INTRODUCTION

THE EAR AND THE VOICE IN THE LETTERED CITY'S GEOPHYSICAL HISTORY

On January 5, 1884, Colombian philologist Rufino José Cuervo (Bogotá 1844–Paris 1911) wrote a letter from Paris to Miguel Antonio Caro (1845–1909), his fellow grammarian and president of Colombia from 1892 to 1898, who was then residing in Bogotá: "Do you know if somebody has thought about collecting [in Colombia] housemaid tales such as those collected by Grimm and Andersen?" (Cuervo 1978, 111). What was initially posed as a question soon became an affirmation. The apparent lack of documentation of a collected folk corpus has often led to the assertion that in the nineteenth century there were very few studies of folk expressions in Colombia. Gustavo Otero Muñoz, for example, wrote in 1928 in his book *La literatura colonial de Colombia seguida de un cancionerillo popular* [Colombian colonial literature followed by a small songbook]: "The Republic of Colombia is behind in the work that corresponds to it, as a civilized country, namely, that of contributing its fragment of truth regarding the common heritage of the species, formed by the science that Grimm, Max Muller, Bopp and so many other wise men have glorified, searching in the traditions of each regional folklore, the bond that brings into relation the different religions and languages of the peoples" (Otero Muñoz 1928, 241).

This idea of the lack of serious studies of local expressive cultures (including music) has persisted well into the present.[1] Whether through absence of documentation or through the use of inappropriate methodologies in the study of local expressive culture, this seeming lack has acquired a foundational character, the aura of a national truth that hauntingly returns during different historical moments to account for different aspects of Colombia's conflictive history.

The perception and reiteration of this void since the nineteenth century is even more surprising given the fact that Colombia was a key site of global botanical and geographic scientific expeditions in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as well as a country of internationally renowned philologists, particularly in the late nineteenth century. The Botanical Expedition of the Kingdom of New Granada began in 1783, lasted twenty-five years and was crucial in constructing the idea of New Granada as botanically exuberant and for creating the field of natural sciences in the country (Nieto Olarte 2000, 2006). The Geographical Commission's (*Comisión Corográfica*) primary work of description and mapping of the provinces of the country, which took place between 1850 and 1859, produced a wealth of maps and ethnographic documentation, and was important for the foundation of such disciplines as geography, engineering, and ethnology (Sánchez 1999). During the second half of the nineteenth century, Colombian philologists, poets, and writers from different regions of the country developed a corpus of written genres such as textual annotations on maps, customs sketches, enlightened travel writing, poetry, and novels imbued with local idioms, detailed philological analysis of local language usage, annotated reeditions of colonial indigenous grammars, histories of Colombian literature, among others, that included the depiction, theorization, or usage of local language and expressive practices. Moreover, philology became a highly politically charged discipline in the late nineteenth century, when a series of "grammarian presidents," philologists who came to presidential power and who were deeply concerned with the proper use of language, brought the full import of their knowledge into the national design of jurisprudence, education, and religious affairs.

But none of these dispersed disciplinary concerns with the local have historically counted as proper "folklore collections." If, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the sciences of nature and those of language and expressive culture were not seen as totally separate, but as part and parcel of the epistemological endeavor of building a corpus of knowledge about the nation at a historical moment when such an endeavor was an urgent political necessity, then it seems awkward that there was such a distance between the wealth of information generated by the botanical and cartographic expeditions, the abundance of philological and poetic texts, and the apparent void in documenting local aural expressions. Even more so if we consider that due to its varied geography, and following an Ibero-American lineage of identifying the Andes with paradisiacal excess, during this period Colombia was perceived as a country of botanical abundance and unlimited economic potential that could produce any type of natural commodity found on the globe (Cañizares-Esguerra 2006; Nieto Olarte 2000). Rather than a problem to be solved, I see this disjuncture as a key site for understanding how the idea of a valid aural expressive genre was constituted depending on the listening practices or "audile techniques" (Sterne 2003) through which it was constituted. What is revealed by such a disjuncture is that many of the acoustic dimensions of the colonial and early postcolonial archive are not presented to us as discrete, transcribed works or as forms neatly packaged into identifiable genres (Tomlinson 2007). They are instead dispersed into different types of written inscriptions that transduce different audile techniques into specific legible sound objects of expressive culture. This book is about ontologies and epistemologies of the acoustic, particularly the voice, produced by and enmeshed in different audile techniques, in which sound appears simultaneously as a force that constitutes the world and a medium for constructing knowledge about it. Voice was ambiguously located between "nature" and "culture," and thus was central for shaping what those terms meant in this historical period. I explore how listening practices were crucial in determining how the voice was understood and what counted as a proper form of voicing and cultural expression for different peoples in Colombia at a historical moment when the colonial itself had to be reformulated as a postcolonial politics of an independent nation.

An acoustically tuned exploration of the written archive reveals that the documentation of local expressive aural practices was entangled in what was then understood as natural and civil histories as well as by emergent creative practices in the fine arts. It is thus difficult in this period to find separate folklore collections neatly packaged and understood as such. But there was abundant discussion on the sounds of Colombia's many different peoples, nonhuman animals, and entities of nature–rivers, volcanoes, the wind. The full import of different practices of rationalization and artistic creativity was used in making sense of such listenings, simultaneously producing knowledge about local soundings and a "reorganization" (Rancière *dixit*) of how the senses were perceived, felt, understood, and used. In this book I seek to explore how different practices of listening led to the inscription in writing of local aural expressive genres as well as to an enlightened cultivation of hearing that were crucial to the development of concepts about "local culture" and "local nature" that often persist to our days. In the process what emerged was not only a dispersed corpus of ideas of how to think about local creative cultures and about local nature but also a "refunctionalization of the ear" (Steege 2012) and its relation to the voice.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, different moments and processes of aural perception and sonic recontextualization have always been accompanied by an intense debate about the meaning of sonic localism and temporality and its place in history. In his book *The Lettered City*, Angel Rama saw the written word, concentrated in the cities, the sites of political administration, as constitutive of a highly unequal public sphere that took shape in the hands of lettered elites that to him resembled a "priestly caste . . . that enjoyed dominion over the subsidiary absolutes of the universe of signs" ([1984] 1996, 16). But in this book I argue that Latin America was simultaneously and just as importantly constituted by audile techniques cultivated by both the lettered elite and peoples historically considered "nonliterate," giving rise to the types of questions and relations that the worlding of sound enables. Lettered elites constantly encountered sounding and listening practices that differed from their own: vocalities that seemed out of tune, difficult to classify as either language or song, improper Spanish accents that did not conform to a supposed norm, sounds of indigenous languages for which there were no signs in the Spanish alphabet, an abundance of noises or "voices" coming from natural entities that seemed to overwhelm the senses. In the process of inscribing such listenings into writing, the lettered men (and it was mostly men) of the period simultaneously described them, judged them, and theorized them. And while some were keen to rein in what seemed like a disordered acoustic abundance into a descriptive and normative standard that allowed for the proper identification of an ordered "nature" and "culture," others sought to enhance the relevance of such acoustic multiplicity by reveling, often in contradictory ways, on the significance of such sensorial exuberance.

In the midst of such processes of recording sound in writing, what emerges is not only the possibility of exploring how the lettered elites conceived of sounds. By reading the archive against the grain, it is possible to speculate how indigenous peoples, Afrodescendants, and mestizos also conceived of such vocalizations. Thus, rather than seeing the nineteenth century (or the colony) solely as the site of constitution of Western theories about the other, I prefer to understand it as a contested site of different acoustic practices, a layering of contrastive listenings and their cosmological underpinnings. The different practices through which such listenings have been historically inscribed, in bodies, on stone, on skin, and on paper, through rituals and through writing, are, to be sure, marked by highly unequal power in the constitution of the public sphere. But that does not mean that their significance disappeared or was completely erased. Rather they had to be accounted for, even if to deny their singularity while acknowledging them as resources for the distinction between popular and fine arts, between an improper pronunciation and a good one, or, frequently, to unsettle the taken for granted tenets of the disciplining of sound. Thus, in this book, the aural is not the other of the lettered city but rather a formation and a force that seeps through its crevices demanding the attention of its listeners, sometimes questioning and sometimes upholding, explicitly or implicitly, its very foundations.

One of the elements that emerged as I explored the archive was that ideas about sound, especially the voice, were central to the very definition of life. In this book I explore how persistent underlying understandings of the acoustic today emerged or were consolidated during the early postcolonial period, especially regarding the way "local sounds" of different entities and of peoples were understood as "voices." I am particularly interested in what the endurance of some of the often unacknowledged or taken for granted ideas regarding local expressive cultures, especially in a "globalized" world and one increasingly marked by the condition of displacement, is supposed to invoke, provoke, and incarnate for different peoples and the different formulations of what they are supposed to acoustically embody and be. Understandings of the significance of local linguistic accents, of the relations between body and voice, of the seemingly contradictory politics of education of the ear and the voice of "the people" amidst the simultaneous recognition of a diversity of listening and vocal practices were crystallized or (re)formulated for the purposes of the nation in the nineteenth century, even when deeply embedded in colonial history's lengthy lineages of the global/local constitution of knowledge and of ideas of personhood. The voice, especially, was understood by Creoles and European colonizers as a fundamental means to distinguish between the human and nonhuman in order to "direct the human animal in its becoming man" (Ludueña 2010, 13). Thus, the relation between the ear, the voice, and the understanding of life emerged as a particularly intriguing dimension of the politics of what a "local" expressive culture was supposed to be or become and who could incarnate it. The question of how to distinguish between human and nonhuman sounds became particularly important in a colonial context in which the question of such a boundary troubled, in different ways and for different reasons, the many peoples that originally populated, willingly came, or were forcefully brought to the Americas. And in the formulation of such a question the spectral figuration of the voice and of the acoustic as an invisible yet highly perceptible and profoundly felt (im)materiality, which hovers between live entities and the world, became particularly important.

This book is a contribution to the intellectual history of listening, a growing field in the past two decades. The current scholarly trend of searching for traces of the aural in the literary (Picker 2003; Lienhard [1990] 2011), for the sound of the voice in different historical contexts and vocal genres (Abbate 1991; B. Smith 1999; Connor 2000), the attention to different "new" technologies that existed prior to the invention of the phonograph (Gitelman 1999, 2006), the trace left by different genres of inscription on the work of music making (Szendy 2008; Johnson 1995), the critical work on the philosophical grammar of vocality and writing (Derrida [1974] 1997; Cavarero 2005; Cournut 1974), the study of discourses and practices of the aural in fields such as physiology and acoustics that surrounded the invention of sound machines (Sterne 2003; Brady 1999; Steege 2012), and the search for how specific historical periods prior to the emergence of mechanical sound reproduction sounded (Smith 2004; Rath 2003; Corbin 1998), attests to the recent scholarly recognition of these historical practices of legible aural inscription. Such work is considered part of a general auditory turn in critical scholarship, one which explores "the increasing significance of the acoustic as simultaneously a site for analysis, a medium for aesthetic engagement, and a model for theorization" (Drobnick 2004, 10).

This recent "auditory turn" in critical theory is giving rise today to the increased formalization of sound studies (Sterne 2012a). Questions about how such a turn is historically traced, what fields of sound studies are privileged in tracing such a genealogy, and who the pioneering figures are differ from one scholar to another (Sterne 2012a; Feld 1996; Szendy 2009). But another perhaps more central issue emerges here. As historical work on audition intensifies, the question is raised as to whether the deaf ears of history were those of an epochal moment when the gaze was privileged above all other senses in the West (Jay 1993), or whether listening practices were always there, hidden by the fact that the traces left by audibility are enmeshed with different practices, a listening to be found in the nooks and crannies of history, dispersed across several fields and sites of knowledge and sound inscription. For Peter Szendy, the "critical force of listening" has often been "restrained and denied" (2008, 34). Listening also appears as hidden behind other auras. For example, studies of "orality" tend to concentrate on theorizations of its literary dimensions, described as the other of writing rather than according to its own specificities, and its acoustic dimensions are often subsumed under other linguistic elements (Feld et al. [2004] 2006). Also, for Veit Erlmann, colonial and postcolonial studies have tended to privilege the gaze, and the history of sound studies is primarily on historical works in Euro-American contexts (2004). But such privileging of the gaze is increasingly questioned by rethinking in the history of the senses.[2] Moreover, a long Latin American lineage of interrelating oral and written texts has been central to rethinking the history of indigenous texts in the formation of the literary (Lienhard [1990] 2011; Sa 2004). This is part of a broader history of the gaze, print, the "oral" and the lettered word as central to the insertion of the region into the global construction of modern capitalism (Franco 2002; González Echeverría 1990; Pratt 1992; Rama [1984] 1996; Ramos [1989] 2003). This book builds on such work but inverts the emphasis on the relation between the *written text* and the *mouth* (implied by the idea of the oral) by exploring how the uses of the *ear* in relation to the *voice* imbued the *technology of writing* with the traces and excesses of the acoustic.

My own work on nineteenth-century practices of listening in the midst of the transformation of colonial New Granada[3] to national independence from Spain, seeks to contribute to the historical scholarship on the relationship between listening and the voice as part of the history of the relation between the colonial and the modern. Before the invention of sound machines, the inscription of sound took place through what Lisa Gitelman has called "legible representations of aural experience" (1999, 15). This involved not only musical notation but also words about sound and aural perception, and recognizing the different historical ways in which technologies of the legible made and still make sound circulation possible. Since the period I address is before the invention of sound reproduction machines, I necessarily work with the inscription of sounds into writing. By inscription, following Lisa Gitelman (1999, 2006), I mean the act of recording a listening into a particular technology of dissemination and transmission (in this case writing). But the inscription of sounds can also occur on the body, in different kinds of objects such as stones, waterfalls, or other entities of nature or of urban life, which are understood by different peoples as containing or indexing the sound archive (Feld 1996, 2012; Seeger 1987; Hill and Chaumeil 2011).

In this book, practices of listening and aural perceptions, descriptions, and knowledges appear dispersed across several sites of inscription: travel writing (chapter 1), novels, poems, and literary histories (chapter 2), songbooks (chapter 2), grammars (chapter 3), ethnographies and political writings on language (chapters 3 and 4), orthographies and practices of music notation (chapter 4). Listening is not a practice that is contained and readily available for the historian in one document but instead is enmeshed across multiple textualities, often mentioned in passing, and subsumed under other apparent purposes such as the literary, the grammatical, the poetic, the ritual, the disciplinary, or the ethnographic. If sound appears as particularly disseminated across different modes of inscription and textualities it is because, located between the worldly sound source from which it emanates and the ear that apprehends it, the sonorous manifests a particular form of spectrality in its acoustics.

Such a spectrality of sound also shows up in other ways. For many of the lettered men of the nineteenth century, the relation between writing as a format of inscription and listening appears as highly problematic. Angel Rama identified the power of the written word as the "autonomy of the order of signs" in Latin America, "its capacity to structure vast designs based on its own premises" ([1984] 1996, 60), a particular order of things done with written words central to the structure of governmentality in the region. And yet, the inscription of the acoustic seems to render that power as highly ambiguous. In Latin America and the Caribbean practices of "narrative transculturation" systematically seep into the written word to the point that part of the history of the region's literary aesthetics is narrated almost as a history of the practices of incorporation of the sonorous aspects of language (rendered as "popular culture") into the written realm (Rama [1984] 2007). On the one hand, writing is indeed what inscribes a proper form of listening and of vocality into the law and thus epistemologies on how the local should sound, emerge from the pen. As I explore in this book, the use of writing as a technology of inscription and dissemination determines the history of the rise of folkloristics and the politics of language and popular song in the official canon. On the other, writing just as frequently appears merely as an instrument or medium in the service of acoustic memory (Cournut 1974). As such, it is often a fallible technology, a highly limited format that renders ambiguous the relation between the voice and writing and the powers ascribed to each (Cavarero 2005; Derrida [1974] 1997). A format "names a set of rules according to which a technology can operate" (Sterne 2012, 7), and the limitations found in writing reveal the disjunctures such rules provoke. Alphabetic graphemes do not conform to linguistic sounds either of indigenous or European languages (chapters 2 and 3), staff notation is not technologically suitable for the typographic technologies of nineteenth-century Colombia (chapter 4), and the description of different types of voices through writing is at best an approximation to how they sound (chapters 1, 2, and 3). But this is not only a problem of the formats of writing. What the limits of the format make evident is that the acoustic recognition of different practices of vocalization or sounds of natural entities associated with the idea of the voice exceeds their very inscription. Through the problems presented by technological limitations, what emerges is that the ontology of the relationship between the ear and the voice exceeds its containment in a particular medium. Listening appears as the nomadic sense par excellence and the voice as highly flexible, an instrument that can be manipulated to position the relation between the body and the world in multiple ways (Weidman 2006). The politics of regimentation of the voice are also multiple and often show us how the body and the voice do not necessarily coincide (Connor 2000; Weidman 2006). To the contrary, voices have the potential to disembody themselves into objects as in ventriloquism (Connor 2000), to travel between human and nonhuman entities as when animals teach humans songs (Seeger 1987), to incarnate other worldly beings in a body of this world as in rites of "possession" (Matory 2005), or are presumed to represent an autonomous or unique individual, as in the predominant Western philosophical political tradition (Weidman 2011). Hearing voices thus frequently invokes the need to ontologically address implied questions about the cosmologies (Schmidt 2000) or the ear (Steege 2012) and the definition of life they bring forth.

The relation between the voice and the ear then implies a *zoé*, a particular notion of life that involves addressing different conceptions of the human and the boundaries between the human and nonhuman. In the colonial context of the Americas, where peoples from different places came together, such a definition of life through the voice was certainly a contested political issue. For exploring such an issue, I use the term *zoopolitics* following Fabián Ludueña (2010) in his deconstruction of the division between *bíos* and *zoé* as present in the work of Foucault and Agamben, a term he takes from Derrida. Ludueña questions the neat division between *bíos* as "something like a qualified life, and thus the more proper subject of politics while *zoé* represents, to say it in some way, a natural life originally excluded from the world of the city" (Ludueña 2010, 28).[4] The definition of "the political community of humans" (Ludueña 2010, 13) implies the definition of life to determine the boundary between the human and nonhuman. Nature is not that upon which culture builds, but rather both terms, nature and culture, are mutually constituted through the politics of life. One of the central aspects explored in each of the chapters of this book is how a zoopolitics of the voice was a political means, in this historical moment of transformation from the colony to the postcolony, to redefine the relationship between the colonial and the modern.

The Aural, the Colonial, the Modern

Colonialism in Latin America and the Caribbean has generated a plurality of responses and discourses throughout its long history: "it could be argued that, at all levels, from colonial times to the present, intellectual action has been developed in an attempt to confront the traumatic effects of colonialism" (Moraña, Dussel, and Jáuregui 2008, 12). And yet, the region's rich tradition in critical readings of its own colonial history has either been largely ignored by the postcolonial debate beyond the Ibero-American world or provincialized by this very discourse. Part of the difficulty of seeing the layered critical colonial Latin American and Caribbean history for scholars working outside of the region is plain ignorance of this long debate, since the recognition of Latin American intellectual critical theory continues to be primarily tied to Spanish and Portuguese, and history departments in the Anglo-American world, and is seldom taught beyond this context, except as "local" theory on courses about Latin America in the humanities and social sciences. Also, the multiple temporal displacements of the Latin American debate as well as the diversity of positions in proposing decolonial politics throughout this long history, makes it difficult for scholars foreign to the region's debates to recognize this long legacy on critical thinking on the colonial.

The history of the American conquest and genocide as well as the history of slavery in the region have been deeply entangled with the rise of a global, capitalist modernity. This was a major change at a global scale that articulated the rise of modernity with the globalization of colonialism to the rise of capitalism (Quijano 2008). The complex ways in which global economic relations were articulated between and in different parts of the globe after the sixteenth century is giving rise to a changing critical transatlantic history that is redrawing understandings of capitalism (Tutino 2011). For Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz such a history needed to be critically addressed through the interrelationship between the economic, juridical, cultural, biological, and aesthetic spheres as constituted by the changing historical politics of global economic exchange ([1940] 1987). Latin American and Caribbean colonial studies then are deeply embedded in the history of trying to account not only for the region's specific colonial history but for its imbrication in the global articulation of modernity.[5] This has broader implications even beyond the widely accepted postcolonial tenet that knowledges, economies, and histories are globally constituted in the traffic of peoples, ideas, and things between different parts of the world, mediated by unequal power relations (Chakrabarty 2000; Mignolo 2000).

As affirmed by Michel-Rolph Trouillot, one of the effects of the key role of the Caribbean region in the articulation of a global modernity was its erasure from broad anthropological significance because its overarching history was not one that could be easily construed through an isolationist nativism (1992). Something similar can be said about the contributions to the dialectic between colonial histories and decolonial thought. The region's centrality in the consolidation of modernity has often led to an erasure of its colonial history (Lomnitz 2005) and its significance for decolonial thought; an erasure that Trouillot (1995) poetically read as treading through silenced ruins that metaphorically reveal the incommensurabilities of the region's decolonial struggles in the mute speech rendered by a landscape marked by colonial architectural remnants. The deeply held tenet that Spanish colonialism and Anglo settler colonialism were highly different because one was more "rational" and the other more "irrational" has been increasingly questioned (Cañizares-Esguerra 2006a). This needs to be acknowledged as a significant aspect for rethinking the debate on colonial legacy and the formulation of indigenous studies in the North and the South. Also, the history of the colonial in Latin America and the Caribbean is a central element of the renewed significance given to the debate on the contested nature of the person and of nature. This topic has become particularly salient, partly as a response to the unprecedented devastation to the environment produced during the past 250 years or so. According to Dipesh Chakrabarty (2009), this implies a crucial redefinition of history by linking the political history of the person with the species history of the human with an urgency that it had never had before.

As both Claude Lévi-Strauss ([1955] 2012) and Eduardo Viveiros de Castro (2011) have written, the contested history of the definition of the human as a species and the political definition of the person has been a central topic of debate since early colonial times in Latin America, thus "demonstrating the necessity of taking back the 'archaeology of the human sciences' at least to the controversy of Valladolid (1550–1551), the famous debate between Las Casas and Sepúlveda about the nature of American indians" (Viveiros de Castro 2010, 28). In this book I explore the relation between the voice and the ear as a fragment of this broader history.

In chapter 1 I explore the way that vocalizations of boat rowers of the Magdalena River, or *bogas,* were heard by Creoles and Europeans and on how those same vocalizations were understood by Afrodescendants and indigenous groups in the midst of an intense process of biological mixture that characterized this region in the eighteenth century.[6] Let us recall that the global colonial archive is full of peoples who howl like animals (Tomlinson 2007) and the *bogas'* mode of vocalization was described by travelers again and again as a mode of howling comparable to the voices of different animals. Such howls were used to understand the boundary or relation between the human and the nonhuman by Western travelers in one way, and by the *bogas* and other riverine peoples from the Caribbean, in another. For Creoles and Europeans, sounding like animals was the sign of a lowly human condition, used for processes of racialization through a politics of representation. For others, such as the bogas or indigenous peoples in northern South America, the voice was not understood as that which represented their identity. Instead, the voice manifested or enabled the capacity to move between states of multiplicity or unity where a single person can envoice multiple beings and where collective singing, as in a feast, can manifest a unity in which the collective is understood as expressing the singular (Strathern 1988; Seeger 1987), where different living entities or musical instruments voice the breath of life (Hill and Chaumeil 2011) and where culture is understood "as an on-going act of creation" rather than "the distillation of a set of abstract ideals" (Guss 1989, 4).

In this chapter I also explore the work of Alexander von Humboldt in the Americas in the broader context of his role in the "Berlin Enlightenment" and the rise of an "enlightened vitalism" that challenged contemporary European mechanical understandings of natural history and aspects of the Cartesian mind-body division as definitive to the consolidation of a European Enlightenment (Reill 2005). These ideas on vitalist theories were developed among German and French scholars through intense and mostly unacknowledged exchanges with naturalists of the Americas, through writings and ideas about the region that circulated as part of the struggle between European nations over the appropriate interpretation of colonial history (Nieto Olarte 2007; Cañizares-Esguerra 2006).[7] Such an exchange was crucial for notions such as identifying a clear pitch as one of the central elements of defining a proper music in the history of musicology and comparative musicology, or the interrelationship between language and identity as a central aspect of musical nationalism as established by the Berlin Counter-Enlightenment (notably by Alexander's brother, Wilhelm), or how notions of climate as determinant factor of race, influenced what was understood as a valid music, language, and culture, in the production of racialized ideas about personhood. I question the formulation of musicology, comparative musicology (and comparative linguistics) as disciplines that were forged solely in Germany (Potter 1998), and posit them rather as disciplines that were forged through the colonial exchange of ideas and data (Bloechl 2008), that took different forms in different places, and to which the formations of knowledge that happened in and were taken from Latin America and the Caribbean were central.

That some of the major ideas about "nature" and "culture" emerged or were reconsidered through nineteenth-century explorations of South America and the Caribbean is no accident of history. The simultaneous emergence of postcolonial concerns amidst Creole elites and subalterns who were redefining their relationship with each other and their former colonizers, and the legacy of a colonial history characterized by continued genocide and massive movements of peoples, plants, and animals after a long geophysical history of relative isolation, made it an exceptional laboratory for unsettling understandings of the world recasting the transatlantic debate on the geophilosophical (Viveiros de Castro 2011a). The place of the senses in defining the relation between the human and nonhuman is part of this long geophilosophical history.

Vision, Sound, the Colonial, the Modern

The history of the rise of the modern since the sixteenth century has been associated with the emergence of vision as the privileged sense for perception and for ideas about the subject and its relation to knowledge and the world in the West.[8] Colombian philosopher Santiago Castro-Gómez sees such ocularcentrism as crucial to the rise of "epistemic coloniality" and calls this the "hubris of the zero point" (*la hybris del punto cero*) (2004). This is the idea that "European Enlightened science presents itself as a universal discourse, independent of its spatial conditioning . . . in an imaginary according to which an observer of the social world can be placed on a neutral platform of observation [the hubris of the zero point] that, in turn, cannot be observed from any place" (2004, 18).[9] For Castro-Gómez such an emphasis on the gaze is crucial to the relation between colonialism as power and coloniality as knowledge because it gives an external observer the power to universalize its categories of knowledge and posit its own point of view as a despatialized omniscience. In Castro-Gómez's formulation, the often recognized and criticized "ocularcentrism" of Western epistemologies is not simply an accentuated tendency in Western conceptions of knowledge, as has repeatedly been cited (Jay 1993; Connor 2004; Smith 2004) but a critical element in the constitution of the colonial modern itself (Castro-Gómez 2004).

A corollary of this ocularcentric history of the moderns has been the idea that vision and sound imply opposite modes of relation to the world, what Jonathan Sterne calls "the audiovisual litany" (Sterne 2003, 15). Its main components are:

> Hearing is spherical, vision is directional; hearing immerses its subject, vision offers a perspective; sound comes to us, but vision travels to its object; hearing is concerned with interiors, vision is concerned with surfaces; hearing involves physical contact with the outside world, vi-

> sion requires distance from it; hearing places us inside an event, seeing gives us a perspective on the event; hearing tends toward subjectivity, vision tends toward objectivity; hearing brings us into the living world, sight moves us toward atrophy and death; hearing is about affect, vision is about intellect; hearing is a primarily temporal sense, vision is a primarily spatial sense; hearing is a sense that immerses us in the world, vision is a sense that removes us from it. (Sterne 2003, 15)

Sterne calls it a litany because of its "theological overtones" (2003, 15) and part of such a political theology of hearing has been constituted through the idea of orality as a mode of communication opposed to writing (Sterne 2011). The identification of orality and tradition as autonomous spheres of knowledge within the epistemic domain of language has historically been a major technique for the construction of modernity and of the social inequalities within it (Bauman and Briggs 2003; Rama [1984] 1996; Ramos [1989] 2003). An aesthetic technique and disciplinary domain (orality) that contrasted with lettered elites' use of spoken and written language, and the constitution of a particular temporality (tradition as the complementary and constitutive other of modernity) became a modern paradigm for the identification of alterity within modernity itself. The creation of the field of "orality" generated a theory and methodology for lettered elites to generate a notion of alterity as constitutive of the modern. Such a field functions as a mechanism through which the subaltern is simultaneously named as having a voice, yet such a voice is subordinated by the very same principles through which it is epistemically identified as other (Martín-Barbero [1987] 2001; Bauman and Briggs 2003; Ramos [1989] 2003). This generates a complex network between culture and politics in which the value of "the people" is recognized as a political figure yet denied its political singularity, and the "other's" culture is recognized as a culture of alterity yet subordinated to the principles of high culture (Martín-Barbero [1987] 2001). Moreover since in the audiovisual complex of modernity, sound appears as the interior, immersive, and affective other of vision's prominent exteriorization, in modern formations of power such acousticity often appears as "hidden" behind the visual. In the relation between the "political theology" of orality (Sterne 2011) and the spectrality of the acoustic, the moderns generated a mechanism of power associated with the production of their own notion of alterity. Part of what is explored in this book is how such a relation between alterity, orality, and sound was constituted through the relation between the colonial and the modern in nineteenth-century Colombia. As such this is a critique of theories of the decolonial that seek to constitute "the other" by appealing to the very same mechanisms of constitution of alterity that the moderns generated.

In chapter 2 I explore how the idea of popular song in nineteenth-century Colombia was constituted as part of literary knowledge in the historical process of constituting "orality" as tradition and through different politics of writing about song. I do so by contrasting three modes in which "popular poetry," as it was called in the period, made its appearance in literature. First I look at what is understood by popular poetry and the role it was given in what is considered the first history of literature in Latin America and the Caribbean, José María Vergara y Vergara's *Historia de la literatura en Nueva Granada desde la conquista hasta la independencia (1538–1820)* (History of Literature in New Granada from Conquest to Independence, 1538–1820) first published in Bogotá in 1867. Vergara y Vergara (1831–1872) was a founding member of the Colombian Academy of Letters and a key figure of El Mosaico, an important intellectual group centered in Bogotá that functioned between 1858 and 1872 and that sought, among other things, to recognize local customs and expressions through their study and publication (Von der Walde 2007). In his literary history he gave a central role to "popular poetry" tracing its lineage to the Spanish conquest, differentiating song types according to different racial ascriptions, and positing the relation between identity, popular song, geographical regions, and climate as crucial to the nation. Vergara y Vergara was a central figure in developing the ideas that led to the transformation of blood purity as a central element of racial differentiation in the colonial period, to popular song as an element of cultural/racial differentiation in the national period. Through his work we can see the constitution of the relation between the notion of a person as having an identity and culture as a racialized category. This happens through detailed classification of the uses of the voice into distinct popular song types, "character" types, and styles. Vergara y Vergara's work in that sense is paradigmatic of the type of thinking that gave rise to the political theology of orality.

Candelario Obeso (1849–1884) and Jorge Isaacs (1837–1895) were the two Colombian intellectuals who compiled songbooks in the nineteenth century. Obeso, an Afrodescendant poet from the Caribbean town of Mompox, had a poetry inflected by detailed attention to the transcription of the acoustic dimensions of Caribbean speech, to the point that often the words in his poems are difficult to decipher at first reading. His nonstandard orthography appears as a technique of transcription that pays special attention to the acoustic in a poetry that heavily critiques the lettered city and that highlights the limits of creolization. Rather than reduce the relation between poetics and Caribbean cultural particularities to a problem of identity, Obeso highlights the incommensurability between the politics of acoustic inscription and his own audile techniques, acutely attuned to sonorous and ontological inflections that did not match the imperatives of the lettered city's progressive standardization. His work is emblematic of a process of inscription that challenged the ideas of the lettered city and that heavily auralized the format of alphabetic writing.

Isaacs, of Jewish descent and from the Andean-Pacific region of El Cauca, is one of the most cited authors in twentieth-century Colombian folkloristics due to his musically imbued fictional work, *María*. In chapter 2 I analyze his early ethnographically inflected fictional use of popular song practices as positioned between his early rise to fame as a recognized author by intellectuals in Bogotá and other parts of Latin America and his silenced heritage as a Catholic convert of Jewish descent. His early work is problematically positioned between the silencing of his own heritage and the recognition of Afrodescendant auralities, generating a complex relation between recognition and negation (Avelar 2004) that in his later work evolves into an outright confrontation with the conservative lettered politics of late nineteenth-century elites in Colombia. As we see, each of these intellectual figures is differently positioned by history and by political choice to the relation between the acoustic and its inscription, and as such they refunctionalize the ear into literary history in different ways. What one sees is that not all lettered elites had the same historical relationship to the ear as that implied by the audiovisual history of the moderns. Rather, what emerges is a more diverse and contested history of the senses in the relation between listening, vision, orality, and the politics of inscription of sound than implied by the notion of the lettered city.

One of the main questions generated by the critique of modernity in the history of the senses has been if, after all, such a history has been overwhelmingly ocularcentric or if it has been understood as such because of privileging specific practices of modernization that have made it seem so.[10] And yet, one of the most baffling issues about the "audiovisual litany" and its complex relation to the political theology of orality and to alterity is its capacity to return as an obvious construction despite repeated historical deconstructions. What Sterne calls "the political theology" of the audiovisual litany and of orality is what here I am calling the "spectral politics" (Ludueña 2010) of modern aurality—this capacity to present itself as "an other" when it is in fact "the same" as a recurrent history of the oral/aural. Even when we change the terms of reference: folklore for intangible heritage, orality for voice, racialized bodies for knowledge of the body, monotonous music for savvy rhythms, and so forth, frequently, without suspecting it, what we are doing is reproducing the same sensorial/expressive scheme that we are critiquing.

In the case of trying to rethink the relation between the colonial and the modern in Latin America and the Caribbean, we see that throughout the twentieth century, the region is often presented as having a different modernity, one that highlights the oral/aural bodily knowledge as a particular knowledge of the subaltern opposed to the ocularcentrism of the elite.[11] Such “fonocentrism” (Ramos 2010, 30) tends to take two forms: a celebration of the acoustic that limits the expression of sonic difference to the body and the voice, and a difficulty of recognizing a dense history of the sonorous and audiovisual as a field that has generated multiple modes of action, thought, and critical theorization, except when it is posited as a contrasting othering. Thus, in the name of recognizing the knowledge of “the other” such “fonocentrism” ends up reproducing an unexpected Cartesian dichotomy of the body and the mind, divided between subalterns and elites. In the name of recognizing the other, it ends up historically using the same method the moderns created to incorporate alterity into its guise, and in the name of decolonizing, it actually recolonizes. One of the main means of accomplishing this spectral alterity of the modern is through the immunization of the voice through specific vocal technologies that entangle different ideas of the people.

Chapter 4 is about the use of eloquence, etymology, and orthography as pedagogies of the voice aimed at producing an idea of orality and of music that created a notion of personhood valid for the nation-state. Following Fabián Ludueña, I call such vocal techniques used in the service of distinguishing the human from the nonhuman in the voice, anthropotechnologies, that is, “the techniques through which the communities of the human species and the individuals who compose them act upon their own animal nature with the purpose of guiding, expanding, modifying or domesticating the biological substrate with the intention of producing that which, first philosophy, and later the biological and human sciences, tend to denominate as ‘man’” (Ludueña 2010, 11).

In Hispanic America and the Spanish Caribbean the political problem generated by linguistic diversity in the midst of homogenizing the nation was not only that of establishing Spanish as a proper language for both the nation-state and for Christianity (Ramos [1989] 2003; Lomnitz 2001; Rodríguez-García 2010) but also that of generating a proper mode of *voicing* it and dealing with its many pronunciations and varied folklore in an area that was no longer politically unified by the colonial dominance of the Iberian peninsula.

One of the philosophical problems of the voice in the West since Aristotle has been how it manifests the animal dimensions of the human, thus demanding a politics of differentiation of the human and nonhuman elements of the voice in the constitution of the political history of the person. In chapter 4 I explore how eloquence was used as a means to correct the fallibility of the ear and guarantee a proper relation between voicing, pronunciation, and orthography in order to produce a desired political idea of the person. Eloquence, wrote Miguel Antonio Caro, "is the art of producing sounds, words and clauses with precision and propriety, with the adequate modulation and expression, when we speak or read. Voice is the instrument of elocution and language is the essential form in which it is exercised" ([1881] 1980, 446). He modeled many of his theories on eloquence on Venezuelan philologist Andrés Bello (1781–1865), who understood the grammar of a language as "the art of *speaking* it correctly, that is, according to good use, exemplified by educated people" (emphasis mine, Bello edited by Cuervo 1905, 1). Eloquence involved then a grammaticalization of the voice in order to create the distinction between a proper and an improper human, a way of "directing the human animal in its becoming man" (Ludueña 2010, 13). Such theories were also crucial in generating the idea of culture as something that needs to be taught to the people as well as a notion of "a people" for the political processes of republicanism. Through such training the voice was understood also as manifesting an enlightened sensorial disposition of the ear that sought to curtail the fallibility of its affective dimensions.

Rufino José Cuervo (1844–1911), a Colombian philologist and colleague of Caro who wrote a large part of his work in Paris, became one of the most important etymologists of Latin America through his work on the history of words for the creation of his *Diccionario de construcción y régimen de la lengua castellana* (Dictionary of construction and regimentation of the Castilian language). For him as for Andrés Bello working in Chile, language was "a living body" (*un cuerpo viviente*) (Bello 1905, viii) and, like a living body, it was characterized by different "life epochs" (Cuervo [1914] 1987, 23). Etymological techniques emerged as the means to control language's tendency, as a "living body," toward diversification across time, by selectively determining the correct origin of a word in order to authorize its proper use in the present. The dangers of language change through inappropriate mixtures were often metaphorically expressed as akin to the dangers of promiscuous sexuality reflected in inadequate race mixtures. The most important archaisms were present in popular lore. But the history of words had to be selectively researched in order to find the most appropriate heritage in considering the value of such popular spoken and sung forms. By controlling the heritage of words and popular expressions through the proper selection of their genealogy and origin, etymology became a technique for a eugenesis of the tongue, attached to a project of national sovereignty.

As a science that combined a politics of descent with one of archaism, etymology turned time into the primary link between language, different elements of popular expressive verbal culture (later to be called folklore) and literature. Through etymology the popular was given significance as a "politics of the prior." In the governance of the prior "the sociological figure of the indigenous (first or prior) person is necessary to produce the modern Western form of nation-state sovereignty even as it continually undermines this same form" (Povinelli 2011, 15). In Latin America and the Caribbean, with the history of biological mixture, the prior had to be selectively determined. It involved not only addressing the place of indigenous languages in the nation but also the politics of highlighting Hispanic heritage while neglecting others in the description of the popular. Thus while "the people" provided the proper archaic etymological word model, they had to be trained as "a people" into linguistic propriety through eloquence. If eloquence turned the multiple into one form of speech (and one people), etymology provided the means to arrive at the definition of what or who that one should be through a careful process of vocal selection. Theories of cultural patrimony emerged through the patriarchal etymological control of language diversity by rewriting the history of the legacy of Spanish language, by producing differential theories of time for the popular and the erudite, and by developing an idea of cultural heritage that mapped a eugenesis of the body onto a eugenesis of the tongue and of folklore.

The third anthropotechnology explored in the fourth chapter is orthography, especially in its use as music notation. Composer and poet Diego Fallón (1834–1904) developed an orthographic musical notation as appropriate to the technological conditions of Colombian typography. According to Fallón, unlike the literary, which was mediated by the newspaper as a medium and the chronicle as a genre, music did not have the same means of dissemination. In his *Nuevo sistema de escritura musical* (New system of musical notation) (1869) and *Arte de leer, escribir y dictar música, Sistema Alfabético* (Art of reading, writing, and dictating music, Alphabetic System) (1885), he developed a system of musical notation based on alphabetic writing. His books show the extent to which alphabetic writing was acoustically understood as a mediation between sound and writing in this period in Colombia. He translated every single aspect of musical sound into orthographic notation in order to propose an idea of the musical work, proper for the moral edification of the citizen who was to be taught through his system. Such a system involved not only notation but a ventriloquization of musical pieces into syllabic form because prior to playing them, the student would first learn to voice the syllables that were the result of the orthographic transcription of music. Contrary to the development in Europe where the emergence of the work concept in music implied its emancipation from language (Goehr 1992), here the emergence of the work concept implied recasting the conservative relationship between music and language as a mediatic, modern one. If the literary was what gave distinction through correct speech, it was music, "the most powerful element of sociability" (González Lineros [1877] 1885, 5), an art understood as able to awaken "sweet, generous and compassionate affects in the human heart," (5) that would be the standard bearer for ethical training in the nineteenth century.

Through the relationship between theory and the political power of grammarian presidents who were invested in them, these three anthropotechnologies generated an "immunization" of the voice in the name of the formation of the political community of "the people" and in the name of an aesthetics of a proper mode of the voice. An "immunitary paradigm" is one that protects or inoculates the person through the use of the very same materials from which it wants to protect them but in some attenuated form (Esposito [1998] 2009). Protection against something through the use of the elements that cause the threat is a basic mimetic principle in sorcery and magic (Napier 2003; Taussig 1993). But in the history of Western zoopolitics of the modern, such a principle of protection becomes also one of alienation through a politics of purification that seeks to recognize something while denying the multiplicity and singularity of its constitution. Roberto Esposito associates such a paradigm specifically with the constitution of Western modernity and the notion of community. Even though for him language politics are central to the creation of an immunitary biopolitics in the name of community, he never associates that to the idea of orality.[12] In chapter 4 I explore how the aforementioned anthropotechnologies of the voice produce a politics of immunization that generates the notion of orality that became central to the political theology of the state. Orality in this book is not the opposite of writing nor a complementary "other" of aurality, as implied in the pairing of the two terms through a backslash (orality/aurality). Rather it is a historical mode of audibility that emerges in divesting the voice of unwanted features while pretending to be speaking about it. But this is not the only form of voicing that one finds in the nineteenth-century archive. The question that emerges for a decolonial history of the voice is not only how to identify the constitution of an alterity of the acoustic as part of the political theology of the state but also the presence of different modes of relating alterity and the voice that do not fit such a paradigm.

Comparativism, Transduction, and Acoustic Assemblages

As Jonathan Sterne has said, “at its core, the phenomenon of sound and the history of sound rest at the in-between point of culture and nature” (2003, 10). As we know, the main method of labor in the humanities throughout the late twentieth century has been that of “denaturalizing” what has been culturally constituted (Avelar 2013). But in “denaturalizing” the cultural constructions through which the knowledge of the “other” has been subordinated in order to recognize and reveal an “other” knowledge we often leave intact the underlying relation between nature and culture that such a knowledge implies. Instead of denaturalizing we often reculturalize by proposing new modes of representation. But not all cultures and not all peoples in different historical moments of Western history consider “nature” as the given and “culture” as the made. What is needed in altering our ways of relating the given, the made, and the sensorial is not just unsettling the history of representations but approaching the underlying relation between nature (as the given) and culture (as the made) implicit in the distinction between music and sound. That means, on the one hand, “discarding the transnational constructions about sound and the ear as a basis for the history of sound” (Sterne 2003, 10) as well as for the history of alterity in the relation between the colonial and the modern (Howes 2004; Taussig 1993). But on the other, it also means being attentive to how both nature and culture, ontologies and epistemologies, ideas about entities that listen and about entities that produce sounds are intertwined in theories about the acoustic whether understood as music, language, narrative, sound, or otherwise. This involves specifically addressing how the sonic was simultaneously constituted as a dimension of knowledge, that is, as something that needs to be judged as representations (Maniglier 2010) and as a dimension of sentience, that is, as a phenomenon that involves “an internal variability” (Maniglier 2010, 25).

According to Jairo Moreno the “cognitive gestures” that address the discursive organization of musical objects in Western music theories, in different historical periods, “invoke a figure who hears, listens and understands, as well as a means to represent what that figure hears, listens and understands” as a major strategy for addressing “the question of what and how [music] theories know what they claim to know” (Moreno 2004, 1). For him, “the cognitive allocations that condition various constructions of hearing, listening, perceiving, and understanding music by and for various subjects” (1) are crucial to the construction of theoretical writing around music. At the turn of the nineteenth century he hears the emergence "of temporality as a new domain within which knowledge of music takes place. Within this new domain there is a turn toward the existential, as listening experience and interiority become empirical addresses of musical thought" (19).[13] For Moreno then, the act of construction of theory around a particular musical object invokes a listening subject that is differentially constituted in distinct periods of Western music history. This also implies different conceptions of the ear. As noted by Ben Steege with regard to the study of acoustics in the nineteenth century: "As in many discourses about acoustical and musical phenomena, we often do not know precisely whether the 'ear' we are describing is a physical, mechanical, organic, physiological, psychological, or cognitive sort of thing. Indeed, the multiplicity of the ear's *potential* qualities and functions gives the lie to any singular notion of 'the' ear" (2012, 50–51).

Thus entities that listen and entities that produce sounds are entangled in the relation between nature and culture and mutually produce each other—a theory of sound implies a listener, which in turn imagines a listener and an idea of reception of sound. In the relation between each of these entities—a listening subject, an object that produces a sound, and a supposed listener of that sound object—what is produced is an ontology of *relationships,* an idea of how to think the interaction between entities that produce/hear sounds. That is why frequently hearing is a method that gives us the keys for how to think different ontologies of the human and the nonhuman.[14] But, in the West this tends to be confused with thinking that sound (or music) is an eminent field of transparent affect and relationality. That is why in the West the expression "to have a voice," to "listen to one another," and more recently, to feel a "resonance" or "vibrations" between people are often expressions used to invoke the idea of participation, the recognition of the "other," and alternative forms of the collective. The point is not to negate that the ear produces an ontology of the relation between the person and the world, but rather not to confuse that with our own notion of relationality. What this implies is the need to explore the richness of a multiplicity of variables among what different peoples consider the given and what they consider the made that come together in the acoustic.

This multiplicity of variables of relation between the given and the made is generated through sound/listening in what I am calling acoustic assemblages. By acoustic assemblages I mean the mutually constitutive and transformative relation between the given and the made that is generated in the interrelationship between a listening entity that theorizes about the process of hearing producing notions of the listening entity or entities that hear, notions of the sonorous producing entities, and notions of the type of relationship between them. Such an assemblage circulates between different listening entities through different practices of inscription of sound: rituals, writing, acoustic events, and so forth that, in turn, are also heard. These assemblages then imply a mutually constitutive transduction (in two directions, let us say) of notions of sound as well as notions of who listens, as well as potentially transformative processes of inscription of sound that interrelate listenings and sounding "objects." If such an interrelationship between listeners and sound objects is intercultural, that is, it occurs between beings considered "different" as is the case in colonial contexts, then we have a cycle of transductions in which each of the listening entities of this assemblage generates its own process of transformation of the relation between the notion of the listening entity, the notion of the sound producing entity, the process of (re)inscription of such hearing and the type of relation constituted in the process.

In such an assemblage we have less a transparent field of acoustic communication as implied by the audiovisual litany than ample possibilities for equivocation. We can link this to the idea of transduction associated with the study of the senses. The notion of transduction means the transformation of one form of matter or energy (sound waves, light) into another (vibrations, biochemical transmitters, etc.).[15] Anthropologists have also thought about the intercultural context of mutual encounters of alterities through the notion of transduction (Viveiros de Castro 2004; Helmreich 2007).

Eduardo Viveiros de Castro has proposed a renewal of anthropological thinking from a "method of controlled equivocation" (2004, 3), derived from Amerindian thinking, in which it is assumed that there are different perspectives in the conceptualization of an entity. As such the modes of conceptualizing the relation of difference do not depend on the history of social constructivism (Holbraad 2012). The work of a comparative anthropology would not be to translate the concepts of the other into its Western equivalents in order to adequately "explain" who the other is, to represent him or her divested of colonial history—a process that assumes that I, as decoder, am able to carry the weight of truth about a "correct" reading of the other; it would rather involve assuming differential fields of conceptualization, each with their potential equivocations as a field of comparative mutual constitution of notions of alterity.[16] Equivocation is not a mistake. To the contrary:

> Anthropology then is interested in equivocation, in the literal sense of *inter esse*, being in between, existing in the middle . . . The crucial point here

> is not the empirical fact of incomprehensions but the "transcendental fact" that they are not the same. The question then does not consist in knowing who wrong and much less in knowing who cheats whom. Equivocation is not a mistake, nor a confusion, nor a falsity, but the very basis of the relation that implies it, which is always a relation of exteriority. . . . Equivocation in sum is not a subjective failure, but a dispositive for objectification. It is not an error nor an illusion—it is not about imagining objectification in the language of reification or fetishization—but the limit condition of every social relation, a condition that is itself overobjectified in the case of the relation we call "intercultural," in which the language games diverge to the extreme. (Viveiros de Castro 2010, 78–79).

For Viveiros de Castro such a process of mutual equivocation for a comparative anthropology implies "not a process of induction, nor deduction, but of transduction" (2004, 20). Following Simondon, he takes the idea of transduction as a model for the notion of controlled equivocation in a decolonial anthropology. Here it is assumed that "difference is a condition of signification and not an impediment" (20). Stefan Helmreich in his study of transduction of sound underwater also proposes the idea of "ethnography as transduction" (2007). He critiques notions of both sound and ethnography as spheres that give access to truth through a process of immersion in their matter. Rather, for him, "a transductive ethnography would be a mode of attention that asks how definitions of subjects, objects and field emerge in material relations that cannot be modeled in advance. Most modestly I offer it as one idiom for thinking through anthropologies of sound . . . More expansively I suggest that a transductive ear can help to audit the boundaries, to listen for how subjects, objects, and presences—at various scales—are made" (2007, 632).

The notions of transduction of Viveiros de Castro and Helmreich are similar in that both suspend the idea that establishing relations in difference means arriving at "the truth" of the other in order to explain it and question rather how "subjects, objects and presences" mutually constitute each other. The idea of this transductive anthropology along with the questions raised by the recent histories of the senses place us at a historical moment when we question the idea of whether the supposed ocularcentric history was actual or if its hypervalorization actually happened because of historiographical practices that do not recognize the importance of other senses and other histories of the senses. The question that emerges is either whether these alternative sensorial histories have simply been there as "subterranean forms of auditory knowledge" (Hirschkind

2006, 121) that were at the margins of a mainstream dominated by the audiovisual complex, or whether a recasting of such histories gives rise, in effect, to a different temporal and hierarchical cartography of the senses (Hirschkind 2006; Howes 2004). Taking into account non-Western histories of the sensorial is a central way of rethinking the ways in which anthropological accounts of the senses are significant not only for a particular place but for a global history of the senses. One of the elements that emerges when doing so is that the relation between the inscription of the acoustic in the musical, the folkloric, and the linguistic, on the one hand, and in sensorial and broader life histories, on the other, is the multiple temporalities (biological and cultural, geophysical and social, economic and material) that accrue in the fact that listening is simultaneously a physiological, a sensorial, and an interpretive cultural practice. Taking into account such temporalities opens up our understanding of the global histories of the colonial/modern not just to a geopolitics of knowledge and economy but also to its relation with the geophysical and ontological. This takes us back to the relation between the history of comparativism in the nineteenth century and its place in the formation of histories of ideas in the twentieth century, especially regarding the place of the voice in the identification of language, song, and music as spheres of knowledge.

The history of nineteenth-century comparativism in Latin America and the Caribbean followed different trajectories from those of Europe, even though both were mutually constituted in the exchange of ideas between them. In some cases it was used to rearticulate new forms of exclusion through a racialized culturalism that used the comparative method to transform the politics of blood purity into cultural theories of discrimination (chapters 2 and 4). But it also gave rise to a relation between the abundance of nature and knowledge that became particularly significant at the end of the nineteenth century and in the first half of the twentieth century, in that it began to formulate the anthropological as a site of expressive creativity that would come to be recognized as unique and highly significant for the history of music, language, literature, and their respective disciplinary histories in the region. In particular, this relation between the magnificence of nature and the joy of knowledge it produced was a way of handling the limits and incommensurabilities of perceived processes of equivocation in such spheres as language, song, music, and forms of narration. In Colombia, listening to indigenous languages played a crucial role in recasting the juridical place of indigenous groups in the nation through the political theology of the nation-state (see chapter 4). But it also generated a type of *naturphilosophie* that centered on the recognition of the relation between indigenous mythical histories, the seeming abundance of tropical nature, linguistic particularity in order to, at least, raise the question of a different history of "man." Such questions were related to an emergent recognition of the value of indigenous languages and vocal expressive practices—myths, songs—contra their negation or useful only for purposes of conversion.

In this book, through the history of comparativism in the region, I question the conceptual, temporal, and spatial framing of this history by rendering it not solely as a European one but one produced in the global trade of ideas about expressive culture and the type of making and doing we call art in the relation between the colonial and the modern. As stated by Ticio Escobar, in Amerindian history, such a "tissue of sensible experience" appears deeply entangled in particular networks of collective experience, functions, and rituals, that "reveal, in the play of form, dense truths that are inaccessible through other means" (Escobar [1993] 2012, 32). For the purposes of this book then, one can think of such a history in the Americas as presenting contested understandings and uses of "ways of making" with sound that entangle the ontological and epistemological in the manipulation of design (Ingold 2011). Some of the aspects of such a history highlight how the recognition of indigenous languages, modes of narration, and different vocalizations, by nineteenth-century intellectuals, raised contested political understandings of indigenous groups and their modes of narration in the new nation. Particularly salient was how incommensurate modes of interaction gave rise to new genres, such as colonial grammars, letters to colonial authorities, and musical rituals that emerged from the colonial process (Hanks 2010). The history of comparativism helps us understand how the politics of equivocation regarding particular expressive practices led to a politics of expressive transformation as a mode of political response. This sometimes generated a conflictive zone of recognition that questioned the very relation between governmentality and expressive indigenous practices proposed by the nation-state.

In nineteenth-century Colombia, two Colombian scholars, Ezequiel Uricoechea (1834–1880) and Jorge Isaacs used and adapted comparative methods and ideas in their studies of indigenous languages in the transition toward the formulation of ethnography and linguistics as disciplines, and of indigenous expressive practices as a significant aspect of the literary and of expressive culture in general. They did so as humanists invested in the development of the appreciation of the local, in order to answer questions about the nature and history of the American continent. In chapter 3 I explore the theoretical significance of thinking the relationship between the valorization of indigenous cultures and the political in the dialectic between nature and culture that emerges in the fracture between hearing and writing indigenous languages.

Uricoechea and Isaacs stand out as unique and exceptional figures in their approach to indigenous languages, after centuries of their study for purposes of religious conversion and in the midst of the rise of nationalistic language policies that sought to eradicate them.

Uricoechea was a Colombian naturalist and philologist who spent his life between Colombia, the United States, and several European countries. A scholar who self-defined himself as passionate "for all things American," he founded the *Collection Linguistique Américaine*, in which he sought to critically edit the indigenous grammars collected by missionaries during the colonial period in Latin America and the Caribbean. He was also one of the early archaeologists in Colombia, and founder of the *Sociedad de Naturalistas Neogranadinos* (Society of New Granadian Naturalists). I explore how his work with indigenous languages was related to the question of the nature of the American continent and its geophilosophical significance for the emergence of indigenous linguistics and for an aesthesis of the local.

After the publication of *María* in his early twenties, Isaacs became a soldier who fought in the ranks of radical liberals against the conservative government but who never lost his passion for local popular expressive forms. Toward the end of his life he wrote one of the earliest ethnographies in Colombia, *Estudio sobre las tribus indígenas del Magdalena* (A study on the indigenous tribes of the Magdalena region) (1884), a text that generated a virulent response from philologist and politician Miguel Antonio Caro entitled *El darwinismo y las misiones* (Darwinism and the missions) ([1886] 1980). Caro was nominally vice president but actually acting president of the nation between 1892 and 1898. He was the author of the Constitution of 1898 that was to last, with several reforms, as the nation's Constitution until 1991, and a key figure in the establishment of the relationship between language, jurisprudence, and the law as a politics of the state. In the hands of Caro and other "grammarian presidents" philology became an instrument of power, not only in the general sense of a relation between power and language but, specifically, in the relation between the exercise of jurisprudence, the knowledge of philology, the politics of civil war, and the institutional use of political rhetoric by the state (Deas [1992] 2006). In this chapter I analyze the significance of the political controversy between Isaacs and Caro and its legal implications for indigenous languages and peoples in the midst of redrawing the boundary lines between nature and culture, between the sound of languages and the politics of their inscription, and between war, politics, and the law. Here the emerging tension between missionaries and ethnologists and their role in the national politics of indigeneity was central to defining the value of indigenous languages for the nation-state.

If a proper aural corpus to represent the Colombian nation has been historically seen as lacking, materials about practices of hearing the voice, as well as other sounds not included in this study, such as instrumental music, are evidently not. The particular archival material explored here in each chapter is only a fragment of what I found. When one listens to the historical archive, without looking for the genealogy of a particular musical genre, but rather simply exploring the way listening practices are found across different forms of writing, what emerges is a series of practices of listening and sounds that extend beyond our present-day ideas of what counts as a proper genre, music, or language. Listening to vocalities was used to establish the historical divide between the colony and the postcolony by defining the nature of different peoples through theories of vocal propriety for the new nation-states.

In the midst of very different political positions and ideas, the nineteenth-century intellectuals studied in this book were dealing with similar questions: if in the new nations all were to be deemed citizens and therefore had to be politically defined as persons, then what counted as a proper human voice? How was that established in the midst of a colonial history that left a legacy of discourses and practices about the questionable validity of the natural history of the continent? How was the juridical status of humans who had historically been considered and treated as not belonging to the juridically valid political community of persons to be redefined? What about the (mis)hearings generated for indigenous or Afrodescendant peoples for whom "becoming animal" or other forms of nonhuman becoming through the voice was precisely one of its many powerful uses? What were the implications for them of assuming a politics of the voice as representative of an autonomous individual in the politics of the nation-state? How did descendants of Hispanics as well as Afrodescendants and mixed peoples make sense of their belonging in a continent to which they could not trace their original heritage and of a heritage that was territorially dispersed? How was indigeneity, and the practice and study of indigenous expressive culture redefined through the politics of nationalism? These questions were not unique to the groups of people or intellectuals described here. Rather they were common to other countries in Latin America and the Caribbean because the political moment defined by the postcolonial struggle generated similar questions even though they were answered differently in each place. Thus while the questions explored here involve addressing the form the answers took by virtue of a particular archive in a particular place, many of these issues were also being considered and explored in other parts of Latin America and the Caribbean. One can think of this book as a microcosm of a broader history of the relation between the ear and the voice, one that implies a shared history of cosmopolitics (that is, a politics that implies taking into account both humans and nonhumans, Stengers *dixit*) for the region even when the particular histories differ. The study of the relation between the history, the voice, and the lettered city is thus a geophilosophical problem, not just an epistemological one.

The contested nature of the person and of nature have recently become major critical concerns, partially as a response to the unprecedented devastation of the environment produced during the past 250 years or so. Latin America and the Caribbean enter the present critical juncture, not only through their centrality in articulating the critical role of present-day environmental struggles through indigenous movements and through the political struggles around crucial regions for global environmental politics like the Amazon. The region also contributes a long and contested history of the person and of nature and therefore brings to the foreground alternate histories for narrating and understanding such a crisis. The relation between the ear and the voice explored in this book is part of this broader history.