Difference and Division in Music Education

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Although the 21st Century represents one of the most peaceful periods in history for many, societies around the world have been increasingly characterized by xenophobia, religious intolerance, sexism, homophobia, political populism, and nationalist rhetoric, alongside the systematic destruction of indigenous ways of life. The interconnectedness of daily life has meant that there is a plethora of opportunities to bring people of diverse backgrounds and worldviews together via technological advances and the ubiquity of social media, but simultaneously these same platforms have produced new spaces for the articulation of difference and exclusion. Similarly, the rising tides of neoliberalism, neoconservatism, and authoritarianism have enabled expressions of intolerance that have redefined or reinforced the lines of inclusion and inequality internationally. The United Nations Secretary General recently highlighted the rising social problem of hate, as one no longer existing in the shadows of society but “moving into the mainstream – in liberal democracies and authoritarian systems alike” (Guterres 2019, n.p.). Despite many nations are strengthening legal frameworks through which expressions of hate may be identified and regulated, such approaches have been deemed insufficient in that they do not address the underlying conditions that give rise to such expressions, nor support those targeted by hate to formulate their own agential responses (see also Gelber 2012).

Consequently, a more pro-active approach to counter expressions of hate has been assigned to the domain of education. Schools, universities, and community organizations have thus been positioned on the front lines in protecting “children from extremism and radicalisation” as well as instilling particular morals and values to “promote a healthy civil society” both locally and globally (Davies & Limbada 2019, p. 2; UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goal 4).¹ In particular, music education has been seen as holding unique potentials for transformative practice, enabling and encouraging youth to “see things differently” and learn how to “speak back to the realities of their world and discover that they are capable and ready to effect positive change” (O’Neill 2015, p. 389). Difference and Division in Music Education critically interrogates contemporary conceptualizations of hate and their manifestation in various music teaching and learning

¹ https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg4
contexts, in examining the ideals and values that legitimize what and how music is taught, why, to whom, and to what ends.

In recognizing that the transformative work of music education takes place within complex political frames, music education scholarship, policy, and practice have moved beyond wholly celebratory accounts of diversity and may be seen as part and parcel of the ways in which difference is assigned and dividing lines are drawn. Such recognition and visibility of diversity not only generates new opportunities for musical and social flourishing but also demands new considerations of the limits of inclusion and tolerance. In acknowledging that “music education is not only about music but deals with ideals of human character and society” (Allsup & Westerlund 2012, p. 134), music teachers assume a degree of social responsibility in navigating difference in ethical ways, to be able to justify the exclusion of certain musics, expressions, or practices in relation to the pursuit of a common good. This is contentious work, as many scholars have noted teaching is never neutral (Apple 2004; Bowman 2007). In enacting this responsibility to teach for good in pluralist settings, teachers cannot rely upon a “straightforward preference for good or evil, each clearly unmistakably defined” (Bauman 1995, p. 2) but are required to engage in critical inquiry and moral deliberation as to who comprises the classroom community, whose values and norms construct the good in any given setting, and what is construed as moral – and by implication – hateful, when and why. This is challenging work, particularly if we also reflect upon education’s long tradition of seeking to civilize or include Others who do not easily align with the norms or values of the dominant population (Patel 2016).

Thus, in asking “How can we live together and define ‘our life’ and ‘our values’ in schools and universities in the twenty-first century?” (Westerlund 2019, p. 3), we ought to also interrogate who lies beyond the ‘we’, and where ‘our’ boundaries of legitimacy are drawn, and why.

The extant literature on hate in relation to music or music education (or even more generally) most often does not take issue with how hate is conceptualized itself (e.g. Chastagner 2012; Jääskeläinen 2019). Criminologist Barbara Perry (2006) cautions against the trivialization of the term as an emotion of extreme dislike that we all feel towards other people or things at some point or other noting that such reductionist accounts “minimize the import and impact of violent and discursive forms of bigotry” (p. 123). Similarly,
she critiques the sociological and criminological definitions of the late 20th century that consider hate as the expression of an irrational cognitive pathology. Whereas these approaches defined hate as something “abnormal, as not the sort of undertaking ordinary people actually engage in” (Goldberg 1995, p. 269), Perry (2006) argues that such approaches,

[estrange] acts of hate from their cultural – as opposed to individual – origins. Consequently, the notion of hate as an affective motive tends to individualize bigoted violence… rather than a reflection of structural and institutional patterns embedded in the broader culture (p. 124).

If we are to then locate hate within the broader historical and socio-cultural operations of power that make certain expressions and identities possible and silence others, it may be better understood as emerging within a complex and dynamic “moral ecology” (Westerlund 2019). This is not in the sense that hate manifests through individualized moral diversity in the music classroom, through which the teacher might easily identify a moral student or music, and in turn, the morally deficient, but as an ecology that frames expressions of hate through entirely rational, logical and even legitimate struggles for power. *Difference and Division* thus approaches hate as both “part of and symptomatic of larger patterns of intergroup conflict” (Perry 2009, p. 60), warranting critical attention if music education is to work towards a *common good* in democratic, ethical ways. Contributing authors examine the ways that music teaching and learning constructs, maintains or challenges notions of propriety; explore the underlying values and cultures of violence that give rise to expressions of hate in music and broader society; and consider what an ethical response to hate in and through music education might entail. In this way, this volume extends contemporary scholarship on diversity in music education and music education as transformative practice by considering the situated and politically imbued values and ideologies that construct meanings of the self and other, and the contested borders by which we shape notions of a democratic, inclusive, and moral music education community.

*Difference and Division in Music Education* is structured in three sections, the first of which focuses upon the ways in which music education is reliant upon, reinforces, or challenges processes of social
identification, recognition, and categorization. In the opening chapter, Nasim Niknafs considers the ways in which the self-congratulatory benevolence of inclusive music education policy and practices risk dehumanizing and excluding immigrant students and teachers, obligating them to express gratitude for the opportunities bestowed upon them. Understanding the politics of recognition as entwined with processes of exclusion in music education contexts, Niknafs calls for critical attention to be paid to the quality of recognition afforded to individuals as part of enacting inclusive ideals and developing a sense of moral-obligation and empathy in re-kindling the joy of music for all. The ambiguity of music education policies aiming towards social integration and inclusion is further explored by Mitsuko Isoda in her chapter on the Ethnic Classroom program in Japanese elementary schools. Targeting students representing the Zainichi Korean population of Japan, who have been (and are still) subjected to extensive hate speech and discrimination, Isoda examines the ways in which this program aims to foster a positive ethnic identity amongst Zainichi Korean students, yet might simultaneously reinforce their marginalization from the majority population. She argues that if such programs are to foster mutual understanding and multicultural symbiosis, teachers require more in-depth awareness of the music and cultures of minoritized groups, and students require more opportunities to learn, create, and perform together. The potentials of music education to transform the lives of excluded social groups is explored by Andrea Rodríguez-Sánchez, through a narrative of violence, trauma, and recovery in Colombia. She extends Galtung’s (1998) conceptualisation of the three classic forms of violence in suggesting that such longstanding conflicts also result in internalized violence – the hate of oneself. She proposes that musical spaces offer an arena for individuals to work through such internalized violence through an axiological proposal by which they might begin to construct peaceful identities, as an alternative to hate. Concluding this section, Juliet Hess locates contemporary music teaching and learning within an overarching, international political climate of hate and white supremacy. Examining the potentials of music to both unify and divide, she argues that music education is uniquely positioned to resist toxic patriotism through communal musicking, facilitating critical conversations, the textual analysis of music, activist songwriting, and the purposeful fostering of dissent as engaged citizenship. Hess invites music educators to engage with the oppressive discourses of hate through music making and critique, and actively living in the “anti-”.
The second section of this volume shifts the focus to the relations between particular kinds of music and hate, as Alexandra Kertz-Welzel opens with a provocation for music education philosophy and practice. She argues that recent developments in music education that position classical music in opposition to students’ lives and the oversimplified transformative ideals of teaching and learning are misguided if not damaging. Through an analysis of the underlying epistemological foundations of this “hatred of classical music” and the essentialized meanings assigned to classical music in schools, she challenges common conceptions of classical music as elitist, morally superior, and having little connection to young people’s out-of-school lives, and argues for a conceptualisation of classical music as part of broader musical diversity. Through a more critical engagement with the discourses on different kinds of music and their meanings, Kertz-Welzel envisions a more informed approach to understanding music’s purpose and power in globalized education contexts. Ketil Thorgersen and Thomas von Wachenfeldt explore the complex relations between music and social ordering that Kertz-Welzel raises, through a musical culture often attributed with the power to lead young people astray: black metal. They explore the role of hate in socializing musicians into the genre and gaining membership into the black metal milieu, as part of a broader political economy that invests in meaning and value construction. Locating contemporary school education within Zygmunt Bauman’s *Liquid Modernity*, the authors argue that school music education might better attend to the fear and uncertainty that often accompanies diversity through engaging with hate as catharsis, and as an invitation to the sublime. Also considering the potentials of music education to disrupt the status quo, Gareth Dylan Smith concludes this section with challenge for music educators to recognize and counter racism as a “manifestation of hate woven into the fabric of American society”. Considering the ways in which the ideology of whiteness perpetuates systemic violence and injustice, he turns to rap music as the means for teachers and students to achieve self-actualization and recognize the omnipresence for racism in their daily lives. Smith illustrates the potential pedagogic authority of this music through an analysis of rap lyrics in light of Khan Egan’s (1998) five tenets of punk: “anger and passion, the Do-It-Yourself (DIY) ethic, sense of destructiveness that calls for attacking institutions, a willingness to endure or even pursue pain, and a pursuit of the ‘pleasure principle’” (p. 100). Through an engaged, punk pedagogical approach to rap as a “site of knowledge sharing” (Torrez 2012, p. 135), Smith argues that teachers and students might disrupt inequitable power structures in education and enact social and political change.
Taking up this challenge to interrogate the violence and hatred that manifests under the guise of neutrality, Warren Churchill and Tuulikki Laes begin the final section of the book by attending to inclusive practices that simultaneously make disability visible in music education and erase persons with disabilities. They argue that the prevalent models of disability in music education serve to pathologize individuals or position them outside of a normative, abled center. Theorizing disability through intersectional invisibility, the ideology of ability, and performativity, the authors challenge the normative binary of centred/decentred, and argue for a more destabilized, critical, perspective on who music education is for and an alertness to hateful ideologies that serve to exclude and silence. Similarly attending to the unseen or unquestioned, Panagiotis Kanellopoulos and Niki Barahanou’s chapter locates work conducted within the inclusive, democratic ethos within a neoliberal music education landscape, examining participatory policies of music cultural institutions as technologies of governance that serve to instrumentalise the arts and co-opt progressive education “in service of an entrepreneurial logic”. This, they argue, constitutes a “hatred of democracy” (Rancière 2006) whereby the radical potential of creative pedagogical encounters are neutralised and rendered impotent. Thus, they call for policymakers and educators to reconsider the role of the incalculable that resides “in art or love, friendship or thought” (Nancy 2010, p. 17) that may lay the groundwork to revive the subversive qualities of creativity that have been at the very core of the Creative Music in Education tradition. Finally, Alexis Anja Kallio concludes the volume by exploring how music teachers and teacher educators might ethically engage with expressions of hate in the music classroom, with such expressions seen as one manifestation of the irreconcilable conflicts inherent in pluralist societies. She argues that the outright censorship and silencing of such expressions negate the democratic prerogative of freedom of expression, pathologize the enunciator, and hinder the extent of self-inquiry necessary for communicative ethics. Instead, she suggests that music educators need to cultivate skills in listening. Kallio calls for pedagogical approaches that foreground active, creative, dialogic and political listening as the means to recognize each individual’s complex personhood, critically acknowledge the historical and sociocultural conditions that give rise to expressions of hate, and commit to a relationality that does not seek consensus, but may allow for new democratic visions of understanding and solidarity to emerge.
In sum, *Engaging Hate in Music Education* contributes towards more complex understandings of the ways in which music education “is always both inclusive and exclusive” (Bowman, 2007, p. 110) through challenging equations of inclusive with *good* and *exclusive* as detrimental to the ideals of democracy and community. Through interrogating the limits of tolerance in light of asymmetrical power relations upon which “the terms for toleration are established” (Helakorpi, Lappalainen & Sahlström 2019, p. 52), we may better recognize the worldviews and values that shape music education ideals and practices as well as the conflicts that inevitably arise in diverse, pluralist settings. Considering music education as an inherently political endeavour, this book highlights the ethical dimensions of teaching in a variety of settings; ethical dimensions to which we cannot afford complacency in today’s increasingly diverse, and divided, world.
References


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