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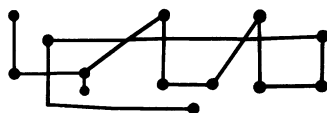
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MASCULINE DISCOURSE IN MUSIC THEORY



FRED EVERETT MAUS

MUSIC THEORY AS A TOPIC FOR FEMINIST STUDY

WHAT RELATION might music theory have to feminist thought?¹

This question might be heard as proposing an interdisciplinary linkage, a cooperation between two initially self-sufficient discourses. But before trying to construct such a linkage, it is important to consider another issue. What does the contemporary field of professional music theory have to do with gender? This second question (or second way of hearing the first question), rather than depicting music theory and feminist criticism as separate enterprises that might interact, opens the possibility that music theory is *already* related to gender in some way. In that case feminist thought, rather than somehow linking up with music theory, might take the present-day practices of music theory as a *topic of inquiry*.

Most musical scholars presently assume that music theory is a technical discipline, confining its attention to issues of musical structure and syntax—"specifically musical" matters, as one says. Many people would find it natural to assume that "specifically musical" matters have nothing to do with gender. But theory and analysis have been, for the most part, a set of texts written by men, about music by men, and perhaps this has had some effect on the outcome.

So I've arrived at a third question: how might a male writer—specifically, a present-day North American male music theorist—exhibit his gender in writing about music?

It is helpful to distinguish two ways that the writing of a male music theorist might display his gender. The positive claims of a theorist might reflect, in some fairly direct way, the writer's masculinity, or aspiration to masculinity. Or the omissions that delimit a theoretical or analytical approach, the things that are not said or not permitted to be said, might result from a writer's desire to present a masculine image.

This distinction is important for the claims I want to make. To put it bluntly, I believe that the *omissions* that characterize much contemporary theoretical writing reflect a desire to avoid *discourse that might seem unmanly*.²

In claiming that many music theorists have tried to avoid unmanliness in writing about music, I want to give an unflattering account of mainstream professional theory, in order to encourage the development and empowerment of alternative approaches. As I see it, an aspiration to masculinity has distorted many writers' images of music, insulating their account of music from common facts of musical experience. And such an aspiration to masculinity is problematic anyway, apart from its bad effect on descriptions of music.³

In giving an unflattering account of mainstream music theory, I do not want to repudiate all aspects of our recent theoretical traditions. I have no interest in simply attacking, or discouraging, work that continues to draw on Schenker's or Babbitt's writings, the basic sources of the configuration of contemporary North American theory. So, regarding Babbitt—the more influential of the two writers in terms of music theorists' discursive norms—I want to distinguish between, on the one hand, the narrow boundaries he has seemed to endorse for "scientific" music theory in his methodological writings and, on the other hand, his insights about twelve-tone music. I do not want to dismiss or minimize the brilliant accomplishments of Babbitt's work in twelve-tone theory. I do want to dispute the assumption that music theory should continue to operate within the framework established in the last four decades, the science-like, objectifying framework that Babbitt's methodological views support.

Writing in the 1960s and early 1970s, Babbitt formulated his methodological views by drawing upon some of the best-known contemporary philosophers who wrote on epistemology and scientific method.⁴ The philosophers Babbitt admired were logical empiricists—an unsurprising choice, since that was one of the dominant approaches to epistemology and philosophy of science in the United States. If music theorists had followed Babbitt's example of up-to-date interdisciplinary metatheoretical reflection, keeping up with the philosophical discussions that succeeded the heyday of logical empiricism, they would have encountered many ways to question Babbitt's methodological views and the related image of music theory. Among other pertinent developments, they would have encountered feminist claims about masculine and feminine thought and discourse. But, instead, mainstream music theorists have generally neglected metatheoretical speculation. They have been content to perpetuate a scientific image of music theory—in effect, accepting Babbitt's general conclusions about the nature of music theory without reviewing his arguments.

Feminist epistemological discussions can help explain the self-restrictive quality of much professional writing about music. What is the connection? What do thought and discourse—including, presumably, thought and discourse about music—have to do with gender? No answer will be uncontroversial, but a few rough generalizations are enough to start one thinking about relations between gender and music theory.

Feminist writers have suggested that men are more likely to cultivate, and to value, quantitative, impersonal, rule-bound, competitive thought, while women more easily think in qualitative, personal, empathetic, improvisatory, collaborative ways. And feminists have suggested that the masculine traits dominate public intellectual life, to its detriment.⁵

Such generalizations about the gendering of thought and discourse must be understood as historically specific, as claims about what constitutes masculinity and femininity in a particular time and place, within a particular race, a particular social and economic class. And even so, the generalizations may contain an unsettling mix of fact and stereotype. These qualifications do not diminish the value of the generalizations for my purposes. What I need is, precisely, an account of the conceptions of gendered discourse likely to be held by the contemporary middle-class North American white males who predominate in our music theory community.

I have come to believe that the distanced, technical, nonexperiential modes that prevail in recent professional theory and analysis constitute a style of discourse that fits comfortably with a masculine self-image, and that many theorists write as they do because they want to project such a self-image, to themselves (their first readers) and to other readers. If the

men who have called the shots in professional music theory have acted on beliefs that certain kinds of thought and discourse are masculine, others feminine, the beliefs that have guided them need not be true (they might involve stereotype), nor of course need they be universal truths about male and female thought. So it would be a mistake to think that my position in this paper depends on essentialist claims about male and female thought. If I claim, correctly, that someone avoids a type of behavior in the belief that it is feminine, it need not be true that such behavior is in fact characteristic of women. When an explanation depends on the ascription of beliefs, the ascription, and the explanation, can be true independently of whether the ascribed beliefs are true.

I've been referring to something I call "mainstream music theory." For several decades, a relatively conservative core of technical music theory has functioned as the center of the field, despite a proliferation of imaginative alternative approaches. Theorists know this, and sometimes refer to the core as "Schenker and sets"; less laconically, it can be identified as the theoretical and analytical work that derives fairly closely from the examples of Babbitt, Forte, and American-style Schenker.⁶

Of course, there is more to professional music theory than its mainstream. Recent professional theory seems to have a permanent penumbra of diverse, alternative, experience-oriented writing; the conspicuous examples, from my angle of vision, include so-called "contextual" analysis, various "phenomenological" texts, and the "literary" ventures of Randall, Boretz, and Barkin. These alternative approaches persist, dimly, naggingly, around the edges of the professionally central technical theories—never quite disappearing, never emerging into the limelight. When I think about my own work in relation to the field of professional music theory, rather than just thinking about the musical questions and concerns that motivate me, I feel like I am in that penumbra, as are many of the music theorists whose work is most interesting to me. No doubt, a music theorist whose topics and approaches are somewhat outside the mainstream is especially likely to wonder why there isn't more cultivation of diversity in professional theoretical and analytical writing.

In claiming that mainstream music theory is constituted partly by its aspiration to masculinity, I also hope to explain the marginalization of alternative approaches. If the more personal, experiential kinds of writing about music seem to be persistently marginal, it is partly because they threaten to feminize the writer. In effect, the contemporary field of music theory is internally structured, and hierarchized, by a distinction between masculine and feminine discourse.

This has been less than obvious, because some of the mainstream figures are female and many of the marginalized figures are male: the gendering of discursive styles in music theory has not directly reflected the

sex of individual theorists. In my own case, an awareness that music theory might be internally divided into gendered discourses was certainly delayed by the almost-all-male origins of the music theory I learned in graduate school. For me, as a graduate student at Princeton in the early 1980s, mainstream music theory centered on Babbitt and Peter Westergaard; the significant alternative consisted of Randall and Boretz, especially their work subsequent to Boretz's "Meta-Variations."⁷ (This will probably seem ridiculously parochial to someone who was not trained at Princeton; anyway, for better or worse, it was a large part of my world view.)

So, as I experienced it in the early eighties, the most conspicuous bifurcation in ways of thinking about music involved the conflicting views of various males, with no apparent link to a contrast of gender. At that time, I was impressed by passages like this, written by Boretz:

The reification of competence and skill enables us to substitute the visible tokens approval, admiration, and status for the non-negotiable needs interest and expression. . . . Status replaces identity, erudition replaces experience, technique replaces awareness. Discipline replaces engagement. Knowing replaces searching. Self-congratulation replaces self-fulfillment—and in the end it must be that cynicism replaces yearning.⁸

Adrienne Rich, a writer who has not been influential among music theorists, seems to have similar concerns, but casts the issue in terms of gender difference:

Men in general think badly: in disjuncture from their personal lives, claiming objectivity where the most irrational passions seethe, losing, as Virginia Woolf observed, their senses in the pursuit of professionalism.⁹

Boretz urges musicians to abandon certain restrictive patterns associated with professionalism; Rich suggests that similar patterns are characteristic of "men in general."

I don't remember anything about the Princeton Department of Music in the early 1980s that would have encouraged anyone to make a connection between Boretz and Rich. But now I think that such resonance between a marginal music-theoretical position and a feminist claim is significant and revealing; the present paper is an attempt to articulate such connections.

SOME GENDERED OPPOSITIONS

It might seem that I should support the claims I've made by giving a detailed interpretive survey of contemporary work in music theory. But, as it happens, someone else has already done a fine survey that allows me to take a shortcut. Consideration of John Rahn's excellent essay "Aspects of Musical Explanation" will allow me to clarify and substantiate the claims I have made.

Rahn's essay appeared in *Perspectives of New Music* around 1980, in an issue that seemed to mark a turn away from the primary technical orientation of earlier issues.¹⁰ The appearance of extended "literary" texts by Barkin, Boretz, Margolin, Tichenor, and Randall in that issue coincided with the journal's first change of color—from the drab yellow cover it had always had to a bright red.¹¹ It was easy to interpret the change of cover as the announcement of a major change of editorial policy (and, perhaps, as the proverbial "red flag" that taunts or incites).

Rahn's essay, not itself especially "literary," can be read as a commentary on the sudden presence of so much nontechnical writing. The essay advocates an inclusive attitude toward such writing, an attitude that would accept the new writing as a valuable resource *along with* the older models of Schenker and Babbitt.

Rahn offers something like a map of different ways of writing about music, with comments on the goals, advantages, and risks of different approaches. He organizes the essay around four sets of paired terms, each pair distinguishing two kinds of discourse about music. Rahn's first pair receives the technical-sounding names "digital" and "analog"; roughly, these amount to the alternatives of modelling discourse on the sciences or on literature and the humanities. The second pair, "in-time" and "time-out," has to do with whether a description traces the development of a piece as it unfolds in time or treats it atemporally. The third pair is "concept-driven" and "data-driven." The fourth pair, "theory-of-experience" and "theory-of-piece," includes, and generalizes beyond, the second pair.

One might wonder why the field of musical explanation is so thoroughly binary in its structure. Surely there can be kinds of discourse that do not fall neatly on one or the other side of Rahn's pairs. When I first read the essay in 1980, I admired its attempt at comprehensiveness, but I thought its presentation of fixed categories was misleading. It seemed to me that Rahn was endorsing not just the existence of multiple approaches to musical explanation, but the continued existence of the particular divisions he described: as though a theorist could know in advance what the various linguistic alternatives were, and could select one or the other of the various conveniently labelled options. I thought,

on the contrary, that it would be good to mix categories, writing in ways that would spoil such classifications.¹²

I still think it is good to look for ways to subvert fixed categories of discourse, but now I think more highly of Rahn's binary oppositions than I did at first—not as an abstract, general taxonomy of ways to write about music, but as a description of ways some particular people at a particular time *were* writing about music, organized in a way that is helpful in *explaining* the state of music-theoretical discourse. Two facts bear pertinently on Rahn's conceptual couples, though neither fact is stated explicitly in his essay. Both facts have to do with politics, and the reason to value his binary oppositions is that they contribute to a political analysis of professional music theory.

First, each pair in effect distinguishes an aspect of conventional, mainstream professional discourse from an alternative possibility that remains relatively marginal. Mainstream discourse in theory and analysis has been science-like, atemporal, concept-driven, and oriented toward pieces rather than experiences. The alternatives have been marginal. Thus, Rahn's pairs bring out aspects of the "intellectual politics" of music theory, the distribution of professional prestige and influence among practitioners of different approaches.¹³

And second, each pair is associated with gender difference. In the science/humanities pair the gender association is familiar enough.¹⁴ The pair "theory-of-experience" and "theory-of-piece" (which subsumes the pair "in-time/time-out") designates a difference in discursive style, with experience-oriented accounts tending toward personal chronicle (gendered feminine), piece-oriented accounts tending toward statement of results and impersonality (gendered masculine). An opposition between "concepts" and "data" is likely to recall gendered oppositions between form and matter, mind and body. But Rahn's pair "concept-driven" and "data-driven" also conjoins, more specifically, a version of the intensely gendered active/passive dichotomy, indicating whether the theorist or the composition has control over the initial stages of their interaction. Rahn's pairs bring out aspects of the "gender politics" of discourse about music.

In each pair, the term that refers to mainstream professional discourse is also the term that associates with masculine gender. Inexplicitly and, I assume, unintentionally, Rahn's essay supports the analytical claim that mainstream theory has been constituted in part by the exclusion of discourse marked as feminine.

SOME GENDERED FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

Though Rahn does not offer explicit analysis in terms of gender, some of his language does suggest that he associates his pairings with the opposition “masculine/feminine” or “male/female,” presumably unconsciously. This material also shows some of the complications and ambivalences that can arise in the gender-related thought that I am exploring.

I’ll cite three examples from the essay; but first, it is appropriate to comment on the kind of attention I am about to give to Rahn’s language. All my claims in this paper (not to mention other things I’ve written) are about discourse, and reflect my belief that discourse about music is an important subject matter. There are different ways of taking discourse seriously. So far I have been writing about kinds of discourse that are linked, at least in present widely-shared beliefs, to gender difference. The next paragraphs involve a different focus, interpreting details of figurative language rather than broader discursive style. Such readings, familiar among literary critics (in large part through the influence of psychoanalysis and deconstruction), can provoke a range of reactions, from admiration to outrage. The outrage is understandable: readings of figurative language often involve the claim that someone, working hard at communicating something, has also been communicating something *else*, in ways that are not under conscious control. That may seem like an unpleasant or disrespectful claim, but after a certain amount of experience with such interpretations, it has become hard for me to doubt that discourse is often, perhaps always, working in such inexplicit, uncontrolled ways. In particular, I believe figuration is one of the most pervasive media in which we unreflectively circulate and reproduce thought about gender.¹⁵ Now, the first example:

(1) Rahn offers alternative terminology for the pair “concept-driven/data-driven.” A “concept-driven” approach can also be called “top-down,” putting the theorist on top, the position reputedly associated with active, masculine sexuality. A “data-driven” approach can also be called “bottom-up,” a term that perhaps combines specification of the theorist’s placement under the piece with information about the theorist’s posture.

These remarks may seem like frivolous punning, but, as I just indicated, I intend them seriously. To show why, I’ll sketch a context in which Rahn’s language takes on significance. This will get me into some general claims that are crucial for my understanding of the relation between gender and music theory. (This material also delays the arrival of the second and third citations from Rahn, but they will arrive eventually.)

In the dominant stereotypes of contemporary North American culture, classical music is—to put it gently—not the best field for someone who wants to establish an overt, unambiguous masculine identity. It compares poorly with baseball, for instance, or engineering, or surgery; within academia, it compares poorly with science, politics, or philosophy. No doubt the reasons for this are complex. But one, particularly germane for theorists, is the importance of *listening*.

For any musician, experiences of listening attentively to someone else's music, letting the music have its effects, must have been crucially formative. For theorists, one might think, listening remains central—more so, perhaps, than for musicians who devote themselves to performance or composition. (This will sound strange to someone who thinks of theorists as, primarily, people who formulate abstruse generalizations after looking at scores. Probably many musicologists think of theorists this way. But the score-reading and the generalizing only make sense as elaborations, however remote, of something that begins in listening. I don't deny that the optical and the abstruse can pretty much take over, but in such cases it's precisely the remoteness from listening that suggests that something has gone wrong.) Perhaps, then, theorists are musicians who specialize in taking a passive, receptive role—as part of their job and also, sometimes, as their main musical vocation. It is easy to think of this listening role as gendered.

One model for gendering the theorist's relation to music is conversation. Think of a theorist as someone who lets the composer have his say (her say, possibly—not very often), and then responds with careful commentary and support. The composer has the role of initiating conversation and controlling the subject matter, a dominating role associated with men.¹⁶ A man who is uncomfortable in the feminine role of listener might want to find a way to reverse the power relation, somehow giving the controlling role to his own discourse. Highly general and predictively oriented discourse could have this effect. The generality would situate the individual composition as an instance of the general theory, thereby giving the theory a sort of controlling power over the composition; the predictive conceit would, in a way, reverse the conversational temporality, giving the theorist the opening conversational move.

But I was writing about sexual positions. In some important ways, sexual activity is more accurate than conversation as a model for musical experience. Music doesn't just convey information or maintain sociability: with its pulsating rhythms, hypersensitive surfaces, and elaborate patterning of climaxes, it can give a particularly intense, concentrated, sensuous pleasure. The music (or the composer, perhaps—but I think the composer's role is less conspicuous here than in the conversational model) has the active role of initiating and controlling the interaction

that gives the listener pleasure. This sexualized conception of listening is, of course, even more threatening to masculinity than the conversational conception. It's one thing for a man to listen respectfully while someone holds forth, quite another to get fucked. Perhaps a rigidly maintained "top-down" position offers a way of getting on top, capturing the active role. (One might guess that such discourse cannot afford to say much about music as something from which the writer receives pleasure.)¹⁷

These comments on listening add an important element of motivation to my general claim about music theory as gendered discourse. To put it schematically, the situation I am describing has two main features: kinds of thought and discourse that are associated with gender, and an activity that is easily perceived as passive and feminizing. If male music theorists find themselves engaged in a listening activity that they find alarmingly feminine, they can try to cheer themselves up by writing about music in ways that they and their readers can regard as masculine. The manly writing is the compensation, and screen, for the unmanliness of the listening.¹⁸

Now, more examples from Rahn's essay:

(2) The "apotheosis" of the "digital" or scientific, Rahn suggests, is "a fully formalized theory" that meets certain methodological requirements. But formalization is demanding. As Rahn puts it,

The endeavor is still in its musical-theoretical infancy; the still unusual apparatus of formalization can get in the way of a fully flexible and responsive analysis by the formalizer. On the other hand, the precision of formalization has already penetrated many conceptual abscesses with therapeutic results. Some (not all) theories and theorists of music have ripened to the point at which formalization is appropriate. (208)

From this series of metaphors, one can easily retrieve an image of science-oriented music theory as passing from infancy to manhood by acquiring full command of the novel apparatus that is used for penetration.

There are complications. It is unclear whether the theorist "ripens" into someone who can penetrate, or someone ready to be penetrated by formalism (someone, perhaps, with "ripe abscesses"). That is, "ripeness" might simply mean phallic maturity, as when a boy "ripens" into a man, but the term is somewhat more apt for the *object* of desire or activity than for the *subject*. So perhaps a theorist might somehow be penetrated, and feminized, by his own masculine apparatus—as though the theorist's attraction to formalization is indeterminate between an aspiration to masculinity and a desire for the masculine.¹⁹ On the other hand, the lancing or penetration of ripe abscesses would be an attempt to *cure*

them. So perhaps the figurative language condenses a narrative: the theorist initially has a wound or hole, but it can be healed by the therapeutic penetration of formalization. However, Rahn seems a little wistful about the trade-off between “penetration” and “flexible response.” He implies that one might eventually have both; perhaps he’s describing a phallic phase of music theory that might eventually give way to an androgynous or hermaphrodite phase.

These complications leave intact the conception of “formalization” as “penetrative apparatus,” while raising questions about the relation between the theorist and the apparatus. But I don’t think these interesting wrinkles really distract from the main point of the passage, which is to recommend the attainment of penetrative formalization as a goal of maturation.

(3) At the end of the paper Rahn states a risk run by the “theory-of-experience” option, and a corresponding strength of a “theory-of-piece”:

A theory of experience may degenerate into the whining, mewling, and puking of a perpetually infantile and unformed analysis so pathetically fragile as to avoid potentially “disturbing” intercourse with its peers, hiding behind the arrogance of an ad hominem self-justification. And a theory of piece propounded even by a dogmatist, but especially by a devout Platonist (such as, probably, Schenker), often forces a very robust, even squalling and kicking, new idea into the world. (218–19)

This is a rather dense passage. One way to approach it is to compare the infants that figure the two alternatives. The first infant pathetically refuses to individuate, grow up, and have some intercourse; the other is active, energetic, even a little violent. Everyone knows the first question (often the only question) everyone asks about a baby: what is its sex? The babies in Rahn’s essay are easy to sex, and the result seems to associate the “theory-of-experience” with the risk of femininity, the “theory-of-piece” with the promise of masculinity.²⁰

However, there is an interesting complication in this passage about infants. It seems, strangely, that the piece-oriented theory is the mother of the boy baby. Does that mean the theorist might be a mother? This may be an obscure acknowledgment, once again, that the theorist’s relation to masculinity is never simply identification. Perhaps, while Rahn generally seems to associate formalization and piece-orientation with masculinity, he also indicates, quietly, that the theorist’s masculine ideal is never quite attained. Perhaps a theorist can never stop being a listener, never get completely on top; but a theorist can still hope that the feminizing experience of listening will result in a baby boy.²¹

I don't want these comments on Rahn's language to be taken as condescending or derogatory. I do think that Rahn's language reveals a gendering of music-theoretical approaches, along with some intriguing convolutions that complicate this gendering, and I assume that he was unaware of these meanings of his own writing. But gendered figurative language is relatively ordinary; only in the 1980s have a large number of academic writers (mostly outside musical scholarship) become deft at identifying such gendered figures, and using or avoiding them with conscious intention. Rahn's language is worth analyzing because his essay is unique and important. The fundamental originality, boldness, and importance of the essay lies in its willingness to champion the controversial new work that was appearing in *Perspectives*.

HOW THIS MIGHT MATTER

It may seem that my emphasis on gender overlooks some other, more obvious ways of explaining the present condition of professional music theory. What about the general prestige of scientific methods in the North American academic community, especially in the 1950s and 1960s? Surely that created a strong pressure for a new field to show its scientific credentials. And the relatively secure status of positivistic musicology must have put pressure on the newer field of music theory to show that it can meet similar standards of objectivity and verifiability. Aren't these factors enough to explain the scientific tone of mainstream music theory?

It would be absurd to deny the pertinence of these institutional explanations. But one can certainly question whether these other explanations are independent of gender considerations: some feminists have argued that the prestige of science (especially "hard science," as one says) is tied up with the prestige of masculinity.²²

Further, whatever role positivist aspirations, as such, played in creating contemporary music theory, I have argued that there is a special problem about descriptions of music, connected to the experience of listening, that can create an especially intimate and individualized motivation for the assertion of masculinity. If I am right about this, one cannot explain the constraints of mainstream music theory just by considering the general scientific atmosphere of academic thought.

If there is a special gender-related problem in writing about music, shared by male musicologists and male music theorists, it is interesting that the two fields are nonetheless very different from each other. Here is a speculative generalization about the difference between mainstream musicology and mainstream theory. Neither field has been primarily

concerned with sensitive accounts of musical experience, but they have avoided the issue in different ways. Mainstream musicology has put out a fact-oriented discourse that obviously has no bearing on the details of musical experience, and therefore doesn't tend to deny or distort such experience. It's as though musicology has relied upon a strict distinction between public discourse and a realm that is more private and intimate. In contrast, the discourse of mainstream theory, when it is unequivocal, does not seem to be protecting the privacy of listeners. It seems more like a *substitute* for sensitive, evocative description, an *Ersatz* even; something that responds, publicly but speciously, to the desire for a shared articulation of musical experience.

Even if there is some relation between ideas about gender and styles of thought about music, why should it matter? For example, isn't there enough to think about in the contrast between Babbitt's and Randall's explicit formulations about music, without dragging in other highly charged issues?

The relation to gender matters partly as a way of explaining *why* marginal discourse has remained marginal.²³ Indeed, once one thinks of the relevant discursive styles as gendered, it is easy to notice that professional theory has settled into a pattern very much like a conventional marriage—an equilibrium in which a secure, powerful center tolerates and indulges a fussy, nagging, powerless periphery.

For someone like me, to whom Princetonian controversies around 1980 were exciting and formative, redescrptions of those controversies will be fascinating. And I believe that greater visibility and influence for Randall's and Boretz's writings, a possible result of such redescrptions, would be good for music theorists.

More generally, I have suggested that men in music, in our time and place, already occupy an uncertain or compromised gender role. Perhaps, in dealing with male musicians, particularly specialists in listening, one is dealing with people who are not simply men.²⁴ The ways male musicians have dealt with the special complexities and tensions of the role "male musician" are likely to provide subject matter for many interesting studies over the next few years. One project for feminist music theorists will be the exploration of this issue in relation to the literature of music theory. It is a good task for male feminists, since it does not require a male writer to "speak for women."

But redescrptions of previous claims and controversies are not likely to be the only, or the most interesting, effect of feminism on music theory. Thinking about music theory in relation to gender might make it easier for theorists to innovate. Once one thinks about styles of discourse as articulations of gender-identity, one must rethink what is at stake in arriving at a discursive style. Not only is style a way of situating oneself in

relation to gender; more broadly, it is always a form of expression and self-depiction. But in that case, it is no longer possible to rely on a contrast between writing that is calmly, objectively *about music* (and therefore appropriate) and writing that is self-indulgently *about oneself* (and therefore inappropriate). Lacking such a contrast, theorists might begin to develop more complex and interesting ways of reflecting on what they are doing and, as a result, the things they do might become more complex and interesting.²⁵ To return to the focus of this paper: if theorists begin to think of the present mainstream professional linguistic norms as, in part, a project of “self-depiction as masculine,” and begin to think of that project as unsatisfactory, they will distrust those norms and seek other styles of self-depiction. Initially this may involve special attention to the feminizing discursive resources that have been set aside in recent mainstream theory. But it is not clear that one will want, ultimately, to be guided simply by the *exclusions* of the models one wants to decenter, or by a notion of feminine discourse that is just the flip side of the masculine discourse that men have valued and practiced.

Now I need to make a point that will already have occurred to many readers. Feminism is, centrally, a political movement concerned with the social role of women. Motivated by that concern, feminist writers have developed ideas about gendered discourse. I have relied on those ideas to generalize about some male writers. Along the way women have dropped out of my ostensibly feminist discussion! That makes some sense, to the extent that my topic is the behavior of men.²⁶ But it is an obvious and important question how discourse *by women* about music might be different. What insights about music can come from conscious cultivation of a woman’s perspective?

A male writer like me cannot attempt to answer this question directly, by somehow “cultivating a woman’s perspective.” (I recommend, to male writers, trying *not* to cultivate an exclusively masculine perspective, but that’s different from somehow becoming a source of information about what it’s like to be a woman.) But a male feminist *can*, now, read feminist writing, by women, about music. Very little of the recent feminist writing on music has been by women who consider themselves professional music theorists, but much of it addresses the concerns of theorists—the conceptualization of music and musical experience. I am sure that this writing can improve the discussions of music theorists, revealing aspects of musical experience that have been hidden by the masculine discourse of male writers—aspects of the musical experience of many women and men, and also, perhaps, kinds of experience that are relatively unlikely or uncommon for men. Of course, an important question in such feminist writing will be the long-term usefulness of styles that might be regarded as distinctively feminine.

Music theorists, female or male, should want to learn everything they can from these exciting new ideas.²⁷ My claims in this paper yield some advice for theorists who want to learn from, and participate in, feminist explorations of music: don't assume that the only way to be a feminist music theorist is somehow to do mainstream music theory *and* feminism simultaneously. Mainstream music theory might not be so innocent, and feminism might not be so accommodating.

AFTERWORD

Since writing this paper eight months ago, I've had thought-provoking reactions from several sources. The "Afterword" records, and responds to, some of these reactions, mostly having to do with two issues.²⁸

(1) *Center and margin*. Marianne Kielian-Gilbert wondered whether I should rely so heavily on the notions of "center" and "margin" in describing music theory: do I, by using this pair (along with "domination and subordination"), "acknowledge the *status quo* in a way that reinscribes its power"?

In thinking about this question, I've found it helpful to consider a number of similar but more specific questions, which I'll address separately.

Do I want music theory to develop in such a way that the notions of "center" and "margin" will remain pertinent?

No: I believe, ultimately, that *music theory should not have a center* (nor, therefore, should it have any margins). A few years ago, writing about "the future of music theory," I came up with the following formulation, which I still like:

We should not only recognize the probability of a future characterized by musical and linguistic diversity, but we should welcome and cultivate this multiplicity. . . . If music theorists actively pursue discursive diversity, the "theory community" will not be constituted by the unity of its analytical, theoretical, or metatheoretical approaches. Instead there will be overlapping subcommunities, constituted by shared musical and linguistic preferences. The richer the variety that theorists achieve, the greater the certainty of mutual incomprehensibility among some music theorists. We should think of it as exciting, rather than problematic, that people will talk about music in ways that we cannot immediately understand.²⁹

That's my image of music theory when it has no center—when no approach holds the position now occupied by "Schenker and sets." We

will be able to think about music theory in terms of “overlapping sub-communities,” and there will no longer be any reason to think about centers and margins.

Do I, by describing the present in terms of “central” and “marginal” approaches, somehow make the *status quo* look good?

I hope not! Actually, I think *explicit public discussion* of the existence of “central” and “marginal” theoretical approaches is something of a novelty, and might help to make the *status quo* look problematic.³⁰ My formulations about “center” and “margin” are connected to conceptions of the audience I am addressing and of the position from which I can effectively address them. I take myself to be directly addressing professional music theorists, especially those in what I call the center or mainstream. And I take myself to be speaking from a slightly complicated position: from within professional theory, but from its more marginal sector. In addressing mainstream theorists from the margin, and writing explicitly about central and marginal approaches, I hope to lead theorists to confront matters that we do not usually discuss in public. I want to say, in effect: “You and I both know that some kinds of music theory are regarded as central by most members of the profession, and others are regarded as marginal. Boretz, for instance, counts as marginal, while Forte counts as central. *Why?*” Such questions are not comfortable, and I hope that raising them can make the *status quo* feel like an uncomfortable situation.

Though the paper directly addresses music theorists, I also hope the conversation might attract a certain kind of eavesdropper: innovative musicologists, including feminist musicologists. And the “center/margin” language has a distinct point in relation to that audience. Many musicologists are disgruntled about music theory as they know it. What they tend to know is what I call mainstream music theory. So, to innovative musicologists, I want to say, in effect, “When you generalize about music theory, it seems to me that you are talking about *one especially conspicuous part* of professional music theory. I wish you would take more of an interest in the alternatives that some theorists have developed, especially since those of us in the margin often share your qualms about mainstream theory.”³¹

If I don’t endorse the norms of mainstream music theory, why don’t I just do some good work that escapes those norms? Isn’t that the best way to change music theory—rather than lavishing attention on people whose work seems to disappoint me?

I agree that the best way to enlarge the scope of music theory is just to do some innovative work, without dwelling explicitly on its relation to mainstream norms. And I think that’s how I’ve usually tried to write.³²

But I have come to think that a more confrontational approach might also be useful, sometimes, since it may be harder to ignore.

Elaine Barkin made a point somewhat like Kielian-Gilbert's. She found "evaluative criteria lurking about" in my essay:

They stand out in such phrases as "never emerging into the lime-light" or "outside the mainstream," "persistently marginal," even "nontechnical" and "long-term usefulness" and "fussy, nagging, powerless periphery. . . ." To make a long kvetch short, I don't go for the shoving, once again, to the sidelines, of work that has been important to many people, presumably also to Fred!!

I certainly do not want to sideline the work of Boretz and Randall; I wish more people would pay more attention to Boretz and Randall and other innovative thinkers. So why do I continue to call them marginal?

I don't mean that they are marginal to my own thinking about music—they aren't. I mean that they are marginal in professional music theory. Barkin is right that evaluative criteria are in the picture, but they are the criteria of other people. Probably I was not clear enough in the paper about my basis for distinguishing central and marginal styles. Here's what I meant: I believe there is a fairly obvious distribution of power, within professional music theory, among practitioners of different approaches, and the evidence for this claim includes such phenomena as the contents of theory journals and conference programs, the writings that most theorists feel obliged to cite, the makeup of editorial boards, patterns of hiring and promotion, and so on.

Of course my paper can't do without something like the opposition "central/marginal music theory": the argument works by connecting that opposition to another one, current conceptions of "masculinity/femininity." My main claim is that the second opposition is helpful in understanding the first.

(2) *Listening and sexuality.* First, I'll paraphrase my argument on this subject. I propose two extramusical analogies for musical listening, both implying that the music-listener's position is feminine. Listening to music is somewhat like listening to someone talking, and it is also like being the passive partner in a sex act. I argue that the latter analogy is especially threatening to masculinity. This claim, which I take seriously, led to some interesting responses. Here are the sentences that conclude my argument:

This sexualized conception of listening is, of course, even more threatening to masculinity than the conversational conception. It's

one thing for a man to listen respectfully while someone holds forth, quite another to get fucked.

That is, I attribute to some music theorists a thought along these lines: “When I listen, it’s sort of like the piece is fucking me! Yikes! I’m not going to write about *that!*”³³ Susan McClary responded as follows:

I’m wondering if “quite another to get fucked” doesn’t sound a bit homophobic. The note makes it clearer why the author makes this distinction. And bluntness does have its effects. But by using the language of homophobia here, he puts an almost irredeemably negative slant on anal eroticism. “To indulge in anal penetration” or something might be better.

As a heterosexual woman I’m often dismayed at how men will use the terms for the very things they want to convince us are “loving acts” (fucking, screwing, sucking, etc.) also as terms of abuse (“I got screwed,” “this sucks!,” etc.). This is, of course, precisely what the author is trying to get at—the horror many men have that they might be treated like women. But it seems to me that “to get fucked” plays into the problem. It may well heighten the anxiety he wants to try to defuse.

I think the sentence McClary cites is more than “a bit” violent—I meant it to be—but I didn’t expect it to be read as an expression of my own sentiments.³⁴ As I’ve just indicated, I was paraphrasing a thought that I attribute to some other people. I chose my language for precisely the reason McClary indicated: the phrase “to get fucked” can evoke, very economically, the horror with which many men regard male passivity or penetrability (especially their own penetrability).³⁵

As for “anxieties,” I’m not sure how immediately I want to “defuse” them. If it’s true that ideas about listening are often shaped by anxieties about sexuality, then thinking seriously about listening will mean thinking seriously about those anxieties. How can a man think seriously about his sexual anxieties without, first of all, *experiencing* them?³⁶

At one point in the paper, I mention that theorists are notorious for looking at scores rather than listening to musical sound. I don’t make much of the point, except to remark that “in such cases it’s precisely the remoteness from listening that suggests that something has gone wrong.” Chauncey Maddren made more of this, connecting score-reading and sexuality in an intriguing way. He suggested that score-reading is like masturbation: in both cases, individual imagination

replaces interaction with an actual partner, and this increases the control of the score-reader or masturbator.

Maddren's insight led me to think of another way to connect score-reading, sex, and control. It is easy to align the opposition "musical sound/music-listener" with the oppositions "active/passive" and "masculine/feminine." But theorists of visual media have often regarded the position of the *viewer* as the active or masculine position, a position of possessing and enjoying the object of vision (such as a painting or film).³⁷ This suggests a starting point (crude, as starting points tend to be) for investigating the relation of score-reading and gender: if the position of listening is feminized in comparison to the position of looking at something, for instance, a score, then the theorist's preference for scores may be a preference for the more masculine position.

Kielian-Gilbert asked an appropriate question: "What about 'active' listening?" I think this is a crucially important question for thinking about relations between gender and classical music institutions. For now, I'll just make a brief comment.³⁸ A careful investigation of relatively active and receptive aspects of listening would be an excellent contribution to music theory. Pauline Oliveros has done pioneering work in this area.³⁹ On the other hand, I believe an overemphasis on active listening can serve as a masculine denial of the listener's feminized role.⁴⁰ A listener is always less active, in comparison to performers and composers.

(3) *More questions and ideas.* So far I've cited reactions that led me to further ideas or clarifications. I end by passing on, without comment, some other reactions that I find insightful and helpful. Kielian-Gilbert observed:

Although the *feminine* is never explicitly connected to the *unmanly* in the paper, this association reinforces the prevailing cultural practices of that move. Because one of the main goals of the paper is to expose this move as a cultural construction, I would have liked a more dialectical discussion of ways of resisting and redefining that practice (for men and women).

She also noted, correctly, that I don't write about the good aspects of professionalism:

Question: I would want to disentangle the set of issues surrounding the notion of "professionalism" and "professional"—how is it (or is it really) linked to gender? I want to preserve a part of the notion in a way also accessible to women and the feminine. Saying, for example, that men are more athletic than women is to confuse a particular kind of skill (athleticism) which is independent of gender

with value judgments which are tied to a gender bias. If to be professional is to be like a man (or to enact behavior which is linked solely to the masculine) then this same distinction—of a skill, a commitment rather than a value judgment—also seems relevant. Professionalism, regarded in terms of a depth of honesty and passion, integrity in the face of doubt (etc.), links with aspects which are important to maintain for women or for women to have access to (like athleticism, rationality . . .).

Barkin asked:

Just how would one “consciously cultivate a woman's perspective”? Either you ask the question or you don't. It's not an uninteresting question; but just how might one go about trying to do it? I suppose that so many of us, having been taught (mostly) by males and having read—early in our lives—only stuff written by men (by us, I mean “women” over 45; the younger women have greater opportunities)—so many of us unconsciously (and often uncomfortably) cultivated a man's voice; and perhaps perspective, as well. Consciousness is such a heavy “ness.”

Finally, I want to cite McClary's formulation of one of my main claims, just for its elegance:

This paper argues . . . that the attempt at maintaining the fiction of “masculinity” has prevented male theorists from valuing their own most passionate experiences with music. And they ought to come to resent that form of self-alienation.

NOTES

This paper develops some thoughts that I first explored in a paper on Hanslick. Between that paper and this one, I encountered some splendid and very pertinent writing by Philip Brett and Suzanne G. Cusick: their ideas have contributed a lot to the present effort. (For references, see note 18.) Cusick, Marion A. Guck, and Katharine Eisaman Maus made many helpful comments on earlier drafts.

Some of this material was presented at conferences on “Feminist Theory and Music” (Minneapolis, June 1991, and Rochester, June 1993).

1. In current North American music-academic talk, the professional specialty that includes theory and analysis is called “music theory.” I shall follow this usage; that is, when I write about “the field of professional music theory” I do not mean to exclude analytical work.

Though, for convenience, I follow the conventional usage, it is open to criticism; Joseph Kerman, for one, likes to substitute the term “analysis” in many contexts where others would write about “theory.” See “How We Got into Analysis, and How to Get Out,” in *Critical Inquiry*, 7 (Winter, 1980): 311-31.

Of course, there is food for thought in the fact that the widely accepted general term for the field gives preference to its more abstract, generalizing activities. The argument I will make in this paper might support an analogy between the use of “theory” as an abbreviation for “theory and analysis” and the use of “he” as an abbreviation for “he or she”—though it’s a bit early in the paper for me to be making such a claim.

2. If the masculinity of music theory is particularly apparent in its omissions, that just means that music theory follows the pattern of contemporary masculinity (and, perhaps, masculinity in general). As one pithy formulation has it, “The first order of business in being a man is: don’t be a woman.” (Robert J. Stoller, *Presentations of Gender* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985], 183.)
3. Of course a description of music theory as “manly discourse” or a “defense against unmanliness” may or may not seem unflattering, depending on the reader. Many people, some of them music theorists, do not accept or have not even encountered the idea that the social construct “masculinity” is, to a large extent, unappealing and destructive.

4. Babbitt's methodological position was stated in three papers: "Past and Present Concepts of the Nature and Limits of Music," *Congress Report of the International Musicological Society* (1961): 398–403, "The Structure and Function of Musical Theory," *College Music Symposium* 5 (1965): 49–60; both reprinted in *Perspectives on Contemporary Music Theory*, ed. Boretz and Cone (New York: Norton, 1972), and "Contemporary Music Composition and Music Theory: A Contemporary Intellectual History," in *Perspectives in Musicology*, ed. Barry S. Brook, Edward O.D. Downes, and Sherman Van Solkema (New York: Norton, 1972).
5. For influential accounts, deriving from social sciences, see Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982); Mary Field Belenky, Blythe McVicker Clinchy, Nancy Rule Goldberger, and Jill Mattuck Tarule, *Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind* (New York: Basic Books, 1986). For an excellent critical survey of philosophical work in feminist epistemology, see Lorraine Code, *What Can She Know?* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991).

I am not the only person to have noticed that current discussions about gender and epistemology bear on current styles of discourse about music: see the "Introduction" to Leo Treitler, *Music and the Historical Imagination* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989). At the same time that I was writing this paper, Suzanne G. Cusick and Marion A. Guck were writing, more specifically than Treitler, on the relation of professional music theory and feminist epistemology (in papers presented at the 1992 Meeting of the Society for Music Theory).

6. On the special qualities of American-style Schenker, see William Rothstein, "The Americanization of Heinrich Schenker," in *In Theory Only* 9, no. 1 (1986): 5–17. For something like an official declaration of the scope of mainstream theory, see the articles and bibliographies collected as "The State of Research in Music Theory," in *Music Theory Spectrum* 11, no. 1 (Spring 1989).
7. Babbitt, Randall, and Westergaard were teaching at Princeton, and all had considerable influence among graduate students; Boretz was much discussed, partly because of his close ties to Randall, and made a memorable visit to Princeton in 1982.

It is strange to generalize about theory at Princeton without fitting Edward T. Cone into the picture. But I did not tend to think of him as having any very determinate relation to the contrast between Babbitt/Westergaard and Randall/Boretz; as I saw it, the diversity of

his work, along with its noncoercive tone, left his various ideas available to anyone who wanted to use them. Another significant presence at Princeton in the early eighties was Joseph Dubiel, then a junior faculty member very active in graduate teaching. His example was crucial for me in many ways, among them his evident concern to benefit from the best insights of different senior faculty members. Cone and Dubiel, by their examples of eclectic thinking, contributed to my conviction that one can benefit from various kinds of theoretical approach without having to choose one in any exclusive way. At Princeton, this kept me from feeling that I needed to “choose sides” between Babbitt and Randall, as a number of students were doing.

8. Boretz, “If I am a musical thinker . . .,” *Perspectives of New Music* 20 (Fall-Winter 1981, Spring-Summer 1982): 505 and 507. I first encountered this when Boretz read it at Princeton in 1982.

Here is another pertinent passage, from “Language, as a Music,” in *Perspectives of New Music* 17, no. 2 (Spring-Summer 1979): 171–72:

Our invariant, and perhaps unreflective, profession of such a rhetoric of discourse is motivated primarily by social considerations, as providing an accessible, shared, medium of professional intercommunication. . . . And yet, I have been thinking that our deepest and most passionate work of thought is, first and foremost, intensely personal to each of us, such that our need to capture it in configurations of language which express its most specific and individual significations might be supposed to be far more deeply exigent than the service of however worthy a social convenience.

The section cited, “Ivy,” is in the voice of a student contacting a former professor; its cautious academic diction is absent in other parts of “Language, as a Music.” Needless to say, the voice is no more (nor less) Boretz’s authentic voice in this section than elsewhere in the set. (The name “Ivy” refers, I take it, to the “Ivy League” academic setting and does not imply a female persona named “Ivy.”)

9. Rich, “Taking Women Students Seriously,” in *On Lies, Secrets, and Silence* (New York: Norton, 1979), 244. Since writing this, I was intrigued to find another male academic citing the same passage (Gerald MacLean, “Citing the Subject,” in *Gender and Theory: Dialogues on Feminist Criticism*, ed. Linda Kauffman [Oxford:

Blackwell, 1989], 148). Rich's directness and precision make the passage particularly haunting.

10. *Perspectives of New Music* 17, no. 2 (Spring-Summer 1979): 204–24. (As I remember it, the issue actually appeared in the summer of 1980.) While this particular issue really does seem polemical in its focus on innovative “literary” writings, many different types of theory and analysis have continued to appear in *Perspectives*. The change in editorial style did not constitute a repudiation of the work associated with earlier issues of the journal.

11. I use scare-quotes because the notion that the new writing was, in some sense, literature can be quite misleading. It misled the well-known and very competent literary critic Marjorie Perloff, for one. In a presentation to the Society for Music Theory in Oakland (November 1990), she suggested that Randall's writings from the 1970s reflected dissatisfaction with music and an attempt to branch out into poetry. Perloff went on to compare Randall's literary effects, unfavorably, with the effects achieved by Clark Coolidge and other poets: that is, she suggested that he isn't very good at poetry. The response was simple: Randall had never stopped writing about music, and an evaluation of his writing should focus primarily on its effectiveness in communicating about music. (In Oakland, this point led to some interesting conversation between Randall and Perloff about how certain rhythmic effects that Perloff praised in Coolidge's writing would be inappropriate to Randall's goals.)

Relatedly, Boretz has emphasized (in conversation with me and no doubt with others) that “Language, as a Music” is not poetry: it is a musical composition, made up in large part of language.

Regarding the red cover, Elaine Barkin has reminded me that red is also the color of revolution.

12. I was working on the first version of “Music as Drama” at the time (the final version, which is not very different, appeared in *Music Theory Spectrum* 10 [1988]). One main goal of that paper is to dismantle the distinction between “technical” and “emotive” discourse about music.

13. For confirmation of the marginal position of much work that interests Rahn, and of his own role within professional music theory as an expert commentator on nonmainstream phenomena, see his invited contribution to “The State of Research in Music Theory.” His part of the survey is called “New Research Paradigms,” and gives a prominent role to “the Boretz/Randall/Barkin paradigm.” According to Rahn, this “paradigm” is “perceived by established theory as a threat

not only to the content of music theory but to its very mode of discourse" (85).

14. Need I cite evidence? Yes, because some men who are professionals in the humanities have developed a blindness to this widespread gendering. (Perhaps they are the only ones with this blindness.) So, for instance, here's the authoritative-sounding word from a standard book on child-rearing:

In school, girls continue to excel in language areas (spelling, reading comprehension, vocabulary, creative writing) and boys in spatial skills (depth perception, solving mazes and geometrical puzzles, map reading) and in math in the teen years (though it's not clear whether this is the result of nature or nurture).

(Arlene Eisenberg, Heidi E. Murkoff, and Sandee E. Hathaway, *What to Expect the First Year* [New York: Workman Publishing, 1989], 375.) The authors regard implausibly many gender differences as innate; that doesn't prevent the section "Gender Differences" (375–77) from being a useful summary of, precisely, gender associations in *our* culture.

15. Neil Hertz, "Two Extravagant Teachings," in *The End of the Line* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985) and Barbara Johnson, "Gender Theory and the Yale School," in *A World of Difference* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1987) are two clear, imaginative essays that work out the gender politics of literary-critical writing.
16. Deborah Tannen has recently given a popular, rather uninflected account of this male role, in *You Just Don't Understand: Men and Women in Conversation* (New York: Morrow, 1990). For careful evaluation of relevant scholarly work, see David Graddol and Joan Swann, *Gender Voices* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), 69–94.
17. I'm taking for granted that conventional masculinity includes, as an important constituent, a horror of sexual passivity and of being sexually penetrated. This is connected to a stereotyped image of heterosexual intercourse as an act of mastery, done by the proud possessor of a penis to a submissive nonpossessor (who may even be masochistically thrilled). In relation to this widely shared image, it is a particularly humiliating loss of phallic prestige for a male to be penetrated. No doubt this simple conception of sexuality predominates in many people's thoughts and practices. In some other people's lives it seems

less pertinent, but in no case can the limits of its influence be determined by a quick introspective survey of one's conscious thoughts.

On the restrictions and inhibitions that make it difficult to think nonphobically about anal eroticism, see Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "A Poem Is Being Written," in *Representations* 17 (Winter 1987); Leo Bersani, "Is the Rectum a Grave?" in *AIDS: Cultural Analysis, Cultural Activism*, ed. Douglas Crimp (Cambridge: MIT, 1988); D. A. Miller, "Anal Rope," in *Inside/Out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories*, ed. Diana Fuss (New York: Routledge, 1991).

18. In "If I am a musical thinker . . ." Boretz emphasizes the priority of listening. "Listening is the primal expressive act; listening is primal composition. . . ."

On tensions between musicality and masculinity, and the defensive reactions to these tensions in music scholarship, see Susan McClary, *Feminine Endings* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 17–18, and Philip Brett, "Musicality, Essentialism, and the Closet," forthcoming in *Queering the Pitch*, ed. Brett, Gary Watson, and Elizabeth Wood (Routledge, 1993). The "Who's on top?" issue receives elaborate discussion in Suzanne Cusick, "On a Lesbian Relationship with Music: A Serious Effort Not to Think Straight," forthcoming in *Queering the Pitch*.

I have written about the gendered passivity of listening in two papers on nineteenth-century topics: "Hanslick's Animism" (*Journal of Musicology* 1992), and "Virile Music by Hector Berlioz" (International Conference on Narrative, Nashville, April 1992).

19. Such indeterminacies between "identification" and "desire" are part of the subject of Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985).
20. My interpretation draws on the conventional assumption that boy babies are more energetic and independent than girl babies. For an interesting display of this assumption, see T. Berry Brazelton, *Infants and Mothers* (New York: Delacorte, 1969). Brazelton writes about differences between "quiet," "average," and "active" infants. For vividness, he personifies each type, narrating the development of three babies. One is not surprised to discover that the "quiet" baby is a girl, and the other two are boys.

Brazelton acknowledges the "appropriateness" of this stereotyping even while noting that it diverges from fact (and, as usual in child-rearing books, he hastens to reassure parents who worry that their little boy will become effeminate or, one infers, homosexual):

Even though such quiet, watchful activity may be more appropriate to a girl than to a boy baby, it need not be sex-determined. I have seen many little boys with this same makeup who are sturdily masculine as they develop. (79)

This passage shows clearly the conflicting demands on Brazelton: his writing attempts to reproduce a fairly strict gender ideology, while not alarming those parents whose babies don't know enough to conform.

For a well-known argument that boys are more powerfully motivated than girls to individuate themselves from their mothers, see Nancy Chodorow, *The Reproduction of Mothering* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978).

21. Suzanne Cusick, in conversation, has given me two more points about the passage. Rather than focussing on the contrast of infants, one could reflect on the contrast between nonreproductive (masturbatory or homosexual) and reproductive sexuality. Further, if a theory or theorist is identified as maternal, that need not be regarded as a disempowering feminization: on the contrary, the all-powerful mother experienced by young infants is a vivid figure of control.

The accusation of masturbatory writing is cheerfully anticipated by the title of Marjorie Tichenor's "Onanalysis" (one of the "literary" contributions in the same issue of *Perspectives* as Rahn's essay). Discourse about music would benefit greatly from a close examination of the notion of "masturbatory" writing (as in "Isn't that just mental masturbation?") or, relatedly, "self-indulgence." Though such terms don't appear in print very often, I think they play a significant, unexamined role in the evaluative thought of many musical scholars.

22. See, for instance, Sandra Harding, *The Science Question in Feminism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986).
23. The professional response to Randall and Boretz is a special, complex issue. Reaction has often been remarkably harsh and violent. I would not claim that negative or marginalizing reactions to their work have resulted *only* from the gendering of discursive styles. Nor do I want to suggest that no traits of Randall's or Boretz's writing might be gendered as masculine. But I think the aspects of their work perceived as deeply threatening are mostly aspects that can be gendered as feminine.

Nor do I want to suggest that Randall or Boretz has been motivated by consciously held feminist beliefs. I am not aware that either of them is particularly interested in feminism as an intellectual or

political movement, and I would not care to predict how they might respond to various feminist claims.

It is hard to give persuasive evidence in discussing “the reception of Randall and Boretz”: the persistent reactions of contempt and disgust have not found their way into print. In professional writing—conference papers and publications—the negative reaction to Randall and Boretz has normally taken the form of simply ignoring their work, even when it is obviously pertinent to a topic under discussion. For an exception, see Joseph Dubiel’s review of Wayne Slawson, *Sound Color*, in *Music Perception* 6, no. 3 (Spring 1989).

I wonder, by the way, what similarities and differences there have been in responses to work by Elaine Barkin, whose work has been, as she puts it, “deeply and heavily affected, supported, and influenced by (that of) Jim and Ben.” For geographical reasons—she has been on the West Coast, I on the East—I’ve had few opportunities to see her in action, or to witness the reactions.

24. If this formulation seems distressing, it may be because my remark sounds like a familiar type of misogynist or homophobic insult. Note 3 above is pertinent.

Of course a more pedantic, less provocative formulation is possible: “Male musicians, particularly specialists in listening, do not unproblematically exemplify all important aspects of the contemporary social role ‘man,’ partly because their crucial activity of sensitive listening does not seem to fall on the masculine side of the active/passive dichotomy.”

25. I discuss such issues in a paper, “Self-Depiction in Writing about Music,” presented to the Society for Music Theory (Oakland, November 1990).
26. It does seem strange to rely on Randall and Boretz, or any other males, as the central paradigm of feminine discourse about music. But I doubt that their examples could be eliminated without sacrifice from discussions of gendered discourse on music. The fact that Randall and Boretz are male, and were trained in Babbitt’s tradition, has allowed them some measure of visibility and professional survival, or at least notoriety, even when their writing veered from masculine norms. So writings of Randall and Boretz might, in fact, offer instances of feminine discourse that are unusually well developed and widely known.
27. I am presently working on an essay about music-theoretical ideas of Renee Lorraine (who has published under the name Renee Cox),

Suzanne Cusick, and Pauline Oliveros, in order to articulate some of what I have learned about music from feminist women.

28. Elaine Barkin, Marianne Kielian-Gilbert, and Susan McClary evaluated this paper for *Perspectives*, and they all wrote long, thoughtful reports. Apart from the exchanges in this “Afterword,” I also changed details of the paper in response to their suggestions and questions.

I presented the paper at the University of California, Riverside, in February 1993, and on that occasion Chauncey Maddren made the observation that I cite.

For other thought-provoking responses, and for encouragement, I owe thanks to Philip Brett, Joseph Dubiel, and Renee Lorraine in addition to those I’ve already mentioned.

29. “The Future of Music Theory,” in *Indiana Theory Review* 10 (Spring/Fall 1989).
30. But—to say what is probably obvious—initiating public discussion of “center” and “margin” is not, by itself, my principal strategy for raising doubts about the *status quo*. My principal strategy, in this paper, is to link mainstream theory with masculinity, and then try to make its masculine aspects seem unappealing.
31. Joseph Kerman’s “How We Got into Analysis, and How to Get Out” (cited in note 1) illustrates my point, as does the apparent dismissal of the more venturesome contributions to *Perspectives in Contemplating Music* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985).
32. One could not infer from, for instance, my previous article on Boretz and Randall (“Recent Ideas and Activities of James K. Randall and Benjamin Boretz: A New Social Role for Music,” *Perspectives of New Music* 26, no. 2 [Summer 1988]), or from “Music as Narrative” (*Indiana Theory Review* 12 [Spring and Fall 1991]), that music theory has the kind of mainstream depicted in the present article.
33. Or, in a less vivid formulation: “I don’t want to write about my listening experiences, because listening is awfully close to occupying a passive sexual role.”
34. It may be that one needs a subtler account of such ideas than the notion of “homophobia” provides, since some gay male discourses also tend to devalue passive sexual roles. See Richard Dyer, “Coming to Terms,” in *Out There: Marginalization and Contemporary Culture*, edited by Russell Ferguson, Martha Gever, Trinh T. Minh-ha, and Cornel West (New York: The New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1990). For a discussion of the relation between sexual roles and

racism in gay male pornography, see Richard Fung, “Looking for My Penis: The Eroticized Asian in Gay Video Porn,” in *How Do I Look? Queer Film and Video*, edited by Bad Object-Choices (Seattle: Bay Press, 1991).

35. The substitute phrase that McClary proposed—“to indulge in anal penetration” instead of “to get fucked”—won’t do, for a simple reason: it doesn’t reveal that the issue is about the passive role.
Nor is her phrase particularly reassuring (which was one of her concerns about my phrase). “To indulge in anal penetration” suggests that being penetrated is an “indulgence,” something one is likely to desire despite some coexisting inhibition. If you want to heighten some anxieties, try suggesting *that* to a random sampling of masculine heterosexual men.
36. This responds to McClary’s emphasis on “defusing anxieties” rather than “heightening them”; it doesn’t, of course, fully defend my writing, since my particular way of heightening anxieties may not contribute helpfully to the “working-through” process.
37. Early, influential accounts of the “male gaze” include John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: BBC and Penguin Books, 1972) and Laura Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” in *Visual and Other Pleasures* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), first published in 1975.
38. I expect to have more to say in another essay; see note 27.
39. Oliveros, *Software for People* (Baltimore: Smith Publications, 1984).
40. I claimed this about Hanslick in “Hanslick’s Animism,” 287.