Feminism as Critique in Philosophy of Music Education

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Introduction

Feminism as critique in philosophy of music education. For the moment let's set aside the discussion of philosophy of music education and examine the view of feminism as critique, although because this is about music education and philosophy, those concepts cannot remain discrete or unrelated to the initial discussion of feminism as critique. Notwithstanding the contemporary women's movement has been in progress over twenty years and "has led to a significant restructuring of our theoretical tradition from a feminist perspective,"¹ in most disciplines, this restructuring is only recent within musicology,² and nascent within music education. Long after the national media has named feminism the new f-word and proclaimed a post-feminist era, we have yet to broach the subject as music educators. Perhaps we have been cloistered in our practice rooms a bit too long. Considering the impact of such otherworldliness on our profession, it undoubtedly is necessary to define feminism for this paper. "Defining Feminism" is followed by an examination through feminism of aesthetic and praxial philosophies of music education, constituting the major section of the paper, "Speaking Philosophy of Music Education." I conclude this essay on feminism as critique with some musings on the possibilities for feminist theorizing in music education in a section called, "Feminist Mus(ic)ing: A Fiction-Theory."

Defining Feminism

"I myself have never been able to find out precisely what feminism is: I only know that people call me a feminist whenever I express sentiments that differentiate me from a doormat," said author Rebecca West seventy-one years ago. A British suffragette, Teresa Billington-Grieg, describes feminism "as a movement seeking the reorganization of the world upon a basis of sex-equality in all human relations;" that it "...has as yet no defined creed...[and] is the articulate consciousness of mind in women...in its different forms of expression." Within the current generation bell hooks has stated that feminism "is a commitment to eradicating the ideology of domination that permeates Western culture on various levels--sex, race, and class, to name a few." Similarly, Nancy Hartsock says that feminism "is a mode of analysis, a method of approaching life and politics, a way of asking questions and searching for answers, rather than a set of political conclusions about the oppression of women."³ And Barbara Smith emphasizes:

Feminism is the political theory and practice to free all women: women of color, working-class women, poor women, physically challenged women, lesbians, old women, as well as white economically privileged heterosexual women. Anything less than this is not feminism, but merely female self-aggrandizement.⁴
Even though these definitions encompass generations of feminist theorizing, commitment and achievement, the influence of feminism in music education has been nil. Feminist scholars in music education are still drawn into arguments to demonstrate gender as a characteristic or quality within music, even as our research and that of our colleagues in historical musicology, ethnomusicology, and music theory has moved far beyond that basic point; even as every other discipline has accepted, at least in some corner, that gender matters. For example, Estella Lauter can expect to be understood when she says:

Through its analysis of the operation of gender throughout the Western artworld over four centuries, feminist practice has established that regardless of individual artists' occasional successes, art registers discriminatory cultural practices. Idealism aside, art is gendered. A music educator cannot expect such understanding when she states that music is gendered. And yet, the evidence that music is gendered through the preparation of musicians, the production of music and the reception of musical works, as well as musical performers/performances has been and continues to be thoroughly documented. Feminist scholars in music education are in a very different situation than their counterparts in the related field of the visual arts, where "[t]he resulting widespread dissemination of the concept [of feminism] and the paradigm [of feminist criticism] has allowed for the exploration of more complex theoretical ground as the debate progresses, it is no longer necessary for feminist theorists of the visual arts to reinvent the wheel of their critique in every academic outing." 

Let me roll out the wheel of my critique in this academic outing.

Categories of Feminism

To begin, the wheel that is my understanding of feminism as critique grows out of working with diverse feminist theories through the now-established discipline of Women's Studies. An early critical spoke in this wheel was the exploration of distinct feminist theories. Although I no longer use that spoke it did have value; therefore, I now present a reductionist overview of contemporary feminist theorizing in order to provide background for theorizing feminism as critique.5

Feminism as critique is not diminished in magnitude by incongruities among and within a multifold of feminisms. Rosemary Tong identifies the following varieties of feminist theory: liberal, Marxist, radical, psychoanalytic, socialist, existentialist, and postmodern.9 In practice, we can find combinations of, additions to and subdivisions of these seven types. For example, Marxist and socialist feminisms are often hyphenated within one category; lesbian feminism, Asian feminism and black feminism frequently are added; existentialist feminism might be seen as an historical moment,10 and so forth. In the interests of clarity, and using Tong as a guide, I offer some brief definitions of feminist theories together with examples applicable to music education.

Liberal feminism. In her definition of liberal feminism Tong names Mary Wollstonecraft and Betty Friedan, and the concepts of equality in law and androgyny among her examples.11 A liberal feminist analysis of music might be concerned primarily with issues of equal opportunity in music education for students and teachers. Women composers would be added to the existing curricula, i.e., women's compositions would join the canon of great works. Care would be taken to provide girls with the same opportunities as boys to study jazz and use computers and synthesizers. Employment equity programs would work towards equity in hiring and promoting women teachers.
and professors at different levels of music education.

Psychoanalytic feminism. Tong suggests Juliet Mitchell, Carol Gilligan and Nancy Chodorow to exemplify psychoanalytic feminism during the '70s-'80s decade. Today psychoanalytic feminism often focuses on criticism of Freud and Lacan, while borrowing their concepts where useful. Many literary critics borrow psychoanalytic principles within their feminist criticism. Psychoanalytic feminism might look for solutions to women's absence from music and music education in re-worked and re-visioned psychological constructs. It might also look for and analyze representations of maleness and femaleness within the music itself.

Radical feminism. Generally, radical feminism could say that the root of the problem is in patriarchal constructions of sexuality, that "women's oppression...is the first, the most widespread, and the deepest form of human oppression." Tong's sampler of radical feminist thought includes Kate Millet, Adrienne Rich, Mary Daly, and Marilyn Frye, among several writers, poets and philosophers. Another aspect of radical feminist theory, cultural feminism, might be especially applicable in music. "Women's music" of all kinds would be important within this model of feminism. A cultural feminist examination of music education would likely critique the androcentricity of western art music and look for indications of a feminine music, or a gynocentric aesthetic, in a re-valuing of "woman's nature" from a patriarchal past.

Marxist/socialist feminism. Marxist/socialist feminism would analyze the inequities within the social structure in terms of class differences and access to music, as well as the value of the art to society; that is, highlighting issues of power and powerlessness, of production and reproduction. Socialist feminism, which sees sex/gender systems as social (not biological) constructions and, therefore, aims to eliminate masculinity and femininity, is "largely the result of Marxist feminists' dissatisfaction with the essentially gender-blind character of Marxist thought." In music, it might very well be the socialist feminist focus would begin with what Dorothy Smith calls the standpoint of women, and examine gender divisions of labor in music education, including the alienation of women from all aspects of production and reproduction of music. As well, such critique, growing from the Frankfurt school of critical theory, might argue, as does Josephine Donovan, that "art is inherently political in that it by definition offers a negative critique of commodity exchange reification.

Postmodern feminism. Tong equates postmodernism with the "French feminism" of Cixous, Kristeva, and Irigaray, all of whose work is concerned with literature, language, and drawn from psychoanalysis, including critiques of Lacan and Derrida. Foucault's studies of power, knowledge, sexuality and institutions are important influences and sources for critique in postmodern feminism, also. Postmodern feminist criticism in music would examine the margins of music education as a "celebration of multiplicity." In addition, the attention postmodernists give to subjectivities, representation and performative qualities of gender have implications for theorizing artistry, aesthetics and education. In other words, since music is created through cultural practices (including, for example, particular individual's and group's definitions of music and artistry, self and self-knowledge, masculinity and femininity), it would be worthwhile to examine how these various representations are realized and what they mean in relation to theorizing music education.

Feminism as critique. Feminism as critique differs from feminist criticism. Feminist criticism might be seen as comparable to literary or artistic criticism and focusing upon works of art, but I am not thinking within that more narrow definition. Feminism is an ideology(ies) seeking nothing less than the reorganization of the world through a commitment to eradicating ideologies of domination; this involves political theory and political action, as well as philosophic and artistic criticism. Feminism is also a mode of analysis, a method of approaching life, a way of asking questions and searching for answers, so
that we can name and experience the articulate consciousness of mind in women in all its different forms of expression. In this sense, feminism requires praxis, that is, both knowing-what-we-do and doing-what-we-know, "the self-creative activity through which we make the world," such that philosophizing feminist critique in music and doing music cannot be separate entities. Thus, those who speak of feminism as critique are participating in a paradigm shift that embodies the diversity of women's experiences in its challenges and questions, while seeking meaning-making conditions that honor their differences.

Because of the broader context and greater depth of feminist work surrounding us within a multidisciplinary framework, it is possible to begin at this time the task of feminist theoretical reconstruction of music through music education, even while we "deconstruct" the Western art music tradition to uncover its gender blindness and biases. Musicologists, ethnomusicologists, and (more recently) music theorists increasingly are engaged in this "deconstructive" project as they examine the realities of women's experiences in music historically, cross-culturally, and in musical theory or structure. At the 1993 Feminist Theory and Music II Conference, I heard musicologists' and music theorists' initial (and often somewhat naive pedagogically) examples and questions regarding the transmission and transformation of musical knowledge. Most frequently there was no recognition that musical knowledge is transmitted within and through particular kinds of institutions, institutions which present resistance to change. On the other hand, I did hear a willingness to consider the institutional implications of reconstructing music through music education voiced by one theorist: could it be that education is the social action component of feminist music theory? To take that question further, I suggest that music scholars now ask how shifting from men's to women's perspectives might alter the fundamental categories, methodology and self-understanding of music, particularly as transmitted through the educational process. This form of questioning exemplifies feminism as critique.25

So long as only one critical position is assumed, basic categories within music--music itself--would remain unchallenged. Although the initial presentation of categories of feminist thought help to make different perspectives apparent, in the end the critique must be greater than the parts; no one model of feminist theory will suffice for a thorough interrogation of music as cultural practice transmitted through education. We cannot hope to find a singular "common language" for this project. Expanding my definition of feminism as critique to acknowledge the partiality of any one critical lens, the futility of universal perspectives, the shifting ground of subjectivity/objectivity, the dominance of "neutrality," the very political substance of education and art, simultaneously with the centrality of women to feminism--such acknowledgments fracture the line of fault hidden underneat the everyday-ness of music teaching that serves to domesticate girls and women within music worlds. Awareness then makes it possible to work provisionally through feminism as critique in philosophy of music education. By placing feminism as critique within philosophy of music education, I attempt to present a more integral understanding, where "if patriarchy can take what exists and make it not, surely we can take what exists and make it be," where "utopia would be a fiction from which would be born the generic body of she who thinks," where consciousness of women's musical minds can be articulated. Clearly, developing feminist theory is risky business.29

Speaking Philosophy of Music Education30

The problem with the extant philosophy of music education is that there is no accounting of difference, especially difference within sex/gender systems. Now by "accounting of difference," I do not mean simply an enhancement of the
classical or art music under discussion/performance with various other types of music (popular, jazz, rock, world music, etc.). I do not mean a marginal addition of cultures other than European-derived. I do not mean a mention of socio-political influences at certain carefully circumscribed moments as possibly relevant to the understanding of music. I do not mean the occasional use of inclusive language to acknowledge that not all of us are white or male (who is us, anyway?). While all of the above do impinge on any movement towards more inclusive philosophies (that is, differences do need articulation), the articulation in and of itself is neither an ends or a means. Re-thinking of difference in relation to music is required. Therefore, part of what I mean is accounting of difference as if differences matter and play some central role in the meaning of music; specifically, that race, class and gender (and diverse variations thereof) permeate music, have an effect on music and are affected by music.

Aesthetic education. Although aesthetic education approaches cliché among many music educators, it is equally evident that that hegemony is not as secure as it was a decade ago. Criticism of aesthetic education as the philosophy of music education is not new. During the past several years we have begun to hear competing ideas regarding what music means and why we do music in schools. Scholars have been wondering, talking, thinking, and writing about the adequacy of aesthetic education as both a philosophical basis and a rationale for music education. If these competing ideas were ineffectual, it would not be necessary for proponents of aesthetic education to claim that no one else has proposed an alternative philosophy, while simultaneously reducing those competing ideas to policy squabbles. And since ideas do not spring instantly and maturely into publication (unlike the patriarchal myth where Athena burst forth from Zeus’ forehead), then it seems significant to acknowledge that musical thinkers have been struggling with the meanings of such competing ideas, that these ideas have a history through, within and around, as well as against, the hegemonic discourse of aesthetic education. However, since texts of aesthetic education and some alternatives to it are readily available, these texts expressing their respective positions better than I, and, since I believe I can assume you are aware of them, and finally, since my focus is on feminism as critique, I will not review all of those philosophical concerns. My attention to these theoretical perspectives will focus on accounting of/for differences—in, around, through music and music teaching and learning. This particular exploration of feminism as critique (a fiction-theory pushes and pulls the boundaries of philosophy in music education to expose the gaps excluding so many of us from its myths and narratives.

It appears to me to have been a commonplace among the general population of music educators that aesthetic education is the philosophy of music education. For twenty years Bennett Reimer’s A Philosophy of Music Education was the only music teacher education text with a reference to philosophy in the title. The prevalence of this text resulted in the emergence of aesthetic education as a master theory that has remained relatively stable for nearly three decades. In fact, in the second edition Reimer states, “No alternative philosophy has been proposed by anyone else.” Simultaneously, the contemporary historical period in U.S. music education has been identified as that of Aesthetic Education, or “the aesthetic education movement.” Such statements demonstrate the move from a more indefinite “a” philosophy to a hegemonic “the.” Consequently, the critique I herein engage pertains to that aesthetic education concept which is hegemonic.

Whether or not one agrees with the philosophic position espoused, aesthetic education as music education has provided some definitive guidelines for teaching practice: good music, expressive music should be what is taught; music should be perceived as aesthetic through its formal elements; aesthetic and/or musical terminology that focuses on the expressive musical elements is appropriate for teaching and learning situations. According to Reimer’s recent
writing, “Engagements with works that emphasize their meaning as art...may be understood to be aesthetic education.” Other key characteristics of aesthetic education include: “transcendence achieved by intrinsically meaningful form or structures;” that which is “regarded as and responded to as an instance of meaningful form;” that which “attempts to provide tuition about how to interact in relevant ways with musical phenomena can be construed as aesthetic education.”37

Feminism as Critique of the Aesthetic

While the definition of aesthetic education appears to be expanding in response to criticisms of its limitations, such components of aesthetic education as musical exemplars, aesthetic perception, aesthetic reaction and aesthetic experience are firmly rooted in 18th-century aesthetic principles. These principles are appropriately applied to a specific kind of music within an historical location inside the western art tradition. Simply saying that musics outside of that specific limitation (whether popular music or Ghanaian drumming or fill-in-the-blank music) can be experienced aesthetically, taught through aesthetic education does not make it so—or appropriate.

Part of the problem with aesthetics as a philosophy of music applied to music education is found within philosophy itself. As Carolyn Korsmeyer points out, the feminist challenge to assumed neutrality is especially subversive in philosophy, a discipline priding itself on aspiration to universality and rigorous theory.38 This aspiration to universality is seen in the axioms of aesthetic education as applied to all musics under the rubric that these axioms are value-free and therefore applicable to any music from any culture or any historical era. Although more feminists are critical of aesthetics, Hilde Hein suggests that even though “some of the most formative and central doctrines of classical aesthetics are not at all compatible with feminism and have been inimical to women,” aesthetics, more than any other branch of philosophy, offers possibilities for pluralism that may be advantageous to feminist theory. She notes that branches of aesthetics, particularly Marxism and phenomenology, often engage in critique similar to feminism, but without questioning duality or gendered discourse.39

Gender and museum culture. Hein proceeds to specify problematic aesthetic doctrine deeply implicated in both gender and duality: aesthetic disinterestedness; autonomy of the aesthetic; and, aesthetic transcendence.40 Estelle Lauter adds more doctrine crucial to the master theory of the aesthetic but problematic to a feminist theory of the arts: exclusive consideration of the art object; the requirement for expert training in identification, interpretation, and evaluation of art; conceptualizing the art-work as expressive of an individual artist who perceives differently.41 Specifically in music, Claire Detels defines three main elements of what she calls autonomist/formalist aesthetics:

1. the definition of art as a distinct activity, apart from other cultural practices;
2. the isolation and reification of “artworks” (i.e., the physical objects of art), away from their origins and symbolic meanings in human experience; and
3. the use of formalist, or structurally oriented, concepts as universals for judging and hierarchizing value of artworks.42

This history of aesthetics is not innocent. The 18th-century sources for the 19th-century development of aesthetics were steeped in the sexual and racial politics of European culture and society. Philosophers of aesthetics (e.g., Hanslick, Kant, Schopenhauer), all in one way or another exclude women, exclude all but European serious art, and consequently—even though the most recent writing about aesthetic education indicates the possibility of inclusion of non-white and popular cultures—it is very difficult to adjust the conceptual parameters to create an authentic space for such diversity. For example, to say that “each piece, no matter its cultural origin, should be studied and experienced for its
artistic power including but transcending any specific cultural references,\textsuperscript{44} would be to re-shape and re-experience a non-western, non-artistic music into a culturally inappropriate, historically western aesthetic mold. Universals are implied through the application of expressive and formal "elements of music"\textsuperscript{44} defined in western art music tradition and transcendence is the stated goal. As Detels places these criteria:

Notwithstanding its denial of cultural connections, the autonomist/formalist position itself arose in a cultural context, that of the "museum culture" of the arts.\textsuperscript{45}

Exemplar as problematic. Another concept problematic in feminist analysis but implicit in aesthetic education is the exemplar,\textsuperscript{46} the exquisitely art object on the pedestal for disinterested admiration, which obviously parallels medieval poetic chivalry as carried forward to the 19th-century "separate spheres" and "angel-in-the-house," where good and virtuous women were placed on pedestals above the sweat and blood of daily life.\textsuperscript{47} According to music theorist, Marianne Kielian-Gilbert:

...given the cultural tendency (as for example, in Hollywood film) to treat the "female body and the female self only as objects of aesthetic contemplation," we may reenact this cultural practice of sexual oppression when we attend solely to the aesthetic features and the autonomy of a musical text, thereby symbolically gendering and rendering it feminine.\textsuperscript{48}

Thus, the art object--music--is feminized, passive and beautiful in relation to the male admirer. This subject/object split, while most peculiar in terms of music which does not exist as a material object in and of itself, requires even further translation for the female subject, who is not-subject and not-object even as the exemplar axiom requires identification with the masculine subject and objectification of the feminine object. In addition, the absence of women as actors within aesthetic theory itself underlines this feminization of exemplar/object/music, and specifically in terms of education, reminds us of Rousseau's differential tracts for the education of Emile and Sophie.\textsuperscript{49} Gender has always already been a factor in this guilty history, and those occupying the feminine position have always been circumscribed by its limited range.

Praxial philosophy of music education. The praxial philosophy of music education is a more recent development and, therefore, neither as ossified or as neatly defined as aesthetic education. The writings of Phillip Alperson and David Elliott have been central to the explication of the praxial philosophy; therefore, I rely most heavily upon their definitions, supplemented by Eleanor Stubble's investigations of play and performance as a means of self-knowledge.

Phillip Alperson defines a praxial philosophy in reference to the arts in general:

The praxial view of art resists the suggestion that art can best be understood on the basis of some universal or absolute feature or set of features such as...aesthetic formalism, whether of the strict or enhanced variety. The attempt is made rather to understand in terms of the variety of meaning and values evidenced in actual practice in particular cultures....

The approach is contextual but not relativistic, either in the sense in which it might be thought that no truths about artistic realities can be had or in the sense in which it is claimed that no standards of artistic value can be enunciated. The truths and values of art are seen rather to be rooted in the context of human practices....\textsuperscript{50}

As the praxial philosophy of the arts is concerned with the practices of the arts within societal or cultural contexts, it answers some of the criticisms feminists have of aesthetic philosophy, specifically the critique of formalism, universality, exclusivity of the art object, and (to some extent) the definition of art as apart from other cultural practices. In applying this praxial viewpoint as a philosophy of music education, Alperson goes on to say
[A] music education program which aims to educate students about musical practice in its fullest sense must take into account, not only the history and kind of appreciation appropriate to the musical work of art, but also the nature and significance of the skills and productive human activity that bring musical works into being, if for no other reason than the fact that the results of human action cannot be adequately understood apart from the motives, intentions, and productive considerations of the agents who bring them into being.51

David Elliott works out more of the details of a praxial philosophy of music education with specific concentration on the meaning of musical performance as integral to that philosophy. Elliott focuses on music as knowledge, a knowing-how embodied in performance that is "a process to be lived," where "real musical/interpretative performing involves both generative and evaluative thinking" becoming "a live deployment of the whole Self."52 Technical skills, propositional and procedural knowledge are integrated within the intentionality (thought-full-ness) of musical performance, concomitant with the value judgments and strategies that are part of a successful musical performance.53 Further, Eleanor Stuble elaborates concepts of play as crucial to music performance yielding constructive knowledge of self and the development of culture, particularly through "feeling apart together."54 Elliott suggests that "From this perspective, to enter into and take up a musical practice is also to be inducted into 'a musical world'," which "rests on long traditions that provide the musical practitioners/teachers/students of these practices with constructive knowledge about who they are in relation to themselves, to each other, and to past others."55

**Feminism as Critique of the Praxial**

I have no doubts that the praxial philosophy of music education, which is still evolving, opens up more possibilities than the aesthetic, but as I said earlier, my project is to expand the boundaries of philosophy of music education (perhaps into philosophies) and to expose exclusionary practices in current philosophical discussion. My concerns herein are not so much with what is said in definition and explication of the praxial philosophy, but what is not said, that is: if "otherness" (e.g., gender, race, class, sexuality, ethnicity, abilities) is not named and addressed directly, the dominant group presumes universality and consequently can easily if not intentionally oppress. Employing a praxial philosophy does not yet shift the paradigm to embody the diversity of women's experiences, among others, in its challenges and questions; it does not yet account for difference as if differences matter and play some central role in the meanings we make of music.

**Reified performance.** Performance has long been reified within western musical traditions. For confirmation, we need only note the star status accorded to historical and contemporary virtuosos. Kielian-Gilbert names one of the oppressive practices resulting from the reification of procedure and interpretation within music theory. Her reference to an abundance of methodologies, technologies and skills is applicable to a praxial philosophy of music education:

The sheer proliferation of currently available theoretical procedures, and the emphasis on technology and skill, also cloud the consequences of who is doing the interpreting and the ends to which an interpretation is or might be directed. Though perhaps not intended, our focus on procedure promotes aestheticization and the elevation of analytical prowess as an end or display unto itself, and limits interpretation in the sense that tools may
easily be used as weapons to dehumanize and destroy.\textsuperscript{56}

Briefly addressing musical performance utilizing contemporary technologies, we find research demonstrating that boys and girls approach music technology differently. Austin Clarkson and Karen Pegley report that while girls were proficient in their use of MIDI technology, their attitudes towards its place in the music classroom were less positive than boys, possibly because the girls were more interested in balancing group singing with computer-generated sound, whereas the boys preferred to use MIDI to perform instrumental solos or competitive rap. Further, Pegley noticed that both place and vocality had direct effect on performance, i.e., boys exhibited more interest in performing solos publicly and on videotape, while girls were not willing to be either video or audio taped live, which would have resulted in their collaborations being shared with a wider audience.\textsuperscript{57}

When Kielian-Gilbert says that tools may easily be used as weapons, the meaning need not be limited to metaphor: induction into western musical practice has often meant the adoption of “success at any cost” and “no pain-no gain” attitudes and priorities. The damage that musical instruments and highly skilled, highly disciplined participation in musical performance can cause to the human body has been identified only within the past decade. While performing arts medical clinics have been established, many are still gathering information about the incidence of injury and, therefore, making educated guesses regarding rehabilitation. In other words, musicians undergo various therapies, even surgery, to relieve pain, but conclusive evidence has yet to be established that these retain their effectiveness once (or if) a return has been made to high levels of musical performance. This new knowledge that performance “may be hazardous to your health” has yet to be reckoned with in the praxial philosophy.

\textit{Contradictory performance}. Musical performance is a contradictory experience for women, as Kielian-Gilbert suggests when she refers to the consequences of who is doing the interpreting and the ends to which an interpretation is or might be directed. On the one hand, performing music can be most empowering and constructive of self-identity. For example, it can mean “having control over my time and energy and working at home, being paid to do something that felt like an expression of myself, being paid to travel, and most important, being treated with respect and \textit{being heard}.” Simultaneously that same woman musician says:

\begin{quote}
Playing and performing hurt me very deeply. ...In a profession that is traditionally associated with suffering, it would be unthinkable to suggest that we have gone too far, that there is nothing wrong with our bodies, that it is the instruments that must be changed. A culture that hates bodies and their limitations teaches us to scoff at the idea that the discipline and pain required to succeed in the arts is unnatural and wrong.\textsuperscript{58}
\end{quote}

We must acknowledge that questions of power are embedded in performance. Is the musical performance truly self-actualizing, or is it enacted under the supervision of a conductor, coach, mentor, master teacher? If one among the latter, then whose self is being lived? How? And with what effect upon the woman who is performing? As music theorist Suzanne Cusick suggests:

\begin{quote}
[A]ll musical texts (whether “performed” or not) represent complex models of the mind-body relationship—a relationship which is both severely dichotomized and heavily gendered in European-derived cultures. The virtual elimination of questions about the bodies whose actions allow music to exist from the “toolbox” of music theory and musicology is itself, then, a feminist issue.\textsuperscript{59}
\end{quote}

In addition, since performance is not devoid of aesthetic features and the primacy of musical text, performing music can be implicated in
gendering the music as feminine, the performer as masculine.

This contradictory experience of musical performance can be seen historically in western art music and cross-culturally. Ethnomusicologist, Ellen Koskoff, documents these complexities, including those of western art music, noting that while the meaning of women's performance differs by culture, it invariably is tied to that culture's concepts of women's sexuality. Performances deemed inappropriate for women, perhaps unfeminine, frequently personify sexuality out of control. A woman professional musician may be identified within a society as a courtesan, a prostitute, a loose woman—whatever her sexual reality. It appears that in almost every culture women's musical performances are differently and usually less valued than men's. Likewise, musical performance is linked to socialization (whether in educational, religious, or professional settings), simultaneously expressing and shaping cultural gender norms.

Another example of this contradictory performance experience was studied during 1992 by Travis Jackson in his work as a black jazz musician and among black jazz musicians in New York, where he found the jazz performance space mixed in all terms except gender. Through race as a signifier of master/slave, Jackson sees black women being placed outside the definition of womanhood into a completely sexualized position. In conjunction with this positioning, affection is displaced to the jazzman's instrument, often referred to as "my girl." According to Jackson, the "male gaze" is so prevalent as to make the very presence of women antithetical to jazz: women are seen as a source of evil; the jazz scene demands total commitment to the music and personal or artistic autonomy, thus, placing music first and lover or family second and third. Consequently women are not taken seriously or valued professionally as band members or band leaders, but considered to be a novelty.

It becomes apparent that the praxial philosophy of music education also is not innocent. These diverse power relations are implicated in the "long traditions that provide the musical practitioners/teachers/students of these practices with constructive knowledge about who they are in relation to themselves, to each other, and to past others." Such issues are begging to be addressed through feminist analysis of who is doing the interpreting/performing and to what end.

Feminist Mus(ic)ing: A Fiction-Theory

How does shifting from men's to women's perspectives alter the fundamental categories, methodology and self-understanding of music, particularly as transmitted through the educational process? Some of that shift to women's perspectives has been demonstrated in the previous sections with feminism as critique of the aesthetic and the praxial philosophies of music education, where the value of that paradigm shift...lies in its ability to go beyond the liberal feminist vision of equal representation in the mainstream institutions and canons of the arts, and to challenge the underlying exclusionary framework of values and practices that produce and maintain gender inequality, both in and outside of the artworld.

Other partial lenses into that si[gh]te were found in the definitions of various types of feminism and the explanation of feminism as critique. Some alterations of fundamental categories, methodology and self-understanding of music would occur should these initial examples become reality, because...feminist theory returns art to its social contexts and reinvigorates it so that it becomes a source of power to a wide variety of people. Feminist theory enhances our experience of art by accounting for it more accurately. It expands the range of what we consider to be art and prepares the way to legitimate new art
forms; opens the community of artists; revalues subjectivity in art and augments it to include women’s experiences; allows us to reconnect aesthetic values with political activity; stimulates criticism of obsolete aesthetic standards and validates new ones; valorizes new modes of production; and supports more active response.\

Feminism as critique of instructional practices in musicology. Several musicologists are struggling with similar ideas within the educational process as they find it. Marcia Citron suggests teaching a critique of canonicity as one immediately useful methodology for music historians and performers. David Code discusses the false universalization of twelve-tone temperament in terms of his concerns regarding what and how his students learn music theory; while Lawrence Kramer reasons apprehension of the paradigm shift as dependent on “our willingness to read as inscribed within the immediacy-effects of music itself the kind of mediating structures usually positioned outside music under the rubric of context.” J. Michele Edwards sees the line blurring between audience, performer, and composer as women performers/composers challenge musical values to pose different modes of musical interaction; whereas, Jennifer Rycenga sees musical agency (and I would suggest, education) as a process:

to create situations that have similar parameters, though they may not imitate this exact compositional/improvisational dynamic. Situations of musical trust will not only deconstruct the composer’s presumed authority and prestige, but stress the agency, interaction, and extension, over time, of all involved. Thus the human politics of music can become a location for an ethics that is not judgmental, but relational.

Feminism as critique of instructional practices in music education. Within music education itself, Eleanor Stubley points toward this position when she borrows from reader/response theory to suggest similarities between musical performing and reading as transactions which speak from the heart and exist in association with the immediate past and the future about to unfold, where there is a certain simultaneousness of self and other. Patricia O’Toole demonstrates that integral site of knowing in her discussion of choral pedagogy and rehearsal techniques, weaving together theory and experience. Further highlighting the contested terrain of music education, Vicki Eaklor suggests the theoretical problems are based in a discipline that is both too feminine for males and too masculine for females, and Julia Koza documents the heterosexism of choral education texts that exhibit great concern for the missing males and the potential unmanliness of singing, such that good teaching has been defined as that which assures the presence of boys in the music class.

In a similar vein, Lucy Green notes that work is needed on teaching the compensatory history of women in music in the school curriculum, both in terms of knowledge of the music and for a foundation for understanding women’s situations today; we need “new ways of understanding how girls and boys relate to music as aesthetic and cultural object, or how musical meanings operate within this relationship;” and, we need to discuss “questions about how gendered musical relationships are perpetuated by schooling.”

Feminist musings. These are all partial and--in some cases--contradictory shifts; they do begin to fracture the line of fault hidden underneath the everydayness of music teaching. Operating provisionally, aware of complicity even in critique, I suggest “working from the site of knowing that is prior to the differentiation of subjective and objective” where one teaches “an explication of the actual practices in which we are active.” This site could be

where art remain[s] embedded in and arise[s] out of conversation with the contingent, everyday world. The artistic praxis...works with [context] in a dialogic fashion, that recognizes that moments of
In this way, researching and thinking about music is not separate from doing music is not separate from teaching music\(^7\) is not separate from the line of fault, that is, the ways in which the everyday musicworlds we experience as women are incongruous with the social expression of these musicworlds. In this way we can recognize music’s subjectivity/objectivity as a shifting ground relevant and even implicated in educational practice, especially as we acknowledge our own actions as inventing musical praxis, and, thus, its political substance. “Art is not transcendent, then, but rather part of the mortal process.”\(^7\)

Fundamental concepts requiring explication of musical practices in critical education include those centered in duality: subject/object; mind/body; thinking/doing; masculine/feminine. Interrogating these dualities through feminism as critique recognizes the power inequities of many musical actions and activities, making it possible to understand through connections or integration rather than separations and individuation. It is quite possible that through integration of dualities we can come to recognize multiple differences that play central roles in the meaning of musics. It is at this point that we can attend to the permeation and permutation of music by differences—as if they mattered and are worthy of honor. Further to this critique, Renée Lorraine suggests a pedagogy of “fluctuating stasis,” such that “[t]here would be no common language...multilingualism would become essential.” In a continued explication of the actual Lorraine envisions

...urging our students to think, feel, listen and create for themselves, ...familiarizing students with conventional ways of approaching music, but at the same time encouraging them to resist authority and to approach music in their own unique ways.\(^\text{77}\)

Concluding fictions. In conclusion, some of these ideas seem rather pedestrian; others bring me back to the fiction-theory where the generic body of she who thinks would be born, taking what exists and making it be, where consciousness of women’s musical minds could be articulated/composed/performed.\(^7\) Perhaps here we would find feminist mus(ic)ing. Here we would take pleasure in chaos, revealing deep structures beneath surfaces.\(^7\) Like Patti Lather, “Rather than ‘how to’ guidelines, what I have tried to ‘sum up’ here instead, is the need for intellectuals with liberatory intentions to take responsibility for transforming our own practices so that our own empirical and pedagogical work can be less toward positioning ourselves as masters of truth and justice and more toward creating a space where those directly involved can act and speak on their own behalf.”\(^8\) Finally, I remember Eleanor Stubley’s suggestion that the current challenge to music education philosophy is “to awaken the profession to the full range of meaning potential in the musical experience and to encourage the reflection upon that experience for insights.”\(^8\) As one alternative within that full range of meaning potential, engaging feminism as critique reveals hitherto undiscovered, unexamined, and unthinkable possibilities. As one last example, we who are women would know music as if women mattered, while men would know music as if they were women.\(^8\) Thus, feminism as critique in the philosophy of music education increases the capacity of music education philosophy to comprehend and elucidate “what music means.” On the other hand, to attempt awakening to and reflection on the full range of meaning potential in the musical experience without considering feminist theories risks theoretical naivete.
NOTES


2. Susan McClary’s pathbreaking Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press) was published in 1991.


5. See British Journal of Music Education 10, no. 3, (November 1993) and The Quarterly Journal of Music Teaching and Learning 4, no. 4/5 no. 1 (Winter 1994) for the first issues of academic journals in music education to address feminist theory.


8. Categories of feminism are most often used as a pedagogical tool in Women’s Studies classes. This presentation is approximately one semester of an undergraduate honors seminar in feminist theories reduced to 600 words!


10. Specifically Simone de Beauvoir. See Ibid., 195-216.


13. Tong, Feminist Thought, 71. Tong devotes two chapters to radical feminism, 71-138.


15. Renée Lorraine proposes a gynocentric aesthetic: ...we may assume that the powerful emotion of dance and song would be used along with medicine and talk therapy to heal physical, social and psychological ills. (Music, art, and dance therapists would be more plentiful, highly valued, and better paid.) Artistic activity would more often adapt to nature, rather than seek to express refinement or domination of nature. The division between intellect and emotion in aesthetic activity would lessen, and both would combine with action to achieve a synthesis of body and spirit. The erotic would be expressed as a vital, positive force and would be divorced from repression and the domination, submission, and violence of pornography. Artistic activity would be understood by and accessible to all; the authoritarian, hierarchical, and exclusionary nature of traditional artistic circles and performance groups would fall into decline. The emphasis would be off aesthetic objects to be coveted, hoarded, and contemplated, and on dynamic process, fully engaging and socially significant.


16. Tong, Feminist Thought, 39-71 (Marxist feminism); 173-194 (socialist feminism).

17. Ibid., 173.


1985). This definition of postmodern feminism is even more simplified and problematic than her others (Tong, *Feminist Thought*, 217-234). Post-structuralism would be a more accurate name for the theoretical position Tong describes, with postmodernism reserved for critiques of representation.


25. I draw this formulation from Benahib and Cornell, *Feminism as Critique*, and apply it to music.


30. There are several aspects of philosophy of music education that I have not addressed in this paper, especially those centered in psychological frameworks and what might be called relativism. Due to time/length restrictions I chose to focus my discussion on feminism as critique of aesthetic-and performance-based philosophies, the two that at this time appear to be receiving the most discussion.

31. As but one example, *The Quarterly Journal of Music Teaching and Learning*, vol. 2, no. 3 (Fall, 1991) featured a thorough discussion of many of these issues.

32. Gall Scott defines fiction-theory as developed during the 1970s by les Québécoises. This *l’écriture au féminin* (translated in English as “feminist writing”) sought to explore that gap between male dominant culture and an emerging culture in-the-feminine...This was not *theory about fiction*, but rather...[emphasis and ellipses in original] a reflexive doubling-back over the texture of the text.

Where nothing, not even the "theory" escapes the poetry, the eternal rhythm (as opposed to the internal logic) of the writing. The better to break continuity (the continuity of patriarchal mythologies) into fragments in order to question syntax/context. This habit of stopping to reflect on the process within the text itself looks forward to a meaning-in-the-feminine. Mutable meaning, open-ended...

...The lucidity of the theoretical process—in itself an intertextual process involving reading, talking, in which the words of other women play a key role—constantly prepares the way for the new risks she herself moves towards in her own fiction.


40. Ibid., 10-12.


44. Ibid., 54.


49. The search for abstract and speculative truths, for principles and axioms in science, for all that tends to generalisation, is beyond a woman's grasp; their studies should be thoroughly practical. It is their business to apply the principles discovered by men, it is their place to make the observations which lead men to discover those principles. A woman's thoughts, beyond the range of her immediate duties, should be directed to the study of men, or the acquisition of that agreeable learning whose sole end is the formation of taste.

Sophie's mind is pleasing but not brilliant...


51. Ibid., 236.

52. David J. Elliott, "Music as Knowledge," in Philosopher, Teacher, Musician, 33, 34, emphasis in original.


60. "[I]t is precisely her [Viardot's] reputation as diva and seductress which makes it difficult to learn much about her achievements as a composer." In Clarity James, Caryl Conger, and Linda Plaut, "The Music of Pauline Viardot-Garcia," 17 June 1993. "The stereotype evoked by the..." dancing lady "...is a sensuous woman of dubious morals, open sexuality, and fickle allegiance who may tempt others into sin."


63. There is one area in which both the aesthetic and the praxial can be questioned on the same ground, i.e., the idea of genius, whether as seen in the inspired composer or virtuoso performer. See Christine Battersby, Gender and Genius: Towards a Feminist Aesthetics (London: The Women's Press Ltd, 1989).


67. David Code, "[Not Equal]: Feminism, Tuning, and Theory Pedagogy," Abstracts, Feminist Theory and


74. Donovan, "Everyday Use and Moments of Being," 64. In her essay Donovan makes direct reference to Virginia Woolf's *Moments of Being*. For me the "everyday use" calls forward Dorothy Smith's "everyday world," although Donovan specifies "everyday use" as the craft of domestic art.

75. Gregory Ulmer suggests that there need not be any separation of research, teaching and art; see *Applied Grammatology: Post(e)-Pedagogy from Jacques Derrida to Joseph Beuys* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985).

76. Donovan, "Everyday Use and Moments of Being," 64.


78. See notes 29 and 32.


82. I am paraphrasing Gloria Steinem:

We have for so long looked at most subjects through male eyes that remedial vision (which for women, would mean looking at the world as if women mattered, and for men, as if they were women) brings a new perspective.

Gloria Steinem, *Moving Beyond Words* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994), 14, emphasis in original. For an example of a male scholar appropriately engaging feminist criticism, see Fred Everett Maus, "Masculine Discourse in Music Theory," in *Perspectives of New Music* 31, no. 2 (Summer 1993).

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