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Gendering in Music: An Autoethnographic-Phenomenological Tale

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ABSTRACT

Gendering in music in my autoethnographic-phenomenological tale is drawn heavily from my personal experiences highlighting music composition and performance, deciphering gender norms through musical utterances illuminated in my mother's lullabies and my grandmother's lamentations as musical rhetoric. While the foregoing forms part of my creative space, reflexivity borders the self as located within cultural praxis. Result of the study reveals that vignettes of my musical journey create socio-cultural representations rooted with phenomenological nuances that are magnified through entrainment and association, forming ideological patterns articulated through uniform and regular rhythmic pulse, for instance, as mirrored in the narratives of people's common ideologies and struggles for emancipation that are illuminated in melodic kundiman songs, depicting gendering in music as a social-construct viewed from the lens of critical discourse. In conclusion, this tale foregrounds self-culture relationship and understanding where patterns of meanings utter gendered norms in musical tales affecting thoughts, emotions, and forming socio-cultural resonances and representations.

INTRODUCTION

This narrative study encapsulates an autoethnographic-phenomenological tale of my musical journey centered around gendered representations and resonances in both music composition and performance. Composition constitutes my written music and performance embodies selected performances of established works. As an inquiry into gender voices in music, the narrative traverses through conscious and unconscious telling of gendered nuances such as feminism through sound utterance. The format is narrative in nature, hence, free style of writing is used.

Gendering refers to the process of socialization according to the dominant gender norms (Scibar, 2015). It is the attribution of qualities or behaviors typical of either masculinity or femininity to persons, objects or phenomena: "the ascription of masculine or feminine quality to some pair of opposed entities or concepts" (Guck, 1994 as cited by Sergeant & Himonides, 2016). As a discourse, gendering in music argues that music has been described as "a dynamic mode of gender" (Taylor, 2012) "an essentially gendered discourse", "a marker of sexual identity..." meaningful only within a context of "...gender, race and ethnicity" (Treitler, 2011 as cited by Sergeant & Himonides, 2016), "fraught with gender-related anxieties," and the history of musical form and structure described as "a heavily gendered legacy... bound up with issues of gender", and that "classical music—no less than pop—is bound up with issues of gender" (McClary, 1991, pp. 16, 18, 54 as cited by Sergeant & Himonides, 2016). Having said, gendering in music fosters awareness and sensitivity in gender representation through musical articulation.

Gendered discourse implies a critical perspective of gendering in music grounded on women emancipation,

gender inclusion and empowerment where gender-fair philosophy instigates equity in musical composition. On the other hand, one of the ticklish discussions in feminine power through music is the gendering of musical performance practices taking place from the perspectives of audience, music educators, and performers. In popular music culture, audiences often base their opinions of what constitutes an acceptable musical performance on the visual aspect of performance or the image and persona created by the performers (Curtis, 2018). For example, such icons as Lady Gaga, Beyonce and Billie Eilish strengthen the feminist cause in their music, using lyrics and personae as a means to promote discourse and equality (Rork, 2019). Their music represents a progressive shift in gendered power dynamics like those found in relationships, the female body and ultimately, the industry (Rork, 2019).

Moreover, whether based on instrument choice, participation in singing, musical listening performances, or musical career choices, the gendering of music is a socially constructed phenomenon (Lamb, 1994; Green, 1997 as cited by Curtis, 2018). As a social construction, gendering of music is also largely perceived by a listening audience. While it is true that composers have a way of expressing their meanings in order for the audience to appreciate and understand, the listener must recognize the symbols in order to recover the same experiences – the music's message – from the sounds, a process that requires that composer and listener share a common vocabulary (Sergeant & Himonides, 2016).

In other words, gender music is not structurally determined but has a lot to do with performance and listening activity that construct those impressions. The sounds are intentional, and their intention is to convey meaning; "music is therefore a denotive language

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(Monelle, 2001, p.5 as cited by Sergeant & Himonides, 2016). Indeed, uncovering gender qualities in music can be a daunting task when there is so much subjectivity in perceptive analysis in music structure, in performance and listeners' perceptions.

Thus, gendering in music makes sense in the listener's experience of music as an embodiment of its overall impact. According to Sergeant & Himonides (2016), musical meaning is dependent on social context, that it is "socially and culturally constructed" (Olsson, 2007, p. 989) "a culturally defined artifact" (Lipscomb and Tolchinsky, 2005, p. 384), "growing out of specific social context, and expressing the assumptions of that context" (Citron, 1993, p. 120), "setting life to music" (Ethel Smyth, 1928), telling "the truth about life" (Solie, 1993, p. 10), part of our sense of "the particular structuring of the world implicit in classical music" (Shepherd, 1991, p. 14, 162). DeNora (2008) writes of "The musical composition of social reality."

Autoethnographic-Phenomenological Tale

Feminism expressed through music is one of the best celebrated narratives of all time. In a society beset with parochial mentality where the role of women is generally repressed, displaced, and muted, the cry for women revolution is a battlefield for many groups all over the world. Indeed, feminine power is a poignant message that calls for radical change in perception owing to its emancipatory impact.

"Feminine power is epitomized in my grandmother's chanting narrative elevated a unique and emphatic musical sound uttered by a woman, an answer to an abnormally skewed musical performance towards masculine character, against a feminine form. In the utterance of chanting sound, I deciphered its inner meaning and structure in terms of feminine quality apart from the obvious notion of the grandmother expressing those lines."

As a reflexive process, deciphering meanings allows the autotethnographer to ponder upon intricate self-realization while understanding one's relationship with a feminine figure (grandmother) articulated within autoethnographic-phenomenological framework, the self within culture. In such interrelationship, the cultural facet of experience is absorbed with cognitive resonance in such a way that the experience is validated. Reflexivity, as an analytical and interpretive tool in music ethnography, is used in the design of a research, in the discussion between ethnographers/musicologists and musicians or non musicians - carriers of a "tradition"-or in the composition of an ethnographic "text" (Theodosopoulou, 2016).

Moving on with the analysis, one of the pertinent challenges of feminist revolution is the fact that men need to rally the cause of women, too. According to recent statistics, the music industry comprises 83.2% men and 16.8% women (Rork, 2019). Such disparity naturally displaces women along with their issues thrown on the side. If more women occupy positions in recording, concertizing, producing and occupying many other key positions in the music industry, there should be

narrowing of the gender divide that has been afflicting societies for many years now. If, indeed, government and private sectors come to a binding solution that forges equanimity, fair treatment and more opportunities for women endorsed sincerely by their male counterparts in response to their over-indulgence to masculine power, feminine power will be heard more profoundly.

One of the voices of feminism is represented by mothers. Because of the universal feeling of love for mothers, there is always music associated with it.

"I composed a piece titled, "Danza ni Nanay", a sublime celebration of motherhood. Filled with gentleness, the walking tempo of danza epitomized femininity in its grandest gesture with a touch of kundiman expressed in thirds and sixths as nuanced ornaments in certain melodic sections. With soothing ambience, I dwelt on folk loric temperaments depicting mothers that raised family with affirmations of feminine power in a subdued manner."

There are important ideas to be threshed out in my vignette. First, "Danza ni Nanay" with a touch of kundiman delegates the piece as kundiman, usually performed by women (Co, 2021). Rightfully so, early kundiman music was mostly performed by female sopranos. In addition, there is something to consider in the gentleness of the piece that is attributed to motherhood through music.

"I never thought music could perhaps express "feminine" tonality until I wrote "Danza ni Nanay" which was portrayed in my gentle swaying of head as I played while pounding on such question as "was there a feminine sound? Such realization opened up new ways of deciphering music structure that would elicit gender qualities."

I find it rather stereotypical to think of mothers as gentle, such universal attribute placing mothers to be subservient, always accommodating and accepting. While our strong Catholic faith propagates the notion that to mother means to nurture relationships, the very things that give meaning to our lives and work (Bean, 2020), feminist ideology advances women's role, mothers included, to extend beyond familial relationship. With that, "affirmations of feminine power in a subdued manner" need to decipher hidden meanings of subtlety as it could just be another subservient resonance of motherhood.

One of the ticklish discussions in feminine power through music is the gendering of musical performance practices taking place from the perspectives of audience, music educators, and performers. In popular music culture, audiences often base their opinions of what constitutes an acceptable musical performance on the visual aspect of performance or the image and persona created by the performers (Curtis, 2018). There are many examples to illustrate this point, to wit: a Madonna or Lady Gaga concert is visually ornamented with elaborate colors and decorations associated as feminine qualities in musical design. Likewise, a Broadway concert by Lea Salonga will normally showcase songs sung by female characters in different musicals, not to mention, her stunning gown captivates that feminine touch in visual perspective. It will be noted that the descriptions are audience-driven, meaning to say, they are perspectives drawn from the

audience, not really saying they are congruent with the performers' rendering of musical meanings.

"While it was true that the sound was coming from her vocal chords, I could not help but dwell on the idea that I, the listener, had the final say on its femininity or indefinability whatsoever. It dawned in me that her way of relaying the chant could be different from what I heard. In other words, while in tantric mode, was she actually aware of her feminine power expressed in the voice and in her body response, or was it just a matter of listener's perception?"

As a social-construct, gendering of music is also largely perceived by a listening audience.

"I could rightfully say that the audience identified that the "Nutcracker Theme" I played was very feminine in terms of the delicate texture of sound resembling that of a glockenspiel. For my part, I had images of a ballerina spinning around in pointed toes while the melody kept coming out from the keyboard."

While it is true that composers have a way of expressing their meanings in order for the audience to appreciate and understand, the listener must recognize the symbols in order to recover the same experiences – the music's message – from the sounds, a process that requires that composer and listener share a common vocabulary (Sergeant & Himonides, 2016).

In the above vignette, there are two perspectives of gendering music. First, "Nutcracker Theme" I played was very feminine in terms of the delicate texture of sound resembling that of a glockenspiel. Such vignette is a labelling of the theme music as feminine in itself (ballet music) and it is explored in the delicate texture of sound which, again, refers to gentle tonality expressed in feminine vocabulary. Second, the notion of "ballerina spinning around" relates to a melodic rendering. In this account, feminine gesture becomes a performative task (rendering), something not fixated by the musical structure. In other words, gender music is not structurally determined but has a lot to do with performance and listening activity that construct those impressions. The sounds are intentional, and their intention is to convey meaning; "music is therefore a denotive language (Monelle, 2001, p.5 as cited by Sergeant & Himonides, 2016). Indeed, uncovering gender qualities in music can be a daunting task when there is so much subjectivity in perceptive analysis in music structure, in performance and listeners' perceptions.

"A sonorous piece with nuances of emotionality, "Vocalise" depicted a sense of femininity in musical thought from sound articulation. Indeed, I imbibed a feminine character in my interpretation and such visualization reflected in the sonority of sound with "curved" sense of balance. Meaning to say I was metaphorically enriching the sound with soprano singing technique while celebrating womanhood in a genderless musical sound."

"Was there going to be gender in sound? If so, what musical characteristics should I assign in order to have a sense of universal understanding of the meaning of feminine sound? In my performance, I embraced lyrical passages as soft, tender and placid qualities of sound that would usually describe a woman, a tender woman at that. With that, I controlled my touch without overexerting effort to emphasize a note. I just considered the verse

as one horizontal line with connected sound that formed a unified entity of a woman making sense in a male dominated profession in music, or so I thought."

A popular Philippine music titled "Sa Ugoy ng Duyan" authored by Lucio san Pedro" nurtures mother-child relationship expressed through a lulling lullaby. The music draws wide public admiration across generations because of its sweet melodies. "Ingatan Ka" by Carol Banawa, another Philippine song about taking care of one's mother, magnifies mother's adulations from her offsprings. Following the same analysis on gendering, these songs have lyrics that elucidate motherhood in music exemplifying warm tonality in subdued rendering, nostalgic and peaceful resonance as attributions to "motherly" music. These perceptions are decoded signals from the message relayed by the performer and absorbed by the audience especially when both listeners and performer/composer share the same vocabulary.

Lastly, learning of gender-appropriate behavior is due partly to gender role models offered in the media (Macdonald, n.d.). A study of representations of men and women in popular music television, radio and magazines in the UK during 1980s and 1990s revealed that more men than women were represented overall, and that when women were featured it as vocalists than instrumentalists (Bayton, 1998 as cited by Macdonald, n.d.) in another approach, male characters are more adventurous, assertive and aggressive than females, and in which females are more affectionate, dependent and nurturing (Seidman, 1992; Sommersflanagan *et al.*, 1993 as cited by Macdonald, n.d.). These stereotyping of gender roles in music is a continuous struggle of privileging the unprivileged voice of women, such consciousness to be felt deep and will only be found solutions when political groups advance the cause of feminist advocates, when support from the government and private sectors and the music community will be extended with strong conviction so that gender divide in music will rightfully take its fall. While feminist ideology permits musical narratives with feminine attributes carefully designed by some composers, the grand narrative of gendering in music encompasses femininity, masculinity, including other gender groups in the principle of gender equity and gender equality. While gender equality is the state in which access to rights or opportunities is unaffected by gender (Martinez, 2022), gender equality as defined by the European Institute for Gender Equity, is the provision of fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities between women, men, and all gender (Martinez, 2022).

The foregoing discussions on gender expressions in music are heavily underpinned by critical theory within Critical Tradition where communication is a discursive reflection (Craig, 1999). Critical distortions emanating from issues like feminism, gender diversity, equity, equality, emancipation, identity formation, and associations are resolved using communication to solve those problems. From the standpoint of musical persuasion, the ability to assert individual expression in elucidating truth from

personal narratives resonating within cultural milieu ponders on discursive reflection as subjective undertaking mirroring social values. The self, at the center of inquiry, is engulfed in social issues brought about by power structure, political divisiveness and discrimination where music serves as the language of communication deciphering on the intricacies of self-culture relationship. *"I am not beholden to any form of structure when I compose and play music before an audience. Thus, I do not really associate any form of gendering in music because of its inherent universality. For me, music is a personal attribute with personal meanings attached to the sound uttered. All genders are welcome to listen and indulge with my narratives even if I am not consciously adhering to specific gender groups as I play."*

The preceding vignette illustrates musical liberation through an autoethnographer's sketch of gendering within cultural milieu as articulated in the pathos (audience listening) in musical rhetoric. In other words, gendering is a socially-constructed phenomenon with the audience's behavioral and critical reading of the musical text. To illustrate such profundity of cultural meanings, the following themes derived from pathos of listening is worth pondering.

Autoethnographic-Phenomenologic Resonances

This section discusses cultural nuances of my autoethnography with phenomenological peg. They are called resonances which comprise the themes arising from the narratives previously stated.

Entrainment

Entrainment describes the temporal dynamics of interacting rhythmic systems. The essence of interpersonal musical entrainment (IME) is the interaction and coordination of human beings mediated by sound and movement (Richardson *et al*, 2003 as cited by Clayton *et al*, 2020). In the context of musical performance, interpersonal entrainment is the synchronization and coordination of movements of the audience when they hear, for example, regular beats in rhythm. This is exhibited in synchronized nodding or foot tapping signifying oneness of physical response.

"The song affected the audience in synchronized responses with head movements in the same direction. It was perceived to be a clear indication of oneness between me, the performer, and the audience." The idea of coordination and synchronicity brings out performer-music-audience interrelationship in such a way that what the performer emits through sound forms a collective consciousness of oneness defining social bond. As a form of understanding, the audience's delightful response is an indication of music's power to move them. This persuasive character can be a mimetic experience one way or another as the representation imitates actual reality defined and illuminated by the performer. In this example, musical coherence is codified as true to the sentiments of the audience as well because movement is synchronized. From individual to collective expressions, entrainment encapsulates unity of expression where

profound collaboration is sought in an instantaneous manner.

"I was moved by the emotions rendered in the song without noticing that other listeners moved in the same way I did."

In many ways, rhetorical appeal does resonate to the audience as explained in pathos, the emotional connection of the musical speaker to the audience. In interpersonal entrainment, emotional connection is sought through a performer's willingness to connect to the audience using music. However, such emotional attachment in the form of synchronous movement is not a direct explanation of how music communicates emotionality. Even with synchronicity in understanding, individual meanings underneath a general notion of unity prevail as music affects individual persons individually. In effect, entrainment process can be an indirect rendering of social bond but if prolonged and deepened, the social fabric begins to have a strong hold.

In a much larger scheme of things, entrainment as a cultural phenomenon illustrates prosodic alignment and affiliation through harmonizing of individual beliefs with cultural expectations. While it is easy to say, it is rather difficult to maintain harmonic relationship between individual values that can be independent with societal goals in a society beset with personal struggles such as survival, amelioration from abject conditions. In managing difficult situation, harmony is instilled when individual motives are sacrificed for a much higher goal, the cultural goal of group harmony. This behavior accentuates group consciousness as previously discussed which later can also form distortion when the self is sacrificed for the group. In this sense, social cognition as the process involved in perceiving other people and how we come to know about the people in the world around us (Cherry, 2020) rescues self-culture relationship so that entrainment instills. In the context of gendered entrainment, female describers entrain most, male entrainers entrain least (Reichel, Benus & Mady, 2018).

"When I performed for the first time in a large concert, I noticed that women were more or less moving with the rhythm in harmony. I saw a uniform head nodding and swaying in the same direction as the music played."

Based on the analysis, gendering in music utilizing entrainment paradigm simply illustrates how the audience tends to equalize gender expressions through harmonized behavior as response to music. In rhythmic passages, entrainment entails uniform head nodding or hand clapping mirroring gender equality in physical attribution. This further illustrates social-construction of entrained meanings as equality rather than equity. The latter, gender equity, recognizes differences in expressions among differentiated gender groups not explainable in equality as total uniformity and sameness as attribution. In musical expression, musical entrainment is a social consciousness enveloping listeners whether male or female or other gender groups. Rather, entrainment envelopes encompassing gender divisions with uniform, entrained response to musical utterance. Clearly this

illustrates a phenomenological perspective of entrained experiences.

Association

Association is the connection between a percept, an idea or between one idea and another by virtue of which one appearing in consciousness tends to revive the other (psychologydiscussion.net). As a rhetorical appeal, association draws heavily from connections formed in a speaker's narrative of experience built in consciousness that are recollected. A case in point is a person's sense of reverie that suggests ideas and experiences forming a continuous labyrinth that can be freed or controlled.

In my case, association is best exemplified in these vignettes:

"In retrospect, my self-revelations formed collective consciousness as relayed to me by some members of the audience signifying a unified association of musical sound to experience located in the country's history."

"But the most striking to me was how much I associated the 'kundiman' to a painful lamentation of my struggles as an individual and as a member of a nation with issues of sovereignty."

The above vignettes clearly illustrate resonance of kundiman to my own personal struggles as a citizen in a country that has historical baggage of colonialism from Spanish and American regimes. In here, music reverberates a cry, a deep sense of wailing pain to free myself from any form of rule that is a representation of a much bigger pain that engulfs a nation. Such association of memory recollection as facets of personal and social struggles elucidates a rhetoric that is emphatically glued on sordid experiences of the past. In other words, music becomes meaningful and emphatic message grounded on a speaker's authentic experience of bigotry, displacement, and freedom. The changing moods in associative transformation thicken musical expression because sentiments are altered, predicaments are transformed and the elucidation of meaningful sound mirrors those transformations.

"Such poignant elucidation of historical association unleashed a powerful force of music to conjure inner sentiments without the indulgence of lyrics to solidify a people's predicament, my predicament. In retrospect, my self-revelations formed collective consciousness as relayed to me by some members of the audience signifying a unified association of musical sound to experience located in the country's history."

Apart from historical dimension, association also manifests in visualization of musical sound uttered during performance.

"I played with utmost controlled speed to emulate a ritualistic trance, such heightened stated could have been easily construed as disturbing decorum for someone not used to listening to madness in sound."

The vignette signifies a metaphor of a "ritualistic trance" as an associative statement as it elaborates and extends interpretation to another level of connection, this time, more creative and indulgent. The insistence upon indulgence in the vignette is connected to the level of frequency and intensity defining association. For

example, indulgence in a speech or musical performance creates a rich interpretation of a text that borders on authentic expressions rightfully intensifying associative rhetoric. Simply put, narratives that are indulgent affect a speaker's ethos because performance explains credibility and authority. Thus, performances that are drawn from heaviness in emotional indulgence create a powerful force that elevates a performer's sense of authority.

"I was magically switching moods without hesitation as if talking to two different persons with different emotions. Embroiled with dissonant articulations, my sense of enthusiasm to diabolical line ushered a sense of vulnerability that I thought was bordering on insanity, or its approximation."

"Indeed, my diabolical intentions became powerful affirmations of vulnerability and reconstruction so delicately intertwined...."

It is rightfully gleaned that indulgent notion of vulnerability bordering on insanity is an associative notion of reconstruction that restores chaos from excessive indulgence. In this manner, the degree of emotive power gratifies a sense of commendable performance especially when balance is restored. This is a persuasive indication of association that gives meaning to music and its realization is delved on by an indulgent performer.

In the context of musical performance, concepts form a system of integrated functioning of the different elements of music previously discussed that form a network of unified language, an associative connection as a form of inevitable occurrence. For instance, the element of melody is always related to the concept of harmony as the latter is built from the former, timbre is always related to touch and texture arising from melodies and harmonies created. However, the unified language becomes a weapon of the performer's sense of authority that should be understood by the audience. In this regard, "inevitable occurrence of" of concepts becomes a performer's quest in one's interpretative narration that should resonate to the audience's cognitive understanding.

In classical music in general, a selected audience who understands the logic of musical structure will rightfully grasp nuances and logical coherence in musical utterance because performance is associative to the structure as written by the composer.

"In terms of form, the first movement followed the standard structure of exposition, development, recapitulation and coda intricately woven together with notions of improvisation running through my mind as I explored."

It will be noticed that my narrative implores a dualistic notion of association similar to the previous analysis. For one, following the standard structure is in tune with ideas forming associations which are "inevitable occurrences", connections as givens, but, adding "improvisation" into the narrative delves interpretation to a more authentic level, hence, not really following the structure anymore, but come to think of it, improvising melodic themes also follows chordal structures that guide a performer in embellishment such that a listening audience can still sing the main melodic themes.

"Improvisation was about creating authentic ideas within a chordal

structure without playing the actual melody but the surrounding tonal or atonal themes that should be acceptable to the performer, with the ensemble artists, and with the audience."

In the context of association, improvisation as connecting ideas subsumes a dialogic interaction between a performer through a process called mental association. Mental association is the state of being connected together as in memory of imagination (Alexander, 2011). Its power is one example of a skill that often times goes unnoticed in our daily routines but, when used deliberately, can help increase the quality of our lives (Alexander, 2011).

Improvisation elevates magical discoveries that are oftentimes spontaneous according to how a musician feels during that moment of discovery. Such "authentic ideas" represent a deep-seated invigoration of creative stimulation that surfaces and intensifies especially when the story around improvisation develops a climactic turn.

In one instance,

"Every bit of sound was a serendipitous moment imprinted in my head. I could say that listening to my inner passion was instrumental in exhuming the depths of my narratives."

This is a classic case of addressing authentic expressions that resonate in improvisational technique. It is a technique because it involves association of creative ideas to chord inventions, modulations, among others, but beyond that, the audacity to magnify self-indulgent themes that are serendipitous, welcoming and true to the musician's spirit is a form of authentic association grounded on personal experience and sensibility which provide creative directions of musical lines.

Improvisation is the heart of syncopation in Jazz music that has its roots in African culture, the sense of off-beat sensation justifying foot work such as walking and dancing in multiple rhythmic pulses and in spoken language with abundant polyrhythmic utterances in everyday conversations among people.

Syncopation is to rhythm what dissonance is to harmony (Hein, 2015). It will be gleaned that as a rhythmic sensation, syncopation is a kind of distortion to a regular beat like placing an off-beat note with a heavy accent somewhere within a measure. A syncopated rhythm has accents on unexpected beats (Hein, 2015). It can be construed as an irregular heartbeat, or something that comes from somewhere surprising. In the sense of its off-beat sensation, dissonance in harmony approximates the feeling of being off-beat because of its atonal, irregular and non-harmonic character in tone.

"In playing jazz music, I would often dwell on unexpected sections in my interpretation that seemed to come from excitement giving me impulse to emphasize certain notes with a high degree of articulation relative to the rest of the notes."

"Playing jazz music and all its shades like bounce, swing or bossa nova tempo instigates different rhythmic pulses, syncopated melodies creating new impressions and emotional attachment."

"What was exciting also was my determination and audacity to play the same songs in different jazzy rhythms according to my mood, the audiences' reactions, and venue."

The first vignette highlights an elucidation of impulsive,

hence, off-beat feeling with a "high degree of articulation relative to the rest of the notes." Indeed, its associative quality accentuates a notion that syncopation is an emphatic articulation of certain sections exhibited in an unexpected manner. The second vignette highlights emotional attachment as the core of improvisation. When a musician relates his music to a certain experience, expressions are more authentic and involved as with any narrative that draws on personal accounts. The third narrative connotes a confluence between musician's temperament, audiences' response to one's articulations and the venue affecting overall signification. All such implications drawn upon association are forming networks of influence and interrelationship between performer-music-audience, an inseparable synergy as a combination rather than as summation of individual characteristics.

In African-American music traditions, syncopation is connected historically with slave songs (Sala, 2016). The syncopated attack pulses are supplied by various drums and other percussive instruments, but during slavery in U.S. drums were forbidden (Sala, 2016). Slave owners feared they might be used to transmit messages between individual slaves or slave communities, so syncopated rhythms were instead produced by clapping and tapping (Sala, 2016).

In the case of slavery in African-American traditions, persuasive expression of black people's predicaments is just as poignant as today when protests like Black Lives Matter (BLM) continues to haunt Western societies. Black Lives Matter is about the wrongful deaths of men and women of color at the hands of police (Stern, 2020). In its categorical form, BLM music resonates protestation but in many ways, a great song can unify and provide inspiration for people seeking a better world by serving as a vital soundtrack for actions – large and small, personal and universal – designed to promote positive change (Varga, 2020).

"The piece called "Round Midnight" by Theolonious Monk, a black jazz composer and pianist, which I played with jazz enthusiasts aboard the ship spoke, drew attention with some guests lamenting I embodied the essence of black sensibility."

Black sensibility in my vignette locates associative resonance of black history of oppression to my own struggle of colonialism. Such predicament of wanting to release from the bondage of repressive structure exemplifies a collective expression that I embody as a person located in society's struggles.

The point of this contention is rhetorical impact of music that is associated in forming collective consciousness beyond the confines of individual gratification. When rap, rhythm and blues music affect the listening audience due to protest messages embedded in the songs' lyrics, Beethoven's instrumental music is also a 'condemnation' of certain musical confinements that defined the classical tradition as he was a transitional figure between Classical and Romantic periods where the latter focused on depth of human expression more than following rules. Even

more emphatic is the discussion of counterpoint in Baroque music as a clear description of association in musical structure.

“With extended phrases, the art of fugal playing was the apex of contrapuntal playing with polyphonic voices layered in the score which had to be explicitly enunciated. For my part, I had to bring out individual voices as continuous lines by switching finger pressure to denote louder melody and a softer accompaniment.”

Phrases like “polyphonic voices”, “individual voices as continuous line” all indicate connection of melodic phrases in different voices as associative formations that define the logic of Baroque music. In the language of music theory, counterpoint in music exemplifies a blending of at least two different voices creating musical logic. Even if they create a fluid connection from the harmony created, the voices have a degree of independence.

Association in Baroque counterpoint exemplifies musical dialogue as written in the score, learned and played independently but heard interdependently as voices nesting on each other. Such continuity of sound links pathos to ethos because the core of expressing layers of sound is the performer’s interpretation and audience’s impressions of the sound as persuasive statements are tied to the performer’s emotional credibility. It will be noted that Bach’s music was written as a plain manuscript without indication of tempo, dynamics and other markings as they were all dictated by the performer’s interpretation.

“However, in the midst of compliance to the manuscript, it dawned on me that the original score I played had no dynamics and tempo indications signifying my freedom to interpret the score. Thus, even with the confines of baroque playing, I internalized the notion of ornamentation by placing accents on different sections, thinking legato while some notes had to be played staccato, and distributing melodic emphasis according to how I felt.”

Such personal assertion to a form that is intricate in itself is a celebration of persuasive playing that instructs and moves the audience in many ways.

“In the listening end, the audience seated on pews quietly absorbed the music in a reverential way with some closing their eyes in meditation while others just staring at me. I thought my playing aided their spiritual journey, accompanying prayer with cycles of emotions while my music was echoing through the walls of the church, deepening their communion with God. What was striking in this spiritual journey was that I, too, was one with the audience in their prayer. Such spiritual rapport was relieving and the dialogic air I felt between me, the audience, and to a reverential force, God, was a continuous flow.”

The foregoing vignette comes from my interpretation of Bach’s “Jesu, Joy of Man’s Desiring”. Bach originally programmed it as the finale to a ten-movement liturgical work celebrating the miraculous pregnancies of Mary and Elizabeth from the gospel of Luke, and God’s subversion of the world order through the birth of Christ (Jones, 2017). The wondrous hand of the exalted Almighty is active in the mysteries of the earth, the work proclaims (Jones, 2017). As such, my performance of the piece is an associative acclimation in reverential meditation that

binds me and the audience in one spiritual journey. Even with spirituality removed in performance, interpretation of such soulful sound will always be associated with reverence and tranquility because the music has its innate qualities of dignified semblance.

In the final analysis, association in rhetoric has qualities of communication practice within Sociopsychological Tradition of Communication Theory as expression, interaction, and influence where communication is mediated by psychological predispositions such as attitudes, emotional states, personality traits, unconscious conflicts, social cognitions, etc. (Craig, 1999). My psychological predispositions forming associative nuances of ideas, impressions and historical interrelationship with kundiman’s lamentation of love of country expressed in romantic stories and Black Lives Matter consciousness that connects music to a larger issue on imbalance, all of which solidify connections in many different avenues through musical utterance. As a communicative device, the rhetoric of association moves the performer and the audience in a symbiotic relationship reinforcing each other as interpretation deepens.

A clear manifestation of psychological indulgence worth noting is the idea of how much individual traits become important aspects of expression, interaction and influence as associative connections in communication practice. This strengthens communication’s interactive power using indulgence of sound, without lyrics, as rhetorical justification that instructs, moves and entertains as espoused by the philosopher Cicero.

Thus, rhetorical association is an expression of human experience that is interdependent, cohesive and mutually understanding which glorifies personal predispositions to cultural facets that produce and reproduce meanings. Connections grow with every utterance in communication practice that listens and responds.

CONCLUSION

Gendering in music foregrounded on reflexivity as an autoethnographic practice unearths personal experiences drawn heavily from memory recollection of musical narratives in composition and performance. In doing so, sound utterance deciphers gendered meanings articulating femininity as in the case of a mother’s lullaby and a grandmother’s lamentation in musical rhetoric. Because of the universality of musical expressions, these gender tones create stereotypes with both theoretical and practical nuances. For instance, music theory suggests soprano voice as generally feminine, or a mother’s lullaby as placid melodies associated with feminine tranquility, or a mother’s lamentation as expression of passionate rendering through soulful rhetoric.

While the foregoing forms part of an artist’s reflexivity, autoethnography borders on self as located within the culture. Hence, personal vignettes of my musical journey create socio-cultural themes exhibited through entrainment as a gesture of uniformed behavior emanating from an audience’s synchronized expression

at the same time from the deep layers of associations as cognitive patterns with cultural resonances. In here, personal narratives of associations highlighted in kundiman illustrate stories of struggle and emancipation as societal narratives of oppression and relief viewed from the lens of critical discourse. In other words, personal pains drawn from musical tales become stories of power struggles enmeshed as critical ideology where emancipatory elements elevate the musical journey. Finally, this study is limited to self-narratives with phenomenological nuances. As such, validity of truth is relative and the study's results are not generalizable. For future research, gendering in music can be expanded to include larger participants involving different gender groups where musical nuances can be gleaned in the light of the different expressions illuminated by the different genders liberating social values that impact society.

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