Unsettling Binary Thinking:
Tracing an Analytic Trajectory of the Place of Indigenous Musical Knowledge in the Academy

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Abstract

Six years ago, I wrote a composition about the state of indigenous music in the academy with an accompanying research paper. In this work, I attempted to trace the presence of indigenous music in the institution both musically and through an anti-colonial lens. The writing was structured around three musical snapshots entitled Subjugation, Cognitive Dissonance, and Recognition that represented what I saw as the present and future trajectory of indigenous musical knowledges in the academy. The accompanying paper wrestled theoretically with the same concepts the music represented. At the time, I was ambivalent about the work, but did not have a sophisticated enough theoretical understanding to articulate the reasons. Presently, I better understand my discomfort with the work. In this paper, I reflect on my binary thinking of six years ago, the changes in my thinking, the reasons for those changes, and my analysis of these issues presently.

Keywords: *music education, anti-colonialism, indigenous musical knowledge, decolonization, binary thinking*

Six years ago, I wrote a composition about the state of indigenous music in the academy with an accompanying research paper. The project was part of my doctoral work and fulfilled a course requirement. In this work, I attempted to trace the presence of indigenous music in the institution both from an anti-colonial theoretical perspective and through music. The writing was structured around three musical snapshots—brief glimpses into what I saw at the time as the present and future trajectory of indigenous musical knowledges[1] in the academy. The snapshots were entitled *Subjugation*, *Cognitive Dissonance*, and *Recognition*. *Subjugation* represented what I felt to be the state of indigenous music in the institution at that time. *Cognitive Dissonance* represented the necessary process toward transformation. Finally, *Recognition* represented my ideal of what we might

hope for in music education. In the accompanying paper, I wrestled theoretically with the concepts represented by the music. At time of writing, I was ambivalent about the work, but had not yet developed a sophisticated enough theoretical understanding to clearly articulate the reasons for my ambivalence. Six years later, I better understand my discomfort with the work. In this paper, I take the opportunity to reflect on my firmly binary thinking of six years ago, the changes that have occurred in my thinking since that time and the reasons for those changes, and my analysis of these issues presently.

In thinking about my desire to examine the trajectory of my thinking on these issues, I look to Elliott and Silverman (2015) to understand the importance of critical reflection on past thoughts:

> Critical *reflection* takes critical thinking one step further. In critical reflection, we assess why and how our *past* thoughts, feelings, and actions have led us to our current ways of thinking and doing. Reflection guides us in evaluating what is best to keep or discard from our personal repertoire of past habits and perspectives and how to apply the results of our evaluations to future thinking and doing. We become critically reflective by challenging our own and others' concepts and solutions to a problem. Of course, questioning our long-standing beliefs takes determination and courage because careful reflection often causes us to let go of ideas we've identified with or defined ourselves by, which is why some people refuse to engage in critical reflection. (10–11, italics in original)

In reflecting on this composition and the accompanying analysis, I wince at the binaries that were everywhere in my thinking. The marginalization of indigenous music and knowledges in the academy is fraught with intense issues of inequity and injustice. However, I believe there are many "shades of gray" that I had not at that time developed the ability to discern. I now believe that a more nuanced analysis may be more productive in beginning and continuing conversations than militant binary constructions. I thus use this paper as an opportunity to explore both present and past thinking by examining my approach to the issue of indigenous music in the academy. In so doing, I am concerned that this paper will be more about me than about the issue of the marginalization of indigenous musics. Given my privileged position as a white woman talking about racialized subject matter, the possibilities for problematic power dynamics are palpably present. Even so, it is my hope that the

analysis of my thinking might be useful to those who may also be struggling to reconcile past and present thinking.

Mediating Righteousness

Six years ago, I was angry. I was furious at the marginalized place that indigenous knowledges seemed to hold in the academy. I was self-righteous with a sense of justice that continually revealed itself in ways that were not particularly productive or helpful to the issues, but rather tended to prompt resistance and anger in others. In beginning this project in 2009, I described the prevalence of the ensemble paradigm, notation, European composers, and Western elements of music as "epistemological violence" (Edwards and Hewitson 2008, 96). I likened the institution of the music faculty to a colonial project—a project that "erases and marginalizes indigenous music and simultaneously reinforces Western music as the dominant and 'important' knowledge through various mechanisms" (Hess 2009). I wonder now at the extremity. Surely the issue is not that simple. In the following sections, I trace the original project mediated with my current thinking, in order to present what I consider as a transformation in analysis.

I draw on the idea of the one-third world/two-thirds world to explain the complexity. In 2003, Mohanty wrote

> "North/South" is used to distinguish between affluent, privileged nations and communities, and economically and politically marginalized nations and communities, as is "Western/non-Western." While these terms are meant to loosely distinguish the northern and southern hemispheres, affluent and marginal nations and communities obviously do not lineup neatly within this geographical frame. . . . I find the language of "One-Third World" versus "Two-Thirds World" as elaborated by Gustavo Esteva and Madhu Suri Prakash (1998) particularly useful, especially in conjunction with "Third World/South" and "First World/North." These terms represent what Esteva and Prakash call social minorities and social majorities—categories based on the quality of life led by peoples and communities in both the north and the south. The advantage of one-third/two-thirds of world in relation to terms like "Western/Third World" and "North/South" is that they move away from misleading geographical and ideological binarisms. (226–27)

Mohanty's work points directly to the fact that categorization masks greater complexities. Mohanty contends that dividing wealth geographically is flawed logic. Rather, she suggests that the extremities of wealth and poverty take

place in all geographical locations. Similarly, categorizing the Eurocentric approach to music education as "epistemological violence" is to miss all of the disruptions and complexities that comprise a music program. Binary categories, as Mohanty elucidates, fail to capture the nuances of an issue.

The Original Project: Binary and Righteous Constructions

I approached the issue of indigenous music in the institution from an anti-colonial perspective. At the time, my theoretical understanding of anti-colonialism lacked nuance, based solely on the work of George Dei. According to Dei (2000),

> [a]n anti-colonial discursive approach would recognize the importance of locally produced knowledges emanating from cultural histories and daily human experiences and social interactions. It sees marginalized groups as subjects of their own experiences and histories (Fanon 1963; Memmi 1965; Foucault 1980) (117).

I complicated this view at the time by considering the work of Dei and Asgharzadeh (2001) who take a broader view of colonialism than the typical imperial understanding. They view colonialism as not simply "foreign or alien," but rather as "imposed and dominating" (300), allowing for the applicability of an anti-colonial lens to examine a multiplicity of oppressive situations.

The Project: Representing Indigenous Music in the Academy . . . Musically
I intended the three musical snapshots—*Subjugation, Cognitive Dissonance*, and *Recognition*—in the original project to reflect the state of indigenous musical knowledge in the academy, following the ideas in the accompanying paper to create new possibilities. The instrumentation was violin, piano, and Ewe set,[2] representing the conflict of Western and indigenous musical knowledge in the academy. I used Ewe music in this case because I have studied it intensively since 1999 both in Toronto and in Ghana. The Ewe parts for this piece come from a traditional Ghanaian piece called *Gahu,* which originated in Nigeria, where it was called *Kokosawa*. Its name literally means "expensive dance."[3] As the project progressed, however, I began to fear the reproduction of colonization—an ironic mirroring of life in music. The musical component of this project, in many ways, was more problematic than not, as it often reinscribed oppressive power relations I intended to

disrupt. As I move through the "snapshots" in this section, I will explain my original thinking in this project.

I. Subjugation

> Despite all the debates about what constitutes indigenous knowledge and separates it from scientific knowledge, one constant emerges: all indigenous knowledge is subjugated by Western science and its episteme (its rules for determining truth) (Semali and Kincheloe 1999, 31–32).

My original composition and paper were rooted in the argument that indigenous music and knowledge was subjugated in the academy due to a range of structures and practices. My concerns included the binary constructions of "music" and "world music" and musicology and ethnomusicology, the peripheral presence of "world music" courses in the postsecondary curriculum, the survey approach to the world music ensemble, and funding issues. In this section, I explicate my original concerns.

Six years ago, in considering the place of indigenous musics in the academy, I pointed to the well-documented "music"/"world music" and musicology/ ethnomusicology (Feld 2000) binaries and discussed the subjugation of the latter term in both sets of terms—the term associated with "Other" (non-Western) music. The fact that the word "music" somehow did not include all music and "world music" somehow did not include Western music seemed problematic—a problematic reflected in the disciplines of musicology and ethnomusicology. Both binaries seemed to privilege Western music in a manner that manifested in the academy.

I was also concerned with the firmly peripheral nature of indigenous music in the academy. "World music" courses, I noted, were often electives, as opposed to their mandatory Western classical counterparts in music institutions. I argued that if mandatory status was conferred on certain courses that emphasize Western classical music, the mandatory/optional binary communicated a clear message of which knowledges[4] the school community valued. In labeling "Other musics" as optional, their status was affirmed as marginal, inscribing a hierarchy of knowledges, musics, and epistemologies.

I also believed the survey approach to "world musics" reinscribed their marginalized position. World music ensembles often took place over the course of a semester, implying a pervasive attitude that these musics were "simple" or "primitive." The premise that it might be possible to understand Javanese Gamelan, for example, in a single semester revealed an essentialist logic or attitude toward "world musics" (Trimillos 2004; Solís 2004) that could easily lead to stereotypes. Funding also entered into the power relation between "traditional" disciplines within music and the world music ensembles. The indigenous musicians hired to direct world music ensembles typically held sessional contracts or had adjunct status, as opposed to the permanent faculty who taught musicology, ethnomusicology courses, and other (Western) ensembles (Averill 2004; Sumarsam 2004).[5]

Furthermore, I questioned the practice of using the terminology of *culture bearer* to describe indigenous musicians in the academy. Much discussion in the discourse of music education focused on using culture bearers to bring "authenticity" to "exotic" musical endeavors (Feay-Shaw 2003; Klinger 1996; Parr 2006; Volk 1998; Campbell 2002). At the time, I resisted the practice, citing Vaugeois (2009), who challenged whether any one person can "be expected to stand in, imaginatively, as representing everything there is to know about her or his people—as if people identified as Other should or could be reducible to the unified, static, and knowable" (16).

Finally, I looked at the admissions process of the music faculty, noting discrepancies between the nature of indigenous knowledge and institutionally sanctioned musical knowledge as it affected those with indigenous musical knowledge who attempted to gain admission to a music school (Koza 2008). Koza elucidated the manner in which the music school audition process valued certain types of musical knowledges—knowledges that often exclude individuals with indigenous knowledge.

I intended Snapshot 1, *Subjugation*, to represent the way in which the academy subjugates and marginalizes indigenous music, as described above. These ideas directly informed the musical decisions I made in the work. I struggled to represent the marginalization in a way that might do it justice. The Ewe set playing *Gahu* rhythms bent in form and tempo to the Western classical instruments (violin and piano). They existed on the margin in a tempo much too slow for the parts.

They were fragmented and tangential to the main classical theme. The nature of polyrhythmic music required that the parts play together to make a whole. In this snapshot, the parts did not play together for the most part; they existed largely in isolation or in pairs. Despite their marginalization, Ewe parts in this piece added an "exotic" element, much the way the institution viewed world musics. As hooks (1992) argued, "[w]ithin commodity culture, ethnicity becomes spice, seasoning that can liven up the dull dish that is mainstream white culture" (21).

PLAY MUSIC – "SUBJUGATION"

I originally intended to let the music speak for itself, but I realized, after the recording session, that I needed to describe the session. A number of points of interest emerged with the fusing and collision of two diverse musics. The musicians who worked on this project were for the most part familiar with both Ghanaian music and classical music. I met eight of the nine musicians through studying Ghanaian music, including the classical violinist. The classical pianist was well versed in Brazilian *samba* and Cuban music. All the musicians had a fundamental understanding of both written and oral traditions (and specifically drumming traditions). Our drummers included a professional oboist, a former professional double bassist, and a number of others who had studied piano extensively. What was most remarkable about this project is the manner in which these snapshots lived up to their intentions.

Subjugation began the recording session. It required notational literacy. It also required a conductor. I needed to step into the role of the Western conductor in order to give cues to the fragmented parts. The drummers were uncomfortable with the overwhelmingly Western structure of the piece and the reading of rhythms at half tempo that they had previously heard and not seen. Performing slowly was particularly difficult. This piece forced a crossover into the Western world and literally *subjugated* the drummers into assuming uncomfortable and foreign characteristics. I wonder now why I thought this representation might be helpful and can conclude only that I thought it was justified by the fact that it was meant to represent the beginning, not the end of the process.

II. Cognitive Dissonance

For the second snapshot in the original project, I drew on Boler's (1999) pedagogy of discomfort to consider the processing necessary to reconcile indigenous musics in the academy—something I attempted to represent musically. Boler called on educators and students to

> engage in critical inquiry regarding values and cherished beliefs, and to examine constructed self-images in relation to how one has learned to perceive others. Within this culture of inquiry and flexibility, a central focus is to recognize how emotions define how and what one chooses to see, and conversely, not to see (176–77).

She called this a *pedagogy of discomfort*—a way to challenge held beliefs to move students and educators to a new place—perhaps one of decolonization. This discomfort came with engaging with beliefs and knowledge systems that might challenge one's fundamental sense of self. I used the terminology *cognitive dissonance* (Festinger, Riecken, and Schachter 1956) in order to invoke musical terminology to describe this challenge and ensuing discomfort. At the time, I situated the term *dissonance* in 19th century classical music. Six years ago, I wrote:

> I find the term dissonance particularly salient because of the direction of the movement of classical music beginning in the late 19th century. Dissonance, although always a tool in classical music to provoke tension and resolution in the audience, began to move in extreme directions in the late 19th century. Each composer "pushed the envelope" further than the composer before and works of music such as Wagner's Tristan and Isolde,[6] moved from dissonance to dissonance—each dissonance more intense than the last—until the release of tension could be found in dissonance itself. Although it is a Western construct, I apply it to this pedagogy of discomfort because I feel it invokes a sense of forward movement. Throughout the tension and release marked through varying degrees of dissonance, one becomes increasingly "comfortable" in realms of previous discomfort. As such, I feel this terminology is highly appropriate as a tool of decolonization. (Hess 2009)

At the time, I argued for the necessity of challenging cherished beliefs, particularly as a dominant individual with institutionally valued knowledge—a practice for which I still advocate.

Snapshot 2, *Cognitive Dissonance*, placed the two musics in conflict with each other, and I represented this concept metrically. The Western classical instruments performed in mixed meter, while the Ewe instruments played in 4/4 time.[7] The

music engaged a *pedagogy of discomfort* (Boler 1999) in its provocation of tension. It resolved metrically at the end, as the parts came to an agreement before moving into the final snapshot, *Recognition*.

PLAY MUSIC – "COGNITIVE DISSONANCE" [8]

> I wrote the following reflection after recording the second snapshot:

> The second snapshot was literally cognitive dissonance. I knew what I wanted to achieve when I wrote it; however, the success of the performance hinged on the gankogui (double bell) part. I practiced the gankogui part leading up to the recording. There are four points in the piece where the musics meet.[9] I practiced over fifty times and I got it right about one time in three. The classical mixed meters did not allow my brain to make sense of the gankogui cycle. I felt I could not play the part because I knew both musics too well and could not divorce what I was doing from the whole. The Western mixed meter disturbed the way I felt Ewe music. However, all the musicians felt this cognitive dissonance at some point. Another player took over the gankogui part and she found she had to completely tune out the classical aspect in order to play because of the way it affected her thinking. The pianist performs Brazilian samba, and samba is rooted in Gahu. One of the drummers plays both samba music and Ghanaian music and he explained the musical connections between the two to the pianist. Once the pianist understood the connections between his part and the drumming, he had difficulty playing because it affected his thinking. In discussion afterwards, all of the musicians said they could not listen to the other music for more than a brief moment at a time without altering their own parts. This snapshot was cognitively very difficult to experience as a musician—a true cognitive dissonance. It was also rewritten in the moment so the drummers entered before the pianist and the violinist. I initially intended the pianist and the gankogui player to begin together, but the fusing of two incompatible meters required establishing one meter before introducing the other. (Hess 2009)

As the musics of Snapshot 2 settled into uneasy co-existence after extreme metric and tonal dissonance, I noted the relationship between indigenous knowledge and Western knowledge was "*a continuum between conflict and dialogue*" (Maurial 1999, 69, emphasis in original). I attempted to represent this continuum musically in the second snapshot.

III. Recognition

In conceptualizing the final musical snapshot, *Recognition*, I rooted the compositional idea in practices that I believed might help "shift indigenous musical knowledge from margin to center through an alternative model for a faculty of music curriculum and admission and hiring practices" (Hess 2009). I suggested that this process was related to decolonization in a manner that addressed how one was "willing to engage in the tensions inherent in the re-education project" (Hess 2009).

The first issue I put forward was one of demographics—the question of who was represented in the faculty and student population. Dei (2000) advocated for integrating indigenous knowledges into the academy through altering hiring practices to include the "hiring [of] indigenous and racial minority scholars to join teaching faculties" (118–19).[10] I wondered at the time if the hiring practices and efforts at diversifying the student population could be extended to be more than tokenistic and whether the cycle that perpetuates the lack of diversity in demographics could be interrupted in some way. My thinking at the time was vague on this matter.

My second proposal was the restructuring of curricular content and programming to disrupt the "add and stir" model of education. As Battiste (1998) contended, this model "does not help disempowered students to reconcile their position in society or find the awareness or means to overcome the problems of their oppression" (21). I suggested instead a structural integration of indigenous knowledges—a process that involved the decentering of Western music.[11] I drew on the Afrocentric concept of centering learners "within the context of their own cultural references so that they [could] relate socially and psychologically to other cultural perspectives" (Asante 1991, 171). Centering learners in this manner potentially validated their knowledges and their epistemologies and subsequently opened the door to exploring other, equally valid, ways of knowing. My contention at the time was that the structure of the institution functioned on a "theory of diffusionism" (Blaut 1993, as cited in Battiste 1998, 22)—a system "in which knowledge is thought to be diffused from a European center to its periphery" (Battiste 1998, 22). I advocated for a pedagogy of discomfort or cognitive dissonance to play a fundamental role in the rethinking of this relationship and cited the importance of valuing different ways of knowing—including aural knowledge.

I also advocated for maintaining a non-essentialist view of indigenous knowledge and practices. I argued that

> indigenous knowledge is not a "semiotic of the prehistoric" (Kincheloe and Steinberg 2008, 142) and must not be conceptualized as such. Dei (2008) notes that while indigenous knowledge is "localised and context-bound, it does not mean that it can be boxed in time and space and/or does not transcend boundaries" (7). Non-essentialisation inherently connects to the hiring of more indigenous scholars without limiting them to the capacity of culture bearers used to "authenticate" musical situations. (Hess 2009)

These ideas formulated the compositional elements of Snapshot 3, *Recognition*. In this snapshot, the Western instruments engaged polyrhythmically in *Gahu*. The violin part joined in on the *Kagan* part (the "stubborn" drum, as master drummer Kwasi Dunyo describes it) and the piano part played the *Sogo* and *Kidi* rhythms in the right hand, while playing an alternate gankogui part in the left. This section also featured the lead drum, *Gboba*. This snapshot represented a way to think music differently.

PLAY MUSIC – "RECOGNITION"

Six years ago, in this final section, I optimistically wrote the following:

> I titled this final section "Recognition," and the corresponding music has the Western instruments taking on the polyrhythmic characteristics of Ghanaian music—recognizing their value and the wealth that they offer, not from an additive perspective, but from an equal partnership. As the faculty at schools of music becomes more diverse, the potential musics for study will also diversify, as will the student body. As Dei (2000) notes, "different knowledges can coexist,…different knowledges can complement each other, and…knowledges can [also] be in conflict at the same time" (120). The academy is a space where these conflicts can exist and resolve. This "recognition" comes with the recognition that all knowledges offer us a wealth of information—about others and about ourselves—and they also, more importantly, speak to coexistence and an equitable sense of respect in the world. Why should this not begin with music? As Shohat (1995) asks, quite musically,
>
>> Rather than ask who can speak, then, we should ask how we can speak together and more important, how we can move the dialog forward. How can diverse communities speak in concert? How might we interweave our voices, whether in chorus, in antiphony, in call and response, or in polyphony? (177)

> After Subjugation and extreme conflict in Cognitive Dissonance,
> Recognition was a relief and a joy to play. This was the first snapshot
> with the lead drum (Gboba) and it features a Gahu drum call for the
> ending.

In reflecting on the original project, now six years ago, I question some of the thinking that informed my musical choices. Revisiting this work now, I believe that I missed many of the nuances and complexities of these issues and perhaps engaged in a musical activity that actually served as a colonial reinscription. In what follows, I attempt to reconsider past thinking and move it in a direction that is perhaps more productive.

Revisiting Past Thinking: Reshaping and Reformulating

In considering the thinking that initially prompted the attempt to represent these ideas musically, I realize much has changed in my conceptualizations over the last six years. In this section, I remap the territory covered in the section above to problematize both my earlier thinking and its musical manifestation.

The lens: A subtle shift in focus?

Six years later, the theory of anti-colonialism and its relevance to this work seem much more sophisticated and complex than my working definition in the previous section. The centering of Western classical music in the academy does indeed point to lingering sustained colonialism within the system.[12] The theoretical lens I employ, therefore, rightly needs to be one that addresses (and resists) colonialism and its inherent power relations explicitly. I do not doubt my choice of anti-colonialism as a theoretical framework. However, there is much more nuance to this lens than I realized six years ago. Dei (2006) argues that the anti-colonial perspective

> is defined as an approach to theorizing colonial and re-colonial
> relations and the implications of imperial structures on the processes of
> knowledge production and validation, the understanding of
> indigeneity, and the pursuit of agency, resistance and subjective politics
> (2).

This approach to colonial relations allows for insight into the postsecondary system in North America. Dei's commentary on the effects of imperialism on knowledge production speaks directly to the consideration of an education system predicated on colonialism. The Eurocentric nature of postsecondary music institutions and the

imposition of Western classical music and Western musical epistemologies on music education structures around the world is a direct effect of colonialism; an anti-colonial approach is thus salient in striving to understand the position of indigenous musics in the academy. Further, an anti-colonial lens allows us to consider diverse ways of knowing music. It also creates the possibility for resisting the imposition of dominant paradigms. Such resistance is a key element of anti-colonialism (Gandhi and Dalton 1996; Fanon 1963; Césaire [1972] 2000; Memmi 1965). Anti-colonialism opens spaces to reclaim indigenous religion, culture, language (Memmi 1965, 133–34) and non-Eurocentric ways of knowing. I mobilize this lens to address the hegemonic nature of the Eurocentrism that dominates music education so visible in the dominance of Western classical forms and Western standard notation. Because of such privileging, placing issues of power and of race at the forefront of the discussion is helpful.

Location is also important to this discussion. The dominance of Western classical musical epistemologies is far more prevalent in North American schools than in the UK and in Nordic countries where popular music is much more common. However, classical curricula in institutions located in formerly colonized countries are not unusual. Place is a crucial element to this discussion, and as a Canadian residing in the United States, my place-based knowledge and bias is North American.

In reflecting on the distinctions between my understanding of anti-colonialism six years ago and at this present time, the subtleties of that framework are now more apparent: my theoretical understanding has shifted from a simple construction of colonialism and dominance to a framework that includes issues of coloniality, the notion and question of the recolonial, the significance of place, the importance of indigeneity in these discussions, and an acknowledgment of the presence of Eurocentricity. The sense of dominance and colonialism is still very much present, but now there are subtleties within that dominance and colonialism.

I. Subjugation

In revisiting that first snapshot, I wonder at some of the thinking that informed the music. The categories I constructed do not leave room for any sort of spectrum or

continuum within the binaries and dichotomies. In this section, I thus reevaluate my analysis and examine the music more critically.

In reconsidering the music/"world music" and musicology/ethnomusicology divide, in retrospect, it seems far less binary than the virgules suggest. What is referred to as "world music" often includes musics that could be categorized as Western. Celtic music, for example, is usually included in the "world music" category. Further, multiple academics have turned an ethnographic lens on Western institutions and classical music practices, including perhaps most famously Bruno Nettl (1994) and Christopher Small (1998). Thus, in some ways, the absolute dichotomy between "(Western) music" and "world music" and "musicology" and "ethnomusicology" is not nearly as firmly entrenched as it seemed six years ago. Further, the term "world music" is increasingly recognized as problematic and disruptions and ruptures in all four terms occur far more frequently.

As I pointed to earlier, there is also potential within the context of survey-type world music courses to foster stereotypes due to lack of specificity. Bradley (2003) strongly advocates for the contextualization of all musics. In an article inspired by Morrison's (1990) *Playing in the Dark*, she worries that within the global choral classroom, if teachers do not provide contextual information for the songs learned that students will actually imagine the context for the song. When they "invent Otherness"—a term Bradley draws from Morrison's (1990) "inventing Africanness"— students rely on the always already Other often drawn from stereotypes provided by various media. The failure to contextualize potentially leads to the reliance on stereotypes and racist ideology. The lack of specificity and context sometimes present in class content can indeed contribute to the marginalization of so-called "world musics."

Further, six years later, the material significance and consequences of various programming and faculty hiring decisions resonates much more strongly than my original conception of the often-adjunct status of many faculty who direct world music ensembles. The equity issues between tenured and tenure-track faculty and adjunct faculty are now well documented (Baldwin and Chronister 2001; Chait 2002; McPherson and Schapiro 1999) and reveal serious disparities in socioeconomic status and access to healthcare and benefits. The musicians who lead world music ensembles at the postsecondary level often are adjunct faculty. The prestige of

leading such ensembles belies the consequential economic effects that ultimately determine livelihood.

Reflecting back now, it seems that people have also become more aware of the various implications of the term "culture bearer." However, the idea of bringing in an indigenous expert of some kind is still prevalent. Vaugeois (2009) considers bringing in a violinist as an expert to discuss her musical expertise with students and points out that "we would no doubt be interested in hearing from other violinists" (17). The implication is that Western classical music is multi-faceted—that a single violinist could certainly not provide a complete picture of all that is Western classical orchestral music. Yet indigenous artists are often expected to provide that complete picture—another indication that indigenous music is perceived as "simple" or worse, "primitive." To shift this practice, we might consider hearing from a range of indigenous artists on a single genre of music, much the way we might wish to hear from multiple violinists.

I am also presently startled by the number of times I was asked inappropriately to serve as an expert in Ghanaian music and the manner in which I easily described myself as "bimusical" (Averill 2004; Lundquist 2002; Palmer 1994), as I was extremely comfortable performing both Western classical music and Ewe music. Years later, I am uneasy with my prior use of the word "bimusical." What does that mean? I understand that as I employed the term years ago, what I meant was a true fluency with two musical epistemologies. It was a true statement insofar as I was as comfortable with learning orally/aurally as I was through learning notation, and with both embodied and (much) less embodied approaches. However, am I bimusical if I cannot understand the words I sing except through translation? It seems as though I am treading into the dangerous territory of "authenticity"—a concept that is effectively impossible, and perhaps not even desirable (Schippers 2010). When music unintended for the academy occurs in that context, it effectively is a recontextualization (Schippers 2010).[13] Is there a hierarchy to these recontextualizations? Should there be? I wonder now what constitutes true bimusicality, and who legitimates such a status. The complexity of these concepts and the manner in which they defy the kind of categorization I attempted at that time speaks to the inability of categorical language to truly capture what it categorizes.

In considering admission policies and the possibility of the admission of an indigenous musician given the prevalent Western classical audition (Koza 2008), it seems that institutions are grappling with this very issue. In 2013, Patricia Shehan Campbell, president of the College Music Society, appointed a national task force to consider what it might mean in the 21st century to be an "educated musician." The findings of this task force point directly to many of the issues in this paper and conclude with recommendations toward change (Campbell et al. 2014). Furthermore, some schools are proposing more varied degree programs, majors, and requirements for admissions and degrees. Seeing the changes begin to take hold is encouraging indeed, but the path is fraught with complexities.

I wonder now at my binary delineation of these complex and nuanced issues. While many of these matters remain, there are ruptures. Koza (2008) challenged us to think about whether or not we are "listening for whiteness" when we audition and urged us to "defund" such practices.[14] Multiple North American programs are revamping course offerings and degree programs to address such issues. It seems that there are slippages within these dichotomies.

The composition, *Subjugation*, was an effort to see if I could somehow mirror what I saw occurring in the institution in relation to indigenous music as defined broadly above. Years later, I remember the process of working through this snapshot—of consciously trying to think about everything that Ewe music is, and disrupt it, fragmenting it in space and time. The act of writing felt both "imposing" and "dominating" (Dei 2000, 117)—an utter colonization of the music I had come to love and value deeply. I believe my thinking at the time was rooted in the fact that the representation, while colonial, was meant to move to a more hopeful place. Now, I am startled by the violence of *Subjugation*. The portrayal of indigenous music as "spice" (hooks 1992) parallels the way non-Western cultures are often "celebrated" as exotic. Marxist feminist Bannerji (2000) argues:

> As long as "multiculturalism" only skims the surface of society, expressing itself as traditional ethics, such as arranged marriages, and ethnic food, clothes, songs and dances (thus facilitating tourism), it is tolerated by the state and "Canadians" as non-threatening. But if the demands go a little deeper than that (e.g. teaching "other" religions or languages), they produce a violent reaction, indicating a deep resentment toward funding "others'" arts and cultures. (79)

Ethnicity in this snapshot is spice, and it is exotic. This attitude is also prevalent in the arguments described above. The postsecondary music curriculum is effectively "peppered" with "Other musics"—musics tangential to the core program. While the tangential status of this music is shifting in some places, in others, it remains steadfast. This musical snapshot brings forward questions about art. My younger self believed that a representation of a violent reality through art was not violence in and of itself if that was not the final goal. My present self adamantly disagrees.

II. Cognitive Dissonance

Moving to Snapshot 2, I now seriously question the manner in which I situated cognitive dissonance within the Western classical tradition, specifically within the context of dissonance and tonality in the late 19th century. I understand my motivation at the time, for, as I explain above, that Wagnerian concept of dissonance does have a forward movement inherent in it that is instructive in some ways to this work. Assuming that forward movement in areas of previous discomfort is desirable, I still wonder at this analogy. The ultimate resolution to consonance in this operatic example reveals an ever-present longing for the comfortable—a resolution that is perhaps less oriented toward forward movement than it initially appears. Placing the concept of cognitive dissonance in the Western classical tradition almost situates a tool of decolonization within a type of music that often takes a colonial position in education institutions around the world—a placement that, while logical, may serve to colonize the tool. However, I do stand by the forward movement that this idea implies. As we, as music educators, work to increase our comfort with indigenous musics and epistemologies, I argue that beginning to feel comfortable in realms of previous discomfort is movement in a direction that is desirable for the profession. Significantly, institutions around the world are beginning to take those steps.[15]

I also worry now at the way I situated the responsibility for change in individuals as opposed to institutions. Individual acts, while important, are less significant than working toward systemic change. In fact, the reification of individual acts functions antithetically to change in at least two capacities. First, racism is often described in terms of individual racist acts instead of through an

acknowledgment of the structural racism through which these acts occur. Structural racism that continually reinscribes hierarchies that situate white people at the top is far more problematic than individual racist acts, injurious as they might be. Mills (1997) contends that society is actually predicated on a racial contract that propagates the subjugation of non-white "subhumans" or "subpersons" and the consequent privileging of the white body. Such a contract upholds global white supremacy—the structure Mills (1997) identifies as the unnamed dominant political structure in the world today. Operating at the individual level, while important, cannot produce the macro change that is so necessary to moving forward.

To compound the issue, individualism is a commonly used tool of neoliberalism. The concept of a meritocratic society relies on the notion that individual acts determine one's place in the world. This individualism within the so-called meritocracy has historically been quite destructive to people of color (Goldberg 1993). The idea that to be successful in society requires no more than "pulling up your bootstraps" is a blatant denial of the structural racism that makes doing so effectively impossible for many people of color. Thus, targeting individual change is necessary, but misses the larger picture. That is not to negate its importance; it is to say that this issue is systemic.

In considering the music, in many ways, I believe *Cognitive Dissonance* was a reasonably successful representation of that internal cognitive conflict. My critique of the work is two-fold. Importantly, in the recording session for this work, given the musicians' broad understandings of both musics, they had to obstinately block out the other music to successfully execute the music for which they were responsible. The musicians themselves could not allow the cognitive dissonance to occur in the performance. If they had allowed it, they would not have been able to represent it—an interesting paradox in light of my intent. A performance art version of this piece might have recorded what occurred musically when musicians performed while embracing such cognitive dissonance. Second, I put forward the question of language. In my descriptions of the work in the previous section, the language I used was rooted in Western music and performance traditions. As someone theoretically well versed in Ewe music, I wonder at my failure to describe Ewe music on its own terms. My utter inability to describe this metric dissonance in language other than language belonging to the Western classical lexicon leads me to question any notion

that I could possibly be "bimusical." My language is colonial, despite intent to the contrary.

III. Recognition

In the thinking behind Snapshot 3, I centered issues of demographics—specifically from a faculty and a student perspective—and questions of curriculum content. In considering the diversifying of the faculty, questions of economy and materialism emerge. As I identified earlier in the section on *Subjugation*, there is currently a funding dichotomy between individuals who tend to teach world music ensembles and individuals who teach the "core" curriculum. A shift in these practices will require a rethinking of whose knowledge is valued. The institution at which I worked previously recently hired a musicologist in the African Studies department. Perhaps music education as a discipline might think about whether it may be valuable to hire a specialist in African Studies within the School of Music to focus not only on music, but also on issues of equity, race, and contextual history. What might an expert on the African diaspora bring to an Afro-Cuban world music ensemble? Fostering diverse and economically equitable hiring of faculty coupled with engaging in the interdisciplinary practices found regularly in disciplines such as sociology might create a very different demographic among faculty, and open a host of curricular possibilities.

In terms of student demographics, I noted earlier that there are active attempts to re-envision course and degree requirements, audition expectations, and even types of degrees. With these shifts, we could potentially foster a very different student demographic than we currently see in faculties of music. Popular music programs abound in the UK and in Nordic countries, so there are models for structuring music programs differently. However, these programs, despite often valuing aural knowledge, do not necessarily model the types of demographic diversity that many schools are working to address. To foster different demographics in music schools, we must make active moves to "defund" the practices of listening for whiteness in entrance auditions, as Koza (2008) suggests.

In also considering content, I wonder now what might it mean to destabilize European music as the center of postsecondary music programs? It seems that in

North America, we have much to learn from our colleagues in popular music programs. Heuser (2014) implemented what he calls a "juxtapositional" pedagogy in the music education program and the University of California—Los Angeles (UCLA). This pedagogy draws on formal and informal learning strategies and oral and written traditions in equal measure. Brigid Bibbens, a graduate of Syracuse University, describes herself as "paper-trained" as a result of her postsecondary music education.[16] What are the possibilities if orality is valued on par with notation-based learning? What if holistic and embodied learning receive equal emphasis to a classical European approach to performing music? What might such a program offer future musicians and global citizens as they leave their undergraduate homes and enter the world? In her doctoral work, Deborah Bradley (2006) explored the concept of "multicultural human subjectivity" and wondered if the performance of global song had a cosmopolitan effect on the choristers in her children's choir. If music faculty curricula shift to include an interdisciplinary approach to multiple musics and musical epistemologies, might there be a resulting cosmopolitanism or "multicultural human subjectivity" that results in students as they begin their professional lives? Bradley's (2006) work suggests that multicultural human subjectivity is indeed a possibility.

        In my initial thinking about Snapshot 1, I also suggested that essentialism in world music courses is often an issue. Taking a non-essentialist perspective is a crucial aspect of any approach to world music education. A non-essentialist approach recognizes that it is impossible to know a music in a twelve-week semester. A more integrated method is thus important in the process of destabilizing Europe as the dominant center in North American music faculties. As I have written elsewhere extensively (Hess 2013, 2015), an integrated approach includes drawing connections between musics over time and space and linking the past to the present through careful contextualization. I contend that musics of all kinds inform each other and affect each other in various, and sometimes surprising, ways. Taking these connections into account creates a much richer curriculum for students seeking an education in music. This integrated approach has the potential to be less essentializing than an approach that insists that it might be possible to understand Taiko drumming after a single semester of study while simultaneously asserting through program structuring that understanding classical music takes years of study.

In turning to the music of snapshot three in light of these additional complexities, in retrospect, I question everything about this final snapshot. What I intended to be recognition, celebration, and open dialogue actually (violently?) subjugated the Western classical instruments and musicians to a tradition incompatible with Western notation-based music education—an oppression of sorts without the institutional power structure to support it. The fact that the Western musicians were successful—but perhaps uncomfortable—was perhaps due to their fluency in oral tradition. There are points, however, in this track, where I hear hesitation. However, as I consider this track and the oppressive overtones, I know that "reverse racism" is impossible. Sensoy and DiAngelo (2012, Chapters 3 and 4) thoughtfully explain the distinctions between discrimination and prejudice and note that oppression can only occur when discrimination is backed by institutional power. Those not in power may discriminate, but without institutionalized power behind their actions, it is not racism. So what is this snapshot, then? In my attempt at recognition and my intended celebration of Ewe music, classical musicians were made to feel uncomfortable—a point perhaps not undesirable in light of the previous section on cognitive dissonance. The destabilization also certainly occurred. However, I wonder at the balance. In many ways, discomfort is a crucial element to moving forward, and perhaps, in some ways, discomfort does produce recognition. Yet somehow, I remain unsure.

Moving Forward

In concluding the initial project, I proposed that the suggestions I put forward in the final section—the diversifying of the faculty and student body through changes in hiring and admissions policies, the shifting of curricular content, and the insistence on a non-essentialist approach to indigenous knowledge—were a way to begin within an existing institutional structure. I concluded: "So let us imagine—a space where all people and musics are integral to the whole. A space that welcomes and values all knowledges" (Hess 2009).

In pondering the initial conclusion to this paper, I realize that I am much more adamant now about engaging the institution in its current incarnation. Creating a new type of education is a lofty goal, but not terribly realistic within our lifetimes. However, changing the institution that currently exists seems more

possible. In considering the occurrences and changes in the six years between the original work and today, I think it is fair to say that we are beginning to move in this direction. The term "culture bearer," although it conceptually still exists in music education, is diminishing in prevalent use. World music ensembles are far more prevalent in institutions everywhere. Schools everywhere are working to reconfigure their music programs to make more sense in this world. The problematic nature of the term "world music" rarely requires an explanation now—even in circles outside of music. It is a hopeful time indeed to be working in music education.

Troubling the Binary: Tracing a Thinking Trajectory

In revisiting my graduate school project project six years later, I better understand my previous discomfort. The musical composition in many ways reinscribes colonialism. I believe I understood that shortly after the conclusion of the recording session. However, much more interesting to me is the absolutely categorical way I shaped the world cognitively. I was determined that behaviors, processes, institutions, and knowledges could (and perhaps should?) be categorized. Now, I recognize frequently as I write that my mind still wants to "bin" thoughts into categories as they occur to me; however, I see constant slippages. As Mohanty (2003) noted in struggling with geographical categorizations, very little can be categorized in any sort of binary manner. I ended the initial paper with an odd sort-of utopian ideal for where I thought we should be—and perhaps identified something not particularly realistic or even desirable. Six years later, I am much more determined to stay grounded in the present—to make moves towards decolonization that are both realistic and possible. I still feel that I am often categorical and I struggle with that in my work. Anger and passion for justice are strong emotions that I do not easily mediate. Distance grants perspective, and yet I recognize I do not always want distance from my work. However, the trajectory is interesting, for the world does indeed exist in "shades of gray." Acknowledging that in thinking and in writing makes it much easier to have conversations about matters of justice, both in the classroom and with individuals with diverse perspectives—a practice I plan to continue for years to come.

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Notes

[1] My original definition for indigenous knowledge is as follows:

Although acknowledging that any definition can only ever be partial, I begin with the concept of indigenous knowledge, which Battiste and Henderson (2000), Dei (2000), and Castellano (2002) characterize as holistic (Battiste and Henderson 2000, 42), combining the mind, body, and spirit as the three aspects of the whole self indigenous knowledge addresses (Meyer 2008). Castellano (2002) groups indigenous knowledges into three broad categories: *traditional knowledge*, where the knowledge is handed down from older generations, *empirical knowledge*, where knowledge is gained through observation of everyday life and social practices, and *revealed knowledge*, where knowledge is based on intuition, emotions, and dreams. In examining transmission practices, Battiste and Henderson (2000) find oral and symbolic transmission are the primary modes of transmission for indigenous knowledges (48). The connection of indigenous people to the land they inhabit or inhabited before the (African) diaspora is similarly a theme prevalent in the literature (Dei 2000; Fals Borda 1980, as cited in Dei, 2000; Semali and Kincheloe 1999). As well as the crucial link to land, Indigeneity and indigenous knowledge also intimately relates to the experiences of colonization and oppression (Macedo 1999, xi; Purcell 1998, 258; Semali and Kincheloe 1999, 16). For the purposes of this paper, I am specifically interested in the knowledge production aspect of indigenous musical knowledge.

Upon considering definitions of indigenous knowledge in general, it appears that indigenous musical knowledge then is holistic and embodied knowledge that is generally transmitted orally. Shehan (1987) specifically describes the process of aural music transmission as follows:

> Orality in music learning may be generalized to include the following interrelated forms: immediate imitation of teacher demonstration by the student, mnemonic systems of pitch and rhythm, vocalization or recitation of pitches and rhythms, and memorization of phrases and formulaic passages. (2)

Indigenous musical knowledge is also intergenerational (Castellano's 2002 *traditional knowledge*)[1] and maintained with a sense of responsibility. It also relates specifically to place of origin. There is an aspect of Castellano's *empirical knowledge*, as music is very much a social practice. The boundaries often blur between music and everyday life, as music is an integral part of all major life events and many traditions. As Battiste and Henderson (2000) note:

> No separation of science, art, and religion, philosophy, or aesthetics exists in indigenous thought; such categories do not exist. Thus, Eurocentric researchers may know the name of an herbal cure and understand how it is used, but without the ceremony in ritual songs, chants, prayers, and relationships, they cannot achieve the same effect. (43)

Music is a fundamental aspect of Indigeneity. The above quotation indicates that music (ritual songs) is inseparable from other categories defined in Eurocentric thought. Finally, music as a facet of Indigeneity has the potential to communicate emotions (Castellano's *revealed knowledge*)—to celebrate, to mourn, to release anger (Hess 2009).

[2] The traditional Ewe set is seven pieces. Four drums are generally used for *Gahu*. The *kagan* is the smallest drum—the "stubborn" drum; it stays on the same pattern throughout the whole piece. The *kidi* and *sogo* are also supporting drums. The *gboba* is the largest drum with the lowest voice. It plays the role of lead drum and will only be heard in the third snapshot. Together, they make a family of drums with voices sounding at different pitches—the high voice of the *kagan* contrasting with the low voice of the *gboba*.

[3] Locke (1987) writes of *Gahu* extensively.

[4] How interesting that my spell-check does not recognize the word "knowledges." In Microsoft Word, knowledge can only ever be singular—an unexpected though not surprising colonial denial of the possibility of multiple knowledges or epistemologies.

[5] As Averill (2004) notes: "Critics claimed that the Hood-style ensemble system discriminated against foreign artists by refusing them long-term teaching contracts, reasonable pay, and institutionally respected titles. As pianist and medieval music scholar Jon Barlow said of his early years at Wesleyan, 'That I was a member of the faculty, and that Palghat Raghu [*mridangam* teacher] was not a member of the faculty, was a transparent example of colonialism playing its old games again. Because, of course, I was getting paid a lot more than Palghat Raghu'" (98, italics in original).

[6] *Tristan and Isolde* premiered in 1865. Wagner, in many ways, represented the beginning of the movement from dissonance to dissonance and finding tension and resolution within the context of dissonance.

[7] By saying 4/4 time, I am aware that I am using a Western construct for indigenous music, but as a Western classical musician, that is the language I have to explain the conflicted nature of this composition.

[8] The violin melody and piano part of this piece were a preliminary sketch for a piece which later became *There was Crimson Clash of War*—the fourth piece in a song cycle based on Yeats poetry and an apt sentiment for the classical instruments in this piece.

[9] These are points where the beginning of the bell cycle is on the downbeat of the music of the classical instruments.

[10] In an interesting article on studying indigenous Hawaiian knowledge at the elementary school level, Kaomea (2005) also advocates for indigenous (native Hawaiian) bodies teaching indigenous Hawaiian knowledges based on, among other things, the classroom teacher's lack of knowledge on indigenous Hawaiian practices and history.

[11] Caicedo (1997) also examines the destabilizing of the Western subject as the norm and applies it to the social sciences, favoring multiple epistemologies.

[12] See Vaugeois (2013) and Gustafson (2009) for a discussion of race and colonialism in music education.

[13] See in particular Chapter 3 for a discussion of authenticity, context, and recontextualization.

[14] Koza draws on a working paper of Ladson-Billings entitled "The Social Funding of Race: The Role of Schooling," to make this point.

[15] Arizona State University, for example, is in the process of initiating a Bachelor of Arts program that will allow a student entrance to the music program without an audition and enable them to effectively "major" in world music. The classical component of the program is optional rather than obligatory. Not requiring a classical audition for entrance into a music program opens up postsecondary programs to indigenous artists and also popular musicians. The necessity of notational literacy decreases significantly.

[16] See the interview on Bugera Amps at http://bridgidbibbens.com/videos/.

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