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#MarchOnRome: Of Alterity, Social Media, and Marching Bands

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In this online ethnography, I studied marching band identity by examining marching band enthusiasts' and music educators' responses on music teacher professional forums, Twitter, blogs, and other online media, to sports commentator Jim Rome's tweets describing marching band members as "dorks." Using a framework of alterity—or the otherness that complements identity—and a methodology of social constructionist discourse analysis, I found that social media users: 1) claimed that they were proud to be "band dorks"; 2) argued that Rome's comments fit into a narrative of jocks harassing band geeks; 3) asserted that there are many proponents of marching band, and that it appeals to a general population; and 4) addressed Rome's tweet in order to critically reflect on marching bands' roles in society and education. Theme four was infrequent. Educators may pay careful attention to how alterity and the "imagined Other" play a role in music student identity, student motivation, advocacy efforts, and how they participate in social media.

On January 1, 2015, at 6:00 p.m., during the halftime of the Rose Bowl, sports commentator Jim Rome (2015a) tweeted, "Is there anyone not in a marching band who thinks those dorks running around with their instruments are cool?" This tweet angered marching band enthusiasts and music educators because they interpreted it as an insult on marching band and music education, with one Twitter user even calling it "hate speech." Motivated by this anger, marching band enthusiasts and music educators launched a social media campaign. They tweeted with the hashtags #Marchonrome and #Romeonfire to mock him, wrote blog posts and letters to Rome's employer CBS Sports requesting that he apologize or that he be fired, and engaged in discussions on music educator social media forums. Perhaps sensing the appeal to a general

audience of enraged and vocal "nerdy" and "mild-mannered" marching band members, online mainstream media such as the Huffington Post and the Washington Post reported on Jim Rome's tweet and marching band enthusiasts' online activity. In response to this social media campaign and its report by online media, Rome tweeted an apology at 10:35 the following morning. "Band nation—I hear you," he wrote, "I was out of line. I apologize. I do not condone bullying of any kind and that was not my intent" (2015b). Rome's apology prompted marching band enthusiasts and music educators to critique him as disingenuousness on forums and blogs and to tweet utterances of victory under the hashtag #dorkswin.

In a rare incident lasting roughly 24 hours, marching band and music education received social media attention.[1] Marching band enthusiasts and music educators discussed and addressed issues of marching band and its relevancy, its aims and outcomes, the identity of marching band students, and its relation to the larger population, non-marching band members, and sports. What might marching band enthusiasts and music educators' responses to Rome's tweets reveal about marching band identity, the values of marching band, and, more broadly, music education? What does this suggest about marching bands' and music programs' relationship to communities they serve?

Literature Review

The response and media attention to Rome's tweets might not surprise readers because of marching band members' perceived value of the ensemble and their status within the general population. Membership in a marching band can form identity for U.S. teenagers, with both positive and negative connotations. Studies in music education have suggested that participants in ensembles generally look upon their experiences favorably (Adderley, Kennedy, and Berz 2003, Carter 2013, Morrison 2001), and participation helps students form positive social bonds and friendships (Dagaz 2010, Vance 2014). As a result, Adderley, Kennedy, and Berz (2003) borrowed a phrase from Frith (1981) to suggest that marching band members wear "music as a badge" (197), setting themselves against the school population as a whole. In the similar but distinct phenomenon of drum and bugle corps, Vance (2014) found a strong sense of belonging, although that varied by individual and by corps. She found that members used visual identifiers to create and display this identity, including the official uniform and unofficial accessories like "member jackets" and necklaces that revealed how many years they have participated in drum and bugle corps.

Despite forming solidarity and a unified social identity among its members, like other social groups, marching band membership intersects with other identities, and this may create differing experiences and perceptions. Carter's (2013) interviews with gay African American males in marching bands at Historically Black Colleges and Universities found a conflicted sense of participation in the ensemble. They felt a tension between their marching band identity and gay identity; they enjoyed the camaraderie, but remained guarded about their sexualities. As one participant said, "There is nothing better or nothing worse than being Black, gay, and in the marching band" (37), suggesting conflicted notions of belonging and identity. Contrarily, Vance (2014) found a greater acceptance of gay culture in drum and bugle corps.

Despite differences within the ensemble, what binds the identity of marching band members might be its "exclusive" character. As Morrison (2001) notes, identity is constructed "within" and "without":

> An ensemble's identity within the larger community is exactly what many participants value about their membership. However, for a school ensemble to provide that identity of "within," there must also be a "without." For students to take on the identity of the ensemble within the larger school population, then part of that population cannot be ensemble members. (26-27)

Who marching band members *are not* is as essential to identity formation as who they *are*.

While marching band members have positive perceptions, the general population from which marching band members separate themselves to form their identity often views membership in a marching band as synonymous with bookishness and unpopularity. In his study of football culture in a Texas high school, Foley (1990) noted the subaltern status of marching band members. These "band fags" (115), as the school population called them, were seen by non-band members as "goodie goodies, richies, and brains" (114). The term "band nerd" (Adderley, Kennedy, and Berz 2003) or "band geek" has become common parlance to describe members of bands and marching bands who strongly identify with membership in these groups. It seems that, at times, as a corollary to the "music as a badge," marching band members internalize these perceptions of marching band from the general public. As Adderley, Kennedy, and Berz (2003) reported, members are ambivalent with their status. As one participant reported, "marching bad was for dorks" (197). Dagaz's (2010) sociological examination of high school marching bands found a positive sense of self among students. Although students were aware of the negative stereotypes of marching band members as geeks, it helped them form identities that transcended social class status.

These studies suggest that the general public often does not look favorably upon marching band members, frequently referring to them as "band geeks" and other negative monikers (Adderley, Kennedy, and Berz 2003, Foley 1991). To a degree, marching band members internalize this, but also take pride and see value in their participation (Adderley, Kennedy, and Berz 2003, Dagaz 2010, Morrison 2001). There, then, exists what might be called a "perception gap" between what marching band members and music educators see as the benefits of participation and the general public's view of marching band. Jim Rome's tweet, which asks if anyone else outside of those who participate considers marching band relevant and valuable, conjures up this perception gap. Marching band enthusiasts and music educators' social media response to Rome's tweets becomes a way to observe how they make meaning of and respond to this perception gap. How do marching band members and educators engage within this comparison with others? What does it say about the aims and perceived merits of marching band, and advocacy based on those perceptions?

Theoretical Framework: Alterity

As the studies reviewed suggest, the intersection of identity and musical practices (MacDonald, Raymond, Hargreaves, and Miell 2002) and the process of identity formation through participation in musical ensembles and marching bands are well established and studied phenomena (Adderley, Kennedy, and Berz 2003, Carter 2013, Dagaz, 2010, Morrison, 2001, Vance 2014). Either explicitly or implicitly, these studies use social identity theory, which suggests that individuals aim to create positive self-esteem; one's identity is created in part through membership in a group; and, finally, that this membership in a group is maintained and altered through comparisons with other social groups (Tajfel 1982).

This final aspect, that social identity is maintained and altered through comparisons with other social groups, is the focus of this study. This comparison with other social groups is called *alterity,* which may be broadly defined as "otherness." For example, the "without" of the general population that Morrison (2001) describes serves as the alterity that ensemble members set themselves against to form identity. The concept of alterity suggests that in order for a social group to form an identity, there must be an "other" that the group identifies as *not* being (Corbey and Leerssen 1991). Alterity and identity form a dialectic, serving as opposites, but require each other to exist.

Discussing Western identity set against the alterity of the East, in what he calls "Orientalism," Said (1978) suggests that alterity is not created through

objective observation, but on conceptions, even stereotypes, of others. Alterity requires an "imagined Other"; it is the "idea" of the other, not whether it coincides with any "reality" (cf. 5). This imagination is informed by and creates "a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony" (5). The formation of alterity and how the other is conceived or imagined reveals who has power. It also suggests how social groups define themselves and others in order to gain and consolidate power and to weaken others.

Social groups' definition and modification of alterity and identity is a nuanced and continually evolving process, a process that Baumann (2006) suggests is structured by three "grammars." The first grammar, *orientalism,* is when individuals see other social groups in both positive and negative terms. Orientalism is "not a simple binary opposition of 'us = good' and 'them = bad', but a very shrewd mirrored reversal of: 'what is good in us is [still] bad in them, but what got twisted in us [still] remains straight in them'" (20, brackets in original). In other words, members of a social group do not look to other identities merely in negative terms, but also see positive aspects in those other groups that they strive towards. The second grammar, *segmentation,* is the process where the lines of division between different social groups are redrawn and disputed. In different contexts, someone who is considered outside the group may in another context be identified as part of the social group. The third grammar, *encompassment*, is "an act of selfing by appropriating, perhaps one should say adopting or co-opting, selected kinds of otherness" (25). At politically opportune times, members of a social group consider other social groups a subset of their identity. Social groups do this to both elevate their inferior status and to subordinate the social group that they consider a subset of their identity. These three grammars of alterity formation suggest that the lines of identity and otherness shift depending on context, and it is not a simple binary of positive self-identification against negative otherness. Informed by this framework, the research questions of this study are: How is marching band identity and its alterity constructed and maintained in marching band enthusiasts' and music educators' social media responses to and discussions of Jim Rome's disparaging tweets about marching bands? What do these responses reveal about music education's relationship with identity and alterity?

Methodology

Study Design

To study alterity's relation to marching band identity, I conducted an online ethnography (Rogers 2013). Online investigations have become more commonplace within music education research within the last half-decade (Waldron 2011, Bernard, Weiss and Abeles 2015, Abeles, Hafeli, and Sears 2014, Gooding, Yinger, and Gregory 2014), perhaps because they are a readily available source of data that is unobtrusive. In this study, I "lurked" (Hine 2005), meaning I served as a non-participant observer, collecting data from social media and media that addressed Rome's tweets. As I was a "non-participant," I did not post, tweet, or blog, or contribute to any discussion on this topic. I collected data from January 1 until March 24, 2015, although new data was not posted past January 7, 2015.

Data Collection

I collected data from public social media websites, included Twitter and music education professional forums. On Twitter, I searched the hashtags #Marchonrome, #Romeonfire, and #Dorkswin. For the professional forums, I initially manually observed each forum and later searched using relevant search terms. These sources then lead me to further public sources, including blogs, and media reports, which led to further tweets and other media. I collected data until I reached "data saturation," where no new codes emerged and collection became redundant (Creswell 2013). There were many tweets by people outside the marching band community who supported Jim Rome and were critical of marching bands. However, because I wanted to examine marching band members' and music educators' social media activity, I did not include these data. Through this process, I collected "screen captures" to document and keep data, in case they became inaccessible at future dates.

Ethics and Confidentiality

In all forms of inquiry, researchers must proceed with caution, carefully weighing the topic, potential harm, and ethics. This becomes a place of deliberation and compromise in the newly emerging field of social media research, where there are changing standards and conceptions of ethics (Markham and Buchanan 2012). I consulted several sources checking for ethical practices. Collection from these sources meet ethical guidelines of on-line research as outlined by James and Busher (2009) because this data is "officially and publically archived; No password is required for archive access; No site policy prohibits it; and the topic is not highly sensitive" (123, also cited in Waldron 2011, 37). However, despite

the publicly available nature of this data and that it does not pertain to a sensitive topic, the concepts of "private" and "public" have various meanings to different people (Paechter 2013). With this in mind, I have taken steps to maintain confidentiality. I have not included the names of those who have authored these tweets, posts, and blogs, nor identified each data point's exact source.

   Different data sources require differing levels of confidentiality. I considered Twitter and open blogs as public. I considered these data sources as public because they are accessed easily, and news websites like the Washington Post, CNN, and Huffington Post, among others, repeated these sources, including the authors' names when reporting on Jim Rome's tweets and the public's response. In professional forums, the concepts of public and private are more ambiguous because it is possible users might consider them private because they consist of ostensibly like-minded professionals, even though tens of thousands of users access the forum. In those cases, I took additional steps to secure confidentiality. So that posts cannot be linked to their authors via search engines, I followed a practice of Abeles, Hafeli, and Sears (2014); in this data, I replaced certain synonyms (such as "mad" for "angry") and rephrased comments (i.e. "I think that is a problem," becomes "There are some things wrong with that"), while retaining the meaning of the post. After considering this topic not of a sensitive nature and taking steps to secure confidentiality, I deemed use of this data as ethical and its discussion valuable.

Data Interpretation

I used a social constructionist discourse analysis methodology as defined by Jørgensen and Phillips (2002), where "[p]eople's identities (both collective and individual) are the result of contingent, discursive processes and, as such, are part of the discursive struggle" (34). Using the theoretical framework of "alterity" and its "grammars" (Baumann 2006), I looked for the shifting nature of social identity formation, solidarity, and otherness through language. This was dependent on looking at the "discourses"—or rules that govern society—that social media users borrowed to structure truth and establish legitimacy (Foucault 1971). In other words, I looked at what ways of being and agendas social media users privileged in order to maintain and create identity and alterity and how discourses informed this process. In this way, I paid attention to how users employed language as a political tool. To find themes within this language, I openly coded, deriving the themes as I reviewed the data (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002). The theoretical framework informed this open coding; using the grammars of alterity as a guide, I reviewed the data, first assigning "codes" and then combining those codes to derive "themes" (Saldaña 2013).

Themes

Data interpretation produced the following themes: 1) Dork pride, where social media users posted that they were proud to be part of marching bands in defiance of Rome's negative moniker of "Dork"; 2) Bullying critique, where social media users suggest that Rome's comments fit into a narrative of jocks harassing band geeks; 3) Refutation of Rome's question, where social media users asserted that there are many proponents of marching band and that it has appeal for a general population; and 4) the infrequent but important theme of Questioning of the aims of marching band, where educators responded to Rome's tweets in order to critically reflect on marching bands' role in society and education.

Dork pride
Many social media users proudly embraced being called a dork by Rome as an act of defiance, and this response was the most prominent theme. These included post such as, "Proud to be a Marching Band dork, Jim Rome. You really showed your stupidity now. This is real talent [with pictures of marching bands]" and "The preferred term is 'Band Nerd' . . . Jim Rome is an fool in more ways than one."[2] Upon viewing the apology tweet by Rome (2015b), one user posted, "Here's to the crazy ones. The misfits. The rebels. The troublemakers. The round pegs in the square holes. i.e., the dorks." One teacher commented, "I and my students embrace 'band nerd.' I have shown them that everybody's a nerd about something. Athletes are sports nerds. Computers kids are computer nerds. I told them to embrace what they love to do. Some have even put the term on their pep band shirts. Awesome." On the morning of January 2, after Rome's initial tweet, but before his apology, one user posted, "Good morning dorks."

    In order to create a prideful dork identity, users set their identity against the alterity of athletes. As one user posted, "What do you expect from a jock." Rome became a stand in for "dumb jocks," which served as an alterity against marching band identity. For example, one educator suggested that he used "jock" as a way to get students to blend:

> I [. . .] use the term drum jocks, or trumpet jocks humorously within my concert band when I continually have to ask them to tame themselves and blend more. They all love it and know exactly what I am talking about, it makes for a good laugh within the context of a closed classroom.

    Marching band members created identity by presenting themselves as "unique," as set against the alterity of insensitive "jocks." They flipped a negative moniker placed upon them by Jim Rome into a positive badge of honor.

Bullying critique

While some embraced the "dork" moniker, others were critical of the term and instead couched its use in a larger narrative of bullying. As one commenter noted, "When you're a broadcaster that's washed-up, you bully band kids. That get's people talking about you." One music educator posted,

> With Jim Rome calling band members "dorks," many people have defended "band nerds" across the US. Although many use this term as a badge of honor, I certainly have never embraced this term and I never referred to my own students that way [. . .] Yes, band accepts those rejected by the sports teams. In band, popular girls share a music stand with shy kids. The honor-roll student marches next to those who are barely passing [. . .].

For this educator, the moniker "dork" is detrimental, and marching band is inclusive of a variety of students.

One educator saw eliminating the negative moniker from educators' vocabulary as a progression towards greater acceptance of one's self and students' identities. In response to an educator who embraced the "dork" moniker with pride and called his students dorks, the user commented:

> What I would suggest is that you consider stage as a transition along your current path. In the next stage you get your band students to recognize themselves as true artists (because that's what they are) who are doing something tremendously important . . . and they don't need to apologize, and they don't need to accept labels that carry negative connotations.

For this educator, to embrace the "dork identity" is a sign of a nascent self-awareness and an intermediary step to self-acceptance and realization of purpose.

One high school band director was critical of others' responses to Rome. Instead, he suggested that Rome's comments were a form of bullying that band students often endure. "Trying to persuade Rome that band students are 'cool' or 'athletic' is a waste of time. His goal, like any bully, is to demean others, to establish a pecking order." In another post,

> If you grew up being hassled about bringing your instrument on the bus, or being pushed around in the hallway because you were a "band dork," or being mocked by the football players while you were out practicing in order to support them on a Friday night, [then small comments like Rome's are not jokes. . . .] Times have changed, Jim. Bullying is no longer viewed as just kidding around. And saying you didn't intend to "condone" bullying [in response to his apology] is a lot different than apologizing for *being* a bully. Your carefully-crafted words ring hollow. Those of us who grew up around this stuff know the difference. "You band kids are dorks...*hey sorry you know I'm just kidding.*" If we heard it once,

we heard it a hundred times. [Is it] Kidding, or [is it] revealing? (Italics in original post)

Similar to the dork pride theme, these users maintained identity against the alterity of jock culture. However, these users did not readily take on the dork moniker; instead, they questioned the harmfulness the term creates regardless of context. At times, this demonstrated an inclusiveness of many students with differing identities; at other times, it maintained a clear division between marching band participants and non-participants.

Refutation of Rome's Question

Some responses to Rome's tweets suggested that marching band was inclusive by touting marching band's extra-musical benefits and its appeal to a wider audience. Users suggested that one of the extra-musical benefits was physical fitness. These users described marching band as an athletically rigorous activity. One social media user wrote, "My son and his friends in marching band loved to play ultimate frisbee before their school's football games. The school's hockey team challenged them and the band won. The football players challenged them and the band won. Who is in better physical condition?!" Others circulated a picture of a University of Texas football player playing saxophone and marching in the band with his football uniform on. Another user juxtaposed two pictures: one with a marching, shirtless tuba player with "six pack" muscles and another with relatively obese football players standing in a group. Another user posted, "What Jim Rome doesn't realize is the marching band works out longer in the summer than the football team." Others posted a video that originally aired on the sports network ESPN about the strenuous physical demands of drum and bugle corps.

In an "open letter" to Jim Rome, one author directly suggested that marching band participation is more physically demanding than athletics:

> You called us dorks. That's fine; many of us would self-identify as such anyway. But your implication was clearly that we "dorks," who just "run around with our instruments," are somehow lesser than the athletes we support. Let me ask you: have you ever carried a 40-pound silver-plated sousaphone on your shoulders while you marched several miles in a wool uniform and unsupportive shoes and (oh yeah) were also *playing said sousaphone?* I have. Marching band is an athletic activity just like football, or basketball, or softball, or any other sport you could think of. I've played softball, I was on my high school swim team, and I danced for the large majority of my life, and none of these sports were as taxing— mentally and physically—as marching band. Many other athletes I know— runners, swimmers, dancers, football players, baseball players—who were also in the [university's marching band] would undoubtedly agree.

This use of athletics to support marching band is in contrast to the disparaging comments about "jocks." Some users listed physical fitness as an extra-musical benefit of marching band, drawing upon athletics' domain of fitness as a legitimation of marching band, and some users were antagonistic towards "jocks."

While some used athletics to legitimize participation in marching band, others used the military. "Hey Jim Rome did u know many of those dorks at my University will serve our country in the military?" Others used celebrities as legitimation of marching band culture. One user posted pictures of former United States President Bill Clinton as a teenager in a marching band uniform with the line, "I don't know Jim Rome, he was more successful then you'll ever be." Similarly, another posted, "A 'dork' once played the saxophone. He also became POTUS." Another user posted a link to an article titled, "6 Celebrity Marching Band Members Far From Being The 'Dorks' Jim Rome Claims: Lil Wayne, Samuel L. Jackson, Halle Berry and More."

Others suggested that marching bands by their nature are inclusive and create camaraderie. From the "open letter" quoted earlier:

> In marching band, we accept people for who they are. We bond over our love for the craft and our love for our teams and our love for our school. We bond over sunburns and sore feet and sorer shoulders. We bond over the amazing experiences that being part of a marching band has afforded us. If you want to bond with your meathead buddies over making fun of the band, go ahead; we can't stop you.

The use of athleticism, the military, and celebrities, shifted the notion of identity outward in an attempt to make marching band participation appear inclusive and to have extra-musical benefits for a broader population.

Questioning of the Aims of Marching Band

I found one post that was of particular interest because the original poster tried to elicit discussion to reflectively answer Rome's question and ask why marching band might have a negative reputation. Although, among the data I collected, this post was unique, I have included it to serve as a contrast to the majority of discourse on Jim Rome's tweets. The user wrote:

> Just a thought on the Jim Rome comments. He isn't far off with his assertion and perhaps we should be asking ourselves some questions. . . do people that don't have marching band experience or formal musicianship in general appreciate the art form of marching? If they don't, then why not? [. . .] WE

> think it's important because we understand the all musicianship and hard work. . . but if John Q. Public doesn't. . . then what?

This user questioned the relevancy of marching band to the general public. She looked to understand the how she can bridge the divide between her identity as a marching band member and educator and the alterity of the general public. The responses to this question were met with a variety of responses. The first respondent posted, "Hey, I've always been a geek. I'm proud of it." In the face of a reflective question, this poster reverted back to Theme 1 of creating identity with "dork pride." Other users were quick to quell reflection upon Rome's tweets. "Sorry.....Rome does not deserve this kind of debate!" responded one user. After push back from other users who similarly urged educators not to reflect on Rome's question because it was beneath them, the original poster responded, "But he isn't the only one who thinks it. He's a bully and more for saying it. But he isn't alone in thinking it. Why? [. . .] Are we advocating the right way?" Eventually, professional forum users began attempting to discuss the original poster's questions. One commenter responded, "my pet peeve is the term 'band nerd.' Who wants to join a group where its own members refer to themselves in a way that most people think of as negative [. . .] if we're going to wear dorky uniforms and refer to ourselves as geeks then we shouldn't be surprised when others refer to us in the same way." This post, though not a reoccurring theme, displays reflection, its rarity, and some users' unwillingness to engage in the process.

Discussion

For roughly 24 hours, Jim Rome's tweets brought questions of marching band identity and music education into a wider public forum. Rome's use of the term "dork" prompted marching band enthusiasts and music educators to confront their subaltern status and music education's relevancy outside their social group. Some embraced the "dork" moniker, setting it against the alterity of "dumb jocks." Others suggested that Rome's tweets were part of a narrative of "jocks" bullying "band geeks." Some argued that marching band is relevant to the larger community. A small population engaged in self-reflection of the aims, relevancy, and advocacy efforts of marching bands. While I describe these themes as distinct, they were not always mutually exclusive; individual users often engaged in more than one theme, and I coded some individual posts and tweets as fitting into multiple themes. Can the varied and sometimes-conflicting justifications used by marching band enthusiasts and music educators reveal insights into how marching band participants form and maintain their identity?

In their defense of marching band identity and participation, social media users imagined and created the alterity of "jock" to define their identity in opposition to, and Rome became the face of this alterity. Rome provided a personification and caricature of a jock that is physically fit, yet socially and artistically insensitive and unintelligent. However, the attributes of jocks assigned to Rome and athletes in general by marching band enthusiasts are not solely constructed from observation or a realistic accounting of athletes' characteristics. Rome's personification of the "imagined Other" served as an "idea" of the "jock" governed by discourses rather than a "reality" (Said 1978). By serving as that caricature, Rome provided an opportunity for marching band members to imagine and then critique a jock alterity and use it as a way to define their own identity.

This creation of marching band identity verses jock alterity served political aims for these marching band enthusiasts, but also perhaps revealed their status in society. Rome and the alterity of imagined jock is not simply *any* opposite to create identity against; this alterity possessed power. Perhaps marching band enthusiasts saw a need to respond to, rather than ignore, Rome's comments because he has the ability to persuade a large population and damage marching bands' reputation. However, Rome also seems to have symbolized marching bands' inferior status of regularly servicing and supporting athletics by performing during football halftimes and other sporting events. In an attempt to mitigate the asymmetrical power dynamic in this relationship, social media users, including music educators, may have created a positive identity of cultured and sensitive marching band participants who support one another by imagining the negative alterity of dumb jocks. This was perhaps done to elevate marching band status.

Marching band enthusiasts' efforts to ameliorate their subordinate position and to gain power and a higher status in the face of this powerful imagined Other may be situated within Baumann's (2006) three grammars of alterity. Some social media users appear to have participated in an *orientalizing* grammar of alterity to create identity. The dork pride (theme 1) and bullying critique (theme 2) cast athletes and the general public as inferior to marching band members. Marching band enthusiasts set their identity in opposition to "dumb jocks" who are abusive and lack sensitivity and understanding of the subtleties of the marching arts. In this way, they may have created an "us = good, them = bad" binary. However, when coupled with comments that aimed to refute Rome's tweets (theme 3), there is also a subtle recognition of the superiority of these other groups. The same "dumb jocks" were also physically fit individuals that marching band members esteemed. These users claimed participation in

marching band also created, and in some cases surpassed, this physical fitness. In this way, they may have participated in an orientalizing grammar by simultaneously, and perhaps ironically, denigrating and esteeming athletic culture and its outcomes.

While the orientalizing grammar requires a stark and clearly delineated alterity to define marching band identity, in the *segmentation* and *encompassment* grammars, social media users blurred the lines between identity and alterity. They borrowed or coopted military and football culture, of which marching band is intimately linked, to legitimize their status. They also suggested that marching band participation has relevancy for a larger population, claiming that many participate in marching band, that it is inclusive, and that it contributes to preparing well-rounded citizens. Some of the social media users borrowed the attributes of athletes and military personnel—including physical fitness and toughness—and argued for broad appeal to a general public to legitimize marching band's outcomes and its members' social identity. At times, they blurred the lines between themselves and the military by considering themselves a subset or encompassed within those communities. They also blurred the lines between identity and alterity in the opposite direction by expanding the inclusivity of marching band through the segmentation grammar. "In band," as one social media user posted, "popular girls share a music stand with shy kids. The honor-roll student marches next to those who are barely passing." Marching band is an inclusive space where everyone is included.

By employing these grammars of alterity, the social media users created a set of contradicting characteristics of marching band identity and participation. Marching band participation creates sensitive marching artists who are picked on by insensitive jocks, yet it also creates physically fit, tough individuals on par with athletes. It is exclusive and close-knit, yet it is inclusive and has relevancy to a general population. Social media users emphasized differing and contradictory benefits and shifted the lines of identity and alterity from inclusivity to exclusivity depending on which ones were more advantageous in gaining power, elevating their status, and furthering their argument of relevancy and legitimacy.

These shifting borders between identity and alterity and the contradictions they reveal support and further nuance the findings of previous studies. It supports the findings that the general population often has a negative outlook on marching band status, referring to them as dorks, geeks, or nerds (Adderley, Kennedy, and Berz 2003, Foley 1991) and that despite this ridicule, marching band members wear "music as a badge" (Adderley, Kennedy, and Berz 2003, Dagaz 2010, Morrison 2001), even though they may feel conflicted about their status (Carter 2013, Vance 2014). This study might suggest some ways marching

band members employ the band dork, geek, and nerd monikers in the relation to these contradictory feelings. In the face of a subaltern status and the bullying that accompanies that status, some members of the social identity group reclaimed pride by appropriating the terms their bullies used to define and control them, weakening the harmful power of these monikers in an attempt to gain social status. Conversely, others argued that acceptance of this language is to be complicit in one's own oppression. This is similar to the more extreme examples of "reclaiming" the word "slut" in feminism (Attwood 2007) and the n-word in African-American culture (Kennedy 1999) in order to gain more status in society and to demonstrate pride, while other members of the social group critique adoption of this language. Like the use of negative terms in these communities, marching band members' use of "dork pride" suggests a complicated, contradictory, and debated relationship with that language and the larger community.

The segmentation and encompassment grammars might suggest that educators adopt a fluid view of marching band, music students' and teachers' identities and how power influences that fluidity. Who does the music education community consider a "music student" and how does the criteria change in varying contexts? How do students and teachers rationalize and legitimize these identities, and what is power's relationship with this process? What are the potentially harmful alterities that educators and students imagine to create these ensemble identities? Studying these questions in the context of formal education, as opposed to online activity, and in a variety of ensembles might reveal new interpretations.

These grammars of alterity might extend previous research in marching band and ensemble identities and its intersection with teachers' actions. As previous studies have suggested, the exclusive social identify forged through marching band participation is powerful because it forms camaraderie and motivation (Adderley, Kennedy, and Berz 2003, Carter 2013, Dagaz 2010, Morrison 2001, Vance 2014). Despite this positive aspect, the social media activity reviewed in this study perhaps suggests that wearing "music as a badge" and the creation of an exclusionary identity—whether through dork pride or refusal of this term— may inhibit teachers' abilities to reflect on advocacy efforts and their responsibilities to the alterity of the larger community. Only one post displayed self-reflection on marching bands' relationship to the communities they serve, whether those who do not participate in marching bands understand and appreciate its value, and how educators might improve their efforts to communicate marching band and music education's benefits. The appearance of only one self-reflective post highlighted the lack of social media users' desire to

use this as an opportunity to improve practice and instead defend music education.

Music teachers' lack of reflection is, perhaps, not surprising. It seems reasonable to conclude that marching band enthusiasts felt attacked by Rome and were in a defensive position with the aim of justification and protection. Previous research has suggested that people present an idealized version of themselves online (Mellins 2008) and critical self-reflection might not suit that aim. Some or many music educators also appear to value professional forums, Twitter, and social media as a space to voice frustrations and humor to an ostensibly like-minded audience of sympathetic professionals, rather than exclusively as an avenue for self-reflection and professional development. Brewer and Rickels (2014), for example, coded posts that serve this function as "community" posts in their study of the Band Directors Group on Facebook. Because of this, the social media users in this study may not have had a desire to self-reflect, and this cannot be overlooked.

However, if social media is a space where users form, maintain, and alter music student and teacher identities and alterities, then the vociferous defense and general lack of reflection does raise questions for further consideration. Who is included and served in marching band and music identities and who is left out in the necessary creation of those identities' alterities? How does the continual maintenance and justification of those identities and alterities inform and influence music educators' advocacy efforts? How, if at all, does online participation facilitate or impede the development of music teachers' beliefs and practices? Music educators might consider these dialectics of identity and alterity and their consequences as they devise ways to motivate students, foster camaraderie, advocate for their programs, balance students' education with service to the community, and participate online.

About the Author

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Notes

[1] Another example of social media attention to marching band occurred later that calendar year on September 6, 2015 after some viewers interpreted a Kansas State marching formation as representing a lascivious act with their rival's mascot, the University of Kansas's Jayhawk.

[2] Social media users often included ellipses in the posts to connote a pause or a "therefore" function. In this article, ellipses are original unless placed in square brackets. Also, there are sometimes grammatical and syntactical errors, but because these posting are an informal space, such looseness of language is idiomatic and I do not call attention to them with the use of *sic*.

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