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Musical ethnicity: affective, material and vocal turns.

This article is intended as a critical reflection on the introduction to an edited volume entitled *Ethnicity, Identity and Music: The Musical Construction of Place* (Stokes 1994) (footnote 1). A tone of personal reminiscence is unavoidable, and I hope that will be forgiven. In part, the point of this is to place credit where credit is firmly due, with Edwin Ardener, who was the charismatic leader of an important anthropological circle at Oxford until his death in 1987. A certain amount has been written about Ardener’s thinking, to which I will refer the interested reader, but not recapitulate here (footnote 2). Less has been said about his circle, however, which continued to function long after his death. It shaped a distinctive school of ethnicity and identity studies, a school of which the *Ethnicity, Identity and Music* volume was very much a product.

A secondary intention is to underline the shape of the key ideas in my introductory chapter. Rice has argued that ethnomusicology has not been good at developing theoretical models. ‘Identity’ as a case in point (Rice 2010; see also Rice 2017 for a broader set of arguments). He implies that ethnicity and identity have been too diffuse as ideas to constitute a proper theoretical model, and too weakly or vaguely connected to music to constitute properly *ethnomusicological* theory. Much hinges, of course, on how one defines a ‘theoretical model’, and whether one agrees that theoretical progress in ethnomusicology only works through the neat processes of ‘remodelling’, in which Rice of course excels. So I am seizing the opportunity to clarify, in retrospect, what that model might have been. I would also like to articulate what I now find problematic in it (footnote
This will prompt an exploration, in the second part of this essay, of what the model might look like in terms of the recent theoretical ‘turns’ – affective, material and vocal. This will certainly fall short of a fully blown ‘remodelling’ of the original piece of work. But I believe it may help move the perennial and (as this special issue shows) necessarily persistent ethnomusicological question about ethnicity and identity in a useful direction.

*Ethnicity, Identity and Music: The Musical Construction of Place* was the product of an ongoing seminar convened by Edwin Ardener at Oxford in the 1980s. At Oxford, then, the word ‘seminar’ had a rather specific meaning. The term referred to both an event and a kind of informal intellectual community. As far as the event was concerned, the format would typically be an hour’s presentation, followed by half an hour of questions, often preceded by tea, and usually followed by a trip to the pub. They could be run by anybody with the funds to invite a few outside speakers, and with access to an appropriate venue, in college, institute or department. They could be formal and official, but equally, they could be somewhat dissident and alternative. So, as far as the community was concerned, they were typically associated with a particular ‘crowd’, one that cut across disciplinary, age and status boundaries. One could be a member of various such seminars, at least in anthropology, or be a regular visitor to others, though the norm was a serious and identifiable commitment to one. In this sense, ‘seminars’ were important communities of scholarship at Oxford at that time, and remain so.
The format in the specific case of the ‘Ethnicity and Identity’ seminars was eight sessions distributed over eight weeks, to match the Oxford term. Though never explicitly stated as such, the expectation was that invitees might bring Ardener’s rather particular blend of structuralism and sociolinguistics to the matter at hand. A particular theme would prevail for the eight-week term involving a fairly fixed pool of mainly local contributors. An editor from among the eight would often pull the papers together as an edited collection, which Berg would usually publish (footnote 4). In the days of ‘the Institute’ (footnote 5), much was done through these college-based seminars. Anthropologically speaking, the Needham circle would meet in All Souls, the Lienhardt circle at Wadham (or in The Horse and Jockey, then a pub, now flats); the Ardener circle at St. Johns, usually in St. Giles House. It was, very much, the first part of my anthropology training at Oxford, a training punctuated by the unexpected and early death of Ardener in 1984. It was also an induction into the Ardener circle, which I should explain in a bit of detail, because it says much about how *Ethnicity, Identity and Music* came to be written.

In the first place, the seminar placed emphasis on a certain kind of eclecticism. Much of this came from Ardener himself. Anything and everything was grist to the Ardener mill. He saw no particular topic as being peculiarly ‘anthropological’, or, at least, as being intrinsically more deserving of anthropological attention than anything else, with the exception, arguably, of language, which he felt urgently needed to be wrested back from the sociolinguists. Anything that contributed to the ways humans organized, represented and mobilized their social groups was of potential interest, and he recruited his students and
seminar participants accordingly, people with first degrees or professional experience elsewhere wanting to learn, as graduate students, an anthropological ‘take’ on them. Anthropology for Ardener was a matter of learning to move as a stranger, asking the kinds of questions insiders to particular disciplinary or professional worlds were incapable of asking, because they were too invested in its status games. Anthropology, for Ardener, then, involved a kind of professional disciplinary outsidership. One learned to ask the relevant questions via Saussure, Levi-Strauss, Chomsky and Wittgenstein – questions, essentially, about how language gives shape to the world and sets it into motion. But one directed these questions externally. Ones job as a student, it always seemed, was to present to him disciplinary tangles in –in my case music and musicology – that lent themselves to ‘unpacking’ (a favorite Ardener term) in terms of the classic Ardenerian questions. So Ardener seminar participants were a diverse lot, linked by certain style of question-asking and a shared bibliography, rather than area or disciplinary subject matter.

Gellner’s embittered critique of Oxford philosophy in *Words and Things* (Gellner 1959) describes a world participants in the Ardener seminar would all surely at least partially recognize and remember, whether or not they would agree with Gellner’s gripe (footnote 6). The seminar was, most certainly, intellectual practice concerned with describing, not changing, and possessed of a deep conviction that most things came down to language games, between which it was, at the end of the day, impossible to arbitrate. Questions of ethnicity came to predominate in the 1980s, and Frederick Barth’s *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (Barth 1969) was to become required reading. But it was, however, to be read
critically, and in what struck me at the time as a somewhat depoliticized way. Barth’s relentless ethical self-positioning (viz his position on Colin Turnbull’s *The Mountain People*) always struck me at least as being embarrassing to Ardener (footnote 7). Questions about power were routinely subordinated to questions about language and structure (footnote 8). What primarily interested Ardener about minorities, for instance, was the symbolic and linguistic ways in which minorities were defined and loaded with attributes of strangeness, remoteness, and exoticism, and the peculiarities of world-views approached from within these kinds of subject position. Not the exercise of power or violence. Ardener’s Ireland, for instance, was one seen through Dumezil, and such arcane topics as the historical disappearance of the fifth province. Terry Eagleton’s postcolonial Ireland could not have been further away, even though in those days Terry Eagleton himself could be tracked down easily enough playing tin whistle in the Irish pubs on Cowley Road.

Thirdly, I have described it as a circle, lead by a charismatic, but it was a circle in which the charisma was quite well distributed, and, later, routinized. At the time I knew it, as well as Edwin, there was his wife Shirley, noted feminist anthropologist; there were fellow travellers with college or research centre positions (Jonathan Webber, Tamara Dragadze); there were regular visitors from continental Europe (Kirsten Hastrup, Zdaslav Mach and others); there were graduate students, some already with significant reputations, publications and research posts (Malcolm Chapman, Ed Condry and others); others were just starting off, including two interested in music (myself and Sara Cohen). There were distinguished Oxford returnees and retirees (Elizabeth Tonkin). After the
initial shock of Edwin's death, ‘the seminar’ was, as a consequence, able to pick itself up and move forward. It is still, to the best of my knowledge, going strong today.

The contributors to the seminar that dealt, that term, with music were locals or fellow travellers, chosen initially not by me but by Shirley, Tamara and Jonathan. The first I knew of it was an invitation to give a paper, which I duly delivered in the shape of “Black Sea Turks in the West of Ireland”. Only later, others presumably having declined, was I asked to step forward as an editor and brush them up for publication by Berg. I took this on with some misgivings – life was very busy at that point, not least because of the birth of my first child, and it seemed like a big responsibility for somebody only just starting out. I recruited a couple of extras with a view to involving some sympathetic friends doing interesting work on music as anthropologists (Suzel Reily and Fiona Magowan), and to making the area coverage a bit broader, and then sat down to write an introduction. It was in other words a rather reactive effort on my part to connect the themes and approaches of a variety of rather disparate papers, and imagine the kinds of questions Edwin Ardener himself might have of them.

At the heart of these, via Barth’s *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, was, it seemed to me, the question of symbolic boundaries. Barth’s approach to the study of ethnicity – one whose structuralist logic was very much approved of by Ardener - was to understand ethnicities and identities primarily via the symbolic terms in which they distinguished themselves. This would produce a focus, ethnographically speaking, on the boundary zones, the processes of exclusion,
the various ways in which we state “I don’t know what I am but I know what I am not”. Ardener also approved of Barth’s insistence that we don’t let symbolic systems as it were, simply speak for themselves, an error he would habitually attribute to Rodney Needham, his rival at Oxford. His students were asked, instead, to inquire into how they were mobilized, how they became sites of action and event-making, and how - far from being deep items of belief and interiority - they might be understood as relative, contextual, mobile. This also seemed to me to be particularly productive.

What if were to consider music identity markers in exactly these kinds of terms? The emphasis then might not be on what it took to belong, musically speaking, but on what it took to exclude and to distinguish. It would be to imagine participating in ethnically marked music less as a means of containment and bounding, and more as a means of organizing or regulating movements across demarcating lines. The ethnic pleasures of music, it struck me, are often of this nature – the going there and coming back, the sending forth and the gathering in, the idioms of travel and hospitality. This seemed entirely consistent with this Ardenerian/Barthian programme, and at the root of the “Ethnicity, Identity and Music” ‘model’: a theorization of music as a symbolic boundary system, regulating movement across it, and articulating ethnic with other kinds of social difference in the production of community.

Two other elements were in the mix. One comprised the fact that, at the time of writing in 1993, I was working at the Queen’s University of Belfast, and Belfast’s soundscapes pressed on me. Here was a simple and compelling model of ethnic
difference-making projected, via sound and spectacle, onto a city’s social
geography. I found myself in familiar Ardenerian territory: asking questions
about the semantic struggles over minoritarian status, rights and sympathies
(both Protestants and Catholics in Belfast, confusingly for an outsider, seeing
themselves as vulnerable ‘minorities’); about the claims of heritage and tradition
to protect marching routes (where the core intention was one of intimidation
and ethnic cleansing); observing the sophistry and playfulness involved in
projecting Catholic/Protestant, Irish/British difference across significant areas of
cultural life that were substantially shared. But these questions slowly pushed
me out of Ardenerian territory, and inevitably towards questions about the play
of power and violence, the place of the state, the vagaries of ethnic performance
and performativity in sites of intractable and emotional conflict. Guiding me in
this direction was, on the one hand, a group of interesting anthropologists of
Northern Ireland – May McCann, Neil Jarman, Tony Buckley and others, on the
other the work of Michael Herzfeld in Greece, of such importance to the Turkish
side of my work (footnote 9).

Another might be described in terms of disciplinary organizations and
institutions. Specifically, it was a result of closeness, in those days, between
IASPM (the International Association for the Study of Popular Music) and British
ethnomusicology, and an effort on my part to think through questions of
ethnicity in popular musical spaces. What might be involved, in other words,
thinking through questions of ethnicity on a larger scale, mass mediated and
more obviously commodified spaces, where issues of ethnic difference-making
might be more systematically and obviously articulated with issues of class,
gender and sexuality difference-making? The work of Richard Middleton and Simon Frith was a major point of orientation, as was that of a certain peer group, Keith Negus, Dave Hesmondhalgh and Sara Cohen amongst them.

Ethnicity and ‘the turns’: affect, materiality, and voice.

Having said something about the rather complex conjunction of forces and agencies that bought *Ethnicity, Identity and Music*, and its particular theoretical ‘model’ into being, I want to say something about where I see the major problems, and where I would take this line of thought if I were to sit down and try and reinvent it all today. In brief, I think the limitations are those of a residual structural-functionalism. To anticipate my conclusion, we might want to start today with language offering a fuller acknowledgement of the ambivalence and ambiguity of ethnic identity, which is, after all, often as much about connection and contiguity as it is about difference and boundaries. I want now to touch on three topics with this in mind: affect, materiality and voice.

Firstly, let us consider the question of musical identity from the point of view of affect. We are by now decades into the ‘affective turn’. Surprisingly little systematic attention has been devoted, though, to the question of affect in musical belonging (footnote 10). Feeling defines the ethnic self, obviously enough. In part, we see this in the matter of the fine feelings we consider ourselves to have, as opposed to the shallow, ‘sentimental’ or out of control feelings of our neighbours, of others. But we also need to take into account the ambivalence that surrounds these habitual forms of affective categorization of the other; the sense that their pleasures and emotional satisfactions take
something away from ours, or make ours look puny and bloodless, or involve an element of mockery or smugness, or make us jealous, or angry, or laugh. No wonder we want it, or a share of it, in whatever translated or hand-me-down form. Much of this affective ethnic reckoning revolves around emotion terms; ‘emotives’ as William Reddy describes them, labels which give shape and direction to otherwise inchoate collective emotional state (Reddy 1997). “Don’t get sad, get mad” is his simple example of how emotions works, socially speaking; partly a matter of defining the mood, partly a matter of channeling its social consequences.

Emotives are pervasive in ethnic reckoning around music – what it is that we have and they don’t, and vice-versa, and what slips in-between. Saudade, in Portuguese fado (and Brazilian popular music); kara sevda in Turkish arabesk; mihna in Algerian rai; lonesome in Country music, furusato in enka, strappacore in Italy, hiffet damm in Egypt, craic in Ireland (footnote 11). Not all are terms connoting affective negativity or heaviness or sadness – hiffet damm and craic connote high spirits, levity, wit. Let me call them ‘music identity emotives’, at least for the purposes of the present discussion. These are terms indicating collective affective intensity of one kind or another. The relationship of these terms to musical repertories is complex. Sometimes they are central, at the very heart of the terminological and expressive practices that value the music. Sometimes they are more peripheral and oblique. Often enough, though, music identity emotives are connected to musical repertoires also marked as low, marginal, polluting, undervalued. And thus come to speak of in highly divided and ambivalent terms.
An encounter in the summer of 2016 in the Columbian Embassy in London to celebrate UNESCO's declaration of vallenato as an intangible cultural asset springs to mind, by way of anecdotal illustration. I found myself in a small group, exchanging small talk with a middle-aged invitee, clearly a regular at Embassy events. He said words, a propos of nothing in particular, to the small circle of non-Columbians awkwardly clutching wine glasses around him. I recall it, with some paraphrase, as follows: “Thank you, on behalf of the Columbian people, for this recognition of vallenato. It is the music everybody in our country loves and everybody dances to. It brings the country together. We are deeply grateful. However, I'm afraid I personally can't stand vellenato. I and my wife prefer salsa.”

It wasn't the occasion to dig, and I didn't know what emotions one might stir if one did. But I had read Lise Waxer’s study of salsa, and Peter Wade's work on music and race in Columbia, and knew at least something of its cultural politics, something of its opposition to a certain Columbian view of mestizaje and whiteness. So I could tell that this was a nicely ironic, and layered performance – implying a degree of amusement that an international organization of UNESCO's stature should have chosen to endorse something quite so parochial, quite so low-brow, to mark Columbia's contribution to global culture; that Columbians should be so insecure about their national identity that this kind of international recognition should matter so much; that anything ‘bringing the country together’ should be such a matter of visible relief after shameful decades of civil war; that the place of something marking an authentic cosmopolitanism and sophistication in Columbia – salsa – should be so un- or under-recognized, and so forth (footnote 12). Those researching the repertoires of cultural intimacy are familiar
with these kinds of statement: “it’s clearly ‘us’; but I don’t like the way it makes us look to outsiders.”

On top of, and perhaps connected to, their affective ambivalence, music identity emotives are often deemed untranslatable. Indeed, quite elaborate performances, usually externally directed, are involved in declaring the ‘non-translatability’ of such terms. The irony (signaled by the scare-quotes) is that such purportedly untranslatable terms are, in fact, routinely translated. Of ‘kara sevda’, for instance, an expression linked to arabesk’s dark and gloomy registers of emotion, I would be told, in so many words: “not something you’d ever understand – Europeans like you are too civilized and refined. But it’s something like the Blues.” Or: “you’ve lived here long enough. You know what we’re like, emotional people” i.e. a translation, or an appeal to shared experience that would ground the translation of the term. And one would then hear about how this violent passion connects Greeks and Turks – “it’s something we share; it is why we fight so much, but also why we stick up for one another when we find ourselves picked on in Europe”. And a bit later, from the more erudite, perhaps, a disquisition on the word ‘sevda’. It is derived, I learned, from Arabic sauda, originally meaning black bile, and not the common Turkish root for love, sev-, as is often supposed. The word, incidentally, connects Turkish kara sevda with Portuguese and Brazilian saudade. This kind of translational talk about purportedly ‘untranslatable’ terms is always something to track.

Musical identity emotives circulate, then, in complex and shifting fields of translations and translatability. They reveal is another apparent contradiction:
music identity emotives claim to be about defining an affectual ethnic self, a self as opposed to others – but deployed in verbal performance, they more often seem to speak of contagion, translation, connection, and sameness, and do so where least expected. To force them into a calculus of boundaries and difference making would be to do them a violence, to miss much of the subtle identity work that they do – work that is often about connection making, not difference.

Secondly, materials. The ‘material turn’ is now well underway, in musicology as elsewhere, and now re-animating organology (footnote 13) in terms that should interest ethnomusicologists. On the face of it, the question of how musical instruments mark ethnic boundaries is a familiar one. There are the well-known cases of appropriation by the national cannon – as the ‘Irish’ harp, the ‘Croatian’ *gusle*, the ‘Turkish’ *saz* and so forth (footnote 14). Such appropriations are the product of arduous and painstaking national-cultural labour to eliminate ambiguity about who might lay claim to them. There is the usage on clothing, flags, and other items of national paraphernalia; instrument as a visual sign, within a system of national iconography. There is the sonic mobilization of instruments in the symbolic humiliation or subjugation of ethnic others; lambeg drums on Belfast streets, Serbian accordion bands in Croatian towns during the Yugoslav civil wars. There is the desecration of identity-bearing instruments, or the censorship of musical practices by banning the instruments associated with them: West African drums in the colonial Caribbean, *rubab* and *tabla* in Afghanistan under the Taliban (footnote 15). An act, of course, that enhances their significance and value as markers of identity. There are the instruments that perform identities by being coupled with the voice, acting as surrogates or
doubles, translating words into deeper or more profound emotional registers, perhaps saying things that cannot be said because the poetry in question is censored, or self-censoring, or under erasure in some other way, and thus hobbled and constrained; the violin in Carnatic music, the *duduk* in Armenia, and so forth, spring to mind (footnote 16).

But what unreliable work these instruments do as identity markers! So easily undone, so easily and so unexpectedly rerouted, possessed of such strange agencies. Material studies’ apprehension of the unruliness, of the complexly distributed nature of these agencies, is helpful here. The story of the ‘Neapolitan’ mandolin, discussed by various contributors to Plastino and Sciorra’s *Neapolitan Postcards: Neapolitan Song as Transnational Subject* (Plastino and Sciorra 2016), is an interesting and revealing one in this regard. The Neapolitan mandolin marks two kinds of margin; one an Italy marginal to the mid to late 19th century global order, present in this order primarily as a supplier of labour and raw materials to the industrial world; the other a Naples marginal to Italy's northern centre of political power. The Neapolitan *canzone* was, then, doubly exotic. Its ubiquity in 19th century Europe – it was so ubiquitous that Moore would adopt them in his Irish Melodies (and Chopin borrow them from Moore) with hardly a word of acknowledgment - had much to do with this doubled marginality. Its ubiquity was of course a matter of considerable embarrassment to Italy’s elites. As Prato puts it, in an essay in the same volume, Mussolini detested “mandolinists and *posteggiatori* and *pizzaioli* from Naples probably because, in his view, they were responsible for foreigners’ opinions that Italians were not a race but just a cowardly bunch (*imbelle accozzagla*) of people born to serve and
entertain” (Prato 2016). Within such a mind-set, Neapolitan song, painfully exposed to the outside world, evidenced cultural contamination, migration, poverty and the southern question. It spoke of a maudlin, nostalgic and self-absorbed emotionality that hardly communicated faith in historical progress or military supremacy. And more importantly, it was open to outside scrutiny, and open in a way that seemed to pander to peculiarly demeaning stereotypes.

The mandolin was inseparable from the global circulation of Neapolitan song, serving not just as a instrumental surrogate for or double of the voice, but as a visual icon. There was very little 'Italian', let alone ‘Neapolitan’ about it. It was, as much as anything, a product of the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1878. Here, as Goffredo Plastino shows, Parisian manufacturers developed an instrument on an Italian model, but with a deepened bowl, for added resonance, with steel strings, replacing the traditional gut strings, and a machine head to make it easier to tune. This instrument was popularized in Paris not by Italian musicians but by Spanish student ensembles – so called estudiantinas – whose sound was subsequently marketed as ‘Neapolitan’ (via sheet music, musical toys and piano rolls) by Italian entrepreneurs only after they had caught on in the Paris café chantants (Fabbri 2016). Many of these Italian entrepreneurs were Sefardi Jews, whose commercial networks spread “Neapolitan Song” to Athens and Smyrna in the final years of the Ottoman Empire, where it mingled with emerging popular song forms like kanto and rebetika. The mandolin became a household object across Europe and the Ottoman world during this period, attached to musical worlds sometimes connected, sometimes remote from Neapolitan Song – its use
as a pedagogical device for teaching western art music in early 20th century Turkey and North Africa is an interesting case in point.

What would the history of Neapolitan Song as material object look like from the perspective of this musical instrument, I wonder? Hard to say, but it is clear it would not and could not be a story of belonging and boundaries; it would have to be a story of circulations and translations, of commerce, migrancy and hybridity. As such, it serves as a useful reminder that the story of Neapolitan Song is not, really, a story about Naples, or even Italy, at all; it is a story about New York, Buenos Aires, Paris, Athens, Symyra; it is a story about migrancy at the end of Empire, at the dawn of globalized industrialization. It is a story about minority identities only to the extent that we imagine such identities in a framework of borrowing, adaption and translation, and not difference making. It provided, after all, the means by which many might imagine themselves as 'Neapolitan'.

Thirdly, voice. This, of course, has been a longstanding concern in music studies, repeatedly underlining the embodiment and materiality of vocal utterance. These concerns have been integral to the ‘new musicology’ of the 1990s, grounding engagement with various forms of poststructuralist and psychoanalytic theory. They were less revelatory to ethnomusicologists, who, arguably, have never needed reminding about music's embodiment and materiality. The vocal turn is still, however, underway (footnote 17). Some of its more recent directions may usefully be bought to bear on how we think of voice in relation to ethnicity, identity and race.
I want to think, in this context, about a voice that has long interested me, that of Turkish crooner, Zeki Müren (see Stokes 2010). His death in 1996 marked a moment of national mourning in Turkey. Freud’s aphorism in his famous essay, “From Mourning to Melancholy” springs to mind: we may know who we have lost when we are bereaved, but not what we have lost in them (footnote 18). In 1996, people were clear that Turkey had lost a singer of national stature and importance; media coverage and state honours underlined the fact. But what had been lost in that person was far from clear, and this continues to be the case.

Which Turkish identity, then, had suffered a loss with the passing of Zeki Müren? There were numerous candidates. A high cultural Turkey – a Turkey reacting to the state building and official folklore of the 1930s? A cosmopolitan Turkey – the Turkey of Menderes era, Las Vegas accented consumerism? A queer, dissident Turkey? A Turkey of minorities and margins? A Sufi Turkey? The Turkey of Arabesk popular music, the popular classes? All of these are feasible.

All would agree, too, that a voice had been lost. But, again, which voice? This was a voice that, in the early years, changed, chameleon like according to context, as he shuttled between Turkish Radio recording studios, the film studios in Yeşilçam, and the nightclubs of Beyoğlu and Tarlabası. It was a melodramatic voice, and thus changeable within songs. Follow it through a song of the 1950s – particularly the multi-sectional fantazi genre, full of subtle shifts of mood, voice, tone, mode – and we hear a voice that adopts, or engages, or plays with, a variety of emotional perspectives on the ongoing amorous or erotic situation. It was a sentimental voice, in a rather strict Adam Smithian, perspectival, sense (footnote 19). It was also a voice that aged, intense and sparkling in earlier years, lower in
pitch, and with a tired feel in later years, the years of illness and Arabesk. It was a voice that was nonetheless recognizably and unmistakably his. Diction – urbane, camp, erudite - was at the heart of this recognizability, and, of course, his gift to generations of mimics and impersonators.

As national voice, Zeki Müren came to prominence in Turkish popular culture at a moment when the popularity in Turkey of Egyptian stars like Umm Kulthum and Mohammed Abd al-Wahhab was waning. He replaced them precisely because he mimicked their stardom, their cosmopolitanism, their ability to simultaneously embrace elite and vernacular musical values. The model was there; what was required was somebody to make them Turkish, to sing them in the Turkish language, with reference to the entire range of Turkish art, folk and popular music, as well as the tangos, foxtrots, and Egyptian UGHNIYYAT (long songs) circulating around the entire region. So the national identity of the voice had much to do with its insertion into regional patterns of circulation. As one obituarist put it in 1996, reflecting on childhood memories of the early 1950s, “if Egypt had Umm Kulthum; we had Zeki Müren” (footnote 20).

An early critic, Edip Özışık, described Zeki Müren’s voice as ‘mikrofonik’ (see Stokes 2010: page ref), identifying in this voice both cyborg and circulatory properties, as we might now say. His last appearance on television, some will recall, involved gifting him with his first microphone at the TV studios in Izmir; it looked to me like the classic RCA crooner’s mike. Overwhelmed with emotion, he tottered off stage and died in the wings, microphone in hand. So Zeki Müren’s was a voice that was both born and died, with its microphone. The same could be
said of others in the long first half of the twentieth century (one that ended, for the purposes of this discussion, in the 1960s), cross-cultural crooners, international film stars and heart throbs, national icons, simultaneously globalized, regionalized and localized by the wars and industrial transformations of the times; Carlos Gardel, Abd al-Halim Hafiz, Amalia Rodrigues; the list could go on.

The question remains: what makes of these identifiably national voices, and when? For that national quality is always there in the discussion, even as it is disputed. It is disputed, because, along with everything else, these are voices that have been typically considered, at least by some, impure, or contagious (because insinuating non-national elements into the national psyche), or weak (because requiring amplification, or because associated with once beautiful but, with the passing of time, aged and diseased bodies), or a sign of decline, or a misdirected modernity. This configuration of ideas around the voice is common in many parts of the world: ideas about weakness, impurity and decline on the one hand; the unalloyed pleasure these voices afford on the other - pleasures of recognition and shared feeling. The apparent contradiction is admirably captured in Herzfeld’s well-known ideas about cultural intimacy in the modern nation-state – ideas that developed in the Greek context but that are very applicable on the fringes of global modernity across the world: ‘we’ recognize ourselves most authentically and with the most emotional satisfaction, in representations of weakness, impurity and decline; such recognitions take hold in the popular imagination because they allow us to deflate the pretensions of our rulers, to
cope with their ubiquitous psychic toll, and to hold power to citizenly account (Herzfeld 1997).

The popular voice, in this kind of reckoning, plays across complex and dialectical spaces of sameness and difference-making; it resists reduction to identity, and produces an aura of complexity, difficulty, strangeness, which in turn puts them to work in identity debates, where identity, as it so often and perhaps necessarily is, is in question, or a matter of anxiety, of crisis. It is the voice’s perceived qualities of emotional contagion, its erasure of categories that are important elsewhere, that make them important as signs of identity.

To conclude, the approach with which I began my own particular exploration of questions of identity were too preoccupied with structural-functional questions about boundaries and the production of difference; questions about affect, material culture and voice would, today, complicate the ‘music and identity’ picture considerably and oblige one to shift one’s language, or, perhaps, just start in a different kind of place. The shift would, to put it directly, be one from a structural functionalist terminology, to one oriented towards key psychoanalytic and poststructuralist categories – beyond the binary, as it were. Such a move need not be any the less anthropological, or ethnographic – at least in my understanding of both of these terms. This would be my first gesture towards a ‘remodeling’ of the key organizing ideas of Ethnicity, Identity and Music.

The second would be an integration of the ethical dimension. At this particular juncture, we might want to imagine connections between questions of ethnic
identity and music and the debates around transgender identities, so pressing at the moment. For questions about identity are always questions about politics, and always questions about emotion. The space between is where an ethics of contemporary being and belonging are to be fashioned, and music surely contributes. These are questions that see desire, embarrassment, envy, addiction and humour; rage, revulsion and disgust and much else that we don’t talk enough about in ethnomusicology as being constitutive of identity/identification, not a by-product, or an epiphenomenon, of identity’s structural categories. This would push us firmly in the direction of who wants to identify, and why, and when, and what such turbulent desires, and reactions to them, might set in motion, and thus away from the bounded reifications of ‘identities’ and ‘ethnicities’ that have caused such problems. It would also force us to consider some of the more uncomfortable and tangled identifications that inform our own disciplinary practice.

I would stress, in conclusion, that the problems that have struck and troubled me periodically rereading the introduction to Ethnicity, Music and Identity are my own and not Ardener’s. Quite the reverse: it was Ardener’s emphasis on the performativity of signs, on the power relations implicit in muting, on the necessity of an integrated vision of history and ethnography, and, more broadly, on anthropology as a critical practice that made it possible for me, and for many others, to develop a sense of how one might think about ethnicity and identity in more overtly political and ethical ways than he would himself have been comfortable with. These were doors he opened for others, even if he chose not to walk through them himself. So I would like to close by paying tribute to
somebody who very much inspired me and has kept the idea of ‘sounding ethnicity’ so vital and interesting to me.

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(1) This article was first presented as a keynote talk at a conference organized by Lothnan O’Brien at Nott on, on the subject of Sounding Ethnicity. I was most grateful for the invitation, the lively exchanges at that conference, and for the opportunity to rework it. In rewriting I have stuck closely to the tone of the original oral delivery, feeling this to be appropriate in the context of a special issue such as this. But I have taken the opportunity to tidy up and clarify the arguments, to the extent I have been able, and to eliminate the obvious errors.

(2) The most important and easily accessible source for Ardener’s writings, including useful introductory essays by former students and a bibliography, is Malcolm Chapman’s edition of them, *The Voice of Prophecy* (Ardener 2006).

(3) Though heavily cited in ethnomusicology throughout the 1990s, the volume was not (at all) short of critics. See, for example, Negus 1996.
(4) Berg became Berghan later on, which continued to publish a number of the proceedings of the Ethnicity and Identity seminars.

(5) 'The Institute' was then 'The Institute of Social Anthropology', later the Institute of Social and Cultural’ Anthropology. Now ‘The Institute’ is part of the School of Anthropology and Museum Ethnography.

(6) Gellner denounces, in this famous book, an Oxford philosophy in thrall to Wittgenstein, complacent and conservative, seemingly determined to detach itself from the world even as it claimed to be forging a new approach to everyday language use, unable to exercise ethical, intellectual or political judgment.

(7) The full exchange is to be found in Barth and Turnbull 1974.

(8) Ardener’s work on what he called ‘muted groups’ constitutes something of an exception, though, characteristically, the focus was very much on the muting, and the nature of muted languages, and much less on who or what was doing the muting, and by what means.

(9) Michael Herzfeld was briefly an Ardener student; his early work on Greek folklore acknowledges the intellectual debt, an acknowledgement reprised in his introduction to Berg’s most recent edition of Ardener’s essays (Ardener 2006).

(10) For an important exception, though one drawing or quite different theoretical sources, see Hesmondhalgh 2013.

(11) On saudade in Portuguese fado, see Grey 2010, on the same word in the Brazilian context I am indebted to conversation with Jason Stanyek; on kara sevda in Turkish arabesk see Stokes 1992; on mihna in Algerian rai see Virolle-Suibes 1995; on lonesome in Country music see Tichi 1996, on furusato in enka see Yano 2002.
(12) I had been prepared for some elements of this encounter by Lise Waxer’s book on Salsa in Columbia (Waxer 2002); see also Wade (2000).

(13) Kevin Dawe declared a ‘new organology’ in his contribution to Middleton, Herbert and Clayton 2011; see also Dolan 2013 and Bates 2016 for important statements signaling a new sensibility to organology.


(15) See Baily 2011 for a discussion of the breaking of instruments as a form of censorship under the Taliban in Afghanistan.

(16) See Weidman 2006 on the violin in Carnatic music; Adriaans 2011 on the Armenian duduk.

(17) Everyone will date ‘the new musicology’ differently, according to different criteria. But the emphasis on voice in many of the contributions, and their explicit engagement with queer, poststructuralist and psychoanalytic theory in Ruth Solie’s edited volume, Music and Difference (Solie 1995) make this probably the right one to cite here. For an important discussion of the most recent ‘vocal turn’, see Kane 2016. On timbre, an emerging preoccupation, note Isabella Van Elferen’s forthcoming work.

(18) A translation of Freud’s famous essay, and a book length discussion, is to be found in Fiorini et al 2009.

(19) On sentimentalism and emotional perspectivalism, see Chandler 2015. Sentimentalism is understood here less in terms the quest for emotional authenticity (or nostalgia for it) than as a kind of reverberative, multi-
perspectival dialogue about feeling across difference, anticipated in cinema, and the work of Frank Capra in particular, in Sterne, Smith and Dickens.

(20) Cited in Stokes 2010 p. 41.