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Title	Ethics in ethnomusicological research: Historical perspectives, emergent challenges
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Publication date	2022-11-30
Original Citation	Stock, J. P. J. (2022) 'Ethics in ethnomusicological research: Historical perspectives, emergent challenges', in Stock, J. P. J. and Diamond, B. (eds.) The Routledge Companion to Ethics and Research in Ethnomusicology. New York: Routledge, pp. 3-15. doi: 10.4324/9781003043904-2
Type of publication	Book chapter
Link to publisher's version	https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003043904 - 10.4324/9781003043904-2
Rights	© 2022, the Author. All rights reserved. This is an Accepted Manuscript of a book chapter published by Routledge in Stock, J. P. J. and Diamond, B. (eds.) The Routledge Companion to Ethics and Research in Ethnomusicology on 30 November 2022, available online: https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003043904-2
Download date	2026-11-16 10:28:00
Item downloaded from	https://hdl.handle.net/10468/13869


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1 Ethics in Ethnomusicological Research: Historical Perspectives, Emergent Challenges

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Abstract

It is not surprising that ethical research practices are important in ethnomusicology, given the discipline's foundational interest in the study of music making of diverse peoples worldwide and its reliance upon long-term, immersive fieldwork. After describing why ethics remains a key focus and summarizing the distribution of the book into four parts, this chapter provides a disciplinary history for anglophone ethnomusicology of our engagement with ethics. First, in the period from the formation of the discipline from its several disciplinary predecessors, from the 1880s to the 1960s, we see that while ethical issues sometimes arose in the contact between researcher and researched, they were rarely treated as topics of in-depth, direct consideration. By contrast, in a second phase, embracing the 1970s and 1980s, some ethnomusicologists actively recorded the steps they took to ensure that they were able to form ethical relationships with those whom they studied, and so a new sensitivity to such matters begins to take form. This period overlaps with the so-called crisis of representation in anthropology, and in a third historical phase, from the 1990s onward, new ethical concerns accompany the reflexive turn that entered ethnomusicology at that time. The chapter concludes by noting that current global challenges—conflict, decolonization, democracy, education, environment, gender equality, human rights, migration, security, and more—demand an ethical turn that related the production of close-up, nuanced understandings to collaborative action toward sounder social formations.

Introduction

Ethics are the moral principles that guide human conduct. Ethical conduct is relevant in every form of research, but is particularly significant for ethnomusicologists given the depth of our engagement with people making music and extent to which we build careers through inviting them to reflect with us on music's roles, meanings, and legacies in their lives. Authors in this volume explore the ethical dimensions of stances and approaches associated with the discipline; the ethics underpinning our personal actions, inactions, and interactions as researchers; and the ethical impacts of our presence, outreach, and outputs. We draw together perspectives on our

efforts to share ethically founded understandings in a world riven by inequalities of respect and opportunity, on research in situations where differing ethical values are in conflict, and on settings where musical performance itself acts to reshape ethical dimensions for those present. We do so in a disciplinary context characterized by the study of remarkably diverse range of musical topics. Among numerous other themes, ethnomusicologists investigate the creation of song and the sustaining of threatened musical traditions in rapidly modernizing societies; the many ways music infuses rituals, protests, entertainments, or identity politics with power, fellow-feeling, appeal, or markings of difference; the life histories of musicians and the reception of their work by communities of listeners; and the contribution music makes to healing, education, conflict, or social justice in wide-ranging global settings. Investigating such themes, we draw on a set of research practices which have been actively made and remade since the early 1950s, when ethnomusicology emerged as a conscious reworking for the postwar era of research efforts within several longer-standing fields and disciplines—principally folklore studies and anthropology, but also the now-defunct comparative musicology.[1] Foremost among these approaches is the gathering of accounts of music-related experience offered by those typically referred to as research consultants, i.e., the people we consult personally, often during extended, immersive fieldwork where we aspire to reach beyond observation and interviewing toward the formation of enduring relationships based on trust, respect, and a mutual interest in expressive culture.[2] Building sustained relationships may include participating regularly in cultural gatherings; studying a musical or dance style intensively with a principal teacher or group to better apprehend the joys, disciplines, virtues, and frustrations that accompany learning to perform;[3] or simply forming friendships that lead to deep involvement within particular social circles. We may focus on certain types of event or setting, such as festivals, tourism, or religious

occasions, or trace musical activity across a particular cluster of theoretical issues. Where the situation allows, many ethnomusicologists live alongside their research consultants—some of us come from that very background, of course: the idea that ethnomusicology inevitably means the study of others has never been representative. We use the vernacular to participate in everyday discourses, believing that doing so better grounds our understanding of our consultants' values, practices, and interpretive insights, as well as the surrounding contexts.

Meanwhile, our topic, music, acts directly upon the bodies of those who hear it. Sonic patterns register temporarily on the surface of each listener's skin, and resonate through their internal organs, bone, and muscle. Such vibrations reach the listener intrinsically interwoven with the musician's purposeful deployment of the aesthetic and rhetorical potential of the tradition or style in question. Visual aspects of performance and reception offer up subject positions and stances of arousal and interaction. Musical performance and playback thus recalibrates time, space, subjectivity, and feeling, summoning up rich sensorial impressions of the past (real or imagined), of the present, and of future possibilities. Music is not inevitably ethical in orientation—some music disseminates distinctly unethical sentiments and some reaches us already fully entwined with the publicized moral flaws of its creators: is it still okay, as William Cheng asks (2019), to teach Michael Jackson—but music is an outstanding venue for the staking of claims about human relationships, and for evaluations of the qualities and inequalities, hopes, fears, disappointments, and triumphs of human existence.

We are, furthermore, cognizant as researchers of society of broad systemic inequities across the globe. Research on race, gender, sexuality, colonialism, religion, class, ability, aging, and the intersection of such factors regularly informs study in ethnomusicology, and ethnomusicologists contribute to the socially grounded exploration and theorization of these topics in turn. Violent

confrontations and the resultant forced migrations have not diminished but accelerated. The degradation of the environment, often in the interests of "development", is at a critical juncture. Again, ethnomusicologists engage directly with these concerns in their research, which is to say that we are confronted regularly by the ethical dilemmas associated with these situations.

Then there are the classroom settings and the informal channels that embody the discipline just as much as our peer-reviewed writings, films, performances, blogs, and other outputs. In these scenarios, ethnomusicologists regularly champion the voices and values of those marginalized or excluded by dominant narratives. Doing so, we sustain an explicitly ethical stance illustrated in John Blacking's well-known exhortation, namely that we "explain why, under certain circumstances, a 'simple' 'folk' song may have more human value than a 'complex' symphony" (1973:116). Yet many of us do this within institutional structures founded upon imperial legacies, and so we encounter significant internal opposition, and we may utilize knowledge and materials gathered in questionable circumstances (see further, Tuck and Yang 2012). We may thus occupy a contradictory position, calling for greater attention to cultural diversity and yet serving the very systems that have historically overwritten and still actively resist such diversity. Inevitably, our careers bear an ethical imprint following our (in)actions, educational decisions, use of resources, and attempts to maintain professional and personal relationships with students, colleagues, and those outside the academy.

All this means that ethics is central to the ethnomusicologist's work today. As such, it isn't surprising that ethnomusicologists have sometimes shared ethics-related reflections, particularly those that arise in relation to fieldwork dilemmas. Already classic cases include Paul Berliner's narrative on finally earning the right to learn the full symbolism of the names of the keys on the Shona *mbira dzavadzimu* (1993:1–7) and Nicole Beaudry's account of gender relations, anger,

and suspicion in Arctic and Sub-Arctic North America (1997). A number of authors have traced the impact of their publications on those they studied (Shelemay 1999; Plastino 2003) or considered the unethical situations that arise when recording permissions were not properly negotiated (Guy 2002). And in particular relation to our fieldwork conduct and subsequent management of data, many of us work under institutional codes of ethics, some of which include detailed explanation and illustration, and the best of which have been co-produced with members of Indigenous communities or other marginalized groups (e.g., AIATSIS 2020).

Yet, and notwithstanding contributions such as Mark Slobin's appraisal of the subject area (1992), we still have few accounts that take up ethics as a direct topic in itself. Looking back, one might think that ethics often remained a task to be completed before a study could begin, or an issue raised only when things went awry. This situation, and the discipline at large, is now very much under transformation, as ethnomusicologists face up to a series of challenges posed by the "times of trouble", as Timothy Rice has put it (2014). According to this view, numerous former social, economic, political, and educational certainties fell into question as neoliberal capitalism ground inexorably onward following the collapse of the Soviet bloc and as we better recognized our own societies' complicity in sustaining global inequalities. But I want to rephrase that, since times of trouble have surely been a long-standing norm for much of the world's population, including so many global ethnomusicologists. Those of us in established, first-world settings are now experiencing challenges long familiar to colleagues elsewhere and those standing among us in the precariat. If that's a better description, it suggests that colleagues from marginalized or subaltern communities may hold much experience in working for justice in difficult circumstances, and so be particularly able to provide practical leadership and ethical inspiration as we collectively seek to restructure disciplinary (and societal) patterns of authority.

The authors of chapters in this collection see this kind of disciplinary renewal as urgently needed even as it is already underway. We seek to contribute tangibly to that outcome through our new writing. We adhere to the notion that uncovering the conditions and consequences of the ethical choices we face and make is necessary in building a more engaged, restructured ethnomusicology, despite the personal vulnerabilities it may reveal. The projected disciplinary realignment is yet to be fully mapped, but it's already certain that it will involve emphatic collaboration with partners from a wide set of community groupings directed toward concrete societal goals (see further, Harrison and Pettan 2010:15). In a context of responsible environmental stewardship, such collaborative opportunities will often be realized near where we live and work, a shift with potentially very significant implications for the generation of theory and methodology in turn (see further, Stock 2008:202–4).

The chapters in this volume are arranged into four parts, each of which opens with a short, orientational introduction. In Part I, contributors reflect from a wide-ranging set of positions on what ethics are, or what they might become, in this discipline. They explore perceived inspirations, opportunities, boundaries, and shortfalls in the structures of values ethnomusicologists habitually think of as comprising research ethics. Chapters in Part II build on established work that envisages fieldwork as a site of potentially very complex ethical encounters. The contributions point to new directions in our research but also to career-long and even intergenerational considerations that reach deep into the researcher's personal or family life. Each contributor to Part III has experience of working at sites of crisis. Environmental threat, political oppression, personal violence, and crippling economic inopportunity make our work ever more pressing but the consequences of a misstep as we seek to help people find safety or reconciliation, build resilience, or receive due reparation are also even more fraught ethically

(as too would be the consequences of declining to act). Finally, in Part IV, authors consider the ethics of work in a cross section of contexts outside the university: in policy making, in museums and old people's homes, and through the performance of music taken from sources preserved in public archives. Increasingly, our professional work includes that in such settings, and they bring a new set of ethical concerns to the fore.

Historical Perspectives

As a frame of reference for the ensuing chapters, I now offer a short history of ethnomusicology's ongoing encounter with its manifold ethical dimensions. But I must acknowledge upfront that the disciplinary literature reaches into many languages: there are active populations of researchers in many nations, and moreover there is an established disciplinary ethos of sharing research findings with those who helped generate them. That means there is much publication in numerous global languages. In this account, I work mostly from English-language sources, so what's presented here needs to be read as a partial representation of a broader, global whole, notwithstanding the colonial histories (and, for some, colonial presents) that mean English is widely used around the world.[4]

I divide the last 70 years, over-simplistically, into three phases. In the first, I look at the characteristics of work in three disciplines the new ethnomusicologists drew upon around 1950 when imagining the shape and remit of their new field. Here, ethical issues sometimes arose, but rarely became topics of in-depth, direct consideration. By contrast, in the second phase, embracing the 1970s and 1980s, some researchers actively recorded the steps they took to form ethical relationships with those whom they studied, and so a new sensitivity to such matters begins to take form. In the third section, I look at the rise of new ethical concerns after the

reflexive turn that entered ethnomusicology in the 1990s, following the so-called crisis of representation in anthropology a decade earlier.

Formative Ethical Latencies (Precursors and Up To the 1960s)

Ethnomusicology emerged, post-World War II, as a conscious remolding of components mainly drawn from three longer-standing fields: anthropology, including Native American studies; music folklore; and comparative musicology. If researchers in these areas in question did not (then) routinely publish discussions of the ethical stances they adopted, the study of human beings can hardly occur in an ethical vacuum, and we can abstract aspects of historical practice from published sources. Identifying these practices allows us to see what the early ethnomusicologists chose to inherit and what they reacted against.

An access point into ethical practices in Native American studies is provided by reflections on the varying recognition ascribed to Omaha tribe member and ethnographer Francis La Flesche (1857–1932) by two white New England researchers, James Owen Dorsey and Alice Fletcher, as analyzed by Katie Graber (2017). Graber notes how Dorsey's ethnology (1884) ignored the hybridity already found among the Omaha people—La Flesche's father was an Omaha chief and also of French descent. Dorsey's use of static, monolithic identities unreflexively emphasized Dorsey's own authority as external expert cultural interpreter (Graber 2017:121). Meanwhile, over the course of three publications, Fletcher first presented La Flesche as having "aided" the work—writing to her publisher, she states:

> Francis has a great deal of feeling concerning the recognition of his share of the work involved in [*A Study of Omaha Indian Music*, 1893]. He wants his name to appear on the title page…. I shall be glad to have his name added.

(cited in Graber 2017:121)

However, in a following volume, much of it based on the earlier material, the authorship is Fletcher's alone (1900). Then, in a third item on Omaha culture published some years later again (1911), La Flesche appears as co-author and Fletcher acknowledges La Flesche's more than 25 years of collaboration (Graber 2017:122–3).

In its hesitant way, Fletcher's work foreshadows several later ethical trends. These include the detailed naming and acknowledging of research consultants, so that those we study appear as individual human beings, not indistinguishable representatives of a population; the description of the specific conditions that shaped the research and writing, including noting the impact on the research of perceived power differentials, and the specifying of dates and places, which helps suggest information is context-specific; and, eventually, a rising recognition of scholarly work produced by or co-produced with cultural insiders.

A second example portrays norms found in a wide range of folkloric studies at this time. Published around the same moment the term "ethnomusicology" was coined (Kunst 1950), a report by Jasimuddin (1903–76) summarized the poet's folksong collecting activities from 1922 up to Pakistan's independence in 1947. Reporting in the *Journal of the International Folk Music Council* (1951), Jasimuddin noted that urbanites now found rural ballads overly leisurely and obscure. Yet urban listeners comprised a vital source of potential income for rural musicians. He intervened to teach rural vocalists new songs that set contemporaneous lyrics to the best folk tunes he had collected, with the dual aims of preserving the original melodies and sustaining rural musicians' livelihoods.

Jasimuddin finally judged his project successful, but noted initial setbacks:

> I came to the town with my beautiful songs, and with the little money I had I bought 20 lbs. of the best sweets and approached the best singer. He ate my sweets, but he did not sing my songs.
>
> (1951:43)

As this passage suggests, Jasimuddin did not reflect very deeply on the seemingly significant changes embodied within his vision for the rural traditions. He did not question whether he had a right to instigate such action, or whether the new songs could still be represented as regional folk music. Ethical blind-spots like these surround research "at home", just as they do that overseas, since researchers anywhere can be inspired by powerful ideologies. Lillis Ó Laoire, referring to Irish music research from the 1980s onward, comments that

> ethical concerns around gathering traditional material and terminologies associated with such practices have not generally made a widespread impact in Ireland, a situation due directly to…nationalist ideals…. Indeed, I would say that such debates have been quietly but deliberately resisted.
>
> (2003:121)

A third case in point is offered by the research of English phonetician and mathematician, Alexander Ellis (1814–90), a scholar described as "the true founder of comparative scientific musicology" by the influential comparative musicologist Erich von Hornbostel (1922:3). Ellis had moved on from studying the history of Western pitch (one outcome of which was the cents system we still use today for precise expression of pitch differences) to a more global account of tuning systems. Seeking to discover the principles of Indian scales from a *vina* held in London's South Kensington Museum, Ellis sought out a musician named Mr. Phookan. The meeting led

Ellis to discard a line of enquiry into intervallic dimensions that was not validated by actual musical practice (see further, Stock 2007:320). Acknowledging that an Indian musician knew best was, of course, ethically appropriate, but it may have been an uncommon gesture in its day: some of Ellis's contemporaries saw the British imperialist project as imbued with an aura of scientific progressiveness and moral superiority.

Ellis's investigations finally led him to conclude: "The musical scale is not one, not 'natural', not even founded necessarily on the laws of the constitution of musical sound so beautifully worked out by Helmholtz, but very diverse, very artificial, and very capricious" (Ellis 1885:526). Later generations of ethnomusicologists regularly return to this finding, admiring the way it undermines Western claims to superior rationality. Yet Ellis himself was primarily interested in the pitch systems utilized worldwide, not in the music that employed those pitches or the values expressed through the performance of such music. Many of the subsequent generation of comparative musicologists who went on to study those musics similarly assessed it quantitatively—counting beats, measuring intervals, transcribing melodic variants—which did little to encourage researchers to think further on the ethical dimension of music research.

In sum, researchers in each of these areas identified matters of ethical significance but collectively they pursued such implications only tentatively. The same goes for the discipline's earliest textbooks. Neither Kunst's *Musicologica* (1950) nor Bruno Nettl's *Theory and Method in Ethnomusicology* (1964) gives direct attention to ethical matters, and neither Alan Merriam's *The Anthropology of Music* (1964) nor Alan Lomax's *Folk Song Style and Culture* (1968) treats ethics as a topic in itself, although Merriam's volume sometimes mentions it in passing, for instance when dealing with the behavior of musicians or the deployment of song during social conflict. Nevertheless, if ethical discussion was mostly absent from this initial set of central

texts, we should recall that rising disciplinary institutionalization certainly facilitated the emergence of informal spaces and teaching contexts where reflection on ethics could occur.

Toward a "Humanizing" Ethnomusicology (1970s–80s)

Ethnomusicologists in the 1970s and 1980s explicitly put forward several ideas that contributed to an enhanced ethical awareness within the discipline. These include a widespread recognition that success in fieldwork was dependent on the maintenance of respectful relationships with other human beings. Likewise, it became more normal (and more technologically practicable) to return research materials and results to members of the communities under study, a point that helps us recognize the uncomfortable parallels between music collecting and resource extraction (see further, Diamond 2012). Researchers raised questions about earlier ideals—non-intervention, scholarly distance, positivist objectivity—and others took forward a theoretical, philosophical, and political interest in developing the discipline's humanistic qualities, rather than seeing ethical matters more simply as methodological challenges to be overcome.

The earliest fieldworkers had recognized that gathering music through recording and via the assembly of associated information required interaction with musicians and their surrounding societal groupings, but by the 1970s ethnomusicologists were beginning to reflect on the kinds of relationship necessary to support periods of immersive study not just short recording trips aided by local (or colonial) authorities. Mantle Hood, for example, wrote: "Success in field work depends on the combination of three things: technical know-how, substantive knowledge of subject, and a great sensitivity to the values and feelings of other human beings—these listed in inverse order of importance" (1982 [1971]:202). Elsewhere, Hood's championing of performance as a means of research inevitably placed the student ethnomusicologist into an

ethical framework, that of pupil under the tutelage of a master performer (1960). In his own reflections on disciplinary history, Bruno Nettl connects a rising ethical awareness to such topics as music ownership, debates over protecting sources of knowledge via broad use of anonymity versus acknowledging the personal expertise and standing of certain musicians, and to a growing awareness among community members that their material might be misrepresented by a researcher, sold to a commercial record publisher without their agreement, or used by the researcher as basis for a well-paid career (1983:290–5). Nettl recommended that the (outsider) ethnomusicologist might meet such "moral obligations" by contributing copies of materials to local or national archives and by actively training and supporting local scholars (*ibid*.:300). These two ideas form the basis of what Tokumaru Yoshihiko formally designated "fieldback" in work dating from 1976. Fieldback comprised "the act of returning musicological results (in terms of articles, musical transcriptions, recording and filming, etc) to the original field" (Tokumaru 2002:341). In Tokumaru's ideal conception, it also involved the researcher in delivering a program to revitalize earlier performance practices through reintroduction of these historical materials. The rise of digital recording and copying, and online publishing and streaming technologies over several decades has made this kind of task easier to undertake, but does not replace the onsite work Tokumaru envisaged.

Alongside such practice-directed reflections, a small number of ethnomusicologists were thinking critically about broader questions of ethical stance. Kenneth Gourlay's argument for a "humanizing ethnomusicology" offers a key instance.[5] Gourlay emphasized "the active, positive, reciprocal, creative aspects of an ethnomusicological dialectic", this in preference to "a scientific-reductionist-objectivist-empiricist approach, whereby the scholar attempts the impractical—amassing all the data—before performing the impossible—disappearing into it"

(1982:412). Gourlay's own exemplification of the methodological steps essential to activating his model remained provisional, but other researchers too were becoming uncomfortable with reliance upon scientific paradigms that they saw as closing off ethnomusicologists' capacities to address directly humanistic concerns. Reflecting on his stance in relation to US Baptists and Pentecostals, Jeff Titon, for example, noted that

> No ethnomusicologist could maintain a scholarly reputation if he attributed the cause of the religious music and behavior he observed in the field to God. Instead, scholarly reputations have been built on insisting the opposite…. And that, I am afraid, is the result of the irony that the scientific world of scholarship, though believing itself open minded, must absolutely reject all absolutist claims to truth.
>
> (1985:22–3)

Or, accounting for his involvement in the making of a film of the Navajo Blessingway religious ceremony, David McAllester explored several facets of the resulting ethical complexity: for instance, McAllester's principal consultant, ritual specialist Frank Mitchell, wanted the film made, but some of Mitchell's children were uncertain, a situation that may have contributed to later family divisions. Likewise, when the family became unwilling to show the film to the wider community, McAllester, who had been showing it to some audiences, noted that "it was troubling to find myself in this classic position of the selfish exploiter" (1984:284).

Further pressure for ethnomusicologists to move beyond the limitations of established models—exhortations to "do no harm", and to avoid influencing those under study—came from scholars active in what can broadly be considered "home" settings. Mellonee Burnim's account of researching gospel music at two African American churches in Indiana as both a Black American and an experienced choir accompanist exemplifies this trend. Burnim writes modestly that her

article “simply explores the dimensions of a single fieldwork experience which reveals the elements of researcher error and personality which have so often been missing in the literature” (1985:434), but by emplacing herself within the account, Burnim allows her readers to grasp how her personal characteristics, interests, and anxieties shaped the ongoing research. That’s already ethical, insofar as it strengthens the particularities of the observations presented and reduces any risk that the ethnography is misread as a general representation of all African American church music. Burnim moreover reveals that she found herself unable to refuse to utilize her musical expertise when requested to play piano for the groups in question. Models of positivist non-intervention were inherently ethically skewed, at the very least for those ethnomusicologists whose research topics and home sites overlap.

Each of these examples reveals how researchers in this period gradually formed a shared interest in pursuing the ethical dimensions of the different human subjectivities that coalesce around the making and the researching of music. An essential foundational step for a focus on research ethics was taking form, even while the subject remained mostly unexplored in its own right. As Mark Slobin noted in one of the first studies to look explicitly at ethics in ethnomusicology, “All ethnomusicologists have probably had a moment of ethical awareness at some point in their work, yet few, if any, see fit to publicize such moments” (1992:329). As such, Slobin had many fewer sources to work from than those contributing the parallel chapters in the same volume on, say, music analysis or fieldwork. Nevertheless, he provides several insights that remain telling today. For instance, Slobin points out that there can be multiple sets of ethics at play, since those whom we study may have ethical systems of their own (*ibid.*:330). The researcher thus needs to weigh up their proposed actions with care. Slobin also observes that ethical dilemmas are situational: “no generalized response provides an easy answer in light of the very specific nature

of the immediate circumstances surrounding each case" (*ibid*.:332). In this volume we take up the exploration of situationality as a guiding principle in grappling with what is at stake in our research.

Reflexivity, Engagement, and New Directions (1990s and Onward)

In this section, I explore examples of ethnomusicological writing from the last three decades that show the most significant ways in which ethics has emerged as a disciplinary topic in its own right. First, I trace the rise of reflexive writing intended to reveal how research insights take form during the interactions of researcher and research consultants. Second, I consider the upsurge in applied ethnomusicology, noting also how the ethical imperatives and opportunities activated in such work relate to new patterns in knowledge production. Finally, I conclude by considering ethical dimensions explored in recent writing on the soundscapes within which we all live.

Writing in anthropology and related disciplines from the 1970s onward combined insights from both new French philosophy and postcolonial studies to point to a crisis in ethnographic representation. Objectivist scholarship, the critics argued, hid the personality and interests of the author and so veiled the formative influence of such factors on the research. Meanwhile, all writing had an inevitable political dimension, not least when fieldworkers portrayed their subjects as exotic but otherwise individually indistinguishable others in the modern world or inscribed foreign knowledge into colonial categories or hierarchies (see further, Asad 1973; Clifford and Marcus 1986; Abu-Lughod 1991). Critics noted that these forms of the production of knowledge served the interests of the Western researcher more than those of the subaltern research subject. Such thinking was reinforced by the entry into positions of academic leadership

of many whose sensitivities had been fostered in social campaigns across numerous nations, including the civil rights and women's liberation movements in the USA.

In fact, music forms its own public representation, and ethnomusicologists had long embraced opportunities to bring both live performers and recordings to new audiences exactly to contest orientalist representations proffered by the market or the exclusionary actions of elitists entrenched in cultural and educational infrastructures. Notwithstanding an initially slow take up of some of the new devices of authorial rhetoric, by the 1990s, reflexivity had become characteristic in much new ethnomusicological writing. This shift is exemplified most directly in Gregory Barz and Timothy Cooley's impactful *Shadows in the Field: New Perspectives for Fieldwork in Ethnomusicology* (1997). Numerous chapters discuss ethical matters, and fieldwork ethics emerges as a major theme in itself. For example, Carol Babiracki reflects on how her changes of stance in terms of gender identity and romantic relationship shaped her access to and participation within communal music and dance events in village India, and so too her eventual representations of those societies (1997:123–5). In a contrasting situation, Nicole Beaudry had approached members of the Dene culture, in Northern Canada, with questions about their songs. She recounts how her initial surprise at being asked to listen to stories became an understanding of a local ethical prescript: "I was also being taught to *listen*, a quality I could never achieve by *asking* too many biased questions. Learning to listen is also learning to expect and trust that truth, in due time, will reveal itself" (1997:69, emphasis in original).

If human relationships, research process, and resulting publications are mutually constitutive, then the way we represent those whom we research demands great ethical care. This is a multifaceted issue, and one made further complex by the detail that while the majority of ethnomusicological accounts are written, they typically rest on a combination of embodied

musical experience (listening, dancing, practicing, performing, etc.) and on conversations, explanations, and other ideas shared in and characterized by oral communication. Actions and feelings may reduce only skeletally to words, and the telling deployments of spoken register, voice, and power can be challenging to replicate in academic writing, even when there is no translation at play. (Radio or film may handle such content better.) Even the very process of converting speech into written form raises ethical dilemmas. Ingrid Monson provides an example in her study of jazz improvisation in New York City:

> The identification and representation of what Henry Louis Gates Jr. would call 'the black difference' in African American language consequently results in a double bind: spellings that convey cultural identity to African Americans and sympathetic non-African Americans imply social and educational inferiority to others.
>
> (1996:23)

That is, when Monson writes up the words of her consultants, she risks either exoticizing them or whitening them, neither of which is an ethically appealing outcome.

This period has seen a huge rise in study that informs and contributes to programs of local action. In such cases, researchers inevitably consider the ethics of action versus inaction. Samuel Araújo provides a discussion of such actions in a Brazilian context, describing the overall move as one of "from neutrality to praxis" and exploring the multiple ways that a scholar can mediate between groups of marginalized people and the social formations that surround them (2008). Placing community members at the fore, including as researchers of their own situations, Araújo's model rests on the internationally influential principles of Brazilian educationist Paulo Freire. Angela Impey offers a second example, writing on the challenges of participatory action research in KwaZulu Natal, South Africa (2002). Here, conflicting pressures arise from

initiatives aimed variously toward environmental conservation, sustainable development, post-Apartheid social reconstruction, HIV/AIDS control, and poverty-related crime reduction. Collectively, these measures create significant obstacles for poor black residents, not least in reconnecting to land from which they had been historically displaced. Impey established a project that targeted the recovery and sustaining of knowledge that recorded community members' senses of attachment to their traditional lands—birthing ceremonies, marriages, funerals, and ancestral rites—and that held by traditional healers known as *izangoma*, "who operate as the essential custodians of information about the environment" (*ibid*.:19).[6]

Recent work exposes several further new directions for the study of ethics in music research. Scholars of sound studies offer striking ways of thinking about music as one element of a wider field of "sonorous phenomena and situated auditory practices" (Daughtry 2015:11). J. Martin Daughtry's account of US soldiers' experiences in wartime Iraq maps out four concentric zones of audition, each characterized by its constituent sonic events and by a listening stance that bears ethical dimensions. In the outermost "audible inaudible zone", experienced troops learn to ignore the sounds of distant gunfire consigning whoever might be under threat there to an ethical vacuum. A little closer lies the "narrational zone": here soldiers listen carefully to piece together an account of unseen or semi-visible conflict. Their narratives reach out to those directly involved, potentially projecting guilt that as listeners in the middle distance they remain safe while others face deadly assault. In the "tactical zone", a constrained focus on the sounds of proximate combat precludes narration but leaves much space for concern for those directly to hand; finally, in the "trauma zone", the sounds of war overwhelm listeners, preventing them from being able to think ethically (*ibid*.:76–95). Daughtry's model is not music-focused, but it

explores the interplay of listening stance and proximity in the experience (or denial) of ethical engagement, an observation with wide relevance to the study of music.

A second space for new ethical thought in music studies stems from recent inquiries into the musical expressions of radical groups, such as far-right nationalists or eco-animal rights militants (Teitelbaum 2014; Pieslak 2015). Such studies require ethical reflection in several respects. For two generations at least, ethnomusicologists have espoused an ethos of respect for the value of those whom they study, and ethnomusicological research has aimed to bring compassionate and informed understanding to the voices and musical expressions of the under-appreciated. When one's primary aim is, however, to critique a group's central ethos, the ethics underlying the customary building of rapport through participatory fieldwork and respectful interviewing aren't straightforward at all. What about giving consideration to the voices of the group's victims, or the risk of providing such groups yet a further platform for their views? In fact, very similar questions are activated in research into illegal activities and that concerning groups targeted by repressive regimes or subject to widespread social prejudice and abuse. New work on research ethics at the fracture points of state and society, then, brings into view questions that reach far beyond the practicalities of gathering informed consent during fieldwork or maintaining personal safety in the field.

The ethical projections offered in music and dance performance form a third space rich in potential for new ethnomusicological investigation. Performance offers narratives, it embodies positionalities, and inspires conscientious auditing and witnessing. Building on established work on the ethic-aesthetic relationship, certain ethnomusicologists have explored such occurrences in the social world to explore particular musicians' deployment of music as a tool for social realignment. Ryan Skinner, for example, describes how Malian songstress Nana Soumbounou

initiated a song fully aware that the ensuing chorus would "cool down" an in-progress argument between two band staff, a father and son. Soumbounou's intervention reminded all present of an ethics of empathic fellowship common to family and band membership alike but, and more importantly, it drew them into attentive expressions of mutual support—melodically, registrally, timbrally, and through shared reliance on a well-tempered, interlocking accompaniment. Her action also allowed her to seize agency as an outstanding woman in a professional context where male leadership is the norm (Skinner 2015:90–5, 104). The example illustrates the operation of a multilayered ethics of listening even in the same auditory zone, to take up Daughtry's term above, reminding us once again that the study of ethics is ultimately the study of how and why music works (or fails).

Conclusions

Earlier notions of cultural relativism (sometimes) allowed certain researchers to distance themselves from the peoples and materials they studied. Such a stance is untenable in a world where many of us research at and around our own homes, where "both people and the music they transmit are simultaneously local and translocal" (Shelemay 2013:786), and where we recognize that we are reciprocally interconnected with those whom we study. This does not mean that the account above is one of a smooth progression from collective disciplinary unawareness or disinterest to a present where we are all admirably attentive and woke. Ethics doesn't move in a straight line. The progress we have made so far, such as it is, is to recognize that ethical issues are present at every stage of our research and that they're deeply woven into the very fabric of our topic music.

Clearly, the chapters here, numerous and diverse as they are, cannot exhaust all the manifold dimensions of the subject of ethics, and much remains yet to be done. Most obviously, this volume generally pays attention to direct matters of research. There's also a pressing need for ethnomusicologists to reflect on ethics in our lives as students, teachers, and mentors; as activists and administrators; as colleagues, competitors, musicians, or peer reviewers. We need to think further about the ethical consequences of the institutional structures within which we work, and how these continue to benefit some more than others.

Beyond exploring our own conditions, some of us may also feel an imperative toward research-directed action. Current global challenges—conflict, decolonization, democracy, education, environment, gender equality, human rights, migration, security, and more—are rich in musical articulations and are already significant sites for ethnomusicological investigation. A deeply ethical turn in these areas will be one that produces close-up, nuanced understandings that directly contribute to collaborative action toward sounder social formations.

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[1] The history of ethnomusicology closely relates to locational specifics in contrasting institutional, linguistic, and global settings worldwide. For distinct viewpoints on North American ethnomusicology and the formation of the Society for Ethnomusicology compare Nettl 2010 and Titon 2015. Accounts with wider geographical reference include Nettl and Bohlman 1991; Myers 1993; Nettl 2016. Scholars from the other music disciplines have written of ethics too. Marcel Cobussen and Nanette Nielsen (2012), for instance, open up spaces for the study of listening, discourse, stagedness, orality, and associated performative features within the Western art music tradition; Jeff Warren’s key contribution is to conceive music as a means of encountering others and of making sense of the experience of such encounters (2014).

[2] Few ethnomusicologists reduce the discipline to fieldwork-based study alone, but this remains a paradigmatic method, even while many in the other music disciplines place the key marker of ethnomusicological difference in an assumed focus on the "non-West" and on traditional genres.

[3] Michelle Bigenho, however, cautions us that privileging participation as a special site for the acquisition of understanding projects a Western ideology of music as an autonomous zone where personal experience is separate from its underlying social constructions (2008:29–30).

[4] I also read in Chinese, but am unaware of research on ethics in Chinese-language ethnomusicology, although there are rich studies on the ethical aspects of music in the imperial period, when court officials and philosophers alike treated musical sound as endowed with social and supernatural powers. Even within English writing, distinct disciplinary histories move to the fore when ethnomusicology is represented as, for example, an evolving culture of teaching and learning practices (Krüger 2009), as a pressure point for institutional reform (Wong 2006), or as a tapestry of life stories (Sarkissian and Solís 2019).

[5] Mark Slobin and Fred Lieberman convened a panel entitled "Professional Ethics and Field Work" at the Society for Ethnomusicology's 1972 conference. One of this volume's peer reviewers noted that the panel "bounced off the devastating conflict within anthropology over the ethical dilemmas of covert funding and personal responsibility (much of it in cold-war situations)", an observation that reveals how contemporaneous concerns inspired new ethical thinking even as the new discipline established itself across the USA.

[6] A further significant vein of engaged work occurs in the area of medical ethnomusicology (e.g., Koen 2008). Diamond and Castelo Branco note that applied research risks re-inscribing Western-centric hegemonies, casting the researcher as "helper" and community collaborators as the

helped (2021:17). According to my own observations, applied research has most often been designed and delivered by a researcher who comes from or has developed enduring ties to the community in question. That does not resolve every ethical risk associated with interventional research, but it may lessen the particular problem Diamond and Castelo-Branco identify.