Routledge Voice Studies

THE PERFORMATIVE POWER OF VOCALITY

Virginie Magnat

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The Performative Power of Vocality offers a fresh perspective on voice as a subject of critical inquiry by employing an interdisciplinary and cross-cultural approach.

Conventional treatment of voice in theatre and performance studies too often regards it as a subcategory of actor training, associated with the established methods that have shaped voice pedagogy within Western theatre schools, conservatories, and universities. This monograph significantly deviates from these dominant models through its investigation of the non-discursive, material, and affective efficacy of vocality, with a focus on orally transmitted vocal traditions. Drawing from her performance training, research collaborations, and commitment to cultural diversity, Magnat proposes a dialogical approach to vocality. Inclusive of established, current, and emerging research perspectives, this approach sheds light on the role of vocality as a vital source of embodied knowledge, creativity, and well-being grounded in process, practice, and place, as well as a form of social and political agency.

An excellent resource for qualitative researchers, artist-scholars, and activists committed to decolonization, cultural revitalization, and social justice, this book opens up new avenues of understanding across Indigenous and Western philosophy, performance studies, musicology, ethnomusicology, sound and voice studies, anthropology, sociology, phenomenology, cognitive science, physics, ecology, and biomedicine.

Virginie Magnat is Associate Professor of Performance at the University of British Columbia, Canada.

ROUTLEDGE VOICE STUDIES

Series editors: Konstantinos Thomaidis and Ben MacPherson

The Routledge Voice Studies series offers a platform for rigorous discussion of voice across disciplines, practices and areas of interest. This series aims to facilitate the dissemination and cross-fertilisation of voice-related research to effectively generate new knowledge and fresh critical insights on voice, vocality, and voicing.

COMPOSING FOR VOICE
A Guide for Composers, Singers, and Teachers
Paul Barker

VOICE STUDIES
Critical Approaches to Process, Performance and Experience
Konstantinos Thomaidis and Ben Macpherson

TRAINING ACTORS' VOICES
Towards an Intercultural/Interdisciplinary Approach
Tara McAllister-Viel

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Pow Wow Singers by Daphne Odjig, 1987.
Image courtesy of Heffel Fine Art Auction House. Printed with the permission of Daphne Odjig's son, Stan Somerville, as well as the owners, Dawn and Michael Tymianski.

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Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 2020
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

and by Routledge
52 Vanderbilt Avenue, New York, NY 10017

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Names: Magnat, Virginie, author.
Title: The performative power of vocality / Virginie Magnat.
Description: New York : Routledge, 2019. |
Series: Routledge voice studies | Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2019025372 (print) | LCCN 2019025373 (ebook) |
ISBN 9781138659179 (hardback) | ISBN 9780429340338 (ebook)
Subjects: LCSH: Singing. | Singing--Psychological aspects. | Singing--Social aspects. | Voice--Psychological aspects. | Voice--Social aspects. |
Indians of North America--Canada--Music--Social aspects. |
Indians of North America--Canada--Social life and customs.
Classification: LCC ML1460 .M28 2019 (print) |
LCC ML1460 (ebook) | DDC 783/.043--dc23
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2019025372
LC ebook record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2019025373

ISBN: 978-1-138-65917-9 (hbk)
ISBN: 978-0-429-34033-8 (ebk)

DOI: 10.4324/9780429340338

Typeset in Perpetua
by Taylor & Francis Books

TO MY PARTNER, FAMILY, AND FRIENDS.

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ROUTLEDGE VOICE STUDIES. SERIES FOREWORD

The claim that voice is everywhere might be a truism. Voice is predominant in interpersonal and technologically mediated communications and features prominently in discussions of identity, psychological development, and language acquisition. From theatrical performance to avant-garde or operatic singing, voice also offers aesthetic pleasure and, as is the case with rhetoric or journalism, it facilitates or imposes messages, arguments, and beliefs. Voice is also a powerful metaphor. Feminist scholars have championed the female voice, cultural studies has lent an attentive ear to subaltern voices, and the voice of the people is central to debates around politics, media, activism, and religion. In the arts, voice is not merely an instrument to be perfected or enjoyed. Notions of the artist's voice or, occasionally, the author's voice permeate relevant discourses. Non-human or posthuman voices invite us to listen to animal voices, interactive voice recognition systems, and vocal synthesis effected in robotics labs.

But how does one account for such plurality and multiplicity? How is voice to be discussed from a scholarly perspective? How might we move beyond bifurcated concepts of the voice in performance studies, for example?

The first, but decisive, step would be to create platforms for rigorous discussion of voice across disciplines, practices, and areas of interest. The Routledge Voice Studies series offers precisely such a platform. In the last few years, attention given to voice has shifted from sporadic publications in disparate areas of enquiry to the epicentre of discourses in a variety of overlapping disciplines. This series aspires to facilitate the dissemination and cross-fertilisation of voice-related research and effectively generate new knowledge and fresh critical insights on voice, vocality, and voicing. To that end, we are delighted to include in the series of publications a variety of formats. We are equally interested in monographs, themed edited collections, student-focused anthologies and sourcebooks, revised and expanded editions of classic texts, and inter-medial and multimedial outputs. Our hope is that these varied structures will attract both practitioners and scholars as contributors, and find a readership among established and emergent researchers, students, and artists.

We understand voice studies as a shifting landscape of questions and concerns, as a proliferative inter-discipline. Building on current initiatives, we wish to expand and capitalise on the productive debates taking place in the areas of music, theatre, and performance studies, as well as cultural studies, ethnomusicology, sound studies, acoustics, and acoustemology. Yet we are equally as keen on extending an invitation to inputs from psychology, fine art, poetics and orality studies, linguistics, media and film studies, robotics and artificial intelligence, history and philosophy, translation and adaptation studies, among others. Spearheaded by the discussions across disciplines and cultures hosted in its inaugural publication, the edited collection, *Voice Studies: Critical Approaches to Process, Performance and Experience*, this book series listens out for new spaces in which voice can reverberate with revitalised vigour. We hope you enjoy this fascinating journey with us.

Series editors: Dr Konstantinos Thomaidis and Dr Ben Macpherson

FOREWORD

"Finding one's voice" is a phrase so frequently employed in neoliberal discourse on individual creativity and agency that its implications remain largely unexamined, as if secretly regulated by a tacit consensus about what voice is. Allow me to provide an academic example of this widespread phenomenon. The reviews of my first book, *Grotowski, Women, and Contemporary Performance: Meetings with Remarkable Women* (Routledge, 2014), were all authored by women, save one. This reviewer provided an overall positive assessment of my book and I greatly appreciated his careful consideration of each chapter, as well as his attention to the methodological approach, including my engagement with Indigenous scholarship. In his conclusion, however, the reviewer's scholarly authorial voice resoundingly declared that I had not found my own. Interestingly, this criticism was not raised in reviews written by women, for whom it was perhaps clearer that my primary goal was to foreground the value of the contributions made by Jerzy Grotowski's women collaborators, whose artistic journeys, creative research, and teaching had rarely been documented and analyzed. Women reviewers might also have better understood why it was crucial to ensure that the voices of these artists could be heard.

This has led me to reflect on the performative labor that is involved in embodying the scholarly authorial voice that academics are expected to find, hone, and eventually master. Whose voice is it anyway? Certainly not mine, although I do employ it to articulate questions, formulate hypotheses, and engage in theoretical debates with other scholarly voices. When reading academic writing, I am aware that sentences beginning with "as Derrida reminds us …" or "in light of Foucault's concept of power …" can constitute appeals to authority seeking to harness the cultural capital invested in established scholarly voices.

Vocalization is, of course, implied in J. L. Austin's notion of performative utterance, a key reference in performance studies, but he does not account for this, although uttering necessarily refers to the lived voice. Even the mute scholarly voice functions as performative utterance experienced by readers as interpellation, as if audibly inflected with the authoritative tone of academic expertise. In French

scholarly writing, authors use the personal pronoun *nous* (we) to de-personalize their voice and make it more objective, scientific, and detached, while simultaneously imbuing it with the commanding might of the "royal we." Jacques Derrida rarely employs *je* (I) and, when he does, it is a generic first person, as opposed to the autoethnographic "I" used in the reflexive writing of qualitative researchers to ethically position themselves within their work.

In my qualitative research graduate seminar, I invite students to engage in a dialogical and performative writing exercise which entails appropriating, subverting, and decentering the voices of influential theorists. This exercise, which I developed as a Postdoctoral Faculty Fellow in Anthropology at the University of California, Santa Cruz, is grounded in Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of dialogism and builds upon anthropologists Dennis Tedlock and Bruce Mannheim's dialogical ethnographic model, as well as George Ulmer's "Mystory," a heuristic approach employed by leading qualitative inquiry scholar Norman K. Denzin. I ask students to write a response to selected reading materials in the form of a scripted dialogue engaging the voices of the various authors in a conversation with each other and with the students themselves, or a persona standing in for them, as well as any other relevant voices which students might want to bring into dialogue (including theorists, artists, historical figures, cultural icons, and even relatives or friends). Students then collaborate to create a plurivocal montage, perform it collectively to give life to a dynamic chorus of voices, and reflect on what can be learned from this embodied experience. Writing dialogically and making these diverse voices and competing discourses resonate in the space of the classroom through vocalization and embodiment provide students with a potentially liberating and often subversive sense of creative agency, compelling them to engage personally and self-reflexively with the course material and explore their positionality in the classroom, the academy, and, most importantly, within their own research projects.

Reflexivity further complicates the notion of authorial voice in my case due to yet another form of performative labor that pertains to writing in a second language, that is to say, in a voice which is almost-mine-but-not-quite, which means that I routinely practice a combination of impersonation, mimicry, and ventriloquism. When reading my writing out loud at North American conferences, vocalization exposes my accent, which can produce an othering effect for native English speakers, as well as for francophones in Canada, since my pronunciation reveals to them that I am from France. Even when presenting my research in French at the Sorbonne in Paris, my parents who came to support me ended up scolding me for speaking too fast, which I think was their way of expressing their inability to follow what I was saying due to their lack of fluency in scholarly language.

These ruminations about finding one's voice point to an abstract, metaphoric, and rather opaque way of referring to the exertion of academic authority discursively wielded with written words. While the performative and dialogical labor I

engaged in to produce this book on vocality inevitably participates in this scripto-centric economy of knowledge critiqued by Dwight Conquergood and Diana Taylor, I nevertheless seek to investigate the non-verbal, non-semantic, non-discursive dimensions of vocality in relation to performance, with a particular focus on orally transmitted vocal traditions. Because my research is grounded in practice, I am committed to employing an alternative approach to citationality designed to create an open forum for the often competing voices of cultural practitioners, artist-scholars, and researchers working across disciplines. This also requires being in relation with the voices of ancestors and the natural world, as discussed by Indigenous scholars, who stress that knowledge is shared within and across communities inclusive of other/more-than-human agents. Writing this book has enabled me to summon all these voices, inviting them to dialogically inform my investigation of vocality without seeking to reach a consensus on what voice is—a question that I have personally chosen to address through embodied research which entails (re-)learning the songs of my Occitan ancestors. I infer from this research that the assumptions, implications, and investments underlying the imperative of finding one's own scholarly voice obscure the multiple and diverse potentialities of vocality encompassed by the sonorous substance of the lived voice.

The Performative Power of Vocality offers an alternative to conventional understandings of voice in theatre and performance studies, where vocalization tends to be consigned to textbooks and manuals that offer fairly limited examinations of vocal work, too often considered as a subcategory of actor training, thereby confining the study of the lived voice to specialized publications advocating particular training systems. These systems are usually linked to influential voice experts and master-teachers, such as Kristin Linklater, Cicely Berry, Arthur Lessac, Catherine Fitzmaurice, Dudley Knight, Patsy Rodenburg, and Richard Armstrong, as well as music theatre specialists, such as Jo Estill, Janice Chapman, and Gillyanne Kayes, who have significantly shaped voice pedagogy within Anglo-Saxon theatre schools, conservatories, and university programs. Moreover, vocal training has become further systematized and increasingly institutionalized by members of the Voice and Speech Trainers Association (VASTA), the leading North American professional organization for voice specialists. Consequently, very little attention has been given to experimental, cross-cultural, and non-Western approaches to vocality, most of which are excluded from the training canon specific to mainstream professional acting for stage and screen. This problem is compounded by scholarly discourses employing theoretical models and analytical frameworks that tend to privilege physicality over voice, image over sound, and the spoken word over non-verbal vocalization. This monograph significantly deviates from these dominant models by employing an interdisciplinary and cross-cultural approach to engage in the exploration of vocality as a vital source of embodied knowledge, creativity, and well-being, grounded in process, practice, and place, as well as a form of social and political agency.

Chapter 1 opens in Canada, where you will meet my research collaborators for the project "Honoring Cultural Diversity through Collective Vocal Practice," a series of cross-cultural and intergenerational community gatherings and workshops co-facilitated by myself, four graduate students, and the seven members of the Indigenous Advisory Committee with whom we worked in close consultation. You will be called into our singing circle through selected fragments of a co-authored text braiding our twelve voices together as a way of searching for echoes and resonances while leaving space for dissonances. This collaborative testimony of our experience of resonance as a practice of ritual engagement reflects the challenges of working toward reconciliation, pointing to something other than unanimity, unison or perfect harmony. This practice requires listening very attentively to other voices, which are all unique within the group, so that something can emerge from their relationships, a collective embodied experience, which is also deeply personal. I will then introduce the teachings of Zygmunt Molik, the voice specialist in Jerzy Grotowski's Laboratory Theatre, focused on the body-voice connection, organicity, vibration, and resonance, notions that are central to my embodied research on vocality. These examples of vocal practice will prompt a discussion about the paradoxical lack of attention to vocality in performance studies, and the necessity to develop an interdisciplinary and cross-cultural approach that eschews what Conquergood boldly categorizes as Western textual fundamentalism and that Taylor characterizes as a privileging of the archive over the repertoire. We will then be called to bear witness to the decolonial space of Indigenous epistemologies that promote embodied sovereignty beyond essentialism/constructionism binaries, a space where traditional singing pertains to ceremonial art and transformative cultural practices that associate vocality with breath, spirit, living energy, and mystery.

In Chapter 2, we will track anthropology's colonial legacy in the development of ethnography, a methodology initially designed to make the practices of the Other legible to the West by translating orality and embodiment into scholarly writing. This will lead us to scrutinize how the sensorially experienced non-discursive materiality of vocality becomes "voice" when reduced to a conceptual abstraction or a metaphor through visualist and textualist theoretical frameworks. I will invite you to embark on an imaginary visit to ancient Greece to probe what philosopher Adriana Cavarero calls the devocalization of logos, and take part in a performative ethnographic encounter with Ion, a skilled rhapsodist and vocal expert whom Plato attempts to silence in his text. Cavarero will challenge us to confront the Derridean critique of voice and presence, and semiologist Roland Barthes will entice us to delight in the non-discursive, sensory experience of vocal music. We will then become immersed in the material affective efficacy of vocality summoned by Antonin Artaud's alchemical theatre that mobilizes the transformative power of breath, energy, and vibration. This time spent with Artaud will enable us to critically consider both Derrida's and Gilles Deleuze's

enduring fascination with his visionary attempt to emancipate performance from the dominance of speech/text in support of the non-representational intensification of presence. We will then follow Artaud on a trip to Mexico in search of healing, a journey he evokes in a testimony foregrounding the agential role of sound, music, and song as affective material forces within the peyote ceremonial process that he claims he experienced when visiting the Tarahumara.

In Chapter 3, we will explore the potential of the new materialist and posthumanist paradigm shift for conducting research on vocality beyond the limitations of post-structuralism and the dominance of anthropocentrism. We will critically engage with affect theory, neuroscience, and quantum physics, as we investigate different conceptualizations of non-human agency and identify points of convergence and divergence between Indigenous philosophy and posthumanism/new materialism to reconfigure performance processes beyond mind-body dualism and account for the relational dimension of vocality. Indigenous scholars Vine Deloria Jr. and Manulani Aluli-Meyer will offer compelling interpretations of quantum physics that foreground the non-separability of materiality and spirituality, followed by Dylan Robinson's analysis of "doing sovereignty" through the affective politics, vibrancy, and efficacy of Idle No More song-actions, and Dolleen Tisawii'ashii Manning's critique of new materialist and posthumanist scholars for appropriating Indigenous understandings of the affective potency of material existence that encompasses traditional stories and songs, considered to have their own agency—understandings that Manning effectively reclaims through her creative philosophical-poetic writing. This potent living materiality will also be evoked by Indigenous architect Douglas Cardinal, who designed the National Museum of the American Indian for the Smithsonian Institution, the Canadian Museum of Civilization, as well as the En'owkin Center, and who gained life-changing knowledge from a vision quest during which he became fully aware of his interconnectedness to all living things.

Finally, in Chapter 4, we will engage with vocality through the convergence of musicology, paleoanthropology, neuroscience, phenomenology, and performance studies. Gary Tomlinson's hypothesis of the co-evolutionary biocultural emergence of music and language will serve as a basis for challenging language-centric evolutionary theories of cognition that fail to account for singing since tonality, timbre, and melodic contour are neither language-like nor symbol-like. We will then consider Grotowski's suggestion that the non-representational performative processes pertaining to source techniques, including traditional singing, may enable us to experience consciousness not linked to language but to presence, as if activating an embodied ancestral relation to those who sang the first traditional songs. This practice-based understanding of a connection between presence and consciousness achieved through doing will be corroborated by Alva Noë's phenomenological reclamation of presence as a vital aspect of non-representational modalities of knowledge by which we gain access to the world. To ground these

alternative conceptions of presence, consciousness, and creative agency in a specific vocal tradition, we will travel to Occitania and meet Pèire Boissière, a respected traditional singer specializing in the orally transmitted Occitan vocal tradition, which resonates with the voices of my ancestors. The resurgence of this oral culture has served as a source of agency and resistance for Occitan music revitalization, a radical form of cultural activism that defies French nationalist ideology and Eurocentric chauvinism, while offering a counter-narrative to the neoliberal model of global culture. As we return to Canada, our journey will come full circle at the En'owkin Center with a unique cross-cultural encounter between two vocal traditions from different continents.

Research on vocality confronts theorists and practitioners with the paradoxical nature of performance: emerging from dialogical and intersubjective engagements informed by particular social and cultural contingencies, and unfolding in the material "here and now" of time and space, performance constantly oscillates between repetition and improvisation—always unique because ever-changing, yet always already belonging to those who came before. Drawing from my performance training, research collaborations, and personal commitment to cultural diversity, I probe the contemporary value and significance of vocal traditions whose cultural continuity relies on trans-generational modes of embodied transmission combining the constraints of structure and precision with the freedom of spontaneity and improvisation. I seek to open a dialogical space inclusive and respectful of Indigenous ontologies, epistemologies, and methodologies, a space where it becomes possible to consider vocality from the multiplicity of perspectives offered by established, current, and emerging research in sound studies, musicology, ethnomusicology, voice studies, philosophy, performance studies, anthropology, sociology, phenomenology, cognitive science, physics, ecology, and biomedicine. Envisioning vocality as source, resource, and potentiality, I ask how experiencing resonance as relationality and reciprocity might strengthen relationship to our community and our natural environment, enhance health and well-being, reconnect us to our cultural heritage, and foster intercultural understanding and social justice. In the spirit of call and response, I hope that you find productive ways of engaging with the diverse voices you will encounter in the course of this polyphonic research journey.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Routledge Voice Studies Series editors Konstantinos Thomaidis and Ben Macpherson for supporting interdisciplinary and cross-cultural research on vocality that values embodied ways of knowing. I am also indebted to my long-time collaborator Robert Ornellas for his patient, attentive, and supportive editorial assistance throughout the development of this monograph, as well as for sharing with me his embodied knowledge of performance and his passion for music and singing.

I am deeply grateful for the generosity of the members of the Indigenous Advisory Committee, formed for this project, and composed of Syilx Elder Delphine Armstrong, Cree Elder Dr. Winston D. Wuttunee, and *nêhiyo itâpsinowin* (Knowledge Keeper) Joseph Naytowhow, four distinguished singers, musicians, storytellers, and educators; Indigenous Music Therapy specialist Dr. Carolyn Kenny (Antioch University); arts-based Indigenous Education scholar and musician Dr. Vicki Kelly (Simon Fraser University); scholar-practitioner of Indigenous Epistemologies and Indigenous Education Dr. Manulani Aluli-Meyer (University of Hawaii); and Indigenous Performance Studies artist-scholar Dr. Jill Carter (University of Toronto).

The research for this book was supported by an Insight Grant and a Connection Grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), and I would like to thank the selection committee members and the anonymous reviewers who assessed my grant applications. This SSHRC funding enabled me to work in close collaboration with the Indigenous Advisory Committee, as well as with four Graduate Research Assistants: Mariel Belanger and Cori Derickson, two Indigenous students (Syilx/Okanagan) pursuing Master of Fine Arts degrees at the University of British Columbia's Okanagan Campus, and Claire Fogal and Julia Ulehla, two doctoral students in theatre studies and ethnomusicology at University of British Columbia's Vancouver Campus.

As a performance practitioner engaged in the exploration of the body-voice connection, I greatly benefited from and am deeply grateful for the teachings of master-performers Rena Mirecka and Zygmunt Molik, two key founding members of Jerzy Grotowski's Laboratory Theatre, whose life-long dedication to transmission

is a deep source of creative energy that I seek to honor in my work. I am also thankful for the teachings of traditional singers and musicians Pèire Boissière, Joan Francés Tisnèr, and Manu Théron, whose passion for cultural revitalization and renewal has inspired me to (re)learn the songs of my Occitan cultural legacy.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to Daphne Odjig's son, Stan Somerville, for granting me permission to feature his mother's powerful 1987 painting "Pow Wow Singers" as the frontispiece of my book. Thank you also to Jordan Bennett for putting me in touch with Stan, to Phillip Gevik for contacting the Heffel Fine Art Auction House, who provided a digital image, and to the owners of the painting, Dawn and Michael Tymianski, for their permission to use it.

1

PERFORMANCE, EMBODIMENT, AND VOCALITY

> Without song wind cannot play inside our bodies. [Songs] tantalize the musculature and restore cellular movement in that easy way that the breath of the four winds has of tantalizing the earth, dragging sound through trees, and haunting the world with the beauty of breath's power.
>
> (Lee Maracle, *Celia's Song*)

Coast Salish author Lee Maracle's poetic invocation of singing suggests that the restorative power of breath animates the air with sound, vibrating and resonating within the human organism as well as throughout the natural world, encompassing a wide range of sonorities that she associates as much with the voicings of wind, earth, and trees as with the voicings of human beings, bound together in a relationship of reciprocity that she honors in her writing.

As a European performance practitioner, researcher, and educator working at a public Canadian university located on the unceded traditional territories of First Nations communities that comprise the province of British Columbia, I am deeply inspired by the powerful cultural revitalization movement for self-determination and sovereignty in which Indigenous Elders, Traditional Knowledge Keepers, artist-scholars, educators, and activists have been engaged for several generations. While developing my previous research project on the artistic journeys of women who collaborated with Polish experimental theatre director Jerzy Grotowski, I was fortunate to meet Cree actor, director, and writer Floyd Favel, who worked with Grotowski during the final phase of his post-theatrical research. Favel shared memories about his experience with Rena Mirecka, the leading actress of Grotowski's Laboratory Theatre and a trusted teacher, with whom Favel had a special creative relationship, as acknowledged by Mirecka when I spoke with her about him (see *Grotowski, Women, and Contemporary Performance* 39–43). Inspired by the mutually beneficial intercultural connection between Favel and Mirecka, whose respective artistic journeys have clearly been influenced by what they have learned from each other, I conceived of my new project as a collaborative endeavor

DOI: 10.4324/9780429340338-1

engaging with the 94 "Calls to Action" issued by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada in 2015. These include:

- a Covenant for Reconciliation to "renew or establish Treaty relationships based on principles of mutual recognition, mutual respect, and shared responsibility for maintaining those relationships into the future";
- a National Council for Reconciliation to "promote public dialogue, public/private partnerships, and public initiatives for reconciliation";
- Education for Reconciliation committed to "building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect";
- the integration of "Indigenous history, heritage values, and memory practices into Canada's national heritage and history," supported by the National Program of Historical Commemoration;
- the development of "a strategy for Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists to undertake collaborative projects and produce works that contribute to the reconciliation process," funded by the Canada Council for the Arts (www.nctr.ca/reports.php).

In his 1957 Nobel Peace Prize lecture, Canadian Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson asked: "How can there be peace without people understanding each other, and how can this be if they don't know each other?" He then referred to what he defined as "cooperative coexistence," positing that knowledge and understanding must be reciprocal ("The Four Faces of Peace"). In 2015, almost sixty years later, Stephen J. Toope, who was at the time the President of the Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences and the ex-president of the University of British Columbia, invoked a similar form of reciprocity in a *Globe and Mail* article when he stated that in the wake of "the groundbreaking work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) chaired by Justice Murray Sinclair … Canadians have been called upon to act to contribute to a process of reconciliation with aboriginal peoples in Canada" ("Reconciliation Begins by Closing the Graduation Gap"). Highlighting the role of universities in this historical process, Toope concluded that "dialogue and interaction between aboriginal and non-aboriginal students, faculty and community members must underpin the co-creation of new futures" ("Reconciliation"). This statement followed Justice Sinclair's address to the academic community assembled at the 2015 Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences in Ottawa, during which he stressed our responsibility as scholars and educators to actively contribute to reconciliation through our research and teaching. When the final Walk for Reconciliation reached the Ottawa City Hall on May 31, 2015, groups of singers welcomed everyone with drumming and traditional songs, and we were encouraged by Justice Sinclair and other TRC leaders to work together to restore trust, solidarity, and social justice in Canada. This powerful call convinced me that the

most valuable research outcome for my new project on vocality would be to support collaborative, cross-cultural, arts-based inquiry, fostering reciprocal understanding and respect, and to continue to integrate Indigenous scholarship in my research, a strategy I began to develop in my first book.

Preliminary Research

In 2013, I received a Research Development Grant from the University of British Columbia Faculty of Creative and Critical Studies to conduct preliminary research for my project on vocality, which enabled me to provide an undergraduate research assistantship to Syilx (Okanagan) artist Cori Derickson, who graduated from the National Aboriginal Professional Artist Training (NAPAT) program offered at the En'owkin Centre in Penticton, British Columbia, and who transferred into the Interdisciplinary Performance Bachelor of Fine Arts Program at the University of British Columbia's Okanagan Campus. Cori helped me to organize an event entitled "Sharing Traditional Songs: A Cross-Cultural Encounter" that brought together a group of international students, whom I invited to share traditional songs from their cultural legacy with a group of young Indigenous singers and musicians, mentored by Syilx Elder Delphine Armstrong (Cori's mother) at the En'owkin Centre on April 3, 2014. Cori also scheduled meetings with certain of her relatives and other community members, who generously shared with me some of the important reasons why songs are considered such a valuable part of cultural knowledge.

Elder Richard Armstrong, who is Cori's uncle, explained to me that Syilx people have always used songs for thanking, honoring, and giving back to the people of the four kingdoms: the flying people, the water people, the four-legged people, and the plant and tree people. He stated that these are the parents of the two-legged people, who need their help to survive and prosper. Knowledge about hunting, harvesting, making medicine for different purposes, turning animal hide into clothes, and so on, was given to humans by the people of the four kingdoms. This knowledge is reflected in the making of a traditional drum, which necessitates using the hide of an animal and building a wood frame, so that the sound of the drum is the pulse of the land. Singing and drumming during the Winter Dance ceremony, along with sharing fish, meat, root vegetables, berries, and fruits, are ways of showing that humans continue to practice what they were taught and that they still benefit from these gifts. He observed that when singing these songs and when speaking the Nsyilxcən language, the body is involved, and that movement helps in remembering the words and their meaning, which is very precise, a learning process that is an important part of oral tradition. He noted that, these days, students are too busy taking notes, which is a way of relying on the mind to record in writing what they hear and see, and pointed out that the words, sounds, and movements of oral tradition cannot be accounted for in writing without losing stresses, tones, musicality, and rhythm. He

maintained that putting spoken words down on paper is a different way of learning than remembering these words in the oral tradition from which they originate and where they are linked to gestures and movement. He highlighted the sensory dimension of the Syilx people's deep connection to nature, which includes hearing and feeling the different sounds of the land, the vibration and rhythm of the earth. Richard's sister Delphine, Cori's mother, stressed that such a sensitivity to natural sounds coming from the wind, the water, the plants, and the animals is reflected in the sonorities and rhythms of the Nsyilxcən language, whose words sonically evoke the natural environment to which they refer. Syilx songs often don't have words, or sometimes only a few words, so that the meaning of songs comes from how they sound. Delphine pointed out that singing must have a certain quality, which is not conveyed by all singers, as some only sing with their mouth, and she suggested that more is needed, as this quality has to do with vibration, energy, receptivity, as well as singing with the heart.

Glen Deneault, an established Secwépemc (Shuswap) song leader, told me that he had trained for thirty years before being given permission to represent his Shuswap Nation in the Okanagan, where he is a guest. He explained that songs live in the spirit world, which means that they cannot be lost and disappear, even under colonialism, and they provide a connection to the ancestors, a long lineage of people who walked the earth before us and who help the living because they are relatives for whom they care. He specified that songs watch people and visit those who can sing them. They come to certain people because they need someone to sing them. He referred to an agreement: the trees, plants, and animals will give of themselves to the humans to sustain them, and in return the humans will give something of themselves as well, such as giving life to songs through singing. He said that the trees, plants, and animals help with the singing, as it is part of the agreement. Because singing goes up to the spirit world where the songs live, and back down to humans, it is a trail to the spirit world, and lead singers like himself experience the power within singing as a responsibility. He stressed that singers are needed for many different aspects of life, as there are prayer songs and social songs that must be used in specific circumstances. He remarked that in pre-contact times, many people were singing together which was very powerful. This helped them as they needed to be strong to hunt, build things, gather food and medicine, and so on. Everyone had a specialty and people had to collaborate to survive. During ceremonies, singers would "make power," not to have power, but to be a channel, conduit, or vessel for power in order to help others. Even though things have changed, the role of singers today is still to help the community, and the ancestors also help by sending songs, which are teachings. Like Delphine Armstrong, Glen Deneault remarked that it is not enough to just sing, and emphasized that one has to give a part of one's life to the songs, a process that takes a lot of energy and that can affect the singer for hours, days, or even months. One has the choice to do it or not, for the songs continue to live in the spirit world, and they are the voices of the ancestors that are heard during ceremonies.

I also had a conversation with Cree performance practitioner and educator Geraldine Manossa about her teaching in the NAPAT program at the En'owkin Centre. She told me that students in this program receive performance training that focuses on their identity, community, culture, land, and ancestors, which is at the root of the creative research they carry out at the Centre. She explained that some of the students initially feel lost and without any connections, yet they have a strong need to find out about their identity. The training enables them to work deeply with their body and voice as they explore singing, dancing, and story-telling rooted in who they are.

kʷunkʷancin

In order to further develop this research, I applied for government funding to offer graduate research assistantships to Cori Derickson and Mariel Belanger, the two Syilx multidisciplinary artists, who had just begun their Master of Fine Arts studies under my supervision. I planned to invite them to collaborate with me on this new project, focusing on the interconnection of orality, relationality, and reciprocity within traditional vocal music practices belonging to the repertoire of our intangible cultural heritage. After learning in April 2016 that my Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Insight Grant application for "The Performative Power of Vocality" had been successful, I discussed my plans with my colleagues within the Indigenous Inquiries Circle. Our group meets annually at the International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry (ICQI), directed by Norman K. Denzin at the University of Illinois, and includes influential Cree scholars, Margaret Kovach and Shawn Wilson. The Circle recommended that I form an Indigenous Advisory Committee that would provide the research team with advice, guidance, and mentorship throughout the development of the project.

Following this recommendation, I invited seven established Indigenous artist-scholars, Elders and Traditional Knowledge Keepers, who generously agreed to become part of the Advisory Committee: Syilx Elder Delphine Armstrong, Cree Elder Dr. Winston D. Wuttunee, and *nêhiyo itâpsinowin* (Knowledge Keeper) Joseph Naytowhow, three distinguished singers, musicians, storytellers, and educators; Indigenous Music Therapy specialist Carolyn Kenny (Antioch University); Arts-based Education scholar and musician Vicki Kelly (Simon Fraser University); scholar-practitioner of Indigenous Epistemologies and Indigenous Education Manulani Aluli-Meyer (University of Hawaii); and Indigenous Performance Studies artist-scholar Jill Carter (University of Toronto). I then applied for and obtained a SSHRC Connection Grant to bring the members of the Advisory Committee and the graduate students together for the practice-based component of my research on vocality entitled "Honoring Cultural Diversity through Collective Vocal Practice."

The aim was to create opportunities to engage in cross-cultural and intergenerational exchange through collective vocal practice grounded in different vocal traditions,

as a way of supporting expressions of cultural sovereignty and self-determination while promoting inclusivity, diversity, and solidarity as the core values of a healthy multicultural society. This project hence raised the following questions:

1 Can engaging in non-colonial forms of collective vocal practice help Indigenous, Settler, and Immigrant communities to develop mutually beneficial relationships based on a shared commitment to collective health and well-being, intercultural understanding, as well as social and environmental justice?
2 Can collective experiences of the value of cultural diversity lead to positive change in Canada in the post-Truth and Reconciliation Commission era?
3 Can the contested term reconciliation be envisioned as a call to active participation in anti/de/non-colonial forms of cultural practice, a form of collective testimony or "utopian performative" (Dolan 5) holding the potential for transformation?

Drawing from my twenty-five years of experience as a performance practitioner and educator, which includes (re-)learning traditional songs in Occitan, the critically endangered language of my cultural legacy,[1] I worked in consultation with the members of the Advisory Committee and in collaboration with Cori and Mariel, who were developing cultural revitalization projects for their MFA degrees in Performance and Indigenous Studies, and two UBC Vancouver non-Indigenous doctoral students: Claire Fogal, a theatre actor, director, and educator, whose father trained with Etienne Decroux, and who was conducting doctoral research on the Decroux-Grotowski lineage under my co-supervision, and Julia Ulehla, a classically-trained professional singer and ex-member of the Workcenter of Jerzy Grotowski and Thomas Richards (www.theworkcenter.org/), whose doctoral research focused on the Slovácko traditional songs of her Moravian cultural legacy in the Department of Ethnomusicology under Michael Tenzer's supervision.

In 2016–17, we co-facilitated community gatherings hinging upon the Indigenous ethical principles of respect, reciprocity, and relationality (see Wilson, *Research Is Ceremony*) that took place in British Columbia and consisted of three singing circles hosted in two Okanagan traditional winter homes and at the UBC First Nations Longhouse in Vancouver; two open workshops at Simon Fraser University and UBC's Okanagan Campus; two co-authored presentations for ICQI and the Canadian Association for Theatre Research (CATR) conference; as well as a three-day retreat/closed meeting in the Okanagan. The idea of a singing circle came from collaborative teaching experiments held at UBC with Cori and Mariel in my first- and second-year performance studio courses. We sought to combine Indigenous perspectives on cultural practices linked to circular patterns, including the Medicine Wheel and the sacred architecture of traditional winter homes, with a form of collective vocal improvisation based on the vocal vault first transmitted to me in Paris by students of Zygmunt Molik, Grotowski's

Laboratory Theatre voice specialist, and later by Molik himself in Poland. An example of this collective vocal practice facilitated by Molik, and in which I am a participant, can be seen in the 2006 documentary film *Dyrygent* featured on the companion DVD to *Zygmunt Molik's Voice and Body Work* (Routledge, 2010).

We organized a first community gathering/singing circle hosted at the Makwala Memorial Kekuli winter home in Kelowna on December 3, 2016. Winter homes are pit-style houses made of a wooden log frame which is built over a large pit dug into the ground. In preparation for this gathering, Cori, Mariel and I met with Cori's mother Delphine, who explained that *q'wc'i?* is the Syilx word for winter home although the Chinook term *kekuli* is commonly employed to refer to the winter home as it is easier to pronounce for those who are not fluent speakers in the Nsyilxcən language. Eric Mitchell, the Syilx Elder, who co-led with his spouse Chris Marchand the Cultural Safety Training in which I participated at UBC from September to December 2017, was once interviewed by a local newspaper about the significance of the word *kekuli*, and he specified that it refers to "something underneath" in Chinook, the trade language that First Nations people used to communicate with European traders in the Pacific Northwest ("Traditional Winter Home Explained"). Since we needed to name our first gathering, Delphine suggested *kʷunkʷancin*, which means "we sing," and generously offered to share songs from her family and tradition, including a welcome song to open the gathering and a traveling song to close it. We agreed to keep a record of this first meeting on video as part of the documentation process for this project, which would enable us to keep sonic and visual traces of our encounters (https://icer.ok.ubc.ca/research/).

Our first gathering was small in scale, which gave us the opportunity to have an intimate collective experience that began in the early afternoon and lasted into the evening, as a dozen people sat together around the fire burning inside a circle made with large rocks marking the centre of the *kekuli*. We were honored by the presence of several Elders, including Wilfred Barnes, who offered the opening prayer and smudge,[2] and Dr. Winston D. Wuttunee, an accomplished Cree singer and musician, whose work has been recognized with an Aboriginal Lifetime Achievement Award, who shared stories and songs from his tradition—we later invited him to become a member of the Advisory Committee and he kindly accepted. Anishinaabe/Metis scholar Vicki Kelly and graduate student Julia Ulehla also joined us from Vancouver, as well as my Pearson College friend, Dr. Mary Stockdale, an environmental scientist and activist who teaches at UBC's Okanagan Campus.

When we debriefed after our first singing circle and began planning a larger gathering to be hosted at the UBC Longhouse in Vancouver in February, Vicki shared her extensive experience of organizing and participating in community gatherings, including the 2016 Simon Fraser University (SFU) "President's Dream Colloquium on Returning to the Teachings: Justice, Identity and Belonging," a series of events inspired by the TRC's recommendations specific

to institutions of higher education. The SFU website describes this unprecedented initiative as follows:

> Justice, identity and belonging are central indicators of health and well-being. Founded on the ideal of a pluralistic society, Canada faces significant equity challenges in upholding the health and well-being of a diverse range of social groups. This is particularly true for First Nations, Metis and Inuit peoples, who face disproportionate challenges within Canada's education, health, economic, environmental and justice systems. These institutional pillars tragically have failed to serve the Indigenous Peoples of this land, for by holding up the State, the strength of these institutional pillars has weakened the cultural and relational roots of ancient worldviews, wisdoms and traditional societies. Through ceremony, public lectures and dialogue, this President's Dream Colloquium will cultivate an ecology for 'a new way forward'. The intention is to create a rich experience of knowledge mobilization, diverse community engagement and capacity building for a new vision. The colloquium is born out of our right to dream for the rights of future generations, and for us to reimagine and enact a new reality for them.
>
> (www.sfu.ca/dean-gradstudies/events/dreamcolloquium/DreamColloquium-Reconciliation.html)

Vicki explained that during these events she had witnessed the powerful impact on Indigenous communities, who met at gatherings facilitated by local Elders/Traditional Knowledge Keepers, as well as on non-Indigenous people, who had never participated in a ceremonial process and who gained an experiential understanding of the value of this process.

This helped me to realize the extent to which *kʷunkʷancin*, our much more humble attempt at creating a cross-cultural and intergenerational gathering/singing circle, fostered a collective process akin to a ceremony that included both Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants in the shared space and time of the *kekuli*. The ceremonial dimension of our first gathering was very tangible for Cori, whose family built the winter home on Syilx traditional territory and re-named it the Makwala Memorial Kekuli, in honor of her son who had helped to build it and had later lost his life in a tragic accident. By welcoming us into this space with songs from their family lineage, Cori and her mother shared some of its power with us. In a class presentation that Cori gave in my qualitative research graduate course, she spoke about the sacred geometry of the winter home as a reflection of the significance of circularity in Indigenous epistemologies, and later developed this research in her MFA thesis by consulting with her mother about *Q'wc'i? Nwixɬn* (winter home knowledge), which was transmitted through traditional storytelling, singing, and dancing during the winter season.

Holding our first gathering in an Indigenous space was an important first step for our project, as reflected in the words of Chief Dr. Robert Joseph of the Gwawaenuk First Nation, former Executive Director of the Indian Residential School Survivors Society, and Honorary Witness to Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, cited on the SFU Dream Colloquium webpage: "Let us find a way to belong to this time and place together. Our future, and the well-being of all our children rests with the kind of relationships we build today" (quoted in www.reconciliationcanada.ca/about/team/chief-dr-robert-joseph/). The sweat lodge, another type of traditional gathering space, is employed by Margaret Kovach and her collaborators as an allegoric device to present their research findings in their 2015 SSHRC-funded report, "Indigenous Presence: Experiencing and Envisioning Indigenous Knowledges within Selected Post-Secondary Sites of Education and Social Work." In this text, the authors explain that the members of the research team participated in "a sweat lodge ceremony held in March 2013 … led by Elder Joseph Naytowhow to honour and ground the research" (33). They associate the doorway of the sweat lodge with deep commitment, a portal requiring participants to "take a leap," and describe the lodge as "a place of understanding and being that is consistent with an Indigenous way of being," employing the words unity, holism, healing, prayer, song, proximity, trust, vulnerability, spirituality, and protocol to express their experience (78). They address the connection between this experience and their research process by pointing out that "the sweat lodge ceremony is a useful allegory to explicate the social and spiritual relations and practices of an Indigenous worldview" (33). People attending a sweat lodge ceremony may seek counsel about important and complex matters, and the lodge is considered to be a place for meditation, purification, and wisdom (36). During the ceremony,

> There are several rounds with each successive round becoming more intense due to the participants having experienced one or more rounds previously. Each round signifies endurance and with each new round, there is an opportunity for increased healing and clarity.
>
> (33)

In the report, the lodge represents Indigenous knowledges, and various elements of the landscape become part of the imagery. Fire "represents motivation and burns with a passion for justice" (42). Smoke reflects the sacredness of relationships and is linked to smudging, which "dispels negativity and allows individuals to proceed in deliberations with others from a place of a good mind and heart" (46). Smoke thus represents

> an animated interconnecting and interdependent world of relationships. Sacred *Smoke* helps to clarify and cleanse. *Smoke* brings healing and reminds that we must do our work in a way that serves community. Like

> *Fire, Smoke* also contains within it a potential to do harm. Relationships, too, can cause pain. With *Fire* and *Smoke* we must be careful.
>
> (78)

The snow of the winter landscape is a more ambiguous element since it can engulf, conceal, and be perilous, "as if Indigenous Knowledges were in danger of slipping away under the heaviness of an unrelenting blanket of whiteness," but snow also "quiets and melts; it rejuvenates and replenishes. With patience and persistence, pathways can be cleared" (79). The image of the path leading to the sweat lodge through the snow represents intention, and the research team concludes that "in order to get to the lodge, there must be friends who can help clear snow" (79). What is at stake in this process, then, is the necessity to reaffirm that research is ceremony because it is about making connections and strengthening them, a process which takes "a lot of work, dedication and time" (Wilson, *Research Is Ceremony* 89–90).

Accordingly, it is possible to envision *kʷunkʷancin* as our way of entering into a ceremonial space through the portal of the *kekuli*, a leap into proximity, vulnerability, and trust that may be interpreted as a collective commitment to a quest for healing, clarity, and wisdom. This process was made possible by the small number of participants, which allowed us to take time to go through several rounds of sharing songs and stories about songs. One of the most memorable moments for me was when Winston invited us to take a stick from the firewood and use it to drum on the large rocks lining the fire and create a collective rhythm to support his singing—Winston called these rocks "the Grandfathers"—which allowed all of us to become part of his song. This simple but profound collective action that emerged from our sitting together around the fire in the womb-like haven of the winter home became a way of honoring everyone's presence, including the ancestors whom we invited in with our songs. Through this action, which emerged organically from our sitting together around the fire, we asked the Grandfathers to help us renew our respect for each other and for our natural environment, strengthen our commitment to individual and collective well-being, and ground our research in transformative cultural practice holding the potential for reconciliation.

kʷunkʷancin, lulum chet,ʻtiləm ct

The next phase of our project entailed organizing a larger gathering/singing circle in Vancouver at the UBC First Nations Longhouse, as well as a workshop at Simon Fraser University in mid-February 2017. Cori and her family have long-standing relationships with Vancouver relatives, friends, and community members, and Mariel has close friends there, so they contacted each of them to invite them personally. Julia and Claire invited the Vancouver-based artists from their network who

had interests in singing, music and performance. We decided to name the Vancouver gathering *kʷunkʷancin, lulum chet,' tiləm ct* (*We Sing*) to honor words in Nsyilxcən, Sḵwxwú7mesh, and Hənqəminəm, the languages of the Syilx, Squamish, and Musqueam First Peoples whose words would be spoken and sung at this event.

On the morning of Saturday, February 18, we had a closed meeting at the Longhouse to prepare for our afternoon event. The participating members of the Advisory Committee were Delphine, Winston, Joseph, and Carolyn. As we sat together in a circle, Winston offered a prayer for our gathering. We then took turns to speak as we passed around a stone brought from the Okanagan by Delphine and Cori, as it has a particular significance in Syilx culture. Out of our circle emerged the theme of the power of traditional songs as a source of healing, a theme which recurred in the course of our community gathering/singing circle in the afternoon.

This event was made possible thanks to the generosity of Musqueam and Squamish Elders, who welcomed us as their guests, the guidance of the Advisory Committee members, the hard work of the four Graduate Research Assistants, and the support of my partner and research associate Robert Ornellas, who assisted Mariel and Claire with the video documentation process. Our guests included singers, musicians, theatre practitioners, arts-based educators, and therapists, as well as my Pearson College friend, Dr. Evan Adams, best known for creating the memorable character of Thomas-Builds-the-Fire in the iconic movie *Smoke Signals* and who is Chief Medical Officer of the First Nations Health Authority in British Columbia.

An Indigenous caterer delivered food to the UBC Longhouse and our guests had time to socialize and sign consent forms asking for the permission to film the gathering (we had informed everyone in advance about the documentation process) before being invited to sit in a large circle in the centre of the Great Hall. People spontaneously chose where to sit and, as we began, it became clear that the circle was comprised of small groups of relatives and/or friends who were enjoying each other's company, including our non-Indigenous guests who were sitting together in one portion of the circle. Equitable time management was a concern as this was a relatively large group of participants, so we asked our guests from the outset to be mindful of time to ensure that everyone had a chance to share songs with the circle, yet we were only able to have one round due to time constraints. As participants passed the Okanagan rock from one person to the next, we noticed that our gathering was inadvertently turning into a talking circle instead of the singing circle we had hoped for. Fortunately, some of the most engaging stories told in the circle were related to the healing power of traditional songs and cultural practice, echoing our morning conversation. By the time the rock reached Delphine, who sat next to her daughter and her granddaughter, and was passed on to Joseph who sat next to Winston, songs began to flow from one singer to another and our singing circle finally materialized. Joseph and Winston stood up to follow our Dene guest, Gary Oker, on an improvised musical journey, drumming and singing together as they walked along the

inner rim of our circle. This uplifting moment of shared creativity enlivened the entire circle and inspired others to join in. More songs and dancing were shared, filling the Great Hall with spirit and energy, and our first and only round ended with inspiring words and a powerful Squamish song offered by Chief Ian Campbell, giving our gathering a strong sense of completion and fulfillment.

The following day, Delphine, Joseph, Mariel, Cori, Julia, and I offered a free workshop at Simon Fraser University Woodward's Centre. It was attended by a group of twenty participants from various generations and backgrounds, and it turned out to be an interesting experiment in collaborative facilitation. In my experience, a successful workshop requires planning but when working with a new group of participants, facilitators must be flexible so that the process can unfold as organically as possible. In this case, the co-facilitators were also co-leading a workshop together for the first time. Fortunately, we collectively shared decades of experience and were able to rely on Joseph's gentle form of leadership acquired through his life-long dedication to respectful and inclusive forms of cultural transmission. His ability to gracefully relinquish authority while remaining a constant and reliable guide welcoming playfulness and experimentation, his generous presence and grounded energy, and his care, patience, and attentiveness helped to foster the type of collaboration that was essential to establishing a sense of trust between facilitators and participants.

Before leaving Vancouver, I met with Carolyn to speak about the Longhouse singing circle and the SFU workshop which she was unable to attend due to on-going health challenges; receiving her generous guidance was extremely helpful. Back in Kelowna, Cori, Mariel, and I had a productive meeting with Delphine and Winston, which also gave us the opportunity to brainstorm about our upcoming summer events. This conversation was followed by an online video call between the four graduate research assistants and myself. I also received an email from Joseph who shared with me a text that he had written about his experience of the workshop:

> For our workshop held at Simon Fraser University I suggested using the "hand drum stick" tradition of inviting people to sing for the community. It's what we do at *piciciwin* (stepping into) dances back home in Treaty Six territory/*kiskaciwan* (Saskatchewan). The hand drum stick passing is a time-honored ritual; I'm not aware of its beginning. What happens is that a designated coordinator referred to as an *oskapewis* (young apprentice) brings a hand drum stick and passes it on to the singing leader of the first group of invited *piciciwin* singers. This first group will sing four songs then the stick will be passed on all night until all singing groups have been invited to sing.
>
> I wasn't sure how this passing on of the hand drum stick ritual would be received. Participants responded and sang to their heart's content. That's a good sign. It means that the invited singers were open. And that's what

> Indigenous people who come from communal societies regard as there being a "spirit" or "ancestor" in the ceremonial gathering. It was definitely not about holding back. The stick went from person to person, perhaps with some anticipation and excitement. Maybe the participants didn't expect to be lead singers or to sing a song from their family or community. Yet, here we were in downtown Vancouver, awakening to the challenge of a time-honored tradition practiced by all Indigenous peoples from all over the world.
>
> When my turn came, I took charge like you're supposed to because you know your songs and drum rhythms. You know how to ignite the fire in the circle. The "spirit" is with you whether you choose to know it or not. You're lifted and carried from the first song to the last. I don't even remember if I completed my four songs. I was on fire. Well, my energy was anyway. I was ready to be a part of this ceremony and research into Indigenous sound.
>
> ("Experiencing Resonance" 172)

The intense embodied vocal power flowing out of Joseph as he shared his singing with the group during this peak moment can clearly be sensed when witnessing its sonic/phonic trace in the video documentation of the workshop.[3] This moment is one of the special gifts we received from the collaborative process in which we engaged during this project, and there are two other particularly important experiences that brought us closer together and that I have chosen to highlight: a performative presentation that we created for the 2017 Canadian Association for Theatre Research (CATR) conference held in Toronto; and a collective vocal improvisation that occurred during our summer retreat in the Okanagan.

We Came Singing

Anishinaabe/Ashkenazi scholar Jill Carter, one of the seven members of the Advisory Committee, collaborated with Vicki, Mariel, Cori, and me to create our performative presentation for the CATR conference. In the article, "We Came Singing," that I co-authored with Jill and Mariel for the journal *alt.theatre*, Jill asks key questions about singing and foregrounds the affective, existential, and relational dimensions of vocality:

> When I tell a story with my heart pounding in my throat, as my being resonates, stretching the strands of my DNA to their limits—reaching to a listener, feeling desperately for an answering vibration—is that singing? When I sing out a greeting or hear my blood singing in my ears, am I not singing then? I have learned through the years that singing, while certainly confessional, is as much response as it is call. It requires an opening of self—a signal of invitation, a promise to accept what is received … Across Turtle

> Island, we came to each other singing. Across Turtle Island, we received each other in song. Today, our nations' circles and the circles within those circles continue to receive, to grow, to radiate outwards.
>
> ("We Came Singing" 28–9)

During our conference presentation we experimented with this form of call and response by inviting our audience of theatre colleagues to stand up with us in the seven directions announced through spoken words, Syilx and Occitan songs, drumming, and flute playing, thereby braiding our voices, sounds, and words together as an embodied way of honoring Indigenous research methodologies. Jill frames our objectives and strategies within the context of our project:

> We rejected the urge to arrange bodies in a circle—to obligate our witnesses to enter (however willingly) this circle without ceremony, without protocol, without invitation. Instead, we applied the first fruits of our research, utilizing ancestral mechanisms to inscribe a healing circle with the resonance produced by our own instruments. Within this vocally inscribed circle, we intended to re-place our guests in mindful relationship to the biota we share; to each other; and to the difficult work with which we are all charged in this historical moment.
>
> (30)

Our collaborative experiment was significantly informed by Jill's investigation of "dramaturgical structure devised as an insurgent research encounter that pushes back against settler-hunger/passive consumption and gently transforms the comfortable voyeur into active witness" (30). This polyphonic performative event was an invitation addressed to those who had "gathered in Tkaronto/Gichi Kiiwenging, … visitors to, stewards of, and settler-denizens within the traditional territories of the Erie, Petun, Neutral, Wendat, Seneca and Michi Saagig Anishinaabeg" (30). As Jill called out each direction, the sonic trajectory of her spoken words situated and orientated us in our shared space as we all turned together to face a different direction, starting with the East:

> *Waabinong*: The East is the place of new beginnings: the journey of life begins in the eastern quadrant of the circle; the sun rises before us, and we face its light, seeking vision and giving thanks for this gift of life—the return of the birds, the warming earth, the flowering trees. It is springtime—*Ziigwaan*. And everything is quickening inside and around us. *Asema*—tobacco—is the medicine of the east—offered in gratitude for these things.
>
> (31)

Jill then invoked the next direction, and springtime turned into summer:

> *Zhawaanong*: Here in the South, we are in *Niibin*—the summer of our lives. The world is bursting with the sweetness of life. We are taught that it is here and now that we must take care of the spirit the growing body houses. We must cultivate that spirit, so the harvest will be rich and sweet as youth fades, and the hot blood cools. Grandmother Cedar is the medicine of this wild, wandering season. She cleanses and protects.
>
> (31)

Sounding out another seasonal change, Jill guided us towards the West:

> *Epangishmok*: Facing westwind, we are in *Takwaakin*—the autumn of our lives. A time of preparation; a time to ready ourselves for the conclusion of our journey in this life. Sage is the medicine associated with this season; its sweet smoke cleanses us, soothes heated thoughts, calms fears, and ensures that we continue to travel on with clear sight and good thoughts.
>
> (31)

Having summoned offerings of tobacco, cedar, and sage, Jill then turned to the fourth cardinal point:

> *Kiiwedinong*: The North is the place of wisdom. As the earth rests under her snow blanket, so we rest in the winter of our lives. This is the time of story. The time of ceremony. The time of spirits. The sweetness of the sweetgrass braid carries us momentarily back to the summer of our lives, reminding us that life continues; all times are one … *Biidaaban*: Dawn is breaking. The future rushes in. Rest. Remember.
>
> (31)

Calling and responding, inviting and promising to accept what is received, we reciprocated within this intertwining web of relationships: Mariel braided the words of her poem about her quest for identity and belonging together with Jill's words about the cyclical seasons of life; Cori wove the Syilx sonorities of her "Four Directions" song that honors the four cardinal points as well as all above, all below, and the center inside us, with the sonorities of my Occitan vocal music tradition; and the mellifluous tone of Vicki's Native flute flowed out in the seven directions—East, South, West, North, as well as Zenith, Nadir, and Center. Then, Jill called out:

> They told me, Look up to the sky! You will never lose your way. And you will always know when to plant or to pray; when to feast or to fast; when to hunt or to tell story. Follow the path of souls. Feel the big-bellied grandmother pulling on your womb! Look up, they told me. "We are such things as stars are made of …" … Look down, they told me. You are the youngest child of *Aki*—the earth. When your mother is sick, take care of her … . You stand at the centre of the circle. Wherever you find yourself—that is the centre. Look ever outwards from this place where your spirit begins its journey. And know this: Like a stone cast upon the waters, your every impulse effects change in the world. For good or for ill? That is your responsibility—the burden you must carry. LISTEN …
>
> (32)

The acoustic ecology we created for this experiment benefited from Vicki's extensive experience with literary *métissage*, which includes her collaboration with the authors of *Life Writing and Literary Métissage as an Ethos for Our Times*, who recognize her as a mentor. In the acknowledgments, Cree scholar Dwayne Donald defines *métissage* as "an ethical praxis of relationality" that he relates to the key challenge currently facing Indigenous peoples, namely, "the assertion of difference in response to the homogenizing power of coloniality, neoliberalism, and globalization," and he notes that this focus on difference "seems in direct contradiction to Indigenous philosophical emphasis on wholism and ecological relationality," prompting him to ask: "How can we be simultaneously different and related?" (xvii). This challenge is particularly relevant to research striving to contribute to on-going reconciliation processes in Canadian society.

Reflecting on the current situation, Jill writes that "in the wake of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's final report, a rush to reconcile is occurring," resulting in a multiplicity of partnerships and workshops, formal requests for consultations with Indigenous scholars, and official invitations sent to Indigenous artists and Elders: "Circles are formed and smudge bowls make their way around these circles, as our settler-allies listen to stories, research historical events, and labor to pronounce original names" ("Experiencing Resonance" 162–3). She asserts that while "such initiatives signal good intent, … the task for all Canadians … requires those who have settled on Indigenous lands to *re-imagine* themselves in light of this learning (Saul 2009, p. 317)," which leads her to observe:

> The work to which we have committed ourselves with the singing circles, facilitated by Virginie Magnat, concerns itself with the project of re-worlding—the re-imagination of right relationships and the invitation to articulate … a deepening understanding of ancient commitments and kinship ties. Embodied practices such as these, it seems to me, chart a processual pathway upon which we might negotiate a difficult journey

> (through a challenging landscape that teems with the verdant overgrowth of frustration, hardship, deception, mourning and danger) towards a place of "reconciliation with the natural world" and conciliation between our peoples (see Crowshoe, as cited in Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015, p. 123).
>
> ("Experiencing Resonance" 163)

Analyzing the dramaturgy of our CATR intervention, she notes that

> we called out and responded to each other (in words, in song, with flute and with drum) from the cardinal directions, locating ourselves within the space and locating our audience within a medicine wheel that we were physically mapping and vocally inscribing.
>
> ("Experiencing Resonance" 171)

Given that we were a mixed group composed of four Indigenous women and one non-Indigenous woman from different generations and that we were participating in an academic conference, we were necessarily situated within the context of cross-cultural research relationships, and we hoped that the particular physical, cognitive, emotional and spiritual space that we were seeking to dramaturg would locate us and our audience within a genuine circle formed by collective intent. Significantly, the words spoken by Mariel powerfully evoked "the *dis-ease* experienced by so many Indigenous people as a consequence of a sustained, historic campaign of dislocation (ontological, epistemological, relational, and geographical)" (171). While her call came from the North, behind our audience, we responded from the other directions, "locating ourselves and our witnesses directionally and seasonally as we reflected, through spoken word and ancestral music, on the stages of life and the seasons of ceremony that govern the human condition" (171). We thus experimented with the dramaturgical possibility to "*affectively* curate an encounter that would locate us all (presenters and witnesses) in space and time, deepening our relationships with place and with each other," and we engaged in a collaborative effort to "architect an intermediary space through which presenter (host) and witness (visitor) might transit to meet each other in a relational hoop—wrought through affect, and not through the arrangement of furniture in a room" (170).

Experiencing Resonance as a Practice of Ritual Engagement

By contrast, the collective vocal improvisation in which we participated during our closed three-day retreat that took place in the Okanagan in July 2017 was post-dramaturgical and paratheatrical in the sense that we were simultaneously participants and witnesses, so that the relational loop of our small circle became our way

of experiencing resonance as a practice of ritual engagement, in the words of Hawaiian scholar, Manulani Aluli-Meyer, who joined us for this gathering.

On the first day, we were welcomed at the En'owkin Centre in Penticton by UBC Indigenous Studies Professor Greg Younging and were honored by the presence of two special guests, Māori scholar Graham Smith and Cree scholar Shawn Wilson. We participated in a collective toning experience gently and perceptively guided by Carolyn Kenny, a compelling vocal exploration, whose deeply embodied and affective dimensions are challenging to describe. It felt like being part of a subtly intimate vocal vault as we sat in a circle with closed eyes, listening and responding to the call of vocalizations spontaneously emanating from different directions, interweaving in unpredictable ways and creating fortuitous polyphonic moments intensified by a sense of heightened perception and emergent relationality. It was an immersion in a dream-like flow of sensory perceptions without beginning or end, that might be associated with what Jill identifies as "deep time." On a personal note, I would like to express our profound gratitude to Carolyn for making this gift to our circle, a testament to her generosity during the final stages of her cancer journey which ended three months after our Okanagan gathering, when she passed on to the Spirit World.

In one of her most influential publications entitled "The Field of Play," Carolyn shares the model that she developed to convey the multifaceted dimensions of music therapy as an embodied practice designed to create the appropriate conditions for a type of creative experimentation that fosters balance and well-being through growth and openness to change. When employing this model to describe the practice of collective vocal improvisation, she states that "the group becomes an aesthetic in and of itself," that is to say, "an environment of being and acting through relationship and music, with a particular attention for human growth and development" (*Music & Life*, 105). Within this environment, participants experience "an anticipation for and belief in what is possible in the emerging moment [that] has to do with stretching the boundaries of what we consider our limitations," as this open space "provides safety and support [for] *a movement toward wholeness*," reflecting "the logic of a self-organizing system" (105). She observes that in the case of collective vocal improvisation, this organic process "takes on a life of its own, a dynamic of its own," so that each singer has "a relationship to the aesthetic of the group" (111). She suggests that the interrelated dimensions of what she defines as the field of play are best envisioned as "an expanding, holographic systems model [that] will expand in every direction, … a 'field matrix' that centers and holds a process. It is an energy system" (110). There are two main co-constituted dimensions, namely, the musical space, "a self-contained safety zone that develops out of the relationships between … participants," and the field of play, which is open to experimentation (111). The musical space and the field of play are established between each singer and the group, along with four secondary fields: ritual, state of consciousness, power, and creative process (111). Ritual refers to

patterns that emerge organically from the musical improvisation; state of consciousness is "a field of focused relaxation and intense concentration, yet playfulness"; power combines motivation and receptivity to generate an accumulation of energy that leads to growth and creates change; and creative process emerges holographically from the interplay of all the other dimensions. Carolyn observes that "on a subtle level every person in a group is interacting with every other person, even if this does not appear to be the case," so that patterns of sound or receptivity to sound open and close in an ongoing dynamic leading over time to "a healthy movement toward wholeness" (111–12).

Relationality is central to this holographic model, and a parallel can be made with Nina Sun Eidsheim's statement in *Sensing Sound: Singing and Listening as Vibrational Practice*: "[W]hat connects singing, listening, and sound … is the transmission and transduction of vibration," based on her analysis of the perception of sound as "undulating energy [that] ultimately reverberates throughout the material body that produces and senses it," so that singing affects the singer and the listener who enter in a relationship that changes them and impacts the world around them (180–1). Eidsheim hence suggests that if singing and listening are understood as "vibration across bodies, causing change," it becomes possible to define vocality as "vibrational energy—and, at times, transformation through that vibrational energy, which is an always already unfolding relational process" (180).

Carolyn's sensitive facilitation of this relational and potentially transformative energetic process within our collective vocal experience fostered a sense of trust that enabled us, on the second day of our retreat, to delve into the vibrational depths of the Hawaiian *oli* that Manulani invited us to chant with her. She encouraged us to embark on a vocal journey that took us by surprise, opening up creative possibilities within and between ourselves. It was a stirring vocal experiment in precarious equilibrium which felt like being lifted skyward on a great wind of vibration, as if freely flying into an ever-unfolding sonic/phonic territory—a shared sacred space/time where it is possible to experience infinity/eternity, a notion which in Hawaiian culture is encompassed in the vibratory quality of the sound "A," as Manu explained, and which Winston also evoked when he spoke about singing as a way of calling for our ancestors and asking them to join us so that we may experience the connection between the living past and the living present.

The Indigenous spaces in which we gathered during this retreat included the *kekuli* built by Cori's family in Kelowna and the Okanagan Indian Band Kekuli built by Mariel's community in Komasket Park near Vernon, BC. Our coming together for this retreat marked the culmination of a year-long journey, and we agreed that we would exchange in writing the thoughts, feelings, questions, and intuitions that emerged from our participation in this project. The opportunity to share our experience with others arose when we were invited to create a co-authored chapter and a companion documentary film for a collected volume on the theme of

research and reconciliation, co-edited by Shawn Wilson, Andrea Breen, and Lindsay DuPré. In this text, entitled "Experiencing Resonance as a Practice of Ritual Engagement," and dedicated to Carolyn, we braid our twelve voices to search for echoes and resonances while leaving space for dissonances. This collaborative testimony reflects the challenges of working toward reconciliation, pointing to something other than unanimity, unison or perfect harmony. Weaving critical thinking about reconciliation with various strands of our embodied experience expressed in word, song, and image, we invite readers to enter and participate in our collaborative research journey through our plurivocal performative writing and our documentary film, hosted on the UBC Institute for Community Engaged Research website (https://icer.ok.ubc.ca/research/).

In her contribution to our co-authored chapter, Manulani offers her reflections about our collective vocal engagement with the *oli* that she shared with us:

> *Ulu a'e ke welina a ke aloha.* Here is the *mele* Hawaii we chanted together in Kelowna within native lands and diverse cultures. It is a statement of our commitment to loving and its *mana* is expressed within one breath. Inhale. Exhale. It is where I understood what research was and can be – to explore difference until resonance fills our shared knowing; a synergy reaching inward toward the heart to strengthen faith in collective purpose.
>
> ("Experiencing Resonance" 160)

Expressing "*Ulu a'e ke welina a ke aloha*" with one breath requires a deep inhalation and a long and sustained exhalation to fill the vowels of these Hawaiian words with enough air to support a single line of vibration. When exploring this *oli* collectively, such deep breathing enables the group to weave together long waves of vowels flowing into one another, converging into a polyphonic synergy fueled by the undercurrents of individual voices coursing through an ocean of vibration—a relational experience of resonance that Manulani associates with becoming immersed in a sonorous source of life:

> *Ulu a'e ke welina a ke aloha*—Loving is the practice of awake minds (Hawaiian proverb). Singing one line over and over and over to find resonance felt like swimming in my favorite stream and pond along Hilo Paliku. I had to catch my breath—it was that kind of beauty. Nurturing, delightful, rejuvenating. A secluded process filled with joy and secrets found in harmony. All of it unusual and familiar at the same time. To know myself through sound. Now, how to express that in ways that engage the fullness of Other to bring us to Self again, and again, and again … Chanting, singing, expressing sound in this unusual way changed everything for me, and for the first time I could feel, really feel, *resonance*—a touching of shared meaning with

> strangers because that is what we could all offer: our own excellence and faith that it would be brought forth for something useful. We became vowels in expansion, reaching from an inside-out knowing, to bring each other to the shores of our own shared *purpose*.
>
> (173–4)

In her reflections, Vicki evokes a pedagogy of resonance activated by traditional singing and drumming, whose teachings she associates with ceremony and healing:

> [W]hen I joined the gathering in Kelowna that December day in the *kekuli*, I was deeply grateful to be singing and sounding within a traditional house, resonating with the power of traditional songs. Since then, these sonic experiences have echoed and lingered, much like the drum that lies vibrating long after the beating of the drumstick has stopped. The drum has many teachings but perhaps its greatest gift is the offering of the pedagogy of resonance as it has sounded over the lands of Indigenous peoples for millennia. What role do the drum and the pedagogy of resonance play today? What role can the reawakening of the drum and traditional song play in creating moments of ceremony that actively heal and reconcile our broken relationships with family, community, the land, and all our relations? What can this sonic inquiry into resonance reveal for our collective well-being and future generations?
>
> (165)

Delphine chose to contribute, by means of an open conversation with me that I recorded and transcribed, her experience of oral traditional knowledge, from learning stories and songs from her grandmother to teaching them to young children today, thereby continuing the important work of oral transmission:

> My grandma told us *captikʷəɬ*, our historical stories to which landmarks are connected throughout our territory, the stories about when there were plants and animals only, and then the people finally came. She would say: "The song that I'm going to sing or the story that I'm going to tell is *captikʷəɬ*, before there were humans." In every story, *captikʷəɬ*, there's a song … My grandmother always said that in our culture there were songs or prayer for any time we gather, for any time we do anything. We have songs for picking the first roots, the first berries, still today, and that's what I teach. We have songs for every ceremony that we do, that's what we have to do, it goes back to the *captikʷəɬ*. We were given laws in our *captikʷəɬ*, and that was taken away by the residential schools, and a lot of

> the people have forgotten that, forgotten their language. So few of us still remember the stories, the songs, and the ceremonies, so we do them and teach them today, which is really good, because we bring them back.
>
> (158, 168–9)

Listening attentively to the sounds of her natural environment, including the voices of the animals, taught Delphine about musical rhythm and inspired her to create her own songs, which she also transmits in her teaching:

> I tell the children that I teach, and my grandchildren, and my great-grandchildren, "You know, all you have to do is listen." I remember that back then there were so many birds. My dad used to get up early in the morning and he'd say in the language, "You can hear the birds singing, and that's beautiful," so I used to love getting up early. I'd go outside just to hear the birds sing, and the frogs, it was like an orchestra, the small voices, the loud voices, there's rhythm to it, harmony. We had three or four types of grouse, and I would hear these wings flapping in the bush, and my dad would say, "That's the winter grouse." We used to hear coyotes and wolves, but after we grew up they kind of disappeared, no more wolves. We used to hear bears growl in the bush, and my dad would say, "That's a black bear." There was a little bird, a little gray one, I don't know the name of it and I don't even see those birds anymore, but anyway, this bird would make a nest every year … in the spring and it would sing and sing and sing. I believe that's where songs come from. It was really, really nice hearing those animals, seeing them, and growing up with them. I believe that when you listen to everything, everything has a song, you can hear the song, you can hear the music and I always think, "Is it because I'm musical?" Maybe, I don't know, but I can hear it, I can hear the rhythm, and that's beautiful.
>
> (170–1)

In his written testimony, Winston affirms that living in relationship with the cyclical rhythms of nature and taking part in ceremony to maintain a relationship with the ancestors constitute a spiritual form of ecological balance:

> Our people were always outdoors and naturally learned to live in balance with nature. For instance, on the Prairies in the fall we camped in sheltered places that could break the cold furies of winter. We had corrals that were shelter for our horses, where water and good prairie wool was available. We were aware of every wind and every ray of sunshine and all our food sources. We camped in the fall beside great stands of

> chokecherries, saskatoon berries, pin cherries, buffalo berries, cranberries, strawberries, and blueberries. We learned to live for every season and consequently saw the drama of every season—good and bad.
>
> … [In the *kekuli*, a]ll my senses were wide awakened, starting from the smudge outside by the bushes to the traditional prayer song Mariel sang to the spirits of the land, air, and water. This smudge ceremony permitted us to go ahead and participate fully in brotherhood and music. I was aware of the ancestral spirits who previously lived daily in the *kekuli*. What a beautiful family experience that must have been for them conversing and thinking in their own language. The old *kekulis* were alive every day, mentally and spiritually, with language, food, and life. It was good for all of us in our special group to experience [this] even for just a day. We are better people for it!
>
> (166, 168)

Joseph chose to share the deep need he felt for reconnecting with the traditional songs of his culture as a young adult, after his experience in the Canadian residential school system, testifying that singing helped him to recover his identity, love for life, and sense of purpose:

> I was attending university back in 1973 in Regina, Saskatchewan, when the *nikamowin atayohkan* (singing spirit) and this principle of singing and drumming with precision led me to understand the critical nature of paying attention. Songs were passed on from one generation to the next and often these songs would have been dreamt about or heard during sleep. The spirit of songs being passed on told me that someone no longer here on the earth had sung the song that I refer to as "old." My wanting to sing in the old Cree way was very strong. I didn't deny myself the opportunity to learn how to sing in the way my ancestors did long before I came into this world. I had to sing. I wanted to sing. In retrospect I now know that the *nikamowin atayohkan* had arrived as my guide and motivator. After 13 years of residential school and not hearing these old songs, I was in heaven. In my experience with the *nikamowin atayohkan*, it will enter into your life when you're ready to sing. At 20 years of age, I needed an outlet, a method to express myself that would lift my mind, body and spirit. I had experienced extreme pain and trauma at the hands of the residential school. Thank you *nikamowin atayohkan*. You saved my life. Today, when I sit quietly, all the songs I have sung over the last forty years come visiting in my mind now and then, and they still sound the same as I'd

> first heard them. This is how I understand and appreciate *nikamowin atayohkan. kahkiyo niwahkomakanik*! (For All My Relations).
>
> (174)

Cori, Delphine's daughter, highlights the significance of learning and transmitting songs as a vital way of sustaining cultural continuity within her family and for Indigenous communities in Canada:

> At one point in our history we were not allowed to sing our songs … Why? Because the federal government of Canada made it unlawful. The songs were connected to our ceremonies, to our language, and to our culture … To sing is to be a keeper of the songs. It is a responsibility not only to your family but also to your community and your nation. The songs are sacred and alive. Within the songs live a power of past generations and knowledge embedded in the lands, the trees, the birds, and the wind … Most of the songs I learned from listening to my mother sing. The songs can be traced back to my maternal family lineage to my great-grandmother Christine Joseph. The songs then passed to my grandfather, to my mother, and then to me. The songs then made their way to my children and now grandchildren … This is the way of our people; this is how the songs stay alive.
>
> (167–9)

Julia, who has been exploring her Eastern European cultural heritage through the process of learning and performing the traditional songs from Slovácko, a small region at the base of the Carpathian Mountains in south-eastern Moravia, Czech Republic, explains that spending time with the members of our circle strengthened her personal conviction that the work she has been doing in the service of fostering living culture, deepening relations with her ancestors, her living family members, and the communities and individuals she encounters, is valuable in a way not often recognized in academia:

> Over the last eight years, I have been working to recover this Moravian (Czech) cultural heritage from my living grandmother, from others in her extended community, and by singing these songs as much as I can, in as many situations as I can … As a doctoral student writing about her experiences with song heritage within the Western academy, I have been advised to consider a series of inexplicable phenomena—certain events and situations that I have come to associate with the presence of spirit and appearance of my ancestors—with critical skepticism, and to approach them with scholarly distance. But to sing the songs of my ancestors within the ceremonial gatherings of this project, to have them received with generosity and

> openness, and to have the presence of spirit named and acknowledged has been a tremendous teaching and a different kind of advice or encouragement from that which has come from within the Western academy.
>
> (163–4, 167)

She points to the "great variety of contours, textures, timbres, and densities" in the songs and sounds that we shared, foregrounds "the overtones and harmonics that spontaneously rang out on top of the intervals we sang during collective toning at the retreat—led with warmth and grace by dear Carolyn Kenny," and offers a testimony of her personal experience of resonance as a practice of ritual engagement:

> I am reminded of the presence of something (a sound, but is it something else too?) that was not issued from any *one* body, but rather emerged when one person's utterance interacted with those of all the others, an act achievable only through the concerted participation of a group of human beings. And I am reminded of another kind of polyphony that we created, not by voices sounded simultaneously, but rather by voices that were spun out over time, accumulating in the slow movement of the sharing circle. Voices that didn't disappear when their sound decayed, threads of utterance issued dialogically, as each individual spoke or sang not for him or herself, but in order to weave a new composite story, a resulting polyphony, out of all the different fibers we brought.
>
> (176)

Claire, a theatre-maker committed to inclusive and transformative creative practices that foster trust, support risk-taking, and strengthen community, writes about her experience of our largest gathering:

> On Saturday, February 18, 2017, on the path to the UBC Longhouse I met Carolyn, a long-time family friend and renowned music therapist. She too was coming for the planning part of the singing circle that day, and she shared with me that she was seriously ill. We hugged out in the cold air and entered the space together. Full of Carolyn's news, I breathed in the height and natural wood and light of the central hall and felt awed and soothed all at once.
>
> … Participants began to fill the Great Hall of the Longhouse, and as the circle progressed, I was more and more moved. Amanda, a young Musqueam woman who was pregnant, stood and spoke with confidence, then danced a story sung by her mother, Madeline, and their relative, Ian Campbell, the Squamish Nation Chief. At one point, several women of European origin sang traditional songs, one after the other: Julia in the Moravian dialect of

> Czech, Ana Elia in Catalan, and Jocelyn in Scottish Gaelic … Sung a cappella from open throats under the roof of the Longhouse, these songs had a similar raw unadorned power. I felt like a tuning fork vibrating with each offering, or some kind of song barrel, with all the resonance collecting inside me. Then Gary Oker, a traditional song keeper from Doig River First Nation, talked about how he found his song in a dream, and he sang and played it on both his drum ("Dene, so with that snare drum-like resonance," he explained as he played) and then on his spirit gong-drum. I felt this song splinter the wood of my barrel-chest open and give my heart a rigorous cleansing. It was such a relief.
>
> (161–2)

Mariel recalls that during our first gathering in the Makwala Memorial Kekuli she struggled when attempting to share with us a lullaby that her grandmother used to sing: "To be honest, I have held onto shame that expresses itself as anxious tears and wavers in my voice as it did that day by the fire" (167), and wonders why she felt that way, given that she comes from a long line of singers, including her grandmother and great-grandfather, whose songs were recorded by Wendy Wickwire, an anthropology student, who spent summers with her family in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Mariel goes on to recount that shortly after our final gathering held at the Okanagan Indian Band Kekuli in Komasket Park, she was visited by song:

> I had a personal experience with song after being with the Elders of the Advisory Committee during our retreat this summer. I sang as I "paddled home" to an ancestral gathering place on the Spokane River. I heard my own voice return. I first felt it singing Manulani Aluli-Meyer's *oli* in the earth-covered winter home with Carolyn Kenny. On the Spokane River, I paddled across to the main village site where the community and guests gathered and visited, almost like we did at Komasket. I saw the shore and waited, lying in the canoe listening to the echoes reverberate around me, through the air, across the water, in my soul and through my voice. Since time immemorial we have been engaging and embodying the ancestors as the story of our lives intertwine in concert with those around us. From these places on the Okanagan Trail I gathered the pieces of my spirit that were carried away downriver forgotten and lost by old loves. Broken pieces put back in place. Sealed with new intentions, meant for new love.
>
> (177)

The caring and free-spirited energy of Carolyn's teachings and the flowing vibrations of Manulani's *oli* have also visited me during the writing of this book,

reminding me of the practice of ritual engagement with resonance that we experienced together. I associate this practice with the relational ecology of being evoked by Carolyn in "The Field of Play: Ecology of Being in Music Therapy":

> The seasons come and go. The day turns to night. We wake. Then we sleep. We breathe. We follow the natural rhythms and textures of the Earth … As human beings, we are bioregions, just as the earth we inhabit. Our beings are in a state of dynamic flux. Elements of our being are dying and being reborn constantly. Music is one of the sensory elements that permeate our consciousness to ground us in this ecology … [I]t is important to remember that all people have tribal roots. Modern Indigenous peoples represent this tribal identity. But is there a possibility of re-membering the essential spiritual principle of the interdependence of all things embedded in our ancient tribal memory? … The essential question is how do we come to a greater awareness of just being? And in an ecology of being, our second question must be how do we come to a greater awareness of the principle of the interconnectivity between all things?

As if echoing Carolyn's words, Manulani writes about this interconnectivity as a source of insight, spirituality, and wholeness that is found in the quality of the relationships in which we engage:

> *Ulu a'e ke welina a ke aloha*. Loving is the practice of an awake mind. Here is a space for mindfulness to enter the academy with chant, insight, and spirit … A spiritual understanding brings forth the wholeness that already exists … The idea of wholeness is actually the practice of it. This is why indigenous knowledge is needed now in society.
>
> … *Wailua* [spirituality] is found in the quality of our life's practices. It is found in how we inhabit these ideas. It is found in the quality of our relationships. Pointing to ideas is not enough … Slow down all discussions and include cultural practitioners who are not theorists, but knowledge keepers … Remember, it is the quality of our relationships that will help us to evolve. This kind of intelligence is not simply indigenous, it is basic common sense. How we express it then becomes the distinction of cultures and the purpose of our lives.
>
> ("Indigenous Epistemology: Spirit Revealed" 153, 162–3)

Enlisting My Ancestors as Research Collaborators

When I was conducting preliminary research for this project, Secwépemc singer Glen Deneault spoke of having met singers from various parts of the world and intuited that

all peoples have songs that live in the spirit world. He observed that these songs from different cultures can be accessed from anywhere by those to whom they belong. Adding that it was possible to share songs cross-culturally if one had received permission to do so, he recalled that while studying at university, he had formed a group of drummers and singers composed of international students. They accompanied him to an Indigenous event and he registered the group as "United Nations Singers"—he said that it was a very good experience for everyone. When I shared with him my plan to organize singing circles involving Indigenous and non-Indigenous people as part of a larger research project on vocality, he encouraged me and gave me two related pieces of advice: I should do this work with my heart first and only later use my head; and I should ask my ancestors to help me.

While I felt stimulated by the challenges underpinning these recommendations, I wondered how I might involve my European ancestors in my research process. As I reflected on what ancestry meant to me, I thought about my belonging to a French working-class family whose lineage can be traced to generations of resourceful, resilient, and strong-spirited peasants from remote rural communities in Occitania, while at the same time charting a different path for myself by being the first in my family to attend university, a personal trajectory that has led me to adopt the hybrid identity of artist-scholar within the North American academic system. This requires sustaining affiliations with two very different worlds and negotiating relationships with two seemingly irreconcilable types of ancestors: those whom I consider to be my cultural ancestors via my family and its Occitan roots, and those who might be called my intellectual ancestors, from René Descartes to more contemporary French thinkers whose theories are so predominant in the Anglo-Saxon academy that I have felt compelled to exclude them from my writing as my own decolonial form of citational politics– a possibly futile act of resistance to the ubiquitous scholarly practice of relying on the prestige of French theory to accrue what Pierre Bourdieu (who is of Occitan descent) calls cultural capital.

It was difficult at first to fathom how these intellectual ancestors might be pertinent to my research, given that their perspectives have served as the foundation for structuralism, poststructuralism, and postmodernism, which all address voice in metaphorical ways that largely leave out the question of vocality. As for my cultural ancestors, their Occitan language was systematically suppressed by education policies that established French as the official national language, thereby interrupting the oral transmission of Occitan traditional songs in the first half of the twentieth century, so that I have had to piece together my intangible cultural heritage one song at a time within the remaining fragments of the repertoire. Yet I gradually came to realize that engaging in this process of (re)learning to sing Occitan traditional songs is a way of asking my cultural ancestors to help me reclaim our shared heritage, while the act of singing these songs is a means of thanking them for their help. Having begun to establish a relationship, however tenuous, with the cultural side of my ancestry, I wondered whether I

could afford to disown the intellectual side. I inferred from my conversations with Indigenous Elders, Traditional Knowledge Keepers, scholars, and artists, that giving up on one's least favorite ancestors is not responsible, as it is the equivalent of cutting off annoying family and community members to avoid having to deal with them altogether. Moreover, non-Indigenous people of European ancestry tend to assume that they don't need to be accountable for the prior acts of their ancestors, although they have obviously benefited from their European ancestry, even if they are unaware of the privileges they have inherited. Whether artistic, cultural or intellectual, ancestry is a form of legacy linked to identity and belonging that can never be taken lightly, especially when it is linked to a history of colonialism.

Given that the near extinction of my vocal music heritage was historically due to a form of internal colonialism,[4] I initially thought that honoring my Occitan cultural ancestry might require me to confront, defeat, and overthrow the elite French thinkers who, as my intellectual ancestors, benefited from this history. However, my being advised, quite to the contrary, to enlist their aid, has led me to envision an alternative strategy, which entails bartering with these illustrious interlocutors: if they are willing to support my research on vocality, I will return the favor by citing them in my writing, so as to include their perspectives. Even if they end up being of no help, I will at least find out why, which might turn out to be helpful. I have therefore resolved to engage in a conversation with both my cultural and intellectual ancestors while remaining in dialogue with Indigenous epistemologies and methodologies in the hope of gaining insight from this cross-cultural convergence. Heeding Deneault's advice, I have also made a commitment to first doing this work with my heart.

The Enigma of the Lived Voice

I was reminded by the "United Nations Singers" story that Deneault shared with me that my relationship to vocality is rooted in a foundational experience I had between the ages of 15 and 17: I was fortunate to receive a full two-year scholarship to attend Lester B. Pearson United World College of the Pacific, a non-profit and non-denominational institution whose mandate is to make education a force to unite people, nations, and cultures for peace and a sustainable future. It was in that small global village, hosting two hundred students from over sixty-five countries in the coastal forest of Vancouver Island, that I became immersed in songs belonging to diverse forms of intangible cultural heritage. At Pearson College, I developed lifelong friendships with people from a wide range of nationalities, identities, and worldviews, and have since envisioned cross-cultural performance research and pedagogy as a powerful site of encounter, exchange, and collaboration (see *Grotowski, Women, and Contemporary Performance* 43–7).

Upon returning home to France, I began my formal vocal training with traditional singer Évelyne Girardon and opera singer Anne-Marie Grain at the *Atelier de*

Théâtre Musical Populaire de Villeurbanne on the outskirts of Lyon. Being simultaneously introduced to traditional and classical training gave me early insights into two very different ways of approaching vocality. While I deeply appreciated the high level of precision, discipline, and competence required by opera singing, I felt that being classified as a soprano limited my ability to creatively explore a potentially wider vocal range. Moreover, given my fraught relationship with *solfège*, the pedagogy of reading and writing music that I instinctively resisted while growing up under the confining system of French musical education, I was grateful for the opportunity to work with traditional songs *à l'oreille* (by ear), since the melody and lyrics of these songs are transmitted orally, and became interested in the creative experimental dimension of *ornementation*, the type of melismatic vocalization employed by traditional singers to improvise within the musical structure.

Although the classical Western opera model is "a rarefied practice," as Eidsheim observes in *Sensing Sound*, this model has nevertheless "disproportionally affected academic discourse on singing" and contributed to legitimizing what she defines as a "sound-based" conception of singing, whose influence reaches well beyond the realm of classical vocal pedagogy (143). Eidsheim thus maintains that when operating "under the ontological impression that sound and music are stable and knowable," singers working within genres other than opera are also guided by this particular orientation to vocality (143). Drawing from her training in Western classical singing, she points out that relying on Western musical notation requires singers to take instructions from the score, which is "a text-based abstraction of the sound" (138). She objects that "the conceptualization of singing through sound fails to present a path by which the singer is intuitively prompted to access the mechanisms and actions of singing" (139). Providing the example of the sung sound of the word *mio* on the note A, which is considered to be synonymous with the note A written in a score and equaling 440 hertz, the measurement of the sound wave's oscillation, she infers that "the vocalizing signifier must produce a sonic signified that is itself bound to a stable definition" (139). She explains that, in her own training, she felt that the sound she was expected to produce existed outside of herself, the pedagogical goal of this training being to "move the voice as close as possible to the sonic ideal set by the genre," a sound-based approach to singing that "revolves around conformity in regard to sound" (140, 142). When discussing the pedagogical approach to teaching voice that she developed, Eidsheim draws a parallel between the action-based singing she advocates and Jackson Pollock's action painting, comparing "what takes place as a result of the physical configuration of his body—the paint dripping from the brush held in his hand, which extends from the trunk of his body," with the notion of vocal sounds which, "like dripping paint, arise out of the physical conditions we find ourselves navigating" (131). Engaging the entire body when training the voice thus enables singers to discover the "body's sonic possibilities by exploring its potential for action" instead of focusing on "sonic outcome," a process-oriented vocal pedagogy that refrains from

imposing "preconceived sound that singers must attempt to match" and that eschews judgemental attitudes thwarting vocal creativity (146–7).

I was able to explore such sonic creative possibilities thanks to the fully embodied approach to vocality which was foundational to my four years of Grotowski-based performance training in Paris with the group *Présences en Regard*, led by Caroline Boué and Bertrand Quoniam. During one of our training sessions, they brought out a stack of small note cards and invited each member of our group to draw a card randomly. Each of them featured a handwritten statement, whose author was unidentified. Mine read: "*La voix est énigme pour le corps qui ne sait pas s'il la crée, la reçoit ou s'en délivre*" (Voice is an enigma for the body which does not know whether it creates it, receives it or frees itself from it; my trans.).[5] We did not share with each other the statements on these cards and there was no group discussion about their meaning. Yet even though this was a chance experiment, I felt that this statement was addressed to me personally, that it was a sign, a challenge, perhaps even a call, and I held onto the card, which I still have today. The enigma of the lived voice has proven to be an enduring source of mystery and inspiration for me over the last three decades, leading to the writing of this book.

The physical and vocal training that was transmitted to me by Boué and Quoniam was grounded in their own training with Molik, whose work focused on the body-voice connection, as well as with Ludwik Flaszen, the established literary critic who served as Grotowski's alter ego and devil's advocate, and who led a series of creative experiments on vocality as part of the Laboratory Theatre's paratheatrical research. While I did not work directly with Flaszen, I participated in three work sessions led by Molik in Poland in 2006, 2007 and 2008. I found many similarities between Molik's teaching and what had been transmitted to me by his students, including the fact that no verbal explanations were ever provided about what occurred in the studio, since one of the key principles shared by the majority of Grotowski's collaborators is that one should not talk about "the work"—least of all write books about it.

After Grotowski died in 1999, however, it became clear that relying solely on teaching to transmit the legacy of the Laboratory Theatre was not sufficient. By 2010, two important testimonies had been published: a collection of texts written by Flaszen appeared under the title *Grotowski & Company*, and a series of conversations between Molik and theatre scholar Giuliano Campo were transcribed and presented in the book, *Zygmunt Molik's Voice and Body Work*, with a DVD documenting the training developed by Molik. Shortly before the book was published, Molik passed away, along with his mastery based on fifty years of embodied knowledge about vocal practice.

I suspect that many performance practitioners whose training is Grotowski-based are as grateful as I am for these publications, even if they only provide traces of the work and can never replace direct embodied transmission. In his dialogue with Campo, Molik reminds us of these limitations when he declares:

> When I read some books on voice, they made me laugh. I might say, always. It's not possible to say, for instance: "do this with the larynx and make a kind of 'la … la …' using the teeth." No. Voice is a complex thing, a very complex thing. The whole body must be engaged and only you can know how to distribute some different factors, how much energy, how much subtlety, how much vibration, and so on and so on.
>
> (*Zygmunt Molik's Voice and Body Work* 9)

Molik makes clear that his approach to voice departs from conventional vocal training methods, and stresses the importance of using the physical training to prepare the body for its engagement with the voice: "The first thing must be quite simply to do this physical work in order to fully open the voice" (5). He emphasizes that what concerns him is not "how the larynx works technically" but how the voice and the body are organically interconnected: "I am working on the organism. On the whole organism" (4). He specifies that in his teaching he focuses "on the organic voice only, on how to get the organic voice from the base of the spine, how to start the resonators from the end of the vertebral column, the lowest point of the vertebral column" (8). He describes the organic breathing process that roots the voice into the body, which must itself be rooted into the ground:

> The whole body must be involved. If you are in a real process, the whole body must inspire, must breathe. All, from the feet, the whole body. It's difficult to explain, because we know that for respiration we are organically limited to only that part, that middle part of the body. But practically, the whole body must take part in the process of breathing. And … it must come from the feet. From the earth. The energy must be taken very often from the earth … Sometimes it comes from the heels, other times from the front part of the feet. It depends. But anyway, there is a connection with the earth. So, [the feet] must be alive and they must be like conductors. Conductors of the energy of the earth.
>
> (50)

In this organic approach to vocality, the area around the base of the spine is therefore "always the source of the sound," and when singing it is important to "take the power from the earth" with the feet, legs, and hips, a way of engaging the whole body that provides the performer with energy to create sound (103). When Campo asks Molik about the head, he replies: "The head, in my opinion, as far as I am concerned, should be eliminated. It's never possible to eliminate the head completely, but I always try to eliminate the head" (51). To assuage Campo's apparent perplexity about having to exclude the head when training the voice, Molik explains: "The intelligence can stay there, but only as spirit. Intelligence is

part of the spirit. And all that's physical in the head should be eliminated, for me" (51). He further remarks that when teaching performers who speak languages that he doesn't understand, linguistic difference is never an obstacle because he does not focus on words, whether they are the lyrics of a song, the verses of a poem or the lines of a dramatic text:

> the meaning of the words is nothing for me, something else is important: what Life is given, the Life the person brings out with these words. What sound, what feelings in this sound, what colour with this sound, what rhythm with this sound.
>
> (17)

He maintains that text is simply material with which to work:

> For me a text is always just a text, you must deal with it, yes, but you can't get much from it. "Words, words, words," as Shakespeare said, and for me the same, nothing else, nothing more. What is important is what you give and bring to that text, and you must put into it all of your life …, your whole experience, the whole tradition, all your sufferings, all your joys, everything! You must put your actual self into the text and then, yes, it can be really alive.
>
> (19)

This also applies to the lyrics of a song, and it is the vibratory qualities of vocalization, whether spoken or sung, that Molik seeks to cultivate through the training:

> So the work on the balance of the voice is that you invite someone to give the maximum of himself on the level of the vibration of the sound, but never force the voice. Never. It is possible to touch the impossible with a sound which is pure vibration, without a high voice, without a strong voice.
>
> (107)

In my experience of Molik's work sessions, he spoke very little when teaching yet I recall the recurring injunction "less voice, more vibration" (*Grotowski, Women, and Contemporary Performance* 135). The delicate search for balance that lies at the core of this vocal work therefore hinges upon the relationship between voice, sound, and what Molik calls "the power of vibration," which he associates with resonance:

> When you are in the room, you hear your sound … and at the same time you can hear three or four sounds, three of four notes of your own

> sound. I don't use the word voice because here there's more sound than voice. When it's almost pure vibration you hear exactly three or four notes … It's easy to check when you open your voice, listening to the open sound and hearing the pure vibration, and when instead it's just voice or the mixture of voice and sound. When you give just voice, then you can hear only one resonance, and two when there is this mixture.
>
> (*Zygmunt Molik's Voice and Body Work* 107)

The training is therefore a necessary preparation in this search for balance, the goal being to "wake up the connections in the body, to make the body alive and ready to give and respond to the impulses" (142). There are various stages in the process that takes place during a work session, beginning with the physical training that engages the whole body in the actions of Molik's Body Alphabet (some of these actions come from the *plastiques* developed by Rena Mirecka at the Laboratory Theatre); the physical training that leads to moments of improvisation departing from the Body Alphabet and opening onto what Molik calls a "meeting with the Unknown" during which appears what he identifies as "the Life"; the vocal training that builds on the physical training to open the voice and that focuses on vibratory qualities and resonance; a form of collective vocal improvisation that consists in weaving the vibratory lines of individual voices in and out of the collective sound created by the group—my teachers, Boué and Quoniam, used the term *voûte vocale* (vocal vault); and, finally, working with a specific song and a specific text. Molik describes the different stages of this process when stating:

> First of all, we must find the Life. Then, only into this Life can you try to put, if it is possible to say this, the open voice. Then, from this open voice, we must move from simple vocalisation to something like a song. Then you put the text.
>
> (4)

He remarks that once the body is well trained, "this training can and must be completely forgotten," which means that a second nature has been acquired:

> The body remembers that it must be more alive than in everyday life, it must be something special, a different kind of life, … not as small as in the everyday life; the full life has to be there. This is the reason why this process is done.
>
> (14)

This training hence prepares performers for a meeting with the Unknown, which will later inform the song and then "become the structure for the

monologue" (94). Molik insists on the total commitment that is required throughout this creative process:

> You never know how much you have to give. You must find the point where you are touching the impossible, and then give everything. I mean not by forcing the voice but by giving all yourself … All your heart must be in this. (65)

Significantly, Molik does not distinguish between singing and speaking in the vocal work so that the same principles apply to working with a song and working with a text. He explains that the Life is what matters in both the song and the text:

> Because someone has found it, and he has really lived it. And later he has sung it. Expressing this Life in his or her song. And later … he or she replaces this sound with text. He now articulates the sound into the words of the monologue. (95)

To speak of the role of the voice in the human organism, Molik employs the term "vehicle," stating that the voice is "like a vehicle which brings out the whole life. So, not only the sound, not only the breath, but also the soul" (103). When asked by Campo how he discovered the process that guides his work, Molik replies: "The Process started from the very beginning of the world," and suggests that without it, there would be nothing. He then specifies that for him, the creative process is about exploring, searching, seeking in the unknown, and he observes that "sometimes this Process is the most interesting element of the work and it is more important than the result" (105). He acknowledges the unpredictability and tenuousness of this "quest in the unknown" when explaining:

> The beginning of the Process … is absolutely unconscious. You don't know where it comes from … .[Y]ou just follow it as long as it is possible, until the Process just stops … But a little later, a few minutes later, or a few days later, or even a few weeks later, it's also possible to try to find how to follow up on this work in Process.' (105)

Finally, he foregrounds the deeply existential nature of creative work: "the process is an expression of dreams or realisation of some desires which are important for yourself. It's what you want to reach. And it depends on everyone's life experiences … . It's always something *in statu nascendi*" (106).

Echoing his Laboratory Theatre colleague, Flaszen refers to the voice as a vehicle when recalling the practical experiments he conducted on vocality in the 1970s during the company's paratheatrical period, also known as Active Culture. To the question "And what is the voice?" he replies: "It is a catalyst of Experience. A vehicle which takes us into something that is not voice. It's a flying carpet, taking us to a rare dimension" (*Grotowski & Company* 145). In his testimony, Flaszen includes the text of the leaflet for the work session called "Voices" in which participants were invited to explore "Voice and its sonic possibilities," which entailed "looking for one's own voice with its vibratory fullness by means of practicing simple movements, by acting with the body and the voice, vocalising, improvised singing—both collective and individual, with words and without words" (135). Since in these experiments everything was to be improvised, performing ready-made-pieces, chants or songs was ruled out, but Flaszen welcomed vocal compositions that emerged out of "a spontaneous *consensus* as a chorus, like a sonic home which one can leave for the unknown and return back to, then leave again" (141). A gifted writer, he attempts in *Grotowski & Company* to put this practical research on vocality into words:

> There are voices, voices, voices. Something like a virgin forest with all the richness of its sounds, echoes of life, the uncalculated music of nature, the acoustics of existence … You forget whether you sing nicely or uglily … The voice in you [is] a vehicle. The Vehicle of Experience. Meditating with sound, wandering with sound, existence through sound … Entering with sound into an unknown dimension of life. A totally obvious dimension. So perhaps not a new one, but forgotten.
>
> (141)

He makes clear that such vocal experiments are not a form of vocal training designed to improve the skills of singers or actors, nor is the goal to engage in "an artistic production for aesthetic contemplation" (145). He remarks: "It may happen that musicality is the only thing that you get from [this]. It means that the Experience did not reach its full potential … The Voice-Vehicle is not about producing or seeking sonic effects" (145). He compares this experience with alchemy and suggests that it is about something far vaster than the realm of vocal music, something that challenges our notions of sound, voice, and song. He provocatively declares:

> The very fact that you are singing is completely meaningless. You sing because there is singing. And you just don't know who is singing there. Certainly not you. It sings you, through you, it has chosen you, your body, as an instrument. But it could have chosen someone else.
>
> (145–6)

Maintaining that the Voice-Vehicle has no identifiable author, he suggests that the experience he evokes can only become possible when one is reconciled with oneself, with others, and with the world:

> [W]hen you understand with your entire being that everything which is exists, and that you exist in it, and that in this wholeness with which you are so tangibly in contact, you are only a small particle, a spark, a straw, a grain of sand. (146)

He then offers a *koan*-like riddle: "Not every open voice, not every full vibration is the Voice-Vehicle. Although every Voice-Vehicle is an open voice and a full vibration" (146). He further asserts that silence is the invisible center around which this experience revolves, and that hearing is far from being the only sense that is engaged:

> [W]hen we break through zones of the unknown vibration, at last you break through to the visual without form, to the light, the light that fills us with a mild warmth, and every breath seems to have an unlimited length, as if we didn't need air, because everything is breath. (147)

Comparing the group with a constellation in which respecting distance creates closeness and a sense of trust, he envisions this "distantly near" togetherness as enabling each one to "confidently go our own way, supported in this wandering by the voice of an invisible comrade—and supporting ourselves reciprocally," as if each individual in the group were

> part of the wholeness, a tiny living particle in the abyss, like distant celestial bodies flickering at each other, and we are seized by the immensity that gave birth to us and will absorb us again, and now—by breathing, by a vibration, which connects everything that exists—makes it kindred, woven from the same matter, … and the fear that we will disappear is already behind us. (147)

Yet he admits such moments of insight and epiphany are rare, for "all this happens in certain conditions, which—frankly speaking—are not exactly known to me" (147). During this practical research, he also experienced hopeless wanderings, tinged by an acute awareness of human limitations and a sobering humility, from which he infers that "just opening the voice and the constructive joy of shared musicking are not enough to break through to the Unknown … There must be another factor, a kind of catalyst—an element X, that causes the alchemical transformation of perception" (149). He also acknowledges that these experiments

sometimes positioned him as "quite an original teacher, who could not read musical notation and who only offers lessons in improvisational singing …" and states that in the process he learned about "a certain craft of solidity," which was perhaps inspired by Molik's intuitive yet rigorous teaching, possibly tempering in Flaszen

> any excessive enthusiasm towards making pacts with ill-defined powers which don't like to be excessively harassed, and which come when nobody is looking for them … when they like … when one is ready to accept them but does not know that one is …
>
> (149; ellipses in original)

Flaszen might thus have learned about the voice-body connection that is central to Molik's conception of vibration and resonance, compelling him to engage with the enigma of the lived voice:

> And it may so happen that your voice vibrates fully and you don't know if it is you who is bringing about this voice or the voice that is bringing about you, and where the source of the sound is—in your mouth, your chest, in your lungs, in your stomach, in your groin, or maybe in the room's walls and ceilings, or maybe in distant celestial bodies, in the crystal spheres of the universe. And it may so happen that your body is as if it was without joints, completely flexible, and it waves around freely, like an aquatic plant, following every current of the sea. And it may also happen that silence falls—one that is not acoustic zero, but something you can immerse yourself in as if at a safe depth, and you suspend yourself in it and there is no bottom beneath you … And when you emerge, you see and hear as if for the first time … And it may so happen that the question: what for, why?— may not pop into your mind but fall away like a dry twig or a pupa's husk. And when someone asks you such a question, you laugh like a child being tickled.
>
> (149–50)

In his testimony, Flaszen also recalls the importance of embodiment for Grotowski, who employed the terms "body-memory" and "body-life" to evoke the performance processes he was investigating and considered that these tangible human capacities can be honed through precision, rigor, constancy, and resilience—until "the body of the ancestors' also appears—the body of our forefathers, whom we can raise from the dead thanks to the vibrational powers of songs inherited from them" (270). According to Grotowski, when a competent performer actively and attentively embodies a traditional song, it can become a vehicle that reconnects her/him to those who first sang the song. What keeps a traditional song alive is the particular

vibratory quality linked to the precision of the song's structure, a form of sonic/phonic energy channelled by repetitions and subtle variations, enabling this song to reach us across hundreds of years. If ancestral embodied knowledge is encoded in traditional songs, and if the power of these songs hinges upon the embodied experience of singing them, then trusting that the body can remember how to sing, as if traces of this ancient knowledge had been preserved in the body-memory, can become a way of recovering that knowledge and reclaiming cultural continuity. This perspective on singing has compelled me to (re)learn the traditional songs of Occitania as a way of reconnecting with my Mediterranean cultural heritage.

Vocality as a search for balance, organicity, relationality, and (re)connection to one's cultural ancestry through traditional singing constitutes the main focus of the third chapter of my monograph, *Grotowski, Women, and Contemporary Performance: Meetings with Remarkable Women*, published in 2014 in the Routledge Advances in Theatre and Performance Studies Series. Based on four years of embodied research and multi-sited fieldwork that I conducted in Canada, Poland, Italy, France, and Denmark from 2008 to 2012, this project explores the artistic journeys and creative practices of key women artists who collaborated with Grotowski.[6] The significance of the cross-cultural performance research conducted by the Polish director was recognized through his appointment, in 1997, to the Chaire d'Anthropologie Théâtrale, created specifically for him at the Collège de France in Paris, and the relevance of his legacy was acknowledged by UNESCO on the tenth anniversary of his death through the designation of 2009 as the "Year of Grotowski." Most theatre historians rank Grotowski, along with Stanislavsky and Brecht, as one of the most influential theatre innovators of the twentieth century, yet there is a comparative paucity of scholarly texts, whose focus is limited to the early stages of Grotowski's work, leaving out the rarely documented post-theatrical phases of the research he conducted from the 1970s to the late 1990s. Within this relatively limited extant literature, very little attention has been given to the work of women.

Although the particularly strenuous physical training emblematic of Grotowski's approach is not gender-specific, it has historically been associated with a masculine conception of the performer disseminated through scarce yet iconic archival film footage and photographs. My book and companion film series featured on the Routledge Performance Archive therefore redress this imbalance by focusing on key women from different cultures and generations, who share a direct connection to Grotowski's work, while clearly asserting their artistic independence, and whose approaches oftentimes cross the boundaries of aesthetic and ritual performance. They actively participated in all phases of the Polish director's practical research, and continue to play a vital role in today's transnational community of artists whose work reflects Grotowski's enduring influence. My own Grotowski-based performance training is grounded in the embodied transmission processes I discuss in my first book: after four years of training with actors who were

students of Flaszen and Molik, I went on to work with Molik himself, as well as Mirecka, the Laboratory Theatre's leading actress. Several other encounters with women belonging to the Grotowski diaspora eventually led me to conceive of that project.

In "Towards an Ecology of the Body-in-Life," the third chapter of *Grotowski, Women, and Contemporary Performance*, I infer from my embodied experience of training with Grotowski's collaborators that vocality is an extension of movement, and that exploring the body-voice connection enables the performer to experience an interconnection between the organicity of the human body and the organicity of the natural world. This is reflected in the use of imagery evoking natural elements and the importance of connection to space/place, as well as in the fluidity of the notion of organicity encompassing all forms of life, human and other/more-than-human. This ecosystemic conception of organicity, which I link to the scientific hypothesis, according to which human life and natural ecosystems share fundamental features (see Fiscus 2001; 2002), envisions the human organism as a microcosm of the natural environment and supports an ecological understanding of performance, in the broader sense of ecology articulated by Indigenous scholars who foreground the interconnectedness of human beings and other living forces.

Within this relational understanding of ecology, performance may be considered as a continuous search for balance, or a deeply felt experience of life as "precarious equilibrium," a phrase frequently employed by Eugenio Barba, one of Grotowski's earliest collaborators. In *The Paper Canoe*, Barba refers to techniques that produce an alteration of balance through a deconditioning designed to eliminate daily behavior, resulting in a reconditioning from which emerges the type of "extra-daily" behavior pertaining to highly stylized and codified forms of physically-based performance traditions, such as Japanese Noh, Chinese Opera, and Indian Kathakali. These deeply transformative techniques, often inspired by the observation of the rhythmic structure and organic flow of natural processes, as reflected by the Japanese notion of *Jo-Ha-Kyu*, enable the performer to develop an experiential mode of cognition that Barba describes as "thinking in motion," that is to say, "creative thought … which proceeds by leaps, by means of sudden disorientation which obliges it to reorganize itself in new ways" (*The Paper Canoe* 33, 88), thereby altering the performer's perception of the world. I suggest that such precarious equilibrium is a form of productive disorientation that reflects our on-going efforts to find balance in our lives. This is also something that I learned from my circus training with Lan Nguyen, a Vietnamese trapezist and juggler, who worked for Cirque Plume and who defined balance as "*cherche-trouve*" (search-find; my trans.): if you search without finding, it's not balance; if you find without searching, it's not balance. This never-ending process of searching-finding is clearly linked to the notion of precarious equilibrium evoked by Barba. I argue that envisioning an ecosystemic performance paradigm hinging upon this understanding of balance opens up alternative conceptions of creativity and embodiment that challenge anthropocentric and gendered

conceptions of agency. From such a perspective, singing is experienced as a material practice striving to sustain ecosystemic balance between all sources of life.

Ethnomusicologist Timothy Rice, in his discussion of music as a social, psychological, and cultural resource, refers to someone of Pueblo Indian ancestry who once told him: "My friend, without songs you cannot do anything" (*Ethnomusicology* 51). Accordingly, Carolyn Kenny observes in *Music & Life* that Indigenous peoples often honor and nurture connection to the natural world through song, and specifies that in Navajo culture a person's wealth is determined by the number of songs the person knows. She relates this form of cultural knowledge to ecological balance, which she links to human health and well-being (161, 173). Yet embodied ways of knowing that are pivotal to vocal traditions often remain absent from scholarly research, and she suggests that the denigration and marginalization of this type of knowledge undermine our ability to build culturally diverse and healthy communities that value connection to each other and to our natural environment "in ways which are honorable, respectful, and ultimately essential if we are to survive" (175).

Attuning Performance Research to the Non-Discursive Dimension of Vocality

The wealth of vocal music traditions with which cultural practices are endowed around the world reflects the particular value attributed to vocality as a source of knowledge, well-being, creativity, and agency by each of these cultures. However, embodied forms of expressivity pertaining to vocalization are largely underexplored in the arts and humanities, whose literary, linguistic, and aesthetic theoretical frameworks tend to privilege discursive knowledge systems over experiential modes of inquiry (see Conquergood 2013; Fortier 2002; and Taylor 2003). In the absence of sustained engagement with vocality as a subject of critical inquiry, Konstantinos Thomaidis, a leading exponent of interdisciplinary voice studies, urges researchers who investigate performance to "reclaim some breathing space for the contingency, temporality, presence, vulnerability and relationality of the lived voice" ("The Revocalization of Logos?" 84).[7]

The relational and reciprocal dimensions of breath, voice, and resonance are pivotal to my exploration of the performative power of vocality, and I build upon philosopher Adriana Cavarero's valorization of "the plurality of singular voices that convoke one another in a relation that is not simply sound, but above all resonance" (*For More Than One Voice* 179). Cavarero foregrounds relationality within vocalization when stating that

> [I]t is the uniqueness of the voice that gives itself in the acoustic link between one voice and another. It is a vocal exchange where the

> repetition of sound, and all its tonal rhythmic variants, expose uniqueness as an understanding (*un'intesa*) and a reciprocal dependence.
>
> (182)

Citing Cavarero as a key reference, philosopher Karmen MacKendrick posits in *The Matter of Voice: Sensual Soundings* that "[r]esonance is not only in what comes back into the voice, but also in the direction of its address—in call and response" (5). Importantly, the sonic/phonic qualities that pertain to the non-discursive dimension of vocality are not exclusive features of the heightened voice found in various forms of singing and chanting, but are also constituents of the verbal expressions of the speaking voice, since "the music of voice is timbre and rhythm," necessarily informing both "the sound and sense" of verbalization (13). Such sonorous qualities therefore "exceed the dimension of mere expression," as philosopher Don Idhe remarks in his phenomenological analysis of vocality's "multidimensioned possibilities":

> *What* is said, the discursive, in voice, is never present alone but is amplified within the possibilities of *how* the voice says it … What lies within [voice], central to the very way we experience the world, is almost too complex to deal with. For much is said in even the single expression. Here, however, what is voiced, sounded, is our focus … [T]he sound of voice already bespeaks much [through] the modulations that are sounded, for even a word is multiple in its auditory context and if I address you as:
>
> You!
>
> You?
>
> You.
>
> I have already voiced three different possibilities of the voices of language. And I have done so in the economy of voice, situated as it is in the unspoken but understood field of language. Every dimension of spoken voice, carefully heard, presents a multiple dimensioned wealth … This phenomenon is probably most familiar in the voice of the actor or the singer.
>
> (*Listening and Voice* 170, 196–7)

Actors trained in Stanislavsky-based psychological realism thus rely on the subtle nuances of vocal modulations to convey the subtext that qualifies, modifies, contradicts, and at times negates the literal meaning of the lines attributed by the playwright to a character, thereby requiring spectators to actively listen and create their own interpretation. MacKendrick infers from the irreducible indeterminacy of verbalization, characteristic of oral communication both on and off stage, that "[e]very voice tells more than it can say, and it sounds even when it cannot tell, and in the end, it resists perfect knowing" (*The Matter of Voice* 18). As for the heightened voice, she

envisions this kind of vocalization as a way of stretching "the limit of sense" as well as "the limit of vocal sound," that is to say, "the limits of what we can do with words, [and] perhaps sometimes, as in song, [the limits] of the voice itself," which implies that "[o]nomatopoetically, we may give up on reference to make meaning altogether by sound" (9–10). Highlighting the non-semantic power of heightened voice, musicologist Lawrence Kramer asserts that the latter is "material, qualitative, and penetrating," so that its modality of direct address "transfigures utterance and transpierces the auditor" ("On Voice" xii). As with Idhe and MacKendrick, Kramer stresses that vocality's multiplicity poses a conceptual challenge, for "[o]nce we recognize the voices that always inhabit the voice, we must recognize also that there can be no theory of voice properly speaking" (xii). He goes on to suggest that whereas the voice must be carefully listened to if it is to be heard, it can only be understood if it is attentively "[*o*]*bserved* in every sense of the word: noticed, heeded, acknowledged, described" (xii). He infers that such acute observation "can take the place of theory," for he is convinced that "[d]oing anything more than that (but it's already a lot) would reduce the plurality of voice to an allegory of voice," which leads him to conclude that "[u]nderstanding voice does not *begin* with the observation of voices; it *is* the observation of voices" (xii). I would further contend that practitioners are most familiar with this observation-qua-understanding that preserves the plurality of voice, and this explains why, within the world's exceedingly diverse cultural traditions that value the creative potentialities of the lived voice, singers have as many ways of evoking the multiple dimensioned wealth of vocality as there exists different types of vocal music practices.

Toward an Interdisciplinary and Cross-Cultural Approach to Vocality

Ethnomusicologists describe and analyze singing as performance by foregrounding specific sonic/phonic modulations, such as "vocal width or tension, glissando, glottal shake, tremolo, rasp, volume, pitch level, vocal blend, and degree of accentuation of stressed tones" (Nettl, *The Study of Ethnomusicology* 97). Physicists specializing in human phonation employ the technology of electroglottography to observe laryngeal vibratory mechanisms—"the different configurations of the glottal vibrator that allow the production of the entire frequency range of the human voice"—and track variations in vocal timbre that are detected perceptually by singers, who are "accustomed to distinguishing sound categories regrouped under the name of register based on the acoustic qualities or the proprioceptive sensations linked to their production" (Roubeau et al., "Laryngeal Vibratory Mechanisms" 425, 437). From a neuroscientific perspective, singing engages highly complex mechanisms that require multiple networks for vocal motor control and sensory feedback processing, which explains why singers need to undergo

> many years of extensive sensory-motor training and practice to exert much finer vocal control during more difficult tasks, such as singing fast vocal runs (e.g.: melismata, melodic embellishments, etc.) or maintaining a melodic passage as someone else simultaneously sings a harmonic line.
>
> (Zarate, "The Neural Control of Singing" 1)

Physicist Nathalie Henrich Bernardoni, who specializes in the physiology of the sung voice, corroborates the importance of vocal training through which singers learn to breathe effectively, control laryngeal vibrators, and adjust articulators within the vocal apparatus to achieve the necessary balance between breath, vibration and resonances, also known as "*accord pneumo-phono-résonantiel*" ("pneumo-phono-resonatory concordance"; my trans.; "*Avant-propos*" 18). Hence, whereas ethnomusicologists, neuroscientists, and physicists measure, map, describe, and analyze the intricacies of vocalization, singers apprehend them as acoustic qualities and proprioceptive sensations detected perceptually through training and practice, thereby developing an intuitive embodied knowledge that provides a sense of creative agency. Henrich Bernardoni, who is herself a singer, recognizes that the deeply experiential nature of vocality cannot be fully elucidated by science:

> *La voix humaine fascine ou intrigue, elle exprime, elle communique, elle suggère. Rarement laisse-t-elle indifférent. Vectrice d'émotions, moyen d'expression artistique, support de la communication, la voix humaine accompagne notre quotidien du premier cri au dernier soupir. Dans ses expressions musicales, la voix exprime tout le potentiel de ses possibles. Ainsi, la voix chantée permet à l'homme de se libérer du cadre de la parole et d'explorer des palettes de sons inconnus, des gestes articulatoires inhabituels, des ajustements vocaux maîtrisés.*
>
> The human voice fascinates or intrigues, it expresses, communicates, alludes. Rarely does it leave us indifferent. A conduit of emotions, an artistic means of expression, a communication medium, the human voice accompanies our everyday life from the first scream to the last sigh. In its musical expressions, the voice conveys the full range of its potentialities. Hence, the sung voice allows human beings to free themselves from the constraints of speech and explore a broad gamut of unfamiliar sounds, unusual phonological articulations, and controlled vocal adjustments.
>
> ("*Avant-propos*" 1; my trans.)

While it is crucial to acknowledge that some of the most intriguing aspects of vocality lie beyond the scope of scientific inquiry, the potential health benefits of music-making and the therapeutic dimension of singing in particular are supported by growing multidisciplinary scientific evidence that points to yet another remarkable feature of the

lived voice. For example, people affected by cancer who engage in regular choir practice experience psychosocial benefits, such as reduced anxiety and depression, along with enhanced immune function, as indicated by decreasing levels of the neuroendocrine stress hormone cortisol and the neuronal signalling molecules oxytocin and beta-endorphin, respectively linked with social bonding/attachment and feelings of euphoria, as well as by a general activation of the cytokine network that stimulates the immune system (Fancourt et al. "Singing Modulates …" 9–10). Recent research therefore suggests that sustained vocal music practice vitally engages the human organism in a way that may positively affect psycho-neuro-immunology.

Yet somewhat surprisingly, vocality as a vital resource, an embodied mode of cognition and expressivity, as well as a source of creative agency, remains to be fully investigated by scholars working in the interdisciplinary field of performance studies. Given that vocalization, as with physicalization, is an integral part of an extremely wide range of performance processes, how might we account for this conspicuous lack of engagement with voice? Might the latter have been overlooked because it is considered to lie within the purview of sound studies, situated at the intersection of musicology, ethnomusicology, anthropology, and communication studies? If so, this perception is inaccurate as vocality tends to be underrepresented in sound studies, whose most frequently referenced publications focus on topics, such as hearing/listening/audition, acoustics, linguistics, sound art, and sound technologies, as reflected by the contents of the edited volumes, *Keywords in Sound* (Novak and Sakakeeny 2015) and *The Sound Studies Reader* (Sterne 2012). In her 2017 monograph, *Voicetracks: Attuning to Voice in Media and the Arts*, sound/media artist-scholar Norie Neumark explains that when asked by sound studies colleagues why she has chosen to focus on voice, she replies that she does not understand "voice as the same as sound, nor as reducible to sound or vibration," positing instead that sound is the medium "in which and through which voice calls out and is heard" (29). Neumark, who is interested in human and more-than-human voices, argues that they "vibrate through our, and their, bodies and call upon us to listen," inducing her to "think through voice, rather than sound or music" and to draw upon her own bodily responses and her own listening when conducting research (29).

Significantly, the field of sound studies has yet to foster diversity and inclusivity through cross-cultural dialogue, exchange, and collaboration. For, as noted by David Novak and Matt Sakakeeny in the Introduction of *Keywords in Sound*, in spite of its interdisciplinary breadth "the field as a whole has remained deeply committed to Western intellectual lineages and histories," an allegiance which is manifest across a rapidly expanding body of literature: "of the dozens of books about sound that have been published by MIT Press—a leader in science and technology studies,

philosophies of aesthetics, and cognition—none is principally invested in non-Western perspectives or subjects" (7). They acknowledge that, consequently,

> [S]ound studies has often reinforced Western ideals of a normative subject, placed within a common context of hearing and listening. Presumptions of universality have also led scholars to treat sound as stable objects that have predictable, often technologically determined, effects on a generalized perceptual consciousness, which might even be reduced to an entire "human condition."
>
> (7)

While they point to recent critical interventions in media studies, communication, literary criticism and cultural studies that address "sonic identities linked to socially constructed categories of gender, race, ethnicity, religion, disability, citizenship, and personhood" (8), they nevertheless identify a Eurocentric bias that continues to limit the scope of sound studies.[8]

In *Voicetracks*, Neumark, who is writing from the standpoint of an American scholar residing in Australia, observes in the Introduction that non-Western cultures have been in relation with more-than-human voices "in sophisticated ways for a very long time—beginning with First Nations peoples," and acknowledges that "Indigenous Australians continue to remind us of the materialism of voice, of the multiplicity of voice, of the groundedness of voice in country" (3). Yet the theoretical framework she develops over the span of six chapters privileges and builds upon the perspectives of Western scholars: anthropologists Tim Ingold and Michael Taussig, posthumanist, new materialist, and affect theory scholars Karen Barad, Vicki Kirby, Brian Massumi, Erin Manning, Jane Bennett, and Rosi Braidotti, as well as poststructuralist theorists Jacques Derrida and Judith Butler. Interestingly, Neumark notes that the notion of tracking, which is central to her book, is based in part on Ingold's concept of wayfaring derived from his ethnographic fieldwork on Inuit cultural practices and evoking a careful way of laying and following trails, a "living in and with the earth" (26), so that the title she has chosen for her monograph is to some extent indebted to Indigenous ways of knowing, namely, to "the way tracks play a key role in First Nations' cultures (Ingold 151), which are attuned … to hearing voice beyond just human voices, to hearing voices of *country*, as Indigenous Australians put it" (27). Why, then, are the voices of Indigenous scholars who can speak to attunement, the materialism of voice, and other/more-than-human agency, not heard more directly in *Voicetracks*? I wonder, for example, how these scholars might contribute to Neumark's discussion of breath, vocality, and resonance:

> Voice begins with the breath, which moves and carries the voice from inside our bodies out, animating it, contouring it, giving it rhythm and

> life, and expressing its rhythm and life. Ephemeral and intimate, breath is both bodily and not, starting in one body and connecting to another. It animates language but is not itself language … Breath also connects us to the place through which it resonates and the others in that place and in the shared medium of air. It not only connects people, intersubjectively, it also connects people to animals and things, voicing the connections between breath and the natural environment.
>
> (10–11)

I would suggest that comparing this passage with Maracle's evocation of breath in relation to human and more-than-human voicings in *Celia's Song*, which I cite at the beginning of this chapter, provides a sense of possibilities when attempting to bridge Euro-American and Indigenous ways of knowing, especially since the latter's relevance is clearly acknowledged at the outset and in the Conclusion of *Voicetracks*. While the lack of further critical engagement with Indigenous scholarship in this otherwise compelling exploration of artworks mobilizing animal sounds and voices, along with the voices of place and of technology, constitutes a missed opportunity for cross-cultural research, it also raises important ontological, epistemological, and ethical questions about new materialism and posthumanism that I will address in Chapter 3.

Accounting for Vocal Traditions and Practices in Performance Studies

The limitations identified by Novak and Sakakeeny in *Keywords in Sound* also circumscribe the work of musicologists who, when focusing on voice, tend to privilege European classical vocal practices that are held up as "high art" in Western culture and that occupy a prominent place in publications, such as *In Search of Opera* by Carolyn Abbate (2001), *A History of Singing* by John Potter and Neil Sorrell (2012), *Voicing Gender: Castrati, Travesti, and the Second Women in Early Nineteenth Century Italian Opera* by Naomi André (2006), *Making Words Sing: Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Song* by Jonathan Dunsby (2009), and *On Voice* edited by Walter Bernhart and Lawrence Kramer (2014).

By contrast, the field of performance studies is characterized by its commitment to being inclusive of non-Western cultures and traditions as well as "low art," popular and folk cultural practices, yet research on voice has nevertheless been substantially curtailed as the non-discursive performativity of vocality eludes the poststructuralist theoretical frameworks that have been critical to the development of this field, a seemingly irresolvable methodological dilemma signaling the field's allegiance to specific Western intellectual lineages. Performance studies scholar Diana Taylor thus argues that in the trajectory of poststructuralist theory, "the performative becomes less a quality (or adjective) of 'performance' than of discourse," and asserts that "although it might be too late

to reclaim performative for the nondiscursive realm of performance," attempting to do so is crucial precisely because "the discursive [realm is] so privileged by Western logocentrism" (*The Archive and the Repertoire* 6). Taylor insists that it is not solely "because Western culture is wedded to the word, whether written or spoken" that verbal expression, discursive language, and writing claim "such epistemic and explanatory power"—and are consequently conflated with meaning, while "live embodied practices not based in linguistic or literary codes, we must assume, have no claims on meaning"—for the schism that she identifies is "not only between literary and oral traditions, but between verbal and non-verbal embodied cultural practices" (*The Archive* 24–6). Taylor hence considers dance, music, and song to constitute a vital part of the repertoire of embodied memory through which cultural knowledge is created, preserved, and transmitted—a repertoire recognized by UNESCO as our intangible cultural heritage, whose valuable diversity must be carefully safeguarded in the era of globalization.

Comparing the materiality of the archive to the intangibility of the repertoire, Taylor remarks: "Unlike the archive that houses documents, maps, literary texts, archaeological remains, bones, videos, films, compact disks—all tangible items supposedly resistant to change—the acts that are the repertoire can be passed only through bodies" ("Performance and Intangible Cultural Heritage" 92). However, she objects to UNESCO's construction of intangible cultural heritage as "fragile, short-lived, and somehow belonging in the past," which serves as a justification for "the organization's stance that these forms would disappear without official intervention and preservation" (99). She argues instead that what differentiates the repertoire from the archive is the fact that continuity is ensured by means of embodied transmission through memorization, practice, and repetition, so that living cultural traditions "have a staying power that belies notions of ephemerality" (92). Indeed, while intangible cultural knowledge is "created, stored, and communicated through the embodied practice of individuals," this experiential way of knowing "exceeds the limit of the individual body," since it can be transmitted: "The acts, clearly, are separable from the individual practitioners. People can pass them on. Others can learn them" (92–3). She highlights a crucial aspect of the repertoire when stating that the latter "requires presence: people participate in the production and reproduction of knowledge by 'being there', being a part of the transmission" (*The Archive* 20), and it is via these acts of transfer that embodied knowledge is "kept alive through repeated enactment," a performance-based model that is just as reliable as the archival preservation of knowledge, which is why "certain sayings and songs will outlast many a book or photograph" ("Performance" 94, 100). Asserting that "the way to understand and preserve practice is through practice," Taylor contends that embodied practice must be legitimized as a way of knowing that "always exceeds the limits of written knowledge because it cannot be contained and stored in documents or archives," and stresses that the living practices associated

with the notion of intangible cultural heritage enable people "to reaffirm their cultural identity and transmit a sense of community by engaging in these cultural behaviors" (101). She remarks that debates about the ephemeral nature of performance are profoundly political, and asks: "Whose memories, traditions, and claims to history disappear if performance practices lack the staying power to transmit vital knowledge?" (*The Archive* 5). She therefore emphasizes that privileging the institutionalized archive as the most dependable way of "safeguarding" culture while "leaving political, economic, and intellectual property discussions off the table … in and of itself does violence to the practices UNESCO seeks to protect" ("Saving the 'Live'? Re-Performance and Intangible Cultural Heritage" 153).

In the case of vocal music traditions, which rely on trans-generational modes of embodied transmission that combine the constraints of structure and precision with the freedom of spontaneity and improvisation, performing is a way of dynamically reactivating collective cultural memory embedded in traditional songs that are often the only vehicle for endangered languages, thereby challenging us to consider the contemporary relevance and future potentialities of intangible cultural heritage. Cross-cultural analyses of orally transmitted vocal music corroborate the importance of embodied memory by showing that "prescribed series of sound or sound relations [are] specified by an exemplar (such as remembered performance) rather than in written notation" (Tenzer and Roeder, *Analytical and Cross-Cultural Studies in World Music* 11). The vitality and continuity of traditional singing hence crucially depend upon "remembered performance" to transmit sonic specificity and subtleties that exceed verbal expression and resist semiotization, so that these unique characteristics are lost when vocal music is transcribed through the standard Western notation system heritage (Magnat, "Occitan Music Revitalization as Radical Cultural Activism" 62). Accordingly, whenever "intergenerational transmission processes are weakened" due to changing ways of life linked to colonialism, Western cultural imperialism, and globalization, the vocal music heritage of minority cultures becomes perilously marginalized along with "the unique language contained in song [and] related theatre or dance forms" (Grant, "The Links between Safeguarding Language and Safeguarding Musical Heritage" 47).

Given that the lived voice is integral to the embodied, experiential, and sensory ways of knowing that are fundamental aspects of performance, defined by Taylor as "an embodied practice and episteme" (*The Archive* 17), vocality can be said to offer an alternative to the dominance of language-based discursive knowledge systems. This promising possibility has been most compellingly advocated by Dwight Conquergood, an ethnographer whose performance-based research has significantly contributed to the establishment of the field of performance studies. Conquergood contends that "the return of the body" in ethnographic methodologies advocated by qualitative researchers shifts the emphasis "from space to time, from sight and vision to sound and voice, from text to

performance, from authority to vulnerability" ("Rethinking Ethnography" 87). Pointing out that "transcription is not a transparent or politically innocent model for conceptualizing and engaging the world," and foregrounding the implication of textualism in "historical processes of political economic privilege and systematic exclusion," Conquergood suggests that the visual/verbal bias of dominant regimes of knowledge "blinds" us to the significance of embodied expressivity in human modes of communication ("Performance Studies" 34–5). He therefore challenges performance studies scholars to account for "voices, utterances, intonations, and multivocality"; to explore the relationship between sound and "temporal process, proximity, and incorporation"; and to reconfigure listening as "an interiorizing experience, a gathering together, a drawing in" that he contrasts with sight, observation, detachment, distance, and objectivity linked to "the spatial practices of division, separation, compartmentalization, and surveillance" ("Rethinking Ethnography" 87). Referring to Paul Gilroy's (1994) examination of the oppositional politics of black musical performance in *The Black Atlantic*, Conquergood provides the example of Frederick Douglas's life narrative as epitomizing the importance of "the improvisatory performance politics expressed in the singing of enslaved people," who were forbidden to acquire literacy in the nineteenth-century American legal system ("Performance Studies" 36). Douglas's stirring testimony as a former slave leads Conquergood to advocate "an ethnography of the ears and the heart," which transforms participant-observation—the cornerstone of mainstream ethnographic practice hinging upon asymmetrical power relations between ethnographer and informants—into what he envisions as "co-performative witnessing, … a riskier hermeneutics of experience, relocation, copresence, humility, and vulnerability" (37). Conquergood employs Raymond Williams' phrase "structures of feelings" to evoke the dynamic power that performative practices of resistance "register and radiate," and he associates "the tones, cadence, vocal nuances, and the sensuous specificities of performance that overflow verbal content" with specific phonic modalities of expression which "pull us into alternative ways of knowing that exceed cognitive control" (37–8). He infers from this analysis that the field of performance studies has the potential to bridge critical and creative forms of inquiry by "bringing a rare hybridity into the academy" that can foster alternative methodologies through the "braiding together" of different ways of knowing (41).

While Taylor and Conquergood highlight the potentialities of performance studies, they also bring attention to its shortcomings and articulate a powerful critique of the hegemony of the written word in the academy. Taylor remarks that the field of performance studies, which emerged from the convergence of theatre studies and anthropology, has inherited some of the "assumptions and methodological blind spots" pertaining to these disciplines, even as it claims to have overcome their respective limitations (*The Archive* 7). These assumptions include the Eurocentric focus of theatre studies and its antitheatrical prejudice that can be traced to Plato, as well as anthropology's

historical collusion with colonialism that continues to raise key ethical questions about ethnography and Western research models in general. Although the increasing ubiquity of the terms performance, performative, and performativity seems to provide ample evidence of the efficacy of the paradigm endorsed by performance studies scholars regardless of these shortcomings, I would contend that an awareness of the potentialities and limitations of this paradigm is critical to the appropriate redeployment of its terminology, conceptualizations, and methodological orientations within the emerging field of voice studies, as reflected in Conquergood's sobering assessment:

> The good news is that in recent decades there has been a remarkable constellation of thinking around performance. The "antitheatrical prejudice" notwithstanding, performance is now a powerful locus for research in the human sciences, a rallying point for scholars who want to privilege action, agency, and transformation (Barish 1981). The bad news is that the almost total domination of textualism in the academy makes it very difficult to rethink performance in non-Eurocentric ways … Because the conceptual deck is stacked in favor of text-based disciplines, methods, and epistemologies, we need to ask whose interests are served by the textualization of performance practices? What are the consequences of thinking about performance and textuality as fluid, exchangeable, and assimilable terms? What is at stake in the desire to blur the edges, dissolve the boundary, dismantle the opposition, and close the space between text and performance? What are the costs of dematerializing texts as textuality, and disembodying performance as *performativity*, and then making these abstractions interchangeable concepts? What gets lost in the exchange, in the "reworking of performativity as citationality" (Butler 1993, 14)? Because knowledge in the West is scriptocentric, we need to recuperate from performance some oppositional force, some resistance to the textual fundamentalism of the academy. Performance studies scholars must continue to engage with the visualist/textualist bias of western intellectual systems by deploying performance as a lever to decenter, not necessarily discard, the textualism that pervades dominant regimes of knowledge.
>
> ("Beyond the Text" 47–8)

Accordingly, if textuality and performativity are dematerializing and disembodying abstractions that privilege a poststructuralist/postmodernist conceptualization of performance, then what is at stake in the textualization of performance practices is the consolidation of dominant scriptocentric knowledge systems that exclude other ways of knowing. In *Performance Studies: An Introduction*, Richard Schechner (2013) warns that the term performativity is "hard to pin down," and points to the

baffling slipperiness of this poststructuralist concept embedded in a postmodern understanding of language and discourse. He specifies that "postmodernism and poststructuralism are the bases for academic theories of performativity" that were initially grounded in linguistic philosopher J. L. Austin's definition of performative utterances, such as "promises, bets, curses, contracts, and judgements," considered to be actions that produce effects (123, 141). He further remarks that "those who built on Austin were soon discovering a wide range of 'speech acts' and applying the theory of performativity to all areas of social life," thereby making this concept simultaneously all-encompassing and elusive (168).

In an effort to situate and ground the term performance within the field of performance studies, anthropologist Victor Turner, Schechner's close collaborator, traces its etymology to "the Old French *parfournir – par* ('thoroughly') plus *fournir* ('to furnish')" and infers that

> *performance* does not necessarily have the structuralist implication of manifesting form, but rather the processual sense of 'bringing to completion' or 'accomplishing.' To *perform* is thus to complete a more or less involved process rather than to do a single deed or act.
>
> ("Dramatic Ritual/Ritual Drama" 82)

Indeed, the *Dictionnaire de la langue française* by Émile Littré traces the verb *parfournir* to the twelfth century and defines it as *fournir en entier, achever de fournir* (to fully provide, to bring providing to completion) (www.littre.org/definition/parfournir; my trans.), thereby corroborating Turner's analysis. Interestingly, Le Dictionnaire du Moyen Français (1330–1500) features a host of related meanings that characterize *parfournir* as both processual and productive: *accomplir, mener à terme, à bien, parachever* (to achieve, to carry out, to complete, to finalize); *achever, terminer, remplir entièrement* (to accomplish, to round off, to fully complete); *parfaire* (to perfect); *mener à son terme* (to lead to an end); *fournir ce qui manque pour achever un paiement* (to provide what is missing to complete a payment; www.atilf.fr/dmf/definition/parfournir; my trans.). Finally, it is worth noting that in the contemporary French language, the noun *performance* and the adjective *performant* combine the notions of being effective and being competitive to refer to the efficiency of car engines or computer hardware as well as to the competitiveness of professional athletes, but these terms are not employed in reference to the wide range of performance events and actions that comprise what Schechner calls the broad spectrum of performance. Spanning more than nine hundred years, this etymological survey foregrounds a chain of signification that points to a continuity and a dynamism, rather than a tension or an opposition, between bringing something to life and bringing something to completion, that is to say, between doing and accomplishing, or process and product.

Schechner builds on Turner's processual definition of performance when he equates performance with "practices, events, and behaviors" and points out that a "quality of 'liveness' – even when dealing with media or archival materials – is at the heart of performance studies," which leads him to posit that "performances exist only as actions, interactions, and relationships" (2, 30). As for Taylor, who clearly emphasizes the centrality of embodiment in performance practice, she acknowledges and supports the open-endedness of the concept of performance when she observes: "Its very undefinability and complexity I find reassuring. As a term simultaneously connoting a process, a praxis, an episteme, a mode of transmission and accomplishment, and a means of intervening in the world, it far exceeds the possibilities" of other words that are frequently offered in its place, whether it be theatre, spectacle or event because "performance carries the possibility of challenge, even self-challenge, within it" (*The Archive* 15).

The implications of the triad performance/performative/performativity for research on vocality are as manifold as the phenomenon of vocalization itself: as we have seen, Cavarero and MacKendrick consider resonance to convoke voices in a relation of reciprocal dependence, a modality of direct address, of call and response, which may be associated with the type of actions, interactions, and relationships that Schechner identifies as fundamental properties of performance, along with the quality of "liveness" that he highlights as a central tenet. Kramer stresses that, from a musicological perspective, heightened voice has the capacity to transfigure utterance and transpierce the auditor, which, I would argue, extends Austin's concept of performative utterance beyond the notion of speech act and into the non-discursive realm of performativity, thereby potentially offering an alternative to the textualization of performance practices indicted by Conquergood. Idhe's phenomenology of voice points to the infinite performative possibilities conjured up by the nuanced modulations that imbue both verbal communication and non-verbal forms of vocal expression with irreducible indeterminacy. Finally, Thomaidis foregrounds the contingent and temporal dimensions of vocal performance, which he relates to notions of presence, vulnerability, and relationality that epitomize the performative potentialities of the lived voice, while Neumark distinguishes voice from sound, envisioning the latter as the medium that enables voice to call out and be heard, and emphasizing the relational and affective aspects of vocal performativity. In the case of the particularly challenging modality of the heightened voice, I would suggest that vocality may be said to be performative in the sense of processual, efficacious, and productive. Since performing a song hinges upon embodiment, or the involvement of the whole being—body, mind, and heart—in singing, this complex form of technology, currently scrutinized by neuroscience as a particularly intriguing human capacity, can be said to "thoroughly furnish," or "fully provide," what the performer needs to activate the quality of liveness of the song, attend to the process of its unfolding, and bring it to completion so that it may fulfill its purpose.

While such a capacity may be considered to exemplify Turner's notion of "*Homo performans*" (*Process, Performance, and Pilgrimage* 72), the question of whether it can be deemed exclusively human must be raised by performance studies scholars striving to move beyond anthropocentrism.

The suitability of the lens of performance studies for the investigation of vocality arguably stems from the fact that this field has been shaped by theorists who define performance as a seemingly paradoxical phenomenon, combining consistency and indeterminacy, iteration and deferral, constraint and freedom. Performative utterances and enactments, informed by particular social and cultural contingencies, are context-dependent yet unpredictable events, always unique because ever-changing yet "never for the first time," since according to the concept of restoration of behavior defined by Schechner as a key principle of performance studies, every performance is composed of fragments of restored behavior that are endlessly recombined into different configurations (35–6). Schechner emphasizes that the notion of iterativity is a pivotal aspect of performance processes: "unstable 'iteration' – repetition, but not exactly – replaces stable representation," hence constituting both the strength and the weakness of performance, as restored behavior is subject to the theory of flux attributed to Heraclitus and based on the observation that "no one can step twice into the same river" (28, 143). This pre-Socratic conception of life as an ever-changing flow of experiences is also relevant to the non-visual materiality of vocality often expressed by voice practitioners through water metaphors, evoking the ebb and flow of breath within the human organism and the phonic fluidity of sound waves, simultaneously flooding internal and external space by immersing the body in vibration and enveloping it with resonance. Moreover, the theory of flux has been instrumental in articulating performance as a complex phenomenon whose multifarious implications lie well beyond the disciplinary scope of theatre studies. Performance studies scholars have therefore capitalized on poststructuralist and postmodern theoretical perspectives which, in spite of their limitations, have undeniably broadened conceptions of cultural practice. Within the field of critical ethnography, Conquergood and D. Soyini Madison have built upon the postcolonial and feminist critique of positivist research in the social sciences to position performance studies as a form of radical academic activism committed to developing reflexive, dialogical, and performative research methodologies in the service of social justice. Supporting a pluralistic and inclusive approach to performance studies therefore necessarily entails respecting, valuing, and learning from cultural traditions and practices whose performative power can help communities and individuals to survive colonial violence, resist political oppression, and oppose cultural imperialism.

Learning from the Performance Turn in Qualitative Inquiry and the Contributions of Indigenous Scholars

The epistemological and methodological revolution that has taken place in qualitative inquiry over the last three decades has been significantly informed by what Norman K. Denzin identifies as "the performance turn" in the social sciences (*Performance Ethnography* xi). In *Turning Points in Qualitative Research*, Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln examine "the triple crises of authority, representation, and praxis" that brought about a deep questioning of the nature and function of the social sciences, and remark that this radical critique has profoundly affected methodological approaches, for if researchers can only "know the other" through their own "practices of representation," the knowledge they produce is "always partial, incomplete, and situated," while at the same time necessarily informed "implicitly or explicitly by the social, cultural, class, and gendered location" of the producer (3, 17). This critique integrates the perspectives of women as well as non-Western and Indigenous researchers, who had been largely excluded and who have since contributed alternative methodologies and representational devices, such as personal narratives, critical autobiography, reflexive ethnography, performance ethnography, and Indigenous anthropology, among others (19).

In his discussion of the performance turn, Denzin builds upon Conquergood's scholarship to assert that "the world is a performance, not a text," positing that "every performance, every identity [is] a new representation of meaning and experience," as well as a site of struggle, negotiation, and hope, "a site where the performance of possibilities occurs" (*Performance Ethnography* 328). Denzin envisions the subversive potential of performance as particularly empowering for minority groups claiming the right to self-representation as well as the right to participate in representations of the world, and maintains that "the performance turn in Anglo-Saxon discourse can surely benefit from the criticisms and tenets offered by Māori and other Indigenous scholars, [for] Westerners have much to learn from Indigenous epistemologies and performance theories" (108).

In the Introduction to the *Handbook of Critical and Indigenous Methodologies*, an edited volume that brings together culturally diverse approaches to critical qualitative research to promote dialogue, exchange, and collaboration, Denzin and Lincoln state:

> Indigenous knowledge systems are too frequently made into objects of study, treated as if they were instances of quaint folk theory held by members of a primitive culture. The decolonizing project [that Indigenous scholars] support reverses this equation, making Western systems of knowledge the object of critique and inquiry.
>
> (6–7)

Māori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith, who co-edited the *Handbook*, asserts in the Conclusion to the second edition of her influential book *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*: "As indigenous peoples we have our own research needs and priorities. Our questions are important. Research helps us to answer them" (232). Foregrounding the imperialist assumptions underlying Euro-American intellectual traditions, Indigenous scholars challenge their European and American counterparts to reassess the role that dominant knowledge systems have played in marginalizing non-Western ways of knowing. They infer that there is "a pressing need to decolonize and reconstruct those structures within the academy that privilege Western knowledge systems and their epistemologies (Mutua and Swadener, 2004, 10; Semali and Kincheloe, 1999)" (*Handbook* 6–7). This includes scrutinizing "critical theory's criteria for self-determination and empowerment [that] perpetuate neo-colonial sentiments while turning the Indigenous person into an essentialized 'other' who is spoken for (Bishop, 2005)" (*Handbook* 5). Instead of claiming to produce "new knowledge," Indigenous scholars stress that the purposes of research are "pedagogical, political, moral, and ethical, involving the enhancement of moral agency, the production of moral discernment, a commitment to praxis, justice, an ethic of resistance, and a performative pedagogy that resists oppression (Christians, 2002, 409)" (*Handbook* 14). Moreover, they emphasize that "the central tensions in the world today go beyond the crises in capitalism and neo-liberalism's version of democracy," since according to Native Canadian, Hawaiian, Māori, and American Indian pedagogy, "the central crisis is spiritual, 'rooted in the increasingly virulent relationship between human beings and the rest of nature' (Grande, 2004, 354)" (*Handbook* 13). In response to this crisis, Indigenous scholars and activists propose "a respectful performance pedagogy [that] works to construct a vision of the person, ecology, and environment" that is compatible with Indigenous worldviews (13).

In her contribution to the anthology, Manulani Aluli-Meyer states:

> We must develop new theories from ancient agency so that we can accurately respond to what is right before our very eyes … [I]ndigenous *and* authentic, old *and* new, cycled *and* creative, ancient *and* developed-this-moment … Can the idea, then, of duality combine itself into wholeness needed for this time? Dual to nondual, research to renewal, fragment to whole – yes this is the goal … Knowledge that endures is spirit driven. It is a life force connected to all other life forces. It is more of an extension than it is a thing to accumulate … Our thinking body is not separated from our feeling mind. *Our mind is our body. Our body is our mind.* And both connect to the spiritual act of knowledge acquisition … Knowledge that does not heal, bring together, challenge, surprise, encourage, or expand our awareness is

> not part of the consciousness this world needs now. This is the function we as indigenous people posit.
>
> ("Indigenous and Authentic" 217, 221, 223)

While highlighting the specificity of traditional ways of knowing, Aluli-Meyer contends that Hawaiian epistemology is relevant and valuable beyond the confines of its geographical and cultural boundaries. She posits an Indigenous conception of universality based on the notion that it is specificity that leads to universality. She defines the latter as hinging upon "respect and honouring of distinctness" and ties it to Hawaiian Elder Halemakua's declaration: "*We are all Indigenous*" (230). Fending off potential controversies, she cautions that "to take this universal idea into race politics strips it of its truth," and specifies that she believes Halemakua meant that "at one time, we all came from a place familiar with our evolution and storied with our experiences. At one time, we all had a rhythmic understanding of time and potent experiences of harmony in space," so that we might be able to "tap into this knowing to engender, again, acts of care, compassion, and the right relationship with land, sky, water, and ocean – vital for these modern times" (222, 231). The notion of indigeneity evoked by Halemakua and supported by Aluli-Meyer is thus grounded in a place-specific understanding of universality predicated on the interrelation of land and self, experience and spirituality, embodiment and knowledge.

While Indigenous methodologies are designed by and for Indigenous scholars and activists working within their own communities, Opaskwayak Cree scholar Shawn Wilson states in *Research Is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods*: "So much the better if dominant universities and researchers adopt [Indigenous research principles]" (59). How, then, might decolonizing methodologies based on these principles transform the field of performance studies? How might collaborations with Indigenous scholars and artists re-orient performance studies in otherwise unforeseeable directions? Māori scholar Brendan Hokowhitu suggests that Indigenous perspectives offer productive ways of moving beyond the tension between constructivist and essentialist conceptions of identity that continue to characterize dominant Western theoretical approaches. In his critical analysis of New Zealand's nationalist appropriation of the Indigenous cultural practice of *haka* performed by the New Zealand national rugby union team, also known as the All Blacks, Hokowhitu contends that "the mimicry of colonial masculinity by Indigenous men and its subsequent reinterpretation as 'traditional Indigenous masculinity'," has resulted in the production of the hypermasculine, violent, and heterosexual Māori male subject, whose gendered performance of the *haka* epitomizes the pervasive neo-colonial constructions of "authenticity" informing contemporary expressions of Indigenous identities (286). He observes that *haka* has nevertheless become pivotal to the "strategically essentialized ontological construction of postcolonial Māori identity," which has positively fueled struggles

for Indigenous rights (292). Although he focuses mainly on the physicality of *haka*, he cites Māori scholar Nathan Matthews who describes this performance practice as "'a posture dance accompanied by chanted or shouted song … One of the main characteristics of *haka* are that actions involving all parts of the body are used to emphasize the words' (2004: 9)" (273; ellipsis in original), which clearly indicates that physicalization and vocalization are interrelated processes that produce the intensity and energy endowing this highly stylized traditional form with its arresting affective power.

To reclaim the existential dimension of Indigenous cultural practices such as *haka*, Hokowhitu advances the notion of "embodied sovereignty" as an alternative to the "ongoing essentialist/non-essentialist debate, which plagues postcolonial theory in general," choosing to focus instead on "what culture 'feels like'" for Indigenous people, as well as on "the immediacy of just being, of living, of doing," which he relates to embodiment when stating: "There is nothing more *immediate* than the body" (278, 293, 294). Linking Indigenous embodied sovereignty to a radical alterity that undermines Western masculine expressions of mind-body dualism, he employs the concept of "body logic" to refer to the body "as material producer of thought" and to move beyond what he considers to be the limitations of constructionism, namely, the Foucauldian "agencyless body," and essentialism, or biological determinism (295, 297). Arguing that existential agency and sovereignty must be considered as possibilities if Indigenous theorizing is to have a decolonizing and transformative impact, he considers *haka* as "a site where Indigenous bodies exude a political presence that moves Indigenous liberation beyond rational thought" (298). Positing the "*immediate* materiality of the Indigenous body" as inescapable, he articulates "an Indigenous body logic" as a way of reorienting interpretations of Indigenous cultures away from what they look like and toward "how 'culture feels' in the moment" (298), that is to say, an understanding of cultural practice which crucially hinges upon embodied experience. Hokowhitu therefore articulates an alternative view of agency as embodied sovereignty "that moves beyond the categorization of Indigenous cultures within the premodern, 'traditional', and/or 'to be preserved' frames, a vital logic to the temporal decolonization of the Indigenous body" (298).

This type of analysis points to possible reconfigurations of performativity and restored behavior that might be employed to explore performance practices whose contemporary body logic is rooted in experiential ways of being and knowing recognized as ancestral embodied knowledge. Performativity may thus be associated with the invigorating sense of immediacy experienced by practitioners engaging with "how 'culture feels' in the moment," while restoration of behavior may be understood as the (re-) activation of a living lineage of creative human actions and vocalizations whose enduring power and efficacy continuously disrupt and dissolve binary oppositions between the past and the future, presence and absence, the old and the new, infusing the boundless liminality of performance with vibrant existential potentialities. Re-imagining the

performance paradigm might therefore entail mobilizing other/older modes of cognition, including ancient ways of knowing sedimented into the term *parfournir*, which might be interpreted as eschewing the process/product binary by conveying instead a sense of relationality, interdependence, and reciprocity between the action of bringing to life and the action of bringing to completion.

The mutually binding interrelatedness of process and product is foregrounded by Gregory Cajete in his discussion of Native American conceptions of art. A Tewa citizen of the Santa Clara Pueblo, New Mexico, Cajete states that the product makes tangible the process to which it is linked because "as process, art is an integral part of the product itself" (*Look to the Mountain: An Ecology of Indigenous Education* 154). He emphasizes that in Indigenous artistic practices, the "aliveness" of the product is "the primary aesthetic criteria, rather than its beauty," which consequently makes beauty a "natural by-product" of its life (155). He points to the transformative dimension of artistic practice that occurs through "the deliberate creation of a context in which process, product and self might become one," whether this context be "ritual, ceremony, dance, song, pilgrimage, or a combination thereof" (156). He explains that from a Native American perspective, "the creation of art is an alchemy of process" through which the artist becomes immersed within her/his media, "an intimate and spiritual relationship" that is honored through the act of creation (149–50). Specifying that "spirituality comes from the process of exploring and coming to know the nature of the living energy that moves in each of us, through us, and around us," Cajete links breath to spirit when stating that "the breath represents the most tangible expression of spirit in all living things," which it connects together "in a direct relationship" (*Native Science: Natural Laws of Interdependence* 261). Breath is associated with "the perception of thought as a kind of 'wind'," as well as with language and song, which contain "the power to express human thought and feeling and to emotionally affect others" (262). As an expressive use of breath, "language in the form of prayer and song has therefore a life energy that can affect other energy and life forms toward certain ends" (264). He stresses that the creative process that is called art today was traditionally considered to be "an act and expression of the spirit and was therefore sacred" (264). Within the culturally-specific context of Native American ceremonial art, expressing the power of living energy through the creative act in a responsible way requires fulfilling a multilayered set of conditions. The latter include preparing oneself by becoming aware, sharpening the senses to fully engage in "a task, a creation, a song, a dance, a painting, an event, a ceremony, a ritual, etc.;" acknowledging "the inherent mystery, the intrinsic integrity of both medium and material," and reaching a state of "letting go and becoming," described by Cajete as "self-effacement and surrender to the contingencies of the task of creation," so that the creator and that which is being created may become one; taking care of every detail as a way of "honoring the process of making [and as] a way of prayerful work;" achieving completion, which consists in "the

complete gathering of everything that needs to be part of creating … a tangible form … packed with potential," not as an end in itself but as a "transformation of orientation and focus;" giving up the completed form to "the purpose and process for which it has been created," which occurs through "the Give Away [that] marks the entrance of [this creation] into a community" who will recognize its symbolic meaning as long as it "remembers the context, circumstances, and purpose of its creation;" and finally, honoring that which has been created by using it "for its designated purpose from one generation to the next, or over the lifespan of the individual(s) responsible for its creation" (*Look to the Mountain* 156–9).

Within the transformative creative process evoked by Cajete, the type of traditional singing that pertains to Native American ceremonial art constitutes a tangible expression of spirit achieved through a particularly powerful use of breath. Singing entails becoming acutely aware and focused while letting go and surrendering to song; it requires valorizing aliveness in song as aesthetic criteria and giving song away by sharing/teaching it to others so that it may be honored through appropriate use and intergenerational transmission. Furthermore, since traditional songs are designed to be performed a cappella or with minimal instrumental support, such as the heartbeat of ceremonial drumming, the singer's voice is both the medium and the material, so that process, product, and self necessarily become one in the act of singing, a transformative immersion into living energy which requires trusting in the inherent mystery of vocality.

Notes

1 Occitania is a vast and bio-culturally diverse territory extending from Bordeaux and Toulouse in south-western France to the Piedmont valleys of Italy, and from Marseille and the Provencal Alps in south-eastern France to the Aran Valley in Catalonia on the Spanish side of the Pyrenees.

2 Please see the smudge at the opening of our documentary film. Smudging is defined in the *Canadian Encyclopedia* as "a cultural ceremony practised by a wide variety of Indigenous peoples in Canada and other parts of the world. Although practices differ, smudging is used for medicinal and practical purposes as well as for spiritual ceremonies. The practice generally involves prayer and the burning of sacred medicines, such as sweetgrass, cedar, sage and tobacco. While colonization has repressed such traditions, the practice of smudging has survived to the present day." Available at: www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/smudging

3 The workshop was filmed by Robert Ornellas, who is of Hawaiian ancestry on the maternal side of his family. Ornellas was selected by Jerzy Grotowski to join the first group of theatre students involved in the Polish director's Objective Drama Project at the University of California, Irvine.

4 In his 1971 book *Décoloniser en France* [*Decolonizing in France*], Occitan activist Robert Lafont describes the preferential historical process of national construction that produced official French culture and indicts the French state for the systematic denigration of regional cultural and linguistic practices by means of French public education, during a historical period that coincided with the exacerbation of nationalist mythology and the glorification of French imperial power (p. 213). See my discussion of the Occitan vocal music tradition in Chapter 4.

5 I only found out many years later that the statement on my card was a quote by psychologist Marie-France Castarède from her book, *La voix et ses sortilèges* [*Voice and Its Spells*], published in 1987.

6 Situated at the intersection of performance studies, experimental ethnography, and Indigenous research methodologies, this book is the recipient of the Canadian Association for Theatre

Research Book Award Honorable Mention. My research was supported by a Standard Research Grant and a Research/Creation in Fine Arts Grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

7 Thomaidis is the author of *Theatre & Voice* (2017), the co-editor of *Voice Studies: Critical Approaches to Process, Performance and Experience* (2016), and the founding editor of the *Journal of Interdisciplinary Voice Studies*.

8 *Keywords in Sound* includes two notable exceptions: Steven Feld's entry on acoustemology discussing his ethnographic studies on human/avian relationality in the Bosavi rainforest region of Papua New Guinea, and Deborah Kapchan's entry on the body, grounded in her fieldwork on the practice of Sufi ritual chants in Morocco.

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RECLAIMING PRESENCE FOR THE LIVED VOICE

What is at stake in the devocalization of logos historicized by philosopher Adriana Cavarero? Which defining features of vocality are lost in translation, as it were, when the voice is reduced by scriptocentrism to a concept or a metaphor? What are the implications of the Derridean critique of voice and presence for research on performance and vocality? In this chapter, I address these key questions by foregrounding the material affective efficacy of vocality. I call upon semiologist Roland Barthes's sensory engagement with vocal music beyond the tyranny of signification, as well as on theatre visionary Antonin Artaud's efforts to emancipate performance and vocality from the dominance of speech/text, as I seek to reconcile the lived voice with the non-discursive performative power of its experiential phonic/sonic presence.

"Voice" in the Anthropological Ethnographic Project[1]

In his chapter on ethnography for the 2014 edition of the *Oxford Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Anthony Kwame Harrison states:

> Etymologically, ethnography combines *ethno*, meaning "culture (or race)" and *graphy*, meaning "to write, record, and describe." Thus ethnography, which Barbara Tedlock (2000) refers to as an "inscription practice" (p. 455), can be thought of as the process and product of writing, recording, and describing culture.
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> (225)

Harrison traces the origins of this practice to the prominent and controversial figure of Bronisław Malinowski and foregrounds "the colonial legacy of the ethnographic project" (226), specifying that, in 1909, the principals of Oxford, Cambridge, and the London School of Economics determined that the term ethnography was to be employed to refer to the "descriptive accounts of non-

DOI: 10.4324/9780429340338-2

literate peoples (Radcliffe-Brown 1952, p. 276)" (231). Ethnography was therefore conceived as a method designed to make the cultural practices of the Other legible to the West by translating orality and embodiment into scholarly writing, whose truth value was legitimized through publication. This privileging of literacy and print culture can be related to Dwight Conquergood's notion of scriptocentrism based on Raymond Williams's critique of the contempt for embodied and practical activities "always latent in the highly literate," considered by Williams as "a mark of the observer's limits, not those of the activities themselves," as exemplified by the assumption that "farm labourers and village craftsmen were once uneducated, merely because they could not read (Williams, 309)" ("Performance Studies" 34). Conquergood infers that "scholarship is so skewed toward texts that even when researchers do attend to extralinguistic human action and embodied events they construe them as texts to be read," an attitude he considers to be a hallmark of Western imperialism (34). In "Re-thinking Ethnography: Towards a Critical Cultural Politics," Conquergood further remarks:

> I do not imagine life in a university without books, nor do I have any wish to stop writing myself. But I do want to keep thinking of what gets lost and muted in texts. Following Turner and others, I want to keep opening spaces for nondiscursive forms, and encouraging research and writing practices that are performance-sensitive.
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> (98)

I therefore seek to open a space for the exploration of the non-discursive performative power of vocality, which first requires identifying the ways in which voice gets *muted* when reduced by scriptocentrism to a conceptual abstraction or a metaphor within qualitative research.

Since its Malinowskian beginnings, the discipline of anthropology has undergone profound epistemological and methodological changes, provoking intense internal tensions that reached their apex during the 1980s. However, whereas the postmodern turn marked by the publication of *Writing Culture* (Clifford and Marcus 1986) placed the *ethno* of ethnography and its fraught relationship to culture and race under scrutiny, the emphasis on *graphy* remained central to postmodern anthropology, albeit in a more self-reflexive and performative fashion. Harrison hence remarks that the "new ethnography" that emerged from this postmodern movement has been characterized by an "emphasis on the rhetorical processes involved with ethnographic production and, ultimately, the view of ethnographies as writerly projects" ("Ethnography" 243). Foregrounding the enduring continuity of the writerly dimension of ethnography that connects the literary turn in postmodern anthropology back to Malinowski's pioneering work, Harrison points out that James Clifford himself invokes the "founding father" of ethnography on the first

page of *Writing Culture* when "arguing the partial and constructed nature of truth claims, and advancing the artistic dimensions of ethnography as a project profoundly situated between systems of meaning making" (243). Relying on the lineage he provocatively establishes between Malinowski's and Clifford's perspectives, Harrison outlines a methodological consistency within the evolution of ethnographic practice, an evolution which he describes as having been "gradual, reflective, and historically mediated," and argues that the uniqueness of ethnography as research and as a representational practice resides in its capacity to contextualize the social dynamics of fieldwork by reconstructing experience "through the process of writing first field notes (Emerson et al., 1995) and later ethnographic monographs" (226, 243). He therefore legitimizes the persistent dominance of *graphy* by positing the latter as a valuable primary property of ethnography's epistemological and methodological DNA.

The colonial legacy of the ethnographic project nevertheless resurfaces in a loopback effect toward the end of the chapter when he acknowledges an arresting paradox: "Ethnography's foundations are in writing culture, yet historically ethnographers are deeply implicated in the project of literatizing non-literate societies," which compels him to ask two crucial questions that remain open-ended: "What non-literal forms of ethnographic representation might a contemporary, critical, and historically informed ethnographic project take? How can we move beyond *writing culture*?" (245). I would contend that these questions are particularly relevant to the interdisciplinary exploration of vocality within qualitative research. In the case of vocal traditions, subtleties of interpretation hinging upon melismatic techniques, ornamentation, and regional variations are lost when this oral repertoire is transposed into writing through standard Western notation. Similarly, when oral language is "literatized" through writing, vocalization's oral, sonic, and vibratory qualities, sensorial and affective properties, experiential cognitive potentialities, and vital relational dimension are lost in translation, and the decontextualized "voice" becomes a conceptual abstraction or a metaphor.

In "Anthropology and Voice," Amanda Weidman discusses the conceptualization of voice in the service of a particular theoretical framework and points to

> the disjunction between anthropology's concern with agency, subjectivity, representation, and power – the metaphorical sense of "having a voice" – and the more sonically and linguistically focused study of actual voices and vocal practices, usually undertaken within the subfields of ethnomusicology and linguistic anthropology.
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> (38)

Weidman's insightful literature review exposes anthropology's "methodological conceit about the authenticity of the voice, inherited from Western ideologies" (46) that associate the voice of the autonomous, rational, speaking subject with self-presence and

interiority, as well as with individual agency, will, and authority. Moreover, this enduring conception of subjectivity tends to privilege linguistic-centered discourses on voice, positing that "the sonic and material aspects of the voice are separable from and subordinate to its referential content and message" (39).

This is clearly exemplified by Ferdinand de Saussure's distinction between *langue* and *parole*, the latter being excluded from the study of language as an abstract system of signs because it is rooted in the lived experience of particular individuals situated within an historically and culturally specific context. Psychosociologist Bernadette Bailleux questions this privileging of *langue* over *parole* and offers a psychophysical approach to vocality, based on the relationship she establishes between voice and embodiment. She argues that an individual's "vocal style" is constituted by all her experiences throughout the course of her life, as well as by the various ways in which she might consciously or unconsciously identify with some of these experiences, including class-based identifications that manifest themselves vocally through accents. Gender also constitutes a major factor in the reproduction of normative vocal behavior, so that speaking with a high-pitched voice, for example, becomes a sonic marker of femininity associated with being a woman (see Karpf 2006 and Kreiman and Sidtis 2011), a form of conditioning which may be perceived as the vocal equivalent of the type of physical behavior defined as *habitus* by Pierre Bourdieu. Bailleux includes within the category of vocal style the kind of vocal work that performers undertake to train their voices for the purpose of artistic practice, which can be perceived as a form of de-conditioning when this training interrupts and reconfigures the normative vocal practices through which socially constructed identities become naturalized.

Weidman refers to a range of "denaturalizing perspectives on voice [that have] emerged from the fields of linguistic anthropology, musicology, ethnomusicology, and media and technology studies," whose critique of the Western metaphysics of voice seeks to offer counter-discourses that historicize and theorize the "always-constructed relationship between voices and bodies in different kinds of contexts" ("Anthropology and Voice" 41–2). She suggests that Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of dialogism constitutes one of the most effective theoretical destabilizations of dominant Western conceptions of a unitary autonomous subject, for he envisions the voice as "collectively produced [through] the play of different and competing voices within any utterance, which he termed heteroglossia" (42). She provides the example of Amanda Minks, who builds on this dialogical perspective in her ethnography of the vocal playfulness of Indigenous children living in a multi-ethnic and multilingual community on the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua, and infers that "we come to know ourselves and position ourselves in society by echoing, transforming, or silencing the voices of others (4)" (43). Weidman goes on to examine the concept of voicing, which emphasizes "the strategic and politically charged nature of the way voices are constructed in both formal and everyday performances" (42). She

remarks that although voicing is predominantly employed in the study of spoken discourse, this concept "may also introduce questions of authorship and agency in relation to sung expression" (43), leading her to ask whether singing might provide a performative agency that would otherwise be unavailable to speakers, particularly in instances where freedom of speech is undermined by censorship.

Alternatively, the performativity of voicing can be deployed to generate, consolidate, and naturalize normative models of social and cultural identity enforced through the institutionalization of oppressive and exclusive practices that sustain and perpetuate dominant structures of power. Weidman relates such practices to Bourdieu's investigation of the "symbolic power of language," J.L. Austin's conceptualization of performative utterances as "doing things with words," and Judith Butler's articulation of performativity in her examination of the naturalization of heteronormative gender constructions by means of their reiterative enactment (44). However, in her article, "Does Voice Matter? Vocality, Materiality, Gender Performativity," Annette Schlichter remarks that, in spite of Butler's focus on the materialization of gender through embodied performativity, she fails to address the material dimension of vocality, a form of "phonophobia" that Schlichter associates with the repression of orality underscoring Jacques Derrida's reduction of vocal utterances to the linguistic/discursive functions of speech and the visual/spatial dimensions of writing (36). Schlichter argues that Butler's Derridean understanding of "materiality as *textuality*" privileges the intelligible through the visible because gender citationality is conceived as a series of "visible-as-legible effects" produced by the repetition of bodily acts, a form of "logocentric videocentrism" crucially depending on legibility (37–42). I would further suggest that by granting sight pre-eminence over sound and correlating the visual with discursive language, these influential theorists are attempting to literatize embodiment, whose physical manifestations are observed and analyzed through a visualist and scriptocentric theoretical lens that disregards and potentially disavows the sensually experienced non-visual materiality and non-discursive sonic/phonic performative power of vocality.

This undecipherable yet tangibly efficacious power is manifest in Louis Althusser's notion of interpellation operating as a performative utterance through which the vocal action of hailing simultaneously asserts the authority of the policeman's voice and positions the individual being hailed as a subject of that authority. In her analysis of hailing, Weidman argues that voice constitutes the implicit yet under-theorized element of interpellation, because "the force of the voice comes not only — as Althusser implied — from its power to name, but also, and perhaps more often, from its sonorous, material, and affective qualities (Kunreuther 2014)" ("Anthropology and Voice" 46). She concludes her article by challenging anthropologists to critically examine how neoliberal corporate discourse on "creativity, entrepreneurship, and self-management" has productively harnessed notions of "interiority, will, and intention, associated with classic formations of the

liberal subject" to reframe and repackage the modernist conception of voice as "choice, personality, uniqueness, freedom, and communication" (46).

Probing the Origins of Devocalization through a Performative Ethnographic Encounter with Plato's *Ion*

The under-theorized aspect of voicing identified by Weidman in reference to Althusser is pivotal to Konstantinos Thomaidis's analysis of Adriana Cavarero's critical engagement with "the historical processes whereby Western philosophy has developed its core strategies and principles of logos at the expense of the lived materiality of the voice," resulting in what she names "the devocalization of logos" ("The Revocalization of Logos?" 77–8). Thomaidis states that these strategies and principles led to "the systematic exclusion, marginalization or silencing of the experienced, contingent and intersubjective voice, of *phone*, in the realm of philosophical inquiry" (77). He builds on Cavarero's "positioning of voice against (traditional, patriarchal and Eurocentric) understandings of logos as reason and of logos as language" to raise pertinent questions about vocality, vocal training, and singing, which he suggests "can only be explored fully in practice" (78). As he underlines, Cavarero's critique of the primacy of sight over other senses in Western philosophy has precedents, for example, in "John Dewey's condemnation of a 'spectator theory of knowledge' (Quinton 1977: 3)" whose influence on Western knowledge systems can be traced back to Plato (78).

Following Thomaidis's prompt, I propose to momentarily return to the source of the devocalization of logos historicized by Cavarero and its ensuing proliferation of problematic "ideologies of voice" scrutinized by Weidman. This performative ethnographic fieldwork will entail an imaginary visit to ancient Greece to critically examine Plato's anxiety about performance and its implications for performance studies scholars committed to engaging with vocality. It will be crucial to keep in mind throughout this potentially perilous expedition that music, singing, and poetry are interconnected in ancient Greek culture: the lyre is an instrument that has "very ancient associations with the singing or chanting of epic poetry," and legendary lyre musicians are envisioned as powerful performers, such as "Orpheus, who could charm wild beasts with his song" (Sacks 147). Cavarero specifies that "in Homeric Greek, the poet is a singer [*aoidos*] whose song [*aoide*] is his voice [*aude*]" (*For More Than One Voice* 88). Moreover, although in ancient Greece the rhapsode performs poetry without musical accompaniment, "his manner of delivery is better described as 'chanting' rather than simply reciting, [as] in Plato's dialogue the *Ion* (named after the rhapsode Ion)" (Thomas 118). An awareness of this culturally-specific form of vocal practice will provide the necessary context for our ethnographic encounter with Plato's *Ion*, a text raising questions that have been foundational to the development of philosophical discourse on the arts in Western culture:

> But the fact is, Ion, … you only cheat me, and you are so far from exhibiting the art of which you are a master, that you will not, even after my repeated entreaties, explain to me the nature of it. You literally assume as many shapes as Proteus, twisting and turning up and down … But if, as I believe, you have no art, but speak all these beautiful words about Homer unconsciously under his inspiring influence, then I acquit you of dishonesty, and shall only say that you are inspired. Which do you prefer to be thought, dishonest or inspired?
>
> (Plato 23–4)

Plato's ambivalent relationship to performance is perhaps most palpable in this dialogue probably written several years prior to *The Republic* and already underscored by a deep concern for the subversive potential of the performer's embodied agency expressed through Socrates's anxious evocation of Proteus, a sagacious and elusive shape-shifting sea-god who could foretell the future but would only do so if captured. In this text, Socrates questions the expertise of Ion, a well-known champion of rhapsodic contests. In the course of the conversation, which seems more like an interrogation, Socrates presses Ion to reveal to him the nature of his *technê*, yet the rhapsodist appears unable or perhaps unwilling to do so. Socrates attempts to prove to Ion that his actions on stage occur spontaneously, in spite of his own will, and argues that Ion's irrational behavior, including his unwarranted emotional reactions to the fictitious events depicted in Homeric epic poetry, demonstrates that rhapsodes are simply not in their right minds when performing.

The fact that there appears to be no technique involved in the art of rhapsody, no specific practical knowledge or artisanal know-how, pleases Socrates. Indeed, he states that had Ion's actions on stage been deliberately crafted by means of a *technê* in order to affect the audience, his behavior would have been premeditated and manipulative, so that his *technê* could only be equated with the art of manufacturing deception. If, on the other hand—and this is Socrates's thesis—Ion's success as a rhapsodist depends entirely on his being inspired or "possessed" by a god, who initially inspired Homer to compose his epic poetry, then it is that divinity, and not the performer, who acts on stage for the benefit of the audience. Accordingly, the authenticity of Ion's performance necessarily derives from a yielding to divine influence through a temporary loss of consciousness and relinquishing of agency.

In spite of the dialogical appearance of this scene, Socrates cannot possibly lose Plato's staged debate, and in the end Ion replies to Socrates's rhetorical question "Which do you prefer to be thought, dishonest or inspired?" by asserting his moral integrity over his creative agency. However, there is a serious flaw in Socrates's seemingly virtuoso performance. Toward the last third of the dialogue, having foregrounded Ion's emotional involvement in the poetry he performs on stage,

Socrates asks him: "And are you aware that you produce similar effects on most of the spectators?" Ion earnestly replies:

> Only too well; for I look down upon them from the stage, and behold the various emotions of pity, wonder, terror, stamped on their faces when I am speaking. You see, I have to pay close attention to them, since if I make them cry I will myself be laughing when I get the prize money, and if I make them laugh I will myself be crying when I don't.
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> (14)

This is an intriguing slippage in Plato's text, for if, as Ion testifies, rhapsodists are acutely aware of the reactions of the spectators upon which they gauge their success—and Socrates specifies that more than 20,000 people attend rhapsodic contests—then the theory, according to which performing implies a loss of consciousness and agency, no longer holds.

From a performance practitioner's perspective, being moved, moving others, and being aware of this relational process are not a contradiction in terms but an experiential reality that should free Ion from the double bind set up by Socrates like a trap. To disallow the possibility that Ion's creative agency may hinge upon his *technê*, Socrates must move swiftly by proceeding with his definition of "possession" qua divine inspiration regardless of Ion's lived experience, thereby entirely dismissing the rhapsodist's testimony that it is his craft that helps him to win the contest. This enduring view of performance/possession can be traced in Western ethnographic discourses that literatize the Other by reading possession through the lens of pathology and psychoanalysis, as in the writings of Pierre Janet, Jean-Claude Dorsainvil, and Georges Lapassade, where trance and spirit possession are diagnosed as mental illness; or through the lens of theatricality and the anti-theatrical prejudice inherited from Plato, where these ritual practices become associated with simulation by Melville J. Herskovits, with acting-as-pretending by Alfred Métraux, as well as with intemperance, exhibitionism, and even deceit by Michel Leiris. In his ethnography of *zār* possession practices in Ethiopia, Leiris admits that his frustrated attempts at assessing the authenticity of ritual performance are premised upon a very elusive distinction between sincerity and simulation, leading him to conclude that, whereas the magical power of possession may perhaps once have been known to Europeans—as reflected in his final chapter which opens with a quote by Jules Michelet about the practice of sorcery during the Middle Ages in France—spirit possession, along with theatre, has become a lie in which Europeans can no longer believe.

In her critical analysis of Western constructions of "authentic" possession as necessarily antithetical to agency, anthropologist Kalpana Ram articulates a particular type of agency that she argues is specific to mediumship because it entails

developing "*skilled* forms of attunement" hinging upon what she describes as "fresh performativity," thereby foregrounding a more nuanced interpretation of possession that acknowledges and values "the agency of skilled performance" (155). She refers to "Merleau-Ponty's (1986, pp. 145–146) description of skilled musicianship" as a form of mediumship requiring the acquisition of embodied technical competence gained through training that becomes second nature when the musician reaches the point "where conscious deliberation is left behind," a fundamental aspect of artistic mastery, for "the less a conscious subjectivity intrudes, … the more directly the musician is able to become a conduit for the music itself to come alive" (*Fertile Disorder* 155–6). Ram contends that the ability to submit or yield to the life of the music is linked to a non-willful creative agency patiently cultivated through practice over time, an artisanal honing of *technê* that must have also applied to the vocal music performed by rhapsodists, but that Plato deliberately denigrates in the *Ion*.

Might Plato's motivation for writing the *Ion* be fueled by the desire to discredit, disparage, and disown these properties of vocality because of his association of sonorous materiality with the power of orality and the dangers of live performance? Cavarero denounces a rhetorical erasure whose epistemic violence is strategically deployed by "the metaphysical machine [to] neutraliz[e] the power of the voice … for millennia" ("Multiple Voices" 531). Cultural historian Walter Ong somewhat tempers this analysis when suggesting in *Orality and Literacy* that Plato's attitude toward vocality might have been grounded in a latent anxiety about oral culture, so that his "entire epistemology was unwittingly a programmed rejection of the old oral, mobile, warm, personally interactive lifeworld of oral culture (represented by the poets, whom he would not allow in his Republic)" (79). Ong's pairing of the antithetical terms "unwittingly" and "programmed" nevertheless introduces a sense of doubt about Plato's intentions, especially since Ong goes on to emphasize the ancient Greek philosopher's privileging of sight:

> The term idea, form, is visually based, coming from the same root as the Latin video, to see … Platonic form was form conceived of by analogy with visible form. The Platonic ideas are voiceless, immobile, devoid of all warmth, not interactive but isolated, not part of the human lifeworld at all but utterly above and beyond it.
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> (79)

Plato's prejudice against oral culture might therefore be linked to its performativity, which cannot easily be reduced to *mimesis*, that is to say, the passive imitation of the world of appearances produced by holding a mirror up to nature, as discussed by Socrates and Glaucon in the opening dialogue of Book X of *The Republic* (for detailed critical analyses

of this fragment, see *Unmaking Mimesis* by Elin Diamond 1997, and *Typography: Mimesis, Philosophy, Politics* by Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe 1989).

The concept of *mimesis*, which lies at the core of Western discourses on theatre, hinges upon an age-old dialectic between living and acting, reality and illusion, materiality and representation, authenticity and surrogacy. It is connected to the notions of objectivity and subjectivity, the perception and acknowledgment of difference, as well as seemingly irreducible binary oppositions, such as mind versus body, spirit versus matter, the abstract versus the concrete, signifier versus signified, and so forth. Such pervasive dichotomies are challenged by Conquergood who defines performance as a movement from *mimesis* as imitation, to *poiesis* as construction, to *kinesis* as dynamism and transformation. He highlights the passage from *poiesis*—defined by Turner as "making, not faking" (1982)—to *kinesis*, which he links to postcolonial theorist Homi Bhabha's "urgent political view of performance as breaking and remaking," and interprets this crucial transition as "a move from cultural *invention* to *intervention*" which foregrounds creative agency ("Beyond the Text" 56).

Whereas performance has been productively reclaimed by qualitative inquiry, the notion of objectivity, whose scientific aura continues to legitimize quantitative approaches to research, remains rooted in a deep-seated faith, nowadays mostly devoid of any specific religious foundation, that human intellectual powers of rational understanding can provide reliable answers about the riddle of human existence. This discursive quest for certainty can be traced to Plato's decision to draw the line, as it were, between enlightenment and self-delusion. In *The Taste of Ethnographic Things*, anthropologist Paul Stoller reflects on the impact of Plato's legacy on Western knowledge systems:

> Plato's quest for Truth (or Forms) through objectivity was his solution to the puzzle of the infinite variability to be found in the world of appearances. And so, Plato becomes the first thinker to distinguish appearance from reality. Behind every appearance, he tells us, there is a hidden immutable Form … The birth of metaphysics, of Ultimate Forms, of the search for Truth, set the boundaries between art and metaphysics. Plato wanted the dramatic artists expelled from his Republic, for the sentiments that dramatists are capable of provoking lead people back to the heroic myths and ignorance, rather than toward the discovery of Ultimate Forms.
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> …
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> [A]rt and metaphysics become mutually exclusive … These metaphysical distinctions have not been disputed; rather, thinkers since Plato have disputed the question of how we discover reality (the One) hidden behind the appearances (the Many), how we arrive at Truth … [T]he search for the One in the Many has [therefore] been at the heart of Western scholarly discourse.
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> (48–9, 138)

Metaphysics may thus be defined as the study of the philosophical problems that can only be apprehended outside the realm of human sensory experience. According to metaphysics, embodied experience obscures, veils, or dissimulates the answers to such problems. Although from Plato to Descartes, the senses are not to be trusted, sight is exceptionally privileged by metaphysics, for it mediates appearances to the mind, which is thereby able to scrutinize the Many in the search for the One. Modernity is founded upon the objective gaze of the philosopher, the scientist, the ethnographer, piercing through the material world of appearances in order to dis-cover that which lies beyond it and remains invisible to the untrained eye.

In his discussion of the legacy of *mimesis* in contemporary French theory, namely, poststructuralism and deconstruction, Mihai Spariosu maps out a continuity between modernism and postmodernism through the concept of truth as revelation, which he associates with what he calls "truth-science," the dominant approach that he links to Plato's perspective. He provocatively argues that even poststructuralism and deconstruction are unable to renounce "the power-principle which lies at the foundation of Western civilization" because the efficacy of Western theoretical discourses crucially depends upon such power, which they perpetuate through the use of discursive language ("Mimesis in Contemporary French Theory" 63, 67, 77). This critique applies to theories of embodiment that remain indebted to linguistic models of analysis empowered by discursive reason. However, as emphasized by Stoller in *Sensuous Scholarship*, language-based theories become unproductive when applied to the embodied dimensions of performance. Pointing out that "even the most insightful writers consider the body as a text that can be read and analyzed," Stoller contends that the discursive practices of postmodern theorists privilege a language that is "bloodless" and curiously disembodied, thereby reinforcing "the very principle they critique – the separation of mind and body, which … regulates and subjugates the very bodies they would liberate" (iii–xv). Given that embodiment and vocality are central to performance practice, performance studies scholars must pay particular attention to the language available to them in their theoretical toolkit and to the mechanisms of philosophical strategies that are complicit with the "systematic exclusion, marginalization or silencing" of the lived voice and that continue to promote a disembodied and devocalized economy of knowledge (Thomaidis, "The Revocalization of Logos?" 77). It is within the purview of performance studies to confront the limitations of such regimes of knowledge by critically engaging with theories rooted in Saussurean linguistics that subordinate vocality to discursivity and that reduce voice to a conceptual abstraction or a metaphor.

Ironically, Plato, and later Descartes, practiced metaphysics through storytelling and dramatization to turn the unveiling of Truth into a spectacular form of revelation. Plato thus contrived the allegory of the cave by resorting to the theatrical technique of shadow-puppets to convey the distinction between optical illusion and philosophical insight. In his *Méditations métaphysiques*, Descartes also made up fantastical stories, such as the one

where he sits in his house, peering through the window frame at an ordinary street scene featuring fleeting passers-by—but what if, the philosopher self-reflexively ponders, I were deceived by some *mauvais génie* who conjures up ghosts or winds up mechanical men costumed with hats and coats that he sends parading down the street? Significantly, sound and vocality are muted by Plato and Descartes's silent stories about sight.

Given Descartes's Platonic obsession with optical illusion, it is no wonder that in *Discours de la méthode* the section entitled *Dioptrique* is filled with hand-drawn sketches of human eye-balls, illustrations of the ways in which light is refracted by the retina, perspectives and vanishing points, anatomical drawings documenting how the eyes are connected to the brain via the optical nerves, or how the colors of the rainbow become perceptible to human eyesight, along with notions of astronomy and detailed instructions about the proper way of crafting eye-glasses. Descartes's preoccupation with sight is largely responsible for the visualist logic of Western scientific discourse, for the French philosopher has been upheld as one of the founding fathers of modern science, along with Galileo, whose telescope is believed to have inspired Descartes's anticipation of the invention of the microscope. Stephen Gaukroger hence argues that Descartes's "optical instrument model of cognition" gave rise to the notion that we see representations which are in the mind rather than in the world, a representationalism that creates "separate internal and external worlds" by offering an account of vision from which derive "many of the problems that have been associated with the metaphysical doctrine of mind-body dualism" ("Cartesianism and Visual Cognition" 124).

While Descartes's fantasy of the *mauvais génie* is a form of storytelling that does not rely on vocality as it is part of the inner monologue of Cartesian meditations, in Plato's imaginary dialogues the aural nature of vocality that endows Ion's chanting with non-discursive performative power is never acknowledged, nor is Glaucon's incapacity to represent sound visually when holding up a mirror to nature. Yet I would argue that voicing is central to Plato's dramatization of philosophy, for, as Jean Nienkamp remarks, "Plato did not write systematic philosophical treatises, but dramatic philosophical dialogues in which he was not himself a speaker" (*Plato on Rhetoric and Language* 2). Indeed, if we follow Socrates's definition of the three types of storytelling outlined in Book III of *The Republic*, Plato's writings necessarily fall under the category of imitation since they stage dialogues involving various characters while the author remains outside the dramatic frame. In this section of *The Republic*, Socrates clearly condemns imitative storytelling by providing the example of Homer, whom he accuses of attempting to suggest that someone other than himself is speaking, as if he were "possessed" by the spirit of his own characters. However, the Socrates who indicts Homer in *The Republic* is himself a fictional character created by Plato. Writing in the voice of his mentor, Plato fashions an imitation of the historical figure of Socrates whom he casts in the role of the main protagonist in his dramatic

dialogues as if attempting to summon the master-philosopher back to life. Even though Plato devises such séances for "honest" pedagogical purposes, he nevertheless resorts to ventriloquism and puppetry as he hovers invisibly above his craftily staged dramas. Ironically, had his ideal Republic existed, Plato would have most likely been sentenced to exile along with Homer, Ion, and all the other unwanted artists.

What is perhaps most perplexing about Plato's anxiety vis-à-vis performance is that embodiment and vocality must have played a pivotal role in the traditional pedagogy of ancient Greece, where philosophy was an interactive public forum, or a sporting event of the mind that probably took the form of improvised arguments between highly skilled debaters. Within this culturally specific context, the historical Socrates must have had to perfect the type of performative *technê* that Ion is denied by Plato's "Socrates," for the vocalization of logos must have required Greek philosophers to strike a balance between discursive logic and intuition, rationality and emotion, as well as verbal and non-verbal communication, and Socrates must have mastered these techniques brilliantly. Whereas in his own lifetime, Socrates's popularity might have been ascribed in part to his being inspired or "possessed" by his love for truth, the skills that he acquired through embodied practice must have been critical to his success as a public orator. Socrates must also have excelled at dialogism, since an overly didactic and coercive approach might have produced resistance instead of the "emotional and behavioral sympathy" which Ruby Blondell argues was pivotal to Athenian pedagogy, and which most likely depended on a "condensation of experience and practice" produced by a pleasurable dialogical process, a live debate whose ultimate outcome was probably assumed to be unpredictable (*The Play of Character in Plato's Dialogues* 81).

In Plato's written dialogues, conversely, the authority of "Socrates" can only prevail if the responses provided by his interlocutors help Plato to develop the overall argument he intends to present to the reader. This is especially clear in the *Ion*, a dialogue in which the respondent's perspective is systematically dismissed as self-contradictory thus illogical, so that Ion's agency and honesty necessarily cancel each other out while Plato's own positionality remains beyond scrutiny. This rhetorical stratagem seeking to prove that honest rhapsodists have no artistic mastery may be envisioned as a kind of "primal scene" whereby the unsuspecting reader/spectator becomes witness to the disturbing origins of the devocalization of logos, whose epistemic violence is directed against Ion, an acclaimed epic story-teller and established vocal expert. Revisiting this scene through imaginative ethnography helps to highlight its (ironic) performative dimension: emboldened by the power of the metaphysical machine evoked by Cavarero, Plato unscrupulously appropriates the "voice" of his mentor Socrates to silence Ion and cleanse logos from vocality for the rest of time—or so he hopes.

As specified by Cavarero, the Platonic devocalization of logos reduces "the *phone* to the acoustic sign of the idea," a conceptual operation which entails silencing the

phonic/sonic properties of vocality and theorizing the latter as "the general voice of language, subsumed under a videocentric logic of the signified and controlled by the system of signification," a linguistic economy of knowledge which assigns spoken speech itself to "the register of signs generated by writing" and which, as I previously argued, leads to scriptocentrism (*For More Than One Voice* 83). Cavarero infers from Plato's "obsessive attack on the rhapsodic voice" that his determination to sever logos from its sonorous sense stems from his fear of "the corporeal realm of the vocal," that is to say, the immemorial embodied dimension of vocality that connects *phone* to what Ong describes as the "mobile, warm, personally interactive lifeworld of oral culture" (*Orality and Literacy* 79) and that Cavarero associates with "the voice of acoustic pleasure, the voice that is rhythm and breath, the voice that escapes the control of the videocentric system of language" (*For More Than One Voice* 83–4). What the metaphysical machine cannot reduce to a concept, an abstraction or a metaphor, then, is the distinctively unique sonority of Ion's voice, whose secret escapes Plato's grasp as it bounces off the tight boundaries of discursivity, propelled into posterity by the power of vibration and resonance.

As this imaginary visit to ancient Greece comes to an end and the ethnographer prepares to return to the proverbial safety of the ivory tower, a fortuitous meeting occurs with interdisciplinary voice studies scholar Konstantinos Thomaidis, who also happens to be working in this historical geolocation for his new project "Listening Back: Towards a Vocal Archaeology of Greek Theatre." Thomaidis generously shares reflections based on his current research and describes Socrates's symposium sonic environment as inherently dialogic, where interlocutors are continuously engaged in the process of speaking/listening and listening/speaking, irrevocably implying the other and invoking their response. He stresses that this phonic exchange is the first and foremost structural tenet of the symposium's particular vocal acoustics: there are no outside listeners but only listener/speakers and speaker/listeners (with the exception, perhaps, of the overhearing researcher conducting imaginative fieldwork), and the length of their sentences or spoken passages, alongside other extra-linguistic and pragmatic features, provide important clues about the vocally embodied rhythm of interlocution. Thomaidis further specifies that the symposium environment is inclusive of music, another element that must be taken into account when attempting to re-imagine its sonic dimension, yet in his written dialogues Plato expresses a distrust of musicality and rhythm, which are, of course, central to orality, because he suspects that the aural/phonic qualities of logos might distract listeners/speakers from the primacy of discursive meaning, as in the case of epic poetry chanted by skillful rhapsodists.[2]

Although Plato salvages a rhetorical victory for Socrates in the *Ion*, he manages to do so only by strategically overlooking the complex question of creative agency. Plato's dramatization of philosophy through the staging of dialogues is jeopardized by his efforts to contain the dangers of performativity, thereby revealing that the

effects of mimetic pedagogy might be much more difficult to control than the philosopher-dramatist envisioned. His failed attempt to revive in his writing the voice of a master of the oral tradition epitomizes this conundrum: Platonic dialogues, because they feature a character who is almost-Socrates-but-not-quite, constantly refer us back to the man who once initiated Plato to the art of philosophical inquiry. This elusive signified remains outside the scope of the metaphysical *theatron*, as if a shade trailing behind the stage director, peering at the script over Plato's shoulder and amusedly gauging the verisimilitude of the lines attributed to its illustrious double, whose "renown has echoed down the centuries, allowing Socrates to exert an unparalleled influence on the European tradition of philosophy and literature" (Blondell 85). For, irrespective of the director's intentions, the final *coup de théâtre* lies in the spectacular metamorphosis of the allegedly heretic gadfly of Athens into a legendary philosopher-hero of Homeric proportions.

"What non-literal forms of ethnographic representation might a contemporary, critical, and historically informed ethnographic project take? How can we move beyond *writing culture*?" (Harrison 245). Resisting the ethnographic project of "literatizing non-literate societies" could be one way of responding to the questions raised by Harrison about the limitations of ethnographic writing, and this might be achieved by envisioning an alternative to the type of agency associated with modernist, liberal, and neoliberal conceptions of self, free will, and individualism. This might entail experiencing vocality as a vital source of embodied knowledge and creative energy connected to the vibrancy of intangible cultural heritage that is remembered, reactivated, and reclaimed through story and song:

> The oral epic (and by hypothetical extension other forms of narrative in oral cultures) has nothing to do with creative imagination in the modern sense of this term, as applied to written composition … When a bard adds new material, he processes it in the traditional way … 'Song is the remembrance of songs sung' (Peabody, 1975, p. 216) … Basically, the singer is remembering in a curiously public way—remembering not a memorized text, for there is no such thing, nor any verbatim succession of words, but the themes and formulas that he has heard other singers sing … The oral song (or other narrative) is the result of interaction between the singer, the present audience, and the singer's memories of songs sung. In working with this interaction, the bard is original and creative on rather different grounds from those of the writer.
>
> (Ong 143–4)

Fully embodying this alternative agency might require being open to learning from Homer's intimate relationship with the sonorous materiality and phonic substance of vocality, and from his finely tuned sensitivity to its ephemeral performative power:

> The spoken word is always an event, a movement in time, completely lacking in the thing-like repose of the written or printed word. Our complacency in thinking of words as signs is due to the tendency … to reduce all sensation and indeed all human experience to visual analogues … Oral man is not so likely to think of words as 'signs', quiescent visual phenomena. Homer refers to them with the standard epithet 'winged words'—which suggests evanescence, power, and freedom: words are constantly moving, but by flight, which is a powerful form of movement, and one lifting the flier free of the ordinary, gross, heavy, 'objective' world.
>
> (Ong 73–5)

A more politically urgent engagement with vocality, which might produce a more profound transformation, could take the form of a patient and humble apprenticeship that would entail learning how to listen to (and perhaps sing with?) the Elders and Traditional Knowledge Keepers belonging to contemporary oral cultures, whose continuity critically hinges upon the vulnerability, relationality, and reciprocity of the lived voice.

ME: Why do I use a drum?
OLD WOMAN: To touch the earth.
ME: Then why do I sing with it?
OLD WOMAN: To allow the earth to touch you.
ME: What am I singing for?
OLD WOMAN: So that someday you might sing the one note that joins your heartbeat and the earth's heartbeat to the heartbeat of everything.
ME: You're saying that drumming and singing, anything that leads me inward and then outward, are just like praying and meditating.
OLD WOMAN: You are getting wiser, my boy.

***

ME: What is the point of prayer and meditation?
OLD WOMAN: To bring you closer to the Great Mystery.
ME: So I can understand it?
OLD WOMAN: No. So you can participate in it.

***

> I grew up spiritually after that.
>
> (Richard Wagamese, *Embers*)

Deconstructing the Derridean Critique of Presence and Phonocentrism

Thomaidis suggests in *Theatre & Voice* that Roland Barthes's essay "*Le grain de la voix*" ("The grain of the voice") exemplifies the possibility of hearing "the body within voice" (45), a rare attempt by a theorist to address vocality through a discussion of his intensely pleasurable and fulfilling embodied experience of the singing voice. Further examination of Barthes's intuitive insights into the non-discursive power of vocality has regrettably been curtailed in theatre and performance studies by the critique of presence that has been pivotal to the postmodern deconstruction of the modernist conception of the subject. However, in their determination to demystify presence, postmodern performance scholars bound by an intellectual allegiance to deconstruction have missed the opportunity to effectively engage with embodiment and experience, two of the most fundamental features of performance as a material practice. (Re)searching vocality must therefore account for the largely unexamined implications that this postmodern suspicion of presence has had for theorizing voice in relation to performance, so that we may move beyond demystification to restore our trust in embodied ways of knowing and embrace the lived voice as a vital aspect of human experience. As stated by philosopher Alva Noë, "To resist traditional approaches to presence – this should be clear – is to resist different ways of denying presence" (*Varieties of Presence* 5).

We are challenged to do so by performance theorist Jon Erickson who points out in his 2006 essay entitled "Presence," that "being for or against presence involves being able to adequately define what you mean by presence" (145). Erickson provocatively argues that "those who take a strong antimetaphysical and materialist approach to things cannot explain [presence] adequately, although they would love to explain it away, through recourse to some purely comprehensible socio-semio-psychoanalytic structure of desire," and he pointedly underlines the irony in the efforts of "those semio-materialists who want to discount the very idea of presence while they contradictorily seek to resist its power over others (and perhaps even themselves)" (146–7). In response to performance studies scholar Philip Auslander's reliance on Derridean deconstruction in his book *Presence and Resistance: Postmodernism and Cultural Politics in Contemporary American Performance*, Erickson questions the relevance of Derrida's theoretical stance on presence when applied to performance, given that the French philosopher's primary concern is with language in the lineage of Saussurean linguistics, as reflected by the influential concept of *différance* (150). Erickson stresses that what is at stake for Derrida is the notion of pure or full self-presence, which is "connected to the self-assured unity of being in the subject," a linguistically-grounded perspective emphasizing the relationship between speech and subjectivity that has antecedents in Lacan's psychoanalytical articulation of "the split subject, whose speech is never fully to be counted his own and present to himself" (145). This is corroborated by philosopher Mladen Dolar in *A Voice and Nothing More* through his examination of Lacan's conceptualization of voice as both surplus and lack:

> [F]or psychoanalysis, the auto-affective voice of self-presence and self-mastery was constantly opposed by its reverse side, the intractable voice of the other, the voice one could not control … [T]he object voice is the pivotal point precisely at the intersection of presence and absence. It discloses the presence and gives ground to its imaginary recognition—recognizing oneself as the addressee of the voice of the Other—but at the same time it is what inherently lacks and disrupts any notion of a full presence, it makes it a truncated presence built around a lack—the lack epitomized by the surplus of the voice.
>
> (41, 55)

Having foregrounded Derrida's commitment to deconstructing speech-as-presence, assumed to guarantee the full self-presence of the unitary subject, Erickson asserts that deconstruction should not be conflated with "a negation of the subjective experience of presence" ("Presence" 151). He observes that when this deconstructive strategy is employed to critique "the personal sense of presence of anyone," it focuses on the language they speak "as opposed to what they do with their bodies" (151). Erickson's main objection to the postmodern negation of the embodied experience of presence in performance is that such a categorical stance makes it impossible to address the phenomenon of charisma other than through the lens of the suspicion of presence, which inevitably leads to an overestimation of the manipulative and exploitative potentialities of the affective power of charisma. He remarks that, despite its alleged radical intent, this micrological analysis of presence legitimized by Derridean deconstruction—an analysis which he deems as "a *pose* of being political through theorization"—is not likely to prove "very useful in thwarting a person's attraction to a charismatic figure of authority, whether it is a Hitler or a Martin Luther King or a Gandhi (or a Jacques Derrida!)" (151). While Erickson does not deny that oppressive and abusive expressions of authority can be conveyed through the power of human presence, he suggests that it is ethically necessary to remain open to the potential for expressions of empathy, compassion, and love that can also be fostered through a more humane cultivation of presence. He finds totalizing interpretations of the experience of presence, empathy, or absorption problematic because they overlook the specificity of the circumstances in which such an experience occurs.

For Erickson, the problem does not lie in empathy and compassion themselves, but in the ways in which they can be manipulated in the service of authoritarianism, demagogy, sensationalism, etc. He further contends that acknowledging the mystery of presence and being susceptible to its affective power do not systematically undermine our critical faculties, as theorized by advocates of Brechtian theatre, because "not all mysteries are mystifications" (143). He goes on to relate the creative process of artists and theorists to a form of animism that entails

"imbuing or assuming a kind of autotelic or even autopoetic life (or 'presence') for their material, whether physical, visual, aural, or verbal" (149). He includes within this animistic praxis the terminology coined by certain influential scholars that gains currency as it circulates in academic publications by means of citations, enabling a particular theory to take on "a life of its own" (150)—which, of course, brings to mind the presence and recurrence of the Derridean neologism *différance*, whose perplexing untranslatability is part of its mysterious charisma.

Reclaiming the power of presence beyond its postmodern critique in theatre and performance studies is particularly important for research on vocality. While Erickson does not address the non-visual and non-verbal experience of phonic presence evoked by Barthes in his essay on the grain of the voice, he nevertheless considers the extent to which our sense of temporality impacts "how we interpret what is present before us at any moment," and he points to intensity and duration when specifying that presence is not experienced "merely in an 'on-off' relation with absence, but can also be understood as experienced in degrees, more or less," adding in parenthesis that he believes the audition of music can provide "a good example" (152). He does venture to offer what he calls "a modest and tentative idea" of what he means by presence, which he defines as "a kind of saturation of feeling, of sensibility, a condensation of experience that in the right circumstances emanates from the person or performer," stressing that presence is perhaps most importantly related to practice (and I would add that practice is necessarily informed by some type of training), as abundantly evidenced by the teachings and writings of theatre practitioners such as Stanislavsky and Barba, among others (147).

In *For More Than One Voice*, Cavarero probes Derrida's critique of presence by raising pivotal questions about voice in the appendix dedicated to the French philosopher. She proposes a compelling and courageous reassessment of Derrida's legacy that addresses the issue of vocality as the unexamined conundrum of deconstruction, and boldly challenges the contention that Western metaphysics favors speech over writing because of its grounding in a primarily phonocentric metaphysical discourse, exemplified by Platonic philosophy. Cavarero frames her discussion with the observation that Derrida features the voice as "the very thing that metaphysics privileges, over and against writing, in order to construct itself as a system of presence," a strategy that she undertakes to deconstruct (213). Drawing from her critical historicization of metaphysics as the devocalization of logos, she objects that the voice is "pertinent to a culture or an age that is opposed to metaphysics," and asserts that, in stark contrast to the antihistorical Derridean view of a metaphysics that valorizes speech and delegitimizes writing, metaphysics grounded in Platonic philosophy must be understood as "the historical product of a civilization of writing" (214). In light of this analysis, it becomes possible to identify the anachronical dimension of Derrida's thesis that the voice is "the constitutive feature of metaphysics itself, while the task of destabilizing the

phonocentric order is reserved for writing" (214). This influential Derridean interpretation of the role of *phone* in configuring truth as "a realm of presence" (214) has serious implications for research seeking to "valorize the antimetaphysical potential of the voice that, starting with Plato and in spite of strategic reticences, the philosophical tradition itself continually invokes" (215). In her research, Cavarero hence raises the crucial question of whether the voice, which, from a Derridean perspective, appears to be privileged by the "metaphysical ear" and entrusted with the category of presence, actually is "a sonorous voice" (215).

Furthermore, Cavarero identifies yet another antihistorical dimension of Derrida's critique of metaphysics, namely, its focus on the subject, which she notes is informed by Derrida's initial analysis of Edmund Husserl's phenomenological interpretation of the Cartesian cogito as "the 'modern' metaphysics of presence understood as 'self-consciousness'" that governs the notion of truth (*For More Than One Voice* 216). She points to a series of binary oppositions invested with the value of presence in Derrida's critique, including Saussure's signified/signifier, "making the latter (the phonic sign) dependent on the first (the concept), whereas the written sign appears as the sign of a sign," that is to say as "the graphic sign of a phonic sign," a linguistic system where signs represent the absent presence of the signified. Derrida hence argues that although the metaphysics of presence operates through the distinction between the signifier and the signified, such a distinction is revealed to be fictitious in the light of what he defines as *différance*, namely, "the continual movement of signs that defer to one another, in an interminable play of referential traces that have no origin" (216–17). Consequently, it is the desire for a (nonexistent) present entity that "produces the necessity of constructing the category of presence," theorized by Derrida as "an effect of the metaphysical privileging of the voice" (218). Cavarero's genealogy of the development of Derridean deconstruction recontextualizes the French philosopher's reflections on voice by showing the extent to which they operate within "a sector of modern philosophy that is heavily influenced by a Cartesian inheritance" (219). She observes that he is primarily concerned with the effect of presence produced when the speaking subject hears the expression of what s/he wants to say—the signified—through her/his enunciation of words—the acoustic signifier—thereby experiencing a form of self-presence, described by Cavarero as a solipsistic concept of subjectivity and consciousness whose closed and self-referential characteristics are rooted in the Cartesian cogito (219). This self-sufficient, monological speech-as-presence, which is disembodied and cut off from the world, may therefore be characterized as "a voice of thought, totally insonorous" (220). Cavarero remarks that

> although it does not use the physical voice and therefore does not hear itself speak, the Cartesian subject is capable of producing both the self-presence of the thinker and the immediate presence of that which it intends with its own thought,

which leads her to ask: "So why does Derrida – who obviously knows all this quite well – insist on the voice?" This key question requires a closer investigation of the relationship between deconstruction and voice, including Derrida's commitment to privileging *écriture* as *différance*, an open system of deferral that requires the voice to be cast in "a metaphysical role in opposition to the antimetaphysical valence of writing" (220). The major objection raised by Cavarero is that Derrida employs "the ancient Platonic condemnation of written discourse as a demonstration of this thesis," whereas she stresses that Platonic metaphysics crucially depends on the privileging of the faculty of sight, hence making it videocentric rather than phonocentric, a thesis which is "far more plausible, and philologically documentable," as evidenced in Western philosophy by the persistent linking of sight to the category of presence (222).

Cavarero suggests that what orients Derrida toward the voice might be that his critique focuses above all on "the effects of life (*vivezza*) that speech claims to transmit to the category of presence," which she contrasts with the lifelessness of the Platonic idea, "frozen in the immobility of its eternal present" (226). The Derridean critique of the full self-presence of the subject needs the voice because

> if the voice were the metaphorical voice of consciousness, obviously, there would be much less life in circulation. Only the voice that is perceptible sound and breath is capable of transferring an effect of living presence to the phonic sign, rendering it an animated signifier.
>
> (226)

Derrida is therefore committed to deconstructing the metaphysical operation that "vivifies presence through the voice" and that simultaneously consigns the lifeless and breathless written sign to immobility, which compels him to denounce this death of writing as a metaphysical trick that "devalues the trace by freezing it in the posture of a dead body" (227). Cavarero problematizes the grounding of this Derridean critique in Platonic thought by pointing out that Plato valued a devocalized logos which he associated with "the visible and mute order of ideas" rather than with the phonic substance of speech (230). She stresses that, for Plato, the ideas are unsayable, for their pure, visible, and mute presence, which does not belong to the realm of speech, can only be contemplated by "the eye of the soul" (231). By locating "the origin and cause of the phonic signifier in the mental signified," Platonic metaphysics clearly prioritizes sight over sound by envisioning these two modes of sensory perception as incommensurably distant, and the examples provided by Cavarero include the allegory of the cave through which Plato invokes "the luminous and mute mirage of the pure vision of a pure presence" (231–2). Far from privileging *phone*, simply considered to be "the inevitable material of vocalized speech," Platonic metaphysics is characterized by Cavarero as "peremptorily videocentric" (233), a strategic valorization of sight over

other senses that compels metaphysicians, and Derrida with them, to overlook the sonic/phonic materiality of the lived voice, whose vibrantly resonant presence is fundamentally antimetaphysical.

Cavarero elaborates on what she considers to be the antimetaphysical dimension of vocality in her chapter entitled "The Voice of the Soul," where she states that, for Plato, language is

> bound first of all to conform to thought, to correspond to it and to reflect its order. Because it is bodily, *phone* inevitably threatens the metaphysical instance of this conformity. The voice – and this, finally, is the point – disturbs philosophy.
>
> (*For More Than One Voice* 45)

She suggests that the threat of vocality compels Plato to insist on the muteness of "the dialogue of the soul with itself," (45) a silent discourse that he describes in *Theaetetus* as the soul "interrogating itself and responding to itself by itself" (45). Such a perspective anticipates the theatre of consciousness hinging upon "the soliloquy of an *I* whose disembodied ear concentrates on its own mute voice" that will produce the Husserlian ego critiqued by Derrida (46). Importantly, Cavarero contends that what makes this silent theatre of consciousness most problematic is its privileging of internal self-referentiality devoid of "the natural relationality of the vocal – the acoustic relationality that speech itself, insofar as it is sonorous, confirms" (46). Plato must strip *phone* from its materiality anchored in the sentient human body and foreclose the relationality it implies in order to safeguard "the mute and disembodied perfection of the solipsistic colloquium" (46). This entails sacrificing the vocality of speech and turning the voice into a metaphor to eliminate its relational status "in order not to have to worry about the existence of others" (46). Metaphysics therefore devalorizes "a *phone* that evades its rational semantic function [within] language as a system of signification," and reduces non-discursive vocality to non-sense precisely because the sonorous substance of the lived voice "lies beyond the logocentric domain of meaning" (182).

In Praise of Non-Discursive Vocalization

Although the connection posited by Derrida between Platonic metaphysics and phonocentrism is questionable, as Cavarero cogently demonstrates, Derridean deconstruction has nevertheless been instrumental to the critique of presence articulated by semiomaterialist scholars, as discussed by Erickson in his examination of the postmodern suspicion of presence in performance theory. The insights into vocality provided by Barthes in "*Le grain de la voix*" are therefore all the more intriguing when coming from the semiotician who once championed demystification and anti-essentialist materialism in his

Saussurean-inspired investigation of the social constructedness of language.[3] This essay, written in 1972, is part of Barthes's late work, a period described by Lucy O'Meara as "entirely consumed by aesthetic matters," with a publication output consisting "almost exclusively of essays on aesthetic objects: music, painting, literature, film" (*Roland Barthes at the Collège de France* 19). Significantly, Barthes's Collège de France lectures as Chair of Literary Semiology from 1977 to 1980 gave him the opportunity to address "the inclusion of aspects of language and literature overlooked by his previous, more systematic semiology" and confront what Diana Knight identifies as "one of the problematic aspects of the structuralist orthodoxy which Barthes himself helped to fashion … [, namely,] the gap it inserted between language and the world " (quoted in O'Meara 6, 16). These lectures are therefore a testament to Barthes's commitment to producing a discourse which is "*moins technique et plus 'humain'*" [less technical and more 'humane'], " a humanization he seeks to achieve "through the insertion of sensuous details," employing the word "experience," the title of Montaigne's final *Essai*, "as a '*mot d'ordre*' at the end of Barthes's inaugural lecture" (O'Meara 16–17; my trans.). Encouraging his Collège de France audience to turn away from the reductive force of concepts, Barthes reasserts Nietzsche's association of modernity with "the rule of the concept, which excludes 'intuition', in the sense of the particular, immediate relation to the world which concepts cannot capture" (19). This perspective, which is influenced by Romantic thought as demonstrated by Andrew Bowie, enables Barthes to license "his idiosyncratic lecturing methodology, with its tactics of simulation and fantasy, by recourse to the Nietzschean archetype of the artist" (19). Aesthetic experience thus becomes pivotal to this period of Barthes's work, and O'Meara considers the Collège de France lectures to represent "the apogee of Barthes's career as a public intellectual" (2). Acknowledging that "Barthes's late work has been castigated for retrenching into the aesthetics," she counters this critique by suggesting that Barthes's arguably most significant achievement as professor of literary semiology consists in teaching "the importance of the aesthetic to our sense of our place in the world, … and the value of the non-instrumentalisable, whatever that might be: reticence; elusive social accord; a kind of teaching that is not goal-oriented" (20). I would contend that it is within this particular context that Barthes's writings on vocal music, and especially his essay on the grain of the voice, must be situated and (re)considered.

In this influential text, Barthes explores that which exceeds discursive language in the voice of Charles Panzéra (1896–1976), a celebrated lyric baritone and master-teacher who published several books on vocal training and with whom the French theorist studied in his early twenties ("*La musique, la voix, la langue*" [Music, Voice, Language] 248). Barthes's writings about vocal music are therefore grounded in his apprenticeship with Panzéra, whose teachings gave him an experiential understanding of vocal practice that preceded his attempt to theorize vocality. This is perhaps why Barthes distinguishes between the structural and processual

dimensions of vocal production in "*Le grain de la voix*," identifying the former as *phéno-chant* (pheno-song) and the latter as *géno-chant* (geno-song), in reference to Kristeva's notions of *phéno-texte* and *géno-texte* that designate the communicative function through which meaning appears in a concrete form and the generative signifying process that she considers to be unstructured and unstructuring (Kristeva 223). As noted by Jonathan Dunsby, Kristeva describes music as a "non-verbal signifying system" and Barthes extends this idea to vocal music by associating the grain of the voice with the concept of *géno-chant* (Dunsby 115). Barthes also employs the term *signifiance*, which Kristeva borrowed from linguist Émile Benveniste and applied to non-verbal signifying processes. For Barthes, the *signifiance* of *géno-chant* operates beyond the meaning and form of lyrics, as well as beyond elements of style, technique, and execution that characterize vocal music performance. Conversely, *phéno-chant* refers to structural and technical dimensions encompassing genre, form, style, and interpretation that place artistic execution in the service of communication, performance, and expression, codified according to culturally and historically specific social norms and values.

Embodiment plays an important role in the distinction that Barthes makes between *phéno-chant* and *géno-chant*, for he states: "*Le 'grain', c'est le corps dans la voix qui chante*" (The 'grain' is the body in the singing voice; "*Le grain*" 243). He associates the materiality of vocality with the cavernous depths of the body (muscles, mucous membranes, cartilage) and with the phonic source of the language in which the song is performed, whether it be Russian, German, or French, as in the examples he provides when discussing particular singers (238). He stresses that the grain that he hears in their voices is neither personal nor original, but is individual in that it enables him to hear a particular body in their voice, and he further contends that while the *signifiance* conveyed through the grain of the voice is over and above the intelligible and the expressible, it is linked to the materiality of the body speaking its mother tongue (239–40). Although he does not further interrogate the relationship between grain and mother tongue in this essay, Barthes evokes a specific space where "***une langue rencontre une voix***" (a language encounters a voice 237; emphasis in original) and where a germination process takes place from within the materiality of language. This generative process, or "*jeu signifiant*" (signifying game/play 239), eludes communication, representation, and expression, which would seem to suggest that the performativity of vocality is linked to its sonorous materiality, invoked by Barthes in the phrase "*la volupté des sons-signifiants*," namely, the sensuous delight of signifying-sounds, which he relates to the "truth" of language rather than its functionality (239–40). He provides the example of the voluptuous *signifiance* of the game/play of vowels ("*jeu des voyelles*") in Panzéra's *géno-chant*, and remarks that ü is the most French of vowels because it does not come from Latin (240). These observations raise the question of whether such sonic/phonic characteristics might linger within language as the echoing

sonorities of ancient oral culture, yet Barthes does not expound on this hypothesis in "*Le grain de la voix*." Instead, he goes on to evoke the paradoxical phonetics of the *lettre-son* (letter-sound) which he posits as being at once wholly abstract ("*entièrement abstraite*") as a vibratory element, and wholly material ("*entièrement matérielle*") because it is embodied in the singer's singular corporeality (240). According to Barthes, this phonetics resists culturally-specific attempts to reduce it to poetic and melodic expressivity because its *signifiance* is inexhaustible, so that it is able to escape what he calls the tyranny of signification (240–1). These considerations compel him to articulate three intriguingly open-ended questions: he wonders whether he is the only one who perceives this phonetics; whether he might be hearing voices in the voice ("*Est-ce que j'entends des voix dans la voix?*" 240); and whether the entire space of the voice might be an infinite space ("*L'espace entier de la voix n'est-il pas un espace infini?*" 240). Having noted that what he defines as the grain of the voice is not simply its timbre, he suggests that the notion of grain opens up a space of *signifiance* that has to do with the friction between music and something else, and he specifies that the latter is language but has nothing to do with message (241). To ground this theory of vocality in artistic practice, Barthes explains that the French *mélodie* is characterized by its connection to the French language and the oratorial dimension of poetry in French culture, as exemplified by the vocal music composed by Fauré, Duparc, and Debussy.

In the 1977 essay entitled "*La musique, la voix, la langue*," Barthes foregrounds an intriguing paradox about the relationship he establishes between language and vocal music. He provocatively claims that whereas the French *mélodie* may be conceived as the celebration of the cultivated French language in the milieu of the bourgeois salon, Panzéra's vocal performance subverts this bourgeois art form because the singer performs with his entire body, *à voix nue* (through the naked voice), an approach that Barthes identifies with the very mode employed in traditional folk singing, inducing him to contend that Panzéra honors this mode in secret by performing the cultivated *mélodie* as if it were a folk song. Interestingly, the French semiotician backs up this claim with evidence drawn from his own experience of studying with Panzéra, who always borrowed from old French songs in the singing exercises he used when teaching vocal practice ("*La musique*" 248–51). Barthes infers that Panzéra's singing epitomizes vocal music's connection to a particular quality of language that is unrelated to poetics, rhetoric, or semiology. He associates this quality with what language does not explicitly articulate, a *non-dit* (something unsaid) that makes room for *jouissance* (rapturous delight), tenderness, delicacy, and fulfillment—the values belonging to a subtle imaginary enabling Barthes to envision vocal music as that which is expressed through the inflections of utterances as well as that which is implicit because not articulated, so that vocality as *significance* remains outside both meaning and non-meaning (251–2).

Barthes, who ardently asserts his love for Panzéra's voice, hence offers a lover's discourse of value and praise based on his own experiential knowledge of vocal music as connoisseur-listener and amateur-practitioner rather than on his expertise in semiotic analysis, and he boldly proposes that a successful relationship to vocal music, epitomized by his personal attraction to the performative power of Panzéra's vocality, eschews both the censorship of desire and the sublimation of the unspeakable ("*La musique*" 252). The importance of relationality in Barthes's testimony seems to corroborate Cavarero's perspective while effectively circumventing the Derridean critique of presence, in accordance with Thomaidis's suggestion, in his discussion of voice as sonorous material, that "another way to account for the complexity of presence is not by turning back to the interiority of the self but by opening out to the intersubjective communication between material bodies" (*Theatre & Voice* 25).

In his writings on vocal music, Barthes does not attempt to demystify the affective impact of vocality by explaining its power away, as in the postmodern critique of presence in performance theory, but seems instead to be willing to acknowledge the sense of mystery evoked by Erickson while at the same time insisting on the embodied materiality of vocality foregrounded by Thomaidis. Barthes engages with this power by bearing witness to the infinite space opened up by the non-discursive generative signifying process of *géno-chant*, and by attempting to describe his personal experience of the corporeal dimension of Panzéra's voice, compelling the French semiotician to explore the relational nature of its sonorous substance, and to wonder whether he hears voices in the voice. In response to the salient questions that Barthes raises about vocality, Cavarero might contend that it is the embodied materiality of Panzéra's voice that imbues the phonic sign with its living, breathing presence, transforming it into an animated signifier whose vibratory quality conveys to Barthes the individuality rather than the personality of the singer, over and above the intelligible and the expressible. Indeed, she emphasizes that "unlike the gaze, the voice is always, irremediably relational," and maintains that one can hear in sonorous speech—and, I would add, in singing—"the plurality of singular voices that convoke one another in a relation that is not simply sound, but above all resonance," which she considers as "the first matrix of every poetic song," specifying that resonance "does not exhaust its meaning only in determining the musicality of language" (*For More Than One Voice* 177, 179, 182). She therefore suggests that the meaning of resonance "lies first of all in the vocal relation to which the singular voices are called" (182). Building on Cavarero's understanding of resonance as "musicality in relation" (182), I would further hypothesize that it is possibly because Panzéra performs with his entire body, *à voix nue*, to subvert high culture and reclaim a vocal tradition that he transmits through his teaching, that Barthes feels he hears the call of other voices, as if perceiving traces of ancestral orality still resonating in the grain of Panzéra's singular voice.

Artaud's Quest

Barthes's notion of "grain" has been so widely disseminated within the fields of Western art music and popular music since the 1970s that it has "turned into something of a slogan" according to Dunsby (113). In theatre and performance studies, however, this notion has had much less currency, even though Barthes's intuitions about vocality were foreshadowed several decades earlier by Antonin Artaud, who frequently summoned the creative potentialities of vocalization in his influential writings on performance. Thomaidis hence considers Artaud to be a precursor of contemporary artistic experiments exploring "voice as material, sonorous and capable of doing much more than accommodating language" (*Theatre & Voice* 27). Having positioned Artaud within the lineage of "earlier and subsequent experiments of the historical avant-garde, from Futurists to Dadaists" (28) that probed the limitations of verbal expression in oral and written language, Thomaidis suggests that traces of Artaud's insights into vocality can be found in the work of German voice teacher Alfred Wolfsohn, who explored the therapeutic potential of extended vocal techniques that his student Roy Hart applied to experimental performance, as well as in the work of Grotowski, who developed with his Laboratory Theatre collaborators a regime of intensive physical and vocal training that hinged upon the body-voice connection and combined rigorous precision with organic spontaneity (see Magnat 2014).

As an actor, director, and writer, who actively contributed to the Surrealist movement, Artaud was deeply invested in practice and driven by the urge to decenter discursivity in the arts. His unconventional writing style ostensibly sought to destabilize the reader's confidence in the linear logic of rational discourse, and his anticipation of what theatre might achieve once freed from the stifling constraints of psychological realism—which became dominant in Europe during his lifetime—was conveyed through the quasi-prophetic "voice" of his performative writing that fused intricately layered conceptualizations with stirring poetic imagery and coarse vernacular expressions. In *Le Théâtre et son double* (The Theatre and Its Double), Artaud provocatively calls into question the dependency of Western theatre on text-based intelligibility, a propensity that Barthes will later identify as the tyranny of signification in vocal music. Inspired by his encounter with Balinese performance traditions at the 1931 *Exposition Coloniale* in Paris, Artaud strategically privileges in his writing the carnal/plastic aspects of physicality and the sonic/phonic materiality of vocality over the discursive function of language. His quixotic battle against French textocentric theatre hence required no less than storming the fortress of European high culture and blazing a fiery trail leading toward what he called the theatre of cruelty—a somewhat infelicitous utopian performative opened to an array of contradictory (mis)interpretations for future generations of theatre-makers. Yet, in spite of the ambiguities and inconsistencies inherent in his controversial conception of performance, Artaud is portrayed by Grotowski in *Towards a Poor Theatre* as "a great theatre-poet, which means a poet of

the possibilities of theatre and not of dramatic literature, [whose] secret, above all, is to have made particularly fruitful mistakes and misunderstandings" (120, 125). Artaud testified in his work to the chronic suffering he experienced due to severe physical and mental ill health, and it is tempting to pathologize his visionary work by searching for symptoms of psychosis, schizophrenia, and paranoia in his writing, including in his famous vision of actors burnt at the stake and signaling through the flames—as if performance constituted a dangerous way of knowing forever threatened by suspicions of esotericism and heresy wielded by superstitious inquisitors. Yet, Grotowski asserts that, no matter how improbable Artaud's prophetic allusions, visions, and metaphors may be, they "seem, in the long run, to possess a certain soundness. For all this is bound to happen. No one knows how, but it is inevitable. And it does happen" (122). In response to this *koan*-like epigram defying us to take Artaud seriously, I propose to rescue his writings on performance from the smoldering ashes of the theatre of cruelty to identify core principles, recurring themes, and central images that may contribute to the reconstruction of his theory of vocality. I will then address Derrida's critique of Artaud's perspective in light of Cavarero's analysis of Derridean deconstruction, whose strategic overlooking of vocality I will further scrutinize.[4]

When discussing the impact that Artaud's legacy has had on the arts, Martin Esslin points to Peter Brook and Charles Marowitz's 1964 Theatre of Cruelty experiments in acting and staging at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art; Grotowski's Laboratory Theatre's exploration of physically-based performance processes (although Esslin notes that the Polish director became familiar with Artaud's writing only after his company had achieved international acclaim); and the North American theatre experiments of Judith Malina and Julian Beck's Living Theatre, Joseph Chaikin's Open Theatre, and Richard Schechner's Performance Group, as well as Alan Kaprow's "happenings" (91–4). Interestingly, Kaprow was a student of the composer and musician John Cage, whose investigation of indeterminacy via chance procedures in collaboration with choreographer Merce Cunningham, visual artist Robert Rauschenberg, and pianist David Tudor at Black Mountain College, was influenced by his encounter with *Le Théâtre et son double*. In the summer of 1952, Mary Caroline Richards was in the process of translating this book and read parts of her translation to the Black Mountain College community. Richards had found out about Artaud's book through the writings of French actor and director Jean-Louis Barrault, who recommended *Le Théâtre et son double* "as one of the five works all actors should read" (quoted in Harris 228). She was further intrigued when discovering that it was one of the books that Pierre Boulez had been reading when composing his *Deuxième Sonata*, and it was on Tudor and Cage's suggestion that she decided to undertake the first English translation of Artaud's writings (quoted in Harris 228). In *The Arts at Black Mountain College*, Mary Emma Harris reports Richards's contention that Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty, far from

advocating brutality, "was concerned with the absolute energies of life" (228). Indeed, Artaud himself explains in a letter to the writer Jean Paulhan included in his book that although he employs the term "*cruauté*" (cruelty) he might as well say "*vie*" (life) or "*nécessité*" (necessity) to express what he means:

> *parce que je veux indiquer surtout que pour moi le théâtre est acte et émanation perpétuelle, qu'il n'y a en lui rien de figé, que je l'assimile à un acte vrai, donc vivant, donc magique.*
>
> because I want to point out first and foremost that for me theatre is action and perpetual emanation, that there is nothing fixed in it, and that I associate it with an act which is real, hence alive, hence magical.
>
> (177)

While Cage was a musician and Artaud was an actor, they both appeared to have been drawn to the unpredictability of the energetic currents flowing through the living performance processes they explored.

In *Theatres of Immanence*, Laura Cull specifies that *Le Théâtre et son double* inspired Cage "when making works such as *Music of Changes* and the *Untitled Event* of 1952 at Black Mountain College, which has subsequently been dubbed the first 'Happening' (Kahn 1999: 328–9) – and in which Mary Caroline Richards performed" (16). Cull stresses that Cage's compositional techniques employed chance "as a means to expose the ego of the author to the intervention of worldly forces into the art-making process, such that the author is no longer the sole arbiter of events" (49). The influence of Artaud on Cage might also be traced in the American composer's determination to challenge conventional conceptions of music by integrating a wide range of sounds into the controversial pieces he created. The infamous 4'33" presented in 1952 while Cage was becoming familiar with Artaud's writings is a case in point, as it featured musicians refraining from playing music for 4 minutes and 33 seconds, a provocation daring audience members to get past their sense of awkwardness and discomfort to become gradually aware of the acoustic ecology composed of all the surrounding sounds that they would have otherwise not been able to perceive. Whether or not this constituted Cage's version of an Artaudian music of cruelty, his exploration of the limits of artistic modes of expression and representation has had a powerful influence on experimental performance, as most tangibly exemplified by Kaprow's work.

The Material Affective Efficacy of Vocality

Engaging with Artaud's performative writing, whose significance is acknowledged by some of the most influential artistic innovators of the twentieth century, may be

perceived as a necessary rite of passage. Susan Sontag hence declares in the introduction to the volume of selected writings by Artaud that she edited: "To read Artaud is nothing less than an ordeal" (lvi). Warning that such an undertaking requires a special disposition combining stamina, sensitivity, and tact, she provides the following cautionary guideline:

> Forbidden assent or identification or appropriation or imitation, the reader can only fall back on the category of inspiration … Artaud is someone who has made a spiritual trip for us – a shaman. It would be presumptuous to reduce the geography of Artaud's trip to what can be colonized … For anyone who reads Artaud through, he remains fiercely out of reach, an inassimilable *voice* and *presence*.
>
> (lvii–lix; emphasis mine)

Four decades later, I wonder whether renewing my relationship with Artaud's writings on performance might become a way of bearing witness to the enduring vibratory presence of this resounding voice which has provoked, baffled, irritated, challenged, and inspired so many to assent and dissent, claim and disown, critique and emulate its resonant and stridently polemical poetics. For me, the hermeneutic labor of re-reading Artaud in French and conveying my interpretation through the process of translating his thinking into English is also a way of entering in dialogue with him about the alchemical theatre he conjured up as an antidote to the unconditional endorsement of Cartesian rationalism by French culture and its excessive reverence for the canonical dramatic literature of text-based theatre. As philosopher Serge Margel remarks, from Artaud's modernist avant-gardist perspective, "*Le langage est malade, anémié, mortifié, il a rompu avec sa force d'incantation et quitté son pouvoir symbolique*" (Language is diseased, anemic, mortified, having broken off with its incantatory force and forsaken its symbolical power) and the actor's work therefore consists in reactivating these properties, as reflected by the type of training developed by key European theatre directors, from Stanislavsky and Meyerhold to Grotowski and Barba, reconfiguring the performer as a *transacteur* (transactor) who is able to put others in contact with collective forces or energies as in a ceremony or a ritual ("*Portrait de l'acteur en performeur*" 29–33; my trans.). Grotowski thus states:

> The ritual is a moment of great intensity; provoked intensity; … Performer knows to link body impulsion to sonority … The witnesses then enter into intense states because, as they say, they have felt a presence. And this is owing to Performer, who is a bridge between the witness and something. In this sense, Performer is *pontifex*, a maker of bridges.
>
> (*Grotowski Sourcebook* 377)

In *Le Théâtre et son double*, Artaud asserts that alchemical performance operates through the convergence of prodigious and conflicting affective forces, a tumultuous process that he describes as "*une sorte de rebrassement essentiel débordant de conséquences et surchargé de spiritualité*" (a reshuffling of elemental forces teeming with consequences and overflowing with spirituality), evoking an absolute and abstract purity beyond which he states there is nothing, and which he envisions as "*une note unique, une sorte de note limite, happée au vol et qui serait comme la partie organique d'une indescriptible vibration* (a unique musical note, a kind of threshold sound, snatched in flight, as if it were the organic manifestation of an indescribable vibration; 79). Hence, sonority is pivotal to the alchemical process that Artaud traces to the Orphic mysteries of ancient Greece, whose function he envisions as fulfilling a nostalgia for pure beauty—"*sonore, ruisselante et dépouillée*" (sonorous, diluvian, and denuded)—that he suspects Plato himself must have experienced at least once (79–80). This process resolves, through strange and unimaginable conjunctions, all antagonistic oppositions, including matter versus mind, idea versus form, and concrete versus abstract, merging all appearances by melting them into a unique form of expression akin to spiritualized gold (80). Asserting that artistic practice must be as efficacious in the spiritual and imaginary realms as the type of practice which, in the physical realm, actually produces gold, Artaud compares the virtual efficacy of alchemy with that of performance as they both depend upon symbolic operations (73). He infers that performance should not be reduced to imitating the banality of quotidian life, but must instead be employed to convey "*une autre realité dangereuse et typique, où les Principes, comme les dauphins, quand ils ont montré leur tête s'empressent de rentrer dans l'obscurité des eaux*" (another dangerous and quintessential reality where Principles, like dolphins, once they have shown their head hurriedly dive back into the dark waters; 74). He cautions that alchemical theatre cannot be achieved by purely human means, and that it should not be analyzed through an abusive form of logic whose intellectualism schematizes the arts, but must instead be apprehended poetically through forms, sounds, music, and volumes that induce intense states of acuity, "*d'un tranchant si absolu que l'on sent à travers les tremblements de la musique et de la forme les menaces souterraines d'un chaos aussi décisif que dangereux*" (of such absolute sharpness that one senses in the tremors of music and forms the subterranean menace of a type of chaos that is as decisive as it is dangerous; 75, 77). Jolted into heightened awareness by Balinese performance traditions, Artaud makes striking connections between visual and sonic expression when evoking the phonic materiality of words uttered by performers, whom he urges to develop a sensitivity to the spatial quality of language, which must be manipulated like a solid object "*qui ébranle des choses, dans l'air d'abord, ensuite dans un domaine infiniment plus mystérieux et plus secret mais qui lui-même admet l'étendue*" (that shakes things, first in the air, then in an infinitely more mysterious and secret domain, itself allowing for spatial expansiveness), a domain through which appears "*une certaine poésie dans l'espace qui se confond elle-même avec la*

sorcellerie" (a spatial type of poetry that merges with sorcery; 111–12). He therefore seeks to renew the old magical efficacy of language, its spellbinding properties, whose mysterious possibilities have long been forgotten (172).

Artaud is convinced that such possibilities can only materialize if the performer undergoes rigorous training—as in Asian performance traditions—and becomes "*un athlète du cœur*" (an athlete of the heart; 199). This training entails gaining an embodied awareness of breath as a source of "*vie énergétique*" (energetic life) that animates verbal and non-verbal phonic expression through rhythmic tensions, compressions, and counterpoints, and that flows through the vibrations and pulsations of the body to create poetry in space (173–4). He stresses that the secret of this poetic energy lies in the dynamic contrasts between silence and sound, solo and choral vocalization, shifts in tonality and dissonances that rupture the dialectic chain of expression (175). For Artaud, the performative power of vocality stems from the evocative modulations of the lived voice, vibrating in space and time beyond the discursive value of language, opening up a sensory dimension that supplements rather than arrests thinking (183). Moreover, the affective dimension of performativity must itself be understood in relation to the double function of alchemical theatre, for as Grotowski points out in *Towards a Poor Theatre*,

> Artaud was well aware – as we know from his essay "*Un athlétisme affectif*" in *Le Théâtre et son double* — that there is an authentic parallelism between the efforts of a man who works with his body (e.g. picking up a heavy object) and the psychic processes (e.g. receiving a blow, retaliating).
>
> (206)

Having observed that "to pick up an object from a table is the conclusion of a complicated process in the body," the Polish director acknowledges that when actors rely on "a particular type of movement to exteriorize a particular type of emotion" their work usually leads to clichés, whereas Artaud, who was himself an actor, sought to "escape from the exact imitation of human reactions and calculated reconstructions," as exemplified by his focus on breath, which offers the performer "a chance of widening his possibilities, of acting not only through words but also through that which is inarticulate" (184, 206). In the chapter entitled "Actor's Training," Grotowski rejects the type of breathing techniques taught in conservatory training and declares that the only absolute rule is that the actor must be physically engaged in an action for vocal expression to be alive (181). He asserts:

> The voice is something material … In the vocal process, all parts of the body must vibrate. It is of the utmost importance – and I shall go on repeating this – that we learn to speak with the body first and then with

> the voice … Our whole body is a system of resonators – i.e. vibrators … The complexity of this system is astonishing.
>
> (184)

This parallel process between physical and vocal actions may, in turn, be related to the "authentic parallelism" that Grotowski associates with Artaud's notion of *athlétisme affectif*, in which the parallel planes of physicality, vocality, and affectivity must exist simultaneously for performance to be materially efficacious. Expanding on Grotowski's perspective, Margel suggests that, for Artaud, the athlete's organism is analogous to the affective organism of the actor as they exist in parallel with each other yet on different planes ("Portrait de l'acteur en performeur" 35). He remarks that whereas the athlete is endowed with a physical body, muscular strength, and corresponding organs,

> *l'acteur est non seulement pourvu d'un véritable organisme, par lequel il opère la mise en scène de son propre corps, mais de plus cet organisme comporte lui aussi une force réelle, qu'Artaud nomme affective.*
>
> the actor is not only endowed with an actual organism, through which he realizes the mise en scène of his own body, but this organism itself comprises an actual force, which Artaud designates as affective.
>
> (35)

Margel infers that these two types of forces are each other's double, one pertaining to the body's organs, linked to muscles, effort, and movement, while the other pertains to the power of affects, linked to time, memory, and a sense of the collective (35). Since the athlete of the heart works within the register of invisible affective forces, energies, and influences, the actions s/he performs affect both her/his own double and a collective double, namely, the audience whom s/he puts in contact with these affective forces (36). Margel observes that many cultures associate this double with forces, energies, or magical powers hinging upon the performer's capacity "*d'agir sur le spectateur, au sens performatif du terme*" (of *working upon* the spectator in the performative sense; 37; my trans.; emphasis in original).

As underlined by Grotowski, Artaud focuses on breath (*le souffle*) as foundational to *athlétisme affectif*, yet Margel differentiates between the athlete and the actor by stating that for the former, "*c'est le souffle qui s'appuie sur le corps*" (it is breath that relies on the body), while for the latter, "*le corps est appuyé par le souffle*" (the body is supported by breath; 37; my trans.). Consequently, the actor's breath is no longer a product of the body, affiliated with its organs, and caused by the contraction of the lungs, as it is the case for the athlete, but produces the body or bodiliness ("*produit le corps ou du corps*"), and even refashions another type of body ("*voire même qui* ***refait*** *un autre corps*") to which Artaud refers elsewhere as a body without

organs (37; my trans.; emphasis in original). Margel infers that, for Artaud, performance training must enable the body to be supported by breath so that the potentialities of the body, its power, can emerge from breath, becoming the body's double—not a type, a figure, or a character laden with clichés, but

> *cet autre plan [qui] constitue la force performative de l'acteur, où ce sont les forces de l'affectivité (souffles, gestes, cris, regards, signes …) qui produisent l'action dans laquelle un corps peut surgir comme doublure collective, des corps partager l'espace et traverser un temps commun.*
>
> this other plane that constitutes the performative power of the actor, where affective forces—breathing, gesturing, screaming, looking, signaling—produce an action through which the body comes into being as the collective double, and bodies can experience shared space and communal time.
>
> (37–8; my trans.)

I would further contend that Artaud's theory of vocality, grounded in his embodied experience as an actor, posits that breath supports the lived voice as physicality's double: similar to athletic training, it is through a specific form of psychophysical training that the performer's voice and body become channels through which affective forces circulate. This connection between breath, vocality, and physicality may be related to Margel's association of the efficacy of affective forces with that of performative utterances or speech acts endowed with a transformative power, whereby the body is brought into being by the forces from which it emerges, as it does from breath upon which it relies for its movement and actions. Margel hence asserts that breath and affective forces, instead of being produced by the body, exist independently and find their origin and destination within themselves (39). He infers that Artaud imagines language as an autonomous, active force, whose performative efficacy lies beyond the discursivity of speech, and considers that breath enables the performer's body to enter in relation with its double by means of evocation, intonation, incantation—a non-verbal, material, affective language that does not rely on representation, on the separation of signifier from the signified, of sound from meaning, but enacts a transformation on a different plane (41). While the performer must sustain a relationship with these various forces by channeling them, s/he is empowered and transformed by their intensity, radiance, and vibrations, thereby becoming her/his own double in the process (43). From such a perspective,

> *les forces se dédoublent entre une action et son intensité, un acte concret et sa densité variable, comme un souffle et son mouvement, sur lequel s'appuie le corps … tout se dédouble dans le jeu de l'acteur. Un monde en double, mais non un autre monde.*

> forces double up into an action and its intensity, a concrete act and its variable density, as with breath and its movement, upon which the body relies. Everything becomes double through the performance of the actor. A world doubled up, but not another world.
>
> ("Portrait de l'acteur en performeur" 45; my trans.)

In the alchemical theatre powerfully invoked by Artaud's performative writing, spoken words must therefore be heard "*sous leur angle sonore*" (from the angle of their sonority) and perceived as movements, while objects and even light itself must speak "*comme dans les toiles de certains vieux peintres*" (as in the canvases of certain classical painters), and everything must be buzzing with signification (*Le Théâtre et son double* 186). This material agitation, structured by silence, rhythm, and vibration, is composed of objects and gestures "*réellement faits et réellement utilisés*" (genuinely created and genuinely used), and words that acquire their incantatory meaning through their materiality, "*leur formes, leurs émanations sensibles*" (their shape, their tangible emanations; 193). Artaud emphasizes that these are ancient techniques that combine the intensity of color, light, and sound and rely on the vibrations, repetitions, and tremors of musical rhythm and spoken words through tonal modulation and dissonance (194). For the Artaudian actor, then, affective athleticism entails "*capter et faire rayonner certaines forces*" (channeling certain forces and making them radiate)—forces whose course, direction, and destination must be deeply embodied since Artaud refers to "*leur trajet matériel d'organes et* ***dans les organes***" (their material trajectory among and *within the organs*; 201), italicizing the last three words without any further explanation, although he provides the example of the importance of breath for the Kabbalah in the Jewish tradition and of mantras, the sacred utterances of meditation practices in Hinduism.

Martin Esslin points out that Jean-Louis Barrault was able to translate Artaud's "technical and mystical language into mundane physical practice," and states that "the results, as anyone who has watched Barrault demonstrate, this technique (or rather his elaboration of it) can testify, are spectacular" (*Artaud* 87). Artaud stresses that the performer must believe in "*une matérialité fluide de l'âme*" (a flowing materiality of the soul) and become aware that since passion is matter, the former is informed by the fluctuations of the plasticity of matter, an awareness that substantially extends the performer's agency, to which Artaud refers as a form of sovereignty endowing her/him with the type of mastery pertaining to a true healer ("*vrai guérisseur*"; *Le Théâtre et son double* 202). He also links breathing with spontaneity and life when stating: "*J'insiste sur le mot spontané, car le souffle rallume la vie, il l'embrase dans sa substance*" (I emphasize the word spontaneous, because breathing reignites life, it sets its substance ablaze), and specifies that a deliberate way of breathing can bring about the spontaneous reoccurrence of life (204). Asserting that breath is intimately connected to the notion of sacred theatre, he associates

breathing with affect and infers that all emotions have an organic foundation and that it is through a process of embodied self-cultivation—akin to Zeami's teachings about Noh—that performers can recharge the voltaic density of their emotions (210).

Artaud acknowledges in the text entitled "*La mise en scène et la métaphysique*" that he deeply regrets having to employ the word "*métaphysique*" to speak about the poetic breadth, concrete efficacy, and spiritual depth of certain types of artworks (*Le Théâtre et son double* 54). To those who might object that the Western idea of metaphysics is inhuman, ineffective, and dead, he responds that what he is proposing is a metaphysics of language, physicality, and musicality, placing them in productive relation with one another and creating fruitful encounters with time and movement that can regenerate the incantatory power of words (66–9). He also qualifies his usage of the terms religious and mystical in this text, by pointing out that he is aware of the negative connotations and tired clichés associated with this vocabulary in Western culture, and by specifying that he seeks inspiration for his alchemical theatre from Asian performance traditions, whose transmission processes across thousands of years have preserved ancient secrets about physicality, intonation, and harmony—secrets that are linked to sensory and other modes of perception—and whose vibratory consequences he associates with the intense poetry of nature and the magical relations in which these traditions participate (71, 112).

Artaud therefore envisions a metaphysics of performance that conjoins materiality and spirituality and whose efficaciousness he intuits from his experience of Balinese performance, which he vehemently opposes to the type of theatre that subordinates everything to text and that he considers to be "*un théâtre d'idiot, de fou, d'inverti, de grammarien, d'épicier, d'anti-poète et de positiviste, c'est-à-dire d'Occidental*" (an idiot's, madman's, invert's, grammarian's, grocer's, anti-poet's and positivist's theatre, in other words, Western theatre; 61). He contrasts this textocentric theatre with the poetry in space produced by alchemical performance, which is anarchical and creative because it calls into question the relationship between form and signification, arising from a disorder that brings us closer to chaos, hence to the great metaphysical terror lying at the core of ancient theatre, whose efficaciousness he yearns to rediscover (64–5). Esslin infers that

> Artaud's idea of a metaphysical theatre, paradoxically, springs from his conviction that it is abstract, discursive thinking that cuts man off from the hidden, mysterious sources of his being and confines him in a narrow world. To re-establish contact with the true meta-physical basis of human existence it is the body which must be re-awakened and re-activated.
>
> (*Artaud* 81)

Although the culturally specific codification of the highly stylized and intensely physical Balinese traditions necessarily escapes Artaud, it is nevertheless through this encounter with tradition that the full potential of what he reluctantly calls metaphysical performance suddenly becomes tangible. Accordingly, Artaud's theory of vocality is conveyed by means of an intuitive chain of associations connecting sound with image and movement, hearing with sight and spatiality, as well as vibration, rhythm, and musicality with affect, energy, and life. From Artaud's visionary perspective, the human voice can acquire a material efficacy when unfettered from discursive language, and it is through the alchemical process of performance that the breathing and moving athlete of the heart is able to transform the incantatory vibrations of sonorous visions into spiritualized gold, the secret function and mysterious purpose of his metaphysical theatre.

The Performative Power of Artaud's Voice in *Pour en finir avec le jugement de Dieu*

Artaud's fervent quest for the alchemical formula of an alternative metaphysics whose magical power would reanimate ancient forms of embodied knowledge makes his thinking-on-the-edge-of-language simultaneously vulnerable and attractive to Derridean deconstruction. Jones Irwin hence argues that while Derrida underlines that the transgression of Western metaphysics conjured up by Artaud always risks returning to and participating in that which it seeks to transgress, he is nevertheless seduced by the radicality of Artaud s project because "in attempting to transgress the limits of Western philosophical thinking about life," Artaud achieves "a 'consciousness' which goes beyond traditional philosophical understanding while also remaining enigmatically dependent upon philosophy"—a performative radicality that maintains "a tension of ambiguity within itself, which remains irresolvable" and that Derrida himself emulates in his writing: "Certainly, there is a clear sense that Derrida is uneasy with the status of traditional philosophical discourse and his own encounter with Artaud allows him to develop a different kind of (nonphilosophical) textual practice or performance" (*Derrida and the Writing of the Body* 17, 20). The far-reaching influence of Artaud's legacy can thus be traced well beyond the arts, as evidenced by Derrida's sustained critical engagement with Artaud's writings, on the one hand, and by Gilles Deleuze's fascination with the figure of Artaud on the other, leading to the surprisingly long trajectory of the perplexing phrase "*corps sans organes*" (body without organs) spoken by Artaud in the banned radio piece *Pour en finir avec le jugement de dieu* (*To Have Done with the Judgement of God*) recorded in November 1947, four months before his death.

Artaud's disturbingly effective performative prowess in this piece is considered by Esslin to constitute "the true fulfilment of his ideas about the theatre of cruelty" (*Artaud* 9). Writing about his embodied experience of listening to Artaud's "wild,

piercing, inarticulate cries – outbursts of such a deep intensity of anguish beyond speech that they freeze the blood" (9), Esslin observes that the shrieking and howling words uttered by Artaud draw attention not to "*what* they say" but to

> *how* they say it, the furious discordance and variation of the rhythms, the abrupt transitions, the intensity evoked by repetition and accumulation of words, all combining to communicate the rage, anguish and deep commitment which underlie them. Here language truly reaches its uttermost limit. (74–5)

It might therefore have been the *signifiance* of Artaud's strangely compelling vocal expressivity that endowed the phrase "*corps sans organes*" with such abiding affective power, striking Deleuze so deeply that it infiltrated his discourse in *Logique du Sens* (*The Logic of Sense*) published in 1969, and acquired the status of key concept in the two volumes of *Capitalisme et Schizophrénie* (*Capitalism and Schizophrenia*), co-authored with Félix Guattari and published in 1972 and 1980.

The quasi-animistic quality of this charismatic concept may be related to Erickson's discussion of presence, as well as to another text cited by Cull in which Erickson, addressing ethics and performance, remarks that "in the working out of their theories Deleuze and Guattari have little to say about the performative situation," further observing that they read Artaud "almost entirely in relation to his biography, with little if any attention paid to his theater works" ("The Face and the Possibility of an Ethics of Performance" 19; quoted in Cull 4). However, Cull deflects this objection by pointing out that "the image of a body without organs or a disorganized body – including a destratified voice" comes directly from Artaud's vocal performance in *Pour en finir avec le jugement de dieu* (58). In accordance with Esslin, she argues that it is through this "actualized performance practice" that Artaud's vision was most vividly materialized, thereby invalidating the commonplace argument that "Artaud failed to achieve in practice what he set out to do in theory," privileged by theatre scholars who turn to Derrida (rather than Deleuze as Cull does) when seeking to philosophically apprehend language and voice in performance, and who are swayed by Derrida's insistence "on the fundamental impossibility of Artaud's project" (59). Derrida's critical reading of Artaud's writings has indeed been so influential in theatre and performance studies that Artaud's visionary discourse has been largely discredited, hence robbing it of potential efficacy within the realm of performance theory. This Derridean dismissal of Artaudian theatre unsurprisingly hinges on the critique of presence, yet as shown by Cavarero, Derrida's critique is based on a particular philosophical interpretation of the role of voice, which I would contend is especially relevant, and even pivotal, to his own enduring fascination with Artaud.[5]

In the 1967 text, "*La parole soufflée*," a title playing on the ambiguity of this phrase, which suggests that speech is either stolen, or inspired, or both (Irwin 15), Derrida's discussion of subjectivity relies on a close reading of Artaud's writings that seeks to account for the totality of his life and work, which Derrida refers to as "*son aventure*" (his adventure), and which he views as constituting an unprecedented instance of absolute resistance to clinical and critical forms of exegesis deployed by those (critic, spectator, psychiatrist or scholar) striving to turn "*une existence refusant de signifier*" (an existence refusing to signify) into a case study, or to apprehend art without artwork and language without trace (*L'écriture et la différence* 261). Ironically, Derrida himself appears to make such an attempt when he identifies in Artaud's writings a yearning for artistic manifestation irreducible to mere expression and whose aim is no less than the creation of life, a creative process that cannot separate itself from the body to become a sign, an artwork, a representation. Derrida conveys the image of *parole* (speech) being stolen (*dérobée*) from the body, and makes an association between the verb *souffler* (to blow, exhale, whisper) and the verb *inspirer* (to breathe, inhale, inspire), which enables him to relate the phrase *parole soufflée* to theatre by pointing to the *souffleur* (prompter) who remains invisible to theatre audiences while whispering to the performer the pre-existing text of a play written by someone else (261–2). Such semantic free play makes it possible to envision the *souffleur* inhaling the performer's *souffle* (breath) as if speaking through her/his body and turning stolen lines into performative utterances. This voice blowing in from elsewhere, a counterfeit of inspiration, robs the speaker of the possibility to hear her/himself speak, which for Derrida constitutes the necessary condition for believing in the illusion of an autonomous, stable, and self-knowing subject.

This chain of theatrical metaphors about voicing enables Derrida to argue that "*Artaud a voulu que fût soufflée la machinerie du souffleur*" (Artaud wished that this machinery be stolen from the prompter) through the destruction of poetic inspiration pertaining to the economy of classical art—in this case, the economy of theatre, where the prompting-as-theft machinery masquerades as inspiration—which necessitates destroying metaphysics, religion, and aesthetics (*L'écriture et la différence* [*Writing and Difference*] 262). Indeed, in "*En finir avec les chefs-d'œuvre*" ("No More Masterpieces"), Artaud brazenly claims that defeating representation requires destroying art, and philosopher Philippe Sergeant concurs with Derrida when suggesting that this entails demolishing Western theology and metaphysics to find out what a body freed from logocentrism can achieve, so that, for Artaud, the theatre of cruelty holds the promise of a life that does not rely on artworks for inspiration or use art as a crutch, that is to say, a life without teleology (Sergeant 96, quoted in Delain 304). Artaud's assertion that artistic creative processes can defeat representation is resoundingly called into question by Derrida in "*Le théâtre de la cruauté et la clôture de la représentation*" ("The Theatre of Cruelty and the Closure of Representation"). In this influential text, Derrida infers from his critical reading of Artaud's writings that "*Artaud a voulu effacer la répétition en général*" (Artaud wished to

erase repetition as such) because the latter is a re-presentational device designed to preserve the present moment through a form of conservation that inexorably kills what was alive in that moment, which implies that repetition-as-representation is necessarily bereft of power, presence, and life (*L'écriture et la différence* 361). Artaud's desire to engage with that which in the present cannot be repeated and escapes representation is considered by Derrida as especially paradoxical since Artaud attempts to fulfill this desire in the theatre:

> *Nulle part la menace de répétition n'est aussi bien organisée qu'au théâtre. Nulle part on n'est aussi près de la scène comme origine de la répétition, aussi près de la répétition primitive.*
>
> Nowhere else is the threat of repetition as well organized as in the theatre. Nowhere else is it possible to be in such close proximity to the stage as the origin of repetition, in such close proximity to primordial repetition.
>
> (362)

For Derrida, repetition robs theatre of "*la présence simple de son acte présent, dans le mouvement irrépressible de la répétition*" (the simple presence of its present act, in the irrepressible movement of repetition; 363), so that the non-representational physical and vocal presence cultivated by the athlete of the heart in Artaud's alchemical theatre can never be realized in practice and amounts to no more than the after-image and fading echo of an incoherent dream.

In his 2017 doctoral dissertation, Pierre Delain probes Derrida's hypothesis that Artaud unconsciously and unintentionally wished to re-live the time or moment preceding his own birth in a world without *différance*, the endless repetition and deferral of meaning, and that Artaud believed such a world could be embodied through the breath and the voice, a conviction to which Derrida objects on the ground that Artaud's performances are unable to destroy *différance* because they rely on this principle that puts them into motion, thereby forever failing to satisfy Artaud's unfulfillable desire (157–8). Yet what seems most paradoxical, ultimately, is that, in a supremely ironic twist of fate, or perhaps the kind of cruel cosmic joke that befits alchemical theatre, the theory of subjectivity that Derrida articulates in "*Le théâtre de la cruauté et la clôture de la représentation*" is inspired by Artaud, who becomes Derrida's *souffleur*/prompter, as if robbing the philosopher of his authority by voicing his lines in his name: "*J'ai rapport à moi dans l'éther d'une parole qui m'est toujours soufflée et qui me dérobe cela même avec quoi elle me met en rapport*" (I relate to myself through the ether of speech that is always stolen from me and that steals that with which it places me in relation; *L'écriture et la différence* 263). While he does not expound on the ethereal nature of speech (*parole*), the philosopher points to the radical irresponsibility of speech premised on his argument that the speaker is not the source of her/his speech (263). Having emphasized

that Artaud keeps repeating in his writing that the origin and urgency of speech compelling him to express himself coincide with the very deficiency of speech causing words to be stolen from him, Derrida unequivocally links speech to language when referring to a pre-existing cultural field from which the speaker draws the words and syntax of speech, hence positing that the latter is stolen from language, and consequently from the speaker, who is neither the owner nor the initiator of *parole* (263–5). The problem arising from Derrida's equation of speech with language, however, is that it does not account for the possibility that breath might produce the kind of non-articulated sounds imbuing Artaud's performance in *Pour en finir avec le jugement de dieu* with the non-discursive power of vocality. Furthermore, when building on Cavarero's critique, it becomes possible to argue that Derrida dismisses the sonic/phonic dimension of speech as ethereal because he reduces its invisibility to immateriality within the scriptocentric economy of knowledge privileged by deconstruction.

Interestingly, Delain reports that during a colloquium held in Cerisy in 1980, Derrida responded to a remark made by Jean-Luc Nancy with the following declaration: "*Mais je n'ai jamais rien dit contre la voix!*" (But I never said anything against the voice!), yet acknowledged a few years later:

> *Au fond de moi, je suis plus que tout autre un métaphysicien de la présence: je ne désire rien de plus que la présence, la voix, toutes ces choses auxquelles je m'en suis pris.*
>
> Deep inside, and more than anyone, I am a metaphysician of presence: I desire nothing more than presence, voice, all these things that I opposed.
>
> (Janicaud 114, quoted in Delain 118)

Delain audaciously infers that Derrida persistently disavows in his writing his fascination with presence and voice, which he associates with the uniqueness of experience epitomized by "*l'instant vivant de l'énonciation*" (the living instant of enunciation), a secret moment or event whose rhythm, tone, and performativity can never be captured in writing (119). Delain hypothesizes that Derrida's disavowal is fueled by his desire for an impossible return to lived experience and to the immediacy of perception, and suggests that a trace of this desire subsists throughout Derrida's œuvre, fraught with an irreducible contradiction or paradox joining "*une voix disparue et un texte lisible*" (a vanished voice and a legible text), and faced with an irresolvable riddle: "*Comment ne jamais effacer ce qui ne peut que disparaître?*" (How can one manage to never erase that which is always bound to disappear?; 120).

In response to Derrida's engagement with Artaud, Cull articulates a Deleuzian interpretation of Artaud's conception of performance, which she views as "tending towards immanence rather than transcendence, and towards 'differential presence'

rather than self-presence" (*Theatres of Immanence* 60). She defines the transcendent as "that which 'stands outside and above' the physical world," as in Plato's notion of Ideal Forms lying outside experience or in Descartes's insistence on the independence of mind and body (6). She contrasts transcendence with immanence by referring to its etymological roots in "the Latin *immanere*, which might be translated as 'to dwell within'," and explains that

> for Deleuze, univocity or immanence means that there is only *one* kind of thing or being in reality, and as such no fundamental separation or hierarchy between the nature of words and things, body and mind, subject and object, representation and the real, theory and practice and so forth. (7)

She goes on to specify that such a perspective does not homogenize the world or deny difference, since "the '*one* kind of thing' we have evoked is not one *thing* at all, but process, change or difference" (7). She notes that from a Deleuzian perspective, voice and voicing are linked to "the concept of univocity or one 'voicedness'," according to which "'Being is Voice' [as stated in *Logique du Sens*] because Being speaks itself in and as the many different beings of the world: a 'single voice for every hum of voices' (Deleuze 1990:179)" (61). She remarks that this sense of "multivoicedness" is reflected in language since, for Deleuze, "each apparently individual utterance is always already connected to the collective; each seemingly single voice is many different voices speaking through and as us" (61). Artaud's exceptional contribution to this plurivocality becomes a particularly fruitful source of inspiration for Deleuze, who suggests in *Logique du Sens* that Artaud made himself a body without organs to engage in a relationship with language, enabling him to actively use the latter "as 'words without articulation,' as words that become 'illegible and even unpronounceable [and transform] into so many active howls in one continuous breath' (Deleuze 2004a: 33)" (Cull 64). Deleuze states that for people suffering from schizophrenia, language is "'carved into the depth of bodies' (Deleuze 2004a: 31)," which implies, as Cull argues, that the body is "no longer sheltered from confusion with language, nor with other bodies" (65). Deleuze infers that Artaud discovered a way of coping with this suffering by actively transforming words into actions, and suggests that these words without articulations became triumphant *mots-souffles* (breath-words) and *mots-cris* (howl-words), which Deleuze relates to Artaud's notion of "*corps sans organes*," namely, the vital body that Deleuze contrasts with the fragmented, dissociated body characteristic of schizophrenia (Cull 66).

Yet the connection with schizophrenia can appear problematic, and Cull reports that Artaud's collaborator and friend Paule Thévenin accused Deleuze of reducing Artaud's life-long work to a case study that employed psychoanalytical terminology in a way that was complicit with the medical violence he experienced as an individual

diagnosed with a serious mental health condition. Cull notes that in Deleuze's subsequent collaborations with Guattari, the notion of "*corps sans organes*"—abbreviated into "CsO" in French and "BwO" in English—was no longer associated with the conventional psychiatric definition of schizophrenia but became an ontological concept linked with the destratification of the subject, from which emerged the notion of a destratified voice (66–7). She states that in their writings Deleuze and Guattari evoke "'nonstratified, unformed, intense matter' or 'energy'" and envision organisms and subjects as "flows of energy, of difference itself (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 153)," a perspective that she relates to the BwO, conceived as "an event of becoming: a circulation of intensities, a transmission of forces and a transformation of bodies by one another" (68–9), leading Deleuze and Guattari to articulate the concept of the destratified voice in *Mille Plateaux* (*A Thousand Plateaus*).

Cull contextualizes this concept within Deleuze and Guattari's theory of language, which counters the Saussurean distinction between *langue* and *parole* by positing perpetual variation as the key principle, rejecting the imposition of "a homogeneous system of language on speakers," and conceiving of the destratified voice as the means by which speakers can perform difference and experience being a foreigner in their own tongue (70). For Deleuze and Guattari,

> voice is neither the phenomenological medium that allows the presence of self-consciousness to itself nor the mere "simulation" of presence, as Derrida contends in *Speech and Phenomena* – the response to the threat of the difference that language is said to introduce into self-presence (Derrida 1973: 15).
>
> (Cull, 70)

Cull applies the concept of the destratified voice to her analysis of Artaud's vocal performance in *Pour en finir avec le jugement de dieu*, which she defines as "an experiment towards making oneself a body without organs," observing that this materialization of the theatre of cruelty does not exclude language and words but rejects the codified ways in which these tend to be used, a codification that she contrasts with Artaud's investigation of "the capacity of altered *intonation* or pronunciation to access the 'music' underlying the conventional meaning of words" (71). She argues that these alterations and variations "can expose the difference within words that Artaud conceives in terms of an immanent, autonomous musicality" (71). While destratification implies that culturally specific codes and social norms stratify and constrain this immanent sonic materiality, Deleuze considers phonological variation to constitute vocality's most productive characteristic and to account for its creativity, as exemplified by glossolalia, namely, the capacity to produce language-like rhythm and melody, also described as speaking in tongues (72). Cull suggests that Artaud's destratified voice enables him to enter into a series

of becomings, a strategy that frees language from the bond of signification, thereby offering a wide range of possibilities that include becoming-woman, becoming-animal, as well as becoming more than one speaker, since Artaud engages in a dialogue with himself in which "he is mad *and* sane, patient *and* analyst" (72).

Indeed, the volatile grain of Artaud's voice pierces through the recording of *Pour en finir avec le jugement de dieu*, becoming double ad infinitum and gaining irrepressible momentum from the affective power of its sonic materiality; the dynamism, energy, and danger conveyed by the modulations of its chant-like vocalization; the fluctuating tonal, vibratory, and rhythmic qualities of its playfully non-discursive percussiveness; as well as the disconcerting unpredictability of its performative turbulences, clamours, and uproars. Toward the end of the recording, Artaud's voice becomes multiple through the creation of a discordant chorus of competing voices, including an intensely shrill voice accusing "*Monsieur Artaud*" of being a raving madman, and a resoundingly cavernous voice responding in the first person by vehemently denying the soundness of this allegation. This unsettling dialogism reaches its paroxysm when the dissonant voices attempt to convince one another that God did not construct man properly and that the latter must be emasculated by means of an autopsy that will reconfigure his anatomy through the elimination of organs, deemed utterly useless, so that he may be alleviated from all automatisms and his immortal freedom may be restored. He then must re-learn how to dance in reverse by turning himself inside-out, a delirious inversion that shall become his right-side-out.

It is precisely because the signification of this intriguing conclusion remains open to interpretation that the mysteriously evocative power of Artaud's phrase "*corps sans organes*" has proven so operative, compelling Deleuze and, in turn, new materialist scholars, to develop "a posthuman approach to the subject, agency, materiality, and affect" that supports forms of creation and experimentation "grounded in the ethical imperative to rethink relations of being" (St. Pierre, Jackson and Mazzei 104, 106, 108). In "Voice Without a Subject," Lisa A. Mazzei proposes to reconfigure voice as process and duration so that voicing may be conceived as that which "produces being in its becoming," a bold theoretical move enabling new materialist theory to free voice from the burden of signification and subjectification imposed by the humanist conception of voice "bound to *a* specific body" where the individual is "the source of voice, agency, being," (153–4). Drawing from Deleuze, Mazzei describes the notion of body without organs (BwO) as "an organism that is an assemblage of forces, desires, and intensities, … a collectivity … of conjunctions, levels and thresholds, passages and distributions of intensity (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 177)" (153). When this understanding of BwO is applied to the humanist conception of voice, the latter can be reimagined as voice without a subject, which Mazzei defines as "ontological voice that is an expression of being as becoming, … an enactment of forces and not all necessary human" (153). She contends that "if the individual is no longer the source of

voice, agency, being," then the unbounded voice can be envisioned as a "Voice without Organs" aligned with the concept of BwO (154). The "VwO" decouples voice from "an intentional, agentic humanist subject" and reframes it within "a complex network of human and non-human agents that exceeds the traditional notion of the 'individual', the 'body', the 'person'," a perspective which challenges conventional qualitative inquiry relying on phenomenology, hermeneutics, and psychoanalysis to investigate lived experience (155–6). Mazzei suggests that conceiving of voice without a subject opens up possibilities "beyond the limits of how voice is constituted, constrained, manipulated and held constant in our efforts as researchers, artists, and philosophers, to craft a narrative, tell a story, give voice, and make meaning" (157). She argues that letting go of methodologies designed to produce accurate and meaningful representations of someone's lived experience can free researchers to ask questions about "how to express that which cannot be represented," since, from a Deleuzian perspective, there is "no present, conscious, coherent, individual who speaks the truth of her present or her past" (157–8). Narratives can therefore be reconfigured into "lines of articulation," or assemblages of enunciation described as "the invention of becoming-voice at the very moment of its invention" in an entanglement of histories, spaces, wordings, bodies both human and non-human "that exist on the same plane, neither necessarily preceding the other, all producing material effects, rupturing notions of the subject and time," thereby resisting what Mazzei identifies as "the gravity of recognition and representation" (159). Positing ontological voice "as a surface or plane, not of *a* subject or *a* time," Mazzei infers that "thinking voice *without* its genesis in an organized body offers a meeting place between language and the world" (154–5). However, the VwO remains associated with discursive language in spite of its emancipation from the (humanist) subject of enunciation assumed to be its source, and voicing conceived as "becoming-voice in lines of articulation" continues to be placed in service of discursive utterances understood as "the product of a collective assemblage of enunciation" (158, 160). Consequently, while this conception of voice without a subject raises important questions about what constitutes agency, it does not account for the non-discursive materiality of voicing, whose performative power Mazzei brushes against in her writing when she refers to the "jolts" of utterances that "shock and surprise" because they have the capacity to affect (159).

In contrast, Cull's engagement with Artaud's performance in *Pour en finir avec le jugement de dieu* leads her to employ the Deleuzian concepts of BwO and destratified or disordered voice to explore the sonic/phonic affective materiality of vocality, which enables her to offer a counter-narrative to "the dominant, deconstructive interpretation of Artaud's work in particular, insofar as it makes clear that the call to undo voice and language as communication is based on a pursuit of *differential* rather than self-presence" (*Theatres of Immanence* 79). Cull remarks that Deleuze insists on the processual dimension of creation without positing a transcendent producer: "To make

yourself a body without organs is both to find and to construct an immanent processuality as it is manifested in the process of writing, performing, thinking, living" (80). Whereas Derrida argues that "presence requires representation in order to appear" and maintains that Artaud's attempt to defeat representation is fueled by his desire to "escape from differences into the absence of difference," the destratified voice of the body without organs "allows difference to make its presence felt" through an encounter with perpetual variation "as that which exceeds the representational consciousness of the subject, forcing thought through rupture rather than communicating meaning through sameness," an encounter that the theatre of immanence makes possible because it "*produces* bodies rather than representing them" (81–3). Cull hence suggests that Artaud does not advocate a mindless theatre in which presence would be opposed to thinking, but conceives instead of presence as "the *unconscious movement of thought*," which she links to Deleuze's definition of thought as "an embodied, creative process born of the encounter" (85–6).

Freeing Performance from Mimesis, Representation, and Logocentrism

In her critique of Derrida's understanding of representation as a precondition of presence, Cull thus relies on the Deleuzian concept of differential presence as an encounter with variation—which may be related to Heraclitus's theory of flux employed by Schechner to address the paradoxical uniqueness of restored behavior (see Chapter 1). By contrast, sociologist Spyros Papaioannou probes Derrida's attraction to Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty to discuss presence from the standpoint of non-representational performance. In his 2018 article, "Mapping the 'Non-Representational': Derrida and Artaud's Metaphysics of Presence in Performance Practice," Papaioannou considers Barthes's notion of geno-song as an example of "non-linguistic performance mediums [that] reveal the productive potential of performance in the process of creating, rather than representing, meaning" (4–5). He argues that non-representational work in performing arts produces "an intensification of presence" that challenges "normative and prescriptive ways of mimetically representing texts, identities, histories, ideas, cultures, and conflicts through theatre" (7–8). He goes on to suggest that Derrida discerns "in Artaud's writings and theatrical practice … an affirmative way of challenging normative and mimetic representational mediums in Western theatre," debunking the assumption that theatrical performance signifies "something absent from the event" and symbolizes an idea or conveys a message "whose reality is external to the performance itself" (10). He further argues that Derrida perceives a potential in Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty for undermining the logocentric foundation of Western theatre whose theological process is "dictated by speech, by the transcendental *Logos* that becomes the authoritative power that transforms performance into mimesis" (12). He infers that the non-

theological "sacred space" that Derrida senses as a potentiality in the Theatre of Cruelty is linked to "a process of sacred presence that destabilizes the theatrical stage emancipating it from the domination of speech" (12). While Papaioannou suggests that Derrida is intrigued by Artaud's quest for "a sacred stage without speech," he stresses that within this non-theological space the performance-event that unfolds is not mute, specifying that it "functions not through words, but *before* words" (13). He provides the example of *Pour en finir avec le jugement de dieu*, "in which Artaud's voice gets much closer to music than to ordinary speech" (14).

Papaioannou interprets Derrida's deconstruction of Artaud's writings as particularly affirmative and positive because the French philosopher "sees a potential of performance to produce a language that challenges the mimetic function of representation; even if he understands it as an impossibility" (14). By focusing on potentiality rather than impossibility, Papaioannou seeks to downplay Derrida's insistence on "*textualism* and the inevitability of repetition," and attempts to mitigate his argument about "the inescapability from representation to the extent that the latter is a re-presentation of presence," prioritizing instead what I would describe as Derrida's intuition—as if prompted (*soufflée*) by Artaud—that the creative power of the Theatre of Cruelty manifests itself by means of a provocation about "the possibility of converting the substance of representation into a non-repetitive re-presentation" (15). Suggesting that what appeals to Derrida is the possibility of critique that emerges from this "unattainable theatre," Papaioannou points to an alternative metaphysics of theatrical performance in which it becomes possible to experience a non-logocentric sacred space and a process of sacred presence (15). He posits that "the non-representational potential" offered by this alternative functions "in a level which is as real as the one attributed to affective qualities such as imagination, fear, affection, and intimacy" (16). He contends that accounting for the actual impact of sacred and ritualistic performance processes pertaining to this non-theological metaphysics can become

> [a way of] giving importance to *how* something becomes possible in, rather than to *what* could be signified through, a theatrical work. It is paying more attention to what takes place in the present of a theatrical event (how it is actualized and realized), than to what mimics an external reality or symbolizes a fixed meaning.
>
> (16)

Consequently, the intensification of presence produced by non-representational performance practices must be further explored to understand how the experiences they make possible "function in live conditions of performing" (17).

In Search of Healing

Artaud's quest for a sacred space that would intensify presence to the point of sacralizing all forms of life was expressed through his desire to experience ritual practices engaging participants in non-representational performative processes. When he traveled to Mexico in 1936, Artaud sought to encounter holders of traditional knowledge in the hope of participating in the peyote ceremonial practiced by the Tarahumara people, an Indigenous community living in the state of Chihuahua and whose Raràmuri language belongs to the Uto-Aztecan linguistic family, one of the largest in the Americas in terms of numbers of speakers and languages, as well as geographic extension (Caballero 485). Artaud refers to this encounter in several of his published texts, as well as in *Pour en finir avec le jugement de dieu*, where his prophetic diatribe against the greed and violence of American capitalism indicts an unbridled drive for productivity that strives to replace nature wherever and whenever possible with synthetically manufactured ersatzes of trees, fruits, vegetables, and medicinal plants, as if Artaud simultaneously anticipated and rejected the ideology of hypercommodification as a hallmark of postmodernity (Bertens et al. 116), contrasting this consumerist society with the traditional mode of life of the Tarahumara and their land-based ritual practices:

> *J'aime mieux le peuple qui mange à même la terre le délire d'où il est né, je parle des Tarahumaras mangeant le Peyotl à même le sol pendant qu'il naît, et qui tue le soleil pour installer le royaume de la nuit noire.*
>
> I much prefer the people who eat delirium directly from the earth out of which it is born, I am speaking of the Tarahumara, eating peyote straight from the ground while it is still growing, and killing the sun to usher in the reign of the darkest of nights.
>
> (*Pour en finir*)

In his performative writing, he evokes the ceremonial process he claims to have witnessed and participated in during his visit with the Raràmuri community through the use of vivid imagery, conveying in evocative detail the agential role of music, song, and sound as affective forces, whose sonic/phonic materiality seems linked to that of natural elements and appears to be neither merely reducible to its mediation by human sensory perception nor necessarily confined to human understandings of reality. In the text entitled "*La Danse du Peyotl*," for instance, Artaud evokes the intensely affective sonorous dimension of this process, culminating in a multisensory epiphany about the material efficacy of ritual practice:

> *Couché en bas, pour que tombe sur moi le rite, pour que le feu, les chants, les cris, la danse et la nuit même, comme une voûte animée, humaine, tourne vivante, au-dessus de moi. Il y avait donc cette voûte roulante, cet agencement*

matériel, de cris, d'accents, de pas, de chants. Mais, par-dessus tout, … cette impression, qui revenait, que derrière tout cela, et au delà, se dissimulait encore autre chose: ***le Principal***.

Lying down at the bottom, to let the rite fall over me, to let the fire, the chants, the calls, the dancing, and the night itself, like an animated vault, human, alive, revolve above me. So there was this spinning vault, this material arrangement of calls, accents, footsteps, chants. But above all, … there was a lingering sense that, concealed behind all this, and beyond it, lay something even other — that which is *foremost*.

(*Les Tarahumaras* 65)

In the text "*Tutuguri*," Artaud describes sonic/phonic materiality as an overwhelming and energizing fervor, acting simultaneously as a structuring force and as a source of transformation, endowed with its own agency and purpose:

Je ne sais pas si c'est le vent qui se lève, ou si un vent se lève de cette musique d'autrefois qui persiste encore aujourd'hui … Le tympanon du septième Tutuguri a pris un lancinement atroce: c'est le cratère d'un volcan au comble de son éruption. Les lamelles semblent se briser sous les sons comme une forêt foudroyée sous la cognée d'un fantastique bûcheron … Car le tympanon est un vent, il est devenu le sol d'un vent où une armée pourrait fort bien avancer. Et en effet, il y a aux confins du bruit et du néant, car le bruit est si fort qu'il n'appelle en avant de lui que le néant, il y a donc un immense piétinement. Rythme scandé d'une armée en marche, ou galop d'une charge affolée … Et le bruit du galop s'exaspère. Et l'on perçoit à l'horizon … comme un cheval emporté qui s'avance avec un homme nu dessus … Et dans le tympanon de bois du septième Tutuguri … toujours cette introduction de néant: … un temps creux, une espèce de vide épuisant entre les lamelles du bois coupant, néant qui appelle [*le corps de l'homme*] *dans la fureur (non: dans la ferveur) des choses du dedans.*

I cannot tell whether the wind is rising, or whether the sound of the wind comes from an ancient music that still endures today … The marimbol of the seventh *Tutuguri* becomes excruciatingly harrowing, a volcanic crater reaching the peak of its eruption. Its tongues seem shattered by the sounds as if a forest struck by the thunderous blows of a fantastical woodsman … For the marimbol is a wind, it becomes the groundswell of a wind that could prop up an advancing army. And indeed, at the outmost reach of the noise and the void, for the noise is so loud that it inexorably calls out for the void, a great trampling can be heard. The rhythmic chanting of a marching army, or the frantic gallop of a military charge … And as the galloping grows louder, on the horizon a

> fiery horse appears, approaching, with a naked man on top … And in the wooden marimbol of the seventh *Tutuguri* … there is still this void calling out: … a hollow time, a kind of exhausting emptiness between the tongues of sharp wood, a void calling out for [the body of the man] in the midst of the furor (no: the fervor) of inner things.
>
> (*Les Tarahumaras* 75–7)

When attentively engaging with these descriptions, it is difficult to overstate the abundance and density of sonorous details. Because Artaud's poetic and impressionistic renderings of the ritual process are rife with such details, it is tempting to suggest that they point to an experiential dimension firmly grounded in embodied multisensory perception inclusive of specific sonic/phonic textures, tonalities, and intensities, as well as rhythmicity, vibrancy, and resonance, thereby significantly weighing in favor of the consistency and trustworthiness, if not the reliability, of Artaud's testimony.

However, in an article entitled "(Sur)real or Unreal? Antonin Artaud in the Sierra Tarahumara of Mexico," published in the *Journal of Surrealism and the Americas* in 2014, anthropologist Lars Krutak questions the validity of Artaud's writings about his involvement in this ritual process. Krutak suggests that while Artaud most likely met the Raràmuri, it is highly doubtful that he actually participated in a peyote ceremony. He suspects that Artaud might have witnessed "a minor funeral rite that had a peyote 'curing' component to it," but objects that he would not have been allowed to take part in such an intimate rite which is traditionally reserved for family members (33, 36). He thus formulates the hypothesis that neither the account Artaud provides in the text "*La Danse du Peyotl*" published immediately after his trip, nor the references appearing in texts that were written later, nor the description of the *Tutuguri* rite featured in *Pour en finir avec le jugement de dieu*, are based on first-hand experience (33). He further hypothesizes that Artaud "must have relied heavily on the accounts of others whom he did not credit," such as published ethnographic works "used as primary sources of information to fabricate and embellish his numerous accounts" (33). He also points out that Artaud, who did not have a strong command of Spanish, must have been limited in his ability to converse with interpreters on whom he must have nevertheless relied in his attempts to communicate with the Raràmuri, with whom he probably only spent from six to eight weeks, a relatively short time by ethnographic standards. Krutak hence asserts:

> While it might not be fair to treat Artaud as an anthropologist, it is important to briefly touch upon the problem of interpreter accuracy and informant access as it is brought into relief by Artaud's predecessors to the Sierra, the ethnologist Carl Lumholtz and anthropologists Wendell Bennett and Robert Zing,

whose aim it was to record religious and cultural information by means of direct contact with the Raràmuri, and "who faced great difficulty in finding responsible and knowledgeable interpreters throughout the course of their extended stays in the Sierra" (34). Specifying that "the Raràmuri have always been wary of outsiders whom they meet with great suspicion," Krutak explains that when conducting fieldwork of his own he had to seek out the help of interpreters who not only spoke both Spanish and Raràmuri but who were also relatives of the elder family members he interviewed (34–5). According to Krutak, who also emphasizes that Artaud had been experiencing severe heroin withdrawal, too many odds were stacked up against him in terms of his ability to gain direct access to the Raràmuri ceremonial process, let alone take part in it.

Yet it is possible to formulate the following counter-hypothesis: the Raràmuri community could have been better disposed toward Artaud than toward his Western predecessors precisely because he was not an ethnologist or an anthropologist trying to gain access to sacred knowledge to advance academic research, with all the colonialist implications pertaining to this early model of ethnographic fieldwork. Krutak does not acknowledge this crucial difference, but he does entertain another possibility: "Then again, perhaps the peyote shaman of the Tarahumara felt enough pity for this apparently wretched shell of a man such that he certainly needed to be cured from his ailments," but dismisses this scenario as implausible in light of the extant ethnographic literature on the Tarahumara portraying them as tenaciously determined to protect their traditional knowledge and keep it within their community (35–6). He goes on to compare an English translation of "*La Danse du Peyotl*" with several ethnographic texts predating Artaud's trip. This exercise, which he declares to be unprecedented, consists in searching for overlaps in terminology and tracking recurrent specific descriptive details; having identified several "eerily similar" fragments, Krutak infers from his analysis that Artaud most likely plagiarized ethnographies authored by Zing, Bennett, and Lumholtz (35–40). The problem with this particular hypothesis is that it can neither be validated nor falsified, so that the question of Artaud's witnessing of and possible participation in a peyote ceremony remains open-ended. What Krutak maintains, however, is that Artaud did visit the Raràmuri, as this is confirmed by the testimony of a living witness, namely, Elder Erasmo Palma, whom he describes as "the renowned 80-year old Raràmuri troubadour and poet who received a lifetime achievement award from former Mexican President Vicente Fox," and who told Krutak that he had met Artaud when he was 8 years old (40). The anthropologist reports that Don Erasmo explained:

> They said he was crazy, because he said the truth was with the Tarahumara. When he came, I was a boy. We showed him a place over there [he points to the northeast of his *rancho*] where there is a rock art site near a cave called *Pierra Pintada* [in Raràmuri it is called *rehebahuéami*,

> "signed" or "marked" rock]. He said the truth was there. But now you can't see it very well. I made a song about him.
>
> (40)

The sharing of this sacred site with Artaud seems to indicate that he was treated as a guest in need of healing, given "the significance of caves and other natural features in relation to indigenous cosmology and self-knowledge," as specified by another Raràmuri Elder cited by Krutak:

> There are places that have great strength for one that knows how to understand and feel. They are places of unique power that comes out of the earth. It can be a place apart, somewhere in the fields, in the mountains, surrounded by rocks or boulders, at the entrance to a cave, at the high summit or at the rim of a canyon. If you stay there in silence for a very long time without sleeping – best is through the night – you might feel like new, ready to face and do many things you couldn't do before.
>
> (41)

In his article, Krutak includes a photo of pictographs that he took at the site, which he visited with Don Erasmo's son Carlos Palma, and he observes in a footnote that many of the drawings that Artaud created in his notebooks while he was institutionalized at the end of his life seem to "parallel the anthropoid figures, spoked wheels, and skeletal beings that comprise the rock art site of *rehebahuéami*" (49). Don Erasmo was referring to this period of Artaud's life when he told Krutak:

> Nobody liked him and they thought he was crazy; they gave him shock therapy … Before he died, he put his shoes on to come to Mexico to cure himself with the peyote. But he died … He died carrying a mystery to the tomb; he died dreaming of his Tarahumara brothers and the Tarahumara Sierra. He wanted to make known what he lived [and experienced] in the Sierra, but his countrymen didn't believe the truth.
>
> (40–1)

This "truth" is perhaps what Artaud attempts to convey in "*Le Rite du Peyotl chez les Tarahumaras*" when he shares a testimony about the beneficial effects of a peyote-induced vision he experienced under the guidance of an Elder, and which might also be what he is invoking in *Pour en finir avec le jugement de dieu*, when admonishing *l'homme* (man/mankind) for having forgotten what it feels like to make himself a body without organs, a delirious inversion that entails dancing in reverse by turning oneself inside-out:

Je dis: reversé de l'autre côté des choses, et comme si une force terrible vous avait donné d'être restitué à ce qui existe de l'autre côté. – On ne sent plus le corps que l'on vient de quitter et qui vous assurait dans ses limites, en revanche on se sent beaucoup plus heureux d'appartenir à l'illimité, à l'Infini, et qu'on va le voir… Et ces signes étaient balayés en tout sens dans l'espace pendant qu'il me parut que j'y montais, mais pas tout seul. Aidé par une force insolite. Mais beaucoup plus libre que lorsque sur la terre j'étais seul …

Cela m'a inspiré sur l'action psychique du Peyotl un certain nombre de réflexions. Le Peyotl ramène le moi a ses sources variés. – Sorti d'un état de vision pareille on ne peut plus comme avant confondre le mensonge avec la vérité. – On a vu d'où l'on vient et qui l'on est, et on ne doute plus de ce que l'on est. – Il n'est plus d'émotion ni d'influence extérieure qui puisse vous en détourner.

By reversed, I mean on the reverse side of things, as if a tremendous force had granted you the right to be returned to that which exists on the other side. – You no longer feel the body that you have just left behind and that kept you secured within its limits, but you nevertheless feel much happier about belonging to the unlimited, the Infinite, and about being poised to see it … And these signs were swept through space in all directions as I felt that I was rising into the air, but not by my own means. Supported by a peculiar force. Yet feeling much freer than when I was alone on the earth …

This has inspired in me a number of reflections about peyote's psychic effects. Peyote restores the self to its various sources. – Once one has experienced this type of vision it is no longer possible to confuse falsehood with the truth. – One has seen where one comes from and who one is, and one no longer doubts what one is. – No emotion or exterior influence can turn you away from such an awareness.

("Le Rite du Peyotl" in *Les Tarahumaras* 35–7)

In the final pages of this text, Artaud poignantly contrasts the beneficial medicinal properties of peyote with the violence of the electroshock treatment administered to him against his will during his forced internment in a psychiatric ward:

Assez, assez et assez avec ce traumatisme de punition. Chaque application de l'électro-choc m'a plongé dans une terreur qui durait parfois plusieurs heures … sans parvenir à me reconnaître, sachant parfaitement que j'étais quelque part mais le diable sait où et comme si j'étais mort. Nous sommes loin avec tout ça de la guérison par le Peyotl.

Enough, enough, enough already with this punishing trauma. With each electroshock treatment I was thrust into terror for up to several

> hours, … unable to recognize myself, fully aware that I was somewhere but only the devil knows where, and feeling as if I were dead. How far we have come from the healing virtues of peyote.
>
> (*Les Tarahumaras* 41)

While fruitful theoretical perspectives can be derived from particular interpretations of Artaud's writings, as demonstrated by Deleuze, whose own writings have been particularly influential, I would argue that it is nevertheless crucial to keep in mind that, for Artaud, the embodied material practice of performance was a matter of life and death, urgently requiring him to explore his body and his voice beyond abstract and metaphorical conceptualizations of embodiment and vocality, and compelling him to wholeheartedly embrace the processual, transformative, transgressive, and potentially therapeutic dimensions of art, while vigorously rejecting established modes of artistic production.

Cree actor, director, and writer Floyd Favel, who traveled to Europe as a young man and worked with Grotowski and his close collaborators (see Magnat, *Grotowski, Women, and Contemporary Performance* 39–43), has had a long-standing interest in Artaud's encounter with the Tarahumara, so I decided to email Krutak's article to him. In response, Favel shared with me his unpublished text, "Red People Red Magic" in which he recounts a dream he had while in Europe. Playwright Jean Genet, who had recently died, appears in this dream and tells Favel about Artaud:

> Not long ago, a prophet arose
>
> from amongst the Europeans
>
> who have enslaved the world.
>
> His name was Antonin Artaud, a theatre director,
>
> my friend and countryman.
>
> In 1936 he journeyed to your Sacred Island,
>
> to Mexico and ate a holy sacrament,
>
> Peyote, in the land of the Tarahumara.
>
> He brought his knowledge back to our people,
>
> knowledge of a sacred theatre,
>
> but jealousy and fear were his undoing
>
> and they put him in a straitjacket,

a madman writing in an asylum at Rodez,

crucified by his critics.

He came in Peace.

He did not come to enslave your people,

or steal the land and put you on reservations.

Hand extended, he came, seeking healing

as that is what your People offered,

and healing is what theatre, the Younger Brother,

must eventually offer.

Without healing there is no art.

Favel, a board member and former Vice President of the Native American Church of Canada, whose ceremonial practitioners use peyote as a sacrament, wrote in a follow-up email message:

> Artaud, I believe, was in a healing process and had the possibility of changing theatre … As it is, theatre is in the hands of bureaucrats, fake artists … As a peyotist, I believe peyote was doctoring him … and he was in a state of healing when he was arrested in Ireland with a staff … a staff is part of the peyote ritualist gear … it represents the shepherd's staff. Staff of leadership, etc … I read the article. In hindsight people are very smart, but in the moment, Artaud's moment, he thought he was experiencing peyote. He did probably take peyote. The Tarahumara Elder remembers him. The essayist is wrong in saying that peyote is a drug in his opening paragraphs. The essayist displays very colonial attitudes; lack of belief and experience of the sacred power of nature. Also it must be remembered that Artaud was not an anthropologist or a journalist. He was a poet. He was seeking a form of healing in the new world and as sometimes happens, one can become lost or disorientated. I think that could have happened to him. I have felt like that in my travels, had become lost and anguished, as a journey is a very personal thing. One journeys with their heart and soul, open to chance.
>
> (Personal communication, 8 and 9 February, 2019; ellipses in original)

When searching for online information about Don Erasmo Palma, I came across a documentary film about him made in 2009, and I shared the link with Favel. This

film, entitled *El Ladrón de Violines* (*The Violin Thief*), opens with the Raràmuri Elder asking the young film-makers in Spanish why they want to see "that old man," and when he is told that it is because they heard that he composes music, Don Erasmo denies it and insists that "the old man is crazy." He then looks straight into the camera and declares: "But if there was no madness in the world, there would be no joy." The same scene is repeated at the end of the film, but this time Don Erasmo goes on to say: "All those who create, who study, get into madness. If you were not crazy, you wouldn't be pointing this [camera] at me. We are all crazy." He pauses briefly, then adds with a smile: "I invite you to follow me on the path of madness" (*El Ladrón de Violines*). Emboldened by this invitation, I am compelled to interpret this loopback effect on the theme of madness as opening a non-representational sacred space resonating with the tonalities of the song that Don Erasmo composed to honor the improbable encounter of an 8-year old Raràmuri boy with a "crazy" Frenchman, a vocal performative whose affective power intensifies the differential presence of two human beings who once walked together on the path of creative joy, in the footsteps of the next seven generations.

Notes

1 The first two sections of this chapter are based on the article "A Traveling Ethnography of Voice in Qualitative Research" published in *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies*, vol. 18, no. 6, 2018, doi/full/10.1177/1532708617742407.
2 I am grateful to Konstantinos Thomaidis for his generous guest appearance. Thomaidis conducted research for his project "Listening Back: Towards a Vocal Archaeology of Greek Theatre" over the summers of 2017 and 2018 in Delphi and Dodoni, Greece.
3 All translations of Barthes's writing are mine.
4 All translations of Artaud's writing are mine.
5 All translations of Derrida's writing are mine.

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3

EXPLORING (K)NEW PARADIGMS

Given that Conquergood's challenge to take sound, voice, and vocality seriously has remained largely unheeded in performance studies, and in light of the exponential potency accrued by BwO (body without organs) through the convergence of Artaudian alchemical theatre and the Deleuzian critique of humanist subjectivity, I ask in this chapter whether the intensifying influence of new materialism, post-humanism, affect theory, and cognitive science on academic research across the humanities and social sciences might offer viable ways of circumventing conceptual constraints on, and theoretical limitations to, the exploration of vocality. This relatively recent paradigm shift reflects a shared sense of dissatisfaction with the available analytical frameworks within the constructivism-neopositivism spectrum, a dissatisfaction most compellingly expressed by scholars arguing for the necessity to move beyond anthropocentric perspectives embedded in dominant Western knowledge systems that foreclose the integration of non-linguistic, non-discursive, and non-representational modalities.

Confronting the Columbus Problem

The 14th International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry, held in May 2018 at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, featured the workshop "Indigenous Philosophy and Posthumanism: Connections and Productive Methodological Divergences," co-developed by Jerry Rosiek, an Education Studies and Philosophy professor at the University of Oregon, and Jimmy Snyder, a citizen of the Kickapoo Tribe in Kansas pursuing doctoral studies in Education at the same institution.[1] I attended this stimulating workshop whose participants were invited to engage with the political implications of the rise of new materialism and posthumanism in the Euro-American academy. Rosiek and Snyder suggest that such a paradigm shift constitutes a response to the poststructuralist assertion that language mediates and represents our experience of the world, which is itself an anti-foundationalist

DOI: 10.4324/9780429340338-3

response to Marxism and its reliance on positivism and objectivity. The development of new materialism and posthumanism thus builds on a critique of the politics of poststructuralism, an approach whose genealogy can be traced to Saussurean linguistics, as exemplified by the work of Foucault, Derrida, and Butler, three of its most cited representatives. Whereas this critique links poststructuralism to the marginalization of embodied, experiential, and affective cognitive processes, Rosiek and Snyder remark that new materialist and posthumanist theories seek to preserve the most productive aspects of poststructuralism while conceptualizing materiality differently from both Marxist and poststructuralist theories through the assertion that although our experience of the world is "constructed," the world is nevertheless "real," and agency is not exclusively "human." What this turn to materiality and affect acknowledges, then, is the co-existence of different possible realities, thereby challenging the anthropocentric privileging of the human subject, positioned by social constructivism as an "I" who chooses to imagine the world as real (Rosiek and Snyder ICQI workshop).

Reclaiming poststructuralism within the context of this paradigm shift nevertheless creates unresolved epistemological tensions fueled by the seemingly paradoxical reliance of its proponents on references to scientific modes of inquiry such as cognitive science, neuroscience, and quantum physics, despite the fact that poststructuralist theory was initially deployed to articulate a powerful anti-essentialist critique of modernist notions of rationalism and objectivity. The alternative forms of agency supported by new materialism and posthumanism may justifiably be deemed antithetical to these contested notions that have traditionally been associated with scientific discourses upholding knowledge acquisition as a form of human entitlement, and envisioning the researcher as an outside observer whose prerogative it is to make the world an object of study, an ethically problematic positionality deeply rooted in "the Enlightenment structures of the Cartesian self" (MacLure ICQI Keynote) and identified by Rosiek and Snyder as "spectator subjectivity" (ICQI workshop). Of course, the validating power of scientific and technological modes of knowledge production, relentlessly touted as a form of unassailable and inexorable progress in contemporary public discourse, seems difficult to resist, given the current privileging by university administrators of profit-driven market logic, technocratic bureaucracy, and an audit culture based on a politics and ethics of evidence that fuels competition over resources, funding, students, and professional opportunities, thereby placing qualitative researchers in the precarious position of having to justify methodologies often dismissed as too "soft," hence "unscientific." The collaborative projects and co-authored publications in which I have been involved seek ways of addressing these serious challenges through a strategic move from turf-claiming to turf-sharing that entails developing inter-/

cross-/trans-disciplinary coalitions that support anti-/de/non-colonizing and solidarity-building research perspectives (Kazubowski-Houston and Magnat 389).

Rosiek and Snyder advocate "a generous read" of posthumanism and new materialism that "takes time to recognize themes within an emerging school of thought, then to discern connections with other traditions" that promote a reciprocal form of relationality inclusive of other/more-than-human life (ICQI workshop). Foregrounding the ethical necessity of engaging with these traditions, they urge Euro-American researchers to acknowledge that while embracing this paradigm shift may mark an important turn in the academy, claims to doing something new must be vigorously discredited, given that "Indigenous scholars have been writing about non-human agency for a long time" (ICQI workshop). Rosiek and Snyder assert that such an acknowledgment must translate into "inclusive citational practices" mobilized to actively prevent this paradigm shift from becoming "an agent of displacement" that ends up "reinscribing historical patterns of violent erasure" that have previously enabled Western scholars to ignore, dismiss, or discount Indigenous philosophy deemed "not rigorous/critical enough," or to selectively appropriate Indigenous ways of knowing and assimilate them into dominant Western knowledge systems (ICQI workshop). They call for counter-strategies that foster and sustain respectful and reciprocal relationships with Indigenous scholarship by carefully considering its contribution to "producing modes of being, not just representations of being," and by foregrounding the ethical principle of reciprocity, according to which research must be respectful, accountable, and mutually beneficial (ICQI workshop). During the workshop, Rosiek referred to "the performative ethics of reciprocity" which is central to Indigenous practices "that produce something else than a spectator subjectivity in relation to the non-human," requiring from Indigenous people that they take care of, that is to say, maintain a reciprocal relationship with traditional stories and songs as living beings whose functions include animating and activating the world, a co-creative process that lies beyond human desire for narration and entertainment. From an Indigenous perspective, story-telling and singing thus entail using "the sacred power of utterance … to shape and mold, to direct and determine, the forces that surround and govern life and the related lives of all things," as stated by Paula Gunn Allen in "The Word Warrior," the second chapter of *The Sacred Hoop* cited by Rosiek and Snyder. In her book, Allen goes on to provide the example of "an old Keres song" from the Pueblo peoples:

> I add my breath to your breath
>
> That our days may be long on the earth
>
> That the days of our people may be long
>
> That we may be one person

That we may finish our roads together

May our mother bless you with life

May our Life Paths be fulfilled.

(56)

She specifies that the principle according to which "breath is life, and the intermingling of breaths is the purpose of good living" can be found among the Plains tribes in relation to the medicine wheel or sacred hoop (56). She further asserts that, from a Native American perspective, "the ability of all creatures to share in the process of on-going creation makes all things sacred" (57).

Rosiek and Snyder thus challenge non-Indigenous scholars to recognize and address the "Columbus problem," namely, the claim to have "discovered" new materialism and posthumanism. This requires practicing a respectful and reciprocal citational politics that honors "Indigenous scholarship on non-human agency [being] developed in places where new materialism and posthumanism struggle" (ICQI workshop). Rosiek and Snyder's own scholarly engagement with what they consider a necessary paradigm shift that "has the capacity to ameliorate some of the excesses of contemporary 21st century settler society thought and culture practice" is therefore premised on the necessity to work across connections and productive methodological divergences in order to participate in and contribute to "a performative decolonization of academic spaces" (ICQI workshop).

Materiality and Affect: Beyond Anthropocentrism?

My search for possible applications of this paradigm shift to the study of vocality begins with the acknowledgment of a quasi-absence of references to the lived voice in Euro-American scholarship that embraces the turn to materiality and affect. This is corroborated by musicologist Milla Tiainen, who notes that scholars working within this paradigm have not specifically focused on voice as a topic of critical inquiry, yet suggests that new materialism, posthumanism, and affect theory have collectively mobilized potentially useful theoretical frameworks invested in the reconceptualization of relationality, sensory perception, and generative forces emerging from the interrelations of material, social, human, and nonhuman agents. Tiainen observes that as physical vibration and audible sound, "voices irrevocably exceed the subject or body" usually identified as their source, while at the same time interrelating "bodies, subjects, and spatial, material-social milieus" ("Revisiting the Voice in Media and as Medium" 387). She infers that voice can be considered as simultaneously processual and agentive since it "takes part in and initiates relational events where the involved entities and their dimensions undergo veritable

transition – where they become anew" (390). She further contends that understanding voice as both medium and mediating opens up possibilities for theorizing

> the connective force of voices, the material and sensorial aspects of voice in excess of its role as a medium for linguistic signification, and the plasticity of how the voice relates to body, physical-social space, and the very notion of the human,

thereby ushering in fruitful potentialities that she associates with the development of posthuman understandings of voice (401–2).

However, as noted by Maggie McLure in her 2016 ICQI keynote address, "we continue to underestimate the sheer difficulty of shedding the anthropocentrism that is built in our worldviews and our language habits," a problem also underlined by Rosiek and Snyder who remark that posthumanism tends to oscillate between two extremes: the first aims to better describe the agency of what is being studied without altering the humanist positionality of "the inquirer as spectator subject," hence maintaining the asymmetrical power relations of research; whereas the second seeks to dissolve "the authoritative human subject," an act of willful self-disappearance or a sleight-of-hand that necessarily hinges upon some form of concealed human agency, and that can be interpreted as providing a justification for relinquishing ethical and political responsibility (ICQI workshop). As Rosiek and Snyder point out, the dissolution of the subject "has proven hard to imagine," and I would add that, in the case of Deleuzean-influenced theoretical frameworks, evacuating the subject often calls for a prohibitive level of abstraction, so that when Lisa A. Mazzei invites her reader to conceive of voice without a subject, the materiality of vocality and the affective properties of sonority seem to dissolve along with the subject itself (see Chapter 2).

In the Introduction to their special issue on affect for the journal *Body & Society*, Lisa Blackman and Couze Venn identify a major epistemological shift in the humanities, the social sciences, as well as the natural sciences, spurred by current advances in genetics and biological sciences, mathematics, quantum physics, and neurosciences, and generating the articulation of "a common ontology linking the social and the natural, the mind and body, the cognitive and affective" (7). They specify that in the field of body-studies, "the heightened interest in the non-verbal, non-conscious dimensions of experience [constitutes] a reengagement with sensation, memory, perception, attention and listening" as embodied ways of knowing (8). This is particularly relevant to the non-discursive, non-representational performative power of vocality embodied in the lived voice that eludes post-structuralist analysis. While none of the articles featured in this special issue address vocality, sound studies scholar Julian Henriques's contribution focuses on the auditory and affective vibrations of music in the dancehall scene of Kingston,

Jamaica. Henriques describes "the crowd's intensive, immersive and visceral experience of the saturation of sound" and observes that the materiality of the auditory vibrations produced by the dancehall sound system can be conceptualized as "an *energy pattern*" combining three elements: "*frequency*, pitch or tone; *amplitude*, loudness or volume; and *timbre*, or sound colour or quality" (63, 65–6). He relates the affective intensities experienced by the crowd to "entrainment," a form of embodied synchronicity relying on "increasing musical tempos and volumes," enabling dancers to become collectively "immersed in the rhythmic environment of the entire spectrum of frequencies that the dancehall session fine-tunes" (67). Building on phenomenologist Maxine Sheets-Johnstone's assertion that "feeling *is* the embodiment of movement," and on Deleuze and Guattari's notion of BwO, as well as on the physics of sound waves, Henriques argues that investigating

> [t]he energetic patterning of vibrations offers a way of understanding meaning that is not tied to ideas of representation, encoding, inscription, or even Aristotelian logic. This is the fecundity the affective turn opens up. The previous discursive turn has tended to close such discussions.
>
> (72, 76)

He relates the flow of affect to the elements of repetition, amplitude, and timbre—the latter being identified by Jean-Luc Nancy as "the very resonance of the sonorous" (40, quoted in Henriques 81)—and contends that "the vibrations of affect offer an escape from the cage of the autonomous, selfconsistent, rational subject – liberating the *relational* subject," while insisting that although they may "exceed and exclude discursive representation," the intensities of auditory and affective vibrations are not meaningless (80). He infers from this materialist analysis that "[a]ffect, like sounds, music, colours and abstract images, has the kind of significance that has to be embodied, felt and experienced," and goes on to observe that "the intensive qualities of the sensory experience of affect do not necessarily have to be translated into feelings or emotions" (82). Moreover, because the propagation of sound waves requires some embodied medium, he argues that "vibrations, at the frequency of both sound and affect, invariably bear the mark of the particular medium of their embodiment," from which they derive their "characteristic tone, texture and qualities" (82), which I would contend is also the case for vocalization, whose phonic specificity, or what Barthes calls the grain, is linked to the embodied dimension of the lived voice, and whose non-discursive *signifiance* must be experientially apprehended through sensory perception.

In *Keywords in Sound*, anthropologist Stefan Helmreich explains that the propagation of sound via a material medium is named transduction and refers to "how sound changes as it traverses media, … as it goes through transubstantiations that modulate both its matter and meaning" (222). Helmreich remarks that in Henriques's research on sonic

immersion, which produces "a sense of presence and immediacy," the human body is considered as a sensory transducer, and specifies that within this context the term transduction "describes sound as meaningful and material, reaching across (while also exceeding) sensory, cognitive registers" (224–5). He also states that one of the key assumptions underlying the notion of transduction is that "sound *moves*," thereby supporting "a travelling model of sound," which, as noted by music historians Jonathan Sterne and Tara Rodgers, mobilizes "water-wave metaphors and associated terms such as current, channel, and flow (5)" (229). Pointing to philosopher Casey O'Callaghan's objection that sounds are individual events that have persistence and duration and that "become present at reception" but that cannot be said to travel as waves do, Helmreich suggests that rather than describing sound "as 'travelling' – that is, as *trans*duced," it might be more accurate to envision sound as cutting "across spaces, materials, and infrastructure," which requires thinking "not with transduction, but across it" (229). This raises the question of how this conceptualization of the relationship between sound and affect might apply to the lived voice and, more specifically, to the sense of presence and immediacy produced by singing. I would posit that the acoustic qualities and proprioceptive sensations experienced by the singer constitute the phonic/sonic materiality of affective intensities simultaneously originating from, propagating through, and cutting across her body. The act of singing may thus be understood as a form of visceral engagement with, and immersion in, the energy pattern of vibrations whose frequency, amplitude, and timbre the singer sensitively fine-tunes and skillfully modulates.

Appealing to Neuroscience: Promises and Pitfalls

Interestingly, this special issue of *Body & Society* also features affect theory skeptics such as Constantina Papoulias and Felicity Callard, who interrogate the current turn "from a concern with the social constructions of identity categories to a reassertion of the 'biological foundation of being'" based on a radicalized re-imagining of biology as fluid and dynamic, playful and unpredictable, with affectivity serving as "a placeholder for the inherent dynamism and mutability of matter" (29, 32). They argue that, on the one hand, this selective interpretation does not account for the more deterministic aspects of biology that remain central to neuroscientific research, and that, on the other hand, while affect theory "shows how a biology of afoundational foundations can be imagined, the language through which the findings of neuroscience are invoked by cultural theorists is, paradoxically, often the language of evidence and verification," which they associate with "the old foundational language" of scientific discourse scrutinized by constructivism for its essentialism (37).

Papoulias and Callard focus on two of the neuroscientists who are the most cited by cultural theorists, namely, Antonio Damasio and Joseph Ledoux, foregrounding their hypothesis that the "pre-cognitive functions of the body's intelligent automaticity" is

linked to a "pre-set array of responses that has remained essentially the same across a significant stretch of evolutionary development" (31). The authors point out that by privileging the micro-level of cellular time, cultural theorists overemphasize the fluidity and capacity for change of what appears to be an open system. Yet, for Damasio and Ledoux, "while neural processing works in the hyper-fast 'cellular time', which is below our human sensorium, the body's affectivity is structured – and thereby constrained – through the operations of evolutionary time," inducing Damasio to consider emotions as "'stereotyped patterns of response' whose function is to ensure survival on the level of evolutionary time scales" (31). Even when examining the development of an individual over the span of a life-time, neuroscientist Allan Schore speaks of "patterns of affect regulation which integrate a sense of self across state transitions, thereby allowing for a continuity of inner experience (Schore 1994)" (46). Accordingly, human beings might be programmed by evolution itself to resist the dissolution of the subject advocated by posthumanism, and the stake for such resistance might be nothing less than survival. The authors underline that, unlike cultural theorists, Schore does not envision these patterns as "flexible and provisional; or open to continual remaking; indeed the very opposite" (46). They remark that Damasio himself suggests that the development of the self depends on non-conscious and automatic "innately set regulatory actions," a form of attunement occurring early on in the life of infants and leading to "behaviors and affective modalities that become so ingrained that it is enormously difficult to transform them beyond childhood," so that the non-conscious and automatic dimensions of the consolidated set of habits and ways of being in the world that constitute the adult self shares the characteristics of Bourdieu's embodied *habitus* (46).

Papoulias and Callard conclude that there is a disjunction between neuroscientific literature on affectivity and the focus placed by affect theory on "an afoundational biology capable of destabilizing the pull of language and subjectivation on our bodies," associating affectivity with the body's creative potential (46). Indeed, neuroscience points to "the neural *infrastructure* of consciousness (Damasio's 'cellular time')" rather than to our lived experience of the present moment, or "subjective time," and emphasizes "affect's central role in the regulation of the self" (47). This evolutionary perspective would thus seem to imply that our impulse to resist, when confronted with the threat of the dissolution of our subjectivity, is fueled by affectivity as a major enforcer of the inherited patterns of behavior that once ensured the survival of our ancestors. Hence, while Papoulias and Callard welcome interdisciplinary approaches inclusive of neuroscience, they warn that prioritizing certain aspects of neuroscientific research over others is driven by a cultural-political commitment to emancipate the body from biological determinism through a selective reading of neuroscientific literature that highlights embodied creativity, thereby occluding the limitations placed on such a promising version of embodiment and affectivity by neuroscience's foundationalist account of evolution. Moreover, they stress that within the field of neuroscience

there is no consensus on the role of affect, a contested concept situated at the convergence of competing perspectives. Although this sobering reassessment of neuroscientific discourse calls into question the vaunted fluidity, playfulness, and unpredictability of biology underpinning a view of creativity that celebrates the relationship between affectivity and the mutability of matter—a reassessment seeming to offer very little hope for exploration of the biological dimension of vocal creativity—I will later address the insights provided by the neuroscience of music that convey a more nuanced and promising view that is also relevant to singing.

Taking into account Papoulias and Callard's legitimate concerns, Victoria Pitts-Taylor examines the potentials and pitfalls of the cognitive turn in *The Brain's Body: Neuroscience and Corporeal Politics*, arguing that while the social constructivist and poststructuralist critiques of biological determinism and neuroreductionism provide salient insights, there is a growing sense that "asserting the importance of nurture over nature, culture over biology, or representation over materiality has lost its critical purchase" (6–7). She suggests that although vigilance about the increasing dominance of technoscientific knowledge is arguably more crucial than ever before for scholars in the humanities and social sciences, the poststructuralist privileging of discourse and representation can itself produce reductive understandings of the body, considered to be animated, disciplined, regulated, and materialized through the iteration of social norms, thereby "eliding the material and biological dimensions of embodiment" (9). She highlights the role of feminist and queer scholars in making room for other forms of critical inquiry into the tangibly material impact of gender, class, sexuality, and race-based discrimination, as well as the felt physical and mental effects of pain, illness, aging, and disability, often compounded by social inequities, and infers that taking materiality seriously requires exploring a variety of research areas, including "quantum physics, dynamic systems, biology, epigenetics, neuroscience, evolutionary theory, and other scientific fields to challenge modernist, mechanistic views of matter" (9–10). While Pitts-Taylor argues for "complex and *complexly embrained* embodiment" and asserts that "a material-semiotic view is essential to more fully grasp bodily reality," she simultaneously stresses that it is crucial to critically examine "what *kinds* of brains and bodies are being enacted, erased, and transformed in neuroscientific thought and practice" (10–12). She scrupulously delineates throughout her book a material-discursive investigation of matter that goes beyond social constructivist conceptualizations of the body while challenging us to resist the legitimizing effect of influential scientific accounts claiming to offer value-free explanatory frameworks. In the Introduction, she indicates that "massive financial investments are buttressing … efforts to explore human experience via neurons, neurotransmitters, neural networks, and brain regions" (3), later specifying in a footnote that the European Union-funded Human Brain Project has a $1 billion budget, and that the National Institutes of Health, an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, has a $100 million budget for the

BRAIN Initiative, both of which were announced in 2003 (129). She thus makes clear that there are important political implications for these cutting-edge research programs, including ways in which "social institutions are governing – literally shaping – neurobiology" (12). What is also at stake, then, beyond scholarly debates about the relevance of neuroscience for the humanities and the social sciences, is an understanding of the material effects produced in the real world by such intensive investments in neuroscientific research and practices.

As emphasized by Pitts-Taylor, embodiment is understood differently within the diverse field of neuroscience: while it may be associated with "a universal human condition providing the same constraints and capacities for all," some neuroscientific experimental practices focus on "experiential, phenomenological, physical, and technological variations," while divergences also occur at the cellular level of inquiry, where neuron systems might be interpreted as "fixed, automatic, and precognitive," or might be considered as "symbolically modulated, and therefore affected by social differences" (15). Calling attention to the various ways in which corporeal politics grounded in these different perspectives can be deployed through technoscientific practices in the service of social regulation, Pitts-Taylor critically examines key ethical questions raised by neuroscience while advocating for "the multiplicity of the neurological body and the specificities of embodied lives" (15).

The necessity to remain cautiously skeptical in this early phase of neuroscientific research is further emphasized by Don Trent Jacobs (Four Arrows), Greg Cajete, and Jongmin Lee in their Introduction to *Critical Neurophilosophy and Indigenous Wisdom*:

> There are about 100 billion neurons in the human brain and each is connected to thousands of others. Most behaviors, beliefs, and emotions engage multiple parts of the brain and the variety of possible interactions with memory, culture and DNA is unfathomable. To expect relatively new brain imaging technology and the interpretations of human beings to explain why we behave as we do and how we do is to place too much confidence in technology and Western Science.
>
> (vii)

They foreground the limitations of the technologies upon which neuroscientists have been relying, such as functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) and positron emission tomography (PET) which are "still in their infancy," and contend that since the best spatial resolution is about 1 mm, this type of imaging "leaves out much of the activity in the brain unexplored" (viii). They also remark that when observing a stimulus, the time-span during which it occurs is too short to track the full range of activities triggered in response, and they raise the possibility that some important aspects of consciousness and decision-making might not be

measurable because they might have "nothing to do with physical aspects of the brain" (viii). They nevertheless concur with Pitts-Taylor's contention that taking materiality seriously necessitates making room for different research approaches, including scientific modes of inquiry, and affirm that: "Even with these concerns, however, social neurosciences still have a significant contribution to make if only to stimulate reflection on human behavior in new ways" (ix). They provide the example of neurophilosophy's attempts to understand and prevent the formation of harmful prejudices linked to "bias that exists below awareness and does not rely on conscious deliberation" (ix). They also suggest that neurophilosophy might enable researchers to explore "the biological and spiritual basis for social trust," which can promote healing and restorative social experiences, and might even provide insights into "the mind-body-spirit connection" (ix). To counterbalance the potentially reductionist dimension of neuroscience, they introduce the concept of "Indigenous Wisdom," which they define as an ancient, holistic, and inductive way of knowing that "has been tested and re-tested for thousands of years in the most rigorous real-life laboratories of survival and well-being," and assert that Indigenous knowledge about food, herbal-based medicine, transportation, astronomy, sustainability, governance, education, and interpersonal relationship psychology are "every bit as scientific as modern ideas," including in terms of predicting outcomes (xii). While Cajete, Four Arrows, and Lee argue that it is vital to reclaim Indigenous Science and remain "critical of an over-reliance on Western Science," they state that they seek to partner these two approaches "in a complementary dialogue that intends to better understand how humans can regain our ability to live in harmony with Mother Earth" (xiii). Importantly, the healing cultural processes tested in the real-life laboratories of survival and well-being of Indigenous Wisdom include traditional vocal practices that hinge upon the mind-body-spirit connection and foster reciprocal relationships between human beings and their natural environment.

Brain Plasticity and Music

If neuroscientists are unable to map creative and spiritual processes through brain imaging and analyze them in terms of brain activity, they nevertheless seek to better understand the transformative and healing dimensions of artistic practice. Music making is frequently the focus of neuroscientific experimental research on brain plasticity because it appears to stimulate the brain to reorganize itself and create new neural pathways that enhance connectivity within brain structures, a promising transformative function whose health benefits music therapists seek to harness in their work with people suffering from a wide range of cognitive and affective disorders (O'Kelly, "Music Therapy and Neuroscience: Opportunities and Challenges"). In "The Benefits of Music for the Brain," Sarah J. Wilson examines the extent to which music making may be said to

epitomize some of the core principles of brain plasticity. She states that findings based on neuroimaging studies conducted with musicians and non-musicians, as well as behavioral and neuropsychological studies, indicate that "music making draws on a range of highly-developed and well-integrated sensory, perceptual and motor skills, as well as emotions, memory, and high-order cognitive and attentional functions" (141). These studies point to the connections that music makes at multiple levels, including at the brain's structural and functional level; at the personal level, through the integration of thinking and emotions, as well as the regulation of well-being; and at the social level, through building social cohesion (141). Furthermore, motivation for music making appears to be linked to "an evolutionarily ancient reward system" that activates in response to the anticipation and experience of pleasure, and when this experience is combined with imitation or synchronization with others, it "may promote emotional sensitivity, empathy, and social cognition" (141). Wilson refers to Robert Zatorre's influential article "Music, the Food of Neuroscience?," which posits a complex relation between cognitive-perceptual systems enabling us to analyze and represent the outside world, and evolutionarily ancient systems, whose supposed function is to ensure survival. It would seem that the role of the reward component of these systems is to mediate arousal and attention, emotion, motivation, learning, memory, and decision-making. The act of music making is thus understood to concurrently activate and integrate these multiple brain systems "presumably synchronised by the structure and temporal flow of music," thereby endowing this experience with "the personal and social power often ascribed to music," which might also point to "the adaptive and evolutionary significance of music, in terms of its multiple benefits for human learning and development" (141). Wilson concludes that the power of music to integrate the mind and body through the unifying act of music making produces "benefits for mental and social well-being, both by integrating our thinking and emotions and helping us to connect with others," and stimulates "the fundamental capacity of the brain to adapt to the ever-changing environment," which promotes both individual and social development (146).

The growing influence of neuroscientific discourse on popular culture and the academy is perhaps most strikingly manifest through the wide dissemination of concepts such as brain plasticity and mirror neurons, which have become powerful buzz words in spite of their being both highly contested and subject to on-going debates within the field of neuroscience and beyond. Pitts-Taylor hence specifies that brain plasticity is "conceptualized, measured, and enacted in multiple ways" by neuroscience (*The Brain's Body* 30). Developmental research has identified two critical windows of plasticity: a first "wave of prenatal and postnatal synaptic growth, followed by several years of pruning of unused synapses, which seems to buttress the efficacy of remaining ones," and a second wave occurring just before puberty. She foregrounds the tension that exists within neuroscientific research between the critical windows of the developmental plasticity hypothesis and "the increasing recognition that the wiring and morphology of adult brains can be modified … in

response to changes in activity or stimuli" (28–9). Music making is frequently foregrounded as exemplifying such experience-dependent plasticity, yet experiments employing MRI technology suggest that the brain "does not seem to be monolithically or globally plastic" (29), along with the possibility that brain plasticity is "an advantage afforded unequally to persons" (30). The morphological or structural plasticity of the brain thus appears to be limited by uneven distribution "across various [developmental] stages, regions [of the brain], and even groups of persons," so that accounting for such "temporal, spatial, and genetic variability, along with the brain's proposed selective vulnerability to various social influences" is crucial when examining the implications of this research for human agency (30).

It may seem tempting to celebrate plasticity's potential to undermine biological determinism, yet the association of plasticity with capitalist notions of adaptability, creativity, and innovation that have become dominant values in the global marketplace can become eerily ominous when empowered by biotechnological intervention. Mindful of such danger, Pitts-Taylor argues that skepticism about brain plasticity or mirror neurons expressed through rhetorical attempts to exorcise their materiality as an effect of discourse is simply ineffective, and she points out that reducing plasticity to a social construct or a mere trope "stops short of acknowledging how meanings are materialized *in matter*, how they literally modify brains and body-subjects, and, conversely, how they are touched by what they represent" (20). As Papoulias, Callard, and Pitts-Taylor suggest, engaging with the competing discourses produced by neuroscientific research requires a form of heightened critical vigilance that I would extend to the circulation of phrases such as embodied mind or embrained embodiment within these discourses, along with Pitts-Taylor's choice to title her book *The Brain's Body*, demonstrating the variety of ways in which language seems to inexorably reinscribe an ontologically entrenched hierarchical division between the mind, or the brain, and the body, and exposing the potentially reductionist focus of neuroscience on (embodied) brain functions to explain aesthetic experience, affect, and creativity.

In their discussion of the neuroscience of music, Cajete, Four Arrows, and Lee observe that research on the affective power of sound, whether it be that of an instrument or the singing voice, seeks to locate and explain emotions by mapping brain activity, indicating that the listener is reacting to music experienced as an aesthetic phenomenon, thereby failing to account for the affective power of music making and singing as embodied creative practices. They refer to neuroscientific studies on music and emotions that correlate fast musical tempo with "excitement, happiness, surprise, anger, fear" while slow musical tempo is associated with "calmness, solemnity, tenderness, sadness," and that investigate physical reactions to music, including chills, goose-bumps, and shivers down the spine, which correspond to the perception of "new harmonies, sudden dynamic changes, and textural changes," although these affective events seem to vary depending on

the listener's level of familiarity with the music, which would seem to indicate that "reactions to music are learned" (*Critical Neurophilosophy and Indigenous Wisdom* 85). Four Arrows objects to the neuroscientific focus on "a reaction to art as opposed to the creation of art," pointing out that "in Indigenous ways of thinking, to speak a word, to sing, to paint, to dance, etc., is to initiate a process of vibrational energy that enters into relationships that ultimately connect us back to Nature" (88). He specifies that from this perspective, "all vibrational creations, from painting to music, are ultimately sacred ways to understand and connect empathetically to Nature and of course to ourselves," and notes that the poetic and rhythmical dimensions of Indigenous languages themselves "reveal a closeness to the invisible or spirit world" that influences how the visible world is experienced (88). He stresses that in Indigenous cultures, music as well as other forms of artistic creation are not associated with entertainment or escape but "define place and lead to transformation," thereby enabling "experiences of mutual support and empathy that go beyond ordinary communicative language" (88). Whereas Western science interprets brain activity in relation to art as an aesthetic experience through which human beings feel connected to their bodies and emotions, Four Arrows asserts that "the goal of Indigenous art is to reconnect with the source of life," which necessarily implies engaging with the natural world and the spiritual world, a form of wisdom which he suggests could help neuroscientists to account for what he names ecopsychology (88).

Expounding on these comments, Cajete observes that from an Indigenous perspective, artists become "immersed within the art media as part of the fabric of creative energy itself" since the purpose of art is "bringing something into being," a process that entails "an initiation, a purification, a death and a rebirth," so that a sense of the sacredness of all of Creation, hence of Nature, is pivotal to traditional art forms (90). He points out that what Indigenous people create, whether it be "songs, ceremonies, dances, pottery, baskets, dwellings, boats, or bows," simultaneously has a functional use and an inherent symbolic meaning, thus expressing a relationship between self, community, and world, as well as a life-enhancing connection to "the re-creative healing power of the foundational guiding myths and traditional knowledge of a tribe" (90). Cajete infers that neuroscience misses this fundamental creative and spiritual process by focusing instead on its "symbolic documentation," namely, the artistic form or product, whereas it is the process itself which "is doing something to the brain that is about curing and reharmonizing," thereby providing what he describes as "a pathway to wholeness" (90–1). In conclusion, Four Arrows infers from this Indigenous understanding of artistic practice as processual and transformative that its function is to convey a "sense of harmony and spiritual awareness that reminds us how deeply we are related" (92). This perspective necessarily leads to alternative conceptions of affect and empathy that challenge the (anthropocentric) prioritizing of the human brain in neuroscientific research.

Mirror Neurons and Empathy

What makes the mirror neurons hypothesis particularly attractive to Euro-American scholars is that it circumvents Cartesian body-mind dualism by linking cognition to bodily agency since individuals are thought to use "the same or overlapping neural circuits for processing their own embodied actions and for processing the observed experiences of others," a form of intersubjectivity that "locates the 'other' in one's own embodiment and via motor schema brings the active, experiential body into the mind-brain" (Pitts-Taylor 79, 81). Pitts-Taylor notes that "the enthusiasm about mirror neurons, and their divisiveness, is difficult to exaggerate," given that these special cells are thought "to fire both when an individual makes a motor action and when she sees another performing the same action," with some researchers situating the cells in "brain regions associated with facial recognition and pain processing," leading to the claim that mirror neurons "allow 'mind reading', or understanding another's intentions, and empathy, or feeling what one feels" (67).

It was by inserting electrodes into the brain tissue of macaques, an invasive technique only used in laboratory experiments conducted on animals, that neuroscientists Vittorio Gallese, Giacomo Rizzolati, and their colleagues at the University of Parma were able to measure "the action potential (electrical firing) of individual neurons," leading them to advance the mirror neurons model, later studied in humans through the use of neuroimaging, which is "much less invasive but also less precise" (Pitts-Taylor 71). Significantly, Gallese establishes a connection between embodiment and art in his theoretical articulation of "the empathic body," a neuroscientific approach to the multisensorial and affective dimensions of embodied experience that has important implications for performance (Gallese 188). Foregrounding the bodily meaning of the term *aesthesis* that he relates to "the sensorimotor and affective features of our experience," he posits aesthetic experience as "the multimodal perception of the world made possible by our body" (185). He stresses that "[t]he crucial point when using art in neuroscientific research is not to study the brain, but to study the brain-body system in order to understand what makes us human, since aesthetic work is characteristic for human beings" (185). He highlights "the brain-body system's situated relationships with the world," and argues that this approach offers an alternative to reductive versions of neuroaesthetics envisioning aesthetic experience as passive and deterministic (193). Pointing to the limitations of the "semiotic-hermeneutic perspective" when probing what he defines as "the aesthetic-symbolic dimension of human existence," he contends that it is crucial to account for "the dimension of bodily presence" (194). He therefore links presence to the type of bodily involvement that gives us access to the sensorial, affective, and relational characteristics of aesthetic experience, an intensely visceral engagement that he grounds in our non-conscious and pre-reflective capacity for attunement with the world (188). Interestingly, he maintains that neuroscientific studies that track "the activation of motor, somatosensory, and emotion-related brain

networks" demonstrate that "[m]otor neurons control action but also respond to visual, tactile, and auditory stimuli, provided they are body-related" (186). Although he does not explore the relationship between motor neurons, auditory perception, and the affective power of vocal music, he considers that bodily presence gives us access to the aesthetic qualities of sight, touch, and sound that deeply affect us when we experience art, which he extends to our capacity to connect with and respond to others and to the world (187–8). He infers that this opens possibilities for a neuroaesthetic understanding of intersubjectivity as "intercorporeality – the mutual resonance of intentionally meaningful sensorimotor behaviors" (188).

Some theatre and performance studies scholars have welcomed these possibilities as an opportunity to move beyond the enduring influence of the Cartesian mind/body split and Diderot's paradox. John Lutterbie thus observes that "without the complex interdependency of what we differentiate into body, brain, and mind, we would not recognize ourselves or know what we feel" ("Neuroscience and Creativity in the Rehearsal Process" 156). Suggesting that Artaud's phrase "body without organs" conveys the experience of our undivided engagement with the world, Lutterbie maintains that "as neuroscience is beginning to confirm, we are not segmented creatures with separate systems for thinking and feeling but one organism that is able to know the world concretely and abstractly" (156). Rhonda Blair concurs with Lutterbie when stating that research conducted by Rizzolati and other neuroscientists raises "revolutionary questions about the boundaries and nature of the self," as well as how we understand our relationship to others, and "what it means to be autonomous and to have certain kinds of freedom in our responses" (The Actor, Image, and Action 13). Having acknowledged that there are on-going debates about the specific function of mirror neurons, Blair identifies major potential implications for performance theory and practice: "We are learning more and more about the physical, electrical, and chemical grounds out of which our intellectual and emotional lives arise—and hence about the matter and material of the actor and her work" (14–15). Current discussions about mirror neurons within the field of performance studies, however, mainly address the relationship between action, text, emotion, and imagination, as reflected in Rick Kemp's focus on physicality, language, character development, and emotion in his 2013 book *Embodied Acting: What Neuroscience Tells Us about Performance*, with no consideration of the implications of neuroscientific research on embodiment for vocality. Yet I would argue that it makes sense to probe the potential relevance of the mirror neurons hypothesis for auditory perception and vocality, given the well-documented affective dimension of music and singing, ranging from stress reduction to ecstatic experiences, which has long been attractive to scientific research, especially in terms of potential health benefits (Cervellin and Lippi, "From Music-Beat to Heart-Beat" 373). Additionally, studies on the neurochemical effects of music suggest that collective experiences of music making and/or listening can foster feelings of social affiliation, bonding,

and comfort (Chanda and Levitin, "The Neurochemistry of Music" 188–90), which is relevant to research on mirror neurons and empathy.

Whereas proponents of the mirror neuron model enthusiastically foreground its "dynamically social" and "richly relational" dimensions, its detractors consider mirror neurons to be "insular, atomistic entities shaped by evolution or fixed early in life," and view their processes as "generic, universal, and highly normative" (Pitts-Taylor 69). To counter these objections, some neuroscientists have hypothesized a plasticity of mirror neurons at the developmental level, which means that this model might be at least partially experience-dependent, and Cecilia Heyes radicalizes this hypothesis by positing that mirror neurons "are created in individual brains through the experience of perceiving and performing comparable actions," which she argues offers an alternative to the evolutionary adaptation narrative (Pitts-Taylor 84). Heyes provides the example of fMRI studies of pianists, whose mirror neuron activity is greater than non-musicians when watching a piano performance, a result that correlates with studies of dancers watching other dancers (Pitts-Taylor 84). However, as Pitts-Taylor points out, minimizing the importance of evolution and factoring in the role that experience might have "does not go far enough to render the mirror neuron account of intersubjectivity adequately social" (84). The problem with this type of biological relationality, she argues, is that "it treats our capacities for understanding another's intentions and felt experiences as universal," a feature of mirror neurons that Blackman also singles out as epitomizing the neuro-reductionist and essentialist pitfalls of an approach that "retreats to the *singular* neurophysiological body in order to explain the transmission of affect *between* people" (76; quoted in Pitts-Taylor 82). These critical engagements with the mirror neuron hypothesis ask how the influence of cultural specificity, social context, and experience gained through training might be factored into neural processes that are considered to be automatic; how this model might account for "diversity in brains, persons, and situations that could lead to epistemic differences and intersubjective and intracorporal conflict"; and how the alleged plasticity of mirror neurons might disrupt "the homogeneity of embodiment across persons" engaged in a large spectrum of distinct social interactions (Pitts-Taylor 87).

In spite of these unresolved problems and open-ended questions, Sigrid Weigel associates the discovery of the mirror neurons with an accrued interest, over the last two decades, for the concept of empathy, making it "one of the hottest topics of research" across a wide range of areas, including psychology, evolutionary anthropology, biology, as well as social and cultural research, while "empathy studies" have become a subdiscipline of neuroscience ("The Heterogeneity of Empathy" 1–2). She points out that the "mirror neurons paradigm" has compelled scientists to explore the implications of a form of intersubjective relationality operating through a shared emotional system, leading to a major epistemological shift in brain studies, a field that had long been dominated by a cognitive bias. This shift to "affective resonance between the Self and

others, to inter-subjectivity and related topics such as embodiment" now supersedes the computer-model of the brain that envisioned the latter as "the central control system of any sensual, motoric, and cognitive function" (8). Weigel specifies that recent research considers "the emotional quality of brain functions as primal, older in terms of evolution" (8), consequently reconceptualizing empathy as an innate capacity for mutual affective resonance that serves as the basis for sociality. Yet the nature of this capacity and the way in which it functions remain open to interpretation, and Weigel remarks that the evolutionary approach, because it "regularly interprets the skills of a species as a function of survival," necessarily conceives of empathy and altruism in relation to the interdependence of the members of a given species (3). Significantly, even neuroscientific conceptions of empathy that do not rely on the mirror neurons theory either "presuppose a mechanism of shared feelings or a shared neural network," or envision "a basic, non-conscious resonance mechanism" connecting individuals by means of inter-subjectivity or intercorporeality, hence providing a biological foundation for empathy as "a basic social ability" (8–9). However, Weigel states that "what is lacking, with respect to all these theories, is actual evidence," since laboratory experiments are based on "the *simulation* of certain social situations" (10). For, no matter how scientifically valid the experiment may be, there is no way of proving that what takes place in the laboratory context would also take place in real-life situations, hence raising questions of applicability and generalizability. In the end, evolutionary explanations provide the only way out of this conundrum, as exemplified in Michael Tomasello's book *The Cultural Origins of Human Cognition* that identifies the human capacity for empathy as "a biological inheritance of the Homo sapiens (Tomasello 1999, p. 90)" (quoted in Weigel 14). The inconclusiveness of neuroscientific research highlighted by Weigel is also invoked by Christian G. Allesch, who states that "despite the amazing progress in mind mapping technology, many questions about the relationship between subjective experiences and their biological correlates remain unsolved," leading him to assert that "there is still a need for describing empathic processes on a phenomenological level" ("Einfühlung – A Key Concept in Psychological Aesthetics" 238).

Why Music Matters: A Culturally-Specific Conundrum

From the perspective of ethnomusicology, the notion of evolutionarily ancient systems linked to emotions, memory, pleasure, as well as survival, raises questions about the human need for music and the origins of musical practice. In his assessment of the impact of evolutionary theory on ethnomusicological analyses of the origins and functions of musical practice, Bruno Nettl outlines four areas of inquiry: "the human need for music, premusical kinds of behaviors, a kind of moment of invention, and the earliest music" (*Nettl's Elephant* 110). Whereas the human need for music has been approached by ethnomusicologists through "the study of the uses and functions of

music that all cultures have held in common, with emphasis on small, isolated societies," premusical behaviors have been associated with a type of communication that might have preceded the development of language and that shared some of the characteristics of music, such as "length, stress, and pitch distinction" (111). Nettl states that the earliest music has been "considered to be something like the music of certain tribal peoples," that is to say, "exceedingly simple" in comparison with Western music, while the moment of invention has "always been a mystery," a statement which he qualifies by remarking: "But then, the moment of invention by musical creators from Native Americans to Beethoven has always been a mystery" (111). Moreover, ethnomusicologists have recurrently speculated that music was created by early humans for four primary purposes:

> to increase opportunities for mating, associated with Darwinian theory; to add structure to culture through elevated speech, associated with Spencer and then Wagner [and, as first suggested by Siegfried Nadel, as a way of communicating with the supernatural]; to aid in performing rhythmic labor, associated with Carl Buecher; and to communicate at a distance, associated with Carl Stumpf (summarized in Sachs 1943, 19–20).
>
> (111)

Current ethnomusicological research on the evolution of music focuses on factors such as its role in maternal behavior, and in the stimulation of both individual and social behavior, as well as in the expression of group superiority, although some scholars infer from their research that "music is not part of natural selection" and contend that "some of the things that make life worth living are not biological adaptations" (111). Nettl specifies that when attempting to envision the earliest music and define music universals, the criteria "have often been taken from the musical discourse of Western academic music culture" (112). For example, the evaluation of musical simplicity is "rooted in the Western academic canon of music, in which complexity is an inordinate aesthetic value" (113). Having acknowledged that there is "no cross-culturally valid concept of music or a reliable accounting of universals," he points out that in the history of ethnomusicology, narratives have been informed by Western conceptions of music that tend to dismiss non-Western music as less complex, hence less developed, or "evolved," thereby skewing cross-cultural comparisons in favor of Western music. He notes that this view, based on a misunderstanding of evolutionary theory, "drew much of its presumed credibility from its association with science" (114–15). Ethnomusicologists have also upheld the view that "human musical development, particularly the musical utterances of young children, provided a template for a world history of music," yet in the absence of intercultural studies, they have been unable to provide evidence to support this hypothesis (115). Biology and evolution have also been invoked

when attempting to determine why some musical traditions survived over time while others transformed or disappeared (117). Nettl recalls that in his own research on the music traditions of the Blackfoot people, the association of musical practice with cultural continuity emerged as a central theme, and he explains that while his informants identified "white music" as more technically complicated, they nevertheless considered it to be superficial in comparison with Blackfoot music, which they felt was "essential to life" (218). When he inquired about particular Blackfoot traditional songs by asking his informants whether these songs were good or bad, they preferred to use the term powerful and often associated the value of a song with a family member who had transmitted it to them. Nettl infers from these conversations that from the perspective of Blackfoot people, "there can be no 'bad' song, for they come from guardian spirits, such as animals, that appear in dreams and visions," and he concludes that, for his informants, "the association of the origin of songs with the supernatural is essential to the concept of music" (221), which signals salient epistemological and ontological divergences between Indigenous and Western perspectives on the origin(s), function(s), and purpose(s) of vocal music practices.

This is confirmed by Cajete when he asserts in *Critical Neurophilosophy and Indigenous Wisdom*: "The ceremony of art touches the deepest realms of the psyche and the sacred dimensions of the artistic creative process," whose transformative purpose he relates to a human "impulse towards wholeness" that entails "striving toward centering, healing, and growth" (91). He goes on to suggest that Indigenous conceptions of the sacred pertain to cosmologies that offer "profound insights for cultivating a sustainable relationship to place and a spiritually integrated perception of Nature," insights that are particularly valuable "in the face of the rapid transformation of the Earth by Western science and technology and the ecological crisis that is unfolding at the same time" (102). Since Indigenous Wisdom posits an interconnection between human creativity and the sacredness of all of Creation—so that artistic practice is a ceremonial process that participates in the cultivation of a sustainable relationship with Creation—and since the trans-generational transmission of traditional songs constitutes a crucial aspect of cultural continuity, as emphasized by Blackfoot community members, one may ask whether the evolutionarily ancient systems linked by neuroscientific studies of music to survival, as well as to emotions, memory and pleasure, might hold the key to the human impulse to sing. Might it be possible to develop a cross-cultural and interdisciplinary perspective on brain plasticity and mirror neurons relevant to traditional vocal music practices? Might such a perspective provide valuable insights into vocality by accounting for the ways in which songs have enabled Indigenous peoples to sustain their traditional ways of knowing, hence their identity, in the face of colonialism and Western cultural imperialism? As Cajete and his collaborators seem to suggest, this type of research might be foreclosed by the dominant Western conceptions of music identified by Nettl as prevalent in ethnomusicology. For such conceptions have not

taken seriously enough the possibility that music, and singing in particular, might constitute an inherently relational practice enabling us to "connect empathetically with Nature and of course ourselves," as stated by Four Arrows, and fostering "experiences of mutual support and empathy that go beyond ordinary communicative language," the main purpose being "to reconnect with the source of life," which he defines as the natural world and the spiritual world (88).

Whereas scientific and philosophical discussions of empathy within dominant Western knowledge systems tend to be limited by anthropocentrism through their exclusion of other/more-than-human life, this is not the case for Indigenous ways of knowing whose pivotal notion of interconnectedness includes all forms of life and hinges upon the principles of relationality, reciprocity, respect, and responsibility, as articulated by several generations of Indigenous scholars. In his 1979 book entitled *The Metaphysics of Modern Existence*, Oglala Lakota scholar Vine Deloria Jr. hence states that in the presence of the energy and power of the natural world to which they are subject, "all species, all forms of life, have equal status," brought together by "a great bond" through which each species, including the human species, gains

> an identity and meaning as it forms a part of the complex whole … As long as the bond of life is respected, all species have value and meaning, emotions and intuitions remain a constant factor of experience, and harmony is maintained.
>
> (153–4)

As emphasized by Rosiek and Snyder, Deloria clearly anticipated in his writings the conceptualization of agential realism, generally considered to constitute Karen Barad's foremost contribution to the development of new materialist and posthumanist perspectives, to which I will soon return.

It might therefore be productive to heed the recommendation issued by Cajete and his collaborators in support of methodologies developed at the intersection of Indigenous Wisdom and Western science. It is also worth noting that Indigenous epistemologies and Western phenomenology have demonstrated an engagement with sound, music, and vocality that is significantly more substantial and more robust than affect theory, cognitive science, new materialism, and posthumanism. Although early phenomenology undeniably shares the visualist bias that prevails in these other fields, Merleau-Ponty addresses the perception of sound and engages with music through his focus on embodiment that prefigures the embodied mind paradigm, described by Pitts-Taylor as encompassing "theories of emotion and memory, extended cognition, and enactive perception," and positing that the mind is

> immanent (tied to the capacities and worlds in which it is enacted); relational (affected by its position to and interaction with other minds, bodies, and objects); affective (shaped by feeling and emotion); and situated (tied to specific places, needs, and circumstances).
>
> (*The Brains's Body* 45)

Phenomenological research and pedagogy scholar Max Van Manen notes that, according to Merleau-Ponty, "we know the world bodily and through our embodied actions," and specifies that phenomenology consists in "reawakening the basic experience of the world" (*Phenomenology of Practice* 128), thereby opening up sensory perception to hearing as well as vocality, as reflected in the (post)phenomenological perspective developed by Don Idhe. I will explore alternative perspectives on vocality through the convergence of phenomenology, musicology, paleoanthropology, neuroscience, and performance studies in Chapter 4.

Towards a Posthuman Reconceptualization of Agency

Theorizing agency is arguably the most politically salient dilemma of the posthuman paradigm shift, with obvious implications for poststructuralist conceptions of vocality exclusively concerned with voice as a metaphor for human agency. In an attempt to move away from anthropocentric approaches that privilege human action over a wider affectivity (understood as transformative power) of matter, sociologists Nick J. Fox and Pam Alldred expound on the new materialist understanding of affect in their discussion of emotions and embodiment:

> Affects come in many forms, some governed by physical 'laws' of action and reaction, others by physiological or genetic codes that 'hardwire' responses to stimuli, others by cognition, learning and conditioned reflexes, and still others by the forces that social and cultural theorists have postulated from their studies of power, control and resistance in social formations, institutions and other collectivities. Within this panoply of affects, emotions should be firmly located as one sub-category of affectivity.
>
> (*Sociology and the New Materialism* 129–30)

Instead of speaking of creative agency per se, Fox and Alldred evoke the flows of affects within assemblages of human and non-human relations, along with "the affective capacities of creative products themselves," and associate creativity with "an affective flow [rather than] an agentic attribute of a body" (83). They envision creativity as "an open-ended flow of affect that produces innovative capacities to act, feel and desire in assembled human and non-human relations," and suggest that

creative processes emerge from "a complex ecology of relations" that encompasses "a multitude of event-assemblages that began way back, and will continue far into the future as the creative product affects audiences and other subsequent creators" (85). They point out that such a materialist reconfiguration of creative agency "allows for the potential for entirely 'natural' products (for instance a shell, a landscape feature eroded by wind and rain, or a fractal pattern) to be assessed as creative, because of the affects they produce in observers" (86). I would therefore contend that accounting for the complex ecology of human and other/more-than-human relations is key to the development of non-anthropocentric perspectives on the affectivity—understood as the transformative power—of the sensorially experienced, non-visual materiality of sonic/aural/phonic/vocal performativity.

To further explore the question of agency, let us now take a quantum leap into the materialist-discursive version of performativity proposed by Barad in her post-humanist investigation of materialism, the influential approach to which Pitts-Taylor refers when stating: "In Barad's reading, performativity does not represent or refer to, but rather *is*, what it names" (*The Brain's Body* 35). Providing the example of brain plasticity, Pitts-Taylor remarks:

> The brain isn't plastic because we say it is, to paraphrase Barad (2007) … But the differential differences of plasticity, the way its differences matter, are entangled with our efforts to know it. In this sense, the plastic brain is materially-discursively performative.
>
> (41)

Significantly, the performativity that Barad strives to articulate at the intersection of materiality and discursivity covers much more ground than neuroscientific concerns about brain plasticity or mirror neurons since it envisions matter, nature, and the world itself, as inherently performative. Determining whether this posthuman perspective on performativity might be relevant and useful to investigating the non-discursive power of the sensorially experienced materiality of vocality will require becoming substantially entangled in Barad's writing. This will entail critically engaging with her widely cited monograph *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*, published in 2007, as well as her articles "Quantum Entanglements and Hauntological Relations of Inheritance: Dis/continuities, SpaceTime Enfoldings, and Justice-to-Come," and "Nature's Queer Performativity," published respectively in 2010 and 2011.

Meeting Barad Halfway

Trained as a theoretical physicist, Barad has become a leading figure of posthumanism and new materialism. In spite of the highly specialized scientific underpinnings of her

research, her publications target scholars from a wide range of academic disciplines, as demonstrated by the cautionary clarification she provides in her monograph. Keenly aware of the challenges faced by the majority of her readers, she painstakingly entreats them to be indulgently patient, rigorously attentive, and courageously undeterred by the admittedly daunting complexity of quantum theory; she exhorts the least scientifically inclined of her would-be followers to trust her when she tells them that "the journey can be difficult but there are many rewards for making the effort"; she promises reluctant stragglers overwhelmed by the plethora of equations with which they are expected to engage that "there are riches to be found even for those who do not grasp every detail or nuance"; she seeks to alleviate the anxieties of scholars in the humanities and the social sciences repelled by scientific jargon by reminding them that "poststructuralism is no walk in the park either"; and she even strategically issues an ingenious disincentive by proclaiming that "the reader interested in merely being dazzled, entertained, and mystified … will not find satisfaction here," and by disapprovingly pointing to the "many options available for those who would rather hang out on the sidelines than embark on the journey" (*Meeting the Universe Halfway* 248–9). Barad qualifies her deployment of the "classic metaphor of the journey to mark the adventure of scientific discovery" by stating that she does so "both sincerely and ironically" in her efforts to "cajole, entice, and tease the hesitant traveller," warning that the bounties of knowledge to which she holds the key will remain forever beyond reach "for the reader who refuses to join the journey" (249).

Barad offers a perspective on materiality firmly grounded in her interpretation of Niels Bohr's approach to quantum physics, which she seeks to "rescue" from popular literature on quantum theory that tends to envision the latter as "the scientific path leading out of the West to the metaphysical Edenic garden of Eastern mysticism," and that frequently claims it is "inherently less androcentric, less Eurocentric, more feminine, more postmodern, and generally less regressive than the masculinist and imperializing tendencies in Newtonian physics" (*Meeting the Universe Halfway* 67). She stresses that it is crucial to keep in mind that "quantum physics underlies the workings of the A-bomb" and that it remains to this day "the purview of a small group of primarily Western-trained males" (67–8). Specifying that she is not claiming the quantum theory of the micro world to be "analogous to situations that interest us in the macro world be they political, spiritual, psychological, or even those encountered in science studies," she asserts that her goal is to address broadly applicable and relevant epistemological and ontological issues, including "the role of natural as well as cultural factors in technoscientific and other social practices, the nature of bodies and identities, and the efficacy of science" (70).

Barad historicizes Bohr's radical understanding of matter that revolutionized the representationalist epistemologies of both Newtonian physics and Cartesian rationalism, an unconventional approach to experimental research that triggered a

momentous paradigm shift by resolving the long-standing controversy about the nature of light, which some physicists identified as a particle and others as a wave. With the emergence of atomic physics in the early twentieth century, experiments produced contradictory findings indicating that "light manifests particle-like characteristics under one set of experimental conditions, and wavelike characteristics under other circumstances" (99–100). Moreover, experiments also showed that "matter exhibited this same 'wave-particle' feature," so that "wave-particle duality seemed to be a feature of both light and matter" (100). What distinguishes waves from particles is that the former extend in space so that they can occupy more than one position at the same time and overlap or interfere with one another, like ocean waves on the shore, while particles cannot. The dual nature of light and matter hence appears contradictory since "an object is either localized or extended; it can't be both" (100). Bohr's claim is that "wave and particle behaviors are exhibited under *complementary* that is, *mutually exclusive* circumstances," which implies that "*the nature of the observed phenomenon changes with corresponding changes in the apparatus*," thereby refuting the assumption that is made in Newtonian physics about the transparency of the measurement process, based on the principle of "the existence of individual objects with determinate properties that are independent of our experimental investigations of them" (106). Barad suggests that such a refutation shakes the very foundations of the Enlightenment culture of objectivism along with its investment in representationalism, grounded in the "metaphysics of individualism" and "the intrinsic separability of the knower and the known" (107). Superseding classical physics, quantum mechanics has become "the most successful and accurate theory in the history of physics, accounting for phenomena over a range of twenty-five orders of magnitude, from the smallest particles of matter to large-scale objects" (110). While acknowledging the significance of this success, Barad emphasizes the broader implications of Bohr's insight: if "measurement practices are an ineliminable part of the results obtained," this means that "method, measurement, description, interpretation, epistemology, and ontology are not separable considerations" (121). She infers that such an insight undermines "the Cartesian (inherent, fixed, unambiguous) subject-object distinction," which is foundational to the representationalism she opposes. Furthermore, since, according to Bohr, "individually determinate entities do not exist, measurements do not entail an interaction between separate entities; rather, determinate entities emerge from their intra-action," a term that Barad introduces in relation to the term phenomenon, which she defines as "*a specific intra-action of an 'object' and the 'measuring agencies'*: the object and the measuring agencies emerge from, rather than precede, the intra-action that produced them" (128). She therefore advances a posthuman notion of agency emphasizing the performative dimension of intra-activity and the dynamism of materiality.

In light of Barad's critique of Cartesian and Newtonian forms of representationalism and the pervasive subject/object distinction inherited from these

knowledge systems, I would submit that what is at stake for interdisciplinary voice studies in the counter-perspective that she articulates is the potential relevance of a posthuman materialist reconfiguration of the notions of identity, embodiment, experience, performativity, and agency that might open up possibilities beyond the conceptual limitations of poststructuralism. Significantly, Barad revisits Butler's theory of performativity, according to which the materialization of gendered bodies occurs through "the reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces what it names" (Butler 2; quoted in Barad 64), and asks how such a practice "can account for the matter of sexed bodies," pointing out that Butler's attempt to put matter back into play leaves questions about the material nature of discursive practice hanging in the air "like the persistent smile of the Cheshire cat" (64). Barad observes that Butler "seems to assume that [matter] is ultimately derived (again) from the agency of language and culture," thus failing to truly recognize "matter's dynamism" (64). To address the shortcomings of this poststructuralist account of performativity, Barad proposes to expand Butler's perspective to encompass "the materialization of *all* bodies – 'human' and 'non-human' – including the agential contributions of all material forces (both 'social' and 'natural')" (66). She argues that representationalism "positions us above or outside the world we allegedly merely reflect on," and stresses that this approach is "a prisoner of the problematic metaphysics it postulates," separating the world into words and things, and unable to solve the "sticky problem of humanity's own captivity within language," an approach that she contrasts with her posthuman performative account of "thinking, observing and theorizing as practices of engagement with, and as part of, the world in which we have our being" (133, 137). She infers that performativity should be understood as "a contestation of the unexamined habits of mind that grant language and other forms of representation more power in determining ontologies than they deserve" (133). Barad's agential realist approach to performativity therefore highlights the agency of matter, which it considers to be "produced and productive, generated and generative" (137). She rejects the notion of independent objects with inherent boundaries and properties, which she replaces with the notion of phenomena, understood as relationalities, entanglements, and "differential patterns of mattering," positing that reality is constituted of "things-in-phenomena" and envisioning the world (which she alternatingly calls the universe) as an open process of "intra-activity in its differential mattering" (140–1). She understands this dynamism as agency, and infers that "the universe is agential intra-activity in its becoming" (141).

Performativity Beyond Poststructuralism: The Question of Language

When discussing agential realism during the ICQI workshop, Rosiek, who is also trained in physics, acknowledged Barad's undeniable competence in the area of

quantum theory, yet pointed out that she struggles to achieve her stated goal, namely, to "'extend' Butler's performativity theory beyond the realm of the human" (Barad, "Nature's Queer Performativity" 144), that is to say, beyond a post-structuralist model that privileges the human through its reliance on language. He also observed that Barad is striving to activate a posthuman ontological pluralism premised on the claim that the world is real in a material sense yet that different possible realities co-exist, which requires her to work against her Western intellectual heritage that upholds logical conceptions of inquiry hinging upon the principle of non-contradiction (Rosiek and Snyder ICQI workshop).

Interestingly, this predicament was faced by Bohr himself when he failed to convince Einstein about the plausibility of quantum physics, as acknowledged by Barad who reports that Einstein became so exasperated with Bohr that he seemed to question his sanity when asking:

> So what you are saying is that the very nature of the entity – its ontology – changes with the experimental apparatus used to determine its nature? Or worse, that nothing is there before it is measured, as if measurements conjure things into existence?
>
> (Barad, "Quantum Entanglements" 256–7)

If Einstein, a quasi-mythical figure who has come to epitomize scientific genius, was befuddled by Bohr's hypothesis, one may wonder how Barad's agential realist theory has accrued as much cultural capital in the world of academia whose disciplinary boundaries tend to be anxiously guarded. The answer is provided by Barad herself: laboratory experiments conducted when appropriate technology became available provided "empirical evidence for Bohr's performative understanding of identity," hence scientifically proving that "identity is not inherent (e.g., entities are not inherently either a wave or a particle), but rather 'it' is performed differently given different experimental circumstances" (259).

The riddle of agency emerging from Einstein's nagging questions about identity nevertheless constitutes an ethical dilemma that takes on a particular poignancy for ecocritical scholars and environmental activists committed to upholding the agency of other/more-than-humans while emphasizing human responsibility that requires us to reconfigure the social, cultural, and political practices that have "deteriorated, and in some cases, destroyed our planet's ecological systems" (Norris 158). In her article "Nature's Queer Performativity," Barad specifies in a footnote that what is at stake is the rethinking of "(humanistic) performativity," which does not entail merely widening "the circle of its applicability," but that requires transforming citationality into intra-activity to propose a non-anthropocentric corrective to Butler's poststructuralist model of performativity while retaining the pivotal concept of iterativity (154). Barad

acknowledges the influence of Derrida in "Quantum Entanglements and Hauntology Relations of Inheritance," and refers to feminist theorist Vicki Kirby who draws from her work to examine the limitations and potentialities of Derrida's and Butler's respective approaches ("Quantum Entanglements" 258). In her monograph entitled *Quantum Anthropologies: Life at Large*, Kirby suggests that current understandings of language are too restricted and proposes an alternative perspective foregrounding "scientific and quantum implications" (3). She observes that the "potential exorbitance of language and its overarching comprehension" evidenced by Saussure led him to suspect that linguistics was "only a part of the general science of semiology," a statement that Kirby links to Derrida s provocative declaration that there is nothing outside of the text, which capitalizes on Saussure's insight by positing that "the *entire* scene or system is actively involved in its own decipherment" (7–8). Interestingly, Saussure became fascinated with glossolalia and anagrams, whose phantasmatic manifestations appear to constitute a counter-discourse that "abandons the referential guarantee of sign and meaning," offering instead "a vertigo of infinite connections and disjunctions," from which he inferred that language involves "a sort of living mutation *within* stability" (Kirby 44, 47). Building on this expansive and dynamic perspective, Derrida advances the notion of a general textuality where "differencing *is* 'language' … and there is no outside this genetic involvement" (Kirby 8). Pointing to the radical interiority of this conception of textuality, Kirby stresses that although the latter

> concedes no external perspective, no outside position against which to identify or define what might be unique to the strange vitality of this organism, this articulate enclosure without limits has nevertheless been located and even given a name – *Culture*.
>
> (12)

She asserts that "political interventions into Cartesian logic" that expand "the category 'Culture' to transform and textualize whatever it is defined against" are unable to resolve the problematic subject/object and mind/body dualisms that are fundamental to this logic, since "both Cartesianism and its critique are entirely committed to maintaining the difference between Nature and Culture, presence and absence, and matter and form" (71). The linguistic turn has thus largely contributed to solidifying these binaries by positing Culture as "an enclosed system of signification, representations and codes that affords no immediate access to Nature at all," a strategy which, she argues, is designed to secure human identity against "a more primordial and inhuman 'outside'" that subsumes even "the subject's own corporeal being" (72, 74).

Kirby hence submits that, in spite of their important contributions, Butler and Derrida both uphold "the exceptionalism of the human condition" by assuming that language constitutes a unique human capacity that "commands dominant status in the

definition and explanation of humanity's species privilege," a capacity that remains uncritically associated with "sociality, abstraction, and therefore intellection," maintaining the human subject as "the interpretive architect of the world and origin of language" (15, 40, 75). While Derrida and Butler, following Saussure's intuition about the mutability of language, open up textuality beyond the realm of linguistics to encompass various language systems, a strategy enabling Butler to apply the concept of citationality to the iterative corporeal acts through which gender norms become materialized and naturalized, Kirby stresses that both theorists preserve the nature/culture divide by making human language central to their investigations.

Kirby thus remarks that in *Bodies that Matter*, Butler evokes "a cultural frame of valuations and normative ideals *through which* bodies are controlled and regulated, albeit imperfectly," and infers that "Butler's notion of performative iteration … rests on a foundational difference between Nature and Culture: the failure of fit between Culture's attempts to naturalize norms, or to render the body compliant, becomes the motor of representation and change" (96). Conversely, both Kirby and Barad vigorously challenge the privileging of culture over nature, human over non-human, and mind over matter, arguing for an expansion of the potentialities of language/textuality beyond the (anthropocentric) realm of culture, leading Kirby to contend that the "inside" of language, whose mysteriously productive energies bewildered Saussure, should be explored

> the way physicists negotiate the spatial demarcation of what is inside or outside the universe. Inasmuch as the universe is definitely "comprehensive," an all-inclusive everything, then it can have no edge that marks a limitation to this "everything." What is outside is therefore another aspect of the inside, an answer that also "explains" why the expansion of the universe is described as an expansion into itself.
>
> (83)

As with Barad, Kirby seeks to increase the theoretical purchase of Butler's argument by demonstrating that "Nature is, already, all those mutating, complex plasticities that Culture's corrective would animate it with" (84). She maintains that such a reconfiguration would provide a more satisfactory conception of relationality than does Saussure's self-referential and contradictory system, whose allegedly arbitrary signs and independent units are bound by the contingencies of syntax and grammar. For if "Nature reads, writes, and effectively articulates itself," then humans can no longer be exclusively credited for being the source of language and writing, and for mediating or translating Nature's identity (84). She infers that such a reimagining of the human subject has important political implications "for those whose identities are denigrated as more primitive (because closer to nature)" (88).

While this appears to be an indirect reference to indigeneity, Kirby does not engage with Indigenous conceptions of relationality articulated by Cajete as "the understanding of human beings as dynamic bodies intimately cradled in the body of the world," from which he derives a shared sense of relational accountability:

> We are the Earth becoming conscious of itself, and collectively, humans are the Earth's most highly developed sense organ … The images we create, the languages we speak, the economics we manifest, the learning systems we espouse, and the spiritual, political, and social order we profess must all reflect and honor interdependence and sustainability.
>
> (*Native Science*, 54–5)

In contrast to this view, some subterranean anthropocentric force might be animating the posthuman call for expanding the Saussurean conception of language's overarching comprehensiveness, a Eurocentric aspiration to linguistic expansionism that would include (or subsume?) the realm of Nature. Such a strategy must be vigilantly inspected when promoted by influential Western scholars seeking to theorize the agentivity of the universe by means of an exorbitant scriptocentric take-over through which the Derridean notion of general textuality would be granted cosmic proportions.

Questioning the assumed universal applicability of Western concepts rooted in culturally specific philosophical understandings of language can be an effective way of decolonizing research. In their discussion of the different cosmologies embedded in the respective structures of the Blackfoot language and Indo-European languages, Blackfoot scholars Leroy Little Bear and Ryan Heavy Head state that "when one model of language is artificially forced upon all examples, we miss out on a great deal of richness in our world," as with the cultural imperialistic imposition of "Western methodology and theoretical models upon worldwide phenomena," as well as the "enforced use of Indo-European languages, usually English, as the lingua franca of academia" ("A Conceptual Anatomy of the Blackfoot Word" 37–8). They further assert that a meaningful understanding of Blackfoot linguistics requires setting aside "the preconceived notions of Western structural linguistics" and they explain that instead of envisioning a world in which process/change is forced upon an object by an agent, the Blackfoot speaker understands process/change as "an aspect of the interrelatedness and interdependence of simultaneous events" (31, 35). The specific cosmologies that are embedded in languages thus tend to privilege certain types of conceptualizations over others, which leads Little Bear and Heavy Head to point out that "the prevalent atomistic tradition of thought in the Western world resists the blending of earlier conceptions of the nature of the universe with current research findings in relativity and quantum mechanics," as

epitomized by the principle of non-contradiction, according to which a phenomenon cannot possibly be both particle and wave (38). They relate this conceptual conundrum to "the Western reliance on languages that include distinct nouns (particles) and verbs (waves)" (38). Since this noun/verb distinction does not exist in the Blackfoot language, no such contradiction arises, and Blackfoot speakers experience reality as "an unfragmented, unbounded whole in constant flux" (38). Physicist F. David Peat recounts than when Leroy Little Bear is asked a deep question, he will refer to the Blackfoot language and "produce a pattern of sound [or] pause and sing to himself softly as he tries to discover a way of putting the vibrations, and all that they convey, into the particular linguistic structures demanded by English" (*Blackfoot Physics* 222). In his discussion of language, Peat contrasts the hypothesis by linguist Noam Chomsky that "there are deep linguistic structures within the brain that are common to human beings irrespective of the language they happen to speak" with Indigenous science that considers language "not simply as a medium, or a vehicle for communication [but rather as] a living thing, an actual physical power within the universe" (223–4). Peat notes that from this Indigenous perspective, the vibrations of spoken or sung words "are energies that act within the transforming processes we call reality [and] each language is a link with the particular landscape in which a people live," so that speaking, chanting, and singing are ways of "creating physical vibrations within the universe, and these vibrations evoke and bring into direct manifestation other vibrations, powers, or energies" (224).

This notion of power is also foregrounded in "The New Materialisms and Indigenous Theories of Non-Human Agency: Making the Case for Respectful Anti-Colonial Engagement," co-authored by Rosiek, Snyder, and Scott. L. Pratt, a philosopher who has written about Deloria's work. Based in part on the ICQI workshop, this article stipulates that from an Indigenous perspective, "an individual human being has a specific power that makes her who she is," while simultaneously associating her "with others of her kind by disposing her to act in ways that others share, in this case, humans" (12). Importantly, in this non-anthropocentric conception of agency, "such powers are not instrumental means of acting on other beings, but emerge in relation with other beings like animals, rivers, places, and stories"—and, I would add, songs (12). The authors highlight the spiritual dimension of this form of agency, stressing that its sacredness "adds both to the complexity of Indigenous views and their status as outside what is expected of theories in the present world of social science research" (12).

Barad herself underlines that Bohr, in his attempt to theorize quantum entanglements, considered the power of language and naming when he asked "What do we *mean* by 'particle' or 'wave'? What are the conditions for the possibility for the meaningful use of these concepts? … What role do they play? How do they matter?" and he suggested in response that "concepts are indeterminate outside of

the appropriate material conditions needed to make them intelligible" ("Quantum Entanglements" 253). I would therefore contend that these pivotal questions raised by Bohr should be asked about the concept of performativity that Barad inherits from Butler, especially since, according to Barad, "an ethics of entanglement" is about taking responsibility "for that which we inherit, … for the entangled relationalities of inheritance that 'we' *are*" ("Quantum Entanglements" 266).

Indigenous Ontological Pluralism and the Performative Ethics of Reciprocity

In their critical assessment of new materialism and posthumanism, Rosiek and Snyder contrast the relatively recent emergence of these theoretical perspectives with understandings of non-human agency that have long been integral to Indigenous ways of knowing. For these scholars, ontological pluralism does not constitute a contradiction but an assumption that is reflected in the recognition and acceptance that different creation stories are told in different communities without any of these foundational narratives invalidating the existence of the others, a pluralistic ontological worldview based on wampum belt ethics, according to which the notion of one way, one perspective, one truth is neither valued nor validated (ICQI workshop). Additionally, the notions that knowledge is relational and that a reciprocal transformation occurs in the process of engaging in inquiry are fundamental aspects of the ethics of research outlined by Indigenous scholarship. Most significantly, Indigenous philosophy supports a conception of agency that is never restricted to humans, who are considered to be dependent upon and accountable to all of Creation. Since the universe is alive, every entity is animate and has spiritual significance within a space-time continuum linking past, present, and future while positioning the land and the ancestors as primary sources of knowledge and agency. Rosiek and Snyder also emphasize that Indigenous agential realism posits that non-human agencies have character, personality, and purpose, as stated by Deloria:

> Because the universe is alive, there is choice for all things and the future is indeterminate. Consequently, predictions are based on the knowledge of the "character" of an entity. Statements about how an entity will behave have almost the same probabilities as the educated speculations made at the subatomic level in physics.
>
> (*Spirit and Reason* 50, quoted by Rosiek and Snyder)

By contrast, Rosiek and Snyder observe that

> posthumanist literature has been reluctant to speak of non-human agency in terms of purposes, perhaps out of a concern of anthropomorphizing

> such agents [even if] reserving "purpose" only to humans could also be interpreted as an effort to retain anthropocentrism.
>
> (ICQI workshop)

They specify that whereas "purpose need not imply consciousness nor planned activity, it does imply a non-deterministic tendency towards some organized future state," so that ethical reciprocity may be understood as "the negotiation of different purposes" (ICQI workshop). Arapaho scholar Michael Marker thus states that for the Aboriginal peoples of Australia, "the human mind is a conduit for the consciousness of the land to be expressed in language," which enables the agency of the land to be enacted by humans (Marker 2; quoted by Rosiek and Snyder, ICQI Workshop). In *Indigenous Methodologies*, Cree scholar Margaret Kovach writes about the agency of story in the chapter entitled "Story as Indigenous methodology":

> Stories remind us of who we are and of our belonging. Stories hold within themselves knowledges while simultaneously signifying relationships. In oral tradition, stories can never be decontextualized from the teller. They are *active agents* within a relational world, pivotal in gaining insight into a phenomenon. Oral stories are born of connections within the world, and are thus recounted relationally. They tie us with our past and provide a basis for continuity with future generations. Stories originating from oral traditions *resonate* and engender personal meaning.
>
> (94; emphases mine)

When discussing the notion of performativity, Rosiek and Snyder foreground "the performative ethics of reciprocity" that is central to Indigenous ways of knowing and being, as reflected in cultural practices such as the Sun Dance and sweat lodge ceremonies, wampum exchange, fasting, and making offerings, that is to say, practices hinging upon ritualistic reciprocal relationships with the non-human that preclude spectator subjectivity and commodification (ICQI workshop). Indigenous epistemologies mandate establishing relations of ethical reciprocity with non-human agents and support the production of ethical subjects, instead of the knowing subjects produced by modes of inquiry "making a priority of establishing a spectator subject relation with non-human agents, describing them first" (ICQI workshop). Cree scholar Shawn Wilson, who foregrounds the agency of knowledge, states in *Research Is Ceremony* that: "*If research doesn't change you as a person, then you haven't done it right*" (135). The sacred nature of relationships and the ethics of relational accountability are key to the Indigenous research paradigm that he articulates in connection with the notion of ceremony:

> The space and therefore the relationship between people or between people and their environment is seen as sacred, a key concept within many Indigenous peoples's spirituality. By reducing the space between things, we are strengthening the relationship that they share. And this bringing things together so that they share the same space is what ceremony is all about. This is why research itself is a sacred ceremony within an Indigenous research paradigm, as it is all about building relationships and bridging this sacred space … In reality, spirituality is not separate but is an integral, infused part of the whole in the Indigenous world-view … Everything that we do shares in the ongoing creation of our universe.
>
> (87, 89, 138)

When contrasting Indigenous epistemologies and methodologies with Western modes of inquiry privileging what Rosiek and Snyder describe as spectator subjectivity, these distinct ways of knowing may appear incommensurable to each other. One of the main obstacles to engaging in reciprocal collaborations and establishing mutually beneficial relationships across these ways of knowing may be the notion of intellectual ownership, which entitles individual researchers to claim that they are creating new knowledge—hence the phrase "new materialism." Yet as Rosiek and Snyder maintain, there clearly are robust connections to be made between posthumanist/new materialist scholarship and Indigenous philosophy, which has a particularly long history of valuing human/non-human relationality through a performative ethics of reciprocity that participates in, and is accountable to, what Wilson describes as a continuous process of co-creation.

In an article examining possible convergences between narrative inquiry, Indigenous research methodologies, and new materialism (published shortly after the 2018 ICQI workshop), Rosiek and Snyder refer to Eva Garoutte and Kathleen Westcott s discussion of the agency of stories in Anishinaabeg philosophy, which "regards stories as living beings that exist outside of time and space whether or not people tell these stories" ("Narrative Inquiry and New Materialism" 5). In their book chapter entitled "The Story Is a Living Being: Companionship with Stories in Anishinaabeg Studies," Garoutte and Wescott write about the power of sacred stories (*atíso'kanak*):

> Story affects the fundamental reality in which creation *happens* — is *always* happening because the mythical moment of origin is not subject to the rules of temporality. [Myths] can prevail even over the stubborn, "material" reality. They prevail by continuously reinvigorating the

> perfection of the earliest beginning, calling it forth in ways that literally create and re-create the world.
>
> (*Centering Anishinaabeg Studies* 74)

Rosiek and Snyder observe that stories—and, I would add, songs—seem to circulate in communities as if these protean beings had a life of their own and the capacity to "get into our heads, change the way we think and feel, whether we want them or not" (9). They suggest that the performative dimension of stories (and songs) summons "possibilities for future being that exist whether or not they are actualized," and go on to infer that "their very possibility influences the present—gives the present its form," a purposeful performativity that lies beyond anthropocentric conceptions of performance, purpose, and agency (9–10).

Deloria: From Vision Songs to Quantum Physics

North American Indigenous Elders, who are responsible for the oral transmission of traditional knowledge within their community, teach that such knowledge comes in the form of stories and songs which visit certain people in particular circumstances for specific reasons, as reflected in *Singing for a Spirit: A Portrait of the Dakota Sioux*, a book based on oral testimony provided by Vine Deloria's grandfather Philip Joseph Deloria. He was a prominent Indigenous clergyman of the Episcopal Church who had been "chief of Band Eight of the Yankton Sioux tribe as a very young man," and who served as an elected chief several times after he had chosen to become a priest, so that he was deeply knowledgeable about two very different approaches to spirituality (3).

In his testimony, Deloria's grandfather describes the vision quest as "the most important and difficult step in a boy's life," a spiritual experience crucially hinging upon non-human agency and culminating in the gift of song:

> [A boy] was taken by his father to a high hill or butte, far away from his people. He carried with him, tied in a large sheet, an offering of food and various other things for the Great Spirit. The sheet was spread upon the ground on top of the hill, with its four corners towards the four points from which the wind came, and the offering was presented. The boy was obliged to remain in this place without food or drink for two days and two nights, and sometimes twice as long … During such a prolonged fast he was likely to have a vision. Something having the appearance of a man would stand before him and tell him he would receive help. The vision … gave him his own song. No matter where he happened to be, if he were in any trouble he was to sing the song the vision had given and help would come. Here is an example of a vision song:

SONG OF THE VISION

I came here to you first

I came because you are calling me

I came from the Nation of Crows (East Wind)

I came here to you first

I came because you are calling me

I came from the Nation of Iron (South Wind)

I came here to you first

I came because you are calling me

I came from the Nation of Rocks (West Wind)

I came here to you first

I came because you are calling me

I came from the Nation of Wolf (North Wind)

WOMANYAKE ODOWAN KIN

Miye tokaheya wahiye

Miye co kin on wahiye

Kangi oyate e miye tokaheya wahi

Hinayapata wahi

Miye tokaheya wahiye

Miye co kin on wahiye

Itokaga maza oyate e

Miye tokaheya wahiye

Miye tokaheya wahiye

Miye co kin on wahiye

Wiyorpeyata tunkan oyate e

Miye tokaheya wahiye

Miye tokaheya wahiye

Miye co kin on wahiye

Waziyata sunka oyate e

Miye tokaheya wahiye

> The vision advised him in this fashion: If you should find yourself among any of these nations and in need of help, sing these songs. You will be told what will happen. Crows, iron men, rocks or stones, or wolves will be your friends in each place.
>
> (201–3)

References to traditional songs appear throughout *Singing for a Spirit*, pointing to the social and ceremonial contexts in which singing was used to honor, praise, welcome, challenge, support, incite, taunt, provoke, curse, grieve, mourn, appease, and consecrate. When referring to ceremony, Deloria describes the action of singing as a way of calling upon and communicating with the spirits "to obtain their help in sickness or in fighting and in hunting" (178). He recounts that "the *pejuta wicaśa* (medicine man)" would be expected to heal "all kinds of diseases of mind, body, and spirit. He would bring his drum, [and] would smoke his pipe of kinnikinick, offering the first smoke to the spirits. He would pray for their help and would sing and dance" (179). Referring to times "when the people had nothing to eat and no prospect of anything," Deloria reports that some men who "sang and prayed to communicate with the buffalo spirit" as well as with "the spirit of the deer," were able to attract large herds of these animals, and he states that "each band of Dakotas had men with these remarkable powers, which seemed like some sort of providence. Such men were always held in great honor" (182–3).

Deloria boldly bridges traditional spiritual practices and contemporary scientific modes of inquiry in *The Metaphysics of Modern Existence* by comparing Indigenous ways of knowing, "which [Western] scholars have labeled 'primitive'," with subatomic physics, and suggests that the latter seems to be catching up with the former:

> Gradually scientists became aware that their measurements did not precisely conform to Newtonian formulas, and immense conceptual problems began to emerge in formulating experiments and interpreting results. Questions began to arise regarding the ultimate nature of space, time, matter, and other concepts that once had enjoyed absolute status. Eventually, the idea of a static, intelligible nature, waiting patiently for human examination, began to give way … This expansion of nature to include experiences not directly perceived by ordinary means was a radical break with traditional Western beliefs about the world and seemed more compatible with non-Western intuitions, although few thinkers could see the relationship inherent in the situation.
>
> (35, 151)

Rosiek and Snyder hence advocate acknowledging Indigenous scholarship as a crucial aspect of the ethical responsibility that non-Indigenous scholars have toward their Indigenous colleagues, and assert that doing so requires the former to practice mutually respectful decolonial citational politics. They assert that whereas Indigenous scholars, who do not "feel compelled to justify the concept of non-human agency against the backdrop of settler colonial metaphysics," do not need to quote Barad, non-Indigenous scholars who engage with new materialism and posthumanism have an ethical obligation to quote Indigenous scholarship (ICQI workshop).

Although Barad does not refer to Deloria's writings, the chapter entitled "Space-Time" in his book *The Metaphysics of Modern Existence* historicizes the quantum revolution in theoretical physics and the considerable impact that it has had on Western ways of thinking, and could be interpreted as Deloria's anticipation and response to Barad's *Meeting the Universe Halfway* published 28 years later:

> At the subatomic levels of experimentation the clear picture of the world began to blur rapidly, and new formulations of theory became imperative … Western thinkers were deeply puzzled by this change … Although physicists insist that [this situation] calls for new language and immensely complicated theoretical conceptions, in fact the requirement is simply that we banish predetermined ideas about space, time, and the other

> concepts we have used in science and philosophy. Poetry has once again entered the field as a means of communicating experience, and perceptions of reality demand primacy over conceptions of the mind … Scientific inquiry has now become part of a larger process of interaction that can only be described as incorporating relationships of personal quality with nature to produce knowledge. Western science has thus arrived at precisely the starting point of non-Western peoples in apprehending more than physical and mechanical activities in nature. As the primitive peoples believed that they were personally involved in the processes of nature, so modern scientists have concluded that they are personally involved and are an important factor in the processes of nature when they attempt to learn the secrets of the *kosmos*.
>
> (35–7)

He further contends that our lived experience provides us with particularly vivid insights into this sense of interconnectedness:

> The vast majority of our experiences consist of infinitely complex situations that combine all elements of our environment. Common people, poets, and painters have always understood this aspect of human experience, but only recently have scientists and philosophers rediscovered it and begun to approach more closely the world in which we live.
>
> (38)

Deloria hence associates this intuitive way of knowing with a poetic sensibility that tends to be missing from Western scientific and philosophical discourses.

Interestingly, music artist-scholar Martin Laliberté, a Pearson College graduate trained in physics as well as music composition, might be referring to this form of poetic sensibility when suggesting that musicians seem to have always intuitively known about the quantum world, as if music were a metaphor for quantum physics (Laliberté, SQET Presentation). Having observed that the abolition of absolute precision imposed by the quantum paradigm has implications for musicology, Laliberté points out that musical energy, which is dependent on the interaction of pitch, time, intensity, and timbre, entails a dimension of uncertainty linked to variations due to human interpretation and expressivity (SQET Presentation). The intriguing parallels he makes between quantum physics and music include the fact that sound is a 4D vibration of the acoustic field (air), and that the temporal field, quantified in rhythms, as well as the field of pitch, quantified in musical notes,

always retain some degree of expressive ambiguity that defies absolute measurement, control, and precision (SQET Presentation).

Given the overall lack of acknowledgment of Indigenous scholarship by non-Indigenous scholars, as reflected by the absence of references to Deloria's writings in new materialist and posthumanist literature, Rosiek and Snyder maintain that a lot of work remains to be done within Western paradigms, including the development of interdisciplinary perspectives that valorize Indigenous perspectives so as to avoid theoretical polarization on extreme solutions hinging upon an either/or, such as having to choose between upholding or evacuating the human subject, which turns out to be problematic either way (ICQI workshop).

The Spirit of the (K)new

While Barad does not propose to entirely evacuate human subjectivity, the posthuman reworkings of agency that she insistently promotes as "new" and "radical" in her writings do raise important ontological, epistemological, and ethical questions about the role and responsibilities of human beings in the world's "agential intra-activity in its becoming" (*Meeting the Universe Halfway* 141). I suggest that the Indigenous ethical principles of relationality, reciprocity, and responsibility binding human and non-human agents to each other are informed by a non-anthropocentric understanding of agency that may be said to offer a truly radical, if not "new," eco-critical approach to the crucial questions raised by posthumanist and new materialist scholars. What distinguishes Indigenous ontological pluralism from the quantum theory-inspired worldview advocated by Barad, however, is its *spiritual* dimension. Anishinaabe kwe scholar Kathleen E. Absolon (Minogiizhigokwe) defines this worldview as "wholistic":

> Indigenous thought is wholistic in terms of looking to our past to understand our present and to have regard for the future. We acknowledge our relationship to all that is above, beneath and with us. Gratitude for life is encouraged and expressed on a daily basis. We are related to all of Creation … In this sense, our knowledge is wholistic and creates a wholistic worldview. I spell wholistic with a "w" to denote whole versus hole or holy.
>
> … Spirituality is inherent in Indigenous epistemology, which sees everything in relation to Creation and recognizes that all life has Spirit and is sacred.
>
> (58–9, 61)

Acknowledging this spiritual dimension is a theoretical impossibility for post-structuralism, and although new materialism and posthumanism strive to address the limitations of poststructuralist perspectives, this particular shortcoming remains conspicuously ignored, implicitly dismissed, and covertly discounted. Consequently, although agential realism encompasses "the materialization of *all* bodies – 'human' and 'non-human' – including the agential contributions of all material forces (both 'social' and 'natural')," it leaves "spirit" out of the quantum physics equation, hanging in the air "like the persistent smile of the Cheshire cat" (Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway* 64, 66).

Hawaiian scholar Manulani Aluli-Meyer maintains, however, that the spiritual dimension which is integral to Indigenous ways of knowing does not contradict quantum-informed scientific inquiries. She boldly states: "Indigenous epistemology combining with quantum clarity creates a new-old-wisdom" that conveys a "(k)new understanding of the philosophy of knowledge inclusive of all three aspects of nature: physical, mental, *and* spiritual," ushering in a "(k)new world epistemology [put forth by] Indigenous people and allied scholars" ("Holographic Epistemology" 94).[2] Rather than seeing the "body, mind, spirit" trilogy as a linear sequence, Aluli-Meyer invites us to envision it as "an event happening simultaneously and holographically" (94). Acknowledging that "the topic of spirituality has become a pink crystal New Age embarrassment to all forms of Science," she points to a healing process that requires "faith in wholeness and interconnection," as expressed by the phrase "*the whole is contained in all its parts*" (94). This modern conceptualization of the hologram is "best understood with an ancient mind," for Aluli-Meyer suggests that the notion of "inseparable whole" is something "we have known all along exists" (94). Encouraging us to observe without judgement what the physical, mental, and spiritual planes each have to offer, she asks: "Body, mind, *and* spirit. Do you hear their distinctive harmonics?" (94). She entreats us not to "curl away in anti-religious dismay or leap into dogmatic exaltation," as spirituality should not be conflated with religion but simply is the recognition that "*we are more than our bodies*, more than our minds. *Matter is not separate from spirit*" (97). She links this recognition to concepts of dynamic interdependence, non-separability, self-organizing systems, mutual causality, complementarity, and entanglements, among others, as well as Indigenous epistemologies, leading her to contend that: "What Native intelligence as an enduring pattern of thinking is putting forward with the aid of quantum sciences is the notion that a realm of unseen connected patterns exist and we are the causal linkages that alter its capacity" (97). Positing that Indigenous is a synonym for "*that which has endured*" and distinguishing this enduring way of knowing from "a nostalgic or romantic cast over objective data," Aluli-Meyer suggests that it offers "older ways to view the world [that] synergize with … a quantum world already dreamed of, debated and woven into art forms of function,

reliability, and beauty" (98). In support of this perspective, she refers to "ecosophy," a term coined by Cajete to express the view that everything in the cosmos is "interdependent and moved by creative energy," a reverent view of the universe and the Earth that explores "our essential relationships and responsibilities therein, [namely,] the philosophy Indigenous people have lived for generations" (quoted in Aluli-Meyer, "Holographic Epistemology" 99). Aluli-Meyer infers that Indigenous scholarship is a call for "critical consciousness and respect for other ways of knowing," which she describes as "*cultural empiricism*, so-to-speak, altered by seasons, the sharing of ideas with others, and with its own referential knowing steeped in ancestral memory" (98).

The missing spiritual dimension in new materialism and posthumanism may be discerned as a haunting absence, an exclusion that leaves traces, perceptible in Barad's evocation of "an on-going performance of the world in its differential dance of intelligibility and unintelligibility," an intriguing slippage into poetry which she swiftly qualifies by specifying that she is referring to a posthumanist version of intelligibility that is "not a human-dependent characteristic," suggesting that knowing is a performatively articulated "differential responsiveness … to what matters" (*Meeting the Universe Halfway* 148–9). Yet the slippage creates a fissure through which seeps the sonorous vision of a dancing world whose connected patterns map out a wholistic way of knowing, an enduring new-old-wisdom about the inseparability of matter, mind, and spirit, a holographic epistemology whose ancient harmonics endow the dance with indeterminate purpose, a performative power perpetually dreamed of, sung about, and woven into life by all of Creation—a whole universe resonating in each one of its parts.

In "Nature's Queer Performativity," Barad slips again into poetry when declaring:

> [A]ccording to my agential realist account, not only are empirical claims not ruled out, they are understood to be particular intelligible speakings of the world (with all due regard to all the various qualifications required to make good sense of this claim).
>
> (148)

She does not explain what these various qualifications might be, resorting instead to the legitimating power of scientific knowledge to articulate a posthumanist performative understanding of the nature of nature in which "nature's intra-activity" is redefined as "nature's queer performativity" (126). Rejecting "Nature" with a capital N, which is constructed as external to and different from culture in the service of an anthropocentric vision of human supremacy over matter, she searches for empirical evidence in the "acts of nature" to which she also refers as "queer happenings of the world," and whose posthuman performativity she analyzes under

the headings "Lightning's Stuttering Chatter," "Clairvoyant Neuronal Receptor Cells in Stingrays," "Pfiesteria's Phantom Performances" (she is referring to a dino-flagellate species), and "The Atom's Queer Performativity," seeking to make alliances with those she calls "queer critters" (144–5). She specifies at the outset that

> the point here is not to use (non)humans as tools to think with, but in thinking with them to face our ethical obligations to them, for they are not merely tools for our use but real living beings (and I include in this category inanimate as well as animate beings).
>
> (127)

Ascribing non-human agency to these real living beings whom she enlists as her "queer co-workers," a research team that includes "atoms whose queer behavior refuses to be civilized by the laws of classical physics," Barad credits the work of her collaborators when declaring at the end of the article: "My co-workers and I have presented a host of challenges to classical ontology" (146–7). Perhaps she has become intuitively attuned to the intelligibility of the speaking world and the polyphonic presence of her spirit-helpers, Lightning, Stingray, Pfiesteria and Atom, who have woven the voices of the four winds together into a vision song that they leave with her as a gift: "We came here to you first, We came because you are calling us, We came from the four directions to help you."

Inferring from her performative entanglements with the nature of nature that humans have "an ethical obligation to intra-act responsibly in the world's becoming, to contest and rework what matters and what is excluded from mattering," she points to a sense of "responsibility and accountability for the entanglements 'we' help enact" as well as the "kinds of commitments 'we' are willing to take on, including commitments to 'ourselves' and who 'we' may become," especially in light of current developments in bio-info-nano-technologies (*Meeting the Universe Halfway* 178, 382). She observes that transdisciplinary knowledge networks bridging disciplinary divides between physics, biology, and engineering "are being (re)configured at a pace that humanities proponents of transdisciplinarity only dream about," and warns that "ethical, legal and social considerations seem destined to be forever behind the curve of cascading technological advances" (363). Echoing Pitts-Taylor's concerns, Barad states that the situation is similar to that of neuroscience, with government agencies, universities, and the private sector vying for control over the development of these new technologies, and remarks that we become part of these entanglements that "reconfigure our beings, our psyches, our imaginations, our institutions, our societies" (383). She therefore submits that ethics is "about responsibility and accountability for the lively relationalities of becoming of which

we are a part," and emphasizes that "responsibility is not ours alone. And yet responsibility is greater than it would be if it were ours alone" (393–4).

The Vibrant Sovereignty of Indigenous Research

Ethics, responsibility, and accountability are precisely the problematic areas highlighted by Rosiek and Snyder in their assessment of new materialist and post-humanist literature, whose citational politics largely exclude Indigenous scholarship. Although my purview is necessarily limited to the research I have conducted and the discourses with which I have chosen to engage, I would concur with Rosiek and Snyder about the general lack of acknowledgment of, and engagement with, Indigenous epistemologies and methodologies in this literature. Postcolonial studies scholar Alison Ravenscroft corroborates this major oversight when remarking that, in *Vibrant Matters*, Jane Bennett refers to Spinoza, Nietzsche, Darwin, Adorno, Deleuze, and Bergson, "[y]et nowhere in this book will a reader find the names of the great First Nations intellectuals for whom all matter is indeed vital" (356). Ravenscroft also points out that while Barad relies on Bohr and "returns to, revises, sometimes applauds, and sometimes critiques other Eurocentric thinkers, … [t]here is not so much as a footnote to other thinking about 'human' outside Barad's own intellectual traditions and habitual ways of living" (356). She further observes that Kirby, who is Australian, enters into dialogue with Barad and Derrida, revisits Saussure, and critically engages with Butler, yet Australian Indigenous oral and written literatures "remain tantalizingly absent," leading Ravenscroft to assert that such omissions surreptitiously re-instate "the Western subject [assuming] the sovereign's mantle even in those new materialist writings that sustain some of the most profound critiques of this very centrism" (356). Foregrounding the use of the first person plural "we" to address readers in this literature, she asserts that "the 'human' assumed under post-humanism remains the Western liberal subject" (357). She cites Indigenous anthropologist Zoe Todd (Métis/otipemisiw), who recounts attending a talk by Bruno Latour in which he failed to acknowledge the contributions made by Indigenous scholars, a refusal of indebtedness which enacts "colonialism's elision of Indigenous intellectual labors" and necessarily results in "an unwitting alliance with the very imperialism of the Western sovereign subject that [new materialism] avowedly strives to undo" (357). This compels Ravenscroft to contend:

> Not only have cultures outside the prevailing Western ones theorized "human" and "inhuman" in radical entanglement prior to these new materialist efforts to do so, but new materialism's very possibilities of emergence include Indigenous materialisms that are, however,

> unrecognized. To break from the reiteration of *terra nullius*, non-Indigenous peoples will need to recognize the existence of Ab(original) materialities and materialisms.
>
> (358)

Conversely, Indigenous scholars who critically engage with current academic debates about materialism and posthumanism are opening up possibilities for much needed cross-cultural dialogue. For example, Stó:lō scholar Dylan Robinson examines the sensory and affective politics of sound materialized by Idle No More gatherings that affirm "Indigenous peoples' connection and sense of belonging through Indigenous public assembly" (214). Robinson foregrounds the efficacy of "song acts" that operate similarly to J. L. Austin's speech acts or performative utterances, in that these songs "do what they sing" (212). He specifies that for Pacific Northwest First Nations

> songs can act as the equivalent to legal expressions of land title, enact forms of diplomacy between nations, and convey knowledge about the land; they are living documents of our history, affirm our own and other nations' sovereignty, and provide healing.
>
> (212)

He stresses that, as with Austin's performative utterances, there are "various levels of felicitousness dependent upon a large number of variables, including whether the singer is recognized as having the appropriate status to sing the song" (232). He further asserts that the functionality of Indigenous song is linked to "its more-than-aesthetic impact upon the lands that Indigenous peoples are caretakers of, and its capacity to have an effect upon our relations, both kin and other-than-human" (212). He infers that in Idle No More gatherings, song, music, and dance did not simply constitute "the media by which political messages were conveyed, but performative forms of politics in and of themselves" (218). He thus considers the "song-actions" of Idle No More as "Indigenous forms of 'doing sovereignty'" that not only challenged settler Canadians to reconsider normative negative assumptions about protest, but, more importantly, "also reaffirmed the vital possibility of public assembly among Indigenous participants, which in turn has sustained our energies in agitating for further change" (218). In contrast to quantitative analyses of activism that equate efficacy with measurable change, Robinson focuses on intangible efficacy, such as the amplification of "a sense of hopefulness and 'fullness'" experienced by participants, a collective form of exuberance which he describes as "fluid movement and overlapping of intensities" (219, 234). Beyond its function as a political protest, this transformative affective experience was a celebration of "the

vibrancy of Indigenous sovereignty," and as a participant he testifies that its performative efficacy relied on the affective power of "the timbral and rhythmic cultural specificity of our drums and voices" (221). The sensory and affective politics of the Idle No More movement operated via gathering "in malls, in intersections, on train tracks, in schools, in ever-expanding round dance circles, filling spaces with our voices, and dancing through these spaces together" (223). Robinson therefore considers that the intangible efficacy of repeated acts of Indigenous sovereignty lies in the collective production of "atmospheres of accumulative fullness … and the sense of capacity it affirms" (225).

Anishinaabe scholar Dolleen Tisawii'ashii Manning (Ojibwe-Potawatomi) courageously chooses to address posthuman materialist discourses in her 2017 doctoral dissertation entitled "Mnidoo-Worlding: Merleau-Ponty and Anishinaabe Philosophical Translations," asserting that the "rapidly expanding frontier of posthuman research drifts and morphs along fields of intellectual contestation, gleaning from ancient traditional Indigenous knowledge from all over the world," and pointing out that the notions of affect and materiality featured in these discourses are indirectly derived from Indigenous conceptions of "the affective potency of material existence" (18). Manning observes that speculative new materialists "often overlook the purveyors of this knowledge (and their impoverished material reality)" while searching for ecologically sustainable alternatives to "detached human-centred rationalism, based on Enlightenment thought, [that] has culminated in a global crisis and precarity characterized by population displacement, transnational violence, climate change and significant ecological damage" (18).

She traces the history of this Euro-American quest for traditional knowledge sources to English anthropologist Edward Burnett Tylor, who articulated a now largely discredited evolutionary view of human culture positing a three-stage development process from savage to barbaric to civilized, and points to his influential theory of animism, grounded in this controversial perspective and epitomizing the "primitive" first stage of cultural evolution (17). She notes that Tylor's theory was later updated by American anthropologist Alfred Irving Hallowell through the neologism "other-than-human persons" that he coined in his 1960 book *Ojibwa Ontology, Behavior, and World View* to describe what he posited as a fundamental dimension of Anishinaabe philosophies (17). Manning, who considers that Hallowell's notion of other/more-than-human offers a valuable albeit limited insight into Ojibwe ways of knowing, remarks that it has been recently redeployed in different ways across a wide range of academic fields, including affect theory, new materialism, and posthumanism ("Mnidoo-Worlding" 21).

In her own research, Manning focuses on the Indigenous concept *mnidoo*, which derives from the word *Gizhemnidoo* in her mother's dialect, namely, the word that Hallowell himself attempted to transpose into English through the creation of his

neologism. Whereas *Gizhemnidoo* may be translated as the Great Mystery/Spirit that lies beyond human comprehension, *mnidoo* refers to little spirits, which her mother described as potency, potential, and dynamic energy: "Everything has a little spirit that is propelled by, and exists, due to this energy … [E]verything is endowed with a piece or small version of *Gizhemnidoo*" (3, 17–18). Manning highlights the diversely nuanced interpretations of this term conveyed by the various dialectal forms of Anishinaabemowin, one of more than 30 languages within the Algonquian linguistic family, as evidenced by the non-exhaustive list of 77 different spellings of that term provided on native.languages.org under the category *Gitchi-Manitou* (5, 11). While acknowledging such diversity, she nevertheless emphasizes "the similarities and shared cosmology spanning from the East Coast to the Rocky Mountains, in and around the Great Lakes area, and dipping down as far as southern Ontario into what is now known as the United States," and maintains that despite the subtle differences that make each of them unique, "these many territories, dialects, and Nations share community-owned teachings and overlapping ethical-political ontologies" to which her own work is indebted (5–6, 12).

At stake for these Indigenous communities is the assimilation of their traditional knowledge "into a neoliberal market unaware of the extent of its own embedded anthropocentric imperialism," a risk compelling Manning to emphasize that academic perspectives that participate in such assimilation processes forward "a human-centered solipsism concealed as posthuman liberation … while Indigenous peoples remain the most exploited and marginalized groups worldwide" (18–19). Considering that new academic trends which do not aim to meaningfully change dominant systems are themselves "products of late capitalism, perpetuating colonialism even as they claim to decolonize," she remarks that, when taken out of their culturally-specific context, the non-hierarchical ancestral philosophies of Indigenous peoples "cease to exist in their former interrelational capacities," which may be their way of resisting incorporation into capitalist knowledge production (20).

Manning foregrounds the enduring influence of the term animism, associated with Tylor's research on primitive forms of religion, by tracing it to Marcel Mauss's investigation of potlach in *The Gift* and Lévi-Strauss's discussion of the Ojibwe terms totem and taboo in *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*, as well as to the postmodern theoretical perspective of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, who draw from "both actual and imagined Indigenous related concepts, such as totem [referring to an Ojibwe human/animal system of relations], becoming-animal, nomad and shamanism" (23). Manning's critique of recent redeployments of Western (mis) interpretations of Indigenous philosophy includes the writings of David Abram, who "forgoes the need to cite the authors of these orally transmitted literatures, whom he tends to not mention by name," and who conflates "multiple unrelated Indigenous cultures from all over the world," whose communities she suspects have

not profited from "the commercialization of their traditional knowledge through Abram's publication of their intellectual labour" (86–7).

In the chapter entitled "The Becoming-Human of Buffalo Bill," Manning offers a provocative reassessment of Deleuze and Guattari's *Mille Plateaux*, a book that arguably prefigured and spurred the development of new materialism and affect theory. Scrutinizing the willful dispersion of agency invoked by the authors through the tantalizing notion of becoming-animal, she submits that such a phantasmagoric transformation into the non-human Other constitutes an attempt to abandon privilege that "sheds only the responsibility that one must take for one's privilege" (180). She objects that First Nations peoples, who experienced systematic dehumanization implemented by genocidal government policies negating their most basic rights, do not have the luxury of choosing to abandon a liberal humanist version of agency, but have instead been actively engaged in reclaiming their humanity, even if "becoming-human is also a form of assimilation … intended to make these culturally distinct people disappear altogether (through a process of 'whitening')" (180). She submits that Deleuze and Guattari's call for dissolving the humanist subject into becoming-animal paradoxically reasserts their authorial agency as they "territorialize their Other, as they mark out their own space of deterritorialization," thereby enacting "a new breed of colonizers" by means of a "veiled imperialism … dressed in drag to conceal humanism, dressed down as posthumanism for the show" (188). Furthermore, she identifies in the academy a tendency "to overlook, or even celebrate, their territorialization of Indigenous thought," thereby failing to "do justice to complex Indigenous philosophies and violent colonial histories" (190).

She infers that one needs to be cautious about academic discourses claiming to "[decenter] the human in order to emphasize other-than-human or more-than human *materiality*, since it can be understood to mobilize affect theory as a dispersal of agency" (87). She points to Barad's book *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, which "moves beyond subjectivity and anthropocentric ideals in a speculative turn toward agential realism, quantum physics, and the ontology of the object," and specifies that while she concurs with posthumanist theorists about the necessity to challenge notions of the supremacy of human agency, she strongly objects to "emerging western discourses such as new materialism, posthumanism and affect theory, little cousins to earlier Indigenous versions, [that] not only shift the focus away from humancentrism but in many ways also disown human responsibility altogether," compelling her to issue the following call:

> Now that western logics have brought us to a global tipping point of ecological devastation and mass biodiversity extinction this is the time when human beings need to step up and take responsibility for the continuing damage being done to the Earth. Yes, strip the human of his

> Euro-western supremacy, but not at the expense of shrinking accountability for ongoing harms. We need to take drastic action as well as be willing to make difficult sacrifices to restore the ecosystem, biodiversity, and other relations in both human and other-than-human worlds. This is particularly urgent since … the subject of individual rights and freedoms is closely linked with capitalism, and the exploitation of resources for personal gain without accountability (I'm thinking here of corporate ecological devastation, in particular).
>
> (88)

Highlighting on-going acts of resistance to such exploitative resource extraction, she provides the example of the land-based activism embodied by Indigenous water protectors at Standing Rock, as well as effective forms of political opposition developed by settler communities to protect themselves from capitalist environmental destruction perpetrated by corporations (88–9).

Manning shares in her doctoral dissertation an orally-transmitted, culturally-specific, land-based understanding of relationality and reciprocity that Elders in her community associate with potency, energy, or flux, and that Manning describes as "a mnidoo interconnectedness between present people, ancestors, descendants, and all of our nonhuman relations [animating] our very blood cells as mnidoo potencies, with their own agency and way of knowing and communicating" (200). She refers to the Anishinaabe way of being, "conveyed in Ojibwe/Potawatomi as *Nii kina ganaa* ('All My relations/All My relatives')" as spoken in her home community of Kikonaang miinawaa Aazhoodenaang, also known as Kettle and Stoney Point (201). Manning specifies that the spelling and translation of this phrase were arrived at through close consultation with her mother and her language teacher based on oral accounts (201). She explains:

> Between the "my" and the "all" of "All My relations" is a reciprocal possession and an interrelational gravity. The ownership is one of responsibility. The "mineness" inheres and indwells with an *everything* that is beyond finite comprehension but to which I am indebted. It is capitalized to acknowledge the profound significance of this coexistent autonomous/oneness structure.
>
> (201)

She states that while the basic translation of *Anishinaabe* is "the original person/being," she always combines it with the second translation "mode of being" or "beingness," as an "originary sedimented resonance," and she understands "'original' in the sense of the always already condition of possibility, which, as Merleau-Ponty

suggests, is not only encrusted over a lifetime but also intersubjectively sedimented over generations," a concept that she extends to "a condition of being attuned to what there is in the world in a particular way" (202). However, she departs from Merleau-Ponty's human-centered perspective that cannot fathom "an other-than-human vital materialism, particularly with respect to inanimate agency," and expands his theory of consciousness beyond human subjectivity as well as beyond human/animal sentience, which enables her to locate consciousness in the world—"a living agential co-responsiveness to the field itself"—and to identify it as "external to a bounded human subject, and at the same time as internal in terms of immanence (radiating from within as well as from without)" (205, 211–12). She hence foregrounds "another dimension of experience or perhaps a different kind of sensibility" informed by the Ojibwe Anishinaabe seven directions teachings (north, south, east, west, up, down, and center), which evoke for her "a three-dimensional swelling of continuous and discontinuous bursting forth, … this infinite and finite mnidoo outpouring" through which the seven directions not only subtend one another "but also coalesce and together bring about the heterogeneity of space, time, and consciousness" (212–13). This leads her to contend that "every aspect of existence (not only sentience) knows itself primordially as a thing of the world through the infinite reverberation of mnidoo," and she identifies this "ownmost immediate knowing" with *Nii kina ganaa* (All My relations), to which she previously referred as a coexistent autonomous/oneness structure (215–16). She proposes to conceptualize this mnidoo potency through "the pulsing resonance of bird flight patterns," evoking the intricate cascading patterns that a flock of starlings interweaves "around land, wind, and other flock formations without ever colliding" (216).

Such an all-encompassing conception of mnidoo potency posits that "the material world is *alive*, conscious, and it co-responsively exerts agency" (222). Human consciousness is therefore no longer privileged as a unique path of access to the world, and "discernment, or the transparency of intellection is itself the opacity that stands in the way of fully accessing the mnidoo-self-world," which for Manning replaces the psyche, leading her to envision human consciousness as "one starling entangled in the fluttering murmuration of a multitude" (222). Acknowledging that there is something enigmatic about the notion of "undifferentiated 'consciousnessing'," Manning provides the image of black matter flowing through us, allowing for the emergence of other experiences that challenge "the presentation of empirical 'truth'" pertaining to "objective reality," which often competes successfully for our attention (223). Moreover, humans can only gain temporary access to this mnidoo consciousness that cannot be summoned at will as it can only be apprehended "through oblique interrelational modes" (223). Manning suggests that mnidoo potency temporarily overcomes the self (which she relates to "histories and

attitudes"), and specifies that "ultimately, ceremonial reflexivity immerses the self in the perceptual field – exceeding subjective projection by rousing instead to this relational entanglement" (224). Engaging in ceremony can therefore lead to "an ephemeral encounter" through which "I awaken to Nii kina ganaa and gain access as a *thing* profoundly imbued within its transmission" (224). She stresses that the world-mnidoo-self

> [is] not an experience of inert thingly silence, but of ancestors whittling axe handles, diminishing in one sense while increasing in another, consciousness cajoled from the competing and conversing of wood shavings—self and not self—active, autonomous, *living* materiality.
>
> (224)

As she points out in a footnote, this relational conception of materiality is "distinct and vastly more complex than New Materialism" (224).

She attempts to share in writing her personal experience of mnidoo knowing:

> Mnidoo knowing arrives as a piercing epiphany just as often as a nagging undercurrent, sometimes vague and at others distinct and incontrovertible. It erupts and overturns perpetual experience with a sudden insight … I am struck with the monumentality of how it both beguiles and exceeds me. Surely, it is more than I am and, at the same time, all that I am, when I am most at home, lost to myself … It is an infinite mnidoo dimension [that] exceeds the autonomy/authority of the self-self with the undulation of its own reverberating interiority as mnidoo-world-self presencing (momentarily suppressing the false appearance of subject/object distinctions) … I am seized upon by the passing through of a world-positing centrality. Here, any single-dimensional vibration might momentarily take possession or brush by and inadvertently imprint a new fluctuation … Other-than-human-persons – that is, mnidoo ancestors – radiate from every direction, as colliding universes … Perhaps [this world-mnidoo interlocution] collapses into an endlessly undulating body – a murmuration or a mnidoo-wave – not a unified body stopped up and solidified by harmonious elation, but rather a dialogic body spurred on through permeation and absorption … Everything operates as a collaborative dynamic chorus. We permeate one another as one continuous body – dancers, drummers, crowd, and dust clouds kicked up and carried off into the same undulating wave … I am scarcely certain of this resonance except when I am gathered up and engulfed within it … [T]his interrelational negotiation …, this inter-gravitational

> interplay …, [t]hese spontaneous, co-responsive, and collaborative … subtle improvisational gestures [subtend and condition] the possibility for human consciousness.
>
> (228–30, 232–3, 235)

Manning's evocative use of language to convey the more-than-human synaesthetic dimension of mnidoo-world-self presencing—a multi(extra)sensorial immersion into the undulating waves, vibrations, and murmuration of a co-responsively improvised chorus that reverberates, radiates, resonates, and engulfs—seems to echo Deloria's claim that poetry, or in this case a particularly creative philosophical-poetic writing, constitutes a more suitable "means of communicating experience" than the "immensely complicated theoretical conceptions" of scientific discourse (*Metaphysics of Modern Existence* 36). As with Barad, the intricacies of Manning's writing require focus and perseverance from the reader, yet the mnidoo-world she conveys feels more materially performative than Barad's intra-active universe, even though Manning does not employ the terminology of performativity, and the subtle improvisations of mnidoo-worlding, perceived only through an intuitive attentiveness to its human and more-than-human chorus, clearly encompasses a multiplicity of soundings, voicings, and songs.

Transformative Philosophy

As noted by Dennis H. McPherson and J. Douglas Rabb in *Indian from the Inside: Native American Philosophy and Cultural Renewal*, North American Indigenous worldviews "are best understood and compared with one another as types of transformative philosophy" (158). They suggest that Deloria points to the transformative role of traditional ceremonies when stating that they enact a fulfillment and renewal of "the entire and complete cycle of life, ultimately including the whole cosmos present in its specific realizations, so that in the last analysis one might describe ceremonials as the cosmos becoming thankfully aware of itself" (*God Is Red* 276–7, quoted in McPherson and Rabb 159). To illustrate this transformative process, they evoke the embodied experience of performing at a pow wow:

> To dance [and, I would add, to sing] at a pow wow, for example, and understand that the dance itself is a specific realization of the whole cosmos, to think of your dancing-self [and your singing-self] as "the cosmos becoming thankful for itself," is to experience a transformation of consciousness. It is, in a very real sense, to be transported from the mundane to the spiritual.
>
> (159–60)

They specify that "only after such a transformation are we in a position to understand" the insight that everything is interconnected, in accordance with the Indigenous principles of relationality and reciprocity (160). They stress the cultural specificity of this transformative experience grounded in a particular place, a phenomenon which is challenging to explain to those unfamiliar with such experiential knowledge, as noted by the Indigenous and non-Indigenous philosophers Leroy Meyer and Tony Ramirez, who contend in a co-authored article on Lakota/Dakota metaphysics:

> To *say* that the Lakota and Dakota see the world holistically as one spirit is not the same as to *see* the world that way. For another to see the world that way would require a kind of gestalt switch involving a shift in "styles of reasoning" as well as ways of perception. It would entail responding to the world according to the exhortation: *Mitakuye oyasin*!—"We are all related!"
>
> (*From Our Eyes* 105, quoted in McPherson and Rabb 161)

McPherson and Rabb suggest that "the incommensurability problem" between Western worldviews and Indigenous worldviews comes from the difficulty for descendants of Western European civilization rooted in literate cultures to "come to grips with the Indigenous oral traditions and traditional knowledges of North America" (162). Their book is informed by the research they conducted over the span of three decades to address this problem collaboratively: McPherson is an Ojibwa and a band member of the Couchiching First Nation at Fort Frances, Ontario, and the founding chair of the Lakehead University Department of Indigenous Learning. He first met Rabb, a philosophy professor at Lakehead, when he inquired in 1982 as to why the curriculum delivered by the Lakehead University Philosophy Department covered ancient Greek philosophy, German idealism, British empiricism, as well as the Eastern philosophical systems from India, China, and Japan, but did not offer courses in Native American philosophy. Rabb responded by explaining that no one in the Department had expertise in this area, prompting McPherson to enroll in the Philosophy and Social Work programs, study Law at the University of Ottawa, and collaborate with Rabb to co-design a Native Canadian World Views course. In 1992, they began team-teaching the first course in Native American philosophy to be offered in a Canadian university philosophy department. A first edition of their book, based on this course, appeared in 1993, and the second edition was published in 2011 as their way of contributing to the promotion of scholarship in this area (6–7).

"Native American philosophy has enabled Native American cultures to survive more than five hundred years of attempted cultural assimilation" is the opening

statement of the Preface, and in the first chapter the authors caution that theirs is "not a study *of* aboriginal people," who, they stress, have been studied enough: "the expression 'studied to death' is now widely used by aboriginal communities" (5, 11). Their main argument is two-fold: not only do Indigenous people have a significant contribution to make to the discipline of philosophy, but, perhaps most importantly, "the aboriginal people of the Americas can fully understand themselves only in the context of a Native American philosophy, in the context of their own values and worldview" (11). They emphasize the transformative dimension of this philosophy throughout the book. For example, they propose a phenomenological analysis of the vision quest that enables them to describe it "without dismissing such experience as mere dream or hallucination, as many non-Natives are tempted to do," especially from the perspective of Western scientific inquiry (60–1). They ground their analysis in the first-person description of a vision quest experienced by Blackfoot Métis architect Douglas Cardinal, whose accomplishments include designing the National Museum of the American Indian for the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC, and the Canadian Museum of Civilization located near Ottawa, as well as the gathering space of the En'owkin Center in Penticton, BC, and who is "equally at home in the world of twenty-first century scientific technology and the world of traditional Native American ways" (61). Anticipating objections that spending four days and four nights in isolation without food or drink, as required by the traditional practice of the vision quest, might very well be conducive to hallucinatory states of consciousness, the authors insist that although Cardinal himself employs the term hallucination to describe some aspects of this experience, he foregrounds other peak moments during which he gained what he considers to be life-changing knowledge.

Cardinal reports that Elders say:

> If you set yourself in power with every living thing, then you can see – really *see* and communicate with every living thing … You ask all the living things for strength because they are at one with their creator and you are part of creation.
>
> (quoted in McPherson and Rabb 73)

He remembers "grabbing onto a tree and asking it for strength," and getting strength from the tree, as well as from the grass, the clouds, the sun, and the earth: "As I kept asking and reaching out for life around me to give me strength and sustain me, I got stronger and stronger and stronger. I felt powerful" (quoted in McPherson and Rabb 73–4). While this feeling of being part of everything gave him a sense of power, he also states: "I just wasn't there" (quoted in McPherson and Rabb 61–2, 75). The authors infer that the important knowledge conveyed by

the vision quest is that "we are not really *apart from* the earth and other people," but a part of them, so that "willing the good of others is not in any sense a form of self-sacrifice given the enlarged sense of self acquired in the journey into non-ordinary reality," although they carefully distinguish the notion of enlarged self from "a sense of arrogant individualism," interpreting Cardinal's observation "I just wasn't there" as an attempt to express "his felt experience that there is just no distinction between the individual and the rest of the community, indeed, the rest of the universe" (McPherson and Rabb 100). They further stress it doesn't mean that "the individual self dissolves into the greater whole," since the traditional teachings of the vision quest compel individuals to actively "will the good of other persons, both human and other-than-humans, in their mutually shared community [while expecting] each individual in the community to do the same" (100–1).

In his testimony, Cardinal emphasizes the experiential nature of these types of ritual practices, which he says are "designed so you learn whatever you learn … When you go to the other side, it's like you're guided through the experience. There's something there that helps you" (quoted in McPherson and Rabb 78). He refers to the help one receives from the ancestors when journeying to the other side:

> When you go in the [sweat] lodge you sometimes get tremendous insights or everyone may have a powerful experience at the same time. So they always say that the grandfathers or grandmothers are there. The grandfathers or grandmothers always walk with the people and so they feel guided. So they just say: "I think I'll go ask my grandfather about that." … Non-Indian people sometimes think that the grandparents are alive, but they're not. [Indian people] are continually communicating with their grandfathers and grandmothers … They call just about anybody grandfathers and grandmothers. We're all brothers in the sense of spiritual brothers … It isn't just Indian people. The lodge is open and almost everybody can come …
>
> I think the old knowledge is the new knowledge. I think that is the destiny of the Indian people. We have to teach the immigrant culture to love as we love because our very survival depends on that task … The Indian people don't see this as a racial thing. We call the white people "mooneyow." It's not a racial term. It means: "somebody who is totally controlled and motivated by money, dollars." It's just a behavior trait.
>
> (quoted in McPherson and Rabb 77–8, 81)

Cardinal contrasts this behavior—which he specifies does not characterize all white people yet has become so pervasive that it now threatens everyone's future, including

our planet's—with North American Indigenous ways of knowing conveyed through ancestral cultural practices such as the vision quest and the sweat lodge:

> You have to realize that … you have a life force or spirit or whatever that is more than just your complaining human being. To be a man of knowledge in the Indian culture meant that you have to be in touch with that.
>
> (quoted in McPherson and Rabb 82)

When this contemporary testimony is placed in dialogue with the description of a traditional vision quest culminating in the gift of a vision song featured in Deloria's book *Singing for a Spirit*—where the initiated youth received this song so that "no matter where he happened to be, if he were in any trouble he was to sing the song the vision had given and help would come" (201)—it becomes clear that the vision song is experienced as giving access to the life force to which Cardinal refers, enabling the singer to "communicate with every living thing, [and] ask all the living things for strength" (quoted in McPherson and Rabb 73). Both traditional and contemporary experiences of the vision quest thus hinge upon a transformative process, inducing Cardinal to state that "the old knowledge is the new knowledge," that is to say, an experiential, existential, and spiritual way of knowing that McPherson and Rabb consider to be a central tenet of Native American philosophy (quoted in McPherson and Rabb 81).

Calling for the legitimization of this philosophy within the academy, they suggest that it is possible to reject the Enlightenment assumptions complicit with European colonialism while avoiding "the extreme relativism of postmodern literary theory such as that associated with Jacques Derrida," and they foreground the Native American value of polycentrism as an alternative epitomized by the sharing circle, where everyone expresses a different perspective that is "metaphorically located in the centre of the circle" and that contributes to the development of a community perspective (115, 121). In support of this polycentric worldview, they cite Osage scholar George Tinker stating that "sometimes a single truth is not enough to explain the balance of the world around us" ("An American Indian Theological Response to Ecojustice"; quoted in McPherson and Rabb 122), and they infer that respect for difference pertains to traditional Native American values whose continuity, ensured by the transmission of cultural practices across generations, can be traced from pre-contact times to the present (138).

Resonance as Relationality and Reciprocity

In the chapter entitled "Language and Metaphysics: Native American Ontology and Transformative Philosophy," McPherson and Rabb refer to the Fall 2006 memorial

issue of the *American Philosophical Association Newsletter* published in honor of Deloria, and they highlight Scott L. Pratt's article discussing Deloria's interrelated concepts of power and place through the use of the Ojibwe concept of "*Manitou*" and the Lakota concept of "*orenda*":

> Like *Manitou, orenda* is understood as a kind of unifying notion. Everyone has *orenda*, but it is also differentiating in that different people have different *orendas* … One way to understand this concept is suggested by the linguistic root for *orenda* – *ren* – which is also the root for the terms for 'songs,' 'to sing,' and 'voice' or 'speech' … *orenda* marks the song or voice of particular things.
>
> (Pratt 6; quoted in McPherson and Rabb 152)

Building on this interpretation, McPherson and Rabb contend that voices and songs are linked to the identity of persons, "including, always, other-than-human persons" (152). This leads them to assert: "We are who we are, we are individuals because our voices resonate with those of others in our wider community, the ecosystem in which we live, or rather through which we interrelate," including rivers, fields, hills, and mountain ranges, considered to be persons in their own right (152–3). This resonating relationality encompasses such a wide spectrum of human and more-than-human interrelations that it calls for a reassessment of conventional conceptions of identity and agency. The authors point to "the singers around a pow wow drum" whose individual voices "take on a character, a resonance they could not have on their own" (153). Although Pratt himself focuses in his article on the resonance of drumming, I intervene in the following fragment cited by McPherson and Rabb to suggest that his remarks can also be applied to voices:

> Listening to the sound together, the resonating drums [*or voices*] are a unity of sound; listening for the characteristic expression of a single drum [*or single voice*] makes individuals emerge from the collective sound. It is important to note that while each drum [*or each voice*] has its own sound, it is both a sound dependent upon the drum's origin (the skin and wood of which it is made) [*or the singer's breath and body resonators*] and its interaction with other agents – the drummer [*or singer*], the listeners, even the other drums [*or other singers*] in its hearing.
>
> (Pratt 6–7, quoted in McPherson and Rabb 153; italicized additions mine)

Linking power, place, voice, and resonance to identity and agency, McPherson and Rabb conclude: "We would not be the persons we are without this resonance, our

interrelations or interactions with others in our extended community. As Pratt puts it, following Deloria, 'a person *is* only in place' (Pratt 2006, 7)" (quoted in McPherson and Rabb 153). Within the context of ceremonial practices delineated by Deloria and evoked by Manning, the relational and reciprocal dimensions of resonance may thus be understood as co-constitutive, hence transformative.

McPherson and Rabb are interested in the implications this perspective may have for the teaching and preservation of Indigenous languages whose continuity critically depends on orality. They deplore the fact that today Indigenous languages are written using the phonetic alphabet in an attempt to preserve them, "thus representing the sound of the language purely phonetically" and running the risk of "separating language from the living land" and from all the relations it is meant to sustain (170). They are primarily concerned with the impact that the dominance of the phonetic alphabet has had on the worldviews of Indigenous peoples "as an attack on their very indigeneity" (172). They foreground the urgency of language revitalization for North American Indigenous communities as a way of addressing intergenerational trauma linked to the colonial history of the Canadian residential school system, funded by the Department of Indian Affairs and administered by Christian churches for over a hundred years, with the last school officially closing in 1996. Having been forcibly separated from their families, Indigenous children were treated so inhumanely while in residential schools that many perished from injuries, malnutrition, and disease, while those who did not succumb to the extreme physical and psychological violence they experienced have been recognized by the Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission as the survivors of a cultural genocide (www.trc.ca). McPherson and Rabb thus envision cultural revitalization as an exercise in transformative philosophy, and in response to David Abram's injunction, in his book *The Spell of the Sensuous*, to write language back into the land so as to reconnect with the living world, they cautiously remark that "to rediscover the primordial meaning of hawk, wolf, rock, and wind will require a major transformation of consciousness for those of us enculturated into Western European civilization" (174). They nevertheless assert: "we need to experience this perceptual reciprocity with the animate more-than-human world," as expressed by Calvin Martin in his book *In the Spirit of the Earth: Rethinking History and Time* where he states that language must be "rooted in precise place and learned from such a place … learned in song from place beings (Martin 1992, 94)," compelling McPherson and Rabb to propose that "it is possible to write *music* back into the land" (176). They provide the example of the vocal music project *Ojibwe Landscapes* that combines human and more-than-human voices, namely, the voices of the Dulcisono Women's Choir of Thunder Bay and the voices of "tuned rocks" that are integral to this choral piece. The stones, gathered from the shore of Lake Superior

by the members of the choir, were selected based on their particular pitch. While the singers were searching for these rocks,

> someone stepped on or kicked a stone striking it against another and the choir realized that it sounded the exact pitch they were looking for. They then had to find the rock they heard from among those they were walking on. They like to say that they felt that the stones were calling out to them.
>
> (177)

Commissioned by the Choir, this multimedia artistic creation directed by Susan Marrier included choral music created by contemporary Canadian composer Brian Hubelit, screen projections of a series of photographs of Lake Superior by local photographer Lois Nuttal, as well as narration by Ian Bannon of Fort William First Nation, who shared the creation story about the giant *Nanabijou* who helped the Great Spirit, *Gitchi Manitou*, create the world.

When experiencing this piece, McPherson and Rabb were emotionally engaged by the vocal expressivity of the human and more-than-human choir as it powerfully conveyed the specificity of place. They felt engulfed in the sounds of the Ojibwa words *Gitchigumi* and *Nanabijou* that stretched out like the wind and the waves of Lake Superior (*Gitchigumi*) through the interweaving of the singing voices and the striking of the rocks:

> the haunting sound of the choir, due also in part to the unique use of Ojibwa terms and onomatopoeia … evokes the spiritual significance of [place for the Ojibwa,] the land mass called The Sleeping Giant, Nanabijou, forming part of Thunder Bay harbor at the head of the Lake, [a] large rock formation [resembling] a giant sleeping on his back, arms folded across his chest.
>
> (178–9)

The authors explain that in this version of the creation story, *Nanabijou* falls asleep and *Gitchi Manitou* promises the Ojibwa people that he will awaken if they call for his help, but years of mixing with the European settlers interrupt traditional ways of living and eventually there are too few Elders who remember their traditional songs to call out to *Nanabijou* when the settlers claim the land and lake, so that the Giant cannot hear them, and he is "still there today, waiting for his People to call him so he can help them" (180). This significant rock formation, which the authors identify as a manitou, thus reminds the Ojibwa people of the importance of maintaining their traditions, as if encouraging them to keep their voices strong by practicing the songs of their ancestors, "but it does so indirectly, consistent with

the traditional value of noninterference" (189). The mountain *Animiki Wadjiw*, or Thunder Bird Mountain, offers a panoramic view of Lake Superior and the Sleeping Giant, which is why it is "the location of their pow wow grounds where traditional intertribal ceremonies are still held to this day" (180).

The affective performative power of this vocal music experiment convinced McPherson and Rabb that *Ojibwe Landscapes* "succeeds in writing music back into the land" (183), although what is perhaps most vividly exemplified by this project is the possibility of *singing* language back into the land. They draw a parallel between this potentially transformative experience with cognitive science philosopher Mark Johnson's analysis of music in terms of its "structure and pattern of temporal flow, pitch and contours, intensity (loudness/softness) that is analogous to felt patterns of the flow of human experience (Johnson 2007, 238)" (183). Inspired by the possibility of bringing together the specificity of place and time through vocal music, as exemplified by the human and more-than human creative collaboration that produced *Ojibwe Landscapes*, McPherson and Rabb wonder "how further research in Native philosophy will impact Western philosophy" and suggest that making the latter more transformative can help to resolve the incommensurability problem between Indigenous and Western epistemologies (183).

Notes

1 When I registered online, Snyder was listed as co-leader but was ultimately unable to attend ICQI, and the workshop was facilitated solely by Rosiek.

2 In "The Context Within: My Journey into Research," Aluli-Meyer credits Māori scholar Shane Edwards for the term "(k)new" employed to describe knowledge as simultaneously old/new (*Indigenous Pathways into Social Research* 259). Edwards uses this term in his doctoral dissertation *Titiro Whakamuri Kia Marama Ai Te Wao Nei: Whakapapa Epistemologies and Maniapoto Maori Cultural Identities*, Massey University, 2009.

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4

VOCALITY AS SOURCE, RESOURCE, AND POTENTIALITY

Have we inherited the instinct, need or desire to hum, chant, and sing from our most distant human ancestors? If so, how did they develop this vocal propensity, and why? What can be achieved through singing that cannot be achieved through language? How might vocal traditions, as source techniques, enable us to experience consciousness not linked to language but to presence? Can (re)activating a traditional song in the present moment of performance reconnect the singer to those who sang that song for the first time? Asking these challenging questions is an invitation to imagine possibilities and keep an open mind rather than settle for reasonable answers. No matter how satisfying these answers might feel, they would inevitably muffle, stifle, render inaudible, or perhaps even forever silence the wordless archetypal vocal improvisations of my Occitan ancestors resonating open-endedly within the relational loop of vocal tradition.

Vocal Creativity: The Biocultural Coevolutionary Hypothesis

In the concluding pages of *A Million Years of Music: The Emergence of Human Modernity*, musicologist Gary Tomlinson highlights "the special powers of musicking" and contends: "Linguists may rightly tell us of the sovereign mysteries of language structure and process; but only *lift a voice in song*, and all humans are struck—enthralled, seduced, threatened, made, or unmade—by these powers" (288). In his book, Tomlinson builds on current research in archaeology, cognitive science, linguistics, and evolutionary theory to explore the dynamics of biocultural coevolution, arguing against "the linguocentrism that mysteriously grants lexicon and syntax priority in the evolution of hominin communication, and the specific adaptive advantages (sexual selection, social bonding, and so forth) so many see as the stimulus for Music writ large" (287). He traces the emergence of music and language to a pre-musical and pre-linguistic form of protodiscourse hinging upon nonsemantic and non-symbolic vocalization. Archaeologist Steven Mithen defines this

DOI: 10.4324/9780429340338-4

early form of vocal communication as "Hmmmmm," namely, "Holistic, multimodal, manipulative, musical, and mimetic," in *The Singing Neanderthals: The Origins of Music, Language, Mind and Body* (253). Mithen foregrounds archeological evidence pointing to the development of cooperation for big-game hunting and for coping with dramatic environmental changes, which leads him to speculate that "communal 'Hmmmmm' music-making would have become pervasive in Early Human society" (218). He further grounds this hypothesis in paleontological reconstructions of the Neanderthal auditory system and vocal tract which seem to have been quite similar to ours today, and states that

> although the Neanderthal vocal tract may have been unable to produce exactly the same range of sounds as a modern human, they would have certainly been sufficiently diverse to enable speech if the neural circuitry for language was present in the Neanderthal brain.
>
> (226)

However, Mithen argues that the stability of Neanderthal culture over a period of more than 200,000 years, along with a lack of evidence for innovation such as engagement in symbolic activities, point to "a species that had a holistic rather than compositional form of communication" (231). He speculates that

> without the development of language, it is most likely that Neanderthals maintained the capacity for perfect pitch with which we must assume they were born, and this would have enhanced their musical abilities in comparison with those found in both earlier *Homo* and modern humans.
>
> (234)

He suggests that these innate capacities were so sophisticated that they enabled the Neanderthals to survive without having to develop linguistic abilities, whereas the latter became the main mode of communication for modern humans, leading to a loss of 'Hmmmmm' virtuosity:

> I believe that all modern humans are relatively limited in their musical abilities when compared with the Neanderthals … partly because [the latter] evolved neural networks for the musical features of 'Hmmmmm' that did not evolve in the *Homo Sapiens* lineage, and partly because the evolution of language has inhibited the musical abilities inherited from the common ancestor that we share with the *Homo neanderthalensis* … [I]magine what a Neanderthal would have heard, and how he or she would have responded, when walking through the ice-age landscape. It would have been another

> panorama of sounds: the melodies and rhythms of nature, which have become muffled to the *Homo sapiens* ear by the evolution of language.
>
> (245)

The problem with such a hypothesis is that it does not provide a satisfactory explanation for the processes by which language was able to emerge from, and overshadow, such advanced musical abilities, whose development itself remains mysterious. To address this evolutionary conundrum, Mithen assumes compositional language to have served as a supplement that eventually became "the dominant form of communication owing to its greater effectiveness at transmitting information," and infers that new developments in the brain linked to linguistic capacity would have led to "the loss of perfect pitch in the majority of individuals and a diminution of musical abilities" (260). He also suggests that although language became the privileged communication system, music, which he considers to be a derivative of 'Hmmmmm', remained as a kind of compulsion among modern humans and became useful to communities for sharing non-discursive ideas about supernatural beings and communicating with them, while also serving to support "social bonding, emotional expression and healing" (271–3). Having highlighted the "immense cultural diversity in how music is made and the role it plays, both within and between different human societies," he specifies that while in some of its current uses music continues to provide some of "the adaptive value that was central to 'Hmmmmm', especially in forging group identities," one of its roles is simply to entertain and procure enjoyment (273). He identifies traces of 'Hmmmmm' in language itself when pointing to "onomatopoeia, vocal imitation and sound synaesthesia, which are probably most readily apparent in the languages of present-day people who still live traditional lifestyles and are close to nature'" (276). Suggesting that all humans have retained "a propensity to use holistic utterances," he points to forms of vocalization that can be defined neither as music nor as language and provides the example of Indian mantras characterized by philosopher Franz Staal as "lengthy speech acts [that] lack any meaning or grammatical structure, and are further distinguished from language by their musical nature," and which Mithen considers to be "relatively fixed expressions passed from generation to generation" epitomizing vocalization that still bears traces of the "'Hmmmmm' utterances of our human ancestors" (276–7).

While seeking to establish the adaptive value of language and speech over that of music and singing in human cognitive evolution, Mithen nevertheless provides an ambiguous conclusion to his book when acknowledging that "words remain quite inadequate to describe the nature of music, and can never diminish its mysterious hold upon our minds and bodies" (278). Evoking genetic continuity as that which

gives us access to "an unbroken line to the earliest hominid ancestor that we share," he points to our inherited propensity for musical expression and encourages his readers to listen to and make music in order to "liberate all of these hominids that still reside in you" (278).

In *A Million Years of Music*, Tomlinson acknowledges the value of Mithen's paleoanthropological perspective while identifying his limited understanding of music as a major shortcoming. Drawing from his expertise as a musicologist, Tomlinson proposes a more in-depth analysis of the relationship between pre-musical and pre-linguistic forms of communication based on his hypothesis of the co-evolutionary biocultural emergence of music and language. He points out that musical expression could not have continued to hold such a multiplicity of significant functions across human cultures and societies for millions of years if its adaptive value had been so clearly superseded by the efficacy of linguistic communication as a main feature of human cognitive evolution. Refusing to give either music or language any chronological priority, he elaborates an alternative scenario in which "discrete pitch perception formed alongside protolinguistic elements," so that both were supported by "nascent hierarchic and combinatorial cognition, before either modern language or musicking appeared" (204). This scenario avoids assigning to ancient hominins "a panoply of full-fledged, modern musical capacities," something that musical protolanguage hypotheses such as Mithen's tend to do regardless of deep-historical evidence to the contrary, the innate capacity for perfect pitch that Mithen ascribes to his singing Neanderthals being a case in point (204). Tomlinson thus remains exceedingly cautious about the musical abilities that are frequently projected onto our hominin ancestors to provide an explanatory framework for the emergence of language. He strongly objects to Mithen's suggestion that hominins were singing as far back as 500,000 years ago, as this would have required "cognitive resources far in advance of these posited even by capacious interpretations of the archeological evidence" (116). Pointing out that "a deep-historical approach to music or language cannot begin by assuming the very capacities and design features it aims to historicize," Tomlinson seeks to temper Mithen's enthusiasm about early human musical aptitudes (69). He maintains that "Neanderthals did not sing as modern humans do, and they did not speak a modern language; but their fashioning of the material world preserves traces of powerful cognitive patterns at once protomusical and protolinguistic" (172). He therefore distances "the first systematization and rule governance from the kind of referentiality characteristic of modern language and symbolism," calling into question the assumption that systematization is necessarily "an all-or-nothing force, complex in the manner of language or else nonexistent" (204). Asserting the presymbolic complexity of protolanguage and protomusicking—which he argues were deictic and indexical, in the Piercean sense—as well as of the material interactions of early

humans with the world, he contends that today musicking constitutes "*the extended, spectacularly formalized, and complexly perceived systematization of ancient, indexical gesture-calls*" that once epitomized protodiscourse (205; emphasis in original). Yet he refrains from positing an unjustified indexocentrism in exchange for the symbolocentrism generally upheld by protolinguists, and remarks instead that the loose systematization of discrete pitch prior to modern symbolism and language did not alone "bring about the final formation of musicking" (206). He points to the incremental and syncretic aspects of complex human behaviors linked to expressive capacities hinging upon "conventionalized vocal symbols" as well as on "the transformation of ancient, emotive, acoustical stimulus-and-response into the formalized shapes of all musicking in the world today" (206). This transformation would lead to the use of "discrete pitch as melodic building blocks" that he relates to tonality, which would mesh with hierarchized temporal patterns of entrainment, hence producing "complex, nonsemantic formalisms as a locus where the ancient arousal of expectation and emotion might be channeled to new societal and communicative ends" (206).

Countering cognitive scientist Steven Pinker's dismissal of music as "auditory cheesecake, an exquisite confection crafted to tickle the sensitive spots of at least six of our mental faculties" (Pinker, *How the Mind Works* 534), Tomlinson relies on evidence drawn from archeological, ethological, and cognitive studies to foreground "the communicative powers of protodiscourse," which he posits as the necessary condition for the emergence of both music and language, and asserts that the wide dispersion of these powers in the world today testifies to their evolutionary resilience (*A Million Years of Music* 207). Furthermore, the connection that Tomlinson establishes between protodiscourse and musicking enables him to cogently argue that music is simultaneously more abstract and more embodied than language. On the one hand, it is more abstract because the biocultural coevolutive processes he links to the development of hominin communication entailed "the winnowing of discrete pitch from the graded intonational contours of the calls of protodiscourse," from which emerged "an abstraction, a distancing of the pitches themselves from meaning" that endowed music with a fundamentally non-semantic dimension which has proven to be particularly enduring as "discrete pitch arrays have since maintained this distance from signification" (258). On the other hand, music is more embodied because of its ancient roots in the physical and affective nature of the type of vocalization pertaining to protodiscourse, whose efficacy was crucially dependent on copresence and proximity. He thus remarks:

> Although the embodiment would come, far down the road, to be attenuated in a growing abstraction of cognition and the behaviors it sponsors, the attenuation would always remain less for musicking than for

> language. This is not to advance a *dis*embodied view of language; there can be little doubt that it retains in its pragmatic structure the rhythms and emotional flux of hominin protodiscourse. These ancient elements, however, are more evident still in musicking … Musicking is a human activity unique in the degree to which it highlights somatic experience while structuring it according to complex, abstract, and relatively recent outgrowths of our cognition; this again can only be understood in deep historical perspective.
>
> (289)

He contends that the "linguocentric priorities" that have characterized much evolutionary theory may be counterbalanced by means of a "*musicocentrism*," demonstrating that language lacks music's precise and hierarchized modes of entrainment, namely, "levels of synchronized precision beyond those needed for language," along with music's quasi-infinite tonal and timbral variability made possible by "discrete-pitch combinatoriality" as well as by "explorations of the soundscape available through musical tools" (266, 278). Overturning Pinker's "auditory cheesecake" argument that considers music as "a non-adaptive exploitation of adaptive sources of pleasure" (Caroll, "Steven Pinker's Cheesecake for the Mind" 479), Tomlinson provocatively foregrounds "the musical absences at the heart of language" (278). Countering a reversal of the argument in which the role of music would be overemphasized in human cognitive evolution, he advances instead a biocultural coevolution perspective according to which the incremental emergence of music might be best understood as "coalescing *alongside* modern language and other markers of our modernity, not before them or in their wake" (206).

Interestingly, onomatopoeia, vocal imitation, and sound synaesthesia identified by Mithen as traces of 'Hmmmmm' in language are related by Tomlinson to an affective or emotional prosody that he describes as "the general shaping of pitch, rhythm, and volume for pragmatic purposes in discourse, especially to communicate emotive attitudes or stances" (120). He contends that it is "the kind of prosody in modern speech that bears a strong kinship to the ancient heritage of gesture-calls and protodiscourse," and observes that it is not tied to phonology like linguistic prosody, nor is it ordered in "a generative, systematic fashion," and can thus be said to constitute a form of "'paralinguistic' prosody" whose affective intonational contours, or tunes, appear to have no connection to the structures of morphology and syntax (120). Humans have retained the capacity to intuitively sense melodic shape, which entails recognizing whether a melody goes up or down, and whether its tonality is high, low or monotonal, which Tomlinson links to "broad pattern-processing," namely, the perception of melodic contour inherited from ancestral gesture-calls. Moreover, humans also have the capacity to perceive "arrays of successive discrete pitches (or intervals between them), wholes built from the joining of discrete smaller units," which he relates to

combinatorial structuring and cognition in music that is non-existent in the processing of language, even in the case of tonal languages (121). Finally, "sensitivity to timbral differences," another highly complex and refined human capacity, that pertains exclusively to music-processing, is essential to the perception of "the balance of overtones comprised in a pitch and the natures of onset and decay of its sounding," which entails the subtle gradation of one timbre into the next along a continuum (122). Vocal timbre in language is similar to pitch in music since the ability to distinguish vowel sounds from other types of sound is a fundamental aspect of contrastive phonology, whereas musical timbres are part of a continuous spectrum (122). Tomlinson summarizes these differences between music and language as follows: "Pitch is discrete in musicking but not in language; timbre is partly discrete in language but not in musicking; and neither one is discrete in gesture-calls" (123). This enables him to shed light on the distance separating the gesture-calls of protodiscourse from modern musicking and language alike, and to assert that although "an advanced gesture-call system does not amount either to a musical protolanguage or to a protomusic," the type of protodiscourse produced by such a system marks both musicking and language "*as developments yet to come*" (123).

Neuroscientist and musician Daniel J. Levitin, who is interested in the relationship between sound perception, physical movement, and emotions, proposes one possible adaptive scenario: "those of our ancestors who were endowed with an emotional system that was directly connected to their motor system could react more quickly, and thus live to reproduce and pass on those genes to another generation" (Levitin, *This Is Your Brain on Music* 183). In support of this hypothesis, he remarks that "sounds typically trigger the greatest startle reactions," and specifies that the auditory system is "the fastest and arguably the most important," given that movement occurring in the atmosphere surrounding us causes air molecules to vibrate, which we perceive as sound (185). He points out that "any organism that evolved in a world with vibrating objects is likely—given enough evolutionary time—to have evolved a processing unit in the brain that incorporated these regularities of its world" (44). Our ability to perceive and differentiate an extremely wide range of sonorous stimuli might thus be linked to the capacity of our ancestors "to react quickly—emotionally and with movement—to potentially dangerous sounds," which would imply that we inherited what Levitin describes as "an exquisite sensitivity to change" (186).

Since one of the most prized emotions produced by music is pleasure, or the type of "positive mood and affect" that neurologists associate with "increased dopamine levels," Levitin speculates that music has the capacity to improve people's mood because it conveys "the same emotions that vocal communication does, but in a non-referential, and nonspecific way" (191). From an evolutionary perspective, this may imply that "music taps into primitive brain structures involved with

motivation, reward, and emotion" via complex cognitive processing that makes musicking activities possible, namely, the synchronization of neural oscillators with the pulse of music (191). He suggests that this form of cognitive processing can produce a sense of satisfaction and even delight because culture and experience have taught us that music is not threatening: "Music breathes, speeds up, and slows down just as the real world does, and our cerebellum finds pleasure in adjusting itself to stay synchronized" (191). He stresses that while our response is "largely pre- or unconscious," it relies on "an exquisite orchestration of brain regions" and occurs via pathways that link the ear to the cerebellum and the limbic circuit, rather than via the ear-auditory cortex circuit, a collaborative form of orchestration that involves "both the oldest and newest parts of the human brain," so that all of these different pathways "integrate into our experience of a single song" (192).

This raises the question of the emergence and development of singing, whose performative and affective dimensions are invoked by Tomlinson in his conclusion, when he states "but only *lift a voice in song*, and all humans are struck" (288). In the first chapter, he addresses the evolutionary significance of vocality when specifying that "the communicative functions of vocalization that preceded musicking and language helped to determine both deep connections and deep differences between them" (49). He goes on to distinguish singing from speech in terms of their different expressive and informational ends while suggesting that both rely on similar cognitive capacities, and contends that "song offers itself, in this complex relation to language, as a second modern behavior that protolinguistic analyses need to account for" (91). Most importantly, he asserts that "the special attributes of song and music can widen the question of protolanguage from language narrowly conceived," so as to avoid making fruitless teleological assumptions about the evolutionary advantages of linguistic communication over musical expression (91). *A Million Years of Music* therefore actively resists music-based explanations for the origin of language that frequently underpin language-centric evolutionary theories of cognition, affirming instead that the fundamental features of musicking are "neither language-like nor symbol-like," and compellingly arguing that "from these differences come many clues to its ancient emergence" (24). Along with Mithen, Tomlinson identifies traces of ancient vocalization in both singing and speech that potentially connect us to the non-semantic and embodied dimensions of ancestral forms of protodiscourse, whose non-symbolic vocal efficacy relied on tonality, timbre, and melodic contour as constituents of affective acoustical stimulus-and-response. While Mithen equates genetic continuity with an unbroken lineage to the ancient 'Hmmmmm' of our hominin ancestors whose affective power can be reactivated through singing, Tomlinson suggests that song might constitute the most powerful, efficacious, and mysterious manifestation of our connection to this pre-musical and pre-linguistic biocultural heritage.

Levitin concurs with Mithen and Tomlinson when pointing to the complex cognitive capacities that we have inherited from ancestors who were able to perceive a rich spectrum of sounds. He stresses that the human brain is able to detect tonality, timbre, pitch, and overtones "automatically, without our conscious awareness" (*This Is Your Brain on Music* 41). This instinctive ability that requires no prior musical training has "a great survival value," Levitin remarks, given that "the timbre of a sound is the principal feature that distinguishes the growl of a lion from the purr of a cat, the crack of thunder from the crash of ocean waves," and this capacity for "timbral discrimination is so acute in humans that most of us can recognize hundreds of different voices" since each of them has a distinct "timbral finger print," while our sensitivity to minute timbral variations also enables us to recognize someone's mood or emotional state in the sound of their voice (44–7). He further observes that our ability to sense how sound dynamically changes across time is linked to our sensitivity to movement, rhythm, and energy, that is to say, what makes singing a more deeply embodied experience than speaking: "Rhythm and meter are the engine driving virtually all music, and it is likely that they were the very first elements used by our ancestors to make protomusics" (55). He relates musical rhythmic patterns to the notion of pulse that keeps us grounded and oriented, whereas rhythmic variations keep us alert to possibilities, along with variations in pitch, timbre, and contour that reflect the changing dynamics of our emotional lives and interpersonal relations (169, 171–3). When discussing the neural basis for our innate sensitivity to these specific sonic qualities, Levitin refers to research linking the embodied dimension of music to the cerebellum, namely, the part of the brain that is "involved closely with timing and with coordinating movements of the body," and which has been identified as "one of the oldest parts of the brain, evolutionarily speaking," so that it is sometimes referred to as "the reptilian brain" (174). He specifies that the cerebellum looks like a small brain located at the back of the neck, underneath the cerebrum, which is the larger, main part of the brain, yet in spite of its small size and its weighing "only 10 percent as much as the rest of the brain, [the cerebellum] contains 50 to 80 percent of the total number of neurons" (174). In addition to being linked to "the repetitive, oscillary quality of movement," this part of the brain also appears to be involved in emotion, so that a connection between movement and affect has been hypothesized (175). The possible relationship between movement, timing, and emotion is especially relevant to research on similarities between music perception and motor action planning, which raises the question of an evolutionary basis for such interconnections (178).

Singing as an Ancient Mode of Cognition

Searching for an ancestral connection between movement and vocality is central to Grotowski's performance research on songs linked to "'source' techniques," which

he considers to be "performative" because they pertain "to the organism in action, to the drive, to the organicity," as well as "ecological" because they are "linked to the forces of life, to what we can call the living world" ("The Theatre of Sources" 258–9). Grotowski's Laboratory Theatre collaborators envision the voice as a vehicle: Zygmunt Molik and Rena Mirecka both assert that working with the voice is an embodied process which requires sustaining a fluid circulation of energy in the entire organism, experienced as an open channel, so that the guiding principles of the physical training also apply to the vocal training. Mirecka compares the organic connection between movement and sound to the action of delicately stepping into a canoe to navigate the river of one's creative process; Ludwik Flaszen evokes an experience of wholeness in which one becomes part of everything that exists; and Grotowski envisions a relation with one's ancestors that requires more than artistic competence (see Magnat, *Grotowski, Women, and Contemporary Performance*).

In his talk "*Tu es le fils de quelqu'un* (You Are Someone's Son)," from which I derived the title of my research project "Meetings with Remarkable Women – *Tu es la fille de quelqu'un* (You Are Someone's Daughter)," Grotowski refers to an ancient position of the body in which "the spine is slightly inclined, the knees slightly bent, a position held at the base of the body by the sacrum-pelvis complex" (297). Associating this position not only with *Homo sapiens* but also with *Homo erectus* because it "seems to fade out of sight in the night of the ages," he links it to the reptilian brain, "which is the oldest and which begins in the posterior part of the brain and descends the whole length of the spinal column" (297). Having specified: "I speak of all this through images, without any scientific pretensions," he suggests that "we have in our body an ancient body, a reptile body," and points to the techniques developed by various traditions to access "the primary energy" within that body (297). He observes that when moving and vocalizing in a way that is both organic and structured, rhythm emerges from "the waves of the 'old body' in the actual body" (299). When the performer engages in this process, the body's vertical axis becomes connected to "two different poles: that of instinct and that of consciousness," so that in traditional techniques "one holds these two extreme poles at the same time" (300). For the performer, this entails "*standing* in the beginning," the latter being defined by Grotowski as "all of our original nature, … with all its aspects: divine or animal, instinctual, passionate," which are "present now, here," in the performer's way of standing and keeping watch with her consciousness (300). He evokes "a quality of vigilance," a heightened embodied awareness producing a presence hinging upon acute perceptivity, and "it is this tension between the two poles that gives a contradictory and mysterious plenitude," which he contrasts with "our everyday tepidity" when we are "neither fully animal nor fully human" (300). He refers to dances and songs that are "the outcome of very long practices" whose purpose is "to reach a totality, a fullness" (301). From this perspective, "the dance

and song which should be executed in a structured and organic manner, and at the same time kept up with alertness," enable the performer to enter a non-representational performative process whose potency has to do with "the circulation of energy," a primary energy whose source is found within the reptile body (301).

Grotowski specifies that he is interested in "a way of life and cognition" that is "a very old way" ("*Réponse à Stanislavski*" [Reply to Stanislavski]; quoted in Osinski 400). He provides the example of Late Paleolithic paintings and engravings dating to 14,000 years ago and located on the walls of the deep interior chamber of the Trois Frères cave in southwestern France. The most famous figure, which is both painted and engraved, is a hybrid being that looks like a dancing human wearing antlers and a stallion's tail. It is known as the Horned God, or the Sorcerer (according to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*). Grotowski questions conventional interpretations of these ancient paintings:[1]

> I am not sure whether those who painted on the walls of the Trois Frères cave sought merely to exorcise their fears. Perhaps … but not only. And I think that the painting was not the goal. The painting was the way. In this regard I feel much closer to that cave painter than to artists who think that they create the avant-garde of the new theatre.
>
> (quoted in Osinski 400)

Cajete also refers to this rock art site when defining creativity as a holistic process in his discussion of "art as means of ceremony and transformation":

> The emphasis in the creation of traditional art is upon getting to the heart, the spirit, of an event or entity … [T]he process and context of art-making [are] infinitely more important than the product … There is a conscious effort to simplify, to become aware, to sharpen the senses, to concentrate, to revitalize the whole being. The idea here is to develop the ability to imbue an artifact with pure and simple vitality and to have the clarity of mind and stamina required to undertake a very difficult and sometimes dangerous task, such as the initiatory paintings of the caves of Lascaux and Les Trois Frères, France. There is a guiding spirit, or … the notion of applying one's will to concentrate one's whole being into a task, a creation, a song, a dance, a painting, an event, a ceremony, a ritual.
>
> (*Native Science* 48)

In light of Grotowski's and Cajete's insights into the transformative dimension of creativity, it is possible to envision proto-painting, proto-dancing, and proto-singing not merely as an affective coping mechanism, but as a way of entering a

performative and ecological process developed by our earliest ancestors for adaptive biocultural coevolutionary purposes that our reptile body still remembers today.

Grotowski's practical research on what he calls "true traditional songs," which are anonymous, is rooted in his conviction that the vibratory quality of these songs can reconnect us to a place and a time "difficult to imagine, when for the first time someone sang this song" ("*Tu es le fils de quelqu'un*" 303–4). Referring to the intangible cultural heritage transmitted across generations within the relatively recent history of modern human ancestry, from which we nevertheless tend to feel increasingly disconnected, he states:

> We say: it's the people who sang. But among these people, there was someone who began. Perhaps it was the moment of tending a fire in the mountain on which someone was looking after animals. And to keep warm in front of this fire someone began to repeat the opening words. It wasn't a song yet, it was an incantation. A primary incantation that someone repeated … [I]f you are capable of going with this song towards the beginning, it is no more your grandmother who sings, but someone from your lineage, … from your village, from the place where the village was … You gradually refind the first incantations. You refind the landscape, the fire, the animals … One sings differently in the mountains and in the plains. In the mountains one sings from one high place to another, so the voice is thrown like an arc … Who was this person who sang thus? Was this person young or old? Finally, you will discover that … [y]ou are not a vagabond, you come from somewhere, from some country, from some place, from some landscape … It is you two hundred, three hundred, four hundred, or one thousand years ago, but it is you.
>
> (303–4)

Grotowski specifies that this way of working with traditional songs "consists of discovering in yourself an ancient corporality to which you are bound by a strong ancestral relation," and he describes this creative process as follows:

> Starting from details you can discover in you somebody other – … the distant echo of a color of the voice [enables] you to reconstruct a corporality. First, the corporality of somebody known, and then more and more distant, the corporality of the unknown one, the ancestor. Is this corporality literally as it was? Maybe not literally – but yet as it might have been.
>
> ("Performer" 378–9)

Conducting this type of research or work-on-oneself, to borrow Stanislavsky's terminology, requires taking personal risks:

> [I]n starting with a small element – a song – one opens several problems of belonging, of *appearance* of the song, of incantation, of our human ties, of our lineage in time, … and along with this appears the classical question of your craft. … It's not a matter of playing the role of somebody who you are not … [T]hen it is a question of you – of man [*czlowiek*][2] – that opens up. With this question … , a big door opens: behind you, there's artistic credibility and in front of you something which does not demand technical competence, but competence of yourself.
>
> ("*Tu es le fils de quelqu'un*" 304–5)

For Grotowski, this research is clearly a matter of doing, and he refers to artistic practice as the way, an embodied engagement that requires standing in the beginning, which implies a process that is both performative and ecological since it entails cultivating the productive tension between instinct and consciousness, and fully experiencing the contradictions and mysteries pertaining to our own organicity, to the forces of life, and to the living world. Importantly, this process combines receptive action and active receptivity, which requires the development of "an organism-channel through which the energies circulate, the energies transform, the subtle is touched" ("Performer" 378). The ability to become a conduit for human and more-than-human energies and to hone active receptivity into vigilant awareness constitute the necessary conditions for the phenomenon that Grotowski identifies as presence: "*Awareness* means the consciousness which is not linked to language (the machine for thinking), but to Presence" ("From the Theatre Company to Art as Vehicle" 125). From such a perspective, presence-as-consciousness may be associated with the sense of plenitude that he views as the purpose of source techniques, yet this particular form of presence is neither a given nor is it permanent, for it must be achieved anew each time through practice and can only be experienced in the here and now, a process that cannot be captured by representation or articulated by theory, these machines for thinking whose reliance on language necessarily limits their capacity to convey cognitive processes hinging upon embodiment and lived experience.

Presence, Embodied Experience, and Consciousness

This connection between presence and consciousness achieved through doing is central to philosopher Alva Noë's investigation of an embodied way of knowing that he defines as "a perceptual or experiential mode" (*Varieties of Presence* 127). Emphasizing that "concepts and sensorimotor skills get applied in perceptual experience in the distinctively perceptual mode," he specifies that these skills are not used "to categorize objects or to represent them in our minds," and points out

that "conceptual and sensorimotor skills are not means of representation; they are means of achieving access to things" (124). He therefore rejects introspective phenomenological accounts of consciousness requiring that "we turn our attention away from the world," and argues instead that we must "turn our attention to what we are doing, to our engaged activities" because consciousness, which he links to experience, is not something that happens inside us, or to us, but is something that we do (130). Noë thus envisions "experience itself as a kind of dance—a dynamic of involvement and engagement with the world around us," which leads him to infer: "To study the experience, we must study the dance" (130). He further suggests that grappling with "live performance," either from the perspective of an audience member or a performer, "is exactly the same as that which we confront when we wish to undertake an investigation of our own experience" (131). As with Grotowski, who identifies source techniques requiring the performer to hold the two poles of instinct and consciousness simultaneously in order to fully experience her animal and human nature, Noë considers that being engaged in a performative process constitutes "the aesthetic stance: a critical awareness of and sensitivity to what you are doing" (131). Although he does not refer to the reptile body or the reptilian brain, Noë specifies that the aesthetic stance is not an exclusively human capacity since it opens up "the possibility of appreciating the continuity between animal and human minds" (131). He notes that investigating consciousness entails wrestling with "the problem of the world's presence to mind," and maintains that "how the world shows up for us depends not only on our brains and nervous systems, but also on our bodies, our skills, our environment, the way we are placed in and at home in the world" (131–2). He further contends that the world shows up for animals and humans thanks to what they can do, namely, thanks to "the way [they] can achieve access," which depends on their relation to the world around them (132). Having established that "perceptual consciousness—experience—is what we share with other living creatures, and not something we possess apart," he concludes by stating: "It is precisely the aesthetic character of experience—that it is performed in dynamic exchange with the world around us—that brings this fact about our mutual nature into focus" (133).

Noë links the notion of presence to sensory perception understood as "a dynamic, two-way exchange between the perceiver and what is perceived" (36). He relates perceptual awareness to "a sensitivity to perturbations induced by movement (and action)," and defines perceptual presence "as a kind of two-way transaction" in which our attention is seized by people and things in our immediate environment, thereby foregrounding the embodied dimension of our relation to the world (36). He highlights the fragility and vulnerability characterizing such an experiential modality that critically hinges upon embodied sensitivity: "to know the world, we must move and inquire and explore and exercise our practical and

conceptual knowledge," and points out that our on-going engagement in these activities reflects "our implicit appreciation that perceptual presence is always a work in progress" (40). Presence is our way of achieving access to the world through our transactions with people and things around us, so that "all human achievements depend on our presence in an environment that supports our weight and enables our action" (43). He suggests that we have developed different ways, or a range of different "styles," to achieve or try to achieve access to the world, whether it be "writing, singing, painting, dancing," which leads him to ask: "For what is the mind of a person or animal but, in effect, the sum total, the repertoire, of available ways of achieving the world's presence?" (45). Challenging representation-based theories that consider thinking and perceiving as "different ways of *representing* how things are or might be," he envisions thought and perception processes as different styles of activities in which we engage to try to achieve "access to what there is," a perspective which effectively "demotes *representation* from its theoretical pride of place" (45–6). This compelling reclamation of presence as a vital aspect of non-representational modalities of knowledge may be related to what Grotowski describes as a very old way of life and cognition, whose performative and ecological dimensions he links to source techniques that Noë identifies as styles: "To understand presence, and ourselves, we look not inward, but to the way the skillful person (or animal) performs its life with style" (44).

Reactivating Cultural Legacy through Traditional Vocal Practice

Seeking to reconnect with the style of my Occitan ancestors through (re-)learning the songs of my tradition constitutes my way of taking up Grotowski's challenge. While I was born and raised in Occitania, whose vocal music tradition I associate with my Mediterranean roots, hence my identity, I have not inherited the repertoire directly from those in my lineage, who sang these songs before me. Given the fragility of my transactions with my mostly unknown cultural ancestors, reactivating their songs requires me to commit to perceptual sensitivity as my aesthetic stance, to rely on the ancient competence of my reptile body, and to place unconditional trust in the performative power of vocality. The sense of loss that colors my lack of strong ancestral relation to a nearly extinct language belonging to an older way of life is paradoxically counterbalanced by the sense of plenitude I sometimes experience in the moment of singing, as if the sonic waves of this vocal action reverberated further and further back, toward the source of the song, taking me each time a little closer to the beginning.

Achieving access to this repertoire entails learning it from singers familiar with the source techniques of the Occitan tradition transmitted by elders who

generously shared their cultural knowledge with a generation of young musicians engaged throughout the 1970s and 1980s in the makeshift ethnographic practice of *collectage*. This grassroots movement was inspired in part by the American folk revival instigators Alan Lomax and Pete Seeger, as exemplified by Seeger's open letter "*Ne vous laissez pas coca-coloniser*" (Resist Coca-Colonization) published in 1972 in the French popular music magazine *Rock & Folk*. In this text, Seeger challenges music practitioners to rediscover their own popular music traditions to counter a dangerous form of cultural imperialism supported by the American and European pop music industries (see Mazerolle, *La chanson occitane 1965–1997*, 180).

In his preface to the edited volume *Chansons d'amour en Provence* (*Love Songs in Provence*), ethnomusicologist Luc Charles-Dominique contends that the on-going transmission of traditional songs in Occitan demonstrates the resilience of cultural memory embedded in these songs, whose dynamic reactivation can reveal the contemporary relevance and future potentialities of the Occitan cultural heritage (8–9). Furthermore, this vocal tradition can be said to epitomize linguistic diversity expressed through regional variations of the Occitan language known as Provencal, Languedocien, Auvergnat, Limousin, and Gascon, which were spoken in specific areas of the Occitan territory until the second half of the twentieth century.

I have thus been involved for over a decade in a form of fieldwork-apprenticeship guided by my desire to engage with this contested cultural legacy: I have been learning traditional songs that were preserved by means of *collectage* and that are now part of a vast archive combining audio recordings with written documentation and specialized scholarship, curated by two major Occitan cultural centers located in the cities of Toulouse and Béziers. One may, of course, ask to what extent it is possible to reactivate cultural memory linked to a tradition so devalued on its own territory that transmission processes were interrupted several generations ago. Is it possible to speak of a living Occitan cultural heritage or does it make more sense to free oneself from the yoke of legitimacy and authenticity to engage in the construction or invention of a cultural imaginary and a chosen identity? Is there an alternative to such positionalities that mutually exclude one another? Is it possible to experience, in the present moment of performance, an identity that is both constructed and inherited, imagined and alive, traditional and contemporary?

I suggest that, as an embodied creative practice, singing can provide an experiential perspective on these challenging questions, even when such a practice is based on a precarious relationship to vocal tradition negotiated through an indirect form of cultural revitalization, which, in my case, is complicated by not speaking the Occitan language. My grandparents, born at the end of the first decade of the twentieth century in occitanophone families, were part of the first generation of children who learned to speak and write French in the public school system. My parents belong to the next generation whose first language was French, even if during their youth they heard their

parents and grandparents express themselves in their regional dialect. As for me, I am part of a new generation that has been entirely cut off from its ancestral culture and language, and I have renewed my connection to my tradition through singing workshops offered by artists such as Pèire Boissière, a respected *collecteur* and traditional singer from Languedoc, recognized as a major specialist of Occitan monophonic singing; Joan Francés Tisnèr, an influential musician and singer from Gascony, who creates imaginative cultural events bridging tradition and experimentation; and Manu Théron, an adventurous singer, musician, and cultural diversity advocate, who grounds Occitan music renewal in the exploration of Mediterranean musical traditions.

Archetypal Vocal Improvisation

While singing songs in the critically endangered Occitan language has powerfully fueled contemporary expressions of radical cultural activism (see Magnat "Occitan Music Revitalization" and "*Chanter la Diversité Culturelle en Occitanie*"), I have become aware over the course of my practice-based research that Occitan music traditions once encompassed non-representational vocal modalities employing vocables, devoid of referential meaning, as if such modalities were deeply rooted in the proto-musical and proto-linguistic vocal practices of my distant cultural ancestors, who left traces of a mysterious way of being and knowing on the walls of the Trois Frères cave in southern France. As with the speculative interpretations proposed by Mithen, Tomlinson, and Levitin, my hypothesis simply points to a possibility which I explore through my embodied investigation of ancestral vocality. Singing Occitan songs is not the goal of this creative research, it is the way by which access to the Occitan vocal tradition may be achieved; by which the source techniques of that tradition may be tested; and by which phonic/sonic energies may (re)activate the experience of presence as consciousness within the resonating world.

I would like to emphasize that the notion of a resonating world is not used as a metaphor in oral histories testifying to this phenomenon, but evokes instead the tangible reality brought into being by a particular type of vocal improvisation performed by my immediate Occitan cultural ancestors. This unconventional form of traditional singing, composed mostly of the elongated vowel sounds "o" and "a" linked by the consonant sound "l," was used to serenade the dawn across vast expanses of pasture lands, echoing up the hills and down the valleys as the sun began to rise. Long lines of vibration emanating from various locations wove the dense phonic texture of a collective vocal vault, connecting the voices of each singer whose timbre, tonality, and melodic contour were recognized by the others, a personal vocal style to which they responded with vocalizations of their own.

Pèire Boissière suggested during the interview I conducted with him at his home in July 2016,[3] that this form of vocal improvisation constitutes "*l'archétype du chant*

finalement, parce qu'il n'y a pas de paroles, et donc il n'y a que le corps … il n'y a que le corps et la voix" (the archetypal song, ultimately, because there are no lyrics, so there's only the body … there's only the body and the voice). Both men and women practiced this singing at daybreak while vigilantly guiding a pair of harnessed oxen or cows that pulled a plow across an open field. Boissière observed that the archetypal dimension of these improvised songs lies precisely in their having no lyrics: "*C'est du vocal à l'état pur, enfin même, c'est pas du vocal, c'est du non-verbal, enfin, je sais pas comment il faut appeler ça, en fait*" (It's pure vocality … and ultimately it's something even beyond that … because it is non-verbal vocality, ultimately, so I don't really know what it should be called, in fact; July 18, 2016 interview). Speculations about the archetypicality of this singing style are grounded in ethnographic evidence showing that non-verbal forms of vocality similar to those of Occitania and of several other regions in France have been identified in various cultures around the world, thus appearing to belong to our shared intangible cultural heritage. In 2010, Boissière was invited to participate in an international symposium along with anthropologists, ethnomusicologists, musicologists, and ethnozoologists, who discussed their fieldwork in France, Portugal, Sicily, Spain, Italy, Bulgaria, Brazil, Guadeloupe, Yemen, China, Cambodia, and Thailand; the proceedings were published in a collected volume entitled, *Le chant de plein air des laboureurs* (*The Open Air Singing of Plowmen* 8, 372). Boissière contributed a chapter based on his *collectage* of the plowing songs that used to be practiced in the Agenais region of Occitania.

In the book's Introduction, historical linguist Pierre Rézeau refers to George Sand's 1846 pastoral novel *La Mare au diable* (*The Devil's Pool*) in which she evokes "*le chant solennel et mélancolique de l'antique tradition du pays*" (the solemn and melancholic song of the ancient tradition of the region), namely, the Berry, located in the center of France, inducing her to wonder whether this vocal practice might have originally been sacred, as its incantatory tonalities were once considered to exert mysterious influences (quoted in Rézeau 2012: 33; my trans.). Rézeau notes that the traditional vocal practice that Sand seeks to ennoble in her writing has been described much less appreciatively by other observers through their use of the terms "'*chant monotone et traînant*', '*chant lourd et monotone*', '*chant guttural*', '*hurlement modulé en chanson*'" ('monotonous and drawn-out singing', 'heavy and monotonous singing', 'guttural singing', 'howling modulated into a song'; 33; my trans.).

In his chapter entitled "*Lo branle de boièr: chants de labour en Agenais*" ("*Lo branle de boièr:* Plowing Songs in the Agenais Region"), Boissière cites six Occitan elders, all born before 1900, whose testimonies he recorded in southwestern France. This unique auditory archive, included in the book's companion CD, provides important insights into the regional variations that characterize this particular form of traditional singing called by Occitan speakers "*lo branle de boièr*," "*branle boièr*,"

"*branloboièr*," or "*cantar boièr*," whose literal translation in French is "*chanter bouvier*" (cow herdsman singing; Boissière, "*Lo branle de boièr*" 156). The term *branle*, rooted in the traditional musical form known as *rondeau*, signifies a type of movement more or less regulated by tempo and duration, while the term *boièr* designates a person working with cattle (usually oxen or cows) to plow the earth, so that in French this vocal practice is designated as "*chant de labour*" (plowing song; Boissière, "*Lo branle de boièr*" 156). Boissière infers from his encounters with these Occitan elders that the "*branle de boièr*" practiced in the Haut-Agenais region was powerfully projected outward as if addressed to the surrounding space and other *laboureurs* (plowmen) in the vicinity, trailing relatively slowly in the air, and resonating most powerfully when occurring before daybreak (159). In their recorded testimonies, the elders fondly remember this way of singing and offer their personal *branle de boièr* rendition based on their memories of a bygone era. The examples they provide all hinge upon the sound series "*lò ò ò*" (as noted by Boissière in his commentaries), yet when listening carefully to the recording it is possible to discern variations introduced by singers each time the sound series is repeated. One of these elders is Félicien Beauvier, who was born in 1894 to parents who were themselves singers. This exceptionally gifted Occitan vocal practitioner, whose extensive repertoire Boissière documented by means of *collectage*, recalls listening to others who sang *branle de boièr* and provides the example of two particular singers who would respond to each other as in a dialogue. He amusedly reflects on this memory, explaining that one would sing "*lò ò ò*" whereas the other would sing "*lè è è*" and recounts the way in which their two voices, each originating from a different place, could be heard resonating across the entire valley. Although these various renditions clearly share general structural and rhythmic similarities characteristic of the Occitan *branle de boièr* tradition, each one follows a distinct melodic pattern, which confirms that practitioners would engage in structured improvisation through which they entered into a non-verbal vocal dialogue with each other across considerable distances. As remarked by Boissière, this collective form of improvisational singing required each practitioner to respond to one another so that it could no longer function after the last generation of traditional plowmen had passed away (July 18, 2016 interview).

Le chant de plein air des laboureurs also features a chapter on transmission processes written by singer and musician Mic Baudimant, who emphasizes the improvisatory dimension of this way of singing and points out that research into this vocal style reveals the complexity of an oral tradition requiring a high level of competence from singers, whose creative freedom was earned through immersion in that tradition and through extensive practice (Baudimant, "*Transmettre le briolage*" 299). Suggesting that these rural artists had developed their own poetic version of the blues, he remarks: "*Dans le domaine du language parlé ou chanté tout comme dans le domaine*

instrumental, l'improvisation n'est ni aisée … ni rare! Des traditions basques, bretonnes, etc., s'enorgueillissent de cette aptitude" (Within the domain of spoken or sung language as well as that of instrumental music, improvisation is neither easy … nor rare! The Basque and Breton traditions, among others, take great pride in this aptitude; 304; my trans.). Boissière himself makes clear that the Occitan tradition valorized such an ability and that the cultural continuity of *branle de boièr* depended on musical skills transmitted from generation to generation, which leads him to observe that this form of improvisational singing can be quite challenging for contemporary singers unfamiliar with the repertoire: "*En réalité, étant parfois en situation de formateur (ou transmetteur) en chant, je sais que celui qui rencontre ce chant aujourd'hui peut avoir beaucoup de mal à le reproduire!*" (Actually, being at times in the position of training (or transmitting) songs, I am well aware that encountering this type of song today can be very challenging for a singer when it comes to reproducing it!; Boissière, "*Lo branle de boièr*" 157). In the concluding section of the symposium's proceedings, Rézeau reminds delegates that Boissière provides crucial insights into the transmission processes pertaining to this form of traditional singing when stating: "*Il faut l'entendre longuement pour pouvoir le chanter sans le faire exprès*" (It is necessary to listen to it for a long time in order to be able to sing it unintentionally; "*Lo branle de boièr*" 372).[4]

My Occitan ancestors therefore had the ability to skillfully and freely (or "unintentionally") improvise non-verbal vocal patterns featuring varying tonalities and melodic contours, which they performed along with a physically demanding form of labor, and this traditional practice might have been their way of sustaining a vital relationship with animals, other singers, and the environment. If so, such a performative and ecological engagement with the world appears to share striking similarities with the sophisticated form of proto-singing, based on a complex system of gesture-calls, employed by my much more distant cultural ancestors who painted the hybrid animal-human figure of the Sorcerer in the Trois Frères cave. Furthermore, the improvisational dimension of *branle de boièr* can be found throughout the Occitan vocal music tradition, and throughout traditional singing in general, even if plowmen seem to have developed abilities in that domain that exceed even the most demanding traditional expectations.

The Performative Power of Traditional Songs

During our interview, Boissière provided the example of harvest songs (*chants de moisson*), which he considers to constitute "*le répertoire le plus grandiose, et ce qui vocalement est le plus fort*" (the most powerful repertoire, which is the most vocally compelling) and which were sung collectively but must nevertheless be distinguished from polyphony as they entailed turn-taking and call-and-response that left room for the type of structured

improvisation afforded by plowing songs (July 18, 2016 interview). Associated with harvesting techniques using the sickle, these songs were performed in a way that gave harvesters a considerable amount of creative freedom as they each relied on their own vocal style to contribute to the collaborative rendition of a specific traditional song whose lyrics were distributed among participants. Boissière referred to "*De bon matin se lèva la filha d'un paisan*" (Early in the morning the peasant's daughter awakes), a harvest song often cited in the testimonies he gathered, and explained that it was probably performed as follows: a first harvester would sing the opening line, which would be repeated by a second harvester, then a third, a fourth, a fifth, and so on, but each harvester would sing the line in their own way. As there usually were numerous harvesters, completing the entire song could take quite a long time, a collective approach to singing that supported and valued individual interpretation (July 18, 2016 interview). Someone who once offered Boissière a testimony about this vocal practice enthusiastically exclaimed: "*Ah si vous aviez vu comment ils les envoyaient en l'air, ces chansons*" (Ah, if only you could have witnessed the way in which they threw these songs into the air; July 18, 2016 interview).

In his analysis of the affective and social dimensions of collective vocal practice within Mediterranean musical traditions, ethnomusicologist Bernard Lortat-Jacob highlights an important paradox: countering expectations of cultural conservatism, traditional vocal practice abhors plagiarism, cherishes stylistic divergences, and values audacious innovations above all else, even as it affirms the immutability of its musical domain ("*Donner de la voix, être ensemble*" 161). This clearly applies to Occitan plowing and harvesting songs since variations within the musical structure appear to have been the norm rather than the exception. Significantly, this seems to have been the case for most of the Occitan repertoire: whether they accompanied plowing and harvesting activities or processions for weddings and funerals, traditional songs were performed by singers and musicians who took full advantage of what Occitan music specialist Xavier Vidal describes as the elasticity of temperament and rhythmic structure, as revealed by the recordings produced by *collectage*. Vidal thus states:

> *Les anciens jouaient "faux". . . Si dans une échelle certaines notes sont justes par rapport au tempérament égal, certains degrés sont un peu "tirés," un peu "entre". [Quant aux] chanteurs [ils] sont rarement dans le tempérament égal.*
>
> Our elders played "out of tune". If within a specific scale some of the notes do correspond to equal temperament, some of the degrees are a little "stretched," a little "in-between". As for singers, they rarely sing within the frame of equal temperament.
>
> (*Pastel*; my trans)

As a traditional singer, Boissière learned Occitan songs that were transmitted orally across generations via the embodied processes of repetition, memorization, and

performance, that is to say, without relying on written notation, and he considers himself fortunate for having acquired a repertoire whose songs are "*en dehors*" (outside), by which he means that when attempting to write them down with the notes of the scale available to a piano player, it is impossible to accurately translate their tonal and timbral qualities or map out their melodic contours, aspects that crucially account for differences of interpretation based on regional variations, as well as on the personal style of each singer (July 18, 2016 interview). As Vidal remarks, with the passing of the elders who participated in *collectage*, "*les collecteurs peuvent être à leur tour des sources*" (now the *collecteurs* can, in turn, become sources; *Pastel*; my trans.). Indeed, all the Occitan songs that I have learned come from an oral tradition that singers such as Boissière accessed at its source via the experience of *collectage*, so that his work has now become a source for which I am grateful, as it gives me a point of entry into my cultural legacy.[5] I am also indebted to my distant hominin ancestors from whom I inherited a sensitivity to the vibratory qualities of sound, as well as the ability to intuitively respond vocally. For it is this inherited capacity to perceive sonic/phonic nuances such as timbre, tonality, melodic contour, rhythmic patterns, and discrete pitch that enables me to memorize traditional songs by ear, to explore the musical elasticity of the Occitan repertoire through the embodied experience of singing, and to engage in vocal improvisation as creative experimentation.

Boissière told me that, from his perspective as a singer, it is precisely the elasticity of traditional singing that makes the repertoire affectively powerful, and it is this qualitative dimension that touched him deeply during his experience of *collectage*, and that inhabits him today when performing these songs (July 18, 2016 interview). He explained that the Occitan vocal tradition discourages singers from mechanically reproducing a song, expecting them instead to fully develop their capacity for vocal interpretation:

> *Les grands chanteurs, ils étaient impliqués, ils étaient touchés par la source mais ils avaient leur être aussi à mettre dedans, donc je pense que ça a fonctionné comme ça … Et moi, sans m'en être rendu compte au départ, j'ai fonctionné de la même façon.*
>
> Great singers were engaged, they were touched by the source but they put their entire being into their singing, so I think this was how it functioned for them … And although I was initially unaware of this process, this is also how it functioned for me.
>
> (July 18, 2016 interview)

He made clear that performing a traditional song requires a high level of involvement:

> *Il faut y être dedans pour que ça fonctionne, il faut être habité par ce qu'on fait, il faut être, à la limite, liquéfié par ça, quoi, alors c'est difficile.*
>
> It is necessary to be inside for the song to function, to be inhabited by what you are doing, it is almost even necessary to be dissolved by this process, so it is challenging.
>
> (July 18, 2016 interview)

When I asked him by what he was inhabited, he replied that he wasn't sure and pointed to the convergence of what is being conveyed in the lyrics, the structure of the melody, and the vocal style, and emphasized that he likes to perform special songs that touch him deeply. He stated:

> *Pour que ça fonctionne à la fois pour soi et pour l'autre qui peut l'écouter, il faut y être dedans et puis qu'il y ait pas autre chose … il faut … être transporté par ça, quoi, enfin, halluciné, ça relève de l'hallucination, quoi, quand ça fonctionne.*
>
> For the song to function both for you and for someone who might listen, it is necessary to be inside and that nothing gets in the way … one must … be transported by this, you know, I mean, hallucinated, it has to do with hallucination, you know, when it functions.
>
> (July 18, 2016 interview)

He further noted that the affective power of a traditional song is not dependent on the singer's ability to realistically express the emotions that the song is supposed to stir up within the listener, and he insisted that singers should actually avoid singing a sad song in a sad way. By way of comparison, I shared with him the notion that acting becomes redundant and predictable when the meaning of the text is merely illustrated by the performer—an approach that Grotowski deems deplorably uncreative, and whose singing equivalent Boissière finds "*insupportable*" and "*emmerdant*" (unbearable and boring as shit; July 18, 2016 interview). Moreover, he remarked that while one may experience emotion while performing a song, "*si on l'exprime trop, si on la présente, on oblige l'autre à partager*" (if one expresses this emotion too much, if one displays it, then one forces the other into sharing; July 18, 2016 interview). I suggested that perhaps singing was about letting the song live its own life, which expresses itself through the singer, and he concurred:

> *Oui, c'est ça … On est pas là pour faire une démonstration, on est là pour … proposer quelque chose qui soit … qui pourra émouvoir celui qui est là mais sans lui dire, mon pauvre, là, il faut que tu pleures.*

> Yes, that's it … We are not here to give a demonstration, we are here to … propose something that … can move someone who is listening but without telling that person, my poor friend, here you must cry.
>
> (July 18, 2016 interview)

He then confided:

> *Pour moi, ce qu'il y a de plus beau, c'est quand l'émotion n'est pas mise en avant mais qu'elle peut apparaître, on sait pas pourquoi … quand la grâce arrive … on sait pas trop comment.*
>
> For me, what is most beautiful has to do with an emotion that is not brought to the fore but that is able to appear anyway, and one does not know why … that's when grace arrives … one does not really know how.
>
> (July 18, 2016 interview)

When I asked him whether he still found singing a little mysterious, he replied:

> *Oui, oui, et c'est étonnant, d'ailleurs … ce que ça peut faire … surtout pour celui qui n'a jamais chanté, bon, il peut se demander comment ça se fait que ça … ça va le toucher.*
>
> Yes, yes, and, besides … what is surprising is … what it can do … especially for the person who has never sung, for they might wonder how it is that … they can be touched by this.
>
> (July 18, 2016 interview)

Based on this conversation with Boissière, and in light of the wealth of testimonies gathered by means of *collectage*, as well as the wide range of case studies grounded in ethnographic fieldwork conducted in various world regions, I formulate the hypothesis that the endorsement and valorization of vocality as a vital source of knowledge, well-being, creativity, and agency, epitomized by the Occitan vocal tradition among others, might be rooted in the deep history of biocultural coevolution, through which we have inherited specific adaptive skills enabling us to perform our life with style.

Yet if the human need and desire to sing have persisted across hundreds of thousands of years, why did vocal practices that were widespread among rural communities in Occitania until the first decade of the twentieth century virtually disappear between the two world wars? During our conversation, Boissière observed: "*Et puis au bout d'un moment ça a été … aboli, parce que ça a paru comme quelque chose de complètement irrationnel*" (and then it was eventually … abolished, because it was perceived as something completely irrational; July 18, 2016 interview). When I asked him by whom this practice was abolished, he replied:

> *Ça a été aboli dans la tête des gens … parce que … c'était l'époque déjà où … le chant ça devait être quelque chose de sérieux, et puis ça c'était un truc de sauvages. On ne pouvait pas comprendre comment … alors que tout le monde était scolarisé.*
>
> It was abolished in people's minds … because … it was already the era in which … singing was considered as something that should be taken seriously, and this was the stuff of savages. People could not understand how this was possible, now that everyone was going to school.
>
> (July 18, 2016 interview)

In the chapter that Boissière contributed to *Le chant de plein air des laboureurs*, he similarly asserts:

> *Dans le Haut-Agenais les personnes nées à partir de 1900 (environ) ont entendu le chant de labour, mais ne l'ont pas pratiqué. On entend encore ce chant jusque dans les années 1920 ou 1930, mais j'imagine qu'à cette époque il semble tout à fait incompréhensible, inacceptable, dans les cadres mentaux de la nouvelle civilisation qui s'installe. Á quoi ça sert, de chanter lò ò ò ??? Ça fait sauvage, ça n'a plus sa place, on ne le comprend plus.*
>
> In the Haut-Agenais people born in 1900 (approximately) or later heard the plowing songs, but never practiced them. Although this type of singing was heard until the 1920s or 1930s, I would venture that, by then, it must have become completely incomprehensible, unacceptable, within the mental frames of the newly established civilization. For what is the use of singing *lò ò ò* ??? This has a savage-like feel, it no longer fits, it can no longer be understood.
>
> ("*Lo branle de boièr*" 161)

Indeed, the fact that this traditional vocal practice began to disappear before 1940, even though tractors were only adopted on most small farms between 1955 and 1960, points to its rapid cultural devalorization within modern French society, regardless of its connection to a form of traditional agriculture that persisted until motorized mechanical plowing became dominant ("*Lo branle de boièr*" 161). Boissière contends that people began to denigrate this vocal practice belonging to their ancestral cultural legacy because this way of singing now appeared to them as uncivilized and was offensive to a modern society upholding public education as an antidote to ancient regional cultures and languages. He is therefore hinting at France's problematic nationalist ideology—whose roots can be found, as I will demonstrate, in France's colonial history—that mandated the eradication of centuries-old oral transmission processes which had ensured the continuity of

traditions linked to specific regional identities. In Occitania, traditional plowing songs, which were wordless and improvisational—"*un truc de sauvages*" (the stuff of savages) that risked reminding French citizens of inglorious colonial debacles—suddenly disappeared along with entire repertoires of traditional songs whose lyrics were sung in the Occitan language, the latter henceforth becoming increasingly minoritized and endangered.

Boissière thus testified during our conversation:

> *Il y avait beaucoup de gens qui chantaient bien, et on chantait beaucoup, ce qui a disparu. Dans la génération de mes parents, personne ne chantait.*
>
> There were a lot of people who sang well, and there was a lot of singing, something which has disappeared. In my parents' generation, no one sang.
>
> (July 18, 2016 interview)

Whereas singing was a fundamental part of life in Occitania until at least the first decade of the twentieth century, very few people today seem to be familiar with and cherish the experience of singing, as if everyone had so profoundly disowned the collective memory of their ancestral cultural legacy that it had vanished without leaving a trace.

Internal Colonialism and the Construction of French National Identity

Historically, the 1970s' cultural resurgence of Occitan traditional music in which Boissière participated was coterminous with the emergence of left-wing Occitan political activism, whose leader Robert Lafont famously described the centralist control and economic exploitation of the Occitan territory by the French state as a form of "internal colonialism" (*La Révolution régionaliste* [*The Regionalist Revolution*] 140–2, 181–3). In his writings on Occitania, Lafont links French imperialism in the overseas colonies to the capitalist exploitation of natural resources and human labor in the southern regions of France, arguing in *Décoloniser en France* (*Decolonizing in France*) that both have been in the service of hegemonic political power centralized in Paris and supported by France's Bonapartist constitution (92–3, 175). He points out that France is the only European country whose cultural life relies on the integration of an official model institutionalized by the French state, a form of "authoritarian acculturation" promoting an elitist conception of culture and an exclusionary understanding of national identity that devalue and delegitimize regional popular cultures that are deemed provincial and antiquated (*Décoloniser* 196).

Indeed, the disappearance of Occitan traditional singing practices can be linked to the near eradication of regional languages by the politics of cultural assimilation

implemented by the state through the imposition of French as the official national language. In her examination of the contemporary performance of Occitan songs in Provence, sociologist Elizabeth Cestor historicizes the prohibition of regional languages in French public schools, a policy that was implemented in 1881 by Jules Ferry and that led to the social construction of regional oral cultures as relics of a bygone era associated with the alleged backwardness of rural communities, while the French language epitomized education, progress, and modernity (*Les musiques particularistes* 242–6). Traditional music rooted in regional linguistic and cultural practices was considered to constitute a potential threat to this newly forged sense of national identity because traditional music relied on the embodied transmission of oral knowledge operating outside the control of the public school system. In his polemical text *Histoire de France: L'Imposture!* (*French History is an Imposture!*), Georges Labouysse points to the colonialist mindset of this state-subsidized secular and mandatory education system, which was instituted by Ferry while he held the position of "*Ministre de l'Instruction publique et des colonies*" (Minister of Public Education and of the Colonies), and reports that the latter declared at an 1885 parliamentary debate on French colonial policy that it was the duty of the superior races to civilize the inferior ones, and that, in order to fulfill this duty, France must exert its influence throughout the entire world by means of its language, mores, flag, military forces, and cultural genius (197–9). As specified by sociolinguist Christian Lagarde, colonial domination is often instrumentalized through the imposition of the colonizers' linguistic and cultural models, to the detriment of its indigenous counterparts (179). Lagarde's analysis of the French politics of cultural assimilation lead him to suggest that the principle of equality underlying French republican discourse since the Revolution is in direct contradiction to its ensuing 200-year colonial history. He contends that France's failure to come to terms with this history is manifest in the problematic lack of social and ethno-cultural mixing in contemporary French society, as well as in the denial of cultural diversity through the repression of its own regional languages, cultures, and musical traditions. This is corroborated by the extensive sociolinguistic study conducted by a multi-university research group, directed by Georg Kremnitz, demonstrating that the state doctrine positing the French language as a guarantor of national unity has rendered the promotion of regional linguistic, cultural, and musical expression ideologically suspect, as exemplified by the unwillingness of both right-wing and left-wing French governments to ratify the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (*Histoire sociale des langues de France* 25, 86).

In *Bringing the Empire Back: France in the Global Age*, cultural historian Herman Lebovics confirms the correlation between colonialism and the imposition of a national language and official culture in France when he observes that, with the decline of the French colonial empire in the second half of the twentieth century,

colonial administrators were called back home to continue their civilizing mission in their own country. Summarizing the French colonial attitude toward Indigenous cultures with the phrase "ignore and reconstruct," Lebovics states: "What was not fully carried out in far off Africa could be done for the regions of the European land—and for the same reasons: to cultivate loyalty to France" (81–2). The "standard" French culture that had been instrumental in the education of colonial subjects would be used to "teach the provincials about a united, homogenized society" (82). For, if in the colonies the danger came from separatist movements, in France itself, it was regional, social, and political fragmentation that might undermine collective faith in national unity and the indivisibility of the Republic (79).

The construction of French national identity was therefore implemented through a programmatic institutionalization of official culture, generating a pervasive suspicion of diversity that still today conflates regional difference and ethnic difference associated with the cultural heritage of ex-colonial subjects. Assimilating these first-generation immigrants and their immediate descendants into French society has been central to the French republican project, and the notion of *intégration* promoted by the state continues to be upheld as an antidote to North American models of multiculturalism.

As noted by Lebovics, "The question of 'what does it mean to be French' continues to be the central one in culture, civil society, and politics" (190). Significantly, he devotes an entire chapter to "the rise of organized racist politics under Jean-Marie Le Pen," showing the extent to which the public debate on national identity has intensified under the growing influence of the neo-fascist party *Front National* (National Front) (135). Since the publication of his book in 2004, this influence has substantially increased, as reflected in the 2014 municipal and European elections; the 2015 regional elections that took place in the aftermath of the January *Charlie Hebdo* attacks and the November mass shootings in Paris; and in the presence of Marine Le Pen, the daughter of the party's founder, in the second round of the 2017 presidential elections. By receiving 34 percent of the vote, the highest score in its entire history, the National Front, renamed *Rassemblement National* (National Rally) in June 2018, was propelled to the rank of the third most-powerful political party in France (for a summary of the presidential election results, see Sénécat, Vaudano, and Pommiers, *Le Monde*, May 7, 2017).

Occitan Music Revitalization as Radical Cultural Activism

In this context, Occitan cultural activism, expressed most powerfully through the Occitan music revival, has a critical role to play in contemporary French society by providing a source of cultural resistance and creativity that can offer viable alternatives to the steady ascendancy of neo-fascist discourses that are dangerously

destabilizing mainstream French politics, and contributing to the rise of extreme right-wing movements throughout Europe. The political significance of Occitan activism is linked to its historical affiliation with the powerful social movement that took place in the Larzac region of Occitania over the entire decade of the 1970s, and that Lafont and Lebovics both consider to have anticipated and facilitated the emergence of the *altermondialisation* movement under the leadership of Occitan activist José Bové. Relating the struggle for regional autonomy in the Larzac to the postcolonial movement for self-determination in New Caledonia and to social movements in decolonized Senegal, Madagascar, and Guinea, Lebovics argues that "there is a direct line of connection from the 1970s [regionalist movement] in France back in time to the wave of decolonization of the 1960s and forward to the anti-globalization movements in subsequent decades" (19–20). It is therefore possible to situate Occitan cultural revitalization within this continuum of radical political activism, which has compelled Occitan music practitioners to become increasingly engaged with the issues raised by globalization. Indeed, they are uniquely positioned by their allegiance to the imagined community of Occitania, on whose territory the Larzac resistance unfolded, to claim a radically inclusive conception of cultural identity by embracing the intercultural dimension of their Mediterranean musical heritage to reconcile regional specificity and cultural hybridity.

In her examination of the multiple facets of Mediterranean musical practices, anthropologist Tullia Magrini observes that the Mediterranean Sea has served "as the venue of intense cultural interaction between countries in Europe, Asia Minor, and North Africa, a medium for the circulation of ideas and values that cross national and continental boundaries." She deduces that conducting research on "musical phenomena in their Mediterranean 'dimension' … forces us to be constantly aware … of the richness of historical and cultural relations involved in the production of such phenomena" (*Music and Gender* 25). Accounting for these intercultural relations should therefore be pivotal to the investigation of traditional musical and vocal practices in Occitania.

In *Au-delà des rives: Les Orients de l'Occitanie* (*Beyond the Shores: The Orients of Occitania*), Alem Surre-Garcia foregrounds the intercultural nature of the Occitan tradition when pointing out that Mediterranean cultural practices were shaped by the vibrant convergence of Muslim, Jewish, and Christian worldviews. Consequently, the *pays d'oc* inherited a profoundly original and richly complex imaginary comprised of diverse forms of cultural memory that mutually contradict and reinforce each other through a productive form of creative tension (21–2). This leads Surre-Garcia to suggest that the lyric poetry of the troubadours, whose illustrious culture is generally recognized by historians as foundational to the constitution of Occitania, was significantly influenced by Arabo-Andalusian poetry transmitted to the troubadours by the Mozarabs and Sepharades encountered in their travels

(222–3). He notes that the sung poetry of the troubadours emerged at the same time as *zejal*, a type of sacred singing that originated from Zaragoza in Spain and merged Western and Eastern spiritual traditions. Popularized in Cordoba, *zejal* became an erotic-elegiac genre that valorized a form of courtly love whose recurring themes also characterized the songs of the troubadours (228). Whereas only 250 melodies out of 2,500 poetic texts performed by the troubadours have reached us, Surre-Garcia points to traces of the vocal interpretation of these musical compositions in manuscripts that convey the melismatic specificities of the troubadours' vocal techniques, revealing a highly sophisticated vocal tradition that appears to be related to its Indian and Arabic counterparts (232). From these multifarious cultural interactions emerged the Occitan term *conviviencia*, defined by Surre-Garcia as the art of living together while respecting differences on mutual terms of equality (251).

The reconciliation of Occitan musical practice with its historically transnational and intercultural Mediterranean dimensions is perhaps most radically achieved by Manu Théron, who observes in his 2014 album *Sirventés, chants fougueux des pays d'Oc/Occitan Protest Songs* that the lyric poetry of the troubadours, sung in an ancient form of the Occitan language, provides us with examples of effective creative resistance to religious and political hegemonies.[6] The *sirventés*, a form of protest song, thus functioned as social critique commenting on current affairs and indicting the shortcomings of the powerful, including God and those acting in his name, such as the Pope and the Crusaders who ruthlessly crushed the Cathars in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries to colonize the *Pays d'Oc* (Théron, *Sirventés*). In a Radio France International interview about this album, Théron envisions the very act of singing in Occitan as a way of performing resistance, and he grounds this practice in the political history of Occitania by referring to three key moments: the 1906–07 winemakers' strike featuring placards in Occitana; the post-World War II emergence of left-wing Occitanism, whose members included heroes of the Resistance, whereas some of the more conservative Occitanists had been swayed by the Collaboration; and the influential social movement of the Larzac region in the 1970s, a period during which Occitan became the language of what Théron considers to be the first awakening of ecological consciousness, in opposition to absurd forms of hegemonic exploitation of the environment. He stresses that this Occitan resurgence, far from constituting an exclusionary claim to identity, expresses a key contestatory moment that he envisions as forward-looking, yet whose cultural source can be found in the songs of the troubadours (RFI interview).

Mediterranean musical sources become felicitously interconnected in *Sirventés* through Théron's vibrant interpretation of the repertoire of the troubadours in collaboration with two musicians: Grégory Dargent, who explores these convergences with his group l'Hijâz'Car, and who plays the Persian oud in *Sirventés*, and

the Palestinian percussionist Youssef Hbeisch, whom Théron met in Israel. In his RFI interview, Théron explains that over the last three decades Western musicians have sought to establish connections with Middle Eastern and Arabic traditions. He stresses that the troubadours themselves had already bridged Christian and Muslim cultures in their musical practice, a phenomenon upon which he hopes to shed light with this album, and infers that the culturally fruitful relationships that the troubadours nurtured with the Muslim world invalidate right-wing political discourses striving to essentialize European identity as exclusively Judeo-Christian and Arabic identity as exclusively Muslim (RFI interview).

The Relational Loop of Vocal Tradition

This musical demonstration of the intercultural dimension of the Occitan tradition provides a tangible example of radical cultural revitalization that defies French nationalist ideology and Eurocentric chauvinism, while offering an inspiring counter-narrative to the neoliberal model of global culture. Reactivating this culturally hybrid tradition thus eschews exclusionary forms of traditionalist revivalism and envisions Occitan music and vocal practice as a source of creativity and cultural renewal, as reflected in Théron's description of *Sirventés*:

> *les percussions ancrent la métrique poétique; l'oud ramène à la modalité, et à ce que la musique européenne, écrite, a évacué depuis la fin de l'âge baroque: l'improvisation.*
>
> percussion anchors poetic meter; the oud restores modality, as well as that which has been evacuated by European music, in its written form, from the outset of the Baroque era, namely, improvisation.
>
> (RFI interview; my trans.)

As evidenced by *collectage*, vocal improvisation was cultivated and prized by multiple generations of Occitan singers, whose propensity for creative experimentation might be linked to the pre-musical and pre-linguistic vocal capacities of their distant hominin ancestors. If so, I would suggest that Occitan vocal music is rooted in a much longer tradition than that of the troubadours, connecting today's traditional singers to more ancient forms of vocal practice.

This might be what Grotowski has in mind when asserting that singing a traditional song is a way of searching for an answer to the question "Who was the person who first sang this song?" ("*Tu es le fils de quelqu'un*" 303). He suggests:

> You can arrive very far back, as if your memory awakes. This is a phenomenon of reminiscence, as if you recall *Performer* of the primal ritual.

> Each time I discover something, I have the feeling it is what I recall. Discoveries are behind us and we must journey back to reach them. With the breakthrough – as in the return of an exile – can one touch something which is no longer linked to beginnings but – if I dare say – *to the beginning?* I believe so… [I]t is as if strong potentialities are activated.
>
> (377, 379)

The paradoxical sense of plenitude that I evoked earlier as part of my experience of working with traditional songs occurs at the threshold of this breakthrough, when a song reminds me that it is alive as it suddenly energizes space and time, which powerfully resonate with each line of vibration. It is a qualitatively intense experience causing spatiality and temporality to overlap and converge into the here and now, beyond quantitative notions such as meters and acres, hours and years, that routinely circumscribe "our everyday tepidity, … neither fully animal nor fully human," keeping us in a comfortable form of exile, cut off from the strong potentialities to which Grotowski refers (300).

Intensity, energy, vibration, resonance—these words may be associated with what Noë describes as "a dynamic of involvement and engagement with the world around us" (*Varieties of Presence* 130), and there is a particularly interesting passage in the chapter entitled "Experience of the World in Time," where Noë provides a phenomenological analysis of the auditory perception of a song. Although he is referring to the repertoire of opera and not that of traditional music, I would contend that the crucial questions he raises about the relationship between temporality and spatiality are possibly even more relevant to traditional singing. Focusing on the example of a high note held by a soprano at a peak moment in her singing, he states that: "There is a sense that you can now hear the temporal extent of the sustained note … [T]he note you now hear *sounds* as if it has been going on for a long time" (76). Seeking to account for "the perceptible quality of *temporal extent*" within this auditory experience, he rules out the idea that "the past is present now, or that we now have access to what has already happened" as phenomenologically incoherent (76–7). Stressing that "what is present to you now is the note that you hear now," he observes that "to perceive the note as sustained for a period of time is to experience something *happening,* it is to experience an *event*" (77). He contends that when we experience the temporal extent of a sustained note, we do not hear "the sounds that have already passed out of existence (any more than [we] hear the sounds that are yet to come)," but we experience instead what he describes as "the rising of the current sounds out of the past," further specifying that we hear "the current sounds as *surging forth* from the past" (77). He goes on to remark that we hear these sounds "as having a certain trajectory or arc, as unfolding in accordance with a definite law or pattern" (77). He infers that

> [I]t is not the past that is present in the current experience; rather, it is the trajectory or arc that is present now, and of course the arc describes the relation of what is now to what has already happened (and to what may still happen). In this way, what is present, strictly speaking, refers to or is directed toward what has happened and what will happen. [Hence,] the present sound implicates a temporal structure by referring backwards and forwards in time. (77–8)

He associates the arc of the sound with the singer's voice or, more specifically, "her vocal action – what she is doing" (78). He posits that although the past and future are not present in the vocal action that the singer is performing, they are nevertheless implicated by this action (79). He concludes that experiencing the singer's song is itself an activity and an event because it is a temporally extended pattern of skillful engagement (80–1). Since this phenomenological analysis is limited to the experience of the listener, stopping short of investigating the experience of the singer who performs the vocal action under scrutiny, I will now examine its implications for traditional singing from the perspective of the performer.

In the case of traditional songs, the embodied experience of singing, or the singer's vocal action, is a form of skillful engagement with sounds that surge forth from the past, as if summoned by this action. The trajectory or arc of a traditional song unfolds in accordance with a temporally extended pattern that is both precisely structured and open to interpretation ranging from ornamentation to improvisation, so that the act of singing places what is present now—the song-event that is unfolding—in relation to what has already happened in previous performances of that song, as well as with what may still happen in performances yet to come. By referring backwards and forwards in time, traditional singing implicates a spatio-temporal structure connecting past, present, and future embodiments of this vocal action. One way of envisioning this non-linear process is to imagine the song itself traveling within a circular space-time continuum, a performative and ecological feedback loop through which the singer cultivates her embodied conscious awareness of, and intuitive sensitivity to, what she is doing, thereby experiencing the contradictory and mysterious plenitude, which, for Grotowski, is the purpose of ancient source techniques, and which, for Noë, is an experience of presence that enables us to achieve access to the world. I would further suggest that engaging in this process also enables the singer to come to terms, in the present moment of performance, with her intangible cultural heritage, experienced as simultaneously traditional and contemporary, a dynamic tension between two poles that can activate some of the most unforeseen potentialities of vocality.

Witnessing such potentialities might be one of the greatest rewards of traditional singing, and perhaps this is what Boissière attempts to describe when speaking of

mysterious moments of grace that continue to astonish him. It is also worth noting that whereas Grotowski challenges Western performance practitioners to discover through singing a tangible, embodied means of reconnecting with their cultural ancestry, the Indigenous members of the Advisory Committee for the project "Honoring Cultural Diversity through Collective Vocal Practice" make clear that traditional songs are used to call the ancestors when inviting them into a ceremonial gathering, and to thank them for the songs they have given their descendants as a way of taking care of their community (see Chapter 1). Consequently, in spite of the Cartesian worldview I inherited from my intellectual ancestors, I have come to realize that performing Occitan songs to call my cultural ancestors into the space and time in which I am singing might be the only way in which I can establish a living relationship with them. My determination to do so in an honorable manner was decisively put to the test on September 26, 2018, when Syilx Elders Delphine Armstrong and Richard Armstrong (Delphine's brother) as well as Cori Derickson (Delphine's daughter and Richard's niece) welcomed Manu Théron and me to the En'owkin Centre and invited us to join a circle of traditional singers and drummers. Would our ancestors come to help us with this unprecedented cross-cultural encounter between two vocal traditions from different continents? I felt a profound need for ancestral support as I sat in the circle with Delphine and Cori on my left, and Manu and Richard on my right. After our hosts had sung the Okanagan anthem in the Nsyilxcən language, Manu offered an improvised song in the Occitan language which, as he explained, was an excuse song for our arriving ten minutes late as we had overslept after a long night spent around the fire in the Okanagan Indian Band Kekuli at Komasket Park where Mariel Belanger's Master of Fine Arts oral defense had been hosted.[7] The other singers showed their appreciation for Manu's improvisational virtuosity by reciprocating with songs of their own, and he responded in kind. Syilx and Occitan voices punctuated by the pulsations of drums filled the gathering hall of the En'owkin Centre, whose design by Indigenous architect Douglas Cardinal is based on the sacred architecture of the winter home. At my request, Manu kindly performed the song "*Farai un vers de dreit nien*" ("I will make a poem out of nothing"; my trans.) composed by the thirteenth-century troubadour Guilhem d'Aquitània and included in the album *Sirventés*. The impertinent Old Occitan lyrics sounded strikingly alive:

Farai un vers de dreit nien,
Non er de mi ni d'autra gen,
Non er d'amor ni de joven,
Ni de ren au,
Qu'enans fo trobatz en durmen,
Sus un chivau.

I will make a poem out of nothing,
It will be neither about me nor about other people,
Nor about love or youth,
Nor anything else,
For it came to me while I was asleep on a horse.
(my trans.)

When my turn came, I sang:

M'a pres per fantesia,
Augan de'm har pastor,
Be hei la gran holia,
De préner lo baston
On a whim of mine,
This year I became a shepherd,
It was an act of folly,
To take up the shepherd's staff.
(my trans.)

I had learned this *chant de berger* (shepherd's song) at the 2014 workshop led by Joan Francés Tisnèr in the city of Pau, and it is featured in the *collectage* recording of Pierre Arrius Mesplé, a shepherd born in 1928 in the Ossau valley about 30 kilometers south of Pau, in the Béarn region.[8] This song tells the story of someone who, having impetuously decided to become a shepherd, recalls the daunting experience of looking after a herd of sheep high up in the mountains. A regional version might have been familiar to my maternal grandmother, whom I was told would look after grazing cattle to help her family. Although singing this song in the presence of such accomplished traditional singers as Delphine Armstrong and Manu Théron was the type of challenge for which my vocal training had presumably prepared me, doing so nevertheless felt like taking a big leap of faith. To my surprise, however, that particular Occitan song resonated in this inspiring Indigenous space in a way I had never experienced before—as if my ancestors, having heard my call, had consented to rescue me, along with their vocal tradition, by coming to sit in the circle among us.

Notes

1 Trois Frères Cave, Ariège, France. Available at: www.britannica.com/place/Trois-Freres#ref893311 (accessed February 9, 2019).
2 The Polish word "*czlowiek*" translates as "mankind" (instead of "man").
3 All translations of Boissière's interview in Gavaudun, France, July 18, 2016, and his text *"Lo branle de boièr: chants de labour en Agenais"* are mine.
4 Boissière engages in a *branle de boièr* improvisation at the end of the video documenting his 2015 performance at Château de Gavaudun (www.youtube.com/watch?v=PuTBbniItxg).

5 See Boissière's first solo album *Margarida: Cantar en País d'Oc - Chanter en Pays d'Oc* (2007); the album *Passat Deman* (1988) with Alain Cadeillan and Christian Lanau; and his second solo album *De Tot Un Pauc* (2019).

6 Théron, Manu. Sirventés, *chants fougueux des pays d'Oc*/Occitan Protest Songs. Performers: Manu Théron, Youssef Hbeisch, and Grégory Dargent. CD Accords Croisés, Harmonia Mundi, Arles, France, 2014.

7 Théron, who had just performed with his group Lo Còr de la Plana in Tacoma, Washington, as part of their US tour, had come to the Okanagan Valley in British Columbia, Canada, for a two-day visit prior to flying to Chicago, the group's final destination.

8 Pierre Arrius Mesplé, Chants de la vallée d'Ossau, Béarn, avec ses amis chanteurs et musiciens. (Songs from the Ossau Valley, Béarn, with his singer-musician friends). CD Mémoire sonores, GEMP/La Talvera, 1994.

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AFTERWORD

Writing a Mystory about Vocality: A Dialogical and Performative Experiment

(Note to the reader: The following vocal interchange takes place at an imaginary interdisciplinary symposium situated in the liminal space-time of this Afterword.)

Adriana Cavarero addresses the small audience of the symposium using expressive hand gestures to punctuate key words, and her speech is pleasantly inflected by her Italian accent.

CAVARERO: Cari amici and dear colleagues—I want to make clear that the point is not simply to revocalize logos but to free it from its visual substance, an antimetaphysical strategy through which it becomes possible to listen to the sonorous substance of a vocalic relation making the uniqueness of voices vibrate in the relational reciprocity of resonance.[1]

DERRIDA: [*peering prudently from behind a fortress of books piled high on his table*] Je dois dire que je demeure plutôt sceptique puisque c'est ce qu'Artaud rêvait en vain d'accomplir avec son théâtre alchimique. (I have to say that I remain rather skeptical, as this is what Artaud dreamed of accomplishing, to no avail, with his alchemical theatre.)

BARTHES: [*mischievously*] Mon cher Jacques, je suis prêt à parier mon enregistrement préféré de Charles Panzéra que vous ne pourriez pas résister à l'exquise volupté du grain si particulier de sa voix nue. (My dear Jacques, I am willing to wager my favorite recording of Charles Panzéra that you would be unable to resist the exquisite voluptuousness so specific to the grain of his naked voice.)

MOLIK: This is because Panzéra sings with his entire body, taking the energy from the earth with the feet, engaging the pelvis, hips, and spine, and letting the life of the song vibrate into the space—this is what resonance is all about, my dear Adriana.

DOI: 10.4324/9780429340338-5

FLASZEN: When working with the Voice-Vehicle in the collective improvisations that I call meditations aloud, I discovered that there is something quite mysterious about how singing sings us and takes us into another dimension of consciousness, an experience of wholeness in which one becomes aware of being part of and connected to everything that exists.

GROTOWSKI: [*pensively wielding a smoldering cigarette*] Dobrze, we can say that it is the consciousness not linked to language, the machine for thinking, but to presence, a sense of plenitude filled with potentialities.

ION: [*bolting out of his chair*] This is what I tried to explain to Socrates, but Plato just wouldn't allow me to do so!

ONG: [*attempting to appease the rhapsodist*] Well, that might very well have to do with Plato's fraught relationship with oral culture.

CAVARERO: [*casting a sideways glance at Derrida*] I argue that Plato's conception of logos was videocentric, rather than phonocentric, as Jacques misleadingly claims in his critique of voice and presence.

THOMAIDIS: [*with a cautiously diplomatic tone*] Drawing from Adriana's incisive philosophical analysis of vocality, I identify major implications for voice studies as well as for vocal practice.

DERRIDA: Je dois vous avouer qu'en vous écoutant tous je sens qu'au fond de moi, secrètement, je ne désire rien de plus que la présence, la voix, et l'instant vivant de l'énonciation qui m'échappent inéluctablement. Je crains qu'il ne reste de mes travaux qu'une voix disparue et un texte lisible. J'entends Artaud me souffler une question lancinante: Comment ne jamais effacer ce qui ne peut que disparaître? (I must confess that as I listen to all of you I feel that, deep inside, secretly, I desire nothing more than presence, voice, and the living instant of enunciation that inexorably elude me. I fear that all that remains of my work is a vanished voice and a legible text. [*He gazes at a well-worn copy of* Le théâtre et son double *and sighs*] I hear Artaud prompting me with a harrowing question: How can one manage to never erase that which is always bound to disappear?)[2]

ARTAUD: [*resoundingly*] L'athlétisme affectif de l'acteur-guérisseur consiste à capter et faire rayonner certaines forces, et c'est par le souffle que cet athlète du cœur rallume la vie, l'embrase dans sa substance, ce que j'assimile à un acte vrai, donc vivant, donc magique! (The affective athleticism of the actor-healer consists in channeling certain forces and making them radiate, and it is through breath that this athlete of the heart re-ignites life and sets its substance ablaze, which I associate with an act that is real, hence alive, hence magical!)[3]

FAVEL: Based on my experience as a Cree artist who worked with Grotowski and went on to develop the approach I call Native Performance Culture, I am

convinced that Artaud was on the right track, and that without healing there is no art.

UNIDENTIFIED NEUROSCIENTIST: [*clearing his throat to signal that he has something important to say*] Dear esteemed arts and humanities colleagues, do you realize that we are on the cusp of a scientific breakthrough that will enable us to finally make sense of the so-called magic of performance and vocality, along with their alleged healing powers? For example, laboratory experiments are producing reliable research findings that point to increasingly more robust evidence about the role of mirror neurons in performance processes and that link music and singing to brain plasticity.

ARTS-BASED QUALITATIVE INQUIRY ADVOCATE: [*rises in protest and calls out to the audience*] I want to acknowledge all of our allies in the arts and humanities, who continue to courageously resist reductionist scientific explanations grounded in biological determinism and evolutionary theory!

GRADUATE STUDENT: [*upset and incredulous*] Are we not at university to engage in a reciprocally beneficial dialogue across conventional disciplinary divides and forge productive alliances beyond qualitative/quantitative binary ways of thinking to make research more inclusive and plurivocal?

BARAD: That's why I promote posthumanist and new materialist approaches that reconcile seemingly incommensurable ways of knowing.

MAGNAT: Dear Karen, I humbly invite you to read my book precisely because I argue for the ontological, epistemological, methodological, and ethical necessity to learn from Indigenous ways of knowing as a path toward reconciliation.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE SCHOLAR: [*Ominously brandishing a notebook on which he has been drafting his review of* The Performative Power of Vocality] Oh, so this is when the author makes an appearance, at last! Is your dialogical Afterword, which mimics the type of performative writing that passes for research in arts-based qualitative inquiry circles, simply a coping strategy through which you are delegating the responsibility of writing a proper conclusion to those upon whom you have already relied far too extensively throughout your book, short of establishing your own scholarly authorial voice?

DENZIN: [*in a firm but conciliatory tone*] Allow me to interject at this crucial point of the conversation. Following Conquergood, I assert that dialogism creates spaces for give and take, and that performative discourse simultaneously writes and criticizes performances. Dialogical performative writing is an intervention, an interpretation, an artistic performance that bridges theory and practice, a search for pedagogies of hope, forgiveness, solidarity, and freedom. In the spirit of reconciliation, I support critical performance-based research that values the transformative power of Indigenous knowledges,

seeking forms of praxis and inquiry that are emancipatory, collaborative, and empowering.[4]

MAGNAT: I concur with Norman, and would like to add that, according to Conquergood, performance can be harnessed as an oppositional force that resists the dominance of text-based research modalities, an embodied way of challenging scriptocentrism through hearing/listening and orality/vocality as forms of co-performative witnessing. This reminds me of what I have learned about Coast Salish oral cultural traditions, where the important events in the life of a community are historicized through witnessing and remembering, instead of recording them in writing. Those who are called upon to serve as witnesses must be fully present, alert, and attentive in order to fulfill this important role. Given the prominent place of oral cultural practice in these traditions, witnesses are required to carefully listen to, memorize, and transmit songs and stories that activate collective memory and cultural identity, thereby sustaining the vibrancy of Indigenous sovereignty.

BOISSIÈRE: [*in his musical southwestern French accent*] Dans la tradition orale occitane, chanter était lié à la nature cyclique des travaux saisonniers, comme en témoignent les chants de labour et de moisson, ainsi qu'aux différentes saisons de la vie puisqu'il y avait des chants dédiés à certains événements et cérémonies, y compris baptêmes, marriages, et enterrements (In the Occitan oral tradition, singing was linked to the cyclical nature of seasonal labor, to which plowing and harvesting songs are testimony, as well as the different seasons of life, since there were songs dedicated to specific events and ceremonies, including baptisms, weddings, and funerals.)[5]

MAGNAT: C'est très intéressant, Pèire. This means that in Occitania, singing with and for others once functioned as a form of co-performative witnessing that entailed cultivating a certain quality of presence and receptivity that pertains to oral cultures. I suggest that engaging with these modalities today calls into question the hegemony of the written. For example, revitalizing the repertoire of a vocal tradition can become a form of radical cultural activism in defiance of institutionalized music education offered by conservatories and university programs that privilege classical music and the Western notation system. Promoting an oral tradition whose cultural continuity critically depends on co-performative witnessing can therefore be a way of democratizing—and decolonizing—artistic practice.

THÉRON: [*in his musical southeastern French accent*] Surtout si cela peut donner lieu à des rencontres entre pratiques vocales et instrumentales de différentes régions, cultures, et traditions (Especially if this opens possibilities for encounters between vocal and instrumental practices from different regions, cultures, and traditions.)

MAGNAT: Absolument. I have developed a practice-based strategy that involves opening a conference presentation with a traditional song in the Occitan language when I present my research at professional meetings organized by the American and Canadian Societies for Theatre Research, the International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry, and the American Anthropological Association. I am also seeking ways of writing creatively about the sonorous substance of the lived voice to foreground the value of orality, something to which my voice studies colleague Konstantinos Thomaidis is committed as well.

THOMAIDIS: βέβαια. [*He holds up a copy of the* Journal of Interdisciplinary Voice Studies] In our diphonic editorial for the special issue "Voicing Belonging: Traditional Singing in a Globalized World," Virginie, you stress the high stakes of cultural revitalization initiatives that strive to reawaken, restore, preserve, transmit, and at times transform vocal traditions.[6]

MAGNAT: Yes, traditional songs are transmitted orally and are sometimes the last vehicle for critically endangered languages, thereby epitomizing the notion of intangible cultural heritage. Konstantinos, you emphasize the importance of resisting reification and essentialism and suggest that we need to think *through* and *with* voicing, and explore the in-between-ness and processual unfolding of voicing as the departure point for interdisciplinary voice studies.[7]

THOMAIDIS: In this diphonic text, we also encourage researchers to reflexively address their positionality when engaging with questions of cultural identity and tradition, and critically account for processes of acculturation, identity construction and musical regionalism linked to the re-appropriation of traditional vocal practices as well as to the phenomena of interculturality, hybridity, and fusion.[8]

Thomaidis and Magnat suddenly realize that Derrida is staring perplexedly in their direction. A charged moment of silence, which seems to stretch indefinitely. Some symposium participants shift uneasily in their chairs, others lean forward in anticipation, but no one speaks. Finally, Derrida takes a deep breath and addresses the author:

DERRIDA: Comme c'est bizarre, comme c'est curieux, chère madame, il me semble, si je ne me trompe, que je vous ai déjà rencontrée quelque part. (How bizarre, how curious, dear madam, it seems to me, unless I am mistaken, that I've met you somewhere before.)[9]

MAGNAT: Peut-être est-ce parce que j'ai suivi votre cours intitulé "Advanced Critical Theory" lors de mes études doctorales à l'Université de Californie. (Perhaps it is because I attended your "Advanced Critical Theory" course while I was pursuing my doctoral studies at the University of California.)[10]

DERRIDA: Comme c'est étrange et quelle coïncidence, c'est peut-être bien là que je vous ai rencontrée, mais je ne m'en souviens pas, chère madame. (How strange, and what a coincidence, it is indeed possible that we met there, but I do not recall it, dear madam.)

MAGNAT: C'était lors de votre séminaire, "La bête et le souverain"—je me souviens encore de votre fine analyse d'expressions orales populaires françaises dans lesquelles apparaît la figure du loup, telles que marcher à pas de loup, se jeter dans la gueule du loup, crier au loup, ou hurler avec les loups. (It was during your seminar, "The Beast and the Sovereign"—I still remember your sharp analysis of French oral popular expressions in which the figure of the wolf appears, such as walking with wolf's steps, throwing oneself into the wolf's mouth, crying wolf, or howling with the wolves.)

DERRIDA: Mais alors, mais alors, mais alors, mais alors, nous nous sommes peut-être connus à ce moment-là, chère madame. (Well then, well then, well then, well then, perhaps it was at that time that we got to know each other, dear madam.)

MAGNAT: En effet, c'est fort possible, cher monsieur. Moi, j'ai grandi avec ces dictons où retentit la voix du loup, annonçant sa présence imminente, y compris dans la chanson, "Promenons-nous dans les bois, pendant que le loup n'y est pas / Si le loup y était, il nous mangerait, mais comme il n'y est pas, il nous mangera pas." Les enfants la chantent pour se faire peur, et ils crient pour appeler le loup: "Loup y es-tu? M'entends-tu? Que fais-tu?" Le loup les entend et leur répond avec une voix grave et tonnante qui les terrifient, et ils partent tous en courant pour lui échapper. Votre séminaire m'a d'ailleurs inspiré une variante de cette chanson dans laquelle vous êtes le loup. Dans ma chanson, vous avez la voix grave et tonnante du loup, mais au lieu de manger les enfants vous déconstruisez tout. C'était mon dernier cours de doctorat et j'avais vraiment peur que vous me donniez une mauvaise note qui fasse baisser mon GPA ("grade point average"), puisqu'en France les enseignants sont très sévères et que vous êtes "connu comme le loup blanc," une autre expression très populaire qui vous va bien. Et puis, à ma plus grande surprise, j'ai reçu votre lettre, écrite en français, offrant une analyse détaillée et une évaluation fort généreuse de mon travail, et m'attribuant la note A. Deux ans plus tard, vous nous quittiez. J'ai gardé cette lettre en souvenir de vous. (Indeed, it is very likely, dear sir. As for me, I grew up with these popular sayings in which the voice of the wolf resoundingly announces its imminent presence, including in the song, "Let's take a walk in the woods, while the wolf isn't there / If the wolf was there, he would eat us up, but since he's not there, he cannot eat us." Children sing it to scare themselves, and they shout to call the wolf: "Wolf, are you there? What are you doing? Can you hear me?" The wolf does hear them and responds with a thunderously deep voice that terrifies them, so they all run away to escape from him. In fact, I was inspired by your seminar to create an

alternative version of this song in which you are the wolf. In my song, you have the thunderously deep voice of the wolf, but instead of eating children you deconstruct everything.[11] This was my last doctoral course and I was really afraid that you would give me a bad grade that would lower my GPA, since in France instructors are very tough markers and you are "as widely known as the white wolf," another very popular expression that suits you well. And then, to my great surprise, I received your letter, written in French, offering a detailed analysis and generous evaluation of my work, and granting me an A. Two years later, you passed away. I held onto this letter in memory of you.)

DERRIDA: Alors, chère Madame, je crois qu'il n'y a pas de doute, nous nous sommes déjà vus et vous êtes ma propre étudiante. Virginie, je t'ai retrouvée! (Then, dear madam, I think that there can be no doubt about it, we have seen each other before and you are my own student. Virginie, I have found you again!)

Derrida opens his arms wide as if to embrace Magnat, who remains still and looks at him while softly singing her version of the children's song. Derrida and Magnat then smile at each other, turn to the audience, and take a bow. A portion of the symposium attendees breaks into applause, others boo and whistle, while some giggle nervously. Derrida swiftly returns to his table to disappear behind his piles of books, and Magnat signals to Thomaidis that it is time for the closing singing circle.

MAGNAT: Well, chers amis and dear colleagues, as we reach the conclusion of our symposium, Konstantinos and I would like to invite you to engage in collective vocal practice with us to celebrate the performative power of vocality. [*She turns to Artaud, Grotowski, Favel, Théron, Molik, and Boissière, who are absorbed in a passionate interchange about oral transmission*] So, should we improvise a farewell song to honor the rich multiplicity of our voices? [*She addresses Cavarero, Barthes, Ong, Derrida, Flaszen, and Denzin, who are intensely discussing the intricacies of resonance and relationality*] I hope that most of you will agree that singing together constitutes a particularly apt way of saying goodbye for now and wishing everyone well, until we meet again.

As conversation subsides, the symposium participants cordially reconvene, and little by little join the singing circle. Finally, everyone vibrantly weaves the uniqueness of singular voices into a vocal vault collaboratively shaped from within.

Notes

1 See Cavarero, Adriana. *For More Than One Voice: Toward a Philosophy of Vocal Expression* (Stanford UP, 2005), pp. 178–9, 182.

2 See Delain, Pierre. *Le Concept d'œuvre de Jacques Derrida, un vaccin contre la loi du pire* (*Jacques Derrida's Concept of Œuvre: A Vaccine Against the Law of the Worst*). PhD dissertation, Université Paris Sciences et Lettres, 2017, pp. 118–20.

3 See Artaud, Antonin. *Le théâtre et son double* (*The Theatre and Its Double*) (Paris: Gallimard, 1964), pp. 177, 202.
4 See Denzin, Norman K. *Performance Autoethnography: Critical Pedagogy and the Politics of Culture* (Routledge, 2018), pp. 4–7.
5 See Pèire Boissière, interview with Virginie Magnat, Gavaudun, France, 18 July 2016.
6 See Thomaidis, Konstantinos, and Virginie Magnat. "A Diphonic Editorial." Special Issue "Voicing Belonging: Traditional Singing in a Globalized World," co-edited by Konstantinos Thomaidis and Virginie Magnat, *Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, vol. 2, no. 2, 2017, p. 98.
7 Ibid., pp. 98–9.
8 Ibid., p. 99.
9 This is an homage to the Theatre of the Absurd and to the play, *La Cantatrice chauve* (*The Bald Soprano*) by Eugène Ionesco, first performed on May 11, 1950, in a production directed by Nicolas Bataille at the Théâtre des Noctambules in Paris.
10 See Derrida, Jacques. *Séminaire La bête et le souverain* (*The Beast and the Sovereign Seminar*), vol. 1 (2001–2002) (Paris: Éditions Galilée, 2008).
11 Here is my version of the children's song, with Derrida as the wolf:
Promenons-nous dans les bois (Let's take a walk in the woods)
Pendant qu'Derrida n'y est pas (While Derrida isn't there)
Si Derrida y'était (If Derrida was there)
Il nous déconstruirait (He would deconstruct us)
Mais comme il n'y est pas (But since he's not there)
Il ne le f'ra pas (He can't do that)
Derrida?
Où es-tu? (Where are you?)
M'entends-tu? (Can you hear me?)
Que fais-tu? (What are you doing?)
Derrida's voice: Je déconstruis tout!… (I'm deconstructing everything!…)

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