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Angela Glaros

"Sing me a song." The request startled me, coming as it did in my first conversation with Alikí Lambrou, a singer and folklore researcher on the Greek island of Skyros. I had called her on my cell phone from the neighboring island of Evia, where I stayed with relatives while preparing to move to Skyros to begin dissertation research on gender and vocal music on the island. Eager to move my project along, I explained it to Alikí and asked for her assistance and direction. She responded by asking me to sing. I sang the first thing that came into my head, a piece from the Greek *smyrneiko* repertory that I had performed with the University of Illinois Balkan Music Ensemble.¹ Alikí complimented my singing and then asked, "Have you ever been in love? Because that's very important if you want to understand this music." I responded that indeed I had been in love and also knew heartbreak. In turn, she sang a powerfully moving Skyrian song to me. Most Skyrian songs, as islanders later told me, sing of love, particularly love that has not been or cannot be fulfilled. That sense of passion and longing reached through the crackling cell phone connection, past the growths on Alikí's vocal cords that roughened her voice, and brought me to tears.

On a cold, rainy day in February 2008 I was returning from my first religious festival (*paniyiri*) on Skyros, piled into a small car with five other women to bump over the muddy country roads back to Hora, the island's capital. Among my fellow passengers was an old woman whom my friend Anna described as an excellent singer. The others sitting next to her in the back seat asked her to sing for us. She replied, "If I sing you a song, will you turn it?" The other women responded noncommittally. After beginning a song that sounded beautiful even though her voice was raspy, the singer stopped, saying, "I can't. My throat is closed."

These stories capture several facets of the relationship between collaboration and aesthetics that I address in this article. Anthropological research on music and sound entails close attention to aesthetics, not only in the musical sense but also in the social sense (Cavanaugh 2009).

Such a notion of musical and social aesthetics holds important implications for those of us interested in bringing together collaborative anthropology and research on music and sound. Scholars of collaborative anthropology demonstrate a strong concern for the power relations that inhere in the ethnographic encounter and strive to allow the voices of their collaborators to emerge in the finished, written product as much as in the process of research (Lassiter 1998, 2005; Papa and Lassiter 2003). More than that, they seek the kind of collaboration where research consultants set the agenda for research as much as voice their opinions about the findings; that is, they envision collaboration as "a space for the coproduction of theory" (Rappaport 2008: 2). Thus collaboration not only represents a

methodological and theoretical intervention in ethnographic practice but also constitutes a form of political activism and engagement.

Located at the interface of anthropology and ethnomusicology, scholars of music and sound speak particularly well to the aesthetic side of collaboration, which in turn carries implications for understanding power. Aesthetics figure significantly in music and other forms of expressive culture; moreover, because music is a social act (Feld 1982; Coplan 1991; Kisliuk 2008; Small 1998), musical aesthetics also entail social aesthetics (Cavanaugh 2009) and likewise an accompanying set of ethical concerns related to power.² Ethnomusicologists in recent decades have begun to express similar concerns for vocality and power in collaborative relationships with their interlocutors in the field, often in the related (though by no means identical) forms of public, applied, or dialogical research (Feld 1987; Seeger 2008; Tilton 1992, 2008). While in the past little attention may have been paid to collaboration in setting a research agenda or in the final written manuscript, many ethnomusicologists also recognize that the same kind of performative collaboration that undergirds their research in the field should also manifest itself in collaborative writing (Kisliuk 2008).

For this reason, I link the communal social musical aesthetic on Skyros— embodied most strikingly in the local notion of “turning the song”— to an aesthetics of collaboration. I draw this term from scholars in the visual arts who have questioned typical notions of authority and authenticity through community- based, collective art production (Dunn and Leeson 1997; Gude 1989). I argue that as we come to understand and embody the aesthetics of our collaborators’ music, we also gain an awareness of their sense of ethics and power relations, an awareness that is often articulated most eloquently in musical performance itself.

Scholarly concerns with aesthetics, performance, and power have taken shape within the intellectual turn toward embodiment in anthropology and the shift within ethnomusicology beginning in the 1970s and 1980s that moved from a focus on music in culture to music as culture.³ The scholars who effected this shift linked aesthetics, emotion, and embodied social action in music, expressive culture, and verbal art (see, for example, Feld 1982; Keil 1979; Seeger [1987] 2004). Music affords an excellent view of social processes because it calls attention to performances and performers (Kisliuk 2008); at the same time music constitutes an expressive, emotional ground for social identities through the use of symbols (Turino 1999). As part of a community’s “soundscape” (Feld 1982; Schafer 1993), musical performance is thus “not so much an ‘expressive form’ that evokes a world of meanings located in other realms of experience, as it is a form of representation that participates fundamentally in constituting those worlds” (Sugarman 1997: 27).

The notion of music as culture rather than as object suggests that music’s primary meanings are social and that “musicking” as a social act is at once embodied and

suffused with emotion (Small 1998). Similarly, music creates an “environment of feeling” that joins the personal and the social within the rubric of tradition (Coplan 1991: 45). Emotional and social relations join with musical aesthetics, as in the heightened state of musical and emotional engagement known in Arabic as tarab, that constitutes “an index of the social relations of musical performance and not merely the product of configurations of melody and rhythm” (Shannon 2003: 73). Such arguments also resonate with recent calls for a “vocal anthropology” that considers the voice as “the material embodiment of social ideology and experience” (Feld et al. 2005: 332). As a social practice that engages aesthetics, emotions, and the body, music therefore offers a unique point of entry for interrogating how collaboration itself might be sensed and sounded.

Performance as Ground for Collaboration

The turn toward embodiment in anthropology and ethnomusicology reveals the importance of performance not just as the object of study but also as the means of study. As researchers, ethnomusicologists have long thought of their own bodies as a research tool with which to investigate embodied expressive culture as a performer (Buchanan 2006; Hood 1960; Rice 2008, 1994). While performance as a research methodology often emerges in the course of musical instruction and participation in rehearsals (Hood 1960; Montell 1996; Rice 1994, 2008; Sugarman 1997; Wong 2008), it builds on the more general theoretical supposition that all fieldwork is inherently performative (Barz 2008; Castañeda 2006). Because ethnographic research on music and sound foregrounds performance, many of us understand our work to be inherently collaborative; while collaborative anthropologists challenge this understanding, I suggest that the collaborative performative modes in which we work— and, as I discuss later in this essay, the challenges presented by those we encounter in the field— nonetheless offer aesthetic insights that can enrich all collaborative research.

While my research concerning aesthetics, authority, and gender in vocal music performance on Skyros was never conducted as an explicitly collaborative project, performance of one kind or another figured prominently in my research design.⁴ As many scholars of music envision collaboration in the field in terms of master-apprentice relationships with “principal teachers” (Nettl 1984) or “masters” (Kippen 2008), so too did I seek an apprenticeship with a teacher who could instruct me in the local singing style. I also planned to seek opportunities to perform at musical events on the island, confident this would help me grasp the local aesthetics that emerged in rehearsals as well as in musician- audience interactions. This lofty goal proved to be a challenge in practice, however, for several reasons. First, as I came to understand, Skyrians did not generally conceive of their local music as transmissible through explicit didactic means, though children on the island certainly took formal lessons in Western classical music. People told me many times, “This music can’t be taught. It must be lived.” The implication was that as a non- Skyrian, I was categorically unable to go deep enough to live the music.⁵

Second, Skyrians tended to view the display of their own musical knowledge with circumspection, if not secrecy. In the end, not establishing a formal musical apprenticeship proved quite informative, revealing to me the contours of knowledge and power on the island.

Moreover, musical performance continued to serve as both figure and ground in my research, acting not only as an object of inquiry but also as the means by which I established my credentials as a knowledgeable inquirer. Even in the absence of formal apprenticeships, I continued to employ singing and listening as a kind of performative methodology. Beginning with my first telephone call to Alikí, singing (even if the song was not of Skyrian origin) emerged as a way to establish my basic musical credentials and to initiate an exchange of knowledge. It also elicited a musical response from Alikí that demonstrated to me the emotional key of the music: namely, passion and longing. During the rainy weeks of November and December 2007, as I was becoming familiar with the island, I spent my nights listening to the field recordings of Skyrian singers on the CDs that accompanied books published by Alikí (Lambrou 2004) and ethnomusicologist Sam Chianis (2003). In this way, by the time I encountered live singing at religious festivals and Carnival, I had already learned some of the songs well enough to sing along.

Even such partial knowledge of local songs served as an effective opening gambit in conversations with Skyrians, as when I visited my son's preschool teacher Sophia and her husband Nikos after church on Good Friday. In the course of our conversation, I sang the first verse of "My Saint George the Skyrian" (Ayie Mou Yiorghi Skyriane), a well-loved song about the island's patron saint. Not only did my performance elicit remarks of approval, but it also prompted Nikos to reminisce about how much his parents had loved to sing and to sing a few favorite verses himself. This exchange led to an invitation to their house for Easter dinner two days later, where I met a local bouzouki player and his wife, who invited me to a party at which they were playing at that night, where we sang rebetika and popular songs with a party of Athenians who were spending the Easter holidays on the island.⁶ My participation in the singing opened up a fruitful conversation with the bouzouki player about how Greek instrumentalists learned by observing good musicians and "stealing" their techniques, rather than through formal instruction or apprenticeship. His remarks recalled Herzfeld's (2004) observations of the same process at work among Cretan artisanal apprentices.

As the end of my fieldwork drew ever nearer, more opportunities for live performance emerged, leading to yet more insights into the contours of the Skyrian musical and social aesthetic. For example, singing songs from the Greek smyrneiko repertory at the end of a festival prompted both accolades and an invitation to an "after-party" at a nearby taverna, where members of our group not only traded songs with me but also commented on my own singing in ways that hinted tantalizingly at possible local criteria for "good singing."

While the immediacy of live singing prompted many of these exchanges, playing recordings for others— whether they were my own solos with the University of Illinois

Balkan Ensemble or new field recordings— also elicited insightful commentary and revealed the extent to which musical knowledge on Skyros turned on the play of display and concealment. For example, when I played a tiny snippet of a local person singing a Skyrian song for my neighbor— without telling him the name of the singer— he spent as much time trying to guess who the singer was as he did commenting on the song itself. From this I understood that for Skyrians, musical knowledge turned on social personhood: my neighbor was not fully able to judge the aesthetic aspects of the performance he heard on the recording until he could place the singer socially.

My experience demonstrates that what began as a “failed” research design, a “non-apprenticeship,” nonetheless revealed some of the most fundamental social and aesthetic frameworks that gave shape to Skyrian singing. All these musical exchanges highlighted the central feature of the Skyrian musical aesthetic, namely, antiphony. Furthermore, they begin to reveal what I describe later as an antiphonal collaborative aesthetic, one that resonates with a social aesthetic of reciprocity. Skyrians employ such a reciprocal concept of “turning” to frame singing as a form of knowledge linking past and present. Given that many Skyrians approach both their musical traditions and their stated social and moral values of reciprocity through tropes of loss and nostalgia, singers who meet a request for a song with the question, “Will you turn it?” express not only the expectation of sharing musical knowledge but also the possibility that such knowledge— and the accompanying social aesthetic— may not be reciprocated. In other words, turning as a social aesthetic both presumes and holds the potential to negate collaboration, revealing a keen awareness of complex fields of power.

“Turning” as Antiphonal Collaborative Aesthetic

The music of Skyros forms part of the subgenre of Greek folk music known as “island” songs (*nisiotika*), a term that encompasses the music of the Cyclades, Sporades, Dodecanese, and the islands of the Saronic Gulf (Holst- Warhaft 2005). This music shares similarities with other genres broadly influenced by Byzantine and Ottoman music, including the music of Greek speakers from the western coasts of contemporary Turkey (*mikrasiatika*), and urban genres of “Smyrna- style” songs (*smyrneika*), and what later developed into the urban genre of *rebetika*.⁷ These genres share a system of musical modes as well as an emphasis on musical improvisation, and many songs from the Asia Minor repertoire are also sung on Skyros.

What Skyrians feel most distinguishes their music, however, is an emphasis on vocal performance, particularly in the category of “table songs” (*tragoudia tis tavlas*) performed at feasts: slow, unmetred, and unaccompanied pieces that feature ornate melismatic ornamentation (a vocal passage in which multiple notes are sung to one syllable of text). Skyrians also sing a cappella versions of dance and processional songs at feasts, though these are more rhythmic and less ornamented. Skyrians explicitly categorize their songs as “Byzantine”; that is, as connected to the same musical system of eight modes (*ihi*) that prevails in Greek Orthodox Christian liturgical chant.⁸ In addition to a modal system, these musical genres— along with *amanedhes* and related vocal genres from Asia Minor— emphasize improvisation and melismatic ornamentation (Chianis 2003: 168) as

well as an antiphonal musical texture.

Within the idiom of Skyrian table songs and related forms of vocal music, “turning” narrowly refers to an antiphonal call- and- response form with a secondary singer or group of singers repeating, and often reversing, the refrain (which Skyrians call a *poundos*) sung by a primary singer or group of singers. Chianis (2003: 182– 83) defines *yirisma* as “turning the text.” I have adopted the definition of “turning the song,” following Amanatidis (2005), precisely to get at metaphorical uses of “turning” that extend beyond particular song texts to the social practice of music and, by extension, to research on music as a social practice. Such an interpretation is borne out by my interviews with singers, who encouraged me to sing along with them and referred to this process also as “turning the song”; one man even applied the term to Orthodox liturgical chanting, inviting me to start chanting a hymn so that he could “turn” it by chanting the next verse.

The Skyrian sense of musical aesthetics resonates with a normative sense of social reciprocity, as evidenced by Skyrians who either bemoaned the loss of the communal sense of reciprocity that characterized the “old days” or who at the very least acknowledged that local society had undergone deep changes in the last forty years.⁹ For example, one singer drew explicit connections between the declining knowledge of local table songs and the decline of reciprocal social relations embodied in the large feasts that used to take place in homes. “We don’t entertain like that anymore,” she said, by way of explaining why her own children did not know any of the old songs: they had lost the social context in which such knowledge transmission could take place. As I discuss in the next section, some Skyrians also used musical performance itself to comment on these shifts.

In grounding the musical aesthetic at work on Skyros in a social aesthetic of reciprocity, I draw on Jillian Cavanaugh’s (2009) definition of social aesthetics in language, as follows: “The concept of the social aesthetics of language is meant to capture the texture of the discourses, practices, ideologies, sentiments, and socioeconomic and political constraints that produce and inform speaking and living. This texture is produced at the intersection of power and emotion” (Cavanaugh 2009: 11, emphasis mine). Adapting this definition to vocal music on Skyros, I submit that the concept of the social aesthetics of singing captures the texture of all those discourses, practices, and constraints that produce and inform singing and listening. By juxtaposing aesthetics and authority in my discussion of the social aesthetic in which Skyrian vocal music is embedded, I wish to capture the very intersection of power and emotion that Cavanaugh identifies as key to the production of that texture. Moreover, as she points out, a notion of power and hierarchy is embedded in the very notion of aesthetics, such that she describes the social aesthetics of language in Bergamo as “the feel of language when hierarchy and sentiment met in the everyday rhythm of speech” (Cavanaugh 2009: 195).

Turning enacts a collective or collaborative sense of the performative, allowing us not merely to “hear one person sing, but to hear an entire social ensemble vocalize” (Seremetakis 1991: 120). As a gloss for a musical practice that establishes and performs

relationships between groups of singers and listeners in the building of a mutual state of camaraderie or enjoyment (known in Greek as *kefi*), turning stands as a “musicking” practice (Small 1998) that constitutes an intersubjective aesthetic mode of sociality, in which music could “connect the ‘we’ and the ‘I’ without subordinating one to the other” (Sarbanes 2006).¹⁰ I question the likelihood that such an intersubjective mode could ever truly be devoid of the workings of power in the way that Sarbanes suggests; moreover, I employ this definition specifically to highlight the interpenetration of aesthetics and social practice, which music underscores so dramatically. In fact, as Michael Herzfeld argues, “to engage in social practice is to commit oneself to a politics of personal value, often translatable into larger idioms of power”(2001: 284).

In the following sections of this article I discuss several narratives drawn from my research in Skyros that illustrate the continuity between musical and social aesthetics and their accompanying moral and political implications, not only for Skyrians but also for myself as a singer and a scholar. While they may not illustrate a collaborative research agenda at work, these narratives of Skyrian collaborative aesthetics nonetheless illustrate the place of aesthetics in collaborative research.

Turning as collaborative memory

It was May, one week after Easter, and I was headed to a religious festival at a tiny church near the sea on the northern part of Skyros. After attending the Divine Liturgy in the hot, tiny chapel, my friend Anna and I filed out of the church to drink coffee or small shots of liqueur, sitting on benches outdoors in the spring sun, and to sample the many sweets that had been prepared. Meanwhile, a small group of men prepared the main feast, goat cooked in tomato sauce with rice. Because she knew I wanted to be wherever there was singing, Anna led me into the refectory (*art’kas*), a small concrete building next to the church, and we found seats on benches at the back of the building. This arrangement of seats on opposite sides of the room spatially embodied the coming musical antiphony, by automatically creating two groups who faced one another.¹¹ As more people filed in, a group began to form around several women, some of whom were seated on my right and others on my left. Smaller numbers of men sat together on both sides, closer to the front of the building. As we ate and drank, the mood became increasingly jovial; around an hour after we entered the *art’kas*, several women began to sing. One of them would start up a song and others would join in, either singing in unison or turning it by antiphonally repeating the verse or responding with the next. However, the turning also often became a moment of correction, where the second singer would jump in with a verse that the first singer had left out or providing alternate wording for the lyrics. The comments that accompanied these forms of turning indicated that correction was expected: “Thank you, that’s how it goes”; or “See? You started up just when I stopped!” In this way they acknowledged the collaborative, participatory nature of the vocal performance.

Such instances of collaborative memory and correction also signify opposition and contestation, in which people express not only opposing views of the correct lyrics to a song but also competing visions of community and social reciprocity. For example, at the

first festival I attended in February 2008 — not long before the Carnival season began — there had been great joking and teasing over the issue of turning the song. Singers on one side of the room would begin a song and then try to cajole a group of women on the opposite side into responding, saying, “Go ahead, turn it!” (Oriste, yiriste to!). The other women — some of whom, significantly, had seated themselves with their backs to the singers, bodily refusing to participate in the antiphonal exchange — answered with a quick spoken recitation of the song’s text, “turning” only in a technical (and textual) sense before returning to their cigarettes and conversation, thus apparently disrupting the joint enactment of community that ideally transpires through aesthetic engrossment in song.

Turning as performance

“Are you here to study cultural matters?” Christina murmured discreetly as she passed in front of my entryway, where I was hanging laundry out to dry. I replied that I was, and after I briefly explained my project, she told me about her own singing and encouraged me to meet with her. The next time she found me out hanging laundry, Christina stopped to sing me a song she had recently composed. As we spoke, she said, “You must sing too, I can hear it in your voice.” On a small island so concerned with gossip, display, and concealment, such encounters on my threshold felt like the meeting of two spies. That feeling came up for me again in June, not long before the end of my time on Skyros, when I visited Christina in her house. Before she sang for me, she took care to close her door and windows so that passersby would not hear her voice.

As we recorded multiple takes of “Two Suns, Two Moons” (Dhio Ilii Dhio Fengaria), a song that accompanies wedding processions through the streets of Skyros and that her late father, a celebrated local clarinetist and wedding musician, had played and sung, Christina invited me to turn the song along with her. Following is a brief transcript of our exchange, with our spoken commentary in bold type interspersed with the song lyrics.

C:	Δύο ήλιοι, δύο φεγγάρια, δύο ήλιοι, δύο φεγγάρια, δύο ήλιοι, δύο φεγγάρια, βγήκανε σήμερα, βγήκανε σήμερα—μπές εσύ, θα γυρίζουμε ξανά	Dhio ilioi, dhio fengaria, dhio ilioi, dhio fengaria, dhio ilioi, dhio fengaria, vghikane simera—bes esi, tha yirizoume ksana	Two suns, two moons, two suns, two moons, two suns, two moons Came out today, came out today—you come in, we'll turn again
C & A:	Δύο ήλιοι, δύο φεγγάρια, Δύο ήλιοι—(?)	Dhio ilioi, dhio fengaria— (??)	(singing together) Two suns, two moons—(inaudible)
A:	δύο φεγγάρια, δύο ήλιοι—	dhio fengaria, dhio ilioi—	Two moons, two suns—
C:	Εκεί είναι χαμηλό, το «ααα»	Eki ine hamilo, to “aaa”	That’s where it’s low, the “aaa”
C & A:	δύο φεγγάρια, δύο ήλιοι, δύο φεγγάρια, βγήκανε σήμερα	dhio fengaria, dhio ilioi, dhio fengaria, vgikane simera	(singing together) Two moons, two suns, two moons came out today—
C:	Το ίδιο—	To idio—	The same—
A:	βγήκανε σήμερα. Είναι χαμηλά για μένα!	vghikane simera. Ine hamila yia mena!	Came out today. It’s low for me! (laughter)
C:	Το—λέω, το γυρίζω εγώ— τ’όνα στο—έτσι πάει, τώρα ο ένας, θα το (αλλάζουμε?). . .	to—leo, to yirizo eghe— to’na sto—etsi paei, tora o enas, tha to (allaksoume?)	The—I’m singing, I’m turning it— One in—that’s how it goes, now one, we’ll (change) it . . .

Christina’s comments revealed some of the many permutations of turning that I encountered on Skyros. In the middle of a session that positioned Christina as the musical “expert,” she nevertheless drew me in and insisted that I sing with her, even though I barely knew the song and was singing at an interval of at least a fifth below my normal range. Like most Skyrians who spoke to me about music, Christina seemed to identify turning, either directly or indirectly, as a central feature of song. While knowledge of songs— their melodies, their lyrics, their histories— and vocal styles remained essential to a good performance, the ways Christina and other Skyrians used turning also made it clear that they grasped the broader social aesthetic upon which it rested, which united

singing together with drinking, smoking, and crying together.

Turning as emotional engagement

In a crowded café on the last day of Carnival, with the goat bells of the masqueraders thundering in the background, I asked Alikí Lambrou if she thought it would be all right to teach some Skyrian songs to members of the University of Illinois Balkan Ensemble when I returned to the United States. Her approval would afford me the ability to engage in another common ethnomusicological practice: performing music learned in the field for audiences at home, often in the context of “world music” ensembles.

Although I returned to Illinois in 2008, I did not attempt to perform any Skyrian songs until I had already written a large portion of my dissertation. I sang two songs at Balkanalia performances in April 2010. These performances revealed singing as a technique not just for research in the field but also for interpretation back home in ways that were joined to the process of writing. Not only did I require almost two years of repeated listening to recordings; I also needed time to reflect upon what Skyrians had told me about the significance of their music, before I could render the songs in a way that captured at least a grasp of their aesthetic considerations. Finally, these performances offered me a way to “turn” the songs, to send them back to Skyros, though admittedly from a physical and temporal remove, for the next time I returned to Skyros, I planned to play the recordings for Alikí, Christina, and other singers with whom I had worked.

When I began in the following year to teach Skyrian songs to other members of the ensemble, however, I encountered new issues. Foremost among these was the question of how to help them to sing the Skyrian musical aesthetic, rooted in the kind of longing Alikí had expressed in that first telephone call. After all, I myself had already experienced such a longing at a significant remove. Likewise, I struggled with issues of authority and power: to teach a song implied a mastery that I definitely did not possess. As I continued to coach the singers that year, I gained a new understanding of the apparent shyness and reluctance of Skyrian women like Christina, who, in spite of her love of singing, had sung for me with her doors and windows closed. While gendered constraints on singing explained some of the apparent anxiety about being overheard (Glaros 2011), it was also true that these particular women were not yet “elders” and so possessed only partial authority over the music.

My own conflicted reactions to occupying a place of relative authority regarding Skyrian songs helped confirm this conclusion. While I had at least a sense of how to hint at the aesthetic of longing while singing myself, teaching it forced me to ask on whose authority I, a GreekAmerican not even of Skyrian background, could claim to perform this music, much less teach it to others. In spite of these very real concerns over power and authority— questions with which Skyrians themselves grappled— as the year progressed, my fellow singers and I entered into a deep emotional engagement with the songs, and in our interpretations we worked to understand the social environment in which they were embedded. Most important, we sought in our performances to convey the entangled senses of emotional longing and social belonging that shape both the

Skyrian musical aesthetic and the claims to authority that singing such an aesthetic entails.

Performing these songs in a Balkan music ensemble led to insights that further tied emotion to the Skyrian musical aesthetic. At the dress rehearsal for our spring concert the entire ensemble heard for the first time the “Skyrian Suite” that I and some of the singers had arranged, in which we performed three songs, including a song with the untranslated title *Yer’Yerali*. After hearing this song, a Turkish singer in our group suggested that the expression *yer’yerali* might have come from Turkish, in which case it would mean something like “my love, my wounded one.”¹² Such an interpretation certainly fits with the song’s lyrics, which speak of passionate longing and the wounds of love, as well as with the clearly Turkish- derived expression *sevdalim* that also appears in several versions of the song (Chianis 2003: 87; Lambrou 2004: cd 2, tracks 31– 33). It may therefore illuminate a term that “could not be adequately explained by the people of Skyros” (Chianis 2003: 231).

Additionally, the singer’s insight underscores Aliki’s observation about the correspondences between Skyrian songs and those of the Asia Minor (*mikrasiatika*) repertoire, which frequently contain Turkish borrowings. Indeed, such borrowings typically serve to express heightened emotions, as in the word *aman* (mercy), the long vowels of which lend themselves to elaborate melodic and emotional ornamentation in several regional musical genres.¹³ Interpreting *Yer’Yerali* in this way further highlights the entanglement of longing and belonging in Skyrian music, which often uses Turkish words to express complex emotions of love and mournfulness, words that also index the entangled history and power relations of Greek speakers who originated in territories now governed by Turkey.

Our performance of *Yer’Yerali* constituted a layered form of turning, for not only were we turning the song from the heart of the Midwest, but we also “turned the text” by suggesting a new translation of the lyrics, and we performed the kind of emotional engagement Skyrians expect from the most satisfying song performances.

Turning as metaphor for political practice

Finally, I offer a more metaphoric notion of turning, one that arose during a conversation I had with Aliki Lambrou on one of the last nights of Carnival in 2008. As we walked together down the winding, narrow path that led to my house and on to hers toward the sea, Aliki spoke of her dissatisfaction with the state of “culture” on Skyros, including the way that people had largely failed to acknowledge her own efforts to document and preserve local traditions in her writings (Lambrou 1994, 2004). She linked these traditions to the lives of older women on Skyros— many of whom have served as informants in her own research— women who performed back- breaking labor every day to feed and raise families, and who passed on cultural knowledge and moral precepts without benefit of literacy, and for little thanks. Aliki agreed with my suggestion that her practice of naming such informants in writing constituted a form of activism, and she considered how such reciprocal practices of acknowledgment reflected on researchers as

well as on the community as a whole. For instance, she mentioned another scholar who, she claimed, had never publicly acknowledged the hospitality and assistance provided by her family in early research visits to the island. As we parted that night, I realized that Alikí's remarks were more than complaints lodged with a sympathetic listener: they were also directed at me as a researcher. Alikí's indirect admonition metaphorically extended the notion of turning the song and framed the moral and political necessity that I acknowledge her contributions to my own research. I see my public acknowledgment of her role in framing my understandings of Skyrian song as a kind of reciprocal turning, an imperfect attempt to enter into the collaborative mode of music making and knowledge production, a response to the first song she sang for me over the telephone, from her island to my island.

Conclusions

I have described several facets of turning the song on Skyros that point to its importance both as a key feature of musical aesthetics and as a gloss for the underlying social aesthetic of reciprocity that allows Skyrians to use musical performances to comment on social belonging and relationships of power. I presented these examples in order to illustrate some of the ways in which we as researchers in music and sound might bring aesthetics to bear on our efforts to engage in collaborative research. As these examples suggest, we cannot assume that musical performance, as an embodied, collaborative form of social engagement, will necessarily translate into the kind of collaborative research that ultimately shifts relations of power, even when the researcher adopts a performative approach to research, an approach designed to enter into dialogue with interlocutors. I would argue, however, that close attention to performance in the field, and even our imperfect attempts at "turning" from a distance, allow our interlocutors to impart their aesthetic categories in a way that begins to build their voices into our research. Paying careful attention in this way to the aesthetics of collaboration, to how collaboration is sensed and sounded, can enrich our understanding of collaboration more generally and of the power relations that inhere in ethnographic research. After all, our interlocutors' voices come to us already laden with power. It may be the power to bring tears to our eyes, as Alikí's voice did to mine in our first phone call, showing me the emotional force of Skyrian music. Likewise, their voices may show us the power relations embodied in local aesthetics, as with the old woman in the car who asked her fellow Skyrians, "If I sing you a song, will you turn it?" While such a question carries the possibility of refusal, it likewise carries the possibility of reciprocal social relations that may also keep the throat open.

Notes

1. Smyrneiko or "Smyrna- style" music was a popular urban genre among Greek-speaking populations in the city of Smyrna (modern-day Izmir) and other urban centers along the western coast of Asia Minor in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Smyrneiko songs also figure in the early history of Greek rebetika (or rembetika), another urban genre; for a detailed description and historical discussion of rebetika, see Holst 1983; Holst-Warhaft 1998, 2005; Petropoulos 2000.

2. While Cavanaugh uses “social aesthetics” in reference to language, I adapt it here to musical performance, as discussed later in this article.

3. See, for example, Csordas (1989, 1994), Farnell (1999), Featherstone et al. (1991), Lock (1993), Scheper- Hughes and Lock (1987).

4. The research on which this article is based was conducted in Skyros, Greece, from September 2007 to June 2008. The project received funding from a Fulbright iie fellowship, a Tullia Magrini Scholarship Award for Research on the Anthropology of Music and the Mediterranean, and a Nelle M. Signor Fellowship in International Relations from the University of Illinois at Urbana- Champaign. Write- up was partially supported by a Paleologos Graduate Fellowship from the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America.

5. Interestingly, however, so were the children of some Skyrian singers, who recognized that the conditions under which they themselves had learned and lived the songs no longer existed, such that they could not pass the traditions on to their children.

6. Rebetika is a genre of urban popular music that arose in Greek- speaking communities in Asia Minor around the end of the nineteenth century and became identified with an urban underclass following the mass migration of Asia Minor Greeks to major cities in Greece after 1922.

7. For more on these genres, and particularly the relationship between smyrneika and rebetika, see Holst 1983 (1975) and Holst- Warhaft (1998).

8. See Kallimopoulou (2009) for a discussion of the connections between Byzantine music and urban forms including rebetika.

9. Bearing in mind, of course, that while such statements do not necessarily evidence factual reality, they certainly correspond to a form of “structural nostalgia” (Herzfeld 1997) by which the past is always seen as superior to the present. This performance of nostalgia represents a rhetorical use of local social values rather than a statement of “truth.”

10. Kefi denotes a state of high spirits, camaraderie, and engrossment. Related terms in Turkish and Arabic refer to similar states of enjoyment or engrossment.

11. This recalls Seremetakis’s (1991) discussion of the Greek prefix anti containing a notion of face- to- face relations.

12. My thanks to Özlem Asma Arıkan for this insight.

13. These include the music of the Aegean islands, Asia Minor music (mikrasiatika), and the related urban genres of rebetika and smyrneika.

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