



“You Too Can Compose”: Ruth Crawford’s Mentoring of Vivian Fine *

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ABSTRACT: This article offers a detailed explication of the relationship between Ruth Crawford and Vivian Fine, who was Crawford’s composition student in the 1920s. Drawing on work by feminist scholars such as hooks, Heilbrun, and Miller, I focus on the connections between gender and modernism in two different aspects of the Crawford/Fine relationship: mentoring and musical style. Closer examination reveals valuable insights not only into the gendered implications of the affectionate, empathetic relationship that the two women created and sustained, but also the impact that Crawford’s mentoring had on Fine’s development and emergence as an atonal composer. A case study analysis of Fine’s *Little Suite for Voice and Piano*, written just after Fine’s studies with Crawford, helps to elucidate the structural and stylistic connections between the two composers. A recording of *Little Suite*, which is only available in manuscript and has not been performed since 1931, was also prepared as part of this article.

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[1] At first glance, attempting to trace any sort of legacy or lineage of women composers seems a formidable, perhaps even foolhardy, endeavor. In addition to facing barriers against writing, publishing, and securing performances of their works, women composers usually worked in isolation from one another; as Joseph Straus emphasizes, “the chains of knowledge and influence needed to bind a community together have largely been absent for women composers” (1995, 225). According to Catherine Parsons Smith, women modernist composers in the early decades of the twentieth century faced an even more dire situation, as modernism itself was a staunchly masculine realm that was “profoundly destructive” for female composers (1994, 99); moreover, the few women (such as Ruth Crawford) who did manage to compose “rejected their romantic Americanist foremothers, alienating themselves from female role models along with their ‘feminized’ heritage” (1994, 92).

[2] Over the past twenty years, scholars such as Ellie Hisama (2001, 2007), Nancy Yunhwa Rao (1997, 2007, 2014), Straus (1995), and Judith Tick (1991, 1997) have problematized Parsons Smith's claims by exploring the varied aspects of Ruth Crawford's musical contributions, from her ultramodern compositional style to her work with American folksong. Yet one aspect of her multifaceted career has not been studied in any substantive detail: her work as a composition teacher. During the 1920s and early 1930s, Crawford mentored and taught composition to Vivian Fine (1913–2000); in later years Fine repeatedly named Crawford as her first significant musical mentor, emphasizing that "Ruth introduced me to avant-garde music and she was one of the greatest influences on my musical development" (Fine 1977).

[3] The musical relationship between Crawford and Fine thus offers a unique opportunity to explore the intersections between two women composers working together during the height of American ultramodernism. This article examines the connections between gender and modernism in two different aspects of the Crawford/Fine relationship: mentoring and musical style. Drawing on research by feminist scholars such as Eaton, Heilbrun, hooks, Korsmeyer, and Miller, I argue that these areas illustrate a distinctive viewpoint on composition, one that contains a gendered perspective that differs from the ardent masculinity typically associated with American ultramodernism.

[4] The first part of this article provides a detailed explication of the relationship between Crawford and Fine, including a discussion of gendered discourse in Crawford's letters to Fine. In contrast to the misogynist statements adopted by some composers (such as Ives) as an attempt to validate modern music, Crawford specifically invokes gendered metaphors that compare the modernist compositional process to objects and activities commonly associated with female domestic life and everyday household chores, including sewing, polishing, and dishwashing. The second part of this article turns to a specific work—Fine's *Little Suite for Voice and Piano* (1930)—and offers a case study analysis of the intersections between Crawford's mentoring, modernism, and gender in one of Fine's compositions.

[5] When read against the prevailing climate of modernist music in the 1920s and early 1930s—which is typically characterized as riddled with misogynist attitudes and hostility towards women composers—the relationship between Crawford and Fine provides an important counterpoint to the well-worn argument that women's modernist compositional efforts were brutally hampered by prevailing sentiments of misogyny. Instead, their relationship shows how two experimental women composers formed their own support network within modernism in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Ultimately, deeper investigation reveals valuable insights not only into the gendered implications of the affectionate, empathetic relationship that Crawford and Fine created and sustained, but also the impact that Crawford's mentoring had on Fine's development and emergence as an atonal composer.

The Relationship Between Fine and Crawford

[6] Vivian Fine's extraordinary compositional career spanned more than six decades and includes more than one hundred forty completed works, ranging from solo instrumental pieces to opera. Yet one question that has not been fully examined is precisely how and why Fine began writing music in the first place. This is of particular interest given that Fine began composing in the 1920s, a musical era not particularly noted for its encouragement of fledgling female composers—a milieu famously characterized by Charles Seeger as being rife with "machismo with a capital M":

I was very snooty in those days about women composers and had come more or less to the conclusion that the great tradition of European music, say from 1200 to about 1930, had been created mostly by men and that it was a bit

absurd to expect women to fit themselves into a groove which was so definitely flavored with machismo (and, of course, the early music of the twentieth century and the late music of the nineteenth century was machismo with a capital M). (Wilding-White 1988, 445)

[7] Fine first began composing at the suggestion of Ruth Crawford; in Chicago, Fine took intensive lessons in theory and composition from Crawford for approximately five years, and their relationship continued after Crawford left Chicago in 1929.⁽¹⁾ Fine's lessons with Crawford were the brainchild of another woman famously associated with modernism: Djane Lavoie Herz, a prominent Chicago pianist (and former Scriabin student) who taught piano to both Crawford and Fine; Herz generously arranged for Crawford to teach Fine in exchange for free piano lessons.⁽²⁾ Throughout her career, Fine repeatedly recalled the significant impact that Crawford had on her growth as a composer, stressing the "incalculable importance" of Crawford to her musical development (Fine 1975).⁽³⁾ In numerous interviews, Fine poignantly recalled the moment when Crawford first asked her to write an original piece of music, and Crawford's thoughtful, deliberate response:

One day she asked me to write a piece of music. And I was twelve years old. Nobody had asked me to write a piece before. And so I wrote a piece . . . and I remember how she listened to it. When I turned around and looked at her, she was looking very thoughtful . . . and her response to it played a critical role in my life. She listened to it very carefully; I could tell she was really paying attention. I think this was a critical experience for me—to have somebody respond to something I did. She liked it very much. . . . I really believe it's possible I would never have composed, or composed much later if I hadn't been asked then. (Fine 1977)

She asked me to write a piece, and I wrote a piece, I still have that piece, too. And I could see that she listened to it with great attention, and ever since, after that, I composed constantly. I never stopped composing. But it really grew out of her asking me to write a piece. I don't know what would have happened if she hadn't asked me to write a piece, and also her reaction to it. Perhaps nothing more would have happened if she'd have asked me, but her reaction, and her also being a composer. (Fine 1975)

[8] Crawford's numerous contributions in specific areas of music education have been discussed by a number of scholars. In addition to her well-known work on projects such as *American Folksongs for Children* in the late 1930s and 1940s, Crawford maintained a grueling private piano teaching schedule in Chicago in the 1920s (where she sometimes taught for twelve hours at a time) and later in Washington, D.C.⁽⁴⁾ Crawford's private students often remembered her with great fondness: Sylvia Parmelee noted, "Ruth was such a gifted teacher, who knew how to encourage even the least talented and to bring out the music latent in them."⁽⁵⁾ Crawford's pedagogical gifts also seem to have extended into her work as a composition teacher, but unfortunately this aspect of her musical career has not been studied in any substantive detail. During the late 1920s and early 1930s, Crawford taught modernist composition not just to Fine, but also to Johanna Magdalena Beyer (1888–1944).⁽⁶⁾ Although they are not as well known as Crawford today, both Beyer and Fine continued composing after their studies with Crawford, and both of their compositional outputs significantly eclipsed Crawford's comparatively small oeuvre of less than twenty works.⁽⁷⁾ Both Beyer and Fine also continued Crawford's pedagogical legacy. Beyer supported herself by teaching piano, wrote a short pedagogical treatise, and even taught composition to another female modernist composer, Jessie Baetz. In addition to her prolific compositional career, Fine also taught composition at Bennington College for more than twenty years (from 1964 to 1987).⁽⁸⁾

[9] At first glance, Crawford's teaching and mentoring of Fine might seem to be yet another example of Crawford's abundant work with children, which Crawford continued in the late 1930s and 1940s, after moving away from composition and immersing herself in American folksong. Fine studied with Crawford while she was a teenager, but their relationship provided a stark contrast to Crawford's other work with younger children, in part because of the advanced nature of Fine's studies, and also because Fine was something of an exceptional student who demonstrated a level of musical talent—and emotional and intellectual maturity—well beyond her age. For example, Fine's mother allowed her to quit high school during her freshman year in order to fully devote herself to her musical studies, even hiding her daughter in a closet when a truant officer came to investigate (Fine 1986a; Von Gunden 1999, 4). In August 1927 (one month before her fourteenth birthday), Fine wrote a detailed description of a "radical meeting" she attended in defense of Sacco and Vanzetti.⁽⁹⁾ Clearly moved by the experience, Fine emphasized, "I felt as if I had seen and heard something that raised me above the pettiness and narrowness of the middle class" (Fine 1927). In 1931—at the age of eighteen—Fine moved to New York City by herself to pursue her musical career; Fine did not receive any financial support from her parents, and earned a living by working as an accompanist for a number of prominent dance studios.⁽¹⁰⁾ Fine also used her talents as a pianist to help disseminate Crawford's music: Fine played the first performance of Crawford's *Piano Study in Mixed Accents* in January 1932, and also performed the work for a radio series in 1933.⁽¹¹⁾

[10] Crawford also showed a remarkable level of devotion to Fine's burgeoning compositional career, helping her to obtain a number of significant professional opportunities. When Crawford left Chicago, she arranged for Fine to have her scholarship at the American Conservatory to study with Adolf Weidig, although Fine did not find the lessons very helpful (see n3, above; Von Gunden 1999, 4–5). While in New York, Crawford also provided important networking opportunities for Fine, sharing her compositions with other prominent modernist composers, including Henry Cowell, Charles Seeger, Imre Weisshaus, and Aaron Copland (Crawford 1930a, 1930b). Many of Fine's first important professional opportunities stemmed from the networking and introductions Crawford made on Fine's behalf. For example, after Crawford showed Fine's music to Cowell, he arranged for Fine's first major public performance, of her *Solo for Oboe* (1929), on a Pan American Association of Composers concert in 1930—when Fine was sixteen years old.⁽¹²⁾ Before Fine moved to New York in 1931, Crawford even tried to arrange for Fine to stay in Blanche Walton's home, just as she had previously done in 1929.⁽¹³⁾

[11] Crawford and Fine also developed an intimacy greater than that found in typical teacher/student relationships. In interviews, Fine often emphasized how she studied with Crawford for "a long time" and that the two "became good friends" (Fine 1975). The longevity of their relationship was perhaps bolstered by their relatively similar ages (the two women were only twelve years apart, closer in age than Crawford and her husband Charles Seeger). The two women continued to remain in contact after both had moved to New York City. In 1933 Fine visited Crawford in the hospital after the birth of her first child, Michael; Crawford even suggested that Fine could buy diapers for the newborn if Charles Seeger was too embarrassed, demonstrating how their friendship went well beyond music, sometimes even encompassing traditionally "feminine" realms of childrearing and domesticity (Gaume 1986, 94–5; Tick 1997, 224). Crawford's deep affection for Fine is also evinced by the numerous expressions of support and fondness found in her letters to Fine from the early 1930s, written after Crawford left Chicago. In these letters, Crawford consistently addresses Fine as "my dear Vivian" (1930a, 1930b, 1931b), "Vivian dear" (Crawford 1929), or "dear lovable Vivian" (Crawford 1931a), and often concludes her letters with touching expressions of emotional support, such as "much love to you" (Crawford 1930b) and "I hope you are still singing, composing grandly, practicing piano with joy and power. . . love to you" (Crawford 1929).

[12] In her work with Fine, Crawford also seemed to cultivate a space for teaching and mentoring that was remarkably egalitarian, one in which the boundaries between “master” and “student” could be more fluid, even porous. Two poignant accounts by Crawford show how open and vulnerable Crawford was as a mentor: the experience of listening to Fine’s compositions sometimes revealed Crawford’s own anxieties about her musical worth.

Vivian plays for me her summer output of original compositions. Their profuseness, force, depth, breadth of conception seem to me remarkable at 13, and make me realize how very late was mine own musical, or rather, compositional development compared with hers. (September 9, 1927)

My composing is at times very discouraging. I am tight, negative; my technic [sic] is not free. My power of development is poor. The old doubt returns often. I long to be an artist in the true sense, and feel I was not born one. Vivian for instance; she is every inch artist in the big sense of the word. (November 1, 1927)

Rather than a more traditional master/student hierarchy, the mentoring relationship between Crawford and Fine contained a notably interdependent character, one established in mutuality rather than hierarchy. Fine’s descriptions of Crawford’s thoughtful reactions to her first compositions (quoted at the beginning of this section) emphasize Crawford’s manner of listening “very carefully” and “with great attention” (Fine 1975 and 1977).⁽¹⁴⁾ Crawford’s decision to treat Fine’s earliest compositions with the utmost seriousness and care—to consider Fine’s first compositional efforts as meaningful, mature musical expressions, rather than to dismiss them as mere student exercises—had a profound impact on Fine’s development as a composer.

[13] Crawford’s non-hierarchical approach to mentoring Fine also intersects with some of Crawford’s deeply held views about egalitarianism and pedagogy more generally. Roberta Lamb (2007) has examined the connections between Crawford’s 1948 compositional credo and her work with young children and folksong in the 1940s, in order to “challenge the rigid separation we ascribe to ‘composer’ and ‘teacher’” (Lamb 2007, 169). Crawford’s own explanation of her process for working with four-year-old children emphasizes the importance of recognizing even a preschool music classroom as a valid kind of compositional space, as well as the need for maintaining a collaborative atmosphere that deconstructs the rigid categories of “teacher” and “student”:

What we are doing, then, teacher and children, is making something together, fresh each day—a sort of composition. And in any process of composition, large or small, some days are more productive than others. There are valleys and there are high places. The high places are rich with giving and taking between group and teacher. And with giving and taking, the valleys can sometimes reach to high places which are especially satisfying because they promised so little. Certainly if the teacher’s first aims are a keen awareness of each child’s smallest actions or words or thoughts, and a readiness to follow as well as to lead, there will be a spirit of freshness within the teacher as well as the children, a sense of exploring, of trying something a little new or doing something a little differently (Gaume 1986, 217).

[14] Crawford’s pedagogical practices may also be aligned with some of the core principles of feminist pedagogy: in particular, emphasis on collaborative, nonhierarchical teaching relationships, and a caring, nurturing teaching style (what feminist pedagogues term an “ethic of care”).⁽¹⁵⁾ bell hooks has examined “the place of passion, of erotic recognition” in pedagogy, emphasizing that “we must move beyond thinking of those forces solely in terms of the sexual” (1994, 194). In describing her women’s studies classes at Stanford, hooks describes how she learned “that eros and the erotic did not need to be denied for learning to take place. . . . it was expected that we would

bring a quality of care and even ‘love’ to our students. Eros was present in our classroom, as a motivating force” (hooks 1994, 193–94). Many of Crawford’s affectionate letters to Fine reflect these ideas, as do Fine’s memories of Crawford’s sensitive and compassionate teaching style. As Fine remembered, “In the five years I studied with Ruth, she always criticized my music gently, which I think is absolutely perfect. I remember at one point she felt very bewildered by some of the wild things I was doing” (Fine 1977). Decades after they worked together, Fine emphasized how Crawford’s empathetic teaching and mentoring provided not just technical advice and encouragement, but also instilled in Fine a core belief that she too could compose, as it was “perfectly natural” for women to write music.

[Crawford] influenced me in a very fundamental way. I always thought it was perfectly natural to write music. I never thought of myself as a woman composer, and of course, Ruth was a woman composer, so that was something very fundamental that I got from her. Also, she took a very deep interest in my compositions and my development—in a very feeling way. She wasn’t didactic and she didn’t think of me as just “some young thing.” We had a real friendship. (Fine 1997)

[15] As previously discussed, Crawford and Fine’s relationship continued after Crawford’s move to New York City in 1929; letters reveal a rich and affectionate bond that connected the two women in the years preceding Fine’s subsequent move to New York. Crawford’s letters contain a number of pedagogical suggestions found in typical teacher-student relationships, such as recommendations of books, descriptions of concerts she attended, and general words of encouragement for Fine to keep composing. But sometimes Crawford’s letters took a more inward, philosophical turn, especially when she wrote of her feelings about contemporary composition.

[16] Crawford’s letters to Fine are particularly significant since most surviving commentary on ultramodern music has been by men. Tick has brilliantly discussed how modernist composers often employed shockingly misogynist discourse as an attempt to validate their music by distancing it from the supposed “apron strings of European tradition,” to quote Henry Cowell (Cowell 1962[1933], 13). Tick emphasizes how Charles Ives’s rhetoric relied on the “total devaluation of feminine values” (Tick 1993, 106), as misogynist discourse was used to discredit and repudiate the (European) music of the past and to “butch up” modernist efforts. The rhetorical strategies used by some modernists echo queer theorist Alan Sinfield’s ideas of how effeminacy is often employed as a “misogynist construct” that establishes—and regulates—the boundaries of “true” masculinity (Sinfield 1994, 32). For example, Ives famously encouraged listeners to “take a good dissonance like a man”; in a 1934 discussion, he described Grieg, Wagner, and Tchaikovsky as “ladies,” also worrying that if composers continued to follow in the footsteps of this inherited tradition, “music might some day die, like an emasculated cherry, dead but dishonored” (Tick 1993, 103; Tick 1997, 85). Somewhat ironically, when Cowell approached Ives about recording Crawford’s String Quartet for his *New Music* series, Ives initially worried about her current music being “mansized” enough—but luckily, he eventually changed his mind (Tick 1993, 97–98 and n63).⁽¹⁶⁾ The misogynist rhetoric used by modernist composers sometimes directly contradicted their actions in real life: for example, Cowell was an avid supporter of several female modernist composers, including Crawford and Fine. Yet even composers like Cowell who ardently supported women modernists sometimes adopted this rhetoric. For example, decades after his famous “apron strings” statement above, Cowell admired Fine’s early compositions for reflecting “the grimmest of dissonant styles,” also characterizing them as “unladylike” (Riegger 1958, 4).

[17] In contrast, in her letters to Fine, Crawford emphasizes the importance of maintaining a *balance* as a composer between one’s technical, logical craft and one’s more intuitive, sentimental side by using language that associates modernist composition with philosophical categories typically gendered feminine, including emotion and subjectivity. Sometimes Crawford invokes gendered

metaphors that draw on specific objects and activities commonly associated with female domestic life and everyday household chores, including sewing, polishing, and dishwashing.

. . . my feeling (I think not blinded by having gotten in a “rut” of dissonance) is still unshaken: that dissonant music, having rushed to an extreme of dissonance as a reaction from romanticism, will yet find the great composer who will mould from a mixture of consonance and dissonance a great music which is not only dryly intellectual, as most dissonant music has been so far, but carrying also a deep simplicity—emotion, if we want to use the word—which will link it with the people as well as with the intellectuals. (Crawford 1931a)

And let me stress again in teacherly fashion the need for objective as well as subjective, for the composer. Know as much as you can. Knowing cannot hurt you. Not knowing for the sake of being brilliant, but knowing for the sake of being able to give more freely, with power and without useless effort. . . .

Don’t misunderstand me. Of course the subjective is important, it is the essence. Music must flow. It must be a thread unwinding, a thread from no one knows just where. It must not be a problem in mathematics, writing music. Schonberg [sic] has grown too many geometric pages. But there is a balance. You need not polish the receptacle so meticulously that you have no energy left for filling it. Neither would I consider it complimentary to put a grand flow of sound into a rusty dishpan. (February 7, 1930, in Tick 1997, 222; Von Gunden 1999, 9–10)

Crawford’s rhetoric draws on metaphors that highlight—rather than repudiate—everyday domestic experience, comparing ideal composition to a (feminine) image associated with sewing (“a thread unwinding”), rather than the empty intellectualism of mathematics.⁽¹⁷⁾ Recent research by philosophers working in feminist aesthetics and “everyday” aesthetics have sought to reclaim objects and categories that have been long devalued in traditional aesthetics, such as domestic crafts, household cleaning, and even cooking and the sense of taste, arguing that these seemingly mundane (and typically gendered feminine) “everyday” events can and should be considered as important forms of aesthetic experience.⁽¹⁸⁾

[18] But Crawford’s statements about contemporary composition are particularly noteworthy for the way that they deconstruct longstanding binary oppositions. Instead, Crawford values both sides of categories (objective/subjective, intellect/emotion) in which the “masculine” half is traditionally valued. Rather than aligning objectivity, intellectualism, and genius with dissonant experimental music (while associating subjectivity, emotion, and banality specifically with a feminized tonal tradition), Crawford’s letters to Fine stress the importance of blending both objectivity and subjectivity, logic and emotion, in dissonant composition. Crawford’s emphasis on both “thinking” and “feeling” seems to have been a fundamental part of her compositional aesthetic, even extending beyond her work with Fine. Charles Seeger recalled the impact that Crawford had on him during their work together in the early 1930s, specifically regarding the roles of “thinking” and “feeling” in the creative process.⁽¹⁹⁾ As Seeger remembered, “what I was interested in in composition was trying to connect the head and the heart. . . . [Ruth] was more able to connect her head with the heart than I was. My head and my heart were light-years apart. . . . during the year’s teaching of Ruth, they came quite close together” (Seeger 1972, 187).⁽²⁰⁾

Musical connections: Fine’s *Little Suite for Voice and Piano* (1930)

[19] But Crawford’s inspiration extended beyond pedagogy and discourse: it also permeated Fine’s music. The next section of this article discusses Fine’s *Little Suite for Voice and Piano* (1930), a group of three songs that demonstrates Crawford’s influence in terms of both mentorship and musical

structure. At first glance, it may seem odd to focus on this early work by Fine, but Fine's compositions from this era should not be trivialized or dismissed as immature student exercises since many received professional performances, sometimes even internationally.⁽²¹⁾ *Little Suite* serves as a compelling case study for examining the musical connections between Crawford and Fine, for both stylistic and biographical reasons. The first reason is a practical one: many of Fine's early works have been lost, so this piece is one of the few available examples of Fine's early style.⁽²²⁾ Second, this piece is a logical choice for examining possible stylistic connections between the two composers because of its date of composition: Fine completed *Little Suite* in Chicago in 1930, shortly after Crawford's move to New York. Finally, there is surviving evidence that directly connects Crawford with this particular work. Fine sent Crawford the manuscript, and in a letter from March 1930 Crawford provided detailed suggestions, remarking that the first song "really catches salt and wind" and describing the songs as "the finest you have done" (Crawford 1930a).⁽²³⁾ The suite was premiered (with Vivian Fine at the piano) at a concert at Blanche Walton's home on December 13, 1931—a concert that Ruth Crawford attended (Von Gunden 1999, 16; Cody 2002, 9–10).

[20] Several different musical features in *Little Suite* intersect with specific compositional techniques often used by Crawford in her pre-Seeger works. These techniques permeate Crawford's Chicago compositions, written during her mentoring of Fine (and before Crawford's work with Seeger). As Straus explains: "By the time she met Seeger, Crawford was already a mature composer, reasonably well known in ultramodern circles, with her works receiving regular performances. Her studies with Seeger shaped her music in far-reaching ways, but that should not be seen to detract from her compositional autonomy and originality" (1995, 3–4).⁽²⁴⁾ The following portion of the article discusses three salient characteristics: whole-tone affiliations, transpositional projection, and local melodic processes. (Fine's complete manuscript is provided in **Example 1**, along with the first full-length recording of the piece.)

Whole-tone affiliations

[21] Whole-tone sonorities comprise much of the pitch content of the first song of the suite, "Sea Chest." Fine's use of whole-tone and almost whole-tone sonorities may be connected to Crawford; as is well known, whole-tone sonorities were an important part of the sonic palette of Crawford's compositions before 1930. For example, "Loam" and "Home Thoughts," from Crawford's *Five Songs* (1929), also use melodic and harmonic content grounded in whole-tone collections (Straus 1995, 96–97).⁽²⁵⁾ Crawford's use of whole-tone sonorities likely resulted from her knowledge of Scriabin's music, which Crawford studied in her piano lessons with Djane Herz, who was a devoted former student of Scriabin (Tick 1991, 232–33). Scriabin's music had a formidable effect on Crawford during her Chicago years. Fine often emphasized how Crawford's early work was "greatly influenced by Scriabin" (Fine 1980b, 3), and in 1927 Crawford even noted in her diary, "Bach and Scriabin are to me the greatest spirits born to music" (Mirchandani 2004, 333). In particular, Crawford's use of almost-whole-tone sonorities immediately calls to mind Scriabin's "mystic" chord, (013579) (Straus 1995, 97 and 207–208; Tick 1991, 232–33.). Many of Crawford's early works use chords that are variants of this almost-whole-tone sonority, including her *Five Preludes for Piano* (1924–25) and *Violin Sonata* (1926). Crawford wrote these pieces during the years she was teaching Fine, and Fine heard them in performances and played them in her lessons (Tick 1997, 66–72; Tick 1991, 235–36).⁽²⁶⁾

[22] In addition to her work with Crawford and knowledge of Crawford's music, Fine was also familiar with Scriabin through her own piano lessons with Herz. Fine noted that she learned Scriabin's works (in particular, his Preludes op. 74) with Herz and that she held "the interpretation of Scriabin pieces I studied with her to be quite authentic" (Fine 1975; Fine 1977, 2). Thus Fine's use of whole-tone sonorities represents a complex web of influences from both Herz and Crawford

(and, of course, Scriabin). As Fine explained:

Some of my very earliest compositions, when I was fifteen years old or so, are rather Scriabinesque. I did study in Chicago with a student of Scriabin, Djane Lavoie Herz. She introduced me, when I was a very young teenager, to the works of Scriabin, including his last works. These undoubtedly had an effect on me in the beginning of my writing, especially as my teacher at that time, Ruth Crawford Seeger, also had Scriabinesque influences in her work (Fine 1986b).

[23] Fine's suite was not one of her "very earliest compositions," since it was written several years after she had begun composing and after she had already completed a number of other works, yet a few aspects of the piece may be aligned with Crawford's "Scriabinesque" techniques. Of course, the early music of Crawford and Fine does not mirror Scriabin's exactly—for example, both Crawford and Fine created more dissonant textures than Scriabin—but rather represents a loose affiliation with Scriabin's use of whole-tone and almost-whole-tone sonorities and subsets derived from them.

[24] The opening of the suite may be organized into four sub-phrases; the first, second, and fourth phrases are all built around slightly altered forms of the WT_0 collection that call to mind Scriabin's "mystic chord" and Crawford's similar use of almost-whole-tone sonorities (see **Example 2**). These sub-phrases are further emphasized by Fine's use of exact imitation at T_0 in the right hand in mm. 2–5, which creates a canonic texture in which we hear the first three sub-phrases twice. When the voice enters in m. 7, Fine uses a transposed version of the original piano material, creating additional statements in mm. 7–11 (the large-scale organization of these phrases is discussed in the next section of this article). The conclusion of the first song also contains an inverted form of the opening piano content (mm. 13–19) that results in more repetitions of the sub-phrases.⁽²⁷⁾

[25] Closer examination of the specific content of the whole-tone phrases reveals similarities with Crawford's use of almost-whole-tone sonorities. However, Fine's almost-whole-tone sonorities are somewhat different than Crawford's (and Scriabin's), since Fine often injects more chromaticism into the texture. Fine tends to embed the pitch that deviates from the whole-tone collection within the line, and thus the underlying structure of her lines often contains a chromatic trichord.⁽²⁸⁾ In addition, Fine's whole-tone lines occasionally end with not one but two deviations from the whole-tone texture (bass sub-phrase "D," mm. 5–6 and mm. 18–19).

[26] **Table 1** summarizes the whole-tone references that appear most frequently in "Sea Chest" and their similarities with Scriabin's almost-whole-tone hexachord. Much of the song features two almost-whole-tone hexachords, (012468) and (023468); Fine highlights the whole-tone content of each hexachord by delaying the appearance of the chromatic pitch until the end of the phrase (m. 2, m. 3, and mm. 5–6). Both (012468) and (023468) differ from Scriabin's mystic chord because each contains an embedded chromatic trichord, but these three almost-whole-tone hexachords share a number of distinctive structural similarities. The whole-tone structure undergirding these three hexachords means that apart from the whole-tone hexachord itself (02468T), these three hexachords are the only ones that contain the second-highest number of interval-class or ic 2s (four) and ic 4s (four), along with two ic 6s.⁽²⁹⁾ Aside from these commonalities, each of the interval vectors of these three hexachords is also closely related, differing by no more than two (see Table 1). (013579) and (023468) are also M-related (M_5/M_7); (012468) maps onto itself by M_5/M_7 .

[27] Specific intervallic combinations derived from subsets of Scriabin's "mystic" chord also saturate Crawford and Fine's music from these years; in particular, (016) sonorities, which result from combinations of ic 5 and ic 6. Straus has noted how sonorities structured around these two intervals are a common feature of Crawford's early music (1995, 97 and 239). As Fine explained,

“Ruth’s music before Charlie [Seeger] was influenced by Scriabin, mainly in the chords, the augmented fourth plus perfect fourth” (Tick 1991, 232 n53). These intervals are also an important aspect of Fine’s early music, but her treatment differs somewhat from Crawford’s because she uses them in a more linear (rather than harmonic) fashion. In *Little Suite* these sonorities make only a fleeting appearance, but they tend to occur at particularly dramatic moments, where the texture of the music also changes.

[28] For example, the piano chords that signal the end of the first major section of text (mm. 11–12) unfold alongside a sustained E^b4 (the longest note in the entire first section), and combine to form the almost-whole-tone set class or sc (02368), a subset of (023468); ic 5 and ic 6 are emphasized in the linear motion between the dyads (see Example 2).⁽³⁰⁾ This sonority is anticipated by several prominent (016) trichords in m. 10: [278], [701], [127], and [056]; another (016), [6E0], occurs immediately after this moment (m. 12) to launch the subsequent phrase. Most of these trichords are related by transpositions or inversions that preserve ic 5 or ic 6: for example, [701] and [127] share the tritone dyad [17], [056] and [6E0] share the tritone dyad [06], and [278] and [127] share the ic 5 dyad [27]. In the second song of the suite, Fine begins the generating series with an (016) trichord, [9T3]; this particular motive returns in various guises throughout the second song, appearing in mm. 21–23 (two times), m. 30 (two times), mm. 30–32, m. 32, m. 35, and m. 43 (see Examples 7a and 9; this section will be discussed in more detail below). The recurring (016) motive in the second song is anticipated by a soaring (016) that swoops up into the upper register of the piano and closes the first section: <C, F, B>, in the 6-octave, are the highest three notes of the entire suite (see Example 2). These two (016) motives, [E05] and [9T3], are connected by T₂, which is perhaps a long-range reference to the whole-tone content that grounded the first section of the suite.⁽³¹⁾

Transpositional projection

[29] Fine’s suite also contains a number of structural features that may be more specifically connected with Crawford’s early (pre-Seeger) style, such as her use of transpositional projection. As is well known, transpositional projection is an important part of Crawford’s musical language that is present from her early works and continues into the 1930s. Straus emphasizes that transpositional projection is “unquestionably part of Crawford’s compositional style from her pre-Seeger days, and examples of it may be found throughout all of her music” (1995, 60). In its most basic form, transpositional projection involves recursive and transformational processes: Crawford frequently organizes the long-range structure of her works around transpositional levels based on the individual intervals found within the primary motive(s) of a work. As Straus explains, “this tendency for intervals within a tune to come back later as intervals of transposition is a permanent and central aspect of Crawford’s musical style” (1995, 62). **Example 3** shows how some of the intervals found within the opening motive of Crawford’s *Piano Prelude No. 6* (1927–8) return as the smaller transpositions of the motive (Straus 1995, 69).⁽³²⁾

[30] Like many of her works from this era, Fine organizes the opening section of the suite around canonic entrances of the same melodic line, untransposed (mm. 1–6; refer back to Example 2). Although clearly different from Crawford’s use of (non-twelve-tone) series because of its length and number of repeated pitches, Fine’s use of a single recurring line to generate her large-scale melodic and formal content calls to mind Crawford’s use of motives, phrases, and series as a means of creating and organizing large-scale structure.⁽³³⁾

[31] For example, the opening phrase of the suite is heavily grounded in the whole-tone collection, but Fine also draws on this whole-tone content to create structural connections between the sub-phrases: portions of the first and second sub-phrases relate to one another at T₂ and T₄, characteristic intervals found in the opening left-hand piano gesture (see **Examples 4a** and **4b**). Like Crawford, Fine exploits the intervallic properties within her melodic lines as a means of

organizing the work's larger-scale content.

[32] Fine also uses distinctive features from the opening piano music to create the large-scale structural relationships that undergird the entire first section. One characteristic aspect of the opening is the skip of four semitones, which creates a gap in the largely stepwise motion. When the voice enters in m. 7, its melodic content also largely remains within the WT_0 collection, so initially the vocal lines seem to have just shifted so that they now center upon different pitches in the same WT_0 collection from the opening. However, closer examination reveals that the vocal content is actually tightly organized, and directly relates to the opening piano gesture first heard in m. 1 and m. 2. With only three small exceptions, *all* of the vocal content relates to the opening material at T_4 , the very first interval (A^b-C) heard in the suite (see **Example 4c**; the three exceptions to the transpositional scheme are noted with asterisks). Most of this transposition also unfolds in pitch space, relative to the piano right-hand part.⁽³⁴⁾ Fine's structural choices provide a provocative point of comparison with Crawford's use of transpositional projection: although this particular example is only a single, large-scale transposition (rather than a series of smaller transpositions), in a broad sense Fine's compositional plan reflects some of the same processes found in Crawford's music, as Fine uses properties found within the opening melodic gesture to delineate the content for the entire section.

[33] Portions of the third song of the suite, "Two Strangers Breakfast," illustrate similar processes, but on a smaller scale. "Two Strangers Breakfast" is organized in a loose A-B-A construction (mm. 48–61, mm. 61–75, and mm. 76–83). The B section (mm. 61ff.) begins with a new, more angular motive, built around prominent statements of ic 1 and ic 2 (see **Examples 5a** and **5b**). As with "Sea Chest," Fine emphasizes the material in mm. 61–64 with an imitative texture that contains a second T_0 statement of the "B" motive (mm. 63ff.) that unfolds alongside the opening phrase. Variations of the motive also appear throughout the B section. For example, it occurs in inverted form in mm. 63–64 (I_{11} , $\langle F-E^b-D-A-E \rangle$) and mm. 64–65 (partial statement at I_1 , $\langle G-F-E-B \rangle$). Looser, more fragmented motivic statements appear in mm. 62–63 (T_4 of opening motive, $\langle B^b-C-D^b-G^b \rangle$, piano LH) and mm. 70–72 (abridged and in partial retrograde in left-hand part: $\langle G^b-D^b-A^b-A \rangle$, $\langle A-E-B-C \rangle$, etc.).⁽³⁵⁾ In short, the texture of this section is organized around a dense interweaving of multiple (and often overlapping) motives, based on the generating motive heard in mm. 61–62.

[34] But the most significant transformations of the motive are based on intervals found within the generating motive itself (see **Examples 5b** and **5c**; deviations from the transpositional scheme are marked with asterisks). Many of these specific motivic statements are especially prominent — surrounded by rests, set to similar rhythms as the original motive, and highlighted by dramatic changes in dynamics or accentuation. For example, the second major appearance of the motive (m. 67) is a T_{-2} transposition of the original motive (in pitch space); this motive also appears with an almost- T_{-2} transposition of the first inverted form in mm. 63–64. At the same time, the vocal part features a longer T_2 transposition of the opening piano left-hand material (mm. 61–63, $\langle F^\sharp-G^\sharp-A-D-G \rangle$ and $\langle B^b-B-E-A \rangle$, but without the first pitch) to launch the climactic phrase "a million furnaces of hell."⁽³⁶⁾ Immediately following these measures, another transposition occurs in mm. 69–70, this time at T_{-1} (or T_1 of m. 67). At the conclusion of the B section, Fine also repeats this version of the motive in the right hand (mm. 74–75), alongside a final transposition of the first four notes of the motive at T_5 .⁽³⁷⁾ Like Crawford, Fine chooses specific levels of transpositional projection for her principal motivic statements that are related to the structure of the motive itself.

[35] In the opening measures of "Two Strangers Breakfast," Fine uses transpositional projection on an even more local level, creating a concentrated patchwork of overlapping motivic fragments. The A section begins with a motive that alternates ic 5 with ic 1 (see **Examples 6a** and **6b**); in addition to using a *forte* dynamic, Fine's manuscript even indicates "marcato" and "not much pedal" in order

to make its specific intervallic profile sound more clearly. The <D, G, F#> motive also returns throughout the song, beginning the vocal entrances in m. 53, m. 71, and m. 79 (these phrases are variations of the opening material in the left hand); the piano material in mm. 48–52 also returns in slightly altered form at the end of the suite (mm. 76–83). But in addition to these overt repetitions, the opening phrase features a compact network of gestures based on the initial (015) motive. In her design of these measures, Fine organizes the (015) motives using specific transpositional levels taken from the underlying intervallic structure of the opening motive itself. [267] and [6TE] in m. 48 and mm. 51–52 are related by T_4 ; motives in the right hand of the piano, [489] and [045], are related by its complementary level of transposition, T_8 (T_{-4}). In the second part of the left hand phrase, T_5 connects [015] and [56T].

[36] Fine's use of transpositional projection is both similar to and different from Crawford's. Straus describes how Crawford uses melodies as "the essential building blocks" of her compositions (1995, 4). Like Crawford, Fine creates distinctive melodic lines and uses characteristic material from those melodic lines to organize the larger content of the work. But Fine tends to use projection on a different scale than Crawford. First, many of Fine's pieces from this era are predominantly horizontal in conception, often featuring a canonic texture that emphasizes the primary motives through large-scale, overlapping T_0 repetitions of the opening lines. Second, Fine's use of transpositional projection is frequently more long-range and more strict than Crawford's, with entire phrases or sub-phrases transposed by exact amounts, often in pitch—not pitch-class—space. Crawford's early transpositional schemes frequently involve numerous "near" transpositions of small portions of phrases, where transposed fragments are similar but "not intervallically identical to the prototype," and thus are a bit looser (Straus 1995, 62; 63–66).⁽³⁸⁾ In addition to Fine's long-range use of transpositional projection, she also used projection in a much more compressed, small-scale way, creating phrases based on intricate overlappings of related gestures (such as the opening measures of "Two Strangers Breakfast"). Obviously this is not to say that Fine's use of transpositional projection is somehow more "successful" than Crawford's—just that Fine adopts similar compositional processes to Crawford's, but in her own unique voice.⁽³⁹⁾

Local melodic processes

[37] Beyond the use of whole-tone sonorities and transpositional projection, Fine also seems to have been influenced by Crawford's detailed attention to the structure of individual melodies. Like many ultramodern composers, Crawford's angular melodic lines trend towards maximal variety of pitches and intervals. But some of the most distinctive aspects of Crawford's melodic language result from her recurring use of chromatic completion, "M1" motives, and dissonant, meticulously organized melodic lines. These techniques are a central part of her compositional style and may be found throughout her oeuvre. For example, Straus describes chromatic completion as "a deep aspect of Crawford's individual style, one that predates her contact with Seeger, and persists beyond it" (1995, 8).⁽⁴⁰⁾

[38] The opening of the second song of *Little Suite*, "Sleep Impression," exemplifies many of the core features of Fine's melodic writing during these years and its intersections with Crawford's melodic sensibilities. In contrast to the open, expansive quality of "Sea Chest," the second song features lean, dissonant melodic lines that slowly entwine to create a sonic texture that is much more constrained, one that reflects the introspective mood of the text. Crawford singled out the opening of the second song in her comments on Fine's suite, writing, "The Sandburg songs please me still more. Especially the first, and the first part of the second" (Crawford 1930a). Like the first song, the second song begins with a bass melody that provides the basic material for the entire section (see **Example 7a**). This phrase is repeated at T_0 when the voice enters (mm. 29ff.), where it appears alongside yet another T_0 repetition in the right hand of the piano (mm. 30ff.).

[39] This phrase is much more dissonant and much more rigorously structured than the phrases that begin the outer portions of the suite (see **Example 7b**). Like many of Crawford's characteristic melodic lines, Fine's melody features a diverse palette of different intervals and avoids repetition of individual pitches. (The repeated pitch A appears twice for good reason: it creates a dissonant minor second; without this repeated pitch, the line would have too many consonant intervals sounding in direct succession, which was considered undesirable by Crawford and other ultramodern composers.⁽⁴¹⁾) The opening melodic line is also carefully constructed. If one omits the repeated note (A), the line neatly splits into two (0126) tetrachords; T₉—the interval that connects the last and first pitches of the two sub-phrases, B and G[#]—transposes the first onto the second. The melodic line also exhibits a high degree of symmetry, unfolding as a kind of intervallic palindrome, within which individual intervals form mirror images of one another. The choice to build the line around (0126) tetrachords also helps to create structural connections between the different sections of the suite. (0126) is an expansion of (016), and also a subset of both of the almost-whole-tone hexachords of the first song (see Table 1).

[40] The deeper-level structure of "Sleep Impression" is also tightly organized. Like the other songs in the suite, the main melodic line of the second song also appears alongside another canonic statement of the opening line—but here, at I₁₁. This countermelody occurs in the right hand of the piano in mm. 21–29, and portions of this line also appear in the left hand in mm. 30–33 (D3-C[#]3-G[#]2-C2). The countermelody helps highlight the internal symmetry of the opening phrase; when both phrases are combined together, it results in four different forms of the basic (0126) tetrachord: P, R, I, and RI. Fine's choice to specifically use I₁₁ to transform the opening melodic gesture seems driven by several different factors. The first of these is chromatic completion: I₁₁ creates a countermelody that begins with the only two chromatic pitches (D and C[#]) that are missing from the left-hand melodic line in the opening phrase. Fine also emphasizes these two pitches in later moments of "Sleep Impression." Fluctuations between D and C[#] return as a persistent inner-voice repetition, heard throughout mm. 32–34 (see Example 9, discussed below). These two pitches also launch the chromatic descents in the soprano part in mm. 39–41 and mm. 46–47. In addition, using this particular level of inversion creates a complete eight-note chromatic segment with no repeated notes between the "P" and "I" tetrachords ([9TE3] and [8012]).⁽⁴²⁾

Other local melodic processes: "M1" Motives

[41] Throughout her early works (including *Little Suite*), Fine often uses a specific motive that also formed a distinctive part of Crawford's music—sc (012), arranged as what Seeger would have described as a binary twist neume. Straus has discussed Crawford's pervasive use of chromatic three-note motives arranged by whole step, half step (or vice versa) in opposite directions; these motives appear with such frequency throughout Crawford's works that Straus has termed them Crawford's "M1" motive, noting that they "recur persistently in virtually all of Crawford's compositions" (1995, 27). M1 motives occur most overtly in Crawford's pieces from the early 1930s (an especially well-known example is *Diaphonic Suite No. 1*, shown in **Example 8**), but Straus notes that M1 motives also permeate Crawford's entire oeuvre. In Crawford's Chicago works—such as her Piano Preludes, which Fine knew—M1 motives are an "unmistakable presence" that "create[s] a significant link that spans Crawford's change of musical style" (Straus 1995, 32).⁽⁴³⁾ Crawford used M1 motives not just within melodic lines, but also in important structural moments, especially to delineate phrase endings, or to create a link between phrases (Straus 1995, 28–32).

[42] Fine's music is not as saturated with M1 motives as Crawford's music is, but Fine does tend to use Crawford's "M1" motive in prominent moments, especially phrase endings. For example, in the conclusion of the piano introduction (mm. 5–6), Fine's insertion of an extra chromatic pitch into the line (a change not made in the subsequent vocal transposition of the passage) creates the M1 motive that concludes the introduction. Fine sometimes arranges her individual melodic strands so

that M1s are highlighted between the parts at phrase endings; for example, the conclusion of the opening phrase of “Two Strangers Breakfast” is demarcated by two vertical M1s in direct succession (<564> and <0E1>, m. 52), emphasized by register, accent, and similar rhythmic organization (see Example 6b). M1 motives also appear at more significant structural moments: all three songs end with an M1 motive (m. 19, m. 47, and m. 83; see Examples 1, 2, and 9).

[43] M1 motives also form a substantial part of the long-range structure of the second part of the suite, where they slowly unfurl in the inner voice of the piano (see **Example 9**). Their insistent, almost obsessive throbbing fills in the rigorously structured outer-voice melodic activity and helps to sustain the brooding atmosphere of the song. These incessant half- and whole-step fluctuations originate from the main melodic line: the pulsating half steps hearken back to the half step at the beginning of the opening phrase, and the eventual release into an M1 motive is a spun-out reference to the shorter M1 motives that close the phrases in m. 24 and mm. 27–28 (refer back to Example 7). Three different long-range M1 motives appear during the second part of the suite: <120>, mm. 32–34; <E9T>, mm. 35–36; and <546>, mm. 37–47 (see Example 9). When taken in the order in which they appear, these motives create three different versions of M1: P, RI, and I. But these particular long-range M1s also share a number of significant structural relationships with other primary material in this section of the suite. For example, T₉, the same transpositional level that connects the two tetrachords from the opening melody, connects [012] and [9TE]⁽⁴⁴⁾; <546> is foreshadowed by the prominent (012) from the piano’s left-hand phrase ending in m. 24, <645> (the two are retrogrades of one another); <546> also concludes the song.⁽⁴⁵⁾

[44] The musical intersections between Crawford and Fine are significant because they demonstrate how Crawford was an important composition pedagogue in her own right. Cowell and Seeger are often considered the primary figures with regards to the teaching and dissemination of ultramodernism, and their treatises *New Musical Resources* (1930) and *Tradition and Experiment in (the New) Music* (ca. 1931) are certainly seminal works, central to understanding the compositional techniques and ideological concerns of the ultramoderns. Yet insightful research by Rao has clarified and reevaluated Crawford’s position within the larger ultramodern milieu. Rao 1997 describes the essential contributions that Crawford made in the creation of Seeger’s treatise, characterizing their work on the manuscript as an “entwined partnership” (375) in which Crawford “played a crucial role” (374). Rao (2007 and 2014) also elucidates how Crawford’s music (in particular, her *String Quartet 1931*) influenced works written decades later by subsequent composers, including Elliott Carter and Morton Feldman. Close examination of the Crawford/Fine relationship expands on this research by showing how Crawford herself was also an important promulgator of ultramodern style—not only through her compositions and her work on Seeger’s treatise, but even in a more direct way, through her teaching and mentoring of Fine.

Gender, Modernism, and Fine’s Little Suite

[45] Aside from the musical intersections between Crawford and Fine, *Little Suite* also reveals how Fine explored issues of gender in her modernist settings, particularly by using texts that address female domestic experience. There is no surviving evidence definitively indicating that Crawford instructed Fine to select these particular texts. However, Fine’s suite features three texts by one of Crawford’s close friends from Chicago, the poet Carl Sandburg, and it seems likely that Fine may have followed the example of her mentor in her choice to use Sandburg’s poetry. Several of Crawford’s contemporaneous vocal works, such as her *Five Songs* (1929) and *Three Songs* (1930–32), also set Sandburg’s poems. More specifically, the three texts in Fine’s suite come from two of the same Sandburg volumes that Crawford also used for her own song settings: *Smoke and Steel* and *Good Morning, America*.⁽⁴⁶⁾ In a letter from January 1931, Crawford even suggested that Fine visit the Sandburgs in Chicago to play both of their Sandburg settings, and explained that she had already written to the Sandburgs on Fine’s behalf (Crawford 1931a).⁽⁴⁷⁾

[46] Fine selected poems that offer an interior perspective on domestic life, one that chronicles the increasing emotional distance between a married couple. When combined together in *Little Suite*, the texts present a more focused depiction of a marital relationship that diverges from the original context in which the individual poems first appeared. Fine weaves together three different poems from two separate collections, published years apart: “Sea Chest” and “Sleep Impression” (both from *Good Morning, America*, 1928), and “Two Strangers Breakfast” (from *Smoke and Steel*, 1920). The suite begins with the couple building a chest together, and the second song continues with an introspective, dream-like rumination during early autumn. But by the final song things have completely disintegrated: the work concludes with the couple emotionally separated by “a million furnaces of hell” as they sit together at breakfast, strangers connected only by law.

[47] *Little Suite* provides a glimpse into the unraveling of a marriage. Unlike Crawford’s Sandburg settings, where each song is a separate, self-contained movement, Fine’s suite links the three short songs together into a cohesive whole; a fermata and *lunga* even connect the second and third songs (see Example 9, m. 47). As the suite progresses, the texts enact a narrative shift that becomes increasingly focused on the female character: from third person in the first poem, to ambiguous first person in the second poem (“I” is used but the gender of speaker is not clear), to the married woman herself in the third poem (“the law says you are mine and I am yours, George”). The specific setting of each poem also reflects the growing emotional estrangement of the couple. The suite begins with the couple building a sea chest together, but even their collaboration has a troubling hint of separation: the woman loves the man, but he loves the sea; the separate desires of the couple also reflect traditional gendered divisions between “public” and “private” spheres. The second song contains no direct reference to the couple or their marriage, but still presents a sense of isolation and decay: the narrator’s brooding thoughts occur during early autumn (repeated twice in the poem), alongside the brittle rustlings of dried leaves. By the conclusion of the suite the couple’s situation has become much more constrained, even dire. The suite ends with the two sitting together in a seemingly intimate and familiar domestic scene (the breakfast table), but in reality their naïve dreams have been abandoned, as they are now separated by a seemingly unbridgeable gulf of emotional and psychic distance (“a thousand miles of white snowstorms, a million furnaces of hell, between the chair where you sit and the chair where I sit”).

[48] Although Fine closely followed Sandburg’s texts for the first two songs, she made a number of changes to the third poem that foreground the unsettled and detached relationship of the couple more explicitly (see **Figure 3**). Fine alters Sandburg’s adjectives (“thousand miles of white snowstorms” and “million furnaces of hell”) to put more emphasis on the “million furnaces of hell” that separate the couple. Most notably, Fine omits the majority of Sandburg’s final line, instead ending with the terse statement “the law says we shall breakfast together.” Within the context of the third song, this creates a starker contrast between the outer and inner realms of the couple’s relationship. The multiple repetitions of stodgy phrases regarding what “the law says” about their public, legal connection to one another provide an ironic contrast to their actual inner distance from one another—and since the final poem is entirely from the female character’s perspective, it is not clear if “George” fully understands or even recognizes the situation. Fine’s revisions to the third poem also create a long-range connection between the first and third songs. In *Little Suite* these songs both conclude with the word “together”; the changing contexts in which the couple is “together” (building a chest versus having yet another acrid breakfast) tracks the descent of their relationship into bitter alienation. In short, Fine’s suite presents a perspective that is more sharply focused on gender than Sandburg’s original, individual poems or any of Crawford’s own Sandburg settings.

[49] In addition to her textual choices, Fine also uses text painting at strategic moments to highlight the underlying frictions in the couple’s relationship. In “Sea Chest,” the opening lines of text center on the WT₀ collection, and significant deviations from the WT₀ collection occur with text that

relates specifically to the man or his external desires such as his love for the sea (see the phrase endings in mm. 7–8 and 8–9, discussed above and shown in Examples 2 and 4). Fine’s careful use of chromaticism infuses the otherwise placid, seemingly tranquil whole-tone texture with a bit of additional turbulence, perhaps as a means of musically foreshadowing the eventual rift between the couple from the very beginning of the suite. Other structural deviations in this song also reflect the latent divisions between the husband and wife. As previously discussed, the main vocal phrase in “Sea Chest” is a large-scale transposition of the piano content in mm. 1–6; only three pitches deviate from the transpositional scheme (see Example 4c). Two of these pitches, F and A^b, occur in mm. 9–10, along with text that relates to the woman’s thoughts about the man (“her thoughts of him”).⁽⁴⁸⁾ These pitches also create another subtle link between the first and third songs, as the altered phrase embeds a prominent (015) trichord, [045]; as previously discussed, sc (015) is an important motive in “Two Strangers Breakfast,” especially in the opening measures of the song.

[50] Throughout the piece, changes in the small-scale construction of the vocal line also foreground the inner dynamics of the couple’s relationship. Many of these textual moments occur alongside words that directly refer to the couple. First, Fine puts special emphasis on the word “together,” which she uses to close the first and third songs. The rhythm of “together,” the final word in “Sea Chest” (mm. 17–19), is broadened from the pervasive eighth-notes that appear in the vocal part throughout the rest of the song; Fine’s languid setting of “together” contains a metrically emphasized semitone followed by opi (ordered pitch interval) -9, the largest successive vocal interval of the suite so far.⁽⁴⁹⁾ In the final moments of the suite, the text “together” returns, but this time in a much different context—here, two descending tritones set to rapid-fire eighth and sixteenth notes. Fine’s manuscript reveals that she treated the final moments of the vocal part with particular care. Initially, Fine’s conclusion featured a reprise of the vocal line first heard in mm. 53–54 (a distillation of the piano material in mm. 48–52), but with a different ending that contains the same trichord [E16] from the left hand in m. 52. However, Fine ultimately changed this setting of “together,” revising the line to end with two successive tritones. The final page of Example 1 shows Fine’s early and final settings of “together”; her revised version of “together” (which is taped over this measure in the actual manuscript) is provided below the last stave.⁽⁵⁰⁾

[51] Fine’s setting of pronouns that refer directly to the couple also helps to depict the disintegration of their relationship. Many feminist scholars, including Hélène Cixous (1976), Nancy K. Miller (1991), and Monique Wittig (1986), have discussed the significant ways that pronouns can enact meaning.⁽⁵¹⁾ Fine highlights specific words that relate to the couple through her use of contour and register (see **Example 10**). For example, in mm. 59–61, wide, spiky intervals appear with the words “you are mine, and I am yours”; the opi -10 and +10 leaps surrounding the pronouns are the largest successive leaps in the vocal line in the piece. The opi -14 before “George” —combined with its syncopated rhythm and low register—creates an agitated, hostile ending to the phrase, in which “George” is addressed in a sarcastic, almost spat-out manner. A chain of angular vocal intervals (many of which are tritones) returns in mm. 71–75, surrounding the pronouns “you” and “I” (G³ and B^b₃ are also in the low register); the jagged contour contrasts with the smoother, more restrained vocal range of the first two songs (see Example 5b).⁽⁵²⁾

[52] As with Crawford’s use of gendered metaphors that highlight “everyday” aesthetics associated with domesticity (as discussed in the first section of this paper), Fine’s *Little Suite* also foregrounds domestic experience. Fine’s focus on a private, inner realm (the disintegration of a marriage) diverges from the subject matter and representations of place often presented in compositions by male ultramodern composers. Works such as Cowell’s *The Hero-Sun*, Rudhyar’s *The Warrior* and *Hero Chants*, or Ruggles’s *Men and Mountains*, *Portals*, and *Sun-Treader* depict vigorously heroic, magisterial subjects that are external in nature. In her analysis of the stylistic connections between Carl Ruggles and Walt Whitman, Deniz Ertan describes how Ruggles’s music contains an “overpowering aspect” associated with transcendence and conquering; his works

“evoked the ineffable, mountainous distances, striving towards a co-participation with nature at its grandest” (2009, 243). Ertan emphasizes that “Ruggles’s sublime seems to emerge as an imposing rhetoric of self-aggrandizement” (244).⁽⁵³⁾ In contrast, Fine’s suite involves a much different representation of place: one that is more domestic, inward, and private. This resonates with Von Glahn’s recent work on American women composers and nature. Von Glahn discusses how women in the early twentieth century often wrote works that concentrated on a more “circumscribed sphere,” drawing inspiration from subjects that were “closest to home” (2013, 29).

[53] These distinctions between “public” and “private” also intersect with feminist scholar Carolyn Heilbrun’s descriptions of friendships between “exceptional” men and women in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Heilbrun emphasizes how friendships in this era often reflected traditional gendered divisions between “public” and “private” spheres, particularly in the impact that friendships had for creative individuals. Male friendships typically involved a more public, external dimension:

If one asks what marks all those male friendships that have been acclaimed “from the days of Homer,” the answer is clear: reverberation upon the public sphere. . . . Male friends do not always face each other: they stand side by side, facing the world. (1988, 100)

Heilbrun characterizes women’s friendships in this era as more intimate, private affairs—what she terms “societies of consolation” (100). Certainly, most friendships (even ones during this era) defy such facile categorization, and Heilbrun is careful to include examples of unconventional friendships (such as that of Vera Brittain and Winifred Holtby) that contained both public and private dimensions. In Crawford and Fine’s case, friendship provided an important opportunity to discuss the technical details of writing music and building a career as a modernist composer, but also to share ideas connected specifically with their own gendered experiences. This echoes some of the central claims in Hisama 2001, that “modernism indeed provides a space for forms of expression by women. . . . modernism did not prove harmful to them, but rather stimulated their work in inventive and liberating ways” (11). In her discussion of Crawford, Bauer, and Gideon, Hisama emphasizes that “their craft, of creating works in a sonic medium, might well have offered them a site in which they could record and encode their circumstances while resisting debilitating societal norms” (182). Instead of being incapacitated by an “antiwoman atmosphere” that was “highly destructive to women’s creativity” (Parsons Smith 1994, 95), composers like Crawford and Fine embraced the tools of modernism to craft works that reflected their own gendered subjectivities.

[54] Fine’s *Little Suite* is also significant in this regard because it is the first piece in which Fine specifically addresses issues of gender and marriage, topics that she continued to examine throughout her career. Although Fine often claimed that the feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s inspired her to compose works that showcased conspicuously feminist themes, in truth Fine’s oeuvre reveals a lifelong interest in gender issues, including works such as *The Race of Life* (1937), *Songs of Our Time* (1943), *A Guide to the Life Expectancy of a Rose* (1956), *Meeting for Equal Rights 1866* (1975), *Women in the Garden* (1977), and *Memoirs of Uliana Rooney* (1993). Fine’s focus on feminism and female experience certainly accelerated as her career progressed, and these subjects were presented much more overtly in her later compositions.⁽⁵⁴⁾ But *Little Suite* shows how gendered themes such as domesticity and marriage were an enduring aspect of her compositional style, found even in her earliest works.

Conclusion

[55] After decades of having her life and music overlooked, Ruth Crawford now enjoys a much more stable position within our existing narratives about American experimental music. However,

too often she is treated as a kind of anomaly, an idiosyncratic female blip upon the otherwise ruggedly masculine terrain of musical modernism. Even Straus's thorough, wide-ranging study of Crawford's musical style sometimes echoes this view, concluding with a paean that frames Crawford as a composer whose music "was significantly cut off from music by women before it," but whose works "may come to be seen as a nourishing source" for more recent generations of women composers (1995, 226).⁽⁵⁵⁾ What is missing from our current discussions of Crawford is an exploration of how her work as composition teacher and mentor might refine—or change—our existing views of how women attempted to write themselves into modernism, even in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Further, closer examination of the relationship between Crawford and Fine provides important insights not just into the place of women within musical modernism, but also into the kinds of working relationships women composers created with one another, insights that can enrich our understanding of women's work in music more broadly.

[56] Virginia Woolf's classic feminist text, *A Room of One's Own* (completed in 1929, one year before Fine's *Little Suite*), contains one of the most provocative examinations of the intersections between women's work and women's friendship in the early twentieth century. As part of her discussion of the exclusion of women's novels from the literary canon, Woolf imagines a fictitious novel by Mary Carmichael, *Life's Adventure*, in which two female protagonists are friends who work together in a laboratory.

'Chloe liked Olivia,' I read. And then it struck me how immense a change was there. . . . All these relationships between women, I thought, rapidly recalling the splendid gallery of fictitious women, are too simple. So much has been left out, unattempted. And I tried to remember any case in the course of my reading where two women were represented as friends. (1929, 89–90)

'Chloe liked Olivia. They shared a laboratory together.' . . . Now if Chloe likes Olivia and they share a laboratory. . . then I think that something of great importance has happened. For if Chloe likes Olivia and Mary Carmichael knows how to express it she will light a torch in that vast chamber where nobody has yet been. (1929, 91–92)

[57] This exceptional passage still has rich resonances today, as subsequent generations of feminist scholars have begun to expand on Woolf's ideas in their own examinations of women's friendships. Almost sixty years later, Heilbrun echoed Woolf's thesis, characterizing women's friendships as an "untold story. . . sustaining but secret" (1988, 98). Heilbrun emphasizes that in both biography and literature, "friendship between women has seldom been recounted. . . . If the friendships of women are considered at all, and that is rare enough, they intrude into the male account the way a token woman is reluctantly included in a male community" (98–99). Miller has discussed "transpersonal" relationships between women, a term she uses to describe "lateral" relationships between "those to whom one is related by affinity (profession, passion, politics) but not (or not necessarily) by blood or marriage" (2011, 74–75). In her discussion of Woolf's passage, Miller stresses the significance of Woolf's emphasis on the dual nature of Chloe and Olivia's relationship, in which friendship *and* work are melded together. Miller notes, "Key here for Woolf is not simply the power of the affection that binds women but also the extraordinary, if as yet untested, power of friendship combined with work" (2011, 70).⁽⁵⁶⁾ Fine herself often highlighted the broader ramifications of her relationship with Crawford and its impact on her career, sometimes specifically connecting her awareness of Crawford's influence as mentor and friend with her emerging understanding of feminism:

Well, I began to realize the significance of the role models in my life long after their initial influence. I must say some of these ideas have come from feminism, that is, my awareness of them has come because as I look back on it, women have played a very,

very large part in my education. I don't think I would have been conscious of this unless you people who work in history and the feminist movement were involved with such things. . . . And so women were very, very, important. And Ruth Crawford in particular was very important, because she was in the avant-garde. . . she was right there in the avant-garde, writing very dissonant things. . . . I never gave thought that she was a woman composing avant-garde music. I didn't know such phrases. She was someone I knew; she was my friend, and my teacher (1980b).⁽⁵⁷⁾

[58] The poet Maxine Kumin once described her long friendship with Anne Sexton as “unbelievable”; Miller notes that particularly in the early twentieth century, friendships between women could serve as a kind of lifeline—“an ideal of collaboration, private and public, fueled by love and admiration” (2011, 74). These feminist ideals about women, friendship, and professional work have special resonance for music composition, a field traditionally dominated by men. Fifty years after her work with Crawford, Fine continually emphasized the profound importance Crawford had on her development as a composer. As Fine fondly remembered: “Looking back, I realize that it was of incalculable importance that I had Ruth Crawford as a teacher and as a model in my life. This is why it feels natural to me to be a composer, totally natural. And without that, I might have felt a little bit like a fish out of water” (1975).⁽⁵⁸⁾ [. . .] “The reason there have been so few women composers is very simple, if I think of myself. You do need a role model, someone who says to you, ‘You too can compose’” (1977, 7). Crawford and Fine’s relationship serves as a direct demonstration of the significance—and sometimes necessity—of women’s friendships. But I hope it may also serve as an important reminder to women (whether writing music or words) that we, too, can compose.

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Footnotes

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insightful comments and helpful suggestions. Thanks also to Peggy Karp, Vivian Fine's daughter, for her permission to use and reprint Fine's original manuscript of *Little Suite for Voice and Piano*. Finally, thanks to Phyllis Pancella, Timothy Hoekman, and Nicholas Smith for their compelling work on the recording of Fine's *Little Suite* included as part of this article. This is the first recording of *Little Suite*, prepared specifically for this article. To my knowledge, this piece has not been performed since 1931 (Cody 2002, 175).

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1. It is not clear whether Fine's studies with Crawford began in 1924 or 1925. According to Tick, Fine began working with Crawford in the fall of 1924, when Fine was eleven (Tick 1997, 59). But in interviews in 1977 and 1988, Fine noted that her lessons with Crawford began in fall 1925, when she was twelve (Cody 2002, 5; Fine 1977). In either case, Fine's private studies with Crawford were definitely underway by fall 1925 and continued until Crawford left Chicago in 1929.

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2. Herz (1888–1982) was well known in Chicago for her associations with theosophy and her friendships with modernist composers, many of whom she hosted in her home, such as Henry Cowell and Dane Rudhyar. For more on Herz, see Von Gunden 1999, 3–4; Tick 1991; Tick 1997, 44–53 and 58–64.

Crawford herself also had support from other women, in particular, the patron Blanche Walton (who provided a home for Crawford when she first moved to New York City) and the composer Marion Bauer, whom Crawford met during her time at the MacDowell colony, just after she left Chicago in 1929. Crawford's relationship with Bauer is discussed in detail in Hisama 2001, 99–121 and Tick 1997. These relationships represent other significant examples of mentoring between women within modernist circles.

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3. After her years of lessons with Crawford, Fine briefly worked with Crawford's former teacher Adolf Weidig in 1929–1930, but Fine noted that Weidig "was a product of the old school" and that the lessons did not last long because Fine's dissonant style clashed with Weidig's more traditional views (Cody 2002, 8; Fine 1975). In 1934, Fine began working with Roger Sessions; her studies with Sessions reflected a stylistic shift in her music, as (like many modernist composers) she embraced a more tonal style in the late 1930s and early 1940s (Fine 1975, 1997; Von Gunden 1999, 22–27). A copy of Fine's CV from ca. 1980 lists Crawford and Sessions as her "principal teachers" for composition (Fine ca. 1980a, 2). This CV is undated, but is probably from the early 1980s because at the top of the first page, two awards from 1980 are written in Fine's handwriting (and those awards were the most recent things listed). Many thanks to Judith Tick for providing me with a copy of this CV.

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4. Crawford's Chicago diaries contain descriptions of days in which she taught private lessons for twelve consecutive hours. For example, in a Saturday, November 11, 1927 entry Crawford describes teaching twenty students: "Today tho [sic] my hardest teaching day, since I teach from 8:15 till eight, has been very enjoyable" (Crawford 1927). See also Friday, November 26, 1927, "tomorrow an alarm at 6:45, and twelve straight hours of teaching" (Crawford 1927). In Chicago, Crawford taught lessons privately at the American Conservatory and Elmhurst College (Tick 1997, 58–60). Many thanks to Ellie Hisama for providing me with copies of Crawford's Chicago diaries. Detailed accounts of Crawford's contributions as a music educator working with children appear in Lamb 2007, Tick 1997, and Watts and Campbell 2008.

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5. [Parmalee 1978](#). Parmelee and her two daughters studied piano with Crawford in Washington, D.C. beginning in the early 1940s, and the two eventually became friends. For more on Parmelee, see [Tick 1997](#), 294, 329, and 339–40.

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6. Beyer's work with Crawford is somewhat different than Fine's, since Beyer also studied composition with Charles Seeger and Henry Cowell during the early 1930s. Unfortunately, other than Amy Beal's discovery that Beyer's studies with both of the Seegers began in early 1932, scholars have not yet found specific, detailed information about Beyer's studies with Crawford or the extent of their relationship ([Beal 2015](#), 14). Beyer also translated Crawford's "Prayers of Steel" into German, and dedicated one of her solo piano pieces that was performed on a 1936 Composers' Forum concert to Crawford ([Beyer 1936](#)). For more information about Beyer, see Amy Beal's illuminating biography ([2015](#)) and [Lumsden 2017](#).

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7. More than fifty compositions by Beyer survive in manuscript; most are held by the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. For an in-depth analysis of Beyer's String Quartet No. 2, see [Lumsden 2017](#).

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8. Fine was offered a half-time position at Bennington in 1964, which was converted to a full-time position in 1969. Until the mid-1970s, the majority of her students were women (Bennington was founded as a womens' college, and began admitting men in 1969). Before her Bennington position, Fine worked as an adjunct professor at NYU, Juilliard, SUNY Potsdam, and the Connecticut College School of Dance. See [Von Gunden 1999](#), 70–72, 153, and 155; [Cody 2002](#), 19–20, and 24.

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9. It is not clear who attended the meeting along with Fine; her account mentions that "we" attended the meeting, but does not name the specific person(s) who came with her. The trial and execution of anarchists Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti were well-known events among the radicals in Fine's circle. Five years later, Ruth Crawford completed her song "Sacco, Vanzetti"; Hisama examines how the song "demonstrates one way in which music could serve as a weapon in the class struggle" ([2007](#), 87).

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10. [Fine 1978b](#), 4–7; [Von Gunden 1999](#), 15–17. Fine's parents gave her fifty dollars when she moved to New York, and she never received any further financial support from them. Fine remembered, "My parents gave me fifty dollars and there was no more money. They paid my fare—and that was it. Very different era!" ([Fine 1978b](#), 5). In fact, when Fine's father lost his job in 1932, the family moved to New York to live with Fine ([Von Gunden 1999](#), 15–17).

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11. [Cody 2002](#), 263; [Tick 1997](#), 183. Fine also recovered Crawford's Violin Sonata (1926). She attended its premiere in Chicago on February 8, 1928, and sometime between 1927 and 1929, Crawford gave Fine an autograph copy of the manuscript as a gift ([Tick 1997](#), 60, 62–63). Decades later, Fine's manuscript was the only surviving copy of the work, since Crawford had burned her only copy of the score around 1932 ([Tick 1997](#), 200). After locating the manuscript, Fine helped bring it to publication, and performed and recorded the piece with Ida Kavafian in 1983–1984 ([Cody 2002](#), 262, 271, 276; [Von Gunden 1999](#), 4).

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12. In 1978, Fine recounted how she initially met Cowell "when I was a very, very young composer in Chicago. I was at that time a student of Ruth Crawford. And she must have introduced me to

Cowell. It can't have been anybody else. He became interested in my music" (Fine 1978a). In another interview, she noted that Crawford "introduced me to people like Dane Rudhyar and Henry Cowell, and other people, so that I was rapidly caught up in contemporary music" (Fine 1978b, 2).

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13. Cody 2002, 172; Crawford 1930b; Fine 1978b. Blanche Wetherill Walton (1871–1963) was well known for her patronage of modern music, and had housed Crawford and arranged a concert of Crawford's music just two years before Fine's arrival in New York. Crawford was disappointed that Fine was unable to stay with Walton because she was already hosting another musician. In a 1931 letter to Fine, Crawford writes, "She [Walton] is a jewel. I am sad that you can't go there; Richard Buhlig will be with her I don't know how long" (Crawford 1931b). For more on Walton, see Oja 1997, 242–244.

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14. The importance Fine places on Crawford's careful listening dovetails with many of the core themes outlined by Denise Von Glahn (2013) in her book on American women composers—in particular, how practices of "skillful listening" have powerful resonances in the careers of many women composers. Of course, examples of intensive listening may be found in all corners of Crawford's varied musical career, whether through her own meticulously detailed compositional processes, her invaluable work with Charles Seeger on his composition treatise, or her transcriptions of American folksong. Even the famous anecdote describing how Crawford was barred from attending one of the first meetings of the New York Musicological Society hinges on Crawford's keen listening—from outside a closed door. For more on this incident, see Cusick 1999, 471–73; Hisama 2001, 18–19; Tick 1997, 121–22.

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15. Crabtree, Sapp, and Lacona 2009, 4–5; Gilligan 1982; Magnet, Mason, and Trevenen 2016; Shrewsbury 1993.

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16. Tick (1993, 97–98) notes that Cowell hoped to record works by Crawford and Henry Brant. Ives replied, "I know nothing about Brant's or Crawford's music, except what you...& others have told me—which is that 'in time & a nice tide' they may get mansized (even Miss C.)."

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17. However, Crawford was not always consistent in her use of gendered metaphors. Years earlier, she described herself as a "dressmaker, more worried about sewing on buttons" when brooding over her abilities as a composer (Tick 1997, 221).

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18. See especially Eaton 2008, Korsmeyer 2004, Leddy 2012, and Saito 2007. Eaton notes that historically "the *kinds* of artifacts traditionally produced by women—e.g. quilts, pottery, needlework, and weaving—have not been taken seriously as art but rather have been relegated to the diminished categories of 'decorative arts' or 'crafts'" (Eaton 2008, 878). As Korsmeyer explains, "The narrowing of the idea of art to fine art had notable consequences for the products that many women made, because theories of fine art began to demarcate art from all other products, including things made for everyday use" (Korsmeyer 2004, 6). Of course, in these examples Crawford is using metaphors tied to gendered domestic experience, rather than producing actual art objects. Still, Crawford's gendered metaphors are presented in a way that deconstructs and problematizes longstanding binary oppositions, and it is also significant that gendered metaphors are used in this way specifically in her letters to Fine, another female composer.

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19. Rao's insightful research characterizes the relationship between Crawford and Seeger as a "partnership" grounded in "collaboration," in which "Crawford's talents as a composer, as well as the direction that her musical composition took, shaped Seeger's ideas about modern music composition in an important way" (1997, 375).

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20. This passage is also quoted in Rao 1997, 355. Crawford's comments in her letters to Fine also anticipate statements made by Charles Seeger in his portrait of Crawford in *American Composers on American Music* (written in 1933, several years after Crawford's letters to Fine). Seeger describes the importance of both "thinking" and "feeling" for modern composers. However, he ultimately ties an excess of emotion to the problems of Neoclassicism and Neo-Romanticism. Seeger writes, "Serious music must be capable of submission to both tests. It is a co-operation of head and heart, of feeling and thinking. The trouble with so much modern music is that there is a fight on between the two. . . Great art cannot be built upon feeling alone or upon feeling primarily. 'Gefühl ist nicht alles!' Without more adventurous and fundamental thinking and better social and technical orientation, even feeling gets tangled, and stays tangled. Neo-classicism, neo-Romanticism, and other misnomers are mere conscience-quieters for workers in a pampered art who are at their wits' ends for a compass, a course, and a hand at the helm" (Seeger 1962[1933], 114).

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21. For example, Fine's *Solo for Oboe* (1929) was performed at a Pan American Association of Composers concert in April 1930 at Carnegie Chamber Hall, along with works by Ives, Cowell, and Crawford. Her *Four Pieces for Two Flutes* (1930) was performed on two concerts in Germany in December 1931: one affiliated with the Pan American Association of Composers (in Dessau), and one affiliated with the Internationale Gesellschaft für Neue Musik (in Hamburg), where Fine's piece was performed along with Crawford's *Diaphonic Suite No. 4*. Imre Weiss Haus—who had been introduced to Fine's music by Crawford—helped arrange for the performances of Fine's music in Germany (Cody 2002, 7–9, 172–73; Crawford 1930b; Von Gunden 1999, 6, 9, 13–14).

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22. Fine's archive at the Library of Congress contains the manuscripts of only four works composed before 1931: *Solo for Oboe* (1929), *Four Pieces for Two Flutes* (1930), *Trio for Strings* (1930), and *Little Suite* (1930). Fine completed at least thirteen other works between 1921 and 1931 (Cody 2002, 171).

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23. In another letter to Fine, Crawford mentions that she had shown Fine's *Solo for Oboe* (1929) to Cowell and Seeger, and that "We all feel that is the finest piece of work you have done, together with the Sandburg songs" (Crawford 1930b). Crawford 1930a contains comments on Fine's *Solo for Oboe*, *Little Suite*, and two missing compositions: a set of Japanese songs, and a set of preludes for solo piano. This letter includes Crawford's comments on Fine's manuscripts, along with a few additional suggestions on the works from Henry Cowell and Charles Seeger.

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24. Straus also notes how some of the specific processes outlined below—especially the use of transpositional projection and "M1" motives—also continued to appear in Crawford's music in the 1930s (1995, 32 and 60–66).

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25. Crawford completed *Five Songs* just after she left Chicago, during her time at the MacDowell Colony in summer 1929. She arrived in New York in September 1929 (Tick 1997, 99 and 105).

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26. In interviews, Fine often described how "Ruth began showing me her music" in their lessons

([Fine 1977](#), 5) and that Fine “was playing [Crawford’s] music when I was thirteen, fourteen, fifteen years old” ([Fine 1980b](#), 4). As previously discussed, Fine attended the premiere of Crawford’s Violin Sonata and Crawford gave her a manuscript copy of the score (cf. n11; [Gaume 1986](#), 144; [Tick 1997](#), 60, 62–63, and 200). Von Gunden ([1999](#), 4) notes that Fine “probably” practiced Crawford’s piano preludes (*Five Preludes for Piano*, 1924–25, and *Four Preludes for Piano*, nos. 6–9, 1927–28).

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27. The inverted phrase moves from right hand to left hand in mm. 16–17; this shift is indicated with an arrow in the example. Fine’s manuscript contains lines in mm. 16–17 that show how the phrases shift between the hands (see Example 1). The four pitches marked with an asterisk in Example 2 (m. 14) deviate by one half step from the inversional plan. Moving these four notes up a half step creates a more dissonant texture, and avoids the repeated pitches D and C in m. 14 (D would have created an octave with the bass, and C would have duplicated the soprano’s C4 at the beginning of the measure).

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28. By comparison, in the underlying structure of Scriabin’s “mystic” chord (013579), the half step occurs outside of the whole-tone fragment, and there is no chromatic trichord.

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29. Of course, (02468T) contains six ic 2s, six ic 4s, and three ic 6s. Dave Headlam designates (013579), (012468), and (023468) as the three “whole-tone +” hexachords, and notes that the interval vectors of the three “whole-tone +” hexachords contain the same number of even and odd ics: 10 even and 5 odd ([1996](#), 68–72, 413).

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30. Fine’s manuscript contains three measures of 3/4 time beginning in m. 10. This creates a discrepancy between the measure numbering of the piano and vocal parts. In Example 2, I have changed m. 11 to a 6/4 measure in the vocal part to keep the measure numbering consistent.

Linear motion by ic 5 and ic 6 also connects the chordal sonorities in mm. 7–8 (the piano left-hand part has octaves until these measures). In m. 11, if the voice’s F4 is also included it creates (012368), which contains a chromatic tetrachord along with three embedded ic 5s and two ic 6s. As with (013579), the two almost-whole-tone hexachords discussed in the previous section also feature the subset (016): (023468) contains one (016) trichord, and (012468) contains two.

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31. Fine continued to explore the sonic possibilities of (016) sonorities in two pieces completed just after *Little Suite: Four Pieces for Two Flutes* (1930) and *Trio for Strings* (1930). Both works feature melodic lines organized around (016) sonorities resulting from combinations of ic 5 and ic 6 in direct succession. For a few especially prominent examples, see *Four Pieces for Two Flutes*, first movement (mm. 1–3, 9–11, 32–36, 43–45, and 49–51) and third movement (m. 16, mm. 23–25, and mm. 37–39), and the main motive of the first movement of the *Trio for Strings*.

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32. Not all motivic intervals need to be represented by larger-scale transpositional levels, and multiple transpositions need not occur in the same order as they appear in the original motive. Strauss also discusses examples of near-transpositions, where the transposed melodic fragments are off by one or more semitones (such as those shown in Example 3). For a detailed explanation of transpositional projection, see [Strauss 1995](#), 60–70.

Strauss also cites several examples of transpositional projection from Crawford’s Sonata for Violin

and Piano (1995, 60–6). As previously discussed, Fine knew Crawford’s sonata and piano preludes well (see n11 and n25).

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33. For discussions of Crawford’s serial style, see [Straus 1995](#), 73–76 and [Straus 2011](#), 16–20; a classic example is the third movement of Crawford’s *Diaphonic Suite No. 1*, which is organized around a seven-note series.

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34. The piano right-hand part omits the last five notes of the final subphrase (heard in the left-hand part, mm. 5–6).

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35. Each of these “partial retrogrades” begins with the same prominent intervallic contour of two successive ic 5s in opposite directions, but is followed by an ascending ic 1. Other, slightly varied forms of the original motive appear in this section. These statements begin with +1, +2 rather than +2, +1, but contain the same overall contour and end with two successive ic 5s (these statements have a repeated pitch because of the intervallic change). For example, see mm. 68–69 (<E \flat -E-F \sharp -B-E>, piano RH) and mm. 70–72 (<G-A \flat -B \flat -E \flat -A \flat >, piano LH).

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36. The vocal phrase concludes with a partial T6 transposition of the “B” motive, <0238>.

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37. The A2 in m. 75 is marked with an asterisk in Example 5b and 5c. Fine may have made a copying error in this measure. If this pitch were C3 instead of A2, all five pitches of the motive would be transposed at T5.

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38. In her later works, Crawford explored transpositional schemes in much more systematic detail, particularly in pieces that used series and rotation, such as “Chinaman, Laundryman” and the fourth movement of her String Quartet. For insightful discussions of these specific processes in these works, see [Hisama 2001](#), 35–59 and 78–79; [Straus 1995](#), 75–76 and 172–82.

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39. Other examples of these techniques abound in Fine’s music during this time. The second movement (*Lento*) from Fine’s *Solo for Oboe* begins with a four-note gesture <F \sharp , C, C \sharp , D> that ends with two ic 1s. As with *Little Suite*, intervallic content from the opening motive also drives the two larger-scale transpositions in the movement, as mm. 1–2 are transposed by T₁ to become mm. 8–9, and mm. 3–4 are transposed by T₂ (the total interval spanned by the two half steps in the opening motive) to become mm. 10–11.

Long-range transpositional projection also appears in Fine’s *Four Pieces for Two Flutes*. The opening of the fourth movement features an imitative texture with two overlapping phrases that recalls the opening of *Little Suite*. Here, the second flute begins the movement with a solo motive <4, 3, 0, E> that contains a prominent T₈ (4, 0). T₈ (and its inverse, T₄) also connects many of the subsequent pitches in the second flute’s first phrase (3/E and E/3, mm. 1–2, 2–3, and m. 4; 5/9, m. 5). When the first flute enters in m. 2, all of its content in mm. 2–13 is a meticulously transposed version of flute 2’s material in mm. 1–12—at T₈.

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40. For more on Crawford’s longstanding use of chromatic completion and intervallic variety, see [Straus 1995](#), 8–17.

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41. Ultramodern composers like Crawford who were interested in the principles of dissonant counterpoint sought to “dissonate” their individual melodic lines by avoiding too many consonant intervals. Charles Seeger emphasized the importance of “the recognition and cultivation of an art of Dissonant Melody. . . . A proficiency in ‘dissonating’ the single melodic line becomes a prerequisite to practice in dissonant counterpoint” (1930, 27-28). Seeger (1994) explores these ideas in more detail; see especially pp. 170–75 and 179–84.

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42. Fleeting moments of transpositional projection also appear in “Sleep Impression.” For example, the first and last notes of the original four-note (0126) motive are a whole step away from one another; Fine uses this interval to generate a transposition of mm. 21–24 to close the song. In mm. 43–47, the opening melodic line is transposed by T2, creating a transposed version that also begins on the last pitch (B) of the “P” form of the (0126) tetrachord (see Example 9).

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43. See n11 and n25 for discussions of Fine’s knowledge of Crawford’s music.

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44. Alternatively, these could be thought of as related at I11, which connects the two primary phrases of the song.

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45. M1 motives also occur in prominent moments in Fine’s other contemporaneous compositions. For example, in the first movement of Fine’s *Solo for Oboe* (1929), M1 motives are used to conclude or connect the phrases in mm. 1–2, 8–9, 16–17, 28–29, 33–34, and 38–39. Some of these M1 motives return in the third movement (see mm. 38–39 and 48–49). The opening of the third movement also includes two interlocked M1s connected by RICH: <132> and <324> in mm. 1–2, and the first phrase ends with an M1 motive, <342> in mm. 4–5. The opening phrase of the second movement of Fine’s *Four Pieces for Two Flutes* begins with M1s within and between the two parts; mm. 1–8 features four different forms of M1 (P, I, R, RI).

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46. Crawford’s songs with texts from these two volumes include “Home Thoughts” (*Smoke and Steel*), “Sunsets” (*Good Morning, America*), and “Rat Riddles” (*Good Morning, America*).

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47. It is not clear whether Fine ever visited the Sandburgs and played the songs. In her letter, Crawford described Mrs. Sandburg as “an exquisite person with fine strands of poetry” and noted that the Sandburg children “have been allowed great freedom of expression; your first visit may be strenuous if they are all at home. I hope you can go oftener, and grow fond of them as I did” (Crawford 1931a). For more on Crawford’s connections with the Sandburgs, see Tick 1991, 230–31 and Tick 1997, 53–57.

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48. The third divergent pitch, A_b, occurs in m. 11, again with text about the man and his love for the sea (“his thoughts of the sea”).

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49. Fine’s stress on “together” also parallels Sandburg’s setting of “Sea Chest,” in which “together” is placed on its own line. Many thanks to one of the anonymous reviewers of this article for drawing my attention to this aspect of the text.

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50. Fine often used small scraps of paper to make revisions in her manuscripts. In a letter from Crawford, written before Fine's *Sonata for Oboe* was performed in New York, Crawford even suggests that if Fine wants to revise the manuscript copy that Crawford had (presumably the one used for the performance), "you might send me little slips to paste over" (Crawford 1930a).

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51. Wittig eloquently describes the importance of pronouns: "although they are instrumental in activating the notion of gender, they pass unnoticed. . . . it is as though gender does not affect them, is not part of their structure, but only a detail in their associated form. But, in reality, as soon as there is a locutor in discourse, as soon as there is an 'I,' gender manifests itself" (Witting 1986, 65).

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52. G3 is the lowest note of the vocal part. This pitch occurs one other time: in m. 55, at the text "to each other."

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53. Ruggles associated the grandiose philosophical journeys in his music with "surges" of power and activity, famously asserting that "Music which does not surge is not great music [his emphasis]" (quoted in Ertan 2009, 241).

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54. When asked about two of her works in which feminist themes are featured most prominently (*Women in the Garden* and *Meeting for Equal Rights 1866*), Fine noted, "I don't think I would have conceived either of these things without the stimulus of the women's movement" (Fine 1977).

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55. Straus also writes, "Ignorant of previous women composers of art music, and cut off musically from the women's tradition of domestic music, Crawford chose to make her way in a male-dominated world of musical modernism, one that was hostile to women in a deep and pervasive way" (1995, 221). Although Straus 1995 describes Fine as "Crawford's most important composition student," she is not discussed in any depth—and is mentioned only briefly, in three short footnotes (236, n88; 239, n118; 243, n33).

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56. Feminist scholars have offered a variety of different interpretations of Woolf's passage. For example, in her work on same-sex desire in Victorian England, Sharon Marcus has focused on the inherent ambiguity of Woolf's verb "liked," noting that "Woolf presents 'Chloe and Olivia' in a deliberately ambiguous way, praising the sentence for its coolness but as associating it with a topic too hot to handle, the lesbian love Woolf will not name directly. . . . whether they are lovers, friends, or coworkers, Chloe and Olivia are overworked, and we need more than two proper names and a verb to do justice to the variety and complexity of women's social alliances" (2007, 258).

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57. Fine echoed similar statements in other interviews: "Well certainly women have been very important in my life. . . . Ruth was a very important influence. Mme. Herz was an important influence. I had women teachers. I had some men teachers, but women were very important. And I myself have found since the '60s that the women's movement has been a liberating influence for me personally—to see how men treat women, how women react to being treated by men" (1992).

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58. For other similar discussions of composing feeling "natural" to Fine because of her work with Crawford, see Fine 1985 and 1986b).

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