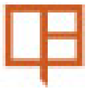

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JEFFREY KALLBERG

The Harmony of the Tea Table: Gender and Ideology in the Piano Nocturne

In the flourishing but fledgling literature on constructions of gender in music, instrumental music reposes in relative neglect. Guided by the premise that, in Teresa de Lauretis's words, "gender is both a sociocultural construct and a semiotic apparatus, a system of representation which assigns meaning . . . to individuals within the society,"[1] and nourished by theoretical models developed by critics of literature, art, and film, music historians have most readily explored the ramifications of gender in opera and song. The attraction is obvious. Gender may initially be broached through the semantic content of the text, which then serves as a kind of lens through which is filtered the critic's reading of the music. Instrumental music, on the other hand, poses its ever familiar quandary: lacking an evident semantic content, it would seem to stymie efforts to understand "systems of representation" at work within it.

Music historians have shied away from trying to recover and explicate these gendered systems partly because the idea that instrumental music occupies an autonomous realm still remains a powerful ideological force in the discipline. Those of us who would seek to lessen the stranglehold of this ideology on modern critical discourse encounter particular difficulties. We might recognize that the language of formalist musical criticism—a twentieth-century stepchild of the aesthetics of autonomy—does not adequately serve the purposes of an inquiry into gender.[2] But shorn of this customary prop, we face an apparent conceptual void, for the ideology of autonomy still seems to command our linguistic possibilities. How can we speak of gender when constrained by the analytical demands of "the music itself"?

The few efforts to treat gender in instrumental music all seem most awkward precisely when discussion shifts from feminism to traditional musical analysis. We can trace this sense of incongruity primarily to an implicit dissonance between the aims of the two systems of thought. The vocabularies of musical analysis—whether they label harmonic and contrapuntal processes, detect Schenkerian *Urlinien*, or identify pitch-class sets—typically represent implicit or explicit distillations of *individual* viewpoints, usually those of a composer, analyst, or "ideal" listener. (And assertions that these analyses are or were generally perceived by

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audiences usually remain in the realm of the ideal.) But feminist projects that might include these analyses generally stake wider *societal* claims, ones validated (in principal) by a network of historical contexts. The goals of the feminist critiques and the musical analyses apparently clash.[3] As yet unresolved, this discord has resulted in a sense of aporia that has rendered the historical traces of gender in instrumental music almost unrepresentable and has caused us to concentrate on more pliant, text-based repertories.

Yet a nocturne or a ballade was no less a cultural construct than *Carmen* or *Frauenliebe und -leben*, and in principal it should have been no less (and no more) given to gendered meanings. If music historians are to detect and interpret these meanings, we need to seek alternative conceptual frameworks for use in discussing instrumental music. But this task, so smugly exhorted, is formidable: at the present time, we might at best hope for partial results. Thus, although I venture two alternative models of explanation in this essay, neither of them breaks decisively with conceptual tradition. First, I examine the consequences of trying to understand historical constructions of gender in instrumental music without undertaking a close reading of the musical notes. Here I seek to cast off the burden of instrumental "autonomy"—of the "work itself." But second, and in some ways contradictorily, I assess how studying the notes of a piece, if we filter our received analytical systems through a social-historical net, might indeed contribute to our understanding of gender.[4]

My approach hinges on a crucial methodological move. Rather than studying instrumental music from the traditional horizon of form, I suggest instead that we focus on its constituent genres. To do so directs our critical attention away from a composer-centered notion, form, and onto a societal concept, genre, that displays more than just an etymological affinity with the idea of gender.

I first understood the significance of this methodological shift while drafting a book on Chopin's nocturnes and the problem of genre in the nineteenth century. Having rejected the notion that genre functions only as a classificatory category located solely in compositions, I adopted instead an understanding of genre as a communicative concept shared by composers and listeners alike, one that therefore actively informs the experience of a musical work.[5] Construing genre as a social phenomenon requires an investigation into the responses of the communities that encountered a particular genre. And it was the investigation of such responses to the nocturne that eventually led me to ask just who made up these communities in Chopin's day.[6]

The answer is: women, mainly. But this simple response masks a number of more complex meanings. For when we understand genre as a communicative concept, it makes us aware of ways in which music interacts with society. In particular, as literary critics and historians often remark, an examination of genre frequently uncovers otherwise hidden ideological agendas.[7] I began the process of exploring the societal constraints governing the perception of the genre in an

examination of Chopin's early Nocturne in G Minor, where the mixture of gestures from the mazurka, chorale, and nocturne genres seems calculated to articulate his kinship with the cultural goals of the Polish romantic nationalists.[8] In this study, I want to take the process one step further, to address a question that is basic to the understanding of the nocturne. What did it mean—culturally, historically, and musically—that the nineteenth-century audience for this genre was understood as primarily female?

An Archive of Musical Difference

I am not the first to observe that nineteenth-century listeners to the genre of the piano nocturne often couched their reactions in feminine imagery. Christoph von Blumröder, in his excellent article on the nocturne for the *Handwörterbuch der musikalischen Terminologie*, includes documentation of this "feminine topos" in his discussion of the "poetic idea" of the genre.[9] But von Blumröder's stance toward the topic (perhaps constrained by his format) remains neutral; he does not explore the critical, historical, and ideological implications of these gendered responses.

Since these reactions took many forms, we ought first to consider some representative samples of criticism in which feminine tropes were invoked. G. W. Fink's brief review of Chopin's Nocturnes, op. 15, written in 1834 for the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, drew attention to the unmediated, spontaneous quality of the feminine response:

> The Nocturnes are really reveries of a soul fluctuating from feeling to feeling in the still of the night, about which we want to set down nothing but the outburst of a feminine heart after a sensitive performance of the same: "These Nocturnes surely are my entire life!"[10]

In the following impressions of Chopin's Nocturnes, op. 27, penned in 1836, an anonymous critic limned a feminine genre associated with both darkness and pain:

> The names of the creations, Nocturnes . . . admit nothing else but a fancifully dark hue. . . . It is the dream, which celebrates its round dances [*Ringeltänze*] with longing, longing which chose pain on its own, because it could not find again the joy that it loves. For that reason these new Nocturnes, like the old ones (as different as they are from them), will again always be most attractive to all hearts inclined toward the feminine.[11]

Sometimes the feminine topos arose in more general discussions of the genre. Ferdinand Hand, in his discussion of the nocturne in the *Aesthetik der Tonkunst* (1841), introduced femininity as a potential expressive deficit in the genre:

> In the notturno, grace balances everything that is characteristically brought into prominence and surrounds it with tender mildness. But this can lead to a twofold error. With level bearing, which here generally is signified by a fixed soul-state, the composer falls into

the prolix and dawdling [*in's Breite und Schleppende*]. . . . On the other side the representation of sentiment in the notturno runs the danger of falling into the effeminate and languishing, which displeases stronger souls and altogether tires the listener.[12]

And Carl Kossmaly voiced similar opinions in 1844 for the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*. His comments occur in the midst of a lengthy overview of Schumann's piano music; the subjects at hand are the *Arabeske* and the *Blumenstück*:

[The *Blumenstück*] is in some measure impaired by an occasional, prominent family likeness to Mendelssohn's "Songs without Words" and J. Field's notturnos and romances. Both pieces remind us unequivocally of the soft [*das Weiche*, also "effeminate"], the rapturous, the tender, lyrical, almost womanly character of the Fieldian cantilena.[13]

In many of these passages, direct references to the perceived feminine quality in the nocturne were accompanied by other figural language. "Feeling," "dream," "longing," "sentiment," "tender"—all of these affective terms were linked to, and surely in different degrees meant to complement, the primary image of the feminine. And often, when these analogous terms appeared in other criticism independent of any explicit citation of the feminine, they were understood as code words for overtly feminine imagery. The feminine slant of Maurice Bourges's 1842 review of Chopin's Nocturnes, op. 48, published in the *Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris* is clearer than most. In fact, its title, "Letters to Mme la Baronne de *** on Some Modern Pieces for Piano," already frames the feminine image. (Although such rhetorical strategies were ubiquitous in nineteenth-century criticism, this does not weaken their ability to dispose a reader toward interpreting some of their tropes in terms of the gender of the addressee.)[14] In the following excerpt, the gender-typing behind the critical language explicitly reveals itself in the final sentence:

Each note should be rendered with intelligence, should conceal a sense, an intimate expression. The material part is subordinated to the spiritual element. For the music of M. Chopin demands on the part of the performer if not soul, then at least imagination, and that naive finesse, next of kin to the spirit. That is why, madame, I have some reasons to think that Mlle Brigitte will not content herself with only rendering the letter of this charming production.

And it is not hard to sense a subliminally gendered message in the following passage from Robert Schumann's 1838 critique of Count Joseph von Wielhorsky's Nocturnes, op. 2:

Even though not highly original, the talent seems manifest. To be sure, it could also by no means become evident in such strongly drawn out form. But the composer also has experience on approval with a less sentimental genre where imagination can stretch more.[15]

Likewise, we can without difficulty construe the sex of the "heart" in the following anonymous critique of Chopin's Nocturne in B Major, op. 32, no. 1, subtitled "Il Lamento" by Chopin's English publisher, Wessel:

"Il Lamento," an *andante sostenuto*, is a *morceau* in the style of Bellini's graceful and pathetic melodies; and may, without much stretch of imagination, be taken as a faithful portraiture of a heart pouring forth its feelings of "sweet sorrow," in strains of intense feeling and affection.[16]

All of these reviews and discussions date from the 1830s and 1840s, the period during which the piano nocturne first began to flourish as a genre. (A decade or so elapsed before John Field's activity in the teens and twenties spawned sustained interest among other composers.) Feminine imagery did not cease after this point; indeed it continued with something of a vengeance. Rather than immediately quoting some of these later nineteenth-century formulations of the feminine topos, though, I want to consider some of the historical and critical ramifications of the evidence we have seen thus far.

Demography and the Feminine

What can have prompted a gendered response to the piano nocturne? Demography offers one obvious answer: women were far and away the primary consumers of piano music in the first half of the nineteenth century (just as they had been of keyboard music generally in the eighteenth century). Any number of sources confirm this. We have known for some time, through the work of Arthur Loesser, William Weber, and Judith Tick in particular, that women played most of the keyboards found in middle-class homes throughout Europe and the United States in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[17] A pair of citations culled from periodicals in the two decades of concern to us suggests the ubiquity of female pianists in Paris. First, the journalist Henri Blanchard in 1843:

Since it is recognized that the professor of the piano has a high public usefulness, we must be permitted to inquire what are the qualities most suitable for properly fulfilling this important mission. Since he often has to do with young girls, it is necessary, so far as this is possible, that he be married, in the interests both of morals and of the security of parents.[18]

Second, an even more direct correspondent, writing in 1835 for the periodical *Le Pianiste*:

The piano today shares popular favor with singing, and that is true because, though I do not wish to favor other instruments, the two specialties are exclusively the province of women.[19]

Stunningly, Loesser also deduced, from a statistical survey printed in the *Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris* in 1845, that the presence of some 60,000 pianos in Paris at that time meant that something like one woman out of five living in the city had some kind of facility at the keyboard.[20] Even allowing for some exaggeration

in Loesser's estimate, it still suggests that a remarkable percentage of the female population was engaged in music making at the piano.

Iconographical evidence further bolsters this written and statistical testimony. Writing of the eighteenth century, and surmising from evidence found in paintings from the time, Richard Leppert has suggested that keyboard instruments were conceived as "both signifiers and insurers" of the domestic role of women. He has also demonstrated the currency of this conception in the early nineteenth century, particularly as embodied in portraits of British subjects in India.[21] Engravings and paintings of the sort reproduced in figure 1 were common coin in the first half of the nineteenth century, suggesting that the association of the piano with the domestic world continued unabated from the previous century. The comments of Henri Blanchard in 1847 leave no doubt about the matter:

> Cultivating the piano is something that has become as essential, as necessary, to social harmony as the cultivation of the potato is to the existence of the people. . . . The piano provokes meetings between people, hospitality, gentle contacts, associations of all kinds, even matrimonial ones . . . and if our young men so full of assurance tell their friends that they have married twelve or fifteen thousand francs of income, they at least add as a corrective: "My dear, my wife plays piano like an angel."[22]

Beyond Demography: The Feminized Detail

But demography by itself cannot explain the affinity of feminine imagery to the nocturne. While women and the piano were clearly paired in the general consciousness of many nineteenth-century observers, the feminine topos did not extend to all genres of piano music. We rarely encounter it, for example, in treatments of polonaises and scherzos. This begins to suggest that demographic factors might primarily have provided a conducive atmosphere for the trope, and that other cultural constructions impinged on the nocturne in such a way as to help reinforce its characterization as a feminine genre.

Perhaps the most obvious of these ideas was the ancient association of women with notions of darkness and night.[23] Less intuitively apparent, however, but playing just as significant a constructive role in the musical culture of the time, was the persistent alignment of the idea of detail with the feminine. Naomi Schor has recently drawn attention to the marking of detail as a feminine aesthetic category.[24] She observes a pattern of associating particularity with the feminine extending at least as far back as Aristotle. The very antiquity of the association ultimately lent it the status of a semi-scientific fact, which could then be mustered, along with other unchallenged tropes like the presumed close affinity of women and nature, to help "explain" and evaluate the respective contributions of men and women to the creative arts.

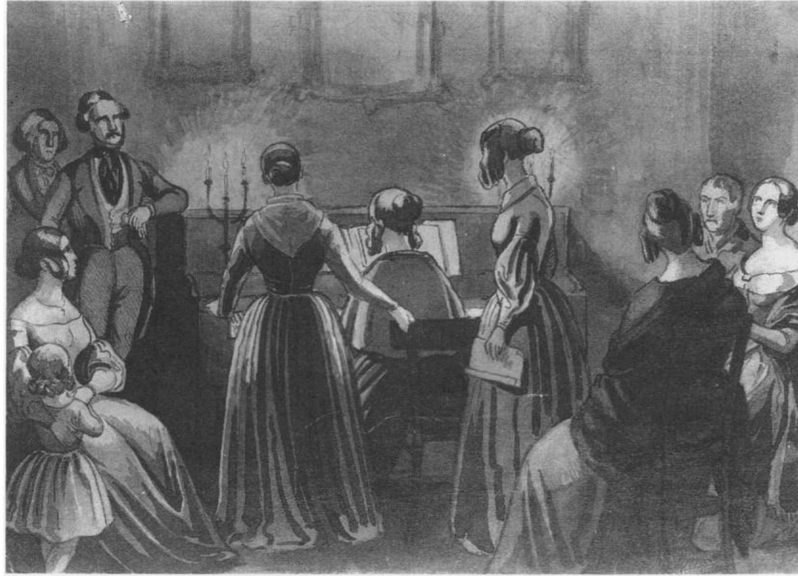

FIGURE 1. Karl Eduard Süffert, *Hausmusik am Abend*, c. 1840. Photo: Historisches Museum Basel.

Schor finds support for her reading of detail in scholarship on the visual arts. Thus Ernst Gombrich's observation that associations of crowded detail with feminine taste can be traced to the rhetorical manuals of classical antiquity leads Schor to see a similar alignment of sexual and aesthetic categories informing Sir Joshua Reynolds's critical evaluations of artistic schools.[25] This in turn helps account for Reynolds's slight preference for the sublime Roman art of Raphael and Michelangelo over the ornamental Venetian art of Titian and Veronese.

And the cultural resonances of this alignment were not limited to the art of the Italian peninsula. Rather, in the dominant Southern view, they mirrored what was perceived as a larger opposition between the universalist Italian tradition of art and the particularist Dutch tradition. Svetlana Alpers cogently argues that the persistent privileging of Southern over Northern art, and the consequent exclusion of Dutch art from the "great tradition," derive in large part from covert associations of Dutch art with the feminine.[26] From the Renaissance on, Italians had difficulty coming to grips with Dutch art, and often expressed it by calling Dutch art an art for women. For example, a remark attributed to Michelangelo dismisses Flemish painting as appropriate only for certain classes of viewers:

> Flemish painting . . . will . . . please the devout better than any painting of Italy. It will appeal to women, especially to the very old and the very young, and also to monks and nuns and to certain noblemen who have no sense of true harmony.[27]

Alpers remarks that "to say an art is for women is to reiterate that it displays not measure or order but rather, to Italian eyes at least, a flood of observed, unmediated details drawn from nature."[28] And, as Schor notes, the problem of this flood of details for Italian observers was that they threatened the relationship of the periphery to the center. They seemed to subordinate the background to the foreground.[29]

Schor's analysis of the gendered role of detail in Western culture would seem to be suggestive for our critique of the "feminine" nocturne. The brevity of a nocturne, along with its typically ornate melodies, would presumably have led nineteenth-century listeners to focus more on momentary surface details of its construction than on the sorts of larger-scale processes that might enter into their experience of a more expansive work. And if this were so, their preoccupation with such details would help reinforce the sexual characterization of the genre.

An article by August Kahlert from an 1835 issue of the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* supports this contention. The title, "Genre Painting in Modern Music" (*Die Genrebilder in der modernen Musik*), reveals its goal: to articulate an explicit link between French genre painting (which grew out of the Dutch tradition) and the recent glut of short instrumental compositions.[30] Kahlert drew what he saw as alarming parallels between the situation in contemporary art, where genre painting seemed to profit at the expense of historical subjects, and that in music, where small instrumental genres gained at the loss of larger kinds. And what is more important, the criticisms he leveled at the smaller "genre pieces" drew on the same kinds of gender-based rationalizations Alpers and Schor documented in Michelangelo and Reynolds:

> Genre painting has also become visible in music. It is characteristic that enthusiasm for the great, the far-reaching, the deep must make way for a multitude of small designs, accomplished forms for the graceful, charming, coquettish [*gefallsüchtigen*]. The lowest and most popular music genre, dance music even, must have recourse to the most expensive finery in order to corrupt the meaning. Dramatic music is with the greatest of pleasure composed of nothing but small forms (Romances, Couplets, Lieder, etc.). The catalogues swarm with Sketches, Eclogues, Impromptus, Bagatelles, Rhapsodies, Etudes, etc. One wants as much variety as is possible, however nothing but the small.[31]

Kahlert's descriptive language reveals the role of gender in the formulation of his aesthetic stance. The notion that "finery" might "corrupt the meaning" of a genre piece already deflects judgment onto a gendered criterion. Still more telling in this regard are his polar oppositions that pit "far-reaching" and "accomplished forms" against "coquettish" and "small designs." Later in the article he mentioned Chopin as one of the purveyors of musical genre pictures, even including him, with Paganini, among those whose use of the concept struck Kahlert as "pathological" (*krankhaft*).

Kahlert confirms that the gendered resonances of detail as outlined by Schor also were felt in the world of music. Hence, we can securely assert that, in addition

to the demographic environment of the nocturne, its very brevity and ornateness also encouraged its perception as "feminine" music.

Gender and the Devaluation of the Nocturne

The significance of this assertion goes beyond its affirmation of the historical affinity of the nocturne and the feminine. For to be associated with the feminine was also often to be devalorized.[32] How did this side of the aesthetic equation affect perceptions of the nocturne? We already witnessed in Kahlert's commentary a general censure of Chopin on grounds that had partly to do with feminine associations (although in other forums he praised the composer).[33] And recall these words of Ferdinand Hand: "The representation of sentiment in the notturno runs the danger of falling into the effeminate and languishing, which displeases stronger souls and altogether tires the listener."

The negative tone should not surprise us. Indeed, given the prevailing attitude of the time, in which affiliation with women usually led to a lesser ranking in the aesthetic hierarchy, it would have been odd if the nocturne had escaped unscathed. But what is striking is how what was only an occasional trope in the criticism of the 1830s and 1840s grew to an almost obsessive preoccupation of writers in the second half of the nineteenth century. They theorized the feminine as a lack. A relatively mild sample of such disapproval comes from an article on the nocturne in Arrey von Dommer's *Lexicon* of 1865:

> NOTTURNO: The character of this piece of music is usually given to a gentle and quiet rapture, without thereby excluding cheerfulness; however elevated ideas and artful arrangement of the same remain distant from it. The whole amounts more to an agreeable amusement and awakening of a mellow frame of mind [*milder Gemüthsstimmungen*] than to an energetic stimulation of deep feelings and passions. For that reason, modern piano music, like other so-called character pieces as well as the Notturno, is precisely suitable to sentimentalize and gush over [*empfindeln*] as much as possible, without worry of encroachment on the harmony of the tea table [*der Harmonie des Theetisches*] by awakening strong feelings and thoughts.[34]

Von Dommer did not directly invoke the feminine, but his aesthetic categories nonetheless can be read as covertly representing sexual differences. He distinguished the "gentle and quiet rapture" of the nocturne from the "elevated ideas and artful arrangement" that might be encountered in other, unnamed genres. The passive categories of "agreeable amusement" and "mellow frame of mind" run up against the more active "energetic stimulation" and "deep feelings." He labeled "sentimentality" and "gushing over" as characteristics of the genre: two more feminine categories in the minds of listeners in the late nineteenth century could hardly be imagined. By the time we reach the end of von Dommer's

definition, we have little doubt as to which sex might be sitting about the tea table avoiding "strong thoughts."

Later nineteenth-century critics—*male* critics, I should now begin to stress—obsessively disparaged music that they associated with femininity. It should therefore come as no surprise that this was the only time in which Chopin's nocturnes were frequently reproached, even by critics who were otherwise well-disposed toward the composer. Frederick Niecks, who authored the first great biography of Chopin in 1888, had this to say about the nocturnes:

> Among Chopin's nocturnes some of his most popular works are to be found. Nay, the most widely prevailing idea of his character as a man and musician seems to have been derived from them. But the idea thus formed is an erroneous one; these dulcet, effeminate compositions illustrate only one side of the master's character, and by no means the best or most interesting.[35]

Earlier in the same work, Niecks had remarked on the qualities that gave variety to the compositions he admired more than the nocturnes:

> Another prejudice, wide-spread, almost universal, is that Chopin's music is all languor and melancholy, and, consequently, wanting in variety. Now, there can be no greater error than this belief. As to variety, we should be obliged to wonder at its infiniteness if he had composed nothing but the pieces to which are really applicable the epithets dreamy, pensive, mournful, and despondent. But what vigor, what more than manly vigor, manifests itself in many of his creations![36]

If Niecks's "epithets" here are not precisely those he used in his discussions of the individual nocturnes, they revolve in the same expressive orbit. What the nocturnes lacked, in his view, was "manly vigor," a quality he located elsewhere in the composer's oeuvre.

A few years later, James Huneker contributed these rambling thoughts on the nocturnes:

> Chopin is so desperately sentimental in some of these compositions. They are not altogether to the taste of this generation; they seem to be suffering from anaemia. However, there are a few noble nocturnes; and methods of performance may have much to answer for the sentimentalizing of some others. More vigor, a quickening of the time-pulse, and a less languishing touch will rescue them from lush sentiment. . . . Most of them are called feminine, a term psychologically false. The poetic side of men of genius is feminine, and in Chopin the feminine note was over emphasized—at times it was almost hysterical—particularly in these nocturnes.[37]

By now, the construction of gender behind Huneker's repeated use of such adjectives as *sentimental* is clear. But it is interesting to witness Huneker's reaction to these and other "feminine" traits. He did not, like Niecks, simply consign the nocturnes to a lesser hierarchical category. Rather, he tried, in Judith Fetterly's clever neologism, to "immasculate" some of the nocturnes.[38] First Huneker urged a less "sentimental," more "vigorous" performance of them. And second he

attempted to coopt altogether the explicit characterization of them as "feminine" by questioning the psychological validity of the concept. If (in a common romantic trope) "femininity" is the "poetic side of men of genius," then it becomes somehow less related to actual sex, and more a "neutral" (or neutered) feature of gifted men.[39]

Devaluations of Chopin's nocturnes were usually framed in terms of general praise for his output as a whole and at least guarded recognition of his achievements in the nocturnes themselves. Nonetheless, in these negative judgments we can still detect the reflection of a larger issue in women's history. For throughout the nineteenth century, and in many different spheres of creative work, genres that were primarily the purview of men (as producers and/or consumers) were privileged. Genres cultivated by women, on the other hand, were relegated to the margins of the aesthetic horizon. Writing of an earlier period, Janet Todd has recently argued that the belittlement of sentimental writing in the late eighteenth century derived in part from its association with women readers and writers; reactions against it were often framed in terms of manliness, of men speaking to men.[40]

These are precisely the terms we encounter a century later in the criticisms of Niecks and Huneker.[41] Each in his own way longed for "masculine vigor" to conquer the "feminine" qualities they found in Chopin. In adopting this outlook, Niecks and Huneker took part in the broader cultural project that granted privileged status to the larger musical genres practiced by men. This attitude too would work against Chopin in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, in the commonplace derogation of his efforts in larger genres like the concerto and sonata. Critics of the time found it simply implausible that the "feminine" Chopin could craft a sonata that measured up to the great tradition of Mozart and Beethoven.

Given that we of late have repressed most of these explicit associations of feminine imagery with the nocturne, by what process was the genre "retrieved" from the feminine sphere early in the twentieth century? A shift in thinking about the genre—at least as it related to Chopin—can be detected early in the twentieth century in diverse sources, including pianists and analysts. Artur Rubinstein frequently gave himself credit for steering interpretations of Chopin away from the "salon style"—itself an encoded reference to "women's music"—of the late nineteenth century. In his memoirs, Rubinstein disparaged the performances of Chopin he attended as a youth, which led him initially to adopt, as he wrote "the generally accepted opinion of Chopin as the young, sick, romantic figure who wrote sentimental music for the piano." But his epiphany came when he was able to hear "Chopin's music as it should sound," that is expressing, among other qualities, "dignity and strength," qualities found in his favorite composer of the time, Brahms.[42]

Theorists did not state their positions quite so baldly, but the very fact that

the likes of Heinrich Schenker and Hugo Leichtentritt devoted serious analytical attention to the nocturnes of Chopin served to "validate" the genre by negating its gendered past. Analyses like Schenker's that sought to lay bare the background structure of a musical work glossed over the same sense of detail that helped link the nocturne with the feminine in the first place. Analytical detail remained, of course, but of a "deep" not "surface" variety, and of a sort that commentators like Kahlert already in the nineteenth century would have found appropriate to "great, German" art.[43]

The first genre Leichtentritt examined in his analytical overview of Chopin's music was the nocturne, and his introductory comments are instructive for the way in which they situate Chopin's contributions to the genre in history. Leichtentritt cited Field and Schubert as progenitors of the Chopin nocturnes. He also specified generic, formal, melodic, and harmonic ties to works of Mendelssohn, Schumann, Liszt, Rossini, Bellini, Grieg, Brahms, and Wagner.[44] But he nowhere linked the genre to women; his language avoids even covertly feminine imagery. In effect, his chronicle of affiliations asserts that Chopin's nocturnes took part solely in the great tradition of male masterworks. Yet by stressing ties with other composers and neglecting associations with women, Leichtentritt told only part of the story: he neutralized the past. By such routes the nocturne eventually lost much of its explicit affinity to the feminine.

Nocturnal Love Songs and the Female Listener: "Voice" and the "Double-Voiced Discourse"

While I have thus far stressed only the tendency toward feminine imagery in reactions to the nocturne, this was not the only type of response to the genre in the nineteenth century. The generic origins of the piano nocturne, which grew out of the vocal kind of the same name, also led to a situation in which both the conception and perception of the nocturne were bound to metaphors associated with "voice"—by which term I refer collectively to figures that evoke vocal music rather than to Edward Cone's concept of musical personae.[45] In 1839, Carl Czerny described the expectations many listeners brought to the genre:

> The *Notturno* for the Pianoforte is really an imitation of those vocal pieces which are termed *Serenades*, and the peculiar object of such works—that of being performed by night, before the dwelling of an esteemed individual—must always exercise an influence upon its character.[46]

Czerny implied that many listeners understood the piano nocturne to be roughly equivalent to it vocal counterpart; they viewed it quite literally as a "song without words." And Czerny's identification of the piano nocturne as a transmutation of its vocal namesake receives confirmation from another, very different source. The frontispiece to the Hofmeister edition of Ignacy Dobrzyński's *Trois Nocturnes*

pour le pianoforte, op. 21, sports an engraving (fig. 2). A man, accompanying himself on a guitar, sings the nocturne to his beloved, who watches from her window.[47] Another amorous couple strolls in the darkened street in the background. Cupid, silhouetted by the moon, surveys the entire scene, arrow ready to fly from his bow. This narrative alone would suggest that vocal associations were part of the piano nocturne; it seems to translate graphically Czerny's words about the "peculiar object" of nocturnes, "that of being performed by night, before the dwelling of an esteemed individual." And a quick survey of some poetic texts for vocal nocturnes, which tend to be addressed from men to women, confirms the ubiquity of the performing situation represented in the engraving.[48]

But if a nocturne in one sense represented to nineteenth-century minds a kind of love poem sung by a man to woman, how could it also be perceived, to recall our earlier discussion, as a mirror of the feminine spirit? On the one hand, a nocturne found its embodiment in the actions of a man; on the other hand, it expressed the soul of a woman. The genre appears to have been engendered in contrary ways. How can we account for this contradiction?

Again, we need to remind ourselves that both of these visions of the nocturne were articulated primarily by men. Thus, as Ruth Solie has recently suggested in connection with the impersonation of women's experience in Schumann's *Frauenliebe und -leben*, the disparity mostly informs us about the mindset of men at the time: it cannot be taken as an accurate representation of feminine response to the genre.[49] Instead, we can see in it an idealized conception of women of the sort that proliferated in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Solie mentions Goethe's *das ewig Weibliche*). Through the simultaneous portrayal of the nocturne as a woman's "entire life" (to quote again Fink's review of Chopin's Nocturnes, op. 15), but a life somehow oriented toward being courted by a man, the message of the genre served to reinforce a widespread ideological stance.

But what of the responses of women to this ideology? How might a female pianist of the time have reacted to what must have been a typical situation for her performance of a nocturne? Here again, the same environment that Ruth Solie imagined for a singer of *Frauenliebe und -leben* must also have existed for a pianist performing a nocturne (see fig. 1). She likely played in a house in front of men; the nocturne was probably written by a man; its expressive message was determined by men, and the ultimate point of the message was the satisfaction to be gained in being wooed by a man. To be sure, for some such pianists the situation would have seemed entirely "normal," and not worthy of reflection.

But just as surely, for others the asymmetry in this state of affairs would have seemed anything but normal. I make this assertion for two reasons. First, the rising subculture of women's movements across Europe in the nineteenth century suggests that the mainstream ideological message of the nocturne cannot have had an absolutely secure hold on all listeners. And second, scholars of women's history have uncovered instance after instance of women challenging a pervasive

mode of interpretation forced upon them by men. Two particularly moving examples concern artistic portrayals of male sexual aggression. First, Mary D. Garrard convincingly shows that the expressive core of Artemisia Gentileschi's painting of *Susanna and the Elders* resides in the victim's plight, not the villains' anticipated pleasure as in other, more familiar versions of the subject.[50] Garrard further argues that Gentileschi's sympathetic treatment of the Susanna theme owed much to her own feelings of sexual vulnerability at the time of the painting, a year before she was actually the victim of a rape. And second, Janet Todd records the outrage of one of Samuel Richardson's first readers, Lady Echlin, upon reading *Clarissa*. So disturbed was Lady Echlin that she composed a new ending to protect herself against "those passages so horribly shocking to humanity."[51]

All of this suggests the likelihood that some listeners (lay and professional alike) might not have entirely accepted the prevalent image of the nocturne in the nineteenth century. Surely some performances of nocturnes encountered listeners who at least partially resisted the ideological message of the genre, who questioned the need to "listen like men" to this "feminine" kind.[52] (If we grant this point, we can further imagine the possible variety of experiences enfolded in performances of nocturnes: male composers impersonating female experience,

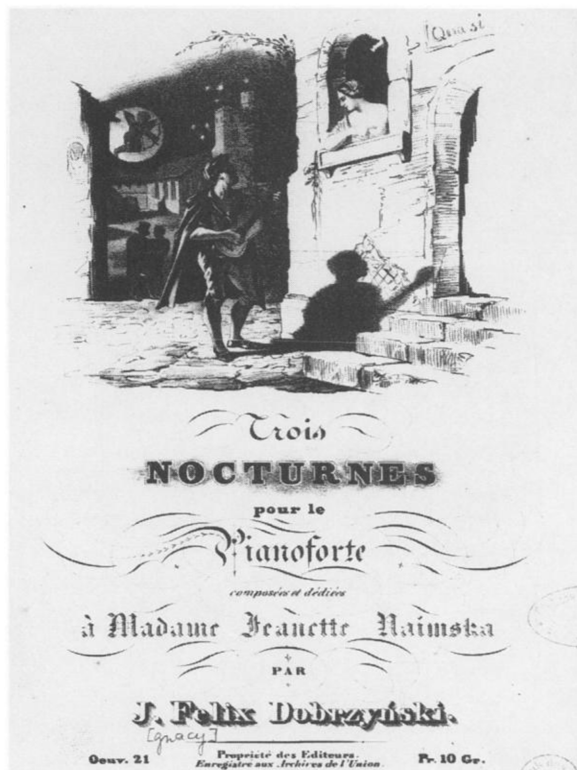

FIGURE 2. Title page, [Ignacy] Felix Dobrzyński, *Trois Nocturnes pour le pianoforte*, op. 21, c. 1835. Photo: Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz.

men listening to women, women listening like men [listening to women], women trying not to listen like men [listening to women]—everything, it would seem, but women listening like women.) And to judge from evidence in the representational arts of the nineteenth century, we might expect that the listeners who challenged or questioned the patriarchal tradition may well have found themselves in a particularly ambiguous relationship to this practice.

But we need to go beyond speculation. For the instrumental nocturne, can we uncover traces of female listeners who, although dependent upon a patriarchal frame of reference, nonetheless intimated woman-centered meanings? Or, said another way, can we find evidence of a "double-voiced discourse" in the realm of the nocturne?[53]

The Composer as Listener: Two Nocturnes by Women

At the present time, we have only limited documentation of specific feminine responses to music. Whereas one can investigate the reactions of men of the time with relative ease—men were the critics for the newspapers, and the correspondence and diaries of well-known male composers tend to be published in some form—the responses of women, who were for the most part excluded from journalism and were not well-known composers, are not as directly retrievable.

For a few notable figures like Clara Wieck Schumann and Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel, however, we have excellent access to their correspondence and diaries.[54] Occasional passages in these published sources support a tentative hypothesis that some women were trained to "listen like men," and moreover, that this experience led to a conflict or internal division. Clara Wieck's diaries and correspondence provide good examples. As is well known, she held contradictory feelings about her work as a composer; at times she was very happy with her efforts, at times quite displeased. But the terms in which she expressed her displeasure could be revealing. For instance, on 11 November 1839 she wrote in her diary:

> I once believed that I possessed creative talent, but I have changed my mind about this idea; a woman [*ein Frauenzimmer*] must not wish to compose—no one has yet been able to do it, should I be destined for it? that would be arrogant, something with which only my father once tempted me in earlier times, but I soon changed my mind about this belief. May Robert only still create; that should always make me happy.[55]

And about her own Trio, she wrote in her diary on 2 October 1846:

> There is no greater pleasure than composing something oneself and then listening to it. There are some nice passages in the Trio, and I believe it is also rather well done in its

form, naturally it still remains women's work [*Frauenzimmerarbeit*], which always lacks force and here and there invention.[56]

Wieck deprecated herself in terms drawn directly from the prevailing male ideology of the day. Particularly striking is her definition of "women's work" as that which "lacks force," for the description could be transferred intact into many of the reviews and descriptions of the nocturne cited above.

Yet another means of understanding how women in the first half of the nineteenth century might have listened to nocturnes is to examine nocturnes composed by them. This is both to view these composers as a special category of listener and to treat their nocturnes as responses (at least partly) to the predominantly male generic tradition. And it is also to invoke, for the first time in this study, the vocabulary of traditional musical analysis. But while the jargon may be familiar to musicologists, the use to which I put it differs in one crucial way from ordinary musicological practice: I explicitly mean my analytical observations to serve as representations of documented early nineteenth-century perceptions of the genre. Because all representations of this sort are incomplete translations of the past, heavily burdened by and implicated in the present, it might therefore seem that I am guilty of mere sleight-of-(critical)-hand, promoting as new method the same, tired bag of analytical tricks. But this undervalues the significance of the move from understanding familiar analytical idioms as expressions of an ideal or individual listener to grasping them as socially constructed representations. Shifting from a univocal to a polyvocal analytical discourse at least raises the possibility of bringing the aims of feminism and musical analysis into a similar critical orbit.

I want to focus primarily on a *Notturno* by Clara Wieck, and to a lesser degree on one by Fanny Hensel. These two stunning examples of the genre stand in some interesting ways apart from the efforts of Field and Chopin.[57] The Wieck *Notturno* forms part of her *Soirées musicales*, op. 6, which was composed in 1835–1836 and published in 1836.[58] The autograph manuscript of Hensel's *Notturno* bears the date 15 October 1838; the work, which she withheld from publication, was first printed only in 1986.[59]

In musical outline, including its harmonic inventiveness, treatment of dissonance, rhythmic variety, clever disposition of form, and wistful coda, the Wieck nocturne is an extraordinary work. But our main concern here is what the piece might tell us about Wieck's reading of the generic tradition. In this regard, two excerpts seem particularly noteworthy: the opening measures of the piece, and its middle section (figs. 3 and 4). In both of these passages, Wieck revealed herself as a progressive. Rather than following the model of Field, she instead adapted innovative gestures introduced into the genre by Chopin only a few short years earlier.

First the opening. Beginnings are strategically crucial to any genre, for along

Andante con moto

sempre legato

dolce

rubato stretto

cresc.

FIGURE 3.

più mosso

cresc.

FIGURE 4.

with the title they can establish the appropriate mental frame for the apprehension of the generic codes of the work. In the first few measures of nocturnes, Wieck's included, several features generally dhelp evoke the gentle and ethereal spirit that commentators (and presumably listeners) of the day identified with the genre.[60] But like only the nocturnes of Chopin before, the Wieck piece at the same time seems surreptitiously to subvert the feeling of surface stability at the start. We can detect two elements of the opening that undercut stability: 1) the tonic pedal (i.e., the reiterated *F* in the left hand), which, occurring so early in the piece, produces a feeling of anticipatory tension—we expect change, not stasis, at this juncture of a work—and 2) the cunning placement of the dissonant and unstable augmented triad (*f-a-c#*) as accompaniment for the first notes of the melody. (The augmented triad becomes a kind of reference sonority in the piece, recurring in each statement of the primary tune as well as the transition back to the reprise and the coda.) Hence the opening measures of the Wieck nocturne subtly undermine the "normal" associations of serenity that attached to the genre and substitute in their place a kind of latent dynamism.

The functionally contrasting middle section of the Wieck nocturne (it projects a different mood from the opening section) again runs counter to Field's conception of the genre, and instead sides with Chopin's—but only to a degree. Before Chopin, middle sections themselves were infrequent in nocturnes, and when they did appear, they mostly left undisturbed the generic mood of tranquility. Chopin however introduced radical shifts in mood in his middle sections; initially he did so chiefly by importing techniques from a foreign genre, the etude (good examples occur in the middle sections of the Nocturnes in B Major, op. 9, no. 3; and F Major, op. 15, no. 1).[61]

These agitated middle sections departed so sharply from the Fieldian tradition of the genre that a wide spectrum of his listeners, including the progressive Robert Schumann, doubted the propriety of the gesture.[62] Yet no other innovation was so quickly recognized as deriving specifically from Chopin. Wieck's decision to adopt a contrasting middle section would plainly have linked her with Chopin in the minds of her contemporaries.

Nonetheless, the middle section in the Wieck nocturne sounds different from the typical example in early Chopin: the sense of contrast with the opening section seems more muted. It is as though Wieck decided to take a position midway between the older Fieldian tradition and Chopin's recent challenge to this tradition. Through her nocturne, she seems to assert that, while the addition of functional contrast adds positively to the generic tradition, this contrast needs to be kept in check so that it does not upset listeners by apparently referring to foreign genres like the etude.[63]

From these passages we gain a sense of Wieck's precarious struggle with the prevailing discourse on the nocturne. (Her diaries have already framed this characteristically ambiguous stance for us.) On the one hand, undermining the calm

of the opening in favor of a latent dynamism suggests a rebuttal to (or a complication of) the notion that only placid sensations are appropriate to the opening of a "feminine" nocturne. On the other hand, muting the vigor of the Chopin-like middle section suggests a fear that such assertiveness, left unchecked, might ultimately coopt the nocturne out of the feminine sphere, and so deprive women of one of the few genres deemed appropriate for them. Wieck faced a powerful predicament, both straining against and constrained by the culturally constructed values of musical "assertiveness." And only in some idyllic realm of fantasy could she have found a homogeneous resolution to this predicament. Hence, just as the genre transmitted a message of conflicted identity of gender, so too Clara Wieck must have been divided against herself in her response to the "feminine" nocturne.

The story of Wieck's nocturne does not end here, for the piece also figured as an encoded sign of Robert Schumann's love for Wieck during their clandestine engagement. On 6 February 1838, Robert wrote to Clara about his recent burst of creative activity:

> And then I have also been composing an awful lot for you in the last three weeks—jocular things, Egmont stories, family scenes with fathers, a wedding, in short extremely charming things—and called the whole Novelettes [*sic*], because you are named Clara and Wieckettes does not sound good enough.[64]

Imagining Clara, but unwilling to name her publicly, Schumann drew his title from the name of another well-known musical Clara, the singer Clara Novello. And five days later, with the *Novellettes* still fresh on his mind, Robert let slip, unconsciously perhaps, the presence of another covert musical signal to Clara:

> Do you know what the most precious thing [*das Liebste*] of yours is for me—Your Notturno in F Major in six-eight time. What do you think about that? It is sufficiently melancholy [*Schwermüthig*], I think. Then the Trio from the Toccatina.[65]

(That Schumann also loved the Trio from the *Toccatina*, the first piece in the *Soirées Musicales*, is not surprising, given that it practically duplicates the melody and harmony of the opening theme of the following *Notturno*.) When Clara finally saw the completed *Novellettes*, however, the signal became clear, for Robert had incorporated—without attributing it (contrary to his practice with other borrowings from Wieck)—the opening tune of the *Notturno* into his eighth *Novellette*. Schumann first introduced the theme as an eerily interruptive "distant voice" (*Stimme aus der Ferne*) at the end of the Trio II, and then recalled it twice in varied form (the variations are substantial enough that we might better say that he transformed the expressive character of Wieck's theme; see figs. 5–7).[66]

This tale of the immediate reception of the *Notturno* bears telling for two reasons. First, and most directly related to the argument of this essay, Schumann's identification of the *Notturno* as Wieck's "most precious" work shows yet one more

Stimme aus der Ferne

FIGURE 5.

5. FORTSETZUNG

Einfach und gesangvoll M.M. ♩ = 96

FIGURE 6.

way in which the genre served both to shape and to reinforce commonly held ideas of femininity. In other words, I think it significant that he prized precisely a nocturne and not a ballade, mazurka, polonaise, impromptu, or piano concerto (to name other genres in which Clara had worked to that point). For Robert, the *Notturno* not only embodied a generalized feminine spirit, it also represented quite literally his beloved Clara. We can therefore read his favoring of it as a sign that the piece did not significantly upset his musical expectations for a nocturne. And should Robert have sensed any generic dissonance arising from Clara's authorship in a genre that ordinarily was understood to recall the love song of a man to a woman, his appropriation of her principal theme in the *Novellette* effectively reversed the direction of the address: now the nocturne—its theme, at least—did quite literally transmit a message of love from a man to a woman. Robert's act of quotation would have in part served to redress the balance of gender in this nocturne, and so to lend it a kind of cultural value ordinarily hard won by "women's" music.

Second, the nature of Schumann's quotation itself may well bear on Wieck's ambivalent self-image as a composer. For careful comparison of Clara's theme with its representations in Robert's *Novellette* shows that even on its initial hearing, Schumann altered Wieck's theme in several ways. In addition to the obviously disjunctive rhythm of the accompanimental pattern, which in large measure conveys the effect of "distance" Schumann wanted, I would note in particular the subtle harmonic change Schumann made at the moment the melody begins.[67]

FIGURE 7.

What had been a straightforward (if unstable) augmented triad in Wieck now becomes, with the addition of the mid-range *c#*, a harmonic entity a good deal more complicated (it may be scanned either as an F# major triad over a D pedal or as an augmented D triad with a dissonant *c#* appoggiatura). It is difficult to imagine any strong contextual reasons why Schumann would have opted for this *c#*; a *d* may be substituted, restoring the unadulterated augmented triad, without disturbing the framework of the phrase. Rather, as becomes clear in the two variations *cum* transformations of Wieck's theme, neither of which preserves the augmented harmony, Schumann simply "composed out" Wieck's distinctive triad on personal aesthetic grounds.

My point here is not to argue the relative merits of Wieck's harmonization against Schumann's. Rather it is to contemplate the effects that Robert's revision of Clara's theme—and this is not the only instance of such retouching—might have had on her creative psyche.[68] As is the case in so many other facets of Wieck's life, the situation seems fraught with ambiguity. On the one hand, we surely must concur with Nancy Reich's reading of Robert's quotations as evidence of the "uncommon unity" and "extraordinary sharing and flowing of ideas" between the two lovers.[69] On the other hand, we cannot help but wonder if Robert's rewriting contributed to Clara's basic indecisiveness over the worth of her own compositions. When quotation becomes transformation, it suggests at the very least a kind of exertion of Robert's self over Clara's, an "authorizing" of the feminine work. And it calls into question the propriety of maintaining, as has one writer, that the two "enjoyed a complete dialogue, made possible by a shared musical heritage."[70] Wieck wrote to Robert that she harbored "a peculiar fear of showing you any of my compositions, I am always ashamed of myself," and we know that she objected to alterations Schumann suggested for the third *Romance* from her opus 11.[71] When we note in addition that Wieck's sole quotation of Schumann, in her "Variations on a Theme of Robert Schumann," op. 20, is almost entirely faithful to its source (the first *Albumblatt* in Schumann's *Bünte Blätter*, op. 99), we sense that the "dialogue" may have seemed more complete from Robert's side than from Clara's.[72] With such basic asymmetry in compositional outlooks confronting her at every turn, it is no wonder that works such as the *Notturno* seem to emanate conflict.

Fanny Hensel's G-minor *Notturno* provides a different reading of the tradition of the nocturne. It directly engages the Fieldian model, avoiding the type of contrasting sections imported into the genre by Chopin. Instead, its formal process develops out of the juxtaposition of short thematic phrases, the accompaniments of which remain mostly unchanged in style (fig. 8 shows the opening of the piece). In writing this way, she may have followed a family prejudice: as writers in the 1830s and 1840s noted, her brother Felix Mendelssohn's "Songs without Words" are similarly rooted in the Fieldian nocturne.[73]

Yet Hensel's nocturne at the same time departs from the Fieldian model in

FIGURE 8.

one essential way. Roughly two-thirds of the way through the piece the opening theme returns with sufficient weight as almost—but not quite—to suggest a reprise (fig. 9). What gives the moment its import is that it marks the first unambiguous dominant-tonic cadence in the piece. Earlier, every apparent cadential progression proves to be a deceptive feint, along the way sliding through some fairly extraordinary chromatic byways (fig. 10). Chopin, in *his* Fieldian nocturnes, was up to similar tricks (somewhat tentatively in the D-flat Major op. 27, no. 2, and more emphatically in the E-flat Major op. 55, no. 2). But if the first of these pieces at all influenced Hensel (the second had yet to be written), then she plainly went beyond the Chopin model in more decidedly imposing a sense of higher-level structure, of formal return, on the processive phrases.

Like Wieck's *Notturno*, Hensel's at once confronts the generic tradition and is implicated in it too. In itself, this combination of innovation and tradition might not seem noteworthy: the new always comes with an admixture of the old, and a similar pattern could undoubtedly be detected in any competent work in any genre. Yet a common gesture need not arise out of common motives. We need also to consider Hensel's peculiar status as a woman composer. The published correspondence with her brother Felix often reveals a profound ambivalence

FIGURE 9.

FIGURE 10.

about composing and publishing, as in this passage written on 22 November 1836:

> With regard to publishing I stand like the donkey between two bales of hay. All the same I have to admit honestly that I myself am rather neutral about it; Hensel wishes it, you are against it. I would of course comply totally with the wishes of my husband in any other matter, yet on this issue alone it's too crucial for me to have your consent, for without it I might not undertake anything of the kind.[74]

The implied comparison (a manifest one in other letters) of her own talents to those of her brother and the lack of self-confidence that expressed itself through the conscious stifling of her artistic impulses together cast the formal experiment in the *Notturno* in a different light. In other words, to view Hensel's nocturne as simply another exemplar in the great tradition of the genre is to whitewash the most essential feature of its relationship to this tradition. For her experience with the genre plainly differed from that of her male contemporaries. In the end, her challenge to it remained a personal battle; she never published the nocturne.[75] Can we imagine Chopin making the same decision with a piece of this high quality? The message from Fanny Hensel seems to be that challenges to tradition must be confined to private musical statements, that for a woman there lurked unstated dangers in publicly confronting the orthodoxy.

To investigate women and the piano nocturne in the nineteenth century is to uncover stories of devaluation, marginalization, and sometimes outright exclusion—but also to discover intimations of individual voices questioning the patriarchal tradition. We have learned that the association of femininity with the nocturne served to reinforce an idealized male view of womanhood, one that may have had little connection with the perceptions of women themselves. Signs of challenge on the part of female composers were at best muted and ambiguous, at worst held from public view. And when a reaction to the prevalence of this "femininity" in the nocturne began in the second half of the century, the affiliation with women acted like an aesthetic lead sinker on the nocturne, pulling it swiftly down the hierarchy into the murky depths of sentimental salon music.

What do these stories lead us to conclude about the potential of musical analysis for a feminist musicology? On the one hand, I think we still must be wary of the music historian's reflex to analyze. Projects that veer toward a note-by-note mapping of musical discourse onto structures of feminist thought may, by privileging composer-centered concepts over societal ones, unconsciously promote the patriarchal agendas they ostensibly would deny. I have not entirely escaped this tendency here. Yet in the process of examining the nocturnes of two women composers, I have shown how, if situated historically, analysis (or at least close working with the notes) can aid our formation of past musical ideologies. So something like analysis might be of some service to a feminist music history after all. I realize

this falls short of a ringing endorsement of the concept. But to wish otherwise is to risk slighting the more significant insights into constructions of gender in music that are likely to follow from the exploration of alternative epistemologies.

Notes

I wish to thank audiences in the Departments of Music at Cornell University, the University of California at Berkeley, the University of Pennsylvania, CUNY Graduate Center, and Stanford University, as well as those at the Second International Chopin Symposium in Warsaw (1989) and the Annual Meeting of the American Musicological Society in Oakland (1990); their questions and comments on earlier versions of this paper helped greatly in the process of revising it for publication. Particularly valuable to me on these occasions were remarks by John Rink and Peter Jaffe. I have also benefitted enormously from the careful readings of Ruth Solie, Marcia Citron, and Gary Tomlinson.

1. Teresa de Lauretis, "The Technology of Gender," in *Technologies of Gender* (Bloomington, Ind., 1987), 5.
2. For a thorough exposition of how the language of formalist criticism places barriers in the path of social and cultural history, see Rose Rosengard Subotnik, "Toward a Deconstruction of Structural Listening: A Critique of Schoenberg, Adorno, and Stravinsky," in *Explorations in Music, the Arts, and Ideas: Essays in Honor of Leonard B. Meyer*, ed. Eugene Narmour and Ruth A. Solie (Stuyvesant, N.Y., 1988), 87–122.
3. I find this often to be the case in the writings of Susan McClary. Throughout her otherwise finely nuanced collection of essays, McClary appeals to "the common semiotic codes of European classical music" to bolster her readings of the gendered and sexualized nature of such chronologically and culturally divergent works as Monteverdi's *Orfeo*, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Bizet's *Carmen*, and Tchaikovsky's Fourth Symphony; *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality* (Minneapolis, 1991). She premises her discussions on the belief that "any five-year-old has sufficient experience from watching Saturday morning cartoons to verify most of the signs [she] will read" (68). But this is to ground her criticism in what seems to me to be an unsupportable belief in the immutable nature of semiotic codes. Did listeners in the 1820s really hear the "unspeakable violence" and "explosive rage" that McClary finds at various moments of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony (128–30)? I think it more likely that McClary instead has documented (and documented valuably) a sexual politics that governs the hearing of some *modern* listeners; what remains silent in her exposition are the voices of Beethoven's generation. Moreover, the appeal to semiotic codes of any sort is worrisome, for in most critical applications these codes turn out to represent a kind of deep structural analysis once removed, and therefore no more societally based than any other reductive theory.

   Similar discrepancies between the enterprises of feminism and music analysis trouble both Eva Rieger's and Lawrence Kramer's examinations of gendered meanings in Liszt's *Faust* Symphony. See Eva Rieger, *Frau, Musik, und Männerherrschaft* (Frankfurt, 1981), 139–40; and Lawrence Kramer, "Liszt, Goethe, and the Discourse of Gender," *Music as Cultural Practice, 1800–1900* (Berkeley, 1990), 102–34.
4. The precariousness of this second alternative is particularly clear to me. It both tinges

the first alternative with the shadow of a traditional mode of explanation and suggests that I am unable to free myself from orthodox analytical gestures. On the other hand, at this stage (and perhaps at any stage) it would be naive to expect anything but slippery epistemological ground when trying to reconcile or confront the disciplines of feminist studies and music history. At the very least, then, my alternative models may open the way for more radical perspectives.

5. My understanding of genre derives in large part from models developed by literary critics. Of the several studies that influenced me, I will mention here just three: Gary Saul Morson, *The Boundaries of Genre: Dostoevsky's "Diary of a Writer" and the Traditions of Literary Utopia* (Austin, Tex., 1981); Alastair Fowler, *Kinds of Literature: An Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes* (Cambridge, Mass., 1982); and Heather Dubrow, *Genre*, The Critical Idiom, vol. 42 (London, 1982).
6. I am chagrined to admit that this basic question occurred to me only when I had nearly completed the first draft of my book. In other words, for a long time I was content to formulate a model of listeners' responses to the nocturne while simply ignoring who actually made up that body. This was tantamount to asserting a "neutral" audience—but of course, from my side, "neutral" had a decidedly "male" cast. Patterns of exclusion run deep: even when one is made aware of the social dimensions of an issue like genre, one can forget that society is a gendered construct.
7. See in particular the discussions in Janet Todd, *Feminist Literary History* (New York, 1988), 136; and Rita Felski, *Beyond Feminist Aesthetics: Feminist Literature and Social Change* (Cambridge, Mass., 1989), 82–153.
8. Jeffrey Kallberg, "The Rhetoric of Genre: Chopin's Nocturne in G Minor," *19th-Century Music* 11 (1988): 238–61. This article also gives a fuller explication of the relevance of the theory of genre to musical criticism.
9. Christoph von Blumröder, "Notturno/Nocturne," *Handwörterbuch der musikalischen Terminologie*, ed. Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht (Wiesbaden, 1982–1983), 9–10.
10. G. W. Fink, *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, 13 August 1834, col. 543. Translations in this article are my own, unless otherwise cited.
11. *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, 20 July 1836, col. 473.
12. Ferdinand Hand, *Aesthetik der Tonkunst*, 2 vols. (Jena, 1841), 2:314ff.; cited in von Blumröder, "Notturno/Nocturne," 9–10.
13. Carl Kossmaly, *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, 17 January 1844, col. 34.
14. Maurice Bourges, "Lettres à Mme La Baronne de *** sur quelques morceaux de piano modernes. Quatrième Lettre," *Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris*, 17 April 1842, 171. The same strategy occurs in an unsigned review of three sets of nocturnes by J. C. Kessler printed in *Le Pianiste* 1 (1834): 124–25.
15. Robert Schumann, *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, 10 August 1838, 56.
16. *Musical World*, 23 February 1838, 120.
17. Arthur Loesser, *Men, Women, and Pianos: A Social History* (New York, 1954), 64–67, 379–97, passim; William Weber, *Music and the Middle Class: The Social Structure of Concert Life in London, Paris, and Vienna* (London, 1975), 35–36; Judith Tick, *American Women Composers Before 1870* (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1983), 13–31; Tick, "Passed Away Is the Piano Girl: Changes in American Musical Life, 1870–1900," in *Women Making Music: The Western Art Tradition, 1150–1950*, ed. Jane Bowers and Tick (Urbana, Ill., 1986), 325–48.

   And it was not just the pianos of the middle class that were played mostly by women: amongst Chopin's high-born pupils, women outnumbered men at the rate of at least 3 to 1.

18. Cited from Loesser, *Men, Women and Pianos*, 382.
19. *Le Pianiste*, 1835, 48; cited and translated in Weber, *Music and the Middle Class*, 35.
20. Loesser, *Men, Women and Pianos*, 386.
21. Richard Leppert, "Men, Women, and Music at Home: The Influence of Cultural Values on Musical Life in Eighteenth-Century England," *Imago Musicae* 2 (1985): 51–133. The quotation is taken from his "Music, Domestic Life, and Cultural Chauvinism: Images of British Subjects at Home in India," in *Music and Society: The Politics of Composition, Performance, and Reception*, ed. Leppert and Susan McClary (Cambridge, 1987), 85.
22. Henri Blanchard, *Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris*, 10 January 1847, 18.
23. There is a good discussion of night imagery in von Blumröder's "Notturno/Nocturne," 7–8. And recall the anonymous review of Chopin's Nocturnes, op. 27, cited above.
24. Naomi Schor, *Reading in Detail: Aesthetics and the Feminine* (New York, 1987).
25. Ernst Gombrich, *The Sense of Order: A Study in the Psychology of Decorative Art* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1979), 23; citation from Schor, *Reading in Detail*, 19.
26. Svetlana Alpers, "Art History and Its Exclusions: The Example of Dutch Art," in *Feminism and Art History: Questioning the Litany*, ed. Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard (New York, 1982), 180–99.
27. Ibid., 194. 28. Ibid., 195.
29. Schor, *Reading in Detail*, 20.
30. August Kahlert, "Die Genrebilder in der modernen Musik," *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, 12 June 1835, 189–91.
31. Ibid., 190–91.
32. Schor does document the rising interest in and greater value assigned to detail beginning with Hegel and the rise of realism and continuing to the present day. But she also observes that the growth of realism did not lessen criticism of detail in some quarters, but instead made it more shrill. Moreover, even when the detail attained positive associations, it did not, until very recently, lose its affinity to the feminine; *Reading in Detail*, 23–97.
33. In an 1834 article entitled "Über Chopin's Klavier-Kompositionen," Kahlert registered his astonishment at and admiration for Chopin's skills as a pianist. A portion of this article is printed in Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger, *Chopin: Pianist and Teacher as Seen by His Pupils*, trans. Naomi Shohet et al., ed. Roy Howat (Cambridge, 1986), 289–90.
34. Cited from von Blumröder, "Notturno/Nocturne," 10.
35. Frederick Niecks, *Frederick Chopin as a Man and Musician*, 2 vols. (London, 1902; reprint ed., New York, 1973), 2:261. The 1973 reprint reproduces a later edition of the Niecks biography, which was first published in 1888.
36. Ibid., 2:213.
37. James Huneker, *Chopin: The Man and His Music* (New York, 1900; reprint ed., New York, 1966), 142.
38. Judith Fetterley, *The Resisting Reader: A Feminist Approach to American Fiction* (Bloomington, Ind., 1978), xx.
39. Christine Battersby, *Gender and Genius: Towards a Feminist Aesthetics* (Bloomington, Ind., 1989), 103–112, provides an interesting analysis of nineteenth-century justifications of the "feminine" side of male "genius."
40. Janet Todd, *Sensibility: An Introduction* (New York, 1986). Todd has also traced the process whereby the extremely high value placed by critics on early nineteenth-century poetry written by men served to downgrade the predominant mode of didactic fiction practiced by women at the same time; *Feminist Literary History*, 111–14.

41. And Charles Ives's notorious *mot* even more succinctly encapsulates this attitude about Chopin: "One just naturally thinks of him with a skirt on, but one which he made himself"; see Ives, *Memos*, ed. John Kirkpatrick (New York, 1972), 134–35, as cited in Maynard Solomon, "Charles Ives: Some Questions of Veracity," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 40 (1987): 452.
42. Artur Rubinstein, *My Young Years* (New York, 1973), 86–87.
43. Kahlert, "Die Genrebilder," 189.
44. Hugo Leichtentritt, *Analyse der Chopin'schen Klavierwerke*, 2 vols. (Berlin, 1921), 1:1–2.
45. Edward Cone develops his theory of personae in *The Composer's Voice* (Berkeley, 1974). For a précis of the generic background of the piano nocturne, see Jeffrey Kallberg, "Understanding Genre: A Reinterpretation of the Early Piano Nocturne," *Atti del XIV Congresso della Società internazionale di musicologia*, 3 vols. (Turin, 1990), 3:775–79.
46. Carl Czerny, *School of Practical Composition: Complete Treatise on the Composition of All Kinds of Music, Opus 600*, trans. John Bishop, 3 vols. (London, 1848; reprint ed., New York, 1979), 1:97.
47. Wolfgang Krueger, tracing the iconography of depictions of serenades back to the late fifteenth century, reveals that, until the early eighteenth century, the woman was ordinarily portrayed emptying her chamber pot on the singer's head; *Das Nachtstück: Ein Beitrag zur Entwicklung des einsätzigen Pianofortestückes im 19. Jahrhundert* (Munich, 1971), 11–12 and 165–67.
48. For a late, transoceanic example of such a text, consider these lines:

    Beautiful dreamer, queen of my song,
    List while I woo thee with soft melody;
    Gone are the cares of life's busy throng,
    Beautiful dreamer, awake unto me!

    Stephen Foster's "Beautiful Dreamer" is by genre a serenade, but it could easily, as Czerny suggested above, be taken for a nocturne.
49. Ruth Solie, "Whose Life?: The Gendered Self in Schumann's *Frauenliebe* Songs," in *Music and Text: Critical Inquiries*, ed. Steven Paul Scher (Cambridge, 1992), 219–40. My thanks are due to Prof. Solie for sharing this paper with me prior to its publication.
50. Mary D. Garrard, "Artemisia and Susanna," in *Feminism and Art History*, 146–71.
51. Todd, *Feminist Literary History*, 123.
52. The phrase "listen like men" is adapted from Jonathan Culler's "Reading as a Woman" in *On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism After Structuralism* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1982), 43–64. Culler derived his formulation from Peggy Kamuf's "Writing Like a Woman," *Women and Language in Literature and Society*, ed. Sally McConnell-Ginet et al. (New York, 1980), 284–99. The viewpoints of Kamuf and Culler have subsequently been criticized by a number of writers; for an interesting analysis of the dispute over "reading as a woman," and in particular its relationship to the question of essentialism, see Diana Fuss, "Reading Like a Feminist," in *Essentially Speaking: Feminism, Nature, and Difference* (New York, 1989), 23–37.
53. On the "double-voiced discourse," see Susan Sniader Lanser and Evelyn Torton Beck, "[Why] Are There No Great Women Critics?: And What Difference Does It Make?," in *The Prism of Sex: Essays in the Sociology of Knowledge*, ed. Julia A. Sherman and Evelyn Torton Beck (Madison, Wisc., 1979), 86; and Elaine Showalter, "Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness," in *The New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature, and Theory*, ed. Showalter (New York, 1985), 263–64. Myra Jehlen describes much the same phe-

nomenon in noting the frequency of "action despite dependence" in feminine creative spheres; see "Archimedes and the Paradox of Feminist Criticism," *Signs* 6 (1981): 581.

54. For Wieck, see in particular Clara and Robert Schumann, *Briefwechsel: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed. Eva Weissweiler, 2 vols. to date (Frankfurt am Main, 1984–); and Beatrix Borchard, *Robert Schumann und Clara Wieck: Bedingungen künstlerischer Arbeit in der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts*, Ergebnisse der Frauenforschung, vol. 4 (Weinheim, W. Ger., 1985). For Mendelssohn, see *Letters of Fanny Hensel to Felix Mendelssohn*, ed. Marcia J. Citron (New York, 1987).
55. Borchard, *Schumann und Wieck*, 232. 56. Ibid., 292.
57. Although I will read the "double-voiced discourses" of the Wieck and Hensel nocturnes against models by Field and Chopin, I do not mean to imply that the relation of these men (or men in general) to this "feminine" genre was necessarily stable or unproblematic. But it exceeds the scope of this article fully to explore the male side of the equation here. I can only offer a few observations about Chopin's case, which particularly interests me (I am investigating the topic in a separate study). While we have already seen how Chopin's nocturnes suffered critically in the late nineteenth century because of their affiliation with the feminine, in fact he had long before been marked as either "feminine" or "androgynous" by some of the metaphorical displacements of his contemporaries. From the time he arrived in Paris, writers repeatedly drew on a small and related stock of metaphors in their accounts of the composer, his performances, and his music. "Raphaelesque," "the Trilby of pianists," "the Ariel of pianists," "an airy apparition," and "small fairy voices sighing under silver bells": these and other gendered tropes framed discourse about Chopin during his lifetime. Chopin's own understanding of the "feminine" nocturne unfolded in the context of these more general metaphorical substitutions, all complexly related but each also freighted with individual meanings. And that the metaphors continually evoke notions of androgyny/femininity draws our attention to even more complicated contexts: Chopin's rather ill-defined sexual identity, and his relationships with women, above all with George Sand. Buffeted by all of these resonances, Chopin surely found writing nocturnes to be, at the very least, a psychically charged activity.
58. For a modern edition, see Clara Wieck-Schumann, *Ausgewählten Klavierwerke*, ed. Janina Klassen (Munich, 1987), 27–30. Also available is a facsimile reprint of the original 1836 edition: Clara Wieck Schumann, *Selected Piano Music* (New York, 1979).
59. See Fanny Hensel, *Ausgewählte Klavierwerke*, ed. Fanny Kistner-Hensel (Munich, 1986), 16–20.
60. Thus Czerny suggested that the character of the nocturne "must be calculated to create an impression of a soft, fanciful, gracefully romantic, or even passionate kind, but never of a harsh or strange"; *School of Practical Composition*, 1:97.
61. Readers with access to compact disc players can easily locate these middle sections: in Artur Rubinstein's somewhat understated recording of the complete Chopin Nocturnes (RCA Red Seal 5613-2-RC), the middle section of op. 9, no. 3, begins at 3:36, and that of op. 15, no. 1, begins at 1:27.
62. Schumann remarked in his review of Count von Wielhorsky's Nocturnes, op. 2, "In the first and last of the Notturnos are interwoven, after the example of some of Chopin's, agitated [*bewegtere*] middle sections, which already in Chopin are often weaker than his first inventions, here also delaying more than promoting continuity"; *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, 10 August 1838, 56–57.
63. In a reversal of the patriarchal mode I have discussed here, Schumann's view of Chopin's middle sections may well reflect Wieck's practice in the genre. As we will see

below, her *Notturno* was very much on his mind around the time he drafted the review of Wielhorsky's Nocturnes.

64. Schumann, *Briefwechsel*, 1:90. 65. Ibid., 1:100.
66. These examples may be heard on Youri Egorov's excellent compact disc recording of the *Novellette* (EMI CDM 7 69537 2): the passage in figure 5 begins at 4:00; that in figure 6 at 4:51; and that in figure 7 at 10:34.
67. Other changes include an added trill (note also the chromatic alteration that Schumann introduced into this figure, the upper note of which changes from *c♯′* to *c♮′*), a simpler afterbeat following the trill (in place of Wieck's chromatic turn), and the simplification of Wieck's melody following the upward leap of an octave.
68. Schumann lopped off the first two measures of Wieck's Mazurka in G Major from the *Soirées musicales* to serve as the opening "Motto von C.W." in his *Davidsbündlertänze*, op. 6. Even in such a brief citation, Schumann could not restrain himself from revising his model: he altered Clara's third-beat dotted-eighth-note/sixteenth-note rhythms to eighth-note/sixteenth-rest/sixteenth-note figures (in the second edition of 1850, he further shortened the first dyads by adding staccato dots to them), changed her downbeat accents to crescendos from the upbeat through the second beat, and converted the rhythm of her second beats from eighth note/eighth rest to a simple quarter note.
69. *Clara Schumann: The Artist and the Woman* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1985), 231. And we know that both Schumann and Wieck at some level shared pleasure in the published *Novellettes.* Robert: "Yesterday I also received my Novellettes; they have grown strong; four volumes of dear Clara [*LiebClärchen*]. . . . Bride, in the Novellettes you will come upon yourself in all possible registers and positions and other irresistible things. Yes, consider only me! I maintain: Novellettes could only be written by one who knows such eyes as yours, who has touched such lips as yours. In short, one can no doubt produce something better, but scarcely something similar"; Schumann to Wieck, 30 June 1839, *Briefwechsel*, 2:608. And Clara: "I myself always find new beauties each time I replay one of his things (hence, e.g., this is now the case for me with the Novellettes). The Novellettes are an absolutely beautiful work. Intellect [*Geist*], soul [*Gemüth*], humor, the greatest tenderness. Everything is united in it, the finest characteristics are unlimited in it. One must know him as I do, and one will find his whole self in all his compositions"; diary entry of 29 August 1839, quoted in Borchard, *Schumann und Wieck*, 301.
70. Anna Burton, "Robert Schumann and Clara Wieck: A Creative Partnership," *Music & Letters* 69 (1988): 224.
71. Clara Wieck to Robert Schumann, 22–23 April 1839 and 16 June 1839, *Briefwechsel* 2:500, 577.
72. Wieck made only one substantive change to Schumann's theme: she omitted the repeat dots enclosing the passage between measures 9 and 24.

    One might argue that the initial statement of the theme in a variation genre demanded a greater fidelity to the source than would a quotation of a theme in works like the *Novellette* or the *Davidsbündlertänze*. But this was not the case, as we may see from Schumann's own practice in his never completed "Variations on a Nocturne of Chopin." Schumann altered the source (Chopin's Nocturne in G Minor, op. 15, no. 3) in several ways: he changed the melody, revoiced chords, reversed accompanimental figuration, and omitted a particularly dissonant measure (measure 19 in Chopin). For the text of Schumann's Variations, see Karol Musiol, "Robert Schumann und Fryderyk Chopin: Ein Beitrag zur Genesis der ästhetischen Anschauungen und des poetischen Stils der Musikkritik Schumanns," *Beiträge zur Musikwissenschaft* 23 (1981): 56–58.

73. Carl Kossmaly's discussion of Schumann's *Arabeske* and *Blumenstück*, cited above, groups together in the same category Mendelssohn's "Songs without Words" and Field's nocturnes.
74. *Letters of Fanny Hensel to Felix Mendelssohn*, 222 and 521. I have modified somewhat Citron's translation.
75. That Hensel did not release this Nocturne is in itself not unusual. Discouraged from publishing first by her father and then by her brother, and deeply conflicted herself (as suggests the letter cited in the previous note), she issued only a very small percentage of her entire output. (For a full discussion of this topic, see Marcia Citron, "Felix Mendelssohn's Influence on Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel as a Professional Composer," *Current Musicology* 37–38 [1984]: 9–17). In no way would one want to consider all or even the majority of these unpublished works as "personal battles" with their respective generic traditions. But her *Notturno* does seem to embody a strikingly divergent relationship to its generic tradition. And precisely because it was composed by a woman who felt constrained not to publish it, it was denied the possibility of participating in the subsequent tradition of its genre.