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Ethnomusicology of the Creative Process

Emmanuelle Olivier

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The notion of creative process was, very early on, a central issue in the studies into Western literary, pictorial, or musical art. Yet ethnomusicology has considered the notion of creative process in a more progressive way since its constitution as a scientific discipline at the end of the 19th century. It is true that “comparative musicology”, the discipline's first denomination, had a strong interest in the question of the “origins” and “ages” of music (Sachs 1962; Wiora 1963). But these initial works are part of the evolutionary paradigm in which the notion of origin is not amalgamated with that of creative process. At the very outset of the discipline, researchers did not question the creative character of the practices they observed and recorded. In his study of Bellakula Indian songs, Carl Stumpf transcribed the voice of a singer named Nusjilusta who was used to “thinking up new melodies [...] on his way to bed each evening” (Stock 2010: 333 about Stumpf 1886), melodies that Stumpf identified as “very like the old ones” (*ibid.*) without further details. For their part, romantic nationalist folklorists dedicated tremendous effort to analyzing and theorizing variations, but viewed as a “natural phenomenon”, i.e. devoid of creative intent (Bartók cited by Brăiloiu 1959: 84). It was from the mid-twentieth century, considered the actual beginning of (modern) ethnomusicology, that scholars such as Bruno Nettl (1954; 1983), Alan Merriam (1964), and John Blacking (1973) truly began to question creative processes, including composition, improvisation and variation. However, in 1983, Bruno Nettl acknowledged that ethnomusicologists still “know very little about the way in which music is produced, especially concerning its innovative

aspect” (Nettl 2005 [1983]: 26). The relatively small number of ethnomusicologists who had to deal with a host of musics in their specific context also undoubtedly constituted an additional obstacle to access a thorough analysis of societies, composers’ biographies, styles, musical trends, etc.

Starting in the 1980s, more and more ethnomusicological works have addressed creative processes. An increasing number of publications have explored improvisation – which, alongside variation and oral composition, is the most theorized and analyzed type of creative process in ethnomusicology. I am thinking in particular of *In the Course of Performance: Studies in the World of Musical Improvisation* edited in 1998 by Bruno Nettle and Melinda Russel, but also, more recently, of the two-volume *Oxford Handbook of Critical Improvisation Studies* edited by Georges E. Lewis and Benjamin Piekut (2016), which are landmarks in the field’s increasing prominence. A special interest group on Improvisation within the Society for Ethnomusicology was created in 2012, along with journals such as *Critical Studies in Improvisation*, launched in 2004. Work on the circulation and transformation of globalized musical forms explore processes such as “creative appropriation” (Manuel 1995). Related to this notion, work on intellectual property have been emerging since the 1990s, initiated by the 1996 issue of the *Yearbook for Traditional Music* on « Music, Ownership, and Rights » themes from ICTM's 33rd World Conference, held in Canberra (Australia) in 1995. Even more recently, ethnomusicology has taken interest in the role of digital technology in the musical production of the Global South.

Since John Blacking’s crucial theoretical and cross culturally comparative contribution in his 1973 *How Musical is Man* book, a few publications have been dedicated to the theory, method, and comparative analysis of creative processes. I will mention Juniper Hill's very recent book entitled *Become Creative. Insights from Musicians in a Diverse World* (2018) that presents cross culturally comparative theoretical works on creative processes in general.

But through the voice of Timothy Rice (2003), Juniper Hill also points out that in ethnomusicology, there are “few comparative overviews of the results of our scholarship and even fewer if any general laws” (Hill 2018: 19).

With the increasing number of ethnomusicological works that address the question of the creative process, writing this entry represents a challenge indeed: that of, in a single chapter and a limited number of pages, embracing questions relating to all of the world musics. I beg for the reader’s benevolence and hope I will therefore be forgiven me since this text merely contains a brief ethnography, in order to privilege a critical history of ethnomusicological works on musical process, from the tropism of the first works on oral tradition societies and collective creation, then the choice of the dialectic continuity vs. change, to the full integration of the notion of creative process in the field of ethnomusicology *in* and *through* globalization.

This first historical part will be followed by a presentation of recent and current themes on this topic: dialectics between creation and tradition, individual and collective creativity; broad social phenomena as migration, “cultural displacements” (Su Zheng 1994) and cosmopolitanism influencing creative processes; focus on process (including improvisation, appropriation, composition) over product; reflection on multiple *regimes* of creative process from renewal to innovation; question on intellectual property and various forms of authority exercised over musical work; the digital revolution that calls for a new form of interdisciplinarity for investigating the creative process of recorded music.

In order to do so, I shall rely upon references from different ethnomusicological currents or schools of thought, both English and French-speaking, from countries of the North as well as of the South¹. The ethnomusicology of creative process has also been enriched by non-Western musicologies and musicologists. Let us think of the long histories of musical scholarship in India, China, the Arabic world, and to centuries-old treatises on music theory

which analyzes composition and provides tools for composing/improvising. The format of this text does not allow to enter into these different histories of music. On the other hand, I refer to the work of some scholars from these cultures who work in the North and have published on creative processes, e.g. A. Jihad Racy, Su Zheng, Nazir Ali Jairazbhoy. All these references will be situated within the major social science research paradigms that have nourished ethnomusicology throughout its history.

About the supposed difficulty of ethnomusicology in dealing with musical creation

In Chapter 3, entitled “Inspiration and Perspiration: The Creative Process” of his book *The Study of Ethnomusicology: Thirty-one Issues and Concepts* (2005 [1983]), Nettl cites the two main reasons accounting for the difficulty in understanding the nature of musical creation and in developing a comparative analysis: “the incompatibility of concepts” (*ibid.* : 28) and a “lack of terminology in most languages for discussing creativity” (*ibid.*). Regarding the first reason, he states that while musical creation is universal, “different societies have quite different views on what actually constitutes musical creation” (*ibid.*). He admits, however, that most of the societies studied share the idea that “there is the recognition that something already exists” (*ibid.*), i.e. that the creative act corresponds to the translation or transformation of already existing material, while *ex nihilo* creation is reserved for the super-human – gods, spirits, ancestors, or nature, etc. (see also Racy 1991 regarding Arabic music). For Nettl, this conception of creation is opposed to that developed in the West since the 18th century, based on the notion of the demiurge composer, which in turn increases the difficulty of ethnomusicologists, deprived as they are of analysis tools. In fact, ethnomusicology prefers to focus on the creative process and creativity rather than on musical creation, a notion that is rather circumscribed to the field of religion.

Nettl's second reason that accounts for the difficulty of ethnomusicology in dealing with musical creation is that there is little, if any, vocabulary that should prevent the development of vernacular discourse, not least theories, on creative processes. These remarks were widely shared in ethnomusicology – one might even say that they contributed to establish the difference between (Western) art music on the one hand, and popular music on the other – until the current of ethnotheories in the 1970s brought about the emergence of a musical discourse and thought about orality. The work of Steven Feld (1981, 1982) on the Kaluli of New Guinea and of Hugo Zemp (1978, 1979, 1981, 1995) on the Are Are of the Solomon Islands significantly contributed to this current, by uncovering the richness and singularity of the semantic field of these musics, and by gathering numerous narratives of musical genesis.

The idea that musical creation is an unconscious process often attributed to improvisation can be related to the idea of a poor vocabulary, or even an absence of vocabulary. The issue is then that of the analytical categories to be designed in the absence of a text, namely, in this case, an identically reproducible piece. In this regard, Nettl emphasizes the particular difficulty raised by so-called traditional music given that it relies on performances which each time are different. This difficulty is likely to explain “why the history of individual pieces has rarely been studied, especially in non-literate cultures.” (Nettl 1964: 238-239). Indeed, ethnomusicologists have long addressed the issue of musical creation through the only extra-European learned music, produced by societies qualified as “civilized” because they are proficient in writing. These works have been mainly devoted to the fine-art traditions of Asian music in a historiographical perspective, through the study of written notation (Harich-Schneider 1973; Provine 1988; Rowell 1992). Ethnomusicologists have shown how “masters” pass on knowledge inherited from a long tradition, develop particular interpretations or styles,

but also elaborate new compositions that may be innovative in terms of modal, rhythmic or formal characteristics (Jairazbhoy 1995 [1971] for the North Indian classical music). From the 1980s onwards, ethnomusicologists differentiated between conception and verbalization, and recognized that conception can be non-verbalized, being based on a “prolonged immersion in the idiom” (Small 1984: 4). But the Western idea that improvisation is an unconscious creative process was to endure for a long time, even in the case of classical music from India or Pakistan (for a critical analysis, see Nettl 2005 [1983]; Nooshin 2003, 2015; Nooshin and Widdess 2006).

Oral tradition societies and collective creation

The “oral tradition music,” which has been the main resource of ethnomusicological work for a large part of the 20th century, has often been understood as “cultural heritage,”ⁱⁱⁱ the product and the reflection of the community only, whose driving force has allegedly been the imitation or reproduction of (mental) patterns transmitted from one generation to the next. And when history was not dismissed altogether, it was considered in such a linearity that it ruled out any rupture, mutation or return to the past (such as rediscovering or adapting ancient instruments and music to the tastes of the day, for example). In this context, the work of the ethnomusicologist consisted essentially in studying the invariant features of the musical system. The individual, often referred to as the “tradition-holder,” was not set aside but considered as a mere user of the musical system, his or her “creative dimension” being reduced to the principle of *variation*^{iv}. This bias to apprehending the creative process in its purely collective dimension also be understood in reaction to the work of musicologists of the time, most of whom focused on the singular, even exceptional, figures of composers as *pri*^{vi}leged channels into apprehending a given culture and a given period.

In Europe, the work of Constantin Brăiloiu has been decisive on the matter. In one of his last writings, entitled “Reflections on Collective Musical Creation” (*Réflexions sur la création musicale collective*) and published after his death (Brăiloiu 1959), he explains that: “The desire to innovate, the crucial motive of the learned creator, is in truth no preoccupation of the ‘primitive’. In relation to what would he innovate? His concern is to safeguard his good, not to replace it. As a matter of fact, this psychic behavior confronts the modern man with a fact that he is still slow to grasp: it is the timelessness of so-called primitive creations” (1959: 89). Brăiloiu adds that: “Everything happened as if the work, as soon as it appeared, had been eager to take refuge in anonymity and retreat into timelessness. Moreover, by one or other of its properties, whatever its novelty, it soon reduced itself to the impersonal and déjà vu” (*ibid*: 90). The innovation, which Brăiloiu calls “originality” (*ibid*: 92), appears only through the renewal of the repertoire from an immutable system where the individual is absent. For Brăiloiu, the collective creation process of “primitive” music can therefore only be part of the variation.

In the 1950s, at a time when the paradigm of structuralism prevailed in the social sciences, most ethnologists and linguists could hold similar views. But this interest in the study of the principle of variation endured, especially among European African music specialists. In 1989, John Blacking noted that, despite a number of ethnomusicological works reporting the existence of individual compositions, “the idea still persists that in the rural areas of sub-Saharan Africa, music was and is composed by some kind of ‘folk collective’” (Blacking 1989: 17), as if, in a somehow mystical manner, music could reflect the soul of an entire society. Blacking further states that ignoring the names of composers and performers is not sufficient to justify the term “ethnic music,” which denies any place in the history of music (*ibid.*).

However, some ethnomusicologists became interested in compositional techniques from Africa or the Americas as early as the 1940s. In his book *Chopi musicians. Their music, poetry and instruments* published in 1948, Hugh Tracey analyzed the composition of pieces for xylophone. George Herzog (1949) studied the compositional techniques of the American Indians of the Pacific Coast (Washington and British Columbia). A pioneer researcher in American folk music, Phillips Barry's interest in collective creation started even earlier, but he preferred the notion of "communal re-creation" (1933, 1939), which better reflects its vicinity to the creative process, as well as to the notion of variation concurrently used by Brăiloiu.

In his article "Notes on Musical Composition in Primitive Culture" (1954), Nettl drew on all this work to dismiss "the romantic myth of the anonymous musical creation of the people as an entity, [affirming] the universalism of compositional techniques, whether music is written or not, and [underlining] the place of inspiration from the divine in many societies" (Zemp 1997: 192 about Nettl 1954: 81). Following Nettl, Alan Merriam criticized the idea that "folklore is the expression of an entire people and that the group of reference as an entity is the creator of each folklore item" (1964: 165). For Merriam, this theory was interesting, as long as one distinguished between *creation*, which he considered as an individual act, and *style*, whose character belonged to the collective. In Chapter 9 of *The Anthropology of Music*, he clearly laid the foundations for a study of musical creation, free of the stigmatizing stereotypes of so called "primitive" societies.

"Composition seems clearly to be the product of the individual or a group of individuals and not to differ radically between literate and non-literate peoples save in the question of writing. All composition is conscious in the broadest sense of the word when viewed

from an analytic standpoint. Composers may be casual individuals, specialists, or groups of people and their composition must be acceptable to society at large. Techniques of composition include at least the following: the reworking of old materials, the incorporation of borrowed or old material, improvisation, communal re-creation, creation arising out of particularly intense emotional experience, transposition and composition from individual idiosyncrasy. Composition of texts is quite as important as the composition of the sound structure. Composition involves learning, is subject to public acceptance and rejection, and is therefore a part of the broad learning process which contributes, in turn, to the processes of stability and change” (Merriam 1964: 184).

Merriam, like Nettl a few years earlier, recognized composition as a universal principle, and abolished the hierarchy then existing between literate and non-literate societies. This is a bold proposal at a time when, let us remember, many Western musicologists still did not recognize the capacity of “oral tradition” societies to produce polyphony. But it must be stated too that this proposal also reflects a difference in approaches between North American vs. European ways of thinking. Merriam goes on to map the entire spectrum of compositional techniques, from performance to the ultimate act of creation, without failing to specify that composition is a conscious process, in the analytical sense of the term. Finally, this proposal is in opposition to the dominant structuralist paradigm, which aims to expose the unconscious categories and structures of the human mind, and this evidences Merriam’s strong intellectual autonomy.

By pointing out that the composition of lyrics is often as important as that of music, Merriam also questions the places of creativity and underlines the close link between word and sound. But his major contribution is actually to situate composition at the crossroads of the creative action of a composer and that of the audience that validates and legitimizes a musical piece. For Merriam, it is indeed the audience, and the society in general, who make the music by

retaining and transmitting what makes sense to it. But Merriam does not fail to point out that music also makes the society, in its stability as well as in its changes.

Dennison Nash is a contemporary of Merriam and also a pioneer in taking a specific interest in the figure of the composer. In two articles published in 1961 in *Ethnomusicology*, he laid the foundations for a reflection on the “role of the composer”. Nash sets out to explain that the figure of the composer as an “arch-innovator” is the product of Western history, just like the emphasis put on the notions of “new and unique” (Nash 1961a: 81). He goes on to suggest opening the composition to improvisation, even to performance. For Nash, innovation always takes place within the framework of tradition. The difference from one society to another lies in the balance between stability and change, which depends on the value set on either of the terms. Nash argues for “the destruction of our musical idols” (*ibid.*: 82), in favour of a “cross-cultural definition of the composer” (*ibid.*). He then proposes a series of new analytical criteria, applicable in any society: 1°) Selective factors in composer recruitment (gender, kinship, social status, nationality, personality); 2°) Position of the composer in society (place of residence, social status, social relations with other members of society); 3°) Technical aspects of the role of the composer (nature of the compositional process, styles, etc.) (Nash 1961b).

Continuity and change

Despite the line of argumentation developed by Nettl, Merriam, Nash and a few others ethnomusicologists in the United States, the terms composition/creation and composer/creator were to be integrated into the ethnomusicological vocabulary after much time. From the 1960s to 1980s, a great number of researchers preferred the notion of “change”, understood as

a driving force for creation and innovation. Undoubtedly, the term “change” represents some progress in thinking about musical creation. It nevertheless does not tackle the question of the individual, by designating not a singular action, but the transformation of a system. It must be said that ethnomusicology, which was then based essentially on synchronic analyses, was still in search of continuity and permanence. For a long time, “change” was perceived as an “incidental, disturbing, exceptional, polluting factor” (Nettl 2005 [1983]: 299). And if it allowed to consider music within a historical process, it has also been considered, in a functionalist perspective, “as a pathological index of cultural decay” (Waterman 1990: 368). At a certain point however, it became inconceivable to think of a musical culture as absolutely static, lest it might be viewed as “an artificially preserved museum” (Nettl *ibid.*: 306). As a result, change was considered as a universal principle (Blacking 1977, 1978), to be understood in a dialectic of continuity *vs.* change, as much as in a logic of “continuity of change” (Hanna 1973).

“Continuity and change” is a term often used in the mid-twentieth century by ethnomusicologists whom one could define as progressive.^v From the 1970s onwards, Blacking thus advocated that the societies studied by ethnomusicology did not wait for colonization to enter History, discover the World and make the choice of musical inventiveness. For Blacking, being interested in change meant rather to “locate when [it] takes place” (Blacking 1977: 13), that is to apprehend societies in the long-term scale of history and identify the moments that herald the emergence of a new form. Though not entering the field of creative process studies, nor announcing it, Blacking thus takes a pioneering interest in change in terms of genesis, drawing on the work of Irvine and Sapir (1976) and Wachsmann (1958). From the 1980s onwards, it is therefore not surprising that the issue of change became part of the “historical ethnomusicology” current, which consists in studying the historical

sources, written and oral, of musical practices that are part of strong social dynamics (see Blum, Bohlman and Neuman 1991).

Different theories of change developed. Merriam and Blacking refer to the work of Franz Boas (1940) on “cultural contacts”, “borrowings” and “circulation” of cultural features, and Melville Herskovits on “acculturation” (1948). They distinguish internal change as a result of a society’s own resources from external change as a result of intercultural contacts. Klaus Wachsmann takes the same perspective in analyzing the integration of foreign instruments into Uganda: the tube-fiddle played with a bow from the East Coast of Africa, first mentioned in 1907, and the *sansa* or *mbira* lamellophone introduced by farmers from the Congo (Wachsmann 1958: 52-54). Wachsmann emphasizes the “stimulus to [African] native creativity” (*ibid.*: 54) that the introduction of European music also provided, and “the change which it has included in the African’s approach to music” (*ibid.*: 55).

Nettl is interested in “the direction of influence” (1964: 232) in musical change through cultural contact. For him, “this can generally be answered with some degree of certainty: the more complex style tends to influence the simpler” (*ibid.*). The general discussion also focuses on the different degrees of change, which leads Nettl to develop a typology: “substitution of one system for another; radical change of a system; gradual, normal change; and allowable variation” (Nettl 2005 [1983]: 307). As for Blacking (1977, 1978), he addresses the question of “radical change” by analyzing the Venda music of South Africa. Following the footsteps of Bronislaw Malinowski (1945), Blacking considers “radical change,” which stems from a situation of intercultural contacts, as the only “proper musical change.” However, there is no unanimity among ethnomusicologists, some of whom consider that the “change that occurs within a system is the norm for ethnomusicological investigation”

(Nettl *ibid.*: 307), while others urge to design a general theory of change (Merriam 1964: 307). All ethnomusicologists finally echo Herskovits's work (1948) who proposes the concept of "reinterpretation" to understand how a group makes new syntheses in a contact situation. They agree on the creative nature of change through cultural contact, even if it takes the form of appropriation, and not *ex nihilo* creation.

Creation through globalization

The 1980s constitute a turning point in the history of ethnomusicology, in the wake of the end of the great paradigms and the beginning of globalization and of the digital revolution. The emergence of world music, on the one hand, and the opening to popular music, on the other, transformed the practice of the discipline and renewed its objects. The notion of musical creation definitively integrates the field of ethnomusicology *in* and *because of* this new context. In the United States, a whole generation of researchers were influenced by the anthropological works of George Marcus and Michael Fischer (1986) that criticize the clichés of the notion of "continuity and change" in favour of an analytical grid that includes both the creation within nation-states and within global networks. The "outside" is no longer seen in opposition to the "inside," but as an integral part of the construction and constitution of what produces society and culture. The societies studied by ethnomusicologists are no longer considered as small, well-defined units that would constitute "lost aesthetics" (Lortat-Jacob and Rosving Olsen 2004: 23), but in their historicized relationships within larger ensembles and as partaking in the circulation of people, practices, knowledge and aesthetics. Hence, these societies can be comprehended as participating in today's world, that is in a "co-temporality" (Fabian 1983) with Western society, a positioning that marks the end of Otherness in favor of "difference" (Bazin 2002). Concretely, this means the progressive

opening of ethnomusicology to all types of music, whether oral or written, rural or urban, traditional or popular, etc. These musics all participate to an economy, or even an industry, of cultural goods that plays with scales, from the local to the global, that relies on technological tools and supports, and that is integral part of a media regime.

For a new dialectic between creation and tradition

One of the most immediate consequences of this paradigm shift is the renewal of the reflection on creation/tradition. Following Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger's *The Invention of Tradition* (1983), creation is no longer seen in opposition to tradition, but as one of its most powerful driving forces. Tradition correlatively becomes the source and a resource of creation. The question raised is then how tradition is manipulated by individuals or groups to historically and/or politically legitimize their new practices; how musicians absorb and unmake tradition in order to create; and how they develop their own definition of tradition by drawing on the different types of resources (local, translocal and transnational) that they appropriate in the course of their careers. Christopher Waterman's *Juju: A Social History and Ethnography of an African Popular Music* (1990) opens this new field of ethnomusicology. "Our Tradition is a Very Modern Tradition" explains the leader of a Juju music group for whom the notions of modernity, including creation, and tradition play out in relational and situational terms.

Considering creation as a driver of tradition allows George Dor to differentiate between *traditionalism*, viewed as the ability to integrate a music piece into a shared tradition, and the *antiquity* of music (2004: 30-31). Dor further explains that the tradition of the Ewe in Ghana is based on their creative capacity, that is "the rate at which newly-composed songs are

introduced to a repertoire” (*ibid.*: 30). Also from Ghana, John Miller Chernoff states that “invention is/in tradition” (1979: 64). He explains that invention enriches tradition as well as it maintains it alive. Some years later, Kwasi Ampene describes how individuals among the Akan people of Ghana introduce innovations, which can be likened to rules that establish new practices and norms (Ampene 2005). As to Iran, Laudan Nooshin talks about creativity “at the centre of the tradition” (1998: 102), which takes the form of a perpetual “re-creation of the repertoire” (*ibid.*). As regards fiddle-based music within the European/Euro-American sphere, Colin Quigley considers the “tradition as generative process” (2012) rather than as “finished product” (*ibid.*). This position allows him to analyze both conservative expressive forms and their potentially infinite “creative transformation”, which for musicians are part of the expression of a renewed identity. For Quigley, this dynamic conception of tradition better corresponds to “today’s mobile and shifting musical practices” (2010) and to the new analytical needs of ethnomusicologists. This “extensive expression of creativity within the bounds of tradition” (Hill 2018: 6) also applies to the classical music of North India (Manuel 2000), the folk repertoires of South India (Guillebaud 2008, 2010) or Finland (Ramnarine 2003), the music for gamelan orchestra in Bali (Bakan 1999), the choirs of the Coloured people of Cape Town (Martin 2013; Martin and Gaulier 2017) or West African Islamic religious hymns of praise (Olivier 2011, 2012). Finally, in the *Oxford Handbook of Music Revival*, the same questioning of the creative process at the centre of the tradition is evoked, to which is added an analysis of “the potency of acts of resurgence, restoration, and renewal” (Bithell & Hill: 2014) in reinvigorating musical tradition, which gives rise to a reflection on the different temporalities at play in the making of tradition.

World Music / Transcultural music / “Creations in migration”

The early studies on world music essentially considered it in terms of the hegemonic relations exercised by the North over the South. These studies dealt with the formatting of music originating from the South according to auditory standards of the North, the loss of authenticity and musical singularities in favor of a commodification conforming to the unique and massive commercial label of *world music*. The notion of “schizophony” was then coined by Steven Feld (1996) to highlight the separation between acoustic materials and their social and historical context. At the same time, Jocelyne Guilbault discussed the thesis of “the greying of cultures” (1993: 35), which refers to the process of assimilation of dominated cultures/music into dominant cultures/music. It is as if the so-called “traditional” music was doomed to dissolve, and musicians lose all creative capacity, in the sense of agency, as soon as they ventured outside their locality.

Veit Erlmann opposed this doom-mongering vision of globalization by employing a more political analysis of the effects of globalization on music, considering “homogenization and differentiation not as mutually exclusive features [...] but as integral constituents of musical aesthetics under late capitalism” (Erlmann 1996: 469). For Erlmann, “synchronicity, the contradictory experience of the universal market-place alongside proliferating neo-traditional codes and new ethnic schisms, is the key signature of the postmodern era” (*ibid.*). In his wake, many ethnomusicologists joined the post-structuralist and post-modernist currents in the social sciences, such as Subaltern studies and Postcolonial studies. Their work focused on a contemporary world shaped by multiple networks, circulations and complex identities. In today’s world, music becomes a vector of strategies of signification and grammars based on code switching, syncretism and hybridization (Manuel 1995; Turino 2000; Wade 2000, etc.). These works differ from previous Western pieces of research in that they take an “anti-essentialist” (Lipstiz 1994: 63) view on music and societies.

Some ethnomusicologists examine the dialectical relationship between local and global. Their interest focuses on the making and circulation of sound and meaning among transnational and diasporic audiences^{vii}. The notion of “creations in migration” (Martiniello, Puig & Suzanne 2009) makes it possible to understand how immigrants, through the music they compose, shape a representation of themselves, others and the world. It is also a question of wondering how these creations are as many “cultural displacements” (Su Zheng 1994, 2010) as “racinations” (*ibid.*: 9), i.e. specific modes of attachment to an environment determined by an exogenous origin. A certain number of researchers denounce the “deracination,” the “denaturalization” (Mitchell 1993) of musicians who share several cultures, but can be torn between them. In parallel, a reflection inspired by Bourdieu’s work emerges regarding the notion of “transcultural capital” (Schiller & Meinhof 2011: 21). The “transcultural capital” is analyzed as a resource that allows migrants to creatively connect the different networks, values and aesthetics that they encounter and incorporate during their musical careers.

The study of “transculturation” (Kartomi 1981) and “transcultural music” thus questions the ability of musicians to move from imposed, assigned categories to chosen or negotiated categories. This is the case of the “fusion” category, invested as a space for “co-creation” by musicians from different musical universes who meet and collaborate during album recordings or artist “residencies” (Djebbari 2012; Hill 2007; Nowak 2017; Racy 2016). These new spaces and times of creation are financially supported as much by the world music industry as by Western institutional networks of cultural cooperation. They become privileged fieldworks for researchers to analyze these transcultural musics: the frictions, the dilemmas, but also the new collaborations generated between musicians with a wide range of knowledge and imaginations (Aubert 2005; Laborde 2014; Stokes 2004; Dueck and Toynbee 2012).

Other ethnomusicologists follow in the footsteps of German sociologist Ulrich Beck (2006) and examine the processes of “cosmopolitanism” in music (Guilbault 2007; Stokes 2004, 2007). This notion makes it possible to think about the production of local music through the global, i.e. to investigate how musicians access the resources of the global and appropriate them to create new pieces, forms and imaginaries, which will in turn circulate. In other words, the issue is not only about the globalisation of flows, but also about “the thickness of the global” (Dassetto 2006), namely its verticality, so to say. The (new) metropolises, as places where populations mingle and which are particularly conducive to exchanges, therefore constitute the privileged field of investigation for this type of work (Puig 2009, 2010; Larkin 2002, 2008; Lemos 2008; Kiwan and Meinhof 2011; White 2008, 2012, etc.).

Studies on musical cosmopolitanism run counter to the conventional wisdom that globalization is synonymous with cultural alienation and annihilation of any creative capacity in the individual who ensnared in the message produced by the mass media. On the contrary, these works show that this new global order contributes just as much to producing diversity and stimulating the imagination. From Zimbabwe, Turino explains that “as the local cosmopolitan formation matured and became self-generating it produced increasingly original local art than still fitted within cosmopolitan aesthetics and ethics” (2003: 70). Between the appropriation of globalized genres and the creation of new local genres, ethnomusicologists observe a large production of music, echoing the words of Anthony Appiah:

“Even though [enclaves of homogeneity] have lost some of their difference, they are constantly inventing new forms: new hairstyles, new slang, from time to time, a new religion even. No one can seriously claim that the villages of the world are identical, or that they are becoming so.” (Appiah 2006: 157).

Figures of creation

American anthropology, very early on, considered individual interactions as a true “locus of culture” (Sapir 1949), thus making the individual an actual actor. But Timothy Rice noted in 1987 that: “Emphasis on the individual is probably the most recent and as yet weakest area of development in ethnomusicology” (1987: 475). Rice added that the study of individual composers and individual acts of creation had long been considered “suspect” (*ibid.*) by the discipline, which regarded this as a means of distinguishing itself from classical musicology. Indeed, one of the arguments put forward was that the status of the composer as a specialist or professional does not exist in many societies. Some researchers, such as Nash (1961a, 1961b), Merriam (1964), Blacking (1976, 1987), Wachsmann (1982), Nettl (1983) or Feld (1984) had already advocated an approach that would have included the study of individuals and their creative imagination. But many ethnomusicological works focusing on the analysis of musical language have for a long time made individuals invisible and anonymous, considering them as passive receptacles of a culture that had been elevated to the rank of a self-regulating system (see also Stock 2010 for a critical analysis).

In anthropology, the multi-sited fieldwork movement conceptualized this focus on individuals some twenty years ago (Marcus 1995). Such a perspective can be found in ethnomusicology, notably in issue 43/1 of *The World of Music* on “Ethnomusicology and the Individual” (2001) and the two issues 15 and 25 of the *Cahiers d’ethnomusicologie*, respectively entitled *Life Stories* (2002, “Histoires de vie”) and *Artist’s Living* (2012, “La vie d’artiste”). Some volumes also address the question of *Lives in music* (“Vies en musique”, Le Ménestrel et al. 2012) or *Figures of musicians* (“Figures de musiciens”, Olivier dir. 2012).

Beyond the restitution of individual life courses, the biographical approach allows to access different temporalities: that of the individual, made up of different stages, ruptures and positioning, but also that of memory, which refers to transmissions and filiations, and finally that of history itself. As a result, temporality is reintroduced into a world which, however globalized it may be, cannot be reduced to “presentism” (Hartog 2003). Following the trajectories of composers also broaches circulatory dynamics that at play, from the local to the global. The researcher thus gains access to different types of networks, postcolonial, religious, political and/or economic, which do not necessarily transit through the North, or which circulate from the South to the North (Perullo 2008; Francfort 2012).

Nettl goes so far as to turn musicians into “culture heroes” (2005: 49). Musicians thus become the true eye-opening figures of a society and a time, who give access to a social intelligibility in the range of sensitivity. Today’s globalized world is in fact characterized by an unprecedented process of individualization of composers that reflects a profound change in social relations and the production of identities. From a socialized practice, a priesthood or an activity transmitted within an endogamous social group, musicianship often moves on to a profession and an “art”. For individuals, this “passage to art” (Tarabout 2003) implies distancing oneself from family or religious authority and local norms, and the emergence of a reflexive process around the categories antiquity/novelty, tradition/contemporaneity, inheritance/innovation. Composers change their status correlatively to become professionals and artists, a global category that they appropriate and redefine. Some researchers initiated a reflection on the dynamics of artistic professionalization in Southern countries, as well as on the participation of artists in these dynamics. They focused their attention on the diversity of careers, statuses and values that surround professions, often recently entered, entangled in

multiple logics. These logics are linked to the internationalization of the art market, to the supervision of the artistic sectors by globalized institutions such as UNESCO or WIPO, but also to the local development of a leisure and entertainment industry (Desroches 2007, 2011; Kiwan & Meinhof 2011; Samson 2017; Andrieu & Olivier 2017).

This change in social categories brings about another transformation in identity constructions. Collective social and/or cultural identity borne by composers is substituted by the identification of an individual or a group of individuals with an artist. New forms of subjectivity are being constructed, both for the audience and the artists themselves, whether they benefit from a “local celebrity” status (Samson 2017: 116) or a “star” status (Danielson 1998). Ethnomusicologists interrogate the value(s) that composers’ singularity holds in the societies they study: protest against dictatorial or tyrannical regimes (Averill 1997; Biermann 2012; Erlmann 1996, 1998; Nooshin 2005), or their annexation of the global world in their own practice of modernity (Andrieu 2012; Berrian 2000; Stokes 2013; Van Nieuwkerk 2011). By studying individuals, the objective is no longer to oppose “two cosmogonies, two incompatible and mutually exclusive value systems: the first [which] claims the primacy of individual rights, [placing] human being at the center of the world, while the second upholds the pre-eminence of collective consciousness in the name of principles of a higher order” (Aubert 2001: 35). The most recent studies, on the contrary, show the heuristic impasse to which this opposition leads. In order to overcome this impasse, these studies propose to analyze, on the one hand, the different forms of articulation between the individual and the collective, subjectivity and objectivity, and, on the other hand, the complexity of the creative process that mobilizes individuals, groups or entire societies at different times. Let us think, for example, of Turino’s analysis on collective composition process of Peruvian panpipe ensembles in his 1993 book *Moving Away from Silence* or to David Borgo’s work on jazz and

the notion of “group creativity” (2006) that it mobilizes. These studies draw on Howard Becker’s sociological work (1982). They seek to understand how music is created in action, negotiation or even tension, between one or more individuals, an audience, institutions, a market, etc., and how each of these actors exercise their authority over musical productions (Erlmann 1996; Ottenberg 1997; Stokes 2010).

Logics of composition

As early as 1954, Nettl noted that “a great deal of variety in the composition processes” (1954: 81). But these processes were to be described and analyzed quite later, through a triple questioning of the status of what is produced (improvisation *vs.* composition); the globalized circulation of music and the multiple forms of its local re-anchoring; and the different regimes of creation (renewal *vs.* innovation). To achieve this questioning, ethnomusicologists implemented musical analysis as a specific tool to have access to the making of music. However, rather than constituting music as a self-referential object, the results of such an analysis aim to shed light on social issues. How do innovation or conformism translate into musical and social issues? What sound references are invoked, how do musicians appropriate, prescribe, reproduce them and what phenomena of hybridization or crossbreeding are at work in music and society? These are questions that a new generation of ethnomusicologists are currently investigating.

Improvisation / creation

Nooshin decries the “ideological implications” (2003: 243) that have long hindered the recognition of improvisation as a full compositional process. She explains the equation at play

in improvisation: “Absence of notation equals non-cerebral, which in turn equals non-art, which is inferior to real art, and so on” (*ibid.*: 246). Even more recently, August Sheehy and Paul Steinbeck highlight the difficulty to represent an ephemeral activity such as improvisation, insofar as “it complicates linear notions of temporality and causality; and it forces us to think carefully about the nature of performance.” (2013 : [4]).

Nettl (1974) was among the first ethnomusicologists to question the opposition established between creation and improvisation. He proposed to apprehend creative practices in a *continuum* between these two poles, which Nooshin (1998) then endorsed some 20 years later in her work on Iranian music. From the 1970s onwards, the influence of Albert B. Lord's book *The Singer of Tales* (1960) on ethnomusicologists in their approach to improvisation as a creative process should also be noted. For Lord, each poetic performance consists of an “oral composition” based on “formulas” and “themes” that are memorized and that constitute starting points from which improvisation is constructed in an assembly set. Improvisation thus acquires the status of com-position, in the etymological sense of the Latin *componere* “to pose together”, i.e. the shaping of pre-existing materials which are memorized before being manipulated, combined, arranged in a more or less original way. This new dialectics between “knowledge and imagination, structure and invention, and form and feeling” (Racy 2016: 235) will be used in numerous ethnomusicological works, notably on the modal systems of South Asia: Indian *ragas* (Wiswanathan 1977) and West Asia *maqam* from Arab music (Racy 2003), and *radif* from Iran (During 1988; Nettl 1992).

In France, the book *Improvisation in oral tradition music* (“*L'improvisation dans les musiques de tradition orale*”) edited in 1986 by Bernard Lortat-Jacob is in line with Lord's work, by defining improvisation as “composition on the spot”, on the basis of empirical

studies conducted in several regions of the world. Different *modus operandi* of improvisation are described in terms of “model” (memorized) and its “realizations” (performed), even if such method favors collective over individual acts and places improvisation outside the historicity of the societies and their practices. Some ten years later, *In the Course of Performance: Studies in the World of Musical Improvisation* edited by Bruno Nettl and Melinda Russell is also situated in the wake of Lord's work, but with different approaches ranging from cognitive study to detailed musical analysis and from a wide variety of music ranging from Arabic Music (Ali Jihad Racy) to Cantonese Opera (Sau Y. Chan), from Karnatak Music (T. Viswanathan & Jody Cormack) to Miles Davis' jazz quintet (Chris Smith).

Other ethnomusicologists, notably Berliner (1994), dismissed the idea that improvisation is not a composition for it being oral. They proposed to consider sound recording as a form of writing, so that the status of a recorded improvisation would be equivalent to that of scores. But this solution reifies the idea that writing, whatever its form, is a prerequisite for creation, which is repudiated by a number of ethnomusicologists who precisely analyze “techniques for composing music orally” (Hill 2009). From India and Iran, Nooshin and Widdess chose to name improvisation “creative performance,” arguing that neither the notion of creation nor that of improvisation accurately accounts for the practices studied (2006: 104). They added that creative performance can take up different forms, from the interpretation of a “pre-composed piece” (*ibid.*: 106) to a “composition in performance” (*ibid.*)^{viii}. From this point of view, it is also necessary to point out the role that the audience can play in this performative composition, what Racy calls “creative listening” (1991: 15) in relation to the modern *tarab* of Syria, by indicating that this “participatory phenomenon” (*ibid.*: 22) between musicians and audience had already been theorized in medieval Islamic literature. Improvisation thus allows

an “astonishing repertory of kinds of creativity” (Nettl 2016: 169), and Ingrid Monson even makes it a metaphor of freedom (Monson 1996, 2007, 2009).

For Nooshin and Widdess, what matters is to undertake a precise description of the musicians’ actions and the memory and compositional strategies they implement. They thus attempt to identify the choices of Iranian and Indian musicians who can then give birth to new musical ideas, combine and recombine them in order to produce new pieces, once they have memorized the abstract principles and techniques of composition. Nooshin and Widdess’ thorough analysis thus focuses on various compositional techniques such as “sequential patterning and motivic development, [...] exact and varied repetition, sequencing and various types of extension and contraction as well as motivic patterns and phrase shapes” (*ibid.*: 110). Finally, their contribution is noteworthy in that they consider improvisation in different temporalities: the short and limited time of the performance embedded in the long time of memory on the one hand and of transmission on the other hand.

Appropriation as composition

The process of appropriation is at the center of most recent ethnomusicological studies. Firstly, because appropriation is inherent to all forms of composition (Martin 2010, 2014) and because it helps discard the vision of the composer as a genius-creator bringing about a new “world”. The second reason is that appropriation enables to enter the circulatory dynamics of music, to gauge their historicity, the scales they play with, as well as their political foundations.^{ix} Appropriation involves the idea of both adjusting (composing with) and negotiating elements from various sources. These adjustments and negotiations can provoke a tension between alien elements and local elements, which may lead the former to prevail over the latter, and thus cause a rift (Martin 2014). But in appropriation there is also the idea of

“domesticating” (Andrieu 2012: 18) external elements, that is being “connected” (Amselle 2001) to the world. From a musical point of view, “domesticating” music that comes from outside means transforming it, an operation that is similar to a process of “rearticulation,” “cross-pollination” (Manuel 2014: 274) or “cross-fertilization” (Manuel 1995: 229). Such an operation consists in “indigenising and resignifying” (*ibid.*: 238) transnational or translocal musical forms. Manuel thus proposes the notion of “creative appropriation” (1994) in referring to the making of music from globalized materials transformed and/or incorporated into local resources (see also Corn 2003; Ottosson 2009). The most striking example is certainly that of hip-hop, a global form if ever there was one, which is relocated^x to such an extent that Adam Krims writes of “hip-hop urge to locality” (2002: 191). The same is true of rock music (Dorin 2005 for India; Nooshin 2005 for Iran), reggae music (Manuel 1994 for Latin America; Samson 2012 for Reunion Island) or jazz music (Dorin 2010, 2016 for India; Falceto 2002 for Ethiopia; Feld 2012 for Ghana; Martin 2008, Roubertie Soliman 2011 for South Africa), and more generally European popular music played in colonized countries as early as the 19th century (Agawu 2003, 2016 for Ghana and several other West African countries ; Olivier 2006 for Namibia; Servan-Schreiber 2012 for Mauritius; Turino 2003 for Zimbabwe). Some ethnomusicologists observe more radical forms of transformation of music imported from the outside, leading to the emergence of new genres, new styles, and even new “pidgin musical language[s]” (Thomas 1981: 184, on the popular genres of New Zealand, stemming from the encounter of European and local music^{xi}) or “new idiom” (Manuel 2000, on Indo-Caribbean music). In this regard, Kofi Agawu does not hesitate to speak of “strategic creative integration” (2003: 9) to qualify “European and African expressions that have given rise to a range of popular musical formations and a vital tradition of African art music” (*ibid.*).

Some other researchers show the porosity of repertoires and styles, their mutual fertilization which can lead to the expansion of their aesthetics or to the emergence of new music. The Afropop movement which spread from ex-Zaire throughout Africa and then to South America (Stokes 2014) is a striking example. There is also the circulation of Bollywood films in Africa, whose music has recently been appropriated and transformed even in the religious field (Larkin 2002, about the *bandiri* music in Nigeria).

Thorough musicological analyses show that the appropriation and the transformation of musical materials involve a wide range of processes, including: remix (Anagnostou 2017; Guillebaud 2010; Waterman 2000), parody (Manuel 1993), imitation (Olivier 2012), quotation (Martin 2017; Martin and Gaulier 2017), juxtaposition (Djebbari 2013, 2014), assemblage (Gaulier 2010; Mallet and Samson 2010; Martin and Gaulier *ibid.*; Stoichita 2008), cross-style (Jain 1993; Manuel 1995) or fusion (Nowak 2017).

Such ethnomusicological analyses are compelling insofar as they propose a reflection on the values and social meanings of compositional processes. This is what most ethnomusicologists have been doing since the late 1980s, for whom the technical study of the music becomes a tool for understanding the music *in* or *as* culture (Stobart 2009). Appropriation is considered as paying tribute, i.e. to connect, recall one's roots. But, on the contrary, appropriation may reveal relations of domination (Feld 1988) and result to strategies of assimilation, or of opposition to the alienation of the dominant (Stuempfle 1995; Martin 2013). We also observe "logics of capturing" (Andrieu 2012), which sometimes take the form of a more or less explicit "theft" (Djebbari 2014; Paulhiac 2014; Stoichita 2010). Other works demonstrate that appropriation is a way of ensuring continuity, whatever its form: filiation *vs.* confrontation (Manuel 1995; Martin 2014; Olivier 2012), as part of an "endogenous evolution" (Manuel

2000). The new music is therefore integrated into the identity of the group, society or country, just as it can be used to manipulate a plurality of identities (Samson 2012, on the fusion between reggae and local music on the Réunion Island).

Régimes of creation

These studies pave the way to a more general reflection on musical creation regimes. Ethnomusicologists today agree that there is no such thing as creation *ex nihilo*: musicians always rely on something to compose, just as their compositions are likely to be mobilized as sources or resources for new pieces of music. The practices of composition, whether of so-called learned or popular music, are thus part of a *continuum* that ranges from interpretation to the utmost radical innovation, and the use and the transformation of existing materials. It is important to bear in mind that some societies reject any form of innovation, conceived as anything “added,” while they privilege what is already “given” (Nettl 2005: chap. 3). And even when innovation is not prohibited, it can be subject to “intense social pressure [that] restrict individuals’ development of skill sets, engagement in creative activities, and willingness to take creative risks” (Hill 2018: 2)^{xii}. Similarly, other societies may prefer “the emotional power and talent to musically affect, or engage the listener ecstatically” to the “ability to display musical innovations” (Racy 1991: 11 about modern *tarab* music from Syria). But more often than not, the realities oscillate between logics of “renewal” and “innovation” (Olivier 2014a). These logics are rooted in specific places, histories, social and political situations, economic markets, but also in individual trajectories, strategies or choices. They reveal values, beliefs, positions, tensions or accommodation that researchers are questioning today.

Many popular, even “populist” (Laclau 2008) music, i.e. music composed to correspond to the tastes of the greatest number, is thus more a matter of constant and swift turnover. This logic is very similar to programmed obsolescence, even if some music pieces have a longer lifespan and evolve into standards that are the object of successive cover versions, or even into “classics” that become part of a local history of music (Olivier 2017).

From this point of view, Colombian *champeta* music constitutes a paradigmatic case: most of the songs are composed, edited and mixed in a recording studio on the very day of their first and often single public performance (concert), before being replaced by new *champeta* music pieces at the following concerts (Paulhiac 2014, 2017). This “standard creativity” (Nowak 2017) responds to the demand of an audience eager for novelty, as well as to an economy based on the constant search for new talents that can generate significant profit for producers when the audience reached is beyond the local scale.

By contrast, the logic of innovation, which Juniper Hill qualifies as “nonconformity” (2018: 6), is based on the creation of new musical genres or styles that break away from pre-existing norms or standards, in terms of composition techniques, instrumentarium, uses, etc.^{xiii} This breaking up can generate tensions, particularly in intergenerational relations. This is the case with rap music in many countries where this genre is associated with a dissident youth seeking to emancipate themselves from their elders (Charry 2012; Van Nieuwkerk 2011; Niang 2006, 2014). In spite of this tension, rap music and musicians embody a new *local modernity*, defined as a “re-narration of the modern” (Vettorato 2009: 180), both distinct from Western modernity and in permanent dialogue with it. For Africa, Mali’s *zikiri* (Olivier 2014), Nigeria’s *bandiri* (Larkin 2002, 2008) and Ghana’s *highlife* and *hiplife* (Collins 2012,

Adu-Gilmore 2015) are good examples, not to mention Ivory Coast's *coupé-décalé* (Kohlhagen 2006; Bahi 2011) or South Africa's *kwaito* (Allen 2004; Steingo 2008, 2016).

Creation and intellectual property

Through these complex sets of appropriation, transformation and innovation processes, the question arises of the different forms of authority, in the sense of *auctoritas*, that individuals exercise over their musical productions: full or partial, explicit or tacit, lasting or circumstantial authority. European art music has long flourished on this “robust” model of authority, whose exercise lay in the figure of the composer. By contrast, so-called traditional music was supposed to remain anonymous or under the collective ownership of a community. The most recent ethnomusicological works dismiss this dualistic and even oriented conception by revealing the whole range of creative forms, whether individual, collective or shared, which involve the notions of ownership, paternity, “common good,” or even “public good,” without necessarily opposing them.

The digital revolution has elicited the globalization of intellectual property law, considered as it is to be a universal prerequisite for creation and innovation (Frith & Marshall 2004; Liebowitz 2002). At the same time, there is the questioning of the intellectual property system and its legitimacy at the global level in favor of different logics such as “low copyright” (Boldrin and Levine 2005), or the *Commons* in the wake of the free software movement (Lessig 2001; Dulong de Rosnay & Le Crosnier 2013). A new generation of ethnomusicologists is thus rethinking the notion of author, or overcoming that notion for the sake of conducting their analyses in terms of *authority regimes*: national and international legislation on intellectual property, (entrenched or recent) local uses, but also new solutions

such as the tertiarization via subscriptions or the development of live performance as part of a service economy. All the tensions, but also accommodation, right up to the innovations that the coexistence of these different regimes generates are thus explored (Guillebaud, Mallet, Stoïchita 2010; Manuel & Marshall 2006; Olivier 2014, 2017; Perullo & Eisenberg 2015; Skinner 2012; White 2008).

Early Western works on intellectual property in the 1990s, however, focused less on the status of composers or the authority they exerted over their production than on the profession of ethnomusicologist and on commercial labels publishing field recordings. In an article entitled “Ethnomusicology and Music Law”, Anthony Seeger (1992) addressed the entire discipline and proposed adding “a course on entertainment law to our ethnomusicology curricula” (1992: 345). He argued that “the terms through which we will be able to experience and communicate about South Indian, Kaluli, and Suya music are probably going to be established by the concepts of music of the industrialized countries” (*ibid.*). His experience of co-producing an album of Suya music from Brazil led him to question the adequacy between the copyright system to which music is subjected once it is commercialized, and the sound materials recorded by ethnomusicologists. Seeger thus echoes Steven Feld in denouncing “the potential for exploitation” (*ibid.*: 354) of world music that the American popular music industry appropriates without any financial counterpart, and calls for “a new awareness of the issues of musical ownership and the ethics of inter-cultural music use” (*ibid.*: 357).

The issue of the exploitation of so-called traditional music by the globalized music industry reappeared in 1996 in issue 28 of the *Yearbook for Traditional Music* in articles by Steven Feld and Hugo Zemp. Feld and Zemp analysed specific cases and criticize the notion of “public domain” assigned to traditional music by French and American copyright laws, which

allows any composer to appropriate traditional music without paying royalties. Feld chose to follow the peregrinations of the Pygmy lullaby “Hindewhu” recorded by Simha Arom and Geneviève Dournon-Taurelle and published in 1966 in their LP *The Music of Ba-Benzélé Pygmies* in the UNESCO collection at Bärenreiter Musicaphon. “Hindewhu” was later covered by no less than Herbie Hancock, Leon Thomas, Jimmy Rowles, John Hassel, Brian Eno, Zap Mama, Francis Bebey, Deep Forest and Madonna, without the original music piece ever being credited.^{xiv} In his article, Zemp described his own experience as an ethnomusicologist in the “record business” and his setbacks with several Western musicians who refused to recognize any intellectual property rights to the music he had recorded. Such music was thus deemed as mere compositional resources that could be openhandedly manipulated.

Feld, Zemp, Seeger and a few other ethnomusicologists push the debate around intellectual property to ethics and even moral issues, by focusing on the mechanisms of economic domination of the globalized music industry vis-à-vis the “largely non-profit ethnomusicological records” (Feld 1996: 27). This orientation was upheld by powerful non-governmental organizations, as well as by UNESCO and WIPO, and led the United Nations to sign the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2007. One of the components of this declaration is precisely devoted to the rights of so-called “traditional” knowledge, understood as a collective good transmitted from generation to the next, as opposed to the property of individuals and creative genius. The drawback linked to this statement is that it reifies a certain cultural determinism that many ethnomusicologists have been criticizing since the 1980s. This statement can also give rise to many ambiguities and misappropriations. This is notably the case of the Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa analyzed by

Veit Erlmann (2017), which, in the name of being the true custodian of African customs, cultures and traditions, holds shares in a vast empire of commercial companies.

Other recent ethnomusicological works, on the other hand, show that access to culture in the Southern countries lies outside the parameters set by the intellectual property system and fit into the new economies of globalization (Barendregt and Van Zanten 2002; Eckstrein and Schwarz 2014; Frith and Marshall 2004; Lemos 2008; Manuel 2017; Mattelart 2011; Olivier 2017; Soumaré 2008). These works stand outside any moral injunction making the intellectual property system a necessary framework for the development of artistic creativity. Thanks to “decentering,” they are able to historicize successive national legislations, to observe how different States have appropriated them and invented new rules corresponding to their own political conceptions of culture. It then becomes possible to examine the dialectical movement between legal and social categories, i.e. between the legal status of authorship and what is the “social authorship” (Toynbee 2008), within this theoretical framework. We can also question the local imaginaries linked how authority is exercised, and finally consider the value given to the music created, depending on whether it is recorded or performed during a social event. These studies also propose to overcome the generally accepted oppositions between legality and illegality, original and pirating. They take into account situations of “porous legality” (Liang 2005) or even “economy of theft” (Djebbari 2014; Stoïchita 2010) which favor the circulation and alteration of music. Finally, these works show that, in situations of “porous legality” or “economy of theft”, music is attributed to individuals whose status as authors is thought to be temporary (i.e. alienable). By taking into account parameters that are not usually recognized (local distribution of cultural products; access to streaming platforms; cost of the Internet, etc.), ethnomusicologists are able to reassess the notion of piracy in the light of the

different political, social, economic and technological contexts (see for example Tcheuyap 2016 for Cameroon).

More generally, ethnomusicologists propose to think afresh about the relations between law and culture. It is the project of an “anthropology in law” proposed by Erlmann (2017, forthcoming), while Olivier (2015, 2017) invites to rethink the intellectual property system as a *situated regime of authority*, even though it has been a universal norm for more than a century. According to these two researchers, such a decentering would make it possible to apprehend the other regimes of authority differently than as alternative, even interstitial or “underground” systems (Mattelart *op. cit.*). This decentering would thus contribute to renew the current debate on the political, economic, technological and aesthetic stakes of intellectual property and *régimes* of creation.

Digital revolution and new *loci* for the creative process

Ethnomusicology has long made music recording one of its most solid foundations. It is certainly no coincidence that the birth of the discipline in Europe at the very end of the 19th century closely followed the invention of the phonograph by Charles Cros and Thomas Edison in 1877. One of the specific characteristics of ethnomusicology from its inception is to apprehend all music production, whether written or oral music, in its performative dimension, which guarantees its social anchoring. But music is an immaterial form that disappears as it deploys itself through time. It needs to be recorded in order to become identically reproducible and acquire true autonomy. This is a necessary condition for its constitution as an scientific study object.^{xv} Recording is therefore an essential preliminary step in the constitution of a corpus. It has given rise to numerous methodological works (List 1972;

Merriam 1964; Nettl 1964; Porter 1974; Seeger 1986; During 1988) and to antagonistic positions taken by ethnomusicologists who favour “in situ” recordings and ethnomusicologists who favour “ex situ” recordings. But whatever these stances may be, the music recording is always a construction of the researcher and constitutes the first moment of ethnomusicological analysis.

Since the first half of the 20th century, many national radio stations have been recording so-called traditional or folk music to be broadcast on their airwaves. This is the case, for example, of West African music during French colonization and after the Independences (Counsel 2003). This music was fixed by recording, and thus contributed to the blossoming of a national heritage. But recording transformed it just as much, and even created it (Andrieu 2009; Djebbari 2013). Recordings intended for a local audience increased in number over time, as technologies for producing and reproducing music developed in the Southern countries (Graham 1988; Manuel 1993; Ochoa Gautier 2014; Waterman 1990). Ethnomusicologists have been late in taking an interest in such music, as if being recorded and entering a cultural industry and media regime had caused this music to lose its “authenticity” (Da Lage 2009).

Ethnomusicology has also long viewed recording as a process of musical fixation with no creative potential. It was not until the very end of the 20th century and Louise Meintjes’ work that ethnomusicology entered the recording studio and apprehended what was happening there in terms of musical creation. Meintjes’ article on “Paul Simon’s Graceland, South Africa, and the Mediation of Musical Meaning” published in 1990 in *Ethnomusicology*, opened up a new field of research that remains largely unexplored,^{xvi} as Eliot Bates shows in the “Agency and Contemporary Recording Production”. It must be said that the creative

practices of the recording studio have not given rise to a great deal of work in the field of Popular Music Studies either, which led Simon Frith and Simon Zagorski-Thomas to define these recording studio practices as a “new academic field” in their book *The Art of Record Production* (2012).

In the wake of the digital revolution, and even more so since cheap and mobile digital audio technology has become accessible locally, DAW home studios are flourishing, in both the North and the South, to form today’s “nerve centre of the creative process” (Meintjes 2012: 274). In many parts of the world, one can observe a reversal of the dialectic between creation and performance. Whereas musicians used to compose and test their new songs with their audiences before recording the most popular ones in the studio, today they go directly to the many home studios at their disposal to compose and record music. The audience thus accesses the new songs through audio recordings and video clips *via* social networks, streaming platforms, web radio or (cable) television channels. The creation process largely takes place in the field of recorded music, while during social performances, the audience often recognizes the music as it was recorded in the studio (Olivier 2017; Olivier & Pras, forthcoming).^{xvii}

It must be acknowledged that digital technology has generated a contradictory paradigm between the unlimited possibilities of sound transformations through digital signal processing and the homogenization of digital music around the world. Some ethnomusicologists fear that “standard creativity” may prevail. By contrast, some other ethnomusicologists think of the studio as a place of experimentation, or even a “sound laboratory” (Ribac 2007), by means of recording, immediate re-playing, technological tools, or the fusion of genres that it allows.

Considering the recording studio as a new place for musical creation has important consequences for ethnomusicology in any case. In terms of the practice of the discipline, and more particularly field investigation, the studio redefines the roles and status of the various protagonists of musical creation. The studio is giving rise to a new figure and a new profession, whose name varies from place to place: “arranger,” “sound engineer,” “producer” or “designer” (Meintjes 2003; Bates 2012; Olivier & Pras forthcoming). Ethnomusicology has thus begun to take an interest in this new figure: his/her career path, his/her acquisition of digital audio knowledge, his/her work in interaction with musicians (singer and/or instrumentalists) during all stages of production, the tools and knowledge he/she mobilizes and which offer him/her new creative possibilities. The studio also changes the organology, since it can be considered “as a musical instrument” (Moorefield 2005). The ethnomusicological analysis thus focuses on the combination of virtual and live instruments, as Paul Greene’s did in his ethnography of Nepali pop music (2001, 2003, 2006) or Eliot Bates in the Istanbul studios (2016).

Digital technology and studio production have effects on creative processes, the most emblematic of which is sampling (Rose 1994; Schloss 2004). The studio also makes it possible to think “production as performance” anew (Stuhl 2014), inasmuch as it transforms the different stages of the production process: composing, editing, mixing and mastering (Olivier & Pras *ibid.*). Finally, the studio extends the music making to that of sound by integrating the analysis of digital audio effects (dynamic compression, reverberation, auto-tune, etc.) used by the sound engineers. Some of these digital audio effects are dictated by fashionable musical aesthetics, economic constraints or equipment limitations, while others set new technological standards. The arrangement and settings of these effects can be understood as “arts of doing” (de Certeau 1980), where the distinction between aesthetics,

musical genres, but also studios/sound engineers, or even countries, is subtly played out in the digital age (Neuenfeldt 2005). But the analysis of these digital audio effects also leads to address the question of the *sound signature*, i.e. how the sound produced by these effects, as an aesthetic quality of music, participates in the construction of cultural, religious, gendered or even generational identities (Bates 2016, 2019; Feld 2012; Olivier 2019; Puig 2017).

In terms of disciplinary boundaries, understanding musical creation in the recording studio requires the implementation of a new interdisciplinary approach between ethnomusicology and sound engineering research, two disciplines that are not accustomed to collaborating. Some works already integrate these two disciplines (Bates 2016, 2019; Barnat 2012, 2015, Olivier & Pras forthcoming). But what is at stake is to untie established academic knots in order to open a new field of research that can apprehend a work as a point of articulation between musical composition and sound composition. Sound engineering provides tools for analyzing sound and its technical manipulations; ethnomusicology makes it possible to test and even recalibrate these globalized tools from the South. The challenge is therefore to revise the scientific practices of these two disciplines by opening them up to each other, so as to set up a sustainable conceptual and methodological framework for the study of the creation of digital recorded music.

Eventually, moving the object of study from performed music to recorded music could lead to an epistemological turning-point in ethnomusicology. First of all, the music recording is no longer a mere tool used by the researcher to fix the music in order to constitute it as a scientific object. The music recording becomes the very object of the ethnography, as a local practice of musical creation and performance. This is a major change in the way the ethnomusicologist conceives his or her position vis-à-vis his or her object of study. Secondly,

while globalization had already opened ethnomusicology to Popular Music Studies, the digital revolution and the survey in DAW home studios are calling for a new interdisciplinarity extended to Science and Technology Studies (Greene & Porcello 2005; Hjorth & *al.* 2017) and to “remapped” Sound Studies (Steingo & Sykes 2019)^{xviii}. By integrating digital audio technologies and sound production into its analysis, ethnomusicology is renewing its objects, tools and methods. The musical creation and its policies lie at the heart of this epistemological turning-point and I have no doubt that it will give rise to a great deal of ethnomusicological work in the years to come.

Conclusion

Throughout this text, we have established that the ethnomusicology of creative process has been constructed and developed within the major scientific paradigms and currents of thought that have shaped the last 150 years. From the origins of music to transcultural creations, from the “instinct of variation” to composition on the spot, from collective folklore to copyright laws, from the oral tradition heritage to digital audio production: the question of creative process extends throughout the history of ethnomusicology and reflects the vitality of reflection and debate within the discipline. New fields of investigation thus continue to emerge, in connection with current social debates, such as musical creativity as “educational theme in the field of comparative and international education” (Burnard 2012) or critical reflection on the “Western lens” used to analyze the creative process (Lewis 2013: [13]).

From my point of view, the contribution of ethnomusicology to Creative Process Studies is twofold. First, by means of an in-depth analysis of creative processes, ethnomusicology provides access to the representations and underlying values to which newly composed music

refers within a society at a given time of its history. Ethnomusicology enables the creative process to be placed within the social, economic and political logics and imaginaries in which it participates and which it helps to transform, produce or reify at the same time. This is what Georges Lewis explains regarding the question of improvisation which, in his view, allows us to “address issues such as ethics, social identity, order and negotiation, computational creativity, telematics and the virtual, time, consciousness and complexity, indeterminacy and agency, migration and mobility, representation, cognition and enactment, economic development, and the remarkable observation that improvisation can serve as a means of conceiving the histories of people and nations” (2013 : [3]).

To this must be added the comparative dimension of ethnomusicology, which allows for a solid cross-cultural analysis of the creative process leading to an increase of generalization. This is the case of Juniper Hill’s recent work which, on the basis of a survey carried out among a hundred or so musicians in Helsinki, Cape Town and Los Angeles, managed to identify six “components that together comprise a cross-cultural experiential model of music creativity” (2018 : 3) : “generativity, agency, interaction, nonconformity, recycling, and flow” (*ibid.* : 9), specifying that certain societies attach more or less value to one or other of these components. Ethnomusicology thus recognizes the creative process as a universal. The ability to be creative is what participates to our common humanity.

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ⁱ The North and South categories, forged in 1980 by the Brandt Commission at the request of the World Bank, substitute those of Developed and Developing Countries. Although these categories are not entirely satisfactory, I will endorse them here as a framework for analysis, favouring “a relational perspective (the South takes its meaning from the North and vice versa)” (Jacquot 2007). In the meantime, I completely agree with Steingo and Sykes’s critical reflection on these categories (2019: 1-5).

ⁱⁱⁱ For a critical analysis of the notion of cultural heritage, see in particular Fabian 1983; Hartog 2003; Nora 1984.

^{iv} Let us recall that Brăiloiu sets up the synoptic transcription (1973 [1931]), inspired by the work of the linguists of the Prague School. Many ethnomusicologists, especially in the French-speaking world from the 1950s until the 1990s, used the synoptic transcription.

^v Of whom Nettle (2005 [1983]: 304-305) proposes the following list: Meyer 1967; Szabolcsi 1965; Bukofzer 1947; Blacking 1977; Bose 1966; Sachs 1962; Merriam 1964; Wachsmann 1958, 1971.

^{vii} See in particular Averill 1997; Erlmann 1993; Guilbault 1993; Lipsitz 1994; Manuel 2000; Myers 1998; Servan-Schreiber 2010; Ramnarine 1996, 2007; Stokes 1992, 2004.

^{viii} What Roger Moseley calls “entextualisation”, in relation to eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century European music, to translate the process by which a discourse or practice becomes a text (2013).

^{ix} Martin Stokes (2014) looks back at two key moments in the history of globalized relations, one that he calls the “First Colonial Encounter” and the second that he names “World Music”. He aims at showing how these two moments led to the simultaneous appropriation and transformation of the music and societies involved. But if the colonial period, which Stokes considers started with the Spanish imperial project around the conquest of Manila in 1570, saw the development of numerous musical exchanges, it was not until the end of the twentieth century and the advent of world music that these transcultural encounters were fully legitimized on a political level.

^x To have insights into hip hop in Africa, see Charry ed. 2012, Kibona Clark & Mwanzia Koster, dir. 2014. In Senegal (Moulard-Kouka 2008; Niang 2009, 2010, 2014), Gabon (Aterianus 2017), Kenya (Eisenberg 2012), Lebanon (Puig 2012, 2107), Iran (Nooshin 2011), New Zealand (Zemka-White 2002; Mitchell 1996; Pearson 2004).

^{xi} See also Martin 1999, 2013 and Martin & Gaulier 2017 on the music of the Coloured people of Cape Town; Olivier 2006 on the new musical language of the Nama flute orchestras (Namibia) adopted at the end of the 19th century, in contact with European music played on the concertina (a kind of small accordion).

^{xii} In her book *Becoming Creative. Insights from Musicians in a Diverse World*, Juniper Hill provides a detailed analysis of “mechanisms for enforcing creative conformity to sociocultural norms” (2018: 12).

^{xiii} Hill takes on the notion of “transformative creativity” forged by Margaret Boden (2004) “which by going beyond existing systems allows us to think new ideas that were previously impossible to conceive” (Hill 2018: 7).

^{xiv} To tell the truth, Arom and Dournon-Taurelle do not discuss the status of the Pygmy musicians with whom they recorded this lullaby, nor do they provide any information on the ownership (even collective) of this song in the record booklet. But this was the case for most of the authors of records of “oral tradition” music published throughout the 20th century (Da Lage 2009; Cottrell & Mandelson 2010).

^{xv} The discipline was thus established with the sound archives of Berlin and Vienna, set up at the very beginning of the 20th century (see Nattiez 2004).

^{xvi} Some ethnomusicological works have followed those of Louise Meintjes, but they are still rare: see notably Barnat (2015, 2015, 2018); Barney (2007); Bates (2010, 2012, 2016, 2019); Crowdy (2007); Fairley and Boudreault-Fournier (2012); Greene (2001, 2003, 2006, 2014) ; Moehn (2005, 2012); Neuenfeldt (2005, 2007) Olivier (2014); Olivier & Pras (on press); Paulhiac (2017); Nowak (2016); Ottosson (2007); Scales (2012); Stern (2016); Thomson & Lashua (2014).

^{xvii} Not to mention the musicians who use lip-sync during performances (Olivier 2017; Paulhiac 2017).

^{xviii} Steingo & Sykes (2019) rightly criticize the Western lens of Sound Studies.