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Postscript

Over the course of Western civilisation music has been regarded as inherently subversive. So argues Mladen Dolar in his capsule summary of the vocal trope — *contra* Derrida — as represented within the metaphysical tradition. For Derrida, voice is understood as the figure of unmediated consciousness; the medium through which the sensible and rational are conjoined within the autonomous self. Yet if this ontological status could be affirmed as key to a harmonious correspondence between nature and culture by Plato and his successors, the treacherous prospect of sound becoming decoupled from sense equally determined the extent of its susceptibility to a prosthetic denaturing. In fact, as Dolar remarks, the parasitic effect of voice may be thought altogether more virulent than that of writing on account of its very interiority. Hence deflected from its sublimated purpose, the sonorous human voice threatens to wreak havoc on the ideality of logos, imposing a hedonistic tyranny capable of undermining all social convention.

This abysmal disjunction is explicitly embodied, or so Marcel Cobussen suggests, in Debussy's ambiguously titled modernist composition for solo flute, *Syrinx*. Nonetheless, as Christopher Norris goes on to claim, it is precisely a critical fusion of the hermeneutics of suspicion with a misappropriation of the pleasure principle that has led to the programmatic denunciation of structural hearing within musicology. One can agree with Norris that any reactionary attitude towards developed perceptual strategies risks selling all listeners short. One may also accept that the exclusive alignment of gratification with localised sensual immediacy is a reductive reflex that takes no account of the satisfaction to be derived from engaged close reading. Where I would wish to question his diagnosis, however, is in supposing that all post-structuralist readings of the discourse of music analysis inevitably take this turn. One could begin, for instance, by countering that despite his own stated convictions to the contrary, Norris's preoccupation with a presumed thematic bias in the work of Heinrich Schenker, not to mention minimalism and the music of the baroque, itself betrays an unwarranted attachment to localised auditory phenomena. More significant, however, is his identification of a 'minor industry' of deconstructive musicology, a statement which confers a misleading homogeneity on the Anglo-American field. For example, that the relationship between theory and practice is at best tenuous in this sphere can be gauged from the fact that Subotnik's paradigmatic essay on the question of structural listening (Subotnik 1996, pp. 148-76) takes little if any account of parallel work linking music and poststructuralism. All the same, if Subotnik's approach falls short of a critique of music-analytical enquiry from within, it nonetheless stands in a position altogether preferable to those blanket condemnations of score-based close reading practice that betray their own essentialism even as they strive to embrace the real-world ideal of social inclusion.

For me, exploring the consequences of the aesthetic ideology for the development of music analysis entails that resistance to theory which, as Misko Suvakovic recalls through a quotation from Derrida, 'demonstrates the impossibility of closure, of the closure of an ensemble or totality on an organised network of theories, laws, rules and methods'. And if this further necessitates a negative appraisal of the criticism of sensibility represented by the work of Joseph

Kerman and Charles Rosen alike – *pace* Norris – then it also admits the kinds of interpretative disposition so resourcefully finessed here by Martin Scherzinger. This much said, the sense of a collegial transatlantic spirit that still shines through Kerman's *Musicology* is likewise something to be defended, a concrete counter to the uniformly bureaucratised conception of professional mission that might otherwise stand to overwhelm Kevin Korsyn's paradigm of auto-critical institutional discourses. Because as Geraldine Finn's textual performance makes plain, responding to music means not only consenting to its political institutions, but also engaging ethically on the ground of alterity through the willing disposition of an entirely other ear. Hence at a time of disciplinary uncertainty and consequent cultural impoverishment, listening, that experience of impossible appropriation, serves to remind us all that a shared sign of humanity which defies exclusive ownership is one of the truths of music which cannot *not* be heard.