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WALKING THE EDGE OF THE STAGE IN THEORY; OR, JANET
CARDIFF'S SENSORIUM FOR INTERMEDIAL BODIES



This article examines Janet Cardiff's site-specific art, and in particular, the 2005 audio walk, *Her Long Black Hair*, as a possible site of refusal or an alternative to the panoptic docile, disciplined Foucaultian body. This paper investigates Cardiff's sound-based collaboration, often performed with artist Georges Bures Miller, as a sensorial, choreographic, and intermedial practice that challenges discourses of representation, such as conformist, dominant fixed perceptions of identity and scripted subjectivity. Cardiff's work demonstrates the process of intermediality and how the intermedial body disrupts linear and visual narratives or sites that fix identity through the constructs of the historical and cultural. The article forwards critical questions about the conditioned human desire for bodily fixity, surveillance, and panoptical structures promoting normative, disciplinary hierarchies, especially through nostalgia for narratological closure. Cardiff's work, her performance and artistic strategies, offer other avenues for inhabitation of the radical sensorium, the body as palimpsestuous, inner theatre, wherein she invites us to participate differently—to *listen* and see, to experience differently. The article also takes up an intermedial, palimpsestic *form* with spaces created for moments of pause and reflection: an enacting of the site-specific intermedial and palimpsestic body.

Cet article examine l'art localisé de Janet Cardiff, notamment une marche guidée audio qu'elle a créée en 2005 sous le titre Her Long Black Hair, en tant qu'alternative ou possible refus d'un corps foucauldien panoptique, docile et discipliné. Derkson s'intéresse à l'œuvre sonore de Cardiff, souvent jouée en collaboration avec l'artiste Georges Bures Miller, en tant que pratique sensorielle, chorégraphique et intermédiale qui remet en question les discours de représentation fondés sur des perceptions conformistes et figées de l'identité et d'une subjectivité déjà fixée. L'œuvre de Cardiff illustre le processus intermédial et montre comment le corps intermédial vient rompre le récit linéaire ou visuel en des lieux qui fixent l'identité par le truchement de constructions historiques et culturelles. L'article de Derkson explore des questions importantes sur le désir

conditionné de l'être humain d'une fixité corporelle, une surveillance et des structures panoptiques qui promeuvent des hiérarchies normatives et disciplinaires, notamment par la nostalgie d'une résolution narrative. Derkson fait valoir que l'œuvre de Cardiff, de même que sa performance et ses stratégies artistiques, proposent d'autres moyens d'habiter le sensorium radical, le corps palimpseste, le théâtre intérieur auquel elle nous invite à participer autrement – à écouter et voir, à vivre l'expérience autrement. L'article aborde également une forme intermédiaire, une sorte de palimpseste avec des espaces créés pour offrir des moments d'arrêt et de réflexion : une représentation du corps palimpseste et intermédiaire localisé.



I've been creating portholes into my other worlds.

Janet Cardiff, *The Walk Book*

Sometimes I feel like I am almost gone... a long ways from home.¹
Gospel singer quoted in *Her Long Black Hair*

For what indeed could a prince do with a princess that had lost her gravity? Who could tell what she might not lose next? She might lose her visibility, or her tangibility; or, in short, the power of making impressions upon the radical sensorium; so that he should never be able to tell whether she was dead or alive.

George MacDonald, *The Light Princess*

Introduction: Site, Sound, Sense

Writing on the polarized notion of retrieving the experiential body in feminist theory and practice, Johanna Oksala comments: “if we conceive of the body as a passive object, it is possible to discipline it, but equally impossible to theorize about its resistance to normalizing power” (107). Oksala’s 2004 article, “Anarchic Bodies: Foucault and the Feminist Question of Experience” returns us to a philosophical discussion on the unpredictability of the experiential body. In “Anarchic Bodies,” Oksala claims that if “we wish to consider Foucault’s idea of bodily resistance, we must leave behind the conception of the body as a mere material object, the body as an object of natural sciences and disciplinary technologies” (107). Oksala’s argument does useful work in a cultural moment that resists the experiential

as trivial and apolitical. This article theorizes the body's "resistance to normalizing power" (107) through an intermedial, chorographic practice, which relies on sound rather than sight to examine variations of embodiment within the performance of a site-specific audio walk. Chorography or place practice is a seventeenth-century theory and method for conceptualizing space and, in particular, the interrelations noted between geography and topography in order to bring forth specific details from a node in a place, map, or body. Tom Conley in *The Self-Made Map: Writing in Early Modern France* refers to the art of Chorography quoted from Ptolemy as "deal[ing] separately with a part of the whole" (170). Similarly, the intermedial, conceptualized as a spatial in-between, works in conjunction with chorography and enacts processes of mediation and meditation to disassemble fixed representations in discourse and place.

Canadian performance artist, Janet Cardiff's site-specific audio walk, *Her Long Black Hair*, presents a possible alternative to the Foucaultian disciplined and docile body as a site of resistance when practiced as a sensorial, *chorographic* (not choreographic) performance. Cardiff's audio walk challenges discourse perpetuating fixed or distinct sexual identity and representations. Her work provides the means for further discussion of embodiment and, more specifically, the variations of embodiment that Oksala suggests feminists (or other theorists for that matter) have not accounted for or explained—perceptive or sensorial, experiential bodies—in the "problem of the relationship between experience and language" (99). Throughout Cardiff's audio walk, the performers' bodies are situated as intermedial, sensorial, and non-representational. Sexualized bodies and identities are not visually represented; instead, bodies are evoked through the oral and aural registers to dissemble notions of fixity.

Janet Cardiff's recent collection of site-specific audio walks, often performed with artist Georges Bures Miller, offer a collaborative, discursive lexicon of sound-based performances that imbricate the histories of walking, performing, and listening. Retracing the imagined footsteps of a woman with long black hair, who appears in a set of photographs dated from 1965, spectators perform a walk along New York's Central Park pathways while listening to an audio track infused with a collage of past and present sounds. In this 2004 performance of *Her Long Black Hair*, walkers don headphones and audio players to engage with a pre-recorded sound-map, which mixes with the everyday noise of living coming from the street to the park. The pre-recorded

sound-map is a montage of clips intermingling street noise with poetry, music, narrative, and other sounds from a variety of past recordings. Operating as a memory trace when listened to by the spectator, the sound-map is also part of the script performed.

As the listening spectator begins the New York site walk from the Sixth Avenue entrance gate with “one foot in the past and one foot in the future” (Cardiff), a female voice (Cardiff’s) speaks about places and spaces along the nineteenth-century footpaths—tightrope walkers by the park entrance, an organ grinder in the street among a cacophony of traffic sounds, or a child visiting the bear in the park’s zoo—and the sound-image collage enacts a poetics of the everyday for each performing body. The sound-map and the photographs of the woman with the long black hair act as a memory thread for the spectators as they navigate Cardiff’s Central Park walk and interact with palimpsestic moments of time, place, and space.

At various intervals the spectators pause to map their approximate geographic location and soundscape with the spatial representations rendered in the photographs of the unknown woman with long black hair; Cardiff’s method demonstrates how bodies become in-between to haunt spaces, modulate time, and mediate the present while remaining unclassifiable. Although her use of photographs may seem to rely on the visual, Cardiff’s work subverts visual performance and practice by creating space for the intermedial body through sonic processes. The photographs, sound-maps, spectators, and palimpsestic landscape function as intermedial bodies resonating in sonic time.

Other Sites

If the discourse of performance is constituted as a practice within the *visual* arts, how does the spectator negotiate site-specific art as soundscape? How does sound change bodily representations in power constructs perceived as ‘normative’ experience? Further, how does the body perform within power structures when both (power and the body) are historically and culturally constructed?² This essay engages the previous set of questions and observations by examining the role of the spectator as performer in a palimpsestuous site within a collaborative sound-based play. In *Theatre Audiences: a Theory of Production and Reception*, Susan Bennett writes, “[i]n the theatre every reader is involved in the making of the play” (21); Janet Cardiff’s collaborative art offers the spectator the simultaneous, multiple roles of reader, listener, and performer in the ‘play within the play’ of her site-specific audio walks.

Cardiff invites the spectator to “*come into being*” (Butler 8) as a performer in her series of audio walks—she asks the audience to “listen” and “walk *with her*” [my emphasis] into and through particular sites. The audio walk sites manifest as *lieux de mémoire*, Pierre Nora’s term for spaces within spaces, due to the movement between historical, intercultural, and everyday rituals that shift the gaze and the visible into the realm of the listened for or the barely perceptible.

Akin to the concept of the city as multi-layered text, Cardiff examines an array of *lieux de mémoire* (Nora 7) for her walks, whether New York’s Central Park, Berlin’s Hebbel Theater, or the City of Jena’s battlefields, to engage in physical, embodied acts of memory, place-practice, and intermediality: the conceptual practices applied and discussed later in this essay. The audio walks, in play since 1991,³ counter the efficacy of national boundaries as does Cardiff and Miller’s reputation, which continues to garner critical international attention while influencing a range of practitioners and critics from a variety of fields.

Of particular note, Marla Carlson’s 2006 article, “Looking, Listening, and Remembering: Ways to Walk New York after 9/11” provides a pivotal account of Cardiff’s performance of *Her Long Black Hair* in New York’s Central Park. Carlson’s article, included in the recent publication of Kim Solga, d.j. Hopkins, and Shelley Orr’s *Performance and the City*, joins a collection of essays focused on the making of the city through theatre and performance across multiple international sites. Solga *et al* also showcase Laura Levin’s expansive and influential work, “‘Can the City Speak?’: Site-Specific Art after PostStructuralism,” wherein Levin emphasizes how the “site speaks ‘for itself’” (240) as a “live presence of the *thing in itself*, in its self-giveness, push[ing] up against and resist[ing] its representation” (240-241): a very useful, engaged *chorographic* definition of the work site-specificity undertakes.

As a follow up to their 2009 text, Kim Solga and d.j. Hopkins’s forthcoming 2012 *Performance and the Global City* signals the shift in recent thinking toward a collaborative transnational movement, a willingness to forego national boundary distinctions in an increasingly global landscape with discussion of a critical question: “how can theatrical performance respond to transnational crisis and change in ways that engage minds and mobilize communities?” (Solga and Hopkins). The relatively ‘new’ direction in critical work, whether in poetry, narratology, theory, or performance studies, moves across boundaries to challenge pre-

existing delineations, especially that of nationhood. Because the modes of interdisciplinarity, the transnational, and globalization redefine our communal spaces and concepts of time, perhaps we must also begin to trouble and refashion postmodernity as it too passes into the palimpsest.

Janet Cardiff's audio walks trouble multiple boundaries due to their use of transnational sites, mobility, interdisciplinary techniques, and overt performativity. The walks' repeated performances are sustained as they occur in a temporal mix of binaural recordings; mobile theatrical architectures; sound and image montage; splices of voice, and collage or sampling of narrative, song, and poetry. However, within this process, Cardiff and Miller also create a momentary community, a place wherein historical bodies collide with our present bodily manifestations. Through community, mobility, and accumulation, the palimpsestuous improvised staging of the audio walks refuse the disciplinary structure of Foucault's Panopticon in *Discipline and Punish*, the "segmented, immobile, frozen place" (195) wherein "[e]ach individual is fixed in place[;] [a]nd if [anyone] moves, [they do] so at the risk of [...] life, contagion, or punishment" (195). Palimpsestic thought generates a new analysis of experience, of living.

Rather than Foucault's segmented, "immobile, frozen place" (195), the performance of the palimpsest, its embodied presence, comes into play in Cardiff's site-specific work. As Sarah Dillon elucidates in *The Palimpsest: Literature, Criticism, Theory*, palimpsestuousness is "—a simultaneous relation of intimacy and separation—[... which,] preserves [...] the distinctness of its texts, while at the same time allowing for their essential contamination and interdependence" (3). The palimpsest, the multiple, interdisciplinary, interplay of spaces within spaces, operates as the site-specific intermedial body in Cardiff's work. Here, I raise the idea of immersive (hyper)text, of intertextuality, and its relationship to performance and palimpsestuousness—the heterogeneous spaces we inhabit through our 'inner theatre,' the sensoria of our bodies.

Inner Theatre, Sensoria: Spiral Avenues

In the walk, *Her Long Black Hair*, Cardiff privileges the aural-oral sensoria over the visual, which opens 'spaces' for intermedial bodies and for a palimpsestuous sense of intimacy and separation. The aural-oral sensoria are the sense apparatus of the sensorium, wherein touch, hearing, sight, and scent coalesce in a series

of spaces or places to enact the palimpsestuousness located in site-specific performance. My use of sensorium derives from the seventeenth century's Late Latin term *Sensorium Commune*. Through my interpretative revision, the sensorium functions as the communal body to which sense impressions are transmitted. I exclude taste here because Cardiff does as well. I examine inter-medial bodies and spaces through interrelations of sensoria or the 'inner theatre' within Cardiff's work. By intermedial, I mean that which mediates, and ultimately, disturbs through the disassemblance of representations, especially prescriptive representations. I rely on the conceptual work of Freda Chapple and Chiel Kattenbelt's interpretations from "Key Issues in Intermediality in Theatre and Performance," to situate Cardiff's work as that of the in-between. Chapple and Kattenbelt define their conceptual work as follows:

Our thesis is that the intermedial is a space where boundaries soften—and we are in-between—and within a mixing of spaces, media, and realities. Thus, intermediality becomes a process of transformation of thoughts and processes where something different is formed through performance. In our concept of intermediality, we draw on the history of ideas to locate intermediality as a re-perception of the whole, which is re-constituted through performance. (12)

However, Peter M. Boenisch's "Intermedial Perceptions" also provides a salient definition of mediation as an "act, a performance, where both medium and spectator create meaningful spatial realities and invoke a sensorial, phenomenological experience which adds to the semiotic reality" (110). Based on these definitions, intermediality posits a 'way in' to choreographic performance and practice through the performer's body with emphasis on the acoustic realm(s).

With these intermedial definitions in mind, I apply a choreographic or place-practice to the sensorium, to bring forth the 'inner theatre' of the body/site in *Her Long Black Hair* so that bodily interactions within the multi-layered spaces of Central Park are *traced, heard, and raised to the surface of the senses*. In Cardiff's audio walk, the performer's work locates the choreographic, the palimpsestic layering or the parts of place in Central Park that mediate in the sensorium of the site and are brought forth in the performer's body. According to Mike Pearson, in his 2006 text "*In Comes I: Performance, Memory, Landscape*, choreg-

raphy, a practice from the Renaissance, “draws attention to that which is barely discernible” (9) by bringing forth a detailed account of a certain node within a specific place. Chorography or place-practice, suggests Elizabeth Hodges in “Representing Place in Corrozet’s Antiquitez De Paris,” alters “how individuals understood and constructed their relationship to place, but also how the idea of place functioned in the early modern period to bind individuals together” (136) to mobilize and often de-stabilize conceptions of representation through interactive reading and performativity within a distinct matrix of space. Cardiff’s sound experiments trace the slippages between the imagined, material, embodied manifestations of intermedial bodies within the site-specific palimpsest of Central Park.

Palimpsestuousness; Or, Sounds of Seneca Village

Her Long Black Hair is haunted by the remnants of a 1820s village now located under Central Park. In 1825, the area between Central Park’s 82nd and 89th Streets and 7th and 8th Avenues was home to approximately 264 African American, Irish, and German immigrants.⁴ But plans for a large public park with long, meandering pathways were already underway when architects Frederick Law Olmstead and Calvert Vaux presented and won their *Greensward Plan*, the design for Central Park. After 1856, Seneca village was razed; the people displaced without a trace.⁵

When spectators move along the Central Park route, they walk toward the old Seneca village. Presumably, Cardiff’s research and editing of the audio mix in preparation for the New York Central Park walk would explain the clear, present voices emerging like traces from the vanished, spectral Seneca village site. I raise this point because Cardiff and Bures neither mention Seneca village in the audio walk script, nor do they indicate any reason for including fragments of speech, whether fictional or not, or the splices of a song known for its resonance in black communities especially during the nineteenth century.

Seneca village’s displaced residents, their disappearance, register in Cardiff’s audio work, her art, through the voices of Harry Thomas, an escaped slave, and another unnamed, unknown woman, who sings a traditional African American song. Both voices occur in Cardiff’s sound-map as memory trace with their brief treatment and almost accidental feel. Harry Thomas’s voice suddenly interrupts the walk’s sound-map and narrating voice to recount an experiential memory of physical enslavement prior to an escape to Canada in the spring of 1850.

The unnamed woman's voice sings fragments of the well-known 1918 spiritual song, "Sometimes I Feel like a Motherless Child." The fragmented, momentary utterances brought forth from the site render live Seneca village's nineteenth-century razing and the villagers' displacement as a still very present event in the here and now. As the performers walk, the sound of water, of rain begins. The rain becomes an allusion for the erosion of place over time, and the woman with the long black hair lingers, spectral, outside of the spectator's view but inside the palimpsest, posing questions of boundaries between sight and sound. Narratives become displaced, mere threads tracing a scattering of sounds along meandering, discursive pathways.

Following the sound of footsteps, the walkers mediate and integrate into defamiliarized scenes, pre-recorded soundscapes interjected with real-time street noise. "It's like our bodies are caught in the middle. The hard part is staying in the present, really being here, really feeling alive," reminds Cardiff's disembodied voice, and so the *spectators* caught up in the present in-between moment of "our bodies" transform into performers; however, their bodies, in the act of improvising, situate as inter-medial as they perform within the geographical, emotive, temporal layers, the network of fields, in New York's Central Park: from the Hallet Nature Sanctuary, the Central Park and Children's Zoos toward The Dene, the Naumburg Bandshell, past the Bethesda Fountain toward the Bow Bridge.

Cardiff does not mention Seneca village; however, voices like Harry Thomas's are caught in the audio track and they re-trace a possible past or a past walk. As the performers move toward the village from 6th Street and along 82nd Avenue, they re-enact this spectral walk while listening to Thomas state, "I was caught and taken back again" when he recounts his repeated escapes from slavery. The repetitive utterance performs the ubiquitous historical loop of bodily constraint that resonates in so many of these vanished sites: I was caught and taken back again. The resistance to "normalizing power" in Thomas's re-telling seems thwarted, attempted, and lost. Thomas's utterance enacts Foucault's Panopticon in *Discipline and Punish* to resurrect it as a memory place wherein bodily resistance is practiced as constraint: that "frozen, immobile place" (195) where any movement is "the risk of [...] life, contagion, or punishment" (195). Thomas may have walked to Seneca village to find refuge before walking to the Canadian border. The effect of these walking performances is akin to continual improvisation wherein the performer's body

speaks improvised lines of the play even though it is evident that Cardiff has staged the walk, the site(s), and the accompanying aural narrative. The improvisational assemblage of sound, movement, and space destabilize the performers' expectations while disrupting their "programmatically preserved" (42), *pace* Pearson, experiences and perceptions.

Opening Interrelations: Walking, Watching...

I situate my findings within the critical discourse that takes up Cardiff's work and, in particular, *Her Long Black Hair*, commissioned by the Public Art Fund, as an aural piece that critics claim deals with loss and memory or the effects of surveillance on the body. In "Ways to Walk New York After 9/11," Marla Carlson responds to the performative walk of *Her Long Black Hair*. She suggests that the Park walk enabled her to "stop featuring [her]self as protagonist, to stop dramatizing [her] experience in [her] own instantaneous memory theatre" (21). While Carlson's objective here decenters her own subjectivity, the act of minimizing herself as protagonist may prompt feminist concern. Carlson also critiques Cardiff's Central Park walk by stating that she was "disappointed by the lack of thematic coherence or narrative closure, [and] that if the story or even the theme were coherent, then our thoughts would be organized at a level that precludes these moments of immersion in the present experience—a present moment that includes our reactivated memories" (21). Here, we return to Johanna Oksala's experiential body as unpredictable event (97) through Carlson's desire for closure, which demonstrates how the body performs when confronted with a rupture in power structures: the momentary immersion into the palimpsestic wherein the experiential body brings forth the intermedial, and for a moment our own histories and cultural scripts become undone.

It is precisely these "moments of immersion in the present experience" (Carlson 21) and the "lack of [...] narrative closure" (21) in Cardiff's work that changes social perceptions of fixed notions of the body to bring non-representational bodies into present (visual) spaces. Cardiff emphasizes the median: bodies situated in or pertaining to the middle belie an initial or final body. Cardiff did not perform a beginning or end in *Her Long Black Hair*; there is no traditional, confining strategy of narratological introduction and closure within the walks. Thus, the nostalgic longing for narratological⁶ closure, for the end of a story, demonstrates a psychological and perhaps bodily fixity, a need for the disciplined, panoptical structures that promote normative hierarchies.

Kirsty Robertson, in her very useful article on the effects of the gaze on the body, draws on Foucaultian ideas of Governmentality and the self-regulation of the disciplined body within Cardiff's work. Robertson, in "Try to Walk with the Sounds of My Footsteps': The Surveillant Body in Contemporary Art" suggests that "Cardiff's works make what is often hidden, apparent—not only through the eyes, but through a fully embodied understanding that makes apparent the potential interconnection through the controlled movements of performer/spectator" (36). Robertson's valuable assertions figure *Her Long Black Hair* as an inside-outside act of surveillance and control. However, what Robertson misses is Cardiff's intermediality, her performativity of listening to the gaze, while turning the gaze on itself: the challenge to western society's obsession with observing the other. While Robertson clearly enunciates the switch in power relations within Cardiff's walk, she maintains that there is an "impossibility of intersubjective connection" (36) and renders listening to Cardiff akin to eavesdropping:

The attempted merger of voice and participant reverses the general relations of surveillance—in these walks the watcher becomes speaker and actually invades the body that generally passively receives the gaze. [...] Through attempting a merger, one is always aware of one's aloneness in Cardiff's work, the way that the gaze surveys but cannot understand or fully encompass. Given this, it is not surprising that in many of the reviews of Cardiff's work there is a distinct fear: a fear of not being able to sufficiently perform the performance, of getting lost, of missing the directions, or of not understanding the work. In many ways, the vulnerability of the body, as well as the inability to perform a complete merger, is laid bare through the fear of not being able to keep up with Cardiff's instructions. (36)

Cardiff's audio walk may initiate vulnerability and aloneness, but are these sensations generated solely from the kind of fear suggested by Robertson? Or, is it possible the listening body responds to the chorographic tensions of the site? Cardiff's Central Park site includes many historical cemeteries, the razed Seneca village, 264 voices lost yet resurfacing again as traces in Cardiff's work, intentional or not. The aloneness some performers experience might not be *their* aloneness; rather, a sense of vulnerability and aloneness may remain from those who underwent loss of home, body, livelihood: a loss of place; or, a placeless-

ness haunts through the accumulation of sound, a placelessness invisible and so, unseen. Further, I wonder about situating the work as an “invasion” on the “passive body that generally receives the gaze” (Robertson 36) or that the aural-oral sensations of the work are mere eavesdropping. If the participant performs the body-mind work that Cardiff requests s/he interact with, between, and into the various scenes, people, and objects, then the *possibility* rather than the impossibility, of intersubjective connection occurs. Intersubjective connection indicates an open consciousness that requires subject-to-subject and object-to-subject *interrelations*. The violence suggested by the “invasion of a body” precludes any kind of relation or interaction with the ‘receiver.’ As well, if a participant deems the audio walk as mere eavesdropping then s/he invests in the panoptical: observation and listening as a monitoring strategy.

Peggy Phelan writes in “White men and Pregnancy”: “[a]s Foucault and Freud have, in their different ways, shown us: law needs invisibility to survey the visible; visibility inspires surveillance and submits to the gaze of the panoptical authority” (139). Listening, contrary to Foucault’s idea of listening as the agency of domination disassembles what remains beneath the surface, the inner theatre, whether of the body or place. So, in reference to eavesdropping, Cardiff’s voice, with its non-linear, thematic and narrative incoherence, might intensify the disciplining participant’s *desire for or pleasure in* surveillance of the other; however, because *Her Long Black Hair* is not a text, is not *written* or inscribed, the disciplining, monitoring eye cannot imprint the force of the law, the Symbolic order,⁷ the figurative reproduction of the other, on the intermedial body. If, as Michel De Certeau claims in *The Practice of Everyday Life*, “[b]ooks are only metaphors of the body” (140) and “[e]very printed text repeats [...the] ambivalent experience of the body written by the law of the other”(140); to demonstrate the rule, and to produce a ‘copy’(140), then the walk, Cardiff’s performative work, disrupts the Law and thwarts the pleasure of the disciplining eye through a privileging of aural-oral sensoria as an act of intermediality.

Cardiff’s work perceived as mere eavesdropping implies a scripted subject position invested in the fear that methods of control, monitoring, and surveillance fulfill within the panoptical system. Further, the claim of eavesdropping suggests a deep ambivalence to the processes of intermediality, which figure as the working through of the “difference that remains” (Foucault 158), as Foucault suggests in *The Order of Things*, once a ‘parti-

pant' begins to listen or 'see differently.' Like Carlson, Robertson's productive critical essay nods to Cardiff's "sensory epistemologies" (37) but does not engage in the practices of intermedial bodies performing intersubjectivity: this disengagement functions as over-reliance, perhaps, on the visible or what is seen rather than as an outright refusal to unscript, to open the body and mind enough to *hear* the inner theatre at play, the dispersals and scatterings of sound, in the sensorium, whether of past and present, performer, spectator, reader, or listener.

Sensoria & Chorographic Practice for the Intermedial Body

In *The Order of Things*, Foucault states, "identity and what marks it are defined by the differences that remain" (158). However, the palimpsest, whether of body or place, embodies the "barely discernible" (9), described by Pearson, the *unmarked* remains that trouble the expected ordering in the representations of visible places and identities. Cardiff's audio walk focuses on the "differences that remain" (Foucault 158) through a dissembling of boundaries, narratives, and space in sensoria. Cardiff's *Her Long Black Hair* challenges discourse representing claims of identity and the marking of bodies, by privileging the *unmarked* aural-oral over the *marked* visual sense. Hearing speech sounds, whether random or rehearsed, such as fragments of laughter, narrative, poetry, fact, fiction, description, breathing, singing, and yet *not knowing*, and in some cases, not witnessing who is speaking, singing, or in some way participating in the fragmented cacophony present on-site, construes the normative process of 'marking,' singling out, and of classification. Instead, the performers' bodies become the chorography, or at least part of a site in the landscape, while each performer relies only on sensoria, and mostly the aural sensation, to *reveal* their location, the space that they momentarily inhabit.

In "Globing the Globe: September 11 and Theatrical Metaphor," Glen McGillivray indicates "the postmodern condition, so it seems, collapses our perception of actual people and events into their representations; however, Cardiff, rather than collapsing perceptions in on each other, disorients and displaces temporalities and, so, notions of fixed place and body. Bodies become out of time, wrested from familiar spaces, sounds, and movement, and so, the body manifests as a material mediation between places and people: the boundaries soften between object and subject but do not render perceptions of place and people as one for the other, or the Same, the continual mimetic self-

re-presentation, Peggy Phelan notes, where the Other collapses into the I, the self, and is marked as the I (3). Rather than a fixed, monitored, disciplined Foucaultian subject, wherein 'actual people' signify their representations, Cardiff breaks the ironic postmodern play of bodies by circulating the performativity of *unpredictable* bodies and events in space: the defamiliarized, unrepresented or unrepresentable, *unmarked* body in a palimpsestous space.

Cardiff includes momentary descriptions of intermedial gendered bodies but does not relay any other detail or information about these bodies, which allows the participants an imagined or improvised perspective, rather than a fixed, stable identity marker. The "woman on the cell phone," the "man on the bench reading the newspaper," the "boy running down the street" enact a temporal scattering, the *here and there* of bodies that destabilizes distinct categorization. Thus, the interjecting, non-linear fragments of Cardiff's narrative perform the intermedial body: the in-between spaces of subject *with* object.

The sparse gendered re-markings throughout the piece displace marked identity and distinct sexual identities because whom or what a performer may hear or see, *what remains*, depends on Cardiff's stage practice, her sensorium for intermedial bodies at the time of recording: what the palimpsest brings forth. Thus, the identity, the representational naming of a body becomes *unmarked* in an intermedial space. For example, Harry Thomas's narration from 1850, "I was caught and taken back again," places the performers in an intermedial time: the past overlapping with the present just as Thomas's narrative performs spatial, temporal, and cultural medians through speech while the performer-participant listens. Harry Thomas, the *presumed* African American who suddenly speaks his experience, his walk to Canada as escape, remains unmarked by Cardiff: she refuses introductory 're-markings,' contextualization, or spatial, temporal fixity. As the site speaks, so too does Harry Thomas. We do not know if this voice is a trace, a haunting from the Seneca village site, or a memory surfacing and performing in Cardiff and Miller's audio mix and script. However, we now know Seneca village was essentially erased from history, place, and time only to be brought forth in fragments, to "*come into being*" (Butler 8) again in the performance, *Her Long Black Hair*.

The audio walk presents several examples of temporal scattering or dispersals along various avenues. Each temporal scattering of the *here and there* of the body demonstrates an intermedial

positioning. For example, the woman on the cell phone occurs in between the states of aural-oral as she listens and speaks into the phone. In this way, the woman experiences the intermedial as she performs it. The man on the bench reading the newspaper performs a spatial, material intermediality. The bench is a medial space, an in-between site or a pause in the temporal. While the man is engaged in a visual process, the act of reading, the newspaper enacts an intermedial materiality because it represents what has been recorded through *speech* from a listening subject for another subject. Thus, the newspaper also performs as an intermedial and reiterative site into which the man reading situates his body. The man's momentary habitus is the newspaper performing the intermedial human body onto the intermedial object of the bench. Again, Cardiff refuses to *remark* any of the bodies occurring in the random mention of these temporal scatterings. The audio material does not attempt to *place* or fix the bodies mentioned through naming or some other form of marking. She refuses to *identify* with, to mark or render the Same any of the bodies in these encounters; instead, she makes a passing reference to the momentary, inhabitable spaces where these intermediary bodies perform. The differences that remain are discerned and recognized but not familiarized.

The embodied intermedial body occurs with the boy running down the street. As the boy runs, each stride wrests him from a temporal, fixed position and space. The boy's movement situates him within a continually improvised place as he runs along the street. Cardiff's seemingly innocuous or random anecdotes and descriptions, whether of people or space, belie a sensorial awareness that she uses to transform the socio-political conceptual framework that classifies distinct sexual identities. The boy running in the street shows a palimpsestic experience—the shifting space and movement refuses binaries while “appearing fixed” then becoming different—with each step.

Cardiff relies on the performativity of the walk, the enactment of walking to bring the walker, the performer, simultaneously into the unseen past while showing the lack of being/body in the present. As Peggy Phelan remarks the unseen woman with the long black hair enacts the ‘unrepresentable,’ ‘unmarked’ body that must be brought forth as the real, ‘speaking body’ before she disappears again only to ‘live’ in the frame, the performance of the still life, the photograph (Phelan 150-151). The question posed by the performers in the walk is one of crossing: the intermedial body in the palimpsest must cross borders and ‘pass’ continually

or *no longer 'pass'*; rather, the performers perform the body as that already 'passed,' crossed, be-coming again.

It is no accident that Cardiff's passing reference to poetry—the embodied palimpsestic performance of the crypt or that which has already disappeared again—reoccurs throughout the (s)cript and then is crossed out. Cardiff and Miller's (s)cript, not the sound recording, refers to the deadly interplay between Orpheus and Eurydice: "They're here, Orpheus and Eurydice. They're leaving the underworld now, almost into the sunshine. But he's worried, afraid that [she's] not really there behind him. [...] Don't look around" (Schaub 61). Again, here, the intermedial body anchored in and through the palimpsest as Orpheus passes from the underworld, or what is already past, into the sunshine, the becoming future only to *look* instead of *listen* and so be caught again in the stable binary of the visible and the invisible. If Orpheus had refused the spectral demand to *look behind him*, Eurydice would not have returned to the 'still life'; they would have crossed together into life.

'Other' Intermedial Bodies

As we turn left, Cardiff speaks of the tightrope walkers with their line strung between the trees. The tightrope walkers' high wire reaches into a historical moment while we walk in the present. The line strung between the trees is a median, a physical trace connecting the past histories of circus to the organ grinder, and as the organ music plays, we shift our bodies on both sides of the line, moving between temporalities, and then later outwards along the street. The tightrope walkers' bodies, 'unmarked' by gender or race, balance precariously, improvising with each step, along the stage that is the line strung between the trees. Each step the tightrope walkers take enact a narrative mnemonic—each step is an improvised recitation of the last step, yet each step could wrest the body perched on the line sideways or below, thus demonstrating possible displacement for the observer, who, as s/he passes the tightrope walker, believes the appearance of reality, and the bodies performing it.

"Enfolded within fiction, theatre seeks to display the line between visible and invisible power" (Phelan 112). The tightrope is the display, the troubling between and of binaric visible and invisible power. The tightrope walkers' performativity is a recited story, a well-known image, historically and culturally constructed but defamiliarized in *Her Long Black Hair* through a glossing over of the visual. Cardiff emphasizes the music from the organ

grinder, whether real-time or not, leaving the tightrope walkers to perform against manifestations of the regulated, disciplined body—the body that walks the line. The tension evoked when the performers listen to the tightrope walkers’ performance occurs whether or not they see and hear or ‘merely’ listen. Palpable tension generated from this act suggests a slippage or softening of boundaries. As the tightrope walkers perform ‘walking the line,’ their boundary lines—the trees on either side of the line and the ground—become indistinct as they focus on balancing one foot after another. The ‘audience’ or participants’ boundaries change as well when listening to the tightrope walkers (or listening and seeing) because they must shift their sight/site lines from looking forward and outwardly to gazing up.

Michel De Certeau discusses our “recited society” (186) in “Believing and Making People Believe”:

Social life multiplies the gestures and modes of behavior (*imprinted* by narrative models; it ceaselessly reproduces and accumulates “copies” of stories. Our society has become a recited society, in three senses: it is defined by *stories* (*récits*, the fables constituted by our advertising and informational media), by *citations* of stories, and by the interminable *recitation* of stories. These narrations have the twofold and strange power of transforming seeing into believing, and of fabricating realities out of appearances. A double reversal. (186)

Her Long Black Hair is a sensorium that interacts with and critiques “our recited society” (186) through its performance of snippets of story, citation, and recitation. The double reversal for Cardiff is pulling apart historical and cultural constructs while remaining within these sites. Cardiff relates to the topography, ‘listening’ for resistant traces that dismantle a historic or cultural perception. She walks through the sites where the tightrope walkers walk the line between two opposites: the ‘sanctuary’ of the park construed by the zoo with its confined swimming polar bear. As she draws the other performers’ attention to the entrapped, repetitive swimming of the bear, she points out how “calming it is to walk” and how “peaceful” the park is within its ‘natural’ setting. Immediately following this segment, Harry Thomas begins to speak of his experiences as an 1850s slave. With this timely intervention, Thomas’s narrative splice, the ‘sanctuary’ of the Park begins to shift: the park no longer sounds or feels like a ‘natural sanctuary,’ rather the performers perceive the traces that remain

in the intermedial between past and present within history and the culturally constructed site. Cardiff's sense effect in this moment magnifies the *feeling* of constrained 'disciplined' docile bodies against the intermedial bodies of the performers.

What is the effect of an 1850s reality, the voice of a slave, within our present and on our bodies? Let's listen to the gaze. We can still feel it: "I was caught and taken back again. He took me to the black smith shop where he had a ring made of iron..." Cardiff casts the net of time through the multiple linguistic references to *caught* throughout the walk: I was caught; caught in a ring made of iron; our bodies are caught; or, the more oblique phrase, "caught in the rain." Cardiff's "double reversal" is the process of investigating how we are caught and then how we let go: the process that signifies intermediality. She often repeats the phrase "let yourself really go into the scene," to counter the caught body as fixed in a specific time. Instead, she listens to fixity in the moment of its fixedness, before a body's release and then after its release. The performers walking with her become caught up in the performance: in the scattered narrative moments, in the rain, and in the seemingly random aural-oral photographs. However, the performers also let go of fixity by walking without knowing their precise location, direction, or 'place' in the performance—the 'right' place may not exist.

But how do we let go? To be caught and then let go signifies the intermedial body, its unpredictable renderings, movements, and sounds in and through space—as the palimpsest. The palimpsestuous movement shows us the spiraling of time, wherein we are caught and let go again and again. However, this repetitious process demands a rupturing, an opening and shifting, a willingness to forego closure, to trouble narrative fixity, to bring forth an unscripted, undoing of learned panoptic authority.

Along the walk Cardiff suggests "another experiment" and "we walk backwards with eyes closed like a video rewind" until it begins to rain. The imagined place shifts into the embodied, the material, as the rain touches our skin. Then the "streets still wet" fill with the scent of "after rain." We have entered Cardiff's sensorium, which emphasizes the richness of dislocation, the "how can I really know what I've seen" that performs against these small everyday acts of rain. The performers' bodies become a sensorium within multiple spaces: "go under the clock, in this little space, until the rain passes." The performance relies on aurality, orality, touch, smell, and lastly, visual sense.

At the end of the performance, the performers are left in the

momentary space that they inhabit to find their way back to where they were before without Cardiff's voice or presence to guide them: this example again shows Cardiff's performativity of the intermedial within the work. The differences that remain in the topography are the percolating traces that the performers' intermedial bodies discover within layered spaces. Intermediality is the sound of presence, the ruptures that interrupt normative responses and work against singularity, individualism, and proprietary actions. Intermediality provokes through traces of speech sounds and perceptions located and raised into hearing: Harry Thomas's sudden voice, the fragment of a song, a child's cry—barely discernible, the father's fist pounding the ground, the echoes reverberating amongst traffic and street noise.

Performing In-Between: Power and Provocations

The performance of *Her Long Black Hair* transforms the theatrical stage into an intermedial site wherein perceiving, mobile bodies also perform, and through their performance become intermedially situated. The edge of the stage, the positionality of the intermedial body, shifts the perspectival view from a line of sight that engages with distinct types of normativity to an experiential mode that embodies active agency in the sensoria mediated through the performativity of sound landscape.

The performance *within* the landscape⁸ does not differentiate interior or exterior; rather, the chorographic practice combined with recognition of the sensorium of the body is always intermedial in its calling out of the traces within a space or a body. Mike Pearson suggests that landscape is always a work-in-progress like the body:

And so, as taskscape is unending endeavour, landscape is always a work-in-progress. To perceive it is always to carry out acts of memory and remembrance, engaging constantly with an environment within which the past is embedded. We might characterise performer as both *dweller* and as *virtuoso* in *performance-as-taskscape*. (Pearson 219-220)

The performer as dweller embodies the series of places, the moments and memories within her habitus; if the landscape or space is liminal or medial, the dweller still performs, but may perform aural-oral, instead of 'inwardly' or 'outwardly,' as a liminal or transgressive body.

As the landscape gathers what is performed and lived, the

performers who locate through the chorographic sensorium, the sense traces that sound, experience a bodily intermediality that does not rely on sight—or just being seen. Rather, the performers inhabit an intermedial body that begins to ‘see differently’ and so feel (enact) the differences that remain when the fixed, dominant body, often the heteronormative, is disassembled through a refusal to accommodate its gaze. When the privileged sense of the visual is disrupted through intermediality, the fixed gaze no longer performs along the predictable lines of distinct, formalized classifications. The body performing in the intermedial challenges limits and, in so doing, shifts the body, even as a site of refusal, away from opposition or transgression as *pleasure*. Rather than a continuous oppositional relation to power or an exception to the rule(s), the intermedial body performs palimpsestuous embodiment to construe limits, its histories and cultures. Where there is power, there is variation. Herein pleasure sounds. ❁

Notes

- 1 I include the epigraph and this research note in the article because it references a body of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century songs, and in particular, an African-American spiritual song, “Sometimes I Feel like a Motherless Child” which resonated with black communities in these periods. Cardiff and Miller use fragments of this song in the *Her Long Black Hair* audio track/script. As well, Henry Thacker Burleigh, a singer, composer, and arranger, includes “Sometimes I Feel like a Motherless Child” in his 1918 set of arrangements. Burleigh arranged the song in 1917. The Fiske Jubilee sang this song as well. I have located some information on Burleigh and the song in Ellsworth.
- 2 In “Anarchic Bodies: Foucault and the Feminist Question of Experience,” Oksala indicates that “[a]ccording to Butler, Foucault seems to argue for the cultural construction of bodies, but his theory in fact [...] reveals that he also understood them to be outside the reach of power” (102). Oksala correctly problematizes the definition of discourse as linguistic, cultural, and historical. If discourse refers to all three categories, it must be continually re-defined within its context since experience is described through discourse.
- 3 Information referenced in Schaub.
- 4 Research, documentation, and source material for the Seneca village are limited; however, E.R. Wayman references the village in “The Seneca Village Project: Recovering New York’s Lost Past” from

Historical Archaeology (2006). Historians, Roy Rosenzweig and Elizabeth Blackmar provide a well-documented history of New York Central park in which the Seneca village site figures in their 1992 *The Park and the People: A History of Central Park*.

- 5 I contacted Dr. Susan Lowes, an anthropologist and professor at Columbia University for information on the Seneca village project and the New York Historical Society web site. Dr. Lowes has worked with the New York Historical Society on curriculum initiatives related to the Seneca village project site. The New York Historical Society Seneca village website provides nineteenth century newspaper clippings citing various events in Seneca village as well as other documentation. See the unknown source entry in the works cited, which provides some information on the events leading up to the Seneca village razing from a *New York Daily Times* clipping.
- 6 My understanding of narratological is defined as the circulation and production of semiotic instances of discourse occurring in space and time. I include a reference on the following texts because I perceive Cardiff's work as an everyday poetics of utterance and the body. The audio walks read as lyric utterance for me. Dan Shen has a helpful article on narrative processes and definitions in the *Journal of Narrative Theory* pp 141-171. Also, refer to Rimmon-Kenan, for further clarification.
- 7 I refer to Lacan's "Law of the Father" or Symbolic language as the figurative representation of the Other in text. Reference Lacan's *Écrits*, especially the essays "On the Subject Who is Finally in Question" and "The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis."
- 8 Mike Pearson's *In Comes I: Performance, Memory, and Landscape* performs the chorographic as "performance within landscape" (219) and text.

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