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Amber CLIFFORD-NAPOLEONE, *Queerness in heavy metal music: metal bent*

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L'auteur & les Éd. Mélanie Seteun

development of the faux-traditional genre of *enka* derived from slightly earlier modern styles and conceived as an alternative to westernized pop music. Tōru Mitsui looks in to the perhaps uniquely Japanese tendency to sing triple time songs in duple time, excavating recordings from the 1920s and 1930s that demonstrate an early proclivity for this.

Part 2 presents a brief history of live and recorded rock in Japan from the late 1950s to the present. Terumasa Shimizu outlines the progression from early postwar covers to the beginning of an original Japanese rock in the 1960s. Katsuya Minamida applies a Bourdieuan analysis to 1970s rock, forwarding a model of mainstream cooptation of rock counterculture as an engine for musical change up to the present. Jun'ichi Nagai traces the history of live rock in Japan, from the coffeehouses of the 1950s to the multi-day outdoor festivals of today.

Part 3 deals with music in film and animation. Kyōko Koizumi analyses one of the film scores of renowned composer Tōru Takemitsu, arguing that international audiences, in ignoring his more conventional works, may be guilty of a

sort of orientalism. Hideko Haguchi uncovers the world music pioneer responsible for the soundtrack for the dystopian, cyberpunk animated movie *Akira*. Aki Yamasaki investigates how *anime* voice actors singing in character have gained ground in the pop charts of the struggling local music industry.

Yoshitaka Mōri's chapter on J-Pop looks at how this music, until recently almost entirely unknown outside of Japan, is being received abroad due to new modes of consumption. Finally, the short interview with Tatsuro Yamashita, an insider who has lived the history of postwar popular music, provides an intimate perspective on the topic to close out the volume.

Though there are occasional, minor translation issues, this book provides a straight-forward but scholarly overview of selected topics in Japanese popular music. While not encyclopedic, it is thorough on the topics that it does cover, providing some much needed context to the existing writing in English on Japanese popular music.

Gerry McGOLDRICK

Amber Clifford-Napoleone, *Queerness in Heavy Metal Music : Metal Bent*, Abingdon, Routledge, 2015.

Metal Bent is an important book that sheds new light on the topic of gender and sexuality in metal music. Its aims are to queer metal and reconfigure discussion of the genre around gender and sexuality, and to move on from thinking about metal as just for "the straight boys" (3). These aims are achieved through a

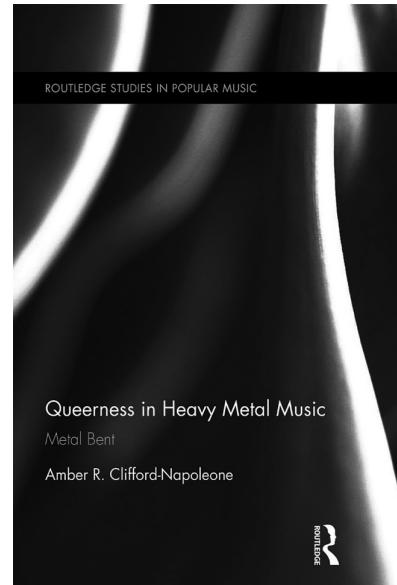
discussion of the style and media coverage of various musicians, and the results of a survey and interviews with queer metal fans. Central are the assertions that metal is queer and that the genre provides a safe space for queer identified people—a queerscape. Identifying this is essential to understanding the genre,

Clifford-Napoleone argues. I have some criticisms of the book, which I address below, but it is nevertheless a timely and vital contribution to scholarship on heavy metal.

In the first chapter Clifford-Napoleone uses Butlerian theory to argue that metal's masculinity is not an essential quality of the genre: "queerness in heavy metal is not the mirage but the reality. It is masculinity that is the mirage" (12). This critique of metal's supposed masculinity will be useful for scholars of queer theory (metal as case study) and gender and metal. Yet, the author characterises current metal scholarship as heterosexist and monolithic, thus omitting discussion of recent work by Rosemary Overell, Gabrielle Riches, myself and others on gender and metal.

Chapter 2 gives an overview of the relationship between queer, BDSM and leather and heavy metal through discussion of Rob Halford, Susie Quatro and others. Clifford-Napoleone argues that leather works as a queer symbol within metal. The chapter is predominantly historical. It is a shame that it does not include discussion of the survey responses, which would have helped understanding of how leather is read by queer and non-queer fans. Equating queerness with leather is somewhat problematic as there are other queer identities. Equating it with the performance of masculinity is also problematic; Angela Gossow's mixing of feminine and masculine signifiers might easily be read as queer, but not in this book.

In Chapter 3 the author does draw on the surveys and interviews with fans to argue that metal is not the homophobic space that it is thought to be, because queer fans report little homophobic discrimination or violence. How-



ever, she provides evidence that harassment does occur and that fans downplay it. This raises the question, why do some fans explain away incidents? Is this enough to assert that metal is not homophobic? These are important questions that are not addressed. More exciting is the section on audiotopia, which argues that metal provides a space for justified anger. Clifford-Napoleone draws a correlation with gender dysphoria and associated difficulties with heterosexist society.

Chapter 4 considers the gender performance of some queer metal musicians. She argues that metal performers' queer signals are evident for anyone who wants to read them, and that they disrupt conventional understandings of gender. She reads black metal musi-

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cian Gaahl as a trickster, arguing that he plays with the boundaries of what counts as inside and outside the genre and of what counts as homophobia and queer sexuality. His denial of any homophobic narrative in the two famous black metal murders “reveals the interplay of black metal and sexuality in the queerscape” (90). I argue that it is problematic to understand Gaahl’s response as merely playful, as Clifford-Napoleone does, and it would have been valuable to see some discussion of Keith Kahn-Harris’s (2004) notion of reflexive-anti-reflexivity at this point. In the interpretations of Joan Jett and Otep’s gender performance as female masculinity, more context regarding women’s music making would have been pertinent: women who want to make rock’n’roll must utilise the (masculine) gender signifiers of rock to be taken seriously. Understanding the context of—and barriers to—music making for women and the different strategies employed to overcome them, is therefore a crucial part of analysing Jett and Otep’s performances, but it is neglected here.

In chapter 5 the author discusses the particular subgenres that different identity groups (bisexual, FTM, gay, etc.) prefer, and includes some quotation from her survey. She argues that metal is a queerscape, allowing queer fans a space to explore and articulate their gender and sexuality; furthermore it is not homophobic, rather it is effeminophobic. It would be useful to compare this with Weinstein’s (2000) assertion that metal is not sexist, but has a problem with femininity and Overell’s (2012) discussion of grindcore fans’ eschewment of “feminine” emotions. Problematically the author surmises why some subgenres might

be preferred, e.g. claiming that queer fans love homophobic black and death metal because “what could be more extreme than listening to music that objectifies and threatens you?” (117), rather than offering evidence from her participants. Instead she assumes that her participants’ reasons explicitly have to do with their gender and sexual identities. But musical preference cannot be boiled down to simplistic understandings of gendered appreciation (Fast, 1999; Hill, 2016); it is much more complex than that. Clifford-Napoleone’s final point, however, is absolutely right. Michelle Phillipov (2012) asserts that taking gender as a problem in metal limits the questions that can be asked. Clifford-Napoleone refutes this, arguing that gender is at the heart of metal and therefore essential to understanding the genre: without considering gender we cannot fully consider metal. This is spot-on.

In spite of the problematic elements of the book, I recommend it to anyone interested in metal music studies or queerness and music. Its initial critique of masculinity as nothing more than performance in metal is superb and utterly needed. Furthermore, the exploration of sexuality changes the discussion in current metal scholarship, moving forward from assertions of the genre as either essentially heterosexual or (supposedly) asexual. In terms of metal scholarship, *Metal Bent* sheds valuable light on a number of contradictory elements in the genre and provides a good foundation for exploring further.

Rosemary Lucy Hill

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Dominique Caubet, *Shouf Shouf Hollanda : succesvol en Marokkaan*, Breda, de Geus, 2006.

In *Shouf Shouf Hollanda* Dominique Caubet, professor in Maghrebi Arabic in France, reports on a series of interviews she has conducted among fourteen Dutch-Moroccan artists from various artistic disciplines. The book is structured in such a way that each artist is briefly introduced, then followed by the interview in verbatim; the final part contains an elaborate commentary by the author on the main findings.

The author discusses a widely debated issue of identity among migrants in the Netherlands—a country that has seen, in recent decades, an influx of labour migrants from predominantly Morocco and Turkey (Berkers, 2009). These migrants, later, were able to bring their family to the Netherlands, subsequently raising their children in a culture that is different from the

one they brought with them. The author's main questions, therefore, touches upon this very issue: how does one refer to artists from Moroccan descent who have, in recent years, established themselves in and contributed to various Dutch cultural scenes—are they Dutch or Moroccan? In raising this question amongst the artists themselves, the book gives a refreshing insight into how such artists view their own identity and their role in the respective cultural scenes in which they have been successful.

In each interview, the central questions asked to the interviewees mainly involve two issues. First, Caubet, in some of her questions, stresses the role of language and how the artists navigate between the use of Dutch and native Moroccan languages. Second, she aims to discuss the art-