

LISTENING TO THE INAUDIBLE: MUSIC, SPIRITS, AND NONHUMAN BEINGS IN INDIGENOUS RITUAL PRACTICE

Marius-Ionuț Stanciu

Department of Arts and Media, University of Craiova, Craiova, Romania

stanciumarius1991@gmail.com

<https://orcid.org/0009-0005-0795-1743>

Abstract— Ritual sound is approached as a medium of relation between humans and non-human beings in indigenous musical cosmologies. Starting from Blacking’s idea of music as “humanly organized sound,” the analysis expands toward relational sonic agency. Songs, chants, sacred instruments, and musicalized speech are understood as means through which spirits, plants, animals, ancestors, and hidden forces become ritually perceptible. “Listening to the inaudible” designates a culturally trained form of hearing through which sound becomes knowledge, mediation, memory, and transformation.

Keywords— Ethnomusicology, Indigenous cosmologies, Nonhuman agency, Ritual sound

I. INTRODUCTION

Ritual sound occupies a central position in many indigenous musical cosmologies, where singing, chanting, instrumental performance, and musicalized speech are not limited to aesthetic expression. Sound may operate as a medium of knowledge, a form of communication, and a means of regulating relations between humans and beings that exceed the ordinary human sphere. Spirits, plants, animals, ancestors, sacred instruments, and invisible forces may become present through musical practice, not as abstract symbols, but as agencies recognized within ritual systems of listening and performance.

The theoretical point of departure is John Blacking’s understanding of music as “humanly organized sound.” This formulation remains fundamental because it places music within human social life, embodied experience, and cultural organization. Yet the ethnographic materials examined here require an expansion of this human-centered model. In several indigenous ritual contexts, the human performer may produce the audible sound, while the origin, authority, or agency of the song is attributed to a spirit, plant-person, animal, ancestor, or sacred being.

The expression “listening to the inaudible” designates this expanded field of ritual perception. The inaudible is not understood as silence, nor as the absence of sound, but as a form of presence that ordinary acoustic listening may not fully recognize. Ritual listening involves culturally trained ways of hearing through which hidden agencies become perceptible, manageable, and meaningful. Such listening is therefore both sensory and cosmological: it joins acoustic perception with myth, memory, body, initiation, transformation, and social knowledge.

The analysis follows three main directions. First, the conceptual movement from human musicality to non-human sonic agency is clarified through Blacking, Rice, Brabec de Mori, Seeger, Hill, and Castrillon. Second, the role of song, spirits, plants, animals, and sacred instruments is examined in relation to indigenous cosmologies of Lowland South America. Third, selected case studies — Kaluli bird voices and weeping, Desana and Baniwa sacred instruments, Huni Kuin image-songs, and Amazonian sound-centered narratives — are used to show how ritual sound mediates between audible performance and hidden presence.

LISTENING TO THE INAUDIBLE: MUSIC, SPIRITS, AND NONHUMAN BEINGS IN INDIGENOUS RITUAL PRACTICE

A sound-centered ethnomusicological approach also raises methodological questions. The microphone may record the acoustic surface of a performance, but it does not automatically capture the cultural attribution of voice, agency, or ritual meaning. The task of analysis is therefore not only to describe musical structures, but also to understand how communities hear sound, how voices are attributed, how non-human presences are recognized, and how ritual knowledge is transmitted through performance.

Ritual music emerges, in this perspective, as a relational practice. It does not merely represent beliefs about spirits, animals, plants, ancestors, or invisible forces; it creates the conditions through which such beings are approached, heard, remembered, and ritually negotiated. Sound becomes a threshold between human action and non-human agency, between acoustic perception and cosmological recognition, between the recorded event and the wider ritual world that gives it meaning.

II. OBJECTIVES AND METHODS

Ritual sound is approached as a form of relation between humans and non-human beings in indigenous musical cosmologies. The study focuses on the ways in which songs, chants, sacred instruments, bird voices, image-songs, and musicalized speech function as knowledge, mediation, memory, and transformation.

The research is based on a comparative and interpretive reading of selected sources: Blacking's theory of humanly organized sound, Feld's analysis of Kaluli sonic expression, Brabec de Mori and Seeger's discussion of non-human agency, Barros and Wright's study of Desana and Baniwa ritual music, Lagrou's analysis of Huni Kuin image-songs, Hill and Castrillon's sound-centered approach to alterity, and Rice's model of ethnomusicological theorizing.

III. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Chapter 1 - From Human Musicality to Nonhuman Sonic Agency

The theoretical point of departure is John Blacking's influential definition of music as "humanly organized sound," a formulation that places musical meaning within the sphere of social life, cultural organization, embodied experience, and human interaction. Music is therefore not treated as an autonomous acoustic object, but as a meaningful practice shaped by the relations, values, memories, and perceptual habits of the community that produces and interprets it¹. Yet indigenous ritual practices require an expansion of this human-centered framework. In the ethnographic materials examined here, musical sound is often not attributed exclusively to the human performer. Songs, voices, and ritual utterances may be understood as manifestations of spirits, animals, plants, ancestors, or other Nonhuman beings. The analytical focus consequently moves from music as a purely human form of sonic organization toward relational sonic agency, where human performance becomes a medium of communication, transformation, and mediation between human and Nonhuman worlds.

1.1. Music as Humanly Organized Sound in John Blacking's Ethnomusicological Thought

In *How Musical Is Man?* music is not approached as an autonomous acoustic object, nor merely as a formal arrangement of rhythm, melody, timbre, and structure. Rather, it is understood as a culturally embedded form of human action. Musical sound becomes meaningful because it is produced, transmitted, heard, interpreted, and valued within human social life. Blacking's argument is directed against ethnocentric hierarchies that separate "Music" from "Ethnic Music" or "Art Music" from "Folk Music." For him, the crucial question is not whether one musical system belongs to a prestigious written tradition, but how sound functions within the society that creates it. In this sense, ethnomusicology becomes a discipline capable of correcting the limitations of formalist musicology: it does not study music only as structure, but as structure shaped by social experience,

bodily action, cultural memory, and collective perception. This perspective is fundamental for the present article because it establishes music as a relational phenomenon. Blacking insists that music cannot be understood as a “thing in itself”; its terms are the terms of the society, culture, and bodies that create and listen to it. Musical form is therefore not external to human life. It is one of the ways through which human beings organize experience, coordinate social relations, and give sonic form to cultural processes. Analysis must consequently move from sound alone toward the human relations that make sound meaningful.

At the same time, Blacking’s definition creates the theoretical problem from which this article begins. If music is “humanly organized sound,” how should ethnomusicology interpret ritual contexts in which the source, authority, or agency of song is not attributed exclusively to humans? In many indigenous ritual practices, the audible performer may be human, yet the song may be understood as the voice of a spirit, an animal, a plant-person, an ancestor, or another being. The human body produces the sound, but the cultural meaning of the performance may locate its agency beyond the human. This problem is explicitly developed in the studies on Lowland South American indigenous music. Brabec de Mori and Seeger observe that ritual music in these societies often involves communication with Nonhuman agents. Their discussion of the Shipibo healing specialist is especially significant: from the researcher’s perspective, a human singer performs the song; from the ritual perspective, however, a plant-person is singing, and the performance becomes a site where human and Nonhuman agency overlapⁱⁱ.

The distinction between audible sound and the apparently inaudible is therefore central. Listening, in these contexts, is not limited to the perception of acoustically measurable sound. It also involves the ritual recognition of presences, voices, and agencies that may not be available to ordinary hearing or to mechanical recording. “Listening to the inaudible” does not mean listening to silence, but listening according to a cosmological logic in which animals, plants, spirits, and other beings may act through sound. This theoretical shift does not require the rejection of Blacking’s model. On the contrary, it extends it. If music must be understood through the meanings assigned to it by a community, then ethnomusicology must also take seriously communities in which musical agency is distributed across human and Nonhuman domains. Music remains humanly organized at the level of performance, transmission, and social interpretation, but it may be cosmologically attributed to beings that exceed the human.

Hill and Castrillon’s sound-centered approach to Amazonian alterity supports this expansion. They argue that indigenous Amazonian peoples use musical sounds, natural sounds, and musicalized speech to engage with different categories of “others”: ancestor-spirits, spirits of the dead, animal and plant spirits, neighboring indigenous peoples, and non-indigenous peoples. In this view, music does not merely represent alterity; it produces a sonic space in which relations with the other can be negotiated, transformed, and historically situated.

The theoretical movement proposed in this subchapter can be summarized as follows:

Conceptual level	Main idea	Relevance for the article
Humanly organized sound	Music is shaped by human social and cultural organization.	Establishes Blacking’s foundational ethnomusicological model.
Ritual attribution of voice	The audible performer may not be considered the only agent of song.	Opens the problem of spirits, plants, animals, and ancestors as sonic agents.
Listening to the inaudible	Listening includes ritual recognition of Nonhuman presence and agency.	Provides the central concept for the article’s title and argument.

LISTENING TO THE INAUDIBLE: MUSIC, SPIRITS, AND NONHUMAN BEINGS IN INDIGENOUS RITUAL PRACTICE

Relational sonic agency	Music mediates relations between humans and Nonhumans.	Allows a broader theory of indigenous ritual music.
-------------------------	--	---

Table I. Analytical Levels of Sonic Agency in Indigenous Ritual Practice

Consequently, Blacking’s definition should be understood here as a methodological threshold rather than a closed boundary. It remains indispensable because it prevents music from being reduced to acoustic form. Yet the indigenous ritual materials require a further step: music must also be analyzed as a field of attributed agency. The question is not only how humans organize sound, but also how sound allows humans to enter into relation with spirits, plants, animals, ancestors, and other presences.

The concept of “listening to the inaudible” begins from Blacking’s anthropology of music but moves toward an expanded ethnomusicology of ritual mediation. Music is humanly organized, but it is not always understood as exclusively human. In indigenous ritual practice, song may become the place where human bodies, Nonhuman voices, cosmological knowledge, and social transformation intersect.

1.2. Problematizing the Boundary between Human and Nonhuman

The distinction between human and Nonhuman cannot be treated as a fixed analytical opposition when approaching indigenous ritual music. In the sources examined here, the Nonhuman does not simply designate an external category opposed to human culture. Rather, it refers to a complex field of beings, presences, voices, and agencies that may enter into relation with human performers through song, ritual speech, instrumental sound, and listening. The boundary between human and Nonhuman is therefore not erased, but it is made permeable through musical action.

In Lowland South American indigenous contexts, musical performance frequently participates in defining what counts as human, while also making it possible to cross or transform the limits of humanness. Brabec de Mori and Seeger emphasize that music is used in cosmologies where communication between humans and Nonhuman s is central. Animals, plants, spirits, and the dead are not merely symbolic references within ritual discourse; they may be treated as agents whose presence is activated, translated, or mediated through sound.

The theoretical difficulty lies in the fact that the visible performer and the attributed source of the voice do not always coincide. A ritual specialist may be acoustically identifiable as the singer, yet the song may be understood as originating from a plant-person, an animal-being, a spirit, or an ancestral presence. In such a case, the human body becomes the site of performance, but not necessarily the exclusive source of musical agency. The voice is simultaneously embodied and displaced: it belongs to the singer at the level of sound production, but it may belong to another being at the level of ritual meaning. This is why the problem of Nonhuman agency cannot be reduced to metaphor. The question is not simply whether indigenous singers “imitate” animals or “represent” spirits. Brabec de Mori and Seeger distinguish between listening to obviously audible sounds and listening to apparently inaudible entities or persons embodied by plants, birds, or other animals. In this framework, sound is not only an object of perception, but also a medium through which different orders of being become mutually accessible. The act of singing may therefore produce a relational condition in which a human performer does not merely refer to a Nonhuman being, but temporarily participates in its agency.

A significant consequence follows from this: humanness becomes a relational and performative condition rather than a stable biological category. In ritual sound, the human does not disappear, but becomes internally plural. The singer may speak or sing from a human position while also giving form to a Nonhuman voice. Musical performance becomes a mode of controlled ambiguity, allowing the community to recognize

difference without reducing it to separation. The Nonhuman is not simply outside the human world; it is approached, heard, embodied, and negotiated through culturally specific forms of sonic practice.

Hill and Castrillon deepen this perspective by proposing a sound-centered approach to Amazonian alterity. Their argument shifts the analysis from visual models of otherness toward musical sounds, natural sounds, and musicalized speech as means of managing relations with mythic ancestor-spirits, spirits of the dead, animal and plant spirits, affines, neighboring indigenous groups, and non-indigenous peoplesⁱⁱⁱ. Musical processes, in their view, do not merely express a change of perspective; they create a shared sonic and verbal space in which the otherness of the other can be acknowledged and social transformation can take place.

The relevance of this approach is considerable for an ethnomusicology of ritual practice. If visual models tend to describe alterity as a matter of perspective, sonic models foreground relation, resonance, participation, and transformation. Listening does not simply observe the other from a distance; it enters into a field of interaction. The voice of the other is not only imagined, but ritually sounded, heard, repeated, transformed, and sometimes embodied. Music thus becomes one of the privileged means through which relations between humans and Nonhuman s are made socially and cosmologically intelligible. Such a view also clarifies why the phrase “listening to the inaudible” must be understood as an analytical concept rather than a poetic metaphor. The inaudible is not the absence of sound, but the presence of agencies that ordinary listening may not recognize. Ritual listening is trained to hear more than acoustic form. It hears relational position, spiritual presence, cosmological reference, and transformative potential. The same sound may therefore be interpreted differently according to the listener’s cultural competence, ritual role, and position within the community.

The boundary between human and Nonhuman is consequently best understood as a threshold. It is crossed not by abandoning the human, but by expanding the human voice into a field of mediated agencies. Song, chant, and ritual sound operate at this threshold, allowing bodies, spirits, animals, plants, and ancestors to enter into relation. In this sense, indigenous ritual music challenges any theory that defines music exclusively through human production. It demands instead a model of sonic agency in which the human performer, the Nonhuman source, and the communal act of listening participate together in the construction of ritual meaning.

The movement from human musicality to Nonhuman sonic agency therefore requires a broader understanding of performance. Music is not only something humans do; it is also a way in which humans become capable of hearing, hosting, translating, and negotiating the presence of other beings. The Nonhuman appears not as an external object of representation, but as a relational force that becomes audible through ritual practice. This is precisely where ethnomusicology must expand its categories: from sound as human expression toward sound as a medium of interspecies, interspiritual, and cosmological relation.

1.3. Sound as a Form of Ritual Knowledge

Sound, in indigenous ritual practice, cannot be reduced to an acoustic event that is merely perceived by the ear. It functions as a mode of knowledge, a way of accessing relations, presences, and transformations that are not always available to ordinary perception. The ethnographic materials considered in this article suggest that music and ritual sound do not simply accompany cosmological thought; they participate in the production, transmission, and activation of that thought. In such contexts, to sing, to hear, and to respond sonically means to enter a field of knowledge in which human and Nonhuman agencies become mutually intelligible.

The relevance of sound as knowledge is especially clear in Lowland South American indigenous cosmologies, where music is described as a necessary medium for understanding ritual practice and relations with other-than-human persons. Brabec de Mori and Seeger argue that a large part of ritual and narration is performed through music and that indigenous epistemology cannot be adequately understood unless music performance is first taken seriously. Their formulation is decisive: ritual music is presented as a missing link for understanding Lowland indigenous cosmologies. This position shifts the analytical emphasis from music

as representation to music as epistemological practice. A song does not merely refer to a myth, a spirit, an animal, or a plant; it may constitute the very means through which such beings become ritually knowable. Sound gives form to relations that are otherwise difficult to conceptualize through external observation alone. It allows the community to identify presences, classify experiences, manage danger, and interpret the unstable boundaries between bodies, spirits, and worlds. In this sense, ritual sound is not secondary to mythological narration. It is one of the principal ways through which mythological knowledge is embodied and activated. The opposition between “telling” and “singing” becomes insufficient, since cosmological knowledge may be transmitted through melodic formulas, vocal timbres, instrumental patterns, ritual sequences, and forms of listening. Music does not merely illustrate a pre-existing worldview; it helps produce the conditions under which that worldview can be experienced.

The Desana and Baniwa materials from the Upper Rio Negro region offer a particularly relevant example. Barros and Wright emphasize the connection between mythology, music, sacred instruments, clan origin, collective identity, and the transmission of knowledge across generations. Some musical repertoires are linked to the “Transformation Houses,” described as portals to the spiritual dimension of origins. The sacred flutes and related repertoires are not only musical objects or sonic practices; they are bound to ancestral presence, initiation, memory, and the formation of identity^{iv}. Such examples show that ritual knowledge is not stored exclusively in verbal explanations. It is also preserved in repertoires, instruments, gestures, choreographies, ornaments, and performance restrictions. The fact that certain repertoires cannot be modified, or cannot be taught before apprentices are ritually prepared, indicates that musical knowledge is regulated by cosmological and social conditions. Sound is not freely detachable from the ritual system that gives it authority. To know the music means to know when, how, by whom, and under what conditions it may be performed.

The same logic appears in the distinction between sacred and non-sacred repertoires. In the Upper Rio Negro context, certain musical forms may be presented in public or non-ritual settings, while others remain restricted because they involve initiation, ancestral power, or forms of knowledge that cannot be separated from ritual competence. Musical sound thus marks degrees of access to knowledge. It defines who is prepared to hear, who is permitted to perform, and who can interpret the meaning of what is heard.

Ritual listening therefore becomes an active discipline. It requires cultural training, bodily participation, and familiarity with the categories through which sound is recognized. The listener does not merely receive acoustic information; he or she interprets sonic events according to mythological memory, ritual position, and social belonging. In this framework, hearing is inseparable from knowing. A sound may remain acoustically audible to all, but ritually intelligible only to those who possess the necessary cultural and ceremonial competence.

The Huni Kuin materials analyzed by Els Lagrou^v extend this argument toward embodied perception and synesthetic experience. In the context of *nixi pae* rituals, image-songs reveal the interrelation between bodily sensation, vision, rhythm, song, and sound. Knowledge is described as a process of seeing through the eyes of the Other and singing through the voice of other beings. Songs guide perception, regulate visionary experience, and help control the agency of Nonhuman forces affecting the body. This example is crucial for the present article because it shows that ritual knowledge is not purely intellectual. It is sensory, corporeal, and transformative. Sound does not simply communicate information; it acts upon the body, orients vision, stabilizes fear, calls presences, sends away dangerous agencies, and helps restore relations between body and soul. The song becomes a path of knowledge because it guides movement across visible and invisible dimensions of experience.

The idea of “songs to see” is particularly significant. It confirms that sound and vision are not separate domains in ritual knowledge. Sound may produce vision, organize vision, or make vision bearable. Conversely, visionary experience may require musical intervention in order to be stabilized or redirected. The act of singing becomes a technique of orientation within a world of powerful images, forces, and Nonhuman agencies. What

is known is not merely described; it is reached through the coordinated action of voice, body, perception, and ritual sequence. From this perspective, the notion of listening to the inaudible acquires a more precise meaning. It does not refer only to the perception of hidden sounds. It refers to the capacity to recognize forms of agency that become accessible through ritual sound. The inaudible is not simply beyond hearing; it is beyond ordinary hearing. Ritual sound creates the conditions through which hidden presences, ancestral forces, spiritual dangers, and Nonhuman voices can be apprehended.

Sound as ritual knowledge also challenges a purely observational model of ethnomusicological analysis. If music operates as knowledge within the ritual system itself, then analysis must account not only for musical structure, but also for the indigenous conditions under which sound is meaningful. Melody, rhythm, timbre, repetition, vocal register, instrumental identity, and performance sequence must be interpreted in relation to cosmology, initiation, transformation, and the management of relations with other beings. Consequently, music is not simply an object to be transcribed or described from outside. It is a mode of knowing from within a ritual world. The ethnomusicologist must therefore treat sound as both musical material and epistemological action. To analyze ritual music is to examine how sound organizes relations between humans and Nonhuman s, how it preserves cosmological memory, how it grants or restricts access to knowledge, and how it enables transformations that cannot be reduced to ordinary social performance.

The movement from sound as expression to sound as knowledge is essential for an expanded ethnomusicology of ritual practice. Indigenous musical systems do not merely represent beliefs about spirits, plants, animals, ancestors, and invisible forces. They provide practical and perceptual techniques for engaging those beings. Through song, chant, instrumental sound, and listening, ritual specialists and communities produce knowledge of worlds that remain partially hidden, unstable, or dangerous. Music becomes a method of orientation within a cosmological field.

Sound functions as ritual knowledge because it mediates between perception and cosmology, between body and spirit, between human memory and Nonhuman agency. Listening becomes a disciplined way of knowing, while singing becomes a way of acting upon relations that exceed the ordinary human world. Within this framework, “listening to the inaudible” operates as an ethnomusicological concept for understanding how ritual sound makes hidden agencies perceptible, manageable, and socially meaningful.

1.4. Ethnomusicology between Theory, Fieldwork, and Cosmology

Ethnomusicology becomes especially productive when it is not limited to the description of musical forms, but develops theoretical models from situated listening, field experience, and culturally specific interpretations of sound. Timothy Rice’s *Modeling Ethnomusicology* is useful here because it treats ethnomusicology as a discipline constantly engaged in theoretical self-reflection^{vi}. The field is not defined only by its object of study, but also by the questions it asks about method, experience, identity, history, meaning, and the social nature of musical knowledge.

Rice’s emphasis on ethnomusicological theorizing is significant for the present argument because the problem of Nonhuman sonic agency cannot be approached only through description. A catalogue of songs, instruments, ritual occasions, or vocal techniques would remain insufficient if it did not ask how these sounds are understood to work within a given cosmology. The central question is not simply what is sung, but what singing makes possible: communication with spirits, recognition of Nonhuman presence, transformation of the performer, healing, protection, memory, or the temporary crossing of ontological boundaries. This approach also clarifies the relation between theory and fieldwork. Theory does not stand outside ethnography as an abstract framework imposed upon ritual practice. Rather, it emerges from the sustained encounter between the researcher, the sonic event, the performer, the listener, and the interpretive world in which the

performance takes place. In this sense, ethnomusicological theory must remain accountable to the ways in which communities themselves define musical action, musical efficacy, and musical agency.

The materials on Lowland South American indigenous music make this methodological requirement particularly clear. Brabec de Mori and Seeger argue that ethnographically grounded music studies should generate theories capable of moving beyond a single local case. They explicitly connect the regional analysis of Lowland South American musical practices with broader theoretical questions concerning auditory perception, humanness, Nonhuman agency, and the role of sound in constructing and reconstructing worlds^{vii}. Such a position allows an article on indigenous ritual music to move between detailed ethnographic cases and a wider ethnomusicological argument. Cosmology, in this context, is not merely a background of beliefs surrounding musical practice. It is part of the very structure through which sound becomes meaningful. A ritual song may be heard as a melodic event, but within its own cultural frame it may also be a sign of ancestral presence, a technique of healing, a mode of communication with animals or plants, or an intervention in relations between visible and invisible beings. The ethnomusicologist must therefore analyze sound both as musical form and as cosmological action.

The methodological difficulty lies in the fact that not all dimensions of ritual sound are equally accessible to the external observer. A recording may capture pitch, rhythm, vocal timbre, repetition, or texture, but it cannot automatically capture the ritual attribution of agency. In the Shipibo example discussed by Brabec de Mori and Seeger, the recording confirms that a human specialist is singing, yet the ritual explanation identifies a plant-person as the singing agent. The discrepancy between recorded sound and ritual meaning is not an analytical obstacle; it is precisely the point at which ethnomusicological interpretation must become more rigorous.

Hill and Castrillon's concept of a sound-centered approach deepens this methodological orientation. They argue that indigenous Amazonian peoples use musical sounds, natural sounds, and musicalized speech to manage relations with various categories of others. Their critique of visually centered models of alterity is also a methodological critique: ethnomusicologists must pay attention not only to what is seen, narrated, or represented, but to what is heard, recorded, repeated, and collaboratively interpreted. The concept of *mike-positionality*^{viii} further shows that the researcher's act of recording is not neutral, since recording participates in the construction of sound-centered narratives. The fieldworker's position is therefore not external to the production of knowledge. Listening, recording, transcribing, translating, and interpreting are part of the analytical process, but they are also part of the relationship between researcher and interlocutor. In ritual contexts involving Nonhuman agency, this relationship becomes even more complex, because the researcher must account for several levels at once: the acoustic event, the performer's explanation, the community's cosmological interpretation, and the limits of the recording technology itself. The question of technology is especially relevant. Earlier limitations of field recording influenced what scholars were able to document and, consequently, what they imagined indigenous music to be. Brabec de Mori and Seeger note that earlier research often recorded and analyzed single pieces of music or single stories because equipment, batteries, tape, and visual documentation were limited. Later work with indigenous research associates and improved technologies revealed larger narrative and musical structures that had previously been misunderstood as isolated fragments. This methodological history demonstrates that theory is shaped not only by concepts, but also by the material conditions of fieldwork.

A rigorous ethnomusicology of ritual sound must therefore combine several forms of attention: analytical listening to musical detail, ethnographic attention to indigenous explanation, methodological awareness of the researcher's position, and theoretical openness toward cosmological categories that differ from those of the observer. The aim is not to verify spirits, plants, or ancestral beings according to external physical criteria, but to understand how such beings become musically active within ritual worlds. This position avoids two reductions. The first reduction would be to treat indigenous ritual statements as mere metaphor, thereby

ignoring the seriousness of their cosmological logic. The second would be to abandon analysis in favor of uncritical acceptance. The ethnomusicological task is more precise: to examine how sound, performance, voice, repetition, listening, and recording make Nonhuman agency socially and ritually intelligible. Within this framework, cosmology becomes a methodological requirement. Without cosmology, musical analysis risks reducing ritual sound to structure. Without musical analysis, cosmology risks being treated as verbal belief detached from performance. Ethnomusicology holds these dimensions together by asking how sound works, who or what is understood to act through it, and how ritual listening organizes relations between human and Nonhuman domains.

The movement from field observation to theoretical formulation is therefore central to the article's argument. Ritual sound is not only data to be described, nor only evidence for pre-existing anthropological theories. It is a medium through which theoretical categories themselves must be reconsidered. Music, voice, agency, personhood, listening, and transformation acquire meanings that cannot be fully explained within a strictly human-centered model of musical practice. The study of indigenous ritual sound thus repositions ethnomusicology as a discipline capable of generating theory from the encounter between acoustic form, field experience, and cosmological knowledge.

Chapter 2. Listening to the Inaudible in Indigenous Musical Cosmologies

The notion of listening to the inaudible acquires its strongest theoretical relevance in ritual contexts where sound is not limited to what can be acoustically perceived or technically recorded. In the ethnographic materials concerning Lowland South American indigenous music, listening involves the recognition of agencies that may be embodied by animals, plants, spirits, the dead, or ancestral beings. Musical performance becomes a privileged medium through which relations between humans and Nonhumans are established, negotiated, and transformed. A sound-centered approach allows ritual music to be understood not merely as an expression of belief, but as an active cosmological practice. Songs, chants, instrumental sounds, and musicalized speech participate in the production of relational spaces where different categories of beings may become audible, intelligible, and ritually effective. In this sense, the inaudible is not the absence of sound, but a form of presence that requires culturally trained listening and ritual competence.

2.1. Music, Humans, and Nonhumans in Lowland South America

Research on Lowland South American indigenous music has increasingly demonstrated that music cannot be separated from the cosmological relations through which humans define themselves in relation to other beings. The human and the Nonhuman are not fixed categories corresponding simply to biological species. In many of the ritual contexts discussed in the attached sources, animals, plants, spirits, and the dead may become persons, agents, interlocutors, or sources of musical knowledge. Music operates precisely in the space where these categories become unstable, negotiable, and ritually productive.

Brabec de Mori and Seeger emphasize that music performance plays a central role in ritual situations involving Nonhuman agency. The importance of their argument lies in the fact that music is not treated as an ornament of ritual action, but as one of its principal mechanisms. In Lowland South American cosmologies, communication between humans and Nonhuman s is not secondary to ritual life; it is one of its constitutive dimensions. Sound becomes a means of addressing beings who are not ordinarily visible, of receiving knowledge from them, of confronting danger, or of translating their presence into forms accessible to the human community. The Shipibo example discussed by Brabec de Mori and Seeger clarifies the analytical problem. A healing ritual may be acoustically described as the performance of a human ritual specialist. Yet, within the ritual frame, the song may be attributed to a plant-person or to another Nonhuman being. The field

researcher and the recording device can identify the human voice, but the indigenous explanation locates the agency of the performance elsewhere. This difference between acoustic source and ritual source is central for understanding why Nonhuman musical agency cannot be dismissed as a decorative metaphor. The song is produced through a human body, but it may be understood as the manifestation of another being.

The distinction between listening to the obviously audible and listening to the apparently inaudible is therefore decisive. The obviously audible refers to sounds that can be perceived and recorded in ordinary acoustic terms. The apparently inaudible refers to entities or persons—often described as spirits and embodied by plants, birds, animals, or other beings—whose presence is recognized through ritual modes of listening. Lowland South American ritual music often privileges this second mode. The point is not merely to imitate the acoustic form of an animal sound, but to relate to the animal's person-entity as a source of song, power, or transformation. This framework alters the meaning of musical performance. Singing is not only an act of expression; it may become an act of transformation. When the song of a bird, plant, or spirit is performed, the human singer may enter into a temporary relation with that being. The performance does not simply represent alterity from a distance. It creates a sonic condition in which alterity can be approached, inhabited, contested, or controlled. Music therefore becomes a form of interspecific and interspiritual mediation.

The problem of humanness is equally important. Brabec de Mori and Seeger show that, in Lowland South American contexts, the category "human" does not necessarily correspond to the biological category *Homo sapiens*. Animals, plants, spirits, objects, rivers, lakes, or mountains may be included in categories of personhood, while some human outsiders may be placed at the margins of full humanness. The frontier between human and Nonhuman becomes undefined, shifting, and permeable. Ritual music is one of the principal means through which such porous boundaries are explored. This porosity does not imply conceptual confusion. On the contrary, it reveals a different ontological logic. If certain beings are understood as persons, then communication with them requires specialized forms of address. Music provides such forms. Songs, chants, instrumental sounds, and vocal transformations allow ritual specialists to move between domains that ordinary speech may not fully connect. The musical act becomes a technique for crossing, translating, or stabilizing relations between different kinds of persons.

Hill and Castrillon develop a closely related argument by proposing a sound-centered approach to Amazonian alterity. They criticize theoretical models that privilege visual perspectivism while neglecting the central role of music, sound, and musicalized speech. Indigenous Amazonian peoples, in their account, use musical sounds, natural sounds, and musicalized speech to manage relations with multiple categories of others: mythic ancestor-spirits, spirits of the dead, animal and plant spirits, neighboring indigenous peoples, affines, and non-indigenous peoples. Their approach is especially valuable because it shifts attention from seeing the other to sounding and hearing the other. Visual models of alterity often emphasize perspective, gaze, and transformation through the imagined viewpoint of another being. A sound-centered model emphasizes resonance, voice, repetition, circulation, and shared listening. The other is not only seen differently; the other is heard, voiced, and musically engaged. This makes sound a relational medium rather than a simple sensory channel. The link between music and speech is also essential. Hill and Castrillon underline the close interrelation between language and music throughout Lowland South America and adjacent regions. Discourses may be sung, chanted, played on instruments, or voiced by Nonhuman others such as birds, frogs, fish, forest animals, trees, or bodies of water. The boundary between music and speech becomes fuzzy and permeable, and it is precisely within these ambiguous zones that shamanic powers of transformation and movement across regions of the cosmos become possible. This perspective allows ritual sound to be understood as a form of narrative action. Musicalized speech does not simply decorate myth; it can mediate between primordial animal-humans, living human communities, the dead, and other categories of beings. Music becomes a way of connecting mythic time and historical time, human society and Nonhuman presence,

ordinary communication and ritual transformation. The audible performance is therefore only one layer of a larger sonic process.

The Desana and Baniwa materials from the Upper Rio Negro region confirm the importance of these relations. Barros and Wright show that mythology, music, sacred instruments, collective identity, and the transmission of knowledge are fundamentally connected. Certain repertoires are linked to the “Transformation Houses,” understood as portals to the spiritual dimension of origins. Music is not merely associated with cosmology; it participates in the formation of identity, the memory of origins, and the ritual continuity of the group^{ix}. The sacred flute complex is significant in this regard. Instruments are not merely sound-producing objects. They are connected to ancestral presence, initiation, territory, secrecy, danger, and the reproduction of life. The sound of the sacred instruments can organize relations between the living community, the ancestors, and the spiritual order of the world. Such materials reinforce the broader argument that Lowland South American indigenous music must be studied as a cosmological practice rather than as an isolated aesthetic form.

Music, humans, and Nonhumans therefore form a relational field. The human performer is indispensable, but not always sufficient as an explanation of musical agency. The song may be transmitted by a spirit, received in dream, directed toward an animal, performed through a transformed healer, or connected to ancestral instruments. The community hears not only the sound, but also the relation that the sound activates. Ritual listening becomes the means by which these relations are recognized and made meaningful. The ethnomusicological implication is clear: music in Lowland South American indigenous ritual practice must be analyzed beyond the level of acoustic production alone. Sound participates in the making of persons, the crossing of boundaries, the transmission of cosmological memory, and the negotiation of relations with other beings. The inaudible, in this context, is not outside music. It is one of the conditions that makes ritual music meaningful.

2.2. Spirits, Plants, and Animals as Musical Agents

In the ritual contexts examined here, spirits, plants, and animals do not function merely as symbolic figures represented by human performers. They may become musical agents: sources of songs, addressees of ritual sound, or presences whose agency is translated into human performance. This idea requires a distinction between the acoustic production of sound and the ritual attribution of voice. The sound may be produced by a human singer, but the song may be understood as coming from another being.

Brabec de Mori and Seeger describe this problem through the example of the Shipibo ritual specialist. From an external point of view, the singer is a human performer; from the ritual point of view, a plant-person is singing. The significance of this example lies in the displacement of agency. The human voice becomes the medium through which a Nonhuman presence is made audible, recognizable, and ritually effective. The same theoretical issue appears in broader discussions of Lowland South American indigenous music. Much ritual music is described as being received from, or directed to, animals, plants, spirits, or the dead. Within such cosmologies, Nonhuman beings may possess personhood, intentionality, and musical competence. Songs are therefore not only human creations addressed to a passive environment; they are part of an active field of exchange between different kinds of persons. This approach also changes the meaning of imitation. When a singer performs a bird’s song, the act does not necessarily consist of reproducing the bird’s acoustic call. Brabec de Mori and Seeger note that the singer may instead refer to the bird’s person-entity as the source of the song. Singing becomes a way of entering into relation with that being, rather than merely copying its sound. The musical act does not imitate the animal from outside; it may temporarily bring the performer into the animal’s field of agency. The role of plants is equally important. The singing plant-person does not need to be verified as a physical singer in order to be ethnomusicologically meaningful. What matters is that the plant

manifests itself as a musical source, motif, or agent within the ritual system. In this sense, Nonhuman agency becomes audible through musical transmission, variation, sequentiality, and performance. The spirit, plant, or animal is not simply explained by the song; it acts through the song.

Hill and Castrillon reinforce this interpretation through a sound-centered approach to Amazonian alterity. Their analysis emphasizes that musical sounds, natural sounds, and musicalized speech are used to manage relations with multiple categories of others, including ancestor-spirits, spirits of the dead, animal and plant spirits, neighboring groups, and non-indigenous peoples. Such relations unfold through sound because music is able to create a shared space in which different beings can be recognized without being reduced to one another. This perspective is especially useful because it avoids reducing ritual music to representation. A song addressed to a spirit is not only about that spirit. A musical phrase connected to a plant is not only a sign of botanical knowledge. A voice associated with an animal is not only a human metaphor. These sounds participate in the construction of relations. They may summon, stabilize, transform, protect, heal, or delimit contact with other beings.

The Huni Kuin image-songs analyzed by Els Lagrou provide another strong example. In the context of *nixipae* rituals, knowledge involves seeing through the eyes of the Other and singing through the voice of other beings. The process of other-becoming is not presented as complete transformation, but as a controlled ritual movement between self and other. Song produces and undoes temporary transformations, allowing the participant to approach Nonhuman agency without being permanently absorbed by it. Spirits, plants, and animals therefore appear as musical agents in three interrelated senses. They may be the source from which songs are received; they may be the addressees toward whom songs are directed; and they may be the beings whose capacities are temporarily embodied through performance. The singer is not displaced from the analysis, but is redefined as a mediator. Human performance becomes the place where Nonhuman agency is heard, negotiated, and transformed into ritual action. The ethnomusicological importance of this model lies in its capacity to treat indigenous explanations as part of the musical phenomenon itself. If a community understands a song as the voice of a plant-person, the analytical task is not to translate that claim into metaphor too quickly. Rather, it is necessary to ask how that attribution shapes the performance, the listening situation, the ritual function, and the relation between the human singer and the Nonhuman presence. Musical agency in these contexts is therefore distributed. It belongs neither entirely to the human performer nor entirely to the Nonhuman being. It emerges through the ritual relation between body, voice, cosmological knowledge, and listening. The song becomes the site where different forms of personhood meet without becoming identical. This is why “listening to the inaudible” requires more than acoustic attention: it requires attention to the cultural conditions under which spirits, plants, and animals become audible as agents.

2.3. Audible Sound and the Apparently Inaudible

The distinction between audible sound and the apparently inaudible is central to the argument of this article. In ritual practice, sound is not limited to what can be captured by the ear, described as an acoustic object, or preserved through recording technology. A sound may be physically audible, yet its ritual meaning may depend on a form of listening that recognizes presences, agencies, and relations beyond ordinary perception. The question is therefore not only what is heard, but how it is heard and by whom it is interpreted as meaningful.

Brabec de Mori and Seeger formulate this distinction with particular clarity. They differentiate between listening to the “obviously audible” and listening to the “apparently inaudible.” The first mode refers to sounds that can be perceived and recorded, such as animal calls or environmental sounds. The second mode refers to entities or persons embodied by plants, birds, animals, or spirits, whose presence may be ritually perceived even when it is not reducible to a recordable acoustic phenomenon^x. This distinction avoids a simplistic opposition between real sound and imagined sound. The apparently inaudible is not presented as an absence

of sonic meaning. Rather, it designates a level of ritual perception in which sound functions as a medium of access to Nonhuman agency. A bird's call, a plant-person's song, or a spirit's musical intervention may not be understood only through its acoustic form. Its importance lies in the relation that the sound activates between the human performer, the listening community, and the Nonhuman source.

The Kaluli case, as interpreted by Feld and later invoked by Brabec de Mori and Seeger, offers a useful point of comparison. The Kaluli listen to birds whose sounds can also be registered by an external field researcher. In that sense, the bird's sound belongs to the domain of the audibly perceptible. Yet Feld's broader work on Bosavi listening shows that sound is never merely environmental background^{xi}. The rainforest soundscape becomes a field of knowledge, memory, place, and expressive practice. Listening is a cultural discipline through which people know the world sonically.

Lowland South American ritual contexts place greater emphasis on the second mode of listening. When a singer performs the song of a bird or plant, the performance may not imitate the acoustic contour of the bird's call or plant-associated sound. Instead, it may refer to the person-entity of that being as the source of the song. The performer does not only reproduce sound; he or she enters into a relation with the being whose agency is recognized through musical performance. This difference is essential for understanding the concept of listening to the inaudible. The inaudible is not equivalent to silence, nor to subjective fantasy. It names a ritual condition in which sound points toward agencies that ordinary listening cannot fully grasp. Such listening depends on cosmological knowledge, ritual competence, and the ability to identify the relation between a sonic event and the being that acts through it. The same acoustic event may therefore have different levels of meaning for the ethnographer, the ritual specialist, and the initiated listener.

Recording technology clarifies the problem but does not solve it. A microphone may capture the human voice, instrumental timbre, environmental sound, or melodic sequence, but it cannot automatically capture the attribution of agency. In the Shipibo example discussed earlier, the tape recorder confirms the voice of the human specialist, while the ritual explanation identifies the singing presence as a plant-person. This gap between acoustic documentation and ritual interpretation marks one of the most important methodological challenges for ethnomusicology.

Hill and Castrillon also stress the difference between an academically trained point of listening and a communally constructed indigenous ear. Their sound-centered approach shows that ritual transformations involving humans and Nonhuman others unfold through musical sounds, natural sounds, and musicalized speech. Listening is therefore not neutral. It is shaped by position, history, training, technology, and participation in a shared sonic world^{xii}. The apparently inaudible also transforms the relation between sound and agency. If a spirit, plant, or animal is understood to act through a song, then the sound becomes more than a sign. It becomes an event of mediation. The voice heard in ritual may be human in its acoustic production, but Nonhuman in its attributed origin, force, or intention. This layered structure of performance makes ritual music especially difficult to reduce to either acoustics or symbolism. The analytical distinction may be formulated as follows: audible sound refers to what is heard as acoustic form; the apparently inaudible refers to what is ritually recognized as agency within or through that form. Ethnomusicological interpretation must hold these two dimensions together. Without attention to audible structure, ritual sound loses its musical specificity. Without attention to the apparently inaudible, the same sound is stripped of its cosmological force. The notion of listening developed here therefore requires a double method. The researcher must listen closely to musical detail, but also to indigenous explanations of what sound does, who acts through it, and what relations it creates. Ritual sound is meaningful because it joins acoustic perception with cosmological recognition. "Listening to the inaudible" names precisely this intersection between heard sound and ritually acknowledged presence.

2.4. Song as Mediation between Worlds

Song occupies a privileged position in indigenous ritual practice because it allows relations to be established where ordinary speech may be insufficient. In the materials examined here, singing does not merely communicate an idea about spirits, animals, plants, ancestors, or invisible forces. It creates a relational space in which these beings may become present, recognizable, and ritually active. The song is therefore not only a musical form, but a technique of mediation. This mediating function is especially clear in Lowland South American contexts, where musicalized speech and instrumental sound operate between mythic, social, and cosmological domains. Hill and Castrillon argue that performing and listening to music mediate relations between human communities and a wide variety of “others,” including mythic animal-humans, spirit-beings, Nonhuman species, objects, affines, neighboring groups, and non-indigenous peoples. Music is thus not secondary to myth or ritual; it becomes one of the principal means through which relations between differentiated worlds are negotiated. The boundary between music and speech is particularly important. In many ritual contexts, the most effective forms of communication are neither ordinary speech nor abstract sound, but sung, chanted, semi-lexicalized, or instrumentalized forms of expression. These intermediate forms allow movement between the fully social world of human beings and the more ambiguous world of spirits, ancestors, animals, or primordial beings. Song functions precisely because it does not remain confined to a single communicative register. In this sense, song mediates not only between beings, but also between temporalities. It links mythic time with historical time, ancestral origin with contemporary ritual practice, and collective memory with present social action. The song does not simply recall a mythological past; it reactivates relations that remain significant for the community. Through performance, the ancestral or Nonhuman world becomes audible within the present.

The Desana and Baniwa materials offer a clear example of this process. Barros and Wright show that music, myth, identity, and ritual form an interconnected system in which musical experience and mythological perspective organize self-construction and social life. Sacred instruments and repertoires are connected to ancestral landscapes, origin narratives, ritual knowledge, and strategies of cultural continuity. Music becomes a means through which the community maintains relations with its origins and actualizes its identity in changing historical conditions^{xiii}. The sacred flute complex is especially relevant because it demonstrates how sound can mediate between the visible community and hidden ancestral power. The instruments are not merely objects used to produce sound; they are linked to secrecy, danger, territory, initiation, and reproduction. Their sounds participate in the organization of relations between human beings, ancestral beings, and the cosmological order. The ritual force of the instrument lies not only in its timbre, but in the network of relations that its sound activates. Song also mediates between body and transformation. In the Huni Kuin materials analyzed by Lagrou, image-songs guide experiences of other-becoming, allowing the participant to approach the perceptive and agentive capacities of other beings. The song does not merely describe a transformation; it traces, regulates, and partially undoes it. In this ritual logic, singing becomes a controlled technique for entering the space between self and other without losing the capacity to return^{xiv}. This mediating function gives song a double character. On the one hand, it opens access to Nonhuman or ancestral domains. On the other hand, it protects the human participant from uncontrolled absorption into those domains. The song calls, guides, warns, stabilizes, and redirects. It allows contact with powerful beings while maintaining a ritual structure capable of managing the risks of such contact. The notion of mediation also clarifies why ritual song cannot be reduced to representation. A song about an animal, spirit, or ancestor is not necessarily a symbolic depiction of that being. It may be a way of addressing it, approaching it, borrowing its perceptive capacities, or placing the singer temporarily within its field of agency. Song becomes effective because it creates relation rather than merely describing relation. Such mediation depends on listening as much as on performance. The community must know how to hear the song’s relational force: who is being addressed, whose voice is being invoked, what danger is being managed, what transformation is being produced, and what cosmological domain is being

opened. Without this trained listening, the song may remain an acoustic event; within the ritual system, it becomes a passage between worlds. The mediating role of song therefore brings together the main elements of the argument developed so far: human performance, Nonhuman agency, ritual listening, cosmological knowledge, and transformation. Song stands at the threshold between audible sound and hidden presence.

Chapter 3. Ritual Sound, Transformation, and Ethnomusicological

The transition from theoretical discussion to ethnographic analysis requires attention to the concrete ways in which ritual sound mediates relations between humans, Nonhumans, memory, identity, and transformation. The selected case studies show that music is not merely an expressive practice, but a medium through which birds, spirits, plants, ancestors, sacred instruments, and visionary beings become ritually significant. In these contexts, sound participates in the formation of knowledge, the regulation of transformation, and the construction of social and cosmological relations^{xv}. A unified analytical perspective also makes it possible to connect ethnographic material with methodological reflection. Kaluli poetics, Desana and Baniwa sacred repertoires, Huni Kuin image-songs, and Amazonian sound-centered narratives all demonstrate that ethnomusicology must examine not only what is performed, but also how sound is heard, recorded, interpreted, attributed, and transmitted^{xvi}.

3.1. Birds, Weeping, and the Poetics of Sound in Kaluli Expression

The Kaluli materials offer a particularly important comparative case for an article concerned with the relation between audible sound, Nonhuman presence, and ritualized listening. Steven Feld's *Sound and Sentiment* is explicitly organized around the interrelation of birds, weeping, poetics, and song in Kaluli expression. The structure of the work itself indicates that the Kaluli sonic world cannot be approached through a single musical category: the analysis moves from the mythic figure of "the boy who became a muni bird," to birds understood as voices in the forest, to weeping, poetic loss, song, and Kaluli aesthetics^{xvii}. The relevance of the Kaluli case lies in the way it connects sound, emotion, and Nonhuman voice. Birds are not treated simply as zoological entities or as environmental background. Their sounds become part of a wider cultural field in which voice, memory, loss, and expressive form are mutually implicated. The title "To You They Are Birds, to Me They Are Voices in the Forest" is especially suggestive for the argument developed here: the same acoustic phenomenon may be heard differently according to cultural knowledge, affective history, and local categories of listening. What appears to an external listener as bird sound may be understood within Kaluli life as a voice charged with social and emotional significance. This perspective gives the Kaluli example a precise place in the broader argument of „Listening to the Inaudible“. In Lowland South American materials, the apparently inaudible often concerns spirits, plant-persons, or Nonhuman agents whose presence is not directly reducible to a recordable sound. In Feld's Kaluli material, by contrast, the bird sound is audibly present, but its cultural meaning exceeds a merely acoustic description. The important point is not that the sound cannot be heard, but that it cannot be adequately understood without the Kaluli interpretive frame. Listening becomes a culturally trained way of recognizing voice, place, memory, and sentiment.

Feld's later reflection on *Sound and Sentiment* clarifies this analytical direction. He describes the work as an experimental ethnography of sound and as a study of sound as a cultural system. The empirical center of the research concerns expressive forms located between language and music, especially the intertwining of song and crying. Feld emphasizes the socio-acoustic complexity of sung vocalization, poetic text, cried accompaniment, and women's sung-texted weeping for Bosavi funerals. This makes the Kaluli case highly relevant for the study of ritual sound, because it shows how vocal expression may occupy the threshold between speech, song, crying, and social memory. Weeping, in this framework, is not simply an uncontrolled

emotional reaction. It becomes a culturally shaped vocal form, connected to gendered practice, poetic organization, and social relations of loss. The expressive force of Kaluli weeping derives from its position between bodily affect and cultural form. It is at once emotional, sonic, poetic, and social. The passage from weeping to song therefore cannot be reduced to aesthetic stylization; it is a process through which grief becomes communicable, socially recognized, and musically organized. The connection between birds and weeping deepens this interpretation. The mythic transformation of a boy into a muni bird indicates that voice may cross the boundary between human and Nonhuman forms. This does not mean that the Kaluli case should be assimilated without distinction to Amazonian models of spirit or plant agency. Its specificity lies elsewhere: the Nonhuman voice is linked to memory, absence, and expressive recognition. The bird is not merely an animal; it becomes part of a sonic poetics through which human loss is heard in the forest.

Feld's later discussion of acoustemology further strengthens the methodological value of the Kaluli case. He explains that his Bosavi research moved from an anthropology of sound toward acoustemology, a way of understanding how people know the world through sound. Bosavi listeners are described as knowing features of the rainforest world—time of day, season, weather history, and ecological presence—through overlapping, alternating, and interlocking sonic configurations. Sound is therefore not an accessory to knowledge; it is one of its primary conditions^{xviii}. This point is essential for the article's central concept. "Listening to the inaudible" does not always mean listening to what has no acoustic form. It may also mean listening beyond the surface of acoustic audibility. In the Kaluli case, bird voices, weeping, and song demonstrate how audible sound becomes saturated with social memory, ecological knowledge, and affective meaning. The invisible or absent presence is not necessarily a spirit hidden behind the sound; it may be the remembered person, the mythic transformation, the lost relation, or the emotional history activated through listening.

The Kaluli case also shows why sound-centered analysis must include the relation between human and Nonhuman environments. Feld stresses the interanimation of human and Nonhuman sounds in the rainforest setting and asks how one may tell a story about crying and singing that is equally a story about nature as cultural construction, ecology, and cosmology. This formulation is especially important because it prevents any strict division between social expression and environmental sound. The rainforest is not a neutral acoustic container; it is part of the expressive system. Within the architecture of the present article, the Kaluli material functions as a bridge between two analytical concerns. On the one hand, it supports the broader critique of a purely human-centered concept of musical meaning. On the other hand, it demonstrates that Nonhuman sound does not need to be interpreted only through spirit agency or possession. Birds, forest acoustics, weeping, song, and memory form a sonic field in which the human and the Nonhuman are related through affective listening and poetic transformation.

A concise synthesis may be formulated as follows:

Analytical element	Kaluli relevance	Function in the article
Bird voice	Bird sounds are culturally interpreted as voices in the forest.	Extends listening beyond acoustic identification.
Weeping	Grief becomes organized through vocal and poetic form.	Shows the transformation of emotion into sonic expression.
Song	Song connects voice, text, crying, and social memory.	Places music between language, affect, and ritualized listening.
Acoustemology	Sound becomes a way of knowing place, time, and environment.	Supports the idea of listening as cultural knowledge.

Table II. Kaluli Sound, Memory, and Nonhuman Voice

The Kaluli materials therefore broaden the article's argument by showing that Nonhuman sound may become meaningful through poetics, memory, and culturally trained listening. Bird voices are audible, yet their full significance is not contained in their acoustic form. Weeping is bodily, yet it becomes socially and musically structured. Song is humanly performed, yet it resonates with Nonhuman voice, mythic transformation, and the acoustic life of the rainforest. The Kaluli case demonstrates that the threshold between human and Nonhuman worlds can be crossed not only through shamanic mediation, but also through the affective and poetic organization of sound.

3.2. Sacred Instruments, Myth, and Collective Identity among the Desana and Baniwa

The Desana and Baniwa materials offer a particularly clear example of the way musical practice, sacred instruments, mythology, and collective identity form an integrated ritual system. In the Upper Rio Negro region, music is not presented as an autonomous artistic domain, but as a practice inseparable from origin narratives, clan memory, ceremonial knowledge, and the transmission of identity across generations. The connection between music and cosmology is therefore structural: sound participates in the organization of social life because it is bound to the spiritual and mythological foundations of the community^{xix}. Among the Desana Guahari Diputiro Porã, musical repertoires are connected to the *dabokuri* ritual, to male and female initiation, and to the broader ceremonial circulation of communities of kin and affines. Some repertoires are considered non-sacred and may be performed in public or non-ritual contexts, while others remain restricted because they imply initiation, specialized knowledge, or ritual preparation. This distinction is essential, since it shows that musical sound is not equally accessible to all contexts or listeners. The right to hear, perform, teach, or modify a repertoire depends on ritual competence and social position.

The *kapiwayá* male vocal repertoire and the *Miriá Porã* repertoire played by sacred flutes are especially significant. The *kapiwayá* repertoire is performed only on limited occasions because only the *bayá* and the elders know its melody, lyrics, and choreography. Its words, melodies, and choreography cannot be altered. The *Miriá Porã* songs, associated with sacred flutes, are not presented in ordinary public events because they imply the male initiation rite. Such restrictions indicate that musical knowledge is not simply preserved as repertory, but protected as a form of ritual authority. The connection with the "Transformation Houses" gives these repertoires a deeper cosmological meaning. The musical instruments, chants, adornments, and ceremonial forms are associated with places of origin that function as portals to the spiritual dimension of beginnings. Music therefore participates in the memory of creation. The performance of a repertoire does not merely recall the past; it activates a relation with ancestral and mythological sources that remain necessary for the reproduction of collective identity.

A concise distinction may be useful here:

Musical element	Ritual status	Cultural function
<i>Cariço</i> and <i>japurutú</i>	Non-sacred or publicly performable repertoires	Renewal, daily themes, social performance
<i>Kapiwayá</i>	Restricted male vocal repertoire	Preservation of sacred words, melodies, and choreography
<i>Miriá Porã</i>	Sacred flute repertoire	Male initiation and ritual transmission
Kuwai / Yurupary instruments	Sacred ancestral instruments	Identity, life-force, cosmological continuity

Table III. Desana and Baniwa Repertoires as Forms of Ritual Knowledge

The Baniwa case develops the same logic through the sacred musical instruments called Kuwai, or Yurupary in *lingua geral*. These instruments are described as the “body” of the First Ancestors, which means that they are not merely objects used in performance. Their sound carries ancestral presence and cosmological force. When they are played, the community does not simply hear musical timbre; it encounters an embodied form of ancestral identity^{xx}. The historical dimension of this material is equally important. Barros and Wright describe a period in which missionary colonization led to the decline or concealment of traditional dance-festivals, songs, sacred instruments, and shamanic practices. Later processes of cultural revitalization brought back traditional dance-houses, initiation rituals, and ceremonial spaces dedicated to knowledge and ancestral memory. Music thus becomes a medium of cultural regeneration. The recovery of songs and sacred instruments is also the recovery of a way of being in relation to the cosmos. This revitalization is not only symbolic. The sacred instruments and shamanism are directly connected to Hohodene and Baniwa ancestral identity, to the transmission of that identity across generations, and to the nature of the cosmos. The sacred flutes and trumpets are described as transmitting the vital life-force that circulates throughout the universe. Pajés and dance-leaders manage this life-force by initiating new generations, sustaining harmony, protecting the community, and supporting healing. In this sense, musical sound acts as a form of cosmological maintenance. The Desana and Baniwa materials also clarify why ritual sound cannot be reduced to performance in the narrow sense. Sound here is linked to secrecy, pedagogy, initiation, kinship, myth, territory, and collective survival. To know a repertoire means to be placed within a chain of transmission. To perform a sacred instrument means to participate in a cosmological relation. To hear the sound correctly means to recognize the ancestral force that the sound activates.

The idea of collaborative ethnomusicological research is also important. Barros and Wright emphasize that the research process itself was based on dialogues with chant specialists, long-term relations with shamans, interviews, recordings, filming, and cooperation among indigenous communities, research institutions, and NGOs. Such a method is especially relevant for the article’s broader argument because sacred musical knowledge cannot be separated from the people and institutions through which it is remembered, transmitted, and protected. The Desana and Baniwa case therefore strengthens the central thesis of „Listening to the Inaudible”. The sacred instrument is audible, but what it makes present cannot be exhausted by acoustic description. Its sound carries mythological origin, ancestral body, life-force, initiation, and collective identity. Listening becomes an act of recognizing the deeper relations activated by sound: relations between the living and the ancestors, between ritual specialists and apprentices, between community and cosmos, between audible performance and invisible continuity.

3.3. Huni Kuin Image-Songs and the Ritual Management of Other-Becoming

The Huni Kuin materials analyzed by Els Lagrou provide one of the most precise examples of the relation between song, vision, embodied perception, and Nonhuman agency. In the context of nixi pae ritual practice, songs do not merely accompany visionary experience. They organize, guide, interpret, and regulate the participant’s movement through a world in which human perception is opened toward other beings, other bodies, and other modes of agency. The song becomes a technique of orientation within a field of powerful images, voices, sensations, and transformations^{xxi}. Lagrou’s concept of image-songs is particularly relevant because it shows that sound and vision are not separate ritual domains. The songs reveal a process of embodied perception and synesthesia, in which bodily sensations are translated into vision, rhythm, song, and sound. To know, in this framework, means to see through the eyes of the Other and to sing through the voice of other beings. Knowledge is therefore not only conceptual or verbal; it is sensory, corporeal, relational, and transformative.

The process described by Lagrou as other-becoming does not imply a simple replacement of one identity by another. The experience is situated between self and other. The participant does not fully cease to be human, but enters a liminal condition in which the perceptive and agentive capacities of other beings may be temporarily approached. Song is essential because it produces and undoes these transformations. It allows the participant to move toward otherness while maintaining the possibility of return. This ritual logic gives Huni Kuin song a double function. On the one hand, it opens access to the agency of Nonhuman beings. On the other hand, it prevents the transformation from becoming uncontrolled. The participant may encounter the powers of animals, plants, or other beings, but the song offers a structured path through which such encounters can be interpreted and managed. Singing therefore acts both as a medium of contact and as a form of protection. The “songs to see” are especially important. Lagrou notes that the principal reason for taking *nixi pae* is “to see.” This seeing is not merely optical perception, but the revelation of hidden realities and Nonhuman agencies. The ritual makes visible the action of beings that may cause pain, illness, or danger. Plants and animals that have owners or doubles may act upon the human body and soul, and each has its proper song. Through song, the participant comes to see what these Nonhuman doubles are doing and how their agency affects the body^{xxii}. The relation between body and soul is not treated as a separation between material and immaterial domains. Substances, visions, bodily sensations, nausea, fear, and song are part of the same ritual field. When the agency of the brew becomes too strong, bodily reactions such as trembling or vomiting are interpreted within a broader logic of cleansing, control, and the expulsion of harmful agentive substances. Song intervenes in this process by giving form to the experience and by making possible the reorientation of perception.

Lagrou’s distinction between different kinds of songs also helps clarify the ritual management of danger. Some songs normalize the visionary experience; others send away harmful presences. If sound and image become too frightening, the decisive intervention is not merely physical relief, but the capacity to sing the right song. The correct song can alter the course of the visionary encounter, stabilize the participant, and counteract dangerous agencies. Music therefore becomes a practical technology of ritual perception. The “eye soul” and the “body soul” discussed by Lagrou further deepen this analysis. The eye soul is associated with perception, while the body soul is linked to vocalization, interpretation, and reorientation. Song appears as a means through which the body soul can guide the eye soul when it becomes endangered in the world of soul doubles. If the correct song is not performed, the person may be drawn into an uncontrolled transformation^{xxiii}. The ritual song traces paths for the lost or endangered perceptive soul, guiding it back through sound. The Huni Kuin case therefore gives concrete form to the article’s central concept of „listening to the inaudible”. The relevant agency is not necessarily perceived as ordinary sound. It may appear as vision, bodily sensation, fear, illness, or the pressure of Nonhuman doubles. Yet song makes this hidden agency manageable. It translates danger into a sonic path, organizes the relation between perception and body, and creates the possibility of returning from the threshold of other-becoming.

A concise analytical scheme may be useful here:

Analytical element	Ritual function	Relevance for the article
Image-song	Connects sound, vision, rhythm, and embodied perception.	Shows that ritual listening includes visual and bodily knowledge.
Other-becoming	Allows temporary movement between self and other.	Clarifies the controlled relation with Nonhuman agency.
Songs to see	Reveal hidden agencies acting upon body and soul.	Supports the idea of sound as access to the invisible.
Songs to normalize or send away	Regulate danger and restore orientation.	Shows song as protection and ritual control.

Table IV. Huni Kuin Image-Songs and Ritual Transformation

The Huni Kuin material also prevents an overly abstract understanding of Nonhuman agency. Spirits, animals, plants, and doubles are not merely ideas in a cosmological system. They are experienced through the body, through fear, through vision, through sickness, through ingestion, and through the need for sonic intervention. Song becomes the means by which this field of forces is made navigable. It does not simply describe otherness; it manages the participant's passage through otherness.

For the broader argument of the article, this case confirms that ritual sound must be understood as both expressive and operative. The song expresses a relation to Nonhuman beings, but it also acts within that relation. It guides perception, stabilizes the body, protects the participant, and mediates between human identity and Nonhuman agency. The Huni Kuin image-song stands at the intersection of sound, vision, body, and transformation, making it one of the strongest examples of how the inaudible becomes ritually knowable through music.

3.4. Sound-Centered Ethnomusicology, Recording, and the Interpretation of Alterity

The study of ritual sound requires more than the description of musical structures or the transcription of melodic and rhythmic materials. When sound mediates relations between humans, spirits, plants, animals, ancestors, and other beings, ethnomusicological analysis must also examine the conditions under which sound is heard, recorded, interpreted, translated, and attributed. The question is not only what the researcher hears, but also how the community hears, who is understood to act through the sound, and how recording technologies reshape the relation between performance and interpretation.

Hill and Castrillon's sound-centered approach is particularly important for this methodological problem. Their critique of visually centered models of alterity argues that indigenous Amazonian relations with others cannot be adequately understood if music, sound, musicalized speech, and listening are treated as secondary. Musical sounds and words create a shared sonic-verbal space in which otherness is acknowledged and social transformation can occur. Ethnomusicological interpretation therefore has to move from a model of observation toward a model of relational listening^{xxiv}. The concept of „mike-positionality” is especially useful in this context. Hill and Castrillon use it to describe the position of the sound recordist during processes of inscription and during the broader construction of sound-centered narratives. The microphone is not a neutral device that simply collects sonic data. It participates in the relation between researcher, performer, community, and later listeners. Recording becomes part of the ethnographic event because it fixes, circulates, and recontextualizes sounds that may later be heard by indigenous interlocutors, other communities, researchers, archives, or descendants of the original performers. This perspective is crucial for the article's central argument. If a ritual song is understood as the voice of a plant-person, spirit, ancestor, bird, or other being, then recording captures only one dimension of the event. It may preserve the acoustic trace of the human voice, the instrumental timbre, the rhythm, or the melodic contour, but it does not automatically preserve the ritual attribution of agency. The ethnomusicologist must therefore distinguish between recorded sound and culturally interpreted sound. The first belongs to the technical inscription of performance; the second belongs to the ritual and cosmological world in which the performance is meaningful.

A methodological distinction may be useful:

Methodological level	Analytical question	Relevance for ritual sound
----------------------	---------------------	----------------------------

LISTENING TO THE INAUDIBLE: MUSIC, SPIRITS, AND NONHUMAN BEINGS IN INDIGENOUS RITUAL PRACTICE

Acoustic documentation	What sound is recorded?	Captures voice, timbre, rhythm, melody, and sonic texture.
Indigenous listening	How is the sound heard within the community?	Reveals culturally specific modes of recognition and interpretation.
Attribution of agency	Who or what is understood to act through the sound?	Connects performance to spirits, plants, animals, ancestors, or sacred instruments.
Ethnomusicological interpretation	How can the researcher analyze the relation between sound, meaning, and agency?	Joins musical analysis with cosmology, fieldwork, and reflexive method.

Table V. Methodological Levels in the Interpretation of Ritual Sound

Translation and transcription also become complex in this framework. Hill and Castrillon argue that translation cannot be reduced to a mechanical transfer of meaning from one language or medium to another. Sacred and ritual discourses often involve sung, chanted, instrumental, or semi-lexicalized forms in which verbal and musical dimensions are inseparable. The ethnomusicologist must therefore attend not only to words, but also to vocal gesture, musical contour, repetition, timbre, performance setting, and the shared listening space in which meaning is produced^{xxv}. This methodological awareness is also compatible with Timothy Rice's broader model of ethnomusicological theorizing. Rice presents ethnomusicology as a discipline shaped by self-reflexive questions concerning what researchers do, how they do it, and how theoretical models arise from the relation between musical materials, field methods, field experience, meaning, identity, and interpretation. His formulation that music is historically constructed, socially maintained, and individually created and experienced offers a useful framework for connecting ritual sound with community, history, agency, and personal experience^{xxvi}.

Applied to the present article, this means that ritual sound must be interpreted on several levels at once. A song is a musical form, but also a social act. A sacred instrument is an acoustic object, but also an ancestral presence. A recorded performance is a document, but also the result of a particular encounter between researcher, technology, performer, and community. A voice may be produced by a human body, but ritually attributed to a spirit, plant, animal, or ancestor. The analytical task is to hold these levels together without reducing one to another. This also prevents two methodological errors. The first would be to treat indigenous accounts of Nonhuman agency as mere metaphor, thereby ignoring the cosmological seriousness of ritual listening. The second would be to neglect musical structure altogether and speak only in terms of belief or symbolism. Sound-centered ethnomusicology requires a balanced method: close listening to musical details, attention to indigenous explanations, awareness of recording technologies, and theoretical openness toward forms of agency that exceed a strictly human-centered model. The phrase „listening to the inaudible” thus

becomes both an ethnographic and methodological problem. For indigenous ritual specialists and communities, it may describe the capacity to recognize hidden agencies through sound. For the ethnomusicologist, it names the need to listen beyond the recorded surface of performance and to ask how sound becomes a medium of presence, memory, transformation, and relation. The inaudible is not outside the field of research; it is encountered precisely where acoustic documentation meets cosmological interpretation.

The strongest methodological implication is that ethnomusicology should not study only songs as objects, but also listening as a practice. The act of listening includes the researcher's ear, the community's ear, the microphone, the archive, the translation, the later playback, and the ritual knowledge that gives sound its agency. Ritual sound becomes intelligible only when these elements are analyzed together. Such an approach allows ethnomusicology to account for the complexity of indigenous sonic worlds without reducing them either to acoustic form or to abstract cosmology.

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis developed throughout the article shows that indigenous ritual music cannot be adequately understood if musical agency is restricted to the human performer alone. John Blacking's concept of music as humanly organized sound remains a necessary theoretical foundation, because it places music within social life, cultural experience, and embodied human practice. Yet the ethnographic materials examined here require a broader model: musical sound may be humanly performed while being ritually attributed to spirits, plants, animals, ancestors, sacred instruments, or other Nonhuman beings.

The phrase listening to the inaudible designates this expanded field of ritual perception. The inaudible is not simply the absence of sound, but the presence of agencies that ordinary acoustic listening may not fully recognize. In indigenous ritual contexts, songs, chants, instrumental sounds, and musicalized speech may establish relations with plant-persons, animal spirits, mythic ancestors, the dead, and other categories of beings. Sound becomes a medium through which the boundaries between human and Nonhuman worlds are crossed, negotiated, and ritually stabilized.

The case studies confirm that ritual sound operates simultaneously as knowledge, mediation, memory, and transformation. Kaluli bird voices and weeping show how audible environmental sound may become charged with memory, loss, and poetic meaning. Desana and Baniwa sacred instruments demonstrate how sound may carry ancestral presence, initiation, life-force, and collective identity. Huni Kuin image-songs reveal the role of song in guiding vision, regulating other-becoming, and managing the risks of contact with Nonhuman agency.

The methodological consequences are equally important. Ethnomusicology must analyze not only musical structures, but also indigenous modes of listening, cultural attributions of voice, ritual explanations of agency, and the role of recording technologies in shaping sound-centered narratives. The microphone may preserve the acoustic trace of a performance, but it does not automatically preserve the cosmological meaning of that performance.

Listening to the inaudible becomes, in this sense, both a ritual practice and a scholarly method. It names the capacity to attend to what is sounded, but also to what is made present through sound: spirits, plants, animals, ancestors, bodies, memories, dangers, transformations, and relations. Music stands at the threshold between human action and Nonhuman agency, between acoustic perception and cosmological recognition, between the recorded event and the ritual world that gives it meaning.

LISTENING TO THE INAUDIBLE: MUSIC, SPIRITS, AND NONHUMAN BEINGS IN INDIGENOUS RITUAL PRACTICE

REFERENCES

- [i] John Blacking, *How Musical Is Man?*, Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1973, pp. 3–4, 88–89.
- [ii] Bernd Brabec de Mori and Anthony Seeger, "Introduction: Considering Music, Humans, and Non-humans," *Ethnomusicology Forum*, vol. 22, no. 3, Routledge/Taylor & Francis, 2013, pp. 269–271, 282.
- [iii] Jonathan D. Hill and Juan Castrillon, "Narrativity in Sound: A Sound-Centered Approach to Indigenous Amazonian Ways of Managing Relations of Alterity," *El oído pensante*, vol. 5, no. 2, Centro Argentino de Información Científica y Tecnológica, 2017, pp. 1–3.
- [iv] Lílíam Barros and Robin M. Wright, "Music, Ritual and Cosmology of the Desana and Baniwa People of the Upper Rio Negro, Amazon, Brazil: A Collaborative Research," *El oído pensante*, vol. 3, no. 2, Centro Argentino de Información Científica y Tecnológica, 2015, pp. 1–4, 12.
- [v] Els Lagrou, "Anaconda-becoming: Huni Kuin Image-Songs, an Amerindian Relational Aesthetics," *Horizontes Antropológicos*, vol. 24, no. 51, Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, 2018, pp. 18–19, 29, 42.
- [vi] Timothy Rice, *Modeling Ethnomusicology*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2017, pp. 7–8, 1–2.
- [vii] Bernd Brabec de Mori and Anthony Seeger, "Introduction: Considering Music, Humans, and Non-humans," *Ethnomusicology Forum*, vol. 22, no. 3, Routledge/Taylor & Francis, 2013, pp. 270–272, 282.
- [viii] Jonathan D. Hill and Juan Castrillon, "Narrativity in Sound: A Sound-Centered Approach to Indigenous Amazonian Ways of Managing Relations of Alterity," *El oído pensante*, vol. 5, no. 2, Centro Argentino de Información Científica y Tecnológica, 2017, pp. 1–3.
- [ix] Lílíam Barros and Robin M. Wright, "Music, Ritual and Cosmology of the Desana and Baniwa People of the Upper Rio Negro, Amazon, Brazil: A Collaborative Research," *El oído pensante*, vol. 3, no. 2, Centro Argentino de Información Científica y Tecnológica, 2015, pp. 1–4, 17–19.
- [x] Bernd Brabec de Mori and Anthony Seeger, "Introduction: Considering Music, Humans, and Non-humans," *Ethnomusicology Forum*, vol. 22, no. 3, Routledge/Taylor & Francis, 2013, pp. 270–272.
- [xi] Steven Feld, *Sound and Sentiment: Birds, Weeping, Poetics, and Song in Kaluli Expression*, 3rd ed., Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2012, pp. 28–29.
- [xii] Jonathan D. Hill and Juan Castrillon, "Narrativity in Sound: A Sound-Centered Approach to Indigenous Amazonian Ways of Managing Relations of Alterity," *El oído pensante*, vol. 5, no. 2, Centro Argentino de Información Científica y Tecnológica, 2017, pp. 5–6, 26.
- [xiii] Lílíam Barros and Robin M. Wright, "Music, Ritual and Cosmology of the Desana and Baniwa People of the Upper Rio Negro, Amazon, Brazil: A Collaborative Research," *El oído pensante*, vol. 3, no. 2, Centro Argentino de Información Científica y Tecnológica, 2015, pp. 18–19.
- [xiv] Els Lagrou, "Anaconda-becoming: Huni Kuin Image-Songs, an Amerindian Relational Aesthetics," *Horizontes Antropológicos*, vol. 24, no. 51, Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, 2018, pp. 18–19, 43–44.
- [xv] Steven Feld, *Sound and Sentiment: Birds, Weeping, Poetics, and Song in Kaluli Expression*, 3rd ed., Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2012, pp. 20–44; Els Lagrou, "Anaconda-becoming: Huni Kuin Image-Songs, an Amerindian Relational Aesthetics," *Horizontes Antropológicos*, vol. 24, no. 51, Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, 2018, pp. 18–19.
- [xvi] Jonathan D. Hill and Juan Castrillon, "Narrativity in Sound: A Sound-Centered Approach to Indigenous Amazonian Ways of Managing Relations of Alterity," *El oído pensante*, vol. 5, no. 2, Centro Argentino de Información Científica y Tecnológica, 2017, pp. 1–3, 8–9.
- [xvii] Steven Feld, *Sound and Sentiment: Birds, Weeping, Poetics, and Song in Kaluli Expression*, 3rd ed., Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2012, pp. 1–10, 20–44, 86–95.
- [xviii] Idem, pp. 27–29.
- [xix] Lílíam Barros and Robin M. Wright, "Music, Ritual and Cosmology of the Desana and Baniwa People of the Upper Rio Negro, Amazon, Brazil: A Collaborative Research," *El oído pensante*, vol. 3, no. 2, Centro Argentino de Información Científica y Tecnológica, 2015, pp. 1–5.
- [xx] Idem, pp. 12–13.
- [xxi] Els Lagrou, "Anaconda-becoming: Huni Kuin Image-Songs, an Amerindian Relational Aesthetics," *Horizontes Antropológicos*, vol. 24, no. 51, Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, 2018, pp. 18–19.
- [xxii] Idem, pp. 29–30.
- [xxiii] Idem, pp. 41–42.
- [xxiv] Jonathan D. Hill and Juan Castrillon, "Narrativity in Sound: A Sound-Centered Approach to Indigenous Amazonian Ways of Managing Relations of Alterity," *El oído pensante*, vol. 5, no. 2, Centro Argentino de Información Científica y Tecnológica, 2017, pp. 1–6.
- [xxv] Idem, pp. 6–9.
- [xxvi] Timothy Rice, *Modeling Ethnomusicology*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2017, pp. 1–4, 7.