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Identifying the English: essentialism and multiculturalism in contemporary English folk music

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Recent trends in ethnomusicology have included a growing concern with indigeneity. A *conceptual alternative to the discipline's long-standing* preoccupations with diaspora, indigeneity is frequently characterised through a narrative in which 'native' groups assert their identity in opposition to an invading—historical or contemporary—oppressor.

The recent explosion of interest in the expression of an English identity within contemporary, multicultural Britain offers a very different narrative. Amid wider public celebrations of Englishness, and popular concerns about immigration, UK devolution, EU federalisation and US-led globalization, a resurgence has taken place in the profile of specifically English folk music and dance since around 2000.

The last ten years have seen an emerging movement to reclaim Englishness by the political left, yet the folk arts pose specific problems for such a project—namely, the reification of nostalgia for a rurality that is necessarily pre-multicultural. Through examining some case studies of the current English folk resurgence, this paper will discuss how contemporary English folk artists (the majority of whom share left-of-centre politics) attempt to negotiate Englishness in relation to their multicultural and multinational British context.

Keywords: England; Folk Music; National Identity; Indigeneity; Multiculturalism; Whiteness

In October 2014, the UK's then Prime Minister, David Cameron, posed for a photograph with a group of morris dancers at Banbury Folk Festival. The morris dancers, a side called Foxs Morris, were part of the border morris tradition and, as is common in that tradition, they blacked up (that is, their undeniably white faces were covered—to varying extents—by black face paint). The photograph quickly reached the national press, and the blacking of the dancers' faces was analysed and critiqued in endless—and often furious—detail, with many considering it an unwelcome throwback to the overt racism of blackface minstrelsy (e.g., Okolosie 2014; Usborne 2014).

The blacking-up debate has a long history, and the activity itself has been scrutinised in much detail in various academic research and practitioner-generated discourse (see further, Bater 2013; Buckland 1990; Davey 2006; Schofield 2005). Nevertheless, the public response to the photograph (and to the traditional costume foregrounded within it) indicated some interesting things about the relationship between English folk arts and English politics. First, the event was presented as a discovery: much of the journalistic rhetoric was based on an underlying disbelief that such a thing could still be happening in an enlightened modern society. Border morris has, nonetheless, involved dancers blacking up since its revival in the 1970s, and these dancers, so adorned, regularly perform in well-frequented public spaces including market squares, high streets, and pub car parks throughout England.¹ The fact that their black-faced behaviours are a revelation to media commentators is, then, an interesting statement of the peripheral—even invisible—nature of the tradition to contemporary, mainstream English society. Notably, such revelations are repeated on a regular basis: earlier that same year, another politician, Labour Party candidate Will Straw, triggered a twitter-storm by posting an image of himself posing with members of the black-faced Bacup

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¹ One or two more localised dance traditions have involved blacking up since much earlier; see Buckland 1990.

Britannia Coconut Dancers. Second, these controversies throw into sharp relief the ways in which folk and traditional activities—despite their marginal status in English society—speak so directly and resonantly to political concerns and debates around race and identity in England’s increasingly volatile political landscape.

The contemporary English folk scene encompasses activities ranging from participatory singing in clubs, playing instrumental repertory in pub sessions, and social dancing in ceilidhs, to presentational forms such as morris dancing and concert performances by professional musicians at festivals. The post-war folk revival of the 1960s, mirroring and interleaving with the American folk movement, resulted in a generally positive profile for folk music, with the folk rock movement bringing much revival material to mainstream rock audiences (see Sweers 2005). After the 1960s, however, the popularity of folk music and dance in England steadily waned; by the 1980s engagement in folk music and dance was relegated in status to something of a national joke, caricatured in terms of out-of-touch, bearded geography teachers, lacking in self-awareness or any real artistic ability. Since around 2000, however, many forms of English folk culture have moved from being topics of ridicule to something altogether more acceptable: the controversies of blacking-up notwithstanding, the more common and politically less challenging elements of English folk music and dance are now acknowledged and even celebrated in mainstream media—and in the wider public consciousness. Exemplary of this shift has been the rise to prominence of the eleven-piece band Bellowhead, who during their active period (2004–2016) gained a celebrity status within and beyond the folk world, performing eclectic arrangements of long-established folk songs and traditional dance tunes at sell-out concerts to growing audiences of young ‘folkies’, in large-scale venues more commonly associated with pop and rock (e.g. the O2 ABC, Glasgow) and classical music (e.g. the Albert Hall, London), as well as for

appearances on popular music TV programmes like *Later with Jools Holland*.² Bellowhead's success is indicative of the wider resurgence of interest in—and profile of—the English folk arts, albeit a resurgence that has also increased the frequency and volume of the blacking-up debate.

Crucially, the timing of that resurgence is not arbitrary: English folk has grown in popularity and significance within English culture in parallel to a swelling awareness of, concern for and discussion about English national and cultural identity. A number of key factors have spurred on this national impulse toward the negotiation and articulation of Englishness (Winter and Keegan-Phipps 2013: 105-111). One of these has been the discourse of increasing political division between the four nations of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Much scholarship on contemporary English national identity has been aimed at unpacking the complex and long-running emergence of a distinct England from the backdrop of an increasingly divided Britain (Aughey 2007; Aughey and Berberich 2011; Hazell 2006). A more literal state of division was narrowly halted when the referendum on Scottish independence, on 18 September 2014, returned a 'no' vote with only the slightest of majorities. Nonetheless, the general trend towards a discursive erosion of a unified Britishness is now unquestionable. It is also well-established: discrepancies in the comparative political influence of the nations was highlighted in the UK parliament by the West Lothian question as far back as 1977, and the notable absence of an English assembly—contrasting with the presence and increasing powers of the Scottish parliament and assemblies in Wales and Northern Ireland—continues to play a central role in political debates about the governance of England.³

² I use the term 'folkies' here as it is colloquially used in the folk scene to refer to all self-identifying folk musicians, dancers, enthusiasts, activists and dedicated audiences.

³ The West Lothian Question is the title given to the general state of affairs—now an established reality in British politics—whereby Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish MPs determine many crucial points of their respective legislatures within their devolved national parliament/assembly, while simultaneously being able to

The rising discourse around contemporary Englishness is not, however, pitched only in response to ‘others’ from within the United Kingdom. Alternative outsiders take the form of peoples from beyond Britain’s shores, whose presence—physical, political or cultural—is felt ever more keenly in England. Among the externalised forces identified within discourse about Englishness is the looming spectre of US-led cultural and economic globalisation. Concerns around the homogenisation of the English cultural experience (Kingsnorth 2008) normally centre on our shopping practices, and often focus on the ubiquity of US chains such as Starbucks, McDonalds, Amazon and Google. Likewise, the inhabitants and political leaders of mainland Europe—as constructs within British public debate—have played a central role in the formulation of the new Englishness: concerns about an increasingly federalised Europe, and a perceived deference of British sovereign powers to the European Union, have often been iterated closely alongside specific anxieties over England’s relative political impotence.

The growing volume of this particular debate accounts—at least in some large part—for the explosion of profile of the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) in recent years (explored by Ford and Goodwin 2014).⁴ Most recently, the politics of an increasingly divided Britain have been recently thrown into stark relief by the result of the United Kingdom European Union Membership Referendum, or ‘EU Referendum’ (23 June 2016). The outcome (likely to be fresh in the minds of many readers), was the largely unanticipated decision—by a majority of just 2%—to initiate Brexit (the leaving of the European Union by the UK).

vote in Westminster upon legislation that only affects English constituencies. It was named after the constituency of the Labour MP Tam Dalyell who, during the 1970s and 1980s, regularly raised concerns over the potential for such democratic inequalities through devolution.

⁴ Whilst it should be recognised that the two subjects (growing discourse about EU federalisation and the rise in profile of specifically English politics) are separate in literal and logical terms, they are nevertheless closely connected by their shared foundations in a localist agenda.

The referendum—its campaigns and results—furthered the exploration and articulation of Englishness in two ways. First, since the ‘leave’ vote appears to have been to some large extent predicated on a desire to ‘take back control’ of immigration policy from the EU, our attention is drawn to ‘immigrants’—another high-profile group of ‘outsiders’ against which the new Englishness is ideologically positioned. This emotive discursive category, politically appealing to the far right, is based on two interrelated concerns: that there are too many of ‘them’ (i.e., that immigration is ‘out of control’), and that ‘their’ arrival in England is an economic and cultural threat to the well-being of ‘us’ (the ambiguously conceptualised English). Fears about a general lack of integration—cultural, linguistic, religious, and so on—between immigrant and native English communities are one source of a vague and often tacit backdrop of civil, political and cultural anxiety among many sectors of the self-identifying ‘English’ society. Second, the geography of votes cast in the referendum highlighted differences between the majority views of voters in the four countries of the UK. Specifically, England saw the largest percentage of ‘leave votes’ (just over 53%), while in Northern Ireland and Scotland the majority voted for the UK to remain a member of the EU (56% and 62%, respectively).⁵

Clearly, the explicit expression of concerns about English national identity, voiced in terms of any one or more of the above narratives, derives from a varied portfolio of political beliefs and allegiances, encompassing both the political right and the liberal left. In this article, I consider some significant moments of contact between the contemporary English folk scene and wider discourses surrounding the politics of Englishness, before broadening the discussion to indicate the challenges posed by those theoretical discourses to the study of folk culture in such environments, and to propose an alternative language and theoretical

⁵ It is widely assumed that this difference in voting patterns (and the fact that England’s electorate were ultimately responsible for the carrying, Brexit vote) is likely to play an important role in precipitating a second Scottish Referendum in the near future.

platform for the political analysis of folk and traditional cultures of indigenous, white, majority groups. The following discussion is based upon fifteen years of active ethnographic fieldwork in the English folk scene, and on publicly circulated discourse (such as press releases and CD artwork). I will concentrate on relatively outlying—but increasingly common—invocations of multiculturalism in English folk music, in order to reveal some central concepts and controversies within the development of an Englishness that responds to the discourses outlined above, while simultaneously meeting the ideological needs of a predominantly left-liberal folk music community. I will then go on to consider the potential of whiteness studies, indigeneity and multiculturalism as perspectives for framing our understanding of those trends and contexts where English folk is consciously drawn upon within performative constructions of a post-imperial England, and a post-imperial Englishness.

The politics of English folk

The concurrence of the English folk resurgence with broader public and academic discussion about Englishness is, as already stated, no coincidence.⁶ As is commonly the case where national folk arts movements ascend in profile ('folk revivals', Livingston 1999), this movement in England is closely related to the wider concerns about national identity. Although writing more specifically about the creation of national folksong collections, Bohlman effectively links spikes of folk music activity with cultural moments involving the definition, redefinition or contestation of the nation (2004: 94), and the contemporary English case clearly illustrates that link as well. Briefly put, the folk construct may contribute to the

⁶ I use the term 'resurgence' rather than 'revival' to label the current phenomenon in England for a number of reasons, chief among them being that the activity in contemporary English folk lacks the clear ideological and artistic direction normally associated with music revivals; instead, performances range from traditional, acoustic duos through to hip-hop inflected stage-shows, with little sense of aesthetic or processual criteria being employed to articulate the status of folk activities as core or peripheral. See Winter and Keegan-Phipps 2013, 10-11.

expression of ethnic nationalism through indexical reinforcement of concepts like authenticity, rurality, antiquity and historically rooted racial purity. Nonetheless, the vast majority of English folk musicians, dancers and audiences actually share left-of-centre politics, and oppose the nationalist rhetoric of the far right. Rather than linking their activities to the celebration of nationalism, the majority of folk performers and enthusiasts consider their involvement in the folk arts to be an expression of vernacularism. That is to say, they identify with a construct of folk music and dance more closely associated with the mid-twentieth century folk movements of the UK and America, whereby the ‘folk’ label took on new meaning as denoting the cultural ‘voice of the people’,⁷ in line with an inclusive, post-war socialism. The jarring coexistence of these opposing mobilisations of folk culture resulted in a highly publicised controversy during 2007–2012 in which liberal left folkies united to vocally reject nationalists’ attempts to appropriate their music and dance traditions and performances.⁸ Key moments in the confrontation included the unauthorised use of folk-rock duo Show of Hands’ newly composed song ‘Roots’ by the far right British National Party (BNP) in its campaign materials. The party’s then chairman, Nick Griffin, also publicly stated his love of folk music, with specific reference to individual acts such as the singer Kate Rusby, and it became apparent that the BNP’s fundraising online shop was selling CDs which included recordings of popular, working folk artists (none of whom were sympathetic towards the party’s extreme policies, which included repatriation and isolationism). Along with the regular circulation in national press of explicit rejections of nationalist politics, prominent members of the folk community also mustered a response in the form of a campaign, entitled Folk Against Fascism (see, for example, Kenny 2014: 147). The campaign was heavily promoted and celebrated within the folk scene, and gained enough publicity

⁷ Hence The Voice of the People record series, first issued by Topic Records in 1988, which has drawn from field recordings made around the British Isles in the 1950s and 1960s (Topic Records 2010).

⁸ The precise nature of the appropriation of folk music by the far right has been discussed in full elsewhere: see, for instance, Lucas 2013; Winter and Keegan-Phipps 2013: 153-9.

nationally to momentarily distance its members—and the folk community at large—from far-right politics.

The controversies and political struggles over the materials and texts of English folk culture have, however, come about because both sides of the right/left political divide are simultaneously and uncomfortably united in the representation of Englishness as a beleaguered identity: something lost, forgotten, ignored or even suppressed by post-colonial guilt and governmental policy. A simple but effective example of this discourse unfolded in the programme notes to a morris dancing-based stage show by the dance group Morris Offspring. The show, entitled *On English Ground*, toured medium-sized performing arts and concert venues in 2005–6, accompanied by the musical trio *The English Acoustic Collective*.⁹ The artists involved in the show were—and remain—central to the contemporary folk scene, and have appeared regularly both at folk events (such as festivals) and more mainstream arts venues. In the programme notes, besides the credits and promotional images, was a floating quotation from Alan Lomax’s ‘Appeal for Cultural Equity’, which read ‘All cultures deserve their fair share of the airtime’ (Lomax 1977: 129). The cultural and political statement being made through the inclusion of this phrase was a striking and multifaceted one. First, it spoke directly to the idea that the English traditions on display in the show had not previously received their ‘fair share of the airtime’; ‘airtime’ here reads as an indexical signifier that goes beyond media profile to include broader concepts such as popular celebration and participation, respect and status—in short, cultural value. Second, the quote invoked an academic piece of writing which, when written, was designed to muster support for—and awareness of—underrepresented musics of peoples beyond the limits of white Euro-America. The quote’s appearance in the programme for a morris dancing show placed this very white, English genre subtly but deliberately into the subaltern bracket. Finally, the fact that the quote

⁹ The prominent positioning of the words English, England, Anglo and Albion in the titles of artistic outputs and discourse has played an important role in the voicing of this resurgence.

needed no introduction or discussion in the show's programme was a testament to the fact that this conception of English traditional music and dance—as beleaguered or suppressed—was shared and understood (or could, at least, be comfortably inferred) by the show's audience. The title song, performed by the English Acoustic Collective as part of the show, went further, identifying perceived obstructions to English traditional culture's success:

We hear the songs of Africa,
We hear the Celtic bard,
But the gold that we are searching for
Is in our own backyard. (Chris Wood, performed 2005)

At first glance, these lyrics appear to extend a gentle but accusatory finger at English folk's competitors in the cultural marketplace. 'The songs of Africa' would appear to indicate the World Music market, but could also be read as a reference to the African-American origins of much Western popular music. 'The Celtic bard', on the other hand, invokes the (now historical) relative supremacy of Irish and Scottish traditional music over English folk music in terms of its popularity among English audiences. Crucially, however, the central culprits for the underachievement of English folk music and dance are (according to the song) the English themselves. A collective 'we'—the English—is identified, in every line of this excerpt, as to some extent responsible for being preoccupied with the (traditional) cultures of other peoples, and for a failure to search in the right places for our own 'gold'. In this context, the precious treasure that the English audience is now encouraged to seek is 'golden' in that it constitutes the cultural materials necessary to celebrate an English identity; so it is implied that a sense of self among the English has waned as a result of their (our) failure to maintain and respect English cultural heritage. Finally, the identification of the artists with their audience in sharing this concern indicates that the show's content is not aimed at portraying a national identity to foreign observers (an otherwise commonly observed element within nationally driven folk art movements: see, for instance, Hellier-Tinoco 2011;

Ronström 2014), but rather an intimate and shared exploration of national identity in which only the English themselves are implored to partake.¹⁰

English folk as ‘British Englishness’

Within this cultural and political context, a number of acts within the English folk resurgence have made very clear attempts to explore, through their music and dance, a kind of Englishness that moves beyond a historically rooted, ethnically pure, green-and-pleasant-land vision of the English and towards a contemporary version of Englishness that reconciles the implied indigeneity of folk with the multiculturalism of modern England. Often, this has happened through a ‘mosaic’ narrative, where English folk arts are portrayed as one cultural heritage among a variety of traditions in contemporary England. This construction of Englishness hinges on the underlying argument that English traditions should be considered equal in value to those of other cultural groups, both within England and beyond. One articulation of this imperative can be found in the framing of English folk within performance and discursive contexts usually reserved for ‘world music’.¹¹

The relationship between Englishness and multicultural society was explored in this way when the world music magazine *fRoots* released two compilation CDs, both subtitled *Looking for a New England* (2009; 2010). The title was borrowed from 1983 single ‘A New England’ by the singer-songwriter and left-wing political activist Billy Bragg and, for the more knowledgeable among the magazine’s readership, recognition of this association immediately revealed something of the radical subtext to the project. The first of the CDs was subtitled *New Folk: Old Roots*, and contained tracks from various acts on the English folk circuit, including high-profile performers such as Shirley Collins; Chris Wood; Bella Hardy;

¹⁰ An interesting parallel can be seen in the ‘*furusato*’ concept in Japan (Hughes 2008: 1-4; 268-273) and the development of ‘domestic exoticism’ (Mitsui 1998).

¹¹ Other examples of this reframing are explored in Winter and Keegan-Phipps (2013: 125, 144-151).

and Jon Boden, and covering a range of generations. This album was then followed by a second, subtitled 2: The Other Traditions, and containing a wide variety of acts more easily recognised among the magazine's readership as 'world music'. These included acts such as the Dohl Foundation, Spirit Talk Mbira and the London Bulgarian Choir. Significant here is the use of the term 'other' in the subtitle of the latter CD. While the second CD is overtly celebratory of an inclusive and diverse 'new England', there is little question that the 'other traditions' are separate (both conceptually and, here, physically) from the English self—the 'old' or 'real' England of English folk music—exemplified on the first disc. This distinction is made more explicit through the visual artwork for the CDs by pop artist David Owen: the cover art of *The Other Traditions* (Figure 1) depicts a billboard on which the well-known world music artist Sheila Chandra, born in England of Indian descent, stands proudly wearing a garland of flowers. Behind her is a sepia photograph of a group of Cotswold morris dancers, clearly taken in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century. In this way, the identification of them and us in this celebration of a 'new England' is reframed in chronological terms—now and then. The result is that a separation remains between the English self and its others, but inter-temporal references disrupt the potential for divisive, ethnicity-based political content. Thus, we see the conceptualising of a discrete, essentialised Englishness, located within both a multicultural Britain and a 'new' (read, culturally diverse and tolerant) England. Crucially, in both narratives, the ethnic and cultural pluralism of the context is foregrounded and celebrated, although the English folk content remains implicitly white and historically rooted.

Indian Englishness in English folk

For some performers, effective response to the machinations of the far right has necessitated a rejection of objectivist constructions of indigeneity (and the implication of racial purity), in

favour of an engagement with a version that constructs Englishness as itself inherently multicultural or ethnically diverse. This is generally approached through the deliberate incorporation of non-native ‘other’ instruments and sounds in the performance of traditional, historically rooted English folk materials. Perhaps the most significant example of a folk group that foregrounds the ethnic diversity of contemporary England (at least in the context of the current English folk resurgence) has been The Imagined Village (see Lucas 2013; Winter and Keegan-Phipps 2013: 146-152). Since its inception, this project (latterly a fully-fledged group) has articulated a narrative of Englishness as an inherently multi-ethnic identity. Bragg, a central and founding figure of the project, summed up this view during a talk to audiences at the WOMAD festival ahead of their launch performance in 2007:

Anglo-Saxon has a hyphen in it...: it’s the only racial type in the world that has a hyphen in it; that little hyphen has been there ever since our country was founded. (Bragg, speaking in The Imagined Village workshop, 2007)

The multi-ethnicity of the group’s personnel is essential to the musical and visual articulation of this statement. The political content of The Imagined Village can, to a certain extent, be approached in terms of the now abundant literature on musical fusion and collaborative projects (in terms of textual approach and political implication, it shares much, for instance with the Ethiopian-Israeli collaborations recently theorised in this journal by Webster-Kogen 2014). Throughout the project’s eponymous first album (2007), dub-beat samples and traditional English songs and fiddle tunes are combined with very prominent contributions on sitar and dohl, simultaneously invoking three distinct cultural domains: English folk music, Western popular music and non-Western music (here, Indian). Each of these categories is represented by both the performers involved and the highly distinguishable soundscapes they bring together. The initial modus operandi of the project focused on performing songs from the revered canon of the previous English folk revival periods, utilizing the diverse

instrumentation afforded by the multicultural personnel. Nonetheless, in their most recent album (*Bending the Dark; The Imagined Village* 2012), the band has moved away from reworking canonic folk song repertory, placing greater emphasis on the creation of original material.

Following the initial successes of *The Imagined Village*, the group's sitar player, Sheema Mukherjee, was commissioned to compose a piece as part of the Cultural Olympiad project 'New Music 20x12'. A partnership between the London 2012 Olympics and the PRS [Performing Rights Society] for Music foundation (PRSFM), this was a UK-wide project, enabling the commissioning of twenty artists working across a range of styles that included Scottish traditional music (fiddler Aiden O'Rourke) and contemporary art composition (Howard Skempton). Each artist was commissioned to compose a twelve-minute piece (hence the title of the project), and the total output was designed to celebrate 'the talent and imagination of the UK's musical community' (PRS for Music Foundation 2011a). In an interview published by the PRSFM, Mukherjee—a musician of Indian heritage, self-identifying as 'brought up between Britain and India' (Mukherjee, n.d.)—gave her response to the Olympic Games' arrival in London, and to the commission:

It is inspirational that generations of people with their various traditions in a multicultural UK are feeling the excitement from the world competing on a level playing field. I feel pride, pleasure and also challenged to write a piece which incorporates the great English musical traditions with the other cultures present in the UK today. (Mukherjee, in PRS for Music Foundation 2011b)

Interestingly, Mukherjee's testimony here moves away from the inherently integrated Englishness signalled by Bragg, drawing her towards something closer to the British-English; British-Other dichotomy exemplified in fRoots 'New England' CDs. Interesting, too, is the metaphor of 'the world competing on a level playing field', which seems to speak directly to the message of Wood's *On English Ground*. Over-emphasis of this metaphorical connection

may seem mischievous on account of the clear literal reference to the—explicitly competitive—games themselves. Nonetheless, the close proximity of competition, English identity and multicultural expression within this statement are a helpful reminder of their nebulous interconnectivity within the music of artists such as Mukherjee, the Imagined Village and the broader English folk scene.

Mukherjee's composition—written for and performed by The Imagined Village, and entitled 'Bending the Dark'—is also significantly 'mosaic' rather than 'melting-pot' in its referential content. The piece begins with a klezmer-esque introduction, first involving a harmonic minor melody in three-part vocal homophony, then as a single-line melody plus fiddle improvisation over an eight-bar i-V7-V7-i chord progression (articulated by a simple 'um-pah' accompaniment on the bass and piano). The main body of the piece then begins with the female vocalists singing the Indian note names ('Sa, sa, ni, sa sa—sa, sa, ni, ga, ga' etc.) of a repeated four-bar motif in unison, evoking the beginning of an Indian raga vocal performance. Of course, this is suitably disrupted by the strong 'rock-eight' drum and bass accompaniment that quickly frames what follows as a piece of Western (or more precisely Western-cosmopolitan) popular music. Within this frame, clear references to Indian musical traditions appear in the form of compound dhol rhythms, and the sounds of tabla and sitar. Meanwhile, central to the signposting of the 'English musical traditions' is the—perceivedly ancient—English morris tune, the 'Cuckoo's Nest', which is developed, repeated and juxtaposed with other motivic material. The gap between this traditional English folk element and Indian musical connotation is closed most clearly where the last exposition of the 'Cuckoo's Nest' melody is ended using the Indian classical closing device of a tihai.¹² Live performances of the work have included morris dancers to 'accompany' this latter element, and in some performances even the juxtaposition of morris and bhangra dancers.

¹² Very simply put, this is a closing technique where the last phrase of the melody is systematically repeated three times, then reduced in length for a further three repetitions, and so forth.

The staging of the work in this way successfully emphasises the commonalities of the two featured traditions—it articulates the ‘level playing field’ identified in Mukherjee’s interview for PRSFM—but the historically rooted English musical traditions are discursively, as well as audibly, distinguished from the Other. While Bragg’s construction of a multi-ethnic, composite Englishness is particularly attractive to left-leaning, predominantly white folk performers and audiences (and effectively ensures that the folk music becomes unavailable to the far-right), Mukherjee’s contrasting conception does not speak to an inherently multi-ethnic English identity, since it actually reinforces an English/Other narrative through clear essentialisation (see Modood 2007: 87–90) of the group’s constituent traditions. In this way, it stands as a strong reminder of the multiple perspectives on, and constructions of, a contemporary cultural identity to be found and articulated within a fusion project like *The Imagined Village*. More specifically, it supports the claim that the intercultural melting-pot narrative is a discourse more readily adopted by the elite, primarily white, ‘native’ stakeholders in an integrative cultural process. Engaging with the work of Ghassan Hage, Levan and Titley explain how ‘Hage...suggests that the categorical questions proposed for debate—should we ‘scrap’ multiculturalism for assimilation?—are mystifications desired by dominant social groups who still imagine themselves as the sole architects of the nation and of national futures’ (2011: 196).

Given the variety of cultures now represented within contemporary England’s society, it is notable that, where non-indigenous musical sounds are explicitly foregrounded within contemporary English folk music they are, in the majority of cases, Indian.¹³ Besides the foregrounding of sitar and dhol within *The Imagined Village*’s output, sounds reminiscent of the Indian subcontinent have begun to appear—albeit occasionally and much less

¹³ Musical characteristics from Irish, Scottish, Scandinavian and American traditions can regularly be heard in the performance of English folk music, but these are more thoroughly and tacitly integrated into the sounds of the English folk scene, and are very rarely presented as explicit references to ‘other traditions’ (to borrow the fRoots phrase).

prominently—in the work of a number of English folk acts. One small example would be the appearance of the shruti box, an unkeyed bellows-blown free-reed drone instrument, traditionally used as accompaniment in North Indian classical music. This instrument has been used as a drone accompaniment by a number of English folk singers, including Sam Lee, Maz O'Connor, and Rachel Unthank and the Winterset (the latter group also performs with a full Indian harmonium).

Elsewhere in the English folk scene, the sounds of Indian music have been evoked through the use of the bansitar, an instrument recently developed by the German-born and England-based luthier Helmut Rheingans. The instrument, as the name might hint, fuses the shape and ergonomics of the five-string banjo with the quintessential buzzing timbre of the concert sitar, and is very much in its infancy. It has recently gained visibility within English folk music culture through, for instance, being played by the inventor's daughter, Rowan Rheingans, as part of the female folk-singing trio Lady Maisery (on the album *Weave and Spin*, 2011). The appearance of an instrument that shares its timbre with a sitar is perhaps not in itself sufficient grounds for asserting the presence of a specifically Indian musical reference, but the introduction to Lady Maisery's track 'Nottamun Fair' (which comprises a bansitar solo) has other musical characteristics that make the Indian link more convincingly. It begins with a brief descending strum of open strings incorporating the ninth degree, the octave, the open fifth and the lower tonic. Following from this is an unmetred passage, evocative of an alap in North Indian classical performance. This passage is predominantly in the dorian mode, which makes the circling of the high octave tonic from the ninth to the sharpened seventh degree in the closing seconds of the introduction all the more notable as signifying the unpredictable tonality of the exotic, alien, other. A metered ostinato then heralds the traditional English folk song itself.

The instrument has also been adopted by older-generation English folk artist Pete Coe. In an interview and performance with traditional singer Maggie Boyle, posted by the latter on YouTube (Boyle 2012), the two joke about the novelty of the instrument. Boyle describes it as ‘like a banjo, but with so much forgiveness in it’. It is interesting that neither of the performers in that context, nor Lady Maisery in the comments on the instrument in their sleeve notes, make reference to the instrument’s sitar-like qualities. That is to say, the Indianness of the instrument’s evocative timbre goes unmentioned, despite being subtly significant as a vehicle for acoustic association with the ‘other’ of Indian music. Whilst small and unspoken, these occurrences provide a further example of the expansion of English folk music performance as an integrative engagement with the multicultural sonic environment of a ‘new England’.

Explanations for this predominance of Indian musical attributes in recent multi-/intercultural folk projects are likely to include coincidences that are practical (such as the availability, interest and interpersonal networking of musicians such as Mukherjee and Kalsi), or musical (for instance, the relative convergence of Indian intervals with those of Western pop and English folk). Nonetheless, Indian musical sounds serve as a tacit index for ethnic-diversity-within that meets with the inclusive narrative of multicultural English folk. The specific nature and symbolic potency of Indian culture—within the context of a radical multiculturalising of Englishness—is significant. In contemporary England, Indianness carries with it a number of subtexts. Firstly, while migration from India to England continues, the common conceptualisation of Indian minorities in the UK (particularly among the cosmopolitan left) is of a historical settlement, brought about by the migratory networks of the British Empire, consolidated through a century of social interaction and familial integration, and demonstrated by a general acceptance of the Indian minority (as a discursive construct, of course) as an interwoven thread in the cultural and economic fabric of modern

England. In short, the relationship between the (indigenous) English and Indian migrants is often imagined as long-established, and—almost by natural extension, therefore—positive and successful. Secondly, Indian communities fall largely outwith the scope of the now common, angst-ridden rhetoric surrounding the impact of immigrants to the UK. While economically centred controversy often points to East European immigration, public discourse on the broader topic of cultural difference remains focused on a vaguely Muslim stereotype. General concerns aired in the British press about immigration are almost synonymous with a small number of specific ‘incompatibilities’ (to borrow the term from Rattansi 2011: 44) normally—albeit not always accurately—associated with a Middle-Eastern Islamic orthodoxy. A clear illustration of this is the common outrage expressed by white British commentators towards the wearing of the niqab or burkah by Muslim women (ibid.: 57–67; Lentin and Titley 2011: 187–92). Comparatively speaking, then, the long-established Indian minority in contemporary England is not widely considered so great a threat (whether physically, or in terms of values) to English culture and society. Related to this is the relatively secularised representation of Indian communities in the UK media. So, while the recurrence of Indian musical sounds might be, to some extent, read as an important but arbitrary approach to performance of the ‘super-diversity’ of contemporary England (Vertovec 2010b), they also hint at a comfortably non-threatening depiction of a non-confrontational host-migrant relationship. That is to say, Indian music and musical sounds, when juxtaposed with recognisably English content, successfully represent what Lentin and Titley have critically labelled ‘good diversity’ (2011: 176).

Theoretical approaches to the new Englishness

The colour of Englishness in English folk

English folk is notably white. It is never declared to be so—as I have said, the majority of folkies have left-of-centre political views, and were brought up by a generation whose earliest folk experiences were heavily influenced by the civil rights inflections of the 1960s American folk movement. The only people who have been explicitly excluded from membership of the English folk arts community are, in fact, those with far-right nationalist politics (via the Folk Against Fascism campaign, for example). Nonetheless, the vast majority of people who directly identify with the English folk scene, be it through participation or as audience to song, instrumental music or morris dancing, are white, although it seems likely that the general rise in profile and popularity of the folk arts in recent years may have led to a small increase in the number of black and minority ethnic participants. Efforts to capitalise on the recent successes of folk music and dance in national media have led activists to look for new ways to emphasise the multicultural history—and, therefore, contemporary relevance—of those genres. For example, October 2016 saw English Folk Dance and Song Society produce their first ‘learning resource in celebration of Black History Month’ (EFDSS 2016). The blog post announcing the publication explained:

EFDSS is here to champion the English folk arts—music, song, dance and related art forms and traditions—as part of the rich and diverse cultural landscape of the UK. We are keen to explore links between English folk traditions and those from further afield.... Black Sailors and Sea Shanties—three songs for use in the classroom is a resource developed over the last 12 months to introduce learners to sea shanties, and to highlight the influence of black sailors on shanties.... The songs are known to have been sung and collected from locations as diverse as the Caribbean, Guyana in South America, Georgia in the southern United States, as well as Portsmouth and Somerset in England. Background notes provide brief information on black sailors and shanties and open up discussion about possible meanings and interpretations of the songs. (ibid.)

The materials included a print document (freely available as a PDF download) with a striking cover image, identified as ‘Portrait of a Black Sailor’ (Figure 2). The portrait, c.1800, depicts a young black man looking directly at the viewer; the spotted red neckerchief and sailing ship in the background indicate his maritime credentials. The picture can be traced back (through EFDSS’ acknowledged source of Wikimedia) to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, whose catalogue names the item as ‘Portrait of a Sailor’, and suggests the abolitionist Paul Cuffe as a possible artist of the work (Los Angeles County Museum of Art n.d.).

Alongside such efforts to acknowledge and celebrate a non-white dimension to the history and content of English folk music, the whiteness of the English folk scene has also been challenged more directly in recent years. The debate on blacking-up in border morris (and one or two other styles of traditional dancing) introduced at the beginning of this article, reared its head once more in August 2016, when a local equal rights campaign group in the county of Shropshire succeeded in lobbying the local Shrewsbury Folk Festival—notably one of the largest festivals in the country—to stop booking morris sides that blacked their faces, on the grounds that the activity has the potential to cause offense (BBC 2016). Since the announcement was made, a number of morris sides have adopted alternative forms of face coverage, including elaborate masks or multicoloured face paints. The public discourse and fiery debates that ensued as a result of the festival’s decision are too rich and expansive to give fair hearing in this article, but the event is indicative of a folk scene facing an internal struggle with the acknowledgement and handling—even performing—of its own whiteness.

The question of skin colour in relation to the English folk arts leads us towards a body of interdisciplinary commentary problematically entitled whiteness studies, and spanning fields including history, cultural studies, education and anthropology. On the face of it, research under this heading appears to engage with the nature and construction of white identity and experience among the dominant white majority in the post-colonial (mainly

Anglophone) West in ways that speak directly to many of the issues raised by the present English folk resurgence. The examples explored above indicate that it is impossible to avoid the invocation of race in the articulation of a new Englishness. Nevertheless, much of the sociological literature in this body of work draws from critical race theory, and draws heavily on its specifically late-twentieth century, American context (e.g. Doane and Bonilla-Silva 2003) where, for instance, white is often deployed in contradistinction to indigenous (Trechter and Bucholtz 2008: 3). McWhorter points to two underpinning views of whiteness studies: '(1) that white identity is socially constructed and functions as a racial norm and (2) that those who occupy the position of white subjectivity exercise 'white privilege', which is oppressive to non-whites' (2005: 533). The role of whiteness in English folk arts is difficult to assess in these terms, since the activities in question seem to be far removed from any racial norm (in spite of the resurgence, folk music and dance remain something of an amusing curiosity for the vast—white—majority in England), and the narrative of folk's beleaguered status embedded in Wood's *On English Ground* appears at odds with the concept of 'white privilege', a force by which one might otherwise expect to see the historically rooted cultural materials of white society consecrated or protected.

Nonetheless, by offering an organising principle for explicating racial interactions in the post-colonial West, whiteness studies draws our attention to the sensitivities involved when the traditional arts of a white, and unquestionably privileged majority appear to evoke racial difference, whether through artistic contradistinction with other—non-white—collaborators or cultures, or through acts that highlight skin colour more directly. The aforementioned controversy around morris dancers blacking up reveals the complexities of such a situation. Here we find large numbers of amateur participants who, despite overwhelmingly liberal, left-leaning political stances, nonetheless vehemently cling to an aspect of their activities that is both non-essential to the impact of the event (many morris

dancers, including those ostensibly involved in performing the same tradition, perform without black faces, or with face paints of other—sometimes multiple—colours), and clearly has the potential to cause offense on grounds of racial sensitivities. In response to one reporter's questions over the controversy caused by Cameron's photoshoot back in 2014, one of the blacked-up morris dancers is reported to have said (quite plausibly, and without a hint of irony) 'There was no offence, and if I thought for a moment there would be then I wouldn't do it' (Usborne 2014).

Multicultural Englishness in English folk

The musical examples discussed above might suggest a need to understand the creative and intentional combination or interleaving of the discrete attributes of multiple cultural groups, considering the theoretical potential of the term 'multiculturalism' in greater depth. In political theory, multiculturalism is commonly written about as a political plan of action—a governmental approach to dealing with the cultural, ethnic, religious and transnational diversity of contemporary societies. While some consider it an objective to be championed and defended, as a respectful acknowledgement and celebration of the groups that make up that diversity (see Modood 2007), for others the multicultural ideology is an outdated mode of social structuring to be critiqued or rejected (see Cantle 2012; Lentin and Titley 2011). Of the alternative options explored, gaining most ground is interculturalism: a recognition of cultural diversity, but with an emphasis on constructive 'interaction and dialogue' (Meer and Modood 2012: 177), and a discursive inclination towards the celebration of common values, shared experiences and unifying ideals. The relevance of such an idea to contemporary folk music scholarship is made abundantly clear by Cantle, whose manifesto for interculturalism proposes a 'new language' that speaks directly to ideas of tradition and identity:

It will require a new and fundamental change to our concepts of personal and collective identity and, in particular, the development of common bonds on the basis of a more universal conception of humankind, replacing multiculturalist conceptions of primordial and ‘natural’ distinctiveness and cultural fixity.... This may...have to overcome some fears about whether interculturalism is somehow designed to create a ‘melting pot’ of population in which the distinctiveness (or purity) of cultures is lost. This is far from the case, but will demand recognition that at least some of the present cultural barriers represent a level of protectionism that continue to carry overtones of racism and cultural superiority. (Cantle 2012: 143)

This interculturalism speaks to many of the ideas at the heart of the projects discussed here, but also identifies the paradoxical nature of those projects, by labelling as obstacles to the cause many of the definitive characteristics of the folk construct—specifically, the notions of inherent authenticity invoked by the first folk revival, and enduring in the current resurgence. It is accepted that English folk music, in terms of both repertory and style, has historically been a very specific object of ‘protectionism’ (see further, Boyes 1993; Harker 1985) and could therefore be considered a cultural barrier that cannot be easily decoupled from race-mobilizing subtexts.

The English folk resurgence, in turn, has much to offer the prevailing discourse on multiculturalism and interculturalism. For instance, the literature that forms and reforms those concepts focuses predominantly on the activities and lived experiences of subaltern groups within British society (a point succinctly made by the subtitle of Kymlicka’s seminal work, *Multicultural Citizenship: a Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, 1995). In anthropology, too, multiculturalism is predominantly bound up in migration studies (see Vertovec 2010a), and is mainly written about in terms of—or, latterly, from the perspective of—the migrant groups, or those upon whom the prevailing politics (that is, the politics of the majority) are imposed (see further, Vertovec 2010b). Recently, Lundström (2014) has worked to expand the assumed trope of the subaltern non-white migrant by concentrating on the white

migration experience. Nonetheless, the concepts of multiculturalism and interculturalism might further be expanded through renewed exploration of the experiences of those who, regardless of political leanings, form a non-migrant mainstream majority.

English folk as an expression of indigenous Englishness?

The contemporary English experience, as it is explored through—among other cultural outlets—the performance of English folk arts, is essentially the experience of a group seeking to articulate an indigenous relationship with place. While the examples of multicultural English folk activities given above illustrate responses to the political complexities and sensitivities inherent in the assertion of a contemporary English national or cultural identity, they remain projects: that is to say, they are moments of reflection—albeit increasingly common and significant moments—that only temporarily divert attention from the historically rooted and unproblematized white thrust of English folk music and dance. Moreover, where the creative goal is one of cross-cultural fusion or celebration, as in the case of *Bending the Dark*, such projects necessarily essentialise the English component in a way that quietly legitimates the English as historically rooted custodians of England, in contrast to the diverse ‘other’.

Of course, any attempt to claim a place for the English, a group so clearly powerful and dominant within their local and global political landscapes, in the field of indigenous studies could be—quite reasonably—perceived as problematic. The word ‘indigeneity’, and the analytical framework that has been built around it over the last three decades of cultural studies, has been used to denote and explore the experiences of the subaltern victims of colonial domination, ‘ethnic cleansing’ and cultural disassembly at the hands of white European interlopers. To that end, it is most often defined as an identity held in opposition to the state apparatus of the non-indigenous majority (Merlan 2009: 305; Paradies 2006: 356).

Accordingly, a number of significant ethnomusicological texts have recently drawn attention to the complex musical impacts of the suffering and dispossession of indigenous groups, and to the roles music has played in processes of resistance and reconciliation (see Bigenho 2002; Dueck 2013; Magowan and Neuenfeldt 2005).

By contrast, the English have in many cases been responsible for colonial oppression. Even in situations closer to home, where the term indigeneity is less commonly cited (specifically Ireland and Scotland), historical acts of resistance against English rule are still celebrated as iconic foci for the expression of respective national identities (for example, the Battle of Bannockburn, the Easter Uprising, and so on). To suggest any kind of parity or equivalence between the experiences of those peoples commonly referred to as indigenous in contemporary anthropological and sociological literature and the experiences of the contemporary English population would be wholly inaccurate, and politically insensitive bordering on offensive. And this points to the heart of the contemporary English condition: while national identities are so often expressed in terms of opposition to—and, ultimately, independence from—a dominating or threatening external group (historical or current), the assertion of an English identity is confused or disrupted by the English people's historical credentials in the role of dominator.¹⁴

Nonetheless, much of the content of contemporary musical expressions of Englishness signposts an English 'indigenusness', in the literal sense of the term. The desire to express Englishness (rather than Britishness: Cullingford and Din 2006: 9) seems to be rooted, for many people, in a desire to assert a historically charted nativity, relative to other groups now present in their homeland. One might go so far as to argue that expressions of

¹⁴ Numerous English folk artists and participants are quite conversant with this idea. Pointing to an imagined diasporic situation rather than an indigeneity narrative, Chris Wood compares the English context to a situation in which 'upon arrival in new lands, refugees congregate to reaffirm and reinvent their identity,... [and that the] oppressor plays a major role in this reunification and the cultural outpourings that follow.... [W]e here in England are our own bogey-man' (2006).

Englishness found in much contemporary folk music and dance signal participants' desire for this nativity to be legitimised and asserted in the face of erosive and homogenising pressures. To suggest, as Wood and Morris Offspring have, that 'the gold that we are searching for is in our own backyard', evokes just such a sense of indigeneity, by indicating that 'we' [the English] exist as a discrete community; that 'we' are united through a shared relationship with the place of our dwelling [England]; and that the nature of that shared relationship is possessory [England is 'ours']. In short, what contemporary Englishness does share with indigenous peoples worldwide is a belief in their particular endemicity within their place of residence, relative to other groups with whom the space is now shared, and a desire that such endemicity be recognised, legitimised and celebrated. In these ways, it might be argued that the concept of indigeneity has something to offer to the theorising of national expression in contemporary, multicultural Europe.

Englishness as a post-imperial endemicity

Significantly, the discomfort that might be felt by a left-leaning ethnomusicologist like myself in suggesting the existence (and validity) of an indigenous English identity is actually shared by the members of the English folk scene themselves, who are currently involved in negotiating and articulating such an identity. From the scholarly perspective, at least, it would seem that the English case warrants an approach that can draw together key features of the above perspectives in making sense of growing moves to articulate an ethically and socially conscientious, majority identity. The state-politic perspective and destabilising challenge of interculturalism to essentialising multicultural social narratives, the close ethnographic and cultural analysis of a group's performed relationship with place, and the constant reframing of local and globalised race relations are all essential to this endeavour. What is called for, then, is the application of these concepts and frameworks to a variety of identity and

experience characterised by post-imperial (as opposed to post-colonial) endemicity within contemporary Western societies. My choice of terms here is based on the assertion that the type of identity being examined is one that results from the combination of two features:

1. An individual or group's perception that their relationship to their homeland (commonly, but not necessarily, a nation) is characterised by high levels of legitimacy and authenticity (based on historical rootedness), relative to the relationships of other groups present within that homeland [endemicity].
2. An awareness of that homeland's historical role as a dominant seat of empire within a global political framework, and the perception of a reduced or diminishing political agency afforded by that history (at the level of the individual or group) [post-imperial].

Ethnomusicologists might go on to assert that the self-perceptions inherent in such an identity lead to particular patterns in the musics of the cultural group in question. The scenarios illustrated above offer a tentative step towards revealing how this identity is reflected in—and consolidated by—musical outputs; the post-imperial Englishness of English folk can be characterised by a common core process of essentialism that is then distributed among the disparate narratives of ruralist nostalgia and visionary multi-/intercultural exchange.

Nonetheless, the English case illustrates the fact that a post-imperial endemic experience constitutes sets of perceptions, awarenesses, thoughts and feelings, the combination of which is by no means standardised, and the political and cultural results of which are unlikely to be monolithic. In fact, the diversity of perspectives from which post-imperial endemicity may be felt is likely to be revealed as a common feature of this social and cultural experience: the variety of discursive and cultural approaches has been similarly illustrated by Kešić and Duyvendak in recent discussion of nationalist sentiment among the progressive left in the Netherlands (2016).

This concept is, of course, only presented here as a possible way to handle the wording and framing of discussion around identities and experiences such as the English experience expressed through English folk. My suggested terminology is intended to encourage discourse, and draw us towards a richer discussion of the new types of cultural and political nationalisms we now face.

Conclusion

The controversies over the appropriation of folk music by the far right BNP in the first decade of this century come as a stark reminder that the concept of ‘folk’ and the ‘folk arts’ speaks simultaneously to the two extremes of the—conventionally conceived—political spectrum. During previous revival periods of English folk (the first c.1880–1920, the second c.1950–70), broader political contexts directed the symbolic framing of folk material first in one direction, then the other: in the late nineteenth-century, folk was the pure, the authentic and the rural; in the post-war revival, folk stood for the honest and inclusive outpourings of the suppressed proletariat. But in the current resurgence, with a political context fit for rising nationalist sentiment, and a community of participants with a shared familial history of socialism, both sets of associations are being mobilised. Furthermore, even among left-wing folkies, both versions of folk are articulated—often simultaneously—through music, dance, imagery and discourse.

Folk music is deployed to articulate a contemporary, enlightened and multicultural Englishness in different ways: the inherent ‘integration’ of traditional English and Indian sounds in the bansitar contrast strikingly with the explicit juxtapositions of East-meets-West in Mukherjee’s composition. But beyond this variety of approaches to the practical elements of performing Englishness, the cases discussed in this article highlight the need to question some of the basic assumptions commonly held in relation to contemporary indigenities and

multiculturalisms as pluralised narratives. For example, while integration is often portrayed as a quality to be achieved by ethnic minority groups, the underlying drive to explore an integrated Englishness through English folk music seems to originate predominantly from the post-colonial concerns of the white, indigenous contingent, rather than from those who represent an ‘ethnic minority’ within the various projects. Conversely, the essentialising of cultural groups is generally recounted in the literature as a failing of the white majority, but in Mukherjee’s *Bending the Dark* we see an act of ‘self-localization’ (Sackmann 2003: 2)—a partial rejection of an integrative narrative in favour of a montage that celebrates multicultural diversity through a clear distinction of constituent cultural signifiers.

England is in an unusual position in that it stands under the umbrella of an inclusive nation-state (Britain). So while, for example, essentialising rhetoric in Netherlands can be so easily characterised as far-right racism (Sunier and van Ginkel 2006), Englishness has at least the potential to remain acceptable to the neo-liberal majority because it is conceived as a legitimate and equal part of the British multicultural mosaic. This ‘British English’ construct, typified by the *Looking for New England* CDs, was already considered (in the reversed form ‘English British’) as an apparently untenable premonition by Cullingford and Din (2006: 9) who regard composite identities such as ‘Asian British’ as a demonstration of the ways in which the label of ‘British’ has continued to distance ethnic minority communities from complete naturalisation within contemporary England. Nonetheless, such essentialisation is a very real, meaningful process of identity building in a contemporary, post-imperial, multicultural society.

The need for agreement on the terms by which to engage with and document this post-imperial endemicity, both in general and as it is expressed through traditional music, dance and other cultural outputs, is now pressing. Overtly cultural and ethnicity-oriented expressions of nationalism are on the increase across Northern and Western Europe. The

growing profile of the English Defence League (EDL)—a far-right campaign movement characterised by controversially aggressive anti-Islamic street protests—has been mirrored by equivalent groups elsewhere in Europe, and by the (re-)elevation of extreme nationalism to the platform of mainstream politics in, for example, the Netherlands, France and Germany (see Entzinger 2014, Hainsworth 2016, and Berntzen and Weisskircher 2016).¹⁵ Beyond Europe, there is a growing need for a language to facilitate the scholarly analysis (and reconciliation) of Trump's recent election success in the US, which shares elemental similarities with the nationalisms being performed on this side of the Atlantic. Developing a clear lexicon for invoking, analysing and critiquing the identities that form the context for such developments is essential; not because we would wish to see such political positions legitimised, but because we would wish to see them understood. The irresistible force of globalisation-fuelled self-identification now acting upon the neo-socialist English folk scene is global in reach, and making new theoretical and terminological demands on those cultural scholars who claim—as ethnomusicologists do—a universal scope to their field of study.

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¹⁵ This situation has, of course, spiked with the recent influx of Syrian migrants to these nations (particularly Germany), and increased Euroscepticism born of a perceived ongoing decline in the stability of the eurozone.

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