

(...editorial)

It's only in mediocre books that people are divided into two camps and have nothing to do with each other. In real life everything gets mixed up!

– Boris Pasternak, *Doctor Zhivago*

Gay/Straight. Western/Non-Western. Masculine/Feminine. Musicology/Theory. Gay/Lesbian. Black/White. Lowbrow/Highbrow. Professor/Graduate Student. Global/Local. Musicology/Ethnomusicology. Popular/Classical. We at *repercussions* are fond of a variety of critical approaches not simply because they often address such social and musicological categories, but more importantly because they (to use a bit of cultural studies-speak) *problematize* these “natural” oppositional pairings. Our goal is to push our readers and ourselves to see beyond the familiar boundaries of identities, spaces, and institutions. In so doing, we hope to create a forum for exploration of our own (sometimes marginalized) subject positions and examination of the relationship of musical discourse to contemporary social and intellectual currents.

It is heartening to see institutions such as the Society for Ethnomusicology foregrounding some of these same issues. In his keynote address to the recent Seattle meeting, anthropologist James Clifford introduced a rich and challenging metaphor for the formation of social identities. He compared the formation of identity (“roots”) to the process of traveling the routes of a city. As he described the routes he traveled in New York

City as a young man—the neighborhoods he knew, the ones he passed through, the ones he avoided altogether—he brought out the connection of his routes to his sense of cultural (and musical) roots. The play upon routes/roots encourages us to re-think our subject positions, and consider the active role that we all play in the construction of our identities. At the same time, the image of a city with many cultural and musicological neighborhoods reminds us that we are too often content to stay within the confines of familiar spaces.

It is also encouraging to see that scholars such as Susan McClary continue to pursue questions about the relationship of musical discourse to social categories. In a recent series of five lectures, McClary pointed out the degree to which all musical conventions are culturally constructed. Her lectures, while organized by musical “neighborhoods,” visited Public Enemy, a nineteenth-century American hymn, Mozart, an African American gospel quartet, Prince, Beethoven, Bach, Glass, and Bessie Smith. By linking together in one set of lectures figures and practices from such typically segregated parts of the musical cityscape, McClary crossed and problematized cultural and musical borders.

We at *repercussions* want to encourage exploration of what to some must appear as a mixed up and often confusing tangle of routes/roots. Like Pasternak, we understand that our lives, identities, and allegiances are not, nor have they ever been, easily dichotomized or explained, and hope by providing a space for writing devoted to such questions to help advance new and ambitious (inter)discipline(s). So we continue to pursue the process of *problematizing* ourselves, our methods, and above all music.

(am)