

## “Ma’am! You’re Being Randomly Checked”: A Music Education Terrorized

Nasim Niknafs

University of Toronto, Canada

*In this article, I examine a situation in the academic life of minority faculty members who suffer from systemic inequity in their academic lives, and more specifically, in their music education. The article engages with Bhabha’s concept of “enunciation” ([1994] 2004), where difference that has been systemically used against such bodies in the official discourse of higher education can become a source of rupture and change in the gaze. The discussion challenges tenure profiles that are compared to the standard form, weighted against the normative discourse, and the outcomes that represent the only factors considered in academic professional lives. The article draws attention to the need for greater equity and more nuanced consideration in the lives of othered faculty members regardless of age, race, gender, ethnicity, ability, religion. Further, I argue that music education rhetoric is not innocent from this discourse and can at times perpetuate such inequitable treatment.*

Keywords: *music education, higher education, academia, enunciation, equity, autoethnography, tenure, Bhabha, Iran*

*When I first came here I wanted the world to look at me  
and now I might prefer to be the eye instead.  
Eimear McBride 2016, 279*

I am a nationally- and religiously-profiled music educator and assistant professor. I identify myself as Iranian, and as a secular, non-white, female musician in higher education. I am a mother, a sister, a daughter, a partner, a colleague, a friend, a fellow citizen; I am a *human being*. I feel saddened, depressed, enraged, and betrayed yet again. I want to cry and scream for the brutalities and emotional violence the likes of me go through on a day-to-day basis. Who are the likes of me? Iranians, Sudanese, Somalians, Syrians, Yemenites, Iraqis, Libyans, and anyone who has ever been negatively labelled as Muslim, targeted as Terrorist,

considered as Dangerous to National Security and the Global Order. I write this in response to the U.S. Presidential Executive order of Friday, January 27, 2017 (CNN 2017), which issued a travel ban<sup>1</sup> on the formerly seven and now six nations listed above. Unfortunately, this did not come as a surprise, considering President George W. Bush's *War on Terror* (Schmidt and Shanker 2005) in the aftermath of 9/11 and his well-known "Axis of Evil" rhetoric. I am used to, though not numb to, going through rigorous screenings and constant surveillance, or as it is now known, *extreme vetting* (Siddiqui 2017) when crossing borders and applying for visas. I am tired of being relentlessly questioned about my place of origin, investigated as *only* an Iranian, and frowned upon as a *legitimate* music educator.

What is at stake is not one executive order banning entry to *some* Muslim majority countries, but a relentless, deleterious, and insincere "look" (Bhabha [1994] 2004) at invisible yet very visible subjects presumed to be *terrorists*. In this article, I challenge some hidden and at times "absent present" (Morrison 1992) academic injustices facing graduate students, pre-tenured junior faculty, and associate professors whose place of origin arbitrarily destines them to be *othered*, considered to be lesser than their colleagues who are privileged by citizenship of countries characterized as *one-of-us*. Adopting *testimonio* (Beverley 2008) or *emergency narrative* (Jara in Beverley 2008) as a mode of inquiry, intertwined with and woven into Bhabha's ([1994] 2004) concept of *enunciation*, I present a situation in the academic life of "object[s] of the gaze" (67) like myself who suffer from systemic inequity in their academic lives and misperceptions about their music education.

### *Mode of Inquiry*

Throughout this article I deliberately present fragmented and non-chronological stories and vignettes of my academic life, rather than full-bodied plots with meaningful exposition, well thought-out actions, and satisfying resolutions. For there are no certitudes in my stories, and to better reflect the intensity of the events I opt for a more raw representation of my life's occurrences, as "*testimonio* can never create the illusion—fundamental to formalist methods of textual analysis—of the text as autonomous, set against and above the practical domain of everyday life and struggle" (Beverley 2008, 573, orig. italics).

I also intentionally avoid any thematic analysis of my stories and over-theorization of my vignettes to open up conversation rather than foreclose the discussion.

My purpose in this essay is for the reader to “care and empathize” rather than “abstract and control” (Ellis and Bochner 2006, 431); however, by juxtaposing my narrative fragments and “collapsing them, into one another without abandoning any of the frames available for thinking and being in the world” (Gannon in Daskalaki, Butler, and Petrovic 2016, 187), I want to encourage the reader to see beyond these vignettes to be able to question the deep-seated institutional injustices toward bodies such as mine—“non-linear, embodied practices involved in identity transformations in-between space-time” (Daskalaki, Butler, and Petrovic 2016, 185). I intend to provide a more practical and a theorized connection between macro and micro power structures and institutionalized differences, to critically suggest changes in current academic discourses that at times represent malpraxis. To this end, I adopt Learmonth and Humphreys’ (2011) recommendation to seek a more balanced approach toward my stories, bringing and engaging with both evocative (Ellis and Bochner 2006) and analytic autoethnography (Anderson 2006).

### *Bhabha’s Enunciation*

Bhabha’s ([1994] 2004) seminal work, *The Location of Culture*, along with his influential counterparts Said ([1978] 2003) and Spivak ([1988] 1993)—the three pillars of postcolonial theory and literary engagement—proposed a novel way of thinking about cultural diversity and cultural difference. Said’s ([1978] 2003) pivotal project of *Orientalism* drew our attention to the ways in which the West packages, studies, and observes what it calls the *Orient* through its own rational lens rather than through what the Orient perceive themselves to be, and Spivak’s ([1988] 1993) crucial essay, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” argued that the benevolent activism of Western intellectuals *for the subaltern* not only does not better their situation but indeed perpetuates the very oppression that many Western intellectuals claim to be against. Bhabha ([1994] 2004) pioneered a mode of thinking that articulates how cultural diversity is treated as a mere object that can be empirically observed, compared, ethnographed, mapped out, and *dominated* as a fixed and unchangeable concept, whereas cultural difference is itself an authoritative utterance: “the process of *enunciation* of culture as ‘knowledgeable,’ authoritative, adequate to the construction of systems of cultural identification” (50, orig. italics). In other words, cultural difference is not a pre-given entity privy to subjugation and objective analysis. It rather negates “the binary division of past and present, tradition and modernity, at the level of cultural representation and its authoritative

address” (51). There is no such thing as a *certain* culture. All there is, is the *uncertain*, “the indeterminate space of the subject(s) of enunciation” (55).

There emerges the challenge to see what is invisible, the look that cannot “see me,” a certain problem of the object of the gaze that constitutes a problematic referent for the language of the self ... the phrase of identity cannot be spoken, except by putting the eye/I in the impossible position of enunciation. To *see* a missing person, or to *look* at invisibleness, is to emphasize the subject’s *transitive* demand for a direct object of self-reflection, a point of presence that would maintain its privileged enunciatory position *qua subject*. To see a *missing person* is to *transgress* that demand: the “I” in the position of mastery, at *that same time*, the place of its absence, its *re*-presentation. We witness the alienation of the eye through the sound of the signifier as the scopic desire (to look/to be looked at) emerges. (Bhabha [1994] 2004, 67, orig. italics)

While people and scholars like me go through daily struggles to be *seen* and to have their works *recognized*, we are at the periphery, our doubly-charged efforts overlooked. Instead, we are *looked at* and very *visible* in the sense that we are fundamentally stigmatized, denounced, vilified.

### “My Sweet Little Terrorist Song”<sup>2</sup>

*I’m detained  
Captured, “in-framed”  
I’m detained  
And I destroy  
I deny  
I’m on a decline  
This is just about how I’m defined.  
And I’m a walking weapon  
Don’t touch me  
Cus I just might blow.*

*Legally I’m nobody, when I cross the border  
I’m somebody mean  
My international rights are in some politician’s thoughts  
I’m just a dream  
As I turn to this microphone and scream.<sup>3</sup>*

Let me provide some detail about what it means to be an Iranian, and what some of our hopes and dreams are. I, however, caution the reader that what follows is not to be taken as a blanket statement and claim for *all* Iranian youth, and cannot

Niknafs, Nasim. 2017. “Ma’am! You’re being randomly checked”: A music education terrorized. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education* 16 (3): 48–77. doi:10.22176/act16.1.48

be generalized into the lives of all Iranians. I am merely speaking from my own point of view. Generally, the first thing that Iranian youth turning 18 aim for is to apply for our passports and driver's licenses. What is the common denominator? Freedom of movement, at least to some extent, because for so long, our public and private behaviours, and our daily affairs and movements, were scrutinized by our own government.

- Where are you going?
- Why are you going?
- What are you doing there?
- How?
- With whom?
- When would you be coming back?

Amusingly enough, these are the same questions that continue to be asked of us crossing the borders. It is ironic that there is no difference between the ways in which Iranians are treated in Iran by the local authorities and how most other governments treat them outside of Iran. It seems that we keep our prison cells with us wherever we go.

A driver's license and a passport grant us at once new adventures and ease of movement. The driver's license provides autonomy to not rely on the weak public transportation infrastructure, especially in the capital city, Tehran. It also brings opportunities for wandering around the city or maybe going out of the city *far from the madding crowd*<sup>4</sup> even for a little while—an idiosyncratic pastime for a lot of Iranian youth. But holding a passport has different meanings for males and females in the country. Acquiring a passport as a female Iranian means that one has gained the permission of her *male* guardian. A male custodian has *allowed* her to leave the country, and has *kindly* offered his permission: very similar to traveling to most countries as an Iranian where one needs to apply for the permission of that country, an arduous and labyrinthine process that does not always result in a positive outcome.<sup>5</sup> Obtaining a passport for Iranian men, however, means that one has (1) finished the eighteen to twenty-four months of compulsory military conscription, or (2) has been exempted from it due to his own or his father's illness or lack of a male guardian in the household, or (3) has deposited a large sum to the *sazman-e nezam vazifeh* (The Military Service Organization) to postpone the military service until after finishing their studies or travels abroad. No Iranian man is permitted to leave the country with a valid passport if he has not met these criteria.

To conclude, the act of holding a passport for the first time has a “symbolic consciousness” for Iranian citizens. It grants them a certain agency, a sense of semi-control, an awareness of conquering the first impediment:

The bilateral space of the symbolic consciousness ... massively privileges *resemblance*, constructs an *analogical* relation between signifier and signified that ignores the question of form, and creates a vertical dimension within the sign. In this scheme the signifier is always predetermined by the signified—that conceptual or real space that is placed prior to, and outside of, the act of signification. (Barthes in Bhabha [1994] 2004, 69)

The passport is the Iranian’s key to the first door of freedom of movement. When we were and are under the constant gaze of our government or, better yet, applying the authority’s surveillance apparatus through self-censorship of our docile bodies (Foucault [1977] 1995), acquiring a passport means we can, now, use this instrument to circumvent that constant gaze, and to come out of our own censorships. Little do we know that the very instrument called *pass-port* is *re-imagined* as *the* instrument of surveillance and scrutiny beyond the borders: a red flag, a warning, a kind of terror, a *where-the-hell-where-did-you-come-from* denotation. The passport becomes a *pass* that *we* are granting to the international authorities to survey us, to study us, to extremely vet us, reminding us that we are forever contained.

*At the International airports, I always hold my passport upside-down so that I don’t get **the look**. Once at the passport check where the passports are electronically observed, I am always addressed by a security officer: “Ma’am! You are being randomly checked.” You tell me, which part of this process was random? How was it not profiling?*

*The routine:*

- *Your bags fully opened and scrutinized*
- *You definitely get the look. Now, from everyone*
- *You are being physically and electronically searched in a glass box observable by everyone; feeling naked, exposed, and humiliated*
- *You are about to miss your flight*
- *Dishevelled and torn apart you take your seat with heart bumping like a Morse code*

## Music Education Terrorized

*One day I learnt  
 a secret art,  
 Invisible-Ness, it was called.  
 I think it worked  
 as even now you look  
 but never see me...  
 Only my eyes will remain to watch and to haunt,  
 and to turn your dreams  
 to chaos.  
 M. Jin in Bhabha (1994) 2004, 65*

I am the child of war (Iran-Iraq war, 1980-1988). Our generation has experienced missing our classmates who went off to war; we have seen our homes shattered to pieces by bombardments; we have gone through leaving our hometowns to stay away from bombings; we have also gained our education via National Television rather than going to schools; we have shared desks, notebooks, pencils, and pens. We have also experienced having new classmates in the middle of the year; we have experienced new games and songs from different parts of Iran; we have experienced being children regardless.

Our music education also went through comparable bittersweet moments. At times it was interrupted and without a structured framework, but it was mostly holistic through intimate family gatherings, active participation at making music, singing and dancing, and later participating at official and unofficial concerts and parties. It was certainly a *musical* music education. Nonetheless, we also had formal musical education, not through a public system, but via private studios with dedicated teachers who were willing to share their spaces for *private-public* performances, or later on through instrument lessons at music institutes and cultural centers. That is how I became a music teacher—by being active in the field, and by trial and error. I was holistically socialized (Isbell 2008, Berger and Luckmann 1991) into music education rather than following the profession atomistically (Shippers 2010).

During my university years in Iran, we were active in creating conscious art through interdisciplinary routes involving visual arts, theater, film, and poetry readings. We taught music through teach-ins and small scale venues to people of all walks of life who wanted to be somehow involved with music. But none of these attempts happened at a school setting, a situation I had not considered to devalue

my music teaching until I left Iran for the first time. I have never been a public school music teacher, as we did not have music as a subject in the Iranian school system; hence the assumed lack of legitimacy as a music teacher outside of Iran. Though I tried to compensate for this supposed lack once in the United States while completing my graduate studies—by interning and teaching at community music schools, and schools with high numbers of refugee and immigrant students, and even teaching at a juvenile detention center—none of these teaching situations “counted” for being an *authentic* music teacher. *I had to have at least three years of public school teaching to be considered a true music teacher (at least in the United States).*<sup>6</sup>

This situation was and is an ongoing personal battle that kept me away from multiple job opportunities outside of the Iranian border and reduced my negotiating opportunities (Bradley et al. 2017). Music education often seems to be considered a blanket one-size-fits-all phenomenon rather than an intimate, personalized yet collective experience. Once again my place of origin—and symbolically, my passport—brought disenfranchisement and detriment. I was the *non-expert* in the field. I knew nothing. I needed to be filled in. I was shattered.

*I could not visit my family for six years when I was completing my graduate studies in the United States. As an Iranian student, I only had one single-entry visa to the States to study. I was able to leave but had no guarantee of return. My family instead sacrificed their time, energy, and resources for my education. There has not been a US embassy in Iran since the US Embassy Hostage Crisis in 1979, so my family had to travel to neighboring countries such as Turkey or the United Arab Emirates to acquire US visas whenever they could visit me. During my music teaching identity crisis I did not have the support of my family and Iranian friends around me to assure me that I was indeed a music teacher—that I belonged to the music education community. I had to deal with it alone.*

It is disheartening that Said’s ([1978] 2003) seminal work, *Orientalism*, still rings true to this day and may be the only defining framework for situations like mine:

The Oriental is depicted as something one judges (as in a court of law), something one studies and depicts (as in a curriculum), something one illustrates (as in a zoological manual). The point is that in each of these cases the Oriental is *contained* and *represented* by dominating frameworks. (40, orig. italics)

I add here that as music educators we are not innocent from *putting* music of *other* cultures into our curriculum as additives rather than integral parts of our music

Niknafs, Nasim. 2017. “Ma’am! You’re being randomly checked”: A music education terrorized. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education* 16 (3): 48–77. doi:10.22176/act16.1.48



teaching.<sup>7</sup> As such, my music education was defined and *represented* by the dominating structure. That was why my music education, that included both learning and teaching, was not considered to be music education after all; it was different, it was dismissed, it was stereotyped:

The stereotype is not a simplification because it is a false representation of a given reality. It is a simplification because it is an arrested, fixated form of representation that, in denying the play of difference (which the negation through the Other permits), constitutes a problem for *representation* of the subject in significations of psychic and social relations. (Bhabha, [1994] 2004, 107)

My music teaching identity was thence terrorized; I was not who I thought I was. I was a lesser music teacher. I was “marked,” as “being unmarked (and therefore ‘normal’ and ‘ordinary’) is both constitutive of, and an effect of, structural advantage and power, and the cultural authority that the power brings” (Mackey 2002, 21).

*During my graduate studies in the United States, I could only go to local and US conferences in music education. I was not able to leave the country. The International Society for Music Education (ISME) also did not grant me a Skype presentation in 2010. I had to be at the conference physically. So, my only exposure to music education outside of the States was through reading journal articles, international guest lecturers in our institution, and international presenters at the US conferences. I had no idea of the outside world until I left the US, where music education became musical again.*

Gradually, I began to realize that this marking, this cause for fear that I apparently projected, this un-ordinariness was an asset to me. I took it as my badge of honour. If I do not reside and belong to the “structural advantage and power, and the cultural authority that power brings,” then I have the luxury, and finally the *freedom of movement* to pass beyond this hierarchy, and to change the narrative. Instead of being terrorized, I became the terror itself. I then felt obliged not to feel ignored, and not to ignore. I decided to be bothered, disturbed, and to disrupt and unsettle. I decided to feel and enunciate my cultural difference (Bhabha [1994] 2004). Instead of “mimicking” the Global North higher education through the state of “almost the same but not quite” (122), I created a space “where the observer becomes the observed and ‘partial’ representation rearticulates the whole notion of *identity* and alienates it from essence” (127, orig. italics).

*I became the eye* (Bhabha [1994] 2004).

After searching for academic opportunities that fit my criteria and background for almost two years during my graduate studies, and gradually losing hope of any positions other than the standardized version of music education, I finally came across a position announcement that excited me. It was a fresh and welcoming announcement, encouragingly shattering the image I had about music education in academia.

*This is an excerpt of the position description:*

We are looking for a music educator with a professional background and professional interest in cultural and global studies in music education. The successful candidate will complement the existing expertise of our music education faculty and have a demonstrated focus on traditional and emerging contexts of teaching and learning in school and community. Possible areas of interest include global musics, technology in music education, differentiated instruction, inclusiveness oriented instruction or music creation. In addition to demonstrated excellence in teaching and musicianship, the candidate must show evidence of scholarly and professional publication and dissemination of research appropriate to the field of music education. The successful candidate will demonstrate a strong professional dimension with the ability to facilitate current and future connections between our students and schools and to community music teaching and learning. Responsibilities and expectations will include teaching undergraduate and graduate courses, supervising graduate students, actively pursuing a program of research and publication, and contributing to university and professional committees and associations. (The College Music Society 2017)

*A cursory discourse analysis of this excerpt would show that somewhere on the planet earth there were scholars who sought my “non-expert,” “non-standard” music teaching. My teaching experience was valued; it was not ignored, to the extent that my advisors also encouraged me to apply. With hope for this exhilarating position but no expectation of landing the position, I applied.*

## **Horror Show Continues: Life of an Academic Other**

*The location on which we fail to cast our gaze  
is that location from which we dominate.  
Dei 2000, 31*

According to the Institute of International Education, “In 2015-16, more than 12,000 Iranians studied in the United States, with a majority of them—almost 78 percent—in graduate programs ... Iraq sent the next-largest cohort—1,901” (Wilhelm 2017). What these statistics show is that my academic story is only a fragment

of what is occurring in the life of academic others. My story is not unique, nor is it only targeted at Iranians. The crucial point about my academic situation is its damaging metastatic abilities. I would like to encourage the reader to treat this story only as a point of departure, a rupture, a disturbance to think more deeply about how a universal understanding of higher education can damage the academic others and throw them into the margin.

No human being wants to leave her homeland, place of birth, family and friends. But when the decision is made regardless of choice or force, one needs to look more deeply and examine more profoundly the reasons for such decisions.

The relocation of the home and the world—the unhomeliness—that is the condition of extra-territorial and cross-cultural initiations. To be unhomed is not to be homeless, nor can the “unhomely” be easily accommodated in that familiar division of social life into private and public spheres. The unhomely moment creeps up on you stealthily as your own shadow and suddenly you find yourself ... taking the measure of your dwelling in a state of “incredulous terror.” (Bhabha [1994] 2004, 13)

What graduate students and scholar-others like myself go through is not only the identity terror they face daily in their academic lives but also the fear of loss and access to homeland, and the fear of the *image* of their homeland projected in venomous ways where they live and work, not to mention the consequent policies and real effects of following such images.

When language around “taking our country back” and “making America great again” is coupled with proposals to treat EU migrants like bargaining chips or to ban refugees on the ground of religion, it fosters deep hatred, and mistrust and sends a strong message that some people are entitled to human rights and others aren't... Have we forgotten that human rights protections were created after mass atrocities of the second world war as a way of making sure that “never again” actually meant “never again”? (Allen in Amnesty International 2017)

Apparently, we have forgotten! It is undeniably happening all over again. Whenever we see a rise of the rhetoric of fear, protectionism, and isolationism, we see the rise of terrorism of all fronts, and acts of violence retrospectively. Never does a geographical ban successfully address the issues of national security that it intends to protect. Stereotyping a population based on the place of their origin or religion only reduces the integrity of their humanity. There is a danger in classifying human beings into fixities (Bradley 2006, Bhabha [1994] 2004) or “representing everything that is there to know about his or her people” (Vaugeois 2009, 16). The men-

ace of containing people within pre-determined identity categories and fetishizations based on their race, gender, age, religion, or place of origin does no good but harms all individuals: the ones who impose these categorizations and the ones who are imposed by them. “In each case, what is being dramatized is a separation—*between* races, cultures, histories, *within* histories—a separation between *before* and *after* that repeats obsessively the mythical moment of disjunction” (Bhabha [1994] 2004, 118, orig. italics).

*I received an email from the institution in Canada where I applied for the position that I was very excited about; I was long-listed for the first round of interviews. The interview was conducted via teleconferencing in early 2013. Later, I was informed that I was short-listed and needed to fly to Canada in a month for the second round of interviews and visit the campus. I was exhilarated that my unusual efforts and background were somehow recognized, but more than that I panicked at the thought of “how could I even apply for the visa in less than a month!” The institution gave me more time to apply for the visa and requested that I let them know as soon as I received the visa. That was in February. I was scheduled to defend my PhD thesis in April to be eligible to graduate in June 2013, as my US student visa was going to expire at the end of June. I was juggling my dissertation, my visa application, and preparation for my second round of interviews all at the same time while thinking “I would lose my chance for the position because of my visa issues.” It was a horror show. I was pulled in so many directions. Not a blissful scene!*

*It was the end of March, and the visa did not show up. I was devastated. I emailed my now mentor and colleague that she should dismiss my application and interview, and move on with the search. What I heard back from her is forever history for me: “**We are coming to you for the interview.**” I was deeply touched and lost all senses. I cried for the whole day to see such humanity in my alienated life as an Iranian graduate student. “Someone is taking the effort to understand my situation;” “She gets it;” “She has real empathy;” “I might have a chance at pursuing this position.” A week before my defense, my now two colleagues came for a full day interview. It was bliss. I then passed my defense a week after, and heard the great news that the position was mine if I wanted it. I wanted it! I wanted to be surrounded by these colleagues. I wanted to be in an institution that waited for me to overcome my unwanted bureaucratic barriers.*

*But the story does not end here. The visa for my interview was issued at the end of May, when I was preparing to leave the United States. I applied for a working permit, now that I had been offered the position, planning to start my academic career in July 2013. The work permit took five months to be issued. I missed the first semester of my teaching. I will not*

*get into details about those months. I leave it to your imagination. Waiting, waiting, and more waiting....*

*I finally flew to Canada in December 2013, and officially started my academic life.*

This situation can also be straightforwardly expanded to music education. When did we do rightly whenever we felt we needed to protect and teach only some specific genres of music and their respective pedagogies (Allsup 2015; Kratus 2007; Bradley 2006; Green 2008)? When did we do justice to the massive array of music making and learning experiences by *censoring* (Dyndahl and Nielsen 2014; Kallio 2014) the repertoire, or by *managing* (hooks 1992, 354), *tolerating* (Matthews 2015; Hess 2013), *arranging* and *simplifying* the authentic and diverse musical experiences into ready-made and ready-to-use packages of music learning (Hess 2015, Wasiak 2009, Bradley 2006, Banks 1994)? A case in point was illustrated by one of the graduate students in Bradley, Golner, and Hanson (2007):

I think about the curriculum I teach—I'm going to have to do *major* work to get where I need to be in the world and United States cultural knowledge levels to teach anything besides European and Jazz musical history ... areas to bone up on ... current pop music, the history of rock and blues and funk and rap etc.... the current racial justice scene, more about Native American culture(s) and Hispanic music ... dance ... I feel cheated. (300, orig. italics)

Whenever the music repertoire and pedagogy is geography based, the music classroom becomes a “bait and switch” (Hess 2015) situation, a “liberal multiculturalism” that “although well-intentioned, operates politically as an erasure” (Bradley et al. 2007, 298). Similar to this situation is the good intention of higher education institutions to include diversity in their student bodies and faculty members without acknowledging the external differences and pressures they go through on a day-to-day basis. Echoing Bradley (2006):

Policies of official multiculturalism that claim to promote equality for all fail to address inequality, thus belying the promise of democracy. Official policies also fail to allow for recognition of ongoing cultural entanglements that make defining any group according to rigid racial or ethnic criteria impossible. (7)

*Since I have started my current position, I have applied for six visas from multiple countries to attend international conferences to present my work and research. I have put a great deal of time and financial resources from my annual research quota toward visa applications, not the research or travel itself. I cannot purchase any flight tickets until I have the visa; thus by the time I can purchase the flight tickets, the expenses*

*are extraordinary, which again is reduced from my research quota. Moreover, most international universities cannot easily consider me as a guest lecturer, as they do not have the time and resources for my visa applications. To conclude, I have less time and resources to conduct and present my research compared to my other colleagues. My concern is that none of these efforts will be acknowledged in my tenure file, as only the outcomes are considered worthy of consideration. Also, since my situation is a not-spoken and not-considered situation, I cannot even apply for more resources or time in my grant applications.*

### “What Does it Matter”?<sup>8</sup> Analysis

*One is never fully emplaced (place/non-place),  
one is not fully fixed (fixity/mobility),  
one is not just “I” but also “an-other” (self/other):  
Identities-on-the-move are ambiguous and contested becomings.  
Daskalaki, Butler, and Petrovic 2016, 192*

The analysis of the narrative fragments presented in this article demonstrate two major premises: the *power negotiations and micro politics* related to my assumed identity, nationality, religion, and music education, and the *(un)location* of my state of being in the place, location, and time of my music education and higher education position. In what follows I elaborate on each of these premises.

#### *Power Negotiations and Micro Politics*

In the vignettes presented so far, a sense of power negotiation exists between the bodies and micro-politics (Daskalaki, Butler, and Petrovic 2016, 191) involved with micro traumas, the most prominent of which is the *look* and the *gaze*: “At the international airports, I always hold my passport upside-down so that I don’t get **the look**.” What I intend to avoid, *the look*, is indeed a fixity, an emotional violence, categorizing me into a name, a number. I am described. This look does not grant me the ambivalent space (Bhabha [1994] 2004) to describe myself, to have a command on the negotiating table. According to Bhabha,

It is only when we understand that all cultural statements and systems are constructed in this contradictory and ambivalent space of enunciation, that we begin to understand why hierarchical claims to the inherent originality or “purity” of cultures are untenable, even before we resort to empirical historical instances that demonstrate their hybridity. (54–5)

Power negotiations and micro politics were also apparent through other narrative fragments policing bodies such as mine: “As an Iranian student, I only had one single-entry visa to the States to study;” “I would lose my chance for the position because of my visa issues;” “The work permit took eight months to be issued. I missed the first semester of my teaching;” “Since I have started my current position I have applied for six visas.” Thus, not only did the policing impede my personal life, preventing me from visiting my family, but it also troubled my professional life: “a critical aspect of this process has been that people have also become dependent on states for the possession of an ‘identity’ from which they can escape only with difficulty and which significantly shape their access to various spaces” (Torpey 2000, 4).

The visa situation that made decisions on my body and so many other scholars coming from the majority Muslim countries also transferred into my music education, insinuating that my music education did not matter, that it lacked rigour. My intimate knowledge of the field was perceived as limited in scope and depth, being dictated by external circumstances, and not by my efforts.

If one examines these narratives chronologically, one can also realize the time range of these micro politics: it has been an ongoing struggle, beginning with my graduate studies, and has continued since I landed the position. It is a never-ending process. In these mostly one-directional power negotiations, there appears

a deep split between celebratory multiculturalism and the real situation of many minorities who experience oppression in their everyday lives. For the west, this appears largely as a division between liberals and conservatives: the first accept assimilation, while the second want to retain their unsullied cultural identities. For minorities in the west, or for those living outside the west, the divisions are less clear-cut. It is not unusual for individuals to want both at the same time. (Young 2003, 24)

It is through Bhabha’s “ambivalent space of enunciation” that bodies can negotiate these “hierarchical claims” (54–5) and determine “its problems of identification and its diasporic aesthetics in an uncanny, disjunctive temporality that is, at once, the *time* of cultural displacement, and the *space* of the ‘untranslatable’” ([1994] 2004, 322, orig. italics).

### *On (Un)Location*

These narrative fragments also suggest a constant state of mobility. I was and perhaps still am an itinerant, literally and symbolically, in-between locations, places,

and times, grappling with my music education, citizenship, (national) identity, and role of the researcher: “During my music teaching identity crisis I did not have the support of my family and Iranian friends ... that I belonged to the music education community;” “After ... losing hope of any positions other than the standardized version of music education, I finally came across a position announcement that ... encouragingly shatter[ed] the image I had about music education in academia;” “there were scholars who sought my ‘non-expert,’ ‘non-standard’ music teaching.” Through these excerpts one can realize my struggles as a kind of teaching and academic identity related to my continuous, un-homely experiences, and dislocation. According to Daskalaki, Butler, and Petrovic (2016), “Identity is a temporary construct, ambivalent and re-invented, translated and fractured, embodied through dislocation and discontinuities in-between space-time” (191).

Perhaps academic identities in general are both relishing from and being trampled upon by a constant state of liminality, which “can offer a sense of freedom, a possibility of creation, a special sense of community with the others in the limbo that has little to do with identity—rather a shared sense of alterity, as it were” (Czarniawaska and Mazza in Daskalaki, Butler and Petrovic 2016, 191). What makes this state of liminality precarious for my situation is its lack of allowance for divergent, discursive transformation of faculty member profiles; a “third space” to articulate these differences is denied from us, despite Bhabha’s assertion that “the non-synchronous temporality of global and national cultures opens up a cultural space—a third space—where the negotiation of incommensurable differences creates a tension peculiar to borderline existences” (Bhabha, [1994] 2004, 218). Therefore, the location where I stand metaphorically very much depends on what the music education and higher education institution hegemony assumes me to be, rather than acknowledging “a polycentric site of contestation, competing powers and challenging differences” (Daskalaki, Butler and Petrovic 2016, 191).

This (un)location, the neither/nor, then becomes a sore issue instead of constructive, messy possibilities of creation or state of becoming (ibid), as I am generalized, boxed and packaged “through [the] institutionally sanctioned authority and pretended objectivity” (Beverley 2008, 579). Bhabha ([1994] 2004) emphasizes instead,

We must always keep open a supplementary space for the articulation of cultural knowledges that are adjacent and adjunct but not necessarily accumulative, teleological or dialectical. The “difference” of cultural knowledge that “adds to” but



does not “add up” is the enemy of the *implicit* generalization of knowledge or the implicit homogenization of experience. (234)

It is through this antagonism that I would like to negotiate some routes and possible blueprints to overcome these inflexibilities and, perhaps more accurately, veiled institutional injustices.

### Macro and Micro Thinking

*We're left here to witness the witnesses.*  
Ellis and Bochner 2006, 430

As academics we already reside in a space of liminality (Daskalaki, Butler, and Petrovic 2016). We are constantly on the move, if not for new and different positions wherever the position obliges us to go, but for conferences, conducting research, collaborations. We are also in constant embedded spatial territories in classrooms, faculty meetings, lectures, conventions. We engage in certain ways with our students, fellow researchers, administrators, local communities, and the overall institution of higher education. Daskalaki, Butler, and Petrovic (2016) highlight that

Work experiences are thus embedded in a journey of repeated emplacements/displacements, during which we *write ourselves in and out of place*, construct our narratives in space-time, and re-construct our identities albeit temporarily in a bodily emplaced relation with-the-other. (186, orig. italics)

Therefore, when such an already liminal career path about which we are passionate turns into a situation where “understanding is replaced by competence; insight is replaced by effectiveness; and rigour of interactive argument is replaced by communication skills” (Barnett 1994, 37), the situation of faculty members such as mine becomes even more precarious. According to Denzin and Giardina (2015), “who among us has not found ourself wading through hours of endless paperwork, annual reports, journal impact factors, students and peer evaluations, credit hours generated matrices, and other measures that seek to quantify one’s contribution to university” (10)? Add to that the amount of paperwork for visa applications while going through gruesome and humiliating *surveillance* and *gaze*, the blissful ignorance of one’s immediate field and higher education institution, spending a great deal of energy on the steps that one does not have the luxury to *take-for-granted*, planning ahead every step of the way so that one can level oneself with the rest of

his/her colleagues, you might now understand what graduate students and faculty members like myself go through on a day-to-day basis.

Even though this article is an expression of rage, it is not intended to be a *complaining piece*. I would indeed like to propose some recommendations to ameliorate these tensions. I would like to *author* change and *translate* (Bhabha [1994] 2004) my own academic being. Thus I recommend some steps that we can take as a community to not only decrease the racial, ethnic, gendered, sexed, age(d) anxieties in our profession, but also to go beyond our own home turf and think more globally and influentially.

### *Our Role as Intellectuals*

A query with which I grapple daily: what are my contributions to the field of music education, to the society of musicians and educators in higher education, to the broader local and global community? Since I first began my academic career as a graduate student, I could not help but think that our profession has a tendency to merely *react* and *respond* to outside events and trends rather than taking a more *proactive* stance. In other words, the meaningful and progressive changes that the pioneers and our contemporaries in the field of music education are and have been making in many places on the planet earth—to level the field of constant global economic, political, and socio-cultural shifts—influence all of us. We tend to *provide* meaning and give a human face to all of these changes, the atrocities, and social injustices that are occurring globally, but do we instead or along with it *create* meaning? Are we doing enough? Does anyone outside of the field of music education bother to read our journal articles, attend our conventions, contact us to make any local changes, let alone global changes? Then what is our role as intellectuals?<sup>9</sup>

Noam Chomsky in his well-known essay, “The Responsibility of the Intellectual” ([1966] 2008), remarked, “Intellectuals are in a position to expose the lies of governments, to analyze actions according to their causes and motives and often hidden intentions” (40). I add that as intellectuals we can and should change the trends, and create movements that go beyond the status quo when, for example, “the conduct of research becomes policed by an array of forces that impinge upon and (re)direct the practice of scholarly inquiry: namely scholarly journals, promotion and tenure committees, federal funding agencies, Institutional Review Boards, bibliometrics, and university political structures” (Denzin and Giardina

Niknafs, Nasim. 2017. “Ma’am! You’re being randomly checked”: A music education terrorized. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education* 16 (3): 48–77. doi:10.22176/act16.1.48

2015, 15). Through public teach-ins, holding concerts with constructive messages, communicating with local agencies, generating public reports, and grassroots activism in our own institutions by speaking to our deans, provosts, vice presidents and university presidents, attending university town halls, and speaking up as members of the academic community, we would be better positioned to *create* the meanings and generate the trends. These are just some small steps to avoid being appropriated and decided upon. If we need change in the attitudes, modes of thinking, and methods of action, we should start with ourselves, asking what our roles as intellectuals are.

### *Social (In)justice by Whom? For Whom? Who Cares?*

In the year 2015, a timely and well-developed *Oxford Handbook of Social Justice in Music Education* (Benedict, Schmidt, Spruce and Woodford 2015) was published. When I received the book, I opened it ritualistically, touched its pages, and devoured the titles, authors, and sections. I felt ecstatic that finally our field had created such a volume, representative of the plethora of social justice practices with which music education engages. However, I gradually realized there were a few issues with my reaction. First, this was not the first time within music education that issues of social justice were discussed in a volume. In 2009, the book titled, *Exploring Social Justice: How Music Education Might Matter* (Gould, Countryman, Morton and Stewart Rose 2009), was also published, but due to the publisher's location in Canada, the volume did not gain as much attention as the handbook that was packaged and published in the United States.

Second, except for one case study in one chapter by André De Quadros (2015) titled, "Rescuing Choral Music from the Realm of the Elite," none of the chapters was written by a scholar residing or coming from the Middle East or Central Asia or written on topics related to these regions, their social justice matters, historical events, and/or music education practices, although there were chapters in this handbook that grappled with concepts such as othering, racism, toleration, equity, feminism, and multiculturalism. This situation, however, may be reflective of the current socio-political upheavals or lack of access to such bodies and places.

I use the *Oxford Handbook* and *Exploring Social Justice* to make a point and not to dismiss their constructive influence, significance in the field, or their acknowledgment of the social justice issues embedded in the "dull familiar stabilities of ordinary everyday life ... local social existence" (Young

2003, 11) and taken-for-granted assumptions. I indeed admire all the materials in these volumes, and the authors who painstakingly spent time to bring forth issues of social justice in music education. But what I would like to point out is that “there are other kinds of riches, other kinds of loss. Other kinds of ways of thinking about the world [;] Human rather than material” (16) that were not part of these instrumental volumes. Furthermore, the authors, as academics and intellectuals, a group in which I also include myself, are

No longer in the situation of marginality and subalternity that his or her narrative describes, but has now attained the cultural status of author (and generally speaking, middle or upper class economic status). Put another way, the transition from storyteller to author implies a parallel transition from . . . a culture of primary and secondary orality to writing, from a traditional group identity to the privatized, modern identity that forms the subject of liberal political and economic theory. (Beverly 2008, 572–3)<sup>10</sup>

Here, then, is my point: the kinds of activism and social justice practices occurring within music education do not suffice to dismantle or disorganize the inequities, (soft and hard) oppressions, and differentiations in ways that some of us have experienced in many parts of the globe. This massive body of literature in music education in this respect does not fully address stories like mine, formerly the “uncommon ‘man’” (Spivak [1988] 1993, 72), and currently, though precariously, part of the hegemonic discourse. As a community we might rethink our approaches toward definitions, implications, and common practices occurring in music education, and constantly question our thoughts and actions whenever we attempt to alleviate any social injustices through music education: to whom are we speaking, for whom are we speaking, and why do we bother?

### *Equity: Macro and Micro*

“In the process of [autoethnographic research], there is always a feeling of risk: a risk of bleeding, in which the presumed categorical containments of your identity threaten to exceed its borders, revealing the ways in which we are always both particular and plural at the same time; never contained and always messy” (Alexander 2015, 141). I have always associated bleeding with the construct of martyrdom, due to the official discourse of our Iranian government during the years beginning with the Iran-Iraq war martyrs, referring to them as *red tulips*. I have never considered my stories as bleeding stories (perhaps *bloody* stories would be more accurate), or associated with blood in

any way until it dawned on me that the discourse around martyrdom, and all of the songs associated with it through red tulips in our post-revolutionary years in Iran, referred in one way or another to concepts of nationalism, borderland, mobilization, and oppression by the West signifying “the false boundaries that limit social possibility” (142).

So, does it mean that wherever I go, as a migrant or nomad or wanderer, I leave traces of my *blood*, which represents a kind of terror that needs to be *cleaned up*? That somehow I could be narrated and *gazed* by someone else, and most probably into a rigid and macro-structured idea of me? I, the Iranian, I the non-music teacher, I the other, I the blood?

If this is the case, then I encourage all of us to think more critically about the macro and micro equity issues that we face daily in our academic lives, as we *all* have “stories on the move” (Daskalaki, Butler and Petrovic 2016, 193) that are worth telling. Therefore, let us think and do “particular in plural” (Alexander 2015, 142) to unravel and address the inequity and differentiation in relation to non-Western music educators crossing borders, where the “never contained and always messy” can act as a source of rupture rather than trepidation. When we include more diversity in our institutions and music education programs, do we also include the diverse messiness, problems, values, priorities, philosophies, practices? *How* do we include diversity? Do we even care? I admit that these questions are broad and perhaps too all consuming. But if each one of us in our corresponding institutions asks these questions and grapples with sensibly responding to them, we might reach to more refined and cultivated practices, where difference would not be *gazed* at but would be considered as genuine contribution.

The same goes for position postings, and for examining promotion files. How do we invite a diverse array of scholars into our institutions,<sup>11</sup> and how do we encourage them? How do we guide and mentor them into sustained and fruitful careers that are meaningful to the individual, the institution, and the community at large? How much influence can we have to examine their academic profiles for promotion in a more nuanced way, so that every (extra) effort in their career, in addition to “negotiat[ing] annual ... accounts of themselves as appropriate subjects, and to stag[ing] a performance of themselves as appropriate(d) subjects” (Peterson in Denzin and Giardina 2015, 16) may be acknowledged and taken into account?

## An Un-Finished Project

*Too much silence: Last Tango with Music Education. Too much silence.  
Lamb 1993-1994, 6*

With the mass population shift that is occurring globally, the mobilization of refugees and immigrants, the horrors of climate change, and mass killings and genocide, how can we or *should* we prepare prospective music teachers to be able to respond to and be responsible for future generations in these turbulent times? With the rise of global neo-fascism and fundamentalism, are we morally permitted to take the back seat and stay tuned? If “music education ought to be inextricably bound to the work of social justice through interrogations of power” (Bradley, Goller, and Hanson 2007, 302), how can we in our music education profession respond and relate to what occurs around us? We have two choices, it seems: isolate from the world and focus only on the *sounds* that we create in our music classrooms and higher education institutions, or bring the *noise* outside into our safe and familiar spaces and create meaningful cacophony so as to move to *beyond*.

The “beyond” is neither a new horizon, nor a leaving behind of the past ... there is a sense of disorientation, a disturbance of direction, in the “beyond”: an exploratory, restless movement caught so well in ... here and there, on all sides, *fort/da*, hither and thither, back and forth. (Bhabha [1994] 2004, 1–2, orig. italics)

I am now guilty of speaking from my trembling position of power as a junior faculty. I was finally able to gain a foothold in the music education discourse; I now have a platform to share my stories and tell the world what othered graduate students and faculty members go through to get what they rightfully desire and dream of. But my story cannot be the case in point: just because I was able to overcome the impediments to some extent does not mean that others in similar situations can and will. As a plethora of research shows, non-white female academics suffer the most within the official discourses of academia (Bradley et al. 2017, Bergonzie et al. 2016, Acker et al. 2012, Boyd et al. 2010, Berry et al. 2007). What if I had not met the professors and advisors who had seen something in me as a graduate student applicant, who believed in me as a music educator and potential scholar who cares about our profession, notwithstanding my non-standard teaching experience? What if I were not spotted by my now mentors and colleagues—who understood that I could do *good* in the world, that I am capable regardless of my background, my assumed identity?

There is something missing in our assuming, all-encompassing understanding of higher education: the stories of scholars who have to demonstrate the same amount of capability and, more specifically, *productivity*, and have to compete for the same resources while not enjoying similar levelled opportunities from which to start. We might be open to providing equal rights and opportunities to every *kind* of scholar, but we are not yet open to recognizing, acknowledging, and providing nuanced support for each individual scholar personally. As Bradley et al. (2017) assert, “tenure binders and portfolios [are] effectively reducing the human experience of tenure to word counts and pounds of paper” (para 59). Our profiles are forced into a standard form, our attempts weighted against the normative discourse, and our outcomes are the only factors considered in our professional beings. The rest is dismissed. So I would like to draw attention to the need for more equity, for more nuanced consideration in the life of *othered* faculty members regardless of age, race, gender, ethnicity, ability, religion.

I would also like to respond to DeeJay Robinson’s call (2016): “I hear you, I see you, I am with you,” that I am “telling our stories and creating music classrooms [and higher education institutions] that challenge and interrogate hegemony” (para 13). And I would like to speak to Ehsan Alimohammadian,<sup>12</sup> Mamadou Tanou Barry,<sup>13</sup> Alan Kurdi<sup>14</sup>—and to so many others who were and are the victims of the systemic economic, political, and social prejudices—that you are not alone; that the labelling, the bans, the systemic injustices do not make you less human or deserving of fewer human rights and dignities. Instead, each of us can be a platform to shed light on our real lives, challenges, struggles, exhilarations, and contributions to our human world. “Discussions of equity should [not] be sidestepped in the face of larger threats to an overall system. Indeed, questions of equity have never been more relevant” (Bradley et al. 2017, para 66). So, let us embrace our enunciated difference.<sup>15</sup> Let us turn and become the gaze!

### Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the continuous support, encouragements, and insight of Dr. Deborah Bradley for the fruition of this project. I would also like to thank the three anonymous reviewers who provided guidance and productive comments for the completion of this article. Further, I am forever indebted to the care, kindness, and guidance of my professors and colleagues who have seen me through my academic career to this day, and to our Dean and administration who also patiently waited for my visa applications to go through during the process of my position application.

## About the Author

Nasim Niknafs, the recipient of the Connaught New Researcher Award, Faculty Mobility Grant, and OMEA's Agha Khan Initiative, is an Assistant Professor of Music Education at the Faculty of Music, University of Toronto. Born and Raised in Iran, Nasim's selected publications have appeared in *Music Education Research*, *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*, *The Ashgate Research Companion to Popular Music Education*, *Punk Pedagogies*, *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophical and Qualitative Perspectives on Assessment in Music Education (in press)*, *IASPM@Journal*, and *General Music Today*. Nasim's research interests include equity and politics of contemporary music education with special focus on Iran, cultural studies, popular music, anarchism, and activism in music education. Nasim holds degrees from Northwestern University, New York University, Kingston University, London, and University of Art, Tehran.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Nasim Niknafs, Faculty of Music, University of Toronto, 80 Queen's Park, Toronto, ON M5S 2C5. Email: nasim.niknafs@utoronto.ca

## References

- Acker, Sandra, Michelle Webber, and Elizabeth Smyth. 2012. Tenure troubles and equity matters in Canadian academe. *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 33 (5): 743–61.
- Alexander, Bryant Keith. 2015. Critical autoethnography as intersectional praxis: A performative pedagogical interplay on bleeding borders. In *Qualitative inquiry and the politics of research*, edited by Norman Denzin, and Michael D. Giardina, 141–58. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.
- Allsup, Randall E. 2015. The eclipse of a higher education or problems preparing artists in a mercantile world. *Music Education Research* 17 (3): 251–61.
- Amnesty International. Annual report: Hateful, toxic rhetoric creating a dangerous and divided world. <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/press-releases/annual-report-hateful-toxic-rhetoric-creating-dangerous-and-divided-world>.
- Anderson, Leon. 2006. Analytic autoethnography, *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 35 (4): 373–95.
- Barnett, Ronald. 1994. *The limits of competence: Knowledge, higher education and society*. Buckingham, UK: Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press.
- Bastaninezhad, Arya. 2014. A historical overview of Iranian music pedagogy (1905–2014). *Australian Journal of Music Education* 4: 5–22.
- Niknafs, Nasim. 2017. "Ma'am! You're being randomly checked": A music education terrorized. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education* 16 (3): 48–77. doi:10.22176/act16.1.48



- Banks, James A. 1994. *An introduction to multicultural education*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Benedict, Cathy, Patrick Schmidt, Gary Spruce, and Paul Woodford, eds. 2015. *The Oxford handbook of social justice in music education*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Berger, Peter L, and Thomas Luckmann. 1991. *The social construction of reality: A treatise in the sociology of knowledge*. London: Penguin Books.
- Bergonzi, Louis, Deanna Yerichuk, Kiera Galway, and Elizabeth Gould. 2015. Demographics of tenure-stream music faculty in Canadian post-secondary institutions. *Intersections: Canadian Journal of Music* 35 (1).
- Berry, Brent, and Eduardo Bonilla-Silva. 2007. 'They should hire the one with the best score': White sensitivity to qualification differences in affirmative action hiring decisions. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 31 (2): 215–42.
- Beverly, John. 2008. *Testimonio*, subalternity, and narrative authority. In *A companion to Latin American literature and culture*, edited by Sara Castro-Klaren, 571–83. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing. New York, NY: The New Press.
- Bhabha, Homi. (1994) 2004. *The location of culture*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Boyd, Tammy, Rosa Cintron, and Mia Alexander-Snow. 2010. The experience of being a junior minority female faculty member. In *Forum on Public Policy online: A Journal of Oxford Round Table*. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ903575>
- Bradley, Deborah. 2006. Music education, multiculturalism, and anti-racism – Can we talk? *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education* 5 (2). [http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Bradley5\\_2.pdf](http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Bradley5_2.pdf)
- Bradley, Deborah, Ronald Golner, and Sarah Hanson. 2007. Unlearning Whiteness, rethinking race issues in graduate music education. *Music Education Research* 9 (2): 293–304.
- Bradley, Deborah, Deanna Yerichuk, Lori-Anne Dolloff, Kiera Galway, Kathy Robinson, Jody Stark, and Elizabeth Gould. 2017. Examining equity in tenure processes at higher education music programs: An institutional ethnography. *College Music Symposium: Exploring Diverse Perspectives*. [http://symposium.music.org/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&id=11336:examining-equity-in-tenure-processes-at-higher-education-music-programs-an-institutional-ethnography&Itemid=124](http://symposium.music.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=11336:examining-equity-in-tenure-processes-at-higher-education-music-programs-an-institutional-ethnography&Itemid=124)
- Niknafs, Nasim. 2017. "Ma'am! You're being randomly checked": A music education terrorized. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education* 16 (3): 48–77. doi:10.22176/act16.1.48

The College Music Society (CMS). 2017. *Archive of past issues*. [http://www.music.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=featured&Itemid=101](http://www.music.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=featured&Itemid=101)

CNN—Full text of Trump’s executive order on 7-nation ban, refugee suspension. Online: <http://www.cnn.com/2017/01/28/politics/text-of-trump-executive-order-nation-ban-refugees/>

Chomsky, Noam. (1966) 2008. The responsibility of intellectuals. In *The essential Chomsky*, edited by Anthony Arnone, 39–62, New York, NY: The New Press.

Daskalaki, Maria, Christina L. Butler, and Jelena Petrovic. 2016. Somewhere in-between: Narratives of place, identity, and translocal work. *Journal of Management Inquiry* 25 (2): 184–98.

Dei, George J. Sefa and Agnes Calliste, eds. 2000. *Power, knowledge and anti-racism education*. Halifax: Fernwood Publishing.

Denzin, Norman, and Michael D. Giardina. eds. 2015. *Qualitative inquiry and the politics of research*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.

De Quadros, André. 2015. Rescuing choral music from the realm of the elite: Models for twenty-first-century music making—Two case illustrations. In *The Oxford handbook of social justice in music education*, edited by Cathy Benedict, Patrick Schmidt, Gary Spruce, and Paul Woodford, 501–12. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Dyndahl, Petter, and Siw G. Nielsen. 2014. Shifting authenticities in Scandinavian music education. *Music Education Research* 16 (1): 105–18.

Ellis, Carolyn S., and Arthur P., Bochner. 2006. Analyzing analytic autoethnography. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 35 (4): 429–49.

Foucault, Michel. (1977) 1995. *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison*. New York: Vintage Books.

Gould, Elizabeth, June Countryman, Charlene Morton, Leslie Stewart Rose, eds. 2009. *Exploring social justice: How music education might matter*. Toronto: Canadian Music Educators’ Association.

Green, Lucy. 2008. *Music, informal learning and the school: A new classroom pedagogy*. Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Limited.

Henley & Partners. 2016. The Henley & Partners Visa Restrictions Index 2016: Global travel freedom at a glance. <https://www.henleyglobal.com/files/download/HP/hvri/HP%20Visa%20Restrictions%20Index%20160223.pdf>.

Niknafs, Nasim. 2017. “Ma’am! You’re being randomly checked”: A music education terrorized. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education* 16 (3): 48–77. doi:10.22176/act16.1.48

- Hess, Juliet. 2013. Performing tolerance and curriculum: The politics of self-congratulation, identity formation, and pedagogy in world music education. *Philosophy of Music Education Review* 21 (1): 66–91.
- Hess, Juliet. 2015. Decolonizing music education: Moving beyond tokenism. *International Journal of Music Education* 33: 336–47.
- hooks, b. 1992. Representing whiteness in the black imagination. In *Cultural studies*, edited by L. Grossberg, 338–46. New York: Routledge.
- Isbell, Daniel S. 2008. Musicians and teachers: The socialization and occupational identity of preservice music teachers. *Journal of Research in Music Education* 56 (2): 162–78.
- Kallio, Alexis A. 2014. Drawing a line in water: Constructing the school censorship frame in popular music education. *International Journal of Music Education* 33 (2): 195–209.
- Kratus, John. 2007. Music education at the tipping point. *Music Educators Journal* 94 (2): 42–8.
- Lamb, Roberta. 1993-1994. Aria senza accompagnamento: A woman behind the theory. *The Quarterly* 4-5 (5-1): 5–20.
- Learmonth, Mark, and Michael Humphreys. 2011. Autoethnography and academic identity: Glimpsing business school doppelgängers. *Organization* 19 (1): 99–117.
- Mackey, Eva. 2002. *The house of difference: Cultural politics and national identity in Canada*. Vol. 23. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Matthews, Richard. 2015. Beyond Toleration: Facing the other. In *The Oxford handbook of social justice in music education*, edited by Cathy Benedict, Patrick Schmidt, Gary Spruce, and Paul. Woodford, 238–49. New York: Oxford University Press.
- McBride, Eimear. 2016. *The lesser bohemian*. London: Faber & Faber.
- Morrison, Toni. 1992. *Playing in the dark: Whiteness and the literary imagination*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Niknafs, Nasim. 2016. In a box: A narrative of a/n (under)grounded Iranian musician. *Music Education Research* 18 (4): 351–63.
- Niknafs, Nasim. 2017. “Ma’am! You’re being randomly checked”: A music education terrorized. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education* 16 (3): 48–77. doi:10.22176/act16.1.48

- Nooshin, Laudan. 2005a. Subversion and countersubversion: Power, control, and meaning in the new Iranian pop music. In *Music, power and politics*, edited by Annie. J. Randall, 231–72. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Nooshin, Laudan. 2005b. Underground, overground: Rock music and youth discourse in Iran. *Iranian Studies* 38 (3): 463–94.
- Pramuk, Jacob. March 21. 2017. Here's what Supreme Court nominee Gorsuch had to say about Trump's travel ban. <http://www.cnbc.com/2017/03/21/neil-gorsuch-talks-trump-travel-ban-at-supreme-court-hearing.html>
- Robertson, Bronwen. 2012. *Reverberations of dissent: Identity and expression in Iran's music scene*. London, England: Continuum.
- Robinson, DeeJay. An open letter to minority music teachers. *Open Mic: Mayday Group*. <http://www.maydaygroup.org/2016/08/an-open-letter-to-minority-music-teachers/#.WLed4RlrK8X>. August 10, 2016.
- Said, Edward. (1978) 2003. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Schippers, Huib. 2010. *Facing the music: Shaping music education from a global perspective*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Schmitt, Eric, and Thomas Shanker. July 26, 2005. U.S. officials retool slogan for terror war. *New York Times*. [http://www.nytimes.com/2005/07/26/politics/us-officials-retool-slogan-for-terror-war.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2005/07/26/politics/us-officials-retool-slogan-for-terror-war.html?_r=0).
- Siddiqui, Sabrina. Trump signs 'extreme vetting' executive order for people entering the US. January 27, 2017. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/jan/27/donald-trump-muslim-refugee-ban-exective-action>.
- Spivak, Gayatri Cahakravorty. (1988) 1993. Can the subaltern speak? In *Colonial discourse and post-colonial theory*, edited by Patrick Williams, and Laura Chrisman. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Torpey, John. 2000. *The invention of the passport: Surveillance, citizenship and the state*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Vaugeois, Lise C. 2009. Music education as a *practice* of social justice. In *Exploring social justice: How music education might matter*, edited by Elizabeth Gould, June Countryman, Charlene Morton, and Leslie Stewart-Rose, 2–22.
- Niknafs, Nasim. 2017. "Ma'am! You're being randomly checked": A music education terrorized. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education* 16 (3): 48–77. doi:10.22176/act16.1.48

Wasiak, Edwin B. 2009. Countering musical tourism and enacting social justice: Repositioning music education as a cross-cultural meeting place. In *Exploring social justice: How music education might matter*, edited by Elizabeth Gould, June Countryman, Charlene Morton, and Leslie Stewart-Rose, 212–24.

Wilhelm, Ian. 2017. Why the travel ban probably hits Iranian professors and students the hardest. January 31. [http://www.chronicle.com/article/why-the-travel-ban-probably/239050?%20elqTrackId=50174c84f9b44b7ab469c774d6012c68&cid=at&elq=%20481ba479f6c44fd9a6f4f92446cf1eb4&elqCampaignId=5024.&elqaid=12364&elqat=1&utm\\_medium=en&utm\\_source=at](http://www.chronicle.com/article/why-the-travel-ban-probably/239050?%20elqTrackId=50174c84f9b44b7ab469c774d6012c68&cid=at&elq=%20481ba479f6c44fd9a6f4f92446cf1eb4&elqCampaignId=5024.&elqaid=12364&elqat=1&utm_medium=en&utm_source=at)

Young, Robert, J. C., 2003. *Postcolonialism: A very short introduction*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Youssefzadeh, Ameneh. 2000. The situation of music in Iran since the revolution: The role of official organizations. *British Journal of Ethnomusicology* 9 (2): 35–61.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> To date, the ban and its subsequent revisions have both been ruled as unconstitutional by Federal District Courts. Although the United States Supreme Court has not yet fully ruled on the ban (Pramuk 2017), on June 26, 2017, the Supreme Court partially lifted the halt and had agreed to hear oral arguments for the petition to vacate the injunctions in the fall. However, on Sept. 24, 2017, a new order was issued that added North Korea, Chad, and Venezuela, to the list of restricted countries, and eliminated the Sudan from the previous list.

<sup>2</sup> A song by the band 127, one of the pioneers of Iranian Rock music after the 1979 revolution. For an extensive information and analysis on the song, please refer to Nooshin (2005b). For more details on the band please refer to Robertson (2012).

<sup>3</sup> Excerpts from “My Sweet Little Terrorist Song” by 127 (Nooshin 2005b).

<sup>4</sup> Referring to the title of Thomas Hardy’s seminal book (1874).

<sup>5</sup> According to Henley & Partners Visa Restrictions Index 2016, Iran ranks 98 out of 104 countries for whom restrictions are the most severe.

<sup>6</sup> For an extensive understanding of the situation of music education in Iran after the 1979 revolution, please refer to Bastaninezhad (2014), Nooshin (2005a), Niknafs (2016), Robertson (2012), and Youssefzadeh (2000).

<sup>7</sup> See for example Hess 2015, and Bradley 2006.

<sup>8</sup> Referring to Roberta Lamb's poignant work (1993-1994, 6).

<sup>9</sup> Here, I would like to make a distinction between what Spivak ([1988] 1993) terms as intellectual and what this article portrays as one. Spivak's just critique of intellectuals cautions us from representing and *re*-presenting what she calls the subaltern. For the subaltern does not need and cannot be appropriated by the good will of intellectuals under the umbrella of the oppression and the totalizing power.

<sup>10</sup> Beverley (2008) discusses the transition from being a testimonial narrator to an author in this discussion.

<sup>11</sup> For example, referring to the posting I have mentioned earlier.

<sup>12</sup> An Iranian PhD candidate at the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering at the University of Toronto flying to San Francisco, CA to present his research at a conference and was detained for hours at the US border on January 27, 2017; the ban occurred while he was in the air to the United States, and later he had to return to Canada without attending the conference. His supervisor presented his research.

<sup>13</sup> A Muslim victim of a hate crime in the Quebec City Mosque Shooting Attack on January 29, 2017.

<sup>14</sup> A three-year-old Syrian boy of Kurdish ethnicity seeking refugee status in Canada via Europe found lifeless at the Mediterranean Sea on September 2, 2015.

<sup>15</sup> Since writing this article, I had to present my research at the New Directions Conference 2017 in East Lansing, MI via Skype because of the ban. However, since the aforementioned Executive Order, my institution responded very positively to acknowledging and addressing the institutional injustices faced by the minority faculty members.