

BETWEEN LIMINALITY AND TRANSGRESSION:  
EXPERIMENTAL VOICE IN AVANT-GARDE PERFORMANCE

---

A thesis  
submitted in partial fulfilment  
of the requirements for the Degree  
of  
Doctor of Philosophy in Theatre and Film Studies  
in the  
University of Canterbury  
by  
Emma Johnston

---

University of Canterbury  
2014

## Abstract

This thesis explores the notion of ‘experimental voice’ in avant-garde performance, in the way it transgresses conventional forms of vocal expression as a means of both extending and enhancing the expressive capabilities of the voice, and reframing the social and political contexts in which these voices are heard. I examine these avant-garde voices in relation to three different liminal contexts in which the voice plays a central role: in ritual vocal expressions, such as Greek lament and Māori karanga, where the voice forms a bridge between the living and the dead; in electroacoustic music and film, where the voice is dissociated from its source body and can be heard to resound somewhere between human and machine; and from a psychoanalytic perspective, where the voice may bring to consciousness the repressed fears and desires of the unconscious.

The liminal phase of ritual performance is a time of inherent possibility, where the usual social structures are inverted or subverted, but the liminal is ultimately temporary and conservative. Victor Turner suggests the concept of the ‘liminoid’ as a more transgressive alternative to the liminal, allowing for permanent and lasting social change. It may be in the liminoid realm of avant-garde performance that voices can be reimagined inside the frame of performance, as a means of exploring new forms of expression in life.

This thesis comes out of my own experience as a performer and is informed both by theoretical discourse and practical experimentation in the theatre. Exploring the voice as a liminal, transgressive force requires analysis from an experiential perspective.

## Acknowledgements

Thank you to everyone in the Theatre and Film Studies department of the University of Canterbury. The legacy will live on! Thank you to all my collaborators and friends in Free Theatre Christchurch. I look forward to many more experiments with you.

Very special thanks to Peter Falkenberg, who has encouraged me to find my own voice since first jolting me into it in *Footprints/Tapuwaē*. Thank you to Sharon Mazer for years of encouragement and advice. Thank you to Greta Bond for being an incredibly supportive friend, colleague and proof-reader. Thank you to Marian McCurdy for sharing these experiences. Thank you to Stuart McKay for very helpful suggestions, and for singing with me. Many thanks to Naomi Campion, Julia Milsom, Gijs Ochsendorf, Ryan Reynolds, Liz Boldt, Mark Hamilton, Coralie Winn, Simon Troon, and Nick Frost.

Thank you to Michael Kime for collaborating so generously with me on the music for *Hereafter*, and to Chris Reddington for early experimentation and encouragement.

Thank you to my friends and family for being so supportive over all these years. Special thanks to Mum, Dad, Sarah, Justin, Henry, Eva, Jilly, Nigel, and Delilah.

Tremendous thanks to George Parker for love, support and encouragement, and for many wondrous collaborations together in the theatre. Thank you.

## Contents

<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter One:</b>	
<b>Between the Living and the Dead.....</b>	<b>25</b>
Robert Johnson at the crossroads: Passing over the threshold between the Here and the <i>Hereafter</i> .....	27
Diamanda Galás at the crossroads: Conjuring up a new voice between blues, jazz, opera and Maniot lament.....	34
“Towards the dead and towards the living”: The liminal female voice in Greek and Māori ritual.....	38
The voice of the plague: The embodiment of pain and transgression.....	44
‘Screaming the dead’: Galás, Artaud and Maniot Lament.....	48
“Death infecting life”: Voicing the abject.....	52
The ritual voice of transgression: Between Gnosticism, Shamanism and the Black Mass.....	56
Between tradition and blasphemy: Grotowski and Staniewski in search of the voice.....	62
Channelling the primordial voice: John Tavener and Björk’s <i>Prayer of the Heart</i> .....	66
<b>Chapter Two:</b>	
<b>Between Human and Machine .....</b>	<b>71</b>
“Swallowed up in the mechanistic process”: The pre-electronic mechanized voice.....	74
“‘The Tenth Oscillator’”: <i>Visage</i> and the theatre of voices.....	77
Behind the curtain: The uncanniness of the acousmatic voice.....	82
“Pleasure in the confusion of boundaries”: Constructing the cyborg voice.....	93

<b>Chapter Three:</b>	
<b>Between Consciousness and the Unconscious.....</b>	<b>102</b>
The maternal voice:	
Between ‘umbilical web’ and ‘sonorous envelope’ .....	105
The Primal Scream:	
Between expression and hysteria.....	113
The voice <i>in extremis</i> :	
Between <i>anima</i> and <i>animus</i> .....	119
<b>Conclusion .....</b>	<b>125</b>
<b>Bibliography .....</b>	<b>133</b>

## Introduction

### i

Lying on my back, with my legs dangling over the side of a raised semi-circular catwalk, ignoring the audience standing and sitting underneath, I had an epiphany that I didn't completely understand at the time. I was too busy trying to sing. I was singing something both familiar and unfamiliar, rehearsed and improvised. The epiphany was the beginning of a questioning of everything I had come to know about how to sing and why to sing and what it meant to 'sing.'

This epiphanic moment was part of a bicultural opera called *Footprints/Tapuwae* (2001), a Free Theatre Christchurch production that juxtaposed Richard Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen* with Māori myth and music. The catwalk I was lying on formed a semi-circular ring that enveloped half of the width of the theatre. The ring was constructed out of a progression of materials that could be seen to form a bridge, a continuum, from 'nature' to 'industry.' At one end, it was constructed of branches, which then progressed through coarse wood into polished wood, and finally into steel rods that came together to form a grid platform. At the time of my epiphany, I was lying in the middle of this platform, on the polished wood, almost halfway between the extremes of branches and steel, but slightly closer to the side of 'nature.'

This was the setting for the scene about halfway through the performance, at a pivotal moment when the mood shifted from triumph and harmonised group singing into individual resignation, defeat and death. The scene was comprised of three actors, singing from the Wagnerian leitmotif of 'love,' and a pianist who weaved in out of these musical fragments, both initiating and responding to the singing of the actors. *Der Ring des Nibelungen* is structured around a comprehensive system of leitmotifs, short musical phrases of

reminiscence that Wagner layered and expanded on throughout the tetralogy. These motifs are predominantly written for the orchestra and often signal the subconscious thoughts of the characters, allowing for a psychological interpretation of their feelings and motivations. In *Footprints/Tapuwaē*, we sang and improvised from certain Wagnerian leitmotifs, allowing us to explore and create our own subtextual expression.

The pivotal scene began on the metallic side of the ring, with a focused, conventional soprano voice delivering an orthodox rendition of the 'love' leitmotif. At the other end of the ring, tangled in branches, an untrained singer delivered his rendition. By this stage, the musical motif was barely recognisable. The text was distinguishable as coming from the same source, but the music was deconstructed and had lost its melody.

I performed the bridge between these two voices, singing after the conventional soprano and before the deconstructed, fragmented sounds of the baritone. From the wooden, central section of the ring, I began by singing the motif through, similarly to the soprano before me, and then slowly began to deconstruct it, coming in and out of the melody and creating my own melodies, in relation to the improvisations of the pianist. It was sweeping, Romantic, Wagnerian music, where the only possible end to its decadence could be through destruction or deconstruction, like the climactic raising of Valhalla in the Nibelungen myth.

Lying on my back, with my legs dangling over the side of the raised, catwalk-like ring, I began to discover what it could actually mean to use my voice. In hindsight, the epiphany came during one particular performance when I opened my mouth, intending to sing the word "caught," but nothing came out. I felt a sudden terror, imagining that I had completely lost my voice. In that moment of panicked silence, everything I had learned about singing, all the classical technique and mechanics of vocal production, was irrelevant. I was not in control of my voice and there was nothing I could consciously do to make my voice do

what I intended it to do. The silence only lasted a few seconds. Somehow I found a voice – or the voice found me – and I was able to continue my song without any further problems.

Although it only lasted a brief moment, the experience was haunting and affecting. Something had happened that I could not explain, and I wanted to explore this further. In order for my voice to resume, I had had to momentarily suspend what I regarded as the proper way of singing, and allow a different voice, a new voice, to come through. This voice was driven by both conscious and unconscious desires. It was produced from somewhere between my head and my body. Its sound was between classical singing and something unbounded by technique and rules. It came out of a performance where I was trying to break down music and melody and explore the potential of different forms, but it went beyond my conscious intentions and pointed the way to something far more radical, exciting and dangerous. The epiphany was a realisation that everything I thought I had known about the voice – about my own voice – was open for question.

This thesis emerges from that epiphany, which provoked in me a desire to experiment with voice, challenging the boundaries of my own classical training, and taking inspiration from theorists and practitioners in theatre, music, film, and performance art. The notion of ‘experimental voice’ can be aligned with the ‘experimentalism’ of twentieth-century American composers and artists, such as John Cage, Man Ray, and William Burroughs (Nicholls 220-1), who sought to establish new identities, distinct from their European counterparts, through works that redefined the boundaries of artistic and musical form; simultaneously breaking away from conventions and “returning to the soil” (Cope 1989: 184). This thesis investigates the possibilities of seeking new identities through the voice that experiments in and around the margins of tradition and convention, but is not explicitly

concerned with the so-called “experimental” tradition<sup>1</sup>. The experimental voice of this thesis is explored, both theoretically and practically, in the context of avant-garde performance.

The “avant-garde” was first coined in the nineteenth century, and was initially used to identify the political left and its anarchist fringe, but by the 1880s, it became almost exclusively related to the “cultural vanguard” (Mann 47). The avant-garde borrowed its name from military terminology that connoted an elite and expendable shock troop that “attacks with such intensity that it often destroys itself on the enemy’s lances, serving in death as a bridge for the army that follows it” (Mann 45). These fundamental notions of self-sacrifice and anarchist politics are arguably what separates the avant-garde from other “new” or “modern” art forms. Peter Bürger claims that

The European avant-garde movements can be defined as an attack on the status of art in bourgeois society. What is negated is not an earlier form of art (a style), but art as an institution that is unassociated with the life praxis of men [...] the avant-gardistes demand that art become practical once again. (49)

The political agenda of the avant-garde seeks out a new vitality, but definitions of the avant-garde are highly contentious. Theodor Adorno perceived the avant-garde as the “only possible authentic expression of the contemporary state of the world,” and “the necessary expression of alienation in late-capitalist society” (Bürger 85), whereas György Lukács rejected the avant-garde as a decadent and abstract expression of bourgeois intellectualism (Bürger 84, 86). Theorists, such as Bürger, argue that the avant-garde failed in its political aims, and that the avant-garde is now dead, whereas Mann regards the death of the avant-garde as proof of its historical force, leading to “a real disruption, a real disorder, the death of the system it served” (119). These oppositional perspectives underline a fundamental characteristic of the avant-garde, as a phenomenon of the in-between. According to Paul

---

<sup>1</sup> A detailed analysis of the American “experimental” tradition is outside the scope of this thesis, but I intend to research this more fully in post-doctoral work.

Mann, the avant-garde is perpetually suspended between irreconcilables: between tradition and the new; between revolution and reaction; between conception and death (45). Mann proposes that this ambiguity is an essential feature of the proper functioning of the avant-garde, whereby it may “articulate a productive conflict which it has been crucial not to settle” (45). From this ambiguous, undefined position, possibilities of something radically new arise.

Reflecting again on my performance in *Footprints/Tapuwaē*, it is the in-between-ness that was so striking. The performance was a meeting between Maori and Germanic music and mythology. The performance space was ambiguous in that there was no bifurcation between performance and audience space. The set was a semi-circular catwalk that bridged the steel rods of ‘industry’ to the bundled branches of ‘nature.’ The voice was central to this passage, particularly in the scene where I had my ‘epiphany.’ My singing was at the turning-point of that scene, which was at the turning-point of the entire performance; my singing was somewhere between rehearsed and improvised, and between classical and something other. These moments of suspension were always passing through on their way to somewhere else – from harmony to disharmony, and from contained to uncontained – but for a moment, everything was suspended in something that was in-between and inconclusive. The way we experimented with voice in this production seemed to have an intrinsic connection to the liminal.

The term ‘liminal’ was coined by anthropologist Arnold van Gennep to describe the intervening phase of transition contained within a traditional rite of passage. The term was later expanded to a wider social platform by Victor Turner, in *From Ritual to Theatre* (1982). Derived from the Latin ‘threshold,’ the ‘limen’ is the ambiguous, marginal stage of a ritual where the subjects are governed neither by their previous or subsequent social statuses, but exist in a kind of social limbo (Turner 24). In *Footprints/Tapuwaē*, the mythological setting

created this sense of limbo, outside society and outside the usual conventions of mainstream theatre. According to Wagner: “the incomparable thing about the *mythos* is that it is true for all time, and its content, how close soever its compression, is inexhaustible throughout the ages” (Goldman 90). Wagner looked to Nordic/Germanic mythology as narrative inspiration for his music dramas, but also because it provided him with a liminal space, outside of, but implicit in, the society from which they were performed. Within this liminal form, Wagner was able to explore new music and new voices, seeking a degree of ambiguity from his singers. Although the music was strictly notated with no space for musical improvisation, Wagner hoped to develop a new style of delivery that would allow for dramatic spontaneity, favouring emotional expression over beauty of tone: “taking our singers back to the starting-point of their so degenerated art, to where we find them acting still as players” (Wagner quoted in Millington 157). This new style would resonate somewhere between singing and declamation, with an almost incantatory style, coming out of the boundaries and intersecting points between music and dramatic expression (Millington 357-9). The function of this intersection of singing and drama was part of the overall function of his *Gesamtkunstwerk*, or ‘total work of art,’ which was to be the meeting point of myth, music, poetry, and drama, where each separate art would combine to create a more expressive and powerful ‘total’ form. It was through this *Gesamtkunstwerk*, this liminal, mythological meeting place of the past, present and future, that Wagner envisioned the possibility of revolutionary change in both life and art, through these emotionally-charged, *Volk* forms of expression (Furness 76, 88).

Wagner’s operas are probably never sung in the way he hoped for. The ambiguity of a singing line that is not quite contained is not something that happens in the major opera houses of the world. Perhaps this is because audiences want to hear beautiful, approachable singing, and are less interested in innovation and the singer’s emotional interpretation of a

role, or perhaps it is because there is something intrinsically dangerous about a voice that threatens to cross the expected boundaries. It is also dangerous and potentially career-destroying for the singers to step outside convention, into uncharted vocal territory where ideas of beauty and control are troubled. My experience of being out of control in *Footprints/Tapuwaē* was terrifying and unsettling, and that was in a setting that encouraged this form of transgression. Turner writes that during the liminal phase:

in many societies the liminal initiands are often considered to be dark, invisible, like the sun or moon in eclipse. [...] They are associated with such general oppositions as life and death, male and female, food and excrement. [...] They are at once dying from or dead to their former status and life, and being born and growing into new ones. (26)

There is something inherently dangerous about the liminal places in-between, but also something creative and regenerative. At the moment my controlled voice seemed to fail me, another voice emerged.

In *Purity and Danger*, Mary Douglas examines the connotations of the liminal, surmising that: “Danger lies in transitional states, simply because transition is neither one nor the next, it is undefinable” (97). Douglas maps van Gennep’s theory of the liminal onto the body, suggesting an implicit relationship between social and corporeal boundaries:

The body is a complex structure. The functions of its different parts and their relation afford a source of symbols for other complex structures. We cannot possibly interpret rituals concerning excreta, breast milk, saliva and the rest unless we are prepared to see in the body a symbol of society, and to see the powers and dangers credited to social structure reproduced in small on the human body. (116)

The voice is not emitted as a visible substance. We never see the voice or its original source, but we do see the throat and the mouth through which it emerges. Douglas claims that “bodily orifices seem to represent entry or exit to social units” (4) and that “the symbolism of the body’s boundaries is used [...] to express danger to community boundaries” (124). In this way, the mouth represents both a physical and a social threshold over which the voice must pass in order to be heard.

In *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, Julia Kristeva continues van Gennepe's and Douglas's line of inquiry into the liminal, but examines it from a psychoanalytic perspective focussing on the 'abject,' of that which is excluded and therefore transgresses the social boundaries. Kristeva locates the abject in ambiguity:

It is thus not lack of cleanliness or health that causes abjection but what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite. (4)

The voice has the potential to upset borders and rules by its presence as something which is constantly passing through corporeal thresholds and boundaries. If there is an implicit relationship between corporeal and social boundaries, as Douglas suggests, the voice can be understood as a constant threat. The experimental voice, which actively seeks out these borders, is even more of a threat.

In the context of *Footprints/Tapuwae* and Wagner's music dramas, it is the melody itself which becomes one of the prime elements of liminality. Most strikingly in *Tristan und Isolde*, Wagner used the closely-packed intervals of chromatic scales to build up a tension that was never musically or dramatically resolved until the final chord, suspending the audience in musical limbo throughout the remainder of the performance. According to Barry Millington, Wagner's prolific use of chromaticism, particularly in *Tristan*: "irreversibly affected the course of music history" and began "the emancipation of harmony from the Classical tonal system" (301). Chromaticism exposes the musical cracks between regular tonal intervals, and the constant layering and suspension of these dislocated, othering sounds lures the listener into a sense of the in-between. It is crucial to note that the revolutionary Tristan chord does resolve. The liminal world of liminal tones of frustrated lover's limbo ends as the heroine sings/sinks to her death, assured of resolution and reunion in the afterlife of the final chord.

This raises a significant point about the liminal. Although it is outside social structure and form, in its original meaning the liminal is a conservative entity that supports the status quo by bridging the transition between different statuses within a society. Van Gennep's example of the rite of passage could be compared to the medieval carnival, where social structures are subverted and social roles are temporarily discarded, but afterward everything is returned to order. While this allows for momentary relief from social hierarchy and everyday drudgery, it does not change the socially oppressive circumstances from which the need for subversion arises. As with the Tristan chord, the liminal space is expected to be only a temporary transition from everyday life, which is highly conservative, as it reminds us of an utmost desire for resolution, not revolution.

As a less conservative alternative to the liminal, Victor Turner introduced the idea of the 'liminoid.' Rather than serving as a bridge from one state to another, the liminoid remains outside society, retaining a somewhat distanced, critical perspective. Turner locates it particularly in the artistic realm, where "the liminoid can be an independent domain of creative activity, not simply a distorted mirror-image, mask, or cloak for structural activity in the 'centers' or 'mainstreams'" (33). Thus, the liminal may be seen to invert mainstream society, but it is only in the liminoid realm where one may subvert the status quo. The liminal tends to reincorporate or return to the status quo, while the liminoid potentially brings lasting social change.

The relationship between liminality and performance has been much discussed since the middle of the twentieth century. Richard Schechner, an experimental theatre director and Performance Studies theorist who worked with Victor Turner, suggests that the two are inextricably linked:

Performing is a paradigm of liminality. And what is liminality but literally the "threshold", the space that both separates and joins spaces: the essence of in-betweenness. [...] In experimental theatre, the limen is between "life" and "art" and relatedly, between "chance" and "fixed" structures. (*Between* 295, 302)

Schechner emphasises that it is in experimental theatre that the potentials of crossing artistic thresholds and bridging ‘life’ and ‘art’ are most profound. It is the ambiguous, liminoid settings of avant-garde performance that I am interested to examine in my thesis. Avant-garde performance is defined by the subversiveness of the liminoid, where alternative ways of acting and being can be developed through experimentation, leading to a social critique that goes beyond artifice and transgresses established social and artistic forms.

In my exploration of experimental voice, I am informed by the work and theories of avant-garde directors and performers: Antonin Artaud, Alfred Wolfsohn, Jerzy Grotowski and Włodzimierz Staniewski. Like Wagner, Antonin Artaud envisioned an all-encompassing theatre that would carry the seeds of revolution in both art and society, assimilating all arts into the dramatic performance. Also like Wagner, Artaud sought inspiration from folk culture, but rather than delving into his own French roots, he looked to other cultures, notably the Balinese and Mexican. Combined with the influence of Catholic and Gnostic ritual, Artaud explored the space between cultures, between performance and ritual, between life and art, and between life and death. The voice was fundamental to his ‘Theatre of Cruelty,’ which, like the work of Wagner, sought an incantatory style of vocal delivery that Artaud claimed would “make metaphysics out of spoken language,” and lead us to “turn away from present-day theatre’s human, psychological meaning and to rediscover a religious, mystical meaning our theatre has forgotten” (35). Beyond Wagner, and following on from the Dadaists’ separation of language from semantics, Artaud exploded the structures of language as a means of destroying the structures of society. Rather than song, Artaud looked to the more violently embodied form of the scream as the ultimate expression of life in art.

The scream was also the fundamental inspiration to experimental voice teacher, Alfred Wolfsohn, whose pupil Roy Hart went on to establish his own theatre company to continue Wolfsohn’s principles within the theatrical realm. Wolfsohn began to experiment

with voice as a way of healing himself and rediscovering his voice after his traumatic experiences as a stretcher-bearer in World War I. After the war, his major symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder were manifested through aural hallucinations of the screams of men dying in the trenches. Wolfsohn described this vocal sound between life and death as a “voice *in extremis*” and wondered at how a “human voice can utter such a sound” (Newham *Singing Cure* 45). Ultimately, Wolfsohn sought to embody this voice *in extremis* as a therapeutic device, and went on to teach his techniques to singers and actors as a means of developing superior and more embodied forms of expression, emanating from this dangerous place in-between.

The exploration of voice through the body was a key component of the theatrical work of Jerzy Grotowski, and many of his most important discoveries relate to the ambiguous nature of vocal production. Some of his early experiments centred on locating and envisioning various resonators, or vibrators, throughout the body, such as the occipital at the back of the head, or the maxillary in the jaw, from which the actor could project vocal energy and resonance (Grotowski 122-3). These resonators produce vibrations that, from my own experiments, emanate from somewhere between the mind and body, between the imagination and physicality. This sense of the in-between was part of Grotowski’s wider search that pushed the boundaries of theatrical production, and sought a theatre that would embody a “secular holiness” (34), grounded in ritual and myth, but going beyond the conventional frames.

As with Artaud and Grotowski, the search for and revival of ritualistic and mystical forms of vocal expression is also central to the work of Włodzimierz Staniewski, and his contemporary theatre ensemble, Gardzienice, named after the village in Poland in which the group is based. The group seeks inspiration from the music and performance traditions of the remote villages of eastern Poland, where Catholic communities co-exist with more marginal,

ethnic cultures. Reminiscent of Wagner, Staniewski uses these folk forms as a basis for his development of a new form of music theatre, the ‘ethno-oratorio,’ in which he sees the potential to “build a theatre from the ruins” of the indigenous cultural forms (1). Staniewski also looks to Ancient Greek forms, in a search for pre-codified music that existed prior to the restrictions enforced by the Christian Church, where dissonance was regarded as sin and the emotional expressiveness of ornamentation deemed dangerous and in need of containment (63-4). Staniewski’s ethno-oratorios aim to explore the musicality that occurs at the ‘edges’ of codified music. He claims we have become deaf to this pre-codified music: “We don’t hear microtones, and [...] we don’t accept the dissonances. But the microtones and dissonances were fundamental for the music of the Antiquity” (CD-ROM). These microtones exist between the semitones of the chromatic scale, between the between tones. Vocal experimentation is intrinsically linked to aural experimentation. Singing between the cracks means listening between the cracks, and this exploration of the cracks, edges, and margins of music may be socially subversive.

The ‘experimental voice’ seems to reside in in-between spaces: between states of consciousness; between cultures and traditions; between the tones and cracks of music itself. The voice is a transitional and ephemeral entity that is made audible as it transgresses the boundaries of our bodies. This creates a certain level of danger that leads to containment within social and cultural forms. It may be at the intersection of experimental voice and avant-garde performance that voice can find form while challenging the limitations and boundaries of conventional vocalities and identities.

## ii

This thesis comes out of my own experience experimenting with voice in avant-garde performance, and these experiments and performances have functioned as starting points for

much of my research and analysis. Following on from *Footprints/Tapuwaē*, I worked with Free Theatre Christchurch on a range of projects in which we explored vocal forms and possibilities within an avant-garde setting. In the 2010 production of *Doctor Faustus*, we explored incantatory voices, modelled on Karlheinz Stockhausen's *Stimmung* and Diamanda Galas's *Litanies of Satan*. Channelling these voices, we experimented with different Grotowskian resonators and looked to cultural forms, such as Tuvan throat singing, to explore the overtones that can be produced when multiple resonators are employed. These liminal approaches to voice, seeking out the tones produced between various parts of our bodies, were modelled on the liminal spiritual practices of Shamans and Satanists, seeking communication between spiritual and earthly worlds through the medium of the voice, in response to Doctor Faustus's forays into the occult.

In the 2009/2010 production of *Distraction Camp*, I explored the possibilities of the voice between human and instrument. Inspired by Jean Genet's *The Balcony* and exploring the physical and musical vocabulary of Argentine Tango, *Distraction Camp* was set in a 'house of illusions' where clients would come to play out their fantasies. In one of these fantasy play scenes, I played the role of the General's 'horse,' vocally restricted with a BDSM ball gag in my mouth, while the General held and played me like a cello, using his whip to bow my stomach, with our real-life cellist and cello mirroring beside us onstage. Weaving in and out of the melody, I explored the way sounds could be produced from a voice and body that was constricted and controlled. As with my ruptured voice in *Footprints/Tapuwaē*, the restriction of the ball gag and the General's whip held against my stomach, forced me to explore alternative means of producing voice, somewhere between human and instrument, and between constriction and freedom.

In 2010, Peter Falkenberg, artistic director of Free Theatre Christchurch and supervisor of this thesis, proposed a theatrical context in which I could more fully explore the

various theoretical models and practical examples of experimental voice. *Jenseits*, or *Hereafter*, is a monologue by German playwright, Werner Fritsch, and is the story of Wolf ‘Sexmachine’ Bold, an underworld figure who is recounting the life that has led to this moment: held at gunpoint following his wife’s mutilation and murder. It is not clear if Wolf is dead, alive or dreaming. It is not clear whether he is his wife’s murderer. It is not clear who is holding the gun to his head, concealed behind a carnival mask of Hitler. Wolf and the audience are suspended in a state of limbo.

The original *Jenseits* emerged from the cracks of Fritsch’s Germany. He based the brutal monologue on the speech patterns, colloquialisms and colourful language of real-life underworld figures, using ‘tape realism’ to record these voices from the margins of society, and giving them a voice in the liminoid realm of avant-garde theatre. In the Free Theatre production, we wanted to address Christchurch’s underworld, lurking beneath the veneer of the genteel ‘Garden City.’ University of Canterbury sociologist, Professor Greg Newbold, claims there is a “big nutcase factor down here” and attributes the “enduring character of the city’s underbelly” to the rigid structure of Christchurch society, which he claims is a “stratified, class-segregated society, with less social mobility than other parts of the country,” which helps to “entrench the city’s lumpen proletariat” (Hume). These marginalised groups or individuals are deprived of a social voice and denied the opportunity to transgress the boundaries of these rigid class structures.<sup>2</sup>

Translating Fritsch’s German play to a Christchurch context, we wanted to engage with the marginalised voice of real-life Wolfs, but were also concerned with the missing feminine voices, suppressed even further down under the underbelly. While the original German text engaged with the marginalised masculine voice, the women remained silent.

---

<sup>2</sup> This perception of an “underbelly” of Christchurch is exploited and exaggerated in the novels of contemporary local crime writer, Paul Cleave. Cleave’s novels are largely narrated in the first person by his protagonists. In his first novel, *The Cleaner*, Cleave takes his readers inside the head of a serial killer, sharing dark secrets, distasteful jokes and violent thoughts in a style similar to Wolf in *Hereafter*.

They were only represented through the masculine voice, which tended to reduce them to body parts and participants in sexual acts. Researching the Christchurch context in relation to the text, we became aware of a number of local homicide cases where women had been the victims of severely brutal sexual assaults, similar to those described in Fritsch's text. In all these local cases, there was a connection to the voice, where women had been strangled, or choked by undergarments forced down their throats. While the primary function of strangling and choking may be to cease a person's breathing and hence end their life, it is also an act of silencing and of stifling the voice, which seems to relate to a much deeper social desire to silence women's voices.

In Free Theatre's *Hereafter*, we wanted to engage with these silenced voices. It became my role to provide an alternative, female voice as a counterpoint to Wolf's macho diatribe. Falkenberg suggested I play the silent role of the Hitler-masked figure, holding the gun to Wolf's head throughout the performance. It was from underneath this expressionless, deathly mask that I was to sing and vocalise. In this way, I was cast between male and female, between movement and stillness, and between life and death. From this powerful and ambiguous position, holding a gun to Wolf throughout his monologue, I experimented with different ways of communicating through my voice. In opposition to the violence of Wolf's language and its reduction of the feminine, I was interested in exploring a voice that could transgress language and create its own form of communication outside the constraints and confines of phallogentric language.

In *The Laugh of the Medusa*, Hélène Cixous theorises the development of a feminine writing voice that emerges through women's bodies from the element of song: "first music from the first voice of love which is alive in every woman" (*Medusa* 881). This voice comes from in-between the cracks of the body and society, breaking up and destroying existing discourses:

At times it is in the fissure caused by an earthquake, through that radical mutation of things brought on by a material upheaval when every structure is for a moment thrown off balance and an ephemeral wildness sweeps order away, that the poet slips something by, for a brief span, of woman. (*Medusa* 879)

This potential for new and other voices to be heard in the wake of destruction, reminiscent of Brünnhilde raising Valhalla to the ground in order to renew life, was significant in our adaptation and staging of *Hereafter*. Although Cixous conjures up a metaphorical earthquake, we experienced a much more literal rendering of rupture. After translating Fritsch's script, our first rehearsal took place in the Free Theatre in Christchurch's historic Arts Centre on 21 February 2011. The following day there was a series of violent earthquakes that changed Christchurch forever. Lives were lost, buildings and homes were destroyed, and the city centre, including the Arts Centre, was 'red-zoned,' fenced off from the general public, awaiting the fate of demolition or restoration. Christchurch was thrown into a liminal state, where every structure was thrown off balance, and new structures and voices emerged in the aftermath. Our opening night was postponed until the following year, on the first anniversary of the earthquakes on 22 February, and took place in a derelict warehouse on the outskirts of Christchurch.

An earthquake lends itself well to van Gennepe's terminology of the liminal, where the initial rupture causes a 'separation' from everyday social structures and forms. Amongst other community and arts organisations, Free Theatre has embraced the subsequent transitional period as something which has opened up opportunities to reengage with Christchurch and the role of theatre in society. While the government seems eager to return to the status quo of a (re)built society, merely tolerating this in-between, incomplete period, previously marginalised groups such as Free Theatre are enjoying the opportunity to be

central players in this liminal phase.<sup>3</sup> It is in this in-between, in-the-cracks state that avant-garde, liminoid forms might thrive and radical new voices, both metaphorical and literal, might emerge. It is from this social context that this thesis emerges.

My initial vocal experiments for *Hereafter* centred on the deconstruction of language and the voice, following on from *Distraction Camp*, and my explorations of the gagged, tortured female voice. I tried different ways of forming internal blockages by playing with vocal fry (“non-pitched, non-verbal, low-pitched and throaty vocal sounds,” Salzman and Desi 27) and manipulating the vocal apparatus. I was also physically constricted by the wearing of a mask throughout the performance, so I initially experimented with different resonances and acoustics that could emanate from within to without. I found through these early experiments that rather than confining or constricting me, the mask empowered and enhanced my vocal ability. With my face covered, I felt more able to contort and express, without the fear of being watched or judged. Whatever I was doing underneath, the audience only saw the Hitler visage glaring solemnly and uncannily back at them. The power of this mask was compounded by my costume: a man’s suit trousers and jacket, with white shirt and brown boots. In stark contrast to the skimpy leather bondage gear I wore in *Distraction Camp* while my mouth was gagged and my body bowed, in *Hereafter* I was anonymous and androgynous and my body gave away no clues. All expression came through my voice.

In selecting the female vocal material for *Hereafter*, Falkenberg asked me to present recordings of experimental voice practitioners that most appealed to me. I brought along recordings of three of my favourite pieces: *ΕΞΕΛΟΪΜΕ*, a piece inspired by Greek Lament, by Diamanda Galás; *Visage*, a piece comprised of female voice and electromagnetic tape by

---

<sup>3</sup> In October 2011, Free Theatre Christchurch presented an adaptation of Heinrich von Kleist’s novella, *The Earthquake in Chile*, performed in and around St. Mary’s Church, Addington. Kleist’s novella and the Free Theatre production presented the utopian ideal of the liminal phase that comes after disaster, but warned of how the authorities are likely to reassert the status quo with a vengeance. Cixous’s use of the earthquake metaphor in *The Laugh of the Medusa* was also inspired by Kleist’s novella.

Luciano Berio with Cathy Berberian; and *Hush Little Baby*, a free jazz interpretation of the traditional lullaby, by Patty Waters. I had no conscious idea of how they might fit, but felt especially drawn to these pieces. After playing all three, Falkenberg concluded that they would all fit within the frame of the performance, although I was initially unsure of how they would do so. We also selected a Māori piece together: *Te More*, by Whirimako Black and Richard Nunns. For the ending, we picked a piece by John Tavener and Björk: *Prayer of the Heart*.

Although I selected these pieces based on the criteria of what appealed to me, rather than how they might be connected to the performance, it soon became clear how perfectly the pieces fitted within the frame of this theatricalisation of limbo. All five pieces could be said to represent different liminalities: Diamanda Galás and Whirimako Black borrow from the Greek and Māori traditions where women's voices are used to mediate communication between the living and the dead; Björk's unorthodox voice delivers an Orthodox prayer to Jesus Christ for safe passage in death; Luciano Berio splices up Cathy Berberian's recorded voice to compose a piece that is between human and machine; and Patty Waters' lullaby sings of a bridge between consciousness and unconsciousness that gradually spirals to what seems a conscious outburst of her own unconscious. This thesis will be structured around these different liminal voices, with each chapter beginning from a piece used in *Hereafter*, before examining the wider provocations and implications of these ambiguous voices.

The first chapter will focus on vocal forms that serve to mediate between the living and the dead. By this, I mean ritualised singing, chanting or calling, such as Greek lament and Māori karanga, that forms a bridge between the Here and the 'Hereafter.' I am particularly interested in Greek lament and its twin functions: to ensure a 'good death' for the soul in transition as it simultaneously provides an outlet for the grief of those left behind. The social positioning of the lament is of central importance, as it opens up a space for the often silenced

women to step forward and claim a principal social role through the act of singing, while the men assume the role of silent participants. Such vocal performances, in the liminal zone between life and death, allow for a temporary transgression of everyday gendered roles, before the social order is reasserted at the other end of the ritual.

In this chapter, I will compare these traditional, ritualistic performances to the experimental works of avant-garde artists, where the potential for transgression is enhanced. I will particularly focus on Diamanda Galás, a contemporary Greek-American, classically-trained vocalist, who uses the tonalities and styles of the Greek lament tradition to critique the living by using her voice on behalf of the dead. Galás's experimental use of the traditional Greek lament form was fundamental to the development of the vocal score for *Hereafter*. We were looking to develop an opening musical piece that would help to establish the liminal setting of the production, and Galás's haunting laments were evocative of a place between life and death. In addition to working with Galás's vocal style, Falkenberg suggested I explore Māori vocal forms, experimenting with the way Galás uses traditional ritual forms, but from a New Zealand context. Similarly to the Greek ritual lament, Māori women use their voices to salute the ancestral dead through karanga and waiata tangi.

Galás's artistic approach is also strongly influenced by the work of Artaud. The lament we used in *Hereafter* came from Galás's *Masque of the Red Death* trilogy (1986), later revived as *Plague Mass* (1991), in which she subverts Christian ritual and attacks the Church's marginalisation and condemnation of those infected with the contemporary plague, HIV/AIDS. In Artaud's famous analogy of Theatre and the Plague, social and corporeal boundaries are imploded from the disease within. I will examine how Artaud's Plague can be understood vocally, as well as conceptually, and how it seeks to transcend and transgress Western theatrical form through an exploration of the metaphysical power of incantation.

Artaud was inspired by the figure of the shaman, who mediates between the world of the living and the world of the spirits. Artaud envisioned the role of the actor as a shamanistic figure, sacrificing his body and his voice in the service of metaphysical powers. In his *Theatre of Cruelty*, Artaud situates the figure of the shaman in a wider ritual setting, combining mystical elements of Gnosticism and the blasphemy of the Black Mass. I will compare Artaud to the ritualistic theatres of Grotowski and Staniewski, where the actors' voices take on a spiritual dimension, channelling the voices of another time or place.

The first chapter will conclude with an analysis of the closing piece from *Hereafter*, which we performed during and after the final monologue, as the lights faded to black. Based on John Tavener's *Prayer of the Heart*, which he composed for Björk's 'primordial' voice, the piece is a sung Greek Orthodox prayer, pleading for Christ's mercy. The 'primordial' characteristic of Björk's voice is enhanced by the way she sings through the cracks and breaks in her voice. In her own compositions, Björk seeks out microbeats, the cracks between the beats, reminiscent of Staniewski's search for the microtones, the in-between tones which we usually do not hear. These liminal sounds suggest something other and uncontained, and are inherently transgressive. This first chapter is therefore directly concerned with the way experimental voice in avant-garde theatre can be seen to transgress the liminal space of ritual encounter, creating a liminoid space in which social and artistic boundaries can be challenged. To that end, Victor Turner's concepts of the liminal and the liminoid will be considered in relation to Mary Douglas's models of social containment and Julia Kristeva's examination of the abject.

The second chapter will explore vocal forms that come into existence somewhere between the human voice and the machine. By this I mean the human voice that is transformed through mechanical or electronic means, retaining a fundamental sense of the human voice, but transgressing the boundaries of the human body and becoming mechanical.

In this way, the mechanical voice could be heard to resound somewhere between the living and the dead, taking the life out of the voice, and capturing and resurrecting it in an eternally reproducible other form. In particular, I am interested in the development of electro-acoustic vocal work in the mid-twentieth century, and the concept of the ‘acousmatic,’ a term coined by Pierre Schaeffer to describe a voice or sound whose source cannot be seen, resounding somewhere between the everyday and the technological.

In *Hereafter*, the second musical piece was based on Luciano Berio’s 1961 electronic tape piece, *Visage*, which sets Cathy Berberian’s spliced-up, recorded voice against an electronically-manipulated landscape. In *Hereafter*, my voice was not electronically-manipulated, and my suited body was visible on stage, but the mask that covered my face throughout the performance created an acousmatic effect, concealing and confusing the identity from which the voice was brought forth. By examining the disembodied voice situated between human and machine, we can gain an understanding of the voice’s troubled relationship to the body and explore the potential for artistic and social transgression made possible in this mechanised, liminal zone.

I will begin by looking at Berio’s *Visage*, in which Berberian’s recordings of a spectacular range of human vocal expression are dissected and disassociated from their embodied source. Berberian creates a nonsensical language out of the phonology of English, Hebrew and Neapolitan dialect, and through analysing this, I will discuss the relationship between the voice and language, and the political act of destroying and recasting language in the service of the sonic (Causton 17). I will compare the act of cutting up and reassigning Berberian’s voice to the fetishistic way that *Hereafter*’s protagonist, Wolf, recalls his former wife, whose body has been discovered brutally murdered and dismembered. I will contrast this potentially victimised image of the disembodied voice with the more powerful position of the acousmatic, and explore the implications of the voice without a visible source, a

phenomenon greatly exploited in film, but largely unexplored in theatre. Antonin Artaud's final performances explored the power of the acousmatic voice and the potentials of deconstructing and experimenting with language. With the radio performance *Pour en finir avec le jugement de dieu* (To Have Done with the Judgement of God), Artaud claimed to have come closest to his concept of cruelty (Helger 48).

Donna Haraway proposes that the transgressing of social and corporeal boundaries is most effectively encapsulated in the concept of the cyborg, a hybrid of machine and organism which she proposes as a feminist tool for breaking down oppressive categorisations and dualisms. Haraway writes that: "To be feminized means to be made extremely vulnerable; able to be disassembled, reassembled, exploited [...]; leading an existence that always borders on being obscene, out of place, and reducible to sex" (Haraway 166). In her "Cyborg Manifesto," Haraway argues for "pleasure in the confusion of boundaries and for responsibility in their construction" (150). It is through reclaiming these confused, marginal, liminal spaces that the potential exists for the creation and empowerment of alternative identities, and alternative voices. Various audio technologies that amplify, distort or manipulate the voice may be used by women to alter the sounds of their voices, thus facilitating the creation of identities that transgress the social and material realities of their female bodies. I will examine Haraway's cyborg myth of "transgressed boundaries, potent fusions, and dangerous possibilities" (154), in relation to the cyborgian performances of Laurie Anderson, Diamanda Galás and Björk.

I will explore Michel Chion's concept of the *acousmêtre*, in relation to film and electroacoustic music, Sigmund Freud's discussion of the uncanny, and Mladen Dolar's argument that the uncanniness of the voice arises from the knowledge that the source of the voice can never be revealed. By looking at the voice in this alienated way, with technology

used to both enhance and contain its power, we can gain more of an understanding of the troubled social relationship between the body and the voice.

The third chapter will explore vocal forms that negotiate the passage between consciousness and the unconscious. By this I mean both the traditional form of the lullaby that lulls the infant from hysterical wakefulness to peaceful slumber, and experimental vocal forms that shatter the silence of consciousness with the hysterical screams of the unconscious. In particular, I am interested in the way avant-garde theatre practitioners have reclaimed the scream and other ‘shadow voices’ as powerful and life-affirming vocalities, seizing the signs of hysteria as a positive means of artistic and psychological expression.

In *Hereafter*, the third musical piece was based on Patty Waters’ 1966 free jazz performance of *Hush Little Baby*, where the initial reassurance of “Hush” gradually turns to terror, as the comforting, protective voice builds to a climax of sobbing and screaming sounds, before returning to the calm and control of the initial lullaby. By looking at, or listening to, these repressed, ‘primal’ voices, we can gain an insight into the relationship between our voice and our unconscious, as a means of understanding more about both.

The third chapter will begin with an examination of the lullaby, a traditionally soothing vocal form that often conveys dark undertones. I will discuss this in relation to psychoanalytic theories of the maternal ‘sonorous envelope,’ as explored in the work of Kaja Silverman, Michel Chion, and Julia Kristeva. I will compare the ‘sonorous envelope’ to Hélène Cixous’s analysis of hysteria and Arthur Janov’s theory of the ‘Primal Scream,’ as a means of examining the concept of the repressed, pre-verbal self as expressed through the power of the scream.

As the ultimate expression and expulsion from within to without, the scream was also central to the Expressionist movement and I will discuss the Expressionist *Schrei Theater* and its influence on contemporary artists such as Diamanda Galás and Yoko Ono. In relation to

this, I will examine Alfred Wolfsohn's development of extended vocal technique inspired by the screams of dying soldiers on the battlefields of the First World War. Wolfsohn regarded his experiments as a practical, vocal embodiment of Carl Jung's vast body of work, and I will discuss Wolfsohn's experimental vocal work in relation to Jung's theories of the shadow, the *anima/animus*, and the concept of self-individuation.

This thesis comes out of my own experience as an actor and a singer, beginning from a frustration with the cracks and blips in my voice, which could not quite be contained or transcended within conventional singing techniques. Through my involvement in avant-garde theatre, and my research for this thesis, I have come to understand the containment of the voice as a wider social, political and ideological tool. Experimental voice seems to be defined by its in-between-ness, ambiguity, uncertainty, and it may be in the liminoid realm of avant-garde performance that these in-between, liminal vocal forms have the potential to transgress not only the boundaries of the voice, but those of identity and society.

## Chapter One: Between the Living and the Dead

This chapter will examine vocal expressions that represent and enact a communicative bridge between the living and the dead. These expressions take on ritual forms, such as lament, prayer and shamanic performances, that serve to mediate between the earthly and the spiritual worlds. The efficacy of these traditional vocal performances is dependent on the overall ritual frame that both enhances the supernatural powers of the event and contains the potential dangers inherent in the transgression. Ritual vocal forms offer a rich source of inspiration for experimentation with the voice, but outside of the performative structure of the ritual they become devoid of meaning and potency, lacking a contextual frame and a receptive, initiated audience to imbue them with significance. Much of the avant-garde theatre of the twentieth and twenty-first century has engaged with the performative potential of the ritual setting (Innes 3). I will examine vocal ritual traditions in the context of avant-garde theatre directors and performers who utilise ritualistic elements, but transgress the traditional boundaries of the forms in search of new, liminal voices.

The theoretical exploration of voice as a medium between the living and the dead comes out of my own practical experiments inspired by traditional and avant-garde vocalists, particularly Greek-American singer and composer Diamanda Galás, whose work consistently seeks to mediate between the living and the dead, largely inspired by the ritual of Greek lament singing. In researching Galás, I was particularly struck by one piece, *ΕΞΕΛΘΎΜΕ* (Deliver Me), a haunting lament that formed part of a larger work, *Masque of the Red Death*. In Galás's performance of the work, she reframes the ritual signifiers of the piece, conjuring it out of a momentary stillness, on a stage filled with lit candles, following a thunderous, Hammond-organ overture. *ΕΞΕΛΘΎΜΕ* could stand alone as a beautiful and evocative piece,

but the performative frame of ritual and theatre enhances the scope of the piece and suggests a power beyond that of the body from which the voice emanates.

When selecting vocal examples to explore in the Free Theatre production of *Hereafter*, Galás's *ΕΞΕΛΘΥΜΕ* was the first we chose to start working from. It embodies much of what is typical and exciting about experimental voice: it mixes and blurs eastern and western tonalities; it soars between moments of tremendous beauty and vocal ugliness; and it is inherently theatrical. At the beginning of *Hereafter*, we juxtaposed this liminal female voice with the liminal masculine voice of blues legend Robert Johnson, whose recordings were played to audiences as they arrived for the performance. Blues is another form of lament, another voice that emerges from the margins and another musical form of Galás's varied repertoire. Placing blues beside lament in *Hereafter*, we created a vocal and musical crossroads from which further voices might be channelled.

Before discussing these 'experimental' voices in more depth, I must clearly establish the theatrical setting from which I explored my own 'experimental voice.' This thesis comes out of an ambiguous position in which I have shifted between the roles of audience, performer and theorist, and I remain somewhere in-between these identities. The practical, performance aspect of this role has been fundamental to my understanding of the topic and has informed my receptive and theoretical approaches to the topic. 'Experimental voice' is a near impossible concept to capture in writing, and therefore the practical work I have undertaken is an essential element of the research and articulation of this thesis at its core. In order to understand this nonconventional voice, it has been necessary to re-examine the conventions of voice, theatre and thesis-writing.

*Hereafter* provided me with a context from which to explore four very different forms of 'experimental' voice that would not have fitted in a conventional or non-theatrical setting. Going over the threshold of conventional vocal expression requires a theatrical context that

puts the performers and audience into a liminal space. Only in an experiential space and time can experimental voice be heard in a meaningful manner. The notion of passing over a threshold is central to my exploration of what I believe the experimental voice to be: something that is constantly permeating boundaries and challenging forms. This vocal crossing of boundaries is only made visible through performance and, more crucially, through theatricality, so that what would perhaps be perceived as just noise could be made understandable. I will begin by describing how my exploration of experimental voice was given a theatrical frame within the context of *Hereafter*, and how this staging and setting brought the audience over a conceptual and literal threshold, into a realm of ambiguity and between-ness.

In order to establish a context for my performance of these vocal pieces, I will firstly describe the performance space of *Hereafter* and provide an account of the audience's arrival at the venue, something that was crucial both to the establishment of the liminality of the performance and to an understanding of this thesis. This arrival could be seen to have formed the initial separation phase of van Gennep's Rites of Passage, serving as an initiation and preparation for the audience and the performance.

### **Robert Johnson at the crossroads: Passing over the threshold between the Here and the *Hereafter***

*Hereafter* was staged in a former Tannery, a large industrial complex in Woolston, Christchurch, established in the 1870s. The complex sustained major damage in the 2011 earthquakes, and the skeleton of the structure is now undergoing significant redevelopment as part of a boutique retail and hospitality precinct. At the time of *Hereafter*'s staging, in February and March 2012, the one-storeyed, brick warehouses were sitting vacant and dishevelled, waiting in limbo to be revived out of their ruptured states. The separate areas of

the Tannery were divided internally by concrete partitions, but much of the complex was now lacking external walls. What became the intimate venue for *Hereafter* was one such partitioned area, located at the farthest end of the Tannery complex, near railway lines. The space was patched up in preparation for our performance, with plywood double doors added to enclose the space and holes filled up, apart from a small gap between the ceiling and the top of the walls around the periphery of the room. This unwanted gap allowed the exterior elements to enter the interior space, but the sounds of crunching gravel, passing freight trains and howling winds, actually enhanced, rather than detracted from, the overall soundscape of the performance. Furthermore, although the Tannery had not been used as a skin processing plant for many years, the stench of rotting flesh that wafted from the nearby gelatine factory was a visceral reminder of the location's former life, and its strong associations with death.

The performance space was located at the far end of an old, disused rail track, formerly used for carting skins and carcasses. It now functioned as a poorly-lit, pot-holed, gravel driveway that cut through the ghost-shells of buildings. The audiences were required to take this journey on foot, and many reported that this preliminary experience was disorienting and somewhat unnerving. There was, in fact, a much closer entrance to the venue, from a side street about twenty metres away. This would have been a safer and more convenient entry point, but it would have denied audiences the experience that the longer, more treacherous passage provided, suspended between everyday reality and arrival at the performance. In a sense, this journey down an unknown, dark road could be seen to correspond to the first "separation" phase of van Gennep's Rites of Passage, where the initiands are separated from the rest of society in preparation for the liminal phase of "transition." It could also be seen as a metaphorical descent into the underworld, both the seedy, gangland underworld described in *Hereafter*, and the liminal zone between heaven and hell, or life and death, that is alluded to throughout the performance. By the time the

audiences arrived at the performance venue, a slight shift, or separation, from their everyday lives had taken place. This experience of arriving at the performance had been constructed to evoke a sense of ambiguity and uncertainty in the audiences, and to further blur the boundaries between the world of everyday life, and the theatrical underworld of *Hereafter*.

Inside the performance venue, individual seats were placed in crooked rows, facing towards the corner of the room, where black polyurethane was laid out on the floor and along the back wall. This polyurethane evoked a sense of television crime shows, where the material is often seen to contain and conceal murdered bodies, or to protect surfaces from incriminating traces of DNA. In the centre of this polyurethane-demarcated area sat a man, naked except for a long white sheet wrapped around his waist. He was sitting on top of what appeared to be a massage bed or a hospital gurney and was facing away from the room, towards the back wall, at a picture hanging above him. The picture, in a large ornamented frame, was a copy of an Egon Schiele portrait featuring a reclining woman, naked except for her knee-length stockings. It was unclear whether the woman frozen in the portrait was meant to be dead or alive. To the left of the man was a double-bass, laid out on the floor like a fallen body, and to the right was a bar stool. This pre-show tableau presented an ambiguous scenario: who was this man and why was he sitting on a bed, dressed in nothing but a sheet? Had the performance already begun? What sort of (under)world was this?

During this pre-show phase, while the audiences were arriving and gathering, a recording of Robert Johnson blues music was playing in the background. Werner Fritsch made reference to Johnson in an epigraph in the publication of *Jenseits*, quoting Johnson's lyrics: "I got to keep moving [...] there's a hellhound on my trail." Johnson (1911-1938) is regarded as perhaps the greatest of the Delta blues musicians, whose legend is enhanced by the mystery surrounding the acquisition of his prodigious guitar playing skills and the popular supposition that he made a pact with the Devil in order to master his instrument. According to

this legend, Johnson travelled to a country crossroads and at the stroke of midnight, sold his soul to the Devil in exchange for virtuosic musical powers (Copeland and Goering 438). Underlying this myth is an opposition between Gospel music, where congregations and choirs sing praise to Jesus and God, and the more personal blues music, where the singing is of misery and despair, and in the absence of a Christian God to appeal to, the darker force of the Devil is implicated. The myth also suggests an implicit belief in the function of singing as a bridge between the living and the dead. In *Hereafter*, the playing of Johnson's blues music in the pre-show environment positioned music and the voice at the centre of a transitional moment, forming a bridge, and blurring the boundaries, between outside and inside, and pre-show and performance. Consciously or subliminally, it established the musical voice as a central, liminal force, but unlike the voice that I was to explore throughout the performance, this was a distinctly masculine voice, more aligned with the protagonist, Wolf, and his stagnant state of limbo, than the liminal possibilities of some 'other' voices.

According to Thomas F. Marvin, aside from the obvious Faustian connotations of the Johnson myth, the legend has roots in West African religion, referring to the god, Legba, who presides over crossroads, bridges, doorways, and all liminal sites (587-588). Legba is said to limp, because he has one foot in the visible world and the other with the spirits (Marvin 587). Marvin claims that: "Jazz and blues musicians may be considered 'children,' or followers, of Legba because they are liminal figures who stand at the crossroads where cultures meet, connecting their listeners with the spirits of the ancestors and the lessons of history" (587). Marvin here positions the musician as medium between the world of the living and the world of the dead, and in particular, the innovative, experimental musician who merges musical cultures and traditions, suggesting the potency of musical forms that merge at the crossroads of cultures and forms.

About ten minutes before the performance was scheduled to begin, the Robert Johnson recording was turned off and Michael, the double-bassist, approached the performance area, and crouched down on the floor, beside his instrument. From Michael's position beside the double-bass, he began to stroke, strum and pluck the strings and body of the bass, exploring textures and sounds, while softly singing *Hellhound on my Trail* under his breath. This deconstructed version of Johnson's song formed a bridge between the recorded blues music and the live, acoustic music to be performed in *Hereafter*. It also added another layer of ambiguity between the pre-show and the performance proper, provoking audiences to move towards the stage and claim a seat. Michael's playing continued until the audiences were seated, the doors were closed, and the lights had faded to black. In darkness, Michael stopped playing, slowly donned a mask, and stood up with his double-bass. Simultaneously, I walked through the audience to the stool at stage left, placed a mask over my face, and took up my seated position on the stool.

The putting on of the masks marked a separation from our pre-show personas, mingling with the audience, to a much more ambiguous performance state, where the masks cast us between identities. Margaret Coldiron explores a similarly ambiguous state in the context of the Balinese Topeng drama, where: "The performer is the link between the two worlds, a human being who, through the mask, gives form to the gods" (173). While *Hereafter* came out of a completely different cultural and spiritual context, the use of masks similarly enhanced the ambiguous, liminal aspects of the performance, where the masked performers could be seen to form a bridge across multiple identities, suggesting the possibility of medium-ship or possession.

When the lights came up again, a modified tableau was visible. The naked man was still there, on top of the bed, but he was now lying motionless, laid out like a body on a morgue table. The man was lit with a tight, neutral spot, creating a tunnel of light that

illuminated the deathly stillness of his body, further enhancing the ambiguity of the situation, and making it unclear to the audience whether this man was meant to be alive or dead. This man, whom the audience had earlier watched watching a possibly dead woman, now appeared to be dead himself, and the audience was now sitting, contemplating him, just as he had contemplated the woman. At stage-right, lit by a cold, blue spot, the double-bass was standing fully erect next to its player, who was now wearing a mask of Frankenstein's creature. This change from the unmasked Michael kneeling beside his double-bass, to the sinister, masked figure standing beside the towering instrument, enhanced the sense of ambiguity and unease. At stage-left, lit in green, and cradling a gun, my own face was hidden behind a carnival mask of Hitler, a visage evocative of violence, power and death. The ambiguity of my presence was enhanced by the juxtaposition of masculine and feminine elements, such as my long hair hanging out beside the mask onto the shoulders of my man's suit, and my small, feminine fingers spinning the barrel of the gun. These feelings of being both masculine and feminine and simultaneously hidden and exposed gave me a sense of freedom from which to experiment. The ambiguity of my presence may have helped prepare me for crossing the thresholds of my usual experience with voice, where correctness, beauty and form are often at the forefront of expectations. By exploring these different identities, I could explore different voices.

This entire sequence, from the passage through abandoned warehouses to the arrival at the makeshift venue, to the playing of recorded and live, deconstructed blues, to these initial, perplexing tableaux, was designed to prepare audiences for the ritualistic form of *Hereafter*. If the performance were to function as liminal in van Gennep's sense of the term, then a phase of 'separation' was required, removing audiences from their everyday realities, and preparing them for something else. Victor Turner described the liminal phase as being: "when the past is momentarily negated, suspended, or abrogated, and the future has not yet

begun, an instant of pure potentiality when everything, as it were, trembles in the balance” (44). In *Hereafter*, this initial separation phase shifted the audiences toward an other world, opening up their senses to a more embodied reception of the monologue through these ritualistic elements and positioning them at a metaphorical crossroads.<sup>4</sup>

Extending this separation phase further, we added a musical prologue before the commencement of the monologue. Similarly to Galás’s performance of *ΕΞΕΛΘΎΜΕ*, surrounded by candles and coming out of the silence remaining after the Hammond organ, our musical prologue began from the stillness of the opening tableau, with the two masked figures framing the man in the bed. Michael, wearing the Frankenstein’s Monster mask, began to bow a long, sustained tone from the depths of his double-bass. As one bow ended, he produced another, creating a constant, meditative drone. As the audiences became tuned to this sound, another texture appeared. Starting from the same tone as the double-bass, I began to hum from underneath the Hitler mask, a sound that was barely distinguishable from the sound of the double-bass. Beginning low in both pitch and volume, my voice initially emitted a masculine quality, but as my hum slowly rose and opened up, it took on a more recognisably feminine sound, and as the piece progressed, it played between these feminine and masculine qualities, echoing my ambiguous physical presence.

The tonality of my singing also played between identities. The beginning of the piece emerged from a pentatonic scale, reminiscent of Middle Eastern and Oriental music, but as I

---

<sup>4</sup> *Hereafter* was also performed at the Temple Gallery in Dunedin, 21-23 March 2012. The venue was a former synagogue, which now functioned as an art gallery. This setting was in stark contrast to the grittiness of the industrial Tannery setting, but the underlying sense of a “separation” phase remained. To reach the Temple Gallery, tucked away off a central city street, audiences had to take a winding path up through a walled garden, before crossing over the threshold that led to a long, candle-lit passage. At the end of the passage, a flight of wooden stairs continued up to the gallery, where the performance was staged. Unlike the uneasy sense of descending into an underworld that audiences may have experienced in the old Tannery yard, this ascent through the garden and along the deserted, candle-lit corridor may have evoked more heavenly associations, particularly with the building’s history as a place of worship. Despite the marked contrast, both arrivals facilitated a separation from the everyday, outside world, and opened the way for the creation of a theatrical world that might operate outside conventional boundaries.

weaved my way up to a vocal climax, my singing became more operatic. From these heights, I descended back into the lower part of my voice, where I sang a contemplative Māori chant that meditated around three tones. The chant had nothing of the urgency of the earlier singing, as if a transition had taken place through the course of the music. Through this singing, at the crossroads between western classical singing, Middle Eastern keening and Māori chant, there was a sense that something had been conjured up, and this sense made me feel powerful and confident in my singing, ridding me of my usual nerves and anxieties when performing. Diamanda Galás has said that early in her career she said prayers to the devil before every performance, calling on him to assist her. She did not know exactly who she was addressing, but she felt that she needed to appeal to something other to help her go beyond herself (Juno 20). The opening musical piece seemed to function in this way for me, as a sort of incantation and a channelling of something other. While it was not a conscious decision to enact an invocation, the music I was singing was inspired by traditional forms that function as a bridge between the living and the dead, so perhaps a sense of this was inevitable.

### **Diamanda Galás at the crossroads: Conjuring up a new voice between blues, jazz, opera and Maniot lament**

The first part of the musical prologue was based on Diamanda Galás's *ΕΞΕΛΟΪΜΕ* (*Deliver Me*), from her Plague Mass trilogy, *Masque of the Red Death*, which she developed through the 1980s in response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. *ΕΞΕΛΟΪΜΕ* features on the second part of the trilogy, *Saint of the Pit*, which Biba Kopf describes in the album's liner notes as being: "the most ambitious and perilous leg of Galás's journey with the damned. Here, she plots the soul in transition," from death to transcendence (Kopf). Galás voices this transition through a merging of classical operatic singing with glossolalic babbling and vocal fry and the tonalities and expressivity of Maniot (Greek) lament form. Galás creates a

voice that resounds at the intersection of forms, an ambiguous voice that avoids categorisation and sings (and shrieks) through boundaries, on behalf of those who dwell at them.

Galás was brought up at a crossroads of cultures and musical genres. She was born in San Diego in 1955, to parents of Anatolian and Greek descent. She played a diverse range of music from a young age, studying both classical and jazz piano. She accompanied her father's gospel choir, played with his New Orleans-style band, and performed as a soloist with the San Diego Symphony at the age of fourteen ([diamandagalas.com/about/diamandas-bio](http://diamandagalas.com/about/diamandas-bio)). In the 1970s, Galás played piano in the improvisational, free jazz scene in San Diego and Los Angeles. Free jazz developed in the United States in the late 1950s and early 1960s, as an expression of freedom from both harmonic and social structures, seeking to expose the ruptures by sounding out the disharmonies from between the cracks. Many of its early proponents, mostly African-American 'outsiders' marginalised by mainstream society, believed that by accepting existing musical structures, musicians were acquiescing to the existing structures of society. In order to challenge society, musicians needed to challenge musical form (Gioia 310). It was from her experiences with free jazz that Galás became interested in the voice:

After playing piano for awhile with all these guys from the post-Ornette Coleman school, I thought, "No, the *voice* is the first instrument." These players have always modelled their mode of expression after the voice. [...] The voice is the primary vehicle of expression that transforms thought into sounds. (Galás quoted in Juno 10)

Exploring the voice as an instrument is a political and potentially revolutionary act, in that it supersedes the structures of language, and allows for the expressivity of thoughts that may not be containable within the confines of language. It can be compared to the voice which Cixous envisions will "dislocate" and "explode" the masculine signifiers which restrict women within masculine discourses (*Medusa* 887). Galás significantly chooses the word

“thought” over emotion, suggesting a rationality outside of language that may be channelled directly through the voice.

This initial epiphany about the voice led Galás to experiment with the possibilities of vocal sound from both an aesthetic and a political stance, detailing her experiments in her 1981 essay, “Intravenous Song”: “In 1975 I decided upon the creation of a new vocal music which employs an unmatrixed production of vocal sound as the most immediate representation of thought” (60). A ‘matrixed’ voice is one enwombed within the cultural, social and political environment from which it develops (OED). This “unmatrixed” voice would go beyond language and music, crossing the threshold into the unknown and seeking out the sounds in-between structures. It is a process of developing awareness and consciousness, while taking a leap into the unknown. Coming from the free jazz movement, where musicians aimed to subvert musical and social structures through their “unmatrixed” music, Galás’s early experiments can be seen to challenge and reimagine the social structures projected onto her female body. The “intravenous song” would flow from the inside to the outside, from the internal organs, through the veins, delivered from the voice like blood.

From this early stage, the theatricality of vocal performance was central to Galás’s explorations of the experimental voice:

Theatrically, this diffraction of the mind is made infinite through a ceaseless navigation of the following variables: physical body effort and shape; changing light series which are choreographed; vocal timbre chains; incremental change of room reverberation; manipulation of sonic spatial coordinates and trajectories through the use of four microphones sent to a triphonic sound system. With the exception of the changing light series, the performer has control over all of the above during performance. (*Intravenous Song* 61)

In these early, solitary experiments, the performance and presentation of the voice was a crucial factor. Artistic control over the production of her voice was also fundamentally important and Galás rejects the label of ‘performance art’ in favour of ‘*Gesamtkunstwerk*’ (Schwarz 133-4). This rejection of the categorisation of performance art reaffirms Galás’s

focus on the musical and theatrical aspects of her experimental performance. Performance art originates as a subsection of Fine Arts, with the body used as the raw material for artistic expression. Galás's body is also at the core of her work, but it is layered with the theatricality of costuming, make-up, lighting and technology – elements that are crucial to her 'total work of art.' Performance art tends to avoid the theatrical in favour of stripping off, often literally, the layers of cultural and political meaning, whereas Galás exposes a social meaning through the adding of layers, bombarding her audience with juxtaposed, conflicting voices. Like Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerk*, and like performance art, Galás's performances exist at the intersection of multiple forms. Part of this intersecting vocal base includes her subsequent training in *bel canto* singing technique, which allowed her to command more control over her voice and to literally take her voice to new heights (Schwarz 134). The training in *bel canto* provided her with yet another theatrical and musical layer; another voice to set against the rest.

Galás's vocal performances evolve from the spaces between her different musical backgrounds: between jazz, gospel, opera and unmatrixed, intravenous sound. One of Galás's major inspirations, that may be seen to bind these disparate influences together, is the lament form of the Greek Maniot culture, from which she is maternally descended. The Maniot lament informs much of the musicality, structure and content of Galás's works. It is an inherently liminal form, both in its ritual context as a guiding voice of passage and in its antiphonal structure, which is believed to facilitate communication directly with the spirits of the dead.<sup>5</sup> It is a socially and politically powerful form, facilitating the expression of pain, anger, and protest, from the voices of those who are usually silenced. It is important to

---

<sup>5</sup> In Greece, the women's lament also plays a key role in marriage rituals and in circumstances of exile. Similarly to death, marriage and exile are concerned with separation. The person being sung over is in the process of changing social roles, and is dead either literally, or in the process of becoming dead to their former social self. (Schwarz, 136).

address the form and function of the Greek lament here, as it is crucial to an understanding of Galás's work and encapsulates the role of the shamanic female voice, mediating between the living and the dead, supporting my argument that the experimental voice arises from these in-between, liminal forms.

### **“Towards the dead and towards the living”<sup>6</sup>: the liminal female voice in Greek and Māori ritual**

In Greek society, women's ritual lamentation, or *moirologi*, has played a key role in the rites of death and burial for thousands of years, and survives today, particularly in isolated, rural populations.<sup>7</sup> The actual process of dying should happen in silence, without weeping, as this is the time of 'the struggle of the soul' when, according to Plato, "the daimon appointed to look after each man during his lifetime endeavoured to lead away his soul" (Alexiou 5). Expressions of grief could delay and endanger this process, as it is a reminder of unfulfilled vows or obligations in the world of the living (Alexiou 5). Although the death should occur in silence, the next treacherous passage of the soul of the deceased should not occur in silence. According to Nadia Seremetakis, "Silent death is the bad death. [...] Death must always have its accompaniment" (76).

The completion of the silent death marks the first phase of the passage, where the soul is believed to become separated from the body. It marks a point of rupture, where, according to Danforth: "Many people believe that at the moment of death a person's soul, which is described as a breath of air located in the area of the heart, leaves the body through the

---

<sup>6</sup> "The acoustic power of the lament, like its language, faces opposite directions: towards the dead and towards the living" (Seremetakis, 119).

<sup>7</sup> Women's role as lamenters for the dead is not peculiar to Greek culture, as Gail Holst-Warhaft notes: "One point on which those who have studied lament in cultures as diverse as those of China, New Guinea, India, Greece, Saudi Arabia and Ireland agree is that laments are generally performed by women" (Holst-Warhaft, 20).

mouth” (38). It is at this moment of death that the women’s lamentation may begin, suggesting that the women take up this final breath or this soul through their own mouths, and transform it through their singing. This moment marks a limen, or a threshold, where the breath of the dead and the voice of the living merge together into the form of the ritual lament. It is from the rupture of death that a new, mediated voice may be heard. The women’s lamentation is required to assist the soul of the recently deceased in its passage to Hades or to heaven, ensuring a safe passage for both the soul in transition and the mourners left behind (Danforth 37). It is believed that the souls of the dead are able to see and hear and are aware of everything done by the living on their behalf (Danforth 46). There is an underlying fear of retribution from the dead if they are not fully satisfied with the rites conducted on their behalf, and lamentation and offerings at the grave are seen as an important way of allaying these fears (Alexiou 9).

The ritual lamentation begins at the *próthesis*, where the women lament as they wash the body in preparation for burial (Alexiou 6). According to Loring Danforth, this liminal period of the soul in transition goes through several phases and lasts until the ritual exhumation, up to five years later, where clean, white bones signify a soul’s entry into paradise (49). Until this time, women are required to tend the graveside and sing laments to the dead. While the lamentation provides an outlet for the community’s grief and mourning, its ritual efficacy lies in its function to form a direct communion between the living and the dead. Gail Holst-Warhaft describes this function of the lament as something which can

bridge and mediate between vital realms of experience. [...] The lamenter becomes the medium through whom the dead speaks to the living, the shaman who leads the living to the underworld and back, thus effecting a communal confrontation with death and, through it, a catharsis. (Holst-Warhaft 29)

The Greek lament for the dead places voice, specifically women’s voices, in an extraordinary position of power. Taking on the shamanistic role of medium between the living and the

dead, the women not only lament to the dead on behalf of the living, but lament to the living on behalf of the dead.

In the New Zealand context, in traditional Māori culture, it is also the role of women to use their voices to form a bridge between the living and the dead. Waiata tangi, or laments for the dead, are performed by both men and women, but the initiation of sung ritual communion between the living and the dead is considered the domain of women (McLean 115). During the pōwhiri, or ritual of encounter between manuhiri [visitors] and tangata whenua [people of the land], it is the job of the elder women of both parties to begin the ritual and to allow the passage of manuhiri onto the marae [meeting place]. These women are referred to as the pae arahi, leaders over the threshold. In her book *Hui: A Study of Maori Ceremonial Gatherings*, Anne Salmond describes the karanga as:

a long, high call which sends greetings, invokes the dead, and brings an emotional atmosphere to the *marae*. The best callers have ethereal but carrying voices, in the words of an informant ‘like a bird, high, light and airy’. Their calls are long and effortless, floating away to a sigh. [...] They invoke the dead in language borrowed from mythology. (137, italics in original)

Mervyn McLean explains that this “sigh” is a “long drawn out descending cry, often preceded by a kind of sob or catch of the voice” (83). The technique of stylized sobbing and catching of the voice is similar to the practice of lamenting Greek women, and karanga is structured in a similarly antiphonal style, where there is a call and response between the women, and the drawn-out cries often act as a signal of passing over to the next singer. The karanga is not a lament to the dead, but it is an acknowledgement of the presence and power of the dead in the rituals of the living.

In *Hereafter*, we merged the opening Galás-inspired lament with a contemporary piece by Whirimako Black and Richard Nunns: *Te More*. The text is a genealogical recital from the Ngati Tuhoe tribe of the Bay of Plenty, describing the passage of the Creation of the Universe, from absolute darkness to the world of light. In contrast to the initial Galás lament,

or to the call of the karanga, *Te More* was based on the more subdued form of moteatea [chant], and connected the “oldest and most revered traditions of waiata with the contemplative concentration of 21<sup>st</sup> century art music” (Black and Nunns). According to the album’s producers, traditional moteatea were always monodic and fell within the range of a minor third (Black and Nunns). In a musical sense, monody is defined as music with only one melodic line, but in its original meaning, monody refers to an ode sung by an actor in a Greek tragedy or a poem lamenting a person’s death (OED). Although the moteatea of *Te More* does not relate specifically to death, the monodic form, with its single melody line contained within the tight range of the minor third, seems inextricably linked to the experience of mourning and sorrow.

In Greece, the women’s lament is efficacious and transgressive in both a metaphysical and a social sense. It was, and remains, one of the few powerful female roles in the traditional patriarchal societies of Greece, and women could use this platform for singing about wider grievances that they may only voice during this liminal period of lamentation (Caraveli 181). Because of this discrepancy in power, the lament has been challenged and restricted by authorities throughout its history. From the sixth century, the lament’s central role in funeral ritual was challenged by restrictive legislation that, according to Plutarch, forbade “everything disorderly and excessive in women’s festivals, processions and funeral rites” (Alexiou 15). From the Byzantine period, the lament was condemned by the church for its provocative effects and for the pagan characteristics that were regarded as “fatal to the church” (Alexiou 28). The metaphysical communication of the lament was especially threatening because it took place outside the official church, with women taking over the sacred role of the priest as the mediators between the living and the dead. In the fourth century AD, Archbishop John Chrysostom dismissed the lament as “self-centred and self-indulgent” and labelled it as a “disease of females” (Alexiou 28).

The need for authorities to legislate on the women's lament performance suggests its potential to incite social disorder. One of the serious concerns of the authorities was the extremely physical nature of the performance. The aim of the *moirologi* is to present the deepest possible signs of *pónos*, or pain. The vocal lamentation is traditionally accompanied by physical gestures of lament and grief, such as the tearing of clothes and hair, exposure of flesh, chest-beating and self-laceration (Seremetakis 73). According to Seremetakis:

Women represent the violence of death through their own bodies. Their postures, gestures and general facial expressions function as corporeal texts which reaudit the experience of death as passage and disorder on behalf of the now silent and now immobile dead. It is through this imagery of bodily disorder and movement that women not only establish their shared substance with the dead but also establish themselves as the iconic representatives of the dead in the world of the living. (74)

It is the precarious ambivalence of the lamenting voice that endows it with power and the danger of transgression. Galás links this transgression directly to the female voice and its ability to cross boundaries:

From the Greeks onward, [the female] voice has always been a political instrument as well as a vehicle for transmission of occult knowledge or power. It's always been tied to the witches and the shamanistic experience – the witch as transvestite/transsexual having the power of both male and female. (Galás quoted in Pope and Leonardi 328)

Galás takes on this role of the shaman and the witch, creating antiphony between her various electronically-enhanced voices, singing soprano and bass together in single recordings. In *Hereafter*, my physical and vocal presence was also somewhere between genders. This reflected the original Fritsch script, where it is suggested in the final lines of the monologue that the Hitler-masked figure is Wolf's transsexual Thai lover, Marilyn. We represented this physically with my wearing of male attire and mask, but also vocally by exploring the range and tone of my voice. The transsexual power that Galás speaks of, seems again to be concerned with the liminal, in the dangerous, ambiguous places outside traditional structures.

In Mani, Greece, where the society is structured around clan cults and the law of vendetta flourishes, women also use their lamentation to incite the clansmen to enact

retribution over an unavenged death (Alexiou 18, 22). In this way, it is the responsibility of the men to manage violence with physical action, while the women manage violence through their voices (Seremetakis 118). Galás explicitly uses the style and tonality of the Maniat *moirologi* because of its shamanistic and vengeful properties, which she refers to as “incantations to the Dead” (Juno 11): “the women would speak *for* the dead, expressing the feelings of the dead [...] – more importantly – the *anger* of the dead” (Galás quoted in Juno 12, italics in original). She refers to the *moirologi* as being “mourning as incitement,” which “incited people to be so angry they would fight. It was never mourning in the pacifistic sense – *never*” (Galás quoted in Juno 14, italics in original). The form and function of this style of angry, incantatory lament has formed the basis of much of Galás’s work, when she sings on behalf of those whose deaths or suffering have been silenced or left unavenged. In *Defixiones, Will and Testament: Orders From the Dead* (2003), Galás used her voice on behalf of the Armenian, Assyrian and Greek victims of the genocide of Asia Minor, who were killed by the Ottomans between 1915 and 1922. The title, *Defixiones*, refers to the warnings, written in lead, on the gravestones of the dead in Greece and Asia Minor, warning of the extreme harm that awaits anyone who moves or desecrates the grave or the buried corpse (Evans). Galás refers to this as “the last recourse” in which the most powerless and marginalised people can claim some form of vengeance, defiant against their killers’ desire to extinguish all traces of their existence (*Interview*). Galás takes on the voice of the curse and raises it on behalf of those whose deaths remain unavenged.

The centrality of the female voice in Greek and Māori rituals that seek to communicate directly with the dead, suggests that there is something about the female voice, or the perception of the female voice, that transcends or challenges notions of containment, in a way that the male voice does not. These rituals provide a public platform for women to express and emote, but ultimately, these voices are sent away into the silent void of the dead.

Galás uses the lament form to sing on behalf of the dead, but firmly aims her vitriol “towards the living.”

### **The voice of the plague: the embodiment of pain and transgression**

Galás’s *Masque of the Red Death* trilogy is both an expression and representation of the pain and suffering of the victims of HIV and AIDS, and an attack upon those in society who have exacerbated the suffering, through their judgement and condemnation of those with the disease. Galás juxtaposes the many voices associated with the disease, embodying them through her vocalisations of the biblical texts of authority, set against the symbolist poetry of the outsider, interjected with the suffering lamentations of the infected and their communities. The second part of the trilogy, *Saint of the Pit*, was released in 1986, just months after the death from AIDS of Galás’s playwright brother, Philip-Dimitri, to whom three of the pieces are dedicated, including the *ΕΞΕΛΘΟΥΜΕ* lament that we used in *Hereafter*.

The title, *Masque of the Red Death*, makes explicit reference to Edgar Allan Poe’s short story of the same name, which influences Galás’s work both thematically and performatively. Poe describes his figure of the Red Death, who transgresses Prince Prospero’s cloistered existence and infects the revellers with the fatal plague, as: “tall and gaunt, and shrouded from head to foot in the habiliments of the grave” (128-9). This figure of horror exists somewhere between life and death, as a reminder that all boundaries can be transgressed and that everyone is implicated in the suffering of others. In Galás’s *Masque of the Red Death*, she represents this transgressive figure herself, singing on behalf of those infected with or dead from AIDS. To be diagnosed with HIV or AIDS in the 1980s was to be diagnosed as dead among the living. Galás sings on behalf of those suffering both the

debilitating effects of the disease and the consequent marginalisation from society, being outcast as infected carriers of the modern plague.

Many pop artists and musicians of the twentieth century have attempted to raise awareness about HIV and AIDS, but Galás claims that pop music “generally dilutes the subject so that people live it without confronting anything unpleasant” (Pope and Leonardi, 326). Galás confronts the unpleasantness by challenging the boundaries of vocal technique, and enacting the suffering through her own voice. She contrasts moments of operatic technique with rasping sounds that grate against the passage of her throat, or seem to emanate from the depths of her gut, reminding the audience of the internal body from which the voice spews forth. Through her voice, Galás communicates a sense of both heaven and hell.

Excerpts from *Masque of the Red Death* formed the basis of Galás’s *Plague Mass*, a live performance that premiered at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City (1990). Galás distinguishes her *Plague Mass* from the more traditional Requiem Mass for the dead, which is intended to “help pacify the living so they can feel the dead are resting in peace”, whereas “the dead from this disease, I don’t think of them as resting in peace” (Galás quoted in Pope and Leonardi 322). David Schwarz described the opening moments of a Galás concert that he attended in Hamburg in 1992, in which she presented excerpts from *Plague Mass*:

The initial seconds of the concert shocked me visually and acoustically. Galás sang at the front of the stage, naked from the waist up; behind her, the stage looked like the ruins of a bombed-out building; the stage and Galás were soaked in a bright red light that made Galás’s sweat look like blood several minutes into the visceral performance. (133)

The presentation of Galás’s semi-naked body, seemingly excreting blood from her pores, evokes the image of the Red Death at the ball, corroding the boundaries between the infected and the uninfected, and reminding the revellers that they cannot separate themselves from the suffering of others. It represents the danger from within and challenges the boundaries

between inside and outside, reminding the audience of the festering disease. It also evokes the image of the Greek lamenting women, tearing at their flesh and clothing in order to communicate the deepest levels of pain.

Galás's use of the plague metaphor and her desire to vocally and theatrically embody the disease, conjures up Artaud, whom Galás has claimed was "a very strong inspiration" for her work (Juno 15). Artaud compared the visceral immediacy of his Theatre of Cruelty to the extreme and unrelenting force of the plague: "The theatre, like the plague, is a crisis which is resolved by death or by healing. And the plague is a superior evil because it is a complete crisis after which nothing remains but death or extreme purification" (22). In a reading of 'The Theatre and the Plague' at the Sorbonne in Paris on 6 April 1933, Artaud shocked the audience by descending from an intellectual presentation into an embodied enactment of the material. Anaïs Nin recounted the experience:

His face was contorted with anguish, one could see the perspiration dampening his hair. His eyes dilated, his muscles became cramped, his fingers struggled to retain their flexibility. He made one feel the parched and burning throat, the pains, the fever, the fire in the guts. He was in agony. He was screaming. He was enacting his own death, his own crucifixion. (Nin quoted in Weiss K 269)

Nin recounts that this was too much for the audience to bear, this eruption from within, this extreme pushing of the boundaries of the representational act. Artaud's performance resounded somewhere between a lecture and a theatrical performance; between a sense of theatre and a sense of being seized and consumed by disease; between his own life and his own death. This extreme embodiment is central to Artaud's concept of theatricality, which according to Jacques Derrida: "must traverse and restore 'existence' and 'flesh' in each of their aspects. Thus, whatever can be said of the body can be said of the theatre" (293). The theatre of cruelty seeks to go beyond representation, to be life itself: "in the sense to which life is unrepresentable" (294).

Galás's claim that: "my work *is* the thing itself, the sound of the plague, the sound of the emotions involved" (Galás quoted in Juno 14, italics in original), is reminiscent of

Artaud:

They always want to hear *about*; they want an objective conference on 'The Theatre and the Plague', and I want to give them the experience itself, the plague itself, so they will be terrified and awoken. Their death is total, like blindness. This is agony portrayed. Mine, yes, and everyone else who is alive. (Artaud quoted in Barber, *Blows and Bombs* 62)

The violence and totality of the plague metaphor was fundamental to Artaud's theatrical explorations of the relationship and passage between life and death. He wanted to restore an "impassioned convulsive concept of life" to the contemporary European theatre – and therefore society – which he perceived to be devoid of meaning and of life (81). Artaud believed that the theatre was capable of renewing life itself: "In life I don't feel myself living. But on the stage I know that I exist" (Artaud quoted in Schumacher xxiv). He wanted to create a theatre that would renew a sense of life by showing people that they live as in death, and conceived his notion of the 'Theatre of Cruelty' as a means of jolting people out of their stupor (Sontag *Artaud* xxxix).

Artaud used the term 'cruelty' to encapsulate the creativity that emerged from his own suffering, like the Greek lamenting women channelling their deepest *pónos* in order to deliver the most moving and efficacious performance of mourning. Artaud did not envision his 'cruelty' as a crude attempt at horror and gore, but as something that might "communicate a remaking of worlds," intrinsically located between life and death: "It is consciousness which gives to the exercise of every action in life its colour of blood, its cruel touch, since it must be understood that to live is always through the death of someone else" (Artaud quoted in Barber 1993: 52). Artaud described the ideal theatre in violent terms: "The theatre is at one and the same time scaffold, gallows, trenches, crematorium, lunatic asylum" (Artaud quoted in Schumacher xxiv). Crucially, the violence and cruelty fundamental to Artaud's theatrical

vision are not to be regarded as forces of destruction, but as Derrida notes, as a source of affirmation, through full and necessary rigour (293).

The rigour and vitality of cruelty is evident in Galás's staged works, such as *Insekta*, a piece about torture in isolation, howled and screamed from the confines of a cage (Rothstein) and in *Plague Mass*, where she evokes the image of a suffering antichrist, like an Artaudian martyred actor, signalling through the flames. Following Artaud, Galás uses the metaphor of the plague and the cruelty of the theatre to challenge and transgress artistic and social boundaries. The voice models the destructive and revelatory powers of the plague, where conventions and laws are overcome by something more "fluid" (Artaud 7).

In Galás's work, this shattering and redrawing of boundaries is enhanced by her penetrative, lamentational voice, going 'through' and 'beyond' what is expected and accepted in the realm of female vocal production. Rather than attempting to charm or seduce her audience, Galás uses extreme levels of sound to inflict pain on the audience, infecting them with the sonic representation of the plague: the scream.

### **'Screaming the dead': Galás, Artaud and Maniot lament**

Of all the audible and visible representations of pain, the scream is of fundamental importance in Greek and Maniot lament singing. *Thrênos* and *góos* are two of the main Greek terms used to describe the lament for the dead, both originating in the ancient Indo-European description for 'shrill cry' (Alexiou 102). This points to the core of the lament as the containment and stylisation of a scream, the archetypal symbol of the transition between the living and the dead. In Greek rituals for the dead, the notion of 'screaming the dead' is believed to form a direct communion with the dead, assisting the safe passage of the soul to Hades (Seremetakis 101). As well as its spiritual function, the scream expresses the horror of death and fear of the unknown. The transgression of metaphysical boundaries is embodied by

the transgressive nature of the scream, which erupts from the body without language and form to tame and contain it.

Gail Holst-Warhaft describes the influence of Maniot lament with “the high-pitched timbres of their voices, the spilling over from song to scream” as a fundamental stylistic influence on the works of Diamanda Galás (10). The scream is one of Galás’s signature vocalisations, often placed in antiphony to passages of text, creating a shamanistic dialogue between incantation and scream. According to Galás, all great artists start from the scream:

The soul and the blood *is* the craft [...] All these artists start with the scream, with the blood, and then they articulate that. They don’t lose sight of *that* being what they’re a medium for. (Galás quoted in Juno 17, italics in original)

The scream is at the heart of Galás’s vocal music, as the voice that manifests between singing and speaking, between language and sound, and between the living and the dead.

The scream was also at the heart of Artaud’s theory and practice, centred on the concern that: “In Europe no one knows how to scream any more” (95). Allen S. Weiss identifies the importance of the scream as the fundamental metaphysical agency of Artaud’s theatrical (aural) visions:

The scream is the expulsion of an unbearable, impossible internal polarisation between life’s force and death’s negation, simultaneously signifying and simulating creation and destruction. (K 156)

Guy Rosolato positions Artaud’s quest for the scream at the “impasse, the double-bind, of the simultaneous and absolute *injunctions to live and to die*” (Rosolato quoted in Weiss K 156, italics in original). Like the Greek lament, Artaud’s scream opens up a bridge between the living and the dead.

The scream emerges as immediate, vital expression, free from the constraints of language and text. Derrida refers to the word as the “cadaver of psychic speech” (303), summarising Artaud’s vehement opposition to what he regarded as the oppressive and dead forms of literary ‘masterpieces’: “Once spoken, all speech is dead and is only active as it is

spoken” (Artaud 56). He declared that: “in order for theatre, an independent autonomous art, to be revived, or simply to stay alive, it must clearly indicate what differentiates it from the script, from pure speech, literature and all other predetermined, written methods” (Artaud quoted in Schumacher 111). Artaud believed that the pain and suffering of writing loses its authenticity when transformed into a work of art. According to Sontag, although this contempt for literature had been made commonplace by the Futurists, Dadaists, and Surrealists, Artaud’s contempt was less associated with cultural nihilism, and more concerned with a specific experience of suffering (*Artaud* xxii). The aim was not to do away with language all together, but to find new forms of communication through the body and the voice that engaged with different levels of consciousness: “We do not intend to do away with dialogue, but to give words something of the significance they have in dreams” (Artaud 72).

Artaud wanted to re-capture or re-imagine an authentic form of language and communication, somewhere between the life and death of vocal expression: “instead of harking back to texts regarded as sacred and definitive, we must first break theatre’s subjugation to the text and rediscover the idea of a kind of unique language somewhere in between gesture and thought” (68). The Balinese Theatre show that he attended in Paris in 1931 was one source of inspiration for this:

the strange thing about all these gestures, these angular, sudden, jerky postures, these syncopated inflexions formed at the back of the throat, these musical phrases cut short [...] is the feeling of a new bodily language no longer based on words but on signs.  
(37)

While Artaud may have misunderstood the cultural intricacies and symbolism of these various gestures and postures, the experience enabled him to envision completely new forms of theatrical expression and communication.

Artaud began to seek a “naked theatre language,” which he believed would “allow us to transgress the ordinary limits of art and words, actively, that is to say magically to produce a kind of creation *in real terms*, where man must reassume his position between dreams and

events” (71, italics in original). This new theatrical language would emerge from the spaces in between cultures, between states of consciousness and between the living and the dead, through the body and the voice of the actor: “Abandoning our Western ideas of speech, it turns words into incantation. It expands the voice. It uses vocal vibrations and qualities” (70). He looked to breathing techniques from the Kabbalah as a means of locating various energy centres, and to the Hindu mantras for the treatment of language. It was through these and other vocal experiments that the actor might make a spiritual connection that would authenticate and enliven their performance: “The soul can be physiologically summarised as a maze of vibrations. [...] Belief in the soul’s flowing substantiality is essential to the actor’s craft” (90). Artaud believed that: “The range of the human voice can be tuned to the point where it can be made to chant like a real organ. There are ways of making the voice jump, of making it shimmer like a landscape. There is a whole scale to the voice” (Artaud quoted in Schumacher 139).

As part of his exploration of breathing and vocal techniques, Artaud distinguished sounds into categories of Neuter, Feminine and Masculine forms. In *Seraphim’s Theatre*, Artaud claims that his voice will be “[n]evermore *in the Masculine*” (99, italics in original). The masculine voice “retains strength, but it entombs me in strength” (Artaud 99). The masculine voice is containing and contained, and does not allow the cracks of emotion or unsignified meaning to transgress its rigid structure. Artaud categorises the uncontainable scream by the feminine voice:

I want to attempt a terrific feminine. [...] The lamentation of an opened abyss, as it were; the wounded earth cries out and voices are raised, deep as the bottomless pit, these are the depths of the abyss crying out. [...] The Feminine voice is terrible, thundering, like the barking of a legendary mastiff, squat as cavernous columns, solid as the air which walls the cave’s huge vaults. (96, 98-9)

The masculine shout stays within the structures of body and society, but the feminine scream pierces through and beyond. This feminine, screaming voice is aligned with animals and nature, and signifies the darkness and disorder of the abyss.

### **“Death infecting life”: voicing the abject**

According to Weiss, Artaud’s concept and embodiment of the scream as simultaneously signifying creation and destruction can be regarded as the “nonmaterial double of excrement,” which may be “both expression and expulsion, a sign of both creation and frustration” (*Radio* 287). This link between excrement and the scream suggests the voice as a vital, urgent force of nature, but it also suggests its associations with transgression, filth, and the abject. This connection is not merely symbolic, as contemporary psycho-linguists have shown a direct connection between the pronouncement of glottal occlusives and sub-glottal pressure created on the diaphragm, thus facilitating defecation (*K* 157).

In Artaud’s final performance, the radio play, *Pour en finir avec le jugement de dieu* (*To Have Done with the Judgement of God*) (1947), he colours and enunciates the passages of text in a way that could be heard to revel in the filth, spitting out the consonants and languishing over vowels, coaxing or expelling the voice from within. These somewhat sinister textual passages are contrasted and punctuated with glossolalia, screams and sound effects, jolting the listener out of any sense of comfort. The text speaks of a dissatisfaction with and animosity towards western, specifically American, ideals, and reviles the judgement of a Christian God who is either “shit” or “does not exist” (Artaud quoted in Sontag *Artaud* 561). These proclamations speak from the body and of the body: of blood, semen and shit. The voice becomes part of this ambiguous symbolic order, thrust from the body, over the threshold, from the inside to the outside.

Associated feelings of unease may arise from the inherent sense of the abject, the notion of filth and disorder that Julia Kristeva suggests arises from “what disturbs identity, system, order” (*Abjection* 4). Artaud’s *To Have Done with the Judgement of God*, where cultural, lingual and performance forms are deconstructed and reimaged, leads to a fundamental metaphysical uncertainty that emanates from a space between sickness and health and between life and death. According to Kristeva: “the corpse, seen without God and outside of science, is the utmost of abjection. It is death infecting life. Abject” (*Abjection* 4). The abject is at the core of Artaud’s theatre and his concept of the plague, and in this final radio work, he manifests this abjection through the voice itself.

Artaud’s denouncements of God and graphic descriptions of bodily matter are pervaded by an overall sense of ambiguity that resonates and unsettles, confusing the boundaries between voice and language. His use of glossolalia is strange, yet familiar; the voices and sound effects are visceral but invisible; we hear the body but we do not see it. Glossolalia translates as “speaking in tongues,” and Freya Jarman-Ivens defines it as “a unified, borderless language” which carries connotations of the divine, the mad, and the primordial (142). Glossolalia is sound without meaning, the signified without the signifier, expressing the “ideal” original language while existing outside of semiosis and linguistic order (142).

Following on from Artaud, the exploration and enactment of abjection can be seen and heard in Galás’s performances that sings from and for the voices at the margins, the socially ejected abject. In her *Masque of the Red Death* and *Plague Mass* works, the opening piece is entitled *This Is The Law of the Plague*, and engages directly with the biblical laws of exclusion, using text from the Old Testament book of Leviticus, Chapter 15, in which various forms of “unclean” practices are proscribed:

And if any man’s seed of copulation go out of him, he is unclean;  
Every garment, every skin whereon is the seed, unclean;

And the woman with whom this man would lie will be unclean;  
 And whoever touches her will be unclean.  
 This is the law of the plague,  
 to teach when it is clean and unclean. (Leviticus 15)

Galás's selected passages focus on the contagion of the "Plague" and stipulate its containment through the avoidance of all "unclean" bodily transmissions. Delivering this Levitical text, Galás takes on a voice of ecstatic incantatory authority, as if maniacally smiling down at us from the pulpit. She contrasts the rhythm of her clipped consonants against vowels which slowly unfurl or attack from the outset. In the *Plague Mass* version, slightly different to the original *Masque* setting, this Levitical voice is interspersed with a lamenting voice that ululates and shrieks at the end of each biblical stanza. It is this wailing, wordless voice that seems to penetrate through as the voice of reason, evoking the terror and embodied humanity behind the irrational rationality of the condemning voice of judgement. Galás's vocal antiphony and her challenging of the Christian God is reminiscent of Artaud, particularly in the final piece of *Plague Mass*, *Sono l'Antichristo*, where she proclaims: "I am the butcher's meat. [...] I am the shit of God. [...] I am the plague. [...] I am the Antichrist" (*Plague Mass*). It is the suffering, marginalised, diseased voice that has come to the surface, disrupting and commandeering the social order by insisting that its presence be heard.

Galás's abject, screaming presence in *Plague Mass* was enhanced by a physicality on stage that likewise engaged with signifiers of the abject, with the presentation of her body naked from the waist up, with her breasts exposed and with the dousing of her body in stage blood during the 'consecration.' Her presence was ambiguous and threatening, with the strong, low masculine vocal sounds emanating from her naked, bloodied, feminine body. In addition to these more apparent signifiers, David Schwarz suggests more subtle forces were at work. He describes her frequent sliding between tones and microtones as "smearing," "bending" and "crushing" (149). These terms are all recognised colloquialisms for the practice of sliding or glissando, but in this context, they embrace the danger of the

transgression of boundaries. When something is “smeared,” it is untidy, dirty, or disorderly, and may be out of place. When something is “bent” or “crushed,” its form is altered by an overwhelming force, and its boundaries are forever changed. Singing between the tones suggests singing between the margins and the cracks.

In *Purity and Danger*, Mary Douglas claims: “Any structure of ideas is vulnerable at its margins. The mistake is to treat bodily margins in isolation from all other margins” (122). Douglas further suggests that this social body is particularly endangered by orifices, the intersecting corporeal points between the inside and the outside (116). When Galás “smears” her notes, or juxtaposes multiphonic voices against each other, she is making the audience aware not only of the transgression of musical and tonal boundaries, but of the transgression of the voice itself, from the pit of her belly out into the world.

The abjection of this type of vocal transgression may be especially pertinent to the voices of women. In her book, *Opera, or the Undoing of Women*, Catherine Clément proposes that singing between notes and tonalities represents a danger to social boundaries and order, and this transgression is implicitly tied to the feminine and to death. Clément examines the use of ‘chromatisme’<sup>8</sup> in relation to Wagner’s *Tristan und Isolde*, suggesting that: “chromatism, whether that of the rainbow or of music, is always associated with affliction, with suffering, with mourning and death” (56). She introduces her discussion of *Tristan und Isolde* with a digression into mythological representations of women, concluding that: “Sickness, stink, poison... all that is feminine. Sickness comes from woman’s body; and the odor of woman – *odor di femine* sang the tantalized, hysterical seducer – always stinks” (56, italics in original). This ‘feminine stink’ exudes from the orifices, from the abyss, linking

---

<sup>8</sup> The French term ‘chromatisme’ is here translated as ‘chromatism,’ meaning the state of being coloured. The original French has a double meaning, and also translates as ‘chromaticism,’ the compositional technique used in *Tristan und Isolde*, that incorporates the foreign, non-harmonic tones of the scale (OED).

the vagina and the female mouth as dangerous points of infection and destruction, but also transgression and creation.

It is the feminine voice that cries between life and death and signifies the natural forces set against a masculine God. It is the lamenting Maniot women, clawing at their hair and clothes, or Galás, half naked and steeped in stage blood. The feminine voice is a reminder of the void and of death. Fear of the feminine relates to a fear of the dangerous other, of those at the margins and the borders, and is not restricted to those with female bodies. Claiming the stinking feminine voice, and the shit and the Antichrist, asserts the marginalised, unsettling voices of the ‘other.’

*Tristan und Isolde* ends with the heroine’s death, both tragic and sublime because she has been returned to the rational system, as Susan McClary describes it: “a tonal piece must establish closure, must resolve that slippery, fragrant chromaticism to the security of a rational tonic triad” (McClary in Clément xiii). Isolde’s death is the opposite of abjection, because it restores order and structure. Artaud sought a theatre that would arise from or through abjection in order to purge society and conventional theatre of its true disorders. Artaud’s ideal theatre would overwhelm through discord: “instead of restricting these discords to dominating one sense alone, we mean to make them overlap from one sense to another” (84). Galás and Artaud embrace the abject voice of the ‘*odor di femine*,’ claiming its discords and dis-eases as vocal and theatrical sites of revolution, rather than resolution.

### **The ritual voice of transgression: Between Gnosticism, Shamanism and the Black Mass**

Although, and perhaps because, Artaud was “done with the judgement of God,” his theatre was as profoundly mystical as it was abjectly embodied. One of his concepts for an

early sound film was to be called *The Dybbuk*. The film was never made, and the script did not survive, but according to Mikhail Yampolsky, the title is highly suggestive:

A *dybbuk* is a character of Jewish folklore, a person inhabited by the spirit of someone who has died and who speaks through the mouth of that person. The ghost of the deceased torments the living person, causing him to writhe and to rave, forcing him to blaspheme against his will. (169)

The myth of the *dybbuk* is linked to many of Artaud's preoccupations: it is a spiritual force that is channelled through the living, making both the body and the voice abject by troubling the relationship between body and voice, between self and other, and between the living and the dead.

The sense of theatre as a medium for engaging with otherworldly or spiritual powers is reflected in many of Artaud's descriptions: "Theatre is an exorcism, a summoning up of energy" (Artaud quoted in Schumacher 78). The exorcism analogy is apt for a theatre that would battle between opposing forces, like the prayers and chants of the priest battling the demonic vocal abjections of the demons, channelling the ills of society through the martyred and suffering body of the actor. The exorcism and cruelty of Artaud's theatre would serve to revitalise theatre and society, through the meeting of opposing forces: "I use the word cruelty in the sense of hungering after life, cosmic strictness, relentless necessity, in the gnostic sense of a living vortex engulfing darkness, in the sense of the inescapably necessary pain without which life could not continue" (Artaud quoted in Schumacher 107). According to Susan Sontag, the "gnostic sense" that Artaud refers to was central to his theatrical vision (*Artaud* xlvii), and is highly pertinent to this discussion of the experimental voice between the living and the dead.

Gnosticism is underlined by a metaphysical anxiety related to the notion of being alien in this world, abandoned by the divine and possessed by demonic powers, trapping the individual spirit in a body, in the social world. The self or spirit can be discovered through breaking with the social world, and taking the spirit out of its body and out of the world,

either through total asceticism, or through libertinism and acts of transgression (Sontag *Artaud* xlvi). Sontag proposes that Artaud wanted to create theatre that would enact a secularised Gnostic ritual, as: “a rite of transformation – the communal performance of a violent act of spiritual alchemy” (*Artaud* xlvii). Jane Goodall locates Artaud’s fundamental concept of theatre’s ‘double’ in the Gnostic experience, which purports the idea of a ‘double self,’ wherein the embodied self is set against a prior self that is both a visitation from without and an irruption from within (16). The gnostic search for oneness is intrinsically performative, as opposed to cognitive, effecting the release of the spirit through ritual performance.

The centrality of performance in matters of ritual efficacy is by no means unique to Gnosticism. The Catholic Mass is the seminal ritual performance of western society, and the strict rules that govern it effect a channelling between the living and the spirit. The use of voice is fundamental to the enactment of the ritual. The consecration and transubstantiation of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ is effected through incantatory language. According to the *Catholic Encyclopaedia*, this transformation “is produced in virtue of the words of ‘consecration,’ pronounced by the priest assuming the person of Christ and using the same ceremonies that Christ used at the last Supper” (Cavendish 393). With certain accompanying actions and the incantation of the stipulated Latin text, the priest channels the voice and power of the Holy Spirit, inseminating it into the bread and wine for communal consumption.

The extraordinary power of this ritual performance, both spiritually and politically, has led to many parodies and inversions. The fifteenth-century *Malleus Maleficarum* claimed that witches “make their instruments of witchcraft by means of the Sacraments or sacramental things of the Church” (Cavendish, 367) and this theme of sacrilege became one of the fundamental features of the shadow of the Catholic ceremony, the Black Mass. The

sacred actions and incantations are retained and enhanced, affirming their efficacy as tools of transformation, but they function sacrilegiously against the power of Christ and against the power of the Catholic Church. The Black Mass is both a spiritual ceremony and a political act against the authorities. Galás's *Plague Mass* uses the form of the Catholic Mass as a political act against the Church, sacrilegiously profaning the sacred acts of consecration, and incanting biblical language against its source. The sacrilege and blasphemy is made more extreme by her half naked female form being used as the vessel that channels the Holy or Unholy Spirit during the consecration. Unlike a Satanic Black Mass, which simply inverts the form and function of the Mass in order to worship Satan over the Christian God, Galás subverts the form and function of the Mass in order to unsettle and question the designations of good and evil, or clean and unclean, in society. Galás uses the theatricality of the Mass for political effect.

Galás claims to “use the voice in the same liturgical way that the Mass has always been used [...]. All masses are the same; all have the ability to conjure up evil or the devil, because all gods, all powers are connected in this world – nothing else makes sense” (Galás quoted in Juno 11). This sense of vocal conjuring permeates Galás's work, which she affirms has “an occult, shamanistic, and ritual feeling” that fits with her concepts of “divine language,” “intravenous song” and “speaking in tongues” (Galás quoted in Juno 9). The shamanistic feeling she claims can be compared to the channelling of the Holy Spirit through the body of the priest, but the performance of the shaman is more extreme and less regulated and prescribed. It is important to examine the traditional role of the shaman here, as a paradigm of the ritual performer who, via his voice and through his body, enacts communication with the spirits of the dead.

According to Mircea Eliade, shamanism is pre-eminently a phenomenon of Siberia and Central Asia, but similar phenomena have been observed in North America, Indonesia,

Oceania and elsewhere (*Shamanism* 4-5). The shaman “specializes in a trance during which his soul is believed to leave his body and ascend to the sky or descend to the underworld” (5). The shaman is responsible for any ceremonies that concern the experiences of the human soul (182). This includes delivering dead souls to the underworld and bringing back messages from the dead (212), but also includes healing a vast range of diseases and afflictions in the living, as according to Eliade: “Disease is attributed to the soul’s having strayed or been stolen, and treatment is in principle reduced to finding it, capturing it, and obliging it to resume its place in the patient’s body” (215). Anything to do with the soul on earth or beyond is the exclusive domain of the shaman (216). The shaman is almost exclusively a male figure, but he channels both male and female voices, contrasting deep voices with wild cries.

The shamanic séance is an elaborate and efficacious ritual performance that is staged around an intensifying dramatic structure that ends in spectacle (Eliade *Shamanism* 511). In most contexts, the shaman connects with the soul and with the worlds beyond through ecstatic trance, commonly reached through singing and dancing, where voice is once again at the forefront of metaphysical communication (243). The shaman may use his voice to channel the voices of the spirits into conversation with the audience, or he may embody a range of animal or bird voices (255). Eliade provides an example of a Yakut shaman taking on a multitude of voices in a healing context:

He cries out wildly. This is followed by another pause; then in a low, serious voice he intones a solemn hymn. Next comes a light dance, during which his song becomes ironic or else diabolical, depending on the beings whose voices he is imitating. Finally he goes to the patient and summons the cause of the illness to depart. (231)

In this description, the shaman uses his voice as a tool for healing, similarly to the ideal of Artaud and Galás, who seek to purge society of its ills through their seemingly possessed vocal performances. This can be compared to the role of the Māori Tohunga, or priest, who when summoned to a sickbed will try to discover the passage by which the evil spirit emerged from the underworld, and then recite incantations to force the spirit to leave its

victim and return to the other realm (Eliade *Shamanism* 369). It should be noted that Eliade describes the shaman as “imitating” the voices of other beings, emphasising the theatricality of the shaman’s performance.

Eliade argues that the meaning of all “dangerous passage” rites is this:

communication between earth and heaven is established, in an effort to restore the “communicability” that was the law *in illo tempore*. From one point of view, all these initiation rites pursue the reconstruction of a “passage” to the beyond and hence abolition of the break between planes that is typical of the human condition after the “fall.” (484, italics in original)

This sense of a return is echoed in the Gnostic search for “the pure and absolute knowledge by which human beings are able to perceive their alienated condition for what it is” (Goodall 11). This concept is fundamental to Artaud’s theatre, in his search for an authentic life and theatre before the corruption of western thought and knowledge. For the shamans, and for Artaud, this passage to oneness can be sought and expressed through the passage of the voice in ecstatic performance. This is a crucial point, as it is through the combination of voice within the setting of a physical performance for an audience that this act becomes efficacious. “For what the shaman can do today in *ecstasy* could, at the dawn of time, be done by all humans. [...] Temporarily and for a limited number of persons – *the shamans* – ecstasy re-establishes the primordial condition of all mankind” (Eliade *Shamanism* 486, italics in original).

Herbert Blau insists on the intellectual validity of Artaud’s theatrical impetus:

Far from the ‘family shamanism’ (Eliade’s term) that characterized most ritual theatre experiments in the sixties, like *Dionysus in 69*, Artaud calls for a rigorous intellectuality and ‘mathematical meticulousness’ in the midst of trance. [...] It is not the randomness of the unconscious that he favours but its articulating and linguistic processes. (77)

The Artaudian voice of text, glossolalia or scream, is always an ultimate act of communication that bridges self with other, and life with death. The theatre of cruelty is not

an insular, individualistic pursuit, but a social, ritual action that channels and bridges the deadness of life with the vitality of something other.

### **Between tradition and blasphemy: Grotowski and Staniewski in search of the voice**

Polish theatre director Jerzy Grotowski spent his career searching for the essence of theatre, and hence of life, in what may be akin to the shaman's search for a "primordial condition." He established the Theatre Laboratory in Poland in 1959, where he worked with his actors at stripping off the excessive elements of theatre, ridding his "Poor Theatre" of make-up, superfluous costuming, scenography, lighting and sound effects, and concluded that theatre "cannot exist without the actor-spectator relationship of perceptual, direct, 'live' communion" (9, 19). The religious or spiritual connotations are apt here, as Grotowski refers to his actors as possessing "secular holiness" (34). Reminiscent of Artaud, Grotowski defines the metaphor of the "holy actor" as "a person who, through his art, climbs upon the stake and performs an act of self-sacrifice" (43). The "holy" actor is not to be taken in the religious, Christian sense, but in the ritual, shamanistic sense of "self-penetration, trance, *excess*, the formal discipline itself – all this can be realized, provided one has given oneself fully, humbly, and without defence" (38, italics in original).

Grotowski regarded the function of art to be rooted in a desire to "cross our frontiers, exceed our limitations" (21). Theatre in particular, with the already transgressive presence of the "human organism's breath, body, and inner impulses" was a site of provocation for Grotowski, an enticement to push physical, social and spiritual boundaries in search of new forms of expression:

I have therefore been tempted to make use of archaic situations sanctified by tradition, situations (within the realms of religion and tradition) which are taboo. I felt the need to confront myself with these values. They fascinated me, filling me with a sense of interior restlessness, while at the same time I was obeying a temptation to blaspheme:

I wanted to attack them, go beyond them. [...] This element of our productions has been variously called “collision with the roots,” “the dialectics of mockery and apotheosis,” or even “religion expressed through blasphemy; love speaking out through hate.” (22)

For Grotowski, theatre is grounded in ritual and myth, but the vitality comes from the transgression of these traditions, going beyond and through the conventional frames.

According to Grotowski, the essential thing for the actor is “to be able to overstep every conceivable limit” (35).

Like the performance of the shaman, the body and voice of the actor were at the core of Grotowski’s theatre. Extensive physical and vocal training were a fundamental component of the Theatre Laboratory’s work that, rather than adding technical elements, sought to eliminate obstacles and blockages, *via negativa* (Grotowski 17, 36). Inspired by, but not emulating, the ritual theatrical forms of Peking Opera, Indian Kathakali, and Japanese Noh theatre, Grotowski’s actors were to give themselves over entirely, integrating the actor’s psychic and bodily powers as in trance (16). In this way, the universal wholeness is channelled through the actor, particularly through the communication of the voice: “The vocal instrument is an empty channel. Just let the voice pour forth” (Grotowski quoted in Slowiak and Cuesta 151). The actor’s voice and body arguably become receptacles for the possibility of something other, similar to the shaman, thus creating a bridge to another realm, whether spiritual or psychological.

In order to achieve this level of openness and receptivity, Grotowski’s actors needed to develop their respiratory and vocal apparatus to a virtuosic degree, extending and enhancing the relationship between the voice and the body: “[The actor] should know how to direct the air to those parts of the body where sound can be created and amplified by a sort of resonator” (Grotowski 35). Grotowski’s system of ‘resonators’ sought out new thresholds of vocal production by visualising the projection of the vocal sound through various key points of the body. Some of these resonators were familiar, such as the head, nasal, and chest, but

Grotowski expanded the imagery to include occipital, laryngeal and maxillary resonators, as well as creating simultaneous resonances that led to a 'total resonator' of the whole body (122-3). This exploration at the boundaries and margins of the production of vocal sound was both a practical exercise, and an almost mystic search for undiscovered sounds in uncharted territories. These resonated sounds occur at the intersection of voice, body and imagination, emanating both from the mouth and from the vibrating area of focus. It was from these discoveries that an actor would become vocally prepared to develop a performance score that transcended and transgressed the conventional boundaries of theatre, opening them up to the possibility of the ecstasy of the 'secular holy' actor.

Grotowski's later work left behind the 'theatre of productions,' pushing the boundaries of the theatrical encounter and delving further into the essence of theatre and performance. He did this initially through his paratheatrical work in Poland and later, from 1976 until 1982, with his Theatre of Sources research, travelling in India, Mexico and Haiti, in search of the sources of traditional ritual performances, particularly ancient and traditional vocal forms and songs ([theworkcenter.org](http://theworkcenter.org)).

Contemporary Polish theatre director Włodzimierz Staniewski works from a similar source base, gathering ancient vocal texts and searching for lost vocalities and sounds, but his work has remained intrinsically theatrical. In the 1970s, before founding Gardzienice, Staniewski was invited by Grotowski to work with the Laboratory Theatre's paratheatrical programme, but after five years with the Laboratory, Staniewski left to refocus on theatre-making in the search for "something with its own performative architecture, possessing more than changing rituals and ceremonies" (3-4). The performances of his avant-garde theatre company, Gardzienice, are grounded in the musicality and songs of indigenous European cultures, which were initially gathered in 'expeditions' to rural villages in Eastern Poland,

where ‘gatherings’ would facilitate the exchange of songs and performances between the actors and the villagers (39-60).

Philosophically, Staniewski seeks the fundamental goal of reversing the ‘deafness’ of western actors and audiences and developing new ways of connecting with music, theatre, nature and identity. He claims that the reduction of western music since the Middle Ages corresponds with the reduction of actor’s expressions in sound, and in his theatre wants to: “expand the actor’s *instrumentarium* towards musicality, not only shouts and cries but also all the phenomena, which are sitting inside of us” (65, italics in original). Staniewski distinguishes between the reduced, codified music and a more ancient notion of musicality that forms an immediate connection with the natural world and our inner beings. He wants to re-introduce the dissonances and microtones that exist in the cracks of our contemporary musical experiences, and in his theatre, aims to “salvage musicality for theatre work” in order to widen perceptions and experiences “beyond the usual patterns” (65). This musicality is “everything which sounds beyond the ‘edges’ of the codified system” (CD-ROM). According to Staniewski, this musicality can be found in the ritual of lamentation (65).

Lamentation plays a crucial role in the development of Gardzienice’s ‘ethno-oratorio’ work, because it combines music and musicality, existing between the two: “Codified music can be taken as a well-constructed argument whereas musicality is a ‘flow of life’” (65). The ‘flow of life’ evokes the idealised feminine voice, unbound by social and lingual structures, and intrinsically connected to concepts of nature and the primordial. This unbound voice may be incomprehensible or too confrontational without the ritual structure of lament, which provides a frame for the experience, allowing for experimentation and transgression, but retaining some form of familiarity and structure (65). In this way, it relates well to my own experience of experimental voice in avant-garde theatre, where a performative frame has

allowed for freedom and exploration, while retaining a sense of meaningful communication with an audience.

### **Channelling the primordial voice: John Tavener and Björk's *Prayer of the Heart***

*Hereafter* began with my rendition of Galás's experimental version of a Maniot lament. The piece had a shamanistic quality, building in intensity to an almost ecstatic climax, before calming down into a more sedate, incantatory Māori chant. The sound of my singing alternated between the pure vowels of operatic singing, and the abject, penetrated and smeared notes of something else. These vocal contrasts created a sense of multiple voices, and suggested a source from the margins or the undersides, hidden in the cracks of the chromatic scale. The piece signalled the beginning of the performance and the beginning, or the extension, of some kind of ritual. The vocal prologue was modelled on forms that serve to mediate between the living and the dead, or between this world and somewhere other, and my engagement with the material sought to emulate this in some way, although what this other force might be remained a mystery and possibly exists only somewhere in my imagination. This was perhaps what Grotowski was referring to when he claimed that the voice is an "empty channel." It is not necessary to define what is being channelled, so long as you let it "pour forth" (Grotowski quoted in Slowiak and Cuesta 151).

*Hereafter* ended with a similarly incantatory feel, using a vocal piece that sought to form a bridge between the living and the dead, this time based on a Greek Orthodox prayer. In many ways, the Greek Orthodox prayer is the antithesis of the Greek lament for the dead, as the lament is founded on pagan beliefs that were subsequently banished by the Christian authorities, but both forms seek a connection with the hereafter, while providing comfort for those still here in the world of the living.

The piece we used was a contemporary setting of the Orthodox *Prayer of the Heart* by British composer John Tavener, written for and performed by Icelandic pop singer Björk, with the Brodsky Quartet. The meditative piece repeats the ejaculatory prayer, “Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me,” in successive Coptic, Greek and English sequences. We performed the first seven minutes of the fifteen minute piece, ending on an ascending, questioning phrase and not performing the concluding English section of the piece. I began to quietly sing the *Prayer* underneath the final lines of Wolf’s monologue, slowly building and eventually enveloping the masculine voice inside the feminine sonority of the prayer. By this stage, I had left my seated position at the side, and was standing atop of the bed, astride the prostrated figure of Wolf, pointing the gun directly at his head. In the final moments of the song, after the monologue had ceased, there was a sense that Wolf was now dead, if he had not already been so, but the liminality of the limbo setting was not fully resolved, reinforced by the questioning tone of the final notes of my voice and the double-bass.

Tavener’s music is informed by his deeply spiritual philosophies and resonates with simplicity. Tavener converted to Russian Orthodoxy as an adult, which he claimed brought him “into collision with Tradition,” and he subsequently sought inspiration from Sufi, Hindu and Buddhist musical forms (Tavener). He believed that music should ultimately seek truth and beauty in a bid to communicate “the sound of the beloved.” He was critical of the “po-faced” modernist music that was devoid of spirituality and unable to “bring forth God (Tavener).” Tavener believed that no composer had the right to subject their audience to “existential angst” and in his own music, opened himself up as a channel through which the Angel of Inspiration could dictate music of beauty and spirit. This Angel of Inspiration is specifically a feminine voice (Tavener).

In an interview featured on his retrospective album, *John Tavener: A Portrait*, Tavener asserted that his *Prayer of the Heart* “couldn’t possibly be sung by anyone but

Björk, or someone with a voice very similar to hers” (Tavener). Björk’s voice appealed to Tavener for its “raw, primordial sound” and its “savage and untamed quality” (Tavener). Of all the pieces in *Hereafter*, this was the most difficult for me to sing, despite being the simplest musically. Björk seems to relish dismembered phrases and cracks between registers, but I struggled with these ruptures that so deeply contradicted everything I had learned to conceal and smooth over in my years of classical training. I wanted to strip off the layers of technique and expose my own ‘primordial’ voice, but I discovered how intensely I had internalised the rules and regulations handed down to me from singing teachers, where all the techniques are aimed at taming and cultivating the voice, and removing any remnants of the ‘primordial.’

Nicola Dibbon links Tavener’s perception of Björk’s “untamed” and “primordial” singing to a notion of authenticity:

Like other pop vocalists her voice sounds untutored, which suggests that she, and her music, are unsullied by human or technological artifice: the noisy breaths, explosive consonants, shrieks, howls, and guttural explosions are the opposite of trained (classical) vocal styles. (54)

The assumption that the untrained voice is uncorrupted, and therefore more “authentic” and “natural” than a trained voice, is in contrast to Diamanda Galás, who strives for the “authentic” through virtuosity: “technique is important. [...] If you lack a certain mastery, you can’t express or *be* yourself. [...] When you are “singing to the gods” you must have a superlative technique to extrovert the ride – to “ride the outer limits of the soul” (Galás quoted in Juno 17, italics in original).

Björk’s signature cracks and explosions are reminiscent of what Roland Barthes has described as “the grain of the voice”: “The ‘grain’ is the body in the voice as it sings, the hand as it writes, the limb as it performs” (188). Listening to Björk singing *Prayer of the Heart*, the focus is directed to the meaning of the prayer, pleading for Christ’s mercy, and the sound of the physical effort may reinforce this intent. The conveyance of physical struggle

through the voice can be compared to Artaud's vocal embodiment of the Plague at the Sorbonne, or to the Maniot lamenters' stylised use of sobbing and sharp intake of breath to communicate the deepest possible levels of pain. Hearing the body from which the sound emanates has a visceral effect on the listener, communicating the struggle or the pain directly to their body.

Björk's anti-virtuosity also seems linked to the ambiguous artistic space she occupies, somewhere between pop and the avant-garde, as well as folk and world music influences. She has expressed an aim to create "innovative" music for "the everyday person" (Dibben 160), and has stated that she "could've so easily gone and become a composer and done some avant-garde music in some corner for the chosen eleven and half person [sic]. But I've never wanted to do that" (Björk quoted in Dibben 159). As opposed to Galás's classical lineage, Björk is more closely aligned with rock, punk, and pop vocalists, whose style evolves from less formal folk traditions. According to John Potter and Neil Sorrell, it was mid-twentieth century singers such as Elvis Presley who "released the natural voice, giving singers permission to shout and scream as well as croon" (254), and subsequent folk singer-songwriters such as Bob Dylan and rock bands such as The Rolling Stones and The Beatles who crossed the bridge between song-writing and singing, placing more emphasis on authentic delivery of one's own work, rather than virtuosic performance of somebody else's. This reclaiming of pre-formalised vocal styles is comparable to the searching of Artaud, Grotowski, Staniewski and Wagner for more 'authentic' theatrical and musical forms, seeking inspiration from the folk or primordial 'roots' of performance and voice.

Björk's musical position between pop, folk and the avant-garde is combined through her use of technology. In the 1990s, she merged the electronic beats of popular house music with traditional song forms (Dibben 74), and experimented with techniques used almost exclusively by avant-garde and underground musicians, such as her use of micro-beats (79).

Micro-beats are the accidental “blips” and “clicks” of electronic music, emphasising the in-between tones and sounds (79) and mirroring Björk’s voice, which also embellishes the cracks and inconsistencies of what is often hidden from conventional vocal music. The use of micro-beats could be compared to Staniewski’s search for the microtones of primordial music, attempting to open up our modern ears to sounds from the past which we can no longer hear. Björk’s use of micro-tones may open up our ears to sounds from the future which we cannot yet hear.

Like Galás, and also like Artaud and the lamenting Maniot women, Björk’s songs begin from text, but then refuse to be contained within the bounds of language, transitioning to wordless sounds at climactic musical moments, emphasizing “the pre-linguistic character of the singing voice” (Dibben 54), a form of vocal expression between this world and a primordial ideal. Björk’s music, like that of all experimental voices, emerges from the crossroads, from the liminal space between: between control and chaos; between experimental and pop; between the primordial and the futuristic; between human and machine.

## Chapter Two: Between Human and Machine

This chapter will examine the performance of vocal expressions that come into being somewhere between the human voice and the machine. By this I mean the human voice that is mediated, enhanced or transformed via electronic means, transgressing the boundaries of the signifiers and the capabilities of the human voice and becoming something other. These disembodied voices become meaningful when they are given a corporeality within the liminoid sonic worlds of avant-garde performance. I am particularly interested in the theatricality of the pioneering electroacoustic work of the mid-twentieth century, where the repositioning of the human voice amidst magnetic tape, filters, and oscillators, unsettled its usual signifiers, and perhaps fulfilled what Artaud envisioned as “[giving] words something of the significance they have in dreams” (72). These sonic worlds created new possibilities for audience reception, whereby rather than watching a physical performance unfold on stage, the drama played out inside the minds of the audiences, guided by unconscious fears and desires triggered in the work.

These techniques have been successfully exploited on the soundtracks of thrillers and horror films, where the interplay between human voice and machine is used to far more terrifying effect than any form of visual trigger. Michel Chion suggests that the power of this mechanised ‘voice without a place’: “takes us back to an archaic, original stage [...] during which the voice was everything and it was everywhere” (27). Mladen Dolar relates the terror of this placeless voice to its unsettling reminder that “the source of the voice can never be seen, it stems from an undisclosed and structurally concealed interior, it cannot possibly match what we can see” (70). The voice that resonates between human and machine may be an unsettling reminder that the voice in general can never really be located or captured. It is inherently transgressive.

This chapter focuses particularly on the 1961 electroacoustic work, *Visage*, composed by Luciano Berio with singer, Cathy Berberian, which formed the basis of the second musical piece in *Hereafter*. *Visage* is a twenty-one minute work that Berio constructed by splicing and realigning magnetic tape recordings of Berberian's voice. The vocal source materials featured a range of expressions, from sighs and gasps, to screams, to various styles of laughter, to nonsense languages formed out of Hebrew, Neapolitan and English phonologies. The repositioning of the vocal material and its juxtaposition and synthesis with various electronically produced sounds produced a work that is difficult to interpret on a rational level, but communicates directly and forcibly with the imagination. This is reflected in Berio's own account of the work: "To start with I was thinking of *Visage* as a soundtrack for an imaginary drama. Instead, it turned out to be a highly complex work which is rather difficult to label" (Berio quoted in Osmond-Smith *Two Interviews* 146).

*Visage* appealed to me for its deeply theatrical exploration of human vocal expression, which seemed like an extension of Artaud's final radiophonic experiments. Both pieces deconstruct language and use screams and sound effects in order to overwhelm and disorient the audience. Both pieces were conceived for radio, and both were initially banned from public broadcast. In the case of Artaud's *Pour en finir avec le jugement de dieu*, this is perhaps not surprising, with its Anti-American vitriol and the scatological and blasphemous language an obvious and intentional provocation. In *Visage*, however, only one actual word is ever uttered: "*parole*," Italian for 'words.' It seems apparent that *Visage* was deemed 'obscene' by the Italian public broadcasting company not for any offensive language or visual images, but for the obscenity that is suggested in the mind of the audience when raw vocal expression is reimagined inside an alternative signifying system.

It is telling that a piece constructed from electronically-produced sounds and an unseen female voice is given the name: *Visage*. A 'visage,' a face to be seen and looked at,

seems to suggest something intrinsically theatrical in the work, an evocation of character and role that is represented through the voice. In *Hereafter*, we used the first eight minutes of *Visage* as material for creating a piece closely modelled on the original, but adapted to live, non-electronic performance for double-bass and voice. We were not concerned with emulating the electronic component of *Visage*, but wanted to explore the way the work deconstructs vocal and musical expression and creates new meaning through the juxtaposition of disparate elements.

The central monologue of *Hereafter* recounted a life lived in the underworld, full of graphic descriptions of sex and violence, filtered through the inarticulate ramblings of the protagonist, Wolf 'Sexmachine' Bold. Wolf is remembering female bodies by *dismembering* them. He describes the look, feel and taste of specific parts of female bodies and has a myriad of ways of naming breasts, but these female bodies always remain in parts and do not form a whole. By reducing these female bodies to their sexual functions, he objectifies them as 'Sexmachines' like him. The inherent violence of these dismembered descriptions could be compared to the process of constructing the deconstructed female voice in *Visage*, where the vocal recordings on magnetic tape are literally cut up and repositioned.

In our *Visage*-inspired piece in *Hereafter*, I explored this idea of dismemberment through my voice. Like the unseen voice of the original, my face was also unseen, concealed behind the Hitler mask. At the beginning of the piece, I fought to find a voice, somehow constricted by my own vocal apparatus. Slowly my voice struggled through the consonants, before finding liberation in the vowels. After this initial struggle for vocality, I created vocal fragments in relation to the play of the double-bass, eventually forming phrases out of nonsense languages. This vocal fragmentation and dislocation could be seen to echo what Wolf 'Sexmachine' does through language: the female voice is chopped up and no longer resembles a whole. However, in *Visage*, and in our performance, the female voice reasserts

itself, and resists reduction and categorisation. Our version ended with the juxtaposition of agonised screams and sobbing with dismissive laughter that seemed to mock and enjoy the preceding signifiers of terror and victimhood. This female voice reclaims dismemberment as something empowering that allows it to reflect and comment on the dominating, male narrative, transgressing the boundaries of simple categorisation and fetishized containment, exploring humanity through its dehumanised form.

### **“Swallowed up in the mechanistic process”: the pre-electronic mechanised voice**

In *Alternative Voices* (1984), Istvan Anhalt writes of a trend that has been noticeable in music since the 1950s:

the appearance of a succession of new compositions for the voice that use it in ways other than exclusively in the ‘usual singing mode’. Spoken, whispered, murmured, and hummed delivery is combined in these works with normal singing and with such marginal sounds as coughing, singing, audible breathing. While some pieces use a syntactically correct text, others employ language in different kinds of construction. (3)

Anhalt traces the recent antecedents of this trend to the early twentieth century, with the Modernist, Futurist and Dadaist movements challenging the boundaries of voice, language, and tonality. I will briefly outline these earlier influences that were later to be developed in electroacoustic work, such as that of Berio’s *Visage*.

Arnold Schoenberg’s development of the *Sprechstimme*, a cross between singing and speaking, led the way to widespread explorations of new types of vocal sounds and experimentations with pitched, unpitched and extended vocal techniques (Dunsby 6). The inspiration for the *Sprechstimme* harked back to earlier examples of melodrama, such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s *Pygmalion* (1772), which sought a voice between the speaking, declaiming voice and the operatic *bel canto* style (Anhalt 7). Schoenberg’s first fully developed example of the *Sprechstimme* was his female solo melodrama, *Pierrot lunaire*

(1912), which consisted of twenty-one poems, delivered by a vocalist, costumed in the style of *commedia dell'arte* (Dunsby 6). The *commedia* style is also evident in the form and performance of *Pierrot lunaire*, where the vocalist both narrates and acts, maintaining similarities with *commedia*, where the masked character can be both inside and outside the role, between the audience and the action on stage. This ambiguity is another example of the experimental voice that communicates in-between fixed identities: between first and third person narrative; between singing and speaking; between the high art of a classical music concert and the low art of cabaret and *commedia dell'arte*. The theatricality of *Pierrot lunaire* created a liminal space where it was possible to transgress the usual conventions of vocal performance, allowing for the creation of a voice that unsettled categorisation, not quite fitting in to the existing forms.

Around the same time, the founder of the Futurist movement, poet Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, demanded that the vocalist “completely dehumanize his voice, systematically doing away with every modulation and nuance” (Tommaso quoted in Anhalt 10). To do this, he must “metallize, liquefy, vegetalize, petrify, and electrify his voice, grounding it in the vibrations of matter itself as expressed by words in freedom” (Tommaso quoted in Anhalt 10). Marinetti promoted the embodiment of the machine as a liberating tool, freeing the voice from socially prescribed notions of the past and of ‘nature.’ This futurist voice would be accompanied by the instrumentation of hammers, automobile horns, saws and electric bells, seeking the noises that would blend with the vocally produced onomatopoeic sounds (Anhalt 10). Rather than restricting or surpassing the human voice, the futurists saw technology as something that might liberate the voice from the shackles of the past, helping to create a transgressive identity that was between human and machine.

Evolving out of the devastation of the First World War, the Dada movement was also concerned with liberating the social and political voice. This was partly done by privileging

raw voice and sound in a critique against language and people's unquestioning acceptance of governmental and journalistic propaganda. By deconstructing cultural signifiers and creating their own, the Dadaists hoped to make people aware of the construction of signification, provoking them to reinterpret and challenge art, literature and the entire social system (Kuenzli 17). According to Dadaist, Hans Arp: "Dada wanted to replace the logical nonsense of the men of today by the illogically senseless" (Arps quoted in Ades 18).

From their initial performance base at the Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich, the Dadaists presented cubist dances, short plays, and various forms of poetry that upheld their principles of illogical senselessness (Kuenzli 18). Founding Dadaist, Hugo Ball, developed 'sound poems' as a means of seeking out the essence of language that might emerge "from the primeval strata untouched and not reached by logic and by the social apparatus" (Ball quoted in Kuenzli 19). He also developed the 'simultaneous poem,' consisting of three or more voices speaking, singing, and whistling at the same time, as a way of rupturing the veneer of language and reinserting the voice as the most immediate signifier:

The 'simultaneous poem' has to do with the value of the voice. The human organ represents the soul, the individuality in its wanderings with its demonic companions. The noises represent the background – the inarticulate, the disastrous, the decisive. The poem tries to elucidate the fact that man is swallowed up in the mechanistic process. In a typically compressed way it shows the conflict of the *vox humana* with a world that threatens, ensnares, and destroys it, a world whose rhythm and noise are ineluctable. (Ball quoted in Kuenzli 194, italics in original)

In contrast to the Futurist view of the mechanistic process as a potential source of liberation, the Dadaists conceived of it as a predatory force that "swallows" us up. This terminology already suggests a link between the mechanistic process of the machine and the organic process of the body, where the notion of swallowing conjures up the fear of the abyss implicit in the unseen recesses of both. The Futurists tried to mechanise the human, while the Dadaists tried to humanise the machine. In resistance to the mechanics of the machine, the Dada poets mine the depths of the voice, searching for the primordial essence of vocal

utterance, while exploring sound in a non-verbal way that seems to emulate the succinctness and timbre of the machine, creating an organic monster somewhere in-between. The search for a voice between primordial nature and the mechanical future resounds in the liminality of avant-garde performance.

### **“The Tenth Oscillator”: *Visage* and the theatre of voices**

In the late 1940s, the fusion of the human voice and the machine became a literal possibility with the advent of the electroacoustic tape piece (Causton 15). With this new technology, it became possible for composers to create entirely new musical sound worlds. This could be done using electrically powered frequency oscillators, rather than the natural resonance of bodies or musical instruments, or by recording and electronically manipulating naturally produced sounds beyond recognition (Causton 16). This new technology gave composers the opportunity to control every aspect of the construction and performance of their works, and of these new worlds of sound.

Unlike the experience of listening to a piece of music and identifying specific musical instruments by their timbre and tone, electronically produced sounds have no frame of reference by which the audience might identify the source of the sound, as there is no visible or material source. Consequently, these new sounds create new signifiers by the way they are positioned in time and space, in relation to other sounds, and in relation to the audience, who construct corresponding narratives in their imagination. Because of this, Richard Causton asserts that all electroacoustic music is inherently theatrical, and that “the tendency to invoke elements of theatre in order to ‘complete’ the experience of electroacoustic music is part of our humanity: the theatre is in the mind” (17).

In this theatrical sound world, the human voice carries much significance. It adds layers of meaning and complexity through language, vocal tone, and timbre, and ultimately

may communicate on a visceral level that other sounds cannot. Causton evokes the example of the sound of a cry of pain, which works directly on the nervous system of the audience, despite being disembodied and removed from its natural and visible source. Composer and sonic artist Trevor Wishart proposes that: “with music for voice [...] it is doubtful whether we can ever banish from our apprehension of the sound the recognition of a human source” (Wishart quoted in Causton 17). The human voice can never be completely swallowed by the mechanisms of electroacoustic music.

As a composer of experimental classical music in the mid to late twentieth century, Luciano Berio took a particular interest in the voice. His work often surpassed the expected sung forms of classical music, and sought inspiration from non-verbal, non-musical vocalisms. He claimed:

I have always been very sensitive, perhaps overly so, to the excess of connotations that the voice carries, whatever it is doing. From the grossest of noises to the most delicate of singing, the voice always means something, always refers beyond itself and creates a huge range of associations: cultural, musical, emotive, physiological, or drawn from everyday life. (Berio quoted in Osmond-Smith *Two Interviews* 94)

Berio initially explored this fascination with the extreme and banal range of the voice in relation to his enthusiasm for the new technologies of electronic music. He first heard a piece of tape music at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1952, which was “an experience devoid of musical content, entirely innocuous,” but it left him with an impression of “what could be done with magnetic tape, and cutting up sounds with scissors” (Berio quoted in Osmond-Smith *Two Interviews* 117). He co-founded the electronic music studio, *Studio di Fonologia*, with Bruno Maderna in Milan in 1955. The name of the studio literally translates to ‘Studio of Phonology’ and a large impetus of the experimentation was concerned with exploring the creative potential of phonetics (Osmond-Smith *Tenth Oscillator* 7). Berio’s first completed electroacoustic work was *Thema (Omaggio a Joyce)* (1958), in which recordings of spoken passages of James Joyce’s *Ulysses* were cut up and electronically manipulated. He

and his collaborators were especially fascinated with the onomatopoeic qualities of Joyce's text, and the way he deconstructed and re-appropriated the signifiers of language (Osmond-Smith *Tenth Oscillator* 4).

The voice Berio used in his *Omaggio a Joyce* was that of his wife and collaborator, American mezzo-soprano, Cathy Berberian. They met while studying music in Milan in 1950, and much of Berio's vocal music was written for, or developed with, Berberian's virtuosic voice (Osmond-Smith *Tenth Oscillator* 2). Berberian was also popular with other contemporary avant-garde composers. John Cage was so impressed by her parodied rendition of a "one-woman simulacrum of tape editing" that he composed *Aria* (1959) for her, a "vocal mimesis of edited tape," in which Berberian sings twenty different voice types in five different languages, against Cage's 'Fontana Mix' electronic soundscape (Osmond-Smith *Tenth Oscillator* 5). In the same year, Bruno Maderna created the tape piece, *Dimensioni II* or *Inverzione su una voce* out of Berberian's deconstructed vocal interpretations of a poem by Hans G. Helms (Osmond-Smith *Tenth Oscillator* 7).

Berberian's virtuosic ability led to her being dubbed the "tenth oscillator" of the studio, and Berio claimed her voice "was almost a *studio di fonologia* for me" (Berio in Osmond-Smith *Two Interviews* 94, italics in original). From this perspective, Berberian's voice is not only mixed with the machine, but is seen to become part of the mechanistic process itself, somehow detached from her own body and creating sounds that arise from a synthesis between human and machine. This Berberian-oscillator combines the emotional expressivity of the human, female voice with the efficient perfection of the machine, potentially losing its own agency and becoming a mere property of the studio. Alternatively, Berberian's voice-as-oscillator takes on supra-human powers, transgressing the limits of her human virtuosity.

In 1961, Berio and Berberian created *Visage*, the culmination of these early experiments with electroacoustic forms. According to Berberian: “Berio wanted to work within a parabola from the failure of communication, through trivial conversation, to serious emotion, and ultimately to song” (Osmond Smith *Tenth Oscillator* 8). Berio claimed that he worked with words in order to find new meanings in them, by analysing them acoustically and musically. He worked to rediscover words and their meaning, aware that any vocal gesture, such as a sigh or a breath, contain meaning and cannot be completely disassociated from it (Osmond-Smith *Two Interviews* 141).

*Visage* began from improvisations of a vast range of vocal expressions, from the everyday sounds of sighs and laughter, to various made-up languages, to sobbing and screaming. Within these categories, Berberian explored the various textures and colours of expressivity. The laughter was sometimes forced and strident, and at other times refined and distant. The languages were based on the phonology of English, Hebrew and Neapolitan dialect, and were sometimes spoken as if in conversation, sometimes deconstructed into single phonemes and syllables, and at other times pronounced fluidly and purposefully, as if some kind of incantation (Causton 17). The only fully formed, comprehensible word ever uttered is “*parole*” (Osmond-Smith *Tenth Oscillator* 8).

The most crucial aspect of *Visage* is the way these vocal improvisations are placed in relation to each other and to the electronically-produced sounds. Positioning the voice against a backdrop of unfamiliar and unrecognisable sounds is immediately unsettling. Unlike the identifiable timbre of a musical instrument, these mechanised sounds cast the audience into an alien and initially incomprehensible world. The introduction of the human voice into this setting may be initially reassuring, but ultimately it makes the situation more unsettling. The first vocal sounds are the beginnings of words, struggling to be enunciated through the hard edge of consonants. Vocally, Berberian is deconstructing language into minuscule elements,

but in the mind of the audience, this inability to vocalise may be evocative of choking and pain. Berberian is announcing the threshold of the voice, making audible the gap between the inside and the outside, of what is heard and what is not heard, and this is unsettling.

The voice in *Visage* provides fragments of familiarity and signification, but the discontinuities and juxtapositions of conflicting emotions make the human experience of this world even more terrifying. One particularly disturbing moment in *Visage* features Berberian's anguished screams set against a sharp, electronically-produced sound that seems to strike down on her, like an axe. Her screams are followed by sobbing, which is then immediately juxtaposed with maniacal laughter that dissolves into multiphonic vocal fry. The initial sounds of distress and terror are immediately followed with sounds of pleasure and enjoyment, and even mockery. At other times, the sounds of the voice and the sounds of the machine become indistinguishable, troubling any notions that the voice and the machine are separate or opposing forces (Causton 18).

*Visage* was conceived for radio, but was deemed 'obscene' and was banned from broadcast. According to Osmond-Smith, subsequent performances vindicated the radio authority's decision, with live audiences being deeply disturbed by the work's content. Osmond-Smith suggests that the intertwining of erotic and destructive urges was the most disturbing element for audiences, giving voice to "the border between pleasure and pain" (*Tenth Oscillator* 9). This was undoubtedly compounded by the fact that these aural images were created by a synthesis of human and machine, sounding of the ambiguity at the borders and the margins, where voices and bodies are not easily defined or contained.

### **Behind the curtain: the uncanniness of the acousmatic voice**

In *A Voice and Nothing More*, Mladen Dolar suggests that the perception of danger at the margins and borders is implicit in our reception of the voice (50). There is nothing reassuring or certain about the voice, which embodies the rupture between the interior and the exterior, and binds language to the body, despite being uncontainable by either (72). The voice stands at the intersections of inside/outside and language/body, and therefore represents the dangerous liminal space in-between. Dolar claims that: “The voice is elusive, always changing, becoming, elapsing, with unclear contours, as opposed to the relative permanence, solidity, durability of the seen” (79). He suggests that a visible vocal source is required to neutralise the danger and obscenity of the untamed voice. According to Dolar, the voice comes from “some unfathomable invisible interior and brings it out, lays it bare, discloses, uncovers, reveals that interior” (80). If we can identify the source, we can isolate and contain it. It no longer poses a threat.

Berberian’s voice in *Visage* is perhaps so unsettling because it is impossible to situate. We cannot see the source of the voice and we cannot define the electronic soundscape in which it is contained. Mediated by technology, this un-locatable voice can multiply and magnify. It flits in and out of language, but is never quite captured. It appears and disappears, but we sense its omnipresence, ready to assert itself at any time. The work’s title, *Visage*, reminds us of the usual visual source of the voice: the face. The voice passes through the mouth and is made rationally meaningful through the articulation of language. The lips pronounce the words and the face enhances the expression. By naming the work *Visage*, Berio points to the absence of a face in the work, but also suggests that the same breadth of expression may be perceived instead through the voice. In an interview, Berio compared the way the voice may come to represent “an expressivity which is like that of a human face which can at times be happy, sad, joyful, tired and in the end lifeless” (Berio quoted in

Brodsky). In *Visage*, Berio and Berberian convey these multiple varied expressions through the voice, rather than the face.

‘Visage’ is a more ambiguous word than ‘face,’ as it also refers to ‘appearance.’ The Oxford Dictionary provides a pertinent example of this other meaning: “there was something hidden behind his visage of cheerfulness” (OED). Unlike ‘face,’ which has connotations of transparency (‘face value,’ ‘on the face of it’), ‘visage’ has more sinister undertones, implying that there may be something hidden beneath the exterior. Applying this idea of a ‘visage’ to the voice, suggests something hidden beneath the exterior of the voice. In *Visage*, this hidden voice comes to the surface as screams and otherworldly, electronically-enhanced vocal sounds, penetrating the facile nature of everyday chatter and innocuous expression. The most disturbing aspect of the emergence of the hidden voice may be the underlying realisation that the voice is always hidden, even when it seems to be revealed.

In *Hereafter*, my body was present on stage, but like *Visage*, the audience could not see the source of my voice, where the voice passes the threshold between inside and outside, because my face was obscured by a mask and my mouth was not visible to the audience. The mask presented a static, emotionless visage that was clearly concealing something underneath. The mask bore the face of Hitler, a symbol of evil, whose rise to power was boosted by the masterful use of his voice within the theatrical frame of Nazi rallies, and filmic and radio broadcasts. In *Hereafter*, a sinister effect was created by the juxtaposition of the lifeless visage of Hitler, with an incongruous, living voice underneath. This liminal position between seen and unseen, between male mask and female voice, and between live body and deadly visage, evoked a sense of the uncanny, something strange but familiar, and ultimately unsettling. In his book, *The Uncanny*, Nicholas Royle claims that uncanniness is “often to be associated with an experience of the threshold, liminality, margins, borders,

frontiers” (vii). It is necessary to consider the experimental voice in relation to discussions of the uncanny, as both can be linked to liminality and transgression.

In his 1919 essay, Sigmund Freud seeks to distinguish the ‘uncanny’ from other frightening things (*Uncanny* 219), starting from a linguistic examination of the German term, ‘*Unheimlich*,’ and exploring the dual connotations of ‘*heimlich*.’ ‘*Heimlich*’ can mean ‘homely’ and ‘familiar’ as well as ‘concealed’ and ‘kept from sight’ (*Uncanny* 222-3). In this way, even the word itself is a source of uncertainty: “*heimlich* is a word the meaning of which develops in the direction of ambivalence, until it finally coincides with its opposite, ‘*unheimlich*’” (Freud *Uncanny* 226). Following this linguistic examination and Frederich Schelling’s assertion that “everything is *unheimlich* that ought to have remained secret and hidden but has come to light” (Freud *Uncanny* 225), Freud suggests that the uncanny relates to a surfacing of infantile complexes which have been repressed, or primitive beliefs which have been surmounted: “for this uncanny is in reality nothing new or alien, but something which is familiar and old-established in the mind and which has become alienated from it only through the process of repression” (*Uncanny* 241).

This unsettling tension between the familiar and the uncanny is fundamental to *Visage*, where Berberian’s everyday vocabulary of laughter, sighs and almost-recognisable language is immersed in a strange, inhuman soundscape. Perhaps the most terrifying aspect of *Visage* is that we cannot quite grasp onto the everyday vocal sounds, and conversely, there is something strangely and distantly familiar about the electronically-created sounds. Listening to *Visage*, we are plunged into an ambivalent, liminal world, where voice and machine slowly come together to form something not quite belonging to either.

The uncanniness of Berberian’s voice in *Visage*, emerging somewhere between human and machine, can be compared to the figure of Olympia, the automaton from E. T. A. Hoffmann’s short story, *The Sandman*, a work fundamental to the discourse on the uncanny.

Referring to Hoffmann's mastery in provoking feelings of the uncanny, Ernst Jentsch proposes that the most common cause of evoking uncanny effects is by creating "doubt as to whether an apparently living being is animate and, conversely, doubt as to whether a lifeless object may not in fact be animate" (11). In *Visage*, this doubt arises when Berberian's vocal phrases are juxtaposed in unusual, inhumane ways, such as anguished screaming placed beside laughter, or when her voice is electronically manipulated, such as when vocal fry is multiplied into several simultaneous voices.

In *The Sandman*, Hoffmann's casting doubt over whether living or lifeless beings are animate is used to both critique the cultural artificiality of the courtly behaviour of upper classes, where automated dolls might be mistaken for living people, and to comment upon the beginnings of an industrialised society, where machines might potentially stand in for humans. In the tale, the protagonist, Nathaniel, falls madly in love with an automaton, Olympia, believing her to be a 'real' woman. Nathaniel is initially enchanted by Olympia's "perfectly proportioned and gorgeously dressed" (99) physique, but is soon also taken with her vocal and musical talents:

Olympia played the piano with great accomplishment, and performed equally well a bravura aria in an almost piercingly clear, bell-like voice. Nathaniel was utterly entranced. [...] The artificial roulades seemed to Nathaniel the heavenly rejoicing of a soul transfigured by love, and when at last, after the cadenza, the long trill shrilled out through the room, as though suddenly embraced by glowing arms he could no longer restrain himself and he cried aloud in pain and rapture: 'Olympia!' (113)

In Nathaniel's praise of Olympia's singing, Hoffmann introduces an uncanny perspective on classical, operatic singing. The notion of "artificial roulades" and "shrill" trilling suggests an unreal, mechanical style of delivery that is perhaps not quite human, or somehow not authentic. Nathaniel's friend, Siegmund, is unsettled by Olympia's perfection: "When she plays and sings it is with the unpleasant soulless regularity of a machine. [...] We have come to find this Olympia quite uncanny" (116). In both Nathaniel's and Siegmund's accounts, technical vocal mastery is equated with technology and artifice. The uncanniness of the voice

between human and machine may arise from the feeling that the voice will reveal itself to be completely devoid of the human and in fact only be machine.

In Freud's discussion of *The Sandman*, he dismisses Jentsch's assertion that the feelings of unease arise from "intellectual uncertainty" over whether a being is animate or inanimate (*Uncanny* 230). He instead suggests that the central theme is related to the mythical figure of the Sandman (*Uncanny* 227), who steals children's eyes, by throwing "handfuls of sand in their eyes, so that they jump out of their heads all bloody" (Hoffmann 87). Freud proposes that this anxiety about one's eyes and the fear of going blind is "a substitute for the dread of being castrated" (*Uncanny* 231). When sight is lost, other senses are heightened. The 'obscurity' of *Visage* seems to be predicated on the audience's projection of fantasies onto the reassembled vocal material. Similarly, Royle suggests that Hoffmann introduces the uncanny "in the experience of sound, ear and voice," claiming: "there is repeated emphasis on the frightening *sound* of the sandman" (46, italics in original). Nathaniel dreads the foreboding sound of Coppelius on the stairs and is later haunted by his call to "bring eyes" (Hoffmann 91), and by Coppola's refrain of "lov-ely *occe*" (109, italics in original). Near the end of the tale, Nathaniel appears to be cured of his fears and obsessions, but in the final episode, the presence of Coppelius in the distance once more triggers Nathaniel's madness. The repressed fears are expressed through his voice, as he rants about puppets and fire and "lov-ely *occe*," and it is these final words that drive him to his suicide (124, italics in original).

Like Berberian's varied voices in *Visage*, Nathaniel's vocal outbursts seem to have no rational connection to the concrete world. They come from somewhere unknown and seem to express the logic of another time or place. These voices may be heard to represent the return to the surface of hidden or repressed desires and emotions, usually concealed beneath the everyday visage. A sense of unease arises because, following Schelling's definition of the

uncanny, these voices should not have come to light. They are somehow familiar, but they are out of place and unplaceable.

The uncanny feelings aroused in *Visage* are strongly linked to the inability to locate or contain the source of the voice. Pierre Schaeffer, an electro-acoustic pioneer and the founder of *musique concrète*, coined the term ‘acousmatic’ to describe a sound that is heard without its cause or source being seen (Chion 17). The expression, acousmatic, supposedly refers to the uninitiated followers of the ancient Pythagorean sect. These followers would listen to their master speak from behind a curtain, so that the sight of the speaker would not detract or distract them from the message he was delivering (Chion 19). *Musique concrète* composer and film theorist, Michel Chion, compares the acousmatic voice behind the curtain to the omnipresent and omniscient voice of God, especially as represented in Islam and Judaism, which is heard but its source is never seen. The unseen voice of the Pythagorean Master or the all-knowing God is enhanced and mystified by this lack of a visible presence. This could be compared to the heightened fear experienced by Nathaniel, as he hides behind the curtain, eavesdropping, in his father’s room.

Pierre Schaeffer’s invention of *musique concrète* in 1948, distinguished electroacoustic music that uses acoustic sounds as source material, as opposed to music where the sounds are created electronically (Schrader 2). According to Schaeffer, ‘traditional’ music begins with abstract ideas that become concrete only in performance while *musique concrète* starts with concrete material that is made abstract during experimentation and composition (10). In this way, the electronically-enhanced and manipulated sounds of *musique concrète* always have a source somewhere other, and resound in an uncanny, liminal space. Berio referred to this as: “creating a bridge between the familiar and the unfamiliar, the known and the unknown” (Berio quoted in Schrader 182).

Allen Weiss describes Schaeffer's creation of a "sound object" as: "not a musical composition but a musical drama of sound effects" (*Radio* 298). As with *Visage*, the audience creates the theatre in the mind, triggered by these uncanny sounds. Schaeffer's first *musique concrète* works were created the same year as Artaud's *Pour en finir avec le jugement de dieu*, and the similarities in form suggest a fusion of the musical and the dramatic in these new recorded sound works. Artaud's search for more immediate forms of communication and theatrical expression corresponded with Schaeffer, who was especially interested in the expressive potential of radio and film to be able to engage with concrete or real sounds, and communicate in sonic registers other than verbal language (Fulcher 392).

Artaud's radiophonic explorations exerted an important influence on the avant-garde music world. In 1958, composer and conductor Pierre Boulez wrote of Artaud:

I can find in his writings the fundamental preoccupations of current music; having heard him read his own texts, accompanying them with screams, noises, rhythms, he showed us how to achieve a fusion of sound and word, how to splash out the phoneme when the word no longer can, in short, how to organize delirium. (Boulez quoted in Weiss *Radio* 298)

Berio could be said to "organize delirium" in his assemblage of Berberian's vocal improvisations for *Visage*, where the reorganisation and juxtaposition of dislocated vocal expressions conjures up the sense of a dislocated mind. In his later work, *Sequenza III*, for female voice, Berberian's voice flits between coughing, various forms of laughter, rapid mutterings and passages of broken down text sung in a coloratura style. Unlike *Visage*, the splicing and juxtaposition of voice is performed live. The piece is primarily a display of vocal range and virtuosity, but Anhalt interprets it as a demonstration of

a great variety of feelings, highly unstable moods, anxieties, neurosis, and psychosis. [...] We sense that she may be a person whose thinking and perceiving are regulated more by irrepressible desires or needs, than by any objective reality around her. Her changes of mood occur erratically and, at times, rapidly. We have no clues as to the psychic triggers that set off her vocal actions, and she seems to relate to no outside trigger at all. (25)

There is an implied link here between experimental, non-rational vocal expression and delirium and madness. If there is no outside trigger, the context must come from the inside, and that is unsettling, more so for the audience than for the vocalist. It is the unconventional organisation of the voice that creates this unsettling sense of delirium, rather than the actual sounds of the voice. Like Nathaniel, whose sudden delirium is expressed through his irrational vocal utterances, a voice that is carefully arranged as if completely disorderly has a very strong uncanny effect, resonating as the surfacing of what should have remained secret and hidden. Artaud first demonstrated the disturbing effect of voicing the hidden dis-ease at his 1933 lecture at the Sorbonne, where his voice embodied the plague, transgressing both the conventional frame of the lecture, and the boundaries between what should be heard and what should remain silent.

Following on from his earlier experiments, Artaud envisioned *Pour en finir avec le jugement de dieu* as the realisation of his Theatre of Cruelty. The radiophonic form gave him the means to communicate his experimental explorations of sound, voice and language to a vast, mass audience. Disrupting the structures of theatre and language, Artaud might suggest something new. Weiss, however, suggests the Theatre of Cruelty might not be capable of realisation within the frame of this mechanised form, which separates and reconfigures the human voice. According to Weiss:

In recording, the organic rhythms of the human voice are hyperstatized and ultimately destroyed by mechanical reproduction, and then ironically these lost body rhythms are returned by electromechanical means. Thus recording produces an exteriorization and transformation of the voice, a sort of dispossession of the self. Recording and radio – through a sort of sympathetic magic – entail a theft of the voice and a disappearance of the body. (*Radio 300*)

Through this swallowing up of Artaud's embodied voice into the machine, Weiss suggests that "the very structure of the theological and psychopathological conditions that he fought so hard to overcome" are ironically reinforced (*Radio 300*). Like the original acousmatic voice

of the Pythagorean master, Artaud's recorded voice becomes imbued with the omniscient and omnipresent voice of a divine being or a paranoid presence (Weiss *Radio* 301). The voice between human and machine is distinctly neither, and remains ambiguous. According to Weiss: "the recorded voice is the stolen voice that returns to me as the hallucinatory presence of the voice of another" (*Radio* 300). The recorded voice is a reconstruction of a human voice. It is familiar, but it is not locatable, and its hidden source creates a sense of the uncanny.

The voice without a visible source is often used to exert an uncanny presence on the soundtrack of films, where the medium has the ability to conceal the voice outside the frame. In *The Voice in Cinema*, Michel Chion claims that the richest of cinematic voice-image relations is "the situation in which we don't see the person we hear" (9). He labels this voice the *acousmêtre*, based on Schaeffer's terminology. Chion claims that when the *acousmêtre* remains "not-yet-seen, even an insignificant acousmatic voice becomes invested with magical powers" (23). The *acousmêtre* haunts the borderlands, being neither inside the film nor outside it. The *acousmêtre* is powerful because of this liminal presence. Chion suggests that the power of this voice without a place may relate to an archaic, infantile stage of the first months of life or while in utero, where the voice was everything and all-encompassing. He cites God and the Mother as the greatest *acousmêtre* (27).

According to Chion, fundamental to this tension of the acousmatic voice is the notion that at any time the face or body might appear and therefore de-acousmatize the voice (22). Chion compares the process of de-acousmatizing the voice to the act of striptease, with the ultimate stage being the revealing of the orifice, the mouth from which the voice flows forth (28). Mladen Dolar draws a paradoxical conclusion from this: "ultimately, *there is no such thing as disacousmatisation*. The source of the voice can never be seen, it stems from an

undisclosed and structurally concealed interior, it cannot possibly match what we can see” (70, italics in original).

Slavoj Žižek suggests that the uncanniness of any voice stems from the fact that “voice is not an organic part of the human body,” but comes from somewhere in-between (*Pervert’s Guide to Cinema*). He claims that

An unbridgeable gap separates forever a human body from ‘its’ voice. The voice displays a spectral autonomy, it never quite belongs to the body we see, so that even when we see a living person talking, there is always a minimum of ventriloquism at work: it is as if the speaker’s own voice hollows him out and in a sense speaks ‘by itself’ through him. (Žižek in Dolar 70)

Žižek cites *The Exorcist* as a filmic example that exploits this problem of the voice. In *The Exorcist*, the primary manifestation of the young girl’s demonic possession is through the voice. She is possessed by “a voice in its obscene dimensions” (*The Pervert’s Guide to Cinema*), a deep, masculine, distorted voice, coming out of a little girl’s body. The voice does not fit with the body, and because of this, it transgresses the body’s boundaries and spews forth everything that should have been hidden.

The sense of the voice as something that cannot be contained or controlled within a visible body has been exploited in many films, particularly thriller and horror films. Peter Strickland’s 2013 film, *Berberian Sound Studio*, explicitly explores the relationship between experimental voice and horror films. The film is set in a 1970s sound studio, where the soundtrack for “The Equestrian Vortex” is being recorded. Aside from the opening credits, we never see the film’s images, we only see the way the sounds are produced to enhance the image. Conjuring up the sounds of sadistic and extreme violence, foley artists chop cabbages, smash marrows, and pour oil into sizzling hot pans. As in *Visage*, the visual image of the violence is left to happen in the minds of the audience.

Strickland is a *musique concrète* aficionado, who became fascinated with the avant-garde soundtracks featured in horror films, particularly the Italian *giallo* films of the 1960s

and 1970s, where composers such as Bruno Maderna and Ennio Morricone created highly sophisticated scores (Fuller 1). Strickland “started to realise how integral avant-garde music is to exploitation cinema, how horror lends itself to dissonance, atonal music and music concrète” (Strickland quoted in Fuller 1). His key influence was “listening to Cathy Berberian’s *Visage* – this 21-minute piece of sound poetry, consisting of very intense howling, intended only for avant-garde circles. [...] I always thought it could be amazing in a horror film. You can imagine someone like that making money on the side by doing a session for a movie” (Strickland quoted in Fuller 2).

In *Berberian Sound Studio*, two avant-garde vocalists arrive to perform a session for the soundtrack of “The Equestrian Vortex.” Performance artist Katalin Ladik portrays a vengeful witch through heavy, voiced breathing, creaky vocal fry and stifled, choking noises that extend into maniacal laughter and screaming. The laughter and vocal fry is reminiscent of Berberian in *Visage*, or Diamanda Galás, who has twice created vocal dubs for horror film witches.<sup>9</sup> In another scene in *Berberian Sound Studio*, free-jazz vocal improviser Jean-Michel van Schouwburg creates a vocal dub for the character of an aroused, predatory goblin. His vocalisations stem from deep vocal fry that gradually ascends into manic glossolalia, violently convulsing from his body. According to Strickland: “These artists are not changing their performance or watering them down. All they’re doing is changing the context of what they do. [...] By switching the association in your mind, it becomes very powerful” (Strickland quoted in Fuller 2). This statement underlines the creative potentials of the experimental voice in performance. Because it cannot be seen or contained, the identity of the voice can be reimagined and recontextualised within countless frames of reference.

---

<sup>9</sup> Diamanda Galás has performed sessions for a number of horror movies, including: “Voices of the Dead” in Wes Craven’s *The Serpent and the Rainbow* (1988); vocal improvisations on the soundtrack of Clive Barker’s *Lord of Illusions* (1995); the voice of a witch in *Conan the Barbarian* (1982); and the voice of a ghost-witch in James Wan’s *The Conjuring* (2013).

Strickland shows us Ladik and van Schouwburg voicing their monstrous characters. We see their mouths and their lips moving, at the threshold between inside and outside. At moments, the shot pulls back to outside the recording box, and we cannot hear the sound, we only see the facial contortions and bodily movements used to conjure up these voices. Despite this awareness of the bodily source, the sounds of these voices remain unsettling. Even though we may be able to categorise the deep, rasping tones as vocal fry, or know the diaphragmatic sensation of producing convulsive vocal sounds, there is something disconcerting about hearing these strikingly embodied voices. They simultaneously reveal the cracks and crevices of the human body while remaining hidden and out of sight. The acousmatic voice of film and electronic music reminds us of this underlying fear of the uncontainable human voice: we can never see its source.

**“Pleasure in the confusion of boundaries”<sup>10</sup>: constructing the cyborg voice**

Female bodies and voices have a particularly ambiguous relationship with technology. This chapter will conclude by examining the cyborgian voices of Laurie Anderson, Diamanda Galás and Björk, beginning with two theories from Theodor Adorno and Donna Haraway, which question the relationship between women’s voices and machines. The first of these theories is based on Adorno’s observation in 1927, that women’s voices were not well reproduced by phonographic technologies:

Male voices can be reproduced better than female voices. The female voice easily sounds shrill – not because the gramophone is incapable of conveying the high tones, as is demonstrated by its adequate reproduction of the flute. Rather, in order to become unfettered, the female voice requires the physical appearance of the body that carries it. But it is just this body that the gramophone eliminates, thereby giving every female voice a sound that is reedy and incomplete. Only where the body itself resonates, where the self to which the gramophone refers is identical with its sound,

---

<sup>10</sup> Haraway 9

only there does the gramophone have its legitimate realm of validity: thus Caruso's uncontested dominance. Wherever sound is separated from the body – as with instruments – or wherever it requires the body as a complement – as is the case with the female voice – gramophonic reproduction becomes problematic. (54)

Adorno's observation suggests a gender-specific problem of the technically-mediated voice: the reproduced male voice, when separated from its visible source, remains identifiable as a male voice, but the reproduced female voice is problematic, because when separated from its visible source, the sound is not clearly identifiable as a female voice. It transgresses categorisation.

In mentioning Caruso, Adorno indicates that the recordings he studies are of an operatic nature. The female voices he refers to may be singing coloratura arias, like the automaton, Olympia, with "artificial roulades" and "shrill" trilling, that sound not quite human. Adorno's observation may reflect Siegmund's reaction: "We have come to find this Olympia quite uncanny" (Hoffmann 116). Adorno also aligns the female voice with musical instruments, which are similarly difficult to distinguish without a visible source. Musical instruments are extensions of human sound, resonating somewhere between inanimate object and human expression. When Adorno describes the recorded female voice as "reedy," he seems to be comparing it to the sound of an oboe, bassoon or clarinet, implying the spectre of a not-quite-human element in the sound of the recorded female voice. This comparison with the mechanical suggests a quality of the female voice that is not quite natural, something between human and machine that is heightened when the voice is swallowed up in the mechanistic process of phonographic recording.

Although sound recording technologies have developed immensely since 1927, Adorno's observation remains pertinent in the way it links women's voices to mechanics and technology. Adorno does not specify the type or style of voice he is listening to, but simply dichotomises male and female voice, reinforcing cultural dualisms and essentialisms that relegate women to the role of 'other.' This relationship between woman's voice and machine

is viewed as problematic and negative, but more recently, feminists have reclaimed this relationship as a positive and empowering one.

Donna Haraway wrote her essay “Manifesto for Cyborgs” in 1985, to “suggest a way out of the maze of dualisms in which we have explained our bodies and our tools to ourselves” (39). Haraway proposes the hybrid, liminal figure of the cyborg, between human and machine, as both a way of re-evaluating woman’s relationship with technology, and as a means of transgressing conventional, essentialist boundaries. She suggests that “there are great riches for feminists in explicitly embracing the possibilities inherent in the breakdown of clean distinctions between organism and machine and similar distinctions structuring the Western self” (32). Following Mary Douglas’s highlighting of the fundamental relationship between body imagery and world view, Haraway’s manifesto suggests a politics of ambiguity, transgressing the boundaries between organism and machine, and other distinctions of the Western self (31-2). She suggests this may be achieved by women “seizing the tools to mark the world that marked them as other” (33).

The experimental vocal work of performance artist, Laurie Anderson, can be considered as a cyborgian performance, in the way that she seizes the tools of technology and machines to blur the boundaries of nature and gender in her multimedia works. Anderson was born in Glen Ellyn, Illinois in 1947 and moved to New York City in 1966, where she studied Art History and trained as a visual artist, completing an MFA in Sculpture at Columbia University (Looser 87). After graduating, she taught at the City University of New York for two years, where she “discovered that [she] loved just standing there in the dark, showing pictures and talking” (Anderson 94). During this period, Anderson became involved in the highly charged political atmosphere of the university campuses and avant-garde art scene, where artists from across disciplines were coming together to question existing conventions and seek out new forms. As a result of this exposure, Anderson moved away from visual art

into interdisciplinary performance art (Looser 87). She developed an ‘electronic cabaret’ performance style that combines gestures, stories and songs with synthesizers, video projections and computers, and incorporates elements of “storytelling, theatre, ritual, dance, music, popular entertainment, and sports” (McKenzie 30).

In *Presence and Resistance*, Philip Auslander writes that “Anderson’s use of technology to extend her performance range makes her into a cyborg to begin with: her performances are produced by something that is part woman, part machine” (*Presence* 116). This cyborg presence is strikingly manifested through the different ways Anderson constructs her voice. She employs a range of technologies to alter her voice, including relay effects, which produce an alienating effect between the voice and the body, and the Harmonizer, a digital filter that Anderson uses to lower her vocal pitch in order to sound like a man. Anderson refers to these altered voices as ‘audio masks’ (Looser 92). The first time she used the Harmonizer in performance was in 1978, performing at the Nova Convention with William Burroughs. Anderson reflected that: “The machismo surrounding Burroughs was thick and this filter was my weapon, my defence. It was the first time I used an audio mask and being in drag was thrilling” (Anderson quoted in Goldberg 18). Anderson uses the ‘audio mask’ of the Harmonizer both to alter her voice, and to alter the audience’s perception of voice and language.

Anderson labels her male voice ‘the Voice of Authority,’ and she often uses this ‘audio mask’ as a means of undermining or interrogating male authority. She also uses ‘the Voice’ to confront narratives of political authority, such as in her 1986 concert film, *Home of the Brave*, where she uses it to challenge the nationalistic American voice. In the film, ‘the Voice of Authority’ complains in the spoken song *Difficult Listening Hour* that someone has broken into her/his home, eaten all her/his grapes (“the ones I was saving”), and torn up her/his wallpaper samples (Auslander *Presence* 114). This invasion of the home, the realm of

the *Heimlich*, is made both funny and *unheimlich* by the contradiction between the masculine voice and the stereotypically female concerns of the home. It is also a reminder of the *unheimlich* character of a voice that is not quite at home in its body, like a ventriloquist's dummy, or the demonic voice that possesses Regan in *The Exorcist*.

This invading capability of the voice is affirmed by the 'someone' who has broken into the house who reveals that "language is a virus from outer space," quoting Burroughs' famous line. Burroughs made an appearance in *Home of the Brave*, and his avant-garde literature and spoken word performances influenced Anderson's own approach to language (Goldberg 117). His technique of the 'cut-up,' influenced by the Dadaists, and developed with painter Brion Gysin, consisted of the cutting up of passages of prose and pasting them together at random. This technique was also used with tape, film and mixed media ([www.languageisavirus.com](http://www.languageisavirus.com)). Burroughs and Gysin developed the idea around the same time that Berio was creating *Visage* in his *studio di fonologia* in Milan. This cutting up as a means of creation undermines the power and authority of structures of language, and allows the possibility for new forms of communication. Anderson said of Burroughs' "language is a virus":

It's a strange thing for a writer to say that language is a disease communicable by mouth. It's also a very Buddhist thing to say. I mean, in Buddhist thought there's the thing and there's the name for the thing and that's one thing too many. Because sometimes when you say a word, you think you actually understand it. In fact, all you're doing is saying it, you don't necessarily understand it at all. So language, well, it's a kind of trick. (Anderson quoted in Goldberg 99)

Anderson's work seeks to expose the tricks, juxtaposing and challenging not just language, but the voices, such as her 'Voice of Authority,' that reinforce these ideologies.

Anderson also uses non-verbal, inanimate objects, such as the violin, as extensions of her voice. Anderson is an accomplished violinist, and has developed a range of modified violins, including the viophonograph, a violin with a battery-powered turntable mounted on its body, and the tape bow violin, with a tape playback head mounted on the bridge, activated

by a bow made of prerecorded audiotape (Goldberg 77, 80). Anderson has claimed that: “For me, the violin is the perfect alter ego. It’s the instrument closest to the human voice, the human, female voice. It’s a siren” (Anderson quoted in Goldberg 77). Reminiscent of Adorno’s description of the “reedy” female voice, Anderson aligns the sound of the female voice with a musical instrument, and with the danger and seduction of the siren, which is not quite human, but is deceptively like a human.

Two other extensions of Anderson’s voice are her dummy and her clone. Her digital clone was created for the television show, *Alive from Off Center*, in 1986, and was digitally manipulated to look like a little man with a big head (Goldberg 127). The clone provided Anderson with another voice through which to talk: “The clone is the concept of a surrogate. At times I use it to say things I don’t have the guts to say” (Anderson quoted in Goldberg 127). The dummy is a ventriloquist’s dummy, strongly resembling Anderson, with electronic components inside its body, enabling it to move and talk. It was first presented in the *Nerve Bible* tours of the early 1990s (Looser 102). Both the dummy and the clone speak with the ‘Voice of Authority,’ both can be said to represent male versions of Anderson, and both evoke a sense of the *unheimlich*. These ‘audio masks’ allow Anderson to locate the source of her voice outside her own female body, transgressing dualistic notions of gender, body and voice, and creating a liminal, cyborgian voice that is somewhere between human and machine.

Anderson’s use of ‘audio masks’ can be compared to the polyphony of voices that Diamanda Galás embodies in *Plague Mass*. In *This is the Law of the Plague*, Galás takes on two masculine voices of authority: a sharp, cutting, Levitical voice, and a low, drawling, resonant Preacher’s voice. These masculine voices are juxtaposed with interspersed ululations and cries of lament of the high-pitched, shrill voice of the ‘other,’ representing the sick, the marginalised and the feminine. The theatricality of Anderson’s voices is created

through technology, whereas Galás produces an extraordinary range of voices without technological assistance, but uses technology such as multiple microphones, reverberation devices, and speaker systems to take her voice beyond humanly possible uses of register, pitch, and volume (Schnabl 15).

Underneath the technology, Anderson's voice is conventionally produced, whereas Galás's voice already transgresses conventional forms. Freya Jarman-Ivens argues that it is the "overwhelming bodiliness" of Galás's voice that marks her sound, and this is enhanced to extreme levels when combined with technological manipulation (139). Jarman-Ivens suggests that Galás may even transgress the boundaries of the cyborg:

Although by its definition, the cyborg is both cybernetic and organic (part human, part machine), *this* version – Galás's manifestation of the cyborg – blurs even further than is typical the boundaries between those two realms, at the same time as exaggerating what either of those realms means. Her voice, even on its own [...] has the capacity to produce "alien forms within," to make *so* audible the internal technologies of the voice that it is altogether unclear at many points where the limits are of the internal and the external. (139, italics in original)

Galás's sound resonates between human and machine, using the extremes of both, and blurring the boundaries between what is organic and what is machine. She possesses a natural range of three and a half octaves, but technology enhances this to five or six octaves, and many commentators assume this to be her naturally extreme range. Technology is not an appendage in her theatrical performances, but an integrated, embodied, central component, that enhances her own bodily sound production.

Jarman-Ivens draws attention to Galás's use of the word 'multiphonics,' which is a term taken from instrumental music to describe "where a monophonic instrument is made to sound multiple pitches simultaneously" (139). Vocal multiphonics are usually referred to as 'throat singing,' but Galás insists on using the instrumental term. Jarman-Ivens suggests that Galás's insistence indicates a desire to make the voice into an instrument that is somehow separate from her body (140). In this way, Galás transgresses the limits of her voice and

body, confusing the boundaries between human and machine, and embracing the “reedy” problematic of the female voice, as referred to by Adorno. Galás’s work aims to break down dualisms, such as the clean/unclean dichotomy presented in *Plague Mass* that can be extended to represent all marginalised ‘others.’ Unlike popular music that describes the ‘thing,’ Galás’s work becomes the ‘thing’ itself (Juno 14). Galás uses her voice to break down dualisms, embodying the transgression by blurring the boundaries between self and other, male and female, and human and machine. By breaking down dualisms in the form of her work, Galás models the breakdown of social dichotomies.

Björk’s work could also be said to be the ‘thing’ itself, without describing or interrogating the politics of the ‘thing.’ Her music explores the spaces between human and machine, embodying aspects of a cyborg identity, without engaging in the politics of these liminal identities. In 1996, Björk said of pop music’s relationship with technology:

I think that in popular music today people are trying to come to terms with the fact that they are living with all these machines, and trying to combine machines and humans and trying to marry them in a happy marriage: trying to be fiercely optimistic about it. [...] But everything is with those regular rhythms and learning to love them, but still be human, still be all gritty and organic. (Björk quoted in Dibben 74)

This attempt to make a “happy marriage” out of human and technology is often manifested in Björk’s ‘naturalisation’ of technology, which is a recurring feature of her work. Dibben suggests that Björk naturalises the electronic beats of her music by singing through the beats and remaining outside of the mechanical ‘grid’ (86), and uses beats mimetic of the sounds of the human body (77). She also technologizes the sound of the human voice, by filtering it through electronic media, or by using the voice to mimic the timbre of musical instruments, such as on her 2004 album, *Medúlla*.

Björk explicitly embodies the figure of the cyborg in her 1999 music video for her song, *All is Full of Love*. At the start of the video, we see a white robotic body being carefully crafted by mechanical arms. When Björk’s singing begins, we see that the robot’s face is in

fact Björk's, and that this newly-constructed cyborg is singing, or lip-synching, the lyrics of the song. The sleek, curved, feminine figure of the cyborg is soon joined by another cyborg, similar in physicality, and also imbued with Björk's facial features. They slowly begin to embrace and make love, caressing each other's plastic skin, and kissing the identical lips of the almost-identical other.

The continuation of this exploration of the relationship between human and machine is central to Björk's most recent work. Her 2011 album, *Biophilia*, was partly recorded on an iPad, and was released as the world's "first app album" in collaboration with Apple (Youngs). She claimed that the new touch screen technology allowed her to "compose more organically," and suggested that technology is becoming more organic: "Electronic music has been criticised for being too cold or gridlike. But with a touch screen the grid becomes like water" (Björk quoted in Mitchinson 537). Björk combines her cutting-edge, technological approach with an almost primitive, mythical perspective, such as in the track *Cosmogony*, where the verses correspond to different creation myths, from Native American culture, to Sanskrit scriptures, to Australian Aboriginal culture, to the Big Bang theory (Mitchinson 537). Björk compares her compositional process to the Pythagorean pursuit of the music of the spheres: "Pythagoras was tapping into harmonics and how sound works, but that is similar to how atoms and the Solar System work" (Björk quoted in Mitchinson 537).

Björk embraces an essentialist view of the voice that combines human, machine and the universe. Her hybridisation of distinct forms and identities dissolves dualistic binaries, but does not challenge the construction of human identities, in the way that Haraway's revolutionary concept of the cyborg provokes. Like most avant-garde artists, Björk looks both backwards to mythology, and forwards to the latest innovations and technology, but Björk does not identify with the modernist avant-garde. Björk presents a postmodernist, postfeminist voice, which seeks harmony rather than transgression.

### **Chapter Three: Between Consciousness and the Unconscious**

This chapter will examine the performance of vocal expressions that represent and enact a passage between consciousness and the unconscious. By this I mean both the lullaby, which soothes an infant to sleep, and psychological performances and therapies of the voice, in which the repressed, traumatised voices of the unconscious return to the surface. These ‘hypnotic,’ ‘hysterical,’ ‘primal,’ or ‘shadow’ voices can be made meaningful within the frame of avant-garde performance, where the unsettling of conventional boundaries allows for the emergence of these usually private, or stifled voices.

Lullaby singing has been popular across cultures for thousands of years. Lullabies are typically sung unaccompanied by a mother or carer to a young child or infant, as a way of calming and inducing sleep. They are often soothing and hypnotic, but in some contexts convey a darker, more mournful tone, akin to a lament (Perry). The lament and the lullaby can be compared in a number of ways: they are both predominantly female vocal forms, and they both function as agents that assist the passage of the listener – the dead or the infant – from one state to another. Although they may seem to appear at opposite ends of a spectrum, with one singing to the dead, and the other singing a new life to slumber, sleep is sometimes referred to as a ‘little death’ (Perry), and the passage to the unconscious is as shrouded in mystery and darkness as the passage to death. The context in which they are sung is the most striking difference. Unlike the social ritual and antiphonic singing of the Maniot lamenting women, the lullaby is an intimate, private form, where the only antiphony is between the lullaby singer and the crying baby.

In his study of Spanish lullabies in the 1920s, poet Federico García Lorca proposed that one of the main functions of the lullaby is to give voice to the mother’s fears and

worries.<sup>11</sup> Like the Maniot women incorporating everyday concerns into their singing of laments, the lullaby provides a setting and a non-judgemental audience for the purging of these pains. In this way, the lullaby, like the lament, can be understood as a form of therapy. Similar to the psychoanalytic ‘talking cure,’ this ‘singing cure’ allows for a channelling and surfacing of repressed fears and desires. The lullaby may then serve as both a passage between the infant’s consciousness and unconsciousness and as a bridge to the mother’s unconscious.

In *Hereafter*, the third vocal piece represented both the soothing form of the lullaby and the eruption of the voice of the unconscious. This piece was based on Patty Waters’ 1966 free jazz interpretation of *Hush Little Baby*, which was recorded live as part of her *College Tour* album. The song begins with a soft, husky rendition of the traditional lullaby, sparsely accompanied by piano, double bass, drums and flute. As the song unfolds, Waters gradually moves away from the melody and the lyrics, into gentle moaning sounds that slowly build in intensity. At its climactic height, Waters’ moaning becomes a seemingly uncontrolled wailing, perhaps signifying a hysterical baby, or the surfacing of a ‘primal scream’ from the depths of her unconscious. After this momentous purge, her voice returns to calmness, and resumes the whispered, husky lullaby: “Hush little baby, don’t you cry. Mama won’t go away.”

Waters was born in Iowa in 1946, and began singing in public from the age of three. As a teenager, she sang in dance bands, and at the age of eighteen, left home to tour with regional orchestras (Gavin). She moved to Manhattan in 1964, where she waitressed by day and went to jazz clubs at night. Free jazz saxophonist, Albert Ayler – one of Diamanda Galás’s early influences – heard Waters singing in a club and introduced her to his record

---

<sup>11</sup> Lorca was referring specifically to Spanish lullabies, and distinguished between these and other “European” examples: “The European cradle song’s only object is to lull the child to sleep, unlike the Spanish which pierces its sensibility” (Lorca quoted in Kline).

producer, who signed Waters to record her first album, *Patty Waters Sings* (1965). On the B-side of the album, she presented her first foray into the “exorcist-like transformation” into wailing that was continued in *Hush Little Baby* (Gavin). This first exploration was with the folk song, *Black is the Color of my True Love’s Hair*. It follows a similar, but more drawn-out, trajectory to *Hush*, beginning with soft, husky singing that gradually dissolves into pained screams and wails that emerge from her repeated singing of the word “black.” In *Hush*, Waters’ voice leads the other musicians into seemingly unconscious depths, but in *Black is the Color*, the piano appears to force her away from the calm of the folk song. The pianist, Burton Greene, begins by scratching and tugging the piano strings, creating sharp, metallic, sinister sounds reminiscent of some kind of torture chamber (Gavin). This music seems to drive Waters to her pained wails, as if the music represents a form of torture being enacted on her body, or her mind. The structures of music and language appear to collapse into immediate communication with the unconscious.

The voice plays a central role in free jazz expression, even in non-vocal pieces. Vocal imagery is often used to describe the unusual timbres created by the musicians. John Litweiler writes of Albert Ayler’s playing:

He screamed through his tenor saxophone in multiphonics and almost uncontrolled overtones, absolutely never in a straight saxophone sound or in any identifiable pitch. His ensembles really did improvise with utter abandon, and they related their music to each other’s in the most primal, irregular ways. (Litweiler 151)

The notion that Ayler “screamed” through his instrument, is reflected in Galás’s experience as a free jazz musician, discussed in the first chapter of this thesis. It was her exploration at the boundaries of instrumental music that led Galás to conclude that the voice is the primary instrument, and that all free jazz music is modelled on the voice (Juno 10). The vocal model for free jazz is not singing as such, but a “primal,” “screaming” voice, which could be said to be an expression of the unconscious. According to Greene, the rawness of the free jazz primal expression led to many of its artists being shattered by “the wear and tear, psychologically,

physically, spiritually, of being so free” (Greene quoted in Gavin). After Waters’ 1968 *College Tour*, she did not perform again in public until 1996 (Unterberger).

Despite the freeness of the genre, there is a clear overall structure in Waters’ *Hush*, and we followed it closely in our interpretation of the piece. The wailing features as the central climax of the piece, framed by the lullaby, and providing a play between freedom and control. In *Hereafter*, our performance of the piece was further framed within the wider narrative of Wolf’s monologue. My sung descent into the unconscious was aligned with the character of Wolf, mirroring a turning point in the narrative, where his bravado began to give way to more intimate revelations. As the song built up to the climactic wailing, Falkenberg suggested I imagine my voice to be an instrument. Rather than attempting to imitate Waters’ screams, I imitated the way I imagined a horn might approach the music. In this way, I was able to maintain a sense of control over my voice, rather than descending into overindulgence or parody. I was aware that my singing was unsettling for an audience, but I enjoyed the play between control and loss of control; between hysteria and calm. In our contemporary culture, lullabies are commonly perceived as gentle, soothing songs, representing an idyllic image of mother and child. Waters’ lullaby transgresses into the voice of a subconscious other. This was something we explored in *Hereafter*.

### **The maternal voice: between ‘umbilical web’ and ‘sonorous envelope’**

A baby can hear sounds from around the twenty-fourth week of pregnancy, and from this time, they are able to hear all the muffled noises of the outside world (Perry). According to child development psychologist, Sally Goddard-Blythe, the most powerful sound for the baby is the sound of its mother’s voice, “because it’s heard both internally and externally – with her body acting like the sounding board or the resonator of the sound” (Goddard-Blythe quoted in Perry). In this way, the maternal voice is the archetypal liminal voice, singing

between the internal and the external, accompanying the passage from conception to birth and beyond. This saturation of the maternal voice is commonly theorised as a “blanket of sound,” encompassing the foetus or new born infant within its aural cover (Silverman 72). From a feminist psychoanalytical perspective, this primal envelopment of the maternal voice has fundamental and lasting implications in the way the female voice is heard or silenced. I will outline these theories that investigate the power of the liminal, maternal voice, and its lasting effect that remains somewhere between consciousness and the unconscious.

In her book, *The Acoustic Mirror: The Female Voice in Psychoanalysis and Cinema*, Kaya Silverman contrasts two similar but opposing fantasies of this encompassing, maternal voice: the ‘umbilical web’ and the ‘sonorous envelope’ (72). She begins with Chion’s take on the acousmatic voice of the mother:

In the beginning, in the uterine darkness, was the voice, the Mother’s voice. For the child once born, the mother is more an olfactory and vocal continuum than an image. Her voice originates in all points of space, while her form enters and leaves the visual field. We can imagine the voice of the Mother weaving around the child a network of connections it’s tempting to call the *umbilical web*. A rather horrifying expression to be sure, in its evocation of spiders – and in fact, this original vocal connection will remain ambivalent. (61)

Chion presents this claustrophobic, predatory image of the maternal voice in relation to theories put forth by Denis Vasse in his book, *The Umbilicus and the Voice*, which were developed out of his clinical experience with psychotic children and adults (Chion 61). Vasse proposes the wound of the umbilical zone as the ‘mark of desire’ in the infant, which is consciously or unconsciously associated with the act of the cutting of the umbilicus. According to Vasse, because this act of ‘closing off’ at birth correlates with the opening up of the mouth and the first cry of the infant, “the voice is inscribed in the umbilical rupture” (Vasse quoted in Chion 61). This rupture from the mother’s body assigns the child to its own body, and from then, “bodily contact with the mother becomes mediated by the voice” (Vasse quoted in Chion 61). Chion suggests that the voice might then conceptually take up the role

of the umbilical cord, as both a nurturing connection, and a binding tie, trapping the subject in the ‘umbilical web’ (62). Chion’s dark, ambivalent take on the voice of the mother relates to his discussion of the *acousmêtre*, outlined in the second chapter of this thesis, where the uncanniness of the omniscient, omnipresent voice is most strikingly represented by God or the mother (27).

Silverman begins her analysis of Chion’s umbilical web from his opening “intentional miscitation” of the biblical text from John I, suggesting the implication that the maternal voice of sound is set in opposition to the paternal voice of meaning (75). “In the beginning” can also, more pertinently, be interpreted as a reference to Genesis, suggesting an alignment of the maternal voice with “the chaos upon which the divine word imposed its order and illumination at the moment of creation” (75). Of the two prototypical *acousmêtre*, it is the acousmatic voice of the rational male God that must overpower the acousmatic voice of the primordial female mother.

Chion suggests a dangerous, predatory image of the maternal voice, where enclosure of the infant is perceived as entrapment. Interiority is presented as an undesirable, impotent state, and exteriority as the ideal condition of potency (Silverman 75). The voice of the mother is associated with the pre-linguistic phase where the child hears, but cannot understand, and produces sounds, but cannot make them meaningful. In order for the infant to enter the exterior realm of the symbolic, the mother’s voice must be placed ‘inside,’ and the ‘container’ must become the ‘contained,’ thus cutting the umbilical tie and choking the maternal voice (Silverman 76). The horror of the umbilical web is directly linked to themes of liminality and transgression. The “uterine darkness” is our first liminal home, and the transgression from this original place to the outside world of the symbolic ruptures this first intimate relationship. Chion’s imagery suggests a maternal voice that is always trying to pull us back to the womb.

Silverman contrasts Chion's sinister account of the maternal voice to Guy Rosolato's notion of it as a sonorous envelope, which "surrounds, sustains, and cherishes the child" (Rosolato quoted in Silverman 72). Rosolato situates the mother's voice as the "first model of auditory pleasure," and associates it with the primordial oneness of the "*music of the spheres*" (Silverman 84-5, italics in original). While this sonorous envelope represents a blissful, idyllic stage of unity between mother and child (84), it also retrospectively represents an '*objet (a)*,' or a 'lost object.' In Lacanian psychoanalysis, the maternal voice and gaze are added to the list of objects inherited from Freud (Dolar 127), alongside faeces, and the mother's breast, that are the first to be distinguished from the subject's self, but whose 'otherness' is never strongly extricated from the self (Silverman 85).

Following this Lacanian reading, Rosolato proposes the concept of an 'acoustic mirror,' by which the infant first comes to recognise itself in the vocal 'mirror' provided by the mother. The analogy of the mirror speaks of the blurred relationship of mother and infant, inhabiting a shared space between interiority and exteriority and between self and other. It is in the frame of this conceptual mirror that the image of the maternal voice becomes blurred. The loss of the *objet (a)* constitutes a monumental loss, comparable to an amputation, and can come to represent that which alone can replenish the subject's lack. Conversely, the *objet (a)* is fundamentally bound up in the trauma of the first rupture and can come to represent what is most abject and most culturally taboo (Silverman 85).

From a psychoanalytical perspective, the mother's voice is thus a source of pleasure and wholeness, as well as a reminder of separation and loss. The maternal voice acts as a bridge to an infantile or primitive existence, and in order for the subject to remain inside the rational, symbolic order, this voice needs to be contained, silenced, or reduced. Silverman argues that the acoustic mirror comes to represent the function that the female voice is expected to perform for the male subject (80). According to Silverman:

Whereas the mother's voice initially functions as the acoustic mirror in which the child discovers its identity and voice, it later functions as the acoustic mirror in which the male subject hears all the repudiated elements of his infantile babble. (81)

The maternal or female voice is cast as the inferior in a system of dualisms, where its otherness is associated with both the pleasure and the fear of the pre-symbolic. The male subject projects his own lack onto the female other, depriving the female voice of its agency and power, and reducing it to the realm of the infantile and the primitive. From this perspective, the act of experimenting with the voice, and transgressing its conventional forms and containments is a deeply political and liberating act. By reclaiming the dangerous liminal zone of the maternal voice, these oppressive dualisms may be overcome.

Kristeva explores the female voice as something that is profoundly disruptive of patriarchal society. Her fantasy of the maternal voice dismantles the dualistic system by discarding the oppositions between inside and outside, between mother and child, and between consciousness and the unconscious. Kristeva encapsulates this fantasy within the notion of the maternal '*chora*,'<sup>12</sup> a concept that fuses and confuses mother and infant, based on Plato's use of the term to denote "an unnameable, improbable, hybrid, anterior to naming, to the one, to the father, and consequently maternally connoted" (Silverman 102). This *chora* could be compared to Haraway's concept of the hybrid figure of the cyborg, which deconstructs the binary system of female otherness in order to reconstruct powerful, liminal identities outside the conventional patriarchal structures.

Kristeva's *chora* is fundamentally ambivalent, and Silverman suggests that it can be compared to both Chion's umbilical web and Rosolato's sonorous envelope in the way that it simultaneously envisions strongly positive and negative associations of the maternal voice. The essential difference can be attributed to the context of the maternal voice, and whether it

---

<sup>12</sup> In *Hereafter*, Wolf's murdered wife was named "Cora," which is pronounced the same as "*chora*." Wolf was fixated on her breasts and expressed jealousy at seeing their son suckling at her breast. Cora's dead body had been found with her breasts cut off.

relates to the pre-Oedipal child or to the adult subject, the latter being the usual focus of psychoanalytic reference (Silverman 104). The *chora* signals both an ideal, primordial state of mother and prehistory, and a chaotic encapsulation of mother and child which must be “abjected” (Silverman 102-3). It represents both a place of creation and a place of destruction. Significantly for this thesis, Kristeva proposes that it is in the avant-garde artistic realm that this voice may be heard, that “the maternal substratum of subjectivity surfaces in carnivalesque, surrealist, psychotic, and ‘poetic’ language” (Kristeva quoted in Silverman 106). In *The Subject in Process*, Kristeva analyses the writing of Artaud, which like the *chora*, seeks a language prior to language (Scheer 116). The voice of the subconscious is made meaningful within the frame of an avant-garde context, and this voice appears intrinsically connected to the feminine.

In her essay, *Aller à la mer*, Cixous advocates for a reclaiming of the feminine voice in the realm of the theatre. Although the theatre has a tainted history of misogyny and objectification of women, Cixous regards it as the primary medium through which women can reassert and reimagine their physical, bodily presence, especially in comparison to film:

It is high time that women gave back to the theatre its fortunate position, its *raison d'être* and what makes it different – the fact that there it is possible to get across the living, breathing, speaking body, whereas the cinema screens us from reality by foisting mere images upon us. (547, italics in original)

Cixous calls for a theatre that is not theatrical, in the original sense of being a visual medium: “lessening our dependency on the visual and stressing the auditory, learning to attune all our ears, especially those that are sensitive to the unconscious, to hear the silences and what lies beyond them” (*Aller* 547). Cixous has explored this auditory, sensorial theatre in her many collaborations with Ariane Mnouchkine and the *Théâtre du Soleil*.

In *Aller à la mer*, Cixous specifically discusses her production of *Le Portrait de Dora*, a play that she wrote based on Freud’s infamous “Case of Dora,” or “Fragment of an Analysis of Hysteria.” “Dora” was presented to Freud with a range of hysterical symptoms,

including a complete loss of voice. The case is widely discussed among feminist theorists, who admonish Freud's imposition of sexual explanations while neglecting the social causes of such symptoms (Showalter *Malady* 159-60). Cixous claims that *Le Portrait de Dora* was for her a first step in a long journey that "badly needed to be taken, so that a woman's voice could be heard for the first time, so that she could cry out, 'I'm not the one who is dumb. I am silenced by your inability to hear'" (Cixous *Aller* 547). According to Elaine Showalter, Cixous regards Dora's hysteria as a "powerful form of rebellion" and perceives hysteria in general as "a kind of female language that opposes the rigid structures of male discourse and thought" (Showalter *Malady* 160). Characterised by aphonia or the scream, manifestations of hysteria are intrinsically connected to the voice, while its connotations and etymological links to the uterus are fundamentally tied to the female body. By reclaiming what were regarded as vocal and bodily abnormalities as creative powers, it may be possible to transgress the marginalisation and containment of female expression.

Reclaiming the feminine voice can be particularly problematic in the avant-garde theatre, where the taint of misogyny and objectification of women is perceived as being particularly strong. We explored the rebellion of the female voice in Free Theatre's production of *Distraction Camp*, which was set in a seemingly misogynistic Genet-inspired 'House of Illusions,' where men came to play out their BDSM fantasies with the prostitutes/actresses. The physical and musical vocabulary of the performance was based on the Argentine Tango, an arguably sadomasochistic dance, where in dance terms, men lead and women 'decorate,' but in feminist terms, where men subjugate and women submit.

I performed in the third of three ritual fantasy scenes, playing the 'horse' for the 'Camp Commandant,' as he tamed me with his whip, bridled me with a ball gag (a kind of induced aphonia), then led me through a tango-inspired dressage routine. Clad only in a leather harness, fishnet stockings and high-heeled tango shoes, I may have appeared to

represent the worst cliché of the objectified, avant-garde actress, and one female reviewer seemed to suggest this, referring to me simply as the “bound, beaten and thonged up woman who becomes his prancing, trotting and ridden horse” (Fala). This reductive description was troubling to me, because it cast my performance as that of a victim, which I had not perceived to be the case. While my body may have been tamed and controlled, my voice was released and empowered.

The most violent image of the scene came after the dressage, when the Commandant restrained me from behind, forcing one hand around my throat, while the other hand guided his whip across my stomach, simulating the bowing of a cello. From this bound, gagged position of subservience, I began to use my voice. The sounds I produced were primarily modelled on the sounds of our cellist, but they also responded to the sensation of the choking hand around my gullet. Throughout these vocalisations, the ball gag remained in my mouth, restricting the types of sounds I was able to produce, and forcing me to find expression beyond language. Reminiscent of my experience in *Footprints/Tapuwaē*, where the rupture in my voice led to new possibilities of vocal production, the constriction of the gag demanded an exploration of alternative ways of using my voice. In this scene in *Distraction Camp*, my voice was forced to rebel and experiment, playing between aphonia, guttural utterance and stifled shriek. In the context of the accompanying visual image, the vocal sounds may have sounded like the pained cries of a tortured woman, but they were not quite that. They were something that could not be contained, that literally came out of the struggle to express a voice.

While I was producing these alternately instrumental and animalistic sounds, the Commandant’s steeliness became somewhat subdued. As he bowed my stomach with his whip, he began to sing gently, almost under his breath as a lullaby to himself, the lines of a sentimental tango song, *Volver*, meaning ‘to return.’ The juxtaposition of the sentimental

male voice with the brutalised female voice created a vocal struggle which the Commandant appeared to find too hard to bear. Coming to an abrupt stop, he ceased his bowing and spun me around into a momentary tango embrace, before pushing me away, removing my gag, and storming out of the theatre, leaving me alone on stage. Facing my reflection in the mirror, I began to sing *Volver*, the tango that had seemingly disempowered the Commandant: “And even if I didn’t want to come back, one always comes back to the first love.” The first love of a man is always his mother. For me, the song was empowering, but for the Commandant, the female voice, or the memory of the maternal voice, was too much to bear.

*Aller à la mer* is a pun in French, which can mean both ‘going to the sea,’ and ‘going to the mother,’ and Cixous ends her essay by explicitly making the connection: “women will be able to go there and feel themselves loved, listening and being heard, happy as when they go to the sea, the womb of the mother” (Cixous *Aller* 548). For Cixous, this dual liminal image of the sea and the womb represents a sonorous envelope from which silenced voices may be produced and heard. According to Silverman:

No matter how it is conceptualized, the image of the infant contained within the sonorous envelope of the mother’s voice is a fantasy of origins – a fantasy about precultural sexuality, about the entry into language, and about the inauguration of subjectivity. (74)

Cixous goes to *la mer* as the source of the female voice, where a maternal form of expression between language and scream is created.

### **The Primal Scream: between expression and hysteria**

In 1970, psychotherapist Arthur Janov introduced the concept of ‘Primal Therapy,’ which he believed could cure neuroses by revisiting and confronting repressed ‘Primal’ trauma. In his book, *The Primal Scream*, Janov describes the origin of his theory:

Some years ago, I heard something that was to change the course of my professional life and the lives of my patients. What I heard may change the nature of

psychotherapy as it is now known - an eerie scream welling up from the depths of a young man lying on the floor during a therapy session. I can liken it only to what one might hear from a person about to be murdered. This book is about that scream and what it means in terms of unlocking the problems of neurosis. (*Scream* 9).

Unlike the post-Freudian psychoanalytic theories discussed in the previous section of this chapter, Primal Therapy works from the belief that “we were born real” (*Scream* 20); we were not born already traumatised by an umbilical web or longing to return to a sonorous envelope. Janov proposes instead that neuroses develop out of parental and societal demands to ‘act’ and to ‘perform’ and to deny the child’s true needs and feelings (*Scream* 25-6). This performance eventually comes to dominate the child’s life, and the ‘true’ feelings are denied or repressed by consciousness (*Scream* 25). Janov’s therapy aims to strip patients of their built-up defences in order to release the true, repressed feelings underneath the neurotic performances. This could be compared to Artaud’s stripping off of the shackles of civilisation in a quest to return to a more authentic theatre/life.

Like the lament of the Maniot women, or the metaphorical vocal embodiment of the plague by Artaud and Galás, the Primal Scream is an expression of pain (*Scream* 90). However, unlike these examples that express conscious or physical experiences of pain, Primal Therapy is a bringing to consciousness of pain that has been repressed in the depths of the unconscious. Janov’s description of this process is reminiscent of childbirth or an exorcism, and in this therapy it is the metaphorical voices of children and demons that are brought forth:

As the patient discusses a new, early situation, we continue watching for signs of feeling. The voice may tremble slightly as if jostled by tension. We repeat the process of urging the patient to breathe and feel. This time, which may be an hour or so later, the patient is shaken. He won’t know what the feeling is, just that he feels tense and “uptight” – that is, tightened up against the feeling. I start the pulling and breathing process. [...] He begins gagging and retching. [...] He will start to form a word only to begin thrashing about and writhing in Pain. I urge him to let it out, and he will continue to try to say something. Finally, out it will come: a scream. (*Scream* 83)

The bridge that Janov attempts to form between consciousness and the unconscious is constructed out of the voice, and culminates in the release of the scream. The process begins from the everyday talking voice, and as unconscious details come to the surface, the voice begins to break, exposing the cracks. The use of deep breathing techniques, described above as “the pulling and breathing process,” engages the entire body, creating something akin to Grotowski’s total body resonator. According to Janov, “[m]any describe it as a lightning bolt that seems to break apart all the unconscious control of the body” (*Scream* 84).

Two of Janov’s first and most famous patients were John Lennon and Yoko Ono, who attended Primal Therapy together in 1970. After his therapy, Lennon recorded his first solo album, *John Lennon/Plastic Ono Band* (1970), which incorporated Primal themes, a rawness of expression and “screaming-tinged vocals,” which were said to reflect his experience of the therapy (Gomez 234). Ono also released a subsequent album, *Yoko Ono/Plastic Ono Band* (1970), which featured “full throttle” screaming, groaning and other expressively Primal sounds (Gomez 235).

Ono had been exploring the scream in performance long before attending Janov’s therapy sessions, and was already infamous for this style of seemingly hysterical expression, which she claimed provided an essential and therapeutic outlet for her emotions (Gomez 231). As a performance artist in New York in the 1960s, Ono had begun to explore the “raw emotion” of sound, and in 1961 premiered an aria of high-pitched wails (Gomez 233). The last track on *Yoko Ono/Plastic Ono Band*, *AOS*, was taken from a 1968 recording with Ornette Coleman and his free jazz ensemble, in which Ono’s voice initially takes on the timbre of a wind instrument, weaving in and out of the other instrumentalists, before moving onto a more recognisably female, orgasmic sound that erupts into animalistic screeching. While seeking a rawness of human expression, Ono embodies the unhuman textures of instrument and animal, developing a voice that is both embodied and disembodied. Her

juxtaposition of emotive sounds is evocative of Berberian, and her wails are reminiscent of Waters.

The free jazz wailing of Ono and Waters, and the all-encompassing physical and vocal expulsion of the Primal Scream, were prefigured in the theatrical setting of German Expressionist theatre in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As with Janov's therapy, the Expressionists sought a direct connection with the unconscious (Innes 41), but the Expressionists' political goals transcended personal therapy, and strove to revolutionise society by renewing its faith in humanity, as expressed through the voice and body of the actor (Kuhns 1). According to David Kuhns:

The Expressionist strategy in the theatre for coming to terms with the crises of contemporary German history was to anthropomorphize them abstractly in the voice and body of the actor. [...] what the Expressionist actor sought to demonstrate, to textualise, was the historical power of 'expression' itself. (2)

The Expressionist actors' physical movements and gestures were reduced to abstract symbols, reminiscent of dreams – or nightmares – and comparable to Artaud's system of 'hieroglyphs' that were also envisioned to function on a direct unconscious level (Innes 42). Verbal expression was similarly reduced through the '*Telegrammstil*' style of delivery, which broke down speech to its essential elements. The restraint of these physical and verbal gestures would build up pressure and eventually explode in overwhelming gestures and impassioned monologues. This tension between reduction and explosion formed the essential rhythm of Expressionist 'ecstatic acting' (Kuhns 105).

The prototypical image of the Expressionist movement was Edvard Munch's 1893 lithograph of *The Scream*, and the scream, or the *Schrei*, was fundamental to Expressionist theatre. The *Schrei* was more than a scream. The *Schrei* was the embodiment of the Expressionist concern of the duality of humanity as both "primatively animalistic" and "spiritually sublime" (Kuhns 103). Similar to Janov's description of the Primal Scream, the *Schrei* came out of the culmination of the accumulated pressure and tension that would

explode from the actor, along with ecstatic gestures and a “primitive purity of expression which was regarded as the vital sign of an historic liberation from the dead past” (Kuhns 93). The aspirations of “primitive purity” and “liberation from the dead past” are comparable to the Artaudian scream, with both functioning as channels through which to regenerate a more immediate and primordial sense of theatre and life, by breaking through the socialised voice and becoming more human and raw.

Galás explicitly acknowledges the influence of Expressionist theatre in her 1994 radio piece, *Schrei 27*, which she staged live as *Schrei X* (1996), and presented as a film, *Schrei 27*, in collaboration with Italian filmmaker, Davide Pepe (2011). The work is about the effects of torture and institutional isolation, and comprises several short pieces of extreme *Schrei* vocals, totalling twenty-seven minutes, with moments of silence between each piece. Galás was attracted to the overwhelming theatricality of Expressionism, where “the idea was to get to an interior place and an extreme heightened emotional state” (Galás quoted in Guillen). The vocal rigour of the Expressionist actors reflected her own demanding training, in which the goal was not to simply become a virtuoso, but to develop a technique from which the most extreme levels of emotional communication would be made possible. Galás staged the live performance of *Schrei X* in total darkness, forcing the audience to confront their own sense of isolation, encompassed by the shrieks of Galás’s ecstatic performance (Guillen).

As with the Expressionist actors, Galás uses her voice as a political tool, channelling a direct link with her unconscious as a means of crying out against the dehumanising structures of society. This expression of the nightmarish unconscious as manifested in the form of the *Schrei* may be perceived as a meaningless representation of madness and hysteria, devoid of any social function other than terrifying an audience. Musicologist Susan McClary suggests that Galás’s embodiment of these signifiers of the hysteric madwoman is

undeniably risky, given the tendency for women in Western culture always to be understood as excessive, sexually threatening, mad. She can be read as simply

reaffirming the worst stereotypes available. But she can also be read as extremely courageous as she confronts these stereotypes head-on, appropriates them, and rechannels their violent energies in other directions. Her images enter into public circulation, challenging the premises of the prestigious male-constructed madwomen preserved within the musical canon. (111)

McClary suggests that Galás, as the composer and creator of her own work, challenges the usually passive and masculine-generated role of the madwoman in opera and music.

In her book, *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender and Sexuality*, McClary argues that male composers have long been drawn to the subject of madwomen, which “are first and foremost male fantasies of transgression dressed up as women” (110). The climactic Mad Scenes of demented divas are as commonplace and popular in opera as the soprano who sings her own accompaniment to death, and the two tropes are often related. McClary claims that the musical construction of the madwoman is particularly prevalent among avant-garde composers, who use the dramatic frame as an outlet for their own emotional and musical excesses, projecting the transgression of musical convention onto the socially transgressive woman (101). She cites Schoenberg’s *Erwartung* as the exemplar of the avant-garde appropriation of the madwoman, where the composer was able to realise his chromatic dream outside the “stranglehold” of conventional tonality, by realising it through the dissonant figure of a madwoman (107). McClary argues that Schoenberg contains the madwoman within his liberation of tonality:

From this moment on, the rational frame guaranteeing social order comes to permeate the dissonant discourse of the madwoman, and the chromaticism of the feminine sexual excess no longer poses a threat: henceforth it is appropriated – even generated – by the highest achievement of intellectual discipline. One can now experience that frenzy, that illicit desire, without either the panic that attends chaos or the traditional demand for narrative closure, because the composer and analyst can prove that every pitch is always contained. (108-9)

The screams and excesses of the operatic soprano may forever be used as fantasies of transgression that are safely framed and contained within the rationality of “artificial roulades” and musical structure. The Primal Screams of Ono and Waters and the

Expressionist *Schrei* of Galás are not so easily contained, as they explode from the unconscious, indefinable, and sounding of rebellion.

### **The voice *in extremis*: between *anima* and *animus***

The elusive, transgressive voice is not exclusively female. Alfred Wolfsohn was the founder of what came to be known as extended range or extended voice, the experimental exploration and expressive expansion of the voice discussed in this thesis, that engages unconventional sounds such as throat singing, harmonics, multiphonics and vocal fry (Salzman and Desi 27). Wolfsohn and his successor, Roy Hart, did not like the term ‘extended voice,’ as they insisted that what appeared to be remarkable displays of vocal virtuosity were merely part of the natural, albeit neglected, human vocal repertoire (Salzman and Desi 275). Defining the voice contains it, and this was antithetical to the goal of ‘unchaining’ the voice. Wolfsohn’s development of the voice was not about applying techniques, but was about unleashing the power of the voice *in extremis*.

Wolfsohn’s experimental approach to the voice was intrinsically connected to analytical psychology and an exploration of the relationship between the voice and the unconscious. After his deeply traumatic experiences in the front-line trenches of the First World War, Wolfsohn was hospitalised with ‘shell shock,’ haunted by aural hallucinations of the cries of dying soldiers. While in hospital, he encountered Freud’s theories on repression, and began to wonder whether his own suffering was related to the unexpressed terror and guilt that he had not yet been able to express and release (Newham *Singing Cure* 83-4). He began to exorcise these pent-up emotions through singing lessons, in which his teacher allowed him to integrate shouts and cries into his singing. He claimed that through this process of working on his voice, “the unyielding presence of death which obsessed me in

those voices was gradually overcome by the presence of a new and intensified life” (Wolfsohn quoted in Pikes 34).

Wolfsohn opened his own voice studio in Berlin in the 1930s, which he subsequently relocated to London during the Second World War (Newham *Singing Cure* 86-7). He worked as a self-proclaimed “voice-psychologist,” developing his students’ psychic health together with their vocal capabilities, as he regarded the two as inseparable. Wolfsohn considered the voice to be “first and foremost the direct expression of the soul,” and believed that the extension of the human vocal range, both in expression and in octave range, implied a comparable growth of the psyche (Pikes 51). He compared this process to the Jungian concept of individuation, or a coming to selfhood, and regarded his work as the vocal embodiment of Jung’s theories (Pikes 51).

Wolfsohn applied the Jungian concept of the ‘shadow’ to depict the dark, unconscious voice that he had discovered during his personal singing therapy. The shadow voice lurked in the spaces between, behind and around the voice, a liminal force existing in the cracks of conventional singing and speaking, and exposing aural glimpses of a darker, seemingly alien voice (Pikes 54). Wolfsohn regarded the shadow voice as a source of tremendous expressive power, which could be channelled and projected into theatrical roles. His most prodigious student, Hart, continued this specifically theatrical exploration after Wolfsohn’s death, with the ‘Roy Hart Theatre Company.’ The concept is also similar to the vocal work of Artaud, Galás, Berberian and Waters, where the uncanny voice, the voice that should have remained hidden, explodes to the surface, like a Primal Scream.

The voice that forms a bridge between consciousness and the unconscious can be compared to the voice that negotiates a passage between the living and the dead. Both death and the unconscious represent a void, an unknown abyss. Wolfsohn aligns death and the unconscious in his unpublished manuscript, *Orpheus, or the way to a mask*, where he

compares his therapeutic, vocal journey into his unconscious, to the myth of Orpheus's descent into the underworld (Braggins).

In Wolfsohn's interpretation of the myth, Eurydice represents his own *anima* figure, his voice (Braggins). Extended vocal technique could be said to be founded on this search for the unchained, unhindered expressivity of the feminine voice. Unlike the avant-garde composers who expressed their musical excess through surrogate female voices, Wolfsohn looked to find it in his own unconscious and in his own voice. He also encouraged his female students to search for their unconscious male voice, their *animus*, suggesting that for them the experimental voice is a masculine one (Pikes 56). Ultimately, Wolfsohn's search was not for the rebellious, transgressive voice of the avant-garde, but for an androgynous oneness which aimed toward therapy, rather than defiance or rebellion. It is for the individual, rather than a wider societal change.

Wolfsohn's therapeutic search for the hidden voices of the unconscious can be compared to Janov's Primal Therapy, both in its fundamental search for the human scream or cry, and in its aim to reconnect the patient with the infant or childhood self. As with Artaud's search back to a time when people knew how to scream, Wolfsohn and Janov seek a cure for the social ills of society upon the individual by mining deep into the unconscious, to a primordial or infantile oneness. Wolfsohn regards the baby as the ultimate vocalist, with its "two tiny tender vocal chords [able to] achieve extraordinary things without suffering any harm," and attributes this to the baby's embodied wholeness that "wants nothing with its head, nothing with its will" (Pikes 38). Janov idealises the baby that is "born real," but is subsequently corrupted by parents and society (Janov *Scream* 20). These idealisations of the feminine, infant voice are in contrast to the psychoanalytic concepts of the 'sonorous envelope' or 'umbilical web,' in which the infantile voice is swallowed up by an all-encompassing maternal voice.

In Patty Waters' singing of *Hush*, it is not always clear whether she is channelling the voice of a mother or the voice of an infant. When I performed the piece, I imagined a voice somewhere between mother, baby and musical instrument, as perhaps she did, too. During the lullaby in *Hereafter*, projected onto the portrait above Wolf's bed were filmic images of breastfeeding mothers, interspersed with hard core pornography. These images unsettled conventional readings of idealised motherhood, mirroring the conflicting voices of the lullaby, and evoking the troubled fetishisation of the maternal voice and body. Some audience members walked out after this scene.

Although the visual images were disturbing, the lullaby was deeply unsettling without this filmic component, which was made evident during our dress rehearsal, when a member of the public had a violently aggressive reaction to the piece. As I reached the climactic point of my wailing, I heard heavy objects being thrown against the flimsy outside walls of the venue, and a man shouting with some force. After the performance, I was told that he had been screaming at me to "shut the fuck up." He lived next-door to the un-soundproofed venue, and was apparently able to hear much of the unamplified sound from his house. While acknowledging that the sound spill may have been frustrating, this was the only moment in which he protested throughout ninety minutes of Wolf's masculine ravings and the other musical pieces already discussed in this thesis. The lullaby seemed to evoke an overwhelming fury in him, as if my wailing was triggering something in his unconscious, something that should have remained hidden. His impassioned screaming created an antiphony with my own, reflecting the split voices of *Hush*, and conjuring images of a primordial struggle against the terror of the umbilical web. I found his screams equally unsettling. The violence and anger with which he tried to silence my voice was clearly gendered. He may have been fighting a struggle with the feminine, maternal voice, and was projecting this battle onto me.

In *Hereafter*, we introduced the female voice as an attempt to create an unconscious subtext for Wolf's rambling stream of consciousness. His stories were full of lustful invectives that straddled the dichotomy of sentimentality and brutality, simultaneously glorifying and loathing women's bodies. In the first minutes of the monologue, the audience was assaulted with a colourfully abject description of his wife: "The super tits under the blood red of the bikini that almost bursts. And the cunt with the sweet sour raspberry and rhubarb jelly just before her period" (*Hereafter*). Here, and at many times throughout the performance, the female body was described as excess, with breasts spilling out and menstrual fluids about to pour forth, portraying the female body as a sweet and sour product to be consumed. In Fritsch's original text, the female body is everywhere, and despite its descriptions of excess, it is contained within the fetishistic and reductive terminology. The female body is silenced within the male voice.

The addition of my female voice provided an alternative to the violent masculine text. My voice was unbounded by language, and was grounded in vocal forms in which women's voices play powerful and commanding roles. In this misogynistic realm of Wolf's fantasies, I reasserted a distinctly female vocal presence, reclaiming the voices of hysteria and pain, with a power that transcended the masculine.

As well as making the silenced female voice heard, the presence of my voice represented the silenced, repressed voice of Wolf. His violence could be seen as a yearning for the mother he never really had. His obsession with breasts seemed to relate to a thwarted primal desire, and an anger and yearning for the monstrous mother who fed him on Jägermeister, rather than breast milk. He recounted the birth of his son, when he "felt so full of life, like since I came out of my mother I have never been again" (*Hereafter*). His desire to return to the womb, or the mother's breast, is transformed into anger projected onto the female body. Wolf's women are constructs of fear and desire. My screaming, lamenting, or

soothing voices could be said to represent these constructs, encompassing the abject, monstrous, hysteric, seductive, maternal female voices, but also transcending them.

Wolf's monologue and my voice remained distinct until the very end. Throughout the performance, my voice was like a dream or a reflection that was expressed during breaks in his speaking. In the final moments of the performance, when Wolf was lying on his back, in a position of submission, I stood astride him, with a gun pointed at his face. As he gasped out his final lines, my singing steadily overtook his words, until he went silent underneath my voice.

## CONCLUSION

This thesis began from an experiential perspective, whereby a 2001 performance initiated a theoretical and practical exploration of the experimental voice in avant-garde theatre. This thesis will similarly conclude from an experiential perspective, presenting insights gained through performance as vital research tools, and will continue past the final page, in an ongoing, never-ending, process of trying to understand my voice.

In the 2012 Free Theatre production, *I Sing the Body Electric*, the company explored the way women and technology could both be seen to be constructed through male desire as fantasies of seduction and destruction. The performance took place in a large drama studio, but all the actors and audiences were contained within the perimeters of the lighting rig. The audiences were led in individually, guided through the blacked out studio by torchlight, and were seated on stools in the centre of the space. Surrounding the audiences, hanging from the lighting rig, was a jungle of electrical cables and household appliances, while the sound of a recorded heartbeat sonically enveloped the audiences, creating a kind of womblike enclosure. This experiential arrival had a sense of liminality similar to that of *Hereafter*, where the audiences had to undergo an unsettling rite of passage to arrive at the performance space. In *Body Electric*, the darkness initially denied the audiences their vision and instead opened up their ears to the sounds and sensations around them, creating the frame for a sensorial, auditory experience, suspended in a dreamlike world.

Lying on the ground, near the point at which the audiences entered the performance space, were two male 'sailors,' whose fantasies formed the basis of this exploration of women and technology. At different points around the periphery of the lighting rig, hanging in harnesses, were five female actors, each embodying a different female archetype, and each expressing itself through a unique form of technology. These actors were hidden in the

darkness, and did not become visible to the audiences until encountered and revealed by the males. As the sailors journeyed through the tangle of cables, they encountered: a Lorelei, whose haunting, alluring voice was enhanced by an echo, but ultimately became distorted and deadly; a Rapunzel, whose uncanny, doll-like appearance was matched with an electronic voice based on the movements of an accelerometer; a Sleeping Beauty, spinning a web of seduction through the sound and movement of colour detection technology; and a Medusa, who used smoke, mirrors and lasers to ensnare the men within her technological glare. I was the Siren, and my technology was a radio microphone taped to each wrist and covered in cling wrap. When I moved my wrists, the crackle of the plastic on the microphones created a sound reminiscent of the sea, enhancing the sense of a sonorous envelope.

As the Siren, I was the first to be encountered by the sailors, referencing Homer's *Odyssey* and the famous episode in which Odysseus is tied to the mast of the ship, so that he may hear the enchanting voices without being drawn to his death. The Siren is the archetypal fantasy of the seductive, destructive female voice, and the prototypical liminal voice. She sings the passage between life and death, luring sailors to their deaths upon the treacherous rocks. She is a hybrid of woman and bird, representing both earth and sky, and living in a liminal setting between rocks and sea, where she sings her enchanting laments, surrounded by the dead corpses of conquered sailors (Cavarero 104-108).

The Siren's song is so irresistibly alluring because it sings directly to the depths of the unconscious, as both seductress and mother. Ancient Greek vases depict the Sirens in a maternal role, nursing the sailors to their deaths (Robson 60). This suggests an understanding of the Siren song as a form of lullaby, singing a bridge between consciousness and the unconscious, between life and death, and once more evoking the voice of the monstrous, carnivorous mother. The voice of the Siren is like the uncontainable contagion of the voice of the plague, infecting the minds of all who hear it. In this way, the Siren is a fantasy of

misogyny, punishing the woman's voice to compensate for creating sweet but unattainable desire.

In *Body Electric*, my Siren sang a song between human and machine. It began as an unamplified, lulling echo, in response to the sailor's song, but gradually gained in pace and volume as I drew the men closer toward me. As my singing intensified, I produced increasingly agitated sounds with my plastic-covered microphones, and as I did this, they picked up the sound of my voice, taking the volume beyond my natural capabilities. The initially soothing oceanic sounds of my microphones, and the sweet, seductive melancholy of my singing, built up in intensity, volume and pitch, until finally released in the scream of a storm.

In 2013, I found myself once again singing in the middle of a theatrical, sonic storm. I was wearing most of the elements of my Siren costume, including the expansive, white wings that had signalled my human-bird hybridity, but in this context, they represented angel wings. In *Body Electric*, I had been hanging from the lighting rig, in a position of recline, luring my audience toward me. In this performance, I was suspended from a knuckle boom lift, over a statue plinth, in a prostrated, flying position, with my arms held out in front of me. Suspended in mid-air, with the wind gently blowing me, I began to sing Diamanda Galás's *ΕΞΕΛΘΎΜΕ* once again. As the piece rose in intensity, sonic artist Bruce Russell began to play his guitar, creating sounds of chaos and destruction through the use of feedback and intensely high levels of volume. This fifteen-minute scene of 'Catastrophe' was inspired by Walter Benjamin's 'Angel of History':

A Klee painting named "Angelus Novus" shows us an angel looking as though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. This storm irresistibly

propels him into the future to which his back it turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress. (Benjamin 257-8)

Suspended over the statue plinth, surveying the broken central city of Christchurch below, I sang Galás's lament for a city suspended between life and death, devastated initially by natural disaster, but increasingly by bureaucratic 'progress.'

This performance was part of Free Theatre's *Canterbury Tales*, a large-scale multi-disciplinary project in collaboration with local musicians, performance groups, and architecture, design and scenography students from around Australasia. *Canterbury Tales* centred on a procession of giant puppets, inspired by Chaucer's characters, that led the gathered crowds from the Bridge of Remembrance, along Oxford Terrace, beside the Avon River, before turning at the Worcester Street Bridge and arriving at the ruins of the Cathedral. The scene of 'Catastrophe' took place at the turning-point of the procession, beside the Worcester Bridge. This intersection was more than a literal turning-point. It signalled a change in the mood of the procession, from carnival and entertainment, to something more confrontational.

The procession was drawn towards our site by a gentle guitar solo, played over a very loud amplifier. The guitar piece was haunting and dreamlike in its repetitive, soothing tone, almost like a lullaby. This transformed the atmosphere of the crowd, seducing them into the sonorous envelope of the music, but provoking some uncertainty of what was to come. Activated by this music, I gently improvised along with my voice, and a dancer on a nearby stage began to embody the sound through her initially trancelike movements. When the music stopped, the lament took over, rising out of a moment of stillness in the crowd. Within minutes, the guitar feedback surged into the sonic frame, overpowering my singing, but also forcing me to adapt, and to explore similar textures of rupture and distortion in my own voice.

This thesis comes out of my own experiences working with experimental voice in avant-garde theatre, but is also strongly informed by the immediate social context that has accompanied the writing of this thesis. I may never have explicitly explored the fundamental connection between liminality and the voice, had it not been for the devastating earthquakes that so shockingly reminded the residents of Christchurch that structures, systems and the very earth that we stand on, are never fixed. There is still hope that the potency of this transitional, liminal phase might create some kind of change in Christchurch, although the city is already being reclaimed and repossessed by the conservative residing powers.

The writing of this thesis has also been plagued by manmade ruptures. Since enrolling as a PhD candidate, the University of Canterbury has introduced three ‘change proposals,’ through which it attempted to close down my home department of Theatre and Film Studies. In the first of these change proposals, the University suggested that Theatre and Film Studies was not ‘core,’ and therefore did not fit within the University’s structure. The main impetus behind the attacks seemed to be a fear of the department’s liminality and its resistance to discrete categorisation, teaching both theatre and film, through both theory and practice. Perhaps the attacks were also related to a fundamental fear of avant-garde theatre and performance, where ideas are explored through the body and the voice, and are not contained within a tidy, literary tradition. The third attempt to close the department was successful and it will be phased out by 2016. I write about the earthquakes and the University closure not to complain or to lament over what has been destroyed, but as a paradigm for what I have discovered about the voice, and to reinforce the hope that creative expression continues to emerge from rupture, transgression, and liminality.

In my thesis, I explored how the experimental voice is intrinsically associated with the concepts of liminality and transgression. By crossing over the threshold of conventional practice, the experimental voice may transgress both vocal and social forms. In my first

chapter, I discussed how traditional vocal expressions, such as the Maniot lament, can be seen to form a bridge between the living and the dead. These specifically female voices take on social and spiritual powers during the liminal phase of the rituals for the dead, but are subsequently reintegrated into their socially silenced roles and re-contained within the patriarchal culture. In traditional rites of passage, the liminal phase is associated with danger and transgression, and the women take on this danger through their voices.

The liminal phase of ritual is inherently conservative, but the liminoid realm of avant-garde performance is not. Galás assumed the voice of the lamenting Maniot women as a means of channelling the anger and pain of those at the margins, the socially dying. Artaud used the primordial power of the scream to shock people into life, and Grotowski and Staniewski explored the voice as a means of connecting to some ‘other.’ Kristeva suggests that death is the “utmost of abjection” (Kristeva *Abjection* 4), and the voice’s ritual connection to death seems to reinforce its inherent ability to disturb and disrupt. Douglas’s observations that transgressions of the body’s orifices can be understood as social transgressions, also suggests that the voice – passing invisibly through the mouth, from interior to exterior – is a potential threat to the social order.

In my second chapter, I explored the voices that emerge between human and machine. The voice already has an ambiguous relationship with the body, and this is enhanced when channelling the voice through technology, or technology through the voice. Following on from the experiments of the Futurists and the Dadaists, pioneers of electroacoustic music sought to find new vocal expressions and meanings by alienating the voice from its familiar context, and resituating it within the liminoid frame of avant-garde music and performance. These acousmatic voices, familiar and strange at the same time, evoked a sense of the uncanny, reminding us of the inherent ambiguity and uncontainability of the voice. Donna Haraway’s “Cyborg Manifesto” advocated for the feminist integration of technology through

the concept of the cyborg, a hybrid identity that transgresses conventional dualisms, allowing women to reimagine and reconstruct their own voices and bodies.

In my third chapter, I explored the voice that enables a passage between consciousness and the unconscious. The lullaby that lulls us to sleep is a reminder of the first experience of our mother's voice from inside her womb, the first *acousmêtre*. From a psychoanalytic perspective, our entry into the symbolic order of patriarchal language severs the intimacy of this bond, and becomes a lost object, whose otherness is never completely disentangled from our selves. The mother's voice thus becomes a 'sonorous envelope' to which we long to return, or an 'umbilical web' from which we try to extricate ourselves. These repressed fantasies of the maternal voice are projected onto the female voice, and lead to a desire to possess, contain, or silence the supposedly unruly, hysteric, female voice. Avant-garde artists, such as Galás, Waters and Ono, reclaim the scream, the voice of hysteria, as a rebellion against containment.

The scream is also at the basis of both Janov's Primal Therapy, where it marks the sound of the unconscious coming into consciousness, and Wolfsohn's search for 'unchained' forms of vocal expression, inspired by the haunting cries of dying soldiers. The scream marks the threshold of both life and death, and this inherent transgression is particularly linked to women, whose bodies mark the threshold of birth, and whose voices 'scream the dead.' Wolfsohn sought the feminine voice of his *anima* through which to develop the range and expression of his voice, and Artaud regarded the scream as the ultimate manifestation of the voice of life, death and the theatre. The voice is fundamentally a liminal entity, coming into being as it transgresses the boundaries of the body, but it is above all the feminine voice that resounds at and of the margins, echoing the fantasies of the patriarchal unconscious that wishes to contain it.

In *Footprints/Tapuwaē*, the shock and terror of losing control over my voice led me to question everything I had come to know about my voice. I had always believed that the voice was something to be tamed and moulded and was therefore aligned with rationality and reason, but in this moment, I lost control and something else took over. In retrospect, I had a moment of epiphany when my voice found me, from somewhere beyond my conscious control. This thesis is part of an ongoing process that grows out of an experiential, embodied desire to explore my voice in relation to avant-garde theatre. The theoretical discourse in this thesis has allowed me to understand my search in a wider anthropological, social, psychoanalytical and political context, but as I have tried to show in my thesis, the actual experience cannot necessarily be put into categories or words.

In Richard Schechner's 2010 essay, "The Conservative Avant-Garde," he suggests that the avant-garde has become a "niche-garde" (895), which "inhabits the already known, marketed as fitting into specific categories or brands" (897). It is of a high level conceptually and technically, but it has lost its searching, political urgency, because it is "known before it is experienced" (897). In my dual role as performer and researcher, I have come to understand the experimental voice as a liminal medium that alludes being fixed or "known," and therefore a suitable partner from which to reclaim the avant-garde from death or conservatism. My search for this will continue beyond the conclusion of this thesis.

## Bibliography

- Ades, Dawn, ed. *The Dada Reader: A Critical Anthology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006. Print.
- Adorno, Theodor W. and Thomas Y. Levin. "The Curves of the Needle." *October* 55 (Winter 1990): 48-55. Web. 10 November 2013.
- Alexiou, Margaret. *The Ritual Lament in Greek tradition*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1974. Print.
- Allain, Paul. *Gardzienice: Polish Theatre in Tradition*. London: Routledge, 2004. Print.
- Anderson, Laurie. *Home of the Brave*. Warner Bros. Records, 1986. Web. 15 August 2013.
- . *The Laurie Anderson Anthology*. Santa Monica: Warner Bros. Records, 2000. CD.
- . *Life on a String*. New York: Warner Music Group, 2001. CD.
- . *Stories from the Nerve Bible*. New York: Harper Perennial, 1994. Print.
- Anhalt, Istvan. *Alternative Voices: Essays on Contemporary Vocal and Choral Composition*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984. Print.
- Ankarloo, Bengt and Stuart Clark, eds. *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: The Twentieth Century*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999. Print.
- Artaud, Antonin. *The Theatre and Its Double*. Trans. Victor Corti. London: New Paris Editions, 1970. Print.
- Attali, Jacques. *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*. Trans. Brian Massumi. Theory and History of Literature, Volume 16. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985. Print.
- Auslander, Philip. *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture*. Second edition. Abingdon: Routledge, 2008. Print.
- . *Presence and Resistance: Postmodernism and Cultural Politics in Contemporary American Performance*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992. Print.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail. *Rabelais and His World*. Trans. Hélène Iswolsky. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984. Print.
- Barba, Eugenio. *The Paper Canoe: A Guide to Theatre Anthropology*. Trans. Richard Fowler. London and New York: Routledge, 1992. Print.
- Barba, Eugenio, and Nicola Savarese. *A Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology: The Secret Art of the Performer*. London: Routledge, 2006. Print.

- Barber, Stephen. *Artaud: Blows and Bombs*. London: Faber and Faber, 1993. Print.
- . *Artaud: The Screaming Body*. Creation Books, 1999. Print.
- Barford, Duncan. *Occult Experiments in the Home*. London: Aeon, 2010. Web. 1 May 2013.
- Bataille, Georges. *Theory of Religion*. Trans. Robert Hurley. New York: Zone Books, 1989. Print.
- Baumgartner, Jennifer L. "Diamanda Galás: Primal Screams." *Ms.* 4.3 (November 1993): 80. Web. 8 July 2010.
- Beaumont, Keith. *Alfred Jarry: A Critical and Biographical Study*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984. Print.
- Benjamin, Walter. *Illuminations*. Trans. Harry Zohn. New York: Schocken Books, 2007. Print.
- Benoit, Eric. "The Voice of Forgotten Histories." *Soma*. (March 2008): 68. Web. 1 May 2010.
- Berberian Sound Studio*. Dir. Peter Strickland. Illuminations Films, 2012. DVD.
- Berio, Luciano. *Two Interviews* Interviews with Rossana Dalmonte and Bálint András Varga. Trans. David Osmond-Smith. London: Marion Boyers, 1985. Print.
- . *Visage, per voce e nastro magnetico*. RAI Milan, 1961. Web. 10 August 2011.
- Berry, Cicely. *Voice and the Actor*. London: Virgin, 2002. Print.
- Best, Elsdon. *Maori Religion and Mythology: Part I*. Wellington: A. R. Shearer, 1976. Print.
- Björk. *Biophilia*. One Little Indian, 2011. CD.
- . *Medúlla*. One Little Indian, 2004. CD.
- Black, Whirimako and Richard Nunns. *Te More*. Auckland: Rattle, 2010. CD.
- Blau, Herbert. "The Dubious Spectacle of Collective Identity." *Antonin Artaud: A Critical Reader*. Edward Scheer, ed. London and New York: Routledge, 2004. Print.
- Braggins, Sheila. "Alfred Wolfsohn alias Amadeus Daberlohn: The Man and his Ideas." [www.roy-hart.com](http://www.roy-hart.com). 12 April 2010. Web. 15 July 2010.
- Brecht, Bertolt. *Brecht on Theatre*. Trans. John Willett. London: Methuen, 1964. Print.
- Briggs, Charles L. "Personal Sentiments and Polyphonic Voices in Warao Women's Ritual Wailing: Music and Poetics in a Critical and Collective Discourse." *American Anthropologist*. 95. 4. (December 1993): 929-957. Web. 5 June 2013.
- Brodsky, Seth. "Luciano Berio: Visage, for tape." *Luciano Berio: Many More Voices*.

RCA 1998. CD.

Brook, Peter. *The Empty Space*. London: Penguin Books, 1990. Print.

Burgard, Peter J., ed. *Nietzsche and the Feminine*. Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1994. Print.

Bürger, Peter. Trans. Michael Shaw. *Theory of the Avant-Garde*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984. Print.

Campbell, James. *This is the Beat Generation*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999. Print.

Campo, Giuliano and Zygmunt Molik. *Zygmunt Molik's Voice and Body Work: The Legacy of Jerzy Grotowski*. London and New York: Routledge, 2010. Print.

Caraveli, Anna. "The Bitter Wounding: The Lament as Social Protest in Rural Greece" in *Gender and Power in Rural Greece*. Jill Dubisch, ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986. Print.

Carlson, H.G. "The Odin Teatret in Holstebro," *The American Scandinavian Review*. New York, 1971. Web. 4 May 2009.

Carlson, Marvin. *The Haunted Stage: The Theatre as Memory Machine*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2001. Print.

Carlson, Marvin. *Performance: A Critical Introduction* (second edition). New York and London: Routledge, 2004. Print.

*Canterbury Tales*. Conceived and directed by Peter Falkenberg. Free Theatre Christchurch in association with FESTA. 27 October 2013. Performance.

Case, Sue-Ellen, ed. *Performing Feminisms: Feminist Critical Theory and Theatre*. Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1990. Print.

Causton, Richard. "Berio's 'Visage' and the Theatre of Electroacoustic Music." *Tempo* 194 (October. 1995): 15-21. Web. 20 July 2010.

Cavarero, Adriana. *For More Than One Voice: Toward a Philosophy of Vocal Expression*. Trans. Paul A. Kottman. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005. Print.

Cavendish, Richard. *The Black Arts*. London: Picador, 1977. Print.

Cella, Edward. "Performance Plus: Notes on Laurie Anderson", *Thresholds: Viewing Culture* 9 (1995): 84-89. Web. 10 December 2009.

Chion, Michel. *The Voice in Cinema*. Trans. Claudia Gorbman. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999. Print.

- Cixous, Hélène. "Aller à la mer." Trans. Barbara Kerslake. *Modern Drama*. 27. 4. (Winter 1984): 546-548. Web. 10 March 2013.
- "Fiction and Its Phantoms: A Reading of Freud's *Das Unheimliche*. *New Literary History* 7.3 (Spring 1976): 525-548. Web. 25 March 2013.
- *The Hélène Cixous Reader*. Susan Sellers, ed. New York: Routledge, 1994. Print.
- "The Laugh of the Medusa." Trans. Keith Cohen and Paula Cohen. *Signs* 1. 4. (Summer 1976): 875-893. Web. 10 March 2013.
- Cixous, Hélène, and Catherine Clément. *The Newly Born Woman*. Trans. Betsy Wing. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986. Print.
- Cleave, Paul. *The Cleaner*. Auckland: Black Swan, 2006. Print.
- Clemént, Catherine. *Opera, or, the Undoing of Women*. Trans. Betsy Wing. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988. Print.
- Coldiron, Margaret. *Trance and Transformation of the Actor in Japanese Noh and Balinese Masked Dance-Drama*. Lewiston, New York: E. Mellen Press, 2004. Print.
- Cope, David. *New Music Composition*. New York: Schirmer Books, 1977. Print.
- , ed. *New Directions in Music: Fifth Edition*. Dubuque, Iowa: WM.C. Brown Publishers, 1989. Print.
- *Techniques of the Contemporary Composer*. New York: Schirmer Books, 1997. Print.
- Copeland, M. and C. Goering. "Blues you can use: Teaching the Faust theme through music, literature, and film." *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy* 46. 5. (February 2003). Web. 13 October 2013.
- Creed, Barbara. *The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis*. London and New York: Routledge, 1993. Print.
- *Phallic Panic: Film, Horror and the Primal Uncanny*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2005. Print.
- Danforth, Loring M. *The Death Rituals of Rural Greece*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1982. Print.
- Davies, Owen. *Witchcraft, Magic and Culture: 1736-1951*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999. Print.
- Davis, Petra. "Judge, Jury and Executioner." *Plan B Magazine*. 33 (May 2008): Web. June 2010.
- Derrida, Jacques. *Writing and Difference*. Trans. Alan Bass. London and New York: Routledge Classics, 2001. Print.

- Derrida, Jacques & Paula Thévenin. *The Secret Art of Artaud*. Trans. Mary Ann Caws. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1998. Print.
- Dibben, Nicola. *Björk*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009. Print.
- Distraction Camp*. Conceived and directed by Peter Falkenberg. Free Theatre Christchurch. November-December 2009 and August-September 2010. Performance.
- Doctor Faustus*, by Christopher Marlowe. Adapted and directed by Peter Falkenberg. Free Theatre Christchurch, May 2010. Performance.
- Dolar, Mladen. *A Voice and Nothing More*. Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2006. Print.
- Douglas, Mary. *Purity and Danger*. London and New York: Routledge, 1966. Print.
- During, Simon, ed. *The Cultural Studies Reader*. Third Edition. London and New York: Routledge, 2007. Print.
- Dunn, Leslie C. and Nancy A. Jones, eds. *Embodied Voices: Representing Female Vocality in Western Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994. Print.
- Dunsby, Jonathan. *Schoenberg: Pierrot Lunaire*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992. Print.
- Eliade, Mircea. *From Primitives to Zen: A Thematic Sourcebook of the History of Religions*. London: Collins, 1967. Print.
- , *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Trans. Willard R. Trask. New York: Pantheon Books, 1964. Print.
- Emmerson, Simon, ed. *The Language of Electroacoustic Music*. London: Macmillan Press, 1986. Print.
- Evans, Simon. "Diamanda Galás – Defixiones, Will and Testament." *OMH*. (8 December 2003). Web. 1 September 2013.
- Fala, Whetu. "Then what is freedom." *Theatreview*. 28 November 2009. Web. 20 December 2013.
- Feld, Steven. *Sound and Sentiment: Birds, Weeping, Poetics, and Song in Kaluli Expression* (second edition). Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982. Print.
- Finter, Helga. "Antonin Artaud and the Impossible Theatre: The Legacy of the Theatre of Cruelty" *The Drama Review* 43. 156. (Winter 1997): 15-40. Web. 10 September 2012.
- Fishman, Andrea. *Thrênoi to Moirología: Female Voices of Solitude, Resistance, and Solidarity* *Oral Tradition* 23. 2. (2008): 267-295. Web. 20 July 2012.

- Flueckiger, Joyce Burkhalter. "Narrative Voices and Repertoire at a Healing Crossroads in South India." *The Journal of American Folklore* 116. 461. (2003): 249 – 272. Web. 1 March 2009.
- Freud, Sigmund. *The Psychology of Love*. London: Penguin Books, 2006. Print.
- , "The Uncanny." *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud. Volume XVII (1917-1919): An Infantile Neurosis and Other Works*. Trans. James Strachey with Anna Freud. London: The Hogarth Press, 1955. Print.
- Freud, Sigmund and Joseph Breuer. *Volume 3: Studies in Hysteria*. Trans. James and Alix Strachey. London: Pelican Books, 1974. Print.
- Fritsch, Werner. *Jenseits*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2000. Print.
- Fulcher, Jane F., ed. *The Oxford Handbook of the New Cultural History of Music*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011. Print.
- Fuller, Graham. "'Berberian Sound Studio' picks up the sounds of violence." *Los Angeles Times*. (June 8, 2013). Web. July 12, 2013.
- Furness, Raymond. *Richard Wagner*. London: Reaktion Books, 2013. Print.
- Galás, Diamanda. *Diamanda Galas – Interview: Defixiones, Will and Testament in Italy*. June 1, 2006. Web. 10 May 2013.
- , *Defixiones, Will and Testament*. Mute, 2003. CD.
- , "Intravenous Song." *Perspectives of New Music* 20 (Fall-Winter 1981/ Spring-Summer 1982): 59-62. Web. 8 May 2010.
- , *The Litanies of Satan*. Y Records, 1982. CD.
- , *Masque of the Red Death*. New York: Mute Records, 1993. CD.
- , *Plague Mass*. Mute, 1991. CD.
- , *Schrei X*. Mute, 1996. CD.
- , *Vena Cava*. Mute, 1993. CD.
- Gavin, James. "Patty Waters: Priestess of the Avant-Garde." *Jazztimes*. May 2004. Web. 12 February 2013.
- Gennep, Arnold van. *The Rites of Passage*. Trans. Monika B. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffee. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1960. Print.
- Gilson-Ellis, J. *The Feminine/Vocal in Contemporary Art Practice*. Ph.D Diss. Surrey,

2000. Web. 25 March 2012.
- Gioia, Ted. *The History of Jazz*. Second Edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. Web. 10 November 2013.
- Glenn, Susan A. *Female Spectacle: The Theatrical Roots of Modern Feminism*. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2000. Web. 5 August 2012.
- Goldberg, Marianne. "Transformative Aspects of Meredith Monk's 'Education of the Girlchild,'" *Women & Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory* 1. 1. (Spring-Summer, 1983): 19-28. Web. 20 May 2009.
- Goldberg, RoseLee. *Laurie Anderson*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2000. Print.
- , *Performance Art: From Futurism to the Present*. New York: Thames and Hudson, 2001. Print.
- , *Performance: Live Art Since the 60s*. New York: Thames and Hudson, 1998. Print.
- Goldman, Albert and Evert Sprinchorn. *Wagner on Music and Drama: A Selection from Richard Wagner's Prose Works*. London: Gollancz, 1970. Print.
- Gomez, Edward M. "Music of the Mind from the Voice of Raw Soul." *Yes Yoko Ono*. Munroe, Alexandra and Jon Hendricks, eds. New York: Japan Society Inc., 2000. Print.
- Goodall, Jane. *Artaud and the Gnostic Drama*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994. Print.
- Goodman, Lizbeth, and Jane de Gay, eds. *The Routledge Reader in Gender and Performance*. London and New York: Routledge, 1998. Print.
- Gottschalk, Kurt. "Heart of Darkness." *Signal to Noise* 49. (Spring 2008): 23-27. Web. 20 July 2011.
- Grant, Mark. "The Extended Voice as Singing Id." *New Music Box*. (August 2007). Web. 25 May 2012.
- Greene, Kent. "Review: The Last of England by Derek Jarman". *Cinéaste* 18. 4. (1991): 59-60. Web. 11 June 2013.
- Grotowski, Jerzy. *Towards A Poor Theatre*. London: Methuen, 1982. Print.
- Guillen, Michael. "Schrei 27: Interview with Diamanda Galás." *Twitch*. April 15, 2011. Web. July 10, 2011.
- Hall, Calvin S. and Vernon J. Nordby. *A Primer of Jungian Psychology*. New York: Taplinger, 1973. Print.
- Haraway, Donna. *The Haraway Reader*. New York and London: Routledge, 2004. Print.

- Harding, James M. and John Rouse, eds. *Not the Other Avant-Garde: The Transnational Foundations of Avant-Garde Performance*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2006. Print.
- Hart, Roy. *Roy Hart... And Man Had A Voice*. Paul Silber, ed. Roy Hart Theatre Archive, 2001. CD.
- Heiner, Robert. *Deviance Across Cultures*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008. Print.
- Hereafter*, by Werner Fritsch. Translated and directed by Peter Falkenberg. Free Theatre Christchurch. February and March 2012. Performance.
- Hill, Douglas, Pat Williams, Frank Smyth and Tessa Clarke. *Witchcraft, Magic and the Supernatural: The Weird World of the Unknown*. London: Octopus Books, 1974. Print.
- Hill, Mary Louise. *When the Voice must be the Body: Feminism and Radio Drama*. Ph.D Diss. New York University, 1992. Web. 15 August 2012.
- Hoffmann, E. T. A. *Tales of Hoffmann*. Trans. R. J. Hollingdale. London: Penguin Books, 2004. Print.
- Holst-Warhaft, Gail. *Dangerous Voices: Women's Laments and Greek Literature*. London and New York: Routledge, 1992. Print.
- Horden, Peregrine. *Music as Medicine*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000. Print.
- Hume, Tim. "Five bodies in six weeks haunt Garden City." *The Press*. (20 September 2009). Web. 10 Dec. 2010.
- Innes, Christopher. *Avant Garde Theatre 1892-1992*. London and New York: Routledge, 1993. Print.
- Ionesco, Eugène. "The Avant-Garde Theatre." *The Tulane Drama Review*. 5. 2. (December 1960). Web. 24 July 2013.
- I Sing the Body Electric*. Conceived and directed by Peter Falkenberg. Free Theatre Christchurch, in collaboration with HITLabNZ. 19 June – 1 July 2012. Performance.
- Janov, Arthur. *The Primal Revolution*. London: Garnstone Press, 1972. Print.
- . *The Primal Scream: Primal Therapy: The Cure for Neurosis*. New York: Abacus, 1977. Print.
- Jarman, Derek. *The Last of England*. David L. Hirst, ed. London: Constable. 1987. Print.
- Jarman-Ivens, Freya. *Queer Voices: Technologies, Vocalities and the Musical Flaw*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. Web. 25 May 2013.
- Jenks, Chris. *Transgression*. London and New York: Routledge, 2003. Print.

- Jentsch, Ernst. "On the Psychology of the Uncanny" (1906). Trans. Roy Sellars. *Angelaki: Journal of the Theatrical Humanities*. 2. 1: 7-16. Web. 25 March 2013.
- Joe, Jeongwon and Rose Theresa. *Between Opera and Cinema*. New York and London: Routledge, 2002. Print.
- Johnson, Robert. *Robert Johnson: The Complete Recordings*. Columbia, 1990. CD.
- Jost, Ekkehard. *Free Jazz*. New York: Da Capo Press, 1974. Print.
- Juno, Andrea and V. Vale. *Angry Women*. San Francisco: Re/Search Publications, 1991. Print.
- Jung, C. G. *The Essential Jung*. Selected and Introduced by Anthony Storr. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983. Print.
- , *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*. Aniela Jaffé, ed. Trans. Richard and Clara Winston. New York: Vintage Books, 1989. Print.
- , *Two Essays on Analytical Psychology*. Trans. R. F. C. Hull. London: Routledge, 1990. Print.
- Kahn, Douglas and Gregory Whitehead. *Wireless Imagination: Sound, Radio and the Avant-Garde*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1992. Print.
- Kennedy, Floyd. "The Challenge of Theorizing the Voice in Performance." *Modern Drama: Listening Rooms: A Special Issue on Voice and Performance*. 52. 4. (Winter 2004). Web. 5 April 2012.
- Kiernander, Adrian. *Ariane Mnouchkine and the Théâtre du Soleil*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993. Print.
- Kimbrough, Andrew McComb. *The Sound of Meaning: Theories of Voice in Twentieth-Century Thought and Performance*. Ph.D Diss. Louisiana State University, 2002. Web. 25 June 2013.
- Kirkup, Gill, Linda Janes, Kath Woodward, and Fiona Hovenden *The Gendered Cyborg: A Reader*. London and New York: Routledge, 2000. Print.
- Kline, A. S. *Federico García Lorca: On Lullabies*. 2008. Web. 20 October 2012. Web. 5 November 2013.
- Koestenbaum, Wayne. *The Queen's Throat: Opera, Homosexuality and the Mystery of Desire*. New York: Vintage Books, 1993. Print.
- Kopf, Biba. *Diamanda Galás*. Nada Ltd., 1988. CD cover.
- Kristeva, Julia. *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*. Trans. Thomas Gora, Alice Jardine, and Leon S. Roudiez. Oxford: Blackwell, 1980. Print.

- , "Place Names." *October*. Trans. Tom Gora and Alice Jardine. 6. (Autumn, 1978). Web. 6 August 2013.
- , *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. Trans. Leon S. Rondiez. New York: Columbia University Press, 1982. Print.
- Kuenzli, Rudolf E., ed. *Dada*. London and New York: Phaidon Press, 2006. Print.
- Kuhns, David F. *German Expressionist Theatre: The Actor and the Stage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997. Print.
- Lawrence, Amy. *Echo and Narcissus: Women's Voices in Classical Hollywood Cinema*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991. Print.
- Leonardi, Susan J. and Rebecca A. Pope. *The Diva's Mouth: Body, Voice, Prima Donna Politics*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1996. Print.
- Litweiler, John. *The Freedom Principle: Jazz After 1958*. New York: William Morrow and Company, 1984. Print.
- Looser, Diana. *Freeing the Natural Voice? Performance, Gender, Society*. MA thesis. University of Canterbury, 2005. Print.
- McCallian, Michael. *The Voice Book*, Revised Edition. New York: Routledge/Theatre Arts Books, 1994. Print.
- McClary, Susan. *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1991. Print.
- McGahey, Robert. *The Orphic Moment: Shaman to Poet-Thinker in Plato, Nietzsche, Mallarmé*. New York: State University of New York Press, 1994. Print.
- McLean, Mervyn. *Maori Music*. Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1996. Print.
- McKenzie, Jon. "Laurie Anderson for Dummies" *TDR: The Drama Review: A Journal of Performance Studies* 41.2. (Summer, 1997): 30-50. Web. 12 February 2013.
- Magee, Bryan. *Wagner and Philosophy*. London: Penguin Books, 2000. Print.
- Magliocco, Sabina. *Witching Culture: Folklore and Neo-Paganism in America*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004. Print.
- Mann, Paul. *The Theory-Death of the Avant-Garde*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991. Print.
- Martin, Jacqueline. *Voice in Modern Theatre*. London and New York: Routledge, 1991. Print.
- Marvin, Thomas. "Children of Legba: Musicians at the Crossroads in Ralph Ellison's 'Invisible Man'" *American Literature*. 9. 1. (1996): 587-608. Web. 20 March 2013.

- Miller, Judith G. *Ariane Mnouchkine*. London and New York: Routledge, 2007. Print.
- Millington, Barry. *Wagner*. London and Melbourne: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd, 1984. Print.
- Millington, Barry, ed. *The Wagner Compendium: A Guide to Wagner's Life and Music*. New York: Schirmer Books, 1992. Print.
- Mitchinson, Andrew. "Q & A Björk: Digital Diva." *Nature*. 477.7366. (September 29, 2011): 537. Web. 10 October 2013.
- Morfee, Adrian. *Antonin Artaud's Writing Bodies*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005. Print.
- Munroe, Alexandra, and Jon Hendricks, eds. *Yes Yoko Ono*. New York: Japan Society Inc., 2000. Print.
- Newham, Paul. *The Prophet of Song: The Life and Work of Alfred Wolfsohn*. Tiger's Eye Press, 1997. Web. 2 May 2012.
- . *The Singing Cure*. London: Random House, 1993. Print.
- . *Therapeutic Voicework: Principles and Practice for the Use of Singing as a Therapy*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 1998. Web. 2 May 2012.
- Nicholls, David. *American Experimental Music 1890-1940*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990. Print.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Birth of Tragedy*. London: Penguin Books, 1993. Print.
- O'Brien, Lucy. *She Bop II: The Definitive History of Women in Rock, Pop and Soul*. London: Continuum, 2002. Print.
- Ogden, Daniel. *Greek and Roman Necromancy*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001. Print.
- Osmond-Smith, David. *Berio*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1991. Print.
- . *Luciano Berio: Two Interviews*. New York and London: Marion Boyars, 1985. Print.
- . "The Tenth Oscillator: The Work of Cathy Berberian 1958-1966." *Tempo*. 58. 227. (January 2004): 2-13. Web. 15 August 2011.
- Oxford English Dictionary*. Oxford University Press, 2014. Web.
- Palmer, Robert. *Deep Blues: A Musical and Cultural History of the Mississippi Delta*. New York: Viking, 1981. Print.
- Payne, John. "The Woman Who Knows Too Much". *Arthur*. 28. (March 2008). Web. 10 May 2009.

- Perry, Nina. "The Language of Lullabies." *BBC News Magazine*. 21 January 2013. Web. 1 March 2013.
- Piekut, Benjamin. *Experimentalism Otherwise: The New York Avant-Garde and Its Limits*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011. Print.
- Pikes, Noah. *Dark Voices – The Genesis of the Roy Hart Theatre*. Spring Publishers, 2004. Print.
- Poe, Edgar Allan. *Selected Prose, Poetry, and Eureka*. W. H. Auden, ed. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1950. Print.
- Pope, Rebecca and Susan Leonardi. "Divas and Disease; Mourning and Militancy: Diamanda Galás's Operatic Plague Mass." *The Work of Opera: Genre, Nationhood and Sexual Difference*. Richard Dellamara and Daniel Fischlin (eds). New York: Columbia University Press, 1997. Print.
- Radcliffe-Brown, A. R. *Taboo*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1939. Print.
- Reed, A. W. and Ross Calman. *Reed Book of Māori Mythology*. Auckland: Reed Publishing, 2004. Print.
- Reilly, Kara. *Automata and Mimesis on the Stage of Theatre History*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001. Web. 22 March 2013.
- Richards, Thomas. *At Work with Grotowski on Physical Actions*. London: Routledge, 1995. Print.
- , *Heart of Practice*. New York: Routledge, 2008. Print.
- Robertson, Alec. *Requiem: Music of Mourning and Consolation*. London: Cassell, 1967. Print.
- Robson, Julie. *Songs of Knowledge: Sirens in Theory and Performance*. Ph.D thesis. Brisbane: Queensland University of Technology, 2004. Web. 5 April 2012.
- Roose-Evans, James. *Experimental Theatre from Stanislavski to Peter Brook*. London and Melbourne: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984. Print.
- Ross, Alex. "Primal Song: Meredith Monk, at BAM." *The New Yorker*. (November 9, 2009): 84-5. Print.
- Rothstein, Edward. "Review/Music; A Diva Makes a Cage Her Vehicle" *The New York Times*. (July 10, 1993). Web. 10 May 2010.
- Royle, Nicholas. *The Uncanny*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003. Print.
- Rozik, Eli. *The Roots of Theatre: Rethinking Ritual and Other Theories of Origin*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2002. Print.

Salmond, Anne. *Hui: A Study of Maori Ceremonial Gatherings*. Wellington: Reed, 1975. Print.

Salzman, Eric and Thomas Dežsy. *The New Music Theater: Seeing the Voice, Hearing the Body*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008. Print.

Salzman, Eric. "Some Notes on the Origins of New Music Theater." *Theater*. 30. 2. (May 2000): pp. 9-23. Web. 12 November 2012.

Schechner, Richard. *Between Theatre and Anthropology*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985. Print.

----- . "The Conservative Avant-Garde." *New Literary History*. 41. 4. (Autumn 2010): pp. 895-913). Web. 17 June 2014.

Schechner, Richard, and Lisa Wolford, eds. *The Grotowski Sourcebook* New York: Routledge, 1997. Print.

Scheer, Edward, ed. *Antonin Artaud: A Critical Reader*. London: Routledge, 2004. Print.

----- . *100 Years of Cruelty: Essays on Artaud*. Sydney: Power Publications, 2002. Print.

Schnabl, Ruth. *Gravity-Bound: The Articulation of the body in art and the possibility of community*. Ph.D. dissertation. State University of New York at Binghamton, 2008. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses. Web. 6 June 2011.

Schrader, Barry. *Introduction to Electro-Acoustic Music*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1982. Print.

*Schrei 27*. Diamanda Galás and Davide Pepe. Intravenous Sound Operations, 2011. Film.

Schumacher, Claude, ed. *Artaud on Theatre*. London: Methuen, 1989. Print.

Schwarz, David. *Listening Subjects: Music, Psychoanalysis, Culture*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1997. Print.

Segal, Charles. *Orpheus: The Myth of the Poet*. Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1989. Print.

Seremetakis, C. Nadia. *The Last Word: Women, Death, and Divination in Inner Mani*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1991. Print.

Sheppard, Richard. *Modernism-Dada-Postmodernism*. Evanstown, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2000. Print.

Showalter, Elaine. *The Female Malady: Women, Madness and English Culture 1830-1980*. London: Virago, 1987. Print.

----- . *Hystories: Hysterical Epidemics and Modern Media*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1997. Print.

- Silverman, Kaja. *The Acoustic Mirror: The Female Voice in Psychoanalysis and Cinema*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998. Print.
- Slowiak, James and Jairo Cuesta. *Jerzy Grotowski*. London and New York: Routledge, 2007. Print.
- Smart, Mary Ann, ed. *Siren Songs: Representations of Gender and Sexuality in Opera*. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2000. Print.
- Smithner, Nancy Putnam. "Meredith Monk: Four Decades by Design and Invention". *TDR: The Drama Review: A Journal of Performance Studies*. 49. 2. (Summer 2005): 93-118. Web. 2 March 2010.
- Sontag, Susan (ed). *AIDS and Its Metaphors*. London: Allen Lane, 1989. Print.
- ed. *Antonin Artaud: Selected Writings*. Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1976. Print.
- Spatz, Ben. "To Open a Person: Song and Encounter at Gardzienice and the Workcenter", in *Theatre Topics*. 18. 2. (September 2008): 205-222. Web. 8 March 2010.
- "Iphigenia in Aulis at La Mama: Microculture and Musicality in the Work of Gardzienice", in *Slavic and Eastern European Performance*. 28. 2. (Spring 2008): 81-89. 8 March 2010.
- Staniewski, Włodzimierz, with Alison Hodge. *Hidden Territories: The Theatre of Gardzienice*. London: Routledge, 2004. Print.
- *Hidden Territories: The Theatre of Gardzienice*. Designed by Peter Hulton. Edited by Alison Hodge and Peter Hulton. Arts Archives. London: Routledge, 2004. CD-ROM.
- Stehle, Eva. *Performance and Gender in Ancient Greece*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997. Print.
- Steinberg, Michael P. and Monica Bohm-Duchen, eds. *Reading Charlotte Salomon*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006. Print.
- Such, David G. *Avant-Garde Jazz Musicians: Performing 'Out There.'* Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1993. Print.
- Tavener, John. *John Tavener: A Portrait*. Naxos, 2006. CD.
- Taxidou, Olga. *Modernism and Performance: Jarry to Brecht*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. Print.
- Tharu, Susie J. *The Sense of Performance: Studies in Post-Artaud Theatre*. New Delhi: Arnold-Heinemann, 1984. Print.
- The Exorcist*. Dir. William Friedkin. Warner Bros., 1973. DVD.

- The Pervert's Guide to Cinema: Presented by Slavoj Žižek*. Dir. Sophie Fiennes. Lone Star, Mischief Films, Amoeba Films, 2006. DVD.
- Turner, Jane. *Eugenio Barba*. London and New York: Routledge, 2004. Print.
- Turner, Victor. *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play*. New York: PAJ Publications, 1982. Print.
- Unterberger, Richie. "Patty Waters: Biography." *Allmusic*. Web. 12 February 2013.
- Urban, Greg. "Ritual Wailing in Amerindian Brazil." *American Anthropologist, New Series*. 90. 2. (June 1988): 385-400. Web. 20 May 2012.
- Varga, Balint Andras. *Conversations with Iannis Xenakis*. London: Faber and Faber, 1996. Print.
- Wahlberg, Mahn. "Artaud's Radio: Avant-gardism and the Event of Mediated Sound." In Fullerton, John (ed.) *Screen Culture: History and Textuality*. Libbey: London, 2004: 41-54. Print.
- Warner, Marina. "Hush-a-Bye Baby": Death and violence in the lullaby." *Raritan*. 18.1. (Summer 1998): 93. Web. 1 December 2012. Web. 15 December 2013.
- Waters, Patty. *College Tour*. ESP-Disk, 1966. Web. 10 August 2010.
- . *Sings*. ESP-Disk, 1965. Web. 10 August 2010.
- Barba, Eugenio. *Negotiating Cultures: Eugenio Barba and the Intercultural Debate*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002. Print.
- . ed. *Towards a Third Theatre: Eugenio Barba and the Odin Teatret*. London: Routledge, 1993. Print.
- Weiss, Allen S. "'K'". *Antonin Artaud: A Critical Reader*. Scheer, Edward (ed). London and New York: Routledge, 2004. Print.
- . "Radio, Death, and the Devil: Artaud's *Pour en finir avec le jugement de dieu*". In *Wireless Imagination: Sound, Radio, and the Avant-Garde*. Doulgas Kahn and Gregory Whitehead, eds. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1992. Print.
- Wiles, David. *Mask and Performance in Greek Tragedy: From Ancient Festival to Modern Experimentation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. Print.
- Williams, David, ed. *Collaborative Theatre: The Théâtre du Soleil Sourcebook*. London and New York: Routledge, 1999. Print.
- Williams, Linda. *Hard Core: Power, Pleasure, and the "Frenzy of the Visible."* Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989. Print.

Winther, Frans. "Odin Teatret and the Music," *Odin Teatret 2000*. Århus: Aarhus University Press, 2000. Web. 20 December 2009.

Wolfsohn, Alfred. *The Human Voice*. Roy Hart Theatre Archive, 2007. CD.

Yampolsky, Mikhail. "Voice Devoured: Artaud and Borges on Dubbing." *Antonin Artaud: A Critical Reader*. London and New York: Routledge, 2004. Print.

Youngs, Ian, "Björk opens Manchester International Festival." *BBC News*. 1 July 2011. Web. 20 December 2013.

Žižek, Slavoj, ed. *Everything You Always Wanted To Know About Lacan (But Were Afraid to Ask Hitchcock)*. London and New York: Verso, 1992. Print.

Žižek, Slavoj and Mladen Dolar. *Opera's Second Death*. New York and London: Routledge, 2002. Print.

Zurbrugg, Nicholas, ed. *Art, Performance, Media: 31 Interviews* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004. Print.

[www.bjork.com](http://www.bjork.com)

[www.diamandagalas.com](http://www.diamandagalas.com)

[www.freetheatre.org.nz](http://www.freetheatre.org.nz)

[www.roy-hart.com](http://www.roy-hart.com)

[www.theworkcenter.org](http://www.theworkcenter.org)

[www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)