

Music's Vibratory Enchantments and Epistemic Injustices

Reflecting on Thirty Years of Feminist Thought in Music Theory

Judy Lochhead

Music is often described as having magical powers to enchant listeners, but it has an equally and often unremarked magical effect on performers and scholars contemplating music. North American music theory has done little to address music's enchantments, preferring to frame its discourse around empiricism and objectivity. Since the 1990s various postmodern and post-structuralist perspectives have brought about changes of content – what music is considered – and methodology, including a consideration of music's "magical" powers. These new perspectives have, in part, resulted in an increased diversity in the demographics of musicology, but there have not been changes of sufficient significance in either content or methodology in North American music theory and the demographics of music theory remain dominated by white, male practitioners. In this short essay, I propose two ways that music-theoretical practice can be transformed in order to overcome the "epistemic injustices" of past work in music theory. First, music-theoretical work should address the complicity of the scholar's perspective, and second, it should recognize the authorial work of diverse creators. To exemplify the latter, I offer a short analysis of Eliza Brown's *The Body of the State* (2017).

Musik wird zwar häufig eine „magische Kraft“ zugeschrieben, Zuhörer*innen zu bezaubern, aber sie hat ebenso eine häufig unbeachtete magische Wirkung auf Interpret*innen und Musikforscher*innen, die über Musik nachdenken. Die gegenwärtige nordamerikanische Musiktheorie hat wenig dazu beigetragen, diese „Verzauberung“ durch Musik zu thematisieren, stattdessen verortet sie sich diskursiv in Empirismus und Objektivität. Seit den 1990er Jahren haben unterschiedliche postmoderne und poststrukturalistische Perspektiven einen Wandel bezüglich der Inhalte – welcher Musikbegriff wird zugrunde gelegt – und Methoden angestoßen, einschließlich einer Berücksichtigung der „magischen Kräfte“ von Musik. Diese neuen Perspektiven haben innerhalb der Musikwissenschaft zumindest teilweise zu einer größeren demographischen Diversität geführt, aber in der nordamerikanischen Musiktheorie hat kein grundlegender Wandel von Inhalten oder Methoden stattgefunden und sie wird nach wie vor von weißen und männlichen Fachvertretern dominiert. In diesem kurzen Essay zeige ich zwei Möglichkeiten auf, wie musiktheoretische Praxis so verändert werden kann, dass sie die „epistemischen Ungerechtigkeiten“ vergangener musiktheoretischer Arbeit überwindet. Erstens sollte Musiktheorie die Abhängigkeit der Forscher*innen von ihrer jeweiligen Perspektive reflektieren und zweitens sollte Musiktheorie die Werke verschiedenster Künstler*innen anerkennen. Als ein Beispiel dafür dient eine kurze Analyse von Eliza Browns *The Body of the State* (2017).

Schlagworte/Keywords: demographics; Demographie; Eliza Brown; epistemic injustice; epistemische Ungerechtigkeit; epistemology of music theory; feminist standpoint theory; Geschichte der Musiktheorie; history of music theory; magische Kraft der Musik; Miranda Fricker; musical magic; Sandra Harding; Wissenschaftstheorie der Musiktheorie

Music enchants listeners through its vibratory forces – forces which spin their magic on listeners, creators, and those who contemplate music from scholarly perspectives. Music's enchantments have a long history, embedded in such terms as "charm" with its Latin roots in *carmen* (song) and in their association with incantatory recitations which have an

occult power.¹ Even the word “enchantment,” bound to singing through the French *chanter*, insinuates the magical forces of music as sounding phenomena.² Music’s magical forces operate as unseen actions on bodies and things in the world, enchanting listeners in a great many ways and challenging modern epistemologies.

Enchantment and magic have been much on the minds of scholars in recent years, with reassessments of Max Weber’s account of the “disenchantment of the world” (“Entzauberung der Welt”) in modernity.³ Historian Michael Saler, in his article “Modernity and Enchantment: A Historiographic Review,” demonstrates how recent scholarship challenges the notion that in modernity “wonders and marvels have been demystified by science, spirituality has been supplanted by secularism, spontaneity has been replaced by bureaucratization, and the imagination has been subordinated to instrumental reason.”⁴ Writers from a wide variety of humanistic disciplines maintain that modernity’s enchantments have operated alongside or sometimes inside of discourses of rationality and objectivity, with music often identified as a rich source of enchantments in the modern era. Gary Tomlinson drew attention to early beliefs about the magical and therapeutic effects of music in the pre-modern era. Published in 1993, Tomlinson’s *Music in Renaissance Magic* was implicated in an emergent scholarly exploration of the “irrational” in a world believed to operate according to reason and scientific objectivity.⁵ Since the late 1980s, both within and without music studies, there has been a vibrant exploration of those domains of human experience that defy modern notions of a rational world. In music studies, a recent special issue of *Popular Music* (2019) includes seven articles devoted to the topic of “Music and Magic.”⁶ In this issue, Zachary Loeffler’s article “‘The Only Real Magic’: Enchantment and Disenchantment in Music’s Modernist Ordinary,” traces how listeners and critics since the turn of the twentieth-century have used the “word ‘magic’ to talk about music,” setting the magic of musical experience against the “ordinary” and “perfunctory” aspects of modern life.⁷ The enchantments of music also find their way into the literary realm as expression of the affective and enigmatic powers of music. For instance, in “Arizona,” a recent short story by John Edgard Wideman, the protagonist of the story reflects on a mid-1980s R&B song, rhetorically asking the song’s creator and performer, Freddie Jackson, “How do you work the magic of your art, Mr. Jackson?” Probing this musical enchantment further Wideman writes: “A song you sing creates a space with different rules, different possibilities” – a phrase resonating with Loeffler’s observation that music provides the possibility of a magical place of being beyond the ordinary world of rules and conformity.⁸

The opening of my essay suggests that those of us who contemplate music as scholars – historians and theorists alike – are equally enchanted by music’s vibratory forces. While those “charms” of music may not be formally acknowledged in historical, critical, theoretical, or analytical scholarship, they work their magic nonetheless. These charms there-

1 OED online 1989a.

2 OED online 1989b.

3 See Weber 1946, Berman 1981, Bennett 2001, Graham 2007, and Landy/Saler 2009.

4 Saler 2006, 692.

5 Tomlinson 1993.

6 De Jong/Lebrun 2019.

7 Loeffler 2019, 11, 29.

8 Wideman 2019, 63; for more on what I call music’s “imaginative transport” see Lochhead 2019.

fore might be counted among the underlying and unarticulated assumptions of music scholarship which perspectives of feminist theory have unraveled since the 1990s. And recent events in North America – which I will address below – have further uncovered racist and ableist tendencies in some well-established music theoretical and analytical concepts.

The explicit naming of these tendencies works against the purported objectivity of music theory and analysis.⁹ Operating from an epistemological impulse that Ian Bent and Anthony Pople define as “empirical,” music-theoretical and analytical scholarship has investigated the technical and structural details of music.¹⁰ These investigations have not typically acknowledged how the enchantments of music might burrow their way into such empirical contemplation of music.¹¹ But an unexamined empirical framework and a failure to recognize the effects of music’s enchantments can have serious ramifications.

The term *theory*, as Claude Palisca points out, has its origins in ancient Western thought: the “Greek root *theōria* is the noun form of the verb *theōreō*, meaning to inspect, look at, behold, observe, contemplate, consider.”¹² Palisca also observed that some of the earliest theorists of the Western tradition, such as Boethius in *De institutione musica* (c. 500), did not address musicians and musical practices but rather speculated about music in abstract terms.¹³ Such a split between practice and speculative thought has had a kind of echo in some contemporary approaches to music theory, especially in the second half of the twentieth century in North America. Mid-century notions of music theory arose when there was a concerted attempt to distinguish theoretical from historical studies of music. The rallying cry for music theory was its focus on “musical structure” apart from any historical, cultural, or performative features surrounding music or musical works. I refer here to the North American splintering of the American Musicological Society (AMS) in 1977 when self-described music theorists established the Society for Music Theory (SMT). This splintering of what had simply been “musicology” into historical/critical and theoretical domains has been amply documented and debated, as has the impossibility of de-historicizing or de-theorizing any sort of musical study.¹⁴ The proclaimed focus in music theory on structure echoes some of the ancient distinctions between speculative thought and musical practice, and this echo was made stronger by a tendency toward a scientific methodology in the mid-twentieth century. While there are clear signs of change in music-theoretical circles since the turn of the millennium, the originating impetus in the mid-twentieth century for a disciplinary focus on “structure” and how it should be formulated by music theories has a legacy. That legacy may be observed in the demographics for music theory which indicate a “chilly climate” for women much like that which exists for women in STEM fields.¹⁵ My brief reflection on trajectories of and future for feminist thought in music theory will first consider the demographic

9 In the remainder of this essay, I will use the term “music theory” to refer both to music theory and music analysis for simplicity’s sake.

10 Bent/Pople 2001, 1.2.

11 Ibid.

12 Palisca/Bent 2001, 2.

13 See further *ibid.* for a historically informed account of the long history of music theory.

14 See Kerman 1980, McCreless 2000, Browne 2003, and Agawu 2004.

15 STEM refers to the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math, and “chilly climate” to the 1982 study by Hall/Sandler 1982.

statistics in North America and suggest that the originating epistemic alignment of music theory with STEM fields has produced a demographic which, like those fields, skews male. I then consider how the epistemic privilege conferred to narrow concepts of objectivity has occluded consideration of what we might think of as music's enchantments. Finally, I offer a short analysis of a work by Eliza Brown, *The Body of the State* (2017), that takes epistemic privilege and epistemic injustice as its musical topic. With this analysis, I demonstrate why detailed consideration of structural details of music composed by women serves to redress the epistemic injustices for women as authorial voices of music.

LEGACIES

Some forty years after the Society for Music Theory split off from the American Musicological Society, it is instructive to compare the demographics of the two societies by gender: in 2017, AMS was 51.2% female and 48.5% male, while SMT was 31.6% female and 66.4% male.¹⁶ The demographics for SMT are comparable to fields such as philosophy, which is 25.2% female, and the sciences, such as chemistry, which reports a 23% female membership.¹⁷ The low participation of women in music theory, like that of philosophy and the sciences, points to some fundamental aspects of these fields that are not conducive to participation by women. For SMT, the number of women who are members has hovered persistently around 30% over the last thirty years despite efforts to encourage female participation. The difference in the percentage of women who are members in AMS versus SMT is significant.

As I have argued elsewhere, the foundations of contemporary music theory in North America were modeled on the epistemic frames of analytic philosophy and the sciences broadly conceived.¹⁸ These epistemic frames shaped a music-theoretical enterprise focused on musical structures that were conceived as objective, typically meaning that they had a trace in the visual record of a score. Critical perspectives from feminist theory and other strands of post-structuralist thought were brought to bear on music theory in the 1990s, drawing attention to the objectivist and structuralist epistemic frames of music theory. These critiques injected new ideas into music theory and launched new approaches.¹⁹ The rationalism of mid-twentieth-century music-theoretical models was countered around the turn of the millennium by approaches addressing human experience, gesture, listening, timbre, and other aspects of music which defy objectivist thought. The new approaches to music-theoretical work that emerged opened the door to a diversity of perspectives. But old habits die hard and the legacy of music theory's originating impulse remains: the institutional and cultural forces that implicitly and sometimes explicitly enforce the status quo are strong.

16 SMT has published a more recent demographic report, but AMS has not. I chose to use the same year for purposes of comparison. See McKay 2017, Society for Music Theory 2017, and the websites of both societies for these reports: SMT <https://societymusictheory.org/administration/demographics> and AMS <https://www.amsmusicology.org/page/demographics> (31 Mar 2020).

17 The statistics for philosophy are taken from <https://www.apaonline.org/page/demographics> and for chemistry from Montes 2017.

18 By contemporary music theory, I mean the development of music theory in mid-twentieth century. For more on this topic, see Lochhead 2016.

19 See in particular Maus 1993, Cusick 1994, Guck 1994, Kielian-Gilbert 1994, McClary 1994, Fisher/Lochhead 2002, and Hatten 2004.

Writers in the philosophy of science who address gender imbalances in the sciences provide some insight into how the status quo persists. Feminist standpoint theory was launched to challenge the epistemic privilege accorded to certain unexamined concepts of objectivity and, in the end, to promote better science. This theory was developed in the 1970s and 1980s by Sandra Harding and echoed by other writers, including Donna Haraway with her concept of “situated knowledge.” Informed by feminist theory, these philosophers of science investigated the relation between the production of knowledge and practices of power.²⁰ A brief review of feminist standpoint theory gives a sense of the kind of critique Harding and others brought to bear on epistemic privileging in the sciences and how it might apply to music-theoretical studies.

In their succinct summary, Crasnow, Wylie, Bauchspies, and Potter identify three theses of feminist standpoint theory: “the situated knowledge thesis, the thesis of epistemic privilege, and the achievement thesis.”²¹ First, the thesis of situated knowledge holds that since all knowledge is partial, knowledge production itself must be examined from the perspectives of epistemic and institutional power. So, for instance, knowledge produced by music-theoretical work should be considered from the perspectives of “*by whom and for whom.*”²² Second, the thesis of epistemic privilege maintains that a particular mode of knowledge holds a dominant and often exclusionary role in a social group. Feminist standpoint theory maintains that since knowledge is always partial, according to the situated knowledge thesis, then the partiality of one’s own knowledge must be critically examined with respect to the episteme privileged in any particular group. For music theory, the authority of any methodology or concept should not be taken for granted and music theorists should examine the partiality of their own observations. And third, the achievement thesis claims that a dominant conceptual framework is achieved through a group consciousness, and that by mapping these conceptual frameworks, one can understand how they maintain their control over institutional rewards and discursive norms. For music theory, this requires a broadly critical awareness of not only the dominant but also the marginal conceptual frameworks that might be available for any musical investigation. The goal of a feminist standpoint, as Harding demonstrates, goes beyond a facile and unexamined notion of objectivity. Harding defines the goal as a “strong objectivity” since it requires that “the subject of knowledge and the process through which knowledge is produced are [...] scrutinized according to the same standards as the objects of knowledge.”²³

The epistemic privilege accorded to facile notions of objectivity and structure forged in the mid-twentieth century still plays a robust – but perhaps diminishing – role in music-theoretical scholarship. That women who study music sometimes find themselves outside of this epistemic frame is driven home by the membership statistics in SMT. The reasons for such “outsider-ness” are multiple and certainly as complex as the reasons why women are underrepresented in science and philosophy. But there are reasons to think that in

20 See Harding 1986 and Haraway 1989. Other important publications of an early feminist theory of science include Code 1991, Irigaray 1989, Keller 1985, Schiebinger 1989, and many others.

21 Crasnow/Wylie/Bauchspies/Potter 2018.

22 See *ibid.*: “The thesis of situated knowledge is based in the understanding that knowledge is for and by a particular set of socially situated knowers and so is always local – a cultural/social/political ‘location’ characterized by the power relations endemic in such settings.”

23 *Ibid.* The authors here develop Harding’s position where she writes “Strong objectivity requires that the subject of knowledge be placed on the same critical, causal plane as the objects of knowledge.” (Harding 1992, 458)

music-theoretical studies the perspectives of embodied and situated knowledge and of a “strong objectivity” are playing a greater role in reshaping epistemic practices and broadening epistemic privilege.

What does this focus on epistemic privilege via feminist standpoint theory have to do with music’s enchantments? Such enchanted places of music, associated as they are with the body and its affects, have eluded explicit thought in modern music theory, especially in its facile objectivist and structuralist epistemic frame. The enchantments of music have posed both an enticing presence and an epistemological hurdle for twentieth-century music studies which were built around the dualisms of mind versus body, objective versus subjective, and rationality versus emotionality. Since music’s enchantments have their evidence in bodily responses which have been deemed “subjective” and based in “emotionality,” music-theoretical studies have held these dimensions of musical experience at arm’s length. The interventions of feminist theory along with other postmodern philosophies around the turn of the millennium have begun the slow process of redirecting musical discourse away from these dualisms – such that the evidences of human experience can be brought to bear on music studies generally. And specifically, if recent events are an indication, these interventions are leaving a palpable trace in music theory.

While there have been signs of gradual change in the epistemic privilege of facile objectivist and structuralist discourse over the last thirty years, the November 2019 meeting of the Society for Music Theory in Columbus, Ohio (USA), seems to have marked a sea-change. This meeting included sessions with such titles as: “Performance: Bodies, Cognition, Technologies,” “Meter, Flow, and Groove in Hip Hop,” and “Cross-Modal Perception in Multimedia and Virtual Reality.” And it included a hands-on session on “Diversity in Music Theory Pedagogy” and a plenary session titled: “Reframing Music Theory.” The plenary session, with papers by Philip Ewell, Yayoi Uno Everett, Joseph Straus, and Ellie Hisama, presented a critique of the field of music theory, undercutting its foundational claims of objectivity and score-based structuralism.²⁴ These included a demonstration of how Heinrich Schenker’s thought was racist and affected the core of his music-theoretical concepts, how new models of cross-cultural analysis can reveal a musical bi-culturalism, how music theory’s emphasis on musical norms reveals an ableist orientation, and how music theory has afforded epistemic privilege to objectivist and structuralist models, thereby excluding diverse theoretical perspectives. While one might have expected a bit of pushback from those with vested interest in a status quo, there seemed to be none at the time. Quite the opposite, there was rather a euphoric embrace of the new directions suggested in the pathways toward a “reframing.” And further, the seemingly widespread approbation of the critique presented in the plenary seemed to flow easily from the diversity of approaches and perspectives in papers during the conference.

We will see what the future holds, but this event should be encouraging to those who might have believed that their particular research does not “count” as music theory – to use Hisama’s term.²⁵ The slow transformation of the mid-twentieth-century epistemic privilege in music theory – brought about by perspectives from feminist theory and also from theories of embodiment, experience, cognition, and critical race theory, to name a few – holds open

24 Information about the 2019 meeting of the Society for Music Theory can be viewed here: <https://societymusictheory.org/archives/events/meeting2019> (31 Mar 2020).

25 Ellie Hisama’s paper in the plenary was titled “Getting to Count” and addressed the issue of the epistemic privilege of a facile objectivist and structuralist conceptual framework in music theory. The question is: *what* is counted as music theory and *by* whom.

new possibilities of inclusion for those who because of any form of difference – including gender, race, ethnicity, sexual identity and orientation, disability – might feel excluded.

HORIZONS

Disciplinary transformations, however, do not happen by magic. Rather, it is crucial for those who endorse the epistemic value of a “strong objectivity” in Harding’s sense to be actively engaged in the work to effect disciplinary change. So, I briefly introduce a musical work that deals explicitly with epistemic *injustice* as a broader form of social exclusion. The work is Eliza Brown’s *The Body of the State* (2017), a monodrama in three scenes for soprano, ensemble, and fixed media. The work is a music-theatrical dramatization of the historical story of Juana of Castile (1479–1555), daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella and heir to the throne of Castile. After the death of her mother and husband, Phillippe of Burgundy, Juana’s father Ferdinand has her declared insane so he can take full control of both Castile and Aragon. Juana is incarcerated for the remaining years of her life, under the dubious claim of madness.

The libretto of *The Body of the State* was written by Brown in conjunction with six incarcerated women at the Indiana Women’s Prison. Via video conference, Brown first participated in a reading group with women at the prison, when they read Miranda Fricker’s *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing*.²⁶ Then on-site, Brown and the six incarcerated women read *Juana the Mad: Sovereignty and Dynasty in Renaissance Europe* by Bethany Aram before embarking together on the writing of the libretto.²⁷ Along with Brown, the authors of the libretto are: Lara Campbell, Jeneth Hughes, Michelle Jones, Melinda Loveless, Anastazia Schmid, and Brittney Watson. The co-authors fashioned a libretto around the story of Juana of Castile, her incarceration, and the ways individuals are denied the powers of knowledge by institutional structures. In writing the libretto, the seven took into account their own situations, reflecting on the various ways that different forms of epistemic injustice deny full humanity to individuals. Brown also enlisted the incarcerated women to make suggestions to her about the music, primarily about orchestration. And she included their group vocal improvisations in the fixed media part.

Brown’s *The Body of the State* may be viewed online in a performance by Ensemble Dal Niente.²⁸ For present purposes, I offer brief analyses of two passages: Scene 1 and the beginning of Scene 3.

In Scene 1, Juana encounters the servants in her home, the musicians playing the roles of these servants. Phillippe, Juana’s husband who will die in Scene 2, is still alive. Phillippe has enlisted the servants to confine Juana to her chambers. Over the course of the scene, Juana comes to understand that Phillippe and the servants are attempting to stifle her power. Despite her rights as heir to the throne, Juana’s gender has rendered her powerless over her husband and father. Realizing the servants’ disloyalty, Juana begins to understand that no one is to be trusted and that her epistemic privilege as the heir to the throne is quickly being eroded.

26 Directly related to the epistemic situation of the incarcerated women, Fricker’s book takes as its goal “to characterize two forms of epistemic injustice: testimonial injustice, in which someone is wronged in their capacity as a giver of knowledge; and hermeneutical injustice, in which someone is wronged in their capacity as a subject of social understanding.” (Fricker 2007, 7)

27 Aram 2005.

28 <https://www.elizabrown.net/the-body-of-the-state> (31 Mar 2020).

The scene is shaped by a repeating bassline in the electric bass and sometimes the cello, and by a ritornello figure in the upper winds and harp and sometimes the strings. The repeating bassline is shown in Example 1 with its initial rhythm. A full statement of this repeating bassline takes six measures in its first presentation, but during the scene it expands and contracts through variations of its rhythm. The ritornello figure consists of rising figures that are also subject to variation by augmentation and fragmentation. Example 2 shows the opening three bars, with ritornello and bassline bracketed on the left of the score.



Example 1: Eliza Brown, *The Body of the State*, Scene 1; repeating bassline.
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Example 2: Eliza Brown, *The Body of the State*, Scene 1, mm. 1–3; ritornello in ensemble and beginning of repeating bassline in electric bass and cello.
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Table 1 maps out the overall form of Scene 1, showing the repetitions of the ritornello and the bassline statements, with the measure numbers and timestamps of the online video in the middle rows. The table indicates that there are twelve statements of the bassline and seven of the ritornello. Recurrences of these two repeating elements are not necessarily coordinated and the moments when they coincide are shown in shaded cells of the table. For the ritornelli, I have also indicated in parentheses their length in measures and whether they involve an augmented rhythm. For the repeating bassline, partial statements are so labelled. Table 1 also includes a row at the top for the text, indicating the general state of Juana's psyche, as she wavers between different forms of perplexity and anger.

Text		Questioning	Suspicion	Anxious	Anger	Anger	Questioning	Loss of Power
Ritornello	R1 (5 mm.)		R2 (4 mm.)	R3 (aug., 6 mm.)		R4 (reg/aug., 4 mm.)		
Time	3:19	3:39	4:36	5:32	6:12	6:23	7:00	7:36
Measure	1	7	30	50	66	70	84	99
Bassline	B1	B2		B3	B4 (partial)		B5	B6

Text	Confusion	Angry/ Confusion	Messenger/ Knowing	Paranoia	Incoherent	Paranoia		
Ritornello	R5 (3 mm.)	R6 (aug., 10 mm.)		R7 (5 mm.)				
Time (video)	7:59	9:05	10:24	12:49	13:09	13:39	14:25	(16:35)
Measure	108	131	159	201	208	217	232	
Bassline	B7		B8 (partial)	B9	B10	B11	B12	

Table 1: Eliza Brown, *The Body of the State*, Scene 1; formal structuring.

The structuring of Scene 1 with repeating and yet transforming elements sonically embodies the “deep, self-replicating structures” of society which constrain Juana's everyday existence.²⁹ Juana's vocal part in Scene 1 moves from a relatively confident sense of being in control – with pitched singing – to one in which she becomes confused and then eventually understands how she has been controlled – with unpitched vocal delivery and incoherent speaking. In its sonic materiality, the music of Scene 1 embodies the situation that Juana inhabits. She is constrained by the institutions which are rigid but unpredictable – like the changing but repeating ritornelli and bassline – and which limit her own ability to wield power.

Scene 3 marks a moment of clarity for Juana, when she understands the fact and significance of her incarceration and its effect on her sense of time and home. In Scene 2, Philippe dies and then Juana is declared insane by her father, Ferdinand, so that he can consolidate his power. At the end of Scene 2, Juana loses her ability to speak or sing: her vocal part transforms from single-syllable utterances to silence. At the beginning of Scene 3, Juana has been stripped of her crown and the physical accoutrements of her regal standing, and through her incarceration she has become a *body of the state*. Juana finds her voice, however, in a moment of self-reflection resulting in full realization of her situation: along with her epistemic power and privilege, Juana has been stripped of her ability to know and to control her world, thrusting her into a time with no past and no future. And in this self-reflective mode she begins “to find cracks in the edifice of power.”³⁰ Juana's music at the beginning of Scene 3 is an aria with a powerful melody.

29 Email communication from Brown to the author, 2018.

30 Email communication from Brown to the author, 2018.

In this aria, Juana expresses a full comprehension of what her incarceration means, in terms of both her bodily and epistemic freedoms. The opening text refers to her body in both its fleshy immanence and in its symbolic control by the state:

Timeless time
No departure
And no home

Queen of sadness
Clothed in a cureless body
Chains of flesh and dynasty
Bind me in time³¹

At the beginning of Scene 3 (video 28:40), just as Juana starts to sing, the harp presents a mensuration canon as if to sonically depict the prisons of time. The rigid temporal control of the canonic statements underscores the point that Juana, like the incarcerated women who co-authored the libretto, has become a body *of* the state and the subject of epistemic injustice. Example 3 shows the six notes of the canon and Example 4 cites the opening of the mensuration canon in measures 33 to 44. As Example 4 indicates, each of the four canonic voices is articulated in a unique durational pattern: four quarter notes; sixteen quintuplet sixteenths; sixteen triplet eighths, and eight triplet eighths. In the example, each of the canonic voices is highlighted by a different color.³²



Example 3: Eliza Brown, *The Body of the State*, Scene 3; sequence of notes, harp mensuration canon.

As Example 4 also shows, Juana's vocal part uses, for the most part, only notes of the canon. In those places where she diverges from this collection, there is a sense that Juana strains against the constraints of her "pitch prison" – "testing the boundaries of a rigid accompaniment structure."³³ The ending of *The Body of the State* includes a confrontation between Juana and a priest (played by the conductor) in which she exhibits her self-knowledge and reveals the priest's complicity in the epistemic injustices of incarceration. The monodrama concludes with a recording of the vocal improvisations of the incarcerated women with Brown, voices present as if by magic. Listeners to *The Body of the State* leave with the vocal sounds of the incarcerated.

31 Brown 2017.

32 Example 4 also indicates that in the initial canonic statements by the two lower voices one or more of the canonic notes are missing.

33 Email communication from Brown to the author, 2018.

25

S. Solo *emotionally blank, barely aware of physical world*

Tub. B.

Hp.

Vc.

E. Bass

Canon—durations for each pitch

4 quarter notes

16 quintuplet sixteenths

16 triplet eights

8 triplet eights

L.V. sempre

No D, A

No A

35

S. Solo *no de-par- ture and no home*

Hp.

Vc.

ST

ord.

fast, narrow, irregular vib. if wavy line appears

40

S. Solo *with a small, small tinge of bitterness*

Queen of sad-ness clothed in a cure - less bo-dy

Hp.

Vc.

The image displays a musical score for Example 4, featuring vocal lines and harp accompaniment. The score is divided into three systems, each starting with a double bar line. The first system (measures 25-34) includes a vocal line with lyrics "emotionally blank, barely aware of physical world" and a harp part with a canon of durations. The second system (measures 35-39) features the vocal line with lyrics "no de-par- ture and no home" and a harp part with various articulations. The third system (measures 40-44) includes the vocal line with lyrics "with a small, small tinge of bitterness" and "Queen of sad-ness clothed in a cure - less bo-dy" and a harp part with dynamic markings and vibrato instructions.

Example 4: Eliza Brown, *The Body of the State*, Scene 3, mm. 33–44; harp mensuration canon. Copyright © 2017 by Eliza Brown and Eliza Brown Music (ASCAP). All rights reserved.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Issues of gender in music-theoretical studies have recently been absorbed into a broad spectrum of difference – rightly so – but they remain. My recent book, *Reconceiving Structure in Contemporary Music: New Tools in Music Theory and Analysis*, was long in coming for a variety of reasons. One involved a discussion with a potential publisher about a book on the analysis of recent music. I had proposed a book in which all the works considered were by women, and the potential publisher wanted to know why, if I were not going to make gender a theme of the book, would I choose only women composers. Walking away from that discussion, I thought about books I had encountered that considered only music by men without a corresponding theme of gender. The epistemic privilege afforded to scholarship addressing music composed by men remains robust.

As a discipline, the field of music theory still needs to address issues of equity and inclusion, encouraging scholars – existing and potential – who might feel outside the epistemic privilege of the field to be engaged and to contribute. The field still needs more diverse scholars – more women, more people of color, more people of disparate economic privilege, more people of varying abilities. One way to engage diverse scholars is to employ theoretical methodologies that specifically address the complicity of the scholar's perspectives in the theoretical outcomes. Feminist standpoint theory and its insistence on a “strong objectivity” provides a useful model for taking account of situated knowledge of the music theorist and the way that the institutionalization of epistemic privilege tends to perpetuate the status quo.

Another way to engage diverse scholars is to recognize the authorial work of diverse creators – composers, improvisers, performers – by creating scholarship about those creators. Such scholarship should strive for a “strong objectivity” and for knowledge about diverse creators that addresses their work as an expression of their unique creative vision. My analysis of Brown's *The Body of the State* draws attention to this composer's creative voice and specifically to how she has crafted a musical work that addresses epistemic injustice.

Recent events in North American music theoretical circles suggest an opening toward a diversity of epistemic perspectives and to the goals of creating a more complete knowledge of the diverse creators of the past and present. And while these changes may be on the horizon, we all need to make sure they happen.

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© 2020 Judy Lochhead (judith.lochhead@stonybrook.edu)
Stony Brook University

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