Disrupting Racism in Music Education: Conceptualizing Admissions Processes Through the State and the War Machine

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Abstract

The college admissions process (application, audition, acceptance) serves as a crucial milestone for many aspiring music educators. It also functions as a barrier to accessing the profession for historically marginalized students. In this article, we employ anti-racism as a lens to critically examine the admissions process as it exists in many music education programs. Incorporating this with Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) theorization of the state and the war machine, we consider ways to disrupt the seemingly iron-clad system of music education collegiate admissions and advocate for changes that benefit marginalized students and the music education profession.

Keywords

Anti-racism, music education, college admissions, Deleuze and Guattari, war machine

*J*ames sat in front of me, smiling nervously, clearly hoping he was making a good first impression. I smiled and tried to reassure him with my demeanor that this part of the audition day—the aural exam—was relatively painless and that I, a graduate student, had virtually no sway in the process. We exchanged pleasantries for a few moments, and I asked him why he wanted to be a music education major. He told me of growing up in an inner city and how music had kept him off the streets and given him a purpose in his life. He also spoke of how few kids got that chance. He said his life goal was to become a music educator, go back to the inner city, and change children's lives through music. I remember being struck by his passion and confidence, as well as his motivation for becoming a music educator. We began the exam, which took no more than 10 minutes. He did well and scored 20 out of 25, which was more than enough to meet the baseline. I wished him good luck on his audition with the applied studio, and he was gone.*

Later that day, someone in music admissions asked me if anyone "stood out," and without hesitation, I mentioned James. I spoke of his relative lack of formal training but that he did well on the aural exam, and his passion for being a music educator was something we needed to foster because the raw talent was there. They knew who I was talking about immediately and even mentioned that James had to get a ride to the audition from a community member. They told me they would keep an eye out for James, but it ultimately would come down to his audition, which was not likely to go well since he didn't have enough experience. I heard nothing else until, several months later, the list of acceptances was made public.

James was not admitted to the music education degree program.

James is Black.

The above vignette is an example of an all-too-common situation in music education programs across the United States. There are ethical concerns to consider when music education programs reject students who desire to teach music and positively impact their community simply because they did not gain acceptance into the program. Often, the decision to accept a student is less about passing the technical components of the audition and more about the number of available slots in a particular applied studio, as well as a completely subjective process of deciding who gets one of those coveted spots. Who are the gatekeepers that make decisions

impacting students' lives? Why are some allowed to pursue this profession while others are never given a chance? It is possible that the system may be set up to reject certain students before they even decide to pursue music education. Furthermore, some students who attempt the admissions process may find that the music education spaces into which they enter are less than supportive or even disinterested in welcoming them. And what is worse, many of these spaces have no problems with the standards governing the program, and those in charge of such standards reflect little desire to change.

The music education field is and has remained predominantly White for the last 30 years (Elpus 2015). Silence about the dominance of whiteness remains pervasive in music education programs, despite a growing body of scholarship surrounding this topic (e.g., Bradley 2006, 2007, 2015; Hess 2015, 2017, 2018; Koza 2008; Talbot 2018). In this article, we argue that the entire admissions process for United States music education programs, regardless of reform attempts and a sizable body of academic scholarship, remains inherently racist. We posit that despite lip service, style appearances, and isolated cases of structural change, the majority of universities and schools of music[1] have no intention of making structural shifts that do not serve their interests. We (the authors) believe the systemic and structural manner in which the admissions process has been maintained demonstrates how programs continue to serve a White-normative, Eurocentric model. Indeed, many of these programs promote themselves on the pretense of change while upholding racist structures in regimented and unethical ways, such as utilizing Black and Brown bodies on websites as tokenized markers of how diverse their programs are while maintaining a majority-White student body, or by posting a "Black Lives Matter" statement on the website banner without coupling it with resources to support those students in gaining acceptance (Knapp and Mayo 2021). We want to be clear that we are not discussing individual actors within these systems but the system itself. Utilizing an anti-racist framework (Dei 2000), we examine the processes within admissions systems at United States schools of music that reify racist practices and structures. We incorporate this with Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) theorization of the State and the war machine to consider how both individuals and collectives work within the admissions systems across music education to uphold racism and racist practices. Furthermore, we consider ways music educators might seek to disrupt this seemingly iron-clad system and advocate for changes that benefit all students and the music education profession.

Our Positionality with this Research

Identity is a social, cultural, and historical construct (Campbell 2000), whereby individuals relate unique facets of themselves to the world around them and to how they interact with society and vice versa. Any facet of identity can be a site of marginalization or privilege—race, class, gender, ability, sexual orientation, and more. As White scholars doing anti-racist work, we recognize the privilege we possess based on our identities and job titles and the social and cultural capital that has, in part, facilitated our access to music education spaces. We are cisgender, heterosexual White women, and we view our privilege as a responsibility that requires us to critically examine the systems from which we have benefitted throughout our careers. We have also faced challenges on our career paths, including navigating the college experience as mothers. One of us is a first-generation college student who has experienced unique challenges. We have both taught students with less privilege than we have, and we have witnessed students from minoritized groups being denied access to spaces that many White students experience. We recognize that we cannot fully understand the lived experiences of minoritized persons within music education spaces. Although race is salient in our thinking and subsequent writing, we also recognize that marginalization exists at many personal, social, and structural intersections. These intersections, although socially constructed, have real-world consequences for those experiencing marginalization. For us, highlighting the intersectional components of an anti-racist framework remains essential, as no one identity point can completely account for a person's experience.

Bounding our Conceptual Discussion

Music education programs in the United States are ultimately the gatekeepers for students seeking to join the profession and become music teachers. Potential US educators must obtain an individual state-level certification that is often contingent upon graduation from an accredited teacher preparation program. Although there are alternative pathways to certification (Hellman et al. 2011), such as an internship or emergency certification programs, collegiate music education programs at the undergraduate level are most common and constitute 69 percent of teacher preparation programs in the United States (US Department of Education 2016). Many factors influence how or if students arrive at the point of application,

such as family background, educational opportunity, and access to musical training. Recruiting is also a crucial factor in encouraging students to apply for universities, and there is evidence that recruitment procedures target whiteness in coded ways (Edgar 2018), such as looking for students who have had significant private lessons or recruiting from schools with financial resources to have a successful music program (Knapp and Mayo 2021; Fitzpatrick et al. 2014).

It is certainly true that racist structural problems exist in several other parts of the process of becoming a music educator. Racism in music education occurs well before a student applies to college (Knapp and Mayo 2021; Bradley 2006; Hess 2017). The US K–12 musical experience is often a barrier for BIPOC[2] students (Abramo and Bernard 2020; Koza 2008) and students may see the entire music education system in higher education as racist and choose not to engage at all (Fitzpatrick et al. 2014). Furthermore, significant retention problems exist for BIPOC students if or when they attend a higher education music program (Fitzpatrick et al. 2014). However, the experiences that take place before or after the admissions process are outside the scope of this specific investigation.

For this article, we chose to focus our conceptual discussion on the admissions processes encountered by high school seniors as they seek acceptance to a university and school of music. By focusing on the most common pathway into the profession in the United States, we seek to discuss structural and systemic issues that maintain racism in music education in the United States. We wondered in what ways music education programs might be operating as a regime or site of control, and how they might be complicit in reproducing a homogenous music education field. We also consider what music educators might do to disrupt such systems.

Theoretical Lenses: Critical Race Theory, Anti-Racism, and the State and Soldier-Body

For this conceptual argument, we utilize two lenses in tandem. First, we employ an anti-racist lens drawn from Critical Race Theory (CRT) and offer a brief overview of CRT's major tenets. Then, we provide a brief explanation of the main elements of Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) conceptual thought experiments of the State, the war machine, and the soldier-body. Finally, we draw connections between anti-racism and the State/war machine/soldier-body in preparation for a critical examination of the music education admissions process.

Critical Race Theory and Anti-Racism

CRT is a body of scholarship initially developed by legal scholars that addresses the lack of accounting for race when explaining structural inequalities in the United States (Delgado and Stefancic 2013; Ladson-Billings 1995). Since its inception and subsequent implementation in education, issues of race and racism continue to grow in prominence in educational research (Crenshaw 2019; DiAngelo 2018; Kendi 2016; Ladson-Billings 1995, 1999), as well as within music education discourse (Bradley 2015; Hess 2014, 2015, 2017; Palmer 2011; Robison and Russell 2021; Talbot 2018). And yet, Hess (2017) argued that music education in the United States still operates under "terminal naivety" or an "intentional lack of awareness of power relations" (19). As a legal framework, CRT serves as an important theoretical tool for those who would enact anti-racist practices. Anti-racism is often promoted as an "action-oriented" outgrowth of CRT (Dei 2000, 27); however, some scholars believe that the theoretical writings of CRT are action-oriented within themselves (Gillborn 2005, 2006). Nevertheless, Ahmed (2007) argued that for anti-racism to truly function, there must be a shift from rhetoric to a commitment to proposed and actual change. As such, for some scholars, anti-racism functions as a metaphorical call to arms (Zamalin 2017).

CRT provides individuals who engage in anti-racist behaviors a structure with which to challenge the status quo and make visible raced thinking and behavior, in what "CRT theorists view as a fundamentally racist world" (Hylton 2010, 336). In employing the tenets of a CRT framework, a person committed to anti-racism might be able to see the "power-asymmetric relation of class, race, gender, and sexuality" (Dei and Calliste 2000, 12), dis/ability,[3] and how they operate on a personal and social level. Those engaging in the work of anti-racism might use the framework to promote change and challenge "the continuance of racialization of social groups for differential and unequal treatment" (27). Furthermore, Hess (2017) argued for the importance of explicitly naming systems of oppression to call out inequalities and injustices. Hess (2017) posited that softening terminology allowed previous researchers to avoid direct language that "points to systemic and structural issues that music education both faces and perpetuates" (34). Indeed, utilizing softening terminology such as *diversity* or *equity* may allow people to safely remain in a state of White fragility, while using direct terms such as *racist*

and *racism* may serve to prevent it by forcing individuals to directly face their complicity in such systems (DiAngelo 2018). Accordingly, we endeavor to avoid such softeners to address racism explicitly throughout this interrogation.

Utilizing Dei and Calliste's (2000) conception of an anti-racist framework and Hess's (2017) call to use explicit language, we examine the United States undergraduate admissions processes in music education to identify ways commonly accepted practices serve as the enactment of differential and racist treatment for marginalized groups. We then offer ways to challenge the status-quo procedures built into music education that continue to support and maintain White supremacy and racialized behaviors (Hess 2017). Finally, embracing the anti-racist "call to arms" (Zamalin 2017), we call upon music education stakeholders to prioritize voices/musics that continue to be excluded and make changes to the admissions processes that reflect these priorities.

Deleuze and Guattari: The State, the War Machine, and the Soldier-Body

Deleuze and Guattari (1987) engaged in a thought experiment about the interplay of regimes and those who would disrupt systems, referencing these as the State and the war machine respectively.[4] They considered how these two opposing entities coexist "in a perpetual field of interaction" (357) but do not belong to each other. They also discussed the notion of the soldier-body as the perceived ideal in connection with the State. It is the desire of the war machine to disrupt the State from molding future soldier bodies. We explore each thought experiment in the following sections.

The State. In current US discourse, the term *State* is typically envisioned as a political or government entity; however, Deleuze and Guattari (1987) utilize the *State* as a conceptualization of any entity of power, regardless of whether it resides in actual government organizations. To add additional confusion, in the United States, some schools are overseen by individual State governments and funding, while others are private institutions funded through tuition and endowments. In our discussion of schools of music, we are discussing both types of institutions, not only those regulated by an actual State government, as we are not focused on direct government control of specific programs but rather the conceptualization of power and control as a whole.

For Deleuze and Guattari (1987), the State is a fictional representation of a re-gime focused on recreating and maintaining dominant social conditions. It accom-plishes this by imposing its will upon people, controlling and forming them for this purpose. In Deuchars's (2019) reflections on the writings of Deleuze and Guatarri, he offers the notion that most people, if not all, are a part of the State in one way or another, and that many people even have a stake in maintaining the system as it currently exists. Furthermore, those people entrenched in the regime of the State may not even view the State as oppressive, as they are unaware of its control. One of the primary ways the State controls is through policing the legitimacy of knowledge; it does so through discourses of control, fear, compliance, and self-regulating behavior (Deuchars 2019). The State can take numerous potential forms and need not be a physical entity. While it can manifest as an actual organization or regime, it is more often an ideological concept upheld through seemingly neutral policies or systems—in short, the intention and enacted refusal to consider any al-ternative forms of knowing or being beyond a State-established locus of control.

The single fundamental goal for the State is reproduction and the widening of its locus of control. The State is never satisfied, never has enough, and it imposes control upon people under its power to form them towards its goals of domination. The State accomplishes this through what Deleuze and Guattari (1987) call striated spaces: set rules that are rigid and seemingly unchangeable. By presenting knowledge as fixed and striated and policing it with rigidity, the State maintains the status quo, no matter the cost to individuals. It decides and defines "goodness" and demands compliance. The State apparatus lives within structures of power and dominance and is unified within itself for its own survival. It operates with rigidity and control from the center, capturing all individuals within its ever-expanding reach.

The War Machine. The war machine lives outside the boundaries of the State and is best understood in terms of its emancipatory potential as an apparatus that cannot and will not be captured by the State. According to Deuchars (2019), war machines are ways of thinking that are so radical to the State that they wage war on existing orders of knowledge with guerrilla logic. The war machine works externally on the margins, disrupting the State's regime while resisting capture. The relationship between the State and the war machine is ongoing and dynamic, with the war machine always being at risk of being reappropriated by the State if it gets too close or if it endangers the safety and control the State desires. Because of

the State's ability to appropriate and conform bodies into the continuation of its own goals, the war machine must always be on guard, remaining in the process of becoming and evolving as an ever-shifting, fluid entity. Even when the State tries to appropriate, the war machine will shift and disrupt from the margins in a new way, because it knows how the State works and can devise new actions of resistance.

While some music education scholars view the war machine in relational opposition to the State (Hess 2014; Jorgenson and Yob 2013), others describe the war machine as a limitless space, neither outside nor in binary opposition to the State, but altogether different (Gould 2009). The main goal of the war machine is as a "counteractive force to decode the flows of capitalism" (Deuchars 2019, n.p.). In this way, it is not necessarily a better way of thinking or being, but a different way. It focuses on becoming rather than being, challenges the legitimacy of knowledge, and refuses to be codified. When entities behave as war machines, the cost is often unknown at the outset. However, in the belief that the price will be worth the disruption, war machines derive their purpose. The war machine does not seek the destruction of the State so much as it envisions an alternative world. What might this limitless space of potentiality that the war machine offers mean for disrupting racist structure in United States music education admissions?

Facialization of the Ideal Soldier-Body. The conception of the war machine and the State apparatus connects to what Deleuze and Guattari (1987) called the facialization of the body. Facialization acts as a "sorting device" that groups and critiques bodies based on how well they fit into preconceived categories (Saldanha 2007, 101). The State inscribes bodies with discourses of homogeneity and then judges the same bodies against these norms. The State's goal in acquiring bodies is to create a site of power that reflects itself and to create a homogenous, ideal face to expand its reach (Deleuze and Guattari 1987). Bodies that do not conform are rejected outright.

Gallagher (2013) likened Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the facialization of the body and the White Man to that of the US *soldier-body,* For Gallagher, the production of the US soldier-body is connected, both visually and physically to the ideal body, which is historically linked to both imperialism, racism, and the "norm-making processes of whiteness" (Gallagher 2013, 145). This soldier-body is the product and possession of the State and represents the continued manifestation of the State's control. Anything that deviates from this idealized body is outside the

State apparatus (Jorgensen and Yob 2013). Gallagher (2013) argued that this metaphor of the soldier-body gives a lens to better understand racial profiling and other exclusionary categories that operate within various State apparatuses. By considering the State's normative socialization as it makes soldier-bodies, we can more clearly see the bodies that do not fit this mold and how they are excluded altogether.

Conversely, the war machine, and those who would operate as such, both embody and promote heterogeneous bodies and becomings. The heterogeneity of the war machine disrupts the sites of power the State attempts to create. These bodies are not stagnant reconceptions of the same; instead, they are fluid and ever-shifting; there is no attempt by the war machine to fit the diversity of bodies into preconceived categories (Gould 2009). The State must function within its own systems, restricted by itself to recreate uniform bodies. If the State were to bring in new systems, it would appropriate them into the static structures already in existence (Hess 2014). The war machine, by contrast, has no limit to the tools at its disposal to subvert and counteract the control of the State to create homogenization; as such, the war machine uses what Gould (2009) referred to as "creative responses to a material problem" (132). These creative responses allow war machine actors to redefine the criteria by which bodies are sorted, or, better yet, to reject outright the facialization of the body by the State for heterogeneous alternatives.

Manifestations of the State, War Machine, and Soldier-Body in Music Education Admissions

The undergraduate music education admissions process is far from universal, and the differing institutional procedures across programs in the United States are not well documented (Knapp and Mayo 2021). Still, there are numerous similarities across US institutions contributing to the admissions process (Knapp and Mayo 2021; Everett 2009; Koza 2008; Payne and Ward 2020; Salvador et al. 2017). Prospective students entering their senior year of high school submit an application to the university and possibly to the school of music. They apply for and perform an audition, most commonly for their applied studio area or other assorted perfor-

mance faculty. Following the audition, faculty committees of various configurations deliberate the student's potential and allocate scholarship funding. Students are then either accepted or denied entry to said music education program.[5]

In the ensuing discussion, we apply an anti-racist lens alongside Deleuze and Guattari's conception of the State and war machine to interrogate the acceptance process. In doing so, we conceptualize the university and by proxy, the music education field as the State, and the actors within it as the compliant soldier-bodies seeking to make more soldier bodies out of the students they accept. We consider how the current admissions experience reveals the State's perception/approach to undergraduate admissions. We examine the impact on students/soldier bodies as racialized products of the State. Finally, we address the admissions process from the perspective of those who might act as war machines to the State system, considering potential means and modes of disruption. We acknowledge this metaphoric strategy is imperfect and has its limits; yet, we believe this philosophical exercise has merit for interrupting the status quo. In doing so, we endeavor to allow this metaphor to go beyond literary theorizing. We hope it might serve as a step towards action-oriented anti-racist (Dei 2000) disruption within the music education field.

Conceptualizing the School of Music as the State

In utilizing Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) poststructural ideas, we argue that the school of music operates as the State, and its faculty are the current soldier-bodies (aware or not) who maintain its regime. Much as the State does not care about the toll to the soldier-body (it knows it can always make more), the School of Music is not interested in the damage inflicted on its faculty or current students as they maintain and uphold structural racism. Furthermore, the State's structural challenges and logistical realities pose difficulties for those faculty members who might wish to resist conformity. For example, applied faculty members can only offer so many spaces (e.g., time slots) within their studios, so there is a logistical limit to who can be admitted, as well as the reality that these spots undoubtedly go to the most promising future soldier-bodies. Additionally, the reality is that most applied faculty at the tertiary level also operate under the same paradigm of training and likely emerged from a conservatory model, which privileges Western Eurocentric ways of knowing and musicking (Jones 2017). There is only so much that individual faculty members can realistically do outside these boundaries before the State

reappropriates their efforts. Many end up perpetuating the status quo to keep their jobs, making them both inflictors and victims of the State.

For example, the potential soldier-body must conform to audition repertoire standards privileged by applied faculty, who in this role act as gatekeepers for the State's ideal (Herndon 2016; Robison et al. 2020; Salvador et al. 2017). In one study, scholars found that students who auditioned with music by female composers were 13 percent less likely to be accepted at one institution (Grise et al. 2021). The applied faculty's viewpoints and those who set curricular standards of "excellence" often override those who come to the audition experience with alternative forms of knowledge (Jones 2017; Koza 2008). Adjudicators may be more subject to bias effects when presented with music or styles with which they are unfamiliar (McPherson and Thompson 1998). The State's musical standards are forcibly imposed on those who seek to pursue careers in music education, whether they ascribe to those same standards or not (Bergee and McWhirter 2005; Lowe 2018). In this way, the faculty are conscripted as actors of the State to uphold the criteria for acceptance they have been conditioned to see as superior.

Controlling the legitimacy of knowledge to maintain dominance. The mission of the State is to maintain a position of dominance both within itself and in comparison to other States, and in doing so, root out all potential alternatives, rejecting them as less valuable or less prestigious. This implicit control is what Wahab (2005) calls "a thick institution heavily complicit in the manufacturing of colonial fantasies that have impressed racialized imaginations of 'Self-Other' in knowledge production" (35). Likewise, Dei (2000) supported the belief that the Eurocentric White gaze has influenced what to see and what qualifies as legitimate knowledge. Students who might want to enter a music program via a less traditional instrument/vocal style or one that is outside the classical canon may not be deemed legitimate enough by State standards. Because it is not in the State's interest to support multiple forms of music knowledge, it then seeks to discredit them. As a tactic, the State and its agents may use placating language to acknowledge musicality but simultaneously delegitimize it, such as "good, considering who they are," which really means "good, considering they are outside the normative standards we want." Legitimizing musical knowledge and practices outside of the Western classical canon would diminish the State's power, as it would require acknowledging multiple pathways to musical success. The State's quest for dominance is not only an arts-based mission, but also intended to show dominance over

non-Western countries and cultures by overtly indicating that Western music is an elite or higher level of music-making. Therefore, the audition process, as it currently exists, serves as a checkpoint of legitimization. A student's body and musicking are not legitimate until the State deems them so and they match the State's standards. The rigidity of the State's audition requirements removes those bodies that do not conform and in doing so, replicates the production of the idealized soldier-body.

Upholding whiteness as superior. The State, as a dictator, defines superiority, which in higher education music typically means Western classical music traditions rooted in whiteness. As such, the State of higher education music upholds whiteness as superior, and disregards racialized bodies as outside the soldier-body norm (Gallagher 2013; Kajikawa 2019). The State operates through inflexible systems and structures that uphold exclusion/inclusion narratives to appropriate bodies to its ends. The State views the student/soldier-bodies as mere tools in their continued quest for superiority and status against other music programs around the country. Prospective students are simply potential soldiers towards this end, and the State appropriates current students for its goals, leaving out those who do not serve its interests.

Following the audition process, admissions panels and faculty committees within music programs sift through potential soldier-body candidates and make acceptance determinations based on perceived fit into the system. The State is not looking for bodies that might disrupt the status quo. Instead, the State seeks to select soldier-bodies who do not need additional support and who will function toward its purposes. Ideal candidates likely already have been acculturated to the State's norms from their prior musical experiences. Rather than support and guide students toward their goal to become music educators, the State identifies which soldier-bodies will adhere to the conservatory model and performance standards. Thus, they are given priority, regardless of their intended career (Bradley 2007).

The State does not care about the cost to the student/soldier-bodies that it appropriates. The toll for those student/soldier bodies is physical, mental, social, and musical, especially for racial outliers who may have gained admission but remain an anomaly to the State's desire for homogeneity. When conceptualizing the admissions process as a process of facialization, the State determines the "fitness" of the body and considers its willingness to conform. As Rastas and Seye (2018) point out, "Similar to all social spaces, music is a racialized field of human agency"

(605). Whiteness is prioritized in cultural and social capital on applications (Fitzpatrick et al. 2014); whiteness is listened for in auditions (Kajikawa 2019, Koza 2008); whiteness is desired when prioritizing written notation over aural learning (Hess 2017); whiteness is cultivated and nurtured in advising and retention processes (Fitzpatrick et al. 2014; Fiorentino 2020; Kajikawa 2019). Faculty who engage in the various stages of the admissions processes are the State's military minions, enacting its will and recreating the State's structures of normativity. The faculty within recreate this conformity with their leadership, compliance, acquiescence, and, in some cases, silence. They then go on to recreate future soldiers in their studios and classes by reifying the same pedagogical practices the State has deemed legitimate knowledge.

The State controls through discourses of fear and power. The State can easily mitigate any notions from faculty who might detach and become a war machine. One such method is through recognition, merit pay, and tenure. The limits of operating within a conservatory model are real, and many faculty express a lack of agency about changing these restrictions (Salvador et al. 2017); however, not fighting back against these same limitations contributes to a perpetuation of the status quo. Furthermore, those faculty who might try to fight the system (or have made attempts in the past) might find that the relational and institutional backlash (Essed 2013) is yet another tool the State wields to appropriate and demand conformity.

The State also imposes administrative and financial power by controlling the hiring of faculty members who might musick in non-Western ways or on non-traditional Western instruments. Budgeting and strategic planning do not allocate funds to hire individuals qualified to provide these offerings, in part because this would mean diverting funds away from State-established priorities of Western Eurocentric norms. Further, finding candidates who possess the necessary degree qualifications for such positions may be challenging, as many individuals who might otherwise qualify were previously rejected as non-conforming undergraduate soldier-bodies. Ultimately, the faculty at these institutions represent the current facialization of the successful soldier bodies and are in the business of creating more replicas. Hiring faculty who do not meet these goals is outside the State's desire to maintain itself. As a result, the State limits the instruments and styles that are considered acceptable, and outside agencies contribute to this problem in the

form of accreditation requirements (Barczykowski 2018) and teacher certification mandates (Bradley 2011; May et al. 2017).

A State within a State. As we conceptualize the college/university as the State, and the music programs within them as a State within a State, we view applicants as potential soldier-bodies being used in the making and remaking of whiteness. The State is using applicants to determine who qualifies as a musician and what qualifies as "good" music. As mentioned previously, the field of music education remains pervasively White and male-dominated (DeAngelis 2022; Elpus 2015; Elpus and Abril 2019; Fitzpatrick 2013; Gould 2011; Kajikawa 2019; Koza 2008). In viewing student applicants as the future soldier-bodies of the State, we consider ways that the State attempts to mold students into the US soldier-body—in this case, the White, Western classically trained musician.

The eradication of potentially non-conforming students comes as early as the application process. During this process, students confront common barriers in the application process, such as the formal requesting of test scores and transcripts, properly handling application fees, and navigating university and financial aid processes (Helmbrecht and Ayars 2021; Sy et al. 2011; Vasil and McCall 2018). Students and their families may have to examine less visible aspects of their lives, including full financial and familial disclosure. Students who are first-generation college applicants, often representing minoritized populations, might be at a disadvantage before they have even begun, due to a lack of cultural capital while navigating the application process (Fitzpatrick et al. 2014). Each of the previously mentioned barriers may serve as a deterrent to starting or completing the application process.

Molding the next iteration of soldier-bodies. After a student/soldier-body is accepted into the School of Music, the sorting and molding of soldier-bodies continues. For example, participation in an ensemble is a required component of the degree plan at many institutions (Hill et al. 2023; National Association of Schools of Music 2021). Those students who navigated through audition requirements without conformity (such as on a less traditional instrument or with alternative musical selections) may find that the system of the State is not set up to support their continued engagement in these types of music. This is especially true for students who are exploring music-making through technological means. Much of the repertoire currently being performed within the ensemble paradigm does not readily include opportunities for non-conforming instruments (e.g., guitar,

banjo, iPad, DAW) (Kajikawa 2019). Instead of considering new ensembles or allowing for an alternative path to meet the ensemble requirement, the regime of the State imposes its will. Students are then forced into submission by focusing on a secondary instrument or vocal style; some choose to abandon the program altogether. In either case, any efforts by faculty or stakeholders to disrupt racist processes during the audition/admissions process are reappropriated by the State through a lack of change at the curricular level.

One reason the State continues to mold soldier bodies is the desperate need to uphold tradition or to conserve historically accepted and promoted static practices (Deleuze and Guattari 1987; Deuchars 2019). An institution that might consider shifting or questioning the status quo faces an inherent risk of loss of position of prestige within the music profession. Making adjustments to the accepted model (in this case, changing the production of classically trained musicians) may mean a perceived devaluing of the degree plan or lowering of institutional prestige by the public. Because the State's primary goal is to maintain dominance (Deleuze and Guattari 1987), which includes Western classical music and, ultimately, White supremacy, the invitation or potential acceptance of other races and cultures is a direct attack on the ideologies of the State. Without a unified priority shift, these potential negative outcomes may be considered too significant a risk for any one university or School of Music to undertake. However, when institutions lean away and resist change, the State is not required to change practices or even consider the consequences of the practices they uphold.

The War Machine as Anti-Racist Praxis: Conceptualizing Music Education Faculty as Potential War Machines

There are those who might act as war machines in music education. War machines might engage in anti-racist praxis by disrupting and dismantling racist structures both in their own spheres of influence and at the structural/policy level. However, the State always seeks to appropriate war machines back into itself and negate the efforts of the war machine. Gould (2009) argued that any structure in music education, whether it be a national standard, a national organization, or any pedagogical or curricular structure, is static and thus a tool the State might use to appropriate war machine bodies back unto itself. Jorgensen and Yob (2013) argued that Deleuze and Guattari "would like to dismantle the State and its apparatus, but they do not provide a practical plan for achieving this" (39). Therefore, those who

would act as war machines must devise their own plan of action for resisting the State, and perhaps it is only in the use of guerilla logic that defies pre-planning that it might work. Gould (2009) posited that those engaging as war machines might use the tools of the State in creative ways to disrupt the State's reproduction mechanisms.

It may be tempting to argue that in situations where the war machine attempts to disrupt from within, they are not acting as a war machine at all. The efforts of a war machine operating within the confines of the State may be only aspirational at best. To that end, Hess (2014) posited, "the war machine cannot ever be fully realized within the walls of the institution. Certain aspects of choice disappear within schools. However, it is possible to create certain learning situations where there are many directions and choices" (245). Gould (2009) maintained that a war machine is a way of thinking beyond representation and can subvert and resist the State through its limitless possibilities. Hess (2014) likewise argued that the war machine offers powerful ways to work within the institution. This might represent what Cremin and colleagues (2006) referred to as *possibility thinking*—engaging with problems to ask "what if" questions and to look for creative solutions (Sawyer 2011). One such creativity is considering the possibility of a music education faculty member acting as a war machine towards anti-racist goals, and as such, disrupting the production of soldier-bodies from within the State. We offer some specific suggestions in the following section of ways a music education faculty member might begin acts of disruption.

From Theory to Practice: Potential Sites of Disruption and Impacts for Students

It is not enough to identify and unmask the soldier-body's creation and replication processes of the State. Nor is it enough to conceptualize those that would act as war machines as those who are thinking about change. A truly anti-racist frame must be action-oriented (Dei 2000), setting in motion changes and policies that strive for equity. Bearing this action orientation in mind, we consider moves that could position music education faculty as war machines within the State, allowing them to engage in possibility thinking within their own situations. Possibility thinking might involve exploring the ideas that are currently "unthought"—to consider what we have not even begun to consider that upholds racism (Thompson et

al. 2023). While any one change alone is not enough to dismantle or truly disrupt the State, it is in taking those actions, both in thought and deed, that faculty members may resist appropriation into and the perpetuation of the State's prescribed ideals.

Disruption and Demystification

A war machine music education faculty member engaging in anti-racism must act on multiple levels, understanding that disruption needs to occur on both the individual and systemic levels. According to Essed (2013), anti-racist scholars must take a different path than the traditional "good colleague" who "does not rock the boat" by engaging in leadership and working to influence others toward creating "a more just, humane world" (1395). They must set an example intellectually in scholarship and by "addressing structural disparities in the human condition that create disproportional acquisition of economic, social, or political power, the effect of which leaves people exploited, marginalized, and denied dignity and respect by the dominant culture" (McKevitt 2010, 40).

One such structural disparity exists in the mystery of the admissions process, and anti-racist war machines might work to demystify and dismantle this gatekeeping process for potential music education students. Some of the ways war machine faculty might do this is by including explicit statements of unspoken norms and expectations, or better yet, removing language that upholds the unspoken White supremacy embedded within (Kajikawa 2019; Koza 2008). Faculty might start by naming unstated components of the audition experience such as expected dress, audition etiquette, and what to expect on audition day (Abramo and Bernard 2020), but they could go further, actively resisting any consideration of such conditions. More broadly, these norms in their current form need to be critically reexamined since they continue to privilege White students who possess the requisite social and cultural capital. At a minimum, the act of making these implied norms explicit serves as a form of resistance to the State, illuminating secrets that were meant to exclude those who do not already know them. By guiding students through the process, faculty war machines might leverage their own social and cultural capital to create a path that allows some bodies into the space that would not otherwise even get that far. Therefore, war machines must seek to explicitly state these norms and guide students through them with care, as well as aim to work at

the structural level to eventually remove norms that merely promote the replication of more soldier-bodies.

Prioritizing Growth

Faculty war machines must also work toward the removal of audition requirements centered solely on Western, Eurocentric forms of musical knowledge (Kajikawa 2019). The audition serves as an institutional structure designed to filter potential candidates, assessing their fitness toward the School of Music's predetermined goals and outcomes. This structure maintains the privilege of prior knowledge within a given skill set, such as proficiency on a Western instrument or bel canto vocal style, while rejecting the musical understandings that come from a variety of musical traditions and ways of knowing (Thompson et al. 2023). Likewise, sight-reading and theory exams negate the value and possibility of other forms of musical understanding and continue to uphold "whiteness as property" (Harris 1993). Both examples demonstrate the continued replication of the soldier-body as White, Western, and Eurocentric. Applicants could have the right to audition using musics, instruments, and styles representing their own forms of musical understanding, not the State's. Instead of looking for students who are already polished and indoctrinated into a conservatory model, music educators might participate in audition panels that instead assess the desire for personal musical growth, taking into account the students' intended goals, such as wanting to be a music educator rather than only a performer.

The desire for personal musical growth also has the possibility to trouble White norms in music education. For example, Kajikawa (2019) points out, "Faculty members and administrators have implemented strategies designed to increase ethnic and racial minority representation, but they have largely left untouched the institutional structures that privilege the music of White European and American males" (156). White norms serve as a "mechanism that maintains a racist system, and not acknowledging whiteness contributes to the permanence of race and racism" (Matias et al. 2014). Representation is not enough when static structures continually push the diversity of persons, musics, and pedagogies to the margins. As an alternative, assessing the *desire for musical growth* might involve war machine faculty reshaping the structural component of an audition altogether, conceptualizing it as an intake of current skills coupled with the goal of crafting a tailored program to suit students' needs and goals. War machine faculty could craft a plan

of study that highlights diverse pedagogies for teaching and learning, as well as conceptualize an asset-based model of current musicianship rather than a deficiency-based evaluation of what the students cannot currently do. Such a model could be implemented across the entire program of study to better support individual student growth, rather than co-opting them into the racist State system after the audition process. It might also involve a mentorship program that offers career pathways and internships outside the standard pathways of public-school teacher or classical performer.

Redefining Good and Becoming

Schools of Music need to reconceptualize not only what a "good" musician is but also what constitutes a "good" teacher. Simultaneously, those who are war machines in this setting question if creating a "good" teacher is yet another reappropriation of the State. For example, a "good teacher" from the State perspective is one who is compliant and seeks to transmit the ingrained norms and accepted Western Eurocentric and racist practices to the next iteration of soldier-bodies. Conversely, a war machine's "good teacher" might work with students to dismantle barriers to access, promote marginalized voices, and explore multiple ways of understanding and engaging with music. The danger of reappropriation exists, and yet the exercise of stretching the bounds of "good" remains critical.

As a starting point for this reconceptualization, Schools of Music, as well as individual faculty members, could conceive of the student as in the process of *becoming* (Deleuze and Guattari 1987)—not replication, but a new way of being that has unlimited options, thus breaking away from the industrial production of the soldier-body in music education. In this Deleuzian vein, *becoming* is the "unfolding of difference or multiplicity"; becoming is instability and disruption in places where stability seeks to replicate (May 2003, 147). In this way, reconceptualized Schools of Music might seek to honor and value a student's current assets and ability and recognize the desire for growth and development as both a musician and an educator. If Schools of Music do not diversify definitions of musician and educator, as well as terms like talent and excellence, then there is no hope to diversify the teaching profession, which in turn continues to replicate whiteness at all levels of music education and cause harm with the methods used to enact it (Thompson et al. 2023).

The State will continue to mold soldier-bodies according to the paradigm that has and continues to exist, and marginalized students will remain undesirable to the State unless war machines disrupt and dismantle with vigilance and purpose. If the desire for growth and the process of becoming moves to the forefront of qualities sought in recruitment, music educator war machines may have the freedom to support students who can later engage as war machines themselves. Instead of replicating soldier-bodies to the State's end, war machine bodies are emerging on the edges, subverting the aims of the State. Instead of the facialization of the White soldier-body, music education students are encouraged to be what Deleuze and Guattari (1987) refer to as rhizomatic—unique, ever-shifting, and without boundary. The possibilities for that student are endless.

Border Crossing

We recognize there are individuals within these institutions who are actively fighting as war machines to disrupt and change the static system, and some institutions have even started to make changes to their admissions processes and curricula (Moore 2017). However, the "voices of the minoritized, intended to rupture/interrogate processes and structures of domination remain ghettoized by a vortex of White academy insisting on having a conversation with itself" (Wahab 2005, 33). War machine efforts by individuals, it seems, are largely ineffective, especially in light of the iron-clad curricular structures that remain in place should a student be admitted to a School of Music. Kim (2007) argues, however, that social justice scholars, and in our case, anti-racist war machine scholars, must remain vigilant in their efforts to be *border crossers.*

To Deleuze and Guattari (1987), a border crosser is the very essence of a war machine in that they are the embodiment of the refusal to remain static or acquiesce to the prescribed life the State demands. Border crossing embodies a nomadic desire for continued movement and change. Such scholars must seek to continually disrupt and destroy the limitations imposed by the State wherever and however they can, even in the face of what seems like insurmountable obstacles. They can never remain satisfied or still in their efforts. They must disrupt by calling out injustice when and where they see it, by highlighting voices that have been ignored, by possibility thinking, by challenging the status quo, and by refusing to be reappropriated, even if the personal cost is high. It is only by continually declaring the

war machine's desires and then endlessly working towards them that any hope of systemic disruption can occur.

This is where a metaphorical war machine idea might reach its limits, and yet we persist in possibility thinking. It is clear to us that no individual, acting as a war machine alone, can be truly effective. There must be a *collective* of war machines working towards the same goals to disrupt the control of the State. There is a power in numbers and in collectives working together that no individual can attain alone. In collectively challenging the regime of the State, anti-racist scholars might more successfully question the system, betray the State, and honor the transformational possibilities of the war machine. We see our work in contributing this article as a part of our own engagement in collective scholar-war machine efforts towards anti-racist change in music education. However, it is only through exploring all mediums—metaphorical, philosophical, scholarly, *and* practical—that anti-racist work might begin to truly gain a foothold in music education.

Future war-machine investigative action

One such scholarly war machine effort must be the act of critically examining the demographics of the current and future music education teacher workforce. As the most common entrance to the music education field requires the completion of a collegiate program, it follows that university programs mirror the profession. The majority of the music education profession is White (DeAngelis 2022; Elpus 2015; Elpus and Abril 2019; Fitzpatrick 2013; Gould 2011; Kajikawa 2019; Koza 2008) and remains entrenched in a Western classical tradition (Salvador et al. 2017), and those who are outside this norm remain the exception (Thornton 2018). Current demographic studies including Elpus (2015) and DeAngelis (2022) provide valuable information but only illuminate a small portion of students who have already reached the end of their coursework. There remains a lack of data regarding the demographic composition of in-progress undergraduate music education students (Knapp and Mayo 2021; Fitzpatrick et al. 2014).

Following this needed data collection, music teacher educators and their institutions must engage in a reflective, self-audit practice. Using this information, they might pursue various extension investigations, including (but not limited to) generating an understanding of barriers from students' perspectives, piloting and documenting program reform efforts, and reflecting on the institutional implications

of such program changes. Furthermore, war machine music educators could explore student experiences as they navigate alternative systems, facilitate professional sharing of successes and challenges of program reforms with other institutions, and continually engage in reflective and anti-racist possibility thinking with regard to the new processes and subsequent music education curriculum offerings and educational opportunities.

Reimagining the Rejected Soldier

We return to James, our prospective student. We ponder what a music education admissions experience might look like for him through the eyes and behavior of a collective of war machine faculty members:

Laura, a music education faculty at the local university, visited a high school near downtown for her biweekly outreach partnership experience. James, a junior, approached Laura after class, and they had a conversation about his goals in music and what the School of Music might have to offer James in the future. Laura connected James with some information about free summer lessons offered locally and encouraged James to participate.

At the summer lessons, James walked in with his guitar and a laptop. The trio of teachers, all local artists active in the music scene in town, invited James to share his musical skills and interests, offering some ideas and encouragement. One of these instructors mentioned they were also adjunct professors at the local community college and offered to continue working with James over the next semester.

When James decided to apply to the university as a music education major, he reached out to Laura, and she assisted in walking him through the admissions material. Based on James's interests and goals, it was determined by the admission panel that James would not engage in a traditional audition, and instead would be invited to visit campus and share his work through a high school student showcase event. The campus visit day included lunch with student leaders who offered advice to potential students as well as informal conversations with faculty; James shared his interest in guitar and composition. There was no sight-reading exam or aural skills exam. Instead, James was able to share and talk about his passion for music and for his own goals for becoming an educator in

the future. For the showcase event, he played two pieces on his guitar, accompanied by several loops playing on his laptop. The first was an original composition, and the second was a song from a famous Caribbean artist that James had arranged for guitar.

The admissions panel discussed areas of strength for James: learning music by ear, improvisation, the incorporation of his guitar and electronic composition tools, and strong interest in music from Caribbean traditions. The committee also talked about wanting to support his understanding of vocal development, as well as widen his understanding of musical skill development across childhood. It was determined that his desire for growth was exceptional, and they were excited to see what he could do as a music education major. Because there was no applied guitar instructor, the committee sought funding from the Dean to hire an adjunct instructor, the same one who worked at the community college nearby, to support James.

The School of Music accepted James and assigned an upperclassmen "buddy" to him who could support his socialization as he transitioned to college. He was also given a faculty mentor, Laura, who helped James craft a program of classes each year that both supported his musicality and musical goals while also developing his musical knowledge in broader ways, all with the goal of preparing him to become a music educator. Through these and other resources, faculty and the School of Music expended considerable effort to assist James with his transition to college and to find social and academic resources to support him on his journey. James continued performing on his primary instrument while broadening his skills in an a cappella group and a university band; however, he chose these options rather than them being prescribed for him. Four years later, James graduated and set out to do the work he was passionate about from the start.

Conclusion

In this article, we considered how Schools of Music continue to function comfortably as the State regime that appropriates and dominates soldier-bodies toward the replication of whiteness in music education. We have considered what, how, and if war machine faculty members might work to disrupt the system. It is worth noting that some readers may not view the reimagined experience for a student applying to a music education program as substantially different from the original

vignette. It is possible that a truly reimagined experience is not possible, as some readers may view any attempt by faculty to act as war machines as only incremental steps instead of a total disruption of the State. This is especially true because the State still holds control of teacher certification and the requirements imposed by groups such as NASM (National Association of Schools of Music 2021).

However, we argue that when collectives of war machine faculty work together, they *are* able to both reimagine and enact a program for students that fights to uphold "whiteness as property" in music education (Harris 1993). By changing the admissions process, the student's needs can be at the center of thinking and action, not the needs of the State. By refocusing attention on the individual, war machines can disrupt and create space for alternative stories to emerge, despite the State's continual attempts to reappropriate. Disruption is often thought of as a breaking down, but it can also be its own form of creation, in so much as it first conceives of that which is known in a way that is currently unknown and then, in pulling apart, leaves new spaces where, in this case, new bodies previously disregarded can enter. By bringing individuals to the forefront and privileging their stories and conceptions of themselves, as well as disrupting norms that would challenge such persons' legitimacy, war machines create the possibility of being *anti-racist* war machines that disrupt White norms in music education.

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Notes

[1] We recognize that university structures within the United States vary and that
music education programs may be housed within colleges of music, schools of
music, departments of music, etc. For clarity within this article, we refer to all
university music entities as "schools of music."

[2] BIPOC stands for Black, Indigenous, Person of Color. Although we use this
academically accepted terminology, we remain uncomfortable with the term due
to the "white gaze" (Ahmed 2007) that Person of Color implies. Some practitioner
circles are beginning to use the term BBIA (represents Black, Brown, Indigenous,
Asian), but this is not yet commonly accepted terminology.

[3] We utilize the term dis/ability to counter the emphasis on the person being
represented by what they cannot do, and to disrupt notions of the perceived
permanence of disability (Annamma, Connor, and Ferri 2016).

[4] For a more complete picture of the concepts of the State and the war machine,
please see Deleuze and Guattari's 1987 *A Thousand Plateaus.*

[5] There are many local and institutional variations on how students are admitted
to music education programs. In some cases, students are admitted simultane-
ously to the school of music and the music education program. At other institu-
tions, students are often admitted to the school of music, but do not gain entry to

music education until the end of year two of their studies, where they participate in barrier exams or auditions (e.g., aural skills, piano skills, applied juries, interviews). For the sake of this paper, we are conceiving of students who simultaneously enter music and music education during their first year of collegiate study.