

## **Genre and meaning in “La Jalouse” by Jane Siberry**

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# GENRE AND MEANING IN "LA JALOUSE" BY JANE SIBERRY

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Since the academic study of popular music is a relatively new field, it has not yet established a standardized analytical methodology. In practice, the discipline is divided between two camps: those, such as Wilder, Hamm, and Mellers, who apply the analytical techniques of art music to popular song and those, such as Keil, Tagg, and Hennion, who do not. The reason that the latter group does not utilize art music theory is that they feel the analytical tools themselves prioritize the parameters emphasized in art music aesthetics, rather than those considered important in popular music. For example, in art music analysis, harmony, tonality, counterpoint, and form are prioritized above rhythm, timbre, and pitch nuance to the disadvantage of popular music (Middleton, 104).

In light of the fact that the latter faction has eliminated the tools of the former, neither camp has come up with an ideal approach to the analysis of popular music. Existing scholarship on popular music, therefore, contains insightful sociological literature about song lyrics and the subcultures surrounding various genres of popular music, as well as stimulating theoretical discussions applying various branches of criticism to popular music as a construct. The lack of literature discussing specific examples of the music itself, however, remains prominent. As such, this paper offers a potential framework toward the analysis of popular music, by way of an example of a song by Jane Siberry.

Jane Siberry (b. 1955) is a Toronto-based singer-songwriter whose experimental rock songs present an original voice in popular music. Her oeuvre spans both the 1980s and the 1990s, which is no small feat in a business of one-hit wonders and flavour-of-the-month promotional tactics. The fact that Siberry continues working to this day is a particular achievement in light of the fact that she avoids formulaic songwriting and works with contrasting genres (such as folk, jazz, country, electro pop, funk, etc.).

Due to the variety of genres in her music, particularly in her albums from the 1990s, Siberry's songs resist any stylistic pigeonholing and are therefore difficult to categorize and subsequently market. In fact, Siberry's musical style has been labeled everything from rock to pop and new wave to new age in the rock press.<sup>1</sup> It is my contention, however, that while Siberry works within contrasting genres, the way in which she employs each genre has similar patterns. Specifically, Siberry problematizes various musical parameters, such as form, metre, and phrase length, to add a level of artifice not conventional to the expectations of a given genre. While there is no space in this paper to compare Siberry's approaches to

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1. With the use of such contrasting genres, one might wonder why Siberry's music continues to be—or ever was initially—addressed in the rock press, rather than more generically specialized (for example, folk, electro pop, funk, or country) magazines. Indeed, Siberry's music has never exhibited the characteristics of the earliest styles of rock (that is, rhythm & blues), that are generally used by critics as criteria for the genre of rock. Instead it is my contention that, despite Siberry's lack of "blues orthodoxy" (Martin, 22), her songs are considered rock because they comply with a second criterion of the genre, namely, that rock is art which transcends commerce. Most rock criticism is based on the premise that rock—since the Beatles, at least—is a style of popular music that is artistically superior to pop music, which, in its emphasis on boy-girl romantic love, panders to the teeny-bopper market and is considered at once naive and crassly commercial. While it is self-evident that rock is less innocent than romantic pop music, there is a certain naive romanticism in rock criticism itself that maintains rock's non-commercial status as a criterion defining the genre (Stump, 206). Although with its millionaire supergroups (such as the Rolling Stones or Nirvana) it is clear that rock is just as commercial as pop, the dichotomy between art and commerce is maintained in a mythology particular to rock; namely, that its biggest stars "transcend" commerce by virtue of their status as artists (Stump, 183). (While jazz criticism also defines itself against a pop other, it maintains the idea that commercial success waters down the purity of jazz as an art form. Thus early Louis Armstrong is preferred to later Armstrong's more popular efforts.)

different genres, a single song by Siberry will be analyzed: namely, "la jalouse" from her 1989 album *bound by the beauty*.

"La jalouse" is a good song with which to introduce Siberry's work to those who are unfamiliar with her oeuvre because it is a relatively simple song for Siberry. As well, it negotiates the genre of folk revival, which is the genre in which she recorded her first self-titled album in 1980 and to which she frequently returns, as in this instance.<sup>2</sup> The rest of the songs on *bound by the beauty* do not negotiate the folk revival genre. In fact, *bound by the beauty* is the first of Siberry's albums to juxtapose contrasting genres within a single recording. For example, it engages such genres as country and Latin, both of which were unprecedented experiments for Siberry. "La jalouse," then, differs from the other songs on the album in that it is a return for Siberry to the genre of folk revival. From a genre analysis of "la jalouse," we will see that Siberry creates with this song both consonant and dissonant approaches to the genre of folk revival.

First, however, the use of the term "folk revival" bears some explanation. In popular culture, for example in the Grammy award categories (Shaw, 131), the repertoire and style of "folk revival"<sup>3</sup> is not distinguished from that of traditional folksong. Both are called folk; even though, in folk music scholarship, traditional folk is defined as songs that are passed on by non-professional transmission through oral tradition (Stekert, 165). Put another way, in popular culture the meanings associated with the folk genre have been appropriated into the folk revival genre. While folklore scholars have dismissed this generic conflation as inaccurate, it remains significant when it comes to the meanings being read by the average reader of a text<sup>4</sup> negotiating a given genre.<sup>5</sup> For example, the way I will be using the term "folk revival" here describes exactly the repertoire and aesthetic criteria that Mark Miller refers to simply as "contemporary folk music" (Miller, 476).<sup>6</sup>

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2 Siberry is perhaps better known for her negotiation of the electro pop/synth rock genre from 1984 - 1987, which spawned her underground hit "Mimi on the Beach" in 1984. By the time "la jalouse" was recorded, however, Siberry had already departed from the thickly textured, multi-tracked, and synthesized sound of the electro pop genre.

3 My use of the term "folk revival" is merely a shortened version of such terms as "folk music revival" (which would include instrumental music such as bluegrass) and "folksong revival" (which refers mainly to the urban revival of ballads—often specifically Child ballads). In the past, the term "urban" was positioned in front of both of the two latter terms to distinguish this repertoire from traditional rural folk styles. As pockets of undisturbed rural areas are virtually impossible to find in Western Europe and North America, it has come to be understood in folklore scholarship that today nearly all folk music is urban (thus rendering the term unnecessary) in that, traditional or otherwise, it is almost invariably found within an urban context.

4 In literary criticism, the modernist concept of a formally organized "work" has been replaced with the postmodernist concept of a formally organized system of signs called a "text." The text differs from the autonomous work in that it is a semiotic system that exists within a socio-historical context. Within any given socio-historical context, different readers come to a text with different values and perceptions. Different readers therefore "read" different meanings from the text. Thus a text and its context interact in a dynamic, dialectical way (Kent, 153). The concept of the text has been applied beyond literary criticism to virtually all areas of culture. A musical piece therefore is just as much a "text" as a novel. Similarly, the person listening to a musical piece is just as much a "reader" as one who reads a novel. A competent reader notices, moreover, that apart from his or her own response to a text, there is an additional interaction between a given text and other texts. "One text is necessarily read in relationship to others and . . . a range of textual knowledges is brought to bear upon it" by the reader (Fiske 1987, 108). This interaction between a text and its historical precursors and contemporaries is called "intertextuality" and is considered a hallmark of postmodernism, which seeks to eliminate the primacy of the autonomous work, as well as collapse a linear notion of history.

5 Genre is a particularly helpful paradigm for making sense of the world in postmodern society. Although genres change over time, they have a "stabilized-for-now" view of the world (Schryer, 107). Because of this fact, the interpretation of meaning for the reader becomes a dialectical process. In musical texts, delineating musical parameters is necessary to distinguish genres, while the analysis of genre conventions helps a listener to place the significance of musical details (Waiser, 28).

6 One might ask with such confusion over the term "folk" and in light of the rejection of the term by folklorists (In 1980 the International Folk Music Council changed its name to the International Council for Traditional Music.), why I would invoke the term here at all. The answer is that the term still exists in popular culture (as can be seen in Mark Miller's definition or even in generic categories used in music stores). It seems clear that Carolyn Miller is correct to "insist that the 'de facto' genres, the types we have names for in everyday language, tell us something theoretically important about discourse" (Miller, 27). To use everyday generic terms "takes seriously the rhetoric in which we are immersed and the situations in which we find ourselves" (ibid).

Because the term "folk revival" has more specific connotations than the popular use of the term "folk," the former is the term I will be using. It should be noted, however, that over the years, even amongst scholars, "folk revival" has been used in various ways. Folklorist Ellen Stekert has conveniently outlined these usages. In the 1930s and 1940s, folk revival referred to the music sung by left-wing political groups at union meetings and hootenannies. Their repertoire included protest songs taken from traditional oral folk culture and new songs, composed by both rural singers such as Woody Guthrie, Aunt Molly Jackson, and Leadbelly and urban singers or "imitators" (Stekert, 157) such as Alan Lomax and Pete Seeger. Not surprisingly, during the McCarthy era there was a turn away from politics to collecting and singing traditional rural folksong. Traditional folksong was again performed by both urban singers such as John Jacob Niles, Peggy Seeger, and Burl Ives and rural singers such as Jean Ritchie, Hobart Smith, and Frank Proffitt. Throughout the 1960s adapting traditional folksong to an urban style and audience was undertaken by the next generation of revival singers, those of "the new aesthetic" (Stekert, 160), including Joan Baez, Judy Collins, and Peter, Paul, and Mary.

For the folk revival singer-songwriters or "urban pop utilizer" (Stekert, 158), however, expressing oneself through the subtle songs of rural folk was ultimately dissatisfying. Singers such as Gordon Lightfoot, Bob Dylan, and Joni Mitchell thus began to write their own songs that were increasingly concerned more with the self than social protest. Nonetheless, "in the public mind these singer-songwriters became synonymous with the idea of a 'folksinger'" (Miller 1992, 483). At first the folk revival songs by these singer-songwriters were written in the image of urban folksong from the 1940s and 1950s, but this did not last. After the Newport Folk Festival of 1965, folk revival fell out of public favour, while folk rock rose to prominence<sup>7</sup> with bands such as the Byrds, the Mamas and the Papas, Simon and Garfunkel, Neil Young and Crazy Horse, and Buffalo Springfield. Even from this brief survey, it is clear that the term "folk revival" has vastly differing associations. The way in which Jane Siberry negotiates the folk revival genre in "la jalouse" (and the way in which I will be using this term) is as an urban pop utilizer.<sup>8</sup>

Before discussing how well "la jalouse" fits into the genre of folk revival, however, we must implement an analysis of folk revival as a "genre prototype" (Paltridge, 2)<sup>9</sup> to reveal the parameters most conventional in this genre. First of all, folk revival has intentionally simple musical parameters. The melody, for example, uses a small range in conjunct motion and is usually modal. Unlike traditional folksong which is sung unaccompanied, folk revival is accompanied by understated acoustic instruments--frequently just a guitar strumming triadic chords to keep the beat (Middleton, 90). Intimately associated with this musical simplicity is a sense of democracy between the singer and audience. This democracy is manifested further in the informality of folk revival performance practice. For example, in performance the singer is usually in a small venue with sparse staging, wearing street clothes (as opposed to concert attire). Again, it is because egalitarian camaraderie is the aim of folk revival that its performance practice is kept informal.

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7 Initially folk rock was not popular among the folk music community. This was evidenced at the Newport Folk Festival of 1965 where Bob Dylan's use of the electric guitar was received with anger and dismay by both folk performers (such as Joan Baez) and audiences. In fact, he and his band were booed offstage at the folk festival. It was only in his negotiation of the folk rock genre, however, that Dylan received any mainstream success. *Subterranean Homesick Blues* from 1965 was his first album to make the pop charts, indicating his new popularity among the popular music community (Shaw, 131).

8 It should be added that from her earliest songs Siberry's approach in negotiating the folk revival genre has always been as an "urban pop utilizer." It is only with *Hush* that Siberry has departed from this methodology to engage the approach of what Stekert calls "the new aesthetic." Rather than writing her own songs in the folk revival idiom, on *Hush* for the first time, Siberry arranged pre-existing traditional English folk songs and spirituals.

9 Paltridge takes his term from John Swales' use of the term "genre prototypicality" (Swales, 52). The same concept, however, "derives from the work of semantic theorist Erdmann (1922), philosopher Wittgenstein (1963), and the psychologist, Eleanor Rosch (1973, 1975)" (Paltridge, 53).

Musical and performance parameters are also kept simple to foreground the lyrics, which in folk revival, form a narrative that often implies a moral (as in the broadside ballad tradition) or socio-political (as in the protest song tradition) lesson (Middleton, 229). More than in early folk revival,<sup>10</sup> however, the romantic idea of the poet as genius was thrust upon the folk revival singer-songwriter (Stratton, 45) from the 1960s onward. For these urban pop utilizers there is thus a certain expectation of virtuosity in the lyrics, particularly regarding social content. This virtuosity results in a corresponding reverence for the folk revival performer. As cultural theorist John Fiske points out, "the veneration of the author-artist is a necessary correlative of the veneration of the text" (Fiske 1989, 125). Thus in performance, the folk revival audience is usually seated (as opposed to dancing) and listens with careful attention to the poetry of the lyrics.

Such rapt attention of the audience can be found in performances of folk revival because central to the aesthetics of the genre, at least at the height of folk revival's popularity in the early 1960s, is the idea of "authenticity" (Middleton, 127), namely, that the singer through their song is speaking a timeless "truth" about the way of life of "the people."<sup>11</sup> Audiences continue to believe that the folk revival speaks the "truth" about their lives because folk songs are evocative symbols of the past (Bohlman, 130), a time when life was simpler and more honest. Philip V. Bohlman suggests that all folk revival is an overt and explicit act of authentication. In fact, he argues that revival is

the ultimate collapse of time and space because it fully admits of the efficacy of that collapse for creating contemporary meaning. Revival relies heavily on new symbols masquerading as the old . . . The revivalist assumes that the audience will simultaneously imagine one set of values, strip those values from the music, and allow new . . . values to assert themselves (Bohlman, 131).

For audiences, then, modal melody with acoustic instrumentation, socially relevant lyrics, and informal performance practice are the parameters that conventionally signify that what they are hearing is folk revival.

Siberry's song "la jalouse" borrows from the folk revival genre in its negotiation of music, lyrics, and performance practice; however, there are dissonances as well as consonances regarding the adherence of this song to the conventions of the folk revival genre. We will see two negotiated dissonances and two overt dissonances; but first, let us look at three consonances "la jalouse" has with the folk revival genre.

First of all, the melody of "la jalouse" (see Figure 1 below) is consonant with the folk revival genre. Like traditional folksong the melody is modal on the chorus; but unlike traditional folksong the melody modulates in the verses (to D major). Although D ionian is as much a folk mode as A aeolian, the practice of modulation is not part of traditional folksong convention. Modulation is endemic to folk revival, however, and is used frequently by singer-

10 Stekert points out, for example, that early folk revival singer/songwriters, such as Woody Guthrie and Aunt Molly Jackson, were celebrated as the living voices of the "noble savage," rather than for their skills as performers or writers of folksong. On the contrary, according to Stekert, Guthrie and Jackson "were unskilled performers both in terms of the traditional aesthetic with which they were raised and in terms of the urban aesthetic within which they were subtly require to produce" (Stekert, 154).

11 The notion of 'authenticity' formerly held together contrasting definitions of folk song by folklorists; they could at least all agree that folk was not pop. This notion, however, has now been debunked by postmodern theorists, as has the notion of 'the people' (Fiske 1989, 24). The romantic notion of authenticity remains as an unspoken assumption, because it is, to quote folklorist Bruno Nettl, a "practical" way of categorizing different types of music in the oral tradition (Nettl, 11).

songwriters, for example Gordon Lightfoot's "Ribbon of Darkness" (Fowke, 48 - 49) or Joni Mitchell's "Night in the City" (Fowke, 56 - 57). Furthermore, although the melody of "la jalouse" is for the most part conjunct (except for the leap in the head motif), the range is almost an octave and a half (see the transcription in Appendix 2). This range is larger than that of traditional folksong, but is typical of folk revival songs, such as Joni Mitchell's "Both Sides Now" (Fowke, 54 - 55).

Figure 1 - Tonality in "la jalouse"

Form:	A	B	C	A	B	D	A	B
Tonality:	D	a aeolian	d	D	a aeolian	d	D-d dorian	a aeolian

Secondly, Siberry's performance practice is typical of folk revival conventions. When I saw her perform in Toronto, she and two other musicians were seated on stools in a small hall wearing street clothes. There was no backdrop on the stage and the seating was in close proximity to the performers. Furthermore, the audience at the concert for the *bound by the beauty* tour that I attended was seated (therefore, there was no dancing), and paid close attention to the performance. This was evident in their silence during the songs and their laughter at the humorous stories Siberry told between songs. The feeling of camaraderie that night was marked. Siberry had a cold, and couple of times she could not reach some of the high notes. After one such failed attempt, one of the audience members called out in support, "We love you, Jane." It was clear from the interaction between Siberry and her audience that Siberry had an unusually high level of camaraderie with the audience in her hometown that evening.

Thirdly, the lyrics of "la jalouse" (see Appendix 1) are consonant with the expectations associated with the folk revival genre. Like the conventions of a traditional folk ballad, the lyrics here tell a story with a moral lesson, namely, that extreme jealousy hurts a relationship. In addition, however, Siberry's lyrics are more complex than those found in traditional folksong. As mentioned, this complexity is conventional to the folk revival genre. For example, while in the lyrics of a traditional folk ballad, the rejected lover laments; in this folk revival text, the lament is inverted, as it is the narrator (the "I", not the "you") who broke up the relationship. And although the couple reunites, in the end, they are still unhappy.

The narrative in "la jalouse" is further complicated by the fact that there is some question as to the identity of the jealous woman of the title. At first it appears that "la jalouse" is an address used for the protagonist's lover ("la jalouse/i told you to go/you . . . drag me into your stinking pit . . . jalouse/ don't cry (baby)/just get out and never come back"). It is not until after the second verse that it becomes clear that it is the protagonist herself who is the jealous one. She explains: "i knocked the table over then i/i grabbed your shoulders then i/i threw you as hard as ever".

Finally, the complexity of Siberry's lyrics are consonant with the folk revival genre in that they transform the narrative from a love-lost ballad into a statement about the nature of jealousy by focusing on the temporal experience of jealousy itself via memory. In Siberry's narrative, the protagonist feels a lack of closure about being jealous of and subsequently unfaithful to her lover. In fact, although her past infidelity meant nothing to the narrator, she is still haunted in the present by the jealousy she feels toward her lover. The listener too participates in this present-tense jealousy by re-experiencing it with the narrator via memory.

The listener discovers that the jealousy that the narrator feels wreaks havoc in her relationship with her lover. To begin with, it makes her mistrust her lover ("you trick me with all your lies . . . drag me into your stinking pit"). In addition to casting suspicions in the first

chorus, jealousy colours the protagonist's recollections of the past in the second verse. The narrator is torn between thinking good and bad thoughts about her lover. At one moment her lover is her friend ("mon amie") and the next, in a savvy wordplay, she is her enemy ("mon contre amie").<sup>12</sup> The narrator repeatedly tries to dismiss her negative thoughts with "i told you to go."

Instead, however, she concludes in the second chorus that her lover is her enemy and, in the climax of the song, chooses to remember likewise, saying: "something you said tipped me off to who you were/we were talking in the kitchen/i closed my eyes i put the glass down/i knocked the table over then i/i grabbed your shoulders then i/i threw you as hard as ever." The fact that this past-tense description is the most narrative of the entire song makes it clear that these are the memories of the narrator. The blow by blow description of this violent event (emphasized with the repeated phrase "then i"), causes the listener to re-experience the memory along with the narrator and to therefore participate in the act of jealousy itself. The recollection of physical violence shows the extent to which jealousy consumes the narrator. Clearly this is not just a song about a woman who felt jealous of her girlfriend ("mon amie"), and now has resolved the situation; but rather, one about a narrator whose character is most frequently defined by jealousy.

The unresolved nature of the narrator's jealousy is evident even in the final verse of the song. Although the couple is back together ("here, have some wine") the narrator still talks down to her lover ("where would you go anyway"), as if she is the exclusive centre of her lover's universe. Realizing the inappropriateness of this comment, the narrator abruptly changes the subject. She suggests: "let's talk about old . . . let's review some things." But, as if catching herself idealizing the good old times, the narrator stops herself mid-sentence and remembers how, in fact, her jealousy has hurt her relationship with her lover. In the final chorus she now sees that it is precisely her jealousy that caused her infidelity. The narrator says: "you made me crazy lose my mind/now i can't remember why." In a small act of redemption, the narrator points out that her infidelity did not reflect her lack of love for her lover: "i don't even like the guy." So, although the narrator remains the jealous one of the head motif, she has at least gained some self-awareness by the end of the song, and toward that end (presumably) tells the listener her tale as a moral lesson. Thus not only is the complexity of the lyrics consonant with the folk revival genre, so too are the performance practice and use of melody in "la jalouse."

There are two parameters pertaining to "la jalouse" that are somewhat consonant with the folk revival genre, but not completely. First of all, the instrumentation of "la jalouse" is somewhat consonant with that of the folk revival genre in that the song consists of a single vocal accompanied by an acoustic guitar in the foreground of the mix. Tellingly, when Siberry went on tour with this album, she played at several folk festivals in Canada and the United States. When I saw her in Toronto, her band consisted of just herself, a guitarist, and a piano/accordion player. In her rendition of "la jalouse" the latter was omitted.

There are also two other instruments in the background of the mix, however. First of all there is an electric bass. Although in this recording the bassist often just plays pedal

<sup>12</sup> Not only does Siberry's unprecedented use of French in this song set up a clever word play here ("my against friend" as enemy) it also introduces and clears up gender ambiguity that would not be possible in English. From the sensual-sounding title, "la jalouse" (for which there is no common English equivalent) it becomes clear that the narrator is a woman. Likewise, from the second verse it is evident that her lover ("mon amie") is also a woman. The implied lesbian relationship makes the final line of the song all the more surprising. Not only was the narrator unfaithful with someone she does not like, but this person is also a man. Of course, to fully realize all the characters in the song it is necessary to actually read the lyrics (since *ami* and *amie* sound the same). Nonetheless, the playing with gender is facilitated by the use of French here. (Perhaps the use of French, as well as the whispering quality of the vocal, is also an allusion to the French torch song tradition.)

tones, his presence creates a band sound that is associated more with folk rock than folk revival. Similarly, the presence of a drummer is not consonant with the folk revival aesthetic of the solo artist. In addition, the fact that the drummer uses only brushes creates an aura of the cool jazz ballad, which is quite dissonant with folk revival convention.

Secondly, the phrase lengths of "la jalouse" are only somewhat consonant with the folk revival genre. While the asymmetrical phrase lengths in this piece are typical of the asymmetries found in folk revival (see Figure 2 below), the sectional nature of their presentation does not reflect the addition and subtraction of measures found at cadential points in the loose phrasing of both traditional folksong and folk revival. I should add, however, that despite this fact, Siberry's composition is successful at creating the organic ebb and flow experienced in both traditional folksong and folk revival phrasing.

Figure 2 - Phrase Length in "la jalouse"

Form:	A	B	C	A	B	D	A	B
No. of mm. :	8	6	5	8	6	6	8	6

For example, after two 4-bar phrases of A material in "la jalouse," one expects two more 4-bar phrases of either BA or BB. And indeed one does get B material; however, it is six measures long. This is too long to fit the established pattern of four and too short to form the conventional group of eight measures. The subsequent material only adds to the conventional ambiguity of phrase length; the C section is five measures long. Not only is this too long to be a 4-bar phrase, it is also irregular (in that it is not symmetrical)--not even following the new six-bar pattern. After the repetition of sections A and B, we hear the final bridge (section D). Like the B section, section D is again a 6-bar unit. Thus the variety of phrase lengths used here, although too formally organized, is endemic to folk revival convention.

Finally, there are two parameters in "la jalouse" that are overtly dissonant with folk revival conventions. The first one is the use of mixed metre. Although mixed metre is common in traditional folk balladry, mixed metre is not endemic to the folk revival genre. In "la jalouse" the presentation of the mixed metre is particularly odd because all the previous sections of the song were an even 4/4 (see Appendix 2). It is only in the D section that the metre alternates between 4/4 and 3/4. While the implementation of metric alternation functions organically with this the most narrative section of the lyrics, that is, the repeated "then i" phrases (as in traditional folk balladry), the fact that the mixed metre only occurs in a single section is dissonant with both traditional folksong and folk revival conventions. Furthermore the metric alternation in section D of "la jalouse" results in an additional measure, artistically replacing the oddity of the earlier five-bar bridge (section C) with a more normative six-bar transition back to the final return of sections A and B (see Figure 2 above). This conscious working out of compositional problems is again endemic to neither traditional folk balladry nor folk revival convention.

Lest one conclude that Siberry's compositional decisions are based on a traditional folk balladry model rather than that of folk revival, we must turn to the final parameter that is overtly dissonant with folk revival convention, that of form. The form of "la jalouse" has folk revival elements, but these are problematized with the intrusion of pop music elements that are not endemic to folk revival. Although "la jalouse" is in the form of a folk ballad (that is, it utilizes a traditional stanza-refrain structure), it also contains, not one but, two bridges (sections C and D, respectively). The form of "la jalouse" is thus ABCABDAB (see Figure 2 above). While the presence of the D material is borrowed from the genre of pop music, Siberry departs from even pop music convention by inserting an additional bridge (section C)

early in the song, before contrast is even required. The presence not only of one, but two bridges (C and D) adds a level of formal complexity not endemic to the conventions of folk revival.

There are then in "la jalouse" parameters which have both consonant and dissonant associations with the conventions of the folk revival genre. The consonant fits with the folk revival genre, however, might be relevant to the audience's experience of this song as folk revival, more so than the dissonant parameters. Paramount is the complexity of the lyrics, which transforms the narrative from a love-lost moralizing ballad, typical of folksong, into a folk revival statement about the nature of jealousy by re-enacting the experience of jealousy itself via narrative memory. The performance practice, in which there is a democratization between the audience and performer via the small venue, sparse staging, and informal stage craft, is also of the utmost importance in establishing the feeling of camaraderie conventional in folk revival. The modal modulation in the large-ranging melody is a clear marker of folk revival convention as well.

In contrast, there are two less noticeable elements exemplified in "la jalouse" that are not as consonant with the folk revival genre. The fact that the irregular phrase lengths are sectional and, in the case of section C, artistically worked out in the subsequent section D, is even less prominent than Siberry's instrumentation, which noticeably uses bass and drums in addition to the conventional voice and guitar. Finally, the strikingly dissonant parameters used by Siberry in "la jalouse" are those of mixed metre in section D, and especially form, which is extended with two pop-derived bridges.

The obvious question that presents itself then, is, why, with such a close fit with the other folk revival parameters, does Siberry obviously complicate those of metre and form? Certainly the song would have been sufficiently interesting without blatantly breaking these conventions of the folk revival genre. The answer, I contend, has to do with Siberry's attitude towards genre itself. Although as a musician she comes out of the tradition of folk revival, Siberry cannot just leave the genre to its own devices. She needs to add an additional layer of complexity to the parameters of form and metre.

The reason for this is that from the beginning of her career, Siberry has conceived of herself as a rock *auteur* along with a stream of other post-Beatles rock artists (Landau, 14 - 15). While her music is not as blues-based as rock'n'roll, Siberry has chosen to align herself with the rock tradition of the artistic singer-songwriter by consistently problematizing certain parameters of the genres that she employs. As a rock *auteur*, Siberry creates songs that, in their complexity, are antithetical to the accessibility of the three-chord pop style, against which rock criticism has traditionally defined itself. Despite the current conflation of rock and pop, Siberry has retained the concept of the rock *auteur* and continues to write, record, produce, and market her own musical and lyrical materials. As such, Siberry has complete artistic control over her songs and creates new forms within a range of contrasting genres.

Thus from the example of "la jalouse," it is evident that Siberry is an intriguing figure regarding her attitude towards genre. Although she intentionally complicates generic parameters as in this example of folk revival, Siberry can ultimately convince an audience that they are hearing "authenticity" in her use of the folk revival genre because of the sense of honesty in her performance. This nebulous quality--that of mood--is evident even on the recording of "la jalouse." It is all the more potent live, however. Add to this sense of mood the poignant narrative in the lyrics of "la jalouse," and it becomes clear that Siberry is more than adept at creating the "authenticity" required for an overall consonant fit within the folk revival genre.

Appendix 1  
Lyrics of "la jalouse"

la jalouse

i said no

la jalouse

i told you to go

you trick me with all your lies

trick me 'til i'm on your side

drag me into your stinking pit

*jalouse*

*don't cry (baby)*

*just get out and never come back*

la jalouse

mon amie mon contre amie mon amie mon contre amie

la jalouse

i told you to go

something you said tipped me off to who you were

we were talking in the kitchen

i closed my eyes i put the glass down

i knocked the table over then i

i grabbed your shoulders then i

i threw you as hard as ever

la jalouse

where would you go, anyway (here, have some wine)

la jalouse

let's talk about old . . . let's review some things

you made me crazy lose my mind

now i can't remember why

i don't even like the guy

Appendix 2  
Transcription of "La jalouse"

from *bound by the beauty* (1989)

transcribed by France Fiedderus

**A**

la ja-lou - - se I said no - - no

D Dsus4 D Dmin B#<sup>6</sup>/<sub>5</sub>

la ja-lou - - - se I told - - - you to go

D Dsus4 D Dmin B# B#<sup>6</sup>/<sub>5</sub>

**B**

you trick me with all your lies - - - trick me 'til I'm on - -

Amin Emin Dmin sus2 Amin Cmin sus4

add brushes

France Fiedderus: "Genre and Meaning in 'La jalouse' by Jane Siberry"

12 *rit.* **C a tempo**

V  
 - your side — drag me in - to — your — stink - ing pit ja - lou - se

G  
 Emin sus4 Dmin sus2 Amin Emin Dmin sus2 Dmin

B

18

V  
 don't cry — (ba-by) get out — and ne - ver — come — back —

G  
 Dmin7 Gmin7 Amin Amin7

B

20 **A**

V  
 la ja - lou - se mon a - mie mon con - tre a - mie mon a - mie mon

G  
 D Dsus4 D Dmin

B  
*tacet brushes*

France Fledderus: "Genre and Meaning in 'La jalouse' by Jane Siberry"

23

V  
con - tre a - mie mon a - mie mon con - tre a - mie la ja - lou - - se

G  
D Dsus4 D

B

This system of music is for the first system of the piece. It features a vocal line (V) with lyrics, a guitar line (G) with chords, and a bass line (B). The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are "con - tre a - mie mon a - mie mon con - tre a - mie la ja - lou - - se". The guitar part includes chords D, Dsus4, and D.

V  
I told you to go some - thing you said

G  
Dmin Amin Dmin

B

B

This system of music is for the second system. It features a vocal line (V) with lyrics, a guitar line (G) with chords, and a bass line (B). The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are "I told you to go some - thing you said". The guitar part includes chords Dmin, Amin, and Dmin. A section marker 'B' is placed above the vocal line.

20

V  
- tipped me off to who you were we were talk - ing in the kit - chen I closed.

G  
Emin sus4 Dmin Amin Dmin Emin sus4 Dmin

B

This system of music is for the third system. It features a vocal line (V) with lyrics, a guitar line (G) with chords, and a bass line (B). The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are "- tipped me off to who you were we were talk - ing in the kit - chen I closed.". The guitar part includes chords Emin sus4, Dmin, Amin, Dmin, Emin sus4, and Dmin.

France Fiedderus: "Genre and Meaning in 'La jalouse' by Jane Siberry"

32 *rit.* *♩* *a tempo*

V  
- my eyes I I put the glass down I knocked the ta - ble o - ver then I

G  
Amin Dmin Emin sus4 Dmin Bb Dmin

B  
*add brushes*

37

V  
I grabbed your shoul - ders then I I threw you as

G  
Bb Dmin Bb

B

40 **A**

V  
hard as e - ver hm where would you

G  
D A7 D Dsus4 D Dmin7

B  
*tacet brushes*

France Fledderus: "Genre and Meaning in 'La jalouse' by Jane Siberry"

V  
ah la ja-lou - - - se let's talk a-bout old

G  
G0? B#6/5 D Dmin7

B

V  
let's re-view some things you made me cra - zy loose my mind

G  
B#6/5 Amin Dmin Emin sus4 Dmin

B

V  
I now I can't re - mem - ber why I don't e - ven like the guy

G  
Amin Dmin Emin sus4 Dmin Amin Dmin Emin sus4 Dmin

B

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myth, many musicologists have been reluctant to examine the medical evidence. However, when we will see that the beliefs surrounding Schumann's writings analogous with his musical endeavours, simply mirrored and changed as he aged. Thus, Schumann's works after 1849 are not indicative of mental illness and are not the worthless products of a mad man.

Let us begin by examining the medical evidence. Since his death, Robert Schumann has been diagnosed as having been schizophrenic, psychotic, and having suffered from hypochondria, organic brain disease, psychosis, and borderline diabetes by different biographers. All of these speculations were disproved by Drs. Eliot Slater and Alfred Meyer in 1959, who drew two conclusive diagnoses based on the medical evidence.<sup>1</sup> Their study concludes that the singular explanation for Schumann's severe mood changes between 1842 and 1844 is bipolar affective disorder, formerly known as manic-depressive syndrome.<sup>2</sup> They believe that Schumann suffered from this disease from the age of twenty-three onwards. This disease is identified as "a form in which mania, melancholia, and sanity succeed each other at intervals."<sup>3</sup> Slater and Meyer's second conclusion was that Schumann ultimately died from a terminal illness, tertiary, or end-stage, syphilis, also known as general paresis – a disease they believe he contracted during his early twenties.<sup>4</sup> Dr. Slater explains the reason for his diagnosis:

The chronic type of illness is typically organic (i.e. not schizophrenic) with its heavy incidence on intellectual capacities. Finally, the rapid physical deterioration to extreme wasting, with gross speech disorder, leading to death in convulsions, fit the picture of tertiary syphilis as no other disease.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Eliot Slater and Alfred Meyer, "Contributions to a Pathology of the Musicians: I. Robert Schumann," *Deviant Psychology*, 32 (1955), 72.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

<sup>4</sup> Clarence White, *Robert Schumann: A Biography* (Philadelphia, P.A. Dovic Company, 1972) 6-103.

<sup>5</sup> Slater and Meyer, 34.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

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