Music Analysis and the Politics of Knowledge Production:

Interculturality in the Music of Honjoh Hidejirō, Miyata Mayumi, and Mitski

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Abstract

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This dissertation proposes a framework for analyzing musical interculturality—the processes through which musicians weave together multiple musical and cultural identities through performance—in twenty-first-century music. By attending to the specific sociopolitical contexts of the intercultural environment in which each performer takes part, I challenge multiculturalist assumptions of cultural purity, homogeneity, and authenticity that often undergird music theoretical analyses of non-Western music. My analysis of interculturality centers on musicians whose work risks being excluded from nation-state-based conceptions of cultural authenticity that have dominated music theoretical work on non-Western music. Through three case studies of active Japanese musicians, I explore how a collaborative project between shamisen player Honjoh Hidejirō (本條秀慈郎) and composer Fujikura Dai (藤倉大), performances by shō player Miyata Mayumi (宮田まゆみ), and the music of mixed-race Japanese American singer-songwriter Mitski present heterogeneous possibilities of national and cultural identity.

Through close readings of musical recordings, videos, and scores, as well as through interviews and archival work, I demonstrate how cultural and musical identities are constructed through the particular historical and sociopolitical contexts within which performers operate. Focusing on how Honjoh, Miyata, and Mitski complicate and challenge strict dichotomies between Japanese and non-Japanese cultural, national, and musical affiliations, I pay close attention to how intercultural meanings are constructed through their performances, dialogues,

and collaborations. In each case study, I argue that an analysis of interculturality necessitates a flexible, interdisciplinary, and transnational methodology that is tailored to the precise historical and sociopolitical circumstances in which the music is being created, performed, and interpreted. By understanding characterizations of Japanese, Western, and Japanese American as contingent categorizations that do not exist *a priori* but materialize through musical performance, I draw attention to the distinctive ways in which Honjoh, Miyata, and Mitski engage in intercultural music-making.

This dissertation challenges essentialist narratives that continue to assume a rigid and homogeneous view of Japanese culture while fetishizing traditional music as a singular marker of authenticity. Given that oppositional binaries between the West/non-West and cultural insider/outsider continue to shape the interpretation of music by non-white non-Euroamerican musicians, I argue that it is crucial for music analysis to confront and complicate—rather than uncritically affirm—these narratives. First, I problematize monolithic and essentialist conceptions of Japanese music. Through analyses of performers who deviate from these narratives, I disconnect expressions of musical identity from ethno-nationalist assumptions and situate ethnicity as one of many factors that shape cultural identity. Second, I interrogate the underlying epistemological frameworks that produce reductive misrepresentations of Japanese music. This dissertation disrupts the underlying Eurocentric epistemological framework that essentializes—and therefore exerts control over—non-Western cultures. I therefore conceive of interculturality not only as an issue of representation, but also as a strategy for challenging the imposed authority of Western systems of knowledge. Third, by analyzing the agency of performers in negotiating and contesting dominant narratives of Japanese ethnic, cultural, and

musical identity, I approach interculturality as an embodied and lived phenomenon rather than as only an intellectual analytical endeavor.

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Dedicated to the memory of:

David Iselin (1989–2018)

Katō Kayoko (1946–2020)

Yoshimura Chikako (1919–2021)

Introduction

As an All Nippon Airways flight bound for Tokyo-Haneda International Airport prepares for take-off, its passengers are introduced to an in-flight safety video—a routine, mundane, yet crucial procedure for millions of air travelers on any given day. This particular safety video, however, is unique as it was produced through a partnership with the Kabuki-za Theatre (歌舞伎座) in Tokyo. The video features Japanese kabuki actors, costumes, make-up, sound effects, and gestures, including the climactic *mie* (見得) pose as it begins reviewing emergency procedures (Figure 0.1). Before the onset of the COVID-19 global pandemic, travelers landing at Haneda Airport might make their way to the Keisei train station for quick access to the city center. On the platform, travelers are welcomed with a set of promotional posters from the "Tokyo Tokyo: Old Meets New" campaign, a branding initiative led by the Tokyo metropolitan government to promote tourism to international travelers (Figure 0.2). Each of the posters juxtaposes two images: a kabuki actor and a robot; an *ukiyo-e* (浮世絵) woodblock print depicting a woman and virtual idol Hatsune Miku (初音ミク); *torii* (鳥居) gates from a Shinto shrine and a digital art installation designed by art collective teamLab; *maneki-neko* (招き猫)[1] and Hello Kitty. The logo of "Tokyo Tokyo" is set in two fonts, one in a calligraphic style and the other in a computerized sans serif font.

The in-flight safety video exposes travelers arriving into Japan—local residents, tourists, students, business travelers, and newly arriving migrants alike—to an unproblematized, depoliticized, and aestheticized image of modern Japan as an industrialized economy that continues to preserve its traditional art forms. The "Tokyo Tokyo" posters embrace a similar

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[1] The "beckoning cat" is a figurine believed to bring good luck.

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Figure 0.1: Kabuki actor's mie pose from All Nippon Airways' 2019 in-flight safety video

Figure 0.2: Promotional posters from "Tokyo Tokyo: Old Meets New Campaign," 2019

message, emphasizing how elements of Edo-period (1603–1868) pre-modernity are integrated

into daily life along with cultural and technological inventions from the post-war period.

According to this view, "Japanese pre-modern tradition" and "post-Westernization modernity"

constitute discrete and oppositional cultural elements that simultaneously occupy the same

cultural space.

ANA's safety video and the Tokyo Tokyo posters are just two examples within a larger

essentialist narrative to which Japanese culture is frequently subjected within and beyond Japan.

As Koichi Iwabuchi (2002) has demonstrated, Western critics have often analyzed Japanese

culture through the lens of *strategic hybridism*, which characterizes Japanese appropriation and

borrowing of foreign elements as a fundamental attribute of Japanese national and cultural

identity. By essentializing practices of appropriation as an "organic and ahistorical aspect of

Japanese national/cultural identity" (54), the narrative of strategic hybridism reinforces the image

of Japan as a static, timeless culture that "absorbs foreign cultures without changing its

national/cultural core" (53). As a result, these narratives work to uphold "rigidly demarcated

boundaries between Japan and the West" (59) by drawing attention to the irreconcilable

differences between Japan—an immutable non-Western entity—and the foreign—a source of

cultural influence that is completely extraneous to Japan.

Discourses of strategic hybridism have been foundational to the reception and criticism of

twentieth- and twenty-first-century Japanese music in the West. As a result of the cultural

stereotypes outlined above, essentialist views of Japanese culture have established an expectation

for music by twentieth- and twenty-first-century Japanese musicians to authentically convey

aspects of Japanese culture, primarily through references to musical styles that were performed

in the Japanese archipelago prior to the Meiji period (1868–1912). These expectations extend not

only to performers of traditional genres but also practitioners of Western art music and popular

music.[2] Such narratives are anchored by an artificially constructed dichotomous relationship

between "traditional" Japanese and "modern" Western music.

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[2] As Noriko Manabe suggests, "foreign critics tend to pay less attention to Japanese music that is strictly in a North American or Western European idiom, preferring instead to look for 'the Japanese' in those works" (2009, 11).

Within the realm of music theory, some analysts of postwar Japanese music have continued to situate a composer's ethnicity as the central lens through which to interpret musical and cultural meaning. Scholarship on the music of Takemitsu Tōru (武満徹; 1930–96), for example, has centered around the identification and discussion of Japanese aesthetics in his music. Timothy Koozin traces Takemitsu's idiosyncratic use of octatonicism to his desire to produce an "expression which is universal and yet, authentically Japanese" (1991, 138). Through his analysis of Takemitsu's music, Koozin draws attention to ethnic difference as the source of musical difference. Identifying how Takemitsu's textural, timbral, and harmonic gestures are influenced by those of Japanese gagaku, Steven Nuss similarly offers a listening strategy for identifying "why, for so many, [Takemitsu's] music seems to sound so 'Japanese'" (2002, 86). Neither author explains why we should interpret Takemitsu's music as "sounding Japanese" when the pieces under discussion are written for Western instrumentation. Their work seeks to demonstrate that Takemitsu's music conveys aspects of Japanese aesthetics that differ fundamentally from those of the West. The "authentic" Japaneseness of Takemitsu's music is neither questioned nor defined, and the linking of Takemitsu's ethnicity with the representation of Japanese aesthetics in his music is given little explicit justification.

Conversely, the writings of Tomoko Deguchi (2019), Noriko Manabe (2009, 2013), and David Pacun (2012) justify and give historical and cultural context for a discussion of the "Japaneseness" in music by Japanese artists. Each scholar carefully explains why a consideration of national identity is suitable and necessary for their work on Japanese music, situating their framework as one of many possibilities for analysis. Focusing on Takemitsu's friendships with avant-garde surrealist poet Takiguchi Shūzō (瀧口修造) and composer Hayasaka Fumio

(早坂文雄), Deguchi explores the historical, artistic, and ideological linkages between the three figures to identify the key influences on Takemitsu's early compositional style (2019). Deguchi identifies a tension between Takemitsu's subtle references to Japanese aesthetics in his compositions from the 1950s and his anti-nationalist views, which went hand in hand with his adoration of Western music (309). Deguchi locates the influence of Hayasaka's neo-nationalist ideology, which carries strong imperialist undertones and thus conflicted with Takemitsu's anti-nationalism, in Takemitsu's use of undefined pitch durations and ambiguous formal boundaries. These compositional decisions, Deguchi argues, represent an eschewal of Western teleological strategies and embody Hayasaka's philosophy of "eternal form," which conceives of repetitive and non-developmental musical gestures as uniquely Japanese (318). In her ethnographic and analytical study of Japanese hip-hop DJs, Noriko Manabe (2013) examines how DJs perform Japaneseness at international competitions, particularly in light of pressures from Western audiences to self-exoticize themselves through references to traditional Japanese music and aesthetics. Finally, Pacun (2012) traces how certain stylistic features—sequences of ascending and descending fifths, pentatonic and minor scales, modal harmonies, and heterophony, among others—came to signify "Japaneseness" in the music of interwar Japanese composers (between 1910 and 1945), against the backdrop of intensifying nationalist and imperialist ideologies. In a similar vein, this dissertation aims to disengage from the essentialist assumption that music by Japanese artists should express Japanese sensibilities simply due to their ethnicity. Instead, this dissertation considers how musicians' Japanese national and cultural identities are defined, negotiated, and contested in relation to Western and Japanese conceptions of authenticity.

In line with the cultural narratives afforded by the lens of strategic hybridism, Western scholars and critics have routinely privileged discussions of traditional music when discussing

Japanese musicians. A number of music theoretical studies on postwar Japanese composers, for example, have suggested that the "Japaneseness" of their work is conveyed primarily through allusions to traditional cultural elements (Deguchi 2012; Hansen 2010; Koozin 1990; Nuss 1996, 2002). As Iwabuchi has argued, traditional Japanese culture often functions as a way to "demarcate Japan's unique, supposedly homogeneous national identity" to both Japanese and non-Japanese audiences (2002, 7). According to Stuart Hall, the association between tradition and cultural purity reflects a "linear conception of culture," in which the notion of tradition "link[s] us to our origins in culture, place and time" (1995, 207). By privileging traditional art forms as a marker of cultural authenticity, a linear view assumes a singular, fixed, and homogeneous conception of Japanese culture in which its elements can be expressed most genuinely through recourse to tradition. Barbara Thornbury (2013) has documented how this ahistorical and rigid perspective has been strategically deployed throughout the postwar period by both American and Japanese cultural institutions as a way to market Japanese cultural and artistic productions outside of Japan. An overemphasis on traditional music and tradition writ large, however, heightens Japan's status as Other and limits the possibilities through which Japanese cultural meanings can be formed. As scholars such as Marié Abe (2018), Yuiko Asaba (2019), Noriko Manabe (2013), Wajima Yūsuke (2010), and many others have demonstrated, traditional music constitutes a sliver of the music that has been consumed and produced in postwar Japan. The tendency to equate Japanese authenticity with the "traditional" misrepresents the diverse shapes and forms which Japanese music could take, and erases musical artists and performances that do not fit within a binary framework that places "traditional" Japanese and "modern" Western music in opposition to one another.

This dissertation challenges essentialist narratives that continue to assume a rigid and homogeneous view of Japanese culture while fetishizing traditional music as a singular marker of authenticity. Through three case studies of Japanese musicians, I explore how collaborations between shamisen player Honjoh Hidejirō (本條秀慈郎) and composer Fujikura Dai (藤倉大), performances by shō player Miyata Mayumi (宮田まゆみ), and the music of mixed-race Japanese American singer-songwriter Mitski present heterogeneous possibilities of national and cultural identity. By attending to the specific sociopolitical contexts of the intercultural environment in which each performer takes part, I argue that music theory urgently needs to challenge multiculturalist assumptions of cultural purity, homogeneity, and authenticity that often undergird analyses of non-Western music. Given that oppositional binaries between the West/non-West and cultural insider/outsider continue to shape the interpretation of music by non-white non-Euroamerican musicians (Finchum-Sung 2017), I argue that it is crucial for music analysis to confront and complicate—rather than uncritically affirm—these narratives.

Through the three case studies, my dissertation pursues the following aims. First, I problematize monolithic and essentialist conceptions of Japanese music. Through analyses of performers who deviate from these narratives, I wish to disconnect expressions of musical identity from ethno-nationalist assumptions and situate ethnicity as one of many factors that shape cultural identity. Second, in addition to challenging existing cultural stereotypes that dominate academic and popular discourses on Japanese music, I interrogate the underlying epistemological frameworks that produce reductive misrepresentations of Japanese music. Third, by analyzing the agency of performers in negotiating and contesting dominant narratives of Japanese ethnic, cultural, and musical identity, I approach interculturality as an embodied and lived phenomenon rather than as an intellectual analytical endeavor. By understanding

characterizations of Japanese, Western, and Japanese American as contingent categorizations that do not exist *a priori* but materialize through musical performance, I draw attention to the distinctive ways in which Honjoh, Miyata, and Mitski engage in intercultural music-making.

Disrupting Cultural Boundaries

Following a linear view of culture, a number of studies on interculturality in music theory have assumed the presence of clearly demarcated cultural boundaries (Arlin 2018; Burt 2001; Hansen 2010; Koozin 1990; Nuss 1996; Yang 2015). In her analysis of intercultural compositional strategies in postwar art music, for example, Yayoi Uno Everett positions "East Asian" and "Western" as discretely identifiable categorizations that enter into dialogue with one another (2004). According to Everett's taxonomy, East Asian and Western elements are either juxtaposed with one another or elements of one category are integrated into the domain of another. Everett's first category, *transference*, describes musical works in which East Asian resources are appropriated by a dominant Western musical context. Her second category, *syncretism*, applies to pieces in which East Asian and Western elements are "merged procedurally" to produce some kind of tension between the two. Lastly, *synthesis* is defined as the incorporation of East Asian and Western elements results in a hybrid, reaching a point where the two are "no longer discernible as separable elements" (2005, 15–19). While Everett's theory offers a valuable template for analyzing the intercultural dynamics of postwar musical composition, I suggest that analyses that focus primarily on the relationship between stable categories of multiple cultural entities should also consider the dynamic and contested nature of national and cultural identities. As writers such as Homi Bhabha (1994), Stuart Hall (1990, 1995, 1996), and Edward Said (1993) have repeatedly argued, a stable notion of cultural identity is

untenable. Maintaining an attachment to fixed cultural ways of being can result in the erasure of ambivalent modes of belonging that emerge from intercultural movement, dialogue, and collaboration.

My approach to analyzing musical interculturality draws upon the work of Stuart Hall (1995, 1996) and Vijay Prashad's formulation of polyculturalism (2001), both of which disrupt static notions of cultural identity by characterizing culture as a "process of becoming rather than being" (Hall 1996, 4). Hall and Prashad situate cultural identity as a site of constantly shifting and contested meanings. As a result, Hall writes, identities are "never unified," "increasingly fragmented and fractured," and "multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices and positions" (4). For Hall, studies of cultural identity revolve not only around questions of "'who we are' or 'where we came from'" (4) but also how identities produce new meanings by moving within and between conventional national, linguistic, and spatial boundaries (Hall 1995). In a similar vein, Prashad presents his framework of polyculturalism as a critique of multiculturalism, a discourse in which "the diversity of faces is used as a cover for an essentially racist project" (2001, 61). According to Prashad, multiculturalist discourses forego discussions of power and oppression and instead engage in a depoliticized "celebration of difference" (63), furthering the tokenistic ideals of diversity, equity, and inclusion rather than taking on an explicit anti-oppressive stance (xi). Furthermore, in contrast to multiculturalism, which assumes the presence of a stable, coherent, and unified cultural identity within clearly defined boundaries and histories, polyculturalism views cultural identity as dynamic and malleable.

Informed by Hall's and Prashad's polycultural stance, my project adopts Hee Sook Oh's use of the term *interculturality*. Oh defines contemporary forms of interculturality as an

"aesthetic of hybridity beyond parceling cultural substance of the gaze of the cultural other" (2017, 210), a dynamic that "increasingly complicate[s] relationships between 'The West' and 'The Rest,' between local selves and others" (195). I adopt Oh's definition of interculturality for two reasons. First, Oh's theory of "new interculturality" reflects the reality that Western art and popular musics have been firmly assimilated into Japan as local musical practices. It is increasingly rare nowadays to encounter professional Japanese musicians—even those who specialize in traditional genres—who have not received formal training in Western music. Second, Oh's framework reflects the diverse musical and cultural backgrounds of twenty-first-century Japanese musicians, many of whom complicate and challenge strict dichotomies between Japanese and non-Japanese cultural, national, and musical affiliations. Rather than framing interculturality as a one-to-one relationship between two discrete and stable cultural entities, Oh's model of musical interculturality allows for a more flexible approach that pays close attention to the musical and sociopolitical meanings that are unique to each creative endeavor.

Interculturality and the Politics of Music Theoretical Knowledge Production

In addition to adopting a dynamic conception of culture, Prashad suggests how analyzing cultural identity through the lens of polyculturalism can have wider implications for knowledge production (2001). By embracing a worldview that assumes the rigidity of national and cultural boundaries, multiculturalism advances the Eurocentric epistemic goals of area studies. As I argue below, static categorizations of culture that are foundational to area studies facilitate Western academic disciplines' objectification of the Other. Prashad demonstrates how a polycultural approach not only contests Eurocentric notions of cultural unity and stability, but also resists the Western gaze through which such characterizations are made possible in the first place. A

polycultural approach, Prashad argues, delegitimizes the West's position as the universal producer of knowledge, which has privileged its theories and ideas over those formulated in areas outside of Europe and the United States (2001, 67). By calling into question Eurocentric ideas of cultural purity, coherence, and authenticity, polyculturalism disrupts the underlying Eurocentric epistemological framework that essentializes—and therefore exerts control over—non-Western cultures. I therefore conceive of interculturality not only as an issue of representation, but also as a strategy for defying the imposed authority of Western systems of knowledge.

At its core, area studies aims to study the Other from the vantage point of the West, positioning Asia, Latin America, the Middle East, and Africa as sources of raw data and the United States (and to a lesser but significant extent, Canada and Western Europe) as the producer of universal theory through which to study these areas for their own benefit. Central to the project of area studies is a mechanism referred to by Naoki Sakai as the *regime of separation*, which reifies power differentials between the researcher and area by enabling researchers to produce knowledge about the area from a remote distance (2010). In other words, area studies not only foregrounds difference culturally and geographically but also temporally and epistemically: in contrast to the modern Western subject, which is capable of producing universal knowledge, the pre-modern non-Western Other is relegated to an observed object that is incapable of producing its own knowledge. Relegating the area as an object of knowledge enables the United States to justify the extraction of information from the non-West as a means to solidify its position as the global center of not only academic knowledge production but also political and military power.

As various critiques of area studies have noted, a parochial view of culture normalizes a particular spatial mode of understanding and categorizing the world. Anthropologist A. B. Shamsul, for example, describes a basic tenet of area studies as "methodological nationalism," which positions the nation-state as a coherent unit of analysis that assumes cultural, territorial, and linguistic unity within its boundaries (2007, 140). The nation-state-centric world view of area studies, however, limits explicit engagement with issues of interculturality, race, transnationalism, and diaspora, all of which disrupt the stability of national boundaries and problematize the U.S. imperialist project of analyzing, classifying, and exerting control the non-Western Other. Moreover, and perhaps most crucially, the regime of separation that allows for researchers to study their areas remotely simultaneously enables them to turn their backs on issues affecting diasporic groups in the West (Quayson 2007; Shih 2019; Yanagisako 2002). Under the framework of area studies, the Western observer's interest in studying the non-Western area is conditional on their ability to ignore the sociopolitical and historical circumstances in the area that are directly linked to the transnational movement into and subsequent racialization of people of color in the West.

I have introduced the primary ideological principles of area studies to highlight the risks of perpetuating the power dynamics inherent in area studies when analyzing non-Western music in Euroamerican music theory. While the limitations and imperialist ideologies of area studies have been critiqued at length following the end of the Cold War (Miyoshi and Harootunian 2002; Morris-Suzuki 2000; Shih 2019), its emphasis on the nation-state and the coherence of its geographical and cultural borders continue to shape the fundamental assumptions in the analysis of non-Western music. As Shu-mei Shih (2019) has recently observed, the Orientalizing gaze of

area studies has endured well into the twenty-first century. I contend that the field of U.S./Canadian music theory has not been immune from these legacies.

For example, on multiple occasions, the programs for the annual meetings of the Society for Music Theory (SMT) have relied on an area-based categorization of papers on non-Western music: "Constructing 'Japan' in Japanese Music: A Hundred-year Analytical Survey" (2010, Indianapolis), "Analytical Studies of Indonesian Musics" (2012, New Orleans), "Analyzing Western Contemporary Music with Asian Influences" (2013, Charlotte), "Music Theory, African Rhythm, and the Politics of Data: Three Analyses of a Corpus of Jembe Drum Music from Mali" (2016, Vancouver), "Latin American Music and Music Theory" (2018, San Antonio), and most recently, "Chinese Music and Chinese Music Theory" (2020, online). Similarly, in 2010, *Music Theory Online* devoted an entire issue (Vol. 16, No. 4) to analyses of rhythm in West African and Afro-diasporic music. Area-based panels explore points of convergence between musical practices taking place within the borders of nation-states and geopolitical regions, based on the assumption that musics originating in the same nation-state have something in common by default.

In addition to area-based panels, the SMT annual meetings have also featured comparative panels in which papers examine a single musical parameter or topic across different non-Western musical traditions: "Subjectivity and Method in the Analysis of World Music" (2012, New Orleans), "Analytical Approaches to Time Cycles in World Music" (2014, Milwaukee), "Singing and Dancing" (2014, Milwaukee),[3] "Meters in Global Perspective" (2016,

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[3] The four papers in this panel discussed Klezmer, salsa, Aka polyphonic song, and Khasonka dundunba drumming.

Vancouver),[4] "Inter- and Intra-Cultural Scale Studies" (2018, San Antonio), "Global

Temporalities, Global Pedagogies" (2018, San Antonio), and "Unsettling Encounters: Transfer,

Exchange, and Hybridity in Global Music Theory" (2020, online). As a number of scholars in

comparative literature have averred, the enterprise of cross-cultural comparison has been central

to the epistemology of area studies (Cheah 2003; Chow 2006; Harootunian 2005; Sakai 2019). In

Western humanistic disciplines, comparison has been ideologically inseparable from the West's

desire to maintain an unequal relationship with the non-West, in which "the frame of reference

has been decidedly Western, against which the non-Western 'work' or cultural difference can

only be seen as a derivation" (Chow 2006, 88). Taking for granted the cultural, historical, and

linguistic coherence of the area, the project of area studies has allowed for Western scholars to

explore affinities between seemingly dissimilar cultural practices, often (but not always) in the

service of universal analytical frameworks. Michael Tenzer and John Roeder's edited volume

Analytical and Cross-Cultural Studies in World Music, for instance, engages in comparative

analyses of "musics that originate in cultures widely separated in space or time but that share

some reasonably objective features…or technical properties" (2011, 4), with the ultimate goal of

enriching Western music theory's "understanding of universal aspects of musical production and

cognition" (15).[5] The goal of this critique is not to dismiss analytical and comparative projects

that are rooted in spatial orientations that have been imposed through Western colonialism.

Furthermore, I do not intend to claim that all or most music theoretical scholarship on non-

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[4] In contrast to this panel on "Meters in Global Perspective," which featured papers on African drum/dance music, Afro-Cuban rumba drumming, and Bulgarian folk songs, the conference also programmed a panel titled "Performing Meter," which included papers on the music of white Euroamerican musicians Arnold Schoenberg, Brad Mehldau, and Meredith Monk.

[5] Tenzer's afterword compares and classifies repertoire discussed in this volume and its predecessor, *Analytical Studies in World Music* (2006), to propose a universal theory of time organization (Tenzer and Roeder 2011, 415–39).

Western music presumes the coherence of national or regional boundaries.[6] Rather, I wish to point out some of the ways in which the configuration of the West and the non-West in area studies presents immediate parallels with that of music theory and analysis. Similarly to area studies, analysis of non-Western music often adopts a nationalist classification of areas and cultures. While orienting one's own analysis around the nation-state does not necessarily signal a complicity with methodological nationalism, music theorists are nevertheless responsible for recognizing how the analysis of non-Western music—a project that aligns closely with the imperializing gaze of area studies—carries the risk of promoting the same epistemic violence perpetuated by area studies.

Informed by Janet Hoskins and Viet Thanh Nguyen's framework of transpacific studies, my analysis of musical interculturality—and of Japanese music—instead draws attention to "movements of people, culture, capital, or ideas within regions and between nations" (2014, 24–25). Paying close attention to these movements as essential music analytical information problematizes notions of national/regional coherence and questions the homogeneity of cultural identity. My analytical approach therefore aligns with Lisa Lowe's call to foreground heterogeneity, which she defines as the "existence of differences and differential relationships within a bounded category" (1996, 67). A focus on heterogeneity, Lowe asserts, highlights the "limitations inherent in a politics based on cultural, racial, or ethnic identity" and "release[s] our understanding of either the 'dominant' or emergent 'minority' cultures as discrete, fixed, or homogeneous" (68). In the history of area studies scholarship, those who did not conform to essentialist, homogenizing, and exoticist characterizations of nation and culture were often made

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[6] A panel at the 2020 meeting of the Society for Music Theory, titled "Provincializing Music Theory: Epistemic Frameworks for the New Comparativism," presented multiple perspectives on how comparative analyses of music can avoid defaulting to Eurocentric ways of knowing.

invisible within mainstream narratives (Yanagisako 2002).[7] My analysis of interculturality therefore centers musicians whose work might not fit within nation-state-based conceptions of cultural authenticity that have dominated music theoretical work on non-Western music.

Beyond the Aesthetic: An Ethical and Sociopolitical Analysis of Musical Interculturality

Given U.S./Canadian music theory's relationship with non-Western music, I wish to emphasize that aesthetic interest alone does not provide sufficient justification for analysis. In particular, music theoretical scholarship on interculturality has focused primarily on its aesthetic dimensions, underscoring the role of non-Western music as an artistic resource for Western musicians. Following theatre studies scholar Erika Fischer-Lichte's formulation that "the aesthetic, the political, and the ethical are inextricably linked to each other" (2014, 11), I argue that analysts of non-Western music should broaden the scope of our work beyond close readings of musical structure and must foreground discussions of the sociopolitical and ethical circumstances that inform composition, performance, listening, and analysis. My approach aligns with one of the basic tenets of new interculturalism in theatre studies, which pays close attention to the particular material and sociopolitical conditions that produce an intercultural encounter (McIvor 2019, 12).

This call for action is urgent in studies of non-Western music in U.S./Canadian fields of music studies. An in-depth analysis of non-Western music without considerations of cultural politics risks reinforcing the essentialist and reductive gaze of area studies and, as a result, will do little to confront the white Euroamerican heteropatriarchal framing of music theory. The phrase "white Euroamerican heteropatriarchal framing" adapts bell hooks's terminology

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[7] In musicology, Brigid Cohen (2014) has similarly argued that nation-state-oriented frameworks often fail to account for musicians who have affiliations to multiple national histories and identities.

"imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy" (2013, 4) and Philip Ewell's formulation of "music theory's white racial frame" (2020a) to explicitly address how institutions of U.S./Canadian music theory have historically privileged the musical and intellectual work of cisgender, heterosexual, white men of the United States, Canada, and Western Europe. Recent work by Ewell (2020a, 2020b), Ellie Hisama (2018a, 2018b, 2021), Loren Kajikawa (2020), Fred Maus (2020), Laurel Parsons and Brenda Ravenscroft (2016), Alexander Rehding (2020a, 2020b), Dylan Robinson (2019, 2020), and Danielle Sofer (2020) has collectively exposed how the hegemony of cisgender, heterosexual, white men and their music theoretical work reaches across a number of spaces in the field: the SMT's demographics, publication awards, conference programs, journal articles, doctoral comprehensive exams, as well as the repertoire and analytical methodologies with which music theorists are expected to achieve fluency in order to establish professional credibility. Although this dissertation focuses primarily on the ways in which musicians and theorists have been excluded from U.S./Canadian music theoretical discourse on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, and citizenship, I adopt the term "white Euroamerican heteropatriarchal framing" to emphasize how the discipline as a whole is structured according to racist, sexist, transphobic, homophobic, ableist, xenophobic, and classist logics of oppression, all of which operate in overlapping ways.[8]

In order to advocate for a more culturally informed approach to music analysis, I adopt dance studies scholar Royona Mitra's framing of interculturality as an "embodied lived

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[8] The goals of this dissertation therefore align with the mission statement of graduate-student-led coalition Project Spectrum, which reads: "one part of the mission is to shift the large-scale culture of U.S. American and Canadian music academia toward equity by confronting racism, sexism, ableism, xenophobia, homophobia, transphobia, settler-colonialism, and other forms of discrimination and injustice" (Gatdula 2020, 137). In the introduction to "Project Spectrum Colloquy: Strengthening the Pipeline," co-chair and co-founder of Project Spectrum Anna B. Gatdula writes, "our highest goal is that the project becomes moot—to create a world in which those -isms and -phobias would no longer structure higher education and music academia" (2020, 137).

condition" (2015, 15) rather than as an abstract exercise that occurs intellectually at the compositional level. By understanding interculturality as a lived reality for musicians, this dissertation examines how cultural meanings emerge uniquely within the particular historical and sociopolitical contexts within which performers operate.[9] Specifically, I pay close attention to the positionality of individual musicians and how intercultural meanings are constructed through their performances, dialogues, and collaborations. As each case study illustrates, the nuanced realities of contemporary Japanese musicians cannot be captured by a one-size-fits-all approach to cultural and musical analysis. I therefore posit that a musical analysis of interculturality necessitates a flexible, interdisciplinary, and transnational methodology that is tailored to the precise historical and sociopolitical circumstances in which the music is being created, performed, and interpreted.

In addition to centering the individual backgrounds and subject positions of musicians, my analysis of interculturality is grounded in my own positionality as a music theorist. Having lived and worked in Japan, the United States, and Canada throughout my life, my analytical interpretations emerge from my perspective as a bilingual/bicultural Japanese music theorist whose educational background is rooted in the Eurocentric music curriculums of Japanese, American, and Canadian institutions. While my work as a music theorist offers me the tools and resources to explore questions of interculturality in academic spaces, these topics also interface directly with three aspects of my identity. First, my perspective in challenging established cultural narratives about Japanese music in U.S/Canadian scholarship emerges from my background as a *kikoku shijo* (帰国子女). A term that translates literally into "returnee children,"

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[9] An emphasis on performers' lived experience and real-life contact between individual musicians is also central to Jason Stanyek's work on interculturality in jazz improvisation (2004) and Bode Omojola's work on Yorùbá music (2012). See also Bayley and Dutiro 2016 on the centrality of dialogue in intercultural music-making.

kikoku shijo describes children of Japanese middle- and upper-middle-class families who relocate abroad due to their parents' work assignments and later return (Kano Podolsky 2004; Shinagawa 2017). My lived experience as a *kikoku shijo* provides the opportunity for me to consider how both Japanese and U.S./Canadian narratives on Japanese culture reinforce essentialist tropes of cultural purity, homogeneity, and authenticity. In particular, I draw upon my intersecting experiences of cultural alienation in Japan as a *kikoku shijo* and of racialization as an East Asian/person of color living in Canada and the United States to resist dominant essentialist constructions of Japanese identity while advocating more broadly for a more inclusive discourse on non-Western music analysis in U.S./Canadian music theory.

Second, my skewed focus on performers who have been able to access and participate in Euroamerican musical scenes reflects my middle-class background, which has enabled access to opportunities for transnational mobility, a bilingual education, and formal training in Western music. Each of my case studies similarly features musicians who—due in part to privileges of citizenship and class—were able to exercise agency in transnational mobility through touring (Honjoh, Mitski, and Miyata), participation in music festivals (Miyata), studying abroad (Fujikura), participating in residencies (Honjoh and Miyata), and their family's international career mobility (Mitski), to list a few examples. While I have gravitated towards Honjoh/Fujikura, Miyata, and Mitski in this dissertation given our shared experiences in disrupting and transgressing cultural boundaries vis-à-vis Japan and the West, they only present a minute sample size of Japanese musicians who grapple with issues of interculturality. For instance, with the exception of Mitski, who is mixed-race, the musicians I discuss in this dissertation are part of the ethnic majority. Consequently, given the scope of this project and my positionality as a person of racial and ethnic majority in Japan, my analyses do not claim to

speak for the intercultural perspectives and experiences of Ainu, Ryūkyūan, and Zainichi Korean

musicians. Furthermore, by narrowing the scope of this study to musicians who navigate

Westernized musical spaces in Japan and the West, this dissertation excludes musicians who are

involved in Afro-Japanese (Cornyetz and Bridges 2015) and inter-Asian projects (Shin 2009) as

well as musicians who are active outside of institutionalized spaces (Novak 2013). While this

dissertation focuses on professional musicians who have received some degree of media

visibility, the strategies through which they negotiate cultural identities are meant to provide a

snapshot of their individual performances and therefore should not be generalized to other

Japanese musicians who are not discussed here. As such, I introduce these three case studies as a

starting point for a much broader conversation on interculturality in performances by Japanese

musicians.

Last, I offer some details about my musical and educational background to highlight the

intercultural subjectivities that shape my own engagement with performances by Honjoh,

Miyata, and Mitski. Having studied violin performance since childhood and the shō as an adult,

my musical background mirrors a trajectory similar to Alison Tokita's model of *consecutive bi-*

musicality in which Japanese musicians trained initially in Western music study traditional

Japanese music as a secondary musical system, often through the lens of a Western-trained

musician (2014). I had few opportunities to listen to, learn about, or perform Japanese musical

styles while I lived in Japan, and my interest in Japanese music developed while studying at

Columbia University, which is one of few universities outside of Japan to have active gagaku and

hōgaku performance ensembles. Given that my primary musical training was based entirely in

Western music, my analysis primarily reflects my perspective as a listener and, in Chapter 3, a

shō player. As such, I do not claim to act as an authority on Japanese musical genres or as a

neutral mediator between U.S./Canadian and Japanese approaches to music analysis, nor do I wish to speak on behalf of Japan-based scholars and performers. While knowledge articulated by performers and Japan-based scholars is essential to my analytical approach, my own approach to analysis is informed heavily by the practices of Western music theory in which I have been trained. As Charlotte McIvor (2019) has argued, interculturality should not be confounded with what Fischer-Lichte refers to as the "utopian potential of culturally diverse and globalized societies" (2014, 11). Rather, McIvor asserts, interculturality presents an analytic to think through issues of cultural politics, power, and colonialism that inhibit these ideals (2019, 5). As such, I do not purport to offer conclusive solutions for overcoming my own Eurocentric biases about Japanese culture and music theory, which I have inevitably accumulated through my years of training in U.S. and Canadian institutions. My aim is to widen the discipline's conversations about interculturality to encompass the aesthetic as well as the ethical and sociopolitical, in the hopes of drawing attention to narratives that have been excluded from existing Eurocentric discourses on non-Western music.

Chapter Summaries

Chapter 1 outlines a theoretical framework for analyzing musical interculturality, which I refer to as *intercultural analysis*. As the discipline reckons with its history of racial and gendered exclusion (Ewell 2020a; Hisama 2021), I posit that music theorists must also reflect on the ethics of studying non-Western musics within a predominantly white Euroamerican heteropatriarchal field. I argue that in addition to broadening the repertoires included in music theoretical research, U.S.- and Canada-based scholars must interrogate the power imbalances we perpetuate through our academic work.

I first contend that North American music theory has minoritized non-Western knowledge even as the field has expanded its analytical canon beyond Western art music. I identify two domains in which North American music theoretical discourse perpetuates this paradox. First, music theory privileges Western epistemologies over those of the non-West, instituting racial hierarchies that have relegated non-Western cultures to providers, rather than producers, of knowledge. Second, music theory has championed modern imperial languages of Europe—English, French, and German—over non-European languages. In challenging the Eurocentric epistemological and linguistic foundations of music theory, I draw upon critiques of institutionalized modes of knowledge production in the academy (Collins [1990] 2009; Grosfoguel 2011; hooks [1989] 2015; Mignolo 2011; Mignolo and Tlostanova 2006; Quijano 2007) to emphasize the partiality of all analytical and music theoretical knowledge.

The chapter then proposes intercultural analysis as a strategy for decentering the Western music theoretical knowledge in the analysis of non-Western music. My analytical orientation follows Walter Mignolo's theory of border thinking ([2000] 2012), which subverts the mythical universality of Western knowledge by situating Western and non-Western modes of thinking as equally viable options. Through a critique of the current epistemic structures of the discipline, I demonstrate how intercultural analysis can broaden the purview of what counts as music theory, who we consider as music theorists, and whose work we value within music theoretical discourse (Hisama 2021; Sofer 2020).

Incorporating analyses of recorded video performances, live performances, audio recordings, gestures, media narratives, and personal interviews, Chapters 2–4 present three case studies of how performances by twenty-first-century musicians subvert essentialist and homogeneous narratives of Japanese cultural identity. Each case study also draws attention to the

inadequacy of existing Euroamerican music theoretical tools for interpreting the intercultural nuances of the performers' musical output.

Chapter 2 analyzes shamisen player Honjoh Hidejirō's performance of *neo* (2014)—a work for solo shamisen by London-based Japanese composer Fujikura Dai—through the concept of *te*, a term used by shamisen players to refer to 1) recurring melodic patterns; and 2) their characteristic fingerings, hand positions, and performance techniques. My analysis of *te* challenges the universalizing reach of Western music theoretical methods in non-Western music analysis. I argue that *te* represents an "invisible" music theory (Tokumaru 2008) that is not explicitly theorized in writing but forms the foundation of performers' understanding of shamisen music. Weaving together the music theoretical work of performers and scholars on shamisen music (Oshio 2015; Ōtsuka 1989, 1995) as well as North American theories of fretboard topography (De Souza 2018; Easley 2015), this chapter presents a case study of an intercultural methodology for analyzing contemporary shamisen music.

Chapter 3 presents an analysis of shō player Miyata Mayumi's recordings of *Ōshikichō-no-chōshi*, a traditional prelude for tōgaku ensemble,[10] and *One⁹*, a work for solo shō composed through a collaboration between Miyata and John Cage. Through a spectrographic and formal analysis of *Ōshikichō-no-chōshi*, I show how Miyata's performance invites new expressive meanings for traditional gagaku repertoire. I examine how Miyata's manipulations of form establish a renewed melodic and structural identity of the work and highlight affinities between the tonal conventions of gagaku and Western art music. I situate Miyata's solo performance of *Ōshikichō-no-chōshi* as a transformative act that has been essential to the development of

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[10] Tōgaku refers to the instrumental genre of gagaku that was imported into Japan from Tang China in the seventh and eighth centuries. A tōgaku ensemble is comprised of three wind instruments (ryūteki, hichiriki, shō), two string instruments (gakusō, biwa) and three percussion instruments (kakko, taiko, shōko).

contemporary solo repertoire (for the shō) in the 1980s and onward. My analysis of instrumental gesture (Montague 2012) in *One⁹* demonstrates how aspects of traditional gagaku performance practice inform Miyata's performance of the work.

Finally, Chapter 4 outlines the tensions between indie singer-songwriter Mitski's background—as a mixed-race Japanese American woman who spent her childhood and adolescence outside of her parents' native cultures (i.e., Japan and the United States)—and expectations for her to make herself legible within Eurocentric categorizations of identity: Japanese, American, Asian American, and Japanese American. I argue that a similar tension can be observed in music analysis, which also expects minoritized musicians to be made legible to the dominant and institutionally accepted epistemologies of white Euroamerican male theorists. This chapter asks how we might reframe the objectives and methods of music analysis in order to avoid reducing Mitski's identity into categorizations of Otherness that are legible to the field's white Euroamerican heteropatriarchal frame. Through an analysis of selections from Mitski's album *Be the Cowboy* (2018), I explore some ways in which music analysis can embrace what Édouard Glissant (1997) calls a politics of opacity—the right to not be rendered legible to dominant discourse.

Chapter 1
Moving Beyond Representation:
Intercultural Analysis as Border Thinking

I was supposed to know *them*, while they were not at all interested in knowing *me*.

–Barbara Christian, "The Race for Theory"

What might it look like for U.S.-based scholars to proceed as though they do not possess the most significant knowledge about, or all of the solutions to, the world's difficult problems?

–Celia Lowe, "Recognizing Scholarly Subjects: Collaboration, Area Studies, and the Politics of Nature"

Westerners are judging whether other traditions are worthy, but not putting themselves in the position to be taught.

–Linda Martín Alcoff, "Philosophy and Philosophical Practice: Eurocentrism as an Epistemology of Ignorance"

The plenary session at the 2019 meeting of the Society for Music Theory in Columbus, Ohio[1]—which provided a sobering synopsis of the field's long-standing investment into racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, ableist, and Eurocentric power structures—sparked a number of new initiatives that have aimed to increase the representation of women, people of color, and/or queer people in music theoretical research and pedagogy.[2] As Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor (2020) has argued, however, representation often functions as an empty symbolic gesture that leaves intact the material conditions that allow for systemic marginalization on the basis of race, gender, sexuality, class, disability, and citizenship. Within the realm of music theory, Danielle Sofer

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[1] The plenary session of the 2019 meeting of the Society for Music Theory, titled "Reframing Music Theory," featured four speakers (Philip Ewell, Yayoi Uno Everett, Joseph Straus, Ellie Hisama), critiquing the systemic racism, sexism, homophobia, ableism, and coloniality that undergirds the discipline of music theory. Versions of their talks will be published in *Music Theory Spectrum* 43, no. 2 (2021).

[2] See, for example, the Composers of Color Resource Project (https://composersofcolor.hcommons.org/) and Expanding the Music Theory Canon (https://www.expandingthemusictheorycanon.com/).

(2020) has echoed Taylor's cautionary tale against the politics of representation. In their article "Specters of Sex: Tracing the Tools and Techniques of Contemporary Music Analysis," Sofer critiques music theory's paradoxical erasure of the perspectives and knowledge of cisgender women, nonbinary, and trans people even while it seeks to challenge the field's male-centric orientation. As larger numbers of music theorists begin to reckon with the field's exclusionary practices of the past and present, we must remain suspicious of the allure of representation and recognize its limitations in advocating for a more equitable field.

This chapter presents the overarching analytical framework of the dissertation, which I term *intercultural analysis*. As an analytical orientation, intercultural analysis centers musical knowledge that has long been minoritized in Western music theoretical discourse and interrogates the cultural, epistemic, and geopolitical dynamics of power that are entrenched in the analytical activity. Drawing upon decolonial theory, Black feminism, and postcolonial studies, my formulation of intercultural analysis highlights the unequal relationship between Western and non-Western knowledge in U.S./Canadian music theory, particularly in the analysis of non-Western and intercultural music. Previous allusions in music studies to the term "intercultural analysis" have proposed new ways of understanding the aesthetics of music that emerge from "contingent intersections between two essentially unrelated styles," celebrating the potential ways in which globalization and multiculturalism can enhance music analysis (Cook 2012a, 206).[3] I posit that an intercultural analysis must also grapple with issues of power when studying non-Western and intercultural musics within the predominantly white, male, and Euroamerican field of U.S./Canadian music theory. Echoing Philip Ewell, my characterization of the discipline as "white, male, and Euroamerican" refers both to the majority-white and male

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[3] Everett (2004) identifies three types of intercultural compositional strategies: transference, syncretism, and synthesis.

demographics of the Society for Music Theory[4] and to the privileging of music and theories of cisgender, heterosexual, white men from the United States, Canada, and Western Europe (Ewell 2020a). Furthermore, following the work of feminist music theorists such as Suzanne Cusick (1994a), Ellie Hisama (2000, 2001), Susan McClary (1991), and Vivian Luong (2017, 2019), my framework of intercultural analysis similarly urges music theorists to broaden the scope of their work beyond the aesthetic study of musical parameters and foreground discussions of the sociopolitical and ethical circumstances that inform composition, performance, listening, and analysis. In addition to broadening the repertoires included in music theoretical research, we must also consider who benefits and is harmed by our scholarship, and the risks of engaging in epistemic violence through our music theoretical and analytical work.[5]

    This chapter comprises three parts. First, I analyze the various mechanisms through which U.S./Canadian music theory has naturalized the supremacy of Western music theory and European imperial languages while relegating non-Western music theory and non-European languages to the periphery. I argue that these inequities in knowledge production persist even while the field expands its analytical scope to include non-Western music. Second, building upon Gloria Anzaldúa's ([1987] 2012) and Walter Mignolo's ([2000] 2012) theories of border thinking, I outline a set of strategies for situating Western and non-Western music theory as equally valid ways of understanding music, disavowing the mythical universality of Western knowledge in the process. In this section, I contend that it is imperative for U.S./Canadian music theorists to decenter our authoritative position by not only *learning about* non-Western music but also *learning from* non-Western music theorists. Third, I complicate the framework of

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[4] According to the Society for Music Theory's 2019 Report on Membership Demographics, 83.7% of the Society's members are white (Brown 2019).

[5] For a recent intervention into music theory's potential for epistemic and material violence, see Reed, forthcoming.

intercultural analysis through a case study of Japan, which is characterized by its ambivalent history as a non-Western, high-income, former imperial power that remains culturally and politically subordinate to the West. By analyzing how some non-Western music theoretical traditions—including Japanese music theory—are granted more visibility than others, I posit that U.S./Canadian music theory privileges musical and theoretical traditions that are legible to the dominant value systems and ways of knowing in the discipline.

1.1 Reframing Music Theoretical Knowledge Production

I frame intercultural analysis as an exercise in formulating a more inclusive analytical agenda. By explicitly drawing upon musical theories, framings, concepts, and terminologies from cultures that have been minoritized in Western music theoretical discourse, intercultural analysis requires analysts to adapt to different ways of experiencing and understanding music, rather than forcing the music to adhere to existing analytical conventions. Engaging in intercultural analysis requires an acute self-awareness of cultural and geopolitical dynamics that are entrenched in the relationships between the analyst and the music under study.

I propose that there are two main components of intercultural analysis. First, I argue that intercultural analysis requires the analyst to interrogate their own potential complicity in Western music theory's Eurocentric epistemologies and how their analysis might perpetuate the erasure of non-Euroamerican and other forms of marginalized knowledges. Second, intercultural analysis requires an understanding of how the cultural politics of music analysis are shaped by the analyst's intersecting identity markers: race, ethnicity, nationality, cultural upbringing, gender, sexuality, class, employment status, musical training, and educational background. Originally developed by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989), the analytic of intersectionality draws attention to how

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experiences of systemic oppression are shaped by multiple converging axes of identity. An intersectional view of positionality is crucial for understanding how scholars—and the discipline as a whole—are complicit in upholding the Eurocentrism of music theory. As Tom Perchard contends, "anyone working on musical topics must take responsibility for the racialized scholarly identities that…we can enact" (2015, 342). Broadening Perchard's formulation further, I suggest that analysts must also acknowledge the privileges and responsibilities of enacting our ethnic, national, gendered, sexual, and class identities, as well as the potential harm caused by their research agenda. The notion that analysis is informed by the analyst's identities and cultural knowledge they bring to the music has been articulated at length by music theorists such as Suzanne Cusick (1994b), Ellie Hisama (1993, 2004), Marion Guck (1994, 2006), Judy Lochhead (2016), and Vivian Luong (2017, 2019). Building on their understanding of analysis as a deeply personal and dynamic process, my model of intercultural analysis encourages analysts to reflect upon our own positionalities and recognize our unique roles in centering knowledge and perspectives that have been historically marginalized by music theory's epistemic structure.

Based on my proposed definition of intercultural analysis, I suggest that applying Western analytical methods to an analysis of non-Western music *without careful consideration of the politics of such an encounter* runs counter to my model of intercultural analysis. For the purposes of this chapter, I use the term "the West" to specify a "place of hegemonic epistemology rather than a geographical sector on the map" (Mignolo 2005, 37), encompassing predominantly white, anglophone, and capitalist settler nation-states of the United States, Canada, Western Europe, Australia, and New Zealand. I define non-Western music as any musical style that is external to the canonized Euroamerican art music and popular music traditions in some way: music performed on non-Euroamerican instruments, music that weaves

together Euroamerican and non-Euroamerican musical traditions, non-Euroamerican popular music, non-Euroamerican folk music, and music performed by people of color in the aforementioned Western nation-states. In a similar vein, the term "Western music theory" refers to analytical methods that were developed primarily for the purpose of elucidating the musical structure of European tonal music as well as post-tonal repertoires written by composers trained in Western styles of composition.[6] Conversely, the term "non-Western music theory" encompasses music theoretical traditions other than those of Euroamerican art music.[7] While imperfect, this binary highlights the dominance of Western music and music theory in the discipline today.[8]

Intercultural analysis reframes the current systems of knowledge production in U.S./Canadian music theory, with the ultimate goals of 1) challenging the presumed superiority and universality of Western music theoretical knowledge; and 2) not only amplifying but normalizing the use of musical knowledge that has been marginalized throughout the history of Western music theory. In challenging the Eurocentric epistemological foundations of U.S./Canadian music theory, I draw upon the work of Black feminist scholars and their critiques of institutionalized modes of knowledge production in the academy and beyond. I specifically situate my framework of intercultural analysis within Patricia Hill Collins's feminist standpoint theory ([1990] 2009) to emphasize the partiality of all analytical and music theoretical

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[6] This category includes music by Euroamerican composers such as Schoenberg, Stravinsky, and Cage as well as composers from non-Western geographical areas who have been trained in Western musical composition: e.g., Toru Takemitsu, Unsuk Chin, and Tania León.

[7] This definition is similar to the criteria adopted by the Analytical Approaches to World Music: "the panoply of global musical traditions, both past and present, that lie outside the purview of Western Art Music" (Analytical Approaches to World Music 2020).

[8] For discussions of musical genres that occupy an in-between cultural space between Western and non-Western music, see Avery 2012, 2019; and Young 2007.

knowledge. As Collins suggests, every individual "speaks from [their] own standpoint and shares [their] own partial, situated knowledge" (270). As such, theories developed from the standpoint of cisgender white heterosexual middle-class and able-bodied men—the demographic that has been historically "overrepresented" in the production of knowledge, to use Sylvia Wynter's terminology (2003)—are similarly partial and situated. In other words, we must recognize that the theories most commonly taught, cited, expanded, and critiqued in current U.S./Canadian music theoretical discourse—Roman numeral analysis, pitch-class set theory, transformational theory, sonata theory, and verse-chorus form, to name a few examples—do not constitute universal modes of knowing. Despite their ubiquity in course syllabi, conference papers, journal articles, and comprehensive exams in U.S. and Canadian institutions, these theories are products of particular historical, sociopolitical, and epistemic contexts. By presenting these localized analytical tools as universally applicable theories for understanding music, Western music theoretical discourse has normalized their use beyond the musical contexts for which they were originally intended.[9]

As Collins makes clear, the gatekeeping mechanisms of knowledge production in the Western academy—the systems that determine whether knowledge claims are validated or discredited—are controlled by "elite White avowedly heterosexual men" ([1990] 2009, 253). The privileging of Western theories as universally applicable ways of knowing severely limits the types of theories that are circulated in academic discourse. According to bell hooks, academic knowledge with the most legitimacy tends to be dominated by theories that are "Euro-centric, linguistically convoluted, and rooted in Western white male sexist and racially biased

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[9] For instance, while voice-leading is a practice that originates in European tonal music, scholars have extended its study to genres such as jazz (Smither 2019), American popular music (Burns 2008), and Japanese koto music (Burnett 2011).

philosophical frameworks" ([1989] 2015, 36). As a result of this epistemic structure, Collins argues, knowledge claims that directly challenge the white- and cis-male-oriented status quo or fail to center the lived experiences of elite White men are less likely to be accepted by the discipline, a systemic mode of epistemic oppression that has resulted in the exclusion of Black women intellectuals from the academy ([1990] 2009, 251–54). In this vein, intercultural analysis seeks to reframe the basic epistemic assumptions music theorists bring to analysis. Although Collins and hooks offer their critiques specifically to rectify the exclusion and misrepresentation of Black women's ideas, priorities, and intellectual production in the academy, their work also offers a critical lens for interrogating the power structures of the academic discipline of music theory. Exposing and challenging these structures remain an urgent undertaking for the field, given its overwhelmingly white and male demographic and severe underrepresentation of Black (1.0%), Indigenous (0.1%), and Latinx (2.7%) scholars (Brown 2019).

By making explicit our own standpoints, reflecting upon the partiality of the Euroamerican music theoretical tradition in which many of us have been trained, and resisting the objectification of marginalized groups as providers, rather than producers, of music theoretical knowledge, intercultural analysis encourages U.S/Canadian music theory to rethink their geopolitical relationship with non-Western musical traditions. A reconsideration of the epistemic power structures of the field can have direct implications for whom we regard and value as music theorists (through citations, awards, publications, and other professional opportunities) and, consequently, who feels welcomed in the field. I draw upon the work of Audre Lorde ([1984] 2007) and bell hooks ([1989] 2015) to broaden the purview of knowledge claims that are recognized as music theory, contributing to recent interventions by music theorists to reevaluate who is "recognized, heard, seen, published, and invited to critical

conversations" (Hisama 2021, 15).[10] Both Lorde and hooks underscore the need to pay closer

attention to alternative sites of knowledge production in order to combat the "prevailing white-

supremacist, patriarchal hegemony" (hooks [1989] 2015, 36) that undergirds many academic

disciplines. In her landmark essay, "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's

House," Lorde argues that systemic transformations cannot be achieved by continuing to rely on

institutionalized theoretical paradigms and framings. Staying within the epistemic boundaries of

the white- and cis-male-oriented status quo, according to Lorde, "means that only the most

narrow perimeters of change are possible and allowable" ([1984] 2007, 110–11). She suggests

that critiques of racist, sexist, and colonialist modes of oppression can present themselves as

inclusive gestures, when in reality such critiques are counterproductive, relying on hegemonic

critical frameworks and ignoring the actual voices of marginalized groups who are purportedly

being included.[11]

Writing at a critical juncture in the discipline—following pivotal interventions by the

graduate-student-led coalition Project Spectrum and the plenary session of the 2019 meeting of

the Society for Music Theory—I interpret Lorde's intervention as a call for re-evaluating our

criteria for which music theoretical knowledge is produced and by whom.[12] Lorde is therefore

warning against the "add-and-stir" method—the process of including new music into the canon

without questioning the ideological bases of the canon itself (Citron 2007, 210). In addition to

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[10] See also Boyd 2020, Ewell 2020a, Hannaford, forthcoming, and Sofer 2020.

[11] See Sofer 2020 for a similar critique of feminist and queer music theory.

[12] Project Spectrum, founded in 2017 by graduate students of color across ethnomusicology, musicology, and music theory, has spearheaded interdisciplinary discussions of equity, inclusion, and accessibility in music studies through a series of events: the 2018 symposium "Diversifying Music Academia: Strengthening the Pipeline" in San Antonio, Texas, the virtual keynote session at the 2020 meeting of the Music Theory Society of New York State ("After 'Reframing Theory': Doing the Work"), and the 2020 online symposium "Diversifying Music Academia: Building the Coalition." Versions of papers presented at the 2018 symposium have been published as a colloquy, "Project Spectrum Colloquy: Strengthening the Pipeline," in *Current Musicology*, Vol. 107 (2020).

broadening the scope of repertoire in our research and teaching, an anti-oppressive music theory must also question the universality of established theories and redesign the very conceptual schemes of the theories themselves.

To move beyond the "add-and-stir" model, music theorists must not only shift our analytical focus towards non-Western music but also engage meaningfully with non-Western musical knowledge. As Sofer (2020) has persuasively argued, topical and methodological diversification in music theory has often failed to center the ideas of those who are marginalized by race, gender, sexuality, class, disability, citizenship, and employment status. Instead, Sofer asserts, music theorists have adopted an "I-Methodology" through which music theorists in privileged positions produce theories about minoritized groups in ways that fortify their authority in the field and seek affirmation from the discipline's white Eurocentric heteropatriarchal frame (55–56). This approach to scholarship regrettably neglects the worldviews and experiences of minoritized groups and further perpetuates the marginalization of their ideas in the field.[13] As such, to move beyond the "add-and-stir" model, we must alter our assumptions about what counts as music theoretical knowledge, how such knowledge is generated, and by whom (Hisama 2021).

To reframe the criteria of what counts as music theory, one solution is to re-examine the settings and actors by which music theoretical knowledge is produced. In her critique of feminist theory, hooks ([1989] 2015) urges scholars to decenter the university as the primary location in which theorizing and knowledge production occurs. Universities have produced rigorous theories

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[13] Although my critique is directed towards contemporary music theory, the marginalization of non-Western musical knowledge in Western studies of non-Western music is certainly not a recent phenomenon. In "Studies on the Tone System and Music of the Japanese" (1903), for example, comparative musicologists Erich Moritz von Hornbostel and Otto Abraham take interest in performances by Kawakami Sadayakko (川上貞奴) and Kawakami Otojirō (川上音二郎) while paying scant attention to their cultural and musical knowledge (Steege 2017).

that continue to shape the discipline's understanding of music. The takeaway here is not to dismiss theories that have originated in the ivory tower but to acknowledge that music theory is also produced in other arenas: by performers (both professional and amateur), teachers, instrument makers, critics, journalists, fan communities, social media users, and bloggers.[14] The white Eurocentric heteropatriarchal framing of U.S./Canadian music theory is therefore closely linked to the discipline's gatekeeping of knowledge within the walls of the academy. I contend that music theorists must advocate for the existence of "multiple theories emerging from diverse perspectives in a variety of styles" (hooks [1989] 2015, 37) and actively cite theories articulated by musicians and thinkers who are unaffiliated with academic music theory. Clifton Boyd's framework of *vernacular music theory* exemplifies such an approach. Boyd defines vernacular music theory as "music-theoretical work that is carried out by practitioners of the style who possess insider knowledge of their communities. While the academy would not traditionally consider these practitioners to be music theorists, their work nonetheless determines the rules…for an entire community of musicians" (2020). Paying closer attention to knowledge produced outside of academia is crucial for deconstructing music theory's white Eurocentric heteropatriarchal structures.

1.2 The Coloniality of Power and the Myth of Universal Knowledge

As sociologist Aníbal Quijano has theorized, global processes of knowledge production in the academy and beyond are undergirded by the *coloniality of power*. Quijano (2007) defines the coloniality of power as a continuation of the power dynamics between the colonizer and the colonized that formed the foundation of European modernity from the sixteenth century

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[14] See also Cusick 1994a, Hannaford, forthcoming, Lumsden 2020, and Raz 2018.

onwards. The coloniality of power encompasses a number of forms of Western hegemonic dominance: the exploitation of labor and natural resources from the colonized, a racial hierarchy asserting the superiority of Europeans, and inequities in knowledge production. Nelson Maldonado-Torres illustrates the distinction between coloniality and colonialism as follows: while colonialism refers to a "political and economic relation in which the sovereignty of a nation or a people rests on the power of another nation," coloniality describes the ways in which forms of Eurocentric dominance continue even after the former colony attains independence as a nation-state (2007, 243). Coloniality of power therefore details the ways in which the structures and systems put in place through colonial rule still remain visible as the West continues to maintain control over labor, natural resources, and knowledge in the non-Western world.[15]

Of particular importance for this chapter is the classification of Western and non-Western knowledges within the coloniality of power, and how such hierarchies are reflected in the production of knowledge in academic music theory. As part of the process of colonization, the Western powers established the hegemony of European knowledge systems while simultaneously disqualifying indigenous languages, histories, and modes of knowing (Quijano 2007). The coloniality of power provides an analytic for elucidating the various ways in which the imbalance between Western and non-Western knowledges is visibly reinforced in contemporary academic disciplines.

One of the consequences of the coloniality of power is the positioning of Western knowledge as a universalizing discourse, operating under the assumption that such knowledge is applicable and useful to both Europeans and non-Europeans alike. By erasing any trace of spatial and temporal particularities of the subject's epistemic location—i.e., the geographical, historical,

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[15] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak describes the ongoing tension between coloniality and colonialism as a "post-colonial neo-colonized world" (1990, 166).

and cultural context within which knowledge is produced—Western philosophy and sciences have been able to situate their knowledge as neutral, scientific, and therefore universal. According to this logic, any knowledge with an identifiable ethnic, geographical, or societal location is disqualified as a universal truth and thus classified instead as inferior forms of knowledge: culture, folklore, myth, and "traditional knowledge" (Mignolo 2011a, 142). To give an example, while Western major and minor scales are considered "music theory" with no geographic, cultural, or temporal qualifier, *maqam* is typically considered a part of "Arabic music theory" in the United States and Canada. In a similar vein, scholars of non-Western music are regularly and disproportionately called upon to define their research through cultural and geographical qualifiers. While the unmarked term "opera" in musicological discourse can refer to Italian, French, English, and German forms of opera, for example, Peking opera is not included in this universal category of "opera" and tends to be referred through the marked cultural signifier.[16] Echoing Sara Ahmed, the invisibility of the West's cultural, geographical, and epistemic origins draws attention to the visibly marked presence of non-white and non-Western music, knowledge, and individuals, making "non-white bodies feel uncomfortable, exposed, visible, different" within the disciplinary space (2007, 157). By virtue of being able to produce knowledge from the mind, an epistemic position void of identity markers (i.e., race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, and language), Europeans assumed the universality—and therefore superiority—of their knowledge over non-European knowledge. Western epistemology's myth of universality was not only used to justify Europeans' disqualification of non-European languages as inferior but also generated the Eurocentric assumption that European knowledge could also be projected unproblematically onto the study of non-European cultures. According to

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[16] My use of the oppositional terms "marked" and "unmarked" borrows from Robert Hatten's usage (1994).

anthropologist Linda Tuhiwai Smith, this logic of universality enabled the West to claim research on non-Western cultures as their own "new discoveries" that could then be "commodified as property belonging to the cultural archive and body of knowledge of the West" ([1999] 2012, 64).

From the late fifteenth century onwards, these Western epistemological regimes were transplanted to Africa, Latin America, Asia, and Oceania through European colonialism and further reinforced in the twentieth century through U.S. imperialism. Colonial domination instituted not only the supremacy of Western knowledges but also the notion that only Western cisgender white heterosexual male subjects had the privilege of accessing universal truth through rational thinking. As Sylvia Wynter (2003) has argued, the "globally hegemonic ethnoclass" (262) of the European white bourgeois cisgender heterosexual able-bodied Man has continued to "'overrepresent' itself as if it were the 'human' itself" (260). The overrepresentation of this particular demographic of Man meant that "the interests, reality, and well-being" of Europeans would be consistently prioritized over those of non-Europeans, who were positioned in opposition to Man as the irrational Human Other (262, 266).[17] As such, in contrast to Western culture, which was capable of producing universalizing knowledge as the knowing subject, non-Western cultures were relegated to objects of study and rendered incapable of articulating knowledge on their own. These regimes, as one manifestation of the coloniality of power, continue to shape how knowledges are produced and valued in modern universities and academic disciplines (Grosfoguel 2013; Mignolo 2003; Quijano 2007). The project of modern academic research, as Tuhiwai Smith has demonstrated, is inseparable from the currents of colonialism

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[17] Although Wynter notes that the overrepresentation of Man has resulted in "African enslavement, Latin American conquest, and Asian subjugation" (2003, 263), she also crucially distinguishes how Indigenous peoples in the Americas and enslaved people of Africa have faced disproportionate levels of violence due to slavery and settler colonialism.

([1999] 2012, 1). Musical disciplines are certainly not immune to these epistemological power structures. Sindhumathi Revuluri (2013) has argued that the coloniality of power operates within musicological scholarship by situating Western music as an unmarked norm while excluding any type of music that does not meet the Western criteria of normativity. If such music is delegitimized, Revuluri suggests, so are the people who make it (850).

The global hegemony of Western knowledge is also closely intertwined with racial hierarchies instituted by the coloniality of power. According to Quijano (2007), the racial hierarchy between Europeans and non-Europeans is co-constitutive with the subject-object relation of Western epistemology. Once white European Christians began conceptualizing knowledge in terms of a relationship between a knowing subject and a known object, they situated themselves as the subject—undisputed producers of universal knowledge who were capable of rational thought (Mignolo 2011a, 142)—whereas non-Europeans, who were deemed incapable of rational thought, were relegated to the role of the object (Wynter 2003). The epistemic difference between the knowing European subject and the known non-European object was therefore inseparable from the West's construction of colonialist racial and ethnic hierarchies. In fact, Ramón Grosfoguel characterizes the myth of the universality of Western knowledge as an "epistemic racism" in which only Western epistemology has the means to access universal truth (2012, 94). As a result, non-European thought and knowledge were written off from global historical and philosophical narratives. These dynamics continue to shape how Western and non-Western cultures are hierarchically positioned within academic discourses: the Western scholar produces knowledge (subject) while the non-Western culture (object) provides knowledge for the subject but is unable to produce knowledge of its own. As we reflect upon the various ways in which the coloniality of power undergirds Eurocentric systems of knowledge

production in music theory, the field as a whole must collectively recognize the partiality of Western music theoretical knowledge, and the limits to which established Western analytical methodologies can be used for studying music outside of and within the Western art music canon. For scholars with power who have benefited from and invested their professional careers into the status quo, this shift may require ceding space to new ways of thinking about music and colleagues who have been marginalized for their critiques of the field, specialization in non-canonical music, or focus on non-normative theoretical and analytical approaches. As expressed by Dylan Robinson, such transformations will require letting go of the "normativity of…the practices and knowledge that you love" (2019, 141).

1.3 Music Theory's Eurocentric Epistemologies

In the following discussion, I demonstrate how the logic of the coloniality of power continues to shape the norms of knowledge production in Western academic music theory. Drawing upon theories of decoloniality, I identify two domains in which the logic of coloniality is most salient within the discourse of U.S./Canadian music theory. First, music theory privileges Western epistemologies and knowledge over those of the non-West, and as a direct consequence, the intellectual work of Western individuals over non-Western individuals. Second, music theory champions modern imperial languages of Europe (Mignolo 2011a) over non-European languages. Through my discussion of the two domains, I illustrate how a double standard of knowledge production operates in U.S./Canadian music theory, in which theories originating in Western musical and linguistic contexts gain more circulation and legitimacy than those produced in non-Western contexts.

1. Inequity between Western and Non-Western Music Theory

A systemic imbalance in knowledge production requires music theorists based outside of the West (as well as music theorists of color based in the West) to study Western music and its theories in order to establish credibility in the field. Western music theorists, however, are able to study non-Western music without engaging thoroughly with non-Western knowledge. Anthropologist Gustavo Lins Ribeiro (2006) identifies two phenomenon that illustrate the inequality between Western and non-Western knowledge. The first, which Ribeiro refers to as *metropolitan provincialism*, describes an "ignorance that hegemonic centers usually have of the production of non-hegemonic centers" (378). The second, *provincial cosmopolitanism*, illustrates how non-hegemonic centers are often up-to-date on the latest scholarship produced in hegemonic centers (378). Ribeiro's critique of the unequal relationship between Western and non-Western knowledge in anthropology rings equally true within the context of music theory. While scholars based outside of the West are expected to demonstrate proficiency in the analytical traditions associated with European tonal music and Euroamerican post-tonal music in order to establish credibility as music theorists, the opposite does not hold true in most cases. In other words, the discipline expects and incentivizes music theorists to cite, critique, complicate, expand, and demonstrate proficiency in the work of established white male scholars in U.S./Canadian music theory, even when writing about non-Western musical topics.

Scholars based outside the West are expected to bring an intimate knowledge of Western music theoretical and musicological scholarship when writing about canonical composers such as Ludwig van Beethoven, Franz Joseph Haydn, and Arnold Schoenberg. While non-Western scholars are often excluded from the dominant scholarly discourse in the West, they are nevertheless expected to follow it closely. For instance, most of the sources cited in musicologist

Sano Akitsugu's Japanese-language article on Schoenberg's idea of developing variations—published in the *Journal of the Musicological Society of Japan* (*JMSJ*)—are those published in English or German (2018).[18] Sano's bibliography features scholars who are cited frequently in Western musicological scholarship on Austro-German composers: Jack Boss, Janet Schmalfeldt, and Walter Frisch. This trend extends across a number of publications in the *JMSJ*. In recently published articles on J. S. Bach (Murata 2014), Jérôme-Joseph de Momigny and François-Joseph Fétis (Ōsako 2014), Schoenberg (Asai 2014; Shirai 2015), Beethoven (Maruyama 2018), and Haydn (Ikegami 2019)—many of which are analytically oriented—citations of Euroamerican scholars vastly outnumber those of Japanese scholars. The inverse, however, does not hold: published research on Schoenberg in North America would rarely, if at all, be expected to engage with Japanese-language scholarship (or scholarship in other non-European languages) on Schoenberg.[19] While I offer Schoenberg as a single example of the field's uneven linguistic playing field, this critique can be extended to other canonical composers such as Haydn (Burstein 2010; Caplin 1998; Mastic 2015; Mirka 2009; Miyake 2009), Franz Schubert (Clark 2011; Guez 2020; Hyland 2016; Rodgers 2017; Suurpää 2014) and Johannes Brahms (Cubero 2017; McClelland 2010; Murphy 2009; Ng 2006; Smith 2006). Barbara Christian's remark encapsulates the inequitable stakes of conducting music theoretical research from outside the West: "I was supposed to know *them*, while they were not at all interested in knowing *me*" (1988, 72; emphasis in original). To rephrase Christian within the context of the discipline's geopolitical dynamics, music theorists based outside the West are supposed to know the work of music theorists in the West, while the latter is not expected to know the work of the former.

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[18] The bibliography features just two sources that are not published in English or German (both of which are in Japanese).

[19] See for example Boss 2014; Cherlin 2007; Newton 2014; and Vande Moortele 2017.

In some cases, North American peer-reviewed journals have allowed Western music theorists to publish analytical articles on non-Western music that rely primarily on analytical techniques developed by Euroamerican scholars. In his analysis of Chinese qin music, for example, U.S.-based music theorist John Latartara candidly acknowledges his status as a cultural outsider, commenting that he does "not read Chinese or play any Chinese instruments" and that his "knowledge of Chinese music and culture…is based upon music from recordings and research either written or translated in English" (2005, 232). Latartara's analysis of mode, motive, cadence, form, and timbre is anchored by methodologies that are familiar to Western music theorists: spectrographic analysis and Schenkerian graphing techniques. Similarly, Michael Tenzer's speculative comparative analysis of *Nhemamusasa* (from the *mbira dzavadzimu* tradition of present-day Zimbabwe) and *Hindehu* (vocal performance from present-day Central African Republic) engages in a citational practice that centers the theoretical work of Euroamerican scholars (2017). For instance, Tenzer's descriptions of musical phenomenon frequently use specialized and technical terminologies of Western music theory: "inter-onset intervals" (142), "imparity grouping" (143), "pitch cardinalities" (151), and "T-1 [transformational] relation" (151). Furthermore, whereas the ideas of white male music scholars such as Simha Arom, Milton Babbitt, David Lewin, Robert Morris, Jean Molino, and Charles Seeger are discussed with nuance in the article, Kofi Agawu and Akin Euba—to my knowledge, the only two Black music scholars (out of 46 non-discography items) who appear in the works cited list—are cited briefly in footnotes. Among the 46 items, the overwhelming majority of cited works are authored by men, and the works cited list includes just four publications from African nations.[20] Latartara's and Tenzer's articles are representative of a broader system of

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[20] The four non-discography items published in African countries are Akin Euba's doctoral dissertation ("Dundun Music of the Yoruba," University of Ghana, 1974), David Beach's *The Shona of Zimbabwe 900–1850: An Outline*

knowledge production in which white Euroamerican scholars can establish professional credibility on non-Western topics by relying primarily on theories and methodologies designed by other white Euroamerican scholars. As Sara Ahmed has observed, explicitly feminist scholarship can engage in a citational practice that paradoxically centers the work of white, male, and Euroamerican scholars (2013). Following Ahmed, I argue that an analysis of non-Western music carries the risk of perpetuating a predominantly white, male, and Euroamerican citational chain without willful intervention.

By drawing attention to the work of Latartara, Tenzer, and Sato, my aim is not to diminish the value of analyses based on etic perspectives, privilege one's approach over the other, or pointedly criticize individual scholars.[21] Instead, I orient my critique towards the wider discursive norms and power structures in which we participate as scholars. I do not wish to claim that all or most white Euroamerican scholars studying non-Western music approach their analyses as complete outsiders to the musical tradition. Furthermore, I do not wish to discredit the valuable contributions of Western cultural outsiders and the reasons for which they decide to engage in music theoretical work on non-Western music. In fact, analytical studies of non-Western by Western scholars have been indispensable for my own research and thinking. Rather, I discuss these examples to highlight a systemic double standard that pervades the field of music studies writ large: the differences in expectations between a Western scholar (i.e., primarily but not exclusively white Euroamerican scholars based in U.S. and Canadian universities) analyzing

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of Shona History (1980, published by Zimbabwe-based publisher Mambo Press), and two articles in the South Africa-based journal *African Music*, both authored by Andrew Tracey ("The Nyanga Panpipe Dance" and "The Matepe Mbira Music of Rhodesia"). All four are referenced in footnotes but not in the main text.

[21] See Roeder and Tenzer 2012 for a successful example of an analysis that builds connections between emic and etic perspectives. Similarly, Kofi Agawu (2003, 2017) has cautioned that the dismissal of etic perspectives can constitute a form of racism against non-Western music by limiting the terms in which non-Western music can participate in analytical discourse.

non-Western music and a non-Western scholar analyzing Western music. While some Western scholars are able to publish articles on non-Western music while relying primarily on English-language secondary sources, many scholars based outside the West are expected to engage with scholarship in English, German, and/or French when conducting research on Western music. Anthropologist Celia Lowe's provocative question sums up what is at stake: "what might it look like for U.S.-based scholars to proceed as though they do not possess the most significant knowledge about, or all of the solutions to, the world's difficult problems?" (2007, 121).

In addition, the adaptation of Western theories for the analysis of non-Western music remains a common practice in Western music theory journals. Under this arrangement, the West functions as the unequivocal center of music theoretical knowledge production (subject), whereas non-Western music constitutes the data through which knowledge is formulated (object). As Paulin J. Hountondji has argued vis-à-vis the natural sciences, the non-Western world has functioned as a provider of natural resources and data to be analyzed by research institutions in the West, who wield the authority in generating scientific knowledge for the world to consume (1992, 240). I surmise that Western music theory and non-Western music are bound by an analogous relationship, with Western scholars having the upper hand in generating music theoretical knowledge using non-Western music as "raw data." Echoing Kofi Agawu, I argue that non-Western scholars and musicians therefore risk becoming "informants rather than theorists of their own traditions" (2007, 261). Within this dynamic, the development of theories on non-Western music is initiated primarily by Euroamerican scholars and carried out in accordance with their intellectual agendas. At present, many analyses of non-Western music primarily benefit and enhance the analytical apparatuses of Western music theory, and by association, the careers of Western music theorists.

For instance, David Clarke (2017) explores how concepts from Fred Lerdahl and Ray Jackendoff's *A Generative Theory of Tonal Music* (1983) might apply to Hindustani classical music. Through his analysis, Clarke evaluates *GTTM*'s claim towards a universal musical grammar and suggests how its rules can be modified to accommodate the principles of *ālāp*, an improvisatory melodic prelude. Clarke notes that his analytical case study examines the "potential wider viability of *GTTM*'s methodology beyond Western classical music" (2017, [1.2]). The author concludes that "with suitable adjustment to preference rules, *GTTM*'s methodology can effectively model at least certain features of Hindustani classical music," though he acknowledges that the theory is not equipped to fully account for musical events at the foreground level ([10.2], [10.6]). One of the primary payoffs of Clarke's analytical project is the expansion of a well-established methodology, using Hindustani classical music as the "raw materials" for probing and refining the explanatory power of Western music theoretical machinery.[22] Rainer Polak and Justin London similarly suggest that their analysis of Mande drumming (of present-day Mali) offers a solution for a longstanding "problem for Western theories of rhythm and meter," which, in their view, have not accounted sufficiently for non-isochronous rhythms (2014, [4]). Polak and London suggest that their analytical findings have far-reaching implications for Western metrical theories. The authors propose that non-isochronous rhythms are not "expressively timed rhythmic groups" articulated at the musical surface but rather "direct expressions of metrical structure" on a deeper level, advancing the possibility of metrical frameworks that are not based on isochronous beat divisions ([107]).

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[22] Other examples of analytical work on non-Western and intercultural music that are anchored primarily by Western methodologies include Burnett 2011 (Japanese jiuta-tegotomono/voice-leading); Clayton 2020 (North Indian rūpak tāl/Western metrical theories); Wells 2020 (South Indian Karnatak music/Lewinian Generalized Interval Systems); and Turner 2019 (cultural hybridity in the music of Isang Yun/theories of French philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari).

Mande drumming, according to Polak and London, challenges them to integrate non-isochronous rhythms into the Western theoretical schemes of rhythm and meter. In this example, non-Western music functions as "raw data" that enhances the analytical capabilities of Western metrical theories. To be sure, the use of Western theoretical systems for analyzing non-Western music cannot always be reduced to an opposition between a Western knowing subject (theory) and a non-Western known object (raw data). Some theoretical studies of non-Western music, for instance, draw upon Western music theories to highlight their intersections with local theories and possibilities for dialogue (Roeder and Tenzer 2012; Schachter 2015). Others, such as Clarke (2017), expose the difficulties of adapting Western methodologies to non-Western musical practices and underscore the need for sufficient cultural contextualization. Nevertheless, I believe the use of non-Western music as a testing ground for Western analytical tools should go hand-in-hand with a thorough consideration of the analyst's positionality, power, and the ethical and political implications of cross-cultural analysis.[23]

In the aforementioned examples, non-Western music is enlisted to expand the scope of established Western music theoretical tools and broaden the purview of the discipline, thus engulfing non-Western music into what Philip Ewell (2020a) has referred to as music theory's white racial frame. Again, I wish to emphasize that the objective of my critique is not to argue

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[23] Other studies have analyzed non-Western music as a means to uncover new ways of appreciating Western music, presumably for other music theorists in the United States and Canada, though the target audience is not explicitly stated (Latartara 2005; Morris 2001; Scherzinger 2010). Robert Morris, for instance, suggests that his analysis of the compositional process of Karnatak music "might reflect back on Western music" and allow for "better ways of understanding and describing music of architectonic complexity" (2001, 89). In such cases, analytical knowledge of a non-Western musical practice ultimately benefits Western scholars' understanding of Western music. Highlighting how an analysis of non-Western music could yield valuable insights for Western music might perhaps be necessary to reach larger audiences, given the continued primacy of Western music in the field and its role as a common point of reference. As analysts of non-Western music, however, we should consider how such justifications risk reinforcing the centrality of Western music even while including non-Western music into its analytical purview. By marketing non-Western music as a means to enhance one's appreciation of Western music, music theorists can inadvertently limit the terms through which we can engage with non-Western music. What might happen, for instance, if a non-Western musical practice is deemed incompatible with Western music?

against the use of Western theoretical paradigms for the study of non-Western music or to dismiss the numerous excellent contributions of Western music theorists analyzing non-Western music. In fact, I agree with Agawu's position that analyzing non-Western music from the standpoint of the West should not require the rejection of Western methodologies altogether, nor should it mean that Western scholars ought to privilege local over Western theories (2003, 173–97). Furthermore, I do not wish to imply that Western music theorists have ignored non-Western theoretical knowledge when analyzing non-Western music, as work by scholars such as Bradford Garvey (2020), Lara Pearson (2016) and Marc Perlman (2004) show otherwise. Rather, I wish to expose the centrality of Western theories in recent analytical studies of non-Western music, as well as the underlying coloniality of power through which the field privileges white Euroamerican epistemologies. As Agawu has discussed in relation to West African rhythmic patterns, Western modes of understanding music (e.g., additive conceptions of rhythmic patterns) are often normalized and "held as natural" (2006, 12). As a result, Agawu observes, the Western framing is taken for granted, applied to analyses of African rhythm, and in many cases, the Western scholar sees "no need for further justification" (12) for using Western analytical tools. Agawu urges readers to abandon the idea that the Western additive conception of rhythm is a "necessary or inevitable one" and asks us to consider the following questions: "given that they [culture-bearers] have a way that is knowable by us [Western scholars], what is our ethical responsibility towards that way? Do we make an honest effort to learn to do things their way, or do we maintain the *a priori* superiority of our way?" (12) Through these provocative questions, Agawu emphasizes the inseparability of analyzing non-Western music and the politics of knowledge production. As long as the analysis of non-Western music remains regulated by the coloniality of power, Western music theorists are responsible for asking themselves whether an

analytical endeavor benefits the tools of the discipline or the music, culture, and people they have chosen to study.

2. Linguistic Inequity in Music Theoretical Knowledge

In addition to privileging Western knowledge over non-Western knowledge, the coloniality of power shapes how knowledge articulated in certain languages is valued significantly over that of other languages. Paraphrasing Walter Mignolo, Western music theoretical knowledge is founded upon the two classic languages of Greek and Latin as well as the post-Enlightenment European imperial languages: French, German, and English (2011a, 19).[24] Within this hierarchy of languages, Mignolo argues, all other languages—as well as any knowledge produced through them—are categorized as inferior.[25] Mignolo and Madina Tlostanova powerfully illustrate the inequity between European imperial languages and marginalized languages to demonstrate how these linguistic hierarchies have played a key role in disqualifying non-Western knowledge:

> Consider, on the one hand, knowledge in the modern and imperial European languages and – on the other hand – Russian, Arabic and Mandarin…In the modern/ colonial unconscious, they belong to different epistemic ranks. 'Modern' science, philosophy, and the social sciences are not grounded in Russian, Chinese and Arabic languages. That of course does not mean that there is no thinking going on or knowledge produced in Russian, Chinese and Arabic. It means, on the contrary, that in the global distribution of intellectual and scientific labor, knowledge produced in English, French or German does not need to take into account knowledge in Russian, Chinese and Arabic. Furthermore, increasingly since the sixteenth century, knowledge in Russian, Chinese and Arabic

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[24] Mignolo also includes Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese as European imperial languages that regulated knowledge production between the Renaissance and the Enlightenment.

[25] Related to the issue of language is the distinction between written and oral knowledges. In his critique of (ethno-)musicological discourse on African music, Agawu highlights how knowledge in the West is only deemed valid when it is written down, thus preventing oral knowledges from receiving due credit for their contributions (2007, 258–59).

cannot avoid intellectual production in English, French and German...*Thus, any languages beyond the six imperial European ones, and their grounding in Greek and Latin, have been disqualified as languages with world-wide epistemic import.* And of course, this impinges on subject formation: people who are not trusted in their thinking, are doubted in their rationality and wounded in their dignity (Mignolo and Tlostanova 2006, 207; emphasis mine).

Mignolo and Tlostanova's critique highlight the various ways in which European imperial languages continue to reign supreme in the production of music theoretical knowledge.[26]

First, the most highly regarded peer-reviewed journals in the field are published in English, French, and German: *Journal of Music Theory*, *Music Theory Online, Music Theory Spectrum, Music Analysis, Musimédiane,* and *Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft für Musiktheorie,* to name a few. In fact, *Music Theory Online*'s "Other Journals" page, which provides a list of academic journals that welcome music theoretical and analytical research, exclusively features journals in English, Italian, French, and German; journals produced outside the West such as *Journal of the Musicological Society of Japan, South African Music Studies,* and *Journal of the Central Conservatory of Music* are not listed.[27]

The center-periphery relationship between European and non-European linguistic regions is further exemplified by the ways in which academic societies have positioned themselves as the authoritative producers of universal music theoretical knowledge. The Society for Music Theory, for example, does not refer to itself as the *American* Society for Music Theory, despite being a regional academic organization in which the large majority of members is based in the United

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[26] Given the historical legacies of linguistic imperialism, not all who produce knowledge in a European imperial language are writing from a position of privilege. Agawu, for instance, notes that "many African scholars write in metropolitan languages because those are the languages in which they first learned to write (not to speak) and because those are the only languages available for scholarly discourse. These scholars are also often trained in institutions modeled on those of Europe, so their work…is tilted in the direction of a European or American audience" (2016, 24).

[27] Other Journals, https://www.mtosmt.org/mto_links.html, accessed June 18, 2021.

States and Canada.[28] The largest conferences dedicated to music theoretical scholarship—the Annual Meeting of the Society for Music Theory, EuroMAC, and Analytical Approaches to World Music—are mostly held in the United States, Canada, and Western Europe,[29] and tend to attract scholars based in these regions. One consequence of these geographical and linguistic hierarchies is that a conference paper presented in English becomes more visible than that presented in a non-European language. As a result, scholars based outside of the United States, Canada, and Western Europe—especially those who do not work in one of the three post-Enlightenment European imperial languages—face considerable hurdles in participating in music theoretical discourse.[30]

Second, similar linguistic hierarchies are evident in many U.S./Canadian graduate programs in music theory. While Western music theorists are expected to familiarize themselves with music theoretical texts written in French and German (e.g., Adolf Bernhard Marx, Jean-Philippe Rameau, Anton Reicha, Hugo Riemann, Heinrich Schenker, and Anton Reicha), pass language exams in French and/or German, and add French and German terms to their music theoretical vocabulary (e.g., *Urlinie*, *Satz*, *règle de l'octave, cadence*), the same expectation does not extend towards scholarship in Russian, Chinese, or Arabic. Work by music theorists such as Nikolay Diletsky, Zhu Zaiyu, and Safi al-Din al-Urmawi, for example, is rarely covered in graduate seminars on the history of music theory, and Western scholars are generally not expected to cite scholarship in languages other than English, French or German.[31] Those who

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[28] For a similar critique of ethnomusicology, see Euba 2008.

[29] The only exception thus far has been the 2020 meeting of EuroMAC, which was scheduled to be held in Moscow but was postponed due to the COVID-19 global pandemic.

[30] In a similar vein, Agawu notes that institutional and linguistic barriers prevent many Africa-based scholars from participating in musicological discourse (2007, 261).

[31] For a related discussion on music theory's linguistic racism, see Ewell 2020b.

actively consult non-European/imperial languages, according to Nancy Yunhwa Rao, risk being considered "area-specialists" rather than bona fide "theorists" (2019, 78).

Finally, peer-reviewed North American journals have published analyses of non-Western music that engage with few sources written in non-European languages. As I have illustrated through my discussion of Latartara's article on Chinese qin music, it is possible, in some cases, for Western scholars to reinforce Eurocentric and Anglocentric citational practices while advancing the study of non-Western music. While I believe that citing the work of non-Euroamerican scholars (i.e., scholars based outside of the West) remains a priority for music theorists analyzing non-Western music, I also wish to emphasize the importance of not only citing but engaging with knowledge formulated in non-European languages. For instance, while Amy Simon's analysis of Japanese *gagaku* piece *Hyōjō Etenraku* (平調越天楽) cites both Euroamerican and non-Euroamerican scholars and practitioners, 20 out of 22 sources in the works cited list are publications in European languages (2019).[32] Simon refers to the two sources in non-European languages: a beginner's guide to gagaku by ryūteki player Sasamoto Takeshi (笹本武志) and Imperial Household Agency musician Shiba Sukehiro's (芝祐泰) transcriptions of gagaku repertoire into Western notation. Throughout her article, Simon consults the work of Shiba primarily for his transcriptions and Sasamoto for his transcriptions and recordings. In other words, whereas publications in European languages are consulted for their historical and musical commentary, sources published in non-European languages are used mostly for their "raw data" of musical material. By calling attention to an example of citational language disparity, I do not wish to suggest that knowledge articulated in European languages should be discounted as less

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[32] The linguistic breakdown of the 22 cited sources are as follows: 19 in English, 2 in Japanese, and 1 in French.

legitimate or preferable compared to that of non-European languages.[33] Instead, I seek to

emphasize the potential limitations of relying primarily on knowledge articulated in European

languages, especially when engaging with non-Western music. To take gagaku as an example,

while the rich body of Anglophone and Francophone scholarship on gagaku has enhanced

accessibility for Euroamerican scholars, privileging these works risks excluding scholars who

have published widely (or even exclusively) in Japanese or other non-European languages.

Given the visibility and prestige accorded to English-language publications in academia,

engaging with knowledge formulated in non-European languages is indispensable to achieving

equity within the field of U.S./Canadian music theory.

The objective of these discussions is not to invalidate the use of Western languages and

analytical tools for the study of non-Western music outright. The solution is not to minimize or

dismiss altogether anglophone and Western music theoretical work. Rather, the issue at hand

concerns equity in the field of music theory. Echoing Hyeonjin Park's critique of game music

and sound studies, the objective is to "disrupt the status quo, to display the potential full

spectrum of ideas and perspectives that only serves to benefit our understanding of one another

and our interactions with this world" (2020, 92). At present, however, the existing infrastructures

of U.S./Canadian music theory privileges, legitimizes, and gives more visibility to theories and

analytical methodologies that emerge out of anglophone and Western modes of listening to and

understanding music. As Loren Kajikawa has observed, graduate students in music theory who

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[33] As Agawu reminds us, the issue of language in scholarly publications is at times complicated by European
colonialism and its erasure and delegitimization of non-European languages. Agawu writes: Many African scholars
write in metropolitan languages because those are the languages in which they first learned to write (not to speak)
and because those are the only languages available for scholarly discourse. These scholars are also often trained in
institutions modeled on those of Europe, so their work follows a certain scholarly protocol (2016, 24). Given the
history of linguistic oppression in former European colonies and Anglocentrism in academic communities
worldwide, scholars outside the West may choose to publish in English for the "attainment of professional
credibility in today's academy" (24).

are looking to write dissertations on hip-hop are required to demonstrate proficiency in Western

theoretical systems of the past and present—restricted primarily to the "music and ideas of white

men"—in their comprehensive exams (2020, 51). I believe his critique can be extended to non-

Western music without difficulty. Given that music theorists in U.S. and Canadian institutions

spend the bulk of their time studying Western theories of white Euroamerican men, most of

which is written in or translated into English, it should not surprise us that many published

analyses of non-Western music also rely heavily on the work of white, anglophone, and Western

scholars. To avoid this linguistic and methodological parochialism, I believe it is essential for

U.S.- and Canada-based music theorists studying non-Western music—especially white

scholars—to recognize the limitations of our Western epistemological biases, cede explanatory

power to non-Western theories, and embrace a willingness to *learn from* music theorists who

have been excluded from participating in conversations on non-Western music. In the following

discussion, I propose alternative modes of knowledge production that place non-Western music

theoretical knowledge on equal footing with Western music theoretical knowledge.[34]

1.4 Intercultural Analysis as Border Thinking

How might U.S/Canadian music theory challenge the coloniality of power and center the

voices and knowledge of those who have been marginalized throughout the discipline's history?

Scholars working in Latin American decolonial studies have proposed border thinking as one

solution for subverting colonial hierarchies of knowledge production. In this section, I first

outline the basic theoretical tenets of border thinking and posit intercultural analysis as a way of

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[34] Readers might notice the irony of critiquing the coloniality of power in a hegemonic language (English). Writing in a European imperial language itself, however, does not preclude the possibility of engaging in such a critique. Mignolo gives the example of Frantz Fanon, who writes from the perspective of a racialized colonial subject while writing in the colonizer's language (French) (Mignolo 2011b, 276–78).

engaging in border thinking within the context of music theory. I demonstrate how pursuing

border thinking through intercultural analysis foregrounds subalternized music theoretical

knowledge and disinvests from the universality and hegemony of Western music theoretical

knowledge. I then discuss how the framework of border thinking is useful for analyzing the

aesthetic, ethical, and political dimensions of musical interculturality.

Initially formulated by Gloria Anzaldúa ([1987] 2012) and later elaborated by Walter

Mignolo (2011a, [2000] 2012) and Madina Tlostanova (Mignolo and Tlostanova 2006), the

notion of border thinking reframes hegemonic knowledge from a subalternized perspective,

subverting the universality claimed by Western epistemology and elevating non-Western

epistemologies in the process. The epistemic framework of border thinking follows in the

footsteps of Black feminist scholars who have analyzed the mechanisms through which white

Eurocentric heteropatriarchal power structures have delegitimated knowledge by Black women

(Bay et al. 2015; Collins [1990] 2009; Cooper 2017; Dotson 2014). In particular, Black feminist

scholars have demonstrated the need to pay closer attention to knowledge produced outside of

dominant institutional settings to "challeng[e] common wisdom about where intellectual

activities take place" (Bay et al. 2015, 4). Border thinking similarly seeks to broaden the

geographical, sociocultural, and institutional scope of what counts as music theoretical

knowledge, with a vision of rectifying the systemic exclusion of the intellectual work of

minoritized music theorists in U.S./Canadian music theory.

While border thinking challenges the Eurocentrism of Western epistemology, it does not

reject Western knowledge outright. A number of postcolonial and decolonial theorists have

similarly argued against the view that decentering Western power structures requires a negation

of Western knowledge.[35] Tuhiwai Smith has argued, for example, that subalternized groups—and in particular, Indigenous peoples—"live simultaneously within [dominant] views while needing to pose, contest and struggle for legitimacy of oppositional or alternative histories" ([1999] 2012, 40). She calls for "dialogue across the boundaries of oppositions" as a way to "make sense of our own world while also attempting to transform what counts as important in the world of the powerful" (40). Confronting Eurocentric systems of knowledge production therefore requires a two-pronged approach: 1) centering ongoing conversations, research questions, and knowledge of subalternized groups, rather than imposing those of Western researchers; and 2) problematizing the universality and dominance of European knowledge in research. Furthermore, rather than doing away with Western knowledge altogether, border thinking acknowledges the reality that Western knowledge has been internalized within many non-Western cultures as a result of colonialism and is therefore unavoidable (Chow [1991] 2003; Curaming 2017; Grosfoguel 2011; Iwabuchi 2010; Mignolo [2000] 2012). Border thinking therefore situates Western and non-Western knowledges and languages as equally viable options (Mignolo 2011a). The crux of border thinking is to take non-Western knowledge seriously as a valid way of knowing and to use concepts and modes of thinking that are not rooted in Euroamerican epistemologies. By building new epistemologies of music theory through a non-tokenistic inclusion of non-Western knowledge, border thinking challenges what Charles Mills has called "white normativity," a colonialist mode of knowledge production and valuation that universalizes Euroamerican ways of thinking as a "constitutive norm" and naturalizes its superiority to other forms of knowledge (2007, 25). In decentering the hegemony of knowledge articulated in the classical and modern imperial languages of Europe, border thinking normalizes the use of

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[35] See also Chow [1991] 2003 and Mbembe 2015.

knowledge originating in non-European languages and entering into dialogue with music

theoretical knowledge produced by groups that have been historically marginalized by Western

historical narratives.

I argue that the epistemic principles of intercultural analysis—which posits a de-

Westernized approach to music analysis by accepting Western and non-Western musical

knowledges as equally valid modes of producing music theoretical knowledge—draw many

parallels with those of border thinking. When applied to the context of music theory, border

thinking offers a much-needed intervention in the Eurocentric processes of knowledge

production in academic music theory. In parallel to Ewell's suggestion that members of the

Society for Music Theory have been complicit in upholding the white racial frame, I posit that

music theorists based in U.S./Canadian institutions are similarly complicit in upholding the

coloniality of power, and therefore hold a responsibility in challenging the discipline's white

Eurocentric heteropatriarchal epistemological systems.

By accepting hegemonic and marginalized epistemologies as equally valid ways of

understanding music, border thinking envisions a world in which credible knowledge can be

produced by Euroamericans and non-Euroamericans.[36] As such, intercultural analysis as border

thinking rescues non-Western music from the trap of ethnotheory. Ethnotheory is defined by

Jean-Jacques Nattiez as "conceptions that indigenous people form of their own music"[37] (1990,

105). The term "ethnotheory" is counterbalanced by an oppositional unmarked "theory," a

category usually reserved for Western music theory. Whereas "ethnotheory" is reserved for

[36] For the purposes of this chapter, I include Black, Indigenous, and people of color in the West within the category
of non-Euroamericans. As I will discuss later in this chapter, this categorization is not unproblematic.

[37] Examples of ethnotheory-based analyses include a Schenkerian graph of a Beethoven sonata (Zbikowski 2018)
and the tracing of metaphorical representations of music theoretical concepts in the music of the Kaluli (Feld 1981).

particular genres of music affiliated with the culture from which the ethnotheories derive, "theory" is considered universal and applicable to a wide range of music. The explanatory power of ethnotheory is further limited by the parochialism of Western art music, which can only be analyzed through universal "theory." Non-Western theories of music are therefore prevented from contributing to the production of knowledge on Western music, despite the fact that Western theories of music are unproblematically used to analyze non-Western music. The framework of ethnotheory therefore positions non-Western music as an Other that is incapable of participating in "mainstream" music theoretical discourse. Ethnotheory, as Agawu (2017, 51) pithily remarks, is "ultimately a confining rather than liberating discourse." In line with Agawu's vision for a "liberating discourse," border thinking dissolves the hierarchy between a universalist "theory" and localized "ethnotheory," situating ethnotheory as one option among many. A truly liberating discourse, according to Agawu (2003, 188), would enable an analyst to weave together indigenous and non-indigenous ways of musical thinking in a way that best serves their analytical goals.[38]

How might border thinking be enacted in music theory? Border thinking requires music theorists to reinterpret conceptualizations of musical parameters and rethink basic definitions of what constitutes music.[39] I suggest three possible ways for analysts to pursue border thinking through intercultural analysis:

First, consider interrogating the Eurocentric assumptions behind musical parameters— e.g., pitch, rhythm, harmony, mode, and tonality—and redefining these terms from a non-

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[38] See also Scherzinger 2001.

[39] Without explicitly drawing upon the notion of border thinking, Pistorius 2018, Revuluri 2013, and Robinson 2020 suggest similar solutions for decentering Western musical knowledge in academic musicology.

Western musical standpoint. For instance, Anna Yu Wang's recent work on *huangmei* opera exhibits border thinking by unsettling Eurocentric definitions of tonal function (2020).[40] Through a mixture of analysis and ethnography, Wang demonstrates how melodies in *huangmei* opera often conclude on *sol* rather than *do*, demonstrating how tonal function in both huangmei opera and Western music must be understood in light of their respective aesthetic and sociocultural contexts.

Second, foreground theoretical frameworks that have been formulated in non-European languages. Relatedly, extending Mignolo and Tlostanova's critique (2006) to music theory, it is imperative for music theorists to cite more scholars producing intellectual work in languages other than English, French, and German, including music theorists who are active beyond the academy and music theoretical work from non-textual traditions.

Third, center ways of knowing that have been historically excluded from Euroamerican music theoretical knowledge production. These may include Indigenous ontologies of song (Robinson 2020), vernacular theories of music (Boyd 2020), embodied knowledge of performers (Shelley 2019), language-based theories of non-European music (J. Park 2020), and the reconstruction of historical performances in diasporic communities (Rao 2017). Within academic music theory, lived and embodied experience remains an undervalued yet crucial mode of producing theoretical knowledge about music. Both Collins ([1990] 2009) and hooks (1994) have traced academia's delegitimization of lived experience as a valid process of knowing and making sense of the world, despite its central role in the production of knowledge for subalternized groups. Writing about musicological discourse on Black music, Guthrie P. Ramsey

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[40] In a recent Twitter thread, Jon Silpayamanant (2021) has also outlined the ways in which "Western meter (and the time signatures we use to name them) are cultural artifacts masquerading as universal and neutral ways to talk about rhythm."

Jr. (2001) emphasizes the importance of taking seriously "black lived experience" and "black vernacular ways of understanding music" as authoritative knowledge on black music, rather than continuing to legitimize analyses that are articulated from the perspective of "the white critical 'I'" (37, 39–40). When engaging symmetrically with hegemonic and subalternized knowledges in music theory, we must also confront our assumptions about which modes of knowing we deem credible in our work, how we incorporate theories that lie beyond the standard media of conference papers, peer-reviewed articles, and monographs, and perhaps most importantly, understanding how our lived experience informs our ways of knowing and priorities in research and teaching.

One of the primary aims of engaging in border thinking through intercultural analysis is to move beyond tokenistic gestures that integrate non-Western music into music theory curricula, conference papers, and journals without confronting the hegemony of Western music theoretical knowledge. Scholars such as Agawu and Martin Scherzinger have already highlighted the potential value of music analysis as a form of empowerment for non-Western musics (Agawu 2003; Scherzinger 2001). Writing two decades after their critiques, I posit that it is no longer sufficient to "include" non-Western music as a repertoire to place on equal footing with Western art and popular music. The project of inclusion, according to Robinson, preserves existing power structures that will continue to equate "excellence" with "Western musical standards" (2019, 141). Progress will fail to take place as long as Western art music constitutes the core of the music department while all other musical styles are relegated to the periphery in the form of electives.[41] Changing the object of study while retaining the Eurocentric terminologies, questions, and methodologies used in the process of research represents an act of colonial

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[41] See Kajikawa's critiques on how music departments in the United States have been complicit in upholding white supremacy through their specialization in Western art music (2019, 2020).

dominance (Mignolo 2011a, 129). Border thinking, to borrow the words of Collins, therefore

requires "challenging the very terms of intellectual discourse itself" ([1990] 2009, 15).

1.5 Japan and Imperial Difference

Thus far, my discussion of the coloniality of power and border thinking has assumed a

binary division between the West and the non-West. While this framing can be valuable for

drawing attention to the various inequities of knowledge production in music theory, the division

between the First and Third Worlds is not always clear-cut.[42] As a capitalist nation-state with a

history of imperialism (both as a victim and perpetrator), Japan is part of the First World but is

not considered part of the West. To consider these geopolitical subtleties, Mignolo ([2000] 2012)

and Grosfoguel (2011) have distinguished between *colonial difference* and *imperial difference* to

theorize how the West has reinforced the coloniality of power in asymmetrical ways. *Colonial*

difference encompasses the various hierarchies of power between the colonizer and the colonized

that have been produced through (primarily) Western colonial rule: the hegemonic dominance of

Western epistemologies, racial and ethnic hierarchies, construction of heteropatriarchal gender

and sexual norms (Lugones 2007), extraction of labor, capital, and natural resources, and

subjugation of the Third World to the economic and political agendas of First World

institutions.[43] *Imperial difference* describes similar hierarchies produced through the coloniality

of power but *without* direct colonization (Mignolo 2007, 474). In other words, imperial

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[42] Postcolonial theorist Homi Bhabha, for example, has argued the First and Third Worlds do not always operate as oppositional entities (1994). Frantz Fanon also discusses feelings of ambivalence that can arise within colonial relationships (1967). For Mignolo, the distinction between the First World (Global North) and the Third World (Global South) is partially an epistemological issue: while the former designates the subject producing the knowledge, the latter refers to the object on which knowledge is produced (Mignolo [2000] 2012, 12–13).

[43] Grosfoguel names four institutions that continue to reinforce colonial difference: the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the Pentagon, and NATO (2011, 14).

difference captures how Western powers have grafted the logics of coloniality onto non-Western

regions of the world without the mechanisms of colonization.[44]

Marking the distinction between colonial and imperial difference is essential for

understanding the limitations of border thinking when discussing Japanese music. Mignolo and

Tlostanova have suggested that Japan—along with Russia, the Ottoman Empire, and China—

exemplifies imperial difference given that it has not been subject to direct colonization by

Western powers (2006, 209–10).[45] Japan's location within the coloniality of power is

complicated by its experience as both a colonizer and colonized, an ambivalent position which

Dorinne Kondo pithily summarizes as a "First-World, capitalist power with an imperialist history

and thinly veiled neoimperialist ambitions that is nonetheless racially marked and Orientalized"

(1997, 160). On the one hand, Japan is a non-Western entity that is situated in the margins of a

Eurocentric world history and carries its own experience of Western imperialism. On the other

hand, as a colonial power, Japan has also engaged in "Japanized Eurocentrism" by constructing a

myth of Japanese superiority over other Asian countries and reproducing the Eurocentric

coloniality of power on a regional level (Ching 2011, 194–95). While an extended discussion of

Japan's ambivalent legacy as both colonizer and colonized is beyond the scope of this chapter, I

raise the issue of imperial difference to cautiously position Japan as a minoritized culture within

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[44] Tlostanova identifies four characteristics of imperial difference: "non-capitalist, non-western, not based on western Christianity or a Latin-derived language" (2012, 135).

[45] See also Grosfoguel 2011, 14.

the purview of Western music theory.[46] By acknowledging Japan's dual status within the

coloniality of power, I seek to 1) avoid whitewashing Japan's complicity in the coloniality of

power; and 2) contextualize how Japan's status as a culturally othered subcolony of the United

States contributes to the marginalization of Japanese musical knowledge in Western music

theory. A consideration of Japan's complex ambivalence within the coloniality of power is a

prerequisite to understanding what roles Japanese music can (and cannot) play in challenging the

Eurocentric epistemic structure of U.S./Canadian music theory.

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[46] Scholars have identified three types of colonialism exhibited by Japan. First, Japan's annexation of Ryūkyū
(1869) and Ainu Mosir (1879), occupation of Taiwan (1895), Korea (1905), the South Seas Mandate (1919), and
Manchuria (1931), and the invasion of China and Southeast Asia during the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937–45)
established Japan as the only non-Western/non-white colonial power.

Second, following its defeat in World War II, Japan converted into a democratized and demilitarized "subempire" of
the United States (Man 2018, 105). Through military and financial backing from the United States and investment into
Southeast Asian markets, Japan quickly transformed into a "regional nexus of free market capitalism and engine of regional
economic growth" as a way to combat the rise of communism in the region and secure U.S. hegemony in East Asia (Young
2018, 222). Japan's postwar economic hegemony, however, was predicated on a neocolonial relationship with its former
colonies. According to Michiko Takeuchi, Japanese industries benefited tremendously from the Korean War and Vietnam
War, during which Japan provided the United States with "weapons and war supplies that victimized thousands of other
Asian people" (Takeuchi 2010, 97. See also Ginoza 2016; Shigematsu and Camacho 2010). Crucially, the dissolution of the
Japanese empire was followed not by a process of decolonization and reparation but by U.S. occupation, which marked
Japan's transition from a perpetrator to a victim of imperialism (Chen 2010). By subsuming Japan under the U.S. military
empire, the occupation allowed Japan to avoid addressing issues of decolonization with its former colonies. As its colonial
legacy was left unaddressed, Japan was absolved of its responsibility for war reparations. Instead, with full endorsement from
the United States, Japan offered reparations in the form of investment and export, through which Japan benefited
substantially by gaining access to natural resources and markets in Southeast Asia (Ching 2001; Young 2018).
Third, Ryūkyū (Okinawa) today exists as both an internal colony of Japan and a military colony of the United States. Ryūkyū
was occupied by the United States military from 1945–72, and continues to hold 73.8% of U.S. military bases in Japan
despite constituting just 0.6% of Japan's total landmass (Ginoza 2016, 584). Kuan-Hsing Chen has described the U.S.
occupation of Ryūkyū as "perhaps the most shameful and neglected chapter in the history of U.S. imperialism" (2010,
270fn9).

In addition to its history as a colonial power, Japan has been subsumed into a neocolonial relationship with the United
States after World War II (Chen 2010). "Almost overnight," Chen argues, "Japan went from being a colonizing power to
being a U.S. colony, from victimizer to victimized" (193). U.S. neocolonialism was most salient during its occupation of
Japan from 1945–52, which was accompanied by sexual exploitation of Japanese women by American soldiers, replicating
similar forms of sexual exploitation in its former colonies by Japanese soldiers during World War II (Takeuchi 2010). Even
after the end of the occupation, Japan has remained subordinate to U.S. military power, with 50,000 American soldiers still
stationed in U.S. military bases (Shorrock 2018). Chen, however, has argued that Japan's reliance on U.S. military power,
which enabled Japan to relegate defense spending to the United States, played a significant role in accelerating Japan's
postwar economic development (2010, 193).

1.6 Diversifying Music Theory: A Cautionary Tale

Japan's imperial history raises broader questions about the potential complications of reframing the Eurocentric scope of music theory.[47] I offer these reflections to caution against inadvertently embracing a narrative of selective inclusion, in which the field privileges theoretical paradigms that are legible to the discipline's existing Euroamerican heteropatriarchal structures. I wish to highlight how such logic can operate as the field increasingly turns its attention to non-Western music and music theory. As Clare Sher Ling Eng (2020) has recently observed, the increase in the number of SMT members who identify as "Asian/Pacific Islander" (57 in 2015 to 82 in 2019) has correlated with a rise in the number of papers on Chinese, Korean, and Japanese topics that have been presented at the Society's annual meetings. By contrast, the number of papers on African, Caribbean, Middle Eastern, South Asian, and Southeast Asian music has decreased or remained stable since 2015 (Eng 2020). Given that the SMT does not disaggregate members' ethnicities in their demographic reports, it is difficult to deduce the extent to which the increase in the "Asian/Pacific Islander" category can be attributed to an increase in members who identify as Chinese/American, Korean/American, and Japanese/American.[48] Nevertheless, we can surmise from this trend that scholarship on East Asian music and music theory is slowly gaining acceptance in the field, whereas the same cannot be said other types of Asian music, let alone all non-Western music. As more and more voices in the field advocate for

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[47] See H. Park 2020 for a discussion of how Japanese hegemony in the video game industry complicates notions of Western power and privilege.

[48] The category of "Asian American/Pacific Islander" (AAPI), though used often in demographics surveys in the United States, can flatten ethnic, class, and linguistic differences that exist among those who identify as AAPI. Asian Americans, for example, comprise of approximately 50 ethnic groups and speak more than 100 languages (Zhou 2021). There are also significant educational disparities among Asian Americans: 57% of Chinese, Korean, and Pakistani Americans hold undergraduate degrees, compared to just 23% of Hmong and Burmese Americans (Budiman and Ruiz 2021). Furthermore, the conflation of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the AAPI label has been problematized for its tendency to marginalize Pacific Islanders and invisibilize cultural and political issues that are specific to Pacific Islander communities (Hall 2015).

the analysis and teaching of non-Western music (Agawu 2000/2001; Amin 2019; Clendinning 2018; Tenzer 2006; Tenzer and Roeder 2011), I invite music theorists to ask ourselves: which non-Western musics are being included in U.S./Canadian music theory? Why are certain non-Western musical and theoretical traditions more visible in the field than others?

These questions resonate beyond issues of Asian representation in the field. Recent conversations on the de-Westernization of the history of music theory, for example, similarly focus on theorists whose work interfaces with the existing canon of white Euroamerican male theorists. While a revision of the history of theory curriculum remains an urgent project for many graduate institutions in the U.S. and Canada, we must beware of merely replacing existing canonical figures with non-European/non-male theorists who have produced intellectual work in ways that are relatable to Western conceptions of music theory. In other words, in addition to recognizing theorists who have been overlooked by the dominant white Eurocentric heteropatriarchal historical narrative, we must also be prepared to pay serious attention to theorists who did not use notation, publish written treatises, or discuss musical parameters in ways that are not legible to Western music theory. Although field-wide discussions about reforming the canon of white European men in the history of music theory are necessary and encouraging, such critiques should also be accompanied by a reframing of criteria for assessing the historical value of music theory. Recent writings by Zhuqing Lester Hu (2021), Alejandro Madrid (2015), and Alexander Rehding (2020a, 2020b) have suggested that we study non-European theorists such as Zhu Zaiyu, Wu Zeitan, Al-Fārābī, and Julián Carrillo, as well as theoretical traditions of Persian and Arabic music. While this is a necessary first step, the white Eurocentric heteropatriarchal status quo will continue to hold considerable power as long as

U.S./Canadian music theorists privilege individuals whose work addresses topics that are valued by Eurocentric intellectual histories over those who do not.

Music theorists, especially those with control over syllabi and curriculum design, must avoid selectively shining the spotlight on theorists whose concerns are congruent with Western theorists, both past and present. For example, Rehding identifies Al-Fārābī as a figure who "expanded Greek principles into the Islamicate context" and Zhu Zaiyu as an originator of equal temperament whose successful calculation of equally-sized intervals predates the Europeans. As Rehding admits, however, such efforts towards de-Westernization poses a serious risk of "constructing a canon from the perspective of American hegemony" (2020a). The discipline's increased engagement with non-Western music theorists therefore necessitates a serious commitment to reframing our practices and value systems. If we sidestep this responsibility, I believe the field will remain complicit in the field's white Eurocentric heteropatriarchal power structures. If we leave the terms of inclusion unchanged, such reforms preserve what Sara Ahmed terms "the whiteness of a thing" (2017, 152) even while increasing the visibility of non-white music theorists who have been historically excluded from the field's history.

I have outlined the key implications of music theory's politics of selective inclusion to highlight the invisible criteria for determining which music theorists and theories are likely to be embraced in the field and which will continue to be neglected. Remaining unaware of these risks will ensure that the discipline will privilege non-Western theories of music that are unambiguously legible to the field's white Eurocentric heteropatriarchal power structures. If U.S./Canadian music theorists are ready to welcome figures such as Zhu, Wu, Al-Fārābī, and Carillo as *music theorists*—rather than as Chinese, Islamic, and Mexican music theorists—we must also simultaneously ask ourselves: who continues to be excluded from our project of

inclusion? Are we merely replacing white cisgender men with cisgender men of color whose theoretical ideas are amenable to Western music theory? In addition to celebrating an increase in the number of papers on Chinese, Arabic, Persian, and Japanese music theory at the Society's annual meetings, we should also reflect on why certain non-Western theoretical traditions are more visible in the field than others. Theories of music that are considered legible within the discipline's white Eurocentric heteropatriarchal epistemological frame are therefore more likely to be accepted into the status quo and heralded as signs of diversity. Far from disavowing the discipline's power structures, a selective model of inclusion tightens its grip onto existing hierarchies of knowledge by provisionally accepting theories that comply with the discipline's white Eurocentric heteropatriarchal frame. As such, the diversification of who we teach and study does not necessarily signify progress towards equity; rather, it can serve as an alternative method of rewarding proximity to whiteness, Eurocentrism, patriarchy, and heteronormativity.

By contextualizing my own work on Japanese musicians and theorists within the politics of inclusion in U.S./Canadian music theory, I wish to highlight how some non-Western music and music theories are likely to occupy a more privileged position within the field's white Eurocentric heteropatriarchal epistemic structures than others. Given Eng's findings (2020), it would be worthwhile to examine the reasons for the increase in the representation of papers on East Asian music and music theory at the Society for Music Theory's annual meetings and peer-reviewed journals (Christensen 2018; Deguchi 2015; Hynes-Tawa 2020; Li 2021; Momii 2020; J. Park 2018; Rao 2016, 2020; Service 2016; Walden 2015; Wang 2020). Through a discussion of the limits of representation and inclusion in the context of the SMT, I suggest that the visibility of research on non-Western music and music theory depends on the extent to which their conceptual schemes overlap with those of U.S./Canadian music theory. Inclusion, however,

cannot be contingent on whether a particular theoretical tradition is legible to the epistemological frameworks of U.S./Canadian music theory. In order to achieve equity between Western and non-Western knowledge, it is crucial for the field to focus on disrupting the hegemony of Western music theory and its constructed myth of universality, in addition to celebrating the expanding subfield of non-Western music analysis.

1.7 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined a framework for intercultural analysis, demonstrating a need for music theorists to center music theory formulated in languages other than English, French, and German, interrogate the white Eurocentric heteropatriarchal epistemic structures of the discipline, and engage with musical knowledge produced outside of institutionalized settings, music theoretical work of performers, and non-Western scholars. By proposing border thinking as a lens through which to engage in intercultural analysis, I offer a starting point for U.S./Canadian music theory to amend for its exclusion of non-Western and other forms of minoritized music theoretical knowledge. The framework, however, does not address the global positionality of minoritized scholars in U.S./Canadian music theory within the coloniality of power. For instance, it is plausible for a music theorist to experience minoritization within the dominant structures in the United States and Canada while enjoying privileged access to funding, hiring, publication opportunities, and speaking engagements due to their native fluency in English, citizenship, U.S./Canadian institutional affiliation, and proximity to U.S./Canadian scholarly networks. For music theorists negotiating these ambivalent positionalities, scholarly identity is negotiated through what Grace En-Yi Ting (2020) has referred to as "entanglements of minority status and privilege," which reflect the simultaneous layering of minoritized and

privileged experiences. To untangle these threads further, future work would benefit from exploring the implications of engaging in intercultural analysis from a minoritized position in the center, a standpoint that carries particular relevance for scholars of color whose research coincides with their diasporic or ethnic background.

To conclude, I reflect upon the epistemic possibilities of intercultural analysis, especially as it relates to decolonization. Border thinking, as Mignolo has articulated, constitutes a prerequisite for the decolonization of knowledge (Mignolo 2011a, [2000] 2012). By centering the epistemologies of marginalized groups, engaging in border thinking through intercultural analysis enables music theory to "delink" from the Eurocentric epistemic structures that have been implemented and normalized through the coloniality of power (Mignolo 2017). Border thinking may suggest an initial path forward towards a "decolonization" of U.S./Canadian music theory. While I agree with Mignolo that border thinking opens the possibility towards decolonial thinking, we must exercise caution against equating decolonial thinking with decolonization proper. Epistemic decolonization—or decoloniality—represents a single method for challenging the coloniality of power within our own acacdemic disciplines. The reach of the coloniality of power, however, extends far beyond the domain of knowledge and is articulated through economic, political, and social means. We must avoid constructing a false equivalency between decoloniality, a dismantling of the Eurocentric heteropatriarchal systems of knowledge production that continue to reinforce asymmetric power relations between Western and non-Western societies today, and decolonization, a radical political movement that involves the repatriation of land and transfer of sovereignty from a colonial power to Indigenous peoples.

Whereas decoloniality focuses primarily on issues of knowledge production, decolonization specifies material forms of reparation. As a number of scholars have repeatedly

argued, there are severe limits to pursuing a decolonial project through decoloniality alone. In Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang's oft-cited formulation, decolonization is not a metaphor, nor is it a "metonym for social justice" (2012, 21). For Tuck and Yang, decolonization "must involve the repatriation of land" (7). As such, when settlers appropriate the term into discussions of curricular reform, canon expansion, and "diversifying" the demographics of the field, we diminish the transformative potential of decolonization and shift the focus away from Indigenous peoples and their sovereignty. Through the repetition of such diversions, settlers depoliticize decolonization into just another multiculturalist buzzword. Needless to say, decolonization lies beyond the capabilities of a single academic discipline, and it would be misguided to frame intercultural analysis as an exercise in decolonization.[49] Rather, I envision intercultural analysis as one step towards disrupting music theory's white Eurocentric heteropatriarchal system of knowledge production. By formulating a theoretical framework for intercultural analysis, I hope to engage music theorists in further conversations on remodeling the epistemological structures of the discipline.

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[49] Anthropologist Nayantara Sheoran Appleton calls for academics to avoid the term decolonization altogether: "till you are actually willing and able to do the work of decolonizing the structures you (and even me) benefit from currently, let us think of better words to do what we are actually doing" (2019). Appleton suggests six alternate words—all beginning with the letter D—that more accurately describe efforts to deconstruct music theory's white supremacist and patriarchal underpinnings: "Diversify your syllabus and curriculum," "Digress from the cannon," "Decentre knowledge and knowledge production," "Devalue hierarchies," "Disinvest from citational power structures," and "Diminish some voices and opinions in meetings, while magnifying others."

Chapter 2
Performing *Te*: Form, Gesture, and Timbre in
Fujikura Dai's *neo* for Solo Shamisen

In his program notes for *Okeanos Breeze* (2011)—a chamber work for shō (Japanese mouth organ), koto (Japanese zither), oboe, and clarinet—Japanese-born and British-based composer Fujikura Dai (1977–; 藤倉大) expresses his vexation towards Western audiences' essentialist cultural expectations of ethnically Japanese composers. Fujikura writes:

> I was asked to complete the piece at such short notice that I did not dwell much on all that clichéd 'crossing-the-border', 'east-meets-west' rubbish that I see in a lot of publicity material for performances using Japanese instruments.

> I was born in Japan but I spent my crucial teenage years in the UK and feel myself to be an equal mix of both cultures (Fujikura 2011).

By making explicit his own intercultural positioning, Fujikura distances himself from the Western colonialist gaze that is often directed towards Japanese composers, whose music is expected and assumed by Western audiences to convey aspects of authentic Japanese culture.[1] His program notes also dissent against clichéd assumptions about music by non-Western composers, particularly that composers ought to write music for traditional instruments from their "own" culture.

> [Okeanos Breeze] is particularly special to me, because it was the first time I had ever written for Japanese traditional instruments. You may think that, because I look Japanese, I must have been playing these instruments since I was born. But the truth is, I had never seen and hardly ever even heard them until I went to a concert at the Darmstadt summer school when I was 20 years old (Fujikura 2011).

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[1] The Western fetishization of a perceived Japanese authenticity draws parallels with anthropologist Dorinne Kondo's analysis of haute couture (1997). Kondo argues that prominent Japanese designers such as Rei Kawakubo, Issey Miyake, and Hanae Mori are judged not as individuals—as in the case of European and American designers—but collectively as Japanese designers whose creative output is rooted in their cultural and ethnic origins.

The use of "you" suggests that the program notes are addressed to Western audiences who might enter the concert hall with such assumptions in mind. Here, Fujikura identifies a disconnect between phenotype ("because I look Japanese") and musical background, disassociating himself from Western perceptions of Japanese identity that often link authenticity with traditional culture. As Fujikura makes clear, he identifies as an "equal mix" of both Japanese and British cultures.

The emergence of composers such as Fujikura calls for a nuanced mode of analysis that not only acknowledges but foregrounds the complex intersections of race, ethnicity, nationality, and musical background. Through an analysis of Fujikura's *neo* (2014) for solo shamisen (a three-stringed lute-like instrument)—one of Fujikura's handful of compositions for traditional Japanese instruments—I challenge widely held essentialist assumptions about a musician's ethnicity and the music they perform or compose. In particular, I focus on performances of the work by Honjoh Hidejirō (本條秀慈郎)—the rock-musician-turned-shamisen-player who not only commissioned and premiered the work but also advised Fujikura on the mechanisms of the instrument. By weaving together performance analysis, Japanese and North American theories of fretboard topography, interviews, and biographical information on Fujikura and Honjoh, I demonstrate how Fujikura and Honjoh resist simplistic categorization as "Japanese musicians." Moreover, I argue that *neo* reflects Fujikura's and Honjoh's subjectivities as modern-day Japanese musicians, challenging the prevailing Western perceptions of Japanese identity as something that is expressed most authentically through traditional culture. By synthesizing music theoretical knowledge from Japanese- and North American-based scholars, I present a case study of an intercultural analytical methodology that reflects Fujikura's and Honjoh's varying degrees of training in Western art music, traditional shamisen performance, and rock.

Drawing upon the rich body of Japanese-language scholarship on shamisen music as well as North American theories of gesture and fretboard topography, this chapter first outlines a performer-oriented methodology for analyzing contemporary shamisen music. A number of studies on shamisen music have focused on pitch- and rhythm-based similarities to categorize idiomatic melodic patterns (Machida 1983; Motegi 1988; Tokita 2000). Machida Kashō, for example, has famously catalogued hundreds of melodic patterns in a variety of traditional genres of shamisen music (Machida 1983). A sizable body of scholarship in both Japanese and English has similarly emphasized the role of melodic patterns in the structuring of various genres of shamisen music (Keister 2004; Kitagawa 2014; Tokita 1996, 1999, 2000; Tanaka 2002; Tokumaru 2000; Yakō and Araki 1998; Yamada 2008). Other scholars, while acknowledging the significance of melodic patterns in the pedagogy and performance of shamisen music, have shifted the conversation away from pitch to argue that performers of the shamisen are more concerned with timbre and performance technique (Oshio 2004, 2015; Ōtsuka 1989, 1995; Schmuckal 2016; Tokumaru 2000).[2] In a critique of past theoretical work on shamisen music, musicologist Ōtsuka Haiko—a skilled shamisen player herself—has warned against theories that are based primarily on notation and quantitative data but ignore oral and embodied knowledge of practitioners (Ōtsuka 1995, 57).

I build upon the two approaches by analyzing *neo* (2014)—a piece for solo shamisen by Fujikura—through the concept of *te* (「手」, or literally "hand"), a term used by shamisen players to refer to 1) recurring melodic patterns; and 2) their characteristic fingerings, hand positions, and performance techniques. My analysis of *neo* highlights how a performer's use of *te* determines the form of a piece. Through aural and visual analysis of performances by Honjoh

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[2] See also Wade 2014, 131.

Hidejirō—the rock-musician-turned-shamisen-player for whom *neo* was written—I demonstrate how the form of *neo* unfolds through changes in *te*. I first demonstrate how each section of *neo* is associated with a unique *te*. I then argue that formal sections are unified by similarities in *te*. By adopting a *te*-based approach, I expand the scope of pitch- and rhythm-based analysis to highlight the interactions between form, gesture, and timbre in contemporary shamisen performance.

While *te* is a colloquial term used among shamisen players, I suggest that *te* constitutes a theory of music which is not explicitly theorized in writing but forms the foundation of how shamisen players think about and understand the music they perform. This idea of an implicit theory of music resonates with what Yoshihiko Tokumaru has referred to as an "invisible theory" (「見えない理論」), which he describes as theoretical principles undergirding performers' understanding of music that are acquired through oral instruction from a teacher (Tokumaru 2008). An analysis rooted in Western analytical methodologies inevitably focuses primarily on musical events and parameters that can be accessed through "visible theories" (「見える 理論」)—which Tokumaru defines as theories of music that are articulated visually through written language and mathematical symbols (e.g., numbers, interval ratios, rhythmic subdivisions, etc.)(170). Moving beyond scale- and pitch-based analyses that are rooted in "visible theories," an analysis of *te* challenges the universalizing reach of Western music theoretical methods in non-Western music analysis. By constructing an analytical methodology based on shamisen players' "invisible" theoretical schemes, I seek to expand the "spectrum of valid and valuable modes of analysis," in the words of Nancy Yunhwa Rao (2019, 79).

2.1 The Shamisen: An Overview

The shamisen is a three-stringed lute-like instrument, which has typically been associated with traditional genres of Japanese music (Figure 2.1). The instrument remains a fixture in a variety of genres and contexts: kabuki theatre (歌舞伎), puppet theatre (*bunraku*; 文楽), narrative genres (*gidayu, tokiwazu*, *kiyomoto*; 義太夫, 常磐津, 清元), lyric genres (*nagauta, jiuta, kouta, hauta*; 長唄, 地歌, 小唄, 端唄), and folk music.[3] In traditional genres, the shamisen has often served an accompanimental role to a vocalist or functioned within an ensemble of other shamisen or koto.

Figure 2.1: A Chūzao (medium-sized) Shamisen (中棹三味線), a three-stringed lute-like instrument used in Honjoh's performance of neo (Japan Arts Council n.d.).

While the shamisen has become one of the most well-known instruments of traditional Japanese music, it is not indigenous to Japan. A number of scholars agree that the ancestor of the shamisen was most likely made its way into Japan from the Chinese province of Fujian (福建) by way of the Ryūkyū (琉球) Islands in the late sixteenth century (Kikkawa 1978a; Malm 1959;

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[3] Generally speaking, narrative genres (*katarimono*; 語りもの) place emphasis on the lyrics while lyric genres (*utaimono*; 歌いもの) emphasizes the relationship between voice and melody (Malm 1959, 204).

Nogawa 2009; Tokita 2008).[4] Moreover, the introduction of the shamisen into Japan came much later than other traditional Japanese instruments such as shō, hichiriki, ryūteki, koto, and shakuhachi, all of which arrived in Japan before the eighth century. Soon after its arrival, the shamisen underwent a process of "Japanization" that transformed the instrument into its current form. According to Nogawa Mihoko, the organological structure of the shamisen was altered by biwa players, who began playing the shamisen with large biwa plectrums rather than picks (Nogawa 2009, 45).[5] Moreover, the snake skin stretched across the shamisen's body was soon replaced with cat and dog skin, as snake skin was incapable of withstanding the strikes made by the biwa plectrum (Malm 1959, 185).

There are three types of shamisen: *hosozao shamisen* (細棹三味線), *chūzao shamisen* (中棹三味線), and *futozao shamisen* (太棹三味線). The categorizations are based on the thickness of the neck, but the three types also differ in the size of the body, plectrum, and timbre.[6] In performances of contemporary music, Honjoh primarily plays the *chūzao shamisen,* which is a middle-sized instrument typically used in jiuta, kouta, hauta, tokiwazu, kiyomoto, and folk music.[7]

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[4] Drawing on historical sources from the early Edo Period (1603–1868), Kikkawa Eishi (1978a) also posits a number of alternative theories for the importation of the shamisen into Japan. While he notes that the shamisen most likely arrived in the port of Sakai (near Osaka) from Ryūkyū, he also suggests that the instrument may have arrived in Kyūshū. He also speculates over the possibility that the imported instrument was originally a two-stringed bowed instrument, which was then altered into a three-stringed plucked instrument by Japanese musicians.

[5] Nogawa also suggests the possibility that biwa plectrums may have already been in use by shamisen players in the Ryūkyū Islands by the time the instrument was brought to Japan.

[6] For details on the different styles of shamisen and the genres with which each instrument is associated, see Johnson 2010.

[7] *Futozao shamisen* is used in gidayū, and *hosozao shamisen* is used in nagauta.

2.2 Fujikura Dai and Honjoh Hidejirō: Japanese Musicians?

Neo, Fujikura's first composition for shamisen, was commissioned by Honjoh, who premiered the work at a recital held at the New York Tenri Cultural Institute in September 2016. Born in Osaka, Japan, Fujikura emigrated to the United Kingdom at the age of 15 and has been living there ever since. Although Fujikura has composed a number of works for Japanese instruments in recent years—*neo* (2014), *Uto* for four taiko drums (2014), *Korokoro* for solo shakuhachi (2015), *Shamisen Concerto* (2019), *Ryu* for koto (2019), and *bueno ueno* (2019) for saxophone and taiko—he only encountered traditional Japanese music at the age of twenty, when he attended the Darmstadt summer course (Fujikura 2011). In fact, Fujikura's formal training has been based entirely in Western music: he studied piano as a child, played keyboard in musicals and rock bands, and went on to receive a Ph.D. in composition from King's College, London, where he studied with George Benjamin (Gotō 2018; Kobayashi 2019). Fujikura also worked closely with prominent figures such as Pierre Boulez and Peter Eötvös, both of whom have conducted his works (Fujikura 2020a).

Similarly to Fujikura, Honjoh (née Ayusawa Keigo; 鮎沢京吾) was born in Japan (in Utsunomiya) and was initially trained in Western music. Throughout his childhood and adolescence, he played piano, electric guitar, and tuba and was exposed to jazz and Western art music through his parents. At the suggestion of his mother, Honjoh began taking lessons in tsugaru shamisen at the age of 15 and continued pursuing shamisen performance at the Tōhō Gakuen College of Drama and Music. At Tōhō, Honjoh mainly studied contemporary music while taking lessons with shamisen player Honjō Hidetarō (本條秀太郎). He was eventually given permission by his teacher to use the stage name Honjoh Hidejirō, and made his recital debut in 2009 (Gotō

2019).[8] He is now one of the few active shamisen players who specialize in contemporary repertoires.

Both Fujikura and Honjoh became acquainted with the shamisen as their second musical language—or M2 as theorized by Alison McQueen Tokita—and approached the instrument with Western music as their primary frame of reference (2014). Moreover, both musicians have expressed discomfort with essentialist ideas surrounding Japanese musicians, especially the assumption that their desire to write for and perform a traditional Japanese instrument derives from their Japanese ethnicity. In program notes for the Miller Theatre Composer Portrait series, Fujikura states that his "childhood dream was to be a composer, not a Japanese composer" (Pellegrinelli 2020). In a similar vein, Honjoh noted his feeling of discomfort with the categorization of the shamisen as an exclusively Japanese instrument, pointing out that the shamisen was an imported instrument and did not originate from Japan (Honjoh, personal communication, August 3, 2019). Fujikura's and Honjoh's diverse musical backgrounds demonstrate the extent to which such essentialist perceptions surrounding Japanese musicians are misguided. I propose that an analysis of *neo* must reflect the underlying intercultural threads that have shaped its composition and performance:

> 1) Fujikura is a U.K.-based and Japanese-born composer who studied Western composition and knew little about the shamisen before composing *neo*;
>
> 2) Honjoh, who specializes in the performance of contemporary music, grew up playing the double bass, tuba, and guitar while idolizing rock music (Fujikura 2020);
>
> 3) *neo* was composed collaboratively through hours of Skype conversations between London-based Fujikura and Tokyo-based Honjoh;
>
> 4) *neo* is written entirely in Western staff notation and has often been performed in Westernized performance venues;

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[8] The practice of adopting stage names is common in a number of other Japanese traditional art forms: kabuki, nagauta, bunraku, and rakugo, to name a few.

5) most of the performance techniques in *neo* are those used most commonly in traditional genres; Fujikura deliberately does not invent any new extended techniques and Honjoh relies primarily on conventions of traditional performance practice when playing *neo* (Honjoh, personal communication, August 3, 2019).

As such, I argue that *neo* invites listeners to understand interculturality as a "relational or discursive rather than an absolute manner," in the words of Ingrid Monson (1996, 97). Given the complexity of *neo*'s interculturality, an analysis that situates Japanese and Western music as oppositional entities to highlight cultural difference would constitute a misreading. By identifying the possibility of a "misreading," I cautiously gesture towards the potential harmful consequences of envisioning analysis as an interpretive act based on the analyst's intersubjective musical experience (Lochhead 2016, 81). As Michael Tenzer has noted, analysis of non-Western music by Western-based scholars presents the possibility of misrepresentation (2006, 10). When an analysis requires the negotiation of intercultural dynamics between the analyst, performer, and composer, analytical misreadings have the disastrous potential to engage in cultural reductionism, perpetuate colonialist ideologies, and inflict epistemic violence onto marginalized groups.

In *neo*, the lines between "Japanese" and "Western" are far from clearly demarcated, and assuming the stability of such cultural, national, and ethnic markers would fail to recognize the subtle ways in which these forces intersect. For both Fujikura and Honjoh, they belong to both Japan and the West, with neither occupying the position of self or other. Given Honjoh's intercultural musical background and his critical role as a collaborator in the composition of the piece, I also contend that the analysis should foreground both Fujikura and Honjoh as agents of

intercultural meaning.[9] An analysis of *neo* should therefore pay close attention to the interactions between the various cultural threads that manifest in the performance of the work.

Fujikura has reflected on his own background of having lived in both Japan and the United Kingdom, often questioning essentialist assumptions that audiences often project onto his ethnicity. In addition to the previously discussed program notes for *Okeanos Breeze*, Fujikura has repeatedly emphasized his unfamiliarity with traditional Japanese music, admitting that he has internalized exoticized perceptions of traditional Japanese music that one often encounters in the West. In his program notes for *neo*, Fujikura writes:

> Until now, I have never written for the shamisen. For me personally, Japanese instruments are the cliché music we hear in Japanese restaurants outside of Japan, or what we see on New Year's Day television programs in Japan.
>
> […]
>
> For some reason, I had a rather cartoon or comic book-like image about the instrument. Like some ninja or samurai who plays shamisen, and a part of the shamisen is a samurai sword, or something (yes, I watch too many movies and too much TV)(Fujikura 2014).[10]

As indicated in the program notes, Fujikura had never written for shamisen prior to composing *neo*. The piece was therefore made possible through a collaboration between Fujikura and Honjoh, who acted as an advisor for technical and instrumental matters. Fujikura consulted Honjoh frequently during the compositional process. In a 2017 interview, Fujikura expresses his preference for near-constant communication with the performer, emailing short excerpts to the performer in return for recorded audio clips (Carvalho, Lopes, and Hiney 2018, 65). Honjoh has

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[9] I explore another example of composer-performer collaboration in Chapter 3, which focuses on the partnership between shō player Miyata Mayumi and American experimental composer John Cage.

[10] In a 2019 interview, Fujikura has also noted that his impressions of the shamisen stem from "sushi restaurants and movies like 'Kubo and the Two Strings'" (Ebright 2019). The 2016 stop-motion animated film stirred controversy for its casting of white actors for voicing the lead Japanese characters. The two most high-profile Japanese American actors in the film, George Takei and Cary-Hiroyuki Tagawa, were relegated to the role of villagers (Cheng 2016).

recounted a similar experience of working with Fujikura (Honjoh, personal communication, August 3, 2019). Honjoh first presented Fujikura with a textbook on shamisen performance written by his teacher, Honjō Hidetarō (2002). According to Honjoh, Fujikura had little interest in inventing new extended techniques and was committed to writing a piece that used traditional techniques in innovative ways. For Honjoh, *neo* has reached the "apex of traditional technique" (Honjoh, personal communication, August 3, 2019). Their Skype conversations focused primarily on technical issues, with Honjoh testing out phrases that Fujikura had sent him. The two discussed different ways of incorporating traditional performance techniques into the piece, with Fujikura ultimately deciding on passages that Honjoh felt were most intuitive to play on the shamisen.

Fujikura's distanced relationship with the shamisen is far from unique in modern-day Japan. According to a 2016 survey by the Statistics Bureau of Japan, just 2.9% of respondents (sample size of 179,297 residents in Japan above the age of 10) reported that they have attended a live performance of traditional Japanese music (including hōgaku genres performed by shamisen, koto, or shakuhachi) between 20 October 2015 and 19 October 2016. In comparison, the same survey showed that 10.1% of respondents attended at least one Western classical music concert during that time (Sōmushō Tōkeikyoku 2017). These numbers alone, however, do not reflect the degree of public interest in traditional Japanese music. In a 2008 study by marketing firm NTTCom Research, 81% of respondents expressed support towards the preservation of traditional art forms in Japan, despite the fact that a significantly lower percentage (7%) had ever attended a live performance of hōgaku (NTTCom Research 2008). In a similar study by Asahi Group Holdings, the most common reason given by respondents for not attending performances of traditional art forms is the lack of knowledge and context: difficulty in understanding archaic

language, cultural references, and tropes (Asahi Group Holdings 2007). These surveys highlight

a contrast between a high level of interest in and general lack of familiarity with traditional

Japanese art forms in contemporary Japanese society. In a similar way, Fujikura approached the

shamisen as a complete outsider. Fujikura was first exposed to the shamisen through its

representations in Japanese popular culture, and like twentieth-century composers such as Lou

Harrison and Takemitsu, was particularly drawn to the "noise"-like quality of the sawari

technique (Miller and Lieberman 2004; Takemitsu 2004). Fujikura writes:

> My attraction to the shamisen was the concept of adding "noise" to the sound, which is
> unthinkable in western classical music. I loved it. I immediately thought of it as a bit like
> distortion with an electric guitar. So I treated this piece like a guitar solo in rock concert
> (Fujikura 2014)

Fujikura's comments suggest that he initially perceived the shamisen as a foreign, quasi-exotic

sonic resource, much like the respondents of the aforementioned surveys.

To further contextualize my analytical perspective, I wish to emphasize the intercultural

subjectivities that shape my interaction with *neo*. As an outsider to shamisen music, I do not play

or have ever formally studied the shamisen, and my knowledge of the instrument is based

entirely on interviews, secondary literature written by scholar-performers, and my subjective

perceptions as a listener and viewer. Just as Fujikura (2020b) has admitted that he had no

exposure to traditional Japanese music of any kind while living in Japan, I developed my own

interest in traditional Japanese music while studying in the United States. My experience of

being a racial and ethnic minority in the field of music theory has elevated my awareness of the

extent to which musics and musical knowledge of Japanese culture—as well as those of other

non-Western cultures—have been neglected. While knowledges articulated by shamisen players

and Japanese scholars form the core tenet of my analytical approach, my own approaches to

analysis are informed heavily by the practices of Western music theory in which I have been

trained. Instead, I seek to use this analytical exercise as a way to 1) explicitly center analytical

approaches and theories of music that have been marginalized in music theoretical discourse; and

2) interrogate my own Western-centric biases and assumptions about music theory and analysis,

which I have accumulated through my years of training in North American music theory.

2.3 Analytical Methodology

Ever since the publication of Uehara Rokushirō's (上原六四郎; 1848–1913) landmark

treatise *Zokugaku Senritsukō* (「俗楽旋律考」; 1895)*,* which was the first attempt to categorize

modes that were used in the music of the Edo period, music theoretical scholarship on traditional

Japanese music has been proliferated by studies of modes, tonality, and other pitch-based

relationships (Tokita 1996, 5).[11] Today, the most widely cited modal theory in Japanese music

remains Koizumi Fumio's (小泉文夫; 1927–83) tetrachordal theory, which challenged Uehara's

segmentation of Japanese modes at the octave. As an alternative, Koizumi proposed that

Japanese modes are organized into three-note units spanning an interval of a fourth (Koizumi

1958).[12] Koizumi surmised that his theory was applicable to not only shamisen music but also

more broadly to music of the koto and shakuhachi (Tokita 1996, 5). His theory has been

extended and modified by subsequent generations of scholars and remains influential in

scholarship on Japanese music today (Burnett 2011; Ōtsuka 1995; Tokita 1996; Tokumaru

1981).

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[11] See Ōtsuka 1995, 21–88 for a historical overview of theories on Japanese scales.

[12] Koizumi theorized that the outer tones of the tetrachord, which are located a fourth apart, constitute the "nuclear tones." The nuclear tones, according to Koizumi, are more stable than the intermediate tones and can function as the concluding note of a melody. While the nuclear tones are fixed, the intermediary tone can vary. The position of the intermediary tone determines the type of tetrachord. See also Tokita 1996; Tokita and Hughes 2008, 19–23.

Tokita and Oshio Satomi have warned, however, that the primacy of pitch in studies of shamisen music represents the imposition of a Western epistemological framework onto the analysis of Japanese music (Oshio 2009; Tokita 1996). While both Uehara and Koizumi were concerned with identifying modes that were specific to Japanese music, their theories of mode were nevertheless based firmly on principles of Western music theory. Whereas Uehara's scalar theories are based on the Western conceptualization of major and minor scales, Koizumi's theory draws upon methods in comparative musicology and the Greek construct of the tetrachord (Ōtsuka 1995, 67–68; Tokita 1996, 4). My intention here is not to criticize Uehara and Koizumi for their dependence on Western music theoretical ideas, as there are historical reasons for why their theories of Japanese music are rooted in principles of Western music. To rephrase Kofi Agawu's formulation, I wish to draw attention to the Western "patterns of prioritization enshrined in [Japanese music theory's] conceptual scheme" (2016, 31). While both Uehara and Koizumi are Japanese, I position their work as Western(ized) music theories given the extent to which they rely on Western conceptions of pitch and mode. I align my approach with that of Tokita and Oshio to explore other modes of analyses that move beyond Western parametric frameworks.

In what ways are pitch-based parameters irrelevant or inadequate for explaining how shamisen music works? Previous scholarship on shamisen music has pointed towards two main reasons for why pitch-centric approaches are inadequate for analyzing shamisen music. First, the notion of absolute pitch, which is taken for granted in Western music, does not fully apply to shamisen music. Shamisen players, for example, prefer to use new silk strings for each performance, despite the fact that newer strings tend to go out of tune more quickly and frequently. But performers often choose to accept these consequences: newer strings are less

likely to snap during performance and yield a better sound (Ōtsuka 1995, 13). As such, it is

common for performers to continually adjust the tunings of the strings during a pause in the

piece or when the piece calls for an open string. Given the instability of intonation in shamisen

performance, Ōtsuka argues that analysts of shamisen music should focus not only on the "tones

that have already sounded" (「出てしまった音」)[13] but also the physical processes that are

involved in the production of each tone: the performer's use of fingerings, frets, hand

movements, and the physicality of the instrument (Ōtsuka 1995, 16).

The intonation of string tunings, in fact, is variable. As I have introduced earlier in the

chapter, string tunings are based not on absolute intonation but on the intervals between them.

When the shamisen is used as an accompanimental instrument, the intonation of the strings is

dependent on the singer's vocal range and can vary from performance to performance. As shown

in Figure 2.2, performers will always refer to the strings by their numbers (i.e., "first string")

rather than by their pitch (e.g., "D string"). The variability of intonation also applies to fretted

pitches. Colleen Christina Schmuckal, for instance, has noted that performers can choose to play

certain pitches "sharper" or "flatter" than the indicated melodic tone for expressive effect

(Schmuckal 2018, 39).

Figure 2.2: Diagram of the neck of the shamisen (Koizumi Fumio Memorial Archives 2008; translations my own).
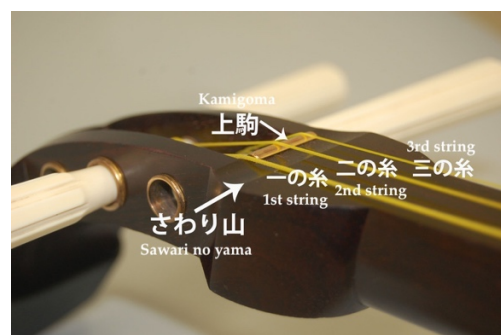
Similarly, adopting Koizumi's theory of tetrachords, Ōtsuka has proposed that the intonation of intermediate tones tend to vary, whereas the nuclear tones tend to have a more fixed intonation. In fact, Ōtsuka has argued that a discrepancy often exists between *what pitch the performer thinks they played* and *the actual sounding pitch* (Ōtsuka 1995, 122–23). A performer of gidayū shamisen, for example, might have the intention of playing C# and use fingerings suggesting that the intention to sound C#; but acoustically speaking, the actual sounding pitch might be closer to D. Ōtsuka posits that such variabilities in pitch during performance are not mistakes but rather represent the norm in shamisen music performance. This is not to say that variabilities in pitch do not exist in Western music, and I do not intend to propose a dichotomy between fixed pitch in Western music and variable pitch in Japanese music. Rather, I draw attention to the variability of pitch in certain contexts of shamisen music to highlight the culturally contingent nature of pitch identity. These observations suggest that shamisen music requires scholars to reconsider the Eurocentric bias of understanding pitch as a fixed and reliable parameter for analysis.

Second, by centering musical parameters that are valued in Western music theory (e.g., pitch, rhythm, etc.), analysts can risk overlooking musical features that are most significant or valued within the tradition. Kimiko Ohtani and Yoshihiko Tokumaru, for example, have criticized Japanese musicologists in the 1950s and 1960s for "perceiving and notating traditional music through ears which had been trained almost exclusively in Western music" (Ohtani and Tokumaru 1983, 156). As a result, analysis of Japanese music based on Western notation and value systems has typically emphasized pitch-based relationships while failing to account for subtleties of timbre, which constitute one of the key parameters of shamisen music (156).

How can music theorists avoid imposing a Eurocentric and pitch-centric epistemological framework onto shamisen music? In response to the pitch centricity of scholarship on shamisen music, scholars such as Ōtsuka and Schmuckal have urged researchers to move away from pitch-centric methodologies and consider how considerations of timbre and performance technique can be incorporated into analysis (Ōtsuka 1989, 1995; Schmuckal 2016). Aligning my approach with those of Ōtsuka and Schmuckal, I propose that an analysis of instrumental gesture—defined by Eugene Montague (2012) as "movements necessary to produce the required sound"—yields a culturally nuanced analysis of shamisen music that pays closer attention to the roles of timbral contrast, performance technique, and considerations of fingerings, frets, and hand movements in shaping musical structure (Ohtani and Tokumaru 1983, 156). My analytical methodology does not seek to dismiss the utility of pitch-based analysis in shamisen music; rather, I foreground the physical processes required to produce the pitches as a way to highlight the interactions between gesture, timbre, and pitch in contemporary shamisen performance.

2.4 Analyzing *Te*

What alternative methodologies can we envision for a more culturally nuanced analysis of shamisen music that does not assume the primacy of pitch? I argue that an analytical methodology centered around instrumental gesture is consistent with how performers talk about and conceptualize shamisen music. My methodology specifically draws upon *te*, which I have defined earlier as a term used by shamisen players to refer to recurring melodic patterns as well as their characteristic fingerings, hand positions, and performance techniques. *Te* is primarily a colloquial term. Shamisen players might use phrases such as "difficult *te*" (「難しい手」) and "my *te* is getting better" (「手が上がる」) in conversation (Honjō 2002, 50). While the former

refers to a particularly difficult musical phrase for the performer, the latter comments on how the

performer's own technique has improved. These examples of how performers use the word *te*

suggest that shamisen players already talk about music by invoking gesture. By adopting *te* as

the primary analytical parameter, I propose a performer-oriented framework as a way of

decentering the Western conceptualization of melody in shamisen music analysis. I am not

introducing *te* as a way to broaden the scope of how Western music theory understands melody.

Instead, similarly to Kevin Fellezs's use of Hawaiian terminology as a decolonial strategy, I

explicitly adopt Japanese-language terminology as a way to decenter Western music theoretical

epistemologies and languages, particularly concerning the parameters of melody and motive

(2019).

      Scholars of shamisen music have offered two main definitions for *te*. First, Mabuchi

Usaburō writes that *te* refers to both the "sound made by hand" and the "playing style of the

hand," suggesting that *te* encompasses both the sounding pitches and timbres as well as the

physical movements needed to produce them (Mabuchi 1979, 36).[14] Similarly, Otsuka defines *te*

as a term that encompasses not only pitch and rhythm but parameters usually ignored by Western

conceptions of melody: fingerings, hand movements, and string choices (Ōtsuka 1989, 170).[15]

By including the physical gestures that are associated with performing the instrument, *te* expands

beyond conventional Western understandings of melody. According to Otsuka, learning the

elements of *te* is fundamental to shamisen performance. Fingerings and hand movements are not

merely a technical issue nor are they left to the performer's discretion; rather, every melody

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[14] Original text in German reads as follows: "Es hat zunächst die Bedeutung von Hand. dann beziechnet es in der Musik das durch die Hand zum Erklingen Gebrachte und schließlich beinhaltet es auch die Spielweise der Hand selbst."

[15] Recent work in music theory has also explored the integral role of performance gestures in shaping musical meaning: Berry 2009; Easley 2015; Koozin 2011; Montague 2012; Rockwell 2009.

dictates a set of fingerings that should be used by the performer to achieve the desired timbre

(Ōtsuka 1989). As such, a *te*-based conceptualization of melody is broader than how it would be

understood by a performer of Western music.

Second, Tokita suggests that *te* is synonymous with both "formulaic musical material"

and "phrase," implying that *te* can refer to recurring motivic material in a given piece or a

musical segment that functions as a self-contained section within the form of the piece (Tokita

1996, 99, 101). When used in this way, *te* allows for an analysis of phrase structure, form, and

the instrumental gestures that are associated with the performance of these formal units. As a

term that synthesizes the two definitions outlined above, *te* offers a way of parsing the melodic

and formal aspects of shamisen music through the lens of instrumental gesture.

Example 2.1: An overview of the various fingerings and timbres through which the pitch E4 can
be played on shamisen (Ōtsuka 1989, Ex. 7)

In her analysis of shamisen fingering conventions, Ōtsuka demonstrates how differences

in *te* are closely intertwined with considerations of timbre. In Example 2.1, a reproduction of

Ōtsuka's Example 7, she suggests four different ways of playing the pitch E4 on shamisen, each

of which features a different *te* and produces a unique timbre. The left side of the example gives

a diagram of the three strings, with the lowest line corresponding to the lowest first string and the

highest line representing the highest third string. The diagram also gives the indication for the

tuning: "honchōshi" (本調子), which instructs the performer to tune the second string a perfect

fifth above the first string and the third string a perfect fourth above the second string. The numbers on the strings indicate the fret numbers of the sounding pitch, the symbols below the strings represent the performance technique for the accompanying pitch. As indicated in the example, the four different ways of playing the pitch E4 are as follows: first, the performer can play E4 by pressing down on the fourth fret of the first string, which in this example is tuned to B4; second, the performer can play an open second string with a downward stroke of the plectrum; third, the performer can play an open second string with an upward stroke of the plectrum, a technique called *sukui* (as indicated by the symbol ス below the tablature); and fourth, the performer has the option to play the fourth fret on the first string and an open second string simultaneously. Ōtsuka argues that each of these four ways of playing produce distinct timbres, and are not interchangeable. The *te* dictates not only the pitch and rhythmic profiles of a given phrase, but also the correct fingerings and strings for producing the desired timbre.

It is conventional for listeners familiar with Western music to equate two melodies with one another if their constituent pitches, rhythms, and contours are identical. If I played the opening theme of the first movement of Camille Saint-Saëns's Violin Concerto No. 3, Op. 61 (Example 2.2) on the G string as indicated in the score, and then played it again entirely in first position, listeners accustomed to Western art music would likely understand that both statements are representations of the same melody. There is therefore a type of timbral invariance at work, in which melodic identity in Western music is dependent primarily on three parameters: pitch, rhythm, and contour.

Example 2.2: Camille Saint-Saëns, Violin Concerto No. 3, Op. 61 in B minor, i, opening theme

By contrast, two segments with identical pitches, contours, and rhythms in shamisen music are not always categorized as statements of the same melody. If the two segments are played using different fingerings and on different strings—substituting an open string for a fretted pitch, for example—they are understood as having different melodic identities due to their differences in *te* (Ōtsuka 1989, 174).

Ōtsuka introduces an example in which two melodies share the same pitches and rhythms but are considered different melodies due to their differences in *te*. Example 2.3, a reproduction of Example 10 from Ōtsuka's article, shows two distinct melodic patterns in Gidayū repertoire—a musical narrative used to accompany bunraku puppet theatre. The *otoko no naki* (男の泣き; cries of a man) melody on the left side of the example represents a crying male character, and *onna no naki* (女の泣き; cries of a woman) on the right side of the example evokes a crying female character. While the sounding pitches of both melodies are identical, *otoko no naki* and *onna no naki* are played using entirely different fingerings. The fingerings for the two melodies are shown above the Western staff transcription in tablature form. The lowest line denotes the first string, the highest line represents the third string, and the numbers indicate the fret at which each melodic note is played. The tablature on the left (marked by ア) shows the frets for *otoko no*

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naki, whereas the tablature o the right (marked by イ) shows the frets for *onna no naki*. Given that B3 and E4 are played by open strings in both melodies, the differences in fingerings are concentrated in the first four notes (B4-A4-B4-C5). The *otoko no naki* melody requires the performer to play all four notes on the second string and avoids the use of the open third string, whereas the *onna no naki* melody is played on the second and third strings and does not shy away from using open strings.

Example 2.3: *Otoko no naki* and *Onna no naki* melodies (Ōtsuka 1989, Ex. 10)

While the *otoko no naki* and *onna no naki* melodies draw upon identical pitches, rhythms, and contours, they are understood as having distinct melodic identities due to their differences in timbre. Fingerings and hand movements are therefore a means of producing the appropriate timbral profiles for each melody. Certain fingerings are associated with certain melodies, and altering the fingerings subsequently transforms its melodic identity. According to Ohtani and Tokumaru, the role of timbre in differentiating melodies with identical pitches, rhythms, and contours has implications for formal analysis as well: "whether a phrase is to be perceived as a cadential pattern or not," they write, "depends simply on which string it is played, though the pitch content may be exactly alike" (1983, 156). As such, building my approach on Ōtsuka's findings, I argue that fingerings—as well as the unique timbres they produce—are much a part of

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the melodic identity as the pitches and rhythms, and require serious analytical attention when examining shamisen music.

2.5 Frets

Having established *te* as a performer-oriented parameter for analyzing melodic configurations, I will now outline the mechanisms through which I analyze *te* in Honjoh's performance of *neo*. Music theoretical scholarship in both Japan and North America has developed the fretboard as an instrumental space that captures the performer's hand and finger movements (De Souza 2017, 2018; Easley 2015; Koozin 2011; Oshio 2015; Ōtsuka 1989, 1995; Rockwell 2009).[16] I specifically draw upon the work of Jonathan De Souza, Oshio, and Ōtsuka to develop a shamisen-specific fretboard model for capturing hand and finger movements in a performance.

Shamisen players have adopted a system of numbering frets called the *bunkafu* (文化譜) since the early twentieth century (Figure 2.3). Similarly to Western tablature, bunkafu notates repertoire as a combination of strings and frets.[17] Developed by nagauta shamisen player Kine'ie Yashichi IV (四世杵家弥七; 1890–1942) in 1922, the bunkafu incorporates the left-to-right, top-to-bottom reading of Western staff notation (Johnson 2010, 107). The three horizontal lines represent the three strings, with the lowest line corresponding to the lowest-tuned first string. Frets are numbered as integers, with 0 representing the open string. Most frets are assigned an integer, while some are referred to by Western accidental symbols (flat/sharp). Lower numbered frets are located closer to the tuning pegs whereas the higher numbered frets are located towards

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[16] See also Baily 1977, 2006; Baily and Driver 1992.

[17] In contemporary manifestations of bunkafu, rhythmic duration is indicated through horizontal lines written beneath each Arabic numeral (Johnson 2010, 108).

the body of the instrument. As a system that reinterprets the features of Western staff notation from the perspective of shamisen fret notation, Bunkafu constitutes an example of border thinking, a process of knowledge production that values non-Western and Western knowledges as equally valid ways of knowing (Anzaldúa [1987] 2012; Mignolo 2011a, [2000] 2012). The clear Western influence in bunkafu reflects the inescapability of Western culture during the Meiji era, during which the state-led adoption of Western music profoundly shaped conceptualizations of music in Japan. The Western influence in bunkafu does not mean the notation is "less authentically Japanese" than that which was in use during the Edo period. Rather, as an instance of border thinking that reformulates a Western notational system from a non-Western epistemic location, bunkafu provides a Japanese epistemological foundation from which to construct a model for analyzing *te*.

One limitation of adopting bunkafu for analysis, however, is its inconsistency in the numbering of frets. As shown in Figure 2.3, some adjacently numbered frets (e.g., frets 2 and 3) are separated by a semitone, whereas others are separated by a whole tone and contain an intermediary fret between them (e.g., frets 3 and 4). For my analysis of *neo*, I replace the fret numbering system used in bunkafu with that proposed by De Souza (2018). Consistent with the twelve-tone equal temperament system, De Souza's numbering system orders frets according to their semitonal distance from the open string. Since adjacent frets are always located one semitone apart, De Souza's system is amenable to comparing distance between frets in terms of semitonal distance. Since *neo* is composed in Western staff notation and makes use of the twelve-tone equal temperament system, adopting De Souza's fret numbering system allows me to tie together fretboard distance to draw conclusions about semitonal distance, and vice versa.

Figure 2.3: Fret numbers according to the *bunkafu* notation system

3rd   0 1 2 3 ♯ 4 5 6 7 8 9 ♭ 10 11 12 13 1♯ 14 15 16
2nd   0 1 2 3 ♯ 4 5 6 7 8 9 ♭ 10 11
1st   0 1 2 3 ♯ 4 5 6 7
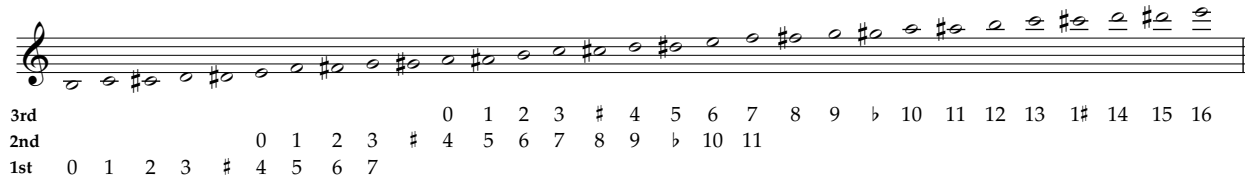
Drawing upon John Baily's work on Afghan lutes, De Souza models the guitar as a *tiered array* in which locations on the fingerboard can be expressed as a combination of fret and string positions (Baily 1977, 2006; De Souza 2017, 55). De Souza uses (*f, s*) coordinates to indicate fretboard location, with *f* and *s* indicating the fret and string positions, respectively. The second fret on the third string would then be represented as (2, 3)(De Souza 2018, 9). De Souza quantifies movements within the fretboard space as intervals (fint, sint) between (*f, s*) coordinates. A shift from (2, 3) to (1, 4) would be characterized as the interval (-1,+1), a movement which requires both *along-string movement* and *across-string movement*. De Souza defines *along-string movement* as shifting a single hand position upward and downward on the neck (i.e., changes in the *f* value), and *across-string movement* as shifting the hand between different strings (i.e., changes in the *s* value)(2018, 9).

Figure 2.4: Fret numbering system used in analysis of *neo*

3rd   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19
2nd   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19
1st   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19
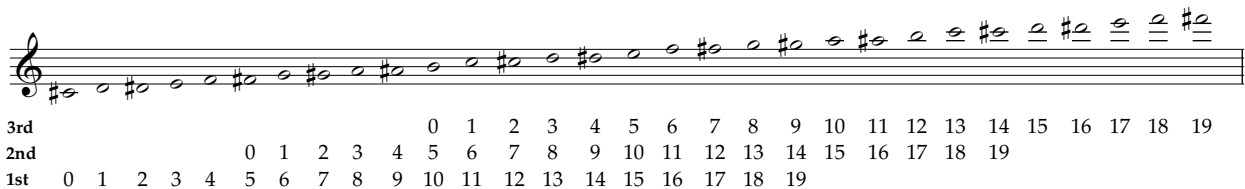
In my analysis of *neo*, I synthesize the *bunkafu* notation system and De Souza's fretboard space model to capture both the fretboard location and Honjoh's hand position on the neck of the instrument (Figure 2.4). Here, I draw upon Oshio's work on shamisen hand positions, which she

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has defined as the possible choices of pitches that can be performed without any shifting of the left hand (2015).[18] Oshio contends that in most cases, a single hand position allows for the performer to access two (if the hand is closer to the tuning pegs) or three frets (if the hand is farther up on the neck) by changing fingerings. According to standard performance practice in traditional genres, shamisen players have at their disposal three fingers: the index, middle, and ring fingers.

Focusing on hand position allows me to differentiate between the multiple fingerings through which a single pitch can be played. As Otsuka has demonstrated, two melodies with the same pitches and rhythms are considered to be different if they are performed using different fingerings and timbres. Returning to the example of the two gidayu melodies *otoko no naki* and *onna no naki* (Example 2.3), the first two pitches in the *otoko no naki* melody (B4, A4) are played within the same hand position, with the index finger placed on A4 and ring finger on B4. The subsequent pitches (B4, C5) require a slight shifting of the hand position upwards on the neck, with the index finger now placed on B4 and the middle finger on C5. By contrast, *onna no naki* requires a larger movement on the fretboard. After playing B4 on the third open string, the performer must play A4 using the index finger, repeat B4 on the third open string, and then move downward on the neck to play C5 with the index finger.[19] Because the two melodies are played using different fingerings, they are characterized as having different *te*.

I differentiate between the various forms of *te* by analyzing the hand positions used during performance. In addition to capturing the fret and string location (*f, s*) for every sounding note, I also note the fingering used by the performer to play it. Drawing upon Oshio's system for

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[18] Koozin 2011 similarly analyzes guitar chord patterns as instantiations of hand position movements.

[19] Although Example 2.3 does not show the fingerings for the *onna no naki* melody, the index finger is the default fingering in shamisen performance. As such, the index finger is the most commonly used finger.

categorizing hand positions in shamisen performance, I then identify each hand position based on the fret number that can be played with the index finger (2015). In both the *otoko no naki* and *onna no naki* examples above, the performer begins on hand position P4, with the index finger located on fret 4 of the second string. In *otoko no naki*, the performer moves their hand upward on the neck to P6, with the index finger on fret 6, which is located a major second above fret 4. In *onna no naki*, the performer moves their hand downward to P1 on the adjacent third string. In the following section, I analyze Honjoh's hand position movements in his performance of *neo* in order to compare differences and similarities in *te* across different formal sections.

2.6 Analysis of *neo*

Honjoh's performances of *neo* are characterized by a flamboyant display of virtuosity, showcasing an impressive level of energy and dexterity throughout the piece. Drawing upon a wide array of performance techniques, *neo* presents listeners with the instrument's versatile timbral capacities: the characteristic buzzing sound of the *sawari*, produced by the rubbing of the string against the neck of the instrument; the percussive striking of the plectrum against the body of the shamisen; rapid passagework; the airy sonorities of artificial harmonics; and climactic moments that index the gestural motions of electric guitar performance. Fujikura organizes *neo* into clearly demarcated formal sections, each foregrounding a unique set of motives, performance techniques, and timbres. As Honjoh moves from section to section, listeners are exposed to various combinations of performance techniques, illustrating the expressive faculties of the shamisen.

Through aural and visual analysis of performances by Honjoh, I demonstrate how the form of *neo* unfolds through changes in *te*. I first demonstrate how each section of *neo* is

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associated with a unique *te*: recurring melodic patterns as well as the fingerings, hand positions, and performance techniques used in performing them. Second, I argue that the melodic patterns in each section are unified by *te* rather than by the pitch and rhythmic identities of the motivic material. To illustrate this point, I compare two sections that share similar motivic material but invite contrasting gestural experiences through their differences in *te*. Third, I suggest that Honjoh's performance highlights similarities in *te* across formal sections with different motivic material.

My analysis of *neo* relies on three different media: the score, an audio recording of Honjoh's performance (Fujikura 2017), and two video recordings of Honjoh's performance—one filmed by Fujikura during a rehearsal in 2018 (Fujikura 2018) and another from the 2019 Forum for Cultural Emissaries, Agency of Cultural Affairs (「文化庁文化交流使フォーラム」)(Agency of Cultural Affairs 2019). While the score provides a blueprint for identifying the pitches that are being played, whereas the video recordings reveal Honjoh's fingerings and hand positions at every moment in the piece. The audio recording was used primarily in the early stages of the analysis, when I was familiarizing myself with the organization of the piece. Wherever there were any discrepancies in pitch or timbre between the two video recordings, I consulted the score and audio recording to determine the "correct" performance of the work.

Form

As shown in Table 2.1, I initially divided *neo* into nine sections, categorized as Sections A–H. For my preliminary formal analysis, I segmented each formal section according to its motivic content. Each section features a repeating motive spanning one to three beats. While each motive does not necessarily consist of the same pitches, every iteration is unified by its

rhythm, duration, and articulation. The table also lists all right-hand and left-hand techniques that are required in every section, and indicates the presence or absence of the sawari timbre. I have provided a short description of the relevant performance techniques below Table 2.1. This information on performance technique and timbre will become more relevant later in my analytical discussion.

Table 2.1: Formal analysis of *neo* based on motivic similarity

Sections	Measures	RH Techniques			LH Techniques							Sawari
A1	1–14	Sukui-bachi	Kokashi-bachi		(Hajiki)							Yes
B1	15–23	Sukui-bachi		Awase-bachi	Hajiki							Yes
C1	24–38					Kamashi	Ura-hajiki					Yes
A2	39–51	Sukui-bachi	Kokashi-bachi									Yes
C2	52–60	Sukui-bachi				Kamashi	Ura-hajiki					Yes
D1	61–102	Sukui-bachi			Hajiki			Suri-te	Uchi-yubi			Yes
[C]	[68]					Kamashi						Yes
[C]	[73–74]					Kamashi						Yes
E1	103–111								Uchi-yubi			
F1	112–145							Suri-te				
B2	146–153	Sukui-bachi		Awase-bachi	Hajiki							Yes
[D]	154								Uchi-yubi			Yes
A3	155–160	Sukui-bachi	Kokashi-bachi									Yes
[D]	161–162	Sukui-bachi							Uchi-yubi			Yes
C3	163–168					Kamashi						Yes
D2	169–172	Sukui-bachi			Hajiki			Suri-te	Uchi-yubi			Yes
F2	173							Suri-te				
E2	174–177								Uchi-yubi			
D'	175–186	Sukui-bachi			Hajiki							Yes
G	187–223	(Sukui-bachi)			Hajiki							Yes
H	224–258									Harmonics		
[B]	227	Sukui-bachi		Awase-bachi	Hajiki							Yes
[B]	251	Sukui-bachi		Awase-bachi	Hajiki							Yes
B3	259–284	Sukui-bachi		Awase-bachi	Hajiki							Yes
C4	285–297					Kamashi						Yes
E3	298–309								Uchi-yubi			
A4	310–337	Sukui-bachi	Kokashi-bachi								Barre chord	

Example 2.4: Brief interruptions of Section C material within Section D, mm. 69–76

mm. 69–76 of *neo*
Written by Dai Fujikura © Universal Music – MGB Songs on behalf of G. Ricordi & Co., Buehnen
Musikverlag GmbH

Example 2.5: Fragmentation of motivic material from Section D in Section D', mm. 178–86

mm. 178–86 of *neo*
Written by Dai Fujikura © Universal Music – MGB Songs on behalf of G. Ricordi & Co., Buehnen
Musikverlag GmbH

A few aspects of the formal diagram require explanation. First, the bracketed sections indicate short segments that refer back to motivic material from earlier sections. Both statements of "[C]" in Section D, for example, feature motivic characteristics that first appeared in mm. 24–38 and again in mm. 52–60 (Example 2.4). Bracketed subsections are very brief, lasting two measures at most. They appear without any transition or forewarning, interrupting the motivic consistency of Section D, and return immediately to Section D proper. Second, Section D' in mm. 178–86 is distinguished from Section D to reflect the fragmentation of the motivic material of Section D (Example 2.5).

Similar Motives, Different *Te*

Based on motivic content alone, it would seem intuitive to identify four statements of Section A: mm. 1–14 (A1), 39–51 (A2), 155–60 (A3), and 310–37 (A4). As shown in Example 2.6, the recurring motive in Section A is a four-sixteenth-note figure. The motivic material in the four sections have in common the following characteristics: 1) rhythmic content (four sixteenth notes); 2) articulation (use of the *kokashi-bachi* technique for the first three notes and the *sukui-bachi* technique for the fourth note); and 3) hand motion, strumming downward from the lowest to highest string for the first three notes and strumming upward on the highest string for the fourth note.[20] As the performer repeats the same motive within each section, they also enact the same gesture over and over again given that each motive requires the same performance techniques. The first three pitches are played as a downward arpeggiation of the plectrum (*kokashi-bashi*) whereas the fourth pitch (*sukui-bachi*, as indicated by the up-bow symbol) is

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[20] One minor difference is that the first A section (mm. 1–14) also features the left-hand *hajiki* technique, which requires the performer to pluck the string with their finger, as in a left-hand pizzicato.

played as an upward strum. The performer must therefore repeat the downward-for-three,

upward-for-one gesture of the plectrum throughout the entire section.

Example 2.6: Motives of Section A: a) mm. 1–14; b) mm. 39–51; c) mm. 155–60; d) mm. 310–37

mm. 1–4, 39–42, 155–58, and 310–13 of *neo*
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As shown in Example 2.6, Sections A1 (mm. 1–14) and A2 (mm. 39–51) begin with the same four-note figure, each pitch a perfect fourth above the previous one: C#4-F#4-B4-B4. Each note is played as an open string on the first (C#4), second (F#4), and third strings (B4). The first two measures of the two statements (mm. 1–2, mm. 39–40) are identical to one another. Section A4 (mm. 310–37) preserves the intervallic content of the four-note motive: D#4 (first string)-G#4 (second string)-C#4 (third string)-C#4. From the perspective of Western pitch-class set theory, the motive in m. 310 is a T2 transposition of the motive in m. 1. This motive is repeated throughout the section, transposing upward by 19 semitones to reach G#5 in the lowest string in m. 326 (Example 2.6). In sum, my analytical decision to group together these four sections is based on similarities in pitch intervals, rhythm, and articulation.

My analysis of Section A thus far has been grounded in culturally specific assumptions about how Western-trained music theorists judge similarity relations between different musical events. Based on the conventions of Western music theory, identifying similarities in pitch, rhythm, contour, and articulation are considered viable grounds for claiming likeness between motives. These criteria are further strengthened by the fact that such similarities are reflected visually onto Western staff notation. I argue, however, that a motivic and melodic analysis grounded in the assumptions and value systems of Western music theory—which prioritizes what Leonard B. Meyer refers to as "primary" parameters (e.g., pitch, rhythm, duration) over "secondary" parameters (e.g., timbre, dynamics, tempo, articulation)(Meyer 1989)—does not acknowledge how melodic and motivic identity is conceptualized in genres of shamisen music.

In the following discussion, I demonstrate how paying closer attention to gestural and timbral distinctions challenges my initial reading of the form of *neo* as beginning with and ending with Section A material. While Sections A1 and A4 share similar pitch-intervallic content

Table 2.2: Formal analysis of *neo* based on similarities in *te*

		Elements of *te*										
Sections	Measures	RH Techniques			LH Techniques							Sawari
A1	1–14	*Sukui-bachi*	*Kokashi-bachi*		*(Hajiki)*							Yes
B1	15–23	*Sukui-bachi*		*Awase-bachi*	*Hajiki*							Yes
C1	24–38					*Kamashi*	*Ura-hajiki*					Yes
A2	39–51	*Sukui-bachi*	*Kokashi-bachi*									Yes
C2	52–60	*Sukui-bachi*				*Kamashi*	*Ura-hajiki*					Yes
D1	61–102	*Sukui-bachi*			*Hajiki*			*Suri-te*	*Uchi-yubi*			Yes
[C]	[68]					*Kamashi*						Yes
[C]	[73–74]					*Kamashi*						Yes
E1	103–111								*Uchi-yubi*			
F1	112–145							*Suri-te*				
B2	146–153	*Sukui-bachi*		*Awase-bachi*	*Hajiki*							Yes
[D]	154								*Uchi-yubi*			Yes
A3	155–160	*Sukui-bachi*	*Kokashi-bachi*									Yes
[D]	161–162	*Sukui-bachi*							*Uchi-yubi*			Yes
C3	163–168					*Kamashi*						Yes
D2	169–172	*Sukui-bachi*			*Hajiki*			*Suri-te*	*Uchi-yubi*			Yes
F2	173							*Suri-te*				
E2	174–177								*Uchi-yubi*			
D'	175–186	*Sukui-bachi*			*Hajiki*							Yes
G	187–223	*(Sukui-bachi)*			*Hajiki*							Yes
H	224–258									*Harmonics*		
[B]	227	*Sukui-bachi*		*Awase-bachi*	*Hajiki*							Yes
[B]	251	*Sukui-bachi*		*Awase-bachi*	*Hajiki*							Yes
B3	259–284	*Sukui-bachi*		*Awase-bachi*	*Hajiki*							Yes
C4	285–297					*Kamashi*						Yes
E3	298–309								*Uchi-yubi*			
I	310–337	*Sukui-bachi*	*Kokashi-bachi*								*Barre chord*	

and right-hand technique, analyzing their respective *te* reveals that the two sections feature contrasting gestures and timbres. Based on this new reading, I reinterpret mm. 310–37 as Section I rather than as Section A4 (Table 2.2).

Analyzing motives in Section A and Section I through the perspective of *te* reveals differences in hand position movement and timbre. Comparing hand positions between Honjoh's performance of Section A and Section I reveals that while Honjoh employs both along-string movement and across-string movement of the hand in Section A, he relies only on along-string movement when playing through Section I.

Moving from one pitch to another on the shamisen can be accomplished in two ways. The first option is to change fingerings between the index, middle, and ring fingers while keeping the

same hand position. This could either mean changing fingerings on the same string (e.g., index finger on the first string → middle finger on the first string) or changing fingerings while moving to a different string (e.g., index finger on the first string → middle finger on the second string). The second option is to shift the hand position along the neck of the shamisen.

In Section A1 (mm. 1–14; 0:00–0:27 in Fujikura 2018), Honjoh's *te* features a mix of along- and across-string movement. The annotations below the staff in Example 2.7a indicate the frets that are played for every motivic statement. The value of the integer corresponds to the number of semitones above the open string: 0 on the first string, for example, represents the open string C#4 whereas 3 on the first string sounds the pitch E4. I have also indicated passages that are played within a single hand position. The piece opens with hand position 1 (or P1), which means that the index finger is located above fret 1. While Honjoh's hand position remains at P1, he uses across-string movement to access different frets and play new pitches. On beat 2 of m. 1, Honjoh places his index finger on (1, 1)—i.e., fret 1 on the first string—to play D4. On the next beat, he places his ring finger on (2, 3) to sound C#5, after which he returns again to (1, 1) on beat 4. He plays through this measure solely through changes in fingering while keeping his hand position at P1. On beat 2 of m. 2, Honjoh shifts his hand position to P3, once again playing multiple notes within the same hand position through across-string movement. From beat 3 of m. 4, Honjoh switches to along-string movement, shifting his hand position between P3, P5 and P2. Within this short passage, changes in pitch are achieved solely through changes in hand position.

Example 2.7: Comparison of melodic motives in (a) Section A1 (mm. 1–14); and (b) Section I (mm. 310–37)

(a) Section A1

(b) Section I

mm. 1–4 and 314–15 of *neo*
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The ubiquity of open string sounds in Section A showcases a buzzing drone-like sound called *sawari* (さわり), the characteristic rubbing of the open first string against the upper bridge (*kamigoma*; 上駒) on the neck.[21] As shown in Figure 2.2, the vibration is made possible by the construction of the neck: below the first string lies a hollow indented area (*sawari no tani*; さわりの谷) and a small ridge, *sawari no yama* (さわりの山)(Kikkawa 1978b, 80; Sakata 1966, 142; Tokumaru 1987, 15). As a result, the first string vibrates against the *sawari no yama* and produces the sawari timbre.[22] Sawari can also be produced through sympathetic vibration, by playing pitches a fifth or an octave above the open first string on the second and third strings. If the open first string is tuned to C#4 as in *neo*, then the first string will vibrate sympathetically and produce the sawari timbre if pitch classes G#, C#, and—to a lesser degree—F#, are played on the other two strings (Tokumaru 1987, 15–16).[23] Sawari constitutes one of the most highly valued aesthetical components of shamisen performance, and skilled performers are expected to produce just the right amount of sawari through considerations of intonation, tuning, string quality, string tension, and the physical structure of the instrument (Sakata 1966, 141). In *neo,* Fujikura draws immediate attention to the shamisen's sawari timbre by opening the piece with an open first string (C#4) played *fortissimo*. As shown in Example 2.8, Section A1 prominently features the open first string, appearing once in all but one measure and twice or more in eight out of fourteen measures. Sawari functions as a timbral drone that asserts its presence throughout the section. The use of the open second string—tuned a perfect fourth above

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[21] Sawari is a phenomenon unique to the shamisen. Scholarship on shamisen music has unequivocally suggested that sawari was developed in Japan in the seventeenth century, and did not exist in previous versions of the instrument that were used in Ryūkyū and China (Kikkawa 1978a; Malm 1959; Nogawa 2009; Tokumaru 1987).

[22] A demonstration of sawari is available at the following link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vyQ9As7svFk.
[23] In certain genres such as *tsugaru shamisen*, some contemporary instruments feature a device called *azuma sawari* (吾妻さわり), an adjustable metal screw that allows the performer to manipulate the vibration of the string against the body (Johnson 2010, 38). For more detailed discussions of the acoustical properties of sawari, see Andō 1996, 193–203.

Example 2.8: *Sawari* in Section A1, mm. 1–14

mm. 1–14 of *neo*

the open first string—in every motivic statement also amplifies the sawari through sympathetic vibration. Fujikura continues to draw attention to the sawari timbre in Sections A2 (Example 2.9; 0:56–1:20 in Fujikura 2018) and A3 (Example 2.10; 3:11–3:21 in Fujikura 2018). Each motivic statement in m. 44, beat 3–m. 50 (Section A2) begins with open first and second strings, producing a continuous sawari drone. Mm. 156, beat 4–m. 160, beat 1 in Section A3 similarly emphasizes the sawari timbre through a repetition of open first and second strings. In sum, each statement of Section A is designed to highlight the unique sawari timbre of the shamisen by saturating the texture with open first and second strings. Section A emphasizes the timbral and gestural idiosyncrasies of the shamisen by foregrounding the sound of sawari and by relying solely on traditional performance techniques.

By contrast, Honjoh relies solely on along-string movement when playing Section I (mm. 310–37; 7:08–7:49 in Fujikura 2018). Unlike in Section A1, changes in pitch always correspond with along-string movement of the hand (Example 2.7b). Differences in hand position movements depend on whether the passage calls for the use of open strings. While every motive in Section A1 (mm. 1–14) requires two open strings and one fretted pitch (Example 2.7a), motives in Section I are played only using fretted pitches. In fact, every motivic statement in Section I is comprised of two successive ascending perfect fourths, each played on a different string. The first motivic statement in m. 310, for example, includes pitches D#4 (played on first string), G#4 (second string), and C#5 (third string). Since *neo* asks for the *san-sagari* tuning system in which adjacent strings are tuned a perfect fourth apart, all three pitches of the motive are played on the same fret. The only exception arises in mm. 317–18, when the uppermost note of the P12 motive C#5-F#5-B5 is altered from B5 to C6. The pitch C6 functions as a neighboring tone to B5, and it is the only instance in which Honjoh uses the little finger in the entire piece,

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one of the few moments in the piece that marks a departure from conventions of traditional shamisen performance. Returning again to the first motivic statement in m. 310, the pitches D#4, G#4, and C#5 occupy the second frets of the three strings. Honjoh therefore begins the section at hand position P2. To play all three pitches in quick succession, Honjoh places his index finger on the first string, middle finger on the second string, and ring finger on the third string. Given that each iteration of the motive requires this configuration of fingerings, Honjoh performs the entirety of Section I by shifting his hand up and down the neck of the instrument while maintaining the same hand position.

Example 2.9: *Sawari* in Section A2, mm. 39–44

mm. 39–44 of *neo*
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Example 2.10: *Sawari* in Section A3, mm. 155–60

mm. 155–60 of *neo*

In contrast to Section A, which prominently features the sawari timbre produced by the open first string, Section I is characterized by its complete absence of sawari. If there is no open first string, no sawari can be produced. Since the motives of Section I can only be played by fretting all three strings simultaneously, the sound of open strings is suppressed throughout the section. In fact, Section I presents the longest passage without sawari. Section A and Section I therefore exhibit different *te* given their variations in timbre (sawari in Section A/no sawari in Section I) and gesture (along-string and across-string movement in Section A/along-string movement only in Section I).

Honjoh's hand configuration in Section I draws a parallel with that of a barre chord in electric guitar performance. The connection between the shamisen and electric guitar is made explicit by both Fujikura and Honjoh, both of whom played in rock bands growing up (Fujikura 2020). The parallel between the two instruments is made explicit in a recently recorded YouTube broadcast between Fujikura and Honjoh and in Fujikura's program notes on *neo* (Fujikura 2014,

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2020). As mentioned earlier in the chapter, Fujikura states in his program notes that he treated *neo* "like a guitar solo in rock concert" (Fujikura 2014). In the YouTube broadcast, Fujikura and Honjoh both identify themselves as avid fans of rock: Fujikura played synthesizer for a Guns N' Roses cover band as a teenager and Honjoh names Matsumoto Takahiro of Japanese rock band B'z as one of his favorite guitarists (Fujikura 2020b).[24] In fact, Fujikura recalls feeling little discomfort in writing a piece for shamisen, despite the fact that he had minimal knowledge of the instrument and its genres. Fujikura has suggested that his long-standing affinity for rock and the electric guitar may have eased his transition to the shamisen (Fujikura 2020b).

I contend that Section I references the electric guitar programmatically, gesturally, and timbrally. First, Fujikura makes explicit the link between *neo* and the guitar in his program notes, suggesting to audiences: "I hope you are cheering and screaming when he finishes this piece, like you would in a rock concert" (Fujikura 2014). Fujikura's comment draws the audience's attention specifically to the end of the piece, for which he recommends an affective response that evokes how a crowd might react after an impressive guitar solo at a rock concert. By giving this suggestion, Fujikura distances *neo* from both shamisen music and Western art music, and instead connects the work to a genre he performed and listened to in his youth. By linking *neo* with the electric guitar—and by association, rock—Fujikura resists essentialist and Orientalist perceptions of his ethnicity, music, as well as the shamisen. In other words, Fujikura discourages listeners from misinterpreting *neo* as an attempt to connect with his native culture and produce music that "sounds Japanese." Rather, Fujikura's programmatic statements validate his own identity as a Japanese-born, British-based composer who identifies just as much with popular music as with Western art music.

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[24] Honjoh also was the lead guitarist in a visual-kei cover band in middle school (Fujikura 2020b).

Second, the repetition of rapid arpeggios and the upward movement of the hand position convey a gestural intensity that evokes the energetic and virtuosic playing style of rock guitar solos.[25] The link between the shamisen and electric guitar is first established through motivic and gestural repetition. As I have already shown, the motivic consistency in Section I translates into a gestural consistency. In the left hand, Honjoh maintains the same fingering position throughout the section, relying only on along-string movement of the hand position to change pitches. In the right hand, Honjoh similarly repeats the same motion: a downward *kokashi-bachi* arpeggio strum for the first three notes of the motive and an upward *sukui-bachi* strum for the fourth note.

The gestural cohesiveness of this section therefore draws parallel with guitar riff schemes, which David Easley defines within the context of hardcore punk as "organizing patterns of physical repetition and physical change made by a guitarist's fretting hand" (2015). Broadening Easley's definition to both left-hand and right-hand gestural patterns in shamisen performance, I argue that the gesturally repetitive *te* of Section I is analogous to riff schemes on an electric guitar. Similarly to how formal sections are associated with specific guitar riff schemes in hardcore punk, each section in *neo* is characterized by its unique *te*. Section I is defined by the set of left-hand (along-string movement of a single hand position) and right-hand performance techniques (*kokashi-bachi*, *sukui-bachi*) that are repeated by the performer. Honjoh's performance gesture in Section I therefore emerges as a site of intercultural meaning. On the one hand, when analyzed through a shamisen-oriented perspective, Section I gains its formal identity through the motivic and gestural consistency of Honjoh's *te*; on the other hand, in light of Fujikura's programmatic statements, the repetitive nature of Honjoh's performance gestures can be interpreted to channel idiosyncratic gestural patterns of the electric guitar.

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[25] For a discussion of how the electric guitar came to be associated with virtuosity, see Walser 1993.

Example 2.11: Section I, mm. 326–37

mm. 326–37 of *neo*

Figure 2.5: Miki Minoru's transcription of classical gidayū-bushi piece "Nozakimura" (野崎村) in Western staff notation (2008, 107)

Fig. 2.41. Techniques for the *Gidayū shamisen* with excerpts from the classical *gidayū* repertoire. (b) A technique for the *Gidayū shamisen* with an excerpt from *Nozakimura*

The connection between the shamisen and electric guitar is reinforced further in the final measures of the piece. As shown in Example 2.11, *neo* concludes with a dramatic *suri* (glissando) descent on the third string from the highest note of the P19 motive (F#6), followed by a loud, accented punctuation on all three open strings. Although the *suri* technique is typically used to ornament individual notes, it can also cover a wide range. In *gidayū-bushi* (義太夫節), the *suri* technique is used to slide between two distant tones. Figure 2.5 shows a Western transcription of an excerpt from "Nozakimura" (「野崎村」), a piece from the classical *gidayū* repertoire.[26] The piece features a passage in which the *suri* technique is used to descend approximately an octave, although the starting note is not precisely pitched. I argue, however, that the especially aggressive use of *suri* in Section I embodies double meanings, indexing not only classical shamisen technique but also a pick slide on an electric guitar. The pick slide is a technique in which the guitarist slides the pick along the string, resulting in a sharp, distorted glissando effect. An especially prominent use of the pick slide can be heard in the introduction to British metal artist Ozzy Osbourne's 1980 song "Crazy Train" (0:15–0:18).[27] In "Crazy Train," the pick slide is used as a lead-in to set the stage for the opening melodic riff that begins on 0:18.

The glissando in mm. 333–36 functions as a transitional passage that connects the climactic accentuation on F#6 (mm. 330–32) and the open string triple stop in the final measure. Once Honjoh completes the *suri* glissando descent, he momentarily lifts his fingers from the neck (7:42), the first time he has done so since shifting his hand from P7 in m. 309 to P2 in m. 310. After a momentary silence, Honjoh concludes the piece with three quick downward strums on all three open strings. The triple stop ending recalls the sonority of the opening motive of the

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[26] Originally published as Fig. 2.41 in Miki Minoru's *Composing for Japanese Instruments* (2008, 107).

[27] As of this writing, the song can be accessed on YouTube at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RMR5zf1J1Hs.

piece, which began with an arpeggio on all three open strings in succession. The takeaway, however, is not that the open string triple stop of the final measure brings back the same pitches as the opening motive. Rather, the significance lies in the return of the sawari timbre produced by the open first string. Fujikura amplifies the sawari timbre through dynamics. The triple stop is marked with a *fffff* dynamic—saving the loudest dynamic in the entire piece until the very end— and he instructs the performer to let the sawari timbre continue for as long as possible. First, the final downward strum of the triple stop is accompanied by a tie into a rest, conveying a sense of sonic continuity. Second, Fujikura indicates that the performer should "let it ring" after playing the triple stops. Third, the fermata over the half rest in the final measure provides space for the sawari to ring for as long as the string would allow, encouraging performers to draw out the sonority for as long as possible before concluding the performance. When the triple stops enter in m. 337, timbral and gestural references to the electric guitar disappear and are replaced immediately by the distinct sawari timbre of the shamisen. Listeners are whisked from the world of electric guitar back to the world of shamisen.

Similar *Te*, Different Pitch Content

In the first analytical section, I have discussed two sections that share pitch-intervallic and rhythmic content but require different *te*. Based on these gestural differences, I have argued that Section A and Section I belong to different formal sections. In the second part of my analysis, I demonstrate that Honjoh's performance also highlights similarities in *te* across sections with different motivic material.

At first listening, Section C (mm. 52–60; mm. 163–68; mm. 285–97) and Section D (mm. 61–102; mm. 169–72) seem to feature contrasting motivic material and performance techniques.

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Example 2.12: Similarities in *te* between Sections C and D

(a) Along-string movement in Section C1, mm. 24–30

Hand position 3 (P3)   *P5*

```
24
2/4
3rd string (B4)   5  3  0        5  3  0                              7  5  0
2nd string (F♯4)     5  3  0        5  3  0         7  5  0      7  5  0        7  5  0
1st string (C♯4)                      5  3  0  7  5  0    7  5  0
```

P8

```
27
3rd   7  5  0  7  5  0  10  8  0  10  8  0   10  8  0      10  8  0       10  8  0
2nd                              10  8  0        10  8  0        10  8  0
1st                                                    10  8  0  10  8  0  10  8  0  10  8  0
```

P3	P5	P8

mm. 24–30 of *neo*

(b) Along-string movement in Section D1, mm. 61–65

Hand position 3
(P3)   P5   P8   P3   P3   P5   P8   P7   P3   P8   P3

```
61
3/4
3rd string (B4)                                8    7        0
2nd string (F♯4)  0          5    8  3  5  0              5          8          0  8  3  5
1st string (C♯4)      0  3                          0  3              0  3
```

P3   P5   P8   P7   P5   P3 P8 P5

```
64
3rd              8  7      5   0
2nd   0             5         8        3  8
1st      0  3                              6
```

P3	P5	P8

mm. 61–65 of *neo*

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Example 2.12 shows a comparison of the motivic material of Sections C and D. Section C repeats a three-note motive comprised of two fretted pitches and an open string. Statements of Section C require two left-hand techniques: *hajiki* (はじき) and *kamashi* (かまし). *Hajiki* is analogous to a left-hand pizzicato in which the performer plucks the string with their left hand rather than with the plectrum. *Hajiki* could be performed either by a single finger, in which case the index finger is used to pluck the open string, or by two fingers, which requires the performer to use the middle or ring finger to pluck the string while fretting the string with the index finger. *Kamashi,* a technique that originates in tsugaru shamisen performance, refers to a gestural to use the middle or ring finger to pluck the string while fretting the string with the index finger. *Kamashi,* a technique that originates in tsugaru shamisen performance, refers to a gestural pattern in which a downward strum of the plectrum is followed by two notes played as *hajiki* (McGoldrick 2005).[28] Each statement of Section C can be divided into different subsections, each performed within a single hand position. In Section C1 (0:37–0:56 in Fujikura 2018), for example, Honjoh begins in hand position 3, using across-string movement to shift his *kamashi* hand position between adjacent strings. In m. 24, Honjoh places his index finger on fret 3 and his ring finger on fret 5, playing E5 with a downward strum of the plectrum and the subsequent pitches D5 and B4 using the *hajiki* technique. On beat 2 of the same measure, Honjoh transplants his hand position to the second string, once again playing fret 5, fret 3, and an open string. Since the second string is tuned a perfect fourth downward from the third string, the sounding pitches are now B4, A4, and F#4. In m. 25, Honjoh maintains the same hand position and shifts to the first string, still playing the same frets (fret 5, fret 3, and open string). The sounding pitches on

---

[28] Tsugaru shamisen is a genre of shamisen music that initially began as a folk tradition in present-day Aomori prefecture. Nowadays, tsugaru shamisen is associated with energetic and virtuosic playing styles, and has been popularized by artists such as the Yoshida Brothers (Peluse 2005).

the first string are also a perfect fourth lower from those that were played on the second string: F#4, E4, and C#4.

On beat 2 of m. 25, Honjoh switches to along-string movement, shifting the hand position from P3 to P5. The interval between the upper two notes remains a major second, and Honjoh continues to use the index finger for the lower note and the ring finger for the higher note located a step above. From the perspective of North American fretboard transformational theory, Honjoh's along-string movement can be described as a ShiftUp transformation, which De Souza defines as an "open-string-preserving transformation" that will "add 1 to f [the fret number] if $f \neq$ 0 but keep it in place if $f = 0$" (De Souza 2018, 28–29). In other words, the performer shifts from one fret to the next by the same interval but keeps constant the open string. In sum, Honjoh's use of *te* in Section C is characterized by across-string movement of the *kamashi* hand position and by open-string-preserving movements of the hand along the string.

The first statement of Section D appears in mm. 61–102. The motivic material of Section D is comprised of two rhythmic parts, the first occupying two beats and the second taking up one beat. The first part is syncopated whereas the second part is on the beat. While there is little consistency in the pitch material for each motivic statement, many of them feature the same performance techniques: *sukui-bachi* in the right hand and *hajiki*, *suri*, and *uchi-yubi* in the left hand (Example 2.13). *Uchi-yubi* (打ち指), which means "hitting finger," requires the performer to strike the string with the left index, middle, or ring finger and immediately release, all without using the plectrum. The resulting sound evokes the hammering-on technique of the guitar, generating an ornamental neighboring tone.

Example 2.13: Performance techniques in Section D

mm. 61–67 of *neo*
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Although Sections C and D feature different motives and performance techniques, an examination of Honjoh's *te* reveals shared patterns of along-string movement between the same hand positions. The similarities in *te* invite an analogous gestural experience across the two sections despite their contrasting motivic identities. In this discussion, I will be focusing on the location of the hand position on the neck rather than on the individual fingerings that are used in the position. In this context, any across-string movement is considered a movement within the same hand position. In both sections, Honjoh shifts primarily between three hand positions: P3, P5, and P8. As I have shown in Example 2.14, Honjoh's performance of Sections C1 (mm. 24–38) begins on P3, with the index finger on fret 3 and the ring finger on fret 5. Honjoh shifts his hand position to P5 in m. 25 and then to P8 in m. 27. Similarly, his performance of Section C3 (mm. 163–68; 3:25–3:32 in Fujikura 2018), which is almost identical to Section C1, also shifts from P3 to P5 and P8. When playing Section D, Honjoh similarly shifts between the same three hand positions.

Example 2.14: Honjoh's *te* in Sections C1 (mm. 24–30) and C3 (mm. 163–68)

mm. 24–30 and 163–68 of *neo*
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Section D1 (mm. 61–102; 1:34–2:38 in Fujikura 2018) begins on pitches F#4 and C#4, both of which are played on open strings. The first fretted pitch, E4, is played in P3, with the index finger on fret 3 of the first string. When playing the subsequent pitch B4, Honjoh has a few choices: 1) playing B4 as an open third string; 2) playing B4 on fret 5 on the second string; or 3) playing B4 on fret 10 on the first string. Honjoh chooses the second option, shifting upward by

two frets and crossing over onto the second string to play B4 in P5. The significance of these three options will become clearer later in the analysis. On the third beat, Honjoh shifts his hand upward to P8 on the second string, playing D5 with the index finger and E5 with the ring finger. Honjoh then returns once again to P3 while remaining on the second string, playing A4 and B4. The P3–P5–P8 motion of the left hand is analogous to that of Section C. Although the subsequent measures present a different array of pitches, Honjoh's *te* revolves around shifts between P3, P5 and P8. On the third beat of m. 62, for example, Honjoh employs the same hand position as that of m. 61, this time playing G5 and A5 on the third string in P8. As shown in Example 2.12b, Honjoh stays in positions P3, P5, and P8 until the second beat of m. 65, with the exception of a slight detour to the adjacently located P7.

When the same motivic material returns later in the section, Honjoh alters his *te* slightly as a way to produce timbral variety. These subtle changes in *te* present yet another example of how motives are not related to one another through shared pitch-intervallic and rhythmic features, but by their characteristic gestures and timbres. At first, the motivic material of m. 69–70 seems to resemble that of mm. 61–62. While the two segments certainly contain the same pitches and rhythms, they are distinguished from one another through timbre. In both mm. 69 and 70, the pitch B4 of the first part of the motive is accompanied by an upbow symbol, which in shamisen music indicates an upward strum of the plectrum (*sukui-bachi*). Honjoh plays B4 with an upward strum of the plectrum on the open third string, presenting a timbre that contrasts with the fretted B4 of mm. 61–62. When B4 is played on an open string in mm. 69–70, the pitch is emphasized through timbral contrast and continues sounding even when Honjoh moves onto the subsequent set of pitches. By contrast, B4 in mm. 61–62 blends in timbrally with the surrounding material as Honjoh plays it as a fretted pitch. When the motivic material returns once again in

Example 2.15: Producing timbral variety through *te* in Section D

mm. 61–70, 75–76, 86–87, and 96–97 of *neo*
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Example 2.16: Section C is preceded immediately by Section D, mm. 161–68

mm. 161–68 of *neo*
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mm. 75–76, Honjoh plays the B4 as a fretted pitch, but this time with fret 10 on the first string.

In this passage, Honjoh first shifts upward from P3 to P10 and then downward to P8, as shown in

Example 2.15. In Section D, Honjoh cycles through the three possible fingering options for

producing the pitch B4 on the shamisen. Each statement of the motive is associated with a

unique *te* and produces its own distinct gestural and timbral profile.

When the motive is repeated again in mm. 86–89 and in mm. 96–97, Honjoh uses the same *te* as that of the first appearance of the motive in mm. 61–62. Honjoh moves between hand positions P3, P5 and P8, just as he had done at the beginning of the section. In mm. 86–89, the pitch B4 in the first part of the motive—which had been played using three different fingerings thus far—is once again played in P5 on the second string, mirroring the timbre and gestual experience of mm. 61–62 (Example 2.15). This *te* is reiterated when the motive returns in mm. 96–97. Charting Honjoh's use of *te* in performing the opening motive of the section reveals an interesting pattern. In the second and third statements of the motive, Honjoh's *te* deviates from that of the first statement and introduces new gestural and timbral identities for the motive. But in the fourth and fifth statements of the motive, Honjoh reinforces the primacy of *te* used in the first statement—one in which Honjoh shifts between P3, P5, and P8—by returning to it once more.

The gestural connection between Sections C and D is illustrated most effectively in mm. 161–68, when Section C is preceded immediately by Section D material. As shown in Example 2.16, motivic material from Section D traces the following positions: P3–P5–P8–P7 in m. 161 followed by P5–P3–P8–P5 in m. 162. Most salient in this passage are the large leaps between P3–P5, P5–P8, and P3–P8, with P7 acting as a neighbor-like hand position that is adjacent to P8. When Section C begins in m. 163, Honjoh retraces familiar hand position movements, moving from P3 (mm. 163–64), P5 (mm. 164–66), and P8 (mm. 166–68). Although Sections C and D offer contrasting gestural and timbral profiles due to their differences in pitch-intervallic content, rhythm, and performance technique, their motivic material is nevertheless linked by similarities in along-string movement.

In the previous section, I have shown how Honjoh's performance of Sections C and D share a common *te*. In both instances, Honjoh's instrumental gestures revolve around hand position movements between P3, P5, and P8. Drawing upon American pitch-class set theory, I express this pattern of hand position movement as prime form (0 2 5).[29] Joseph Straus defines prime form as a "representation that begins with 0 and is most packed to the left" (2016, 66). By converting Honjoh's patterns of *te* into a prime form, I capture the potential gestural similarities between hand position movements that require a leap of two frets followed by a leap of three frets. In other words, using the prime form as an analytic categorizes motions between frets 3, 5, and 8 and between frets 7, 10, and 12 as executions of a single gestural prototype. In the following analytical section, I demonstrate how Honjoh's performance exhibits the (0 2 5) *te* pattern in other sections of the piece, even if they do not involve positions P3, P5, and P8.

Section H (mm. 224–58; 5:30–6:30 in Fujikura 2018) prominently features artificial harmonics, which is not a standard technique used in traditional genres but is not uncommon in contemporary repertoire (Nozawa 2018, 279). As shown in Example 2.17a–17d, many of the passages containing artificial harmonics require the use of hand positions P5, P7, and P10, an expression of prime form (0 2 5). While the position P3 also occasionally appears, it is heavily outnumbered by the occurrence of P5, P7, and P10. As such, Honjoh's performance of Section H is characterized by frequent shifts between these three positions.

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[29] While my analysis draws upon prime form to theorize hand position movements on the neck of the shamisen, Timothy Koozin's work on guitar performance has similarly used the notion of prime form to define guitar voicings produced by fretboard hand positions (2011).

Example 2.17: Use of hand positions P5, P7, and P10 in Section H

(a) mm. 224–25

mm. 224–25 of *neo*
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(b) mm. 231–35


mm. 231–35 of *neo*
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(c) mm. 243–50

mm. 243–50 of *neo*
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(d) mm. 256–58

mm. 256–58 of *neo*
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In Section B3 (mm. 259–84; 6:30–6:51), Honjoh's pattern of hand position movement is once again based on prime form (0 2 5). In mm. 259–61 and 270–75, Honjoh repeats the three-note figure D#5-F5-G#5 on the third string, while playing open first and second strings on the down beat of each measure (Examples 2.18a and 2.18b). This section requires the *awase-bachi* technique, which refers to double- and triple-stops, as well as *sukui-bachi* and *hajiki*. Honjoh relies exclusively on along-string movement to move from one pitch to the next, shifting from P4 to P6 and finally to P9. This motion presents another variation of the (0 2 5) prime form, consisting of one upward shift by two frets followed by another upward shift of three frets. In mm. 279–81, the entire three-note figure is transposed upward by three frets to form A5-B5-D6, which is played as a shift from P10 to P12, and then from P12 to P15. This transposed figure continues to preserve the (0 2 5) pattern of hand position movement.

Example 2.18: Statements of prime form (0 2 5) in Section B3

(a) mm. 259–61.

3rd string (B4)	4 4 4	6 6 6	9 9 9
2nd string (F♯4)	0	0	0
1st string (C♯4)	0	0	0

(b) mm. 270–81

3rd string (B4)	4 4 4	6 6 6	9 9 9	4 4 6 6 9 9	4 4 6 6 9 9	4 4 6 6 9 9
2nd string (F♯4)	0	0	0	0 0 0	0 0 0	0 0 0
1st string (C♯4)	0	0	0	0 0 0	0 0 0	0 0 0

3rd	7 7	10 10	12 12	7 7	10 10	12 12	7 7	10 10	12 12
2nd	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1st	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

	10 10	12 12	15 15	10 10	12 12	15 15	10 10	12 12	15 15
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

mm. 259–61 and 270–81 of *neo*
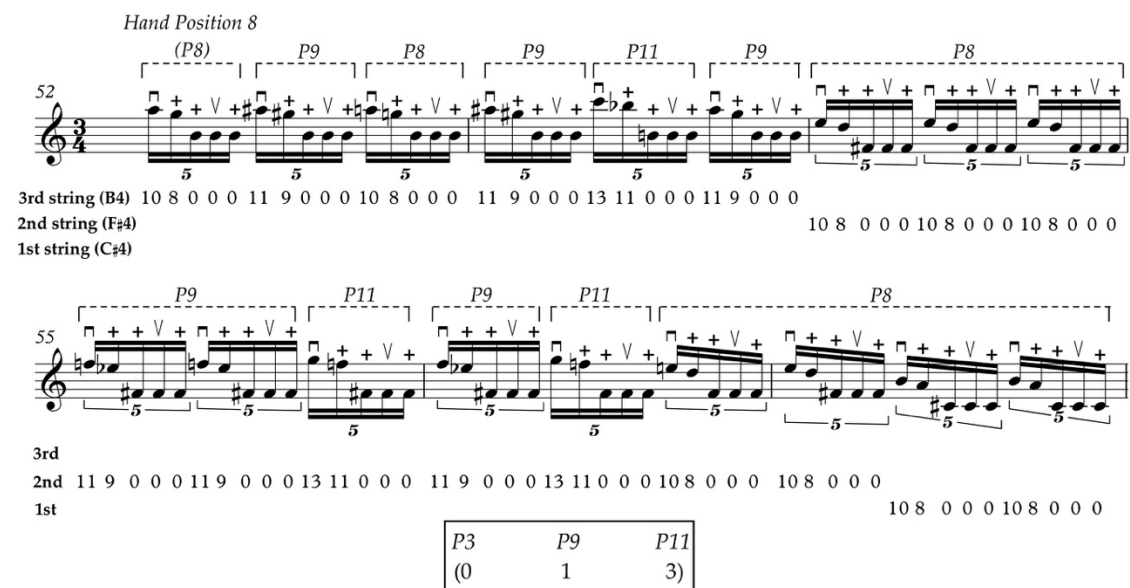
The (0 2 5) prime form is varied not only through transposition, but also through inversion. In Section B3 (mm. 276–78), Honjoh plays pitches F#5, A5, and B5 on the third string (P7–P10–P12), again moving from one note to the next through along-string movement (Example 2.18b). This particular three-note figure, however, reverses the ordering of the fretboard intervals required to move between successive pitches. While Honjoh's *te* in mm. 276–78 also presents a statement of the (0 2 5) prime form, this figure requires Honjoh to first move upward by three frets followed by an upward shift of two frets. In sum, Honjoh's performance of Section B3 outlines various configurations of the (0 2 5) prime form through transposition—i.e., maintaining the fret intervals between successive pitches while altering the pitches themselves—and inversion—i.e., reversing the order of fret interval movements within the motive.

In addition to prime form (0 2 5), Honjoh's performance of *neo* features hand position movement patterns derived from prime form (0 1 3). Comparing the *te* in Sections B and C reveal that despite their differences in motivic material, they both share similar intervallic patterns between hand positions. In Section C2 (mm. 52–60; 1:20–1:34 in Fujikura 2018), Honjoh shifts between hand positions P8, P9, and P11 (Example 2.19). Over the course of this section, Honjoh first shifts upward by one fret and then shifts further upward by two frets to complete the (0 1 3) motion. Honjoh's hand position movements in Section A can similarly be expressed as prime form (0 1 3). In mm. 47–51 of Section A2 (0:56–1:20 in Fujikura 2018), which immediately precedes Section C2, Honjoh's use of *te* exhibits various constructions of prime form (0 1 3), presented and altered through transposition and inversion (Example 2.20).

As I have shown previously, the motivic material of Section A consists of three pitches, each played on a different string as a *kokashi-bachi*, a downward strummed arpeggiation. In this particular passage, the first and second strings are played as open string whereas the third strings

Example 2.19: Statements of prime form (0 1 3) in Section C2, mm. 52–58

mm. 52–58 of *neo*

Example 2.20: Statements of prime form (0 1 3) in Section A2, mm. 47–51

mm. 47–51 of *neo*

is fretted. As such, Honjoh relies primarily on along-string movement on the third string to shift

between pitches. Mm. 47–49 repeats the same three pitches on the third string: E5, F#5, and G5.

Honjoh, however, uses two different *te* to play these three pitches. In both cases, his hand

position movement patterns are based on the prime form (0 1 3). In m. 47, Honjoh plays the first

E5 using the middle finger in hand position P4, both F#5 and G5 in position P7, and the second

E5 using the index finger in position P5. The charted motion between positions P4, P5, and P7

represents a version of the (0 1 3) prime form. In m. 48, Honjoh alters his *te* to play E5 in

position P5, F#5 in P7, and G5 in P8. Unlike in m. 47, each note is played with the index finger,

requiring Honjoh to shift his hand position for every change in pitch. The motion between P5,

P7, and P8 presents an inverted version of the (0 1 3) prime form. But since E5, F#5, and G5 are

presented as a descending stepwise line (G5–F#5–E5), Honjoh first shifts downward by one fret

followed by a downward shift by two frets. The (0 1 3) pattern continues in mm. 49–51, when

the three-note figure is transposed to A5-G5-F#5. Similarly to the gestures used in m. 48,

Honjoh's hand movements correspond with changes in pitch, playing A5 in position P10, G5 in

P8, and F#5 in P7. The motion between these three hand positions constitutes another version of

the (0 1 3) pattern.

In sum, mm. 47–51 of Section A2 presents two three-note figures: G5–F#5–E5 and A5–

G5–F#5. To play the former, Honjoh uses two types of *te*, both of which are variations of the (0 1

3) prime form: P4–P5–P7 and P5–P7–P8. To play the latter, Honjoh moves between positions

P7, P8, and P10. All three hand position movement patterns used in this passage are

configurations of the (0 1 3) prime form, presented both in transposed and inverted forms. The

analytical discussions above have suggested that motivically similar passages in *neo* are

supported by contrasting *te*, and vice versa.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter has presented a case study for intercultural analysis, advocating for music theorists to take seriously the musical knowledge of performers and scholars of minoritized cultures, cite scholarship written in languages other than English, French, and German, and interrogate the Eurocentric epistemic structures of the discipline. Analyzing Honjoh's performance of *neo* through the framework of intercultural analysis, I have demonstrated how incorporating a mixture of Japanese and North American theories of fretboard topography allows for a nuanced analysis that attends to the cultural specificities of contemporary shamisen performance. I have also examined the extent to which Fujikura's score and Honjoh's performance have drawn from their exposure to and training in Western art music, rock, and traditional shamisen performance. I hope to have demonstrated the limitations of strictly Western or Japanese assumptions and methodologies when analyzing works such as *neo*, which requires careful interrogation of Fujikura's and Honjoh's multilayered cultural and musical backgrounds.

Moreover, by shifting the analytical attention from the composer (Fujikura) to the performer (Honjoh), I draw attention to Honjoh as Fujikura's trusted collaborator whose musical and technical decisions play a key role in the realization and performance of the work. By incorporating perspectives and terminologies used by shamisen players, I illuminate the rich possibilities of analyzing performance through music theoretical knowledges articulated by performers. Analyzing Honjoh's performance through a performer-oriented methodology based on the concept of *te*, I draw attention to formal, gestural, and timbral (in)congruities that are overlooked in conventional pitch-based analyses of the score.

The methodology developed in this chapter can potentially be applied towards other works for shamisen, both classical and contemporary. Given that the majority of theoretical tools

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for analyzing fretboard topography are based on the conventions of guitar performance, the *te*-based approach offers a more tailored methodology that accounts for the intersections between melody and timbre in shamisen performance.[30] Given the extent to which the shamisen has become popularized outside of traditional performance contexts—the Yoshida Brothers (吉田兄弟), Agatsuma Hiromitsu (上妻宏光), Wagakki Band (和楽器バンド), and the Wouassi and Roots Band (ワッシー＆ルーツバンド)—further avenues of research might include a comparative approach to explore how performers' use of *te* interact with other musical parameters across different genres and performance contexts, and the various ways in which contemporary performers navigate classical conventions of *te* with stylistic influences from non-Japanese popular music.

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[30] A notable exception to this literature is Joti Rockwell's work on banjo performance (2009).

Chapter 3
De-traditionalizing the Shō:
Interculturality in the Music of Miyata Mayumi

According to ethnomusicologist Bonnie Wade, shō (笙) player Miyata Mayumi (宮田まゆみ) is recognized by "'everyone' as the performer who is at the center of the shō being used 'everywhere'" (Wade 2014, 127). This is hardly an exaggeration—throughout her career, Miyata has performed both classical gagaku and contemporary repertoire within and outside of Japan, ranging from a performance of the Japanese national anthem at the opening ceremony of the 1998 Nagano Winter Olympics to a collaboration with Björk for the soundtrack to the 2005 film *Drawing Restraint 9*. Despite her well-established reputation, Miyata is nevertheless considered an outsider to gagaku (雅楽), the court music tradition of Japan. First, Miyata does not perform with the Music Department of the Imperial Household Agency nor does she come from a family of hereditary gagaku musicians.[1] Second, Miyata began learning the shō as an adult after receiving a degree in piano performance at the Kunitachi College of Music in Tachikawa, Japan. Miyata's relatively late arrival to the instrument contrasts with the backgrounds of professional musicians in the Imperial Household Agency, who have studied gagaku and Western art music concurrently since their childhood. When Miyata began her career in the 1970s, it was still rare for someone trained outside the Imperial Household Agency to establish themselves as a professional gagaku musician.

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[1] During the Meiji period, the newly instituted government established gagaku as the music of the imperial court and the Shinto religion, and the Music Department of the Imperial Household Agency (*Kunaichō Shikibushoku Gakubu*; 宮内庁式部職楽部) continues to serve as the authorized gatekeepers of the tradition today (Suzuki 2019; Tsukahara 2009). Both of Miyata's primary teachers—Ohno Tadamaro (多忠麿; 1933–94) and Shiba Sukeyasu (芝祐靖; 1935–2019)—were descendants of hereditary families and performing members of the Music Department of the Imperial Household Agency.

In this chapter, I argue that Miyata's unconventional musical background enabled her to

expand the boundaries of gagaku beyond its "Japanese" and "traditional" cultural framings,

which have continued to permeate discourses on Japanese music since the Meiji period (Giolai

2017, 66–72; Tsukahara 2009). LeRon James Harrison notes that scholars (both Japanese and

non-Japanese) and the Agency for Cultural Affairs in Japan have put forth a restricting narrative

of gagaku, "confining it temporally to the Heian period and spatially to select places such as the

imperial palace" (Harrison 2017, 24). In Harrison's view, such discourses have "alienated

gagaku from the cultural landscape of postwar Japan," in effect limiting the different ways in

which gagaku can be imagined and understood today (23). By designating musicians of the

Imperial Household Agency as the gatekeepers of tradition, current narratives of gagaku exclude

musicians such as Miyata, who has substantially expanded the repertoire for solo shō through

commissions while continuing to perform classical and reconstructed gagaku repertoire with the

renowned ensemble Reigakusha (伶楽舎), with whom she has been performing since its founding

in 1985. Through an analysis of Miyata's performances of traditional and contemporary

repertoire for solo shō, this chapter situates Miyata as an indispensable figure for the

development of classical gagaku and contemporary concert music, despite being strikingly

absent from the historiographical narratives of both genres. Building upon recent critiques of the

ontology of gagaku by Andrea Giolai, I focus exclusively on Miyata to draw attention to the

ways in which her performances "destabilize the naturalized association of gagaku with

'Japaneseness'" (Giolai 2017, 212). Through an analysis of Miyata's recordings, I demonstrate

how her performances invite intercultural modes of listening to and understanding gagaku in the

twenty-first century: while Miyata's performance of *Ōshikichō-no-chōshi* (黄鐘調調子)—a

traditional gagaku prelude—highlights affinities between the gagaku tonal system and Western

tonality, her performance of *One⁹* (1991)—a collaborative piece between Miyata and John

Cage—is heavily informed by performance techniques from classical gagaku. Miyata's

performances of these two works reveal the rich possibilities of analyzing gagaku beyond the

confines of traditional Japanese music. By drawing upon a mixture of Japanese and Western

theories of music, I demonstrate how Miyata's performance of the shō is shaped by her

involvement with classical gagaku and contemporary music written in Western notation.

3.1 Interculturality in Miyata Mayumi's Performances

In 2016, Miyata curated and performed a series of recitals titled "The Shō: Reviving

Historical Notation and Living in the Present, Series III" (*Yomigaeru kofu to gendai ni ikiru shō;*

甦る古譜と現代に生きる笙シリーズ III)[Example 3.1].[2] The first recital, titled "Shō in the

Present" (*Gendai no shō*; 現代の笙), featured contemporary works composed by five Japanese

composers and one American composer, including four world premieres.[3] It comprises of works

written in the 1980s and onward by composers trained in Western music: Ito Hiroyuki (1963–),

Tokunaga Takashi (1973–), Kawakami Osamu (1979–), Saiki Yumi (1964–), John Cage (1991–

92), and Hosokawa Toshio (1955–). The second recital, titled "Shō in Historical Notation" (*Kofu*

no shō; 古譜の笙), was devoted to classical gagaku repertoire, featuring six preludes for solo

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[2] Miyata began performing recitals as part of the "The Shō: Reviving Historical Notation and Living in the Present" series in 2016. Parts I and II comprised of solo recitals performed in 2016, and Part IV was divided into two recitals. The first recital of Part IV (24 February 2018) featured different arrangements of a popular gagaku piece, *Seigaiha*, as well as contemporary pieces by Kawakami Osamu (1979–), Shiba Sukeyasu (1935–2019), and Hosokawa Toshio (1955–). In the second recital (8 December 2018), Miyata devoted the entire performance to classical repertoire, performing solo *chōshi* preludes from all six gagaku modes that are currently in use. In this recital, each performance of a *chōshi* prelude is a historically informed performance based on the notated version in the treatise *Kofu Ryōritsu-no-maki* (『古譜律呂巻』), which was written by court musician Toyohara Toshiaki (豊原利秋) in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century (See Terauchi 1995). The reconstruction of *chōshi* from historical treatises is an ongoing collaboration between Miyata and historical musicologist Endō Tōru.

[3] In 2017, Miyata was awarded the Art Encouragement Prize from the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (芸術選奨 音楽部門 文部科学大臣賞) for her recital series.

shō,[4] each of which showcases a different mode.[5] Miyata's recital series reflects a broader trend among recent performers of gagaku instruments to incorporate both classical and contemporary works into their repertoire, in some cases, within the same recital. The co-existence of works conventionally categorized as "classical gagaku" and "contemporary music" within a single recital series highlights the dual status of gagaku as both a Japanese cultural heritage and a living musical practice.

Example 3.1 Programs for Miyata Mayumi's Recital Series: "The Shō: Reviving Historical Notation and Living in the Present, Series III"

(a) Program for "Shō in the Present," 30 July 2016 at MUSICASA in Tokyo, Japan.

Ito Hiroyuki (伊藤弘之)(1963–)	*Hōran* for shō and harp (World Premiere)
Tokunaga Takashi (徳永崇)(1973–)	*Holon III* for solo shō (World Premiere)
Kawakami Osamu (川上統)(1979–)	*Kushikurage* for shō and harp (World Premiere)
Saiki Yumi (斉木由美)(1964–)	*Pneuma* for solo shō (World Premiere)
John Cage (1991–92)	*One⁹* for solo shō (1991)
Hosokawa Toshio (1955–)	*Utsurohi* for shō and harp (1986)

(b) Program for "Shō in Historical Notation," 12 November 2016 at MUSICASA in Tokyo, Japan

Sōjō-no-chōshi	双調調子
Taishikichō-no-chōshi	大食調調子
Ichikotsuchō-no-chōshi	壱越調調子
Hyōjō-no-chōshi	平調調子
Ōshikichō-no-chōshi	黄鐘調調子
Banshikichō-no-chōshi	盤渉調調子

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[4] Miyata's performances of *chōshi* preludes at the "Shō in Historical Notation" recital in November 2016 are based on historical scores archived in the Yōmei Bunko (陽明文庫), an archive in Kyoto that houses manuscripts, books, artworks, and other historical records held by the Konoe family, which was one of the most prominent noble families prior to the end of World War II.

[5] Currently, there are six modes in use in contemporary gagaku: Ichikotsu-chō (壱越調; centered around D), Hyōjō (平調; E), Taishiki-chō (太食調; E), Sōjō (双調; G), Ōshiki-chō (黄鐘調; A), and Banshiki-chō (盤渉調; B). For an overview of modes in gagaku, see Endō 2013; Garfias 1975; Masumoto 2010.

At first glance, Miyata's recital series seems to be divided squarely into two discrete

parts: contemporary Western music in the first recital and traditional Japanese music in the

second. The boundaries between the descriptors "traditional," "contemporary," "Japanese," and

"Western," however, become blurry when one considers the multiple forms of interculturality

present across the two recitals. In the first recital, Miyata performs works written in Western

notation for a Japanese instrument by four Western-trained Japanese composers and one

American composer.[6] Although the Western staff system was imported into Japan fairly recently

during the Meiji Restoration, Western notation is no longer explicitly marked as "Western."[7]

Moreover, the presence of the four Japanese composers complicates the scenario further, since

they are Japanese by citizenship but were trained predominantly in the Western art music

tradition. In the second half, Miyata performs classical gagaku repertoire originally imported

from China. They are presented as self-standing musical works in the modern concert hall, which

is a Western cultural import. The performance of gagaku in a concert hall setting departs

significantly from the ritualistic contexts in which gagaku was performed prior to modernization

in the Meiji era (1868–1912): at Shinto shrines, Buddhist temples, and imperial ceremonies.[8]

In order to examine the ways in which Miyata's performances challenge the framing of

gagaku as a traditional Japanese musical genre, I call into question previous analyses of musical

interculturality that have relied heavily on Edward Said's framework of Orientalism (1978).

First, I suggest that neither the contemporary repertoire of the first recital nor the classical

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[6] Kitagawa Junko (2009) refers to Japanese composers trained in Western art music composition as "Japanese *yōgaku*" composers (266).

[7] Alison Tokita (2014) has argued that contemporary Japanese performers of traditional music are "bi-musical" in that they have acquired fluency in both modern and traditional performance techniques and stylistic idioms on their instruments.

[8] See Terauchi 2010.

repertoire of the second recital can be divided neatly into the categories of traditional/Japanese and contemporary/Western. A dichotomous configuration of Japan and the West is rooted in the paradigm of Orientalism, which positions the East (or Orient) as a dominated group against the West as the dominant power (Said 1978). For instance, as I have outlined in the Introduction, studies of Takemitsu's music have tended to rely on an opposition between or mixture of Japanese and Western elements (Koozin 1991; Burt 2001; Hansen 2010; Nuss 2002). This dichotomy is problematic for two reasons. First, the Japan/West binary assumes that the categories of Japan/West and traditional/contemporary remain static and do not interact. For example, the framework of Orientalism and the resulting East/West binary fails to take into account the degree to which Western art music has been fully integrated into the Japanese music scene over the last century. Japanese listeners are likely to be more familiar with Beethoven than gagaku, and it is far more common for Japanese music students to pursue performance degrees in violin or piano than in koto or shamisen.[9] Given the mainstream position of Western art music in Japan, it would be misguided to interpret works by Japanese composers such as Hosokawa and Takemitsu as non-Westerners participating in a Western tradition. As Alison Tokita (2014) has shown, a high number of present-day composers and performers in Japan are trained primarily in Western art music, and most performers of traditional Japanese instruments have a high degree of fluency in Western art music.[10]

Second, (neo-)Orientalist critiques by John Corbett (2015) and others have focused predominantly on the work of composers. Corbett explicitly states that his analysis of

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[9] In fact, only in 2002 did training in Japanese musical instruments become compulsory in the middle school music curriculum (Matsunobu 2018).

[10] Musicians of the Imperial Household Agency, the authorized gatekeepers of gagaku, must develop proficiency in both gagaku and Western orchestral instruments.

Orientalism in experimental American and European music is focused on the "compositional world," and the "pivotal figures" (391) mentioned in his writing are all composers. Corbett situates non-Western music (i.e., "the Orient" à la Said) as "a generalized set of potential 'new musical resources'" (396) usurped by American and European experimental composers, positing a clear power imbalance between the colonizer and the colonized.[11] By critiquing the work of experimental composers through an Orientalist framework, however, Corbett makes a crucial omission. His analysis leaves out performers and teachers of non-Western musical practices who have shared their knowledge with composers to make their intercultural work possible. This perspective therefore minimizes the contribution of performers such as Miyata, whose collaborative work with composers and knowledge of Western music and gagaku have been indispensable to the emergence of the shō in Western contemporary music.[12] In Miyata's case, challenging the self/Other divide inherent in Saidian East/West dichotomies elevates the performer from a passive mediator between the score-based work and listeners into an active collaborator.

Third, given that the understanding of music as an object of aesthetic contemplation was imported into Japan from the West, I argue that concert performances of gagaku in the twenty-first century are inherently intercultural. Hosokawa Shuhei has noted that the Japanese language had "no all embracing term referring to any humanly organized sound form" until Japan opened its doors to the West in the nineteenth century (Hosokawa 2012, 2). Hosokawa notes that the current analogous term for music, *ongaku* (音楽), only entered the mainstream Japanese

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[11] Everett 2005 and Rao 2009 similarly express skepticism towards Corbett's reductive understanding of the relationship between Western experimental composers and non-Western music.

[12] In fact, Miyata was first invited to perform contemporary works for the shō at the National Theatre due to her ability to read Western staff notation (Narabe 2018).

vocabulary amid the processes of Westernization and modernization during the Meiji era (2–3).[13]

In other words, the contemporary definition of *ongaku* as well as the ontology of music as an object for aesthetic contemplation was imported into Japan from the West. Attending to the acoustical, political, and historical dimensions of gagaku, Terauchi Naoko has argued that the conceptualization of gagaku as "music to be heard" is fairly recent, shaped by the founding of the National Theatre of Japan in the 1960s (Terauchi 2010, 2011). Prior to the Meiji era, gagaku was often performed outdoors in palace courtyards, Shinto shrines, and Buddhist temples to accompany rituals and ceremonies. Consequently, the murmur of voices, rustling of trees, ringing bells, and other "non-musical" sounds (in the Western sense) were as much a part of the acoustic environment as the sounds of instruments (Terauchi 2011, v). By shutting out external noise and separating the stage from the audience, modern concert halls introduced new ways of listening to gagaku.[14] The National Theatre in particular provided a designated space for listening specifically to musical sounds, which, according to Terauchi, facilitated the exploration of new expressive and sonic possibilities for gagaku instruments (190–91).[15]

In this context, Miyata's recital refashions traditional gagaku repertoire as self-standing musical works in the Western sense of the term. Through this process of recontextualization, Miyata not only establishes gagaku as a living enterprise that is temporally "coeval" (Fabian 1983) with other forms of contemporary music-making but also negotiates, in the words of Wade, "two deeply cultivated, historically grounded complexes:" traditional Japanese music and

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[13] According to Hosokawa, the word *ongaku* was used to describe genres of the imperial court and Buddhist temples that were imported from China and Korea before the nineteenth century, and remained a niche term in the Japanese vocabulary until the introduction of a Western-influenced educational system in the 1880s.

[14] The founding of the National Theatre also offered opportunities for the public to attend professional performances of gagaku. See Terauchi 2008.

[15] See also Motegi 1999.

contemporary Western music (Wade 2014, 101). Taking Miyata's performance as the object of analysis draws attention to the unique musical experiences afforded by the multiple layers of interculturality in her performance, as well as the intersections between traditional and contemporary repertoire within the modern context of the Westernized concert hall.

By demonstrating how performers—in addition to composers—can serve as "mediators between native and foreign cultural groups in initiating dialogues" (Everett 2004, 5), this chapter extends theories of intercultural synthesis developed by scholars such as Yayoi Uno Everett (2004, 2005) and Bonnie Wade (2014). My analysis of Miyata's performance explores her role as a key creative agent in the production of contemporary gagaku.[16] Previous scholarship by Motegi Kiyoko (1999) and Wade (2014) suggest that performers of traditional Japanese instruments have played an essential role in facilitating the hybridization of Western and traditional Japanese musical aesthetics. In particular, Wade's ethnographic work (2014) has revealed that performers of traditional Japanese music have acted as collaborators in a shared cultural space between Japanese and Western music. Analytical studies of intercultural practices in Japanese music, however, have focused primarily on issues of compositional strategy.[17] I take Miyata's performance—rather than the score—as the object of analysis to challenge the marginalization of performers in scholarly discourse on Japanese music. Understanding music *as* performance avoids the pitfall of attributing the majority of the creative effort to the composer, ensuring that performers such as Miyata are given due credit for their collaborative labor.

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[16] While the Japanese term *gendai gagaku* (現代雅楽), which translates into "contemporary gagaku" in English, is often used to describe postwar concert music written in Western notation for gagaku instruments, I use the English term "contemporary gagaku" to refer to all contemporary manifestations of music that centers around gagaku instruments, including contemporary performances of classical repertoire.

[17] See Burt 2002; Deguchi 2012; Hansen 2010; Koozin 1990, 1991; Everett 2004, 2005; Nuss 1996, 2002; Onishi 2004.

My performance-centered approach to analysis aligns with the work of Nicholas Cook, who has critiqued the structuralist primacy of the notated score in traditional musical analysis (Cook 1999, 2001, 2012b, 2013), and Judy Lochhead, whose analytical model conceptualizes the musical work "not as a fixed structure but rather as a network of sounding possibilities" (Lochhead 2016, 96). Cook has argued that the inclusion of the performer in analysis helps highlight the role of performer as collaborators in the compositional process and how performances can create meanings that are not represented through the score.[18] I especially heed Cook's warning that "it is…the performer as agent who all too easily disappears from performance analysis" (Cook 2012b, 77), instead using analysis as a way to draw attention to Miyata's agency in performance rather than in any prescriptivist sense.[19] While Cook's critiques are often targeted towards Western art music, his idea that "performance should be seen as a source of signification in its own right" (Cook 1999, 247) applies to the repertoires addressed in this chapter. In a similar vein, Lochhead's analytical model suggests that performers play a central role in shaping musical structure, and that analysis should actively incorporate their perspectives. Lochhead outlines a "dynamic model" of analysis that captures the "set of possibilities" (2016, 70) available to each performance. She views musical structure not as an "unchanging feature of the work" (97) but as an "emergent, phenomenal, and malleable feature of musical sound" (7). According to this reconceived model of musical structure, the objective of analysis shifts from identifying pre-existing structural properties to exploring how cultural,

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[18] Carolyn Abbate (2004) has also situated performance as a significant site of musical meaning, arguing that "it is in the irreversible experience of playing, singing, or listening that any meanings summoned by music come into being" (505).

[19] Cook (2013) refers to this framework the "page-to-stage" approach, in which performance decisions are informed primarily through analysis of the score. The relationship between the performer and analyst is therefore constructed on unequal terms; the performer is always subordinate to the musical structure.

social, and historical factors, along with the subjectivities of composers, performers, and listeners, have informed our listening.[20]

My analysis focuses on two pieces from Miyata's recital programs for which the structuring of the musical work is largely contingent upon performance: *Ōshikichō-no-chōshi* and *One⁹*. These two pieces for solo shō have several characteristics in common despite their divergent musical origins. First, both pieces are non-metrical and the duration of each musical event is determined by the performer, albeit with some constraints. In the chōshi, for example, contemporary performance practice usually assigns longer durations to *aitake* (合竹)—five- and six-note pitch clusters used in tōgaku repertoire—than to single tones. *One⁹* is structured according to a system called time brackets, through which Cage determines the pitches to be played but leaves their duration up to the performer, provided the durations fall within the intervals designated by the time brackets. Second, both pieces designate all pitches and the order in which they must be played, leaving no room for pitch improvisation. Third, because the notation for both pieces—classical gagaku notation for *Ōshikichō-no-chōshi* and Western staff notation for *One⁹*—omits information pertaining to dynamics, articulation, and timbre, these parameters are left to the performer's decisions.

The most significant point of confluence between the two pieces is the active role of the performer in shaping their structure and meaning. As Lochhead has suggested, musical structure is not a fixed entity; rather, structure is contingent on performance decisions, which are informed by the performer's and listener's musical, aesthetic, and cultural backgrounds. In Miyata's case, for example, her performances are inevitably shaped by her "bi-musical" background in Western

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[20] Other music theorists also share this view. Mitchell Ohriner, for example, argues that performers do not "passively transmit structure in a one-to-one mapping; but neither do they 'interpret' structure, layering inessential details over something determinate and fixed" (2012, [38]).

art music and gagaku, as well as the fact that she does not belong to either a hereditary family of gagaku musicians or the Imperial Household Agency. Lochhead's methodology of "Investigating" offers a fruitful lens for analyzing Miyata's performance. Lochhead suggests that our engagements with music are always informed by our individual experiences and perspectives. Because creators, listeners, and analysts are "culturally, socially, and historically situated actors," Lochhead notes, musical experiences are always informed by their macroperceptions (2016, 91).

Feminist music theoretical writings have also put forth the idea that musical experience cannot be detached from a performer's, listener's, or analyst's subjectivity. Marion Guck, for example, argues that "any analysis of music derives necessarily from *personal experience* of music" (Guck 1994, 29; emphasis mine), and Suzanne Cusick critiques the omission of performing bodies from the discourse of musical analysis, writing that from the position of the embodied performer, the work is "something you do which is, while you're doing it, entirely coterminous with who you are" (Cusick 1994, 18). I align my approach with that of Cusick, who theorizes the work as a byproduct of a "performer's mobilizing of previously studied skills so as to embody, to make real, to make sounding, a set of relationships that are only partly relationships among sounds" (18). I seek to demonstrate how the intercultural meanings of Miyata's performances are contingent on her subjective position and on her role as a "cultural broker" between gagaku and Western contemporary music.[21]

In this vein, I suggest that Miyata's unique musical background—a graduate of a conservatory piano performance program who was unaffiliated with the Imperial Household

[21] The term "cultural broker" is used by Everett (2004) to describe "individuals who have acquired understanding of more than one set of cultural principles and who function as mediators between native and foreign cultural groups in initiating dialogues" (5). While Everett only includes composers in her list of cultural brokers, I posit that performers such as Miyata also serve similar roles.

Agency and only began learning shō as an adult—afforded her the freedom to experiment with new ways of performing that pushed the shō beyond the confines of classical gagaku: commissioning new works for solo shō, collaborating with composers and performers, and reinterpreting classical gagaku repertoire. In addition, I argue that Miyata's gender has played a major role in establishing her as an outsider to gagaku. To this day, gagaku remains a predominantly men's tradition in institutionalized spheres: as of this writing, the Music Department of the Imperial Household Agency has been comprised entirely of men since its formation in 1947.[22] While officially unaffiliated with the Imperial Household Agency, the ensemble Jūnion-kai (十二音会)—whose members include current and retired members of the Imperial Household Agency—is, as of this writing, likewise comprised entirely of men.[23] As a consequence, Miyata has only performed with ensembles unaffiliated with the Imperial Household Agency since the beginning of her career, although both of the ensembles with which she has performed were led by former musicians of the Imperial Household Agency: Ohno, director of Tokyo Gakuso, and Shiba, the founding musical director of Reigakusha. By contrast, both of her ensembles featured a significantly higher proportion of women. Tokyo Gakuso, for example, had five women in Miyata's final National Theatre performance with the ensemble in 1985, and Reigakusha had eleven women at their first National Theatre gagaku series performance in 1995 and nineteen women as of 2020.[24] Even in the very first ensemble she

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[22] While officially unaffiliated with the Imperial Household Agency, the ensemble Jūnion-kai (十二音会)—which is comprised primarily of current and retired members of the Imperial Household Agency—is comprised entirely of men as of this writing.

[23] Although the Music Department of the Imperial Household Agency is currently dominated by men, there is a rich history of gagaku performed by women. In the eighth century (and possibly earlier), the government established the Naikyōbō (内教坊), an institution where women studied dance, instrumental music, and songs to be performed at rituals and ceremonies. The Naikyōbō was dissolved sometime during the Heian period (794–1185)(Tōgi 1989, 69).

[24] As of June 2021, 59% of Reigakusha's members (19 out of 32) are women.

joined after graduating from the Kunitachi College of Music—the community-based

Sennichidani Gagakukai (千日谷雅楽会) in Tokyo—Miyata was not the only woman musician in

the group (Wade 2014, 127). In contrast to the Imperial Household Agency, which continues to

maintain an all-men ensemble, performing groups outside of the Imperial Household Agency—

both at the professional and amateur level—tend to have a high percentage of women among

their membership.[25] There was, in fact, a correlation between the gender demographic of the

ensembles and their willingness to venture beyond classical gagaku works—which was the focus

of the Imperial Household Agency's performing repertoire. Since ensembles operating beyond

the Imperial Household Agency had more flexibility in programming non-classical repertoire,

Miyata spent the majority of her career performing in environments that were conducive to

performing contemporary works for gagaku instruments. Moreover, thanks in part to the

progressive vision of Kido Toshirō (木戸敏郎), the artistic director of the National Theatre of

Japan until 1996 (Terauchi 2007), Miyata had the opportunity to familiarize herself with

contemporary repertoires early on in her career. It was also Kido who encouraged Miyata to

program a solo shō recital, a rarity before Miyata performed her first recital event in 1983

(Narabe 2018). While Miyata has noted that she has never given much thought to her minority

status as a woman gagaku musician (Narabe 2018), I suggest that Miyata's double-minoritized

status within gagaku—as both a woman musician and as a performer unaffiliated with the

Imperial Household Agency—and her active involvement with repertoires beyond the canon of

classical gagaku offer a striking interpretive lens for understanding her performances. In a

similar vein, Ellie Hisama has argued that Ruth Crawford's experience of "social, gender-based

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[25] In recent years, members of Reigakusha have formed all-women gagaku ensembles such as the shō trio Shōgirls (Miura Remi, Tajima Kazue, and Nakamura Hanako) and wind trio Gagaku Zanmai Nakamura Sanchi, whose members all have the last name "Nakamura" (雅楽三昧 中村さんち; hichiriki player Nakamura Hitomi, ryūteki player Nakamura Kanako, and shō player Nakamura Hanako).

exclusion" in her professional life has transformed her compositions into a "site of resistance" (2001, 19). While I do not intend to suggest that Miyata's performances constitute a method of resistance against the institutionalized gatekeepers of gagaku—all of whom have been men—I suggest that intersections between Miyata's gender, institutional belonging, and musical interests play a critical role in shaping her intercultural approach to performance.

As I have discussed in the Introduction, my analysis of interculturality in Miyata's performance is shaped by my subject position as a Japanese music theorist who was trained primarily in Western art music and began studying the shō during my time in graduate school in the United States. As a member of the Columbia University Gagaku Ensemble, I have had the privilege of studying shō personally with Miyata since 2016. Given my musical background, it would be misleading, however, to limit my subject position to that of a cultural insider—i.e., a Japanese music theorist writing about the traditional Japanese genre of gagaku. While my knowledge of the Japanese language has facilitated access to scholarship in Japanese and direct contact with performers of the shō in Japan, my training in Western art music and unfamiliarity with gagaku simultaneously positioned me as a musical outsider to shō performance. Furthermore, the politics of studying gagaku at Columbia as a Japanese music theorist is further complicated by the fact that my training in shō performance was only made available to me through my institutional affiliation with an elite U.S. university.[26] By contrast, I encountered few opportunities to study, perform, or listen to gagaku while living in Japan or at other U.S. and Canadian universities I have attended. My musical background therefore follows a trajectory similar to Tokita's model of consecutive bi-musicality, in which a Japanese musician trained in Western music "'discovers' Japanese music in later life" (2014, 171). I therefore approach this

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[26] For an analysis of the cultural politics of non-Western music ensembles at U.S. universities, see Groesbeck 2020 and Solís 2004.

analytical project not from a purely "Japanese" or "Western" point of view, but from a multi-layered perspective that has integrated knowledge of gagaku, Western art music, and my training in music theory.

3.2 Analyzing Performance through Spectrograms

A performance-centered approach to analysis is especially productive for illuminating the interculturality of Miyata's performances of gagaku. Through my analysis, I show how Miyata's considerations of dynamics, articulation, form, and instrumental gestures in performance contest the binary between a traditionalist Japan and a modernist West.[27] First, I suggest that Miyata's performance of *Ōshikichō-no-chōshi*, which she has refashioned as a self-standing solo work performed in a Western concert setting, invites new analytical readings of classical gagaku repertoire. Through my analysis of *Ōshikichō-no-chōshi*, I demonstrate how Miyata's performance 1) draws attention to melodic features within the shō part that are otherwise obscured in a traditional ensemble performance; and 2) produces a renewed formal identity for the work. Second, I argue that *One⁹*, while being a contemporary work, actively incorporates aspects of traditional performance practice. Analyzing Miyata's manipulation of form, dynamics, and instrumental gestures in the two recorded performances sheds light on her agency in performing interculturality.

For both *Ōshikichō-no-chōshi* and *One⁹*, I refer to spectrographic images to visualize aspects of performance that are not represented in the score. Spectrograms map the spectrum of frequencies in acoustic signals over time, indicating the presence of the fundamental, overtones and any inharmonic sounds that occur. Although spectrograms are useful for visually capturing

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[27] Eugene Montague defines *instrumental gesture* as "movement required of a performer to produce the sounds demanded by a musical work" (2012, [1.3]).

the acoustic features of a given performance, they also carry significant limitations: fir*s*t, spectrographic images cannot account for how listeners perceive timbres (Gardiner and Lim 2007; Lavengood 2017); second, how a listener perceives timbre is not always commensurate with the acoustic properties of a signal (Fales 2002); and second, they do not differentiate between different timbres when there are multiple sounds (Heidemann 2014). I treat the spectrogram as a medium for visually representing a performance, and I rely on spectrographic images to trace changes in dynamics, differences in articulation, and the timing of fingering changes on the shō.

I align my methodology with that of John Latartara and Michael Gardiner (2007), who have used spectrograms to investigate dynamics and articulation.[28] Although the shō's distinctive timbre has drawn musicians, listeners, and composers alike to the instrument, changes in timbre across a single solo shō performance are remarkably subtle. As demonstrated by Jaroslaw Kapuscinski and François Rose, the spectral envelope of the shō "barely changes over its entire range, suggesting that its sound is homogeneous throughout its range" (2010). I have replicated their findings by mapping the lowest and highest tones in the range of the shō, A4 and E6, onto a spectrum plot (Example 3.2a and 3.2b).[29] Spectrum plots, according to Megan Lavengood, capture "differences in amplitude between various partials" and are well-suited for measuring which partials are are strongest (Lavengood 2017, 15). As shown in Examples 3.2a and 3.2b, the spectrum plots for A4 and E6 reveal that the amplitudes of the second and fourth partials

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[28] Spectrograms have also been used to analyze timbre by a number of music scholars: see Brackett 2001; Heidemann 2014; Lavengood 2017, 2019; and Rings 2013.

[29] The audio files are available on their website at https://ccrma.stanford.edu/groups/gagaku/woodwinds/sho-en.html.

Example 3.2: (a) Spectrum plot for A4, played by the shō; (b) Spectrum plot for E6, played by the shō

(a)

(b)
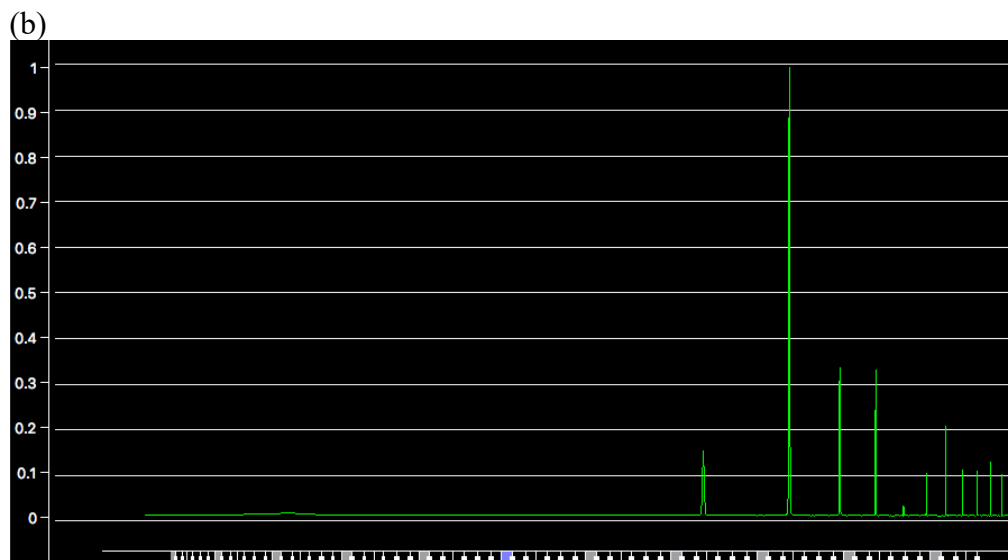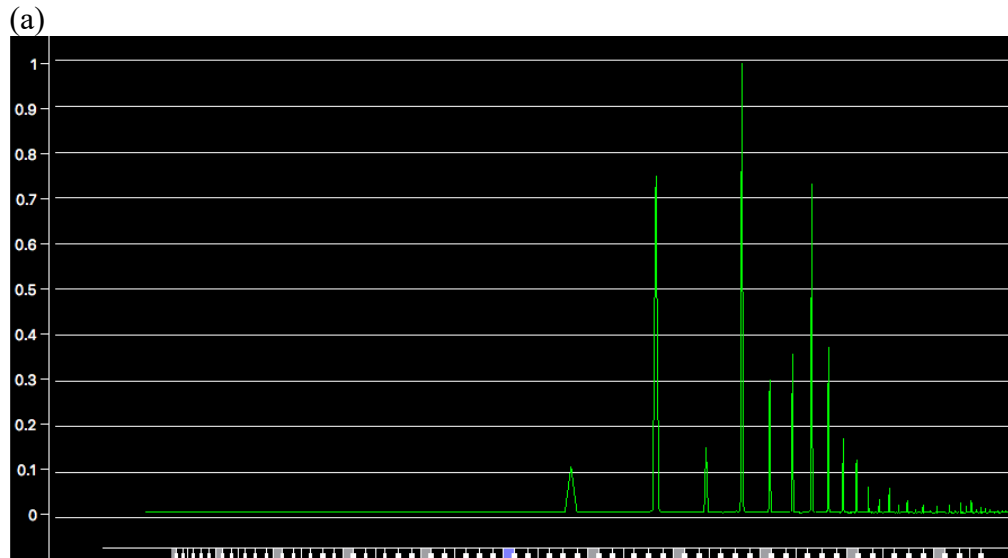
are stronger than that of the fundamental. Both spectrum plots are characterized by a high

spectral centroid (i.e., the mean of the distribution of spectral energy lies in the higher partials)

and spectral irregularity (i.e., having a jagged spectral envelope compared to one in which the

amplitude of each successive partial is weaker than that of the previous partial), suggesting that

the timbral features of the shō remain consistent across its range.[30] Since timbre is unaffected by changes in pitch range, I surmise that dynamics and articulation are two salient ways through which Miyata shapes her performance and generates musical interest for the listener.

3.3 Introduction to Chōshi

For readers unfamiliar with gagaku repertoire, a brief explanation of chōshi is in order. In classical gagaku, chōshi is a prelude performed by a tōgaku ensemble—comprising ryūteki, hichiriki, shō, koto, biwa, and percussion—prior to a performance of bugaku (dance).[31] The chōshi functions as the entrance music for the dancer while also establishing the affect of the mode. Consequently, each of the six modes in contemporary tōgaku has its own version of the chōshi.[32] While all chōshi are notated in the form of traditional tablature,[33] they are primarily taught orally from teacher to student. Each chōshi comprises distinct sections called *ku* (句), and each section of the shō part concludes with a cadential drone outlining an interval of a Pythagorean fifth.[34] In Miyata's solo performance of *Ōshikichō-no-chōshi*, the cadential drone of the first *ku* spans from

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[30] Krimphoff et al. 1994; Barthet et al. 2010. Based on these findings, Kapuscinski and Rose 2010 conclude that the strength of the second and fourth partials contribute to the "bright and pure quality of its isolated tones."

[31] Tōgi 1989 notes that chōshi can also precede kangen pieces, featuring three sections of the shō part, one section of the hichiriki part, and the *netori* (音取) prelude of the ryūteki. In bugaku, the shō and hichiriki continue playing the fourth and second sections, respectively, and the ryūteki plays its own distinct part (called *bongen* [品玄]) on repeat (183).

[32] The six modes in contemporary gagaku are Ichikotsu-chō (centered around D), Hyōjō (E), Taishiki-chō (E), Sōjō (G), Ōshiki-chō (A), and Banshiki-chō (B).

[33] The netori and chōshi for the six modes are included in the *Meiji Senteifu* (明治選定譜), standardized part scores for the complete repertoire of modern gagaku compiled by Gagaku Kyoku (雅楽局; present-day Imperial Household Agency) in 1876 and 1888. Western transcriptions of the chōshi are provided in Shiba 1972.

[34] The shō is tuned according to a Pythagorean tuning system, using a Chinese-derived method called *sanbun son'eki* (三分損益). See Service 2012, 88–90 for an explanation of the *sanbun son'eki* method.

0:11–0:55 (Hussong and Miyata 2004).[35] The number of sections in a chōshi depends on the mode and on the instrument. The shō part for *Ōshikichō-no-chōshi*, for example, contains sixteen sections while the hichiriki part contains only three.[36] Most importantly, in a typical bugaku ensemble performance the chōshi is played using an effect called *omeri-buki* (退吹), in which musical sections are played in canon by each instrumental part, resulting in "a tangled musical texture of overlapping entrances" (Nuss 1996, 169). Because of the crowded texture of the chōshi, it becomes difficult to hear the expressive nuances of the shō part in an ensemble performance. Once the dancer enters and settles onto the stage, the chōshi transitions into a concluding phrase called *fukidome-ku* (吹止句), which is performed only by the section leaders of the ryūteki, hichiriki, and shō (Togi 1989, 183).[37] The performers jump to the fukidome-ku to conclude the chōshi, regardless of which section is being performed at that very moment.

3.4 Analyzing Miyata's Performance of Ōshikichō-no-chōshi

Through my analysis, I demonstrate the various ways in which Miyata's performance of *Ōshikichō-no-chōshi* re-envisions the chōshi as a work for solo shō. My analysis focuses exclusively on Miyata's recording of the work in the album *Deep Silence* (Hussong and Miyata 2004), which contains her first solo recording of the prelude. Her solo performance reinvigorates *Ōshikichō-no-chōshi* as a work independent from its traditional ensemble practice and tailored towards early twenty-first-century recording constraints. I closely examine how Miyata's

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[35] As of this writing, the recording can be accessed on YouTube at
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-KsHnyKYuYE.

[36] The ryūteki part has no internal divisions and is referred to as bongen rather than as chōshi.

[37] When the chōshi is performed again during the dancer's exit, the instruments play an ending phrase called *nyūjō* (入調). In each of the six chōshi, the nyūjō is integrated into the piece and also serves as an ending of one of the sections. In *Ōshikichō-no-chōshi,* the nyūjō is located at the end of Section 6.

performance establishes a renewed melodic and formal identity of the work. By interpreting and drawing attention to expressive and melodic details of the shō part that are often difficult to parse in the congested texture of an ensemble performance, Miyata's performance plays a significant role in establishing the shō part as a standalone work. Miyata began performing the six chōshi as solo pieces in 1983, when she first gave a solo recital at Kido's urging (Narabe 2018). While there had been historical precedent for performing the chōshi as solo pieces, it was uncommon for shō players to perform them in public (Miyata, personal communication, March 28, 2019). In fact, the idea of a solo shō recital was almost unheard of before Miyata. Through repeated performances, Miyata established the chōshi as core repertoire for shō players. As such, I situate Miyata's solo performance of chōshi as a transformative act that has been essential to the development of contemporary solo repertoire in the 1980s and onward.

I have segmented each section (*ku*) of the piece into discrete events, based on how musical information is laid out in the traditional notation. I refer throughout my analysis to Shiba Sukehiro's (芝祐泰) transcriptions of *Ōshikichō-no-chōshi* in Western staff notation (Shiba 1972, 97–101) as well as the traditional notation (Ono 1977). As shown in Example 3.3, traditional notation provides two pieces of information: the Chinese characters (kanji) in larger point size designate the pipes that should be played, and the characters in smaller point size function as musical symbols, providing technical instructions for the performer to release, hold over, and add pipes to produce single tones or clusters. In other words, traditional notation specifies which pipes to play and how they should be articulated. Following closely the layout of the traditional notation, I categorize each execution of a performance technique (i.e., those written in smaller point size) as a discrete event to reflect every instance in which the performer enacts changes in fingerings. I will give examples of some of the most common musical symbols that appear in the *Ōshikichō-*

no-chōshi, which I will reference in my analysis.[38]

> *Aitake* (合竹): play as *aitake* rather than as a single pipe.
> **Example**: Event 1.1 requires the performer to play the *aitake otsu* (乙; E5, A5, B5, D6, E6, F#6).

> *Nokoru* (残): hold over pipes from previous event.
> **Example**: Event 1.2 instructs the performer to hold over the pipes E5 and E6 (*nokoru*) from *aitake otsu* in Event 1.1. When transitioning from Event 1.1 to 1.2, the performer must therefore release four pipes (A5, B5, D6, F#6) to reveal the octave between E5 and E6. Although *nokoru* in Event 1.2 involves multiple pipes, I analyze it as a single event given that the four fingers are released simultaneously.

> *Gusu* (具): add additional pitch(es) to sounding pitch or cluster.
> **Example:** Event 1.3 requires the performer to add B5 while continuing to play through pitches E5 and E6, producing a cluster comprising of pitches E5, B5, and E6.

> *Utsu* (打): softly press down on finger hole and release.
> **Example**: Event 1.4 involves softly pressing down on D5 and slowly releasing shortly after, all the while continuing to hold down the pipes E5, B5, and E6 from Event 1.3.

> *Utsuru* (移): shift fingers entirely to a new pipe.
> **Example**: Event 2.2 requires the performer to hold down a new pipe, A5, while simultaneously releasing fingers from the pipes E5, B5 and E6.

> *Shidai* (次第): add pitches in succession.
> **Example**: In Events 2.4–2.6, A4 and E5 are added to A5 in succession to produce an A4-E5-A5 cluster. While *gusu* implies that two pitches are added simultaneously, *shidai* indicates that the two pitches are added individually in the order they appear.

> *Tataku* (叩): similar to *utsu*, except fingers press down on the finger hole for a slightly longer duration.
> **Example**: In Event 3.3, the performer must press down on the pipes for D5 and A5—comparatively more aggressively compared to the motion for *utsu*—and release.

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[38] In some cases, the name of the pipe is accompanied by two musical symbols that must be executed in succession. In Event 3.3, for example, the pipes for D5 and A5 are accompanied by the symbols *tataku* and *gusu*. Event 3.3 is preceded by the *aitake ku* (工; consisting of pitches C#5, D5, E5, G#5, A5, and B5) in Event 3.2, which requires six fingers to play. The first step in Event 3.3 is to execute the performance technique of *tataku*. The performer must release their fingers from the pipes D5 and A5, place their fingers over the holes for pipes D5 and A5, and release again, completing this motion while continuing to let C#5, E5, G#5, and B5 sound. The next step is to execute the performance technique of *gusu*. Once the performer has released their fingers from pipes D5 and A5 for the second time, they must now place their fingers onto the pipes D5 and A5 once again. Adding D5 and A5 back into the backdrop of pitches C#5, E5, G#5, and B5 completes the *aitake ku*. In Event 3.3, executing the *tataku* and *gusu* techniques in succession accentuates the D5-A5 dyad within the *aitake ku*.

Hirou (拾): each pitch is played as a single monophonic tone. Unlike the other symbols, the *hirou* symbol applies not only to the immediate pitch but also to any preceding pitches that do not have symbols attached to them.
Example: G5 in Event 7.10 is held over from the *aitake* in Event 7.9. Although the *hirou* symbol only accompanies Event 7.13 (G5), Events 7.11 (F♯5) and 7.12 (E5) are also played as single melodic tones since neither of them carry any performance instructions.

Example 3.3: Traditional notation for *Ōshikichō-no-chōshi*, Section 1 (Ono 1977)
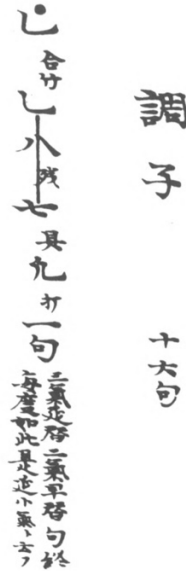
I will first focus on Events 3.9–3.12 to examine how Miyata's interpretations of dynamics and articulation—neither of which are explicitly indicated in traditional notation—draw attention to the unfolding of melodic material in the shō part of the chōshi. My analysis employs Lavengood's framework for timbral analysis to analyze attack profiles. Lavengood distinguishes between percussive and soft attacks to describe the onset of sound, which she defines as "the initial rise from zero amplitude to a peak amplitude, prior to either stabilizing at a sustain amplitude or decaying and returning to zero" (2017, 21). Whereas a percussive attack appears as a "wide band of sound" on the spectrogram, a soft attack has a "thin strand of sound" at its attack point (21). By examining the spectrograms of Miyata's recording of *Ōshikichō-no-chōshi*, I

demonstrate how Miyata's interpretations of dynamics and articulation bring out the melodic

figure E5-B5-D5–E5.

Example 3.4: Spectrogram for Events 3.9–3.12, Miyata's recorded performance of *Ōshikichō-no-chōshi*
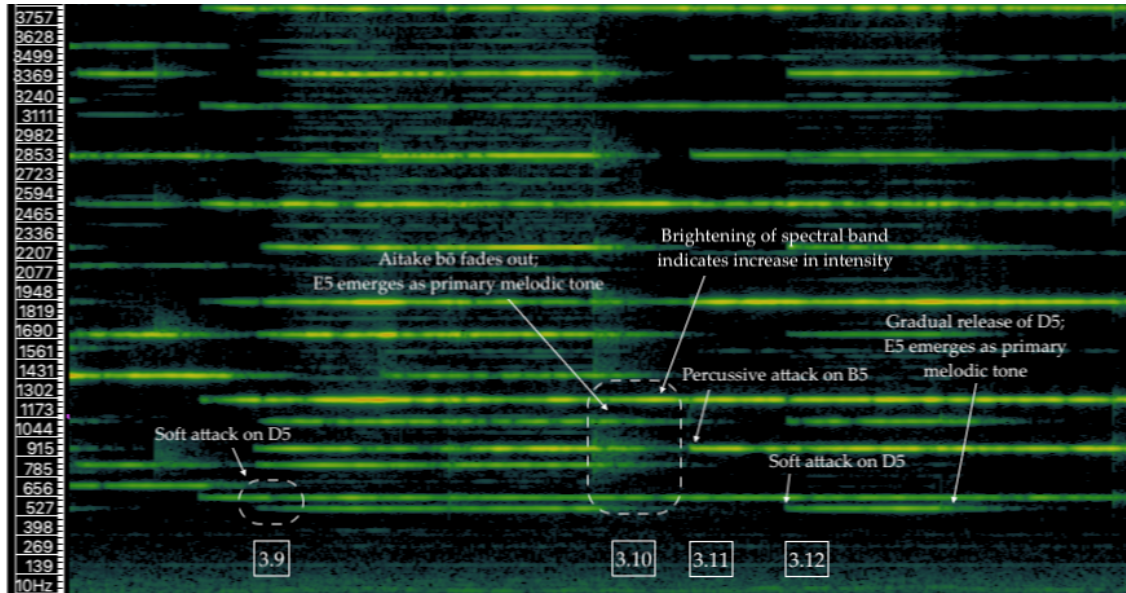
Example 3.5: Spectrogram showing RMS energy (approximate measures of loudness) for Events 3.9–3.12, Miyata's recorded performance of *Ōshikichō-no-chōshi*
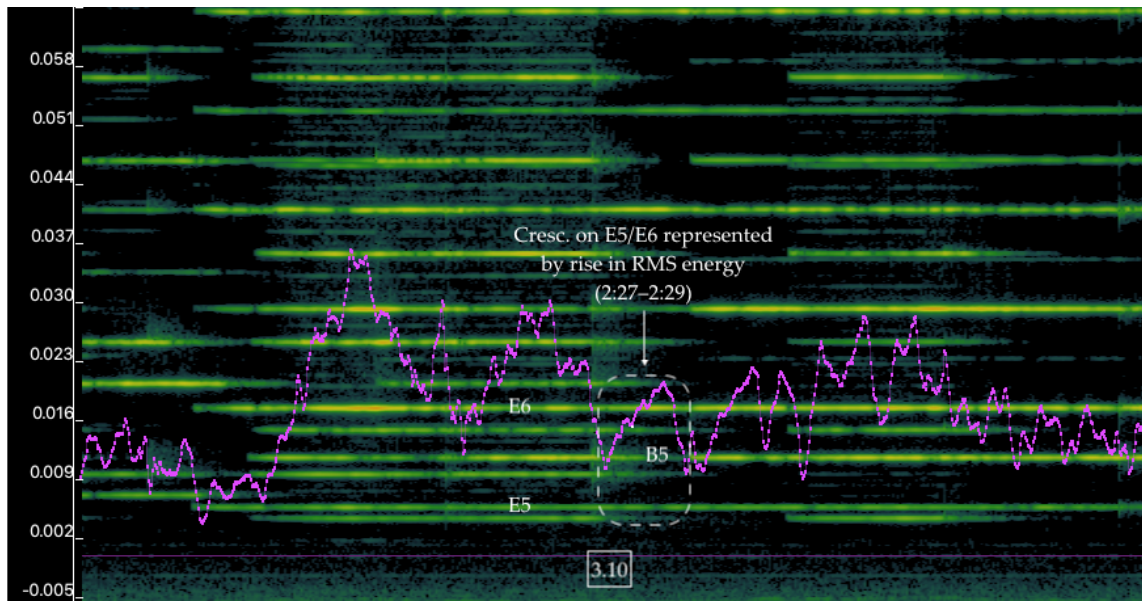
In Events 3.9–3.12 (Example 3.4), the melodic motion E5–B5–D5–E5 is realized through different performance techniques and modes of articulation. Event 3.9 (2:20 in the recording) constitutes the *aitake bō,* which consists of pitches D5, E5, A5, B5, E6, and F♯6. The onset of Event 3.10 (2:31) is realized through the performance technique *nokoru*, meaning pitches E5 and E6 are held over from the *aitake* in Event 3.9 while Miyata's fingers are released from the other pipes. Here, Miyata lets the *aitake* of Event 3.9 disappear through a mixture of breath control and the releasing of her fingers. Immediately after she releases her fingers from the pipes D5, A5, B5, and F#6, she begins a quick crescendo to foreground E5 as the primary melodic tone. The crescendo is represented on the spectrogram in two ways. First, the spectral band for E5 brightens at around 2:32, indicating an increase in intensity and loudness. Second, dynamics can be visualized on the spectrogram by using Sonic Visualiser—an open-source software for analyzing and annotating music recordings.[39] In particular, I use the BBC Energy plug-in on Sonic Visualiser to calculate RMS (root-mean-square) energy for audio signals. RMS energy, according to Michael J. Hove, Peter Vuust, and Jan Stupacher, "describes the total energy in an audio signal's waveform" and is "closely related to loudness" (Hove, Vuust, and Stupacher 2019, 2247–48). RMS energy is therefore often used as a way to approximate shifts in dynamics in music (Goebl, Dixon, and Schubert 2014, 226).[40] As shown in Example 3.5, the RMS energy begins intensifying at 2:27 as Miyata begins a crescendo on E5 and E6, reaching a peak at 2:29. The onset of Event 3.10 has no clearly identifiable attack point, and instead Miyata accentuates the beginning of Event 3.10 primarily through dynamics. As soon as Miyata releases her fingers from the pipes A5, B5, D6, and F♯6, she immediately begins a crescendo on E5 and E6 to draw

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[39] https://www.sonicvisualiser.org/

[40] See also Repp 1999.

attention to its role as the primary melodic tone. By using dynamics to highlight E5 as the primary melodic tone, Miyata makes clear that Event 3.10 constitutes a new musical event despite holding over two tones from the previous *aitake*.

Event 3.10 showcases an example in which the primary melodic tone is established by means of removing extraneous pitches. By contrast, Event 3.11 (2:30) introduces the primary melodic tone through a percussive attack. Event 3.11 marks a clear entrance of B5 above E5, which has been held over from Event 3.10. Compared to the onset of D5 in Event 3.9, which is represented by a dark spectral band, the onset of B5 is accompanied by a bright band. With an unambiguous attack point, Miyata establishes B5 as the melodic tone. The percussive attack on B5 is juxtaposed with the softer attack on D5 in Event 3.12 (2:31). While Events 3.11 and 3.12 both delineate the primary melodic tones through the addition of new pitches to the texture, the *utsu* technique of Event 3.12 requires the performer to indicate an additional melodic change by releasing a finger from one of the pipes. At around 2:34, Miyata carefully releases her left ring finger from the pipe D5 to let E5 emerge as the lowest note, thus producing a melodic figure D5– E5. Attending to Miyata's use of attack profiles, dynamics, and modes of articulation—all of which are afforded by the notated performance techniques—highlights the ways in which her performance crafts the melodic profile of the third section.

Throughout her performance, Miyata frequently manipulates articulation and dynamics to create a contrast between monophonic melodic lines and *aitake*. Miyata's phrasing not only draws attention to melodic and motivic similarities between sections but also gives listeners the opportunity to appreciate and contemplate the melodic identity of the chōshi. This approach to listening is only made possible by Miyata's refashioning of the chōshi as a solo concert work independent from its traditional function as entrance music for the dancer. In other words,

Miyata's solo recording of *Ōshikichō-no-chōshi* represents a new way of performing and listening to the prelude, extending the possible ways of understanding and appreciating the work from the perspective of the shō.

New Formal Identities

By crystallizing the melodic identity of *Ōshikichō-no-chōshi*, Miyata's recorded performance expands the "plurality of versions" of the work (Cook 2003, 199) that currently circulate through a variety of formats: traditional notation, transcriptions in Western staff notation,[41] live ensemble performances, recorded ensemble performance, and finally, live and recorded solo performance. Even among Miyata's solo performances, her instantiations of the chōshi can vary significantly from one another according to the needs and constraints of each performance. In her 2016 recital series, "The Shō: Reviving Historical Notation and Living in the Present, Series III," for example, Miyata's performances of chōshi constitute what Cook has called a "research-led performance" (197). Collaborating with musicologist Endō Tōru, Miyata's ongoing project reconstructs a pre-modern version of the chōshi from *Kofu Ryōritsu-no-maki* (『古譜律呂巻』), a treatise written by court musician Toyohara Toshiaki (豊原利秋) in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century.[42] Since the notation in the treatise differs from that of the nineteenth-century *Meiji Senteifu* (『明治撰定譜』; reprinted in Ono 1977)—the standardized notation on which all contemporary performances are based—Miyata's historically informed

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[41] Efforts to notate gagaku using Western staff notation accelerated in the early decades of the twentieth century, when the *Hōgaku Chōsa Gakari* (邦楽調査掛)—an institution dedicated to research of Japanese music at the Tokyo Music School (東京音楽学校)—began transcribing and notating a vast number of gagaku pieces between 1916–26 (Terauchi 2007, 55). Other individual scholars such as music critic and musicologist Kanetsune Kiyosuke (1885–1957), gagaku musician Konoe Naomaro (1900–32), and Imperial Household Agency musicians Yamanoi Motokiyo (1885–1970) and Shiba Sukehiro (1898–1982) have each published volumes containing transcriptions of gagaku repertoire.

[42] See Terauchi 1995.

performance exhibits phrases, performance practice, and melodies that are typically not heard in performances today.

In a similar vein, all of Miyata's commercially released recordings of chōshi present abridged versions of the material that is notated in the *Meiji Senteifu*. The recording of *Banshikichō-no-chōshi* (盤渉調調子) on the album *Etheric Blueprint* (2014), for example, contains just three out of twenty-one sections, and the recording of *Sōjō-no-chōshi* (双調調子) on the same album concludes after Section 3, omitting Sections 4–15 entirely. Section 3 was most likely chosen as the cut-off point for both recordings because it is customary for the shō to perform only the first three sections of a chōshi in a *kangen* performance.

Example 3.6: Comparison of Form: *Ōshikichō-no-chōshi* as notated in *Meiji Senteifu* (Ono 1977) and *Ōshikichō-no-chōshi* as performed by Miyata (Hussong and Miyata 2004)

Ōshikichō-no-chōshi (*Meiji Senteifu*)			Ōshikichō-no-chōshi (Miyata's Performance in *Deep Silence*)		
Sections	**Cadential drone**		**Sections**		**Cadential drone**
Section 1	V		Part I	Section 1	V
Section 2	I		Part I	Section 2	I
Section 3	V		Part I	Section 3	V
Section 4	II			(Omitted)	
Section 5	V			(Omitted)	
Section 6	I		Part I	Section 6	I
Section 7	V		Part II	Section 7	V
Section 8	I		Part II	Section 8	I
Section 9	V		Part II	Section 9	V
Section 10	I		Part II	Section 10	I
Section 11	V			(Omitted)	
Section 12	II	(Same as Section 4)		(Omitted)	
Section 13	V	(Same as Section 5)		(Omitted)	
Section 14	I	(Same as Section 6)		(Omitted)	
Section 15	V			(Omitted)	
Section 16	I			(Omitted)	

But Miyata's recording of *Ōshikichō-no-chōshi* in *Deep Silence* presents a more peculiar situation. Example 3.6 shows that while *Ōshikichō-no-chōshi* is comprised of sixteen sections, Miyata's recording on *Deep Silence* omits Sections 4 and 5, jumps directly from Section 3 to Section 6, and concludes at the end of the Section 10. According to Miyata, the omission of Sections 4 and 5 in *Ōshikichō-no-chōshi* was a one-off decision to accommodate the time constraints of the CD, and does not reflect conventional performance practice (Miyata, personal communication, March 28, 2019). Given that a performance of a single chōshi can amount to twenty minutes or more when performed in its entirety, Miyata's decision to perform an abbreviated version represents a flexible and pragmatic solution to performing classical repertoire in the early twenty-first century.

In addition to meeting recording constraints, Miyata's performance of an abridged *Ōshikichō-no-chōshi* reflects careful consideration of tonal and formal consequences. By omitting Sections 4, 5, and 11–16 from her recording of *Ōshikichō-no-chōshi*, Miyata constructs a symmetrical tonal structure of the chōshi that preserves the cadential tonal pattern of the original. I argue in this section that the cadential pattern of Miyata's abridged performance of *Ōshikichō-no-chōshi* mirrors that of Western tonality, inviting an intercultural listening experience that foregrounds affinities between the tonal systems of gagaku and Western art music. Example 3.6 shows a side-by-side comparison of the formal outlines for *Ōshikichō-no-chōshi* as notated in *Meiji Senteifu* (Ono 1977) and as performed by Miyata in *Deep Silence.* As mentioned earlier in the chapter, each section of a chōshi ends with a cadential drone outlining an interval of a Pythagorean fifth. The cadential drone usually involves either the first and fifth degrees of the mode (A and E in the case of *Ōshikichō*) or the fifth and second degrees of the mode (E and B in *Ōshikichō*). In Section 1 (Example 3.7), the cadential drone is introduced by

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Example 3.7: Transcription of Ōshikichō-no-chōshi in Western notation, Section 1 (Shiba 1972, 97)

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Event 1.2 (0:10), when four out of six pitches in *aitake otsu* are released to leave E5 and E6. The drone is then filled in by B5 in Event 1.3 (0:12) to complete the E5-B5-E6 fifth. At the end of every section, the performer is required to hold onto the drone for three long breaths and two short breaths (「三気延替二気早替」). As demonstrated in Example 3.7, each section concludes with a drone that can sometimes continue for longer than the preceding melodic material. Example 3.6 shows how the majority of sections (fourteen out of sixteen) in *Ōshikichō-no-chōshi* ends with a cadential drone on A4-E5-A5 or E5-B5-E6. Given that the first degree (modal degree *kyū* [宮]) of the *Ōshikichō* mode is A (pitch name *Ōshiki* in gagaku) and the fifth degree (modal degree *chi* [徵]) is E (pitch name *Hyōjō* [平調]), I will refer to the A-E drone as "I" and the E-B drone as "V." As in Western tonal music, the final cadential drone of each chōshi always features the "I" drone, comprised of the *kyū* (first) and *chi* (fifth) degrees.[43] The convention of ending chōshi on the "I" drone represents a return to the first modal degree *kyū*, analogous to the Western tonic degree. In the case of *Ōshikichō-no-chōshi*, every section that ends with a "I" drone is preceded by a section ending with a "V" drone. Miyata's abridged performance

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[43] The idea that a perfect-fifth drone can theoretically and cognitively signify a tonal center has also been suggested by Daniel Harrison's concept of "dronality" (2016). According to Harrison, "instruments with (perfect-fifth) drones, repertories that feature these instruments, and imitations of drone effects by other instruments all produce deeply embedded, immovable, and solid tonic anchors" (2016, 18).

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eliminates all sections that end on a "II" drone (B4-F♯5-B5). Consequently, the cadential pattern in Miyata's performance alternates between the "V" drone and "I" drone (Example 3.6), establishing a formal structure that alternates between sections that end on "V" and "I" drones. The analogous relationship between the dronal ending on "I" in chōshi and the V-I cadence in Western tonal music is emphasized by Miyata's decision to omit Sections 4–5 and 11–16.

Example 3.8: Pitch class content of Sections 3 and 6, *Ōshikichō-no-chōshi* (Shiba 1972, 97–98)

(Section 3)

(Section 6)

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Example 3.9: Pitch class content of Sections 7 and 10, Ōshikichō-no-chōshi (Shiba 1972, 98)

Ōshikichō mode

Pitch classes in Sections 7-10

Appears only in
Events 7.2 and 7.4

(Section 7)

Section 7
七句

7.1 7.2 7.3 7.4 7.5 7.6

G

7.7 7.8 7.9 G 7.10 7.11 7.12 7.13 7.14

7.15 7.16 7.17 7.18

(Section 10)

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Miyata's decision to eliminate Sections 4–5 and 11–16 can be similarly explained by tonal and formal considerations. Given that any performance of chōshi must always conclude with a "I" drone, the options for the final section of the chōshi are limited to Sections 2, 6, 8, 10, 14, and 16. Section 2 is unlikely to be the final section since both Section 1 (0:00–0:56) and Section 2 (0:56–1:53) constitute the two shortest sections in the entire piece. Sections 14 and 16 must be ruled out immediately since recording constraints have required Miyata to shorten her performance of the piece. Sections 6 and 8 are also improbable candidates, since the melodic material in Sections 1–6 frequently uses tones that are not part of the *Ōshikichō* mode (A-B-C-D-E-F♯-G). Section 3 (1:54–3:14; Example 3.8), for example, features two pitch classes that are not included in the mode: C♯, which appears in Event 3.2 as part of *aitake ku* (工), and G♯, which appears in Events 3.2 and 3.5 as part of *aitake ku* and *aitake ge* (下), respectively. C♯ and G♯— neither of which are included in the *Ōshikichō* mode—are also scattered across Section 6 (3:15–5:25; Example 3.8): G♯5 in *aitake ge* (Events 6.3 and 6.9) and in the hybrid cluster comprised of *aitake otsu* with an added pipe *bi* (美)(Event 6.38), and C♯5 in Events 6.6, 6.11, 6.15, 6.26, 6.28, 6.29, and 6.33, all of which involve the pipe *ku*.

Why is it significant that Sections 1–6 feature a large number of pitches that do not belong to *Ōshikichō* mode? As discussed earlier, the purpose of the chōshi in the *bugaku* genre is to familiarize listeners with the tonal and affective properties of the mode in which the subsequent *bugaku* dance pieces are based. An abridged version of the chōshi will not convey these qualities effectively if the majority of its sections are those that feature a higher number of pitches outside the mode. If Miyata had decided to end her performance after Section 6 or 8, the large majority of the chōshi would include pitches outside of the mode, undermining its ability to evoke a feeling of "*Ōshikichō*-ness." In contrast to Sections 1–6, the vast majority of the pitch classes in

Sections 7–10 belong to the mode (Example 3.9). While Sections 1–6 repeat non-modal pitches C♯5 (pipe *ku*) and G♯5 (pipe *bi*) multiple times, Sections 7–10 introduce pitches G5 (pipe *jū*) and C6 (pipe *hi* [比]). The only exceptions are the two *aitake ge* in Events 7.2 (5:27) and 7.4 (5:34). Since the modal quality of *Ōshikichō* becomes more salient beginning in Section 7 (5:26–6:41), concluding the chōshi after Section 6 or Section 8 leaves little room for listeners to experience the melodic, modal, and affective qualities that are unique to *Ōshikichō*. In fact, Miyata herself has recommended that performances of *Ōshikichō-no-chōshi* should play beyond Section 7 to highlight the unique modal characteristics of *Ōshikichō* (Miyata, personal communication, March 28, 2019). Given these modal, formal, and temporal considerations, we are left with Section 10 (9:48–12:39) as the most ideal concluding section for Miyata's performance. Section 10 fulfills both the aesthetic considerations of performing chōshi and the pragmatic constraints of recording length: Section 10 concludes with a "I" cadential drone (Example 3.9), shortens Miyata's performance of the piece from 20 minutes to 12 minutes, and presents four full sections in which their pitch content is based squarely in *Ōshikichō*.

By choosing to end her version of *Ōshikichō-no-chōshi* at the "I" drone of Section 10 and omit Sections 4–5, Miyata constructs a two-part form for the chōshi through performance. Recall that Miyata's omission of Sections 4–5 and 11–16 from the chōshi results in a symmetrical formal structure in which sections ending with "I" cadential drones and "V" cadential drones alternate with one another (Example 3.6). Based on differences in modality and melodic motivic content, I argue that her abridged performance divides the piece into two formal sections: Part I, which include Sections 1, 2, 3, and 6, and Part II, which comprises of Sections 7–10. As I have already shown, Part I and Part II have contrasting modal identities: whereas the pitch content of Part II adheres closely to that of the *Ōshikichō* mode, Part I frequently includes pitches (i.e., C♯

and G♯) that do not belong to the mode. Consequently, Part II exhibits modal characteristics of *Ōshikichō* compared to Part I.

Miyata's abridged performance of *Ōshikichō-no-chōshi* segments Parts I and II into two subsections, each containing a section ending on a "V" drone and a section ending on a "I" drone (Example 3.6). Miyata's formal reorganization of the chōshi invites a hearing of Sections 1–2 as initiating gestures, Sections 3 and 6 as contrasting material, and Sections 7–10 as the primary melodic section that conveys the modal and affective qualities of the *Ōshikichō* mode. I suggest that Sections 1–2 first draw listeners' attention to the *kyū* (first) and *chi* (fifth) degrees of the mode, orienting our ears towards the tonal relationships of *Ōshikichō*. In Sections 3 and 6, Miyata presents contrasting material by introducing pitches that do not belong to *Ōshikichō* mode. The first half of Part I introduces the tonal framework of *Ōshikichō* mode through the alternating structure of "V" and "I" cadential drones, outlining the first and fifth degrees that are the most structurally significant tones in gagaku modal theory. But the second half of Part I deviates from *Ōshikichō*, introducing pitches that do not belong to the mode. As such, the contrasting material in Part I accentuates the arrival of Part II (Sections 7–10), which is based squarely in *Ōshikichō* mode. In contrast to Part I, in which each section is characterized by a unique melodic identity, Part II (Sections 7–8 and Sections 9–10) is coherently organized as an ABAB form: the melodic material in Sections 7 is repeated in Section 9, whereas the melody used in Section 8 and is restated in Section 10. In other words, Section II exhibits a congruence between melodic motivic material and cadential structure. Sections that conclude on a "V" cadential drone share melodic material with one another, and sections ending on a "I" cadential drone likewise present similar melodic material.

<u>Sections 1 and 2: Initiating Gestures</u>

Section 1 (0:00–0:56; "V" drone) and Section 2 (0:56–1:53; "I" drone) function as introductory material to acclimate the listener to the modality of *Ōshikichō,* bringing attention to the tonal relationship between the *kyū* (first) and *chi* (fifth) degrees of the mode (A and E in *Ōshikichō*). Sections 1 and 2 constitute the shortest sections in the entire chōshi, the former lasting 0:56 and the latter 0:57. The cadential drone occupies the large majority of the two sections: the "V" drone in Section 1 continues for 46 seconds, whereas the "I" drone in Section 2 lasts for 43 seconds. In both sections, there is little melodic material that precedes the cadential drone. The dearth of melodic material in Sections 1 and 2 establish the cadential drones as the most salient features, inviting listeners to focus on the relationship between the two successive drones on "V" and "I."

<u>Sections 3 and 6: Contrasting Material</u>

The primary function of Section 3 (1:54–3:14) and Section 6 (3:15-5:25) is to present contrasting modal motivic material prior to Sections 7–10, which is based squarely in the *Ōshikichō* mode. Sections 3 and 6, while respectively anchored by the "V" and I" cadential drones, represents a departure from the mode. The melodic material of Sections 3 and 6 contains pitches that do not belong to *Ōshikichō* mode: C♯ and G♯, which are repeatedly articulated through *aitake* (*ge* and *ku*) and as individual melodic pitches (Example 3.9). The modal contrast between the second half of Part I (Sections 3 and 6) and Part II (Sections 7–10) heightens the arrival of the *Ōshikichō* melodic material, drawing listeners' attention to the use of pitch-classes C and G, both of which are included in the mode.

Example 3.10: *Ōshikichō-no-chōshi*, Section 7

(a) Shiba's transcription in Western staff notation (Shiba 1972, 98)

(b) Traditional notation (Ono 1977)

Example 3.11: *Ōshikichō-no-chōshi*, Section 9

(a) Shiba's transcription in Western staff notation (Shiba 1972, 99)

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(b) Traditional notation (Ono 1977).

Example 3.12: Spectrogram for Miyata's performance of Events 7.10–7.15, *Ōshikichō-no-chōshi*
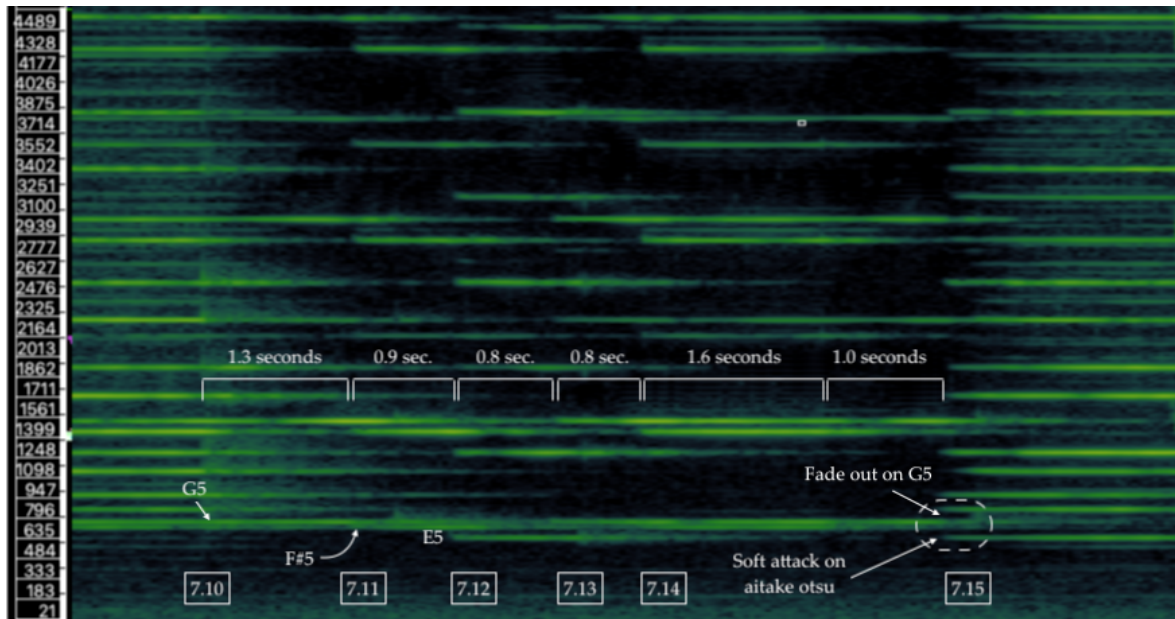
Sections 7–10: Primary Melodic Section

Part II is structured as an ABAB form, with the A section concluding on a "V" cadential drone and B section on a "I" cadential drone. As I will discuss in this section, the A and B subsections of Part II display similar motivic material. In other words, sections with similar melodic material also share cadential drones with one another, creating a convergence between melodic and tonal identity.

I will first demonstrate how Miyata's performances of Section 7 (5:26–6:41) and Section 9 (8:24–9:48) present a unified motivic identity through both pitch content and phrasing. Sections 7 and 9 contain melodic phrases that are identical to one another, as shown in Example 3.10 and Example 3.11, respectively. Both phrases are comprised of pitches G5-F♯5-E5-G-F♯5-G5-E5 and are located in the second halves of their respective sections. The melodic segment—six monophonic melodic tones followed by an *aitake*—first appears in Events 7.10–7.15 of Section 7 (5:49–6:01) and again in Events 9.9–9.14 of Section 9 (8:53–9:05). The first pitch of

the phrase (G5) is held over from the *aitake* of the previous event via the *nokoru* technique. Following the musical symbol *hirou*, the next three pitches—F♯5, E5, and G5—must be played as monophonic tones in succession, resulting in a single-line melody G5-F♯5-E5-G5. Events 7.14 and 9.13 are accompanied by the *utsu* technique, requiring the performer to cover the pipe for F♯5 and slowly release to let G5 emerge as the primary melodic tone. The final event is the *aitake otsu* in Events 7.15 and 9.14, which completes the melodic line G5-F♯5-E5-G-F♯5-G5-E5 ("A melody").

In addition to similarities in pitch content between the melodic segments of Sections 7 and 9, Miyata's performance of Sections 7 and 9 emphasizes their melodic connection through phrasing. As shown in the spectrogram in Example 3.12, each of the tones in Events 7.10–7.13 is assigned the following rhythmic values: 1.3 seconds for Event 7.10, 0.9 seconds for Event 7.11, 0.8 seconds for Event 7.12, and 0.8 seconds for Event 7.13. I quantify the duration of each tone by measuring the distance between one onset and another (e.g., the distance between the onset of Event 7.11 and the onset of Event 7.12). Miyata's performance of these rhythms is consistent with how Shiba has transcribed this phrase in Western staff notation (Example 3.11): a quarter note and sixteenth note for Event 7.10 and one quarter note each for Events 7.11–7.13. The rhythmic similarity between Miyata's performance and Shiba's transcription suggests a conventional interpretation of the phrase. In Shiba's transcription, each tone is assigned the same rhythmic duration—one quarter note, with an anacrusis attached to Event 7.10. Similarly, Miyata performs Events 7.10–7.13 in a more or less consistent tempo with similar rhythmic durations.

Miyata's performance of Event 7.14 interrupts the rhythmic equilibrium established across Events 7.10–7.13. Event 7.14 requires the performer to execute the *utsu* technique on F♯5, resulting in a clash with the G5 held over from the previous event. Miyata suspends the melodic

flow by holding the F♯5/G5 simultaneity for 1.6 seconds, a duration longer than that of any of the

events in the phrase. To compare, this duration is considerably longer than the rhythmic value

suggested in Shiba's transcription, which assigns a mere eighth note to F♯5 in Event 7.14. Once

Miyata lifts her finger from F♯5 to complete the *utsu* technique and lets G5 emerge as the

primary melodic tone, she holds the tone for 1.0 seconds before enacting a soft attack on *aitake*

otsu (Event 7.15). Miyata's execution of Event 7.14 disrupts the rhythmic consistency of Events

7.10–7.13 to produce the effect of a rubato. While the tones of Events 7.10–7.14 are connected to

one another to create a smooth, slurred melodic line, Miyata inserts a momentary pause by

fading out G5 prior to the onset of *aitake otsu* in Event 7.15. Miyata's pause not only suspends

the sense of melodic flow established by the slurred articulation in Events 7.10–7.14, but also

leaves space for Miyata to begin the *aitake* on a soft attack. The brief pause heightens the

contrast between the soft attack and the ensuing crescendo on the *aitake*, thereby enriching its

dynamic profile in the process. The transition between Events 7.14 and 7.15 therefore augments

the contrast between the monophonic and rhythmically consistent melodic line of Events 7.10–

7.13 and the rich sonority of the *aitake* in Event 7.15. Event 7.14 not only dissolves the rhythmic

consistency of earlier events but also gracefully sets the scene for the arrival of the *aitake*.

Example 3.13: Durations of Events 7.10–7.14 and Events 9.9–9.13

Pipe name	Pitch	Musical Symbol	Duration			
jū	G5	*nokoru*	Event 7.10	1.3 sec.	Event 9.9	1.0 sec.
ge	F♯5		Event 7.11	0.9 sec.	Event 9.10	0.9 sec.
otsu	E5	*hirou*	Event 7.12	0.8 sec.	Event 9.11	0.8 sec.
jū	G5		Event 7.13	0.8 sec.	Event 9.12	0.7 sec.
ge	F♯5 G5	*utsu*	Event 7.14	1.6 sec. 1.0 sec.	Event 9.13	1.5 sec. 1.1 sec.
otsu	E5	*aitake*	Event 7.15		Event 9.14	

Example 3.14: Spectrogram for Miyata's performance of Events 9.9–9.14, *Ōshikichō-no-chōshi*
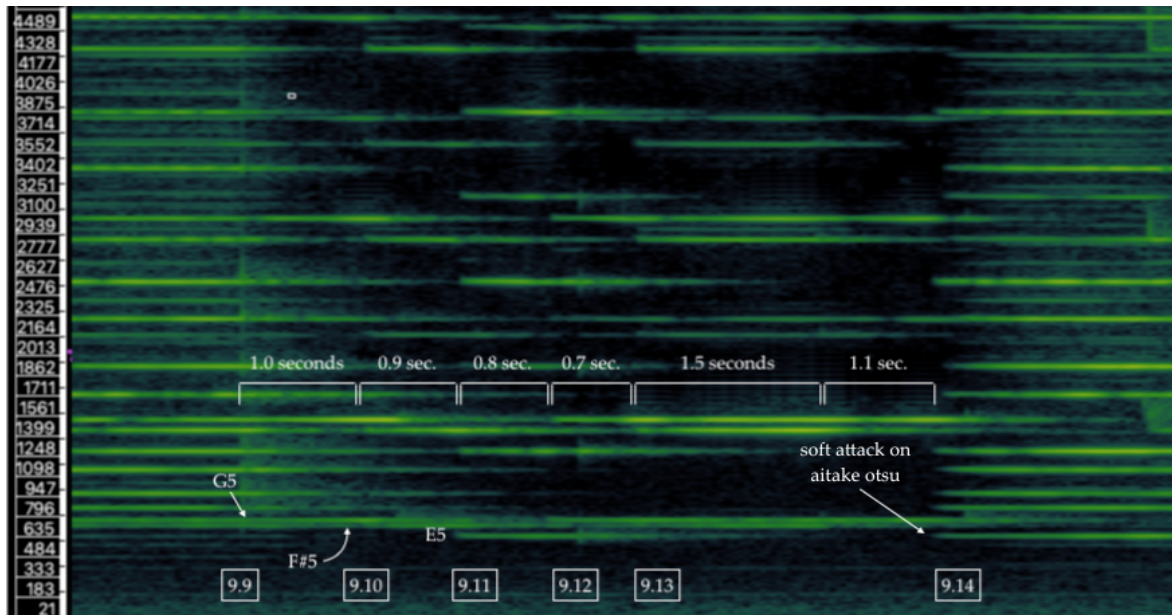
The A melody of Events 7.10–7.15 is repeated in Events 9.9–9.14 in Section 9, as shown in the notation provided in Example 3.11. In addition to sharing the same pitches and performance techniques, Miyata's phrasing of Events 9.9–9.14 is remarkably similar to that of Events 7.10–7.15. First, Miyata assigns similar rhythmic durations to each of the tones. As shown in Example 3.13, the durations of Events 9.9–9.13 closely mirrors those of Events 7.10–7.14. The durations of Events 7.11–7.13 (0.9 seconds, 0.8 seconds, 0.8 seconds) are almost identical to those of Events 9.10–9.12 (0.9 seconds, 0.8 seconds, 0.7 seconds)[Example 3.14]. The rhythmic values of both Events 7.11–7.13 and Events 9.9–9.13 are therefore consistent with those of Shiba's transcription (Example 3.11). Unlike in Events 7.11–7.13, however, the duration of the first note of the phrase—G5 in Event 9.9—is similar to that of Events 9.10, 9.11, and 9.12. Nevertheless, the similar durations of Events 9.9, 9.10, 9.11, and 9.12 establishes a sense of rhythmic consistency, an effect similarly achieved in Events 7.10–7.13.

The duration of *utsu* in Event 9.13 is also congruent to that of Event 7.14, as shown in Example 3.13. Once Miyata releases her finger from F♯5, she disrupts the sense of rhythmic consistency established in Events 9.9–9.12 by holding the pitch G5 for 1.1 seconds. The relative length of time spent on F♯5 (1.5 seconds) and G5 (1.1 seconds) once again produces an effect of rubato, suspending the not only the rhythmic consistency of the phrase but also the sense of melodic acceleration generated by the increasingly shortened durations of Events 9.9–9.12. By holding onto G5 for a longer duration than that of Events 9.9–9.12, Miyata also conjures the effect of a fermata, producing a momentary pause before the *aitake* in Event 9.14. As we have heard in Events 7.14–7.15, Miyata's pause on G5 heightens the expressive effect of her soft attack on *aitake otsu*, highlighting the contrast between the monophonic melodic line in Event 9.9–9.13 and the sonority of the *aitake* in Event 9.14. In sum, Miyata's performance draws attention to the melodic similarities between Events 7.10–7.15 and Events 9.9–9.14 by constructing a shared melodic, motivic, and expressive identity. In addition to sharing the same pitches and performance techniques, the melodic phrases from Sections 7 and 9 achieve similar expressive effects: both phrases begin with a smooth, connected monophonic melody in which each tone is assigned similar rhythmic durations, which then gives way to a rubato effect and fermata before concluding on a soft attack on *aitake otsu*. By establishing a motivic connection between Sections 7 and 9, Miyata highlights the unique melodic characteristics of *Ōshikichō* and articulates a tightly organized formal structure for the primary melodic section of her (abridged) performance.

Having shown how Miyata's phrasing establishes the melodic phrases in Sections 7 and 9 as repeated statements of the A melody, I will now demonstrate how the melodic phrases of

Section 8 (6:42–8:24) and Section 10 (9:48–12:39) present contrasting material. While

monophonic melodies ending with *aitake* also appear in Sections 8 and 10, their phrasing and

pitch content differ from those of the A melody. The first of such melodies appears in Events

8.6–8.13 (6:53–7:08; hereafter referred to as the "B melody"). The structure of the B melody

differs from that of the A melody in a number of ways. First, as shown in Example 3.16, the B

melody in Section 8 (Example 3.15) outlines a descending major third (B-A-G, or the second,

first, and seventh modal degrees) rather than a descending minor third (G-F♯-E, or the seventh,

sixth, and fifth modal degrees). Second, the contour segment of the first four events in the B

melody (G5, B5, A5, and G5 in Events 8.6–8.9) is <0 2 1 0>, whereas the contour segment of the

first four events of the A melody (G5, F♯5, E5, and G5 in Events 7.10–7.13) is its retrograde

inverted form <2 1 0 2>. Third, while the A melody concludes on *aitake otsu* (built on the

fundamental tone E5), the B melody concludes on *aitake jū* (built on the fundamental tone G5).[44]

The A melody in Section 7 and B melody in Section 8 are certainly structurally related one

another: both melodies outline an interval of a third within the mode and exhibit contours that are

members of the same contour equivalence class (Morris 1987, 29–33).

Example 3.15: *Ōshikichō-no-chōshi*, Events 8.6–8.13

(a) Shiba's transcription in Western staff notation (Shiba 1972, 98)

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[44] Garfias 1975 defines the fundamental tone as the "lowest tone of each aitake" (65).

(b) Traditional notation (Ono 1977)

Example 3.16: *Ōshikichō-no-chōshi*, Events 10.6–10.11

(a) Shiba's transcription in Western staff notation (Shiba 1972, 99)

Section 10
十句

10.6 10.7 10.8 10.9 10.10 10.11

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(b) Traditional notation (Ono 1977)

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Melodic phrases in Section 10 similarly embody the characteristics of the B melody introduced in Events 8.6–8.13. Unlike in Sections 7–9, Section 10 contains three melodic phrases. The first melodic phrase, which occurs in Events 10.6–10.11 (9:58–10:08; Example 3.16), comprises pitches G5-B5-C6-B5-A5-G5. The melodic phrase of Events 10.6–10.11 shares three characteristics with the B melody of Events 8.6–8.13. First, the phrase ends with *aitake jū* in Event 10.11. Second, the contour of Events 10.6–10.11 is similar to that of the B melody. If we treat the C6 as an embellishing "neighbor tone" to the B5 appearing in Events 10.7 and 10.9, we can reduce the skeletal structure of the melodic phrase to G5-B5-A5-G5 (Example 3.17). The skeletal melody embodies a contour segment of <0 2 1 0>, which is identical to that of the B melody. Third, the skeletal melody outlines a third (B-A-G) between the second and seventh degrees of the mode. While the melodic phrase in Events 10.6–10.11 is slightly shorter than the B melody and introduces a new pitch (C6), it nevertheless exhibits similar intervals and contours with those of the B melody.

Example 3.17: Melodic reduction of *Ōshikichō-no-chōshi*, Events 10.6–10.11
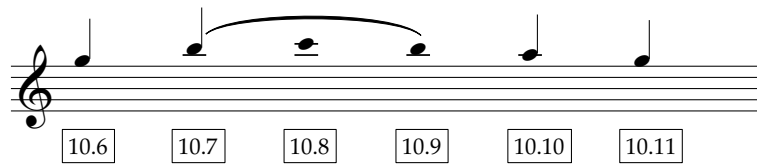
The second melodic phrase in Section 10 occurs in Events 10.26–10.31 (10:41–10:54; Example 3.18). Although the pitches of this melody (C6-E6-D6-C6-D6-C6) differ from those of the B melody in Events 8.6–8.11, the phrase in Events 10.26–10.31 shares the same intervallic properties and contour as those of the B melody. Both melodies outline a major third via stepwise motion—between B and G in Events 8.6–8.10 and between E and C in Events 10.26–10.31—and exhibit the contour <0 2 1 0>. As shown in Example 3.19, the melody outlined in

Events 10.26–10.31 can be interpreted as a T$_5$ transposition of the melodic phrases in Section 8, suggesting that this phrase is another statement of the B melody.

Example 3.18: *Ōshikichō-no-chōshi*, Events 10.26–10.36

(a) Shiba's transcription in Western staff notation (Shiba 1972, 99)

© Kawai Publishing. Used with permission.

(b) Traditional notation (Ono 1977)

Example 3.19: Pitch content of Events 8.6–8.13 and Events 10.26–10.31

The third and final melodic phrase in Section 10 appears in Events 10.32–10.36 (10:54–11:04). This phrase resembles the B melody intervallically, outlining a major third in stepwise motion from B to G. The phrase also relates closely to Events 10.7–10.11, another variation of the B melody. The pitch content of Events 10.32–10.36, which comprises B5-C6-B5-A5-G5, is identical to that of Events 10.7–10.11 (Example 3.20). While comparing the sounding pitches gives the impression that the two melodic segments are exact repetitions, I contend that the two segments express similar but not identical melodic material. As shown in Example 3.16b, the melodic phrase of Events 10.7–10.11 is notated as follows: the pipe jū (G5) with the musical symbol *nokoru*; *shichi* (B5), *hi* (C6), *shichi* (B5), and *gyō* (A5), each with the symbol *hirou*; and lastly *aitake jū*. Based on the notation, we can describe Miyata's performance of this passage as follows. In Event 10.6 (9:58), the pipe *jū* (G5) is left over from the previous *aitake jū* in Event 10.5. In Events 10.7–10.10 (9:59–10:07), the pipes *shichi* (B5), *hi* (C6), *shichi* (B5), and *gyō* (A5) are played in succession as monophonic tones, one leading to the next in a smooth, connected manner. Finally, when Miyata reaches the *aitake jū* in Event 10.11 (10:07), she first plays its fundamental tone G5, after which she introduces the other five pitches of the *aitake*. In contrast, the melodic phrase of Events 10.32–10.36 is notated as follows, as shown in Example

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Example 3.20: Pitch content of Events 10.32–10.36 and Events 10.7–10.11
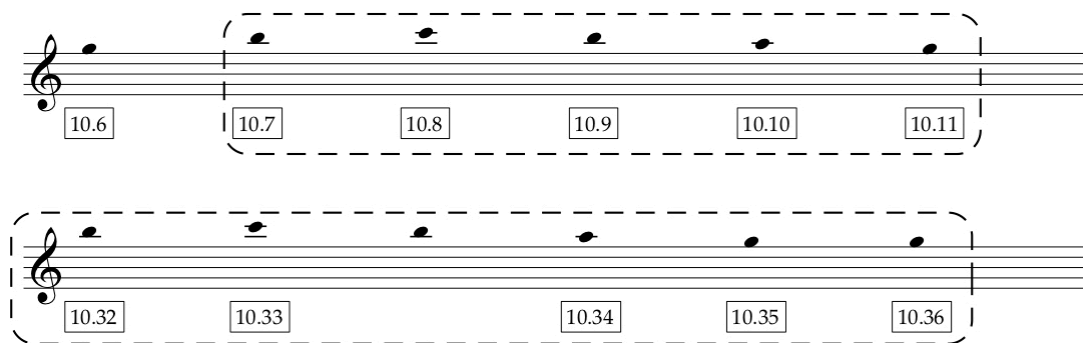
3.18b: the pipe *shichi* (B5) with the symbol *nokoru*; *hi* (C6) with the symbol *utsu*; *gyō* (A5) and

jū (G5), each with the symbol *hirou*; and *aitake jū*. In Event 10.32, the pipe *shichi* (B5) is held

over from *aitake hi* from the previous event. Rather than moving from one melodic tone to the

next, the two pitches must sound together in Event 10.33 as commanded by the performance

technique *utsu*. While Events 10.7–10.8 and 10.32–10.33 both express melodic motion from B5

to C6, they are executed through distinct performance techniques. Miyata slightly deviates from

the given instructions of the notation in Events 10.34–10.35. Rather than playing A5 and G5 as

monophonic tones, Miyata continues to hold B5 while adding A5 and G5 into the sonority,

beginning the process of building the sonority of *aitake jū*. Since both A5 and G5 are members of

aitake jū, she takes the liberty to situate Events 10.34 and 10.35 as the initiating gestures of the

aitake in Event 10.36. The arrival of G5 in Event 10.35 also differs from Events 10.11. Whereas

G5 in Event 10.11 is the fundamental tone of *aitake jū*, G5 is first stated as a discrete melodic

tone in Event 10.35 followed by *aitake jū* proper in Event 10.36.

Despite these notational differences, Miyata relates the two melodic phrases to one

another by using similar phrasing. Examples 3.21a and 3.21b displays spectrograms for Miyata's

performance of Events 10.6–10.11 and 10.32–10.36, respectively. In both melodic phrases,

Miyata places more emphasis on C6 by holding the pitch for a longer duration than its

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Example 3.21: Comparison of Miyata's performance of Events 10.6–10.11 and 10.32–10.36, *Ōshikichō-no-chōshi*

(a) Spectrogram for Miyata's performance of Events 10.6–10.11, *Ōshikichō-no-chōshi*
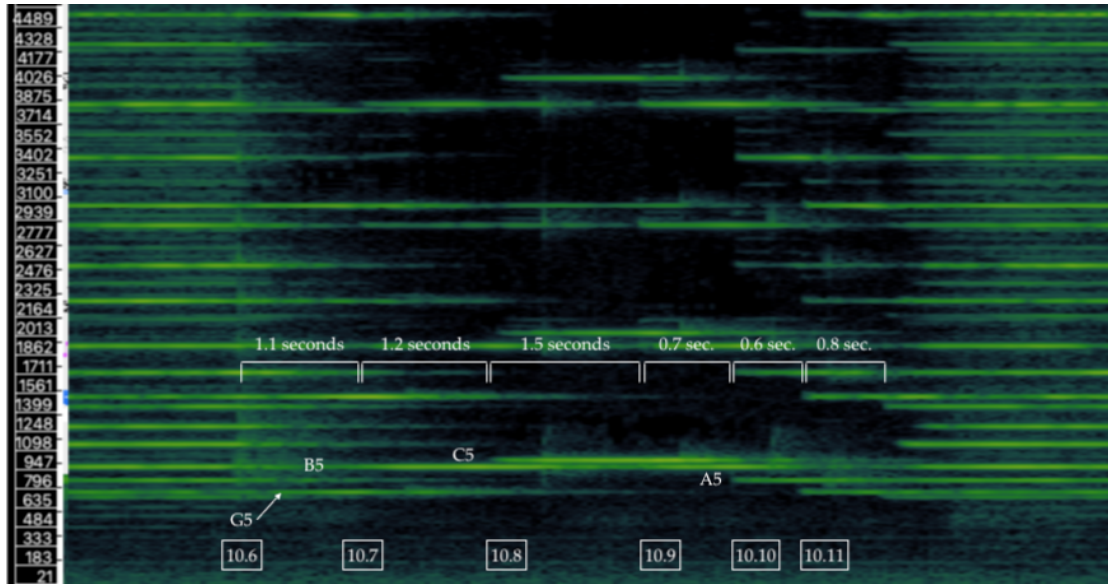
(b) Spectrogram for Miyata's performance of Events 10.32–10.36, *Ōshikichō-no-chōshi*
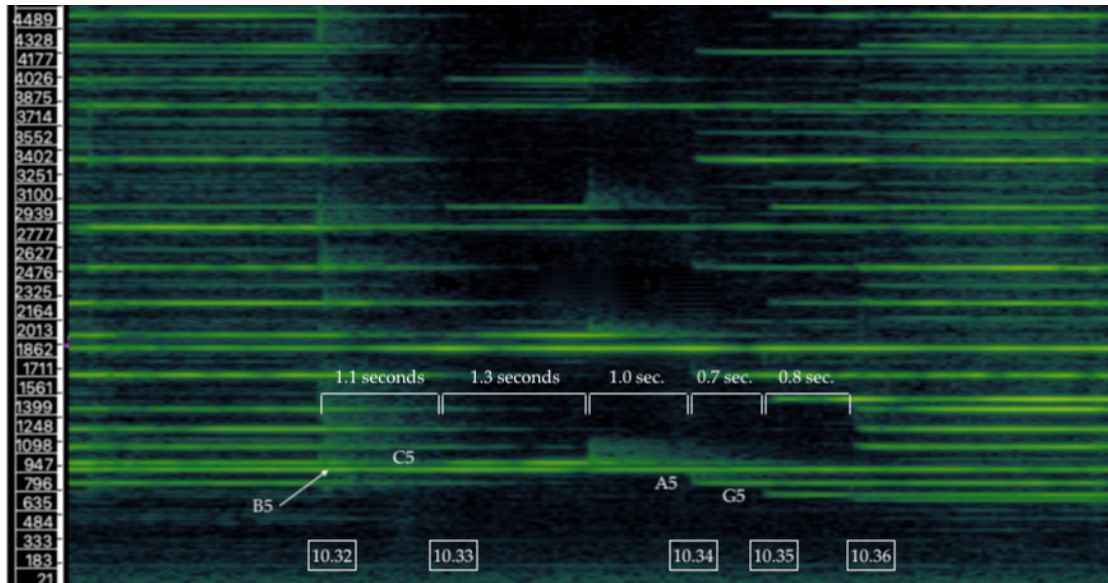
surrounding pitches. In Event 10.8, C6 is held for 1.5 seconds, which is longer than B5 in Event 10.7 (1.2 seconds), B5 in Event 10.8 (0.7 seconds), or A5 in Event 10.9 (0.6 seconds). Similarly, in Event 10.33, C6 is held for 1.3 seconds, which is longer than B5 in Event 10.32 (1.1 seconds),

B5 in the second part of Event 10.33 (i.e., when Miyata releases her finger from C6)(1.0 seconds), or A5 in Event 10.34 (0.7 seconds). In both instances, Miyata holds the C6 longer than the preceding B5 to achieve a fermata-like effect. Miyata emphasizes the longer duration of C6 further through an accelerando on the subsequent melodic tones B5 and A5.

In sum, I have demonstrated how Miyata establishes connections between the melodic phrases of Events 8.6–8.13, Events 10.6–10.11, 10.26–10.31, and 10.32–10.36 through her use of phrasing. Miyata's performance invites us to hear each of these phrases as a statement of the B melody, suggesting a shared melodic identity between Sections 8 and 10. In addition to linking together the melodic phrase in Events 8.6–8.13 and those of Section 10, Miyata also establishes connection between the three melodic phrases within Section 10, even though the phrases are not identical to one another. Although the melodic phrases in Events 10.6–10.11 and 10.32–10.36 contain the same ordering of pitches, for example, there are subtle differences in notation that require the performer to execute them differently. Miyata's melodic linking of Sections 8 and 10 thus positions the two sections as contrasting material to Sections 7 and 9. The resulting ABAB form of Part II highlights melodic similarities between the analogous sections and enables listeners to identify recurring melodies that are unique to *Ōshikichō* mode. By drawing attention to repeated melodic types in Part II, Miyata offers points of reference for listeners—especially those who are not familiar with the sounds of the shō or the conventions of chōshi—in understanding the melodic characteristics of *Ōshikichō* mode.

The analysis demonstrates how Miyata's performance of *Ōshikichō-no-chōshi* presents a renewed formal identity of the work through manipulations of articulation, dynamics, and form. Miyata's reorganization of the chōshi is informed not only by formal and tonal considerations of gagaku but also by the constraints of early twenty-first century CD recording techniques.

Miyata's bold restructuring of a classical gagaku piece invites an intercultural listening, drawing attention to affinities between the tonal systems of gagaku and Western music while also highlighting the unique modal qualities of the *Ōshikichō* mode.

3.5 Miyata and Cage's Collaborative Experimentalism

One⁹ was born out of a collaboration between Miyata and John Cage, after their meeting at the Darmstadt summer course in 1990 (Haskins 2004, 56). When composing *One⁹*, Cage consulted Miyata about the mechanics of shō performance. As part of their compositional process, Miyata provided Cage with a set of detailed notes on the arrangement of pipes on the instrument, list of overtones, fingerings, and traditional *aitake* (Miyata 1991c). Ueno Masaaki (1997) describes the collaborative process between Cage and Miyata as follows: Cage would first generate the notes using a method derived from *I Ching*, after which Miyata would play back the selected notes on the shō. The two of them would then discuss the results together, though Cage would ultimately decide which pitches would be included in the final product.

One⁹ belongs to a larger collection of works called the *Number Pieces*, and *One⁹* is one of three works featuring the shō.[45] While *One⁹* is a work for solo shō, it can also be performed with the orchestral piece *108* (1991) and with five conch shells (in which case the piece is renamed *Two³* (1991)). Making use of what Rob Haskins has called an "unintentional improvisatory style" (Haskins 2004, 6), the *Number Pieces* are structured according to a compositional system called the time brackets, which Alexandre Popoff defines as follows:

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[45] The others are *Two³* for shō and five conch shells and *Two⁴* for shō and violin.

A time-bracket is…made of three parts: a fragment of one or many staves, lying under two time intervals, one on the left and one on the right. Time intervals themselves consist of two real-time values separated by a two-way arrow. The staves contain one or more sound events without any duration indications. A time-bracket is performed as follows: the performer decides to start playing the written sounds anywhere within the first time interval on the left, and chooses to end them anywhere within the second one (Popoff 2010, 67).

In other words, the performer must begin playing each system during the time interval given on the left, and must complete all sounding events in the system within the time interval given on the right. Example 3.22 shows the time brackets for the eighth section of *One^9*. The performer has a large degree of autonomy over the execution of each of the time brackets; as long as the performer adheres to the time intervals indicated, the duration, placement, dynamics, and articulation of pitches can vary widely from performance to performance.

Given Miyata's active role in the compositional process of the work, Ueno describes *One^9* as a form of "complete collaboration" between Cage and Miyata (Ueno 1997, 21–23). The nature of their close collaboration is reflected in an undated facsimile sent by Cage to Miyata sometime in 1991 (Cage 1991), which is replicated in Example 3.23.[46] The second half of the facsimile reads:

Here is a message

One^9 & Two^3 *were written for Mayumi Miyata and* **with her help** (emphasis mine) (Cage 1991).[47]

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[46] A selection of correspondence (letters and facsimile) between Miyata and Cage is available at two archives: The John Cage Manuscript Collection at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts and the John Cage Collection at Northwestern University. The archived material is dated between June 1991 and January 1992. The majority of the archived letters are those sent from Miyata to Cage. Many of the letters document Miyata's excitement towards the performance of *One^9*, and others chart their logistical correspondence regarding the premiere of *One^9*.

[47] Given the content of Cage's facsimile, I surmise that it was sent to Miyata as a response to two of her earlier letters, one undated letter from Fall 1991 and another dated 6 December 1991. The undated letter was likely sent in November or early December 1991, since Miyata had attached a red-tinted leaf from a momiji (紅葉; Japanese maple) tree, which changes colors during this time. The undated letter asks Cage for a "message or some information for *One^9*" (Miyata 1991a) and the letter from 6 December asks whether the five conch shells she had found were "good enough for *Two^3*" (Miyata 1991b).

The completion of *One⁹* would have been unthinkable without Miyata's participation in the

compositional process and enthusiasm towards contemporary music.

Example 3.22: Time Brackets for the Eighth Section of *One⁹*

Example 3.23: Facsimile sent by John Cage to Miyata Mayumi, 1991 (Cage 1991)
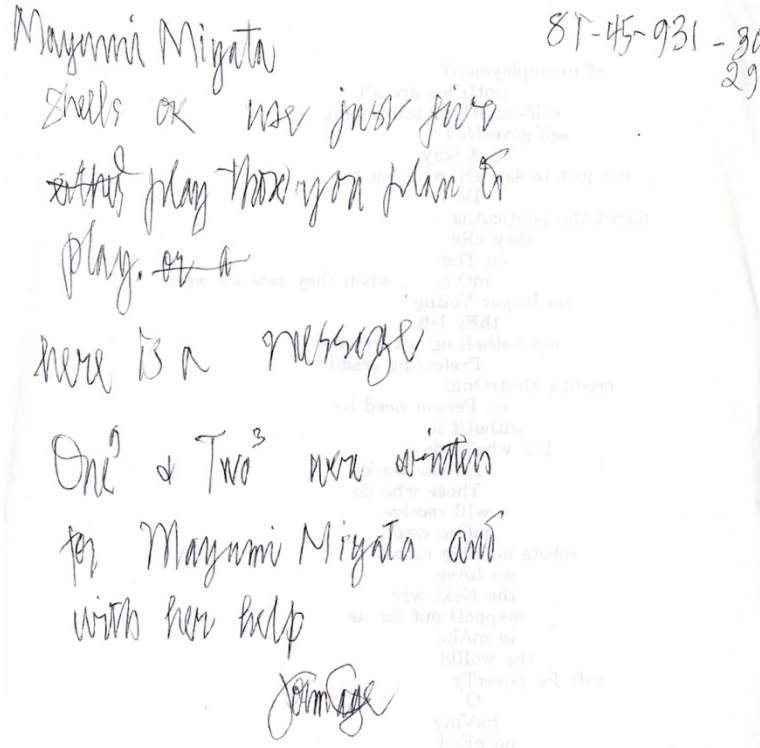
Cagean Orientalism

The history of collaboration between Miyata and Cage complicates Corbett's (2015) depiction of Cage as an Orientalist, since such a framework results in the erasure of key figures like Miyata. While an Orientalist framework can be useful for identifying the power dynamics between the self and Other, it can also dehumanize Asian musicians as "representational figures of 'the other'" rather than acknowledging their agency as 'social actors" in the historiography of Euroamerican experimental music (Rao 2009, 89). In her analysis of Chinese American music on the compositions of experimental composer Henry Cowell, Nancy Yunhwa Rao writes:

A common assumption has been that the aesthetic pursuit of modern music gives rise to the phenomenon of Asian confluence in music, one that consequently leads to analyses that scrutinize either modern music's 'turn' towards Asian influence or modern composers' 'borrowing' of Asian materials—the Other—to forge their musical aesthetics (2009, 110).

But, as Miki Kaneda has noted, Cage was "not simply influenced by 'Zen' or 'Japan' in the abstract sense, but by real, living individual Japanese composers and thinkers" (2012, 26). Orientalist critiques of Cage's experimentalism must therefore be accompanied by an acknowledgment of Miyata's agency in the construction of experimental music. As such, I situate my analysis of Miyata as an intervention in the historiography of Euroamerican experimental music, highlighting her instrumental role in bringing Cage to the intercultural musical space in which she worked.[48] Building upon Rao's recent questioning of the Eurocentricity of the historiography of experimental music (2009, 2017), my analysis of Cage and Miyata's collaboration problematizes prior narratives that have designated Euroamerican experimentalism as "self" and Japanese music as "Other." Moreover, focusing on Miyata's role as an experimental musician challenges the classification of the shō as an "eternally classic" instrument tied primarily to traditional Japanese gagaku (Terauchi 2008, 94).

Cage's strong interest in Japanese culture and music has been discussed within the context of exoticism and cultural appropriation (Corbett 2015; Patterson 2002; Shank 2014; Sheppard 2019). Corbett refers to Cage's appropriation of Japanese aesthetics as "conceptual Orientalism," noting that Cage viewed East Asian music and philosophy as a "potential strategy for the disruption of the Western preoccupation with harmony, structure, and intentionality" rather than as a sonic resource (2015, 398–99).[49] David W. Patterson offers an especially critical account of

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[48] My discussion of Miyata's collaborations with Cage builds on existing work discussing contributions of women musicians to men's musical work: Meehan 2011 (Cathy Berberian and Luciano Berio), Rao 1997 (Ruth Crawford and Charles Seeger), and Tick 2000 (Ruth Crawford and Charles Seeger).

[49] See also Patterson 2002; Shank 2014.

Cage's appropriative stance towards Japanese (as well as East Asian and South Asian) cultures, noting that Cage's appreciation of Japanese aesthetics was "highly selective" and involved "recontextualizing, reconfiguring and in some cases transgressing the intentions and ideals of their original authors" (2002, 48). In other words, Cage's interest in Japanese culture was conditional—he turned to Japan as a resource of "malleable ideas that could be used metaphorically" for "reinforc[ing] the tenets of his own modernist agenda" (59). In a particularly egregious display of entitlement, Cage credited himself for awakening Japanese composers to traditional musical genres from their own culture:

> I think that what we played for them gave them the chance to discover a music that was their own—rather than a twelve-tone music. Before our arrival, they had no alternative other than dodecaphony…In fact, our music, that is, the music David Tudor played for them, was the only music that could afford them an appreciation analogous to their appreciation of traditional Japanese music, something they couldn't find in the different modern musics. So we deserve a small part of the credit for the fact that contemporary Japanese music features elements similar, although not identical, to those of ancient Japanese music (Cage 1981, 200).

In addition to selectively appropriating elements of Japanese aesthetics primarily for his own professional gain, he positions himself as a white savior without whom Japanese composers could not have learned how to appreciate traditional Japanese music. The white savior complex, in fact, was internalized by none other than Takemitsu, who has written that "it was largely through my contact with John Cage that I came to recognize the value of my own tradition" (Takemitsu 1989, 199).[50] Cage's appropriation of Japanese aesthetics was thus fundamental in developing his own experimental approach to composition and in establishing himself as a highly respected figure in both Euroamerican and Japanese New Music circles (Patterson 2002,

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[50] Peter Burt argues that Takemitsu's initial hesitance to incorporate traditional Japanese music into his work reflected a "fear that [Japanese composers] might be lapsing into some kind of pre-war nationalistic 'Zealotism.'" Within this political context, Burt suggests, Cage's interest in traditional Japanese music represented a "seal of Western endorsement," which gave Japanese composers more freedom to explore the sonic possibilities offered by traditional genres (2001, 96).

58; Yang 2008, 34–59). But as Mina Yang suggests, Cage's ascent within international experimental music circles did not coincide with the opening of new doors for composers from Asia, who were only able to participate in these communities "in token numbers" (Yang 2008, 59). While Cage benefited significantly from his fascination with Japanese music and culture, Japanese composers' attempts to incorporate traditional Japanese music into their work have not always been perceived positively.[51]

As a number of scholars have suggested, sexuality further complicates the power dynamics between Cage and Japan. I situate Cage within Philip Brett's theory of *queer musical orientalism*, which situates Orientalism as a "reverse discourse" against the masculine and heterosexual associations of Euroamerican experimental music (2009). Nadine Hubbs notes that queer experimental composers such as Cage, Cowell, Harry Partch, and Lou Harrison were "presumed masculine and heteronormative" due to their "association with a markedly masculinized project" of the avant-garde (2004, 170). Examining the intersections between experimentalism, sexuality, and Orientalism in the work of twentieth-century Californian composers, Yang discusses Cage's interest in Asian cultures in light of his minority status as a queer composer. Suggesting that Cage was "triply marginalized by the musical establishment—as ultramodern, Californian, and gay" (2008, 34), Yang interprets Cage's appropriative relationship to East and South Asian cultures as a "means of negotiating their positionality and minoritized identities in the new music community" (35). In other words, Cage's interest in East and South Asian cultures stemmed primarily from his desire to distinguish himself from the

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[51] Burt, for example, writes that the success of Takemitsu's *November Steps* for shakuhachi, biwa, and Western orchestra has "had the deleterious effect of creating the impression that [Takemitsu's] career was dominated by the attempt to create some sort of 'bridge' between traditional Japanese instrumental praxis and Western symphonic music" (2001, 111). As a result, Japanese composers risk being pigeonholed as *Japanese composers* rather than as composers, an issue Fujikura Dai has also raised (see Chapter 2).

masculinist and heternormatively marked Euroamerican new music community. For queer

experimental composers such as Cage, their perception of East and South Asian cultures as a

"rich trove of alternative and subversive ideas" suggests a simultaneous desire to pursue queer

expressions of sexuality and musical experimentalism (38). Cage's Orientalism not only

constitutes a display of neo-colonialist power by a white male composer, but also reveals the

complicating intersections between Cage's sexuality and the dominant masculinized

heteronormative discourse of Euroamerican experimental music.

One⁹ and Classical Gagaku Performance Practice

As of this writing, there are currently two recordings of Miyata's performance of the time

bracket meta-structure: one in which she plays the time brackets with an orchestra (Cage 2002),

and another in which she plays the time brackets with five conch shells (Salzburg Biennale

2009). By examining the eighth section of *One⁹*, I first demonstrate how aspects of traditional

performance practice inform Miyata's performance of Cage's time brackets. Second, I discuss

instances in which Miyata's fingering choices contradict those of classical gagaku. By pointing

out such anomalies, I highlight how Miyata's extensive experience in performing classical and

contemporary repertoires allows her to transcend stylistic and cultural boundaries to reach new

levels of musical expression.

Similarly to Miyata's performance of *Ōshikichō-no-chōshi*, *One⁹* isolates the shō from the

context of traditional tōgaku ensemble performance. *One⁹* requires an instrument tailored for the

performance of contemporary music: the shō used for contemporary music is tuned to A=440 Hz

(rather than A-430Hz) and the two muted pipes in the traditional shō, *ya* (也) and *mō* (毛), are

given reeds for Bb5 and F5, respectively. In this light, it may seem as if *One⁹* has successfully

Example 3.24: Comparison of Miyata's notes on contemporary shō fingerings, prepared for Cage prior to their collaboration (Miyata 1991c), with traditional shō fingerings used in the performance of tōgaku repertoire

detached itself from the realm of classical gagaku. Examining Miyata's fingerings and pitch content of Cage's clusters, however, reveals that they have much in common with the traditional *aitake* of gagaku. Miyata's notes on the mechanics of shō performance, which are currently archived in the John Cage Music Manuscript Collection at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, suggest that fingering conventions from traditional gagaku practice form the basis of her performance (Miyata 1991c). Example 3.24 compares Miyata's instructions on contemporary shō fingerings, prepared for Cage prior to their collaboration, with fingerings used in classical repertoire. In addition to default fingerings, Miyata also provides alternative fingerings, which she places in parentheses next to the default fingerings. The right thumb, for example, are able to play C6, F♯6, C♯5, G♯5, and B4 according to the default fingerings. The pitches C6, G♯5, and B4 are circled to indicate that while it is possible to play these pipes with the right thumb, different fingers are used to do so in traditional gagaku.

In Example 3.25, I demonstrate that all of Cage's pitch clusters can be played using the default fingerings provided by Miyata, which consist of fingerings used in traditional gagaku as well as the two additional fingerings for the unmuted pipes Bb5 and F5. While traditional gagaku practice requires the use of six fingers—the right thumb, right index finger, left thumb, left index finger, left middle finger, and left ring finger—the addition of the unmuted pipes Bb5 and F5 necessitates the use of the right ring finger (Example 3.24). Whereas Bb5 can be accommodated by the left thumb, F5 requires the use of the additional right ring finger. Unlike fingerings on a piano or violin, fingerings for the shō in classical performance practice are fixed and allow for no flexibility. The pitch E5, for example, must only be played using the right index finger, with no exception. When learning the instrument, performers must first memorize which fingers are assigned to which pipes. As such, shō players are often most familiar with classical

fingerings and will make the effort to learn contemporary pieces using classical fingerings when possible (Miyata, personal communication, March 29, 2018).

Example 3.25: Fingerings for pitch clusters in *One⁹*, played according to Miyata's default fingerings

Event

Fingers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
L4	D6			D5	D5		D6	A4	D5			
L3	A5			A5				A5				A5
L2	B5			B5	B5			B5			B5	
L1			E6		B♭5			C♯6	E6		G♯5	B4
R1		G5								G5		F♯6
R2		E5					F♯5				E5	F♯5
R4	F5		C6				F5			F5		

Event

Fingers	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
L4			D6	A4		A4	D5		D6		D6	
L3	A5						A5					A5
L2			B5			B5		B5			B5	
L1						C♯6	B4	G♯5	E6		G♯5	C♯6
R1	G5		C♯5		G5	F♯6	G5	C♯5	F♯6		F♯6	
R2		F♯5						C6		C6	F♯5	
R4		F5								F5		

Event

Fingers	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36
L4							A4		D5	D6		D5
L3			A5		A5				A5		A5	
L2		B5				B5					B5	
L1	B♭5			E6		C♯6				B♭5		E6
R1				G5					C♯5		F♯6	
R2		C6		C6				E5	F♯5			
R4			F5		F5				F5		F5	

Event

Fingers	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48
L4			A4	D6	D6							
L3			A5		A5				A5			
L2			B5		B5				B5			
L1	G♯5			B♭5	B4	E6	C♯6		G♯5			G♯5
R1	C♯5	G5	F♯6		G5	C♯5					C♯5	F♯6
R2					E5				C6	F♯5		
R4			F5		F5			F5				

Event

Fingers	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58
L4	A4			D6		D6				
L3	A5			A5	A5				A5	
L2	B5			B5		B5			B5	
L1	E6	G♯5		B4						B4
R1	C♯5	G5	F♯6		F♯6	C♯5			G5	
R2	E5	C6		E5		C6	F♯5	E5		
R4	F5			F5	F5			F5		

Example 3.26: Fingerings for chord clusters, Events 41, 49 and 51–52

	Event 41	**Event 49**	**Event 51——**	**Event 52**
LH Ring	D6	A4		D6
LH Middle	A5	A5		A5
LH Index	B5	B5		B5
LH Thumb	B4	E6		B4
RH Thumb	G5	C#5	F#6	
RH Index	E5	E5		E5
RH Ring	F5	F5		F5
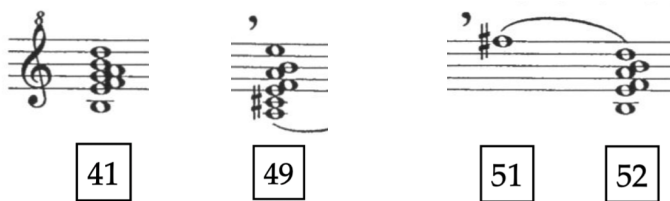
The correspondence between Cage's clusters and Miyata's default fingerings is best illustrated by Event 41 (8:00) and Event 49 (8:46), the only clusters requiring the use of all seven fingers. As shown in Example 3.26, each of the seven-note clusters in Events 41 and 49 can be played using Miyata's default fingerings. Put another way, it is possible to map every note in Events 41 and 49 onto a discrete finger based on classical gagaku practice. In Event 41, the pitch D6 is assigned to the left ring finger, A5 to the left middle finger, B5 to the left index finger, B4 to the left thumb, G5 to the right thumb, E5 to the left index finger, and F5 to the right ring finger. In Event 49, the pitch A4 is assigned to the left ring finger, A5 to the left middle finger, B5 to the left index finger, E6 to the left thumb, C♯5 to the right thumb, E5 to the left index finger, and F5 to the right ring finger. Similarly, Events 51–52 (9:02), which are tied to one another by a slur, jointly constitute a seven-note cluster in which each note can be played exactly according to Miyata's default fingerings (Example 3.24). In all three instances, six of the notes in Cage's seven-note clusters can be played using fingerings from classical gagaku practice, and

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one note (F5) requires the addition of an extra finger that is only used when performing

contemporary repertoire.

Example 3.27: Full list of multi-pitch events that are subsets of *aitake*

Event	Pitches					Relationship to *aitake*
3	C6	E6				Subset of *aitake hi*
4	D5	A5	B5			Subset of *aitake bō, ichi, ku*
11	F♯5	G♯5	A5			Subset of *aitake ge*
12	B4	A5	F♯6			Subset of *aitake ichi*
21	D6	E6	F♯6			Subset of *aitake otsu, jū, ge, gyō, hi*
23	F♯5	G♯5	B5	D6	F♯6	Subset of *aitake ge*
28	A5	E6				Subset of *aitake kotsu, otsu, bō, gyō, jū, hi*
36	D5	E6				Subset of *aitake bō, ichi*
37	C♯5	G♯5				Subset of *aitake ku*
45	G♯5	A5	B5	C5		Subset of *aitake bi*
48	G♯5	F♯6				Subset of *aitake ge*

The pitch structures of Cage's clusters are also similar to *aitake* used in classical gagaku.

In Example 3.22, each pitch or pitch cluster is labeled in the score as a distinct musical event.

The first line, for example, contains Events 1–4. Within the fifty-eight musical events in the

eighth section, there are forty-one events comprised of at least two simultaneously sounding

pitches. Out of the 41 multi-pitch events, eleven (26.8%) are subsets of traditional *aitake*. A full

list is provided in Example 3.27. While Events 3, 37, and 48 are dyads, the combinations of tones

they provide is sufficiently unique such that each of them belongs to just one *aitake*. The dyad in

Event 28, on the other hand, is a subset of six different *aitake*. Similarly, the trichord in Event 21

is a familiar sound from traditional gagaku, belonging to five *aitake*. The clusters in Events 23

and 45, which are comprised of five and four pitches respectively, are remarkably similar to

aitake. Event 23, for example, nearly contains all the pitches in *aitake ge* with the exception of

A5. Event 45 contains all but two members (D6, F♯6) of *aitake bi*.

Example 3.28: List of clusters with three pitches or more containing A5 and B5

		Event										
		1	4	8	30	35	39	41	45	49	52	57
Fingers	L4	D6	D5	A4			A4	D6		A4	D6	
	L3	A5	A5	A5	A5	A5	A5	A5	A5	A5	A5	A5
	L2	B5	B5	B5	B5	B5	B5	B5	B5	B5	B5	B5
	L1			C♯6	C♯6			B4	G♯5	E6	B4	
	R1					F♯6	F♯6	G5		C♯5		G5
	R2							E5	C6	E5	E5	E5
	R4	F5				F5	F5	F5		F5	F5	

Moreover, as I have shown in Example 3.28, Cage's clusters tend to favor the A5–B5 dyad—a combination of tones that is present in every traditional *aitake*. Out of the 27 three-pitch clusters in the eighth section of *One⁹*, eleven (40.7%) include both A5 and B5. Because the A5–B5 dyad is sounding throughout the performance of a *kangen* or *bugaku* piece that requires the performance of *aitake*, it is the most ubiquitous sound made by the shō in the genre. In any given performance, the left index and left middle fingers are always covering the pipes for A5 and B5; the two pitches act as a drone, sounding from the moment the shō enters until the end of the piece. In fact, beginning shō players are often taught early on that the left index and left middle fingers are always placed on these two pipes and remain fixed. The frequency at which A5 and B5 appear together within Cage's clusters suggests that their pitch material is in dialogue with that of traditional *aitake*. Moreover, while each of the clusters in the eighth section of *One⁹* differs from those that are heard in classical repertoire, they can be played using fingering conventions from classical gagaku. The A5-B5 dyad not only evokes a sound that is strongly associated with the pitch clusters in gagaku, but also invites a gestural experience similar to that of performing classical repertoire. Miyata's performance therefore features an interconnected web of cultural meanings: a Japanese performer trained in Western art music plays a contemporary musical work co-written with a queer Californian experimental composer in

Western notation, drawing upon classical Japanese performance practice on an instrument imported from China.

So far, I have concentrated on identifying the ways in which classical gagaku fingerings—which form the basis for Miyata's default fingerings—have informed the gestural experience of performing *One⁹*. Extending my analysis further, I examine spectrograms of Miyata's recorded performance to reverse engineer the fingerings used by Miyata through examination of *te-utsuri* (手移り). A spectrographic analysis of Miyata's fingerings supports my earlier analysis that her fingerings for *One⁹* are unmistakably shaped by conventions of classical shō performance. In classical gagaku, *te-utsuri* designate the rules for fingering changes when moving from one *aitake* to another. The rules of *te-utsuri* delineate the *order* and *timing* in which the fingering changes occur (Momii 2020). In order to successfully execute the transition from one *aitake* to the next, the shō player must coordinate the *te-utsuri* alongside the changing of breath (*kigae*; 気替). Since the shō can only emit sound when the finger holes of its pipes are covered, spectrograms are especially useful for analyzing *te-utsuri*. For example, when Miyata removes her finger from the pipe for D5 during the process of *te-utsuri*, the spectral band will indicate that the pitch D5 is no longer sounding. When Miyata places her finger on the pipe of the next pitch, A4, the pitch will then appear on the spectrogram. Since the finger responsible for holding down D5 and A4, the left ring finger, will not be pressing down on any pipes during the momentary shift from D5 to A4, there will be a brief pause between the two pitches.

The spectrograms for Events 18–19 and Events 20–21 indicate the pauses that occur during the process of *te-utsuri*. The two adjacent events are linked by a slur, which prevents the possibility of releasing all fingers after the completion of the first event. Miyata must therefore enact *te-utsuri* to seamlessly shift her fingers from the first cluster to the next. During the

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transition from Event 18 to Event 19, the spectrogram shows a pause between the fading out of

the spectral band for F#6 and the soft attack on G5, as shown in Example 3.29. According to the

classical gagaku fingerings replicated in Miyata's default fingerings, both F♯6 and G5 are played

using the right thumb (Example 3.24). Given that the right thumb is moving between from F♯6 to

G5 and therefore not pressing down on either of the finger holes, the pause suggests a high

possibility that Miyata is using classical gagaku fingerings. Had she used other fingering options,

it would not have been necessary to insert a pause between the two pitches. Similarly, there is a

brief pause between the fade out of C♯6 and the soft attack on B4. Given that both C♯6 and B4

are played by the left thumb in classical gagaku practice, the pause between the spectral bands is

likely a result of her use of *te-utsuri* fingering movements when shifting from one finger hole to

the next.

Example 3.29: Spectrogram of Events 18–19, *One⁹*
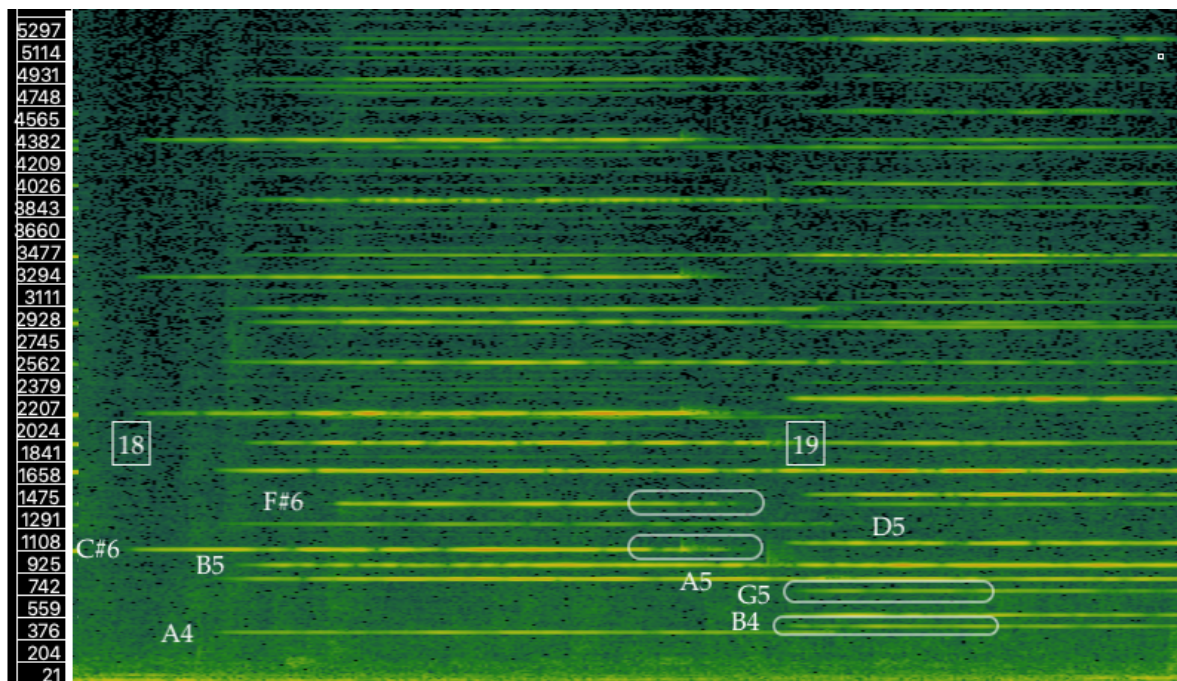
In Events 20–21 (Example 3.30), the spectrogram indicates two pauses: a long pause between C♯5 and F♯6 and a shorter pause between G♯5 and E6. According to classical gagaku practice, C♯5 and F♯6 are both played by the right thumb, whereas both G♯5 and E6 are played using the left thumb. The pause between these pitches suggests that Miyata is once again adhering to classical gagaku fingerings, especially since the *te-utsuri* motions from G♯5 to E6 and from C♯5 to F♯6 are performed frequently together in the *tōgaku* repertoire.[52] These fingering motions constitute another way in which the gestural experience of performing *One⁹* is informed by that of performing classical repertoire. In addition, the differences in the duration of pitches in Event 20 can be explained by Miyata's use of classical gagaku fingerings. As shown on the spectrogram in Example 3.30, the duration of C♯5 and F♯6 is shorter than that of the other pitches in Event 20. C♯5 is the first pitch to fade out, followed by F♯6, C6, and B5. The pitches that fade out first (C♯5, G♯5) are those involved in *te-utsuri*: the right thumb must shift from C#5 to F#6, and the left thumb must shift from G♯5 to E6. Conversely, the longest held pitches in Event 20 (C6, B5) are those that do not require *te-utsuri*: neither the left index finger—which is assigned to B5—and the right index finger—which is assigned to C6—are playing any pitches in Event 21. This means that B5 and C6 can be held longer than the pitches involved in *te-utsuri*. Similarly, D6, which is played by the left ring finger, is the first sounding pitch of Event 21. I surmise that D6 enters before E6 or F♯6 given that the left ring finger is not playing any pitches in Event 20. The left ring finger is therefore available to begin playing at any point. By contrast, E6 or F♯6 can only begin playing after the fingers transition via *te-utsuri* from G♯5 and C♯5, respectively.

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[52] Moving from *aitake ku* to *aitake otsu* is one instance in which this *te-utsuri* motion is enacted.

Example 3.30: Spectrogram of Events 20–21, *One⁹*
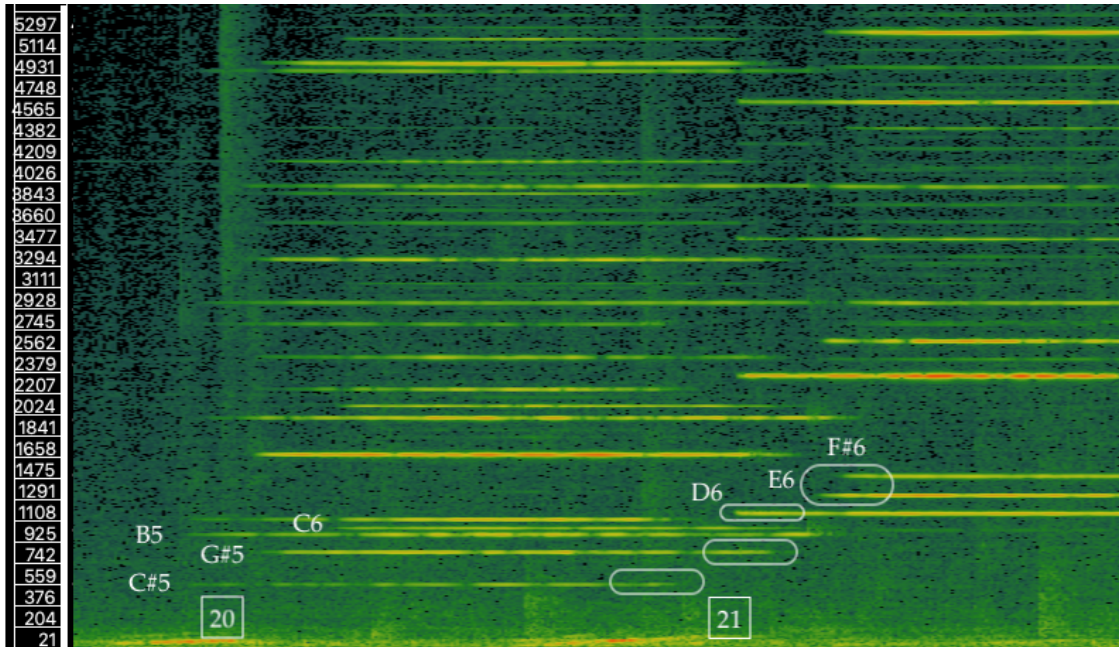
Example 3.31: Spectrogram of Events 5–6, *One⁹*
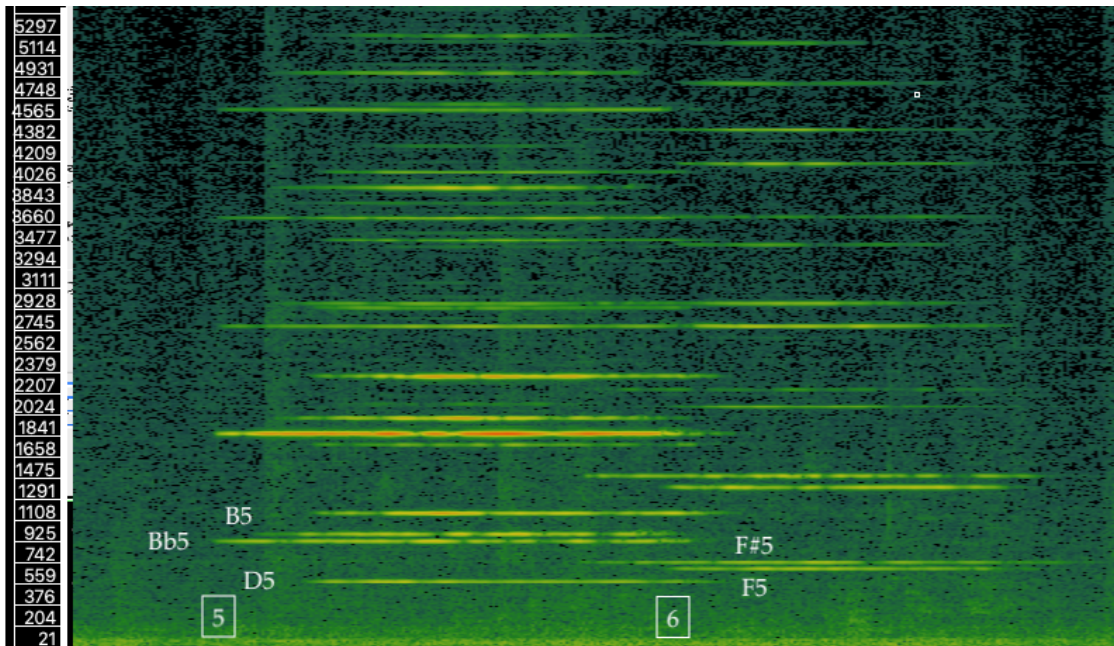
Example 3.32: Spectrogram of Events 29–30, *One⁹*
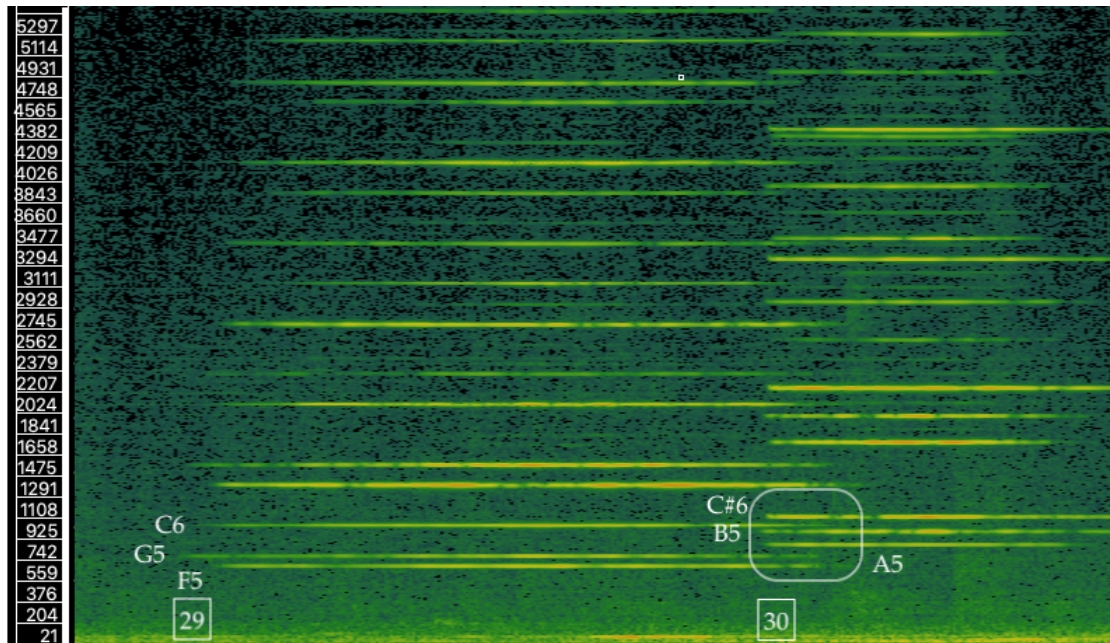
     Fingering conventions from classical gagaku continue to shape Miyata's fingerings even when no *te-utsuri* is required during the transition from one cluster to the next. In Events 5–6 (Example 3.31) and Events 29–30 (Example 3.32), the first and second cluster can be each played by different hands when using Miyata's default fingerings. When performing these two segments, Miyata allows pitches from adjacent events to overlap with one another, even when *te-utsuri* is not necessary to execute the transition. The spectral overlapping of pitches in adjacent clusters once again demonstrates Miyata's use of classical gagaku fingerings as the default option. During the transition from Event 5 to Event 6, the spectral bands of all three pitches in Event 5 (Bb5, B5, D5) overlap with those of the two pitches in Event 6 (F5, F♯5). In Event 5, each of the pitches can be played by the left hand: D5 by the left ring finger, B5 by the left index finger, and Bb5 by the left thumb. In Event 6, each of the pitches can be played by the right hand: F♯5 by the right index finger and F5 by the right ring finger. Events 5–6 utilize a combination of classical and contemporary fingerings. With the exception of Bb5 in Event 5 and

F5 in Event 6—pitches that are only available on instruments customized for contemporary music and therefore require fingerings that are unavailable in classical performance—all other pitches can be easily accommodated by classical gagaku fingerings. Eliminating the need for *te-utsuri* to transition from one cluster to the next, classical fingerings present the simplest and most intuitive fingering solution from an ergonomic standpoint.

The transition between Events 29–30 presents a similar situation. Whereas the cluster in Event 29 (F5, G5, C6) can be played using only the right hand (G5 by the right thumb, C5 by the right index finger, F5 by the right ring finger), the cluster in Event 30 (A5, B5, C♯6) can be played solely by the left hand (A5 by the left middle finger, B5 by the left index finger, C♯6 by the left thumb). As shown in Example 3.30, the spectral bands of each pitch in Event 29 overlaps with those of Event 30. Since the shō can only produce sound when its finger holes are covered, the simultaneous sounding of pitches from Events 29 and 30 indicates that all six finger holes are covered during the transition. The overlapping of pitches between the two events is therefore only possible when the fingerings used to perform the cluster in Event 29 are completely different from those used in Event 30.

I will now apply my observations from Events 5–6, 18–19, 20–21, and 29–30 to discuss Miyata's use of fingerings in her performance of Event 43–47, the longest slurred passage in *One*[9] (eighth section). Through spectrographic analysis, I demonstrate how Miyata's fingerings are determined by the rules of *te-utsuri* in classical gagaku. As shown in Example 3.24, the passage consists of two single pitches (Events 43–44), a four-pitch cluster (Event 45), followed by two single pitches (Events 46–47). When played according to Miyata's default fingerings (Example 3.24), the transitions between Events 43–44, 44–45, and 46–47 do not require any *te-utsuri,* since adjacent clusters can be played using different fingers. For example, since the C♯6 in

Event 43 (played by the left thumb) and the F5 in Event 44 (played by the right ring finger) do not share fingerings with one another.

Consequently, Miyata is able to make the two pitches overlap during the transition. As shown on the spectrogram in Example 3.33, F5 of Event 44 enters on a soft attack as the spectral band of C#6 in Event 43 begins fading, completing a smooth shift between the two events. In a similar vein, the pitches of Events 44 and 45 do not share any fingerings with one another. The fading spectral band of F5 in Event 44 is quickly overtaken by G♯5, A5, and B5 in Event 45, followed by a delayed entrance of C6. While G♯5, A5, and B5 continue sounding even after the onset of F♯5 in Event 46, the C6 fades out earlier than the others. I propose that the singular early decrescendo on C6 can be explained through the need for *te-utsuri:* both C6 in Event 45 and F♯5 in Event 46 are played by the right index finger according to the classical gagaku fingerings adopted by Miyata's notes to Cage. Since G♯5, A5, and B5 are not involved in *te-utsuri* during the transition into Event 46, Miyata holds these pitches longer than C6. Put another way, Miyata is able to smooth out the transition between Events 45 and 46 by continuing to hold G♯5, A5, and B5 while completing the *te-utsuri* between C6 and F♯5. Since F♯5 in Event 46 and C♯5 in Event 47 do not share the same fingerings, Miyata completes the passage by overlapping the two pitches during the transition.

By cross-checking Miyata's default fingerings with spectrographic representations of her performance, I have shown that the examination of overlapping spectral bands open a window into Miyata's use of fingerings in her performance of *One⁹*. First, the overlapping of spectral bands between two adjacent events suggests that they do not share fingerings with one another. Second, gaps between spectral bands suggest Miyata's use of *te-utsuri*—a practice originating in classical gagaku—to shift fingerings from one pipe to another. The pause created by the *te-utsuri*

Example 3.33: Spectrogram of Events 43–47, *One⁹*
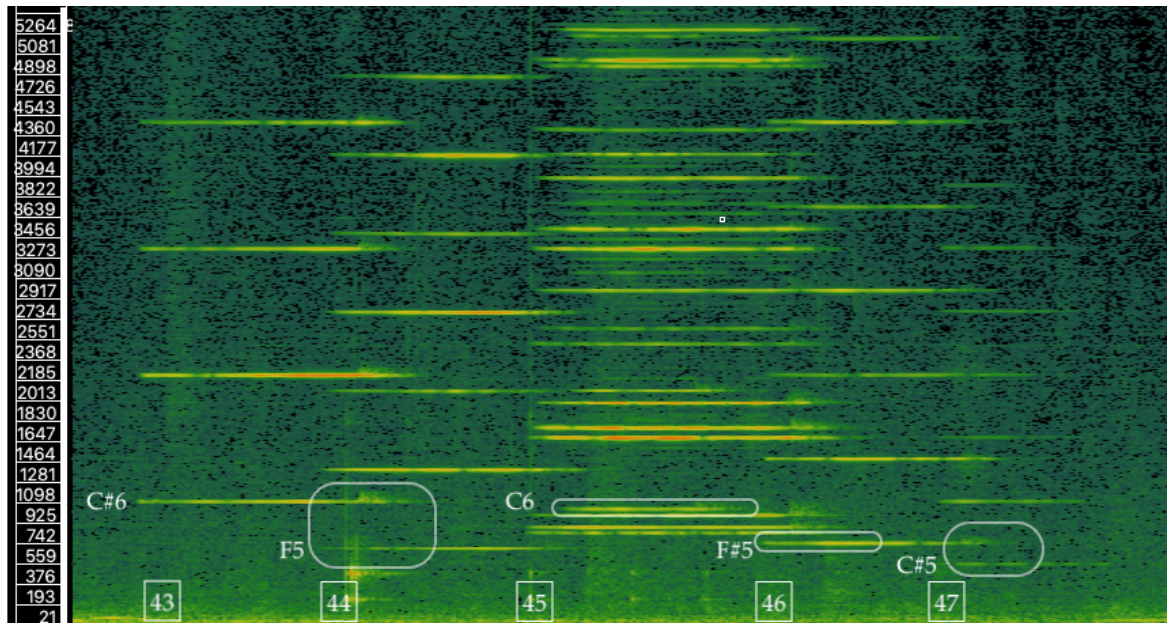
is often masked by other pitches in the cluster that do not require fingering changes. By examining the ways in which Miyata transitions from one cluster to another, my analysis of Miyata's fingerings strengthens my prior hypothesis that each of the clusters in *One⁹* can be played using classical gagaku fingerings—with the exception of Bb5 and F5, which are only available on instruments customized for the performance of contemporary music.

While spectrographic analysis of Miyata's fingerings indicates that her performance relies heavily on classical gagaku fingerings, there are a few moments in Miyata's performance that may suggest otherwise. In Events 15–16, for example, the spectral bands of D6 and A4 overlap significantly with one another (Example 3.34). When using classical gagaku fingerings, both D6 and A4 are played by the left ring finger. Had Miyata adhered to classical fingerings to play through Events 15–16, we might expect a pause between the two pitches while she shifts her finger from D6 to A4. But D6 continues to sound even after the faint entrance of A4. In fact, the thickness of the spectral band for D6 does not wane immediately after the onset of A4,

Example 3.34: Spectrogram of Events 15–16, *One⁹*
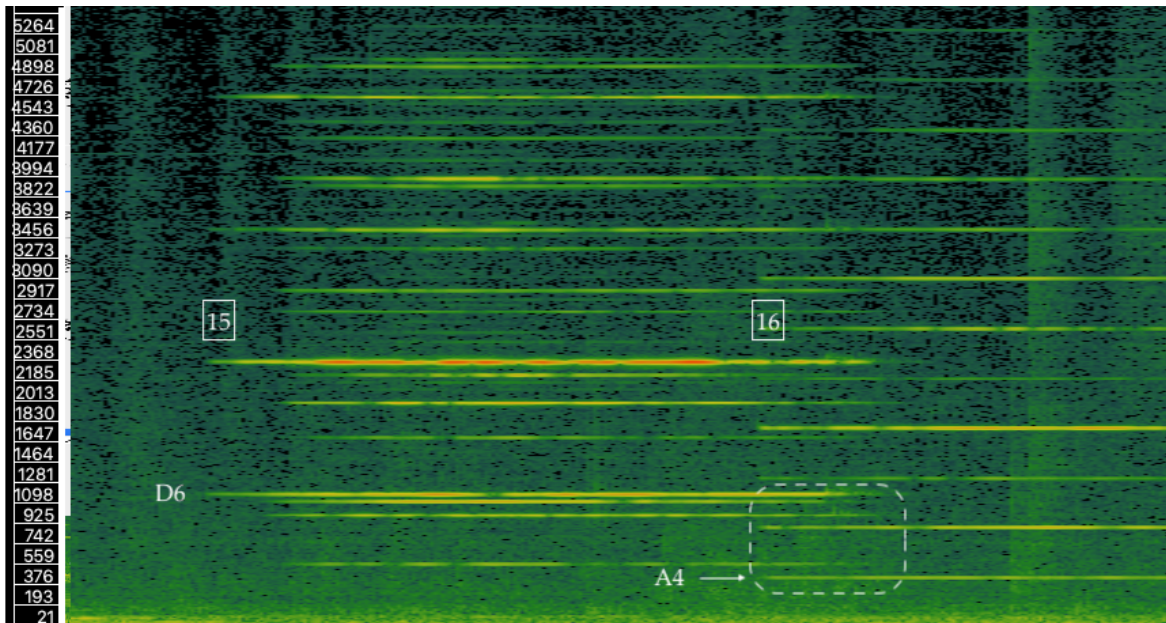
Example 3.35: Spectrogram of Events 18–19, *One⁹*
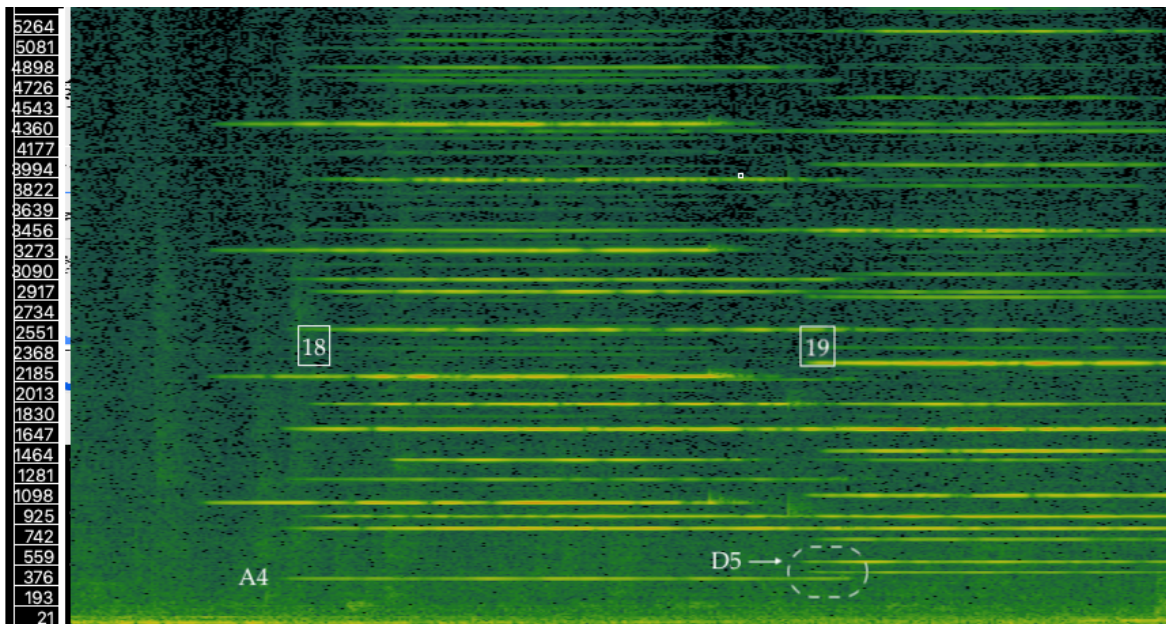
suggesting that finger holes for both D6 and A4 are firmly covered at the same time. The unmistakable overlap in the spectral bands for D6 and A4 therefore suggests that the two pitches are being played by different fingers. In Events 18–19 (Example 3.35), an example discussed

earlier, there is a slight overlap in the spectral bands of A4 (Event 18) and D5 (Event 19). While the duration of overlap is not as long as that of Events 15–16, the overlap nevertheless suggests that A4 and D5 may have been played by different fingers. In both examples, the overlapping pitches involve the left ring finger.

Why might Miyata have decided to eschew classical gagaku fingerings in these instances? A few factors might be at play. First, given that clusters in Events 15 and 18 require three and four fingers, respectively, Miyata has several free fingers to use at her disposal. Since the fingering motions of *te-utsuri* inevitably generate pauses between pitches, opting for substitute fingerings eliminates the need for a pause and therefore ensures a smoother transition. In such a case, it would seem that concerns of phrasing and articulation have overridden the custom of using classical fingerings. Second, I am analyzing a live recording of Miyata's performance at the *Salzburg Biennale, Festival for New Music* in 2009. Consequently, it is uncertain whether effects such as echo and reverb have been amplified through the performance venue speakers, and whether such effects have been added, deleted, reduced, or modified in the studio prior to distribution. The overlapping of spectral bands might therefore be caused by echo and reverb effects. I introduce these conflicting analytical observations to not only acknowledge some limitations in reverse engineering Miyata's fingering choices through analysis, but also to recognize the unique flexibility of Miyata's performance practice. While Miyata's default fingerings are strongly shaped by fingerings from classical gagaku, her occasional departures from these practices suggest her ability to "code-switch" between different styles of performance.

In sum, while *One⁹* isolates the shō from the context of gagaku performance, an examination of the pitch structures of the clusters in Cage's meta-structure reveals that the sonic

tapestry of the clusters is not completely detached from the structures of the traditional *aitake*.
These findings offer possible alternative readings of intercultural—as well as inter-temporal—
synthesis in *One⁹*, which departs from the oversimplistic dichotomies of self/Other and East/West
that characterize the relationship between avant-garde music and traditional Japanese music. By
acknowledging the depth of Miyata's collaborative work in creating this piece, I also complicate
the power differential between the Western composer and non-Western music which has often
been taken for granted in the discourse on American experimental music.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has explored some of the ways in which Miyata Mayumi's solo shō recitals
exhibit multiple forms of interculturality. Presenting both classical gagaku repertoire and
contemporary works written by both Japanese and non-Japanese composers, Miyata's recitals
invite us to consider how her performances draw attention to the various musical meanings that
arise out of the intricate intercultural processes at work. While at first glance, the two-part
organization of her program implicitly relies on a binary division between the
traditional/contemporary and between Japanese music/Western music, critically examining how
Miyata has recontextualized the traditional *Ōshikichō-no-chōshi* and how Cage's *One⁹*, through
collaboration with Miyata, has adopted elements of gagaku performance practice challenges the
dichotomy.

Taking *Ōshikichō-no-chōshi* and *One⁹* as case studies, I have demonstrated how Miyata's
performances break down the fraught categories of traditional Japanese and contemporary
Western music. By focusing primarily on performance as the object of analysis, I have also
showed how intercultural mechanisms are represented in Miyata's choices of dynamics,

articulation, and instrumental gestures. By highlighting Miyata's role as a creative collaborator—not only in her work with Cage but also as a driving force behind the revitalization and reconstruction efforts for *chōshi* and *nyūjō*—this study offers a new approach to analyzing the contribution of performers in the creation of intercultural musical meaning.

Chapter 4
Music Analysis and the Politics of Relatability:
Listening to Mitski's *Be the Cowboy*

We can no longer tolerate a discipline that prioritizes aesthetic objects over the people who create, perform, and listen to them.

–Loren Kajikawa, "The Possessive Investment in Classical Music:
Confronting Legacies of White Supremacy in U.S. Schools and Departments of Music"

Japanese American singer-songwriter Mitski (b. 1990) has publicly shared her discomfort of making her identity legible, and has expressed a desire to control the narratives surrounding her own music. As one of the few prominent mixed-race Asian American women in indie rock, Mitski frequently fields questions about her cultural and ethnic background. A Google search reveals a number of interviews and profiles that present a laundry list of the various countries in which she has lived throughout her life—Japan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Taiwan, Czech Republic, Malaysia, the United States, Turkey, and others (Bruner 2018; Fink 2019; Kawaguchi 2018; Talbot 2019). Interviews often highlight her mixed Japanese and white American background, often as a way to present her as an anomaly in a genre that continues to be dominated by white men musicians. Moreover, media narratives tend to draw attention to the in-betweenness of her identity as a mixed-race Asian American "third culture kid" who has spent a number of years living outside of her parents' native cultures (i.e., Japan and the United States). In an article in *Chicago Reader*, for example, Mitski describes her experience of feeling that she did not fully belong in any of the places she has lived:

> I feel like my whole identity—every place I feel like I belong to, I don't actually belong to, you know? I don't belong anywhere. I think that's the consistent theme for me. I think that really affects how I write songs, how I perceive the world (Geffen 2015).

Similarly, Mitski describes a dilemma of feeling like she did not belong fully to either of her parents' cultures:

> I'm Japanese and I'm also white American, and neither camp wants me in their camp…You're kind of floating in another world and you have to figure out for yourself what your identity is (Mejia 2016).

In these responses, Mitski recounts a sense of disorientation that derives from not being understood by others and struggling to understand herself. Mitski did not "make sense to anybody" because she did not fit neatly into predetermined ethnic, national, and cultural categories of Westernized society. But these misapprehensions should not be attributed to her complex background; rather, the people around her failed to understand Mitski by expecting her to adhere to singular categorizations of identity: Japanese, American, and Japanese American, none of which sufficiently encompass her mixed-race, bicultural, and international background.

Piecing together a number of Mitski's public-facing interviews reveals an overriding expectation for her to make her cultural, ethnic, and racial identities relatable and legible to predominantly white audiences. In particular, journalists and critics display a tendency to reduce her background into a singular category (Asian American or Japanese American) with little consideration of how her identity as an Asian/Japanese American is complicated by her international upbringing and the intersections between her parents' native cultures of Japan and the United States. In this chapter, I relate this expectation to an analogous phenomenon in music theory, in which those who engage in analysis similarly expect minoritized musicians to be made legible within institutionalized modes of analysis that have historically privileged the perspectives of white male theorists. Adopting Mitski's music as a case study, I explore what it might mean for music theorists to choose not to participate in the "liberal mandate" (Lee 2019, 30) of legibility and relatability, which often operate in racist and sexist ways. If we can learn to

recognize difference without reducing it into intelligible categorizations of otherness—and respect musicians' wishes to remain incompatible with Eurocentric framings of identity, as expressed through Mitski's interactions with the media—how should we extend similar gestures of care towards their music? What would it look like for music theorists to respect difference without expecting assimilation, relatability, and knowability?

To address these questions, I write from the perspective of a Japanese *kikoku shijo* studying music theory in the United States. The term *kikoku shijo* ("returnee children") refers to children of Japanese middle- and upper-middle-class families who relocate abroad due to their parents' work assignments and later return to Japan. Although there is no quintessential *kikoku shijo* experience, the term often misleadingly portrays them as Westernized, fluent in English, outspoken, and unable follow unwritten rules of Japanese culture (Shinagawa 2017). In reality, however, *kikoku shijo* bring a wide range of experiences. Although the stereotype that *kikoku shijo* are fluent in English stubbornly remains, not all *kikoku shijo* return from English-speaking regions. Among those who lived in anglophone countries, some attend Japanese-language schools five days a week and receive little education in English, whereas others attend local schools. Moreover, the experiences of *kikoku shijo* also vary widely depending on the ages at which they moved abroad and subsequently returned to Japan: while some spend most of their childhood abroad, others spend just 1–2 years abroad in their late teens. While *kikoku shijo* has often been associated with economic and educational privilege (Goodman 2003), they can also face culture shock, bullying, isolation, and/or discrimination in Japan for not being "Japanese enough" or for not fitting the conventional stereotypes of *kikoku shijo* outlined above. Peers and colleagues can also project essentialist stereotypes onto returnees. As Ōno Mai—a *kikoku shijo* who lived in Indonesia as a child and France as a teenager—recounts, her work colleagues in

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Japan would often blame any signs of idiosyncratic behavior on her background as a *kikoku shijo* (2019). In sum, *kikoku shijo* can face societal pressure to make themselves legible to dominant conceptions of Japanese identity and to caricatured stereotypes of *kikoku shijo* that are produced by these dominant discourses. This chapter focuses on Mitski's resistance towards dominant categorizations of ethnicity and citizenship as it interfaces with my own experience of navigating dominant cultural discourses in Japan and the United States as a *kikoku shijo*.

Through an analysis of "Washing Machine Heart" and "Why Didn't You Stop Me" from Mitski's 2018 album *Be the Cowboy*, I explore how music theorists might engage in what Christine Bacareza Balance refers to as "disobedient listening" (2016). Balance defines disobedient listening as a minoritarian orientation that "listen[s] against and beyond the dominant discourses that continuously constrain and narrow our understanding of the sonic and musical" (4). Focusing specifically on the analysis of form, I contend that a practice of disobedient listening has the potential to challenge hegemonic epistemological structures of U.S./Canadian music theory, including the colonialist framings of analysis that have privileged taxonomic approaches. According to Balance, disobedient listening "disavows a belief in the promises of assimilation by keeping one's ears open to…other types of politics and affiliations than those merely based on the promises and demands of visibility" (5). Balance's intervention cautions against the liberal politics of diversity and inclusion, in which minoritized musicians are incorporated into music theoretical discourse without changing the terms and circumstances under which the analysis is conducted. In other words, the field diversifies the musicians and genres discussed in books, journal articles, and conference presentations while maintaining the same colonialist analytical paradigms. Consequently, the discipline continues to reduce, classify, and hierarchize the music of minoritized musicians to render them legible through Western

epistemic categories. By refusing the mandatory burden of transparency within the act of analysis, I challenge the notion that the music of minoritized artists can only be sufficiently understood through recourse to established music analytical techniques in North American discourse.[1] Furthermore, my analysis seeks to align with Mitski's own refusals to make her own identity legible to dominant societal categorizations of race, ethnicity, gender, and nationality. The objective of my analysis is not to make Mitski visible within the field of music theory, but to examine what it might mean for her music to *not* be made transparent through analysis. How might music theorists engage in analysis without resorting to what Suzanne Cusick describes as the "dismemberment of music's body," the process of breaking down the elements of music into established categories of form, rhythm, meter, timbre, and harmony (1994b, 77)?

4.1 Mitski and the Expectations of Relatability

Born in Japan to a Japanese mother and white American father, Mitski (née Mitski Miyawaki) lived in thirteen countries before enrolling in university. After graduating from high school in Turkey, Mitski relocated to the United States to study film at Hunter College in New York. She eventually transferred to SUNY Purchase to pursue studies in music composition, where she produced two self-released albums: *Lush* (2012) and *Retired from Sad, New Career in Business* (2013)(Kim 2018; Talbot 2019; Talentino 2018). In the words of music critic Alexandra Pollard, Mitski's third and fourth albums—*Bury Me at Makeout Creek* (2014) and *Puberty 2* (2016), respectively—"put her on the map" and garnered attention from mainstream media outlets (Pollard 2018). After touring with Lorde and Iggy Pop, Mitski released her most recent studio album, *Be the Cowboy*, which was ranked the best album of 2018 by Pitchfork, and

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[1] Ellie M. Hisama (2001) and Marianne Kielian-Gilbert (1994) have similarly challenged this idea in their work.

second best album of 2018 by NPR and the *New York Times* (NPR 2018; Pareles and

Caramanica 2018; Pitchfork 2018).

Mitski's increasing visibility in the media meant that there were more opportunities for

questions regarding her cultural background. The public's desire to "make sense" of Mitski—to

pigeonhole her identity into a neatly packaged and legible life story—is reflected in a particularly

invasive interview in the New York-based *L Magazine*.

[Interviewer:] Where are you from?

[Mitski:] We moved to a different country every year or so when I was growing up. So
the question "Where are you from?" is actually quite complicated for me.

[Interviewer:] But there must be a place that springs to mind first?

[Mitski:] It depends on the day, really. Sometimes I feel very Japanese, so I say I'm from
Japan. I lived in Malaysia for 3 years. Sometimes, I just randomly say that [I'm from
Malaysia] if it's a person I know I'm not going to meet again and I'm feeling playful.
Usually, it's just easier to say that I'm from New York, because at this point New York is
the place I've lived longest, which is 5 years (Klingman 2014).

When asked to identify where she is from, Mitski deflects the question by responding that she is

unable to provide a satisfactory answer due to her international background. Her response

suggests a resistance towards making her background and identity legible to the wider public,

especially pushing back against those who expect her to align with fixed notions of culture,

ethnicity, nationality, and place of origin. The interviewer, however, presses on, dissatisfied with

Mitski's purposefully ambiguous response. In turn, the interviewer demands a clear answer and

asks her to choose a single location she identifies as home. She admits to having a script for

introductory small talk ("sometimes, I just randomly say that if it's a person I know I'm not

going to meet again"), a strategy that allows her to avoid having to explain and justify her

irreducible identity. In a later interview, Mitski once again deflects the question, this time citing

concerns that her extensive experience of living abroad would be mischaracterized as elitist: "I lived in a dozen countries. I could list them, but it would make me sound like an asshole" (Spiegel 2016). To be sure, her international background reflects a class privilege made possible by her father's occupation in the U.S. State Department (Talbot 2019). Nevertheless, when dominant society demands transparency and legibility regarding her cultural background, Mitski seems to default to evasive, ambiguous responses ("'Where are you from?' is actually quite complicated for me") and prepared phrases that satisfy the interlocutor's demand for legibility while allowing her to avoid further inquiries about her background. By avoiding detailed discussions of her identity, Mitski challenges rigid and familiar conceptualizations of racial, ethnic, and national identity that are prevalent in Western thought.

Mitski's refusal to make her identity legible recalls Gloria Anzaldúa's theory of mestiza consciousness ([1987] 2012), which similarly calls into question understandings of identity as fixed, oppositional, and discrete. Drawing upon her own identity as a mixed white and Indigenous Mexican queer Chicana woman who speaks English and Spanish, Anzaldúa illustrates how identity is flexible, overlapping, and contradictory. Anzaldúa writes:

> Cradled in one culture, sandwiched between two cultures, straddling all three cultures and their value systems, *la mestiza* undergoes a struggle of flesh, a struggle of borders, an inner war…Like others having or living in more than one culture, we get multiple, often opposing messages. The coming together of two self-consistent but habitually incompatible frames of reference causes *un choque*, a cultural collision ([1987] 2012, 100).

According to Anzaldúa, mestiza consciousness constructs a subject position at the intersections of overlapping categories of race, ethnicity, culture, class, gender, and sexuality, embracing identities that are formed in the "in-between spaces" (Koegeler-Abdi 2013, 71). By interpreting Mitski's refusals of legibility through the theory of mestiza consciousness, I do not intend to aestheticize or valorize in-betweenness as a sign of cultural capital nor do I wish to suggest that

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Anzaldúa's experience as a working-class queer Chicana woman is analogous to that of Mitski as a mixed-race Japanese American woman whose geographical mobility was made possible through class privilege.[2] Rather, I specifically draw upon Anzaldúa's theory to demonstrate how Mitski's interactions with interviewers epitomize the expectations of transparency that often burden women of color in the United States as well as mixed-race people and *kikoku shijo* in Japan.

It would be mistaken, however, to assume that Mitski has little interest in discussing her identity. To the contrary, Mitski has acknowledged that she is "selective with how and where" to talk openly about her cultural background (Kim 2016). Her selectivity suggests that her racial and gender identity as an Asian American woman plays a central role in her decisions to disclose information about herself to others. Although she has given ambiguous responses to questions about her identity on multiple occasions, she also expresses willingness to have conversations about issues of identity with other Asian American women. For example, when asked about her thoughts on being labeled as a woman of color/Asian American woman in indie rock, she responds as follows:

> I think it's important [to talk about diversity] but *I've become selective with how and where I talk about it*…I've found that me talking about it isn't actually making a difference or benefiting anyone. It just benefits the publication, because then they look progressive and feminist, and it becomes part of their brand.
>
> […]
>
> *I talk about being Asian and then that becomes the article*…All the white people reading the article feel good about themselves because they are reading about this person of color being an artist. It stops there and everyone goes back to their day. When other young Asian girls hit me up about what it is like or what my music might mean to them, then I talk about it all day. *For me, now it's just a matter of doing it when it counts and not just servicing all the time* (Kim 2016; emphasis mine).

[2] I have chosen not to address Mitski's sexuality in this chapter as I focus only on aspects of her identity that she has discussed publicly. Nevertheless, a number of reviews have interpreted her songs through a queer lens (Corp 2021; Lemon 2020) and occasionally referred to her as a queer artist (Hsu 2020; Kim et al. 2021; Standen 2019).

Within this context, it is perhaps significant that the interview quoted above took place with another woman journalist of Asian descent, Kristen Yoonsoo Kim—one of the very few interviews with Mitski in which the interviewer was a person of color. In these comments, Mitski recognizes the extent to which critics capitalize on her background to cater to exotic desires of predominantly white American readers and represent her as a tokenistic symbol of diversity in the white- and male-oriented genre of indie rock. In such instances—as exemplified by some of the interviews quoted above—Mitski is transformed into a mere demographic novelty without any thorough discussion of the intricately overlapping dimensions of her background. Moreover, these dominant narratives often oversimplify her background by positioning her as an Asian American symbol of indie rock, despite the fact that she spent most of her formative years living outside of the United States. As a result, there is little consideration of her experience as a mixed-race Asian American woman, as a Japanese American living outside of Japan and the United States, or the alienating experience of having to relocate to a new and unfamiliar location every few years. Mitski's comments suggest that her racial, ethnic, and gender identity is often misappropriated by the media, often in ways that benefit the publication's white gaze. She refers to this type of representation as "racism masked in progressive thought" (Zammitt 2016), a tokenistic move that she feels reductively positions her as a "symbol instead of a multilayered, female Asian artist" (Ruskin 2016). When Mitski is asked to make legible her own upbringing, she is also expected to participate in a multiculturalist discourse of diversity and inclusion—one

that is interested in showcasing her "diverse" optics as an Asian American woman without

interrogating why so few women of color are visible in indie rock in the first place.[3]

Gender has also played a significant role in shaping the narratives through which her

artistic identity is presented. Mitski has expressed frustration towards certain stereotypes of

women musicians which circulate among critics and fans:

> People talk about my music like it's totally confessional, or so honest and raw, and 'it just
> pours out of her'…Even when I'm writing and performing it, [people say], 'Oh no, she has
> no control over it, it overcomes her.' Why is it so hard to understand that my brain is in my
> control? (Moss 2016)

> People work really hard to take autonomy and authority away from a woman artist. They
> don't want to have to acknowledge and understand that a woman is in control of her process
> and creating something. The work that goes into it—it doesn't just happen (Finamore 2018).

In both instances, listeners diminish Mitski's agency as a songwriter by interpreting her songs as

spontaneous autobiographical vignettes that reveal her authentic emotions. The reception of

Mitski's music as personal, honest, and emotional is both racialized and gendered. As Maureen

Mahon suggests, the "image of a *rock* musician is, for most Americans, a white man with a

guitar" (2004, 18).[4] Although white men in rock music are afforded the status of auteur genius

figures, the same could not be said for women of color, many of whom have been marginalized

within the histories of the genre.[5] Moreover, as Matthew Bannister has argued, "the subtext of

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[3] Within the assimilationist paradigm of multiculturalism, Angela Y. Davis argues, "the purpose of acknowledging difference is to guarantee that the enterprise functions as efficiently as it would if there were no cultural differences at all" (1996, 45). In other words, multiculturalism does not address the unequal power relations that produce racist structures in the first place. While multiculturalism presents itself as strategy for confronting oppressive systems, Davis writes, its failure to "acknowledge the political character of culture will not, I am sure, lead to-ward the dismantling of racist, sexist, homophobic, economically exploita-tive institutions" (47).

[4] For examinations of how Asian Americans in indie rock have navigated the predominantly white, male, and upper-middle-class landscape of the genre, see Hsu 2011 and Ishii 2016.

[5] For a critical analysis of the racialization and/or gendering of the notion of genius, see Battersby 1989, Griffin 2001, and Rustin 2005.

the 'genius' discourse is that patriarchal society suppresses emotional, individual expression" (2006, 137). As a result, white supremacist heteropatriarchal modes of listening devalue Mitski's artistic creativity while simultaneously tokenizing and exoticizing her identity as a foil to the white- and male-dominated demographics of indie rock. As I have shown above, Mitski contests journalists' expectations of legibility regarding her identity and artistry, either through purposefully vague responses, direct criticism of the rampant racism and sexism she has experienced, and being selective about sharing her thoughts on issues of identity.

4.2 Music Analysis and the Politics of Legibility

Drawing upon Édouard Glissant's theory of opacity (1997) and recent work on the minoritarian politics of relatability and transparency (Huang 2018; Lee 2019; León 2017), I suggest that Mitski's refusal to articulate her identity in detail constitutes a "resistance to the kind of gaze that desires mastery, simplicity, and knowability, and which all too often aligns with sexist and colonial desires" (León 2017, 378). Through these gestures of refusal, Mitski chooses not to disclose the extent to which she identifies as Japanese, American, or neither, saving herself the affective labor of having to explain and justify her background in ways that are legible to those who view her under the totalizing category of "Asian American woman."[6] As Vivian L. Huang (2018), Summer Kim Lee (2019), and Christina A. León (2017) have demonstrated, minoritized subjects—and especially women of color—are disproportionately burdened with "labors of relatability" (Lee 2019, 35) in which they must "not only be legible and transparent but also accessibly and accommodatingly so" (29). In a similar vein, Huang asserts that women of color are "exhausted from the expectation to literally and figuratively 'say yes' to daily

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[6] I also acknowledge, however, that engaging in the act of resistance also requires affective labor.

mandates of sexism and racism" (2018, 200). In light of these critiques, I surmise that Mitski's

evasive responses to tokenizing questions about her identity demonstrate a desire to exercise the

right to not make legible her identity. Through her reading of Mitski's music video for "Your

Best American Girl," Lee asserts that asocial acts—which can include staying home, spending

time alone, and fantasizing about others—constitute an act of refusal against the burdens of

relatability to which Asian Americans are subjected.[7] According to this interpretation, Mitski's

refusal to conform to racialized and gendered expectations of approachability does not constitute

a negation of sociality but rather a decision to prioritize the "time and space needed for one's

protection, comfort, and love" (28). By avoiding the question "where are you from?", Mitski

withholds the affective labor of making legible her own transnational and multiracial upbringing.

Through such acts of protest, Mitski reorients her energy away from the dominant white, male,

and U.S.-centric narratives and toward herself.

Foregrounding the issue of "compulsory sociability and relatability" (Lee 2019, 29)

highlights the political stakes of analyzing music by Asian American women artists. In the

predominantly white and male field of music theory, these issues remain urgent given the

historical prevalence of harmful stereotypes and ongoing racist and sexist violence against Asian

American women.[8] As Lee suggests, the expectation that Asian American women should be

relatable and legible to dominant narratives emerges from the historical processes through which

they have been racialized and gendered. Lee argues that accommodation of and assimilation into

the racist logic of the U.S. nation-state has been crucial to the racialization of Asian Americans

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[7] The topic of asociality is also explored in Mitski's track "Nobody" in *Be the Cowboy*.

[8] As Ellie M. Hisama has shown, racist and sexist representations of Asian and Asian American women continue to
circulate in Western popular and art musics (1993, 2004). See also the #AtlantaSyllabus, a resource on Asian
American history, culture, and political activism that was compiled by the Asian American Studies Program at the
University of Wisconsin-Madison, following the Atlanta-area spa shootings in which eight people—six of whom
were Asian women—were killed (Lopez, Ho, and Kanesaka 2021).

(34). For instance, as Lisa Lowe has shown, Chinese immigrants in the nineteenth century were hired for low-wage jobs in mining, agriculture, and railroad construction while facing racist exclusionary laws that barred them from attaining citizenship and voting rights (1996, 8). Moreover, beginning in the 1960s, white supremacist structures weaponized the model minority myth to construct a racially marked narrative of Asian Americans as silent, obedient, and socioeconomically mobile subjects, a trope that relies on an anti-Black logic that places Asians in opposition to African Americans.[9] Madeline Y. Hsu characterizes the model minority stereotype as follows:

> Since its earliest articulation in the mid-1960s, the model minority image has become a pervasive, pernicious trope that attached higher standards of academic and employment expectations to ethnic Asians, while blaming other communities of color for failing to attain equitable status, thereby masking ongoing forms of racial inequality in the United States (2015, 21).

By characterizing a subgroup of Asian/Americans as an exemplary model according to the capitalist ideals of financial and educational success, the model minority myth perniciously presents racism as an obstacle that can be overcome through individual willpower and hard work. Most significantly, the myth erases significant differences in ethnicity, class, immigration history, and religion among Asian/Americans and ignores the systemic conditions which have oppressed Asian, Black, Brown, and Indigenous peoples in asymmetrical ways.

This discussion illustrates the historical conditions through which Asian Americans were expected to make themselves relatable to dominant structures of power as submissive subjects of the U.S. nation-state (Lee 2019, 34). In Mitski's case, her interlocutors' ignorance of the heterogeneity of Japanese, American, and Asian American identity generates well-intentioned yet misguided questions about her background, to which she is expected to respond in a way that

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[9] For a discussion of how the model minority myth relies on and reinforces anti-Blackness, see Roshanravan 2018.

makes herself palatable to whiteness. Given the particularized ways in which Asian American women have been racialized and gendered, a consideration of how music analysis might impose expectations of legibility onto Asian American women musicians such as Mitski is a pressing issue for discussion as the field broadens its analytical scope.

In U.S./Canadian academia, music analysis has conventionally taken on explanatory, prescriptive, and descriptive functions (DeBellis 2002). Explanatory analysis, for example, aims to reveal structural properties of the music that may not be clearly audible on the musical surface (Bent 1987; Morris 2000/2001; Tenzer 2006). According to Jeffrey Swinkin, interpretation is made possible through the "structural possibilities and ambiguities" exposed through analysis (2016, 15). Prescriptive analysis, which was more commonly accepted in the mid- and late-twentieth century, suggests possible ways (or, in some cases, a single way) of hearing the piece and draws attention to musical relationships of which listeners may not have been previously aware. Finally, descriptive analysis seeks to articulate pre-analytical truth which exists prior to analysis, or to use Mark DeBellis's phrasing, how we have been "hearing the piece all along" (2002, 130). In many cases, music analyses that adhere to the models above seek to produce knowledge claims about one's own musical experience through the use of music theoretical tools (Lochhead 2016, 68). In other words, the objective of such analyses is to uncover aspects of musical experience that were unavailable prior to the analytical act. Analysis, as it is currently practiced in the United States and Canada, therefore enables music theorists to translate musical sound into terms that are transparent, legible, and relatable to Eurocentric knowledge systems. If analysts have the power to demand transparency from the music we analyze, we also have the ability to resist these desires.

My approach to analysis embraces Glissant's articulation of "the right to opacity" (1997, 194), which outlines the conditions through which Western systems of governance demand legibility and transparency from the Other. Glissant describes the underlying logic behind Western epistemology as follows: "In order to understand and thus accept you, I have to...make comparisons and, perhaps, judgments. I have to reduce" (190). Under this paradigm, the Other can only be understood when they are assimilated within the universalist world view of the West and classified according to its fixed and totalizing categories of difference (49). In other words, difference is recognized and accepted only when the Other is made intelligible to Western systems of knowing. Such expectations for transparency, which inevitably feed the desire to conquer and subjugate minoritarian subjects, establish a hierarchical relationship between the knowing West and the knowable Other. By demanding the Other's assimilation into dominant discourses, the West's normalization of transparency precludes the possibility of having multiple ways of inhabiting and understanding the world. As a result, the West forcibly categorizes minoritized subjects into fixed and singular national, racial, ethnic, and gendered categories. These epistemic conditions undergird journalists' persistent questions on Mitski's cultural background, which demand a straightforward answer about her identity without leaving ample room for any overlap or contradiction between her multiple ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

In response to these colonial desires for transparency, Glissant claims a "right to opacity" as a politics of refusal and unknowability. By articulating the right to remain indecipherable to the Western gaze, opacity embraces ambiguity and debunks the notion of a universal metric through which we can understand others. Moreover, opacity enables minoritarian subjects to resist hegemonic pressures to make themselves legible according to pre-established and generalizable categories of difference. Opacity therefore involves recognizing difference without

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filtering it through epistemic frameworks of the West; this perspective acknowledges that there are certain aspects of difference that cannot be understood. Opacity gives minoritarian subjects the option to remain illegible to dominant discourses and refuse being positioned as knowable objects.[10]

Glissant's theory of opacity presents a framework for rethinking the epistemic goals of music analysis and its emphasis on reducing, hierarchizing, and classifying musical parameters. By advocating for the "right to opacity," Glissant suggests, we ought to "give up this old obsession with discovering what lies at the bottom of natures" (1997, 190).[11] While most music theorists have been trained to utilize analytical techniques to reveal the structural secrets that "li[e] at the bottom of natures," exercising the "right to opacity" embraces the possibility that certain features of music can and should not be accessible to an analyst. As Marion Guck has suggested, music theorists' desire to analyze music through close listening often stems from our feelings of fascination, admiration, and love towards the songs, works, performances, and musicians we study (1997). But can we confidently claim that we care for the musicians we study if we simultaneously demand transparency and legibility from them?

I propose that respecting the right for opacity opens the possibility for an ethical and reparative approach to music analysis that extends care and cultural sensitivity towards the

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[10] While Glissant defines opacity as a strategy for resisting colonial domination, Tyrone S. Palmer suggests that opacity of Blackness can also function as a "precondition and justification for the enactment of violence—both interpersonal and genocidal—upon Black people" (2017, 42). Giving the example of the disproportionately high death rates for Black women with breast cancer, Palmer argues that the perception of Black people as "an opaque mass with superhuman qualities" is "intimately tied to the unthinkability of Black suffering, in particular, and Black feeling more broadly" (42).

[11] This critique by Glissant can be directly applied to the epistemology of Western music theory, which has often emphasized links between musical and natural phenomenon: some well-known examples include Jean-Philippe Rameau's grounding of his theories of harmony in acoustical properties of the vibrating string and Heinrich Schenker's idealization of the major triad as a "chord of nature" which constitutes the most fundamental unit of music (Cook 2002; Drabkin 2002).

musicians we write about. As discussed by Vivian Luong (2017, 2019), embedded within music analysis is an ethical attitude that dictates how we interact with music, the people behind the production, performance, and reception of the music, and the cultures to which they belong. Framing analysis as an act of *music loving* that "requires us to intimately relate to other bodies with love and care," Luong suggests that the repercussions of analysis extend well beyond the analyst and music (2019, 3). Reflecting on *how* we tell stories about music through analysis can guide us towards "creative ways of listening and caring for better worlds," both musical and non-musical (113). Luong's vision for an ethical and reparative music analysis is especially urgent when addressing minoritized musicians and their musical productions. León has observed how the work of minoritized artists is often interpreted through the lens of their identity and sociopolitical message, which obscures their aesthetic contributions (2017, 377). Such essentialist readings can risk "reducing all minoritarian art to the experience of being minoritarian—as if an individual's experience could represent a totality" (377). In the case of Mitski, her individualized lived experience is often superseded by the totalizing category of "Asian American woman." Both scholarly and popular discourse on Mitski remains dominated by discussions of her cultural background as an Asian American woman, with little in-depth consideration of her musical contributions.

4.3 Formal Opacity in Popular Music Analysis

U.S./Canadian practices of music analysis normalize transparency and relatability by using techniques that seek to reduce, classify, and construct hierarchical systems. One domain in which classification particularly reigns supreme is formal analysis, which typically relies heavily on what Joseph Straus refers to as "normalizing discourses" that aim to "rationalize the abnormal

elements (e.g., formal anomalies or dissonant harmonies) with respect to normal ones" (2011, 105). The resurgence of formenlehre in the late-twentieth century has led to an increased emphasis on identifying musical conventions, which serves as a point of reference for labeling and explaining how individual formal units may resemble or differ from these norms (Caplin 1998; Caplin, Hepokoski, and Webster 2009; Gjerdingen 2007; Hepokoski and Darcy 2006).

In a similar vein, literature on formal analysis in popular music has proposed various ways of labeling and classifying formal conventions in anglophone pop-rock, primarily through stylistic and corpus-based studies (Barna 2020; Covach 2005; de Clercq 2017b; Endrinal 2011; Everett 2009; Nobile 2020; Osborn 2013; Spicer 2004; Stephenson 2002; Summach 2011; Temperley 2018).[12] This style of analysis generalizes the sonic, musical, and lyrical features of large-scale and individual formal structures to provide a concrete set of criteria for formal categorization. These tools have enabled music theorists to invent additional sub-categories of conventional formal sections, widening the vocabulary through which to address differences within each formal category.[13]

The privileging of formal categorization in music theory highlights epistemic similarities between music analysis and the taxonomic practices of European natural history. Grace Kyungwon Hong has argued that academia's preoccupation with classification is directly linked to a colonialist desire to construct "naturalized hierarchies of race, gender, and sexuality" (2006, 79). In fact, as Lennard Davis has shown, the notion of classification according to a statistical norm was a central tenet of eugenics (1995, 30). Positioning taxonomic discourses on formal analysis as a colonialist enterprise that reinforces a hierarchical relationship between the analyst-

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[12] For a similarly oriented study of formal conventions in hip-hop, see Duinker 2020.

[13] Christopher Endrinal (2011), for example, introduces four categorizations of bridge sections (interverses) based on similarities in musical, lyrical, and formal content with their surrounding sections.

as-knowing-subject and music-as-known-object, I wish to explore the possibilities of an approach to formal analysis in popular music that resists enforcing the burden of transparency.

In recent years, popular music scholars have offered alternative approaches to analyzing form that de-emphasize the need for classification, exploring instead how form interacts with other musical parameters to suggest broader social and cultural meanings. Jocelyn Neal (2007), for example, shifts the analytical focus towards the role of form and text in the construction of song narrative, whereas Lori Burns and M. Lafrance (2002) demonstrate how an understanding of formal structure can enhance our interpretation of the song's broader social message. Ralf von Appen and Markus Frei-Hauenschild envision the song form itself as an "*object* of analysis, and not just the *basis* for orienting the analysis in the song," directing our attention to the various interpretive possibilities that arise when situating a song's form within broader historical and cultural contexts (2015, 2). Advocating a more experiential approach to form in popular music, Robin Attas and Allan Moore challenge the "object-centered approach" (Attas 2015, 276) in popular music analysis that provides information only on "exactly where one is at a particular point in time" (Moore 2012, 84) without considerations of how a listener might experience the song form in real-time.[14] By critiquing the "object-centered approach" (Attas 2015, 276) in formal analysis, these scholars illustrate how close readings of formal structures in popular music can draw our attention to the cultural dimensions of songs, artists, and genres.

I posit that these approaches outlined above offer alternative approaches to formal analysis that resist urges for classification. Scholars such as Neal, Burns and Lafrance, von Appen and Frei-Hauenschild, Moore, and Attas gesture toward an analytical orientation that calls into question these taxonomic projects that have dominated in popular music analysis. To label a

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[14] Janet Schmalfeldt (2011) similarly takes an experiential approach to analyzing form in Western Classical music.

formal section as a verse (or a sub-section of the verse) or theorize deviations from the verse-chorus form are not politically neutral acts. When carried out uncritically, such analytical decisions can normalize music theorists' expectations of transparency and legibility towards songs and the artists who composed and perform them. But is it reasonable to expect transparency from every song we analyze, and use analysis as a way to forcefully uncover the minute details of the song's structure? As Cusick has warned, analysis carries the risk of inflicting violence onto music by aiming to achieve "mastery through dismemberment" of its constituent parts (1994b, 80). What might it mean to *not* understand all the intricacies of a song's formal structure? What implications might such analytical refusals have for popular music analysis?

To explore the implications of Glissant's right to opacity for analyzing the songs of Mitski, I follow Trevor de Clercq's call to embrace ambiguity in the analysis of song form. Critiquing taxonomic approaches to music, de Clercq encourages analysts to "accept the ambiguity of…section labels as an intrinsic part" of popular music analysis and "adopt a 'both/and' approach to section labels rather than the mutually exclusive 'either/or' approach" (2017a, [1.5]–[1.6]). De Clercq discusses instances in which formal sections exhibit characteristics of multiple formal categories, which he refers to as "blends." In some cases, de Clercq argues, formal sections in pop/rock music are comprised of "seemingly mutually exclusive section roles" (2017a, [3.8]). De Clercq's approach offers a flexible conceptualization of song form that normalizes formal ambiguity and multiplicity, releasing the pressure off of the analyst to construct a singular formal interpretation according to predetermined analytical categories, whether they are musical or cultural. By pursuing such an approach within the realm of music analysis, music theorists are able to avoid replicating expectations for minoritarian

subjects to be transparent, relatable, and classifiable within what Philip Ewell refers to as music theory's white racial frame (2020a).

Furthermore, my analysis draws upon Attas's experiential approach to counter the expectations of transparency that are embedded in the "object-centered approach" to popular music analysis (2015, 276).[15] By adopting Attas's mode of listening, I center my own in-time experience of Mitski's formal structures without indulging the impulse to classify sectional boundaries and decipher formal identities through recourse to established conventions in popular music analysis. Furthermore, to embrace the possibilities of formal ambiguity and multiplicity in Mitski's songs to the extent possible, I have aimed to draw out what Kate Heidemann describes as "interpretations that stem from listening alone" while minimizing my reliance on visualizations of musical parameters to aid and orient my analyses (2014, 25). Adopting Although my analysis of form enters in conversation with these conventions and terminologies, I explicitly embrace ambiguities in formal structures, especially those that arise from non-prototypical compositional approaches to song form. In this chapter, I am interested not in (re)drawing the boundaries of formal sections or taking a position on one formal interpretation over another but rather in recognizing experiences of disorientation, surprise, and ambiguity that become evident when listening closely to Mitski's music.[16] By taking these reactions and discoveries seriously throughout my listening process, I seek to resist the impulse to legitimize the analyst as an all-knowing subject who has the power to produce authoritative knowledge on the musical object.

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[15] David Lewin's article "Music Theory, Phenomenology, and Modes of Perception" (1986) similarly emphasizes in-time musical experience, retrospective hearing, and multiplicity of (sometimes contradicting) hearings as valuable perceptions that inform an analysis.

[16] Joseph Dubiel proposes a similar mode of listening in which the analyst is "led, nudged, and pushed by the music" and "hold[s] open the possibility of discovery, the possibility of responding aurally to something in a piece to which I was not antecedently attuned" (2004, 198).

4.4 "Washing Machine Heart"

I will now outline my in-time experiences of formal disorientation that have emerged through my process of listening to Mitski's "Washing Machine Heart" and "Why Didn't You Stop Me" from her album *Be the Cowboy*. As a number of critics have observed, Mitski often eschews the prototypical verse-chorus form in *Be the Cowboy* (Breihan 2018; Gaillot 2018; Kornhaber 2018; Leszkiewicz 2018). Mitski herself has admitted that she deliberately avoided the convention as a way to "challenge [her]self…and try to figure out ways to pace a song that wasn't reliant on classic song form" (Gaillot 2018). Mitski describes her evasion of the formulaic verse-chorus form as a difficult and conscious decision, as she describes herself as "very much a pop enthusiast" and admits that "a very standard pop song form is genuinely what [she] like[s]" (Gaillot 2018). I provide these details to situate *Be the Cowboy* as an album that intentionally deviates from formal conventions of popular music. As such, the idiosyncratic formal structures of "Washing Machine Heart" and "Why Didn't You Stop Me" are not anomalous but rather emblematic of the whole album.

As the reader will soon realize, this analysis does not endeavor to reach a conclusive reading of the song's formal structure nor will I push in favor of one formal interpretation over another. As a music theorist, I have been trained to claim definitive arguments, provide an abundance of evidence to support a singular interpretation, and delineate clear analytical takeaways. Crafting an analysis that intentionally fails to follow these conventions has been an immensely challenging experience—one that pushed me to interrogate my own preconceptions about the objectives of music analysis and my complicitness in following them. I ask for the reader's indulgence as I think through and sit with sensations of ambiguity and allow for analysis to respect the right to (musical) opacity.

The reader will also notice that notated musical examples—a fixture of many scholarly publications in Western music theory—are entirely absent from the analyses. While transcriptions can be informative visual approximations of the musical phenomena being discussed, they also risk serving as a gatekeeping mechanism that excludes readers who are unfamiliar with Western staff notation, especially when the topic is unrelated to Western art music.[17] As Nicol Hammond (2020) reminds us, the ubiquity of Western staff notation in musical transcription situates music scholars—the majority of whom are proficient in these notational systems—as the primary audience.[18] Consequently, current practices of transcription in studies of popular music and non-Western music severely limit the readership of our work and ostracize those who feel unwelcomed by elitist prerequisites. Furthermore, musical transcription has long been used as a colonialist tool for producing knowledge about, objectifying, and reducing the Other (Goodman 2018).[19] Although many of my analytical observations could easily be represented through spectrograms and transcriptions, depending on these technologies would perpetuate their history of epistemic violence by reducing, translating, and classifying musical phenomena into terms that are legible to Western ways of knowing. To avoid these harmful pitfalls of transcription and other forms of abstract visualization, my musical examples will instead direct readers to the relevant audio clips from the recording. By encouraging readers

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[17] One significant limitation of transcriptions is that they privilege pitch-based parameters and what Dylan Robinson refers to as the "clock-defined time" of Western temporality (2020, 119). The benefits and constraints of using transcription for popular music analysis have been discussed by scholars such as David Brackett (2000, 27–9), Nancy Murphy (2015, 50–9), and Peter Winkler (1997).

[18] See also Straus 2018, who opts for analytical videos over notated musical examples in the interest of accessibility (xi).

[19] Transcription has been implicated in processes of racialization and (settler) colonialism across a wide range of contexts: comparative musicology (Walden 2020), Indigenous American songs (Browner 2011), nineteenth-century African American spirituals (Ramsey 2007), Malay melodies (Irving 2014), and Korean court music (Suzuki 2013), to name a few. For arguments in favor of using transcription for analyzing unnotated music, see Agawu 2003 and Browner 2009.

to engage directly with the recordings, I wish to emphasize the in-time nature of my analysis and invite readers to recreate the experiential listening process for themselves.

Nevertheless, I have relied on technical language to describe pitch range, pitch intervals, pitch contour, formal sections, meter, and instrumentation in my analyses. While scientific pitch notation (e.g., C4 to designate middle C) and terms such as verse, chorus, off-beat, and texture are widely circulating terms in academic music theoretical parlance, they are products of a Western system of knowledge production that must be acquired through a certain exposure to formal musical training. Although this chapter strives to minimize gatekeeping mechanisms that exclude readers who are not familiar with the technical language of Westernized music theory, my reliance on specialized terms and methodologies exposes the limitations of its approach. Consequently, my analyses are inevitably oriented more towards a small circle of music theorists than to listeners of Mitski who are not familiar with music theoretical language. Despite the shortcomings of my approach, I wish to use my work on Mitski as a starting point for exploring how music analysis can depart from the epistemological norms in which we have been trained.

The lyrics of "Washing Machine Heart" evoke an emotional schism between the protagonist and their romantic partner, using the washing machine as a metaphor for the emotional labor the protagonist must perform to appease them.[20] By repeatedly asking "Why not me?", the protagonist wonders why—despite their repeated pleas for affection—the partner is not interested in appreciating them for who they are.

The song opens with a recurring pattern of clapping hands, followed closely by a pulsating bass line on C#3. Twelve beats after the start of the hand-clapping pattern, Mitski's voice and the drums enter to commence the first section of the song (0:07). The first formal

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[20] As of this writing, lyrics to "Washing Machine Heart" can be accessed at https://genius.com/Mitski-washing-machine-heart-lyrics.

section, which I refer to as Section A (Example 4.1), maintains the four-part texture of the voice, hand claps, drums, and bass that was first established in the introduction. The hand claps and drums remain consistent throughout the section, and the voice and bass move in synchronous rhythms with one another. Pitch changes in the vocal melody occur only on the beat, with no syncopated rhythms. After Mitski's vocal entrance, the bass—which had been fixated on C#3—similarly adheres to the Western quadruple-metrical framework by moving in coordination with the voice. By changing pitches every two beats and discontinuing the repetition of C#3 in the opening, the bass helps conjure a sense of motion in the backing instrumental parts. In this section, the voice and bass are locked into a contrapuntal relationship in which the two parts move synchronously and on the beat.

Example 4.1: Audio clip for first statement of Section A, "Washing Machine Heart" (0:07–0:25)

https://youtu.be/12rsVkwSsXU?t=7

Lyrics:
Toss your dirty shoes […] we would kiss tonight

As I listen, I notice that the opening section expresses both verse-like and chorus-like features, inviting an ambiguous formal interpretation through mixed signals in the melody and lyrics. As shown in Example 4.2, I hear this section so far as two statements with identical melodies and contrasting lyrics. On the one hand, the two statements of Section A recall verse-like characteristics, assigning different sets of lyrics to the same melody and expanding upon the emotional state of the protagonist as the song proceeds. On the other hand, the introduction of the song title in the second measure of the section alludes to a chorus-like function. Although the first and second statements of Section A are marked by contrasting lyrics—with the former introducing the title of the song—the two statements share identical melodic and textural

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characteristics. The repetition of the same melodic material with different lyrics strengthens my hearing of this opening section as two statements of the verse, an interpretation which is made slightly uncertain by the presence of the song title—which I would usually expect to appear in the chorus—immediately after Mitski's vocal entrance.

Example 4.2 First two statements of Section A, "Washing Machine Heart" (0:07–0:25)

Section A (0:07–0:16)**:**
Toss your dirty shoes […] bang it up inside

Section A (0:16–0:25)**:**
I'm not wearing […] we would kiss tonight

The subsequent section (beginning at 0:25) brings forth new melodic material, setting up an expectation of a contrasting section to Section A (Example 4.3). Mitski's newly introduced melody immediately differentiates itself from that of Section A by leaping upward from C#4 to A4, eclipsing the previous high point, F#4. Contrast is also reinforced by the bass, which transitions into a new pattern of F#3-E3-A2-B2. However, my expectation for a fully articulated contrasting section is thwarted after two measures when Mitski repeats another four-measure statement of the Section A melody (0:30–0:38; Example 4.4). The return of Section A material marks a disruption of the previously established four-measure phrase pattern, undermining the possibility of a complete four-measure contrasting section. The third statement of the Section A melody brings back the title lyrics from the first Section A statement, raising the possibility of these two sections as refrains that also embody characteristics of verses. Given the consistency in texture, stability of sonic intensity, use of contrasting lyrics, and advancement in the lyrical narrative throughout the first four sections (Example 4.5), I am inclined to hear them collectively as a verse-like section that begins and ends with a refrain-like subsection. In other words, it is

possible to conceive of this tentative verse section as an AABA form with an unsatisfactorily

truncated B section. Understanding the material so far as a single verse section with refrain-like

characteristics establishes my expectation for an additional verse statement consisting of similar

musical material, a pre-chorus that builds energy towards a climactic chorus, or the climactic

chorus itself.

Example 4.3: Audio clip for contrasting section, "Washing Machine Heart" (0:25–0:29)

https://youtu.be/12rsVkwSsXU?t=25

Lyrics:
Baby will you […]

Example 4.4: Audio clip for third statement of Section A, "Washing Machine Heart" (0:30–0:38)

https://youtu.be/12rsVkwSsXU?t=30

Lyrics:
Toss your dirty shoes […] bang it up inside

Example 4.5: Formal overview of first four sections, "Washing Machine Heart"

Section A (0:07–0:16):
Toss your dirty shoes […] bang it up inside

Section A (0:16–0:25):
I'm not wearing […] we would kiss tonight

Section B (0:25–0:29):
Baby will you […]

Section A (0:30–0:38):
Toss your dirty shoes […] bang it up inside

Mitski, however, does not provide us with any of these options—at least not yet. Once

the third statement of the A section concludes, the song launches into an instrumental break in

which the synthesizer—a musical instrument used commonly in popular music that produces sound electronically—repeats the melody from Section A to which the refrain was set (0:38; Example 4.6). The synthesizer replaces the voice as the primary melodic instrument, even paraphrasing the vocal melody from the previous section. The synthesizer draws attention to the Section A melody through repetition, marking it as a motivically significant melody. At this point, the melodic content of the song is dominated by the Section A melody, expressed through Mitski's vocals and the synthesizer. The texture remains unchanged, giving a sense that this instrumental break represents a continuation of the previous verse-like/refrain-like section. Because the texture has remained consistent throughout the song so far, there has been no build in *sonic energy*, which Asaf Peres defines as the "total intensity of…sonic activity" (2016, 42), measured by factors such as rhythmic intensity, pitch register, and *sonic density*, which reflects the "presence (or loudness) of frequencies across the sonic spectrum" (42). The consistency in sonic energy between the synthesizer break and the previous verse-like/refrain-like section leads me to hear the former as a continuation of the letter.

Example 4.6: Audio clip for synthesizer melody, "Washing Machine Heart" (0:38–0:55)

https://youtu.be/12rsVkwSsXU?t=38

Contrary to my expectation, the instrumental section is followed not by a repeated statement of Section A but by Section B (0:56; Example 4.7). The second statement of Section B, which is expanded into six measures, exhibits characteristics of both a verse and pre-chorus. While the melodic and lyrical material recalls the previous verse-like/refrain-like section, the texture evokes the rhetoric of a pre-chorus through an intensification of sonic energy. This section restates the melodic phrase from the previous iteration of Section B ("Baby will you kiss me already and") with a different set of lyrics ("Baby, though I've closed my eyes"). This

segment is then followed by new melodic material, as shown in Example 4.7). The second iteration of Section B heightens its contrast against Section A through changes in rhythm and texture.

Example 4.7: Audio clip for second statement of Section B, "Washing Machine Heart" (0:56–1:09)

https://youtu.be/12rsVkwSsXU?t=56

Lyrics:
Baby, though I've […] you pretend I am

     As I have discussed earlier, the rhythms of the melody in the first statement of Section B align with the metrical beats. In the second statement of Section B, however, Mitski's vocal melody uses syncopation for the first time in the song and begins emphasizing the off-beats. Furthermore, the textural change in the second statement of Section B marks an intensification of sonic energy compared to that of the previous verse-like/refrain-like AABA section. Although the first appearance of Section B features a sparse ensemble of voice, bass, and drums, the second iteration adds guitar and synthesizer to fill in the texture. This new section recycles melodic material from the previous iteration of Section B and therefore presents itself as a verse-like section. Sonically, however, the section exhibits a higher energy level and thicker texture, which suggests the possibility of a build-up towards a climactic chorus section. The build-up function is heightened by the use of syncopation in the melody, which disrupts the pattern of metrically obedient rhythms to conjure a sense of forward motion and generate an expectation of further intensification in dynamics. Once again, this section presents an ambiguous instance in which the formal section exhibits features of both a verse and pre-chorus, recalling melodic

material from the previous section while intensifying the sonic energy through textural and rhythmic manipulations.

Example 4.8: Audio clip for Section C, "Washing Machine Heart" (1:09–1:22)

https://youtu.be/12rsVkwSsXU?t=69

Lyrics:
Do mi ti […]

The second statement of Section B is followed by new melodic material, which I refer to as Section C (1:09; Example 4.8). While the previous verse-like/refrain-like section and the verse-like/pre-chorus-like section set up an expectation of a climactic chorus that contrasts significantly with the preceding material, the section's repetition scheme and textural features undermine my expectation of a chorus. At the start of Section C, the texture is abruptly reduced to voice, bass, and bass drum, and we no longer hear the hand claps, guitar, and snare drum. These sudden changes in instrumentation and the introduction of new melodic material suggests the beginning of a new section. Melodically, Mitski's vocals continue the syncopated rhythmic pattern I observed in the preceding Section B.

While these features establish a sense of contrast between the previous section, they do not immediately signify the climactic function of a chorus. As a number of scholars have observed, the chorus is often the most memorable part of the song, which is often reinforced through an articulation of the song title, low syllabic density, internal repetition of text, thicker textures, and high vocal register (Nobile 2020, 71; Temperley 2018, 161). Section C exhibits some features are idiomatic to chorus sections but lack other key characteristics, generating a sense of formal disorientation that makes it challenging to follow the trajectory of the song's sonic energy. Lyrically, this section features a lower syllabic density than those of the sections,

repeating the one-syllable solfège scale degrees "do mi ti" (while also singing the correlative pitches A, C#, and G#) and the phrase "why not me." The melodic material of this section is made memorable through a repetition of a single three-note motivic segment, which consists of a descending sixth and an ascending fifth (Example 4.8). The melodic material in Section C emphasizes conjunct motion, which presents a stark contrast with the predominantly disjunct melodies of preceding sections. While the prevalence of disjunct leaps does not necessarily enhance the "sing-along quality" that is characteristic of many chorus sections (Nobile 2020, 70), the economic use of a single three-note melodic segment throughout the entire section ensures memorability. In other words, the melody least amenable to singing along is placed in Section C, while at the same time the memorability of the melody is reinforced through internal repetition.

The diminishing textural and sonic energy of the onset of this section, however, are atypical for a chorus section. Having experienced a build in sonic energy over the course of the second statement of Section B, the beginning of Section C presents a conflicting tension between my own expectation for a climactic chorus and a reduction in texture and sonic energy. In fact, the texture in the first statement of Section C is sparser than that of Section A, with the former lacking the snare drum that is present in the opening section of the song. The noticeable reduction in texture evokes the rhetoric of a bridge, which is similarly accompanied by a change in texture and introduction of new melodic material that conveys a contrasting musical profile, or a pre-chorus, which Peres describes as a transitional section between the verse and chorus that often adds or removes sonic layers (2016, 134). In either case, the first iteration of Section C betrays my expectation of a texturally dense, high-energy, and climactic chorus section. The bass also de-intensifies the sonic energy by slowing down the rate of change. While the bass has consistently changed pitches every two beats throughout the duration of the song, it now stays on

each pitch for four beats. Given that the bass supports the harmonic progression throughout the song by articulating the root of each chord, the rhythmic deceleration of the bass runs contrary to conventions of chorus sections, which tend to employ quicker rates of harmonic change compared to those of the verse and pre-chorus sections (Temperley 2018, 162). The primary chorus-like qualities are found in the lyrics, which enhance memorability by exhibiting the lowest syllabic density of the song thus far. All of the words in Section C (the solfège syllables "do," "mi," "ti," and the words "why," "not," and "me") are monosyllabic, whereas the lyrics in Sections A and B make frequent use of polysyllabic words (e.g., "washing," "tonight," "inside"). Moreover, the lyrics' fixation on the words "why not me" represent the protagonist's repeated self-questioning on why their partner is not interested in the protagonist's authentic self. As Neal has observed, chorus sections often "[reflect] statically on the main point of the song" through textual repetition (2007, 45). The lyrical and textural features of this section therefore present conflicting information about its formal identity, simultaneously evoking a chorus, bridge, and pre-chorus.

Section C repeats two more times, each using the same melodic and lyrical material. Section C follows what Mark Spicer (2004) has referred to as an "accumulative form," in which each successive section adds additional instrumental layers to thicken the texture and build sonic energy. In the second statement of Section C (1:23; Example 4.9), the texture is expanded to include guitar and hi-hat in addition to vocals, bass, and bass drum. The final statement of Section C (1:36; Example 4.10) brings back the hand claps, synthesizer, and drums. After reducing the texture at the beginning of Section C, Mitski re-introduces the instrumental layers over the course of the section while repeating the same melodic and lyrical material. Through this process of instrumental accumulation, Mitski gradually intensifies the sonic energy and

reaches a high point in the final statement. Texturally, however, this section fails to maintain the climactic sonic energy of a conventional chorus for two reasons. First, the song only reaches the fullest instrumental texture after two statements of Section C, suggesting that the first two sections function as a build-up and reaches a peak in the third statement. Typically, we might expect a chorus to reach an unambiguous peak at the beginning of the chorus. Section C, however, lowers the sonic energy at the onset of the section and gradually builds energy towards the end. Second, the instrumentation of the third statement of Section C is almost identical to that of the second statement of Section B. The two sections are differentiated only by the prominence of the hand claps. While the claps are present in both sections, they are presented at a higher volume in Section C, which leads to me hear the third statement of Section C as having a slightly higher sonic energy than the second statement of Section B. Given the difficulty in distinguishing the difference in textural density and sonic intensity between the two sections, Section C does not emerge as a clearly recognizable climactic chorus section.

Example 4.9: Audio clip for second statement of Section C, "Washing Machine Heart" (1:23–1:36)

https://youtu.be/12rsVkwSsXU?t=83

Lyrics:
Do mi ti […]

Example 4.10: Audio clip for third statement of Section C, "Washing Machine Heart" (1:36–1:50)

https://youtu.be/12rsVkwSsXU?t=96

Lyrics:
Do mi ti […]

Although the *internal* repetition of a single motive strengthens the melodic unity of the section, the lack of *external* repetition undermines a straightforward hearing of this section as a chorus. While lyrical and melodic repetition within the section is a main feature of chorus sections, the reappearance of the section later on in the song plays a key role in listeners' recognition of the chorus (de Clercq 2012, 41). Within this framework, each successive statement of the verse and chorus confirms and reinforces the verse-like and chorus-like qualities of these sections. In other words, interpretations of form are constructed relationally by placing the lyrical, melodic, harmonic, and sonic content of different sections in dialogue with one another, rather than relying on absolute definitions on what a verse or chorus "should sound like." This relational approach to formal analysis resonates with Dora Hanninen's domain of "contextual criterion," an orientation in which the analyst establishes associations between multiple musical phenomenon based on repetition of shared musical features (2012, 32–34). Crucially, these similarities are determined within each specific musical context rather than by fixed properties and norms. In parallel with Hanninen's emphasis on contextual analysis, my approach to formal analysis pays close attention to musical connections that make sense within the particular context of each song, rather than to pre-established conventions.

The formal trajectory of "Washing Machine Heart" is obscured by its complete absence of external repetition, which refers to a type of repetition in which a formal section returns at a later point in the song, as opposed to successive repetition. For instance, Section C is stated three times in succession but is not repeated later at any other point in the song. Similarly, although Sections A and B are repeated within the larger verse-like/refrain-like section, neither section returns after Section C. As a result, during each listening, I am only given one chance to orient myself formally in the song. Without a restatement of Sections A, B, and C, however, I find it

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difficult to relate the distinct sections to another. These challenges are compounded by the

conflicting lyrical, melodic, and textural features, producing a sense of formal ambiguity in each

section. After hearing each section, I am left wondering whether the material I just heard

functions as a set-up, build-up, or peak.[21] Failing to situate myself within the formal trajectory of

the song prevents me from formulating and confirming my own expectations of how the song

will proceed. I continue to experience discomfort with the song's unconventional formal logic

even after repeated exposure, suggesting the persistence of my internalized musical expectations

of normative formal and phrase structures in popular music.

By eschewing conventional patterns of repetition in popular music, "Washing Machine

Heart" concludes before I am able to confirm or revise my initial formal interpretations. While

the heightened sonic energy and textual accumulation of the third statement of Section C

suggests the possibility of a climactic chorus, the song neither reinforces nor overwrites this

hearing. Instead, Section C is followed immediately by an instrumental break similar to what we

heard immediately after the verse-like/refrain-like section (1:50; Example 4.11). This final

section retains the textural density from the third statement of Section C, substituting Mitski's

vocals with a synthesizer as the primary melodic instrument. Conversely, the melody played by

the synthesizer brings back material from Section A and the second statement of Section B.

Although the accumulative textural build-up of sonic energy in Section C is maintained

throughout the subsequent instrumental section, this energy suddenly dissolves into a throbbing,

distorted bass pulse that abruptly concludes the song. When listening to the album *Be the*

Cowboy, the track immediately transitions into the next track, "Blue Light." Since each section is

only repeated internally, my formal orientation in the song is left ambiguous throughout the

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[21] I borrow these terms from Peres, who categorizes the sonic functions of formal sections in twenty-first-century Top 40 music (2016, 134).

entire listening experience. The absence of any external repetition of formal sections in the song makes it difficult to identify the sonic function of each formal section. As a listener, I am therefore challenged to identify the climactic moments of the song, an experience that produces a sense of confusion and disorientation within the overall formal trajectory.

Example 4.11: Audio clip for instrumental break, "Washing Machine Heart" (1:50–end)

https://youtu.be/12rsVkwSsXU?t=110

4.5 "Why Didn't You Stop Me"

My discussion of "Washing Machine Heart" has demonstrated how analysis of form can embrace ambiguous sectional identities as a way to challenge music theory's taxonomic, extractive, and reductive desires. The second analysis focuses on the song "Why Didn't You Stop Me," another track from *Be the Cowboy*. Whereas the formal ambiguity of "Washing Machine Heart" emerges in part through a lack of external repetition, the sense of ambiguity in "Why Didn't You Stop Me" is enhanced despite the use of external repetition.

The lyrics of "Why Didn't You Stop Me" express the protagonist's feelings of loneliness, longing, and idealization towards a past romantic partner.[22] After acknowledging that the protagonist was responsible for initiating the breakup, they ask why their partner did not "chase after me" and "stop me" from ending the relationship. The protagonist then comes to a realization that the idealized image of the partner is not congruent with what they look like in photographs. This epiphany highlights the stark discrepancy between the protagonist's selective and idealized memory of their partner from the past and their current perception of the partner,

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[22] As of this writing, lyrics to "Why Didn't You Stop Me" can be accessed at https://genius.com/Mitski-why-didnt-you-stop-me-lyrics.

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alluding to the protagonist's feelings of longing and loneliness that emerge from the activation of these memories.

Similarly to "Washing Machine Heart," "Why Didn't You Stop Me" opens with a pulsating bass line. The entrance of Mitski's voice (0:02) marks the beginning of the first section, which I refer to as Section A (Example 4.12). I immediately notice a parallel between the texture of Section A—comprised of voice, bass, and drums—and that of opening sections in other tracks on the album, including "Washing Machine Heart." A change in texture and melodic contour at 0:15 suggests a transition into the next section, which I refer to as Section B (Example 4.13). In this new section, Mitski adds an additional vocal layer, clapping, and guitar to the existing instrumentation of bass and drums. The heightened textural and sonic density in Section B emphasizes the lyrical refrain ("why didn't you stop me"), drawing attention to the protagonist's feelings of longing for a previous romantic partner. In contrast to the conjunct melodic contour of Section A, which is highlighted by upward leaps of a major sixth and perfect fifth, the melody of Section B is entirely stepwise. The arrival of Section B first takes me by surprise, as Mitski abruptly departs from Section A after a single six-measure phrase. Equally startling is the immediate abandonment of the newly established texture of Section B, which lasts for only four measures, during which Mitski repeats the title of the song ("Why didn't you stop me"). After reducing the texture down to the original ensemble of vocals, bass, and drums once more, Section B ends with a brief tag ("and paint it over"). Based on my experiences of listening, I observe that the first statements of Sections A and B induce a sense of formal disorientation, stringing together melodic phrases that do not continue long enough for a listener to apprehend where the song might be headed. As a result, I interpret each section as concluding prematurely without establishing a solidified formal identity.

Example 4.12: Audio clip for Section A, "Why Didn't You Stop Me" (0:02–0:15)

https://youtu.be/nK84dWFj8Lw?t=2

Lyrics:
I know that […] So why

Example 4.13: Audio clip for Section B, "Why Didn't You Stop Me" (0:15–0:25)

https://youtu.be/nK84dWFj8Lw?t=15

Lyrics:
didn't you stop me? […] paint it over?

  While Sections A and B are clearly differentiated from one another texturally and

melodically, the ending phrase of Section B ("and paint it over") sounds as if it simultaneously

belongs to and is separate from the lyrical refrain in Section B (Example 4.14). On the one hand,

when Mitski sings the words "and paint it over," the lyrics are a clear grammatical continuation

of the preceding refrain "why didn't you stop me," given that the two remarks are part of the

same sentence. On the other hand, the texture is reduced to that of Section A, removing the

layered vocals, claps, and guitar and leaving only the voice, bass, and drums. The discrepancy

between the sense of continuity conveyed by the lyrics and discontinuity suggested by the abrupt

change in texture produces an experience of formal disorientation, calling into question whether

the phrase functions as the second half of Section B, a transitional phrase towards another

section, or the beginning of a new section.

Example 4.14: Audio clip for the ending phrase of Section B, "Why Didn't You Stop Me"
(0:25–0:33)

https://youtu.be/nK84dWFj8Lw?t=24

My experience of disorientation and ambiguity in Sections A and B is augmented further by the use of uneven phrase lengths. As Example 4.15 illustrates, both sections are comprised of six-measure melodic phrases. While the first sentence in the lyrics ("I know that […]") is set to a four-measure phrase in Section A, the second sentence ("You know me […]") stretches across Sections A and B, occupying the final two measures of Section A and the first two measures of Section B. The sense of disorientation is created not only through the use of six-measure phrases but also by distributing a single lyrical sentence across two sections, creating an awkward section break. Although Section B is similarly constructed as a six-measure phrase, its length is not equal to that of Section A due to a metrical alteration of the final measure (Examples 4.14 and 4.15). The words "and paint it over" are set to a two-measure phrase at the end of the section, with the first measure in quadruple meter and the second measure in duple meter. As a result, while both Sections A and B are comprised of six-measure phrases, the unequal phrase lengths created through metrical alteration evoke experiences of formal uncertainty at the phrase level. While the six-measure phrase of Section A sounds disorienting because it moves onto new melodic and textural material mid-sentence, the six-measure phrase of Section B presents a surprise by shortening the final measure by two beats. Furthermore, as previously discussed, the final two measures of Section B revert to the thinner texture presented in Section A, giving the sense that Section B has been prematurely interrupted. Although the added instrumentation in Section B temporarily intensifies the song's sonic energy, my expectation that the energy will continue to build towards a climactic chorus section is thwarted by the abrupt reduction in texture. The frequency of textural shifts and use of uneven phrase structures in Sections A and B convey a sense of indecisiveness and instability, challenging my own expectations about how the song might proceed.

Example 4.15: Distribution of lyrics across Sections A and B (0:02–0:25), "Why Didn't You Stop Me"

Section A
Measure 1:   (*I know that […]*
Measure 2:
Measure 3:   *[…] chase*
Measure 4:   *after me?*) (**You**
Measure 5:   **know me […]**
Measure 6:   **I do, So why**

Section B
Measure 1:   **didn't you**
Measure 2:   **stop me?)**
Measure 3:   (<u>Why didn't you […]</u>
Measure 4:
Measure 5:   <u>[…] o-</u>
Measure 6:   <u>-ver</u>)

Each sentence in the lyrics is bracketed in parentheses and coded in *italics*, **bold**, and <u>underline</u> to highlight the misalignment between the lyrics and melodic phrases.

The phrasal and textural instability of this section is further exacerbated by the ambiguity of the lyrics. First, Section A opens with three successive questions to an unnamed former romantic partner. Without giving any prior context, the protagonist begins by asking why their former romantic partner did not "chase after me" and offer to get back together after the protagonist initiated the break-up. The second question reinforces the first and suggests that the partner should have been responsible for intercepting the break-up. The third asks why the partner decided not to prevent the break-up and "paint it over"—with "it" being left undefined and open for interpretation. Does "it" simply refer to their relationship? Or is it invoking a previous incident, conversation, or memory between the two of them that is omitted from the lyrics? Furthermore, are the three questions rhetorical, or genuine? The sense of uncertainty continues into Section B. The lyrics describe the protagonist's search for a photo of their former romantic partner, which ends in failure. Once again, listeners are not provided the full details of

the protagonist's thoughts and actions. Did the protagonist fail to locate any photographs of their partner? Or were they unable to find any pictures of the partner that were consistent with how the protagonist remembered them? The lyrics' moments of ambiguity and emotional instability are heightened through the use of uneven melodic phrases in Sections A and B, contributing to my experience of disorientation.

Example 4.16: Audio clip of guitar and synthesizer melodies, "Why Didn't You Stop Me" (0:25–0:45)

https://youtu.be/nK84dWFj8Lw?t=25

Example 4.17: Audio clip of second statement of Section A (in F major), "Why Didn't You Stop (0:46–0:57)

https://youtu.be/nK84dWFj8Lw?t=46

Lyrics:
I look for […] Where you

The formally and texturally unstable phrases of Sections A and B are followed by two instrumental phrases: a four-measure phrase with the guitar as the primary melodic instrument (0:25), and a six-measure phrase featuring a synthesizer melody (0:34; Example 4.16). Before the synthesizer melody concludes, Mitski's voice enters a minor second above the melodic note, anticipating a half-step modulation in the second statement of Section A (0:46; Example 4.17).

The formal organization of the material that follows—now set in F major rather than E major—is largely reminiscent of the previous section: Section A, Section B, guitar melody, and synthesizer melody. I retrospectively refer to these sections as the *first* and *second formal groups*, both of which are comprised of the same ordering of sections. As shown in Example 4.18, I hear the second formal group as a slightly varied repetition of the first formal group. After outlining the differences between the two groups, I will discuss how the external repetition of

this formal group informs my understanding of the song form, and relatedly, my experiences of disorientation as I attempt to make sense of the song in real time.

Example 4.18: First and Second Formal Groups

First Formal Group (E major)				Second Formal Group (F major)			
0:02–0:13	6 measures	Section A	I know that […] better than I do	0:46–0:57	6 measures	Section A	I look for […] to find one
0:13–0:25	5 measures of 4/4 1 measure of 2/4	Section B	So why didn't […] paint it over?	0:57–1:13	7 measures of 4/4 1 measure of 2/4	Section B	Where you look […] Paint it over
0:25–0:33	4 measures	Guitar		1:13–1:22	4 measures	Guitar	
0:34–0:46	6 measures	Synthesizer		1:22–1:38	8 measures	Synthesizer	

With the exception of the modulation, there are no melodic or textural differences between the first and second statements of Section A. Both are constructed of six-measure phrases and feature a sparse texture consisting of the voice, bass, and drums. The second statement of Section B (0:57; Example 4.19) is texturally similar to the first statement, adding layered vocals, claps, and guitar to the mix. Lyrically, the second statement follows the convention of the first statement and distributes the second sentence across Sections A and B (Example 4.20). Whereas the first part of the sentence ("But I can't seem […]") belongs to Section A, the second part ("[…] look how I remember") is included in Section B. Finally, the arrival of the words "paint it over" is accompanied by a return to the texture of Section A and the final measure of the phrase is shortened from four to two beats. One major difference between the first and second formal group lies in the phrase structure of Section B. Whereas the first statement of Section B is comprised of a six-measure phrase, the second statement presents an eight-measure phrase, presenting the refrain ("look how I remember") three times rather than twice. The use of a six-measure phrase in Section A, the mid-sentence separation of lyrics across sections, and metrical diminution in the second formal group reinforces the sensation of formal disorientation I experienced in the first formal group. Exposure to rapidly changing textures,

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sonic energies, dictions, and meters in a short span of time makes it difficult for me as a listener

to situate myself within the formal structure of the song and predict where the song might be

headed.

Example 4.19: Audio clip of second statement of Section B, "Why Didn't You Stop Me" (0:57–1:13)

https://youtu.be/nK84dWFj8Lw?t=57

Lyrics:
look how I […] Paint it over

Example 4.20: Distribution of lyrics across Sections A and B (0:46–1:13), "Why Didn't You Stop Me"

Section A
Measure 1:   (*I look for […]*
Measure 2:
Measure 3:   *[…] my pock-*
Measure 4:   *-et*) (**But I**
Measure 5:   **can't seem […]**
Measure 6:   **[…] you lo-**

Section B
Measure 1:   **-ok how I re-**
Measure 2:   **member […]**
Measure 3:
Measure 4:
Measure 5:   **[…] re-**
Measure 6:   **-member**)
Measure 7:   (<u>Paint it o-</u>
Measure 8:   <u>-ver</u>)

Each sentence in the lyrics is bracketed in parentheses and coded in *italics*, **bold**, and <u>underline</u> to highlight the misalignment between the lyrics and melodic phrases.

Having heard two iterations of the formal group (Section A, Section B, guitar melody,

synthesizer melody), I tentatively begin to understand them as verse-like sections with embedded

refrain-like material. Given this reading, I might expect to hear a sonically dense and memorable

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chorus section in the following sections. But my interpretation here is far from conclusive or definitive. I hesitate to commit to interpreting the formal groups as verse-like sections for a number of reasons. First, each formal group contains four textural profiles. Section A (Examples 4.12 and 4.17) begins with voice, bass, drums, after which Section B (Examples 4.13 and 4.19) adds layered vocals, claps, and guitar. The texture of Section A returns once the lyrical refrain has been completed. The formal group concludes with two instrumental sections that respectively feature the guitar and synthesizer as the primary melodic instruments. The section evokes a sense of instability, repeatedly increasing and decreasing the sonic energy through frequent manipulations of texture. The textural inconsistency of this section makes it an unconventional candidate for a verse, a feeling of discomfort that is generated through my expectations for verse sections in popular music to adopt a fairly uniform textural profile throughout. Second, Section B exhibits a refrain-like function, suggesting a possible interpretation of the section as an abbreviated chorus-like refrain that repeat with different sets of lyrics in each occurrence. The increased textural density of Section B clearly distinguishes itself against the sparser textural profile of Section A. Section B also exhibits chorus-like characteristics by emphasizing the lyrical refrain through the repetition of a short melodic fragment.

Third, the synthesizer section at the end of the formal group introduces new melodic material, which is then reinforced through repetition. The synthesizer section in the first formal group states the melodic fragment three times, positioning it as one of the most memorable melodies in the formal group. The only other instance of melodic repetition occurs in Section B, which states the melodic fragment twice. In the second formal group, both Section B and the synthesizer section are longer than those of in the first formal group. In Section B, the lyrical

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refrain is stated three times instead of two, and the synthesizer melody is stated four times rather than three. When listening to Section B in the second formal group (0:57; Example 4.19), I notice a build-up of sonic energy that did not materialize in the first statement. When the Section B refrain melody is presented for the third time (1:06), the sonic energy is heightened through a rhythmic acceleration of the drum pattern and an introduction of an additional melodic layer on the melodica. This build-up catches my attention as it creates an expectation of a transition into a texturally dense chorus-like section. Alternatively, the build-up suggests the possibility of Section B establishing itself as a chorus-like section, an option that was denied in the first statement of the section. Instead, Mitski surprises me once again by abruptly reverting to the sparse texture of vocals, bass, and drums (1:09), continuing the pattern established in the previous statement of Section B. Having listened through the build-up of sonic energy, an effect that was absent from the first statement of Section B, I am left feeling bewildered as I seem to have little grasp on the formal, sonic, and textural trajectory of the song. As a music theorist trained to take control of such uncertain moments by imposing a clearly articulated way of listening, I am tempted to explain, claim authority, and reduce through recourse to the dominant taxonomic theories of formal analysis. But I try to resist these urges that have been instilled in me through my academic and musical training, and slowly learn to embrace the sensations of discomfort and disorientation.

When the synthesizer melody returns for a second time (1:22; Example 4.21), I am still left wondering which section of the song fulfills a chorus- or refrain-like function in the song—the melody that a listener might hum or sing to themselves even when the song is no longer playing. Is it the Section B melody to which the lyrical refrain is set, or the recurring synthesizer melody? As I listen to the second iteration of the synthesizer melody, I notice another build-up of

sonic energy, similar to the effect I observed in Section B. In the fourth statement of the synthesizer melody, the drums begin accelerating its rhythms and the bass increases its volume, signaling a textural and sonic heightening towards the following section. To borrow Peres's terminology on sonic function, Section B and the synthesizer melody constitute a peak in the first formal group, signifying a heightening of sonic energy compared to Section A. In the second formal group, however, Section B and the synthesizer melody function as a build-up, accumulating energy towards what might be an upcoming peak. In the case of Section B, the expected arrival of a peak is denied through an abrupt return to the textural profile of Section A. Conversely, the synthesizer melody is followed immediately by a sonically climactic guitar solo (1:38), which I discuss in more detail below.

Example 4.21: Audio clip of the synthesizer melody in the Second Formal Group (1:22–1:38), "Why Didn't You Stop Me"

https://youtu.be/nK84dWFj8Lw?t=82

Before turning to the guitar solo section, I would like to ruminate on another possible interpretation of the formal groups. Looking back on the first and second formal groups, I am also drawn to hearing Section A as verse-like and Section B as chorus-like, with the two subsequent instrumental sections taking on the role of post-choruses. As I have previously discussed, each section is relatively brief, which can make it difficult to discern the formal, textural, and sonic functions of each musical segment and how they relate to one another. Listening to the two formal groups, I feel as if the brevity of each section prevents me from grounding myself in the song's formal journey, and I am whisked from one section to another before I am able to get a sense of whether I am listening to a set-up, build-up, or peak level at any given moment. While the arrival of Section B clearly signals a peak compared to the verse-

like Section A, its prominence as a candidate for a chorus-like refrain is quickly overshadowed by the synthesizer section, which to my ears also exhibits peak-like characteristics that rival those of Section B. In the second formal group, each section fulfills the same sonic function (i.e., set-up, build-up, or peak) as in the first formal group. As a result, the verse-like features of Section A, chorus-like features of Section B, and the post-chorus-like characteristics of the guitar and synthesizer melodies are reinforced during the second formal group.

The build-up of the synthesizer melody in the second formal group (1:22–1:38; Example 4.21) is followed by a ten-measure guitar solo (1:38–1:57; Example 4.22), the longest section in the song thus far. The guitar solo strikes me as a climactic moment in the song, characterized by a new ascending melodic line. Melodically, the guitar solo occupies a higher range (C4 to Bb4) than in the guitar melody in the first and second formal groups, which spans from C#3 to A3. Given that the guitar has been restricted to a lower range throughout the first and second formal groups, the higher pitch range of the guitar solo heightens its climactic qualities. Texturally, the sonic energy in this section is noticeably higher than in the first and second formal groups as the backing track of synthesizer, bass, and drums is presented at a louder volume than in the preceding sections. Furthermore, differences in what Eric Clarke refers to as the *virtual space* of a recording—"a space specified by the same perceptual attributes as a real space, but which is not physically present at the time" (2013, 95)—accentuate the climactic features of this section. As Michèle Duguay (2021) has recently shown, listeners' perceptions of virtual space in recordings of popular music are achieved through studio effects such as reverberation, dynamics, and other mixing techniques. In contrast to the pointed, central positioning of the synthesizer in the preceding section, the guitar solo spans a wider space within the stereo stage of the recording. As a result, while the synthesizer sounds as though it is placed in the center of the recorded

virtual space and directed towards the listener, the guitar solo gives the impression of a more

expansive virtual space, drawing attention to the increased musical activity by establishing

spatial contrast with the previous synthesizer section. In the ninth and tenth measures of the

section, the ascending guitar melody is doubled by a second guitar, expanding the virtual space

even further to heighten the sonic energy of the section.

Example 4.22: Audio clip of the guitar solo (1:38–1:57), "Why Didn't You Stop Me"

https://youtu.be/nK84dWFj8Lw?t=98

The final section of the song (1:58; Example 4.23)—a reprisal of the synthesizer melody that I

have already encountered in the first and second formal groups—compels me to modify my

perception of the guitar solo as a climactic section. The sonic energy reaches its apex in this final

section, leading me to retrospectively re-interpret the preceding guitar solo as a build-up rather

than a peak. The increase in sonic energy is achieved primarily through manipulations of texture

and timbre. Although this section repeats the synthesizer melody of the first and second formal

groups, the melody here is played by an ensemble of horns, doubled by a high-pitched

synthesizer in the background. The accompanimental texture is also enhanced through an

addition of tambourine. The climactic nature of this final horn section is also conveyed through

the virtual space. As I have already discussed, the contrast between the central orientation of the

synthesizer in the second formal group and the wide positioning of the guitar solo generates a

sense of spatial expansion and growth in sonic energy. My perception of an intensification in

sonic energy is similarly linked to a spatial contrast between the previous synthesizer melodies

and the horn melody. When I hear the horn melody for the first time, I immediately recognize the

melodic material from the first and second formal groups. Contrary to the previous synthesizer

melodies, however, the horn melody occupies a wide space within the stereo stage and projects a

loud volume to present a high sonic energy level. The recognizability of the melodic material in this section is counterbalanced by the introduction of a new timbral and spatial profile that has not appeared in earlier statements of the melody. The coexistence of familiar and novel features accentuates the climactic nature of this section.

Example 4.23: Audio clip of the final synthesizer melody (1:58–end), "Why Didn't You Stop Me"

https://youtu.be/nK84dWFj8Lw?t=118

The climactic nature of the guitar solo and horn section is reflected in audiences' reactions to Mitski's stage movements in live performances. In Mitski's performance of "Why Didn't You Stop Me" at Brooklyn Steel in Brooklyn, NY in December 2018, her on-stage choreography was most intensified during the guitar solo and final synthesizer sections.[23] In the first formal group, Mitski's movements on stage are not physically intensive: she paces around the stage while she sings, with one hand holding a microphone and the other by her side. During the instrumental sections in the first formal group, Mitski's movements slightly intensify, accelerating the pace at which she roams the stage, covering more space, and occasionally bending her torso forward. Mitski's movements stay more or less consistent in the second formal group. In fact, when she reaches the lyrical refrain ("look how I remember"), she stands still at the center of the stage, moving only when she begins to sing the words "paint it over." Mitski's movements escalate again during the instrumental sections of the second formal group, bending her torso forward while her forearms are fixed in a perpendicular angle. She begins to further intensify her movements during the synthesizer section, mirroring its sonic build-up function.

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[23] Although I attended this concert in person, my analytical observations draw not only upon my own experience and memory but also from video recordings of the concert that have been uploaded onto YouTube.

After repeatedly shaking both of her hands vigorously, she transitions into a pattern in which she

extends both arms outwards and moving them back and forth, as shown in Example 4.24

(IronChefWong 2018).

Example 4.24: Mitski's on-stage movements during the synthesizer section, second formal
group. Screenshot from a YouTube recording of "Why Didn't You Stop Me" from Mitski's
performance at Brooklyn Steel, December 2018 (1:17–1:34; https://youtu.be/Pec6s1X6Gjw?t=7)

Mitski's movements are heightened considerably during the guitar solo and horn sections.

During the guitar solo section, Mitski repeatedly bends her torso forward towards her feet,

eventually falling on her knees and lying flat on her back on the stage (Example 4.25). Mitski's

stage movements reach their apex during the horn section. At the beginning of the section,

Mitski—still lying horizontally on stage—begins to intensely kick her feet and swing her arms

into the air, repeating this motion several times. She then transitions into a kneel and extends her

arms outward, repeating a rapid bowing motion to conclude the song. In addition to Mitski's

intensifying stage movements, the climactic nature of the guitar solo and horn sections is

amplified further by cheers from the audience. As Mitski begins to escalate her movements on

stage during the synthesizer melody in the second formal group, the audience—which has largely been focused on singing along with Mitski up until this point—begins to cheer her on. When Mitski rocks her torso back and forth during the guitar solo, the cheers become louder and more frequent, reaching a peak in the horn section when her movements also reach their high point as she kicks her feet into the air while lying horizontally on the stage. Watching video recordings of other performances of the song with the same choreography—at the Elsewhere Hall in Brooklyn (August 2018), The Wiltern in Los Angeles (November 2018) and on tour at WWW X in Tokyo (September 2019)—reveals similar interactions in which cheers from the audience become louder reach a climax during the horn section.

Example 4.25: Mitski's on-stage movements during the guitar solo and final synthesizer melody. YouTube recording of "Why Didn't You Stop Me" from Mitski's performance at Brooklyn Steel, December 2018 (1:34–)

https://youtu.be/Pec6s1X6Gjw?t=94.

As I have demonstrated through an in-time analysis of form in "Washing Machine Heart" and "Why Didn't You Stop Me," songs from *Be the Cowboy* often present contradicting and ambiguous signals for interpreting the songs' unconventional formal structures. The objective of these analyses was not to reach conclusive interpretations of the songs' formal structures or attain mastery over of the songs' ambivalent musical expressions. Rather, I sought to highlight the multiplicities and uncertainties behind the interpretations that I experienced while listening to the songs in real time. By considering how each formal section invites multiple (and sometimes contradictory) formal meanings, and demonstrating how the absence of internal and external repetition refuses to clarify the formal and sonic function of a given section, I challenge the assumption that an analysis should arrive at a singular, clearly articulated analytical interpretation. Moreover, by embracing experiences of formal ambiguity and disorientation, my

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analyses eschew schematic approaches to formal analysis that orient and justify a song's formal structure in relation to normative conventions. By stopping short of articulating a definitive argument about the formal organization of each song, I offer one possible approach for respecting musicians' right to opacity in music analysis and resisting music theory's desires to subjugate minoritized artists into its Eurocentric epistemologies through reduction, abstraction, and classification.[24]

4.6 Conclusion

I offer some reflections on my own analytical inclinations and desires that have manifested throughout my listening process, and its implications for preserving opacity in music analysis. At multiple moments during my analysis, I have expressed a desire to locate a climactic and memorable chorus section around which to orient my listening. My experiences of formal disorientation in listening to Mitski's songs emerged primarily from my difficulties in situating myself within the broader formal organization of the song, anxieties of being unsure about how the song will proceed, and ultimately, uneasiness with not being in control of my own listening. Such reactions run counter to my aim in normalizing feelings of uncertainty and confusion in music analysis, and sitting with these sensations rather than trying to overcome them.

Recurring throughout my listening process was a feeling of discomfort with being uncertain about the formal trajectory of the song. Through years of repeated exposure to popular music, I have learned to expect songs to follow certain formal and sonic conventions, and my listening has been shaped through them. Furthermore, given my own Eurocentric training within

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[24] In addition to Mitski, an opaque approach to analysis that departs from these potentially harmful modes of knowledge production might be applicable to other musicians whose intercultural identities, multiracial background, and experiences of diaspora have been minimized or misrepresented by Eurocentric narratives: Bruno Mars, M.I.A., Namichie, Rina Sawayama, and Stromae.

American and Canadian music theory curricula, many of my analytical tools are deeply rooted in the taxonomic and normalizing discourses of Western music analysis. Despite my earnest efforts, I notice that my initial reaction to formal uncertainty is often an urge to relate the passage I just encountered to familiar formal conventions. Does this exhibit characteristics of a verse or chorus? Am I currently listening to a set-up or build-up? Which parts of the song demand more attention?

When music theorists engage in analysis, questions surrounding the ethics of accessibility are rarely asked. Music theorists trained in American and Canadian graduate programs have internalized a desire to exert control over their own listening, wielding analytical tools to subjugate, gain authority, and claim interpretive ownership over the musical object.[25] If we find a musical phenomenon aesthetically interesting, perhaps due to its idiosyncratic qualities or departure from genre-based conventions, we take for granted that our primary objective should be to deploy music analytical tools as a way to explain how and why we respond to the music in such a way. Many music theorists in American and Canadian universities assume that they are free to write about any music that interest them, and until recently, few music scholars have questioned the potential power imbalances of this model of scholarship.[26]

The decision *against* pursuing certain lines of inquiry—i.e., preserving the right to opacity—represents a broader strategy of refusing extractivist modes of knowledge production.[27] Reframing music analysis through the lens of opacity draws parallel with Dylan Robinson's

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[25] Fred Maus (1993) describes the act of listening as a passive act that might impel the music theorist to take control of the music through technical analysis as a way to reverse the power relationship. Danielle Sofer (2020) has recently critiqued Maus's meta-analysis for privileging a male-centric orientation while erasing the presence and perspectives of cisgender women, nonbinary, and trans people.

[26] See Brown 2020; Hisama 2021; Kajikawa 2020; Reed, forthcoming; Robinson 2020; and Sofer 2020.

[27] Strategies of epistemic refusal and its implications for Indigenous sovereignty and decolonization have been discussed in length by Audra Simpson (2007) and Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang (2014).

critique of *hungry listening,* an extractivist orientation towards music that undergirds North

American music theory (2020). According to Robinson, hungry listening "prioritizes the capture

and certainty of information over the affective feel, timbre, touch, and texture of sound" (38) and

"takes part in content-locating practices that orient the ear toward identifying standardized

features and types" (50). Robinson argues that hungry listening seeks to achieve satiation

"through familiarity (to feel pleasure from the satisfaction of identification and recognition) but

also through certainty (to feel pleasure from finding the 'fit' of content within a predetermined

framework" (50–51). Through its fixation on abstracted sonic parameters, deciphering of musical

parameters, and obsession over classification, music analysis adopts hungry listening as its

primary orientation towards musical sound.

While Robinson's work is aimed directly at disturbing the settler colonialist logic that

forms the foundation of music analysis, I believe his critique offers a launching point for

confronting the extractivist framings of Western music analysis writ large. I believe affirming the

right to opacity challenges expectations of legibility that often encumber minoritized subjects, as

discussed by Glissant, Huang, Lee, and León. As Loren Kajikawa (2020) has recently argued,

simply diversifying the contents of music analysis without a serious reconsideration of its

underlying ideologies, assumptions, and methodologies has the effect of reinforcing the white

supremacist heteropatriarchal structures we seek to disrupt. As Glissant has noted, solidarity with

minoritized folks should not be contingent on the dominant culture's ability to understand them

according to their own world view (1997, 193). Reformulated within the context of music theory,

inclusion of music by minoritized artists should not be conditional to its acceptance within the

established epistemic frameworks of Western music analysis. Analyzing Mitski's music through

extant schematic methodologies of formal analysis therefore falls short as an antiracist and antisexist exercise, however tempting it might be for music theorists to claim it as such.

My intention is not to discourage music theorists from analyzing and writing about minoritized artists. Rather, I wish to highlight the power we possess over choosing how we seek and produce knowledge about music. I urge music theorists to consider the consequences of expecting legibility through our analysis, especially in light of Mitski's resistance to critics, fans, and the media who have demanded transparency regarding her music and cultural background. If we envision analysis as one way through which we are able to show care and respect for the music we love, then we must hold ourselves accountable to the potential epistemic violence we may be inflicting onto the artists through analytical engagement. As increasing numbers of voices in the field call for more inclusive research agendas and curricula, we must always ask ourselves whether the inclusion of a minoritized artist within academic music theoretical discourse is simply an opportunity to showcase the flexibility of existing analytical tools. To achieve meaningful progress in issues of race, ethnicity, gender, and citizenship in music theory, the field must be prepared to re-evaluate our priorities during analysis and fundamentally shift the questions we ask. If, as music lovers, we are able to respect musicians' rights to opacity, we can surely extend them the same gesture when studying their music.

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