



Research Article

Music, technology, and humanity: Asempayetsia as a compositional-analytical framework for reframing African indigenous knowledge in music theory¹

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Abstract

Contemporary music theory continues to be largely shaped by Euro-American analytical frameworks, which often limit the recognition of alternative systems of musical organisation rooted in Indigenous knowledge. This paper addresses this gap by proposing Asempayetsia as a compositional-analytical framework grounded in Akan-Mfantse epistemologies. Developed through practice-led artistic research, the framework translates the narrative and symbolic logic of Kodzi, a Ghanaian oral storytelling tradition, into musical structure through a triadic process of cultural excavation, compositional translation, and audiovisual reinscription. Using the case study Pɛrpl Greyps, the study demonstrates how Indigenous knowledge systems can generate music-theoretical structures. The analysis shows how cyclical temporality informs formal organisation, how loop-based processes shape rhythmic structure, how fixed motifs function as symbolic anchors, and how audiovisual integration extends musical form beyond sound. These features collectively propose an alternative model of musical organisation that departs from linear and hierarchical paradigms commonly associated with Western art music. By positioning composition as a site of theory-making, the paper contributes to ongoing debates in transcultural and postcolonial music theory. It argues that Indigenous epistemologies can serve as cultural content and generative systems for analytical and compositional thought. In this context, digital technologies are regarded as mediating tools that enhance, rather than replace, culturally grounded musical logic. The study ultimately shows how artistic research can broaden the epistemological scope of music theory while maintaining the continuity of intangible cultural heritage.

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Introduction

Contemporary music discourse increasingly reflects the interconnection of sound, technology, and human experience, particularly within the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR). Developments in digital composition, sound art, and algorithmic processes have broadened both the tools for musical creation and the conceptual limits of what constitutes musical knowledge. However, despite this expansion, dominant frameworks within music scholarship, and especially within music theory, remain largely influenced by Euro-American epistemologies, often marginalising alternative systems of musical thought rooted in Indigenous and non-Western traditions (Agawu, 2003; Mignolo, 2009; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018). This imbalance is both institutional and conceptual. It influences how musical structure, form,

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and meaning are theorised, analysed, and taught. While ethnomusicology has contributed significantly to documenting diverse musical practices, fewer models have been developed that translate Indigenous epistemologies into music-theoretical frameworks capable of generating compositional and analytical insights. This gap prompts an important question: how might music theory itself be reconfigured when Indigenous systems of knowledge are treated not merely as cultural data, but as sources of theory?

This paper addresses that question by developing *Asempayetsia*³ (Dawson, 2023), a compositional framework grounded in Akan-Mfantse epistemologies. Originally developed in my doctoral research through engagement with *Kodzi*⁴, a narrative-poetic storytelling tradition, the framework translates oral, performative, and symbolic logics into musical and audiovisual form. *Asempayetsia* is structured through a triadic process of cultural excavation, compositional translation, and audiovisual reinscription, through which ancestral knowledge is rearticulated within contemporary creative practice. Crucially, this paper positions *Asempayetsia* not only as an artistic methodology but as a compositional-analytical framework within music theory. It proposes a model in which musical structure and meaning emerge from Indigenous epistemic logics rather than from inherited Western tonal or formal systems. In doing so, the study contributes to ongoing discussions in postcolonial and transcultural music theory by foregrounding composition as a site of theory-making. Methodologically, the study adopts a practice-led artistic research approach, in which composition functions both as a method of inquiry and as a research outcome. The framework is demonstrated through the case study *Perpl Greyps* (2023), which reinterprets Akan storytelling structures through cyclical form, rhythmic interaction, and symbolic audiovisual design. Particular attention is given to how *Kodzi* logic informs compositional parameters such as form, texture, and temporal organisation. While the study engages with broader decolonial discourse (Mignolo, 2009; Dei, 2009), its primary focus is analytical rather than rhetorical. It seeks to show, in concrete terms, how Indigenous knowledge systems can generate music-theoretical structures, rather than critique existing ones. In this sense, the paper's contribution lies in extending music theory beyond its conventional epistemic boundaries through practice-based articulation.

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows. Section 2 situates the study within relevant theoretical and music-theoretical debates, including decolonial thought, artistic research, and transcultural composition. Section 3 outlines the methodological framework. Section 4 presents a detailed analytical case study demonstrating the application of *Asempayetsia*. Section 5 discusses the implications for music theory, technology, and cultural continuity. The paper concludes by reflecting on the role of artistic research in expanding the epistemological scope of music theory.

Theoretical and Conceptual Foundations

Epistemic Disobedience and Music-Theoretical Repositioning

The concept of epistemic disobedience, as articulated by Mignolo (2009), calls for a deliberate disengagement from dominant Western epistemological frameworks in order to make space for plural systems of knowledge. While this concept has been widely applied within decolonial studies, its implications for music theory remain underexplored. Music theory, as a discipline, has historically been grounded in analytical systems derived from European art music, often privileging tonal harmony, formal development, and notation-based abstraction as universal standards (Ewell, 2023, 2021; Deruty & Lattner, 2023; Agawu, 2003; Tagg, 1982). In this context, epistemic disobedience becomes not only a philosophical stance but also a music-theoretical intervention. It raises the question of how musical structure, form, and meaning might be theorised differently when approached from Indigenous epistemologies rather than from inherited analytical models. Rather than treating African musical traditions as objects of ethnographic study, this perspective positions them as sources of theoretical knowledge that can generate compositional and analytical frameworks (Hesselink, 2021; Nikolsky & Perlovsky, 2020; Emielu, 2018; Rice, 2017; Agawu, 2016)

Within African scholarship, this repositioning aligns with broader efforts to centre Indigenous knowledge systems as valid epistemologies (Adjei & Dei, 2025; Dei, 2020, 2009; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018). Oral traditions, embodied performance practices, and communal modes of meaning-making are not merely cultural expressions; they are structured

³ *Asempayetsia* (Mfantse: "concise are words of worth")

⁴ *Kodzi* (Akan-Mfantse storytelling tradition)

systems of thought with their own internal logics. The implication for music theory is significant: analysis need not begin from external categories imposed on sound, but can emerge from within the epistemic conditions of the musical culture itself. In this paper, Asempayetsia is situated within this shift. It is presented as a framework that enacts epistemic disobedience at the level of composition and analysis, proposing that Indigenous sonic logics can function as the basis for music-theoretical modelling rather than as supplementary material to existing paradigms.

Artistic Research as Music-Theoretical Methodology

Artistic research has increasingly been recognised as a legitimate mode of knowledge production within the arts, particularly in contexts where creative practice itself generates theoretical insight (Borgdorff, 2012; Candy & Edmonds, 2018). In contrast to traditional musicology or ethnomusicology, which often separate analysis from creation, artistic research positions compositional practice as both method and outcome. For music theory, this approach introduces an important methodological shift. Rather than analysing pre-existing works through established frameworks, theory can emerge through the act of composition itself. In this sense, compositional decisions, relating to form, rhythm, texture, and sonic organisation, become sites of theoretical articulation. This study adopts a practice-led artistic research methodology, in which the compositional process functions as a primary mode of inquiry. The framework of Asempayetsia was developed through iterative cycles of creation, reflection, and refinement, where each compositional stage generated insights into how Indigenous epistemologies can shape musical structure. The accompanying exegesis serves as meta-documentation, articulating the conceptual and analytical implications of these processes. Within this methodological orientation, knowledge claims are not validated through external analytical systems alone, but through the internal coherence of the compositional logic, the consistency of translation between cultural source and musical form, and the reflective articulation of process. Artistic research thus expands the scope of music theory by enabling its development through practice rather than solely through abstraction.

Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Musical Translation

The Akan-Mfantse cultural context provides a rich foundation for examining how Indigenous knowledge systems can inform musical structure. Within this environment, knowledge is transmitted through oral narratives, performance practices, symbolic systems, and communal participation. The Kodzi tradition, in particular, integrates storytelling, rhythm, and social interaction, functioning as both an artistic form and a mode of cultural reasoning. Engaging with such material through composition requires a rethinking of translation. Rather than mapping Indigenous elements onto Western compositional frameworks, translation is approached here as a process of structural transformation, in which the underlying logics of the source tradition inform musical organisation. This includes principles such as cyclical temporality, call-and-response interaction, symbolic condensation, and communal orientation. In this study, translation operates through three interconnected processes: cultural excavation, compositional translation, and audiovisual reinscription. These processes do not simply preserve cultural material but rearticulate it within new creative contexts. Importantly, the focus is not on reproducing traditional forms, but on allowing their epistemic structures to generate new musical configurations. This approach resonates with existing work in African art music and intercultural composition, in which composers such as Euba (1989) have explored integrating Indigenous musical paradigms into contemporary compositional practice. However, the present study extends this trajectory by framing such integration explicitly as a music-theoretical operation, in which Indigenous knowledge systems function as generative models for compositional structure and analytical interpretation. By situating musical translation within Indigenous epistemologies, the study proposes an expanded understanding of music theory, one that accommodates multiple systems of logic, temporality, and meaning-making, and that recognises composition as a site where these systems can be articulated, tested, and refined.

The Asempayetsia Framework

Overview of the Framework

Asempayetsia, an Mfantse expression meaning “concise are words of worth,” is proposed here as both a philosophical orientation and a compositional-analytical framework within music theory. Developed through my doctoral research, it

emerged from sustained engagement with the Akan-Mfantse oral tradition of Kodzi and from the challenge of composing within Indigenous epistemologies while operating in institutional contexts shaped by Western art-music paradigms. While existing approaches to intercultural composition have explored the integration of African musical elements into contemporary practice (Euba, 1989; Agawu, 2003), Asempayetsia advances this trajectory by foregrounding Indigenous epistemology as a generative basis for musical structure itself, rather than as source material to be adapted. In this sense, the framework proposes that compositional organisation—rhythmic, formal, and symbolic—can emerge from culturally embedded logics. At its core, Asempayetsia treats composition as an act of distillation, in which sound carries cultural, ethical, and symbolic weight. This principle reflects Akan philosophies of language, where meaning is often condensed through metaphor, brevity, and layered expression (Dei, 2009, 2020). Translated into musical terms, this orientation prioritises economy of material, relational structuring, and symbolic density, shaping how motifs, textures, and formal processes unfold. The framework operates through a triadic process—Cultural Excavation, Compositional Translation, and Audiovisual Reinscription—understood not as a linear sequence but as a cyclical system. This cyclical orientation reflects Indigenous temporal logics in which repetition, return, and variation function as organising principles (Onyeji, 2019). As such, Asempayetsia offers a model in which musical form is not driven by teleological development, but by recursive interaction and recontextualisation.

Cultural Excavation

Cultural Excavation (*situated listening, ethical co-presence, and elder-centred knowledge*) involves engaging with Indigenous knowledge systems as sources of compositional logic. This process extends beyond documentation to what may be described as situated listening, where meaning emerges through relational engagement with elders, performers, and cultural contexts. Drawing on Dei's (2009; 2020) concept of *ElderCrit*, this stage recognises elders not as informants but as theorists whose knowledge structures inform artistic decision-making. The composer engages with proverbs, narrative forms, rhythmic practices, and symbolic systems as analytical frameworks in their own right. From a music-theoretical perspective, this stage establishes the epistemic basis of structure. Rather than beginning with abstract musical parameters, compositional thinking is grounded in culturally embedded concepts such as cyclical temporality, communal interaction, and symbolic condensation. These principles later inform rhythmic organisation, formal design, and textural relationships.

Compositional Translation

Compositional Translation (*sonic autoethnography and negotiation with institutional musical forms*) transforms cultural knowledge into musical structure. This process is not representational but generative: Indigenous epistemic principles are translated into rhythmic patterns, formal processes, and sonic relationships. Informed by Agawu's (2003) argument that African music operates through relational rather than reductionist logic, this stage treats musical elements—rhythm, timbre, text, and gesture—as interdependent. Translation, therefore, involves structural negotiation, where compositional decisions emerge through a dialogue between Indigenous logics and contemporary musical resources. This process may be understood as a form of sonic autoethnography, in which the composer's positionality informs the interpretation and transformation of cultural knowledge. At the same time, it involves negotiation with institutional musical forms, including Western compositional techniques and digital production systems. The resulting structures are neither purely traditional nor fully assimilated, but operate within a hybrid yet internally coherent logic. From a music-theoretical standpoint, this stage is where Indigenous knowledge becomes audible as structure—manifesting in cyclical form, layered rhythmic interaction, and symbolic organisation of sound.

Audiovisual Reinscription

Audiovisual Reinscription (*digital revitalisation, archival mediation, and pedagogical dissemination*) situates the composition within contemporary technological environments. Through digital audio workstations, visual media, and spatial audio techniques, the work is extended into a multisensory domain. Rather than treating technology as a neutral tool, this stage involves critical mediation, where digital systems are adapted to align with Indigenous sonic logic. For example, temporal grids may be reconfigured to accommodate cyclical rhythm, and spatialisation may reflect communal

listening environments rather than individualised stereo perception. From a theoretical perspective, this stage expands music theory into the audiovisual domain, where structure is not only sonic but also visual and spatial. It introduces a model of digital musical form in which temporal, visual, and symbolic elements interact as a unified system. Through this process, composition becomes a form of knowledge production in which Indigenous epistemologies are not only preserved but also rearticulated within contemporary media systems.

Theoretical Inspirations

The Audiovisual Reinscription stage is closely aligned with developments associated with the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), characterised by the integration of digital technologies into creative practice (Schwab, 2016). Within Asempayetsia, these technologies are not treated as generative agents but as mediating infrastructures that extend Indigenous knowledge into new representational forms. Three key functions can be identified:

- Digital preservation, where recording and archiving support continuity of oral traditions
- Multimedia representation, where sound, image, and interaction expand the perceptual scope of musical form
- Dissemination, where digital platforms enable broader circulation without detaching knowledge from its epistemic grounding.

While these functions resonate with frameworks such as UNESCO (2003), AU Agenda 2063, and WIPO (2001), their role within this study is primarily contextual rather than central. The focus remains on how technological mediation affects musical structure and perception, rather than on policy alignment.

Distinguishing Features

Asempayetsia differs from Western compositional and analytical frameworks in its epistemic foundation and structural orientation. Whereas programmatic composition often translates narrative into music within established tonal or formal systems, and ethnographic approaches tend to document musical practices externally, Asempayetsia operates from within the epistemic logic of the source culture. Its distinguishing features include:

- Cyclical formal organisation rather than linear development
- Relational structuring of musical elements, where rhythm, text, and gesture function interdependently
- Symbolic density, where sound carries layered cultural meaning
- Communal orientation, reflected in call-and-response interaction and participatory logic

These characteristics position Asempayetsia as a framework that redefines compositional authorship and analytical perspective. The composer operates not as an isolated creator but as a mediator of cultural knowledge, and musical structure emerges through relational processes rather than abstract formal design. In this way, the framework contributes to music theory by proposing an alternative model for conceptualising, analysing, and generating musical organisation—one grounded in Indigenous epistemologies and articulated through contemporary creative practice.

Application: Translating the *Kodzi*

Context of the Case Study

My doctoral project, *Perpl Greyps: Kodzi in 3re Beatz* (2023), emerged from a compositional impasse shaped by the tension between institutional expectations and Indigenous sonic identity. The prevailing academic emphasis on Euro-American models of “advanced” composition prompted a critical return to formative cultural experiences, particularly the Akan-Mfantse storytelling tradition of Kodzi. Kodzi encompasses multiple narrative forms, including mythic or patriotic storytelling (*kodzi*), moral instruction (*anasesem*), history (*abakosem*) and comic performance (*tooli*), all of which contribute to ethical formation, communal identity, and intergenerational knowledge transmission. In response to the decline of these forms within contemporary media environments, this project sought not to document Kodzi but to reactivate it as a compositional system through the Asempayetsia framework. The resulting work presents a narrative centred on conflict and reconciliation, symbolised through the visual and sonic interplay of “*Perpl* (purple)” (unrest) and “*Greyps* (grapes)” (restored harmony). The hybrid title itself reflects a broader compositional logic of ‘cultural convergence’ rather than fragmentation (Kim, 2017; Bhabha, 2012; Euba, 1993).

Cultural Excavation: Situated Listening and Sonic Grounding

The Cultural Excavation stage involved engaging Kodzi as an epistemic system through fieldwork, oral interviews, and embodied listening practices. Due to limited archival documentation, knowledge was accessed through community interaction, including discussions with traditional practitioners, linguists, and cultural historians. A key outcome of this process was the recognition of Kodzi as a rhythmic and narrative logic, rather than only a storytelling form. Its structuring principles—repetition, variation, metaphor, and communal interaction—became foundational to subsequent compositional decisions. Field recordings collected during this stage, including ambient community sounds, children’s play, and musical fragments from social spaces, were incorporated directly into the composition. These materials function not as background elements but as primary structural components, establishing the sonic environment from which the work emerges. The sonic material was derived from recordings across key environments (see Photo 1–3; Audio Examples 1–3).



Photo 1. Seashore environment used as a primary source



Photo 2. Community soundscape (daily activity and social interaction) used for field recording.



Photo 3. Forest environment as symbolic and narrative sonic space

Audio Examples:

Audio Example 1. [Seashore environment recording](#)

Audio Example 2. [Community soundscape recording](#)

Audio Example 3. [Forest environment recording](#)

Compositional Translation: Structural and Sonic Realisation

The Compositional Translation stage transformed cultural material into musical structure through a hybrid approach combining programme music, cinematic composition, electroacoustic practice, and Indigenous rhythmic logic. This process involved the generation of what may be described as “fixed ideas”—recurring sonic motifs associated with narrative elements and character identities.

Formal Organisation: Ternary Structure and Narrative Cyclicity

The work adopts a ternary (ABA) formal structure, reinterpreted through Kodzi storytelling principles:

A (Opening / Community): environmental soundscape and initial setting

B (Dream / Conflict–Resolution): central narrative of tension, ancestral intervention, and reconciliation

A' (Return): re-entry into the original environment, transformed through narrative experience

This structure departs from Western teleological development by emphasising cyclical return and transformation, where the closing section recontextualises earlier material rather than simply repeating it.

Sectional Design: “Beats” as Modular Units

Within the broader ternary (ABA) structure, the composition unfolds as a continuous scene articulated through three major **beats**, each comprising smaller sectional units that correspond to narrative shifts.

Beat 1 — Establishment (A: Opening / Reality)

- Introductory sonic space (cinematic textures)
- Community soundscape (field recordings)
- Interior domestic scene

This opening beat establishes the sonic and spatial context, grounding the work in environmental sound and everyday life.

Beat 2 — Disruption and Transformation (B: Dream / Conflict–Resolution)

- Dream sequence (tribal encounter)
- Conflict escalation
- Ancestral intervention
- Communal dance and reconciliation

This central beat functions as the structural and narrative core, where tension, interaction, and eventual resolution unfold through intensified rhythmic, textural, and motivic activity.

Beat 3- Return (A': Re-entry / Transformation)

Return to the initial environment

The final beat reintroduces the opening environment, now transformed through the preceding events, completing the cyclical formal logic. Together, these beats operate as modular formal units, enabling flexible transitions, layered development, and recursive structuring rather than linear progression.

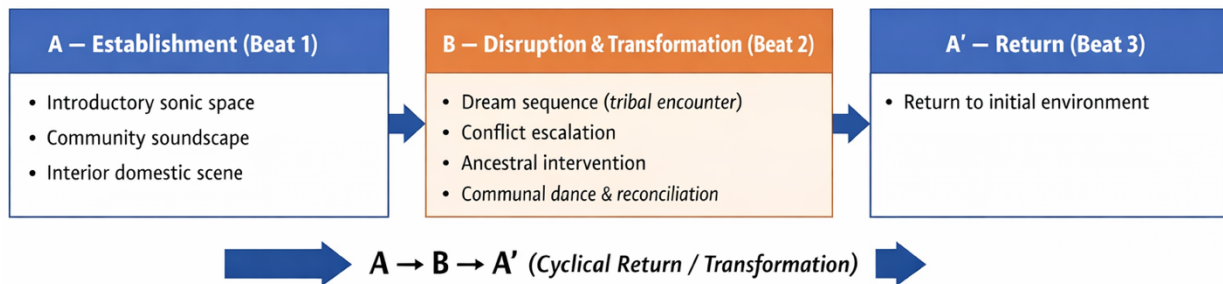


Figure 1. Structural diagram showing ternary (ABA) form and beat-based segmentation of *Perpl Greypts*

The structure reflects a cyclical reinterpretation of ternary form, where return is understood as transformation rather than repetition.

Sonic Material: Environmental and Composed Integration

The work integrates acousmatic (environmental) sound with composed musical material. Field recordings provide an initial sonic grounding, while composed elements—loops, synthetic textures, and instrumental gestures—gradually introduce abstraction. This creates a continuum between documentary sound and compositional intervention, reflecting the transition from lived experience to symbolic representation.

Rhythmic Organisation and Loop-Based Processes

Rhythmic structure is governed by loop-based organisation, reflecting cyclical principles found in Kodzi performance. Repetition functions as a stabilising force, while variation and layering introduce complexity. Aleatoric techniques are employed through controlled indeterminacy, allowing certain layers to interact flexibly. This results in a dynamic rhythmic field characterised by shifting alignment and temporal fluidity rather than fixed metric hierarchy.

Motivic System: Fixed Ideas and Narrative Mapping

Motivic organisation is structured through fixed ideas, functioning analogously to leitmotifs. Distinct sonic gestures are associated with different narrative entities (e.g., tribal identities, conflict, resolution).

- Fragmented motifs signal tension and instability
- Recurring choral-derived material functions as a moral anchor
- Converging motifs articulate reconciliation

Rather than undergoing traditional thematic development, these motifs are recontextualised across sections, allowing meaning to emerge through interaction. This is particularly evident in the ancestral motif, which serves as a symbolic convergence point within the work (see Audio Example 4).

Audio Example 4: [Ancestral motif illustrating symbolic and structural convergence.](#)

Textural Development: From Fragmentation to Convergence

Texture articulates the narrative trajectory. Early sections are marked by fragmentation and discontinuity, while later sections exhibit layered cohesion and density. This shift from dispersion to convergence mirrors the movement from conflict to unity, reinforcing narrative meaning through sonic organisation.

Audiovisual Reinscription: Visual Score and Digital Mediation

The Audiovisual Reinscription stage extends the composition into a visual domain using Cubase, Premiere Pro, and After Effects. The resulting work functions as both an audiovisual artefact and a visual score, where imagery and motion contribute to structural perception. Visual elements are synchronised with musical transitions, reinforcing sectional

boundaries and narrative progression. Minimalist design and symbolic colour (e.g., purple for unrest, grapes for harmony) provide non-verbal cues aligned with sonic transformation. Digital tools are not treated as neutral but are adapted to reflect Indigenous temporal and spatial logics. Cyclical time is embedded in editing structures, and spatial audio reflects communal listening environments rather than individualised perception. The audiovisual dimension of the work reinforces structural and symbolic transformation (see Figure 5; Video Example 1).



Photo 4. Still images from *Perpl Greyps* showing symbolic colour mapping (purple—conflict; grapes—unity) aligned with structural transformation in the audiovisual composition.



Video Example 1. *Perpl Greyps* (Web 1)

Aesthetic and Ethical Considerations

Throughout the process, compositional decisions were guided by Mfantse sonic logic and ethical considerations of representation. Western musical elements were incorporated selectively, ensuring that they did not override Indigenous structural principles. The work does not aim to reproduce traditional forms but to engage them through dialogic transformation. While fictionalisation was necessary, care was taken to maintain cultural integrity through transparency and reflective practice. Although practical constraints limited community feedback, future iterations aim to incorporate collaborative engagement and local dissemination. In this sense, the work remains an evolving project of cultural mediation rather than a fixed artefact.

Discussion

Music, Technology, and Humanity

The Asempayetsia framework shows how Indigenous epistemologies can influence not only artistic practice but also music-theoretical thinking within technologically mediated contexts. Instead of viewing decoloniality as an abstract critique, this study has demonstrated, through compositional analysis, how musical structure, form, and meaning can originate from culturally rooted logics. This section considers three main implications: the positioning of African knowledge within technological systems, the relationship between preservation and transformation, and the role of artistic research in reshaping analytical approaches in music studies.

African Knowledge in Technological Contexts

The integration of digital tools within *Perpl Greyeps* demonstrates how Indigenous epistemologies can function within modern technological settings without being overridden by them. Instead of viewing technology as a neutral framework, the compositional process adapts digital systems, such as sequencing grids, audiovisual synchronisation, and spatialisation, to fit cyclical temporality and relational structures rooted in Kodzi logic. From a music-theoretical perspective, this indicates that technological mediation does not necessarily enforce external structure but can be reconfigured to support alternative organisational principles. For instance, the use of loop-based sequencing in the work reflects cyclical rhythmic logic rather than metric regularity. At the same time, audiovisual alignment emphasises sectional form through narrative cues rather than abstract formal markers. In this sense, Asempayetsia contributes to emerging discussions on digital music theory by illustrating how non-Western temporal and structural models can be articulated within digital compositional environments. Technology becomes a mediating layer through which Indigenous musical logics are extended, rather than replaced.

Preservation and Transformation as Structural Processes

The relationship between preservation and transformation, often seen as a conceptual tension, is demonstrated in this study as a structural and compositional process. Instead of simply preserving Kodzi through documentation, the framework interprets its organising principles—such as repetition, variation, and communal interaction—by translating them into new musical forms. As demonstrated in the case study, cyclical form, loop-based rhythm, and motivic recontextualisation serve as mechanisms of continuity. These elements do not imitate traditional performance but rearticulate its underlying logic within a new medium. In this sense, preservation occurs not at the level of surface material but at the level of structural organisation. This aligns with Nketia's (1974) notion of "continuity through creativity," but broadens it into a music-theoretical context by illustrating how continuity can be traced through formal design, rhythmic processes, and textural development. Transformation, therefore, is not a break from tradition but a way in which its internal logic remains active.

The Human Dimension in Musical Structure

The human aspect of the framework is expressed not only through thematic content but also through structural and sonic choices. For example, the use of environmental recordings places the composition within real sonic environments, while the gradual move from fragmentation to textural unity mirrors processes of social negotiation and reconciliation. From an analytical standpoint, this suggests that musical structure can incorporate relational and ethical elements, rather than functioning solely as formal abstraction. The organisation of sound in *Perpl Greyeps*, particularly the shift from disjunction to convergence, acts as both a compositional and conceptual representation of communal renewal. In technologically mediated contexts, where algorithmic processes increasingly influence musical creation, this focus on relational structure provides an alternative to purely data-driven models. It highlights the potential for a human-centred organisation, in which musical meaning arises from interaction, memory, and symbolic association.

Artistic Research and the Reconfiguration of Analysis

One of the main contributions of this study is its framing of artistic research as a form of music-theoretical creation. Instead of analysing an existing piece through external frameworks, the compositional process itself produces analytical insights. This approach challenges conventional distinctions between composition and analysis. In *Perpl Greyeps*, structural decisions—such as the use of ternary form, loop-based rhythm, and leitmotivic mapping—are not only compositional strategies but also analytical propositions about how music can be organised. In this sense, Asempayetsia contributes to a broader reconfiguration of music theory, where knowledge is not solely derived from abstract systems but can emerge through practice-based articulation. This aligns with Borgdorff's (2012) understanding of artistic research, while extending it into a specifically music-theoretical context.

Toward a Structurally Grounded Digital Humanism

The findings of this study suggest that the relationship between music, technology, and humanity can be understood through the lens of structural mediation. Rather than opposing technological systems, the Asempayetsia framework

demonstrates how they can be adapted to support culturally grounded forms of musical organisation. This results in a form of digital practice in which:

- cyclical temporality replaces linear progression
- relational structuring replaces hierarchical organisation
- symbolic density complements sonic abstraction

Within this model, music functions as a site where technological processes and human experience intersect through structure. The integration of Indigenous epistemologies into compositional design offers a way to expand music theory beyond its traditional boundaries, while maintaining analytical clarity.

Conclusion

This study positions Asempayetsia as a compositional-analytical framework within music theory, grounded in Akan-Mfantse epistemologies and expressed through artistic research. By converting Kodzi's narrative logic into musical structure, the framework shows how Indigenous knowledge systems can influence form, rhythm, texture, and audiovisual organisation. Through the case study *Perpl Greyps*, the paper has shown that:

- cyclical temporality can function as an organising principle in formal design
- loop-based rhythmic processes can replace linear metric hierarchies
- symbolic motifs can operate as structural anchors within narrative composition
- audiovisual integration can extend musical form beyond sound into visual and spatial domains

These findings advance music theory by proposing an alternative model where structure arises from culturally embedded logics rather than inherited analytical frameworks (Komabu & Dawson, 2024). In this context, Asempayetsia does not dismiss existing systems but broadens the field by introducing additional modes of organisation and interpretation. More broadly, the study demonstrates that artistic research can serve as a method of theoretical production, in which compositional practice generates analytical insight. This reconfiguration of the relationship between making and theorising opens new possibilities for how music theory can be defined, taught, and developed. To reinscribe heritage, then, is not simply to preserve the past, but to allow it to operate within contemporary forms of knowledge. In Asempayetsia, this process unfolds through sound, structure, and media—where Indigenous epistemologies continue to shape musical thought in the present.

Implications and Future Directions

The Asempayetsia framework goes beyond compositional practice into teaching, technological design, and research methods. Its main contribution is showing how Indigenous epistemologies can inform not only artistic creation but also music theory, curriculum planning, and digital mediation.

Educational Implications: Reframing Music-Theoretical Pedagogy

Asempayetsia provides a model for rethinking music education by positioning composition as a space for theory development rather than as the application of pre-existing analytical systems. Many formal curricula remain centred on Western tonal frameworks, notation-based analysis, and historical musicology, often marginalising oral, improvisational, and embodied knowledge systems. Integrating Asempayetsia into pedagogy would enable students to explore musical structure through cultural excavation, compositional translation, and audiovisual realisation. In this approach, theoretical understanding develops through practice: rhythmic organisation, formal design, and symbolic structuring are examined as results of culturally grounded processes. This shift redefines music theory as a plural field, where analytical models are adaptable and stem from varied epistemic contexts. It also supports broader educational aims that emphasise cultural continuity and knowledge transfer, all while upholding analytical rigour.

Technological Implications: Structuring Digital Tools Through Indigenous Logic

The framework also suggests new directions for the use of digital technologies in music. Rather than adapting cultural material to fit existing technological systems, Asempayetsia demonstrates how tools such as digital audio workstations, audiovisual editing platforms, and algorithmic processes can be reconfigured to support alternative structural logics. In

the case study, loop-based sequencing, audiovisual synchronisation, and spatial design were adapted to reflect cyclical temporality and relational organisation. This suggests that digital environments are not inherently linked to Western compositional models, but can support multiple approaches to musical structure. Future applications may include the development of AI systems trained on Indigenous rhythmic and narrative patterns, immersive environments that simulate participatory musical spaces, and digital archives organised according to culturally specific ontologies. These directions point toward a model of technological engagement grounded in structural adaptability rather than standardisation.

Research Implications: Expanding Music-Theoretical Inquiry

Asempayetsia adds to a growing body of work that broadens music theory beyond traditional limits. By showing how compositional practice can yield analytical understanding, the framework supports a research model in which theory develops through creation. Future research might investigate comparative applications of similar methods across different cultural contexts, exploring how Indigenous epistemologies shape musical structure within various traditions. Such work would enhance a broader transcultural understanding of music theory, where multiple systems of organisation coexist and interact. Furthermore, interdisciplinary collaboration among composers, theorists, technologists, and cultural practitioners can further develop methods for analysing and producing music that operates outside conventional analytical frameworks. In this regard, Asempayetsia offers not only a model but also a starting point for wider methodological exploration.

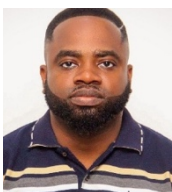
Summary of Implications

Taken together, these implications suggest that Asempayetsia functions as:

- a pedagogical model for practice-based theory learning
- a technological approach to structuring digital musical environments
- a research framework for expanding music-theoretical discourse

Its significance lies in demonstrating that Indigenous knowledge systems can generate not only artistic content, but also analytical frameworks and compositional models.

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