Musicology and Decolonial Analysis in the Age of Brexit

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Abstract

Where postcolonial studies often retain a focus on the imperial metropole, decolonial analysis takes as an imperative the re-location of the critical nexus into former colonies. Yet with this shift there emerges a recalcitrant question about the need for decolonial analysis in the centre: if decolonization is something that happens in the periphery, why, for instance, should we engage with it in the United Kingdom? While this question might have been less pressing in music studies in the 1990s when systematic approaches to decolonial analysis first started gaining traction, I argue that the amnesiac appeals to the Anglosphere which have accompanied the Brexit vote implore us to consider the possibilities of decolonial analysis in musicology anew. I suggest that decolonial analysis can be reconfigured through the notion of the coloniality/modernity bind to turn the decolonial gaze upon the musical subject in the metropole.

The return of a repressed colonial desire, or the last gasps of empire: these are some of the diagnoses offered by postcolonial and decolonial social scientists in the wake of the 2016 vote by the British electorate to leave the European Union.[1] For these scholars, Brexit, as the vote has more commonly become known, was intimately bound up with – if not in part a result of – a residual and unprocessed societal yearning for the bygone (if largely fictitious) island nation which once ruled the world. Whether in racist ideologies of returning control of

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[1] See, for instance, Ben Judah, 'England's Last Gasp of Empire', *New York Times*, 12 July 2016, www.nytimes.com/2016/07/13/opinion/englands-last-gasp-of-empire.html and Kojo Koram and Kerem Nisancioglu, 'Britain: The Empire That Never Was', *Critical Legal Thinking*, 31 October 2017, http://criticallegalthinking.com/2017/10/31/britain-empire-never/ (accessed 21 August 2019).

the United Kingdom to its 'indigenous' white population[2] or in milder (although no less problematic) appeals to secure the country's sovereignty so that it may once again assume its place at the centre of the global economic stage,[3] it is now widely acknowledged that the Leave campaign stoked a nostalgia for Britain's lost empire during the historic referendum.

Of course, not all sectors of British society were drawn to the fantasies of empire. Indeed, the lead up to the vote coincided with mounting calls to pursue a project of decolonization at deeper structural and even epistemic levels in the country's higher education academies. From the National Union of Students' 'Why is My Curriculum White?' and #LiberateMyDegree flagship campaigns to the Rhodes Must Fall Oxford movement,[4] important and wide-ranging issues were broached during this time spanning the confrontation of universities' colonial pasts, the continued coloniality (a term I address at length later in this article) of Eurocentric curricula, the relative absence of black and minority ethnic students and staff in higher education, and the failure to acknowledge the systemic relationships between empire and knowledge production in the country.

These debates have been taken up in music scholarship, albeit with comparatively little sense for inter-institutional or national organization. The University of Oxford's Faculty of Music quietly hosted a 'Decolonising the Music Curriculum' event in 2016, which, to my

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[2] Gurminder K. Bhambra, 'Brexit, Trump, and "Methodological Whiteness": On the Misrecognition of Race and Class', *The British Journal of Sociology* 68 (2017).

[3] Michael Kenny and Nick Pearce, *Shadows of Empire: The Anglosphere in British Politics* (Cambridge: Polity, 2018).

[4] Details of these various initiatives are given in Gurminder K. Bhambra, Dalia Gebrial, and Kerem Nişancıoğlu, 'Introduction: Decolonising the University?', in *Decolonising the University*, ed. Gurminder K. Bhambra, Dalia Gebrial, and Kerem Nişancıoğlu (Chicago: Pluto Press, 2018).

knowledge, has had virtually no material afterlife.[5] Two years later, at the 2018 meeting of

the Royal Musical Association, a number of scholars raised the decolonial agenda in relation

to analysis and transcription in ethnomusicological work.[6] While it is perhaps too early to say,

these isolated projects have had little bearing on collective methodological concerns in the

various music disciplines, or indeed on the germinative zone between these disciplines.

Furthermore, music scholars have been largely absent from the myriad interdisciplinary

volumes that have emerged on the topic of decolonizing academia over the last decade.[7]

Where decolonial approaches have been employed in music studies, they often appear

within the disciplinary remit of ethnomusicology.[8] Indeed, the question of decolonization has

been posed in the field since the 1990s, and came to occupy a more prominent position on the

discipline's critical agenda in the mid-2000s.[9] Decolonial approaches have also recently

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[5] The only mention of this event that I could trace is found in Francesca Amewudah-Rivers, 'Oxford University Drama Society', *Oxford Musician*, 9 (2019).

[6] Chloë Alaghband-Zadeh, Freya Jarman, Byron Dueck, Ruard Absaroka, and Laudan Nooshin, 'Decolonising Analysis' (Royal Musical Association 54th Annual Conference, University of Bristol, 2018).

[7] These editions included, for instance, Gurminder K. Bhambra, Dalia Gebrial, and Kerem Nişancıoğlu, eds., *Decolonising the University* (Chicago: Pluto Press, 2018); Julie Cupples and Ramón Grosfoguel, eds., *Unsettling Eurocentrism in the Westernized University* (London and New York: Routledge, 2018); Jason Arday and Heidi Safia Mirza, eds., *Dismantling Race in Higher Education: Racism, Whiteness and Decolonising the Academy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

[8] Aside from the panel discussion cited before, recent examples would include the numerous contributions in Davin Rosenberg (ed.), *SEM Student News* 12/2 (2016).

[9] For an early contribution, see Adrian Stanislaus McNeil, 'Caught between a Rock and a Hard Place: Decolonising Ethnomusicology in Australia', in *Aflame with Music: 100 Years of Music at the University of Melbourne*, ed. Brenton Broadstock (Parkville: Centre for Studies in Australian Music, University of Melbourne, 1996). The decolonization of ethnomusicology was a theme at the 2006 Annual Meeting of the Society for

emerged in popular music studies, where scholars have focused on the connections between music's colonial material histories and networks of circulation.[10] Both fields, however, are less concerned with music practices and the production of coloniality in the metropole, and locate the possibilities of decoloniality in the former colonial margin.[11]

These studies reflect the concern in decolonial analysis with a focus on the former colony as the site of knowledge production; indeed, decolonial analysis requires a shift in geopolitical focus from the centre to the margin.[12] This shift marks a crucial difference between postcolonial and decolonial discourses. Where postcolonial studies often retain a focus on the imperial metropole, decolonial analysis takes as an imperative the re-location of the critical nexus into the former colonies. With this shift, scholars in decolonial theory have aimed to 'legitimize border epistemologies emerging from the wounds of colonial histories,

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Ethnomusicology. See Luis Chávez and Russel Skelchy, 'Decolonizable Spaces in Ethnomusicology', *SEM Student News* 12/2 (2016), 20.

[10] See, for instance, Quintina Carter-Ényì and Aaron Carter-Ényì, 'Decolonizing the Mind through Song: From Makeba to the Afropolitan Present'. *Performance Research* 24/1 (2019); Oliver Lovesey, 'Decolonizing the Ear: Introduction to "Popular Music and the Postcolonial"', *Popular Music and Society* 40/1 (2017); Michael Denning, 'Decolonizing the Ear: The Transcolonial Reverberations of Vernacular Phonograph Music', in *Audible Empire: Music, Global Politics, Critique*, ed. Ronald Radano and Tejumola Olaniyan (Duke University Press, 2016).

[11] For examples, see Jessie M. Vallejo, 'Revitalising Language through Music: A Case Study of Music and Culturally Grounded Pedagogy in Two "Kanien'ke:Ha" (Mohawk) Language Immersion Programmes', *Ethnomusicology Forum* 28/1 (2019) and Polina Dessiatnitchenko, '"An Elder in Punk Clothes"': Purged Frets and Finding True "Mugham" in Post-Soviet Azerbaijan', *Ethnomusicology Forum* 27/2 (2018), 136–56.

[12] See Walter D. Mignolo, 'Delinking: The Rhetoric of Modernity, the Logic of Coloniality and the Grammar of De-Coloniality', *Cultural Studies* 21/2–3 (2007).

memories and experiences'.[13] These epistemologies have broadly been developed under the interrelating strategies of 'border thinking'. The term was originally coined by Gloria Anzaldúa[14] and has subsequently been developed extensively by Walter Mignolo, among others.[15] It designates a modality of thought cultivated at the margins of the colonial matrix; a modality that draws on traditions and languages of expression formerly excluded by the geopolitics of knowledge dictated by Western academe. Thus, border thinking originates in the third world, and delinks 'from territorial and imperial epistemology grounded on theological (Renaissance) and egological (Enlightenment) politics of knowledge'.[16] That is, border thinking is the critical epistemology constructed through the textual histories, linguistic traditions, and expressive artefacts and modalities that are situated beyond the frontiers made known and knowable in and by the West.

Aside from locating decolonial possibilities in the margin, music scholars have also engaged explicitly with other forms of border thinking as a decolonial framework. While a number of South African scholars have tried to articulate the limits of musicology specifically when confronted with border thinking,[17] Tamara Levitz has called for a turn to 'the material

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[13] Walter D. Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 37.

[14] Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1987).

[15] See Walter D. Mignolo and Madina V. Tlostanova, 'Theorizing from the Borders: Shifting to Geo- and Body-Politics of Knowledge', *European Journal of Social Theory* 9/2 (2006) and Walter D. Mignolo, 'Geopolitics of Sensing and Knowing: On (De)Coloniality, Border Thinking and Epistemic Disobedience', *Postcolonial Studies* 14/3 (2011).

[16] Mignolo, 'Geopolitics of Sensing and Knowing', 274.

[17] Carina Venter, William Fourie, Juliana M. Pistorius, and Neo Muyanga, 'Decolonising Musicology: A Response and Three Positions', *SAMUS: South African Music Studies* 36/37 (2018).

reality of borders themselves' to interrogate new forms of exclusion that have in recent years appeared in the discipline.[18] Furthermore, Alejandro L. Madrid's interdisciplinary reflections on musicology and border studies have productively employed epistemic border thinking as a powerful analytic in thinking through issues of performativity in these disciplines.[19] These studies, in keeping with the geopolitical shift required by border thinking, largely place the work of decolonial analysis *outside* the colonial metropole. Where borders and the interior of the colonial metropole have been the focus of musicological work, as in the forum recently convened by Florian Scheding which considers migrants (and the borders they face) within constructions of British musical identity, decolonial analysis itself has often featured less strongly.[20] Thus although a geopolitical shift is necessary in border thinking for attending to implicit colonial hierarchies of knowledge production and dissemination, it provides an unsatisfactory critical framework for thinking about the potential of decolonial analysis *within* the metropole. After all, if decolonization is something that happens in the periphery, why, for instance, should we engage with it as an analytic in a country such as the UK?

While this question might have been harder to answer in the 1990s when systematic approaches to decolonial analysis first started gaining traction, I argue in this article that a

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[18] Tamara Levitz, 'Introduction', in 'Musicology Beyond Borders?' [colloquy], *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 65/3 (2012), 823.

[19] Alejandro L. Madrid, 'Listening from "The Other Side": Music, Border Studies, and the Limits of Identity Politics', in *Decentering the Nation: Music, Mexicanidad, and Globalization*, ed. Jesus A. Ramos-Kittrell (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2019). Another specifically decolonial discussion of performativity can be found in Ana R. Alonso-Minutti, 'Chavela's Frida: Decolonial Performativity of the Queer Llorona', in *Decentering the Nation: Music, Mexicanidad, and Globalization*, ed. Jesus A. Ramos-Kittrell (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2019).

[20] Florian Scheding, convenor, '"Who Is British Music?" Placing Migrants in National Music History', *Twentieth-Century Music* 15:/3 (2018).

recent resurgent colonial nostalgia, which I consider here in the manifestation of the imperial rhetoric around the Anglosphere, urges us to consider the question seriously once again. In particular, I am interested in the amnesiac condition surrounding empire that has become more common within national debates in the UK. In an attempt to address this condition, I argue that a decolonial approach in musicology (the field that I am specifically concerned with here and the field of music studies that has certainly engaged the least with decolonization) can no longer be relegated to work done in the former colonies. Rather, I suggest that another point of departure for decolonial analysis must be adopted in music studies that does not depend on the border-thinking model, but that focuses on the epistemic entanglement of coloniality and modernity. I will first discuss the rise of imperial amnesia as it has been foregrounded since the Brexit vote before turning to a critique of postcolonialism as the dominant – and ultimately unsatisfactory – way in which musicology has addressed issues of colonialism. I will then propose as an alternative a specific form of decolonial analysis that takes as its subject the 'coloniality/modernity' bind as one approach that could be productively adopted in musicology to interrogate the continued mnemonic erasure of empire.

To be certain: the disciplinary focus of this article is musicology, especially as a field that has often – although not always – focused on musical subjects within the former colonial centre. Indeed, the work of Björn Heile and others has considered aesthetic concepts such as modernism and the avant-garde, which in aesthetic and historical terms are traditionally the concerns of musicology, outside the colonial centre,[21] while authors such as Susan Campos Fonseca have more explicitly addressed issues of colonialism within experimental music in

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[21] See Björn Heile, 'Musical Modernism, Global: Comparative Observations', in *The Routledge Research Companion to Modernism in Music*, ed. Björn Heile and Charles Wilson (London and New York: Routledge, 2019).

the margin.[22] If we are to turn the decolonial lens inward on music studies, mainstream anglophone musicology makes for an attractive disciplinary subject exactly because it relies so heavily on the epistemic architecture that pervades much of Western modernity's cultural thought.[23]

This move, however, comes with its own set of problems, primary among which is an unintentional reproduction of coloniality at the level of linguistic privilege: to turn the decolonial lens onto anglophone musicology, as the reader will no doubt realize in the latter part of this article, is to privilege anglophone discourse once again. Indeed, this article's bibliography – if not its very publication in English – is a testament to an anglophonic myopia which reflects a methodological issue that cuts across music studies in the English-speaking Global North more broadly, and which at a linguistic level fails to acknowledge indigenous knowledge production in the colonial Global South..[24] However, it is also a necessary move in the moment of disciplinary self-reflection that seeks something more than the geopolitical and linguistic deferral of decoloniality to the Other in the colonial margin. It is therefore a shortcoming that remains only acknowledged here in order to retain a focus on

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[22] Susan Campos Fonseca, 'Noise, Sonic Experimentation, and Interior Coloniality in Costa Rica', in *Experimentalisms in Practice: Music Perspectives from Latin America*, ed. Ana R. Alonso-Minutti, Eduardo Herrera, and Alejandro L. Madrid (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

[23] Albeit for different reasons, this point has been made by Julian Johnson, and I return to it later in this article. See Julian Johnson, *Out of Time: Music and the Making of Modernity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

[24] Juliana M. Pistorius has written eloquently of this problem in relation to music studies. See Venter et al., 'Decolonising Musicology', 143–9. Her argument builds on an established tradition of pedagogical and cultural concerns around mother-tongue education within broader decolonial theory. See Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (Nairobi: Heinemann, 1986).

this article's central concern with the Anglosphere and the continued reproduction in musicology of anglophone-colonial ideological matrix. Furthermore, in the following sections I do not aim to 'decolonize' musicology, as far as such a project would even be possible.[25] Rather, I want to propose the critical remit for the field within which decolonial analysis, as a method but also as an epistemological turn, must be set to work.

Brexit, the Anglosphere, and amnesia

On 23 June 2016, the British electorate voted to leave the European Union. It was an event that galvanized the Euroscepticism of certain political sectors, but it also legitimized a number of adjacent political ideologies. The one of concern in this article is the newly emboldened nostalgia for the British empire. Of course, a nostalgia for empire among the British public did not emerge with the Brexit vote. In a 2014 YouGov poll, the majority of respondents considered the empire 'something to be proud of' and one-third felt that the

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[25] The common argument for why such a project would not be possible has been captured in Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang's assertion that decolonization cannot be a metaphorical action and should refer strictly to the re-appropriation of land by the colonized. Thus, an academic discipline cannot be decolonized and land could be. See Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, 'Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor', *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 1/1 (2012). I disagree with this argument for the simple reason that decolonization, especially in the context of the African continent, has always been bound up with the psychic condition of coloniality and thus must to a certain extent always be metaphorical in its double reality in the human experience and in place. Indeed, thinking of decolonization as 'metaphor' was one of the major contributions of Frantz Fanon. See especially Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (London: Penguin Books, 2001 [1961]). Yet I am also not entirely sure that musicology specifically can be decolonized for reasons fully explicated in Venter et al., 'Decolonising Musicology', 138–43.

empire should still exist.[26] This nostalgia has been associated with Euroscepticism for a number of years, with the re-establishment of the British empire (or something closely resembling it) touted as a viable alternative to the EU.[27] The Brexit vote, however, became the political machinery which made this form of nostalgia into a functional ideological apparatus for mobilizing the Eurosceptic vote. It is for this reason that authors have recently drawn out the connections between the nostalgia for empire and the Brexit vote,[28] with some arguing that it marked an active attempt to remake the imperial world order.[29]

The post-Brexit strategy that has perhaps resounded most strongly the desire for the re-establishment of the empire has been the proposal to formalize and fortify economic and cultural relations within what has been termed 'the Anglosphere'. First referred to in 1995, the Anglosphere designates a core group of countries including the UK, the USA, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia.[30] It has been promoted by Eurosceptics since the late 1990s as an alternative to the EU, but the Brexit vote, as Andrew Mycock and Ben Wellings have shown, thrust this transnational configuration into the 'centre of British politics'.[31] The Anglosphere has been championed by key proponents of the Leave campaign such as Liam Fox, William Hague, and the current prime minister, Boris Johnson. Other Conservatives

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[26] Will Dahlgreen, 'The British Empire Is "Something to Be Proud Of"', *YouGov*, 26 July 2014, https://yougov.co.uk/topics/politics/articles-reports/2014/07/26/britain-proud-its-empire.

[27] Paul Beaumont, 'Brexit, Retrotopia and the Perils of Post-Colonial Delusions', *Global Affairs* 3/4–5 (2017), 386.

[28] Aside from the scholars cited in this article's introduction, see Stuart Ward and Astrid Rasch, eds., *Embers of Empire in Brexit Britain* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019).

[29] Judah, 'England's Last Gasp of Empire'.

[30] Andrew Mycock and Ben Wellings, 'The Anglosphere: Past, Present and Future', *British Academy Review* 31 (2017), 42.

[31] Mycock and Wellings, 'The Anglosphere', 42.

such as Michael Gove, Daniel Hannan, and David Davis have also appealed to the idea, alongside the former UK Independence Party leader, Nigel Farage.[32]

While the Anglosphere is a term of recent coinage, it conceptually originates in the late nineteenth century when, in response to growing instability within the British empire, the notion of an imperial federation gained traction in government.[33] This federation would have Britain at its centre and include a number of anglophone settler dominions populated by those of England's 'own blood'.[34] Such a federation never came to be, but the sutures of race and language would for much of the twentieth century retain their appeal to those who yearned for a re-establishment of Britain's empire.[35] Indeed, it is because of these foundations that the Anglosphere has become, as Srdjan Vucetic has shown, a distinctly racialized international configuration in which whiteness is privileged, albeit often implicitly, as a nexus for potential trade and cultural exchange.[36] In other words, the appeals to the Anglosphere as a formalized post-Brexit alternative to the EU are appeals to the re-centring (and re-empowerment) of a

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[32] Mycock and Wellings, 'The Anglosphere', 42. Hannan has even egregiously attempted to couple the very notion of political freedom to the Anglosphere. See Daniel Hannan, *Inventing Freedom: How the English-Speaking Peoples Made the Modern World* (New York: Broadside Books, 2013).

[33] Mycock and Wellings, 'The Anglosphere'. See also Kenny and Pearce, *Shadows of Empire* and Srdjan Vucetic, *The Anglosphere: A Genealogy of a Racialized Identity in International Relations* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011).

[34] This turn of phrase was used by J. R. Seeley, an influential nineteenth-century theorist of Empire whose work is often regarded as foundational for contemporary notions of the Anglosphere. Kenny and Pearce, *Shadows of Empire*, 18.

[35] Among others, Winston Churchill was a major supporter of a similar geopolitical order, and can be seen as the person who first made accessible the underlying architecture of the Anglosphere to the British public. Kenny and Pearce, *Shadows of Empire*, 43.

[36] Vucetic, *The Anglosphere*.

white, anglophone British identity within the global geopolitical order, akin to the British empire.[37]

Framed in this way, appeals to the Anglosphere can be regarded in psychoanalytical terms as an expression of 'postcolonial melancholia'.[38] This term, first used by Paul Gilroy, describes a Freudian psycho-societal pathology that diagnoses the resurgent dreams of imperial greatness as the marker of the British public's inability to critically work through and overcome the loss (the death) of empire after the Second World War.[39] Perhaps one of the most strikingly accurate examples of this condition was offered by Liam Fox. A staunch supporter of the Anglosphere, Fox stated during a Leave campaign speech on 4 March 2016 that 'the United Kingdom is one of the few countries in the European Union that does not need to bury its 20th century history'.[40] In this statement, Fox quite literally describes a denial of the death of empire through the refusal of burial. Empire cannot be buried, his words might be understood, because it is not yet dead. This form of melancholia, however, is closely tied up with a nostalgia that is equally present in Fox's statement. Indeed, Edoardo Campanella and Marta Dassù read his statement within the remit of a broader Anglo-imperial

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[37] Alexander E. Davis, *India and the Anglosphere: Race, Identity and Hierarchy in International Relations* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2019).

[38] Satnam Virdee and Brendan McGeever, 'Racism, Crisis, Brexit', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 41/10 (2018), 1806; Robin Finlay, Anoop Nayak, Matthew C. Benwell, Peter Hopkins, Raksha Pande, and Michael Richardson, 'Race, Place and Young People in the Age of Brexit', *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space* 37/1 (2018), 18.

[39] Paul Gilroy, *Postcolonial Melancholia* (New York and Chichester: Columbia University Press, 2004).

[40] Quoted in Richard J. Evans, 'How the Brexiteers Broke History', *NewStatesman*, 14 November 2018, www.newstatesman.com/politics/uk/2018/11/how-brexiteers-broke-history.

nostalgia that strongly resurfaced with the Brexit vote.[41] Fox's is a yearning for a bygone time, a time when empire was supposedly something of which to be proud.

That said, resurgent notions of empire through appeals to the Anglosphere cannot be understood only as forms of postcolonial melancholia or nostalgia. Amnesia plays an equally important role within this political discourse. While authors such as Campanella and Dassù have argued that amnesia accompanies societal pathologies of nostalgia,[42] Robert Saunders has called for a more acute distinction between the two concepts. We must differentiate, he writes, 'between the longing for empire and the forgetting of Britain's imperial past'.[43] That is not to say that nostalgia and amnesia are mutually exclusive, but it is to argue for a more discerning diagnosis, which separates the 'selective remembering of empire and its elimination from the historical record'.[44] Nor is it to say that the political cultivation of amnesia is something that has specifically arisen with the Brexit vote. Forms of what Paul Ricoeur synonymously calls 'commanded forgetting' are coterminous with the very notion of political configurations, whether it be in the necessary structures of amnesty (note the etymological connection with amnesia) or in the spurious manipulation and erasure of public record.[45] The latter, for instance, was employed by the British government long before the Brexit vote as a strategy to deal with the horrors committed in the name of empire through

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[41] Edoardo Campanella and Marta Dassù, *Anglo Nostalgia: The Politics of Emotion in a Fractured West* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 21.

[42] Campanella and Dassù, *Anglo Nostalgia*, 28.

[43] Robert Saunders, 'The Myth of Brexit as Imperial Nostalgia', *Prospect Magazine*, 7 January 2019, www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/world/the-myth-of-brexit-as-imperial-nostalgia.

[44] Saunders, 'The Myth of Brexit as Imperial Nostalgia'.

[45] Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 452–5.

the concerted effort, code-named Operation Legacy, to destroy incriminating records of colonial administrations.[46]

   Calls for the establishment of the Anglosphere, however, have depended strongly on the political incursion of amnesia. Often dissociated from its imperial forebears in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it is presented as an emergent transnational political configuration, which not only hints at a shared history and culture but also erases the imperial conditions that created these links in the first place.[47] It is for this reason that scholars such as Kenny, Pearce, and Vucetic have been at pains to map the genealogy of the term, tracing it to its imperial origins. That it has gained significant political traction since the Brexit vote invites us not only to interrogate it in the realms of political science and international relations studies, but also, I want to suggest, should make it a concern of the humanities too. After all, it is a proposed conglomerate that relies as much on a purportedly shared culture as it does on prospects of trade and other transnational networks of exchange. In other words, the appeals to the Anglosphere – and the amnesiac colonial desires for which they act as a mask – must also be interrogated in musicology.

The Anglosphere and the critique of postcolonial musicology

This is not to say that the Anglosphere has not been the subject of scrutiny in musicological discourse. Indeed, the term was invoked in the second ever issue of this journal, in an article by Björn Heile on the different critiques of modernist music.[48] While Heile does not use the term in exactly the same way as the social scientists cited before, his rough approximation of

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[46] See Shohei Sato, '"Operation Legacy": Britain's Destruction and Concealment of Colonial Records Worldwide', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 45/4 (2017).

[47] Vucetic, *The Anglosphere*, 6.

[48] Björn Heile, 'Darmstadt as Other: British and American Responses to Musical Modernism', *Twentieth-Century Music* 1/2 (2004).

the Anglosphere as comprising anglophone countries in the West does suggest something of the same sutures as those appealed to in recent political discourse. Furthermore, he uses the term to articulate an anti-European sentiment in the form of the systematic 'Othering' that lay at the basis of the critique of modernist music in the UK and the USA during the twentieth century.[49] This sense of Othering is not unlike the Euroscepticism that culminated in the Brexit vote, but Heile does little to interrogate its origins in a resurgent imperial geopolitics. That he does not, however, points perhaps to the ways in which musicology has depended on the unchallenged demarcation of the 'Anglo-American' without attending to its imperial foundations. This construct, I want to suggest, not only closely reflects the anti-European sentiment of the Anglosphere as critiqued by Heile, but is also conditioned by unspoken centre–dminion alliances of the post-imperial world.

In musicology, these alliances have in the past been interrogated only indirectly in broader discussions of imperialism and colonialism. Since the late 1980s, musicologists have engaged extensively with the critique colonial structures of power, especially as these structures are reproduced through the musical representation of the Other.[50] The prevailing lens through which these studies have done so has been through adoptions and adaptations of postcolonial theory, often with an acute focus on exoticism and/or orientalism. Matthew Head's early survey of such studies details the problems with the postcolonial approach in musicology, which often produces little more than chronological surveys, indices of style, the mapping of genre-specific occurrences of exoticism, and narratives of how the Other

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[49] Heile, 'Darmstadt as Other', 169.

[50] Two early examples can be found in Richard Leppert, 'Cultural Chauvinism: Images of British Subjects at Home in India', in *Music and Society*, ed. Susan McClary and Richard Leppert (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987) and Ralph P. Locke, 'Constructing the Oriental "Other": Saint-Saëns's "Samson et Dalila"', *Cambridge Opera Journal* 3/3 (1991).

infringes aesthetically upon Western compositional approaches.[51] For him, the danger here is that by merely pointing out these representational issues, scholarship in the discipline risks producing little more than what he calls a 'musicological safari'.[52]

While interpretative paradigms of orientalism and exoticism admittedly represent only a small part of postcolonial theory, they have come to form cornerstones in our discipline's response to music and imperialism. And perhaps rightly so: these two terms, after all, provide us with the language to unpack and dissect representations of power imbalances between colonizer and colonized in musical works. Yet I would like to suggest that these terms cannot accurately articulate the problems at stake in the appeals to the Anglosphere after the Brexit vote. This is because these terms encode an ontological distance between Self and Other, rather than allowing for an introspective turn to the operation of the Self alone or a collapse between Self and Other.[53] Put differently, if the problem of a resurgent imperialism after the Brexit vote is a problem *within* the colonial centre, then the lenses of orientalism or exoticism, which properly have to do with the representation of an Other, will only shift the focus again to the figure that is historically, geographically, or economically distanced from the Self. Of course, this is not the fault of postcolonial theory as a whole, but rather a fault in the way musicology has thus far adopted it. Yet be that as it may, postcolonial theory for the

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[51] Matthew Head, 'Musicology on Safari: Orientalism and the Spectre of Postcolonial Theory', *Music Analysis* 22/1–2 (2003).

[52] Head, 'Musicology on Safari', 227.

[53] This critique is often levelled against theories of postcolonialism by decolonial scholars. See, for instance, Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs*.

most part does not seem to offer many viable alternatives of a representational theory that does not operate on the Self–Other binary.[54]

This problem, however, points to a more fundamental issue within postcolonial theory as a whole, which arises especially when it is asked to respond to the concerns presented by the rise of the Anglosphere. My argument in this regard is informed by Anne McClintock's early (but still largely accurate) critique of postcolonialism, and hinges on the temporal order that the term 'post-colonial' fixes.[55] For McClintock, postcolonial theory induces a partitioned ordering of world history into the colonial and the post-colonial.[56] While this binary effectively absorbs the various smaller binaries (she identifies 'the self-other, metropole-colony, center-periphery') that have been offered as a challenge to the West's singular historicism, it does little to undo the Eurocentric temporality that figures the African or Asian subject as cemented in or measured against an Enlightenment-inflected, teleological development of history.[57] In other words, it fatalistically binds the non-Western subject to the conclusion that the colonial must give way to the post-colonial. Yet in casting the history of the world in this temporal rubric, the possibility is foreclosed of conceiving of the way that colonialism can re-emerge outside its own teleological order. This is ultimately postcolonialism's failing, since as McClintock puts it, and as my discussion of the Anglosphere has hinted at, 'colonialism returns at the very moment of its disappearance'.[58]

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[54] The exception, to some extent, being perhaps found in Homi Bhabha's notion of the 'third space'. See Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994).

[55] Anne McClintock, 'The Angel of Progress: Pitfalls of the Term "Post-Colonialism"', *Social Text*, 31–2 (1992), 84–98.

[56] McClintock, 'The Angel of Progress', 85.

[57] McClintock, 'The Angel of Progress', 85.

[58] McClintock, 'The Angel of Progress', 86.

The Anglosphere, which is conceptually linked to the renewed imperialist fantasies of a dying empire in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries and which, much like a ghost, has been recently conjured again in the inability to accept the death of empire, resurrects colonialism outside its proper temporal order.[59] Considered in this way, postcolonial theory fails to offer the necessary temporal matrix for considering the recalcitrant return of the imperial geopolitics foregrounded by appeals to the Anglosphere.

Decolonial alternatives

In contrast, decolonial analysis offers an alternative temporal framework for addressing these issues. This framework differentiates between colonialism and coloniality, where the former designates specific historical instances of imperial domination and the latter considers the epistemic configuration that allowed for colonization, but that is not bound to a specific instance of colonization.[60] Decolonial analysis thus is premised not on the linear (teleological) temporality of *post*-colonialism, which effectively relegates colonial structures of thought to a bygone time and place. Instead, it takes as its premise the possibility of the non-linear emergence and re-emergence of the colonial. The appeals to the Anglosphere can be understood as underpinned by an epistemic coloniality, but it is not a form or instance of colonialism. It is an articulation of the intellectual and cultural afterlife of colonialism.

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[59] To invoke the image of the ghost here is not to suggest that resurgent forms of colonialism are in any way less 'real' than earlier incarnations. Instead, and following scholars such as Achille Mbembe, it recognizes the necrotic modality of colonialism, which always also functions in the negative: it makes the slave into the ghost of modernity and the plantation economy into the 'nocturnal face of capitalism'. Achille Mbembe, *Critique of Black Reason*, trans. Laurent Dubois (Durham,, NC: Duke University Press, 2017), 129.

[60] Coloniality is a term attributed to Aníbal Quijano. Aníbal Quijano, 'Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality', *Cultural Studies* 21/2–3 (2007).

Thought of as a form of coloniality, the Anglosphere then becomes connected once again to its imperial foundations in the late nineteenth century. For musicologists, taking on board this shift, I want to suggest, prompts us then to consider the historicity of transnational conglomerates among Western anglophone countries as not only a product of shared language and culture, but also a product of historical configurations of metropole and settler dominions. Doing so would draw underlying and often unspoken imperial ideological boundaries – and also aspirations and residues – to the fore. Yet more than indexing these imperial ideologies in the way that musicology has done through the lens of postcolonial theory, the reframing of coloniality asks of us to confront these ideologies as they are continually reproduced in the curricula, repertoires, performance practices, and listening habits of our disciplinary present.

Drawing on the frame of coloniality, however, does not only enable the interrogation of the continued reproduction of colonial structures of thought in the present, but also allows us to think – in broader terms – of the historical relationship between colonialism and Western modernity. If the colonial is no longer bound by the temporal remit of specific instances of colonization, it is also not bound to the specificities of geographical place.[61] Thought more broadly (in terms of both time and place), coloniality comes to constitute the darker, untold side of modernity.[62] That is, for scholars of decolonial theory, modernity and coloniality are inextricably bound up with and co-constitutive of each other. Modernity, with its civilizing mission of betterment, is a product (financially, but also epistemologically) of coloniality, as

[61] Mignolo speaks in this sense of the 'global design' of coloniality. Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs*.

[62] See Walter Mignolo and Catherine E. Walsh, *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018), 140.

much as coloniality is a product of a modernizing Western society.[63] The entanglement of these two concepts has been expressed in the term 'coloniality/modernity', designating with the combinatorial virgule the complicities, but also the tensions, within this complex. This bind is set to work in decolonial scholarship as an analytic for exposing and reconfiguring epistemologies that reproduce the uneven structures of colonial power.

By deploying this analytic, musicology can circumvent the ontological distance between Self and Other inscribed by postcolonial theories of representation, and turn the decolonial gaze upon itself. It offers the opportunity to scrutinize the ways in which, for instance, the modernity of British society and its musical subjects have been bound up with the production of coloniality. Such a project would view British music not as contained within the scores, reception histories, and biographies of its institutional composers in the way that has been proposed by many of the contributions to Matthew Riley's edited volume, *British Music and Modernism, 1895–1960*.[64] Recast in decolonial terms, a similar volume would take as its point of departure the ways in which British national identity and social-cultural infrastructures were bound up with the apex of the empire and its subsequent material (although not epistemic) demise, as well as attending to the entrenched forms of whiteness that authors such as Alejandro L. Madrid have identified in the pedagogical deployment of the Western art music canon.[65] Casting the decolonial net even wider, one could imagine the repositioning of Julian Johnson's excellent monograph on music and Western modernity, *Out*

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[63] This view has been broadly accepted within decolonial theory, with exceptions emerging in the differentiation between the slave trade and colonization as constitutive of modernity. See Mbembe, *Critique of Black Reason*, 54–5.

[64] Matthew Riley, ed., *British Music and Modernism, 1895–1960* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010).

[65] Alejandro L. Madrid, 'Diversity, Tokenism, Non-Canonical Musics, and the Crisis of the Humanities in U.S. Academia', *Journal of Music History Pedagogy* 7/2 (2017).

of Time: Music and the Making of Modernity, in such a way that it considers not only how imperialism and colonialism created networks for Western music's circulation across the globe, as Johnson indeed does, but also how coloniality can be traced and interrogated in the very music which he argues participated in the formation of modernity.[66] Something of this envisaged approach can be found in Daniel M. Grimley's recent book, *Delius and the Sound of Place*, in which he foregrounds the formative influences of slavery and imperialism in Delius's music.[67] In this sense, Grimley attends to the ways in which, as a modern musical subject, Delius's creative agency is inscribed with the traces of coloniality.

Yet the decolonial project must go further than this. In the age of Brexit, decolonial analysis in musicology must interrogate the normalized racial-linguistic hierarchies of the global order articulated in appeals to the Anglosphere. This form of analysis could interrogate the reproduction of cultural ideology as it has spread along what Alan Lester calls imperial networks of distribution.[68] Along these trade routes, but also in the assumed directions of transmission (usually from metropole to colony in, for instance, the flows of technology), decolonial analysis will seek to correct anglocentric histories and discourses and act as an antidote to the amnesiac condition in which empire is held today. Doing so, however, would not require necessarily casting the critical gaze out to the geopolitical Other, but would look to the figuration of the Self as it originates in the centre. Indeed, the questions that decolonial analysis will ask, and in this case will ask in relation to musicology, will be those that disrupt and reconfigure the passive and residual structures of British dominance over its former

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[66] Johnson, *Out of Time*.

[67] Daniel M. Grimley, *Delius and the Sound of Place*, Music in Context (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

[68] Alan Lester, *Imperial Networks: Creating Identities in Nineteenth-Century South Africa and Britain* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001).

colonies. It would ask questions that negate the presumed centrality of white, anglophone cultural objects in the global order and reframe these within the colonial matrix of Western modernity as it is tied to coloniality. In other words, through the lens of decolonial analysis, the song of Western modernity will also always be sung in time with the song of Western coloniality.

Conclusion

It is beyond the remit of this article to demonstrate the critical apparatuses of decolonial analysis, but I want to suggest that the proposition of developing and adopting such a framework is crucial in the wake of the Brexit vote. Whether or not the Anglosphere is formalized through a trade agreement, its emergence in this time of crisis suggests that a reckoning with Britain's colonial past and the continued presence of its coloniality is an imperative. Musicology, in some sense, would be uniquely positioned in such a project. Our object of study – music – has a capacity for traversing the temporal order that postcolonial theory fails to escape. Its sense of being intimately sutured to its historical present while also being 'out of time', to invoke Johnson again, makes it the perfect trace for interrogating coloniality's reproduction. That is, music might be able to carry audibly the residues of coloniality which remain hidden by time and obscured by place in concepts like the Anglosphere. Reconfiguring the way we understand these vessels along decolonial analytical lines would require changes in our discipline not only at a methodological level, but also at an ideological-epistemic level. No longer will our assumptions of cultural normativity in the centre prevail, for these assumptions are also the working components of global hierarchies such as the Anglosphere. Nor can we assume that our modes of reading, listening, and interpretation can rely implicitly on a stable and distant modernity that is not intrinsically tied

up to the reproduction of coloniality. Instead, the work of musicology will be to listen in new ways for coloniality's traces both in and out of our own time.

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