

# Action, Criticism & Theory for Music Education

*The refereed journal of the*



Volume 7, No. 1  
January 2008

Wayne Bowman, Editor

Frank Abrahams, Associate Editor

## **Devouring the Other: Democracy in Music Education**

Elizabeth Gould

© Elizabeth Gould 2008 All rights reserved.

ISSN 1545-4517

The content of this article is the sole responsibility of the author. The ACT Journal and the Mayday Group are not liable for any legal actions that may arise involving the article's content, including, but not limited to, copyright infringement.

For further information, please point your Web Browser to <http://act.maydaygroup.org>

## Devouring the Other: Democracy in Music Education<sup>1</sup>

Elizabeth Gould  
University of Toronto



With the western world's so-called war on terror, which is to say a physical battle waged against a metaphysical idea, yet perpetrated by and against very specific material individuals and states, liberal democracy(ies) functions as a commodity exported with some missionary zeal around the world. Sustained and supported by abstract notions of freedom, justice, and equality, liberal democracy is promulgated as (a fundamentalist Christian) God's will, deployed as both the justification of and moral authority for pre-emptive strikes, invasion and occupation against and of the Other—presumably non-democracy (Dhaliwal 1996)—yet another metaphysical idea. That contemporary western liberal democracies currently occupied in this crusade exist in a variety of forms, not one of which has managed to guarantee, let alone provide, freedom, justice, and equality for its citizens at any given time, is immaterial. Apparently, unspecified intentions and unfulfilled goals are their own defence in the context of 'democracy' that is a commodity 'owned' by these western nations (Grewal 1993) in both its metaphysical and physical manifestations, irrespective of the relative justness of those manifestations. Consequently, it comes as no particular surprise that democracy—in any form—is neither easily transplanted from one society to another, nor immediately or eventually effective in at least accomplishing its (impossible) goals of providing freedom, justice, and equality for its citizens.

Despite its apparent failures, liberal democracy(ies) as an (action) ideal persists as a goal for music educators, irrespective of their interest in social justice. Typically, their concern with democracy is confined to enacting so-called democratic practices in their classrooms in terms of specific techniques for teaching and discipline (for instance, DeLorenzo 2003; Nimmo 1997), which are more or less engaged with musically relevant issues associated with social justice, such as, for instance, teaching the music of women composers. Pedagogical and curricular democratic practices, meanwhile, typically include sharing power with students, which means giving them choices in classroom context and

content (such as acting in the teacher's place or choosing repertoire) that are largely symbolic as they do not change or even challenge power relations inherited in modern classrooms. While certainly preferable at a basic human level to autocratic forms of instruction, purported symptoms of the democratic (consensus, community, and agency) are accepted unproblematically with little or no consideration of ways in which consensus depends on coercion, community conceived as inclusion of some is necessarily predicated on exclusion of others, and power relations inhere in every 'freely' chosen act.

Beginning with the assumptions and goals of traditional liberal concepts of democracy, I deploy Val Plumwood's (1993) detailed theorization of dualisms and dualistic logic in terms of the inevitability of "devouring the other" (p. 192), the final result of which is not only death of democracy and society as we know it, but death of the very planet on which we live. Extending her ecology-based discussion in terms of black feminists bell hooks' (1995) and Audre Lorde's (1984) notions of rage, anger and fury, as well as Pierre Bourdieu's (1991) concept of symbolic violence, I argue that failing to account for Others as well as processes of othering in music and music teaching and learning renders democracy in any form in music education at best well-intended but misguided, and at worst, dangerous and destructive. The apocalypse, regrettably, is already upon us.<sup>2</sup>

### **Liberal Democracy(ies)**

Predicated on foundational, universal metanarratives and abstract concepts such as individualism, justice, freedom, and the rationality by which they are articulated and negotiated, liberal democracy(ies) assimilates difference in all of its forms. Materially, it purports that everyone is the same or equal before the law, for instance, or in the voting booth, and in terms of access to opportunity. Given the same treatment legally, educationally, and socially, the logic goes, everyone is protected so they can and will succeed. Where problems arise, abstract reason is implemented to reach some kind of consensus or at least majority decision to achieve resolution, based on the logic that what benefits most people will necessarily hurt fewer people and so is generally preferred.<sup>3</sup> Those who are not protected or do not succeed have somehow failed to assimilate adequately, which is to say they have not eliminated their difference in order to meet the demands of protection or success, rendering their vulnerability or failure a problem not of democracy but of the individual—of difference.<sup>4</sup> The human subject of liberal democracy(ies), then, is autonomous, unified, and

inherited with agency, acting in community with other similarly constituted subjects for the common good: assimilation. In the U.S. melting pot, difference is boiled off, dissipated in the steam of social order, while in the Canadian mosaic, difference is woven into a tapestry, effaced in the warp and weft of social control.<sup>5</sup>

The social contract by which liberal democracy(ies) maintains order among and control of citizens “represent[s] a kind of cultural imperialism” (Murphy & Choi 1997, p. 19), as its instruments, democratic institutions such as governments and schools, impose the values and logic on which ordering and control are based. To be effective, of course, methods of order and control, such as assimilation and majority rule, must appear to be rational and universal, as well as inevitable and beneficial, creating a ‘metaphysics of domination.’ Even as its effects are material, this domination is metaphysical in the sense that it is constructed as the necessary and inevitable result of universal, completely objective, hence ahistorical norms or ideals, to which some people, ideas, and things naturally conform and others do not. These so-called objective standards were conceived as pure, untainted knowledge in classical Greece as Plato’s Ideal Forms. During the Middle Ages, they were understood as the Word of God, and since the Enlightenment as ‘reason’ or ‘science.’ At all times, however, access to this truth has been limited. In Plato’s worldview it was the purview of philosopher kings. Centuries later it was the province of the medieval Church faithful, specifically the official representatives of the Church, and since the Enlightenment it has been reserved for ‘men’ of reason, which is to say scientists. Consequently, contemporary liberal democracy(ies) remain structurally unequal as various individuals and groups have differing access to knowledge, power and decision-making, a disparity that persists as a function of most notably interconnections between and among race, wealth (class), gender, and sexuality.

The logical basis for both ranking (valuing) and dominating (controlling) is the construct dualism, which necessarily enables hegemony (assimilation) on the one hand and inferiorization (domination) on the other. Linked to the classical western philosophical quest for knowledge uncontaminated by bias or material concerns, dualistic structures (reason/emotion, for instance) delineate universal norms (the first term) against which everything else (the second term) is measured. Indeed, they provide the justification that context-free objectivity can exist, situated as it is beyond unreliable and flawed human subjectivity. Similarly, they make possible disembodied, abstract reason and objective methods necessary to obtain and represent knowledge free of contingencies (Murphy & Choi

1997) on which assimilation and domination rely. As the logical basis for assimilation and domination, then, dualisms are further legitimated by conceptual abstraction leading to consensus and consistency of thought rather than embodiment of ideas and ways of knowing that create spaces of critical dissent. The inherent contradiction between effects of dualisms and presumed ideals of democracy underscores the necessity of subverting both dualistic structures and dualistic thought, and begins with explorations of dualisms' nature and logic.

### **Dualisms and Difference**

A dualism, of course, is a form of distinction, which is to say, difference. This is a particular type of distinction, however. Not opposite or mutually exclusive as with dichotomy, separate but side-by-side or existing in tandem as with binary, or similar or overlapping as with resemblance and analogy respectively, dualism is a distinction based on both ranking and inferiorization.

A dualism is an intense, established and developed cultural expression of . . . a hierarchical relationship, constructing central cultural concepts and identities so as to make equality and mutuality literally unthinkable. Dualism is a relation of separation and domination inscribed and naturalised in culture and characterised by radical exclusion, distancing and opposition between orders constructed as systematically higher and lower, as [sup]erior and [inf]erior, as ruler and ruled, which treats the division as part of the natures of beings construed not merely as different but as belonging to radically different orders or kinds, and hence as not open to change. (Plumwood 1993, pp. 47–48)

What is crucial in this ranking is that it is not a simple hierarchy, which for Plumwood (1993) is contingent and open to contestation and change. Rather, this ranking occurs in terms of a complex hierarchy that inferiorizes the second term to the first as a function of power relations such that the second, unless it can somehow resist this structuring, becomes complicit in its own inferiorization, as it internalizes dominant and dominating values of the social world in which it exists. Indeed, Lorde (1984) observes that members of oppressed groups, intimately familiar, out of necessity, with the perspectives of oppressor as well as their own, often take on characteristics of oppressors as an illusion of security. Literally, oppression requires both oppressor and oppressed (Memmi 1991), and describes the complex hierarchy at work in dualisms. The inferiorization of one order (the particular) to the superior order (the universal) results in “the construction of a devalued and sharply demarcated sphere of otherness” (Plumwood 1993, p. 41) by which the particular is marginalized. This in turn

creates a relation of dependency of the first term on the second that is denied by the first (subject), and necessitates the second's (Other's) appropriation. Institutionalized by and through systems of power, dualisms are never neutral, natural, or innocent, and accumulate in terms of interlocking and mutually reinforcing systems of domination. Further, dualisms function in these systems in both the cultural and material worlds, enabling particular types of social structures supported by particular (dualistic) ways of thinking.

Philosopher Gilles Deleuze (1994) argues that dualistic thinking is dogmatic in that it excludes other ways of thinking, and representational in that it can only proceed in terms of identity, opposition, resemblance, and analogy. Similarly, Plumwood (1993) claims that it “forms a fault-line which runs through [western culture's] entire conceptual system” (p. 42). She identifies clusters of several key dualistic structures and their material effects. For instance, reason/emotion and mind/body privilege cognition and rationality, while reason/nature and culture/nature provide conceptual support for environmental exploitation. Similarly, mental/manual and production/reproduction provide a conceptual basis for labour stratification, while master/slave and civilised/primitive conceptually enable racism, and universal/particular and male/female similarly enable sexism.

Certainly sources of oppression expressed as classism, racism, and sexism are ostensibly anathema to liberal democracy(ies). As it was originally conceived, however, and continues to be practiced with its reliance on disembodied—if not entirely abstract—reason, these sources of oppression are integral to its very existence (Dhaliwal 1996). That they persist is a function of an accumulation effect (Plumwood 1993). Deployed in several variations throughout history, Plumwood argues that dualisms accumulate, and are “preserved in our conceptual framework as residues, layers of sediment deposited by past oppressions” (p. 43) that can be mobilised to form new ones. This process is accomplished through Plumwood's concept of *linking postulates*:

assumptions normally made or implicit in the cultural background which create equivalences or mapping between the pairs. For example, the postulate that all and only humans possess culture maps the culture/nature pair on to the human/nature pair; the postulate that the sphere of reason is masculine maps the reason/body pair on the male/female pair; and the assumption that the sphere of the human coincides with that of intellect or mentality maps the mind/body pair on to the human/nature pair, and, via transitivity, the human/nature pair on to the male/female pair. (p. 45)

The pervasiveness and influence of these postulates and dualisms have been obscured in the history of western philosophy, however, as philosophers do not focus on the same dualisms in the same contexts; that is they do not use the same linking postulates. For example, Plato emphasizes postulates concerned with “reason/body, reason/emotion, universal/particular,” while Descartes focuses on those associated with “mind/body, subject/object, human/nature and human/animal”; and Marx emphasises those connected to “freedom/necessity, culture (history)/nature, civilised/primitive, mental/manual . . . and production/reproduction” (Plumwood 1993, p. 45). Similarly, although privileged terms in dualistic structures are generally associated with masculine traits and inferiorised terms are generally associated with feminine traits, Plumwood argues that they are not reducible simply to gender, because exclusions function in multiple ways, even as gender clearly plays a crucial role. For Plumwood, the “master” identity is certainly masculine, but also is inhered with other sources of oppression. Consequently, she uses it in combination with specific masculine pronouns to describe in detail five characteristics of dualisms.

The first characteristic, *backgrounding (denial)* describes the complex master/Other relationship of domination. As the Other fades into the master’s background, and hence is inessential from the master’s perspective, the master denies his dependence for his existence on the Other. This dependency results from the Other’s fulfilling the master’s material and metaphorical survival needs, which nevertheless constitutes a challenge to the master’s authority. Consequently, the master engages in *radical exclusion (hyperseparation)* of the Other, necessitating that the Other is not only different from but inferior to the master, who attempts to maximize this inferiority by excluding and minimizing any sense of similarity with the Other. Indeed, separation from the Other is so crucial that it extends to bifurcation and the creation of two distinct (master and Other) natures. *Incorporation (relational definition)* describes the Other’s identity in negative terms as not-the master. Consequently, the Other is not acknowledged as a fully formed or independent subject, and is recognized only to the extent that she or he may be assimilated by the master; that is to the extent that the Other is colonised. As a function of *instrumentalism (objectification)*, the Other is instrumental to the master by serving him exclusively, while the Other’s concerns, needs, and desires exist only in relationship to the master’s, thus objectifying the Other. Through *homogenization*, differences among Others are minimized to the extent that all may be treated the same, which is to say equally, producing “binarism, a division of the world into two

orders” (p. 54), and supporting radical exclusion, incorporation, and instrumentalism. Taken in combination, these characteristics function to institutionalize discrimination as an integral component of liberal democracy(ies).

### **Institutionalized Discrimination and Symbolic Violence**

In sociological terms democratic institutions are ‘formalized’ in the sense that they are coherently organized in relationship to their function, systems of communication, and authority, lending to them an appearance of impersonal fairness that obscures their social constructedness (Berger & Luckmann 1967). Accorded special status as a function of their stability, predictability, and rationality, institutions such as liberal democracy(ies) and schools for instance, project expectations and preferences that take on the status of mandates and norms, respectively. Discrimination, systematically imbedded in institutions, becomes integral to their daily operations, “[b]uried beneath layers of rules and regulations, and sustained by tradition” (Murphy & Choi 1997, p. 89), which consequently institutionalizes it. In liberal democracy(ies), institutionalized discrimination is manifested, for instance, in a legal system that purports to be “colour-blind,” which is a logical impossibility in a system predicated on assimilation and domination. In music education this is manifested, for example, in entrance processes that are successfully completed only by those who can afford private tuition involving instruments and music of the western art tradition, whether or not actual auditions are “blind.”

As a both hyper-refined and “covert” (Shannon & Escamilla 1999) version of institutionalized discrimination, symbolic violence is a function of symbolic power, “that invisible power which can be exercised only with the complicity of those who do not want to know that they are subject to it or even that they themselves exercise it” (Bourdieu 1991, p. 164). In Plumwood’s terms, the master, in a position of power and domination, exercises symbolic violence through the symbolic power inhered in denial, exclusion, incorporation, appropriation, objectification, and homogenization, using and colonising the Other through interactions that coerce and/or condescend. While both the master and the Other participate in the asymmetrical power relations of symbolic violence, neither generally recognize it as anything but ‘natural’ or at least inevitable. Unlike institutionalized discrimination, symbolic violence is framed as “benign if not benevolent” (Shannon & Escamilla 1999, p. 349), consisting of admonitions that construct it as being obviously for our own good, and

consequently something in which we willingly participate. Indeed, failure to engage symbolic violence in its various forms, *misrecognized* as self-improvement, is constructed as both illogical and shameful, making us accomplices in our own oppression. Consequently, individuals are responsible for any discrimination they may experience, which of course is not discrimination at all, but constructed as the natural consequences of personal inadequacies—of difference. Occurring through processes of “inferiorization and redemption” (Murphy & Choi 1997, p. 103), then, symbolic violence literally is “*the violence which is exercised upon a social agent with his or her complicity*” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 167, emphasis in original). Further, it is exercised when it is *misrecognized*, which is to say when it is recognized as legitimate (Bourdieu 1991), and is advanced through a “special” (Bourdieu 1991), “coded” (Acuña 1995)<sup>6</sup> or “unique” (Murphy & Choi 1997) language,<sup>7</sup> the effect of which is supported by “the strength of the collective, of the consensus, of common sense” (Bourdieu 1991, p. 239).

As state institutions, universities hold a “legitimate” monopoly on symbolic violence (Bourdieu 1991) related to education, making university professors “delegated agents” of the state. Virtually all students entering university music programs become complicit in this as they quite willingly give up control of their bodies to their omniscient music teachers and conductors, convinced that by relinquishing all technical and musical performance decisions, they will gain requisite skills and knowledge to become successful professional concert musicians, and not incidentally will be able to perform every kind of music they may encounter, because skill in performing western art music is purported to make all other musics accessible. Similarly, in the profession of music education, ‘talented’ students are ‘valued’ because they excel in performing western art music, and are consequently encouraged to continue with their music performance studies, regardless of other contingencies, such as limited intellectual capabilities (generally in the case of white girls) or disruptive behaviours (generally in the case of white boys). Children of colour are rarely designated as talented in this context, of course, given their disproportionate inability to access private tuition. Consequently, “the educational system ideologically legitimates inequality by purporting to award . . . credentials, titles and qualifications on the basis of an objective or meritocratic competition regardless of the student’s class or racial-ethnic background” (Anderson, 2005, 401). The point is that symbolic violence is both capricious and arbitrary, erratic and irrational. It names and contains difference. Perhaps most

importantly, symbolic violence results in material effects; in other words, symbolic violence is “real” violence (Schubert 2002).

### **Devouring the Other**

The real violence of symbolic violence is a function of dualistic thinking carried to its logical conclusion, reflected in Plumwood’s (1993) fourth stage of what she describes as “a process of colonisation of otherness” (p. 191). Roughly correlated with historical eras, Plumwood’s colonisation process begins with *justification and preparation*, and is associated with Plato and the early rationalists who established the Other as inferior. In social systems as well as philosophy, the master identity freely and openly dominated “animals, slaves, ‘barbarians’ and women” (p. 191), and thus initiated discrimination against and colonisation of sources of otherness related to humans and culture. During the second stage, *invasion and annexation*, associated with later rationalists such as Descartes and Locke and consequently roughly corresponding with the Enlightenment, the Other, including nature, is first invaded by abstract reason and then annexed in its service. Thus, the Other is colonised, displaced, and disappeared.<sup>8</sup> Comprising the last 200 years or so, Plumwood’s third stage, *appropriation*, transforms the Other as a tool of the master, colonising the Other’s agency for commodification or consumption. The fourth stage, *colonisation*, occurs in contemporary situations that signal the future, and deny the Other’s difference, consisting of what she refers to as “devouring the other” (p. 192). The result of devouring either eliminates or incorporates the Other which extirpates it in either case: “both in use (in commodification) and in non-use, as whatever cannot be made use of, commodified, represented in the market, whatever still dares to assert difference, is destroyed” (p. 193).<sup>9</sup> In both the social and natural worlds, the Other is completely controlled, discarded, and obliterated by the master. This eventually results in his own destruction, of course, because (devouring) mastery persistently ignores its dependence on the Other for its own survival, and thus misunderstands the Other’s resistance. As difference is devoured, both the master and the Other are lost.

Perhaps because her interest is primarily ecological, Plumwood deals with *colonisation* as a general concept, without specifically articulating the European *colonialist* conquests of Africa, the Middle East, India, East Asia, and the Americas. Her concern with the negative effects of colonisation in material, cultural, and natural realities is nevertheless evident in the way she frames her argument. For Plumwood, “devouring the other” includes

people specifically as well as systems of nature and the natural world; indeed she argues that the two are inexorably intertwined. It seems, however, that the co-occurrence of her second stage, *invasion and annexation*, with the height of European colonialism and the Enlightenment is of enormous importance given that the logic of colonialism constitutes the very basis of contemporary dualistic structures and institutions, such as liberal democracy(ies).

Located in “the colonial relationship between colonized and colonizer” (Memmi 1991, pp. 71–72), colonialist logic enables the coloniser to visit any number of atrocities, including military rule, slavery, and theft, on the colonised—all while remaining consistent with Christian morality and ideals of fledgling liberal democracy(ies). Indeed, cultural imperialism accompanying colonialism was constructed as generous and benevolent as it inculcated European languages and religions while concomitantly destroying indigenous cultures. In the context of Christian charity and Enlightenment individualism, then, colonialism was its own defence, encompassing a system of beliefs that legitimated invasion, annexation, and appropriation in terms of a pseudo-Darwinism in which European whites, because of their status at the top of the evolutionary ladder, ‘naturally’ dominated everything, including non-white people and the natural world. As the basis for the evolutionary hierarchy of colonialism, racial discrimination is enormously comprehensive and efficient in imposing domination. Other sources of difference are certainly available and implemented as necessary, but they are secondary in colonialist logic. Discrimination based on gender or any visible source of difference other than race, such as physical able-ness, is not comprehensive as it oppresses only part of any given population. Non-visible sources of discrimination based on religion, for instance, or any belief system are not efficient because beliefs are generally not visible, except in the case of specific clothing or hair styles. Making beliefs visible, as in wearing symbols or tattoos, is certainly possible, but is also inefficient and unreliable. It was primarily on the basis of race, then, as it intersects with other sources of oppression in the context of Christian morals and Enlightenment values, that emerging liberal democracy(ies) was conceived.

Consequently, liberal democracy(ies) wages wars *of terror* against whatever terrorizes it, which by its very definition, wears a non-white face, even as it is oblivious to the terror it visits on its own citizenry. While the idea that whiteness could be associated with terrorism is nearly impossible for white people to imagine, for black people, “White people were

regarded as terrorists, especially those who dared to enter that segregated space of blackness. . . . They were strangers, rarely seen in our neighbourhoods” (hooks 1995, p. 39). This terror occurs not only as the result of visits by ‘officials,’ invading black neighbourhoods to enforce the law or sell products like Bibles and insurance that enact terror through economic exploitation, but anytime a white person even inadvertently ‘crosses the tracks.’

“You’re lost,” he declared before I could say a word. Lost, indeed. I had just stepped out of my car in a neighbourhood in Brooklyn, New York known as Bedford-Stuyvesant, a neighbourhood notorious for its poverty and violence. Middle-aged, thin, and black, he looked at me in the pre-dawn hour intently and not unkindly. Young black men milled around behind him, as I asked for directions to the nearest entrance ramp onto the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway. He responded deftly and carefully, leaving out no detail, so I would be sure to not become lost in his community again. Then he asked for money to buy breakfast. I gave him everything in my pockets, grateful for his help, pleased to think I might be able to return it in some insignificant way. Only many years later did I realize his primary concern was for his community—and not for me, although assisting his community certainly benefited me. I was a trespasser; I did not belong. “Did they understand at all how strange their whiteness appeared in our living rooms, how threatening?” (hooks 1995, p. 39). No, I did not understand. I was more concerned with my own safety, completely oblivious to the chaos and instability my presence threatened, as I was unexplained, out of place. This man, who upon identifying me immediately separated himself from the group, and removed the threat quickly, quietly, and effectively.

Responding with rage to “the terrible, the terrifying, the terrorizing” (hooks 1995, p. 39) terrorist weapons favoured by liberal democracy(ies) of pervasive and debilitating institutionalized discrimination and symbolic violence manifested as racism, then, is appropriate (hooks 1995). Complex and multi-dimensional, rage is essential to resistance when it is deployed constructively through engagement with a wide variety of emotions. As opposed to “narcissistic rage rooted in the ideology of hierarchical privilege” (hooks, 1995, p. 28) and concerned only with its own (offended) sense of entitlement, this is militant rage that “can act as a catalyst inspiring courageous action” (p. 16) against collective oppression. Both crucial and inevitable, it is “the gift of intelligent rage” (Williams 1997, p. 234) in the face of

spirit-murder, or disregard for others whose lives qualitatively depend on our regard, . . . [the] product [of which] is a system of formalized distortions of

thought. It produces social structures centered around fear and hate; it provides a tumorous outlet for feelings elsewhere unexpressed. . . We need to see [spirit-murder] as a cultural cancer; we need to open our eyes to the spiritual genocide it is wreaking on blacks, whites, and the abandoned and abused of all races and ages. We need to eradicate its numbing pathology before it wipes out what precious little humanity we have left. (Williams 1997, p. 234)

Accomplished only when rage is put to use, Lorde (1984) addresses spirit-murder in terms of “anger” and “fury:” anger at racist attitudes and fury when they do not change. As an avenging spirit of anger, fury asks, “‘Who profits from all this?’” (Lorde 1984, p. 129). The task for women of colour who “have grown up with a symphony of anger” has been to “learn to orchestrate those furies so that they do not tear us apart. . . . Those of us who did not learn this difficult lesson did not survive. And part of my anger is always libation for my fallen sisters” (Lorde 1984, p. 129). Orchestrating fury is a creative act, an offering of change and growth, however painful, naming our complicity: “What woman here is so enamoured of her own oppression that she cannot see her heelprint upon another woman’s face?” (p. 132). Lorde’s response to this is to name her complicity as a university professor, and recognize those who endure the symbolic violence related to the university and her position in it; to recognize those who are oppressed and continue to use fury against that oppression.

For music educators, however, the vast majority of whom, particularly those teaching at the university level, are white and heterosexual and male, occupying Plumwood’s master identity in a way that Lorde never could, what is an appropriate response to institutionalized discrimination and symbolic violence of democratic institutions such as universities? Surely it is not rage, as we have not experienced the effects of symbolic violence as racism, and our complacency regarding racism only furthers its reach. Content with liberal democracy(ies), this empty form of democracy, a simulacrum, the ultimate bait and switch, as it promises what—by its very definition—it cannot deliver, can never deliver, we are left with apathy, alienation, and despair. Liberal democracy(ies), regardless of how much better it may be than its alternatives, is no democracy—which is the cruellest blow of all, as it devours the Other. An appropriate response to the institutionalized discrimination and symbolic violence of assimilation and domination, then, for music educators, is *outrage*, utter contempt for liberal democracy(ies), democratic institutions, and so-called democratic practices based on dualistic structures and thinking that not only enable, but necessitate assimilation and domination. Outrageous acts violate standards of behaviour, in this case symbolic violence. They are

supported by contempt, which is to say lack of respect for that violence and the democratic institutions necessitating it. Like hooks' and Williams' rage, and Lorde's fury, outrage and contempt fashion new worlds. Perhaps the only way to subvert dualisms and dualistic thinking constitutes the most outrageous act of all: engaging the Other in terms of her anger, rage, and fury. Without substantively and meaningfully engaging the Other and ourselves on her terms, we are left with only assimilation and domination; we are left with terrorism. This is the difficult work, the work of democracy based not on assimilation and domination, but on difference and dissent. Indeed, this is the work we are afraid to do; the work that terrifies us. How easy it is, by comparison, to simply give students opportunities to make decisions. How easy these strategies are when compared to facing our terror—of each other, of anger, rage, and fury. It is only in confronting terror, however, that we commit outrageous acts undermining the terror of liberal democracy(ies), the terror that threatens us all. For, as Lorde (1984) reminds us,

It is not the anger of Black women which is dripping down over this globe like a diseased liquid. It is not my anger that launches rockets, spends over sixty thousand dollars a second on missiles and other agents of war and death, slaughters children in cities, stockpiles nerve gas and chemical bombs, sodomizes our daughters and our earth. It is not the anger of Black women which corrodes into blind, dehumanizing power, bent upon the annihilation of us all unless we meet it with what we have, our power to examine and to redefine the terms upon which we will live and work; our power to envision and to reconstruct, anger by painful anger, stone upon heavy stone, a future of pollinating difference and the earth to support our choices. (Lorde 1984, p. 133)

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> This meditation has nothing to do with Paul Woodford's (2003) book, *Democracy and Music Education: Liberalism, Ethics, and the Politics of Practice*, and consequently should not be read in relation to it. As an act of *outrage*, it has everything to do with liberal democracy(ies), and should be read in relation to that. Further, it explores "surface effects" of events beneath and behind specific circumstances (Deleuze, 1990), and consequently assumes and is a precursor to explorations of those events (Gould, 2007).

<sup>2</sup> In relation to her ecofeminism, Plumwood (1993) transgresses "*masculinist* apocalyptic thought and action" (Quinby, 1997, 154, emphasis added) as she offers strategies for resistance. I attempt to extend this resistance first by revealing and critiquing liberal democracy in relation to Lee Quinby's (1997) genealogical feminist perspective that "emancipates and enfranchises the knowledges that have been disqualified for voicing uncertainty about or challenging outright . . . absolutes" (p. 146), and then suggesting initial responses appropriate to hooks' (1995) and Lorde's (1984) combined visions.

<sup>3</sup> For a comprehensive and incisive critique of voting and majority rule, see Lani Guinier (1994).

<sup>4</sup> ‘Difference’ is understood as ‘distinction’ or anything that situates individuals and groups alike as Other to specific relevant dominant and dominating norms and values.

<sup>5</sup> As a U.S. citizen gratefully living in Canada, I would add that difference seems to be generally only grudgingly tolerated in the U.S. In Canada, by contrast, it seems to be generally anticipated and accepted—if not always readily, consistently, adequately, or continuously explored in terms of affirming or understanding its value.

<sup>6</sup> The title of Rudolfo Acuna’s (1995) book, *Anything but Mexican*, brings to mind the situation of university bands in North America, particularly in the U.S. In an effort to legitimate them as ‘serious’ (musically acceptable) music ensembles, “The most prestigious [university] bands are known by terms such as wind ensemble, wind symphony, symphonic winds, chamber winds—anything other than band” (Gould, 2003, p. 6).

<sup>7</sup> Acuña (1995) makes the point that “coded language” is used traditionally by oppressed groups in a variety of ways to resist or subvert oppression. In music education, I think of the African American song, “Follow the Drinking Gourd,” for instance. Its lyrics provide clues that assisted runaway slaves in accessing the underground railroad. Similarly, the song, “Juba,” includes lyrics enabling African-Americans to express feelings that are not legitimate in racist society (Sweet Honey in the Rock, 1992). With symbolic violence, by contrast, coded language is deployed, often by representatives of state institutions, such as schools, to justify assimilation and domination.

<sup>8</sup> To be ‘disappeared’ refers specifically to the tens of thousands of men, women, and children, known as the *Desaparecidos* of Argentina, who vanished as the result of abduction, torture and murder during the 1976–1983 Argentine military junta dictatorship. It also is associated with at least 11 al-Qaeda “ghost detainees” who, since 2001, have vanished while in the custody of the Central Intelligence Agency of the U.S., the most powerful and hence most dangerous liberal democracy on earth. I invoke the term here as well to re-call the hundreds of Mexican women factory workers who are currently vanishing as the result of abduction, rape and murder in the desert along the Mexico-U.S. border.

<sup>9</sup> This is in contrast to bell hooks’ (1992) comments about “eating the Other,” in which members of white culture consume aspects of black culture, music and fashion, for instance, as a form of thrill-seeking pleasure. The point, of course, is to appropriate and enjoy rather than destroy black culture so that white people may consume it again and again.

## References

Acuña, R. (1995). *Anything but Mexican: Chicanos in contemporary Los Angeles*. London, UK: Verso.

Anderson, G. M. (2005). In the name of diversity: Education and commoditization and consumption of race in the United States. *The Urban Review*, 37(5), 399–423.

Berger, P., & Luckmann, T. (1967). *The social construction of reality: A treatise in the sociology of knowledge*. New York: Anchor Press.

Gould, E. (2008). Devouring the other: Democracy in music education. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education* 7/1: 29-44. [http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Gould7\\_1.pdf](http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Gould7_1.pdf)

- 
- Bourdieu, P. (1991). *Language and symbolic power*. G. Raymond & M. Adamson (Trans.). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bourdieu, P., & Wacquant, L. (1992). *An invitation to reflexive sociology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Deleuze, G. (1990). *The logic of sense*. M. Lester & C. Stivale (Trans.) New York: Columbia University Press.
- . (1994). *Difference and repetition*. P. Patton (Trans.) New York: Columbia University Press.
- DeLorenzo, L. C. (2003). Teaching music as democratic practice. *Music Educators Journal*, 90(2), 35–40.
- Dhaliwal, A. K. (1996). Can the subaltern vote? Radical democracy, discourses of representation and rights, and the questions of race. In D. Trend (Ed.) *Radical democracy: Identity, citizenship, and the state*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Gould, E. S. (2003). Cultural contexts of exclusion: Women college band directors. *Research in Music Education*, 1(1), <http://www.stthomas.edu/rimonline/vol1gould.htm>.
- Gould, E. (2007). Social justice in music education: The problematic of democracy. *Music Education Research* 9(2), 229-40.
- Grewal, I. (1993). Reading and writing the South Asian diaspora: Feminism and nationalism in North America. In Women of South Asian Descent Collective (Eds.) *Our feet walk the sky: Women of the South Asian diaspora*. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books.
- Guinier, L. (1994). *The tyranny of the majority: Fundamental fairness in representative democracy*. New York: The Free Press.
- hooks, b. (1992). *Black looks: Race and representation*. Boston: South End Press.
- . (1995). *Killing rage: Ending racism*. New York: Henry Holt and Company.
- Lorde, A. (1984). *Sister outsider: Essays and speeches*. Freedom, CA: The Crossing Press.
- Gould, E. (2008) "Devouring the other: Democracy in music education." *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education* 7/1: 29-44. [http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Gould7\\_1.pdf](http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Gould7_1.pdf)

- Memmi, A. (1991). *The colonizer and the colonized*, (expanded ed.). Boston: Beacon Press.
- Murphy, J., & Choi, J. M. (1997). *Postmodernism, unravelling racism, and democratic institutions*. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Nimmo, D. (1997). Judicious discipline in the music classroom. *Music Educators Journal*, 83(4), 27–32.
- Plumwood, V. (1993). *Feminism and the mastery of nature*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Quinby, L. (1997). Genealogical feminism: A politic way of looking. In J. Dean (Ed.) *Feminism and the new democracy: Resiting the political*. London and Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Schubert, J. D. (2002). Defending multiculturalism: From hegemony to symbolic violence. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 45(7), 1088–1102.
- Shannon, S. M., & Escamilla, K. (1999). Mexican immigrants in U.S. schools: Targets of symbolic violence. *Education Policy*, 13(3), 347–370.
- Sweet Honey in the Rock. (1992). Juba. On *Sweet honey in the rock: All for freedom*, track 7. Redway, CA: Music for Little People. 9 42505-2.
- Williams, P. (1997). Spirit-murdering the messenger: The discourse of fingerprinting as the law's response to racism. In A. K. Wing (Ed.) *Critical race feminism: A reader*. New York and London: New York University Press.
- Woodford, P. (2003). *Democracy and music education: Liberalism, ethics, and the politics of practice*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

### About the Author

Elizabeth Gould serves as Associate Professor of Music Education at the University of Toronto. Her research using feminisms and postmodern theories focuses on issues of power and performativity in music education.