

Action, Criticism & Theory for Music Education

The refereed journal of the



Volume 9, No. 3
October 2010

Wayne Bowman
Editor

Electronic Article

But All of Us Are Straight: “Marsha” Undone

Elizabeth Gould

© Elizabeth Gould 2010 All rights reserved.

ISSN 1545-4517

The content of this article is the sole responsibility of the author. The ACT Journal and the Mayday Group are not liable for any legal actions that may arise involving the article's content, including, but not limited to, copyright infringement.

For further information, please point your Web Browser to <http://act.maydaygroup.org>

But All of Us Are Straight: “Marsha” Undone



Elizabeth Gould
University of Toronto

“Marsha” is a dear friend of mine; both the person Marsha and my 2005 *ACT* article, “Desperately Seeking Marsha.”¹ She—and I think of the text as animate—continues to enrich my life, create controversy, and make me smile. The “Marsha” article was meant to be funny, humorous, including sound files that are ridiculous asides intended to amuse and startle, highlighting the absurdity of sorting and ranking. But “Marsha” also frightens me a bit because I am not brave, which is one reason I hail with my title here those who are: editors of the groundbreaking book, *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave* (1982), and whose names I call, Gloria T. Hull, Patricia Bell Scott, and Barbara Smith. Their title alludes to the situation around 1980 when virtually all published authors of feminist theory were white women, while the acknowledged leaders and theorists of the U.S. Civil Rights movement were almost exclusively black men. Hull, Scott, and Smith, like the contributors to their book, were neither—neither white nor men. With their book, they bravely “stepped across” (Koza 2003) both white academic feminism and masculinist race theory, and delineated a radical outside that had been previously unspoken. It had always existed, of course; black women in the U.S. have always been deeply involved in emancipatory struggles related to gender as well as race. Sojourner Truth² is perhaps the most obvious example, even as the contributions of countless others have been obscured by traditional readings of history that are blind, sceptical, and hostile to difference.

This radical outside claimed by Hull, Scott, and Smith nearly 30 years ago was comprised of black feminism and feminist race theory in the context of black lesbian studies, which had no academic precedent. What today makes their actions, words, and meaning-making brave—and mine not so much—is material realization of their subjectivities. I share an interiority in common with at least some of them, what black playwright and activist Lorraine Hansberry signalled in 1957 with her letter to *The Ladder*, the first lesbian periodical published in North America:

I think it is about time that equipped women began to take on some of the ethical questions which a male-dominated culture has produced and dissect and analyze them quite to pieces in a serious fashion. It is time that “half the human race” had something to say about the nature of its existence. . . . In this kind of work there may be women to emerge who will be able to formulate a new and possible concept that homosexual persecution and condemnation has at its roots not only social ignorance, but a philosophically active anti-feminist dogma. (quoted in Katz 1976, 425)

Nearly 30 years later, black women such as Audre Lorde and bell hooks articulated relationships between homophobia and misogyny in the context of persistent racism, and forever changed the very face of academic feminism (Lorde 1984/2007, hooks 1984/2000). It is from these writings that my “Marsha” emerged. I offer these comments not by way of explanation, but rather in hope of inciting—if not Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari’s (1987) “a thousand tiny [revolutions]” (213), or even Gloria Steinem’s “75 outrageous acts for simple justice” (<http://75outrageousacts.org>)—perhaps just one or two outrageous revolutions in music education, where the first journal issue devoted to critiques of race was the one in which “Marsha” was published only five years ago. I invite the reader to create concepts in response to “Marsha,” connecting or spinning off lines of flight, flights of fancy that would move thinking beyond her and, by necessity, me (Deleuze and Guattari 1987).³

“Marsha” Undone

With “Marsha” I attempted a very preliminary, hesitant, uncertain exploration of the concept of whiteness through my concept of lesbian imagination which was inspired by Suzanne Cusick’s “lesbian relation with music” which as I understand it was influenced by Monique Wittig’s *The Straight Mind* which certainly owes some debt to Claude Lévi-Strauss, Karl Marx and Jean-Jacques Rousseau even as Wittig explodes class analysis on the one hand and the social contract on the other which—well, you get the idea. This litany is not meant to delineate a lineage, but rather to suggest rhizomatic connections that continuously form and break and re-form without originary point or terminus. Feminist writing necessitates accounting for various shifting and similarly rhizomatic interlocking sources of oppression: what the concept of whiteness is intended to encompass.

As I noted in “Marsha,” whiteness—due to its status in Western societies as unconscious, invisible, unexamined, and hence, unmarked (Chambers 1997, Frankenberg 1993)—is assumed. It is therefore useful as a theoretical tool to critique racism and white privilege. However, because it “signals the production and reproduction of dominance rather

than subordination, normativity rather than marginality and privilege rather than disadvantage” (Frankenberg 1993, 236–37),⁴ whiteness may be implicated with sources of difference beyond race, such as class, gender, and sexuality. Those who are white, male, middle-class, and heterosexual, for instance, are assumed in any given social situation while those who are not—well, are not.

As you may surmise from “Marsha,” I find it difficult to locate myself in theoretical spaces of whiteness even when they are characterized not only racially as white, but at the very least as masculine, able-bodied, and heterosexual, all in relationship to the middle class, bourgeois subject. Hence, again, the saliency of my reference to *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave*. What goes unspoken in Hull, Scott, and Smith’s title is the heteronormativity not only of feminism and race theory, but also music, education, and Western society in general. Invoked in this theoretical and unmarked space of whiteness, heteronormativity marks lesbians and gay men as different, contrary to the norm—except that homosexuals are apparently marked in *all* spaces, including most notably music education. Citing the work of Hom and Ma (1993), Moraga and Anzaldúa (1983), and Spurlin (2001), I noted in “Marsha” that “homosexuality is not assumed, never expected, and rarely welcomed—particularly in oppressed [poor and/or] non-white cultures” (Gould 2005, 10).⁵ In other words, (abject) homosexuality as difference cuts across all other sources of difference as it is the only difference which apparently everyone (marked or unmarked; abject or legitimate) marks.

The way I conceived my struggle with this “marking”—what I refer to as a “stigmata of difference”—is in the way it has played out in terms of my material lesbian subjectivities. While whiteness privileges in terms of exteriority, it nevertheless does not account for me as a function of interiority. Consequently, as I explain more recently (Gould 2007), I used to wear an inverted black triangle piercing my left ear literally to “mark” myself—in response to those who insisted on unmarking me—those who saw me as straight, which for me is an ethically untenable positionality. What I did not understand about this until I went back to Wittig’s theoretical work—writing I had neglected for nearly 20 years⁶—was that those people who persist in “putting me in the closet,” as I read it, do so because as a lesbian I am *disappeared* to and by them—they quite literally cannot see me out of the context of heterosexuality. Homosexuality is not marked in spaces of whiteness precisely because homosexuality does not exist in spaces of whiteness.⁷ This understanding and its attendant

claim necessitates that I unwrite “Marsha.”

With this paper I unwrite her not so much as a corrective *for* “Marsha” but as an unfastening of my thinking *from* “Marsha.”⁸ Rather than disengaging or abandoning her, this unwriting functions as a freeing *of* “Marsha”—freeing her from the closure of the page, the signature, freeing her from any obligation to me. She is not destroyed or disappeared by this process, but rather unfinished, a process in process—never “too late.” While Randy Bachman’s (1969) song, “Undun” (as in, “She’s come undun”) certainly accompanies this unwriting, “Marsha’s” coming undone is not a search for truth; nor does it attempt any heroic flight or ascent of mountains. And it certainly does not require any salvation even as it is integral to music education, because “all those who lived entangled with [“Marsha”] become [her text]” (Haraway 2008, 163). All those who read “Marsha” become implicated by her, and hence “must re-member” her as she is undone. The body of “Marsha” is the body of each reading, each response, what we each inherit—not only in our readings, but more importantly in our lived experiences of homosexualities in music education. “Marsha” undone attempts to create an opening for thinking how disappeared itself might come undone, how homosexuality—which is to say lesbians and gay men and boys—might actually appear, not only to ourselves, but to music and music education, with a catchy melody and a beat you can dance to.

Disappeared⁹

Wittig’s (1980/1992) lesson is so powerful. How did I forget it? How could I? Simply put, because I did not want to remember. I did not—and I do not—desire to be what I have previously described (Gould 2007) as invisible. The very idea of it outrages me. I thought my desire was for legibility, to run away from or escape (in Wittig’s terms)—what I would characterize as resist—invisibility, my status as abject (Butler 1993). The point here, however, is that abjection (invisibility) exists; it constitutes a subjectivity, a way of being in the world, a way of mattering—even if “strictly foreclosed” (188). To be disappeared,¹⁰ on the other hand and in contrast to invisibility or abjection, does not exist; it is not-existing, not even in memory (we cannot remember what has not been). As subject position, a way of being in the world, then, disappeared is impossible. Wittig poignantly illustrates this, and it breaks my heart every time I read it, not only because of what she writes and the ontological terror it evokes, but much more personally and hence significantly for me—as I wrote it in

“Marsha,”

But where am I

middle-class-middle-age-mostly-able-bodied-if-persistently-uncoordinated-
lesbian-feminist-vegetarian-Buddhist

white grrrl? (Gould 2005, 6)

—how she writes it with hyphens between every word: “you-will-be-straight-or-you-will-not-be” (Wittig 1980/1992, 28).¹¹ Compulsory heterosexuality disavows difference as it enforces the social contract of the straight mind, what Wittig describes as a hegemonic and oppressive metanarrative that is unable to account for or even imagine any other social configuration.¹² Homosexuality is not marked by the straight mind because it does not exist in, for, or to the straight mind.

My claim is that theoretical spaces of whiteness are constituted by the straight mind, and that sexuality, as opposed to race and class, for instance, is not marked but disappeared: absent from the historically situated in the dualisms on which Western philosophy and so-called rational thought are based.¹³ By the time of the Enlightenment and European colonialist conquests around the world, these dualisms formed the basis for discrimination of all kinds: primarily race, but also gender, class, religion—anything that was different from white, middle-class, Christian, European men. Succinctly, the second term of any dualism does not exist except in how it is different from the first—a difference that is neither neutral nor innocent. Non-white people exist only as they are different from whites; women exist only as they are different from (white) men; the poor exist only as they are different from property owners and the middle class, all of whom are (assumed to be) white. Hence the theoretical construct of whiteness.

Homosexuality, however, not even named until the 19th century,¹⁴ was not available as a source of difference in the colonialist imaginary. Same sex desire was certainly known well before then, but it was constructed very specifically. For the ancient Greeks, sex, gendered male in terms of active dominance and passive submission, was not associated with identity. Instead, it was constructed as an expression of social standing and power by which a small elite group of free men penetrated social and legal inferiors: “women, boys, foreigners, and slaves— . . . persons who [did] not enjoy the same legal and political rights and privileges” as free, adult male citizens did (Halperin 1990, 30).¹⁵ Same sex desire between women was similarly expressed in relationship to “social identities, [and] . . . public

standing” (33). By the Christian era, of course, “all sexual activity outside of heterosexual marriage” was strictly prohibited (Hall 2005, 101). Sex between male couples “was made a crime punishable by death in English civil law starting in the 16th century” (102) and continuing well into the 19th century. But what was conceived as “a ‘crime against nature’ . . . was really a crime against the church and the state” (102), expressed during the Enlightenment through assertions of colonial humanist values relating to autonomy and individual rights of powerful upper-class men (Haggerty 1999). The general neglect of same sex desire between women “in law, theology, and literature suggests an almost active willingness to *disbelieve*” (Brown 1989, 69, emphasis in original) its existence, which was underscored by the prevailing belief that the mere mention of it could incite the behaviour (Castle 1993). Even as men beginning in the 17th century formed so-called “molly-houses” to “arrange sexual encounters with other men” (Hall 2005, 102), and women lived together in “passionate friendships” that continued into the Victorian Era, same sex desire generally was understood in Western society as pre-, immature, or inverted heterosexuality.

As a social category associated with identity, homosexuality emerged late in the 19th century shortly before heterosexuality was conceptualized—conceptualization that was necessary to complete the heterosexuality/homosexuality dualism integral to Western reasoning. Indeed, as a dualism, hetero- and homosexuality cannot be thought separately from each other, precisely because as a dualism they do not exist in and of themselves: they comprise “the dominant organizing principles of sexual pleasure and sexual desire in our culture” (Halperin 1990, 45).¹⁶ Judith Butler (1997) similarly positions homosexuality dualistically as “the radical other” of heterosexuality (139), characterizing it as abject in relationship to heterosexuality’s imperative (Butler 1993). This imperative is enforced by the incest taboo which “produces heterosexually normative kinship and forecloses . . . forms of love that cross and confound that set of kinship relations” (Butler 2004, 159), most notably here, homosexuality. While Butler notes that both incest and homosexuality are thus foreclosed, I argue that positioning incest, rather than homosexuality as the primary prohibition in Western society is, among other things, necessarily a function of homosexuality’s being disappeared, because to the straight mind homosexuality “is nothing but heterosexuality” (Wittig 1980/1992, 28).

Unlike gender, race, and class, then, sexuality does not function dualistically, and so is not responsive to the colonialist logic on which dualisms are based, making whiteness an

effect of the straight mind. The heterosexual/homosexual dualism is dismantled—comes undone—not because the latter is different from the former, but because the latter is not possible to the former. Homosexuals are not so much different as they are the same. Indeed, to the straight mind, homosexuals *are* heterosexuals. They are not different *from* heterosexuals, but different *as* heterosexuals. People who see me as straight— notwithstanding those who know me well and are thinking, “Come on, Liz, no one thinks you’re straight”—do so because straight is the only way they *can* see me, (including those who know I am not straight). And what the straight mind sees when confronted with homosexuality is failed or dissident heterosexuality; it quite literally cannot see anything else. This does not mark homosexuality, however; it disappears homosexuality.

Lost in Translation

I experience being disappeared as translation. My subjectivity as lesbian is translated into terms of heterosexuality—poorly enacted, but heterosexuality nevertheless—which is demonstrated in readings of my Canadian marriage as a homosexual version of heterosexual marriage. In terms of the law, of course, that is exactly what it is. Carol’s and my attempts to create a non-heterosexual, which is to say lesbian, wedding event began with our gathering everyone in a circle as I read a political statement. Clergy involvement was limited to resistive versions of what the law required. Instead of pronouncing us “married,” the minister articulated the threshold of our “togetherness”—as opposed to our joining. Instead of asking who objected, she noted the support of those present. All invited guests were family members who participated in choral readings. No women were given or taken; no vows were made; no tokens were exchanged; no brides were kissed. During the brunch that followed, Carol and I did not sit together, but instead circulated among both families. My brother-in-law became so concerned that I was neglecting my new spouse that he insisted I immediately take my position at her side. His “straight mind” could not see our behaviour as “married.” And indeed, it was not meant to be seen that way, as we were consciously searching for a way to be *lesbian married*.

Despite our efforts, however, our wedding and subsequent behaviour were translated as heterosexual. When the correspondence of our wedding activities to heterosexual wedding activities was too low, action was taken to increase it. This was not done out of malice or even love, as my brother-in-law claimed. Rather, it was done out of desire—the desire that

enforces the social contract of the straight mind—which, it must be stressed, is ubiquitous: no one is immune. Upon arriving in Toronto to take advantage of Canada’s gay marriage law, one member of a Russian lesbian couple is quoted as explaining through an interpreter, “All we wanted was to be together . . . *married like any other heterosexual couple*” (Irina Shipitko, as quoted by Aulakh and Balkissoon 2009, A4, emphasis added).

Examples of homosexuality’s being disappeared are available in popular culture, as well. A few years ago *Harry Potter* author J. K. Rowling created an uproar when she revealed that her beloved Professor Dumbledore was gay. While the media and members of the public had apparently found acceptable (because they ignored it) her previous disclosure that wizard Snape, Harry’s long-time teacher and nemesis, sexually desired Harry’s mother, they clearly did not want to know about Dumbledore’s sexual desires.¹⁷ It was irrelevant, they claimed—or at least fervently hoped. Besides, argued *New York Times* columnist Edward Rothstein (2007), “The master wizard is not a sexual being,” which of course implies that lesser wizards such as Snape are (hetero)sexual beings. Moreover, Rothstein insisted, Rowling’s outing Dumbledore “goes too far” because, Dumbledore’s “supposed gayness” is “[un]necessary,” “distracting,” and “unimportant” (E7). Notice that Rothstein remains sceptical of the author—and her authority—as he actively resists Rowling’s claim. The panic expressed by people like Rothstein who are dismayed that Harry’s trusted guide and mentor could be homosexual is not that Dumbledore cannot, to paraphrase Butler, “do his sexuality right,” or even be sexual at all. The problem is that if Dumbledore is gay, if his sexuality cannot be translated as heterosexual, then Dumbledore is disappeared: Dumbledore does not exist. While this is inevitable according to the terms of the straight mind, nonexistence for a character as revered as the Master Wizard is simply intolerable. Consequently, Dumbledore’s homosexuality must be denied, dismissed, and itself disappeared—lest Dumbledore be disappeared.

Another public figure, this one real and perhaps rather less universally loved, was similarly disappeared in television and popular music culture. After weeks of appearing on the Fox Broadcasting Company television show, *American Idol*, contestant Adam Lambert consistently impressed audiences, critics and judges, virtually all of whom predicted he would certainly capture the prize. So obvious was this outcome to everyone associated with the show that the four judges—to a person—used their last opportunity to counsel Lambert’s remaining competitor to be proud of what he had accomplished throughout the season.

Nevertheless, the following evening it was revealed that Adam Lambert had finished second in the voting to modest and modestly talented Kris Allen.¹⁸ Immediately after learning he had won, Allen articulated what everyone in the live and television viewing audiences were thinking: “Adam deserves this. I’m sorry, I don’t even know what to feel right now. This is crazy.”

What happened? Did the pre-pubescent girls who comprise so much of *Idol*’s audience flock to Allen because of his boyish good looks, self-effacing demeanour, down-home, Christian middle America background? Lambert is strikingly handsome—in a dark, *Twilight* sort of way, consistently pleasant and gracious, and—perhaps to his detriment on *Idol*, Jewish and from southern California. Several reasons have been proffered for his loss: the shift of third-place contestant Danny Gokey’s voting block to Allen; the tendency of *Idol* audiences to punish judges’ favourites; the conservative “skew” of *Idol* audiences and U.S. southern roots of all previous *Idol* winners; the two indifferent songs that Lambert was forced to sing during the final week which did not showcase his voice; and Allen’s purported consistency (both Lambert and Allen were voted into the bottom three shortly before the finale) which resulted in a populist underdog surge for Allen at the end (*Rolling Stone* 2009). Moreover, and perhaps most importantly, people who were rather more likely to support Lambert are also, it seems to me, less likely to actually vote in this ridiculous contest. None of these reasons, however, account for Lambert’s sexuality. Considered to be “the most original” contestant in the show’s history, Lambert typically wore eyeliner (what the media referred to as “guyliner”), black nail polish, ear rings, and a rakish, punk haircut while singing with surprising range and dexterity. Then the whispers started. He’s pudgy, soft, not quite masculine. Pictures of him kissing other men appeared on the internet. He must be gay—something he neither confirmed nor denied until after the contest was over when he came out in his *Rolling Stone* cover story.¹⁹ Those provocative markers that first had been so cool, hip, and edgy in the end came to be seen as gay: failed heterosexuality. And just the suggestion that he might be gay was enough to disappear him to millions of voters.²⁰

Disappeared in Music Education

It is important to stress that my understanding of homosexuality is ontological; as a subject position, a way of becoming in the world, which is not coterminous with homosexuality as an identity. Replacing the perhaps more expected term ‘being’ with ‘becoming’ underscores the

fluidity, instability, and incoherence of all subject positions. Consequently, I can articulate the parameters of homosexuality only to the extent that like all subject positions, homosexuality creates potentialities for world-making, for human becoming. These are among the parameters and potentialities that the straight mind disappears. And it is this homosexuality that is disappeared in music education.

Music, of course, has a unique relationship to and with homosexuality as it and its various subject positions are simultaneously emasculated and feminized. The deviant role of musician in society (Brett 2006) where homophobia and misogyny conflate (Bredbeck 1995) necessitates that men assert mastery over music itself (read virtuoso/celebrity) as well as each other (read conductor/front man) while women struggle just to be noticed (read prima donna/pop diva)—all in an effort to uphold the heterosexual social contract. Refusing to acknowledge his homosexuality publicly, Aaron Copland nevertheless quite openly disparaged “the woman composer.” So-called “bachelor composers” such as Copland disappeared themselves even as they were disappeared. Benjamin Britten lived and worked openly with Peter Pears, composing and “perform[ing] with him songs whose texts were unambiguous in their celebration of homoeroticism” (19), while John Cage similarly lived, worked, and collaborated with choreographer Merce Cunningham. The price of complicity in this bargain of being disappeared is bearable for musicians such as Copland, Britten, Pears, and Cage, according to Brett, because engagement with music enables them to live a much-desired “sentient and expressive life” (17). That this life is characterized by, in addition to pervasive heterosexism (the straight mind), rampant sexism, systemic racism including anti-Semitism, and embedded elitism among classically trained and popular musicians only compounds the disappeared experience of homosexual music educators and students.

What does it mean for music education pedagogies and curricula if homosexual students and teachers are disappeared? When we think of them as invisible (as opposed to disappeared), we attempt to increase their visibility: perform the music of gay composers, acknowledge the specificity of lives lived gay, all in the context of demonstrating how they are the same as ‘us,’ how their difference is not difference at all, but just a variation of the same.²¹ When we understand them as disappeared, however, we are forced to acknowledge difference. Perhaps more importantly, however, we are required to confront the problematics of their having no ontological space in our classrooms and ensembles; indeed in our profession. No effort to make homosexuality the same provides ontological space, or a

subject position from which to engage musically and socially. The concept of disappeared compels us to engage difference, to see and hear—to know and think—difference differently. Gay and lesbian students and teachers are not the same; rather, they are different. And different in a way that is disappeared—which is to say incomprehensible to the straight mind of music education.

If tolerance and acceptance disappear homosexuality, what constitutes ontological ground from which homosexuality might speak? In relationship to the subaltern, Gayatri Spivak (1988) insists that particular ground cannot be complicit with imperialism; in this case, that ground cannot exist within the straight mind. Dismantling the straight mind, what Wittig (1980/1992) describes as “break[ing] off the heterosexual contract” (32), then, is required. This task is certainly difficult, always in process, always becoming. But one may begin, perhaps, as Wittig argues, by refusing—refusing the straight mind. Conceive social relations—making music, teaching and learning—in multiple ways. Subvert the narratives of music performance, pedagogy, and curriculum, as well as the subject positions associated with them. Wittig did this through her attempts to make lesbian subjectivity universal by creating with her novels literary Trojan Horses that would universalize homosexuality and thus enable heterosexual readers to inhabit homosexual perspectives (Crowder 2005) by altering heterosexual frames of reference (Zerilli 2005). I attempted it with “Marsha” by proposing a lesbian imagination that signals subjectivities of desire created by and as connections and relationships that would disrupt power relations through “approaches to teaching and learning music that are situated, fluid, collaborative, caring, and giving” (Gould 2005, 11). Clearly however, neither attempt has dislodged the straight mind. Homosexuality cannot speak—as long as it is disappeared. Given that it is not there, it cannot be marked or unmarked. The first step, then, is to undo processes of disappeared and enact processes of appeared—what appears *in* difference—remembering that it is just beyond memory—on the tips of our tongues. Not marked. Just—not there.

Explain why I am an accompanist; explain these soaring episodes I’ve spent a lifetime fitting into my fingers. Explain the art of listening, of voicing, of blending; of imposing variations on sameness, and sameness on variation. Explain why I am musical. Explain “musical.” Leave me out of the picture entirely, if you wish, but *explain the hole that’s left in music when my kind are missing*. (lesbian accompanist quoted by Koestenbaum 2006, 5, emphasis added)

Coda

As Wittig (1980/1992) notes, “We chose to call ourselves ‘feminists’ not in order to support or reinforce the myth of woman, nor to identify ourselves with the oppressor’s definition of us, but rather to affirm that our movement had a history and to emphasize the link with the old feminist movement” (14). I deploy the quote in the text above “not in order to support or reinforce the myth of [lesbian], nor to identify ourselves with the [straight mind’s] definition of us, but rather to affirm that our [subjectivities] have a history and to emphasize the link with the old [lesbians].”

Screw the old boys. Ignore their condemnations in advance. If you listen for the soon-to-come dismissal, you will never say a word.

Think instead of the queer students: silently queer, bruised and attentive, faithful to the full phrase, to the metronome and the composer’s intention. To you, queer music students of 1948, this ... is retrospectively dedicated.

(lesbian accompanist quoted by Koestenbaum 2006, 5)

References

- Aulakh, Raveena and Denise Balkissoon. 2009. From Russia, to get married. *Toronto Star*, October 23: A4.
- Bachman, Randy. 1969. Undun. http://www.lyricsmode.com/lyrics/t/the_guess_who/undun.html. Accessed 23 October 2009.
- Bredbeck, Gregory W. 1995. Anal/yzing the classroom: On the impossibility of a queer pedagogy. In *Professions of desire: Lesbian and gay studies in literature*, ed. George E. Haggerty and Bonnie Zimmerman, 169–80. New York: The Modern Language Association of America.
- Brett, Philip. 2006. Musicality, essentialism, and the closet. In *Queering the pitch: The new gay and lesbian musicology*, ed. Philip Brett et al., 9–26. New York and London: Routledge.
- Brown, Judith C. 1989. Lesbian sexuality in medieval and early modern Europe. In *Hidden from history: Reclaiming the gay and lesbian past*, ed. Martin Duberman et al., 67–75. New York: NAL Books.
- Butler, Judith. 1993. *Bodies that matter: On the discursive limits of “sex.”* New York and London: Routledge.
- . 1997. *The psychic life of power: Theories in subjection.* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

- . 2004. *Undoing gender*. New York: Routledge.
- Castle, Terry. 1993. *The apparitional lesbian: Female homosexuality and modern culture*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Chambers, Ross. 1997. The unexamined. In *Whiteness: A critical reader*, ed. Mike Hill, (187–203). New York: New York University Press.
- Crowder, Diane Griffin. 2005. Universalizing materialist lesbianism. In *On Monique Wittig: Theoretical, political, and literary essays*, ed. Namascar Sahktini, 63–86. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
- Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. 1987. *A thousand plateaus: Capitalism and schizophrenia*. Trans. Brian Massumi. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press.
- Frankenberg, Ruth. 1993. *White women, race matters: The social construction of whiteness*. Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press.
- Gould, Elizabeth. 2005. Desperately seeking Marsha: Music and lesbian imagination. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education* 4(3). http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Gould4_3.pdf
- . 2007. Legible bodies in music education: Becoming-matter. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education* 6(4): 201–23. http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Gould6_4.pdf
- . 2008. Difference out of place: Feminist war machines in music education. *Visions of Research in Music Education* 11(1). <http://www-usr.rider.edu/~vrme>
- Grigoriadis, Vanessa. 2009. Wild idol. *Rolling Stone*, RS1081, 50–57.
- Haggerty, George. 1999. *Men in love: Masculinity and sexuality in the eighteenth century*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Hall, Donald E. 2005. A brief, slanted history of “homosexual” activity. In *Queer theory*, ed. Iain Morland and Annabelle Willcox, 96–114. Houndmills, UK and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Halperin, David M. 1990. *One hundred years of homosexuality and other essays on Greek love*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Haraway, Donna. 2008. *When species meet*. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press.
- Gould, E. 2010. But all of us are straight: “Marsha” undone. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education* 9(3): 82–98. Online: http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Gould9_3.pdf

- Hom, Alice Y., and Ming-Yuen S. Ma. 1993. Premature gestures: A speculative dialogue on Asian Pacific Islander lesbian and gay writing. In *Critical essays: Gay and lesbian writers of color*, ed. Emmanuel S. Nelson, 21–51. New York: The Haworth Press.
- hooks, bell. [1984] 2000. *Feminist theory: From margin to center*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press.
- Hull, Gloria T. et al., eds. 1982. *All the women are white, all the blacks are men, but some of us are brave*. New York: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York.
- Jagose, Annamarie. 1996. *Queer theory: An introduction*. New York: New York University Press.
- Katz, Jonathan. 1976. *Gay American history: Lesbians and gay men in the U.S.A.* New York: T. Y. Crowell.
- Koestenbaum, Wayne. 2006. Queering the pitch: A post of definitions and impersonations. In *Queering the pitch: The new gay and lesbian musicology*, ed. Philip Brett et al., 1–8. New York and London: Routledge.
- Koza, Julia. 2003. *Stepping across: Four interdisciplinary studies of education and cultural politics*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Ledwith, Margaret. 2009. Antonio Gramsci and feminism: The elusive nature of power. *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 41(6): 684–97.
- Lorde, Audre. [1984] 2007. *Sister outsider: Essays and speeches by Audre Lorde*. Berkely, CA: Crossing Press.
- Moraga, Cherríe, and Gloria Anzaldúa, eds. 1983. *This bridge called my back: Writings by radical women of color*. New York: Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press.
- Plumwood, Val. 1993. *Feminism and the mastery of nature*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Rolling Stone*. 2009. How Adam Lambert lost “American Idol” to Kris Allen. <http://www.rollingstone.com/rockdaily/index/php/2009/05/21/how-adam-lambert-lost-american-idol-to-kris-allen/>. Accessed 9 June 2009.
- Rothstein, Edward. 2007. Is Dumbledore Gay? Depends on definitions of ‘is’ and ‘gay.’ *The New York Times*, The Arts, E1, E7, 29 October.
- Spivak, Gayatri. 1988. Can the subaltern speak? In *Marxism and the interpretation of culture*, ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, 67–111. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

- Spurlin, William J. 2001. Broadening postcolonial studies/decolonizing queer studies: Emerging “queer” identities and cultures in southern Africa. In *Postcolonial, queer: Theoretical intersections*, ed. John C. Hawley, 185–205. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Wittig, Monique. [1980] 1992. The straight mind. In Monique Wittig, *The straight mind and other essays*, 21–32. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Zerilli, Linda M. 2005. A new grammar of difference: Monique Wittig’s poetic revolution. In *On Monique Wittig: Theoretical, political, and literary essays*, ed. Namascar Shaktini, 87–114. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

Notes

- ¹ This piece should not be read as an attempt to persuade or convince. Moving beyond the concept of homosexuality as abjection, which I developed in “Marsha,” to the concept of homosexuality as disappeared, this is merely an attempt to account for and perhaps ameliorate lived realities of homosexualities (which infers all non-normative sexualities) in music education. It is written in the spirit of the playfulness of “Marsha”—as I will abbreviate my references to Gould 2005 here.
- ² Sojourner Truth is the assumed (1843) name of Isabella Baumfree, an African-American abolitionist and women’s rights activist born a slave. Her renowned speech, “Ain’t I a Woman?” was delivered in 1851 in Akron at the Ohio Women’s Rights Convention.
- ³ While I delineate the argument I advanced in “Marsha” in the following section and *passim*, I encourage the reader to engage that essay directly.
- ⁴ Notwithstanding that in the case of gender, Frankenberg (1993) refers to “maleness” (275, note 1).
- ⁵ Describing her experience organizing women in Nicaragua during the mid-1980s, Margaret Ledwith (2009) observes, “In this predominantly White [*sic*], working-class community, we were faced with overt sexism, covert racism and *vehement homophobia*” (688, emphasis added).
- ⁶ With thanks to Suzanne Cusick for reminding me of Wittig’s work.
- ⁷ This is not to say that homosexuality is unmarked in spaces of whiteness. That which is unmarked: white, male, heterosexual exist. As a function of being disappeared, homosexuality does not exist, so cannot be unmarked.
- ⁸ Although not, it should be noted, from Marsha.

⁹ As opposed to “disappearing” or “disappearance,” “disappeared” or “to be disappeared” refers to an action that is ‘done’ to one group by another. It was first used in conjunction with the *desaparacidos* of Argentina, who were kidnapped and murdered by the military dictatorship (1976–1983). I use the term here to re-call and re-member the *desaparacidos* of Argentina, as well as the missing and murdered women of Juárez, Mexico, and the missing and murdered Aboriginal women of Canada.

¹⁰ It should be noted that Wittig advances a qualitatively different claim. Lesbians, for her, are not disappeared. Instead, lesbians are not women. They nevertheless retain ontological status as runaways who refuse sexist oppression. With their refusal they no longer qualify as women: those who exist only in terms of sexism.

¹¹ The hyphenated asides in “Marsha” are attached to sound files in which I read the text as quickly as possible in an effort to deflect the accusation that feminists are without humour. Juxtaposing the asides with the seriousness of Wittig’s hyphenated text leaves me quite literally speechless.

¹² See Gould (2008) for a more extensive discussion.

¹³ See Plumwood (1993) for a comprehensive discussion of dualisms and their use in Western philosophy.

¹⁴ Swiss doctor Karoly Maria Benkert is believed to have coined the word ‘homosexuality’ in 1869, although it wasn’t until the 1890s that it was widely used in English by sexologist Havelock Ellis (Jagose 1996, 72).

¹⁵ For a nuanced account see Halperin (1990).

¹⁶ Halperin does not deny ontological status to various sexualities, but asserts that sexual preference is no more appropriate as a basis for categorizing people than is, for instance, dietary preference (see Halperin 1990, 27–8 n★).

¹⁷ One can only wonder what consternation—if any—would have been expressed if it had been Dumbledore lusting for Harry’s mother.

¹⁸ It should be noted that voting irregularities were reported most notably in Allen’s home state of Arkansas.

¹⁹ Losing the vote has been characterized quite accurately as “The Liberation of Adam Lambert” (Grigoriadis, 2009, cover) who is now mostly free to pursue his own career apart from *Idol*.

²⁰ A similar outcome occurred just weeks later on the Fox Broadcasting Company television show, *So You Think You Can Dance*, when the obvious front-runner, a masculine-looking and dancing (black) man (Brandon Bryant) who sounded effeminate (that is, gay) when speaking

unexpectedly lost in the finale to a consistent but mostly unheralded (white woman) competitor (Jeanine Mason).

²¹ My using the third person, omniscient voice here underscores that I am subject to the straight mind even, as lesbian, I am also disappeared in music education, thus unable to write in a way that may be read homosexual: “When *you* think of *us* as invisible, *you* attempt to increase *our* visibility: perform the music of gay composers, acknowledge the specificity of lives lived gay, all in the context of demonstrating how *we* are they same as ‘*you-all*,’ how *our* difference is not difference at all, but just a variation of the same.”

About the Author

Elizabeth Gould teaches courses in music and music education at the University of Toronto. Her research explores articulations of gender, sexuality, and social change.