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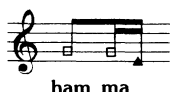
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## SOME ASPECTS OF INUIT VOCAL GAMES

Jean-Jacques Nattiez

**T**his article surveys some aspects of the research dealing with the “vocal games” of the Canadian Inuit. These vocal games are somewhat competitive, played most of the time by women who face each other at close quarters; sometimes, they hold each other’s shoulders. The game stops when one of the women runs out of breath or laughs. The “ludic” (in the sense of playful) intent in this genre is rather dominant, but partners are nevertheless valued for their endurance and for the high quality of the sounds they produce.

The motif is the basic construction unit of a vocal game, for example:



In fact, the motif is made up of a morpheme, a rhythm, an intonation contour and a pattern of voiced and voiceless, inspired and expired sounds that are notated with special symbols explained later. The motif is repeated a certain number of times, and thus constitutes a kind of phrase. One of the women might decide to change motives, and so starts a new phrase. Most of the time, the motif of the second voice is identical to the first voice’s, but occasionally it is completely different, as in example 1. In the frequent situation where the second voice imitates the first most of the time, the total effect results from the motivic superimposition of both voices, canonically dephased, such as can be seen in the complete transcription of a vocal game in example 2.

Example 1. Vocal game with different motifs in the two voices.

Example 1 consists of two musical staves. The top staff is in treble clef and contains a sequence of notes with lyrics: 'ham ma he ha ham ma ha ha he ha ham ma ha he he ha'. The bottom staff is in bass clef and contains a sequence of notes with lyrics: 'hā- ā'. Both staves have a series of percentage signs (%) indicating a specific rhythmic or intonational pattern. The bottom staff also includes a small box containing the letter 'u' at the end of the sequence.

Example 2. Complete vocal game in which the second voice imitates the first.

1. ham ma ham ma etc...

2. ham ma ham ma etc...

1. ha- heg etc... ud la etc...

2. ha- heg etc... ha- heg ud la etc...

1. ham ma

2. ham ma

○ : uncertain pitch

The first publicly accessible recording of a vocal game goes back to 1955 and is found at the end of the first side of Laura Boulton's "The Eskimos of Hudson Bay and Alaska," performed by Caribou Inuit children, on Folkways records. Today other records of these vocal games are available (see discography; for a detailed review of these records, see Nattiez 1980), and of course they have been recorded many times by anthropologists and ethnomusicologists, occasionally supplemented by field work.<sup>1</sup> Since 1974 the Groupe de Recherches en Sémiologie Musicale of the University of Montreal has been regularly collecting them and has produced several articles.<sup>2</sup> A vast synthesis of the research results is under way and should be published within a few years. In this paper it is not my objective to summarize the detailed results to be published in the book, but instead to present some already accessible data about this genre and to share some methodological reflections inspired by the research of our group.

## DISTRIBUTION AND TERMINOLOGY

Generally speaking, vocal games are found throughout the Canadian Central Arctic. Their presence was never witnessed in Greenland or in the USSR. As for Alaska, Hawkes (1916:123) vaguely alludes to something similar that was seemingly never seen or heard again after that. He may have dealt with immigrants to the area, as did David Damas, who recorded

some Netsilik people in the Mackenzie area for the National Museum of Man in 1963.

Vocal games are concentrated in Northern Quebec and South Baffin Land and amongst the Igloolik, Caribou, and Netsilik Inuit. Until recently, the Quebec and Montreal research teams expended most of their efforts on the *katajjait* (sg., *katajjaq*) of Northern Quebec and South Baffin Land where the “guttural” “throat-sound” is so typical; we consequently always used the term “throat-games.” However, my own recordings from Northern Baffin Land convinced us that what in that area was called *pirkusirtuk* did not always include throat sounds. This was further confirmed by Pelinski’s recordings of the Caribou Inuit, Cavanagh’s among the Netsilik Inuit, and Harvey’s in both areas, where the generic term used is *nipaquhiit*.<sup>3</sup>

There are two other reasons for avoiding the expression “throat-games.” First, modern phonetics (Ladefoged 1975) no longer considers “guttural” sounds to be a relevant feature in articulatory phonetics; moreover, the name, “throat-games” (personal communication by Jean Molino), was never a literal translation of *katajjaq*; we never really did elucidate its exact meaning. And when Inuit interpreters speak of “throat-games” or “throat-singing,” they are in fact repeating an expression they have learned from the white man. For these reasons we now prefer to speak of “vocal games.”

The problem of nomenclature becomes even more difficult on the West side of Hudson Bay, because it seems that amongst the Netsilik and Caribou Inuit, we are dealing with two genres of vocal games: (1) the games on repeated motives, as in Northern Quebec; and (2) the ones, as among the Netsilik and Caribou Inuit, in which a series of morphemes creates a kind of narration. As far as we know, the Caribou and Netsilik Inuit do not make a linguistic distinction between the two, whereas we would tend to. Among the Caribou Inuit it seems that the games with motives use a kitchen pot as resonator, whereas those with text do not. In the case of the games with repeated motives, the purpose of the resonator might be to homogenize the sounds. In games with a text, even if we deal with riddles as demonstrated by Cavanagh (1976), word recognition remains important.

## ETHNOGRAPHIC MEANING

There are two main trends in the anthropological interpretation of the vocal games: (1) unifunctional; and (2) symbolic/multifunctional. The unifunctional approach emphasizes relationships between the vocal games

and some particular phenomenon that, to our knowledge, could only occasionally be linked to the games. This appears in the paper by Saladin d'Anglure, for example, who believes the katajjaq to be a kind of intermediary language between speech and music, specific to women:

Hidden language of infra-language, "katajjaq" can only be understood by the dead or their representation in the form of Northern lights which manifest themselves through whispering or whistling; it can also be understood by "Tunnituarruit," the flying heads, that is, humans without bodies but with characteristics of women and birds whose language it is. "Katajjaq" is also a language understood by women, whether they are seductive birds, game or dead souls from men's point of view; "katajjaq" is sometimes done in imitation, either of nature or of geese courting cries or of other animals (1978:91).

The second trend—our interpretation—is that vocal games are *symbolic* and *multifunctional forms*. First, they are *forms*. The vocal games, regardless of the occasions in which they appear, feature a certain number of formal traits: the combination of voiced, voiceless, expired or inspired sounds, intonation contours, rhythmic patterns, and so on. In spite of the astonishing variety of combinations of the constituent elements, there is a basic formal style of the vocal games.

Furthermore, they are *symbolic forms*. The vocal game is a kind of "host-structure" susceptible to absorbing sound sources of various origins: meaningless syllables and archaic words, names of ancestors or of old people, animal-names, toponyms, words designating something present at the time of the performance, animal cries, natural noises, and tunes borrowed from petting-songs, drum-dance songs, or from religious hymns. The insertion of an enigmatic text by the Caribou and Netsilik Inuit could very well be part of the same procedure.

Finally, vocal games are symbolic forms that are also *multifunctional*. It is not possible to reduce their function to a performance in some feasts, to a conjunction with northern lights, to the imitation of some particular animal, or any other such isolated event. We know that, in the past, they could be performed by two people, sometimes by three or four, at any moment of the day, month or year. Although they were performed most of the time by women, they could also be played by and with men or young boys. Also, they were enjoyed as entertainment, to help keep the baby quiet, or to celebrate the return of the hunters in the big communal igloo. They could also be a team game, played while traveling, inserted within sequences of other games, and so on. They probably also had some relationship with shamanism, but that remains difficult to elucidate (on this particular point,

see Nattiez 1983); some Inuit have said it was a breathing exercise in preparation for bad weather conditions; others see it as a form of educative riddle. While the “ludic,” or playful, function of the vocal games can be said to be dominant, it remains necessary to distinguish between circumstances where playing for playing’s sake is emphasized and others where playing for winning dominates (Beaudry 1978b: 35-9). It is again impossible to reduce the function of the games to their ludic aspects. An Inuk has to win, but with *merit!* There exists a gradation in the difficulties of sound production; and you have to win with *beautiful sounds*, as expressed in the learning sessions (Beaudry 1980b). There is a quality of sound to strive for! Virtuosity and aesthetics are not foreign to Inuit vocal games.

The above enumeration of functions should make it obvious that there is no constant situation that would provide a clue to a “deep meaning.” Vocal games no doubt have a symbolic dimension, but semiotics should not enclose the phenomena under consideration within too narrow a symbolism. Its task is to define the exact position and specific articulation of the games. “Symbolitis,” if I may suggest a new kind of illness, would lead us to believe that Americans eat hamburgers in order to consume Americanness. We believe it is better to understand the vocal games within a theory of “diverse circumstances” as noted by Finnegan for oral poetry (1977: 241-3); Beaudry has confirmed this for the Inuit (1979). As in all other games and musical occasions, vocal games are never linked to a single circumstance. They may be performed in a vast number of contexts, between which there seems to be no relation of chronological precedence. The semiotical consequence of this theory is important. Contrary to what a narrow functionalism would lead us to think, variety of functions does *not* imply a variety of corresponding forms. In fact, the entire problem of the relation between form and function needs to be revised. Forms may remain while given functions disappear and vice-versa; that is, functions may remain while new forms are adopted.

## STYLISTIC ANALYSIS

Turning now to the progression and structure of a vocal game, since we will now be referring specifically to our research in Northern and Southern Baffin Land, we will use the term “katajjaq.”

In their papers in *Ethnomusicology*, Beaudry (1978a) and Charron (1978) demonstrate that it is possible to describe the katajjaq from an articulatory point of view, using voiced, voiceless, expired and inspired sounds, as illustrated in the following figure:

	Expirated	Inspirated
Voiced	□	△
Voiceless	■	▲

The Beaudry-Charron system was applied to the transcription of nearly five hundred katajjait from four villages of Northern Quebec and South Baffin Land. Detailed analysis was applied to 74 katajjait from Payne Bay. This allowed shortcuts to be used in the analysis of the corpuses of the three other settlements. Such a large sample was used because we needed a proper series of pieces in each village to discover its stylistic features, and we intend later on to compare the style of the genre in the four villages.

The katajjaq of example 2, like the 73 others of the Payne Bay corpus, was the subject of a paradigmatic analysis (ex. 3), based on the criterion of analogies within a given parameter. So, all the motives of the first column have an identical rhythm ( $\square \square \blacktriangle$ ), an identical morpheme (*hamma*), and beyond pitch differences a common melodic contour (-.-). The numbers indicate the amount of repetitions of a nonvaried motif. When most of the features remain identical, as in the third column, the change is indicated in the paradigm itself (here, the change from the morpheme *haheg* to the morpheme *udlu*). Finally, it may be difficult to decide whether to locate units within one paradigm or another: the fifth paradigm shares similarities with the second, as indicated by the arrow.

Example 3. Paradigmatic analysis of the vocal game in example 2.

The musical notation consists of three staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. It contains a sequence of notes and rests, with some notes marked with squares and triangles. Below the first staff, the text "ham ma" is written. The second staff contains a similar sequence of notes and rests, with a bracket and the number "[2]" indicating a repetition. Below the second staff, the text "ham ma" is written. The third staff contains a similar sequence of notes and rests, with a bracket and the number "[2]" indicating a repetition.


The musical notation consists of ten staves. The first staff has a single note with a cloud-like symbol below it. The second staff has two measures: the first with the lyrics "ham ma" and the second with "ha heg [3] ha heg". The third staff has a single measure with a cloud-like symbol and the number "[2]" below it. The fourth staff has two measures: the first with a cloud-like symbol and the lyrics "ud lu [2] ud lu", and the second with a bracketed section containing two measures of "ud lu". The fifth staff has a single measure with the lyrics "ham ma" and a cloud-like symbol. The sixth staff has a single measure with a cloud-like symbol. The seventh staff has two measures: the first with a cloud-like symbol and the second with a cloud-like symbol. The eighth staff has a single measure with a cloud-like symbol. The ninth staff has a single measure with the number "[2]" below it. The tenth staff has a single measure with a cloud-like symbol.

The 74 paradigmatic transcriptions were subsequently summarized in simplified and synthetic charts. Since the chart for the katajjaq that we just examined is a little complex, example 4 contains the chart of another katajjaq. The principle we have followed here is to indicate in the upper part of





the chart the parameter that remains constant during the entire katajjaq, then to consider lower levels in the hierarchy of its structure towards smaller and smaller units. In example 4 the rhythm of these motives and the types of sounds used remain identical during the entire katajjaq. The motives are first distinguished from each other by morphemes, and finally by intonation contours. The numbers at the bottom of the chart indicate how many times the motif is repeated. Thus one understands exactly what each phrase of the katajjaq is made of: this katajjaq consists of three phrases (the last is probably unfinished) encompassing respectively nine, five and one occurrences of their proper motives. Example 5 contains charts of three other games.






Example 4. Synthetic chart for a three-phrase vocal game.

Rhythm, respiration voiced / voiceless			
Morpheme	gāhā́	udla	
Intonation contour	/ - - /	/ - - - /	/ - - - /
Number of occurrences	9	5	1

Example 5. Synthetic charts for three vocal games.



	
hamma	
/ - - - /	/ - - - /

	
/ - - - /	
hamma	udlu

			
hamma		udlu	
/ - - /	/ - - /	/ - - /	/ - - /
			

Any aspect of katajjaq's substance can in turn become dominant in relation to the others. In the katajjaq of example 2, contour takes precedence over the morpheme used. Its synthetic chart, more complex than the examples used to illustrate the chart principle, is given in example 6.

Example 6. Synthetic chart for the vocal game in example 2.

			
/ - - /	/ - - /	/ - - /	/ - - /
hamma		haheg	
3 4	1 (+  ) 1	3 3	1 1
		udlu	
		1 1	2 1
hamma			
3 4	1		


Classifying these charts led to a taxonomy of the various types of katajjaq in Payne Bay. From a formal point of view, there are three types of katajjaq in this corpus:

1. "Melodic" katajjaq (20% of the corpus): they include an often preexisting melody (ex.7).


Example 7. “Melodic” katajjaq.







2. Those which follow a fairly fixed form in the usual musical sense of the word (43% of the corpus). This group is subdivided in three subfamilies. In the first, a motif “A” repeated most of the time three times, followed once by a motif “B,” forms a phrase that can be repeated x number of times, then a new phrase starts, and so on. Here is a synthetic chart for such a katajjaq:

	
/ - - /	/ - - /
[ hamma <sup>3</sup>	hamma <sup>1</sup> <sup>2</sup>
haheg <sup>3</sup>	haheg <sup>1</sup>
udlu <sup>3</sup>	udlu <sup>1</sup>
[ hamma <sup>3</sup>	hamma <sup>1</sup> <sup>2</sup>
haheg <sup>2</sup>	haheg <sup>2</sup>

In the second sub-group, the morphemes remain the same throughout the game. So, its form is Ax - By. For instance:

	
hamma	ehor
/ - - /	/ - - /
13	16
16	15
21	12
17	5

The third can be described as  $[A3 - B]^x - [C^3 - D]^x$ , where A and B are always *hamma*, and C and D always *ahor*. The differentiation between A and B, and C and D comes from the intonation contour:

hamma		ahor	
			
/- - -/	/- - -/	/- - -/	/- - -/
$\begin{bmatrix} 3 & 1 \end{bmatrix}^2$	$\begin{bmatrix} 3 & 1 \end{bmatrix}^2$	$\begin{bmatrix} 3 & 1 \end{bmatrix}^3$	$\begin{bmatrix} 3 & 1 \end{bmatrix}^3$
$\begin{bmatrix} 3 & 1 \end{bmatrix}^3$	$\begin{bmatrix} 3 & 1 \end{bmatrix}^3$	$\begin{bmatrix} 3 & 1 \end{bmatrix}^3$	$\begin{bmatrix} 3 & 1 \end{bmatrix}^3$
$\begin{bmatrix} 3 & 1 \end{bmatrix}^4$	$\begin{bmatrix} 3 & 1 \end{bmatrix}^4$	$\begin{bmatrix} 3 & 1 \end{bmatrix}^2$	$\begin{bmatrix} 3 & 1 \end{bmatrix}^2$

3. A heterogeneous family (37%), much more aleatoric than the second type, with four subfamilies. The two first are dominated respectively by nasal sounds and “throat” sounds, the third one is based on the morpheme *iginahorlahe*, and the fourth one on *unnaga unna i a*.

As we have seen before, there exists a hierarchy (specific to each kataj-jaq) of morphemes, intonation contours, voiced-voiceless, and inspired-expirated patterns. Each of the hierarchical types can be combined with the formal types we just described, according to the chart in example 8.

Example 8: Hierarchy of the parameters according to the classes of katajjait

I Melodic katajjait		II Fixed form		III Other katajjait
	Sub-family I	Sub-family II	Sub-family III	
C	V-VI	V-VI	M	V-VI V-VI
M	C	M	V-VI C	C M
V-VI	M	C	C or V-VI	M or C

C intonation contour

M morpheme

V voiced (sounds)

VI voiceless (sounds)

It is certainly not surprising that we never encounter two absolutely identical katajjait. What is truly remarkable is that this constant diversity results from the combination of such a small number of basic elements. This constitutes the basis for creativity within katajjaq-playing.

### COMPOSITIONAL PROCESSES

This stylistic description does not describe the active compositional process at work when two women perform the game. This "poietic" or compositional process seems to be based on two types of *stocks*, present in the informant's culture:

1. A stock of basic parameters we discovered from the paradigmatic analysis: from the charts, we may establish an inventory of rhythms, intonation contours and morphemes;
2. A stock of formal structures integrating these basic parameters. These structures, which function as a formal framework, produce either constant motives found in several settlements, or new ones resulting from original combinations.

In the context of a living performance, each couple uses certain aspects of the katajjaq performed before, combining them with new elements taken from the stock. Example 9 summarizes a recording session of fourteen katajjait by four women (a, b, c, d). Each new piece takes from a preceding a part of the totality of its information contour, or of its morphemes, or of both.

From a methodological point of view, this description of the compositional process has been borrowed from the observation of the transcription and from the analysis based upon them. Semiotic jargon would say that a *model* for the *poietical processes* has been *induced* from *neutral analysis*. Thus, we cannot but endorse a remark made by our colleague Cavanagh about drum dances: "As the Inuit composers provide few clues to the process of composition in their comments about making songs and their evaluation of works in the present repertoire, insight into this process can only be gained by an intensive analysis of the songs themselves" (1978: 138).

Recent developments in ethnoscience should have made us feel ashamed of not having used native statements for the description of phenomena so deep in the minds of informants. We do not intend to downgrade the importance of such statements and theories when they are accessible but of course caution is advisable: no Inuk ever declared that he was choosing from a stock of patterns present in this culture!

Example 9. Chart of a recording session of vocal games.

	Informants	Intonation contour	Morphemes
1	a b		panega hamaha
2	c d		kataga humpuk
3	c d		kataga hummituk
4	c d		hummituk sekova
5	c d		kullo oka
6	a c		kokeba higallo
7	a b	<i>id.</i>	<i>id.</i>
8	<i>id.</i>	<i>id.</i>	<i>id.</i>
9	a b		kullo oka
10	b c		koka
11	a b	<i>id.</i>	<i>id.</i>
12	<i>id.</i>	<i>id.</i>	kullo oka
13	c d		hamma habeba
14	b d	<i>id.</i>	<i>id.</i>

But such an inductive method is not the only one. We started from it, but we could have followed another way. The recording, translation, transcription and analysis of learning sessions (Beaudry 1980b) convinced us of the emic relevance of our conclusions drawn from the neutral analysis. This analysis has worked as a hypothesis that another source of information such as learning sessions, carefully evaluated, has confirmed. From a semiotical standpoint we can say that the discourse on music of a native

music maker is of a different symbolic nature than the compositional process itself. It is neither a reflection of nor equivalent to this process but rather, a representation of it that is quite different. Thus, it is not surprising that learning about compositional processes requires complementary methods. Within the limitations of this article, it seems necessary at this stage to insist on only one point, that is, the relevance of the study of *form* for the understanding and reconstruction of a process of composition that is of a psychic nature.

### CULTURAL EXPLANATION

Is it possible to delve more deeply into the understanding of Katajjait? In a first stage, we thought we had discovered that this manner of constructing katajjaq (by motive concatenation) was a feature specific to the genre. Then we thought it was specific to Inuit games, since Beaudry (1978b) demonstrated that it was possible to form a new game from the combination of different games. At the same time, we thought we might have to go even further because Charron (1977) had discovered that Inuit myths were constructed in the same manner.

Is this not a specific trait of Inuit culture? Another argument might reinforce this hypothesis. A nonconcern for time appears in the Inuit way of *thinking*. The anthropologist Carpenter, in analyzing drum-dance song texts, reminds us that there are no *causal* relations between the different themes of a "poem": "In Eskimo thought, it is the non-linear pattern which has value, not the sequence of causal relationship or comparison (1955: 102)....Ohnainewk was interested only in creating a living pattern and he took no care to follow a temporal sequence" (1955: 105). Thus, a basic feature of Inuit thinking might be expressed in this poetry, that is: a nonlinear concept of time. In yet another text on myths, Carpenter again states: "Chronological sequence is of no importance to the Aivilik. They are interested in the event itself, not in its place within a related series of events. Neither antecedents nor consequents are sought, for they are largely unconcerned with the causal or telic relationship between events or acts" (1968: 42). Should we try to establish a link between the Inuit *concept* of time and the musical *structure* of some genres?

Considering katajjaq in this manner is indeed tempting. A katajjaq does not begin and does not end, in the sense that a Beethoven sonata begins with a theme that it develops and then resolves in a conclusion. Katajjaq is a-telic; it provides chronological order to a stock of elements which is, so to speak, vertical. The hypothesis that the structure of Katajjaq reflects the Inuit attitude towards time is very attractive indeed. By establishing a link to a

feature of thought, we might have fulfilled contemporary requirements for a *cultural* approach to a phenomenon. But we cannot take such an explanation for granted. If we did, would we not be as casual as the great Panofsky (1957) when he dared to propose an analogy between the *Summa Theologica* of St. Thomas and the structure of gothic cathedrals?

We have a particular reason to doubt the legitimacy of such an approach: in the hypothesis of a link between the katajjaq and the Inuit concept of time there is not only the katajjaq to be considered but, as we mentioned before, genres that are as formally different from each other as myth, poetry and the drum dance. Why, if the culture “explains” the katajjaq, should the immanent structure of the vocal games be so different from the structure of the music of the drum dance? Pelinski (1981: 122, 156) demonstrated among the Caribou Inuit the existence of identical *topoi* from one village to another. Accordingly, the drum dance offers an analogy with the katajjait: some motives of the katajjait may be found in all of the villages where the genre does exist. But the stereotyped motives of the drum dance do not reveal the same syntactical relations among their own parts as those of the katajjaq do. Even assuming that something exists in the culture which determines the form of the katajjaq, it is enough to find among the Inuit culture various symbolic forms *irreducible to each other* for us to avoid the pretence of explaining each of them exclusively by the culture.

We must turn to semiotics in order to handle this problem: the myth, poetry, drum dance, and katajjaq are *specific* symbolic forms. How could a general concept of time explain them? In fact, we need to question the functioning of such kinds of analysis: when a scholar establishes a link between a cultural feature and a formal feature of a genre, the hypothesis is always based on an act of external perception, on a *construction* by the scholar, whatever his degree of familiarity with the culture. We still have the right to ask him what type of *causality* he may be using, on which *mediation* he is grounding a link between the concept of time and certain aspects of the genre under consideration.

In fact, only a particularly advanced ethnography could shed some light on the discussion. First it would be necessary to establish how time is subjectively experienced among the Inuit, assuming the existence of minimal semantic features regarding the concept of time that would be common to all the Inuit. Then it would still have to be demonstrated that an Inuk establishes a link between this experienced time and the genre itself and at which level: the one of the structures, of the performance modalities, of the tempo? *A priori* we do not see why an Inuk would necessarily establish a connection between two symbolic configurations as distinct as the general concept of time in his culture and the genre katajjaq, especially when other factors such as historical evolution may explain its form more directly.



What a semiotical approach to the nature of symbolic forms in general invites us to consider is that a given symbolic form is necessarily, and may be above all, the historical product of anterior symbolic forms. Present-day culturalism has a tendency to forget that *music generates music*. If a musical style is what it is at a given moment of its evolution, it is because certain specific features of a prior style have, after separation, confusion, or transformation, given birth to a new style. Before becoming the product of a culture (how?), a musical genre is a product of a history of forms. And even if this history is difficult, if not impossible, to reconstruct for the music of an oral tradition, the situation between ethnomusicology and musicology does not differ: there does exist a continuity of music (Kolodin 1969) that is an essential semiotical property of symbolic forms.

It is now possible to see the methodological unity that brings together the various types of research outlined here: the task of musical semiotics is not to reduce the phenomena it studies to univocal and global explanations, but to describe the specificity of forms present in a culture and grasp the nature of the relations existing among them.

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#### NOTES

1. The first anthropological collections were probably those of the Caribou Inuit, recorded by Jean Gabus in 1938 (Archives of the Neuchâtel Ethnographic Museum); then, by Van den Steenhoven from the same area in 1950 and by Gilles Lefebvre from the Belcher Islands in 1955 (private collection). Asen Balikci made some systematic recordings in Povungnituk, N.Q. (1958) and in the Netsilik area (1960), and David Damas recorded them in Perry Island (Inuit of the Mackenzie) in 1963. These collections are accessible at the National Museum of Man, Ottawa. Laval University's collection is an important one: Bernard Saladin d'Anglure, dating from 1968 in Payne Bay, Sugluk, Povungnituk, Cape Dorset; and Carmen Montpetit, since 1973 in Povungnituk (Archives of Inuistiiti Association, Laval University, Quebec City). A good number of vocal games have been recorded from various regions: Beverley Cavanagh from the Netsilik area (1972, 1975, 1978); Maija Lutz in Pangnirtung (1973-74) and Ramon Pelinski from the Caribou area (1977). These later three collections are at the National Museum of Man, Ottawa.

These recordings were occasionally supplemented by fieldwork inquiries. For instance, although Cavanagh was mainly working on the drum dancing of the Netsilik people, she wrote one article (1976) and several pages of her book (1982: I, 161-166) on these vocal games. At

Laval University, Montpetit and Veillet published a paper (1977) and Saladin d'Anglure a substantial article (1978) on the subject.

2. Collections by our group include: Claude Charron in the Belcher Islands in 1974, 1976 and 1978; Denise Harvey in Payne Bay in 1974, 1976, 1978 and the Caribou and Netsilik area in 1980; Nicole Beaudry in Cape Dorset in 1974, 1975, 1978, and Ivujivik in 1978 and 1980; J.J. Nattiez in Pond Inlet in 1976 and 1977 and Igloolik in 1977. Articles produced by the group include: Beaudry (1978a, 1978b, 1980b), Berthiaume-Zavada (1980), Charron (1978), and Nattiez (1982, 1983).

3. We only refer here to generic terms used to designate the vocal games. A lexicographical study of the names of specific games (*qiarvqtua*, *umaqtuq*, *quattupaaqtuq*, *mar-martuq*, *qiarpalik*, *hiurnatuq*, and so on) would go beyond the scope of this article.

4. In a few katajjait of subfamily II, the hierarchical disposition is aleatoric (V-VI, M, C or M, V-VI, C or V-VI, C, M, and so on).

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