Visibility and Ambivalence: Thoughts on Queer Institutionalization

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What is lost and gained in “Establishing Identity”? Undoubtedly music education has compelling reasons to institutionalize LGBT studies. Variously queer and proto-queer children and adolescents flock to music as a place of (relative) safety, solace, and catharsis. It is incumbent on teachers and researchers to recognize the presence of these students and the many queer adults in music. LGBT studies, however, bears a built-in resistance to institutionalization. Its inquiries frequently question the very categories that structure them. This explicitly antihomophobic talk examines the importance of skepticism in queer institutionalization and of ambivalence toward queer visibility, a prerequisite for queer identity.

Thank you, and thanks to everyone who dared, first, to imagine a conference bringing together LGBT studies and music education, and then to work so hard in making it actually happen. I want to thank especially Louie Bergonzi and Bruce Carter for inviting me to speak; I’m honored to be part of this landmark event in music education. I’m also grateful to Chantal Nadeau, director, and the University of Illinois Women and Gender Studies Program for co-sponsoring my talk, and to Greg DeNardo for acting as respondent. Everything I’ll say to you this afternoon comes from my somewhat outside, but I hope relevant, perspective as a musicologist and scholar of gender and LGBT studies. Many years ago I was trained in music education: I got my bachelor’s degree in instrumental music ed at Bowling Green State University. It was an excellent program, and I loved every minute of it. I even did a brief stint teaching K–8 music for the Catholic Diocese of Toledo. In fact, it’s what inspired me to go to graduate school—in a different field. I got my graduate degrees in music theory and taught theory for over eighteen years in university music schools and departments, including twelve years at Michigan. At the same time, I was doing scholarship that often fell under a heading of musicology or LGBT studies, or even cultural history. So, ten years ago I sought a split appointment to match my split personality. Then last year I moved my faculty appointment completely into gender and LGBT studies, retaining only a courtesy appointment in the Music School. I still teach about music sometimes in my Women’s Studies courses: It’s a powerful...
force in the social and cultural operations of gender and sexuality. Nowadays I just steer clear of the Roman numerals and note names, shift the focus a bit.

So, at this point I’ve got a decade’s experience teaching gender and sexuality studies in Michigan's Women’s Studies Department. It’s been fascinating, fun, challenging, and it’s given me lots of first-hand perspective on queer institutionalization. We queers are very institutionalized at Michigan. There’s a University-wide faculty alliance of nearly twenty years’ standing that addresses policies affecting LGBT faculty, staff, and students and helps to orient new LGBT faculty. We have a fantastic, well-funded LGBT-studies lecture and event series that’s been running for over a decade, bringing us the latest in LGBT scholarship and performance every 3–4 weeks, all year long. We have an LGBT studies faculty, scattered throughout various schools and departments, that many of our peers regard as the best in the field. And in my college, Literature, Science, and the Arts, faculty members who have done distinguished work in LGBT studies are recognized and rewarded for it.

For example, my English Department colleague David Halperin, one of the founders of queer theory, holds a collegiate chair that’s designated in “the history and theory of sexuality”—just as it should be in his case. A few years ago when I published a book on gay American composers and it got some notice, the college gave me a faculty award of the most welcome kind: money. Our college in 2001 instituted an undergraduate minor in LGBT studies, which is housed in Women’s Studies and so, currently overseen by me in my capacity as Undergraduate Chair in that department. In 2006 Women’s Studies created a graduate certificate program in LGBT studies, for which I serve as adviser. Graduate students engaged in LGBT studies have formed their own ongoing colloquium, with University funding. And our well-run, well-supported LGBT student office will turn forty next year, the oldest in the country.

All this organization and structure represents battles hard fought over many years, with gains that came only slowly and gradually. But now, at least in the areas of the University where I work, LGBT people and scholarship at Michigan are institutionalized, part of The Establishment. So, what’s the problem? Nothing, it’s great! There’s no question but it beats the alternatives—and I expect many of us could speak about those at first hand. But there are questions raised by LGBT institutionalization, and LGBT scholars in recent years have taken them up.
Most notably there’s the question of moving from margins to center, and what all that means. It means greater visibility, of course, which is associated with lots of good things: recognition, validation, access, and weakening the grip of heteronormativity, which would insist that the only real lives and stories are heterosexual ones, that indeed, heterosexuality constitutes the natural order of things. But visibility can also have negative ramifications, including the risks of homophobic targeting that come with queer visibility, as well as various effects that might be linked to what some scholars now call *homonormativity*.¹ The term carries with it a critique of recently mainstreamed LGBT identities and politics that uphold the institutions and assumptions of heteronormativity. “Homonormativity” points to the normalization, naturalization, and capitalist commodification of a certain, narrowed set of homosexual practices and identities that leave intact the social, sexual, political, and economic status quo rather than pursuing the potential of same-sex relations to call into question so many sociocultural assumptions, prescripts, and inequalities.

The concept of homonormativity has been deployed in critiques of the domestic standardization of white, middle-class, and gay male identity, and in global/transnational queer studies’ critical examination of the recent and ongoing exportation of Western LGBT identities. LGBT scholarship in fields like anthropology and history has shown us a broad range of cultural conceptions of same-sex sex, love, and gender personas—which, for various reasons, mostly involve men. We have studies of male-male sexual cultures in Edo-period Japan; Renaissance Florence; the Arabic-Islamic world, 1500–1800; late—twentieth-century Papua, New Guinea; 1990s Bangkok, Thailand; and ancient Athens, to name just a few.² Each of these societies had its own sex-gender concepts and its own set of social, legal, and religious rules governing them.

So, for example, in certain New Guinean societies all the youths performed oral sex on older men. They believed that they had to ingest grown men’s semen in order to become grown men themselves capable of impregnating their future wives. In ancient Greek society the privileged, exclusively male caste known as the citizenry could have sex with other men without stigma or punishment, so long as it conformed to the expectations and norms of their time and place. That is, the older, higher-status man, the citizen or senator, was expected to be the insertive partner, and a youth or slave was prescribed for the receptive partner. Here, as in Papua, New Guinea, there was no expectation that a man who had sex with another man belonged to a separate, special category of person—no notion of a sexual *identity*. 
Most often in ancient Greece, citizen males had wives and children. We know that certain men were said to have a preference for youths over women as partners. But such preference was understood as mutable: a taste that might develop in a man at middle age, or in widowhood, and might change again at another point. The assumption that an individual’s “true” sexual make-up focuses on one sex or the other, is determined at birth, and follows one to the grave—that’s actually rather novel and distinct to us in Western culture, and even then only in the past 100 years or so.

In fact, not even that long in working-class New York City. The LGBT historian George Chauncey shows in Gay New York that different sexual systems existed side by side in the city’s middle-class and working-class cultures from about 1900 to the 1950s. Middle-class men who had sex with men understood themselves as homosexual or “queer” (during this period that became the word they most often used). Meanwhile, their working-class contemporaries lived within a different organizing scheme in which the mere fact of male-male sex did not establish identity. Here, gender performance was the determinant. So, if you were a man who took the receptive, “woman’s” role in sex, you were marked as a fairy. If you were a man who took the insertive role in sex, whether with women or with men, then you fell into the “rough trade” category, an unmarked category insofar as “rough trade” were deemed “normal” men within their community. According to Chauncey this folk system of sex and gender continued to operate among working-class men into the 1950s before being overtaken by what I just called the middle-class system, that is, the homo/hetero concept of “sexuality” that’s familiar to all of us as THE system. Foucault famously located the origins of that highly influential concept with the medical-scientific invention of the homosexual by European, mostly German, sexology around 1870. Chauncey points out that for U.S. purposes the homo/hetero concept emerged a bit later, around 1900, and had its most immediate influence on the privileged and educated classes.iii

Now, what do I hope to accomplish by these quick sketches and summaries of a few highlights from the annals of LGBT history and ethnography? Well, for one thing I hope these examples will help to defamiliarize and denaturalize the homo/hetero sexual binary and its attendant assumptions: the idea that each of us has a sexuality, determined by sexual object choice (either the same as or different from one’s own sex) regardless of masculine/feminine or butch/femme gender performance, that it is a lifelong fact of one’s essential selfhood that may even be marked on the body, etched in our brain cells if not our genetic code. The most crucial contribution of LGBT studies, starting in the late seventies and
still being explored and elaborated in various ways today, is its revelation of what we know as “sexuality” as culturally specific and constructed rather than natural or given. Now, I hope these few examples make clear what I mean by this notion of social construction—it’s not that people’s sexual proclivities and personas are chosen willy-nilly, or a mere figment of our imagination. But rather that human beings are capable of a wide range of sexual and gendered behaviors, desires, and personas, and these can be classified and understood, and hence molded, in any number of ways, as indeed they have been in different cultures throughout history.

This social constructionist position underlies every work of LGBT studies known to me from the past 30 years. It’s widely subscribed and grounds virtually all that we do in the field. And the assumption of the social constructedness of sexuality is why so much of what we do in LGBT studies is to question the very categories that structure our field: the L, G, and B, particularly (since the T, transgender studies, doesn’t fall under the heading of sexuality in quite the same way). Beyond the field of LGBT studies, however, the situation is rather different. Outside our academic dialogues you’d be generally hard pressed to find representatives of this view of sexuality as a culturally and historically contingent construct. Our focuses within LGBT studies are typically pretty distant from what I’d name as the two main sources of information on sexuality out in the “real world”: popular science and religion. Here you can often find the perspectives that are mobilized time and again in popular debates: first, the notion that one is born gay (or straight), as evidenced in ring-finger lengths, inner ear structures, and genetic codes yet to be deciphered; and second, notions of a loved sinner but hated (homosexual) sin, or of a sinful “homosexual lifestyle,” maybe linked to a nefarious “homosexual agenda,” or to “Western debauchery.”

The first of these views is often deployed in opposition to the second. That is: If people are born gay, then how could you accuse them of sinning for expressing their God- or nature-given dispositions? The idea expressed in this formulation, that each of us is endowed inevitably with a homo- or heterosexual essence, is one of sexual essentialism. Now, I don’t subscribe to an essentialist position, but I’ll certainly admit that it is more useful for queer political efficacy. In America at least, there’s far more sympathy for minoritized people who did not choose and cannot change the condition on which their minority status is based. Social constructionism doesn’t say that homosexuals can’t change—but
neither does it say they can. It says that the question itself can change and indeed has changed over time and throughout different cultures.

And in some places it may be changing before our eyes. Some young women, high school and college age, in the past few years have begun to show a sexual fluidity that we might be tempted to call post-identitarian. The psychologist Lisa Diamond’s longitudinal research on young women with same-sex attractions points to a serious disconnect between homo and hetero labels and her subjects’ real lives, which are marked by fluid shifts in attraction and object choice. Qualitative research on college-age women conducted by a Michigan student last year revealed changing social norms around young women whose romantic and sexual involvements were sometimes with men, sometimes with women; they identified as “nonheterosexual” but not necessarily lesbian, and in some cases bypassed any moment of coming out to family and friends. They and their social circles didn’t see the same need as past (especially post-Stonewall) generations to draw boundaries or mark distinctions in this way when shifting from boyfriend orientation to girlfriend orientation, or to choose one or the other as identity determinant.

And this seems all to the good, for purposes of social and sexual liberation. Of course, whether or not we “agree” with sexual identity, we cannot ignore it. We live in a society fundamentally structured by norms of gender and sexuality, and we work with students, young people who are subject to extreme, sometimes life-threatening, pressure from them. Louie Bergonzi discusses some of the real-world issues arising from these facts and affecting students and teachers every day in his MEJ article “Sexual Orientation and Music Education.” As I’ve suggested, being a social constructionist, acknowledging the cultural and historical contingency of sexual identity categories, or even the pivotal role they play in regimes of social control, does not make one exempt from their influence. Nearly twenty years ago Judith Butler wrote of her skepticism and ambivalence about writing under a lesbian identity label. “This is not to say that I will not appear at political occasions under the sign of lesbian,” she conceded, thus acknowledging the political efficacy of the label for purposes of contesting oppressive regimes, and signaling her solidarity with struggles for justice on behalf of those who come under LGBT labels.
So, clearly, there is an irony at the very center of what we do in LGBT studies. At the same time that we work to document and interpret LGBT lives, cultures, and histories, we’re engaged in exposing and taking apart the categories that define our work and, however problematically, our selves. When conservative opponents of LGBT studies decry our presence in universities they often rail against LGBT courses’ celebration of homosexual identities and indoctrination of students into them. The irony, as some of my colleagues have noted, lies in how much these courses are uniquely devoted to just the opposite: to critically scrutinizing homosexual identities and weakening their unquestioned, naturalized status in students’ minds, as in the culture. It was obvious to me after a few years’ teaching intro to LGBT studies that the course’s most basic, fundamental concept—that of sexuality’s social construction—was the most mind-blowing idea my students encountered all semester. For some students it was devastating, at least in the short term, to lose the certainty they had ascribed to sexual identity categories. Many of them had struggled to fit themselves into these categories—just one, of course, in accordance with the rules. And they might have recently decided on one, and maybe announced it to friends or family. Many of them didn’t expect to have that certainty shaken when they enrolled in my LGBT studies class. In the longer term, however, I suspect my students are better served by knowledge of sexuality’s cultural contingency and of cross-cultural and historical examples of some of the shifting forms and fashions human desire, sex, and subjectivity have taken in various times and places.

I also suspect that the more fluid, less rigid sexual lives and social identities we’re starting to see in some places among young women may reflect a loosening of the grip of binaristic identity categories—or at least I hope so. If teachings and writings in LGBT studies over the past couple decades have contributed to such a loosening, all the better. If I know one thing for sure from my teaching and speaking in this area over the years, it is that younger generations (at least by the time they reach the university, and have gotten past junior high, puberty, and high school anxieties) hold radically different views and feelings about things gay than their elders. I’ve seen this change quite a bit just over the past ten years. By now, even the most conventional, gender-normative, male student in a class is likely to volunteer insights on questions of queer culture, having close gay friends, and so on. The generational differences here are dramatic and, I think, utterly unfathomed by many older people.
So, frankly, I’m not too surprised when I see angry letters to the MEJ editor saying, “I’ve subscribed to this journal for thirty-five years, and now that you’ve published an antihomophobic article, I’m canceling my subscription!” I’m not suggesting that all people of a certain age share such a view. There were lovely letters, too, from retired teachers and emeritus professors praising the journal’s publication of the same article. There’s always diversity within any given generation, but my point is that, in general, it can be hard to get a rise out of people under thirty concerning LGBT issues that have been controversial for older generations. Queerness is just not as distant, othered, or threatening for these younger people. At the same time, there is still terrible bullying and social pressure among school kids, and the word “fag” remains the all-purpose taunt of choice, especially though not exclusively among boys, and there can be no denying that its use repeatedly hammers home the image of gayness as the ultimate social transgression—never mind what Eminem or anyone else might say about “fag” not really meaning “gay.”

There’s no realm of American school life more universally associated with “fag” taunting than school music. It’s particularly attached to student ensemble membership: we’ve all heard of the band fag, choir fag, and orchestra fag. This scenario suggests one reason that music education has stronger impetus than many other fields to open channels of inquiry and dialogue with LGBT studies. But it also predicts defensive reactions and denial among members of the music education community who don’t identify with feminizing and minoritizing sexual identity labels and resent being associated with them. I’ll never forget the story that circulated about a revered bandsman I played under for several years, when somehow he caught wind of the fact that his spectacular all-American high-stepping, high-twirling drum major was gay. “I won’t have a faggot leading my band!” was the phrase that went around among his many gay and lesbian band members (a group of which I was part). Our reaction combined exasperation, amusement, and vindication: “Who does he think he’s had leading his band for thirty years! With all those gleaming golden-boy drum majors?”

In the Gay Shame collection of LGBT scholarship that appeared last year I wrote about my experiences as a music student in the 1980s and the feeling my LGBT friends and I shared of occupying a special world at the intersection of queer culture and music culture, one where our people were accomplished and even indispensable and we could often be ourselves without hiding or apology, more comfortably than in other realms. I’ve also written about past musicians’ cultivation of such spaces: in
my book *Queer Composition*, on the Thomson-Copland circle of gay composers who managed to create the music of American national identity during the most homophobic period in the nation’s history.\textsuperscript{x} At least for the past hundred years the American music world—here I mean the realm of institutionally trained musicians—has been markedly queer in reputation and substance.

Somehow, queer kids often find their way to music. As the late founder of LGBT musicology Philip Brett once put it, music can be a “veritable lifeline” for queer children. It has been for generations now.\textsuperscript{v} Some stay around, to make a life and maybe a career there. This was true throughout much of the twentieth century, for reasons revealed by Brett in his classic essay “Musicality, Essentialism, and the Closet” and Suzanne Cusick in her equally classic essay “On a Lesbian Relationship with Music.”\textsuperscript{xi} And it’s still true today, as the Fox TV show *Glee* depicts, and parodies, so vividly and recognizably. One of the reasons the show hits its target so squarely, I think, is that it doesn’t draw artificial boundaries around the queerness of its characters. There are, of course, the explicitly gay and lesbian characters: on screen there’s Kurt Hummel, the flamboyantly gay soprano with a Mariah-Careylike range, and just off screen there’s the interracial gay couple who are loving dads to the glee club’s young Streisand, Rachel Berry (the out lesbian actor Jane Lynch plays the deliciously evil Sue Sylvester, comically heterosexual coach of the “Cheerios” cheerleading squad). But even the straight characters in this music-worshipping bubble seem, in their various ways, pretty suspicious. The earnest and upright, if often conflicted, glee club coach Will Schuester serves as paragon of heteronormative masculinity in this world—but one could easily imagine him reading as gay outside the show choir circuit.

And so it is in our own musical communities, which often foster alternative spectrums of gender and identity normalcy for members queer, straight, and in between, as well as none of the above. The poet, writer, and critic Wayne Koestenbaum captured this aspect of music-world life brilliantly in his literary prologue to the landmark LGBT musicology collection *Queering the Pitch*. Koestenbaum’s familiar queer characters include not only an aging, semi-retired lesbian professional accompanist and “an endearingly femme bass” chorister but a Tchaikovsky scholar self-described as “a straight man, out of place, pensive and huge, with the wrong haircut and the wrong shoes and the wrong tastes,” devoted by dint of his Tchaikovskian vocation to “the involuted discourse of homosexuality.”\textsuperscript{xii} Elsewhere, the music theorist and critic Fred Maus has written of his family upbringing with a mother and father who were both orchestral musicians, and how the world of his parents and their friends seemed to him as a
kid clear demonstration that music could create a life-space apart from the rigid gender and sexuality norms of the regular world.\textsuperscript{xiii}

As an adult Maus made his own career in music but nevertheless encountered rigid and phobic attitudes toward gender and sexuality in his chosen field of music theory. His essay “Masculine Discourse in Music Theory” analyzes mainstream music theory’s “distanced, technical, nonexperiential” discourse as an attempt to avoid any appearance of unmanliness and to compensate for the theorist’s inevitable involvement in the passive, receptive practice known as \textit{listening}.\textsuperscript{xiv} Other musical gender and sexuality scholars have written of music’s effeminizing threat in Western patriarchal culture and various defensive reactions, including the “great man” and masterwork ideologies of Austro-Germanic musical tradition.\textsuperscript{xv} Brett noted the musical profession’s anxious, compensatory preoccupations with mastery, rigor, and competitiveness. He argued that “Teutonic abstraction” and hierarchical ordering in musicology and theory have served to appropriate music for patriarchal purposes and to keep its sensuous, irrational, feminized qualities at bay.\textsuperscript{xvi} All these instances point to a fundamental insight I hope you’ll keep in mind throughout your pursuits in antihomophobic research and pedagogy. That is, on the defining linkage between the constructs of femininity and homosexuality (conventionally figured as male)—and hence between misogyny and homophobia, and relatedly, between fear of the feminized art of music and fear of the feminized category of “gay.”

Now, you might tell me that being a gay man has nothing to do with being effeminate. And I wouldn’t disagree; in many places that can be true. But not in the realm of cultural constructions and archetypes. There, never mind that the modern scientific and legalistic definition of the male homosexual simply specifies any male whose sexual object is also male, regardless of gender disposition. As the queer theorist Eve Sedgwick noted, the late–nineteenth-century ascendance of the homosexual paradigm was not a clean sweep, wiping away all previous conceptions of male-male, or female-female, sex. Indeed, the new, official concept of the homosexual coexisted with older, contradictory scientific and folk concepts, especially that of the sissy man (or mannish woman), which sexology has just earlier designated as the “gender invert” and defined in terms of a woman’s soul in a man’s body (or vice versa).\textsuperscript{xvii} Even today, we’re all very familiar with the image of the gay man as definitively \textit{effeminate}. However inaccurate or annoying some of us might find that stereotype, we cannot afford to ignore it (as LGBT studies too often has). For this persistent stereotype points to the persistent linkage of gay men’s
social and cultural challenges with those of women, and thus to the need for gay male analysis and politics to engage with gender analysis, and feminist politics.

In conclusion, I want to return to the notion of visibility that I raised at the outset in connection with the idea of “Establishing Identity,” and I want to bring up here one more example of ambivalence and skepticism, showing how different cultural-historical moments might call for different political strategies. The LGBT visibility that promised liberation in post-Stonewall rallying cries to “Just come out!” has come under scrutiny in recent global/transnational queer analyses. These point out the mismatch between visibility projects and postcolonial subjects’ conditioned tendency to avoid visibility, categorization, and enumeration, which have been associated with colonial surveillance and legal apparatuses. xviii

I’m grappling with similar issues in my current book project Rednecks, Queers, and Country Music. The focus of my inquiry is different, but I too perceive a mismatch: between the domestic rural and working-class queerness that interests me here and the visibility-based coming-out standard that attaches to LGBT identity and legitimacy—a visibility standard through which urban and middle-class homonorms have been exported, universalized, and globalized. xix What does current research suggest about LGBT visibility on rural and working-class sites? It suggests that established presence in the community and adherence to community moral values like loyalty, honor, and personal sincerity come before all else. xx But where’s queer visibility in this formulation? Nowhere—hence the mismatch. The politics of queer visibility come out of a middle-class logic involving claims to individual rights. The rural and working-class logic of social coexistence and interaction involves being known and trusted, accepted in the community as a “good person.” xxxi And then, according to some queer locals, you can be whatever you want to be; nobody cares. xxii

What we learn of rural and working-class communities in academe, including LGBT studies, tends to come from middle-class and urban perspectives, which teach us that they are the breeding grounds of homophobia and bigotry. Under a middle-class, “metronormative” lens, the absence of LGBT visibility here is evidence of backwardness and intolerance. xxxii The standard by which rural and working-class communities are judged and found lacking is that of rights claims. But research reveals that these are based on a “recognition politics” exclusively available to middle-class individuals. xxiv As social theory
demonstrates time and again, the middle class is blind to the social and cultural systems of the working class—and vice versa: although middle-class perspectives and values are dominant, they’re anything but transparent from a working-class standpoint.\textsuperscript{xxv} Time constraints prevent me from discussing the vast implications of this mutual opacity between the American working and middle classes and how it intersects with LGBT lives and politics and with musical and cultural engagements. But the questions should interest, at the least, those whose research or teaching touches rural or working-class communities.

I will take up these questions in my book and position them as part of the broader project of examining the effects of globalization of LGBT identities, currently an area of energy and excitement in LGBT studies. Surely the present and future of LGBT studies will include interrogation of fundamental notions of queer visibility and the limits of L, G, B, and T identities. The point is to refine our understandings in the field by means of ever more local knowledges. Now, the point of queer institutionalization, I think many of us would agree, is not to domesticate queerness or to dilute its power to resist oppressive sociosexual norms. But undoubtedly—and I speak here as an institutionalizing queer scholar—some measure of that dilution and domestication comes with the territory. In the words of Joni Mitchell, “something’s lost and something’s gained.”\textsuperscript{xxvi}

I’m thrilled that this conference is happening, and I’m thrilled to be part of it. I hope and expect it will spark many positive changes for music education, including changes in organizational climate and shared perceptions, such that in the not-too-distant future your friends and colleagues—LGBT-identified, allies, and others—won’t hesitate to attend LGBT panels and events for fear of what others in the field might think. After twenty years of institutionalized LGBT musicology, that is one simple but crucial form of normalization that we enjoy, and have enjoyed for some time. Speaking from my own experience, I’d say the benefits of moving freely and unguardedly through one’s research interests and professional life outweigh the sacrifice of more intense in-group bonds and of possibly deriving valuable perceptions or unique vision from a position on the margins. But that’s not to minimize these sacrifices. They are real, and you can find critiques, nostalgia, and mourning about the losses of queer mainstreaming in some recent LGBT studies work.
This conference creates opportunities to discuss potentials and pitfalls, strategies, and circumstances as music education takes a public and deliberate step to engage with LGBT studies. I've raised various subjects under these headings and hope they might be of use for seeding the conversation you’re starting here with productive questions. Reckoning with the problems and promises of identity, visibility, and institutionalization can underscore the continuing importance of skepticism, ambivalence, and self-examination in LGBT studies as you go forward to expand antihomophobic institutional formations in music education.

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**Notes:**


For discussion of issues of queer visibility based on ethnography of rural LGBT youth see Mary L. Gray, “Introduction: There Are No Queers Here,” in Out in the Country: Youth, Media, and the Queering of Rural America, 1–31 (New York: New York University Press, 2009). My own study is focused primarily on working-class culture and relies in part on Beverley Skeggs, Class, Self, Culture (New York: Routledge, 2004). Skeggs discusses the distinct values of the working vs. middle classes on the contemporary political landscape, and the nonrecognition of those on the working-class side: “The emphasis on moral authority, produced from recognition politics [to which the middle class has exclusive access], means that many [working-class] values cannot be recognized by the middle-class commentators, those who can only see from their own position and are unable to extend their perspectives” (185).

Emily A. Kazyak, “‘There’s Still Queer People Here’: How Rural Gays and Lesbians Construct Sexual Identities” (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 2010); Gray, “Introduction.”


The coinage is that of Judith Halberstam, who defines metronormativity in terms of a “story of migration from ‘country’ to ‘town’, . . . a spatial narrative within which the subject moves to a place of tolerance after enduring life in a place of suspicion, persecution, and secrecy”: *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 36–37.

Skeggs, *Class, Self, Culture*, does not specify metropolitanism, but one could argue for the connection. Studies of rural communities attest to the differing mechanisms between social worlds based on knowing and being known by everyone, and those based on anonymity.
