

Political Interventions in Music Education: Creative Engagements and Exclusions

ELIZABETH GOULD

University of Toronto

Abstract

*North American music education is a commodity sold to pre-service and in-service music teachers. Like all mass-produced consumables, it is valuable to the extent that it is not creative, that is, to the extent that it is reproducible. This is demonstrated in curricular materials, notably general music series textbook and music scores available from a rapidly shrinking cadre of publishers, as well as rigid and pre-determined pedagogical practices. Distributing resources and techniques that produce predictable, consistent, and repeatable goods and services, the economy of music teacher preparation and development must necessarily exclude creativity, which consequently must be viewed as not only inefficient but unprofitable. More than undesirable, however, creativity is constructed as dangerous as it injects difference in a system that relies on sameness. Because of its implications for music education discourse and practices, I focus my discussion on research in general and feminist critique in particular in music education. Reading through Monique Wittig's *Trojan Horse as literary war machine*, I argue that creative writing and academic research are not mutually exclusive, and that it is only through infusing the literary or creative in scholarly writing that interlocking systems of oppression may be altered and difference implicated in music education. My analysis of Roberta Lamb's (1995) research piece, 'Tone Deaf/Symphonies Singing: Sketches for a Musical' depicts it as *Trojan Horse*, albeit one that Lamb herself, most likely as a function of editorial imperative, hobbles.*

Introduction

The discipline of music teacher preparation in Canada and the U.S. may be conceived as a political economy. It is political to the extent that it is characterized by exclusions and inclusions that result from choices made in relationship to power and knowledge. It is an economy to the extent that it distributes knowledge and skills that produce predictable, consistent, and repeatable goods and services in the form of individuals eager, willing, and licensed to deliver curricula grounded in Western art music through error-detection pedagogical methods to variously interested and motivated students in multiple school and community settings. North American music education, then, may be described as a commodity sold to both pre-service and in-service music educators. Like all mass-produced consumables, it is valuable to the extent that it is not creative, that is, to the extent that it is reproducible. This is demonstrated in curricular materials, notably general music series textbooks available from a rapidly shrinking cadre of publishers, as well as published music scores. In terms of pedagogical practices this is evidenced by what Thomas Regelski (2004) describes in terms of his neologism 'methodolatry': the 'uncritical devotion to, or worship of . . . *technicist* approaches' to music education, particularly those that include 'claims of "it works" are said to be "proven" by science or experience and those advanced as "technologies" of prescriptive or recipe teaching' (p. 7). Distributing resources and techniques that produce predictable, consistent, and repeatable goods and services, the economy of music teacher preparation and development must necessarily exclude creativity, which consequently must be viewed as not only inefficient but unprofitable. More than undesirable, creativity is constructed as dangerous as it injects difference in a system that relies on sameness.

For music teacher preparation programmes to change so that they may accommodate and encourage creativity, we must explore our conceptions of music education. What are its goals? Who should it serve and why? With implications for both curriculum and pedagogy, these questions invoke considerations of value. What counts? What matters? Traditional music education research in teaching and learning, as well as

institutionalized pedagogical approaches and curricular materials typically delineate these questions but are inadequate for moving thought as and to action. In other words, based on positivist research paradigms they use thinking that ‘mediates everything, but mobilises and moves nothing’ (Deleuze, 1994, p. 55-56). Creative approaches, by contrast, may initiate research and consequently music teacher preparation programmes to positionalities inhered with potentialities of difference, where difference is inextricably linked to a materialist ontology of *embodied* performativity that exceeds discursivity and is inescapably political. Importantly, as I use the term here politics does not refer to governmentality but to exclusions and inclusions. Further, because any analysis of difference, including poststructural analysis is embodied, which is to say carried out by some one who is positioned not only theoretically as philosopher or writer (Grierson, 2007), but materially as in my case, white, lesbian, feminist, it is impossible for any analysis to be written outside of politics. In light of that, I suggest that one approach to music education research that holds particular promise for mobilising difference is Monique Wittig’s literary Trojan Horse. Moreover I maintain that this approach, while unusual in music education research, is not entirely new, even as it remains suspect. With my analysis of Roberta Lamb’s 1995 chapter ‘Tone Deaf/Symphonies Singing: Sketches for a Musicale’ as a Trojan Horse, I argue that political interventions such as this that engage exclusions in music education discourse, practices, and research enrich the profession musically and educationally, and initiating its creative promise.

Trojan Horses and Potentialities of Resistance

French novelist and feminist Monique Wittig discusses the Trojan Horse in her theoretical essay of the same name (Wittig, 1992/1984). Connecting it specifically to literature, she asserts that any literary work created as innovative form functions as a Trojan Horse when it is written, because both its design and goal are ‘to pulverize old forms and formal conventions’ (Wittig, 1992/1984, p. 69). Further, as a Trojan Horse it is a war machine created behind enemy lines where it inexorably clears its own space, disrupting and eventually displacing what has come before. The duration of this process depends on its relative familiarity so that the more unfamiliar the Trojan Horse and the less it is recognizable as a horse, the longer this subversive process takes. Eventually, Wittig claims, as long as the Trojan Horse is familiar enough to be recognizable as a horse eventually, it will become accepted. It is the ordinary, then, which operates as war machine.

Using what is apparently ordinary to subvert existing practices, the Trojan Horse works by operating from within. Radical literary writing accomplishes this as it works with language at the level of form—not concept, where Wittig argues historical, political, and ideological writing operate.¹ These types of what Wittig characterizes as committed writing² are intent on conveying a message, information, a point of view which are necessarily interested regardless of whether they are purported to be objective or neutral. Writers of committed literature use words in terms of their conventional, concrete and abstract meanings which Wittig describes as univocal. Further, committed writers do not ‘question the medium they use’ (Wittig, 1992/1984, p. 73), and hence reproduce the reality they critique. Their point of reference is social history with people at the centre. Concerned exclusively with communicating ideas and concepts and not with language, committed writing cannot create anything new as it operates at the level of truth or literal (abstract and concrete) meanings rather than creating new meanings (Crowder, 2005). For literary writers, by contrast, words are everything. Wittig explains how this works by substituting the term *letter* for *signifier* and the term *meaning* for *signified*. The term *sign*, meanwhile, refers to

the combination of the letter and the meaning). Using the words *letter* and *meaning* in place of *signified* and *signifier* permits us to avoid the interference of the referent prematurely in the vocabulary of the sign. (For *signified* and *signifier* describe the sign in terms of the reality being referred to, while *letter* and *meaning* describe the sign solely in relation to language.) In language, only the meaning is abstract. (Wittig, 1992/1984, p. 65)

Indeed, literary writers 'reduce' words beneath everyday usage, treating them as raw material for working and combining them in ways that create new forms and polysemic meanings.³ It is this process of working, what Wittig describes as a detour that is essential to literary writing. Through this detour, the process of manipulating words, writers work with the materiality of language 'to turn it into something else, a product' (p. 73), taking literary works themselves as a point of reference. Literary writing taken through this detour creates a shock of words, 'as if they were being read for the first time. . . . [P]roduced by their association, their disposition, their arrangement, and also by each one of them used separately' (p. 72), this shock makes of literature a war machine.

The primary purpose of literary writing, then, is 'to change the textual reality within which it is inscribed' (Wittig, 1992/1984, p. 63), the textual reality of literary works. These works become war machines when they universalize a particular point of view. Committed writing may accomplish this when the writer is successful in altering the reader's system of reference, literally making general the individual perspective of the writer. This occurs, for instance, when a writer induces heterosexual readers to experience homosexual perspectives as their own. Instead of enabling heterosexual readers to identify with homosexual perspectives as being like heterosexual perspectives, homosexuality is experienced as universal or general (Zerilli, 2005). Without doing this, writers of committed literature create inert recognizable concepts that because they do nothing, can change nothing. For Wittig, all literary works may begin from the particular, indeed they must include the particular, but at some point they must also encompass the general as they pay 'particular attention to the formal elements that can be open to history, such as themes, subjects of narratives, as well as the global form of the work' (Wittig, 1992/1984, p. 75).

The literary Trojan Horse, meanwhile, is constituted by radical imagination, or the creation of phenomena that incite change and create new, previously unimagined and currently unnamed meanings and forms. As 'the condition for thought, knowledge, and judgment,' imagination and the literary language associated with it, including figurations, images, and metaphors, are of 'critical importance for understanding what does and can appear as part of our world' (Zerilli, 2005, p. 89). Creating what previously did not exist, it names what had been unknown. As Trojan Horse, it ruptures current forms from within, creating contingent meanings and forms that use the language into which we are born, whether verbal, musical, or artistic, and changes it. By engaging 'meaning, understanding, and action rather than truth or knowledge' (p. 92), literary writing enables us to go beyond committed 'practice[s] of doubting' characteristic of feminist theorizing, for instance, and implicates radical imagination in our interactions with the world and each other. Understanding the limits of doubt, then, becomes crucial for devising weapons that may reconfigure what is possible in the world, what counts ontologically in everyday life. Interlocking systems of oppression that both literary works and committed writing would address are not susceptible to demonstrations of propositional logic, dialectics, or scientific method. They cannot be expressed in terms of univocal rationality as they 'cannot be doubted, denied, or jumped over. [They] can only be reimagined. And this imaginative language is not the production of a solitary subject but of praxis, human beings talking with one another' (Zerilli, 2005, p. 111, n31). In other words, committed writing, which is to say writing which is historical, political, and ideological is incapable of initiating change as it tells one particular story from one particular perspective, regardless of how that perspective is characterized. I would suggest that academic research in music education as it is traditionally carried out, whether quantitative, qualitative, or philosophical is emblematic of committed writing, and consequently unable to initiate change because it does not and cannot engage radical imagination.

While Zerilli's interest is in looking at how Wittig's literary writing may express the interests of committed writing, my interest is in how committed writing such as academic research may be literary. Indeed, I not only argue that literary writing and academic research are not mutually exclusive, but that it is only through infusing the literary in scholarly writing that systems of oppression addressed by research may be altered. My contention is that all academic research constitutes committed writing. While truth claims and propositions associated with traditional academic research addressing issues of difference follow generally agreed upon scientific methods, they are not persuasive materially not only because they are univocal, but

more importantly because they negate the *doxa* of our experience in relationship to our desire. Lived reality is the way it is not so much because we experience it a particular way, but because at some level we *want* to experience it in a particular way (which is not to suggest that this desire is freely chosen). It has not escaped my notice, for instance, that scores perhaps most, young women in music teacher education programmes at least in much of Canada and the U.S. enjoy the expressed sexual attention of young men, covertly or overtly relishing their status as an object of sexual desire. A necessary material effect of this sexual positioning as it is constructed in these societies, of course, is women's locatedness as being without power and agency, acted upon rather than acting. Positioning such as this renders women invisible in terms of human subjectivity, which is succinctly demonstrated in English language usage in North America that labels any woman younger than 50 as 'girl' and any group of individuals, whether single-sex or mixed-sex, as 'guys.' Despite more than 40 years of feminist academic research and writing, the sexual positioning these terms assume and imply exhibits little change even as use of these figures of speech exhibits virtually no indication of abating at least in much of Canada and the U.S. Similarly, research related to gender stereotyping of instruments, for instance, replete with specific gender affirmative approaches for introducing instruments that have been shown to ameliorate the problem of stereotyping, has seemingly contributed little to lessening pervasive segregation in instrument selection and performance. Further, and not unrelatedly, music education occupations for which students in music teacher preparation programs prepare remain persistently segregated in terms of race, gender, and class, while music education curricula retain their narrow focus on content and materials based on practices and values now over a century old. What this apparently indicates is that research problems in music education are immune to committed writing associated with politics, history, and ideology, which is to say traditional academic research, necessitating new creative literary forms for 'radical reformulation' of material relations as well as our research practices investigating them. One of these forms, I suggest, *both* 'demonstrate[s] (with concepts or arguments . . . [and] lead[s] before the eyes (with images and metaphors) (Zerilli, 2005, p. 90, my italics). It is not so much a combination of committed and literary writing as it is an attitude or perspective; an aesthetic, if you will. Recognizing the limits of doubt, the limits of reason characterized by 'rational language—and activities we associate with it, judging, thinking, and knowing' (Zerilli, 2005, 89), we approach this literary research form with some modesty, some humility related to what we can know and do, and apply to it our creativity, our radical imagination.

Slouching Toward Troy

Through both her literary and theoretical (committed) writing, Wittig attempts no less than to change Western society itself as she 'create[s] war machines that explode in the face of the straight mind that divides humanity into master and slaves' (Crowder, 2005, p. 83). Very briefly, her argument is that the categories of woman and man have no ontological basis and exist only in relation to each other. This relationship is characterized by dominance of the social group of men over the social group of women which is enforced by compulsory heterosexuality. Because lesbians disobey this law, refuse and literally break the social contract of heterosexuality, they are not women. Rather, lesbians are outlaws, runaway slaves, fleeing from where there is no escape because there is literally nowhere to run, as no place exists for humans outside society. Consequently, these social relations must be renegotiated, a new social contract must be created, which is exactly what Wittig attempts to write with her literary works, most notably and specifically her novel *Les Guérillères*.⁴

Roberta Lamb, on the other hand, appears to attempt rather more modest goals with her research: to make gender visible in the profession of music education, and propose how and what music education might change should gender become at the very least a category of analysis. Because this research undermines the very assumptions of colonialist patriarchy on which music education is based, thus opening spaces to profoundly re-create the profession, I argue it functions as a Trojan Horse. Indeed, through her research, Lamb also creates war machines that explode in the face of the patriarchal colonial mind in music education

that marks students and teachers as legible and illegible. In the case of music education, she creates war machines that dare to not only speak of gender, but to speak gender itself.

Lamb first asks the question, 'Are there gender issues in school music?' in a 1990 essay published in the *Canadian Music Educator*, a journal typically read by school music teachers and those preparing to become school music teachers living in Canada. As with most articles published in this journal, it is short, consisting of three pages that are spread over five pages with two full pages of advertising separating each page of text. By framing her topic as a question, Lamb leaves open the possibility that perhaps gender issues do not exist in school music. This invites the reader to answer the question based on evidence even though the question itself provides the answer: if there were no gender issues in school music, the question would not be asked. Lamb begins the article with a series of anecdotes relating actual experiences in university and secondary school settings, the intent of which seems to be to place readers, who typically are students preparing to become music educators, in the stories, with the assumption that they can and will identify with one or more of the scenarios. Her interest, she suggests, is not that gender is implicated in all of these anecdotes, but that issues related to gender in music and music education are not discussed in the profession, let alone in music classrooms. Students in my second year music education class who read this article, like the students depicted in the article itself, resist the content. Blind to their response, they express hostility about even mentioning issues of gender in music and music education which they claim are irrelevant, inaccurate, and discomforting. Questioning in this way how we might change our practices leaves unasked questions about the necessity for such practices. As an example of committed writing, this essay is neither persuasive nor compelling to students, however reasonable, 'objective,' research-based, and clearly written it is. Some five years later, Lamb published a chapter in a book asking the same question she addressed in this article. This chapter, however, while even more extensively supported by research, is also deliberately creative in both its design and effect.

In the introduction to her text, 'Tone Deaf/Symphonies Singing: Sketches for a Musicale,' Lamb declares that the 'discipline [of] music education is tone deaf—it does not know how to sing feminist, it refuses to hear the symphonic chorus murmuring below the surface' (Lamb, 1995, p. 109). Located in terms of not-knowing and wilfully not-hearing, the profession both resists and refuses the possibility of feminist research contributions, rendering Lamb and those who participate in the profession while also writing feminist critique 'at once tone deaf and . . . symphonic singer[s]' (p. 109). Lamb describes this 'doubled position' what I would characterize as fractured as 'a very real struggle' (p. 109); a struggle requiring creative responses so that gender issues may become legible in the profession as something more than personal or a special interest.⁵ Instead of immediately creating her war machine, however, Lamb pauses to explain its form. While this would seem to be an editorial imperative (similar to her reading and explanation appended at the end of the chapter), Lamb also frames her caveat in the context of the limitations of the printed medium within which she writes.

The form of her Trojan Horse consists of a series of motives,⁶ similar to sections in a rather more traditional research report. These motives are not arranged in a linear format, (although they are of necessity configured in a linear manner in the printed text), but rather as a palindrome or musically, as a rondo.⁷ Lamb then delineates the elements of her discussion in and through the motives. *Motive on an Octave* (motive 1) introduces the piece⁸ and acknowledges, because of its relative newness, the 'highly speculative and exploratory' nature of feminist theory in the music curriculum. In light of this positioning, Lamb names her writing as an improvised 'fiction theory' in a 'musical-poetic form that is both self-reflexive and disruptive' (p. 111). In *Motive in the Dorian Mode* (motive 2) Lamb asserts that because the music curriculum is always already inhered with gender that is economically and culturally privileged masculine and heterosexual, 'gender cannot add to the music curriculum' (p. 111). Rather, she maintains, gender *is* the music curriculum. Women musicians and teachers are implicated in this hegemony in terms of music education's moral implications, as we 'signify the angel-in-the-house' (p. 111), providing stability and continuity through 'the affective training of children' (p. 112). Lamb explores the possibilities of women creating music as women in *Motive on a Fifth* (motive 3), identifying compositional techniques associated with women that function,

in addition to feminist criticism, as ‘one form of resistance to the universalizing of the transcendent in aesthetic theory’ (p. 115). Feminist music teachers, she suggests, may implement these techniques in order to devise ‘a feminist music pedagogy.’ *Motive on a Minor Second* (motive 4) is particularly speculative as Lamb describes women’s stories of their participation in music. Her questions relate the possibilities of these stories in terms of music curriculum and pedagogy. *Lydian Motive with Descending Tritone* (motive 5) describes the risks involved where feminist theory articulates with music teaching and learning, the site where women ‘begin to hear and speak, and maybe even sing’ (p. 122).

The centre of the palindrome, the motive on which the war machine turns is *Motive with a Major Seventh* (motive 6). This is where Lamb speaks the unspeakable, breaking the silence surrounding the violence of music and music education directed toward women. She refers specifically to sexual harassment too often characteristic of the master/apprentice model of teaching most commonly associated with private lesson music teaching. The unspoken convictions that this apprenticeship is both sacrosanct and essential for success in music performance guarantee women’s silence. Expressions of any kind of dissatisfaction jettison the apprentice from the studio, closing down any chances for success. Immediately following this motive, Lamb calls for silence, a grand pause in musical terms, because she claims, ‘Naming harassment interrupts the movement of music through time’ (p. 130). This motive is immediately preceded by a block quote of text from a poem by Adrienne Rich (1973), called ‘The Ninth Symphony of Beethoven Understood At Last As a Sexual Message.’ In the poem, ‘A man in terror of impotence / or infertility, not knowing the difference’ howls and yells, ‘beating . . . a bloody fist upon / a splintered table’ against what it ‘does not want out’ (Rich as quoted in Lamb, p. 122). Speaking sexual violence in music and music education results in silence, a state bereft of music.

This silence cannot last however, particularly for women. *Motive on a Unison* (motive 7) begins the return journey of the palindrome (the A theme of an octave returning as unison).⁹ Here Lamb discusses how the philosophy of music education as aesthetic education has been hegemonic specifically in Canada and the U.S. since at least 1970. Steeped in the Western art music canon, this music education philosophy incorporates the ‘omissions, hierarchical criteria, and positivistic process’ (p. 124) associated with Enlightenment aesthetic conceptions of music and its value. Lamb continues this theme in *Motive in C Major* (motive 8), where she notes that ‘music education research follows a model of scientific inquiry whose underlying project appears to be the establishment of music as science’ (p. 124). The effect of this, of course, is to render it ‘manly’ enough to overcome music’s long association with women and the feminine. In *Motive in the Phrygian Mode* (motive 9) Lamb notes that despite this grounding in aesthetic education, practices of music education pedagogy are persistently performance-based, as performance of music trumps knowledge of it in all cases. Describing music performance as ‘untheorized practice’ that she contrasts with praxis, Lamb links performance to male constructions of music again associated with the master/apprentice relation.

Lamb finally moves away from the Western art music tradition in *Motive in Saraswati Raga* (motive 10) which ‘invoke[s] the examination of music as a symbol system constituted within the ideology of institutions/practices as relations of ruling’ (p. 127). It is at this point where she again becomes self-conscious of the work she is creating even as she aware of her complicity in what it critiques. *Motive on a Perfect Fourth* (motive 11) extends this theme related specifically to pedagogy, noting that in our focus on correct methods we ignore the meaning of the way we teach. In the final section, *Motive on a Major Second* (motive 12), Lamb is hopeful that as music education pedagogy becomes more connected to music in daily life it can avoid reproducing those oppressive gender relations as well. ‘[E]nvision[ing] a radical change in music education content and process’ (p. 128), Lamb suggests ‘a praxis of music education informed by feminist music criticism wherein both men and women speak in resistance of the relations of ruling’ (p. 129).

In addition to the motives, the text includes several other elements. Running alongside motives two through four in the printed text is a boxed list of women composers arranged alphabetically by last name. The first 53 names are of deceased women, some dead for centuries, whom Lamb describes as ‘musical ancestors—composers, performers, historians, conductors’ (p. 130). Acknowledging the partiality of this list, she continues with a list of the names of 432 contemporary women composers, performers, historians, and

conductors. Apparently envisioning this as a performance piece, Lamb suggests that ‘the reading of the women’s names’ (p. 130) should continue following a grand pause inserted after the sixth motive, ‘the midpoint of the piece.’ Indeed, she instructs that these names ‘continue . . . with more regularity than before; they are more persistent, more prevalent, perhaps soothing, definitely surviving’ (p. 130). Easily the longest list of women musicians published in education, albeit the vast majority of which are associated with Western art music, the list remains largely hidden from view of the music education profession, as it is published in a general education book on curriculum: *Gender Informs Curriculum: From Enrichment to Transformation*. Based on the wide-spread belief that music is special, different from other subjects and beyond the understanding of other professional educators, music educators typically read little research literature published outside of the discipline.

Interspersed throughout the text are quotes from the writings of French Canadian theorist and poet Nicole Brossard, feminist ‘new’ musicologist Susan McClary, sociologist Lucy Green who has written on gender in music education, and feminist sociologist Dorothy Smith. Lamb not only uses research in the field to support her own work, but also undertakes re-search for explanations, for making meaning. Living in what was for her at that time a new country itself still recovering from the 1989 murders of fourteen women targeted for being ‘feminists’ (which they desperately denied as they were shot) at the École Polytechnique in Montréal, Lamb found herself losing her own musical voice. Nagging injuries had finally made it impossible for her to continue playing the flute. In addition to sexual harassment, practicing to the point of muscle or nerve damage has been an unspoken and hence tacit expectation in the music profession. Betrayed by her body, her female body unable to withstand the demands of excessive repetitive movement, she turned to literary theory, specifically to Monique Wittig, to find both creative voice and form.

Lamb frames her piece with quotes from Wittig’s novel *Les Guerillères* which similarly frame Wittig’s work. To begin:

(1) GOLDEN SPACES LACUNAE

...

(6) THE SOUND OF THE SINGING VOICES

(7) THE DEAD WOMEN THE DEAD WOMEN

...

(19) THE CRIES THE LAUGHS THE MOVEMENTS

(20) THE WOMEN AFFIRM IN TRIUMPH THAT

(21) ALL ACTION IS OVERTHROW (Wittig quoted in Lamb, p. 110)

Between these lines, Wittig writes:

(3) THEY DREAM AND SPEAK OF THEM

...

(5) THE WEAPONS PILED IN THE SUN

...

(8) CONSPIRACIES REVOLUTIONS

(9) FERVOUR FOR THE STRUGGLE (Wittig, 1971, p. 5)

Focusing on description and sound images, Lamb omits the aspirations, the revolution of ‘they’—the women as universal. Wittig, however, also deliberately and overtly sets the stage for revolution, for change, for Trojan Horses.

To end her piece Lamb again quotes Wittig:

- (3) NO / SYMBOLS TEARING
- (4) ARISE VIOLENCE FROM WHITENESS
- (5) OF THE UNDYING BEAUTIFUL PRESENT
- ...
- (11 [*sic*] ARISE NO / SYMBOLS MASSED
- (12 [*sic*] EVIDENT / THE DESIGNATED TEXT
- ...
- (14 [*sic*] FAULTY
- (15 [*sic*] LACUNAE LACUNAE
- (16 [*sic*] AGAINST TEXTS
- (17 [*sic*] AGAINST MEANINGS
- (18 [*sic*] WHICH IS TO WRITE VIOLENCE
- (19 [*sic*] OUTSIDE THE TEXT
- (21 [*sic*] IN ANOTHER WRITING
- (22 [*sic*] THREATENING MENACING
- (23 [*sic*] MARGINS SPACES INTERVALS
- (24 [*sic*] WITHOUT PAUSE
- (25 [*sic*] ACTION OVERTHROW

This time, focusing on language, texts, and writing, Lamb omits the violent effects of the revolution:

- (7) THE BODY RIDDLED TORN
- (9) (INTOLERABLE)
- (10) WRITTEN BY DEFAULT (Wittig, 1971, p. 143)

Perhaps Wittig's imaginary is too violent for Lamb's war machine of music education research, too violent to be legible, threatening to make Lamb's particular Trojan Horse too strange, too unfamiliar, too unwelcome in music education to function effectively as war machine. What remains unspoken? What is it that gender cannot speak even in and through Lamb's own creation?

Discussion

Roberta Lamb's piece, 'Tone Deaf/Symphonies Singing: Sketches for a Musicale' both demonstrates and manifests possibilities for academic writing as literary Trojan Horse. It does not simply combine literature with research, but creates something else that aspires to leap off the page from visual to sound, singing, murmuring, chanting. Does it count as committed literature in Wittig's worldview? Perhaps. Yet it attempts to universalize women's experience in music and music education, to make women's experience the universal of music and music education. Who does not suffer violence when confronted with oppression? Does it count as research in the worldview of the academic discipline of music education? Perhaps not. It resists linear argument, and attempts to move away from propositional logic. It offers little that would count as evidence in traditional music education research. Rather, Lamb attempts to use language at the level of meaning to manifest rather than demonstrate truth claims presented at the level of concept. Detouring through musical images, Lamb uses words to do something, to sing. Names become signifiers for

potentialities too often unrealized. Their articulation—unheard on the printed page except internally, the inner hearing that must precede all singing on pitch—functions as cadence for the song murmuring just out of hearing. Even with chant the underlying harmonic structure must be heard internally to accurately sing the next pitch. The singer must internalize, make universal the milieu, the context of the chant as well in order to undertake the chanting.

Discursive ideas are handled as motives, melodic, yet fragmented as they are also generally unrealized. The piece does not ‘develop’ in the aesthetic sense of progress, but spirals back on itself, doubling itself. The story is told and untold. Then retold; an editorially induced concession perhaps to research, legibility, explanation, concept. The Trojan Horse, too unfamiliar here to be recognized as horse; not just a different colour but a different species altogether. Zebras, too, gallop and snort, but they are too small to ride, too wild to tame and socialize. So Lamb offers her own reading in the end, revealing her Trojan Horse as exploding bomb while simultaneously defusing and disarming it. War machines do not function at the level of explanation, the level of concept. They must be internalized individually and collectively, understood as universal, a world which becomes the reader’s and even the singer’s. And so this radically imagined creative world, this Trojan Horse exposed as not-horse loses its subversive potential—but not without leaving traces, ghosts of radical imagination of gender and violence in music and music education as it signals a downbeat, a site for beginning the song, clearing spaces for potentialities of creativity in music education and music teacher preparation.

Lamb’s reading and subsequent explanation of the motives are not part of her actual piece, of course, as the text ends with the incantation from *Les Guérillères*. Similar to the pages of Wittig’s novel, more text follows the incantation. Indeed, the final paragraph depicts responses of they (the women as universal) who survived the war: sobbing, crying as they ‘remember the women [they] who died for liberty. And then we intoned the Funeral March, a slow, melancholy and yet triumphant air’ (Wittig, 1971, p. 144).

Lydian Motive with Ascending Tritone

The descending tritone shows a malevolent character, traditionally called ‘diabolus in musica’ (an apt signifier in conjunction with sexual harassment). Some identify this sound as deep, suspenseful, or weird. The tritone is found between the fourth tone and the first of the Lydian mode. Plato forbade use of the Lydian mode, fearing it would make men effeminate. Yet, when the ascending tritone is emphasized, the expression can become prayerful, pastoral, and lyric. (Lamb, 1995, p. 131)

Notes

1. ‘Literary work,’ Wittig claims, ‘cannot be influenced directly by history, politics, and ideology because these two fields belong to parallel systems of signs which function differently in the social corpus and use language in a different way’ (p. 69).
2. Wittig specifically identifies *écriture féminine* (French feminist literary theory) as committed writing.
3. Wittig notes that this process is unique to literary writers. Unlike composers and artists who work with materials (sound and for example, clay or paint, respectively) that do not mean in a denotative sense, writers must first reduce words to be as meaningless as possible so they may become neutral, raw material.
4. In her novel, *Les Guérillères*, Wittig uses the pronoun ‘elles’ (which in French is the feminine ‘they’) universally in reference to ‘les guérillères’ (for which there is no English equivalent so is not translated), the collective that is (can) not (be) women—because it is used as the generic ‘they’ which would consequently encompass everyone. Meanwhile, ‘ils’ (which in French is the generic ‘they’—understood as the generic male which is to say everyone) is used in the novel to refer to a specific group distinct from ‘elles.’ English language editions of the novel have translated ‘elles’ as ‘the women’ which Wittig (2007) insists is inaccurate and suggests that ‘they’ is closer to her original intent and meaning.
5. Feminism is often depicted this way in music education research (see, for example, Reimer, 2003; Woodford, 2005).

6. 'Motive' is a musical term for an emblematic melodic or rhythmic idea that may be recognized in a variety of configurations. Notably, motives should be sufficiently rich to generate more extended musical material. In Western art music this typically means more complex musical material.
7. 'Rondo' is a musical form in which the original theme designated as 'A' always returns after contrasting thematic material (B, C, D, etc.) is introduced. A rondo comprised of three themes may be expressed as ABACA. Perhaps most commonly, however, rondos are arranged as palindromes: ABACABA.
8. I use the word 'piece' rather than 'chapter' as the former signals a musical composition which is to say, contains creative connotations.
9. While 'unison' comprises at least two instantiations of the same pitch in the same register, 'octave' comprises at least two instantiations of the same pitch in different registers, higher or lower. It is important to note as well that in terms of Western melodic movement the interval of a major seventh (motive 6) resolves almost inevitably to the octave (motive 7).

References

- Crowder, D. G. (2005) Universalizing Materialist Lesbianism, in: N. Shaktini (ed.), *On Monique Wittig: Theoretical, political, and literary essays* (Urbana and Chicago, University of Illinois Press), pp. 63-86.
- Deleuze, G. (1994) *Difference and Repetition*, P. Patton, trans. (New York, Columbia University Press).
- Grierson, E. 2007. Difference A Critical Investigation of the Creative Arts with Attention to Art as a Site of Knowledge. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 30, 5, pp. 531-542.
- Lamb, R. (1990) Are There Gender Issues in School Music? *Canadian Music Educator*, 31:4, pp. 9, 11, 13.
- Lamb, R. (1995) Tone Deaf/Symphonies Singing: Sketches for a Musicale, in J. Gaskell & J. Willinsky (eds.) *Gender in/forms curriculum: From enrichment to transformation* (New York, Teachers College Press), pp. 109-135.
- Regelski, T. A. (2004) *Teaching General Music in Grades 4-8: A Musicianship Approach* (New York & Oxford, Oxford University Press).
- Wittig, M. (1971) *Les Guérillères*, D. Le Vay, trans. (Boston, Beacon Press).
- Wittig, M (1992/1980) The Point of View: Universal or Particular?, in *The straight mind and other essays* (Boston, Beacon Press), pp. 59-67.
- Wittig, M. (1992/1984) The Trojan Horse, in *The straight mind and other essays* (Boston, Beacon Press), pp. 68-75.
- Zerilli, L. (2005) A New Grammar of Sexual Difference: Monique Wittig's Poetic Revolution, in N. Shaktini (ed.), *On Monique Wittig: Theoretical, political, and literary essays* (Urbana & Chicago, University of Illinois Press), pp. 87-114.