

**DIFFERENCE OUT OF PLACE:
FEMINIST WAR MACHINES IN MUSIC EDUCATION**

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Abstract

Speaking out of place in a profession where it is characterized as “extreme” and “a special interest,” feminism in music education serves as a catalyst for interrogating the profession’s philosophies, practices, and discourses. It has proven to be necessary and influential to the extent that it cannot be ignored, responding to problems like gender segregation and stereotyping of music education positions, music instruments and musical roles, exclusionary performance practices and the music canon, all as implicated by sexuality and race. Responding to the exigencies of these and related issues and self-imposed imperatives to posit alternatives, feminism has been deployed as critique with goals that may be simultaneously too small and too large. This paper explores ways feminism in music education speaks from and in terms of nomadic out of place-ness as it initiates theory related to issues in music and education engaged with material life. I argue that Monique Wittig’s concept of “The Trojan Horse” and Luce Irigaray’s “ethics of sexual difference” in the context of Gilles Deleuze’s materialist ontology provide examples of feminist war machines that may be deployed in music education to enable difference, the importance and relevance of which are found in problems currently facing the profession.

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Speaking out of place in a profession where it is characterized as “extreme” and a “special interest,” feminism in music education serves as a catalyst for interrogating the music education’s philosophies, practices, and discourses. It has proven to be necessary and influential to the extent that it cannot be ignored, even as it is nevertheless discounted. Addressing problems

such as gender segregation and stereotyping of music education positions, music instruments and musical roles, exclusionary performance practices and the music canon, all as implicated by at least sexuality and race, feminist research and theory are selectively appropriated out of context or misrepresented.¹ This pernicious practice is most notable in relationship to current concerns in music education with social justice directed outwardly from the profession typically as liberal gestures of generosity that enact colonialist salvation narratives.² Feminist researchers, meanwhile, in their responses to the exigencies of these and related issues as well as imposed imperatives to posit alternatives, often deploy feminism as critique with goals that are perhaps simultaneously too small (limited to solving specific problems), and too large (complete transformation of the profession). Inasmuch as the former are irresolvable without achievement of the latter, both projects would seem to be utopian in the context of apparently dystopian realities.

The purpose of this paper is to explore ways in which feminism in music education may speak from and in terms of nomadic out of place-ness as it initiates theory related to issues in music and education producing questions, concepts, and practices engaged with material life. Thinking through and with Monique Wittig's (1992) "straight mind" I argue that her concept of "The Trojan Horse" and Luce Irigaray's (1993a) "ethics of sexual difference" provide examples of feminist war machines that may be deployed in music education to enable difference. The

¹ Appropriation and misrepresentation of feminist research occurs when music education researchers draw on the writings of feminists such as Gloria Anzaldúa and bell hooks without acknowledging or taking into account the feminist contexts in which their ideas were formulated and are situated. When asked about this practice Anzaldúa answered, "I think you could call this selective critical interpretation a kind of racism" (Anzaldúa, 1999/1987, 232). Similarly, hooks always explicitly positions her work on education as feminist (see for instance, hooks 1994; hooks 2003).

² Examples of these efforts include appeals to liberal democracy that do not acknowledge effects of power, as well as for instance, school music outreach efforts to 'under-privileged' groups that ignore the complicity of privileged groups such as the school music profession which supports systemic conditions contributing to racism, under-employment, and homelessness. For challenges in music education to these narratives, see for instance, Gould (in press) and Vaugeois (2007).

importance and relevance of potentialities of feminist theorizing for music education are found in the nature and type of problems currently facing the profession. While multiculturalism has been a concern for at least 40 years, it is only in the new millennium when it has become unavoidable. Similarly, as a profession, we have yet to satisfactorily answer the question of why music education, and in what ways is it possibly salient in a digital world of music on demand, a world in which the music of the Western musical canon is largely beside the point? Addressing these and related questions requires ways of thinking about music education that take into account problematics of contemporary society that the profession has previously managed to avoid. Relevance now requires creativity and flexibility that enable us to think otherwise, to think differently. While Wittig opens up the problematic field of difference, Irigaray turns difference upon itself. In the context of Gilles Deleuze's materialist ontology,³ Wittig's and Irigaray's theories provide two approaches for using difference to create concepts proliferating change and alternative potentialities in music education in order to make (a) difference.

Feminist Potentialities

While feminist critique directed inwardly toward the profession of music education has been generally ignored, issues related to social justice addressed by this research have become salient in the profession in just the last year or two.⁴ Generally speaking, interest in social justice in this research is directed outwardly from the profession, conceiving music education as a means to 'bring' social justice to those who are apparently without it. Inasmuch as the history and politics surrounding these issues is both complex and poorly understood, multiple ways of approaching, theorizing, and acting are required. Feminism provides a multi-faceted lens for

³ For Deleuze, ontology is not so much about discovering what exists, but creating concepts for how one might live in relation to what exists (see for instance Deleuze and Guattari 1987).

⁴ See for instance the July 2007 special issue on social justice in music education of the journal, *Music Education Research*, Vol. 9, No. 2, as well as the 2007 Vol. 6, No. 4 of *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education*.

revealing and critiquing issues related to social justice both theoretically and in practical terms, and then posits alternatives that contribute to change (Grosz 1995). This is what I (Gould in press-a) describe as feminism's imperative: "feminist in terms of its commitments to confronting, resisting, and subverting material interlocking sources of oppression; imperative in terms of its urgency in responding to exigencies of lived experience in education and music education." Further, this is a political imperative understood in relationship to choices—what they involve and how they are made, for every time we select, we also exclude. Sometimes we make these selections easily; other times we are forced to choose. Regardless, the criteria by which our choices are made define the interests and values by which we make them. In music education, this may be demonstrated in our adopting a particular pedagogical approach, or using curricular materials and scores advertised and supported by 'approved' textbook and educational publishers. The political nature of exclusions resulting from choices is also apparent in the narrow range of classes and ensembles that we typically offer as part of school music curricula. Should we decide to choose differently in any of these cases, on what basis might we do that? What criteria, what perspectives might inform our decisions?

Feminist theory and practices provide possibilities on which these decisions may be responsively and responsibly undertaken. The two particular perspectives of feminism that I discuss in some detail here seem to be almost diametrically opposed—or at the very least incompatible. Inasmuch as no answer is ever complete, final, or useful in all situations, feminism holds divergent and even competing views in tension. Indeed, it is this flexibility manifested most notably in its constant self-critique that is perhaps feminism's greatest strength.⁵ By making

⁵ Holding contradictory positions, of course, is typically considered to be an indication of weakness in the content and/or structure of theoretical argument. Within this masculinist discourse, mis(s)-readings of feminism in music education are prominent. Certainty, however, has gone the way of liberal humanism; that is, it is impossible. Contingency and flexibility allow for responsiveness and relevance without totalizing authoritativeness through

connections in unusual ways, feminism itself is never agreed upon, never foreclosed, but always changing, always accommodating alternatives dependent on specific circumstances as they are understood in relationship to both history and politics. Consequently, its concerns necessarily extend beyond gender and are implicated by salient context-specific sources of oppression, such as race, class, and sexuality. As critique of interlocking sources of oppressions, feminism is inherently and overtly political as it is always in process (always involves choices) in terms of “a politics of becoming” (Hughes 2002, 175).

Defining feminism, then, is impossible to the extent that it is multiple, contradictory, and shifting. Unconcerned with the noun ‘feminism’ Monique Wittig directs her attention to “feminist” or “someone who fights for women” (Wittig 1992, 14), a battle that may be undertaken in materialist terms of class or essentialist terms of myth. What is important here is her explanation for choosing the word “feminist” in light of its ambiguity: “We chose to call ourselves ‘feminists’ not in order to support or reinforce the myth of woman, nor to identify ourselves with the oppressor’s definition of us, but rather to affirm that our movement had a history and to emphasize the political link with the old feminist movement” (14). Relative to its historicity and political nature, this definition of feminist necessitates “a materialist feminist approach” (9) that disallows ‘women’ as a “natural” category and insists that the category of women is but “the *mark* imposed by the oppressor” (Wittig 1992, 11).⁶ What we understand as immediate and given concerning sex, and race as well, are elaborate social constructions—

singular (in the Deleuzian sense), mindful, interrogated praxis of action (feminist movement). In music education theoretically informed feminist movement contributes to the recognition of women composers and conductors, investigates and offers solutions for pervasive and pernicious gender stereotyping of music occupations, materials, and instruments all in the context of challenging and changing the very beliefs and assumptions around which the profession is formed.

⁶ Certain social characteristics are said to be ‘marked’ because they deviate from the norm. Being white (‘whiteness’) is not marked because when we refer to music educators, for instance, we assume that they are white, unless we preface our reference to them with ‘non-white’ or follow with ‘of colour.’ Similarly, music educators are assumed to be male, unless we ‘mark’ them otherwise—as ‘female’ or ‘women.’

myths—by which these otherwise neutral physical characteristics are perceived in sets of relationships that reinterpret or mark them in specific pejorative ways. In other words Wittig argues that “before being *seen* that way, [women and blacks] first had to be *made* that way” (12, emphasis in original). This is articulated in the accusation that lesbians are not ‘real’ women, underscoring the constructed nature of the category of women such that it is apparently necessary for ‘women’ to be ‘real,’ and implying that it is possible for some women to not be ‘real.’ Similarly, accusations that lesbians’ refusal to be ‘real’ women means they really want to be men assumes that lesbians would want or be able to assume in addition to appearance, the consciousness of men. Wittig maintains that the latter is impossible because men’s consciousness is inherited with power that is inaccessible to women. For Wittig, then, feminism destroys the totalitarian category of sex that “works . . . through an operation of reduction, by taking the part for the whole, a part (color, sex) through which the whole human group has to pass as through a screen” (Wittig 1992, 8).

By contrast, Luce Irigaray eschews the term feminist,⁷ preferring instead to focus on “the struggles of women,” (Irigaray 1988, 150) thus making room for addressing them in terms of the diverse natures of both women and their struggles. Indeed, she attempts to simultaneously account for “exploitation common to all women”⁸ as well as that which is particular to each woman, “that [which] is for her the most immediately unbearable” (Irigaray 1985, 166-167). Irigaray feels she can accomplish this by maintaining her autonomy and refusing to be associated with or “locked into a single ‘group’” intent on exerting power to establish monolithic ‘truths’ about women and women’s experience. Consequently, Irigaray tends to focus, particularly in her later writings, on issues of citizenship and civil identity that cannot be predicated on equality and

⁷ Nevertheless, when women are attacked “under the label of feminism,” Irigaray is willing “to claim the term back and then to refine it and say something else” (Irigaray 1988, 150).

⁸ It should be noted that the notion of any type of “exploitation common to all women” is strongly contested.

must surpass already given masculine models of so-called neutrality (Zakin 2007).⁹ Irrespective of her distancing from feminism and feminist theory, however, Irigaray involves herself in an ethical political activism that would dismantle traditional non-feminist social relations (Hirsch 1994).

Often overlooked but perhaps most crucial is bell hooks' (2000/1984) claim that feminism does not constitute an identity. Instead, she says, it is an action, something one should advocate. This leaves space for advocating other political concerns in which one does not have a positionality or perspective from which to view the world so much as take one (Ahmed et al 2000), thus avoiding the ideological dualism of feminist/non-feminist. Responsive to so-called third wave feminists' claims that feminism is a process (Walker 1995), this also signals a future of feminism not based on identitarian projects, but rather on "*pure difference*, difference in itself, difference with *no identity*" (Grosz 1995, 53).¹⁰ Understanding difference in this way—as a "right to be and to act differently" (54), without reference to pre-existing normative ideals against which everything else is devalued, acknowledges the existence of and its incompatibility with the specificity of the generic male (white and heterosexual). Based on ways in which sources of difference articulate with each other in contingent relationships (Brah 1996; Jakobsen 1998), this concept of difference is free of hierarchy that would reduce to dualisms (Haraway 1991). Similarly, this view maintains heterogeneity between and among various revolutionary struggles, and necessitates that men's experiences with patriarchy are not equivalent to nor

⁹ For discussions of feminist theorizing interrogating and reframing democracy, see Gould (2007), Ziarek (2001), Dean (1997), and Trend (1996). For nuanced feminist discussions of difference with/in postmodernism see Ahmed (1998) and Jakobsen (1998).

¹⁰ Grosz links this notion of difference as opposed to distinction to "Derrida's conception of *différance*, which in turn is based in part on his reading of Saussure's notion of pure difference" (Grosz 1995, 233, n5). Deleuze's goal is to free difference from what he calls "the four iron collars of representation" (Deleuze 1994, 262): identity, analogy, opposition, and similarity such that "only that which is identical, similar, analogous, or opposed can be considered different" (138). In other words, only that which may be repeated as the same, close, overlapping, or opposite can be considered different, constituting difference only as variation.

concurrent with women's, impacting not only women and their relations with men, but the world as well. In this way difference related to women exists affirmatively in terms of "the active process of empowering the difference that women *make* to culture and to society" (Braidotti 1994, 238-39, emphasis in original).

Understanding difference as positivity enables music educators to move beyond traditional practices and discourses in order to explore alternatives without pejorative connotations. These alternatives are not so much different from what has been accepted in music education, but "*different so as to bring about alternative values*" (Braidotti 1994, 239, emphasis in original) in music education practices and discourses. In other words, difference is not less or opposed to what has preceded it, but rather, difference is just that: different, something new, something previously unthought, untried, even untenable. It does not threaten what came before, but extends and experiments with it, transforming it without prejudice. Evaluation of other choices, different responses, is made on the basis of what happens as the result of implementing them. For Deleuze, the best thing that can happen is that these (different) responses inspire still more responses, because no method or approach can be said to be the 'best' or 'only' one in every situation. Informed by his materialist ontology, feminism enables difference in this positive mode, and is concerned with creating frameworks responsive to questions of how one might live (May 2005). Indeed, this ontology, with which Wittig's materialist feminist approach and Irigaray's ethics are clearly compatible, demands a creative concept of difference that exists only in terms of itself without foundational identities to anchor it or against which it may be compared. As difference in kind instead of difference in quality or variation, objects, concepts, relations are understood in terms of what is beneath and behind them, what more there is than what may be directly perceived or apprehended. What more may be thought in music education

than what we already know or perceive? How might music education function if it did not depend on carefully rehearsed performances? Creating concepts for difference rather than identities opens up the problematic field, eschewing solutions that would constrain thought in music education in order to explore and experiment with different potentialities. Irigaray and Wittig engage difference in singular but related ways that provide openings of and for possibilities relevant to music education.

Irigaray's Ethics of Sexual Difference

Framing her argument in terms of the survival of the planet, Irigaray argues that the intellectual and political projects of sexual difference are crucial.

Think of it as an approach that would allow us to check the many forms that destruction takes in our world, to counteract a nihilism that merely affirms the reversal or the repetitive proliferation of status quo values—whether you call them the consumer society, the circularity of discourse, the more or less cancerous diseases of our age, the unreliability of words, the end of philosophy, religious despair or regression to religiosity, scientific or technical imperialism that fails to consider the living subject. (Irigaray 1993a, 5)

Interrogating and understanding sexual difference intellectually and politically holds such promise for Irigaray because it never has been adequately addressed, let alone realized, in the history of Western philosophy. While difference logically requires at least two sexes, she argues, Western philosophy continues to structure the world in terms of the One, man. Woman, meanwhile, exists not autonomously as a “second sex” but only in relation to and in terms of man, thus entirely dependent on the One. Acknowledging that “partial and local” changes may have reversed some patriarchal “status quo” values, Irigaray asserts that “no new values have been established” (Irigaray 1993a, 6). Further, ‘woman’ disappears because “this sex which is not one” is conceptualized exclusively “on the basis of masculine parameters” (Irigaray 1985, 23). Thinking differently, thinking difference in terms of at least two sexes for the first time

incites revolution based on “an ethics of sexual difference” (Irigaray 1993a) in which ethics is understood in terms of relation between subjects “responsible for the other” (Ziarek 1998, 71). Irigaray notes that “in order for an ethics of sexual difference to come into being, we must constitute a possible place for each sex, body, and flesh to inhabit. Which presupposes a memory of the past, a hope for the future, memory bridging the present and disconcerting the mirror symmetry that annihilates the difference of identity” (Irigaray 1993a, 17-18). As difference beyond identity, this is difference that does not refer but rather creates.

Positing it in psychoanalytic terms as *the* sexual difference, Irigaray describes the difference manifested in “how our lived bodies are related to and differentiated from the source of our desire” (Bergoffen 2007, 153); in other words, how we resolve the Oedipus complex.¹¹ Irigaray reworks the complex in terms of the “almost ethical” biological (as opposed to medical) relation of the foetus to the maternal body, and the already ethical relationship of the young daughter to the mother. Instead of a patriarchal notion of autonomy characterized by “independence and separation,” Irigaray describes a “relative and relational” (Bergoffen 2007, 154) autonomy through which the otherness of the foetus is mediated by the placenta in a way that creates a relationship of acceptance between the maternal body and foetus (Irigaray 1993b, 38-39). Similarly, based on her research of gender-based speech patterns (see, for instance, Irigaray 1993b; 1996), Irigaray notes that only the little girl, through her communication with her mother, “sets up a just and communicative micro-society between her mother and herself” (Irigaray 1996, 130). She is able to create an ethical relation between them because, “there are always two persons speaking to one another” (130), as the little girl demonstrates her “loving intention” for her mother. The adult woman, however, is unable to return this “intersubjective

¹¹ Elizabeth Hirsh (1994) argues that Irigaray’s “*practicable*, or ‘setting,’ of psychoanalytic psychotherapy . . . suggests a theoretical basis for a feminist politics of specificity, which in her words can speak to—because it listens to—‘each woman, right where she is’” (Hirsch 1994, 275, 288 [Irigaray 1985, 167]).

respect” because, “A dominant male culture has intervened between mother and daughter and broken off a loving and symbolic exchange” (130-31). Thus, the mother initiates her daughter into the logic of the same, “[r]ejecting the young daughter’s opening . . . that makes their twoness possible. . . She insists that the daughter listen and obey. Only one voice prevails. . . . The little girl remembers what the mother has been taught to forget” (Bergoffen 2007, 159).

Consequently, according to Irigaray, women must re-discover themselves as woman, sexually individuated in relation to each other. It is in resolving and recouping the mother-daughter relationship, then, that the woman-man relationship of two—as opposed to the patriarchal heterosexual relationship of One—becomes possible. For Irigaray, an ethics of sexual difference starts from current realities of social configurations: the division of the world into two sexes, which she points out, is necessary for the continuation of human existence. Instead of the logic of the same by which women are objects “of exchanges among men” (Irigaray 1985, 171), the sexual difference of woman and man she is interested in is inhered in the negative of each, in their incompleteness. Woman and man are differentiated in terms of their relation with each other, based on the recognition that each individually is not all that there is: “‘I am sexed’ implies, ‘I am not everything’” (Irigaray 1996, 51). Because ‘I’ do not comprise everything and stand in relation to the other who stands in relation to me, both are freed from the logic of the same, “establish[ing] the possibility of identity for each” (Grosz 1994, 344). Women claim this connection with self, according to Irigaray, by reasserting their homosexual relation with their mother in an ethical relation of two individuals respecting the difference of each. Indeed, Irigaray argues, daughters must remain connected to their “ancient and primary relationship to . . . homosexuality” (Irigaray 1993c, 19-20) through their “first love” of their mother. By speaking our language, remembering our genealogies we “give [the mother] back the right to pleasure, to

sexual experience, to passion, give her back the right to speak, or even to shriek and rage aloud” (18). This giving back becomes the basis for our creating “positive self-representations, productive rather than rivalrous relations with other women, relations of pleasure, narcissism, and autoeroticism. And even fertile creative relations with men” (Grosz 1994, 342)—initiating Irigaray’s “ethics of the passions” (Irigaray 1993a, 12) by which her ethics of sexual difference is ignited.

Drawing on what she calls Descartes’ “first passion” (12), Irigaray deploys wonder and surprise in terms of sexual difference. Without opposite or contradiction, the passion of wonder and surprise is always experienced as if for the first time. For Irigaray this constitutes the irreducible difference in that woman and man, astonished by each other’s difference, “are always meeting as though for the first time because they cannot be substituted one for the other,” (Irigaray 1993a, 13), they cannot occupy each other’s positionality. Further, as “the motivating force behind mobility in all its dimensions” (Irigaray 1993a, 73), wonder is an action both active and passive, “a middle voice” (Ziarek 1998, 69), as it induces us to enter in relation with each other while maintaining a moment of stasis, “no longer in the past and not yet in the future, . . . the moment of illumination—already and still contemplative—between the subject and the world” (Irigaray 1993a, 75, 77).¹² Irigaray describes wonder, then, as an *opening* before and after that which would constrain, the beginning force of which modifies our trajectories “toward *rare* things” (79, emphasis in original). The thing most rare, of course, is that which has never existed previously, and never been articulated in Western philosophy: the woman-man relationship of two, “sexual difference without hierarchy” (Irigaray 1988, 154). For Irigaray, this relationship constitutes the most creative, generative, fertile, indeed, fecund encounter, and through it, her

¹² The compatibility of this concept with Deleuzian “becoming” is striking. See Deleuze and Guattari (1987).

negation of the negative incompleteness of subjective existence effectively affirms it in terms of sexual difference (Schwab 1998, 81). Mediating the cultivation of this negative but now affirmed “natural reality” of the subject (Irigaray 1996, 51) makes of wonder spaces of potentiality.

An ethics of sexual difference in music education might focus on the wonder and surprise of musician, breaking down the dualism of musician/non-musician, in which non-musician is understood only in terms of its negative difference with musician. This ethics would conceive music education teaching and learning objectives not in terms of creating the one (musician) in order to eliminate the other (non-musician) but to redefine the two differentiated in relation to each other. How can one live with music everywhere, permeating society as well as culture and be said by the profession of music education to be a non-musician? Is this naming even possible? What interests of music education are served by this naming? How may it be conceived differently? In what ways may concepts of musician be completed by concepts of non-musician? The point, of course, is to focus on questions which create potentialities rather than solutions which are necessarily limited to what they include. Asking other ways of conceiving and understanding what it means to be a musician, to be musical—not describing these possibilities—opens up the problematic field of music education to include connections and configurations otherwise unavailable.

Wittig's Straight Mind

As “a conglomerate of all kinds of disciplines, theories, and current ideas” concerning the concepts woman, man, sex, and difference, Wittig’s “straight mind” describes a hegemonic and oppressive metanarrative that “develops a totalizing interpretation of history, social reality, culture, language, and all the subjective phenomena” (Wittig 1992, 27). Moreover, it is universalized as absolute meaning through its single basis on “heterosexuality, or thought which

produces the difference between the sexes as a political and philosophical dogma” (28). The straight mind, then, unable to account for—or even imagine—any other social configuration, functions as the enforcer of the heterosexual social contract that disavows difference. Intelligible only in terms of identity as representation, disavowed difference is predicated on the necessarily and absolutely heterosexual imperative “‘you-will-be-straight-or-you-will-not-be’” (28). Because the symbolic order of the straight mind renders impossible all other ways of being and doing, the incest taboo—rather than homosexuality—remains primary in Western society, and homosexuality as understood with and in the straight mind, “is nothing but heterosexuality” (28), albeit heterosexually poorly enacted.

Writing from a profoundly “materialist lesbianism”¹³ (Crowder 2005, 64) based on concrete relations of exchange in which “social differences always belong to an economic, political, ideological order” (Wittig 1992, 2) that ranks social groups in relationship to economic (material) exploitation, Wittig asserts, “There is no sex. There is but sex that is oppressed and sex that oppresses” (2). Women, then, do not constitute a *natural* group; indeed, she notes “one is not born a woman.”¹⁴ Rather, existing not as separate ontological categories, women and men inhabit a subject-object relation by which men as a class exploit the labour of women as a class. Her philosophical project, then, is to show that the categories of women and men are politically and economically based, and to use “political struggle . . . to suppress men as a class” (Wittig 1992, 15). Eliminating the class ‘men’ necessitates that the class ‘women’ will disappear as well,

¹³ In materialist feminism, “gender is not at all an arbitrary set of rules or expectations superimposed on biological sex. Rather, these roles and expectations follow logically and inevitably from material exploitation of the class ‘women’ by the class ‘men.’ That exploitation, and the material benefits men derive from it, determines both sex and gender, the former being used . . . as a convenient ‘naturalizing’ excuse for imposing the latter” (Crowder 2005, 65). See Crowder for a cogent delineation of essentialist, materialist, and constructionist feminist positions.

¹⁴ As Teresa de Lauretis notes, Wittig changes Simone de Beauvoir’s famous assertion, “One is not born but becomes a woman” to, “One is not born a woman.” By “shifting the emphasis from the word *born* to the word *woman*, Wittig’s citation of de Beauvoir’s phrase invoked or mimicked the heterosexual definition of woman as ‘the second sex,’ at once destabilizing its meaning and displacing its affect” (de Lauretis 2005, 53).

“for there are no slaves without masters” (15). Wittig distinguishes between ‘woman’ as myth and ‘women’ as the product of a particular social relationship of violence, and argues that the former must be abandoned so that the latter may dissolve. It does not follow, however, that the category of lesbians will vanish as well, because she asserts, they are not women

economically, or politically, or ideologically. For what makes a woman is a specific social relation to a man, a relation . . . called servitude, a relation which implies personal and physical obligation as well as economic obligation, . . . a relation which lesbians escape by refusing to become or to stay heterosexual. (Wittig 1992, 20)

Moreover, this refusal both defines lesbians and implicates them as outsiders within.

What is ‘the straight mind’ of music education? What is the concept through which we ‘see’ and understand music education, blinding us to all other possibilities? Perhaps musicianship as the overriding concern in terms of excellence in performance and musical understanding functions as the exclusionary lens by which we view the profession. Consisting of specific skills and curricular content that have been officially normalized in the U.S. through MENC’s¹⁵ National Standards, and unofficially normalized in other Western societies to minimally include reading standard notation, playing an orchestral or band instrument, singing in the so-called western art music style, and knowing the history and theory of western art music, we strive to make musicianship comprehensive. To accomplish and measure this in music education, we devise specific pedagogical methods, curricular content, and achievement standards. Similarly, dominant philosophies of music education begin with the nature of music and based on that, delineate in detail those characteristics that would comprise musicianship. Everything is about musicing (Elliott 1995) or musical roles (Reimer 2003), regardless of how they are conceived or what ends they are purported to serve, and anything else in music

¹⁵ MENC: The National Association for Music Education, located in the U.S.A., is self-described as the world’s largest music education professional organization.

education constitutes musicianship poorly enacted. The question, then, is how might the straight mind of music education be subverted; how might other relations in music education be created?

Initiating possibilities of thinking differently beyond the sex/gender system, Wittig posits in her novels¹⁶ fantastic alternatives to current lived configurations. This is difference without referent; not so much Deleuze's pure difference, as something entirely else, and something entirely original. Whether conceived in terms of *les guérillères*, the collective which is neither 'women' nor 'men' as it dismantles "the categories of sex in politics and in philosophy, [and] gender in language" (Wittig 1992, 81), or *le corps lesbien*, deconstructed and reconstructed violently and passionately, Wittig looses the "literary war machine" (Cope 1991, 75) of subversion and transformation. The straight mind that necessitates heterosexuality, that cannot even imagine lesbians, is thus "lesbianized" which is to say dismembered through and with the lesbian body, lovingly and completely. This is the performative of materiality, the action of speaking, "the enunciative position of the universal" (Zirelli 2005, 106) in which Wittig articulates the potentiality of subjectivity beyond sex and gender as it is embodied in the "fantastic universal" of the "*elles*" of everyday life (Zirelli 2005, 106).¹⁷ As war machine, *elles* is "set up . . . in the text as the absolute subject of the world" (Wittig 1992, 85), disrupting the social contract of the straight mind through action that breaks the law, through action of the

¹⁶ I am referring here to *Les Guérillères* (1971) and *The Lesbian Body (Le Corps Lesbien)* (1975).

¹⁷ In French "*elles*" refers to the feminine "they" while "*ils*" refers to the generic "they," which is also understood as masculine. Thus "*ils*" traditionally refers to all people, while "*elles*" traditionally refers only to women. In her novel, *Les Guérillères*, Wittig attempts to turn this relation on its head and use "*elles*" universally as it refers to "*les guérillères*" (for which there is no English equivalent so is not translated), the collective that is not women in the traditional sense—because it is used as the universal, the generic "they" which would consequently encompass everyone. Meanwhile, "*ils*" is used in the novel to refer specifically to a specific group distinct from "*elles*." In English language editions of the novel, "*elles*" has been translated as "the women," which Wittig (2007) insists is inaccurate and suggests that "they" is closer to her original intent and meaning.

outlaw, the lesbian (body), creating a minority subjectivity of not-woman¹⁸ “unwrit[ing] the heterosexist images, myths, grammar, lexicon, practices, and relationships that create the object ‘woman’” (Shaktini 2005, 158).¹⁹ Lesbian, then, as outlaw disrupts heterosexuality and its language of oppression expressed in the logic of the One, as it incites “the activity of lesbianization” (Cope 1991, 75) constituting subjectivities inhered with and of potentialities.

Wittig, however, seems to acknowledge the possibility of the war machine only through minority literature, what she refers to as “The Trojan Horse” (Wittig 1992, 68-75), which is created when the author uses ordinary language in dis-ordinary ways, familiar yet subversive. The straight mind, naturally, inhabits the ordinary, the inside of which there is no getting outside, because it exists a priori, something into which we are born. Consequently, we subvert the ordinary only from within, by using language ordinary enough to be recognized, but strange enough to disrupt hegemonic rules and conventions. For Deleuze this included creating neologisms and using words in unique and multiple ways with unique and multiple meanings. For feminist theorists, it often involves interrogating their complicity in what they critique. In these ways, the minority perspective is universalized—not as the minority in and to majority, but as the majority with and in minority. The literary Trojan Horse works not by enabling heterosexual readers to envision homosexual perspectives that may apply to and in heterosexual contexts, but by enabling heterosexual readers to inhabit homosexual perspectives (Crowder 2005), that is by altering heterosexual frames of reference (Zirelli 2005). What is crucial here is that Wittig insists that we must go beyond truth claims such as “One is not born a woman,” and

¹⁸ “[O]ne feature of lesbian oppression consists precisely of making women out of reach for us, since women belong to men. Thus a lesbian *has to* be something else, a not-woman, a not-man, a product of society, not a product of nature, for there is no nature in society” (Wittig 1992, 13, emphasis in original).

¹⁹ “To destroy ‘woman’ does not mean that we aim, short of physical destruction, to destroy lesbianism simultaneously with the categories of sex, because lesbianism provides for the moment the only social form in which we can live freely. Lesbian is the only concept I know of which is beyond the categories of sex (woman and man)” (Wittig 1992, 20).

engage the imaginative in “the free act that eschews truth in search of meaning and a new grammar of difference” (Zirelli 2005, 93). Linda Zirelli describes this in terms of “the tenacity of the category of sex and the limits of doubt” (93). Feminism, then, in all of its forms is compelled to move beyond doubt, beyond critique and posit alternatives; alternatives to the straight mind and the law of the One; alternatives to music education practices that exclude and silence, assimilate and diminish.

Feminist War Machines

Irigaray attempts to posit alternatives with her concept of sexual difference that initiates theory through critique, the sole pragmatic purpose of which is to make (a) difference in both social and ecological relations globally. At least two factors work against her vision, however. First, to the extent that the logic of the One in which women disappear is perceived as *natural* change is impossible. In other words, despite nearly 50 years of contemporary feminist theorizing, social relations between the sexes remain resistant to change precisely because they *appear* to be the way women and men are supposed to relate to each other. As de Lauretis notes,

The point missed . . . is that those heterosexual women who individually manage to avoid sexual or financial domination at home by individual men are still subjected, in the public sphere, to the objective and systematic effects of the institution that defines them, for all men and even for themselves, as women—and, in fact, as heterosexual women (for example, in issues of employment discrimination, sexual harassment, rape, incest, etc.); the institution of heterosexuality is intimately imbricated in all the ‘other mechanisms of male dominance’ and indeed coextensive with social structure and cultural norms. (de Lauretis 1990, 130-31)

Second, Irigaray’s rampant “heterosexualization” (Cheah and Grosz 1998b) as solution for all political struggles undercuts potentialities of her ethics of sexual difference beyond the being-two of the heterosexual couple. While she may leave open the possibility of alliances among women (Cheah and Grosz 1998a; Grosz 1994; Schwab 2007; Ziarek 1998), Irigaray admittedly describes “the special character of our love for other women . . . [with] lots of

quotation marks: ‘ ‘secondary homosexuality’ ’ ’ (Irigaray 1993c, 20), while also characterizing it as “essential.” This self-described ambivalence about same-sex social relations if not same-sex desire certainly demonstrates how Irigaray may be said to be “out of step” with current feminist theorizing (Bergoffen 2007). This is particularly salient when taken in combination with declarations such as, “The whole of human kind is composed of women and men and of nothing else. The problem of race is, in fact, a secondary problem . . . which means we cannot see the wood for the trees, and the same goes for other cultural diversities—religious, economic and political ones” (Irigaray 1996, 47), underscoring the deep scepticism with which her notion of sexual difference has been received (see, for instance, Cheah and Grosz 1998b). Sara Ahmed states this perhaps most succinctly: “Sexual difference cannot be ontologised as *the* difference that matters; sexual difference exists in a complex set of inter-connections with other differences” (Ahmed 1998, 15-16). Nevertheless, to disregard out of hand Irigaray’s concepts would be to discard what may be a viable transition—particularly for those sceptical of feminism—a transition from modernity to postmodernity, structuralism to poststructuralism, oppressions to potentialities.

Wittig’s critics, most notably Judith Butler (1999/1990) and Rosi Braidotti (2002), have insisted that her radical feminism is really a return to both essentialism and humanism. Teresa de Lauretis characterizes these assertions as “misreadings” of Wittig’s ideas, and argues that it is through her novels, mostly published prior to her theoretical writings, where she worked out her theoretical ideas and altered feminist understandings related to both identity and embodiment. Written originally in English, her theoretical writings are spare to a fault as they include little in the way of examples or explanation. By contrast, her literary work was written originally in French, and is densely obscure as she deliberately subverts the French language. These novels

are perhaps intelligible as she intended them only when read in French as she reaches no conclusions, and in this way her work is not only original but compelling.

Even as Irigaray (1985) declares that women do not exist in the relation of the One, Wittig asserts that lesbians are not women. For Wittig, women and men exist only in a social relation in which women's labour is exploited by men. Compulsory heterosexuality enforces this relation. For Irigaray, women and men exist only in a social relation in which women disappear in the universality imposed by men. The logic of the same ensures this relation. Where Irigaray posits an alternative ethics of sexual difference, Wittig creates the lesbian Trojan Horse that both resists and subverts the hegemony of the straight mind. While Irigaray attempts to remake the world from the ground of its current reality, Wittig would explode it and envision worlds entirely beyond current categories. Inasmuch as Irigaray's problematic appears to be both safer and more plausible, Wittig's problematic is no less likely given the intractability and investment of many—if not most—men and desperate reliance of a surprising number of women on the necessity of both women and men remaining just as they are—or at the very least in some kinder and gentler semblance of their current configuration.

By describing the lesbian as “outlaw,” Wittig signals affinity with Gloria Anzaldúa's (1999/1987) *mestiza*, de Lauretis' (1990) eccentric subject, and Trinh T. Minh-ha's (1989) “Inappropriate/d Other;” thus as de Lauretis (1990) notes, she anticipates postcolonial feminist theorizing. Moreover, her lesbian outlaw resonates with Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) nomadic war machine.²⁰ Not so much the runaway that Wittig describes, as itinerant, an outsider. Not adrift, not exiled, but moving along trajectories of points, of relays, moving by sitting; that is, moving in place that is out-of-place. Always vulnerable to appropriation, the nomad brings with

²⁰ As Deleuze and Guattari write it, however, the nomadic war machine is neither feminist nor postcolonial.

it lines of flight, means of subversion, war machines of resistance. In music education, war machines may be found among the others, or rather, the Others: people of dissident sexualities, of colour, of economic displacement, people of difference; music of students, of the world, of everyday life, music of difference; pedagogies and curricula of invention, of experimentation, of exploration, pedagogies and curricula of difference—without outcomes or expectations. This involves people who are not school music students and teachers because they do not learn or teach in terms of sequenced objectives; music that is not found and used only in schools, because it originates and exists beyond educational institutional boundaries; methods and structures that are not tied specifically to arbitrary skills and goals, because they emanate from lived experience.

Feminist war machines in music education are always already part of how and what we do as music educators. We enact them every time we seize so-called “teachable moments” and engage students in terms of who and where they are, every time we eschew pre-packaged materials and published scores, every time we respond directly to students’ needs and interests, unmediated by goals, objectives, and standards. Focusing on the unique and special (difference) beyond the banal and mundane (identities) constitutes wonder and surprise for Deleuze. At once joyful and full of potentialities, it is accomplished through our ongoing thinking together, creating concepts for what we already know. This is the Deleuzian desiring-machine that couples with other machines, always connecting and disconnecting, forming new connections in new and different ways; the machine that knows no limits, that accepts nothing as it is or always has been and is always already experimenting and playing, delighting in improvising and taking risks, failing and learning through new connections in new and different ways, as it opens fields of difference, interrogating, critiquing, and proliferating it.

Whether we begin in music education as Irigaray would have us, with what is here, has

always been here, and use the potentiality of that; or begin as Wittig would have us, with what is here, has always been here, and exceed that; or begin as Deleuze would have us, with what has never been, and never will be unless and until we create it, feminist war machines await our implementation and proliferation. Non-totalizing and non-totalizable, multiple and even contradictory, no single feminist war machine can ever be said to provide the definitive problematic for every solution—or even any solution in music education. Nevertheless, they initiate some partial and contingent problematics that provide a place, perhaps, to start. With current music education concerns of social justice, they enable us to initiate practices that are responsible and substantive, that take into account the historicity of oppressions and our complicity in their continuation. In terms of Irigaray’s ethics of sexual difference, we may engage with others outside music education who we would propose to help in relations of respect, based on our realization of ways in which we are implicated in each other, ways in which we are responsible to and for each other. Instead of conceiving music education as a site always already just or at least righteous in its commitment to helping others through acts of charity, we critique our desire for giving justice to others in terms of how it satisfies our desire for ameliorating our unwitting participation in injustice. In terms of Wittig’s lesbian outlaw, we may engage with others within music education in relations of materiality, of lived experience, based on our understanding of ways in which we are implicated in exploitation. Instead of accepting music education as necessarily hierarchical, we subvert relations on which foundations are based. Indeed, with so little time, and so much to accomplish, we may rage against the machines of oppression and injustice, standards and standardization, turn them against us, or create our own war machines, enable them, produce music education practices of difference, practices that matter and mean, “*renacimientos de la tierra madre*” (Anzaldúa, 1999/1987, 113)

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