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TO LISTEN ON INDIGENOUS LAND: METHOD, CONTEXT, CRISIS

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To my family, given and chosen

Table of Contents

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Abstract

This dissertation unfolds from three premises: that listening is a relational act, something that takes place between a listener and a sound object; that North American contexts are already Indigenous contexts; and that ecological crisis "immediately demands we look elsewhere than where we are standing" (Povinelli 2016). Each chapter explores these premises from a different vantage point. Collectively the chapters attempt the methods that these premises suggest. The first, "People and Publics, Audiences and Inuit," focuses on how Inuk throat singer Tanya Tagaq reads her settler audiences to produce performances that are legible to them, recontextualizing the concert hall vis-à-vis the land on which it sits. Informed by multi-sited fieldwork at healing walks, ceremonies, and other Indigenous- and settler-led events in Northern Alberta and the California Bay Area, "Singing to Rivers" then zooms out to consider entangled relationships among settler humans, Indigenous humans, and nonhumans. It explores how heterogeneous flows of people – rather than mainstream publics – find themselves singing to rivers and it explores the ethical stakes of this practice, ultimately arguing for an expanded and indigenized understanding of sound studies. "On Listening on Indigenous Land" inquires into another form of relational listening, directly addressing ethnomusicological and musicological settler publics ("us") to ask what it means to listen on Indigenous land. Focusing on an unintended contextualizing tool that "racializing listening techniques" may provide, I focus on how whiteness might appear in power relations between interlocutors and ethnographers even when there are no white bodies in the room (or on the land). The final chapter, "Of Desks and Altars," is about writing, itself using experimental ethnography to expand upon the third chapter's assertion: that words do more than function as a kind of realist mapping or mirroring of the world; they make the world.

By taking a multi-sited approach that responds to the structure of something as slippery and complex as climate crisis, this research contributes to new ethnographic methods for a globalized,

interconnected, and contemporary world. It also offers a reconfigured understanding of sound studies by taking into account non-human actors and Indigenous understandings of what sound and listening are and do. Finally, it provides a model for engagement with Indigenous thinkers in an arena that is not necessarily "marked" as Indigenous: climate crisis in North America. Specifically, it models a wide variety of practices of critical self-reflexivity that relational listening, Indigenous contexts, and ecological crisis demand.

List of Figures

Introduction

> Disparate times call for disparate methods.
>
> —Wark 2014, xi

> I think my problem, and "our" problem, is how to have *simultaneously* an account of radical historical contingency for all knowledge claims and knowing subjects, a critical practice for recognizing our own "semiotic technologies" for making meanings, *and* a no-nonsense commitment to faithful accounts of a "real" world, one that can be partially shared and that is friendly to earthwide projects of finite freedom, adequate material abundance, modest meaning in suffering, and limited happiness.
>
> —Haraway 1988, 579

> The subjectivity of the observer is generally acknowledged even in the most objective of scientific experiments. The social sciences are inevitably more subjective than the natural sciences: no matter how much anthropologists may seek objectivity, or claim to analyse only the actors' views and explanations of their world, anthropological research may reveal more about anthropologists and their own societies than it does about the societies they study.
>
> —Blacking 1977, vii

In the summer of 2014, my cousin, my friend, my partner, and I piled into my mom's red 1998 Toyota Tercel and began the 450 kilometer drive north from Edmonton to the tar sands. Accustomed to hiking in the Alberta Rockies, we had prepared for this trip the same way, packing a tent, sleeping bags, raingear, snacks, and meals for three days. In fact, an uncanny air of festivity clung to our departure: we were going on a trip. Instead of heading towards Jasper or Banff on a divided highway built for heavy traffic, however, we hurtled towards Fort McMurray on the 63, an undivided, treacherous highway originally designed for a slow trickle of logging trucks, now bursting with traffic to and from the oil sands, and dubbed the "highway of death."

We were heading to the fifth and final Tar Sands Healing Walk, a walk organized primarily by the five Indigenous groups most affected by oil sands development. Led by the drumbeat and song of a group of Dene musicians, hundreds of Canadians – both Indigenous and settler[1] – would

[1] I use the term "settler" to refer to non-Indigenous people in Canada and the United States. The term "Indigenous," while not the legal term in either Canada or the United States, refers to both the

walk sixteen kilometers around a tailings pond in northern Alberta not necessarily to protest, but to pray for the people, the land, and all of the relationships among them. As the Healing Walk website situates it:

> Indigenous tradition asserts that it is a human responsibility to protect land, air, and water for future generations. Many other Canadians agree. Over the past decade First Nations communities, non-native communities, scientists, politicians, and others are recognizing that the expansion of the tar sands is betraying this responsibility.
>
> No one feels this more than the people that have lived in the Athabasca River region for generations. They have watched their land get destroyed, they are forced to breathe dirty air, and in many communities they can no longer drink the water. The wildlife they have traditionally harvested are getting scarce, the fish they harvest have tumours, and the medicinal plants are disappearing along with the permanently changed landscape.[2]

What attracted me to the Healing Walk was not a longstanding fascination with Indigenous cultures, per se, nor was it a strong interest in the markedly political realms in which debates surrounding climate change take place. It was, rather, that the Healing Walk was shaped by the belief that gathering people to look at the tailings ponds, to smell the chemical scent of the tap water from the nearest town, to sing, to pray, to heal relationships among themselves all *did* something. The ideology shaping the Healing Walk left little room, or so I thought, for someone to stand back and aestheticize the event. Put simply, *all* acts were recognized as political – or the way that I refer to such acts in this dissertation – material.

When I began the dissertation project in 2014, I was captivated by the idea of singing to water: the perfect entrée to considering human relationships with a more-than-human world. In particular, this backgrounding of the usually foregrounded cultural differences among humans to foreground instead affectively charged human and nonhuman relations would, I hoped, yield critical insights into the affective dimensions of thinking about ecological crisis. If, as Michael Mikulak has argued, "the environmental crisis is more than a problem for scientists; it is a problem of narrative,

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rise of Indigenous solidarity and sovereignty movements across the world, and a sense of shared identity despite stark differences in languages and cultural practices.

[2] "Tar Sands Healing Walk," accessed February 15, 2014, http://www.healingwalk.org/.

ontology, and epistemology," considering seriously the practice of singing to rivers offered great promise (2008, 66).

Although the project was not supposed to be focused explicitly on Indigenous cultures, I wanted to be in dialogue with Indigenous interlocutors. It would have been an oversight to ignore the perspectives of the first people on this continent, especially when they had explicit traditions and embodied practices that involved a more-than-human world. It was in sustained engagement with both Indigenous and settler thinkers that I learned more about what I had originally hoped: namely, the cultivation of relationships with a more-than-human world and how that might shape the way we think about ecological crisis. However, it was my sustained engagement with other settlers and settler stances (including academic settler stances) vis-à-vis Indigeneity that showed me I needed stronger foundations for what I had proposed.

When I first started to describe my idea to settlers, even if I framed it as being about ecological crisis and human relationships with a more-than-human world, I began to notice that they often could not see or imagine themselves in the project, even when explicitly mentioned. It was as if they disappeared. If pressed for a geographical location and a "which people where," I would say that I wanted to think about Indigenous, settler, and nonhuman relationships at the tar sands in northern Alberta. It was as if I had never said settler. Many settlers I spoke with wanted to hear all about the Cree and Dene people, about their traditions, their music, their practices. They seemed to be waiting for a story that would transport them. This persistent floating away,[3] this becoming invisible of my settler interlocutors prevented my original project idea from becoming legible: it became about Cree and Dene activists at the tar sands, something I explicitly wanted to avoid since settlers writing "about" Indigenous people by settlers can easily become an ethically fraught practice,

[3] This practice of floating away, of course, is learned: many of us were taught never to use "I" in the academic essays we wrote in grade school, one form of "the dismissal of the body that recurs consistently throughout Western culture" (McClary and Walser 1994, 75).

as I discuss later on. This dissertation, then, became more explicitly about settler publics: our bodies, our methods, our listening practices, and our relationships with Indigeneity and Indigenous land during a time of ecological crisis. It became also about "us" – a specific disciplinary settler public – and what Rabinow calls the "micropractices of the academy," which are themselves settler micropractices ([1986] 2010, 253).

The focus on settler publics and critical self-reflexivity via the consideration of musicological and ethnomusicological settler publics attenuates the form of the dissertation. The unmarked guy-wires – a scholarly voice, critical distance, an outward-facing gaze, to name a few – that usually operate as invisible helping hands in the background of a text are given a weight equal to that of the "objects" of the dissertation: rivers, nonhumans, Indigeneity, settler-colonialism. Standing alongside Indigenous thinkers, I ask questions like: whom does this dissertation speak to and why? Who is "us?" Why are we looking? Where are we standing? In other words, I use ethnomusicological tools both in the field (i.e., the discipline) and in the field (i.e., of fieldwork); I treat these fields as equivalent. Practically speaking, this means that the dissertation reaches towards an understanding of singing to rivers, but instead of bracketing what happens to be in the way, attempts to dismantle each stumbling block it encounters.

Methods

"To Listen on Indigenous Land" concerns methods as much as it uses them. The research draws on fieldwork and interviews that took place in spurts between August 2014 and September 2018 at Cree- and Dene-led healing events in northern Alberta, Cree language lessons in Edmonton (Amiskwaciwâskahikan), the largely Indigenous Lac Ste. Anne Pilgrimage in northern Alberta, the Indigenous Arts Program at the Banff Centre, "music and healing" workshops in the California Bay Area, new moon ceremonies organized by the San Francisco chapter of Idle No More, the

Decolonize Meet-Ups in Berkeley, and a variety of healing walks and water ceremonies in the California Bay Area. The dissertation also mobilizes another set of experiences that I liken to fieldwork: going through a doctoral program in ethnomusicology, participating in Western classical music scenes, and being racialized have contributed to my analyses of settler publics.

The methods pursued here are informed by several fields in addition to music studies and anthropology: Indigenous studies, radical ecological literature, and feminist science studies. These three areas share a surprising number of commonalities. Radical ecological literature often tracks material objects or infrastructures (like mushrooms or sewage) through a variety of different places, attending to forces of globalization and flows of information that are not quite bounded, often focusing on the agency of those material objects and how they serve both humans and nonhumans. The objects connect seemingly disparate scenes: sewage systems in Phnom Penh that transport sewage that feeds morning glories that people harvest, for example (Jensen 2017). Feminist science studies, through both a conception that selves are contingent on place and situation, and a conception that objectivity requires an understanding of the apparatus we use to perceive the world (namely ourselves), also locates a researcher or ethnographer, her perspectives, life history, and experiences, as a site that necessarily draws together many seemingly disparate materials. "All my relations" is a phrase that acknowledges the interconnectedness of all creatures, both as a kind of prayer and as a life philosophy espoused by many Indigenous groups. "My relations," in other words, extends beyond my family, relatives, and ancestors to encompass all beings. At the same time, however, Indigenous knowledge practices frequently include making explicit specific contexts for information or materials being shared: in telling stories or singing songs, for example, people will often preface the act by saying something like, "I learned this from my uncle. . . ." All three disciplines encourage an approach that is highly contingent, contextualized, and disparate-seeming, and that explicitly considers the mechanisms of its production. It matters to the research, for

example, that I needed to be in a specific place to support an ill parent. As Greg Sarris writes, "Readers, for instance, cannot be separate from the history of their reading, of all that makes their encounter with and response to that which they read" (1993, 5). So it is with this dissertation research.

Where radical ecologies, feminist science studies, and Indigenous studies diverge, I follow Indigenous methodologies. It is impossible to discuss land, water, healing, and a more-than-human world in a North American context without considering settler-colonialism and Indigenous knowledge. Beyond including Indigenous content, however, I argue that it is important to enact the "decolonizing methodologies" proposed by many Indigenous scholars (e.g., Tuhiwai Smith 1999, Simpson 2014, Coulthard 2014). This enactment shows up most saliently in ethnographic refusal: while I do, for example, describe settler-led ceremonies, I do not describe Indigenous-led ceremonies. To quote Indigenous scholar Glen Coulthard quoting Frantz Fanon, "Colonialism will never be put to shame by exhibiting unknown cultural treasures under its nose" (2014, 153). (And hence too, as readers may have noticed, the opening vignette remained at a distance from the sights, smells, and close-up unfoldings of the Healing Walk.) The focus on settler publics was chosen within a specific context: "Indians have been cursed above all other peoples in history. Indians have anthropologists," wrote historian Vine Deloria in 1969 (Deloria [1969] 1988, 78). Often, when I showed up for fieldwork, I represented "anthropology," a term that for many Indigenous people conjures images of anthropologists stealing bones from their communities to put in museums or studying them without compensation for academic capital. I have tried my hardest, therefore, not to reproduce what Indigenous studies scholar Andrea Smith identifies as a pernicious conception in the humanities and social sciences: that the "life stories of Native peoples are important, but their theorizing and analyses are not" (Smith 2014, 210). In fact, I do almost the reverse in this dissertation. I consider settler life stories (often my own) and mark settler listening practices using

analyses and theories from Indigenous thinkers.

Chapter Summaries and Contributions

The first chapter, "People and Publics, Audiences and Inuit" focuses on Inuk throat singer Tanya Tagaq and her relationships with settler publics. Through demonstrating how Tagaq reads her audiences to produce performances that are legible to them, the chapter slowly moves towards considering the overlap between musicological and ethnomusicological publics and the settler publics Tagaq addresses. At the same time, this chapter fleshes out Canadian settler-colonial contexts, something that serves as a necessary historical foundation for the dissertation.

The second chapter, "Singing to Rivers," zooms out to consider entangled relationships among settler humans, Indigenous humans, and nonhumans. The chapter wends its way through large-scale discussions of pilgrimage, animism, Indigeneity, and climate crisis to theorize how heterogeneous flows of people – rather than mainstream publics – find themselves singing to rivers. It also explores the ethical stakes of this practice, ultimately arguing for an expanded and Indigenized understanding of sound studies. I argue that the contested categories of music and musicking – who gets to do them and what they might mean – mirror both conflicting ideas about the place of humans in a more-than-human world and conflicting discourses surrounding ecological crisis.

The third chapter, "On Listening on Indigenous Land," inquires into another form of relational listening, directly addressing ethnomusicological and musicological settler publics ("us") to ask what it means to listen on Indigenous land. I do this first through considering settler histories of listening, arguing that the practice of performing land acknowledgements functions as a speech act that radically recontextualizes our research. Then, focusing on an unintended contextualizing tool that "racializing listening techniques" may provide, I focus on how whiteness might appear in power

relations between interlocutors and ethnographers even when there are no white bodies in the room (or on the land). Between this chapter and the last is an excursus, a story told to me in 2015 by Ryan Beauregard.

The final chapter, "Of Desks and Altars," is about writing, itself using experimental ethnography to expand upon the third chapter's assertion: that words do more than function as a kind of realist mapping or mirroring of the world; they make the world. Attempting to dissolve the edges of solid, racialized categories which themselves were formed by practices, I compare many practices: practices of gender, of being racialized, of racializing, practices of singing, of listening, practices of writing, of becoming scholars, practices of ceremony, of ritual.

By taking a multi-sited approach that responds to the structure of something as slippery and complex as climate crisis, this research contributes to new ethnographic methods for a globalized, interconnected, and contemporary world. It also offers a reconfigured understanding of sound studies by taking into account non-human actors and Indigenous understandings of what sound and listening are and do. Finally, it provides a model for engagement with Indigenous thinkers in an arena that is not necessarily "marked" as Indigenous: climate crisis in North America. Specifically, it models a wide variety of practices of critical self-reflexivity that relational listening, Indigenous contexts, and ecological crisis demand.

Mea Culpa

Every piece of writing has an emotional register, acknowledged or not. Writing this dissertation for me has been almost as much about paying attention to that emotional register as to the intellectual one. Thinking about settler-colonialism, climate crisis, and racialization with such daily intensity is something I thought I could do as I have been blessed to see so many elders do: with gentleness and an open heart. Instead, the rage that often ignited in me was as destructive and sudden as the

wildfires that are ripping through California as I write the text of the dissertation. The hopelessness that often followed was not the slow, regenerative pain of sadness, but dark and unmoving. I often felt trapped while writing: from a tiny ledge with danger above and danger below, I found myself self-righteously excoriating white settler structures with the sword forged from as my own experience as a racialized person and strengthened by the pain and rage of many of the Indigenous activists whose words and thoughts I spent my days with. At the same time, still on that tiny, shaky ledge, I became filled with fear and doubt: I belonged to those settler structures, even, to some extent, the white settler structures. Not only did I risk harming those white settlers the instant I let structures slip into people, but I also risked harming Indigenous people the instant that I conflated lived experiences of being racialized with lived experiences of being Indigenous. As much as I could imagine and empathize and educate myself, I would never, ever understand the lived experiences of being Indigenous as well as Indigenous people.

The sad thing is that I never meant to end up on this ledge. I had hoped to write so empathetically and compassionately that people would feel safe in the space of my writing, almost as if the writing itself were a ceremony for healing. Perhaps it was arrogant to strive in a beginner's work, in a dissertation, to do what I have seen these older women do so gracefully. Nevertheless, I have tried my hardest in these pages to speak with compassion while illuminating ubiquitous settler structures that I believe cause great harm, to write in ways that reflect my deepest beliefs: that everyone here – represented or addressed – has been doing their best with the tools they have, wants to do their best, wants the best for everyone. Thank you for hearing me.

I. People and Publics, Audiences and Inuit

> I find it a little ridiculous that some people can take a bite of hamburger from McDonald's, but if they saw a dead cow on the ground, they'd go, "Ewww!"
>
> —Tanya Tagaq[1]

> Given the intensity of Tagaq's performances and the singer's own affinity for heavy metal, . . . I had thought the gig would feature more of a rock 'n' roll crowd, but everyone there seemed quite proper and be-scarfed and classy. I'd half expected to be seeing Tagaq tearing up a basement or smoky club, not a beautifully appointed concert hall.
>
> —Kim Kelly, writing for *Noisey*[2]

It was March 2018, and my friend Roísín and I stood in line for a long time to get into the smaller concert hall at the Chan Centre on the University of British Columbia campus in Vancouver. The crowd was well-dressed and quiet, artsy in a way that felt distinctively West Coast. I remember feeling self-conscious about my not-well-curated scruffiness as I left the line for the drinking fountain, wishing I had thought to wear lipstick or different shoes. I was still ruminating on this in detail as I left the drinking fountain: too scruffy for the Western classical concert crowd, not edgy enough for the hipster crowd, and this audience was both. Moreover, they were drinking wine out of real wine glasses. I found Roísín waiting contentedly for me, looking out at the darkening ferns through the curved wall of floor-to-ceiling windows. I joined her on the rich, clean, yellow strip of carpet and we wove in and out of silence, reminiscing about our shared undergraduate years at UBC, and finally remarking on the wine-drinkers. Student tickets were $29, steep for an early-career musician and a PhD student, so we decided against the much-discussed wine. We were both excited to hear Tanya Tagaq, a performer described simultaneously as a punk artist, Inuk throat singer, and

[1] "Tanya Tagaq on the Polaris Prize, the seal hunt and the 'sealfie,'" CBC News: The National, last modified September 26, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4wKRz562MY8.
[2] Kim Kelly, "Shut Up About the 'Fuck PETA' Controversy, Tanya Tagaq Puts on the Best Live Show I've Ever Seen," *Vice*, January 15, 2015, https://noisey.vice.com/en_us/article/rq44aw/tanya-tagaq-at-joes-pub-nyc. Accessed December 11, 2018.

activist, famous for winning the Polaris Prize in 2014 and for advocating for the commercial seal hunt in Canada.

When we filed into the venue, glossy programs in hand, I looked around curiously. When people talk about the Chan Centre, they are usually referring to the main concert hall, the Chan Shun, which houses operas, orchestral performances, and graduation ceremonies. This space, the Telus Studio Theatre, was a smaller and more intimate replica of the main hall: perfect for chamber music. And while Tagaq is not a chamber musician, she runs adjacent to chamber musicians, most famously collaborating with the Kronos Quartet. As the last few people filed into the terraces encircling us, and the lights began to dim, I kept thinking about what it meant for Tagaq to be performing at a concert hall like this one. Like other spaces in which the Kronos Quartet might perform, the venue in its association not with chamber music specifically but with Western classical music writ large, was consistent for Tagaq: she has performed at Stanford's Bing Concert Hall, the Banff Centre's Margaret Greenham Theatre, Toronto's Roy Thomson Hall, and Victoria's Alix Goolden Hall, to name a few. These concert halls, in fact, were how many audience members became acquainted with Tagaq. Accustomed to frequenting these concert halls to hear Western classical music, jazz and world music, the audience members had read of Tagaq through the advertising of specific venues, perhaps choosing tickets to her concerts as part of a season subscription series after reading a blurb such as the following:

> Celebrated Inuit throat singer Tanya Tagaq employs exquisite, unnerving vocal improvisations that bridge traditional roots with contemporary culture. Her music is like nothing you've heard before: a contortion of punk, metal and electronica into a complex and contemporary sound. . . . Prepare to experience a boundary-pushing exploration of tone, timbre, texture, and the powerful outer limits of human expression.[3]

By March 2018, however, most of Tagaq's audiences knew Tagaq and were itching to see her.

[3] "Tanya Tagaq," *Meany Center for the Performing Arts, University of Washington,* accessed December 11, 2018, https://meanycenter.org/tickets/2019-02/production/tanya-tagaq.

In fact, the sold-out concert Roísín and I were at was added to the schedule after Tagaq's two originally scheduled concerts had sold out. It was Tagaq's collaborator, Greenlandic mask dancer Laakkuluk Williamson Bathory,[4] whom no one seemed to know. I knew what to expect from Tanya Tagaq: sounds that music critics often describe as "elemental," sounds that quite literally took my breath away when I had heard them for the first time a short walk away in the then-music library over a decade ago, sounds that caused Inuit to blush when they heard them,[5] sounds that Anishinaabe elder Sharon Brass contrasts with "historical reenactment," describing Tagaq's living engagement with throat-singing as "absolutely Tanya herself." I expected sounds that transformed my inner landscape from behind a clear fourth wall.[6]

The concert began with Tagaq silent. It was Laakkuluk who crouched low in front of us, her face painted black with oil and soot, the only light coming from the fire she had lit. She began to tell us a story of that happened during *uaajeerneq* when people went into tents in the pitch black, played games, and made love to each other. However, as Laakkuluk began to tell a story that obliquely introduced *uaajeerneq*, we didn't all know that we were being included us in the *uaajeerneq* that was already unfolding. Unlike other creation stories, however, this was not a story that we could observe from a distance. As Laakkuluk spoke, the story of what happens in the tent during *uaajeerneq* became transposed onto the concert hall, the concert hall becoming the inside of the tent. Very soon, Tagaq

[4] From here on, I call Laakkuluk by her first name throughout the piece because this is the name she uses on her promotional materials.
[5] When ethnomusicologist Jeffrey van den Scott working in Arviat, Nunavut, asked Arviammiut (people from Arviat) what they think of Tagaq, blushing seems to be a theme. His interlocutor Wendala responded, "When I heard her, I blushed. The way she was singing, it reminds me of something else. I was blushing, and I told my best friend, 'have you heard her?' 'No,' I said, 'listen to it,' and then a couple weeks later, I asked her, 'what was your reaction?' Her reaction was similar to mine, she said she blushed, too!' (Wendala interview with van den Scott, December 2013).
[6] "Fourth wall" is a term used primarily in theatre to refer to the "imaginary wall" that exists between performers and audience members. The other three walls are the other three "walls" that enclose the stage. If performers interact with audience members or speak as if they are there, the performers are "breaking the fourth wall."

was panting, singing, groaning, and grunting, and Laakkuluk was prowling the concert hall on all levels as if the fourth wall had never existed.

According to Laakkuluk, *uaajeerneq* is supposed to be very funny, very scary, and very sexual: "Greenlanders see that sexuality is a natural expression of being a human being, so *uaajeerneq* really gets into what your boundaries are and how you can accept what other people's boundaries are."[7] As Laakkuluk further explains elsewhere, *uaajeerneq* had value not only as a way of passing long winter nights, but also as a pedagogical tool[8]:

> What it did was it created a safe place for children to learn what it meant to be in a state of panic. This child would grow up and he would get a kayak or he would start to hunt a walrus or a polar bear or something like that. He would be sitting in his kayak and the weather would be beautiful and all of a sudden the weather would change, and the waves would get a little bit higher and a little bit higher. If you didn't know how to deal with that overwhelming panic inside yourself and quell it a bit, you would get so tense that your kayak would turn over and you would drown in a matter of seconds.[9]

However, there is also another side to *uaajeerneq*, a so-called "extinction of the lamps" or *qaminngaarneq,* and it was this side that Laakkuluk invoked when she told us the story of a brother and sister who, their identities unknown to each other, kept becoming lovers after *uaajeerneq*.[10] In the words of someone who immigrated to South Greenland in 1914:

> The challenge is set by one of the ordinary men of the congregation; it would be considered too ridiculous and unseemly if a woman made the first advance. When the lamps are extinguished for this part of the game, a skin curtain is hung in front of the inner end of the house passage and one of those who take no part in the exchanging of wives rattles the curtain in such a way that it drowns the sound of what takes place in the dark. In the meantime, the children remain on the window-platform. When the lamps are lit later on, each man has to be back again with his wife on their common platform place, making pretence that he has not been elsewhere. But the next day, the children will tattle about what they have noticed. (Thalbitzer 1914, 668 qtd. in Sonne 2018, 120)

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[7] "Uaajeerneq: Greenlandic Mask Dancing," posted by recovermentalhealth on July 21, 2011, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0oPQphGs6ao.
[8] Like many other Indigenous cultural forms, *uaajeerneq* is experiencing a revival after a long period of dormancy when it was banned.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Some scholars consider *qaminngaarneq* as a postlude to a *uaajeerneq*, rather than part of it, while other include it as part of the *uaajeerneq*.

Figure 1.1 Laakkuluk performing *uaajeerneq*.[11]

That night in March, like children in canoes or like monogamous adults finding themselves accidentally at a swingers party, the audience *did* seem to panic. I could not see Laakkuluk for the first half of the performance. Instead, I heard the audience erupting from different pockets of the hall as Laakkuluk moved, the nervous laughter and scattered gasps signaling that Laakkuluk was likely pressing her breasts close to faces, blowing into ears, gazing into eyes.[12] Close to the end of the

[11] Photo by Vincent Desrosiers who has given me permission to include it. All other photos in the dissertation are by the author unless otherwise indicated.
[12] Laakkuluk has mentioned – primarily on Twitter – performing all of these acts on audience members on other occasions.

concert, I glimpsed movement in the aisle to my left: Laakkuluk approached slowly. By the time she reached my row, she was towering above us, the whites of her eyes glowing in her pitch-black face. Coming to rest in front of me, she began to uncoil a scarf from someone's neck. Then another scarf from another neck. And then another and another. We were all seemingly wearing scarves. And Laakkuluk just kept uncoiling them, tying them together slowly and unrelentingly as Tagaq gyrated and moved our breath as if we were panicked. Everyone sat perfectly still, frozen.

* * *

After shaking off the chill, after turning on the lights and letting the space of the concert hall dissolve into everyday relations, it would be easy (for us, for audiences) to read this concert vis-à-vis other concerts that happen in this venue. Studied through lenses developed for Western classical or jazz concerts, this concert appears simply uncomfortable. It becomes something that was supposed to be avant-garde but failed, or even something disrespectful to audience members who had paid a lot of money to be there. Read as a world music concert – and I use the term "world music" to reference the genre of music marketed to Euro-western audiences – the concert may appear lacking due to both the absence of a clear explanation of what *uaajeerneq* really was, and an absence of visibility: we could not see half the time. Or, if we do not read the concert as lacking, we might locate this lack in ourselves: we don't really understand *uaajeerneq*, and what was happening really *was* authentic, so we just need to develop the "cultural competency" and the correct information with which to *read* what was going on.

Instead of taking on the lenses that a place like the Chan Centre suggests and in fact that I learned proximate to the Chan Centre at the UBC School of Music, and instead of delving into *uaajeerneq* in a vacuum, I want to contextualize the audience for which Laakuluk's version of *uaajeerneq* was meant in that moment. What can we learn about the audience from *uaajeerneq* and the Chan Centre? Clearly this performance was *not* for Inuit children. Tagaq and Laakkuluk did not ask

us to suspend our disbelief and then perform *as if* for Inuit children. That kind of performance could read quite differently, as something we could listen in on, somewhat like a lyric address where a poet addresses a poem to a lover even though she intends the poem to be read by a wider audience than by just her lover. Or, more sinister for the Inuit in the room: that kind of performance could read quite differently, as something settlers could listen in on, somewhat like interactions between an older Inuk and her child behind the glass of a museum exhibit.[13] If this performance was not, however, for Inuit children or for a Euro-western audience who wanted to hear a lyric address of Laakkuluk and Tagaq to Inuit children, who was it for? The present chapter focuses on this "who" via the slippage between the "audience" a piece was written for and the audience in the room. I ultimately argue that Tagaq's performances shine abundant light on Canadian mainstream publics' conceptions of Indigeneity.

Before I go further, however, it is useful to explore this notion of "audience" beyond the people who were in the room at Tagaq's and Laakkuluk's third Chan Centre concert in March 2018. The two epigraphs that open this chapter elicit some fruitful questions: Who are these be-scarfed and classy people? Are they the same ones who are grossed out by dead cows? Do they all belong to the same group? Are they Tagaq's intended audience? And are Tagaq's audiences who she thinks they are? I want to spend some time exploring these questions and the methods they suggest. The question of classiness and disgust already contains an argument that is central to this chapter: that the dead-cow haters belong to the same group of people as the classy concertgoers. This chapter is about who and what comes into view through relations with Tanya Tagaq; it is about who Tagaq calls "some people." They are not quite her audiences, not quite mainstream Canadian (and

[13] In the nineteenth century this kind of display was quite common. Consider the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition in 1893, for example. Many artists today work in a tradition that responds to this. Tlingit/Aleut artist Nicholas Galanin's installation "White Carver" (2012) involved a white man carving wood in a museum behind a chain so that people could watch him.

sometimes American) publics, not quite her addressees, not quite "all people," and, in fact, not quite people at all.

At the same time, the question of "some people" may masquerade as one exclusively of identity, suggesting various disciplinary methods. A mission to understand "some people" might provoke a quick flurry of activity to "map" all these people, an approach familiar to sociologists. Another impulse might be to zoom in on individuals: I might, for example, follow Tanya Tagaq on her tours and interview audience members at her concerts. I could bolster this method by finding out what Tagaq herself thinks of her audiences, by putting this in dialogue with what her two close collaborators say, and by meticulously combing through concert reviews. While this approach, familiar to ethnomusicologists and anthropologists, addresses concerns about audience stereotypes and creates understandings that may allow individuals non-reductive representation (or a kind of agency),[14] it misses something else that is going on, something that Tagaq's and Laakkuluk's rhetoric points to, by insisting on a particular scale with it a particular form. Paintings whose figures we can make out from far away do not always become more meaningful when we step closer and watch recognizable forms disappear into smears of colour.

By zooming out, by considering that by "some people" Tagaq might *not* be thinking of a few individuals that she then makes into a group, by considering that Kim Kelly's "everyone there" was not literally "everyone there," but rather some kind of crowd, we can get to this question: who or what are these groups and how do they operate? Are they groups and *not* individuals? This question of groups appears throughout the dissertation in various forms, through discussions of publics, settlers, "flows," and a disciplinary "we."

Publics

[14] See Taylor-Neu 2018 for a compelling analysis of audience stereotypes.

A good starting point for understanding Tagaq's relationship to her audiences are what Michael Warner calls "publics." According to Warner, there are many publics, but each one is addressed as "*the* public." In other words, in addressing one public, "the others are assumed not to matter" (2005, 66). Further, someone becomes part of a public by "mere attention" (ibid., 87). For example, whether or not you agree with the views expressed in this chapter, Warner would say that you are a member of its public merely because you are reading the chapter. A public, however, is *not* a group of individuals and not synonymous with people or persons. According to Warner, "publics do not exist apart from the discourse that addresses them" (ibid., 72). One text, though – and "text" can mean almost anything, including musical performances – is not enough to create a public:

> No single text can create a public. Nor can a single voice, a single genre, even a single medium. All are insufficient to create the kind of reflexivity that we call a public, since a public is understood to be an ongoing space of encounter for discourse. Not texts themselves create publics, but the concatenation of texts through time. (Ibid., 90)

On one hand, Tagaq's publics include those at the March 2018 concert who are part of a mainstream public who understand themselves to be engaged with genres of music associated with the Chan Centre. On the other, Tagaq's "publics" also include a less mainstream group of Indigenous thinkers, activists, and allies, comprising what Warner calls a counterpublic, something he defines against publics: "Dominant publics are by definition those that can take their discourse pragmatics and their lifeworlds for granted, *misrecognizing* the indefinite scope of their expansive address as universality or normalcy" (ibid., 122; emphasis mine). Counterpublics, in contrast, address "strangers as being not just anybody. They are socially marked by their participation in this kind of discourse; ordinary people are presumed not to want to be mistaken for the kind of person who would participate in this kind of talk or be present in this kind of scene" (ibid., 120).

Tagaq addresses both publics and counterpublics, sometimes simultaneously. This chapter focuses specifically on the *publics* that Inuk performer Tanya Tagaq has been addressing over the past decade and a half. Such publics are not quite "us," the scholarly community, but they come

close. The scenes and moments I consider in this chapter – the Björk and Tagaq collaboration "Ancestors," Tagaq's live soundtrack to the "documentary" film *Nanook of the North*, Tagaq's short film *Tungijuq*, and Tagaq's collaboration with Laakkuluk – show us how Tagaq established herself with her audiences, gaining an international reputation. Furthermore, they show how she plays explicitly with the slippage between people and publics.

The first section considers publics, publics of patrons whose support Tagaq ultimately needs to become well known. The second considers histories of a very specific group of people defined in relation to Inuit. The third shows how Tagaq, now well known, uses specific channels and tastes created by her publics to change those publics. And the fourth considers how Tagaq and her collaborator use concert culture norms to enact a kind of retribution on specific audiences. Many of these techniques depend on Tagaq's ongoing relationship with her audience, so I consider them in a roughly chronological order. I argue that many of the statements and performances she is able to make work because of a previously established relationship that they further transform. The other chapters in this dissertation consider similar relationships vis-à-vis land acknowledgements, ethnographic writing, and several forms of musical analysis.

Björk and (Indigenous) Legibility

Any artist must be somewhat legible to be commercially viable. "Legibility," of course, is not a quality that inheres. Derived from the Latin *legere*, to read, legibility depends on who is doing the reading. It is a relational quality. Tagaq's rise to national and international popularity began when she appeared on Björk's *Medúlla* in a track called "Ancestors," and that context circumscribes what was initially legible to Tagaq's publics.[15] "Ancestors" begins with a close-miked sigh of pleasure. Unlike

[15] I expected to feel the way I felt when I first listened to Tagaq several metres away in the UBC School of Music library on Björk's *Medúlla* or when I heard her live for the first time in 2015 at the

the choristers on the album who make precisely coordinated, pure-voweled, classical sounds, Tagaq is not a backup singer. In fact, Tagaq and Björk use their voices in equal amounts, at equal volumes, and with similar timbres in "Ancestors." Their melodic lines sometime weave in and out of each other in a way reminiscent of songs like "Unravel," in which Björk sings both lines herself.

Tagaq, then, is positioned as a kind of fraternal twin of Björk, who is distinguishable from – she is throat-singing – but clearly related to Björk. Tagaq can also be read, as a sibling might, as having influence over Björk. Not only is she herself an equal collaborator in "Ancestors," but her recognizable soundworld also seeps into other pieces. "Mouth's Cradle," for example, which follows "Ancestors" incorporates throat-singing. Through the powerful ways in which she is associated with Björk, Tagaq becomes another Northern, wild, breath-using, individualist feminist. Tagaq is Tagaq the way Björk is Björk. And yet what makes Tagaq Tagaq and *not* a Björk-imitator is her throat-singing – not throat-singing as a vocal technique, though some Western avant-garde artists insist that throat-singing is a technique, but throat-singing as an unmistakable sign and sound of Indigeneity. This is the key difference that holds Tagaq apart from Björk. The sound of throat singing is not a sound that Björk could make by herself. It is Tagaq's alone. At the same time as Indigeneity (via throat-singing) distinguishes Tagaq from Björk and Björk-wannabes, allowing Tagaq to stand as "herself," it brings another heavy demand for legibility. Tagaq must make her Indigeneity legible. "Legible" here means what it usually means: legible to a dominant public. In other words, the key beginning question here is *not* something like, "How does Tagaq's identity as an Inuk woman show up in her music?" but *rather* something like, "What do dominant settler publics think 'authentic' Indigeneity is?" In other words, we simply cannot "read" Tagaq and her performances without knowing with whom she is in relationship and to whom she must make herself legible.

Banff Centre. I couldn't breathe.

Indigenous Writers and Indigenous Legibility

Indigenous writers have written extensively about legibility, and, before I write specifically about throat-singing, I find it important to shift to another domain of the arts where discussions of Indigenous legibility are much more direct and abundant than in music studies. In a Twitter essay, Chelsea Vowell, under the Twitter handle âpihtawikosisân, addresses the question of literary audience.[16] Clearly and practically, Vowell lays out the ways in which Indigenous writers have had to appeal to a dominant non-Indigenous public in order to be published. First, Vowell says, Indigenous writers have historically needed to answer the "who is your audience?" question with the answer "everyone." Of course, however, for an audience to be "everyone," a writer needs to use dominant – read Euro-Western – codes for their audiences, however marginalized, to understand. That those codes have become dominant says something not only about ubiquity but also about *power*. Vowell's following comment points to this: "But if you REALLY want to be successful, your real answer needs to be 'the white overculture.'" She goes on to detail how appealing to the dominant public works in practical terms: "This doesn't mean you don't get to write about topics related to your own experiences. It does mean that you are expected to tone it down though; translate, make your world have 'broader appeal.'" What creates "broader appeal," Vowell argues, is making references within a Western literary tradition, integrating the Bible, Greek mythology, some Norse mythology, Shakespeare, and even "some nostalgic pop culture." Tagaq's version of this approach might be collaborating with Euro-Western avant-garde musicians and performing in concert halls. Striving to fit their writing into the structures, "genres, and conventions" that lend themselves well to Euro-Western stories (naturalized as universal), but that do not necessarily work for Indigenous stories,

[16] âpihtawikosisân, (@apihtawikosisan), "I want to talk about some of the push-back I've experienced as a writer, how it's manifested, and what I think drives it," *Twitter*, May 14, 2018, https://twitter.com/apihtawikosisan/status/996042164835573760.

Indigenous writers are then supposed to explain all sorts of allusions and references that this dominant public would not understand: "Our stories turn into strange hybrids. Not really legible to outsiders, not really recognizable to us either. These awkward conventions get introduced . . . a narrator that translates/explains. A mystic character that spells things out." The imperative and the resultant promise of Indigenous legibility are these: "Well, do all this in the right way and then your people will have a role model, someone to look up to. Someone they can aspire to emulate, exceed. If you play your cards right, you might be able to sneak some elements into your writing that feel authentic to your own ppl" (ibid.).

While Vowell's response to this pressure of legibility has been to turn inward, to call on Indigenous writers to support each other the way those favoured by the CanLit (Canadian literature, and mostly Euro-Canadian or heartrendingly "multicultural") support each other, Tagaq speaks, calculatedly, to "everyone."[17] Vowell concludes by saying that she writes for her friends (and she uses the Ojibwe slang for "friends," which is telling). "Now when people ask, who is your audience? My neechies. More specifically, Indigenous people. Prairie neechies. Even more specifically, Cree and Métis." She anticipates the response – "'That's too small a population for you to be successful'" – interprets it as "that's too small an audience to be successful off your work,'" and acknowledges smaller publishers who are willing to take those risks. It is important to note that Vowell is not just fighting for recognition of Indigenous literary traditions. She wants "Elder Brother stories to become as familiar as . . . Dante's Inferno." "Our stories are written on the landscapes," she writes. She wants the marginal centred, in a continent for which, as Vine Deloria puts it "God is red" ((1972) 1994, 296). While I suspect that Tanya Tagaq also wants Inuit versions of Elder Brother

[17] As I write this (on October 17, 2018), Tagaq's first book, *Split Tooth*, partly fictional and partly autobiographical, is the bestselling novel in Edmonton, Alberta.
"Split Tooth by Tanya Tagaq Tops the List of Edmonton's Best-Selling Books," *Dave Alberta*, accessed October 17, 2018, https://daveberta.ca/2018/10/split-tooth-by-tanya-tagaq-tops-the-list-of-edmontons-best-selling-books/

stories centred, her methods are different from Vowell's. Later on in this chapter, when I discuss the short film *Tungijuq*, I argue that Tagaq plays into the norms of the "white overculture" or dominant public discourse that Vowell identifies in order then to challenge tightly-held beliefs.

Throat-Singing and Patron Discourse

While Vowell is able to mobilize her own experiences as an Indigenous writer working with Euro-Canadian publishers, Beverley Diamond is able to mobilize her own experiences as a Euro-Canadian scholar working with Indigenous musicians to consider what, specifically, Tanya Tagaq's dominant audiences might be looking for. Diamond locates herself and her history as a member of that dominant public, reflecting on her initial participation "exoticizing patron discourse": "There was no question that, when I first studied this Inuit music 30 years ago, my imagination, and that of fellow scholars and musicians alike, was drawn to the fact that it was radically different from any type of popular or classical Western vocal production that we knew. We bought and became part of the exoticizing patron discourse" (2007, 174). Reflecting on her earlier views, however, Diamond argues that throat-singing cannot simply be read in terms of Tagaq's identity as an Inuk. Instead, we have to consider what throat-singing means to Tagaq's publics. Diamond (via Penny van Toorn) argues that "identity" has become a category regulated by the expectations of non-Indigenous patrons, audience members, CD-buyers, and ethnomusicologists. "Patron discourse," van Toorn's term, is in Dunbar-Hall's and Gibson's words "a set of normative expectations and ways of listening in non-Aboriginal society, within which minority voices must struggle for audience" (2004, 25). Patron discourse, then, acts like a robust filter: for a song, academic article, painting, or book to make it into what van Toorn calls "the public domain," patrons must recognize it somehow.

According to Diamond, the "'patron discourse' of indigenous music emphasizes 'unusual' timbres, spiritual beliefs, or distinctive social practices" (2007, 173). In other words, an Indigenous

person performing what a dominant public deems "authentic" Indigenous music is much more attractive than an Indigenous person performing music that does not overtly read as Indigenous. This, argues Diamond, is what allows a form like Inuit throat singing to become globalized while Native American rock music has not been. Thinking about Indigenous musics through an identity-studies lens runs the risk of reproducing the logics of patron discourse by focusing on modes of Indigeneity that have become legible to patrons. As Diamond points out, it also excludes the possibility of looking at the feedback loop between Indigenous music production and non-Indigenous expectations: "Expectations feed practice: indigenous musicians, themselves, now often try to combine exoticisms" (Diamond 2007, 173). The question of what Indigeneity and Indigenous musics *are* is far from straightforward,[18] but, for mainstream publics or patrons, throat-singing becomes one of the strongest and surest sounds of Indigeneity.

Essential Voices

That Tagaq's throat-singing is what makes her undeniably "authentic" hooks into what I would argue is many dominant patrons' ideas of what voices are. From the advertisements of voice teachers to writings like a chapter entitled "A Vocal Ontology of Uniqueness" in Adriana Cavarero's *For More Than One Voice* the pairing of the words "unique" and "authentic" with voices is ubiquitous and does much unseen work on our conceptions of voice. Because of this ubiquity, it is useful to unpack some of the associations that these words carry with them. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines "unique" unsurprisingly as "of which there is only one; having no like or equal," but also "standing alone in comparison with others, *freq. by reason of superior excellence; unequalled, unparalleled,*

[18] A wonderful book on this topic:
TallBear, Kim. 2013. *Native American DNA: Tribal Belonging and the False Promise of Genetic Science.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

unrivalled" (emphasis mine).[19] It defines authentic as "entitled to acceptance or belief, as being in accordance with fact, or as stating fact; reliable, trustworthy, of established credit," and "really proceeding from its reputed source or author; of undisputed origin, genuine," but also "acting of itself, self-originated, automatic."[20] The obsolete definitions provided are telling: "of authority, authoritative (*properly* as possessing original or inherent authority, but also as duly authorized); entitled to obedience or respect," and "belonging to himself, own, proper" (ibid.). Bound up in the idea of uniqueness are the ideas of singularity, individuality, and essence. Uniqueness, therefore, implies an uncontaminated centre and a bounded subject. Unique subjects, in other words, are uninfluenced. They maintain their positive difference by not allowing the environment in, by maintaining their excellence in relation to others. Authenticity, like uniqueness, implies an essence, essence in the case of "authenticity" is linked more explicitly to origins.

What, however, happens when uniqueness and authenticity meet difference? Can uniqueness and authenticity stretch to encompass notions of influence from the environment, of change, and of interdependence? In a situation in which we believe in racialized voices, "authentic" often ends up meaning that someone's voice matches our conception of what we think they *should* sound like. We "read" specific origins from their bodies and expect voices to reflect those perceived origins. Whereas "origins" for an "unmarked" body might mean a specific upbringing or life-history, for a marked body "origins" too often means unequivocally "membership in a group of similarly racialized bodies." In an increasingly mobile world, bodies and voices are constantly misread. Posing a similar problem, "unique" denies contingency, movement, and practice: the same way that

[19] "Unique, adj. and n.," OED Online, March 2014, Oxford University Press, http://www.oed.com.proxy.uchicago.edu/view/Entry/214712?redirectedFrom=unique (accessed April 1, 2014).
[20] "Authentic, adj. and n.," OED Online, March 2014, Oxford University Press, http://www.oed.com.proxy.uchicago.edu/view/Entry/13314?rskey=BgSmIX&result=1&isAdvanced=false (accessed April 1, 2014).

"origins" are supposedly legible from bodies, "unique" voices are ensconced in the myth of being born rather than made. The concept, especially, of authentic voices becomes even messier when we consider that our listening/understanding/acknowledging practices often *create* links. As Nina Eidsheim argues, "because of ingrained notions of corporeal differences along racial and ethnic lines, voice teachers expect to hear these differences in students' voices, and consequently *construct difference* through vocal training" (Eidsheim 2008; emphasis in original). In other words, voice teachers see a black body, picture a "black sound" consistent with a perceived "black identity," and then inculcate that black sound in their students. That sound becomes naturalized.

My argument is not to say that Tagaq is not a "real" throat singer or that anyone take up throat-singing willy-nilly – I discuss this more fully in the "Taking Indigeneity" section in the next chapter – but being an Inuk is not enough to be able to throat-sing just as being white is not enough to be able to sing operatically. That said, the processes that get Tagaq to throat-singing seem to be collapsed for her audiences. Intuitive, instinctive, primordial – those words seem to obscure an understanding of how throat-singing works. They don't say *much*, though, besides a kind of awed "that was amazing," something that Robin Taylor-Neu takes up in her analysis (2018).

Tagaq as Canadian

Tagaq's throat-singing anchors her in her publics' eyes as unquestionably Indigenous. Tagaq is not an experimental singer who just "happens to be" an Inuk; her *voice* is an Inuk voice. Perhaps counterintuitively, her specifically *northern* Indigeneity positions Tagaq perfectly to be read as *Canadian* in particular. Northernness is deeply important to Canada's identity, especially in distinguishing it from the United States. As literary scholar Sherrill Grace puts it, "To celebrate the North as a symbol of national unity and Canadian identity is to make a virtue of geographical reality and socio-economic necessity, to differentiate us from the United States" (2002, 67). In the national

anthem and the proliferation of T-shirts I have been noticing in the past few years, Canada is "the truth North, strong and free." Canadian children ridicule Americans for not understanding the North: "They think Canadians live in igloos." Canadian adults ridicule Americans on shows such as comedian Rick Mercer's "Talking to Americans" by getting them to believe that one of our previous prime ministers was called "Jean Poutine," poutine being a famous Québécois snack of French fries, cheese curds, and gravy, and Chrétien being the then-prime minister's last name.[21] Tagaq's Inukness, then, places her squarely within Canada.

We see this conflation of Canadianness and Inuitness, specifically, at work in the Inukshuk logo chosen in 2005 for the 2010 Vancouver Olympics. An inuksuk, as it is known in Inuktitut, is a kind of cairn used by first peoples in the Arctic. Northernness in general and specifically Tagaq's northernness work in other ways too: not only is Tagaq to Canada what Björk is to Iceland, Tagaq can be used to link Canada to European countries that extend north into boreal territory: Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Denmark. These are the countries that have particular cultural capital for liberal Canadians: they're nice; they have healthcare; they get along (but are mostly white). If, as Philip Bohlman argues in "Musical Borealism," "the Nordic and the European enter into a common selfness that is modulated through related dialectics of otherness," the Canadian is able to enter a common selfness with the European aided by its own dialectics of otherness with its own north, as well as its status as a commonwealth country (Bohlman 2017, 40). We do sing "God Save the Queen" at some of our most ceremonial of ceremonial events.

It is crucial to note that as "Canada's Björk" or "polar punk," Tagaq *avoids* being positioned, as she could easily be, as "multicultural performer." This identity would cast her as one more in a faceless line-up of musicians who represent the diverse mosaic that Canada values as a decorative

[21] Mercer also convinces the then-governor of Arkansas, Mike Huckabee, of the existence of a Canadian national igloo.

periphery to a strong core of whiteness. She also avoids being positioned as one in a community of Indigenous performers. As Byron Dueck writes, "mainstream musicians and audiences often perceive infelicities in the music that fills indigenous public spaces. Many hear an absence of professionalism or a failure to live up to dominant aesthetic standards" (2013, 11). Dueck, writing about genres of music like country music, gospel, and fiddle music that are shared with Euro-Westerners, reads this perception as a problem to do with "the broader public," which "perceives not successes in other registers, but rather failures to attain presentational excellence" (ibid., 11). He argues further that "these [musical] failures are sometimes understood to index a broader, racialized abjection," a sentiment echoed so often in public forums, that the comments for CBC's "Indigenous" stories remain closed (ibid.).[22] Inuit throat-singing, which is traditionally not a song performance but rather a game for two women played until one player succeeds in dislodging the other player from her groove, runs the risk of appearing "amateurish" While mainstream Western musicians are taught to disguise errors for the sake of a performance, throat-singing is *supposed to* end with an "error," often resulting in peals of laughter from the players. Tagaq's version of throat-singing avoids being mistaken as "Indigenously" amateurish.

In other words, Tagaq cannot be changed either for the position of other non-white people *or* of other Indigenous peoples. This has to do with genre. Tagaq is still an "other," but the nation state's "other." Talking about Indigenous people creates an alliance with *other* histories that are unstrategic, as catch phrases like "our home *on* native land," for example, as opposed to the national anthem's "our home *and* native land" reference. All of this gives dominant *Canadian* publics specifically reasons to like Tagaq without having Tagaq threaten their Canadian national identity. But

[22] Office of the GM and Editor in Chief, "Uncivil Dialogue: Commenting and Stories about Indigenous People," *CBC News,* November 30, 2015. https://www.cbc.ca/newsblogs/community/editorsblog/2015/11/uncivil-dialogue-commenting-and-stories-about-indigenous-people.html.

I would argue that, for all that Canadian publics may want to distinguish themselves from American publics, there is slippage here too.

By Qallunaat, for Qallunaat . . . about Qallunaat! (A Short History)

The previous section showed how Tagaq appeals to a certain kind of public, one that remains vague. The present section serves to bring these settler publics into clearer view. It does this by exploring the film *Nanook of the North*, which for many settlers was the scene of their first encounter with Inuit and to which Tagaq adds a live soundtrack. When Robert J. Flaherty's *Nanook of the North* appeared in cinemas in 1922, it was an instant success with Qallunaat (non-Inuit).[23] In fact, it was so popular that Qallunaat film critics coined the term "Nanook mania" to describe the slew of Inuit-themed films and products, including the now-ubiquitous bricks of chocolate-coated vanilla ice cream on sticks called "Eskimo pie" (Balikci 1989, 7). Hailed as the first feature-length documentary, the silent film crystallized in Qallunaat popular imagination enduring images both of the North and of Inuit. To create these images, and aided – ironically – by an all-Inuit camera crew, Flaherty hid the pervasive evidence of European contact in order to fabricate a "pristine" Inuit identity.

Flaherty portrayed the Inuit as a people who understand their bleak, snowy, occasionally

[23] The term Qallunaat is often conflated with "white," though I think that as a non-Inuk I probably count as Qallunaaq (the singular form) also. The summary of the documentary "Qallunaat! Why White People Are Funny" demonstrates a more playful (or satirical) version of the marking non-Inuitness that the rest of this chapter tries to do: "This documentary pokes fun at the ways in which Inuit people have been treated as "exotic" documentary subjects by turning the lens onto the strange behaviours of Qallunaat (the Inuit word for white people). The term refers less to skin colour than to a certain state of mind: Qallunaat greet each other with inane salutations, repress natural bodily functions, complain about being cold, and want to dominate the world. Their odd dating habits, unsuccessful attempts at Arctic exploration, overbearing bureaucrats and police, and obsession with owning property are curious indeed."
Mark Sandiford, "Qallunaat! Why White People Are Funny," *National Film Board*, 2016, https://www.nfb.ca/film/qallunaat_why_white_people_are_funny/.

blood-spattered world through the tangibly material and bodily rather than through (implicitly European) abstraction. In fact, two of the most famous staged scenes in the film involve Allakariallak, the man who plays Nanook, feigning ignorance of European-made tools. In one scene, he uses a spear instead of his usual gun to hunt a walrus whose steaming meat he then shares with his helpers. In another scene, despite the fact that his village has a communal gramophone, Allakariallak bites into a record fresh off a spinning gramophone as if testing its edibility. The first scene establishes Inuit as people who dwell in a material, "primitive" world with an iconic image: they eat raw meat with their hands. The second circumscribes Inuit within that image: they are not interested in music or the ineffable; they are interested in eating its casing. What facilitates both of these images is a conscientious removal of all Qallunaat bodies and artifacts from the screen and a naturalization of Qallunaat perspective as "reality" or "what is."

Simultaneously, then, as a documentary, the film works to define not only what it means to be Inuit, but also Qallunaat (or non-Inuit): Qallunaat like to hide their encounters with Inuit. They pretend that Inuit do not know how to use video-recording technology. They pretend that Inuit don't use guns. They pretend that they do not have relationships but merely observe other people. They know how to listen to music and appreciate art. They do not eat seal. They like it when Inuit are different from them. They fight hard to keep their distance from Inuit so that they and Inuit can be different. This difference was bolstered not only by keeping Qallunaat and Inuit apart but bringing Inuit and animals closer together. According to film scholar Fatimah Tobing Rony, "Flaherty used intercutting shots of howling hungry dogs as a metaphor for Nanook's family's struggle" (Rony 1996, 311). Furthermore, in both *Nanook of the North* and its predecessors, "there is an emphasis on hunting and the eating of raw meat by people and dogs" (ibid., 312).

The double move of foregrounding Inuit bodies and concealing encounters between Europeans and Inuit was already commonplace for Qallunaat by the time Flaherty spearheaded the

production of *Nanook of the North*: according to Rony, Inuit had been on display at "exhibitions, zoos, fairs, museums and early cinema" and, as early as 1577, a Qallunaat explorer had "given" Queen Elizabeth I three Inuit, presumably not as labourers but rather as fascinating bodies (ibid., 302, 308). Furthermore, many Qallunaat anthropologists believed that Indigenous populations were dying out and that it was up to them, the anthropologists, to represent Indigenous people as if they had never encountered Europeans. Flaherty himself admitted to "not want[ing] to show the Inuit as they were at the time of the making of the film, but as (he thought) they *had been*" (ibid., 305). Anthropologist Franz Boas watched the film and approved of it as salvage ethnography: "most of the material of this kind has to be collected now because each year sees native cultures breaking down and disappearing under the onslaught of white civilization" (ibid., 304). In other words, what is Qallunaat and what is Inuit must be held apart: distance is critical.[24]

In the twenty-first century, even as an overt scrutiny of Inuit bodies and salvage ethnography are not nearly as popular with Qallunaat as they used to be, an appetite for difference and untainted authenticity (read: untouched by Qallunaat) remain, reinforced by language so subtle and "inoffensive" that it is difficult to critique and yet so persistent that it normalizes this appetite. For example, one journalist for *The Globe & Mail*, a leading Canadian newspaper, writes of Tagaq and her collaborators: "Her bandmates are violinist Jesse Zubot and percussionist Jean Martin, veterans of the improvised-music scenes in Vancouver and Toronto respectively, both of them skilled in musical crafts of which Tagaq has a mainly instinctual understanding" (Everett-Green 2014). Note that the Euro-Canadian (male) musicians are "skilled" and the Inuk (female) musician is "instinctual." Also

[24] I am reminded here of Donna Haraway's "Situated Knowledges": "The Western eye has fundamentally been a wandering eye, a traveling lens. . . . These peregrinations have often been violent and insistent on having mirrors for a conquering self – but not always. Western feminists also *inherit* some skill in learning to participate in revisualizing worlds turned upside down in earth-transforming challenges to the views of the masters. All is not to be done from scratch" (Haraway 1998, 586).

note that I chose the most commonplace kind of statement and not the most egregious. This climate being considered, it is perhaps no wonder that *Nanook of the North* has not been forgotten. Its continued life among Qallunaat continues to illuminate their relationships with Inuit. Despite the fact that Inuit were active participants in its creation, Qallunaat still really like this documentary film. Part of the canon of documentary film now preserved in the Library of Congress, *Nanook of the North* is celebrated as an original documentary film at the very head of the genealogy of documentary films. Qallunaat think of Robert Flaherty as the father of documentary film and often teach this film in their anthropology and ethnographic film classes (Rony 1996, 300).

Qallunaat, however, do *not* talk much about the fact that Robert Flaherty was father to a half-Inuit child or that his granddaughter, Martha Flaherty, has made a documentary film called *Martha of the North*. Perhaps most importantly, many Qallunaat still do not realize that *Nanook of the North* tells us about Qallunaat as much as about Inuit. For example, renowned film critic, Roger Ebert writes:

> The film is not technically sophisticated; how could it be, with one camera, no lights, freezing cold, and everyone equally at the mercy of nature? But it has an authenticity that prevails over any complaints that some of the sequences were staged. If you stage a walrus hunt, it still involves hunting a walrus, and the walrus hasn't seen the script. What shines through is the humanity and optimism of the Inuit. (Ebert 2010, 276)

Note that the focus is entirely on the Inuit rather than on the deeply complex relationship between Inuit and Qallunaat. The Qallunaat, too, are shining brightly in this film!

Tagaq's *Nanook*

In 2012, Tagaq was invited by TIFF (Toronto International Film Festival) to add a live soundtrack to a screening of *Nanook of the North* in which the English subtitles were replaced with Inuktitut text. Both Tagaq's performance and the replacement of English with Inuktitut signaled a significant shift in the film's authorial voice. According to Jesse Wente, the Ojibwe director of film programs at the TIFF Bell Lightbox, "It's really the idea of reclaiming these images for the community. Here you

have a modern day artist – from the people that this movie is about – re-translating it into a new concept. . . . You can begin to see the relationship and understand the different points of view that are being expressed."[25] The context of this screening is also important. This version of *Nanook of the North* appeared as part of the screening program *First Peoples Cinema: 1,500 Nations, One Tradition*, which itself ran in conjunction with an art exhibit called *Home on Native Land*. The play on the Canadian national anthem's line "O Canada, our home *and* native land" (emphasis mine), points to a friction or tension among "different points of view" that often arises when Indigenous people add their perspectives to what often gets cast as "Canadian history." *Nanook of the North* appeared alongside not only the carefully contextualized well-known films *Dances with Wolves* and *Walkabout*, but also films that use conventions that are vastly illegible to non-Indigenous audiences: for example, *Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner*, the first feature-length film in the Inuktitut language. According to Michelle Raheja, the film is Inuit-facing: there is a scene, for example, where shamans make a point about laughter and about playing a game and singing a song that becomes completely lost on non-Inuit audiences. Raheja argues that the film takes "the non-Inuit audience hostage, successfully forcing us to alter our consumption of visual images to an Inuit pace, one that is slower and more attentive to the play of light on a grouping of rocks or the place where the snow meets the ocean" (Raheja 2012, 77).

Tagaq sees her work here as a fierce recontextualization. At her performances at the Banff Centre in 2015, she did not, for example, imitate the puppies onscreen, especially because of Flaherty's frequent visual comparisons of Inuit to dogs. The famous gramophone scene was terrifying. Overlaid with what sounded like unexpected death metal, it felt like a horror film.

"It's like a soup that has simmered a year," she says. "There are parts of the film that are

[25] Jessica Wong, "Home on Native Land Spotlights Indigenous Art, Film," *CBC News,* June 21, 2012, https://www.cbc.ca/news/entertainment/home-on-native-land-spotlights-indigenous-art-films-1.1219929.

> making fun of Inuit people, and sometimes people laugh, and I'm like" – she makes a ferocious growling face – "and they're like 'Oh!'" (Everett-Green 2014)

In other words, perhaps for an Inuit audience, Tagaq's recontextualization might be different. She might trust her audience to read the "funny" parts as horrible. As Raheja points out, Inuit communities often have very different ways of watching *Nanook of the North*, often focusing "on the aspects of the film that reflect their relatives' contributions to the creation of *Nanook*" (ibid., 61). Raheja goes further, arguing both that Nanook "[pokes] fun at the spectator" through his smile, and that the non-Inuit audience might not even realize this: "Nanook's response might register one thing to his non-Inuit audience and another to members of an Inuit community who recognize the cultural code of his smile" (ibid., 58–59). Tagaq's performance, then, seemed very much for a non-Inuit audience: over and over, she was anticipating responses and aggressively redirecting.

It is not difficult to see why: even the article to which I refer at the beginning of the last paragraph embodies a certain tension of which its writer might not be aware. Earlier in the article the author, Robert Everett-Green, quotes Tagaq saying her music is "focused a lot on how I feel about colonialism, government and society" and that she has "been singing about that [her] whole life, without putting words to it." He remarks, "When she does put words to it in conversation, her rage is evident." Directly after Tagaq's quote about the film simmering like a soup and about redirecting the audience, Everett-Green instantly negates it. He follows it up with, "But the film also gives a unique glimpse of Inuit from nearly a century ago practising their traditional ways, without today's myriad Northern social ills." The paragraph ends and then the next is another Tagaq quote: "I get to have my Inuk pride, on so many levels, and I also get to fight against the stereotypes" (Everett-Green 2014). Sandwiched in between quotes from Tagaq is the persistent, authorial, dominant opinion-cast-as-fact: "But" his sentence begins, signalling that he is moving away from Tagaq. Indeed, he soars into the sky and away from relationship, transitioning into a traditional

Qallunaaq perspective, the "bird's-eye-view": Robert Everett-Green, your Qallunaat culture is shining brightly right here!

Two Kinds of Inuk

Running parallel to early twentieth-century Qallunaat's desire to document Inuit bodies and lives as they "had been" was another perhaps contradictory desire to reform Inuit bodies in the present, to reform them not into Inuit bodies of yore but rather into Inuit-becoming-Qallunaat bodies. Anthropologist Lisa Stevenson recounts the story of a teenager who, perching upon some boulders, tells her, "I know a guy who thought that Qallunaat never had to shit" (Stevenson 2014, 49). Stevenson expresses her skepticism and then he insists, "Really! It's true – that was me too. I grew up with my grandma and I thought Qallunaat didn't have to shit. Till one day, when I was, like, thirteen, I went to look. There was this Qallunaaq lady out camping with us. I followed her" (2014, 49). Stevenson writes, musing upon this story,

> It occurs to me that it was probably those nondefecating Qallunaat who, in 1947, produced a slim volume of advice to be distributed among the Canadian Inuit. They called it *The Book of Wisdom for Eskimo*. With simple line drawings and short sentences, the Qallunaat-who-never-shit imparted their wisdom on subjects ranging from health, hunting, and welfare payments. But it was the question of Inuit filth that consumed them. (Ibid., 50)

Even though the drive to de-germ every Inuk above the tree line must have been informed by a strong desire to prevent Inuit from spreading disease to Euro-Canadians in the south, the focus remained fixed on the "dirtiness" of Inuit bodies rather than on the vulnerability of Qallunaat bodies. It was Inuit bodies that ate and shat and Qallunaat bodies (or perhaps minds) that observed and gave advice, so much so that it would appear that "Qallunaat never had to shit." But it seems that this difference for Inuit was not based so much on the idea that every Inuk was essentially Inuk and every Qallunaaq essentially Qallunaaq, but rather that people became what they were through their practices. Stevenson argues that "For the Inuit, becoming 'clean,' whatever else it signified, also

meant becoming white. Even today, half a century later, the history of this transition to cleanliness is narrated as the transition to whiteness" (ibid., 50). Indeed, I take up whiteness as a practice in the third chapter. Our focus, however, remains on the Qallunaat, who between the 1920s and 1940s wanted two kinds of Inuit simultaneously: the Inuit untouched by Europeans, like fresh snow; and the clean Qallunaat-like Inuit who washed with warm water. Although in 2018 both of these desires have been somewhat tempered, their specters remain.

Eating

> I ate a piece of raw seal liver that was still warm. I hadn't done that since I was a kid, and I thought I'd be kind of grossed-out, but it awoke something in my body that was pure and good and perfect. It was like taking a peach off the tree perfectly ripe and warm from the sun, compared to eating a wooden peach during the winter.
>
> —Tanya Tagaq (Everett-Green 2014)

Eating, in particular, is a modern-day venue where Qallunaat still seem to want two kinds of Inuit: the Inuit who maintain their traditional lifeways through traditional foods, and Inuit who embrace southern Canadian values around killing animals. This desire is put in particular relief when it comes to seal hunting and eating. Eating, even more than washing, is a particularly interesting practice through which to look at Inuit–Qallunaat relations because everyone, no matter how interested in looking, cataloguing, analyzing, or standing apart, must perform the very bodily act of eating. The arena of eating is where Tagaq intervenes most obviously with her claim that people should "eat and wear as much seal as possible," with her short film *Tungijuq,* and with her general interventions on her audiences' bodies (which she is able to carry out by making savvy assumptions about Qallunaat preferences and tastes). In this section, I give a brief context for eating in the north. Then I discuss how Tagaq, in (tense) dialogue with vegan activists and rhetoric, works in *Tungijuq* on Qallunaat visceral responses to bloody animals. Finally, I discuss the act of eating (made into a metaphor) when it comes to Tagaq's musical relationships with her audiences.

A Brief Overview of Eating in the North

Inuit, as Qallunaat know from *Nanook of the North,* have traditionally hunted seal. Seal was and is essential for survival, since nothing grows naturally above the tree line. Groceries from the south are available, but they are incredibly expensive and are sometimes past their expiry dates, sometimes even beginning to rot. Prices fluctuate depending on the value of the Canadian dollar, among other things, but they are always far greater than in southern Canada. In summer 2012, for example, a cabbage cost about $27 USD, something that points to the difficulty of getting southern Canadian food to the Arctic: fresh fruit and vegetables must be airlifted in.[26] This is not a straightforward process, since weather conditions in the Arctic, including low visibility due to fog and snowstorms often prevent planes from flying. Less perishable foodstuffs are brought in by ship and only when there is no sea ice. One grim silver lining of climate change is that the sea ice is breaking up earlier and earlier, meaning that the window of time for shipping food to the Arctic has expanded (Ford 2008). All this is to say that eating store-bought groceries is far from ideal. Further, seal is widely considered something that keeps Inuit healthy. In the words of one Inuk:

> We, as Inuit, our tradition is fresh meat, and I know that it can keep the body in shape. . . . Only animals keep us strong as Inuit. . . . When we haven't taken seal blubber for a while, we weaken. . . . When we haven't eaten fresh meat for a while, we get really tired. And then, when we do eat it, our body gets satisfied because we are Inuit. . . . Even if we eat white man's food, if we haven't eaten Inuit food for a while, we weaken. (Anonymous Inuk, Sanikiluaq quoted in Usher et al. 1995; quoted in Freeman 1998, 45)

Or, framed in terms of Western biomedicine, "The importance for Inuit of maintaining high intake levels of iron indicated by low blood-iron levels found among Inuit workers at mine sites in the north who ate regular mess-hall meals of red (but blood-drained) beef. Inuit recognize the importance of blood in their diet" (Freeman 1998, 46).

[26] "Who, What, Why: Why Does a Cabbage Cost $28 in Canada?", *BBC News,* June 14, 2012, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-18413043.

Freeman makes meaning by connecting the consumption of blood (not even the consumption of seal in particular) with adequate blood-iron levels, a stark contrast to the way Sanikiluaq frames eating seal, in particular: fresh meat is Inuit food. Eating seal is the practice that makes Inuit Inuit the way that washing with warm, soapy water and eating "white man's food" was the practice that made Qallunaat white.

There seem to be many parallels here with the Whapmagoostui Cree. Naomi Adelson, writing about conceptions of health among the Whapmagoostui Cree along the Great Whale River in northern Quebec, suggests that what we call health – or *miyupimaatisiiun*, which means "being alive well" in Cree – is tied to being able to do "Cree" things (Adelson 2000). *Miyupimaatisiiun* cannot be understood without the colonial context and involves not only eating, but also has to do with land, health, and identity, and involves warmth, food, and physical ability. The vanishing of *miyupimaatisiiun* has to do with Euro-Canadians and things like the hydroelectric project. In a particularly striking passage, Adelson writes about her interlocutor's not understanding why white people's food is bad for them if it comes from God. If God put food on the earth for people, then it should be good. Simultaneously, there's a lot of rhetoric around Cree people only being healthy from Cree food and white people's food weakening the blood. "In their discussions of the ideals of Cree well-being, men and women offered a vision of a world in which whiteman's interference was minimal" (ibid., 108). *Miyupimaatisiiun* is therefore also political: "It seems then that the greatest obstacle to *miyupimaatisiiun* is not disease, but that which impedes 'living well' [which also includes hunting in the bush, my addition]. The greatest barrier to 'being alive well' is, quite simple, said the people, 'whiteman'" (2000, 100).

Seal Hunt Controversies

Since as early as 1955, however, anti-sealing activists have been vying for mainstream Qallunaat

support to ban the seal hunt in the northwest Atlantic (Wenzel 1987, 198). So-called "subsistence" seal hunting by Inuit is not in danger of being banned. Allowing – and note the paternalistic ring of the word "allowing" – Inuit specifically to hunt seal is part of a politics of recognition that recognizes Inuit as a specific cultural group with specific cultural practices. That said, subsistence hunting, Inuit commercial hunting, and commercial hunting writ large are intertwined practices.

In the words of geographer George Wenzel writing as early as 1987, the costs associated with seal hunting – commercial or otherwise – are significant:

> The inherent instability of reliance on a single marketable species, no matter how renewable, with little or no ability for the producers to influence that market, and the increasing costs of imported technology, including boats, outboard engines, snowmobiles, petroleum fuels and lubricants, spare parts, rifles and ammunition, had a serious effect on the maintenance of the Inuit seal hunting and, by extension, the entire subsistence harvesting regime. (Wenzel 1987, 197)

In other words, Inuit are dependent on the *commercial* seal hunt for their subsistence. Further, opening the commercial seal hunt only to Inuit has not worked either. When the EU, for example, voted in 2009 to ban the import of seal products, they exempted Nunavut from the ban after "effective lobbying by the Inuit Tapirisat," the market for sealskin plunged, mirroring the huge plunge that the market took in 1983 when the European Economic Community (ECC) banned the import of seal products for two years (Rogers and Scobie 2015, 73). At that time, the average income of seal hunters in Resolute Bay went from $54,000 CAD to $1,000 and communities in Nunavut lost 60% of their income.[27] After the 2009 vote, the EU director of the IFAW (International Fund for Animal Welfare) was quoted as saying that the vote "hammered the final nail in the coffin of the sealing industry's market in the EU. The world is uniting in opposition to commercial sea hunts. A complete collapse of Canada's commercial seal hunt may now be

[27] Chris Nelson, "Nelson: Inuit Bore Brunt of Greenpeace Activism," *Calgary Herald*, May 10, 2018, https://calgaryherald.com/opinion/columnists/nelson-inuit-bore-brunt-of-greenpeace-activism.

inevitable."[28]

Inuit, then, find themselves in a catch-22: they can't hunt seal because they don't have money for the equipment required to hunt seal; they don't have the money for the equipment to hunt seal (or expensive, wilting groceries) because the commercial market for seal has plummeted, thanks to anti-sealing activists.[29] Crucially, the near collapse of the commercial seal products market has put not only Inuit, but also the rest of the world in a more precarious position: extreme poverty puts pressure on Inuit to consent to projects like off-shore drilling and fracking in exchange for money from oil companies (Arnaquq-Baril 2016). Their own survival is at stake. They are in a situation where they may be fighting literally for the lives of their families even if they vehemently oppose offshore drilling.

Meanwhile, mainstream Qallunaat – the group whose opinion is "public opinion," in other words, the opinion that collapsed the market for seal – have been receiving much of the information about seal hunting from animal rights activist groups. Most of these animal rights groups, unlike mainstream Qallunaat, are staunchly vegan.[30] While they have not been able to convince mainstream Qallunaat to abandon their factory-farmed meat, they have been able to convince Qallunaat (the majority of whom already abstain from seal) to oppose the seal hunt, framing "the issue as an act of unnecessary cruelty and ruthlessness" (Rodgers and Scobie 2015, 73). From the "images of teary-eyed and bludgeoned seal pups" that Greenpeace and the "parade of celebrities, including Brigitte Bardot, Paul McCartney and Pamela Anderson" helped make ubiquitous as early as the 1960s, to the more recent campaigns on social media that hinge on images of "recently killed seals in pools of

[28] "Europe Votes to Ban Seal Product Trade," *The Guardian*, May 5, 2009, https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2009/may/05/eu-bans-seal-products. Accessed December 13, 2018.
[29] Other traditional foods, such as polar bear and narwhal, are restricted by government quotas (Wenzel 1978, 5).
[30] A list of mostly vegan-related articles on the PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) website: https://www.peta.org/living/. Accessed December 13, 2018.

blood and of skinless cadavers on the ice," anti-sealing campaigns have a long history of, in Rodger's and Scobie's words, offending "the audience," relying on a "'moral shock tactic' to stir strong reactions and recruit viewers to their cause" (Rodgers and Scobie 2015, 73, 81–82).

Opposing the seal hunt is a powerful money-making move for animal rights organizations (*Angry Inuk* 2016). Although many animal rights organizations use similar "moral shock tactics" in their campaigns against factory farms, and although seals are not considered endangered species, the anti-sealing campaigns manage to be among the most lucrative sources of revenue for some animal rights organizations. This says something about the mainstream Qallunaat whom the campaigns target. According to Knezevic, a scholar who studies food and communication, "The cuteness of seals may explain why animal rights groups use the annual harvest of fewer than 100,000 seals in their marketing materials far more frequently than, for instance, the farming of mink. Mink are arguably not as cute as seals, but more than two million of them are killed every year in Canada alone" (Knezevic et al. 2018, 427). It is also important to note that, until very recently, the "seal hunt" meant "the seal hunt in Atlantic Canada," that is, a non-Inuit seal hunt of harp seals rather than adult ringed seals. Wenzel pointed out in 1987 that "lost within the strident tones of southern protest and counterprotest was the impact a highly emotional and politicized anti-sealing campaign would have on aboriginal, especially Inuit, access and use of ringed seals" (Wenzel 1987, 200). Slowly, vastly aided by Alethea Arnaquq-Baril's documentary film *Angry Inuk*, and by Tanya Tagaq's staunch and vocal support of the seal hunt, this is beginning to change.

Tagaq and Seal

As Tagaq disrupts Flaherty's images in *Nanook of the North*, so too does she disrupt images of the seal hunt. Disrupting images of the seal hunt fits into Tagaq's broader practice of collapsing the distance between Inuit and settlers: rejecting the idea that her audiences are there to observe an exotic art

form at arm's length, Tagaq has encouraged them both to "eat and wear as much seal [a primary source of income for Inuit] as possible"; and, before the 2015 Canadian federal election, to vote out Stephen Harper who ignored the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women. In other words, instead of merely telling her audiences that seal is culturally important to Inuit and a major resource for Inuit, Tagaq begins subtly to dismantle the mainstream framing of the seal hunt: it is not something held apart from mainstream Qallunaat and not something that Qallunaat can therefore pass distant, objective judgment on.[31] They must decide whether or not to buy seal products; they must decide whether or not to vote for Stephen Harper.

Interestingly, framing the seal industry as something that implicates Qallunaat creates strange resonances with the vegan rhetoric that Tagaq vehemently opposes. In an edited volume called *Thinking Veganism in Literature and Culture: Towards a Vegan Theory*, Quinn and Westwood grapple with the problem of embodying vegan identities when writing as scholars, especially in light of the "end-oriented aims of vegan rhetoric" (Quinn and Westwood 2018, 278). They state that their collection "offers new ways of conceptualizing contemporary culture, and of understanding philosophical and ethical questions that extend far beyond veganism; what it means to witness and what it means to refuse" (ibid., 278). They also theorize and struggle with the difficulty of embodying a strong ethical stance from which they advocate for their readers to make specific changes, something that stands in opposition to a normative scholarly critical distance. They conclude that

[31] Tagaq herself references this removed stance in her statement to a northern newspaper: "To be against sealing is to literally be taking food out of children's mouths. The isolation, the climate, and the colonial process (which included removing us from a nomadic lifestyle by killing off sled dogs and relocating families in order to claim the northwest passage) has cornered us into [a] capitalist environment. We must pay rent. We must pay taxes. We must feed our families. . . . To see healthy, fed, safe vegans judging us is highly unnerving and insulting. Yet we explain calmly."
Thomas Rohner, "Inuk Teen's Sealskin Parka Becomes an Affirmation," *Nunsiqaq News*, February 3, 2017,
http://nunatsiaq.com/stories/article/65674inuk_teens_sealskin_parka_becomes_an_affirmation/.
Accessed December 13, 2018.

> the urgency of this question [of whether thinking through veganism makes things better for animals or whether if might distract from "real-world changes"] for vegan theory is acutely felt, for the material violence that it challenges is at once so bare-facedly quotidian (on every dinner table), and so distressingly global (climbing rates of species extinction) . . . [proclaiming] the significance of veganism as an ethical identity, an activist stance, *and* a theoretical discourse. (Ibid., 278)

In other words, vegan theory cannot stand apart from its "objects of study."

Simultaneously, veganism has been deemed both a "racially unmarked (therefore, white) politic" as J. Polish points out in another vegan-focused, vegan-written anthology (Polish 2016, 374). In particular, Polish argues that "uncritical comparisons of POC with animals" along with "the role that the rising cultural popularity of white veganism plays in gentrification . . . further highlights the entrenchment of veganism and whiteness." Considering the connectedness of "speciesism and racism," she quotes a white police officer yelling, "Bring it all you fucking animals! Bring it!" to the predominantly black crowd at a protest after a teenager, Michael Brown, was shot by another police officer (384, 387). It is whiteness, argues Polish via Sylvia Wynter who "largely in response to Franz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks,* articulates the ways that the term 'human' is (and has always been) conflated with the Western ethnoclass 'Man': in this way, 'human beings *cannot* be defined in purely biogenetic terms' because even the very definition of the beings we consider *human* was created on the back of highly racialized conceptions of superiority" (Wynter 2006, 118 quoted in Polish 2016, 379). Traces of a structuring of the relationship between animals, white humans, and nonwhite humans can be found in Hannah Arendt's chapter "The Decline of the Nation-State and the End of the Rights of Man" in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* when she is discussing the attempts to protect the Rights of Man with those she calls "stateless people" and "minorities" in mind:

> The groups they formed, the declarations they issued, showed an uncanny similarity in language and composition to that of societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals. No statesman, no political figure of any importance could possibly take them seriously, and none of the liberal or radical parties in Europe thought it necessary to incorporate into their program a new declaration of human rights. (Arendt 1966, 292)

Though Arendt does not pursue this similarity, it is telling both that she finds it "uncanny" and that

the Qallunaat in these liberal or radical parties could not take the propositions seriously because of that similarity. This shows a desire for humans (with white humans being humans par excellence) and animals to be on separate sides of an equation. Minorities are transposable, but dismantling the equation is entirely unthinkable. Vegans would disagree; they would like to dismantle the equation. Vegans insist on animals as people, the implication being that one shouldn't kill people. Inuit (and many other Indigenous groups) also insist on animals as people, but want to eat them.[32] Mainstream Qallunaat eat factory-farmed meat but find this practice irreconcilable with practicing love or recognition of personhood for the animals that produced the meat.

In other words, you don't eat people that you love; you don't eat your dog; you don't eat your friends; and you don't eat the smart or the cute. It is on this white, urban sensibility that vegan rhetoric relies. Vegan rhetoric turns on extremely graphic descriptions of deaths that mainstream advertising for meat avoids. Vegan rhetoric says, "Look at this bloody carcass!" assuming that Qallunaat will feel ashamed, horrified, and repulsed and change their ways. Critically, if Qallunaat cosmology insists on a hierarchy in which humans are better than animals, vegan rhetoric takes advantage of that cosmology, boosting animals to human – and therefore inedible – status.[33] At the same time, Qallunaat cosmology coupled with the whiteness of the ideal human explains why the POC comparison to animals doesn't work well: it risks transposing POC to the wrong side of an equation that hasn't been dismantled. If we are going to compare people to animals while whiteness is still centred, (white) Qallunaat need to be on the forefront of this comparison.

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[32] The Winnemem Wintu tribe who appear in the fourth chapter think of the *nur* or Chinook salmon as their ancestors.

[33] For an approach that reconciles veganism with decolonization, see Belcourt 2014. "Here, decolonization is not only beneficial to animals because it demands the dismantling of all settler-colonial infrastructures (including those that produce and progress speciesism), but would also require a re-signification of animal subjects and human-animal relations throught he non-speciesist and interdependent models of animality envisioned in Indigenous cosmologies. This, of course, is contingent upon the willingness of Indigenous peoples (and our allies) to commit to decolonized animal futurities" (Belcourt 2014, 10).

(Re)enter Tanya Tagaq. "I put baby next to the seal, touching side by side, the seal was still warm. Just kind of to show, 'Look, these are equals, these beings are, they're equal to each other. They're the same, we're all flesh."[34] Tagaq posted a picture of this scene on the internet as part of the #sealfie campaign. The #sealfie campaign was an Inuit response to Ellen DeGeneres's selfie that "re-circulated approximately three million times" and that as "part of a pre-negotiated deal with the smartphone company Samsung" gave DeGeneres $3 million to distribute to several charities of her choice, including one dedicated to anti-sealing initiatives (Rodgers and Scobie 2015, 70). A group of Inuit and allies, including Tanya Tagaq, Alethea Arnaquq-Baril, and Laakkuluk, posted images of people "wearing sealskin clothing, eating seal meat or standing beside freshly killed seals" (Rodgers and Scobie 2015, 70).

[34] Tanya Tagaq, interview with Anup Mistry, *Red Bull Music Academy,* accessed December 21, 2018, http://www.redbullmusicacademy.com/lectures/tanya-tagaq-lecture.

Figure 1.2 Inuuja beside a dead seal[35]

Braden Johnston, an Inuk teenager explained his own #sealfie in which wears a sealskin parka, "For me it wasn't just 'Fuck Peta', but a 'fuck you' to every government or person or group who have told Inuit what they can and cannot do and wear, what's acceptable and what isn't. It was me being fed up at not being able to be proud of my culture and people," he said.[36] If this seems like strong language, the next three posts from Twitter give a sense of the abusive messages Tagaq received in response:

[35] Photo by Tanya Tagaq who has given me permission to include it.
[36] Thomas Rohner, "Inuk Teen's Sealskin Parka Becomes an Affirmation," *Nunsiqaq News*, February 3, 2017, http://nunatsiaq.com/stories/article/65674inuk_teens_sealskin_parka_becomes_an_affirmation/. Accessed December 13, 2018.

Figure 1.3 Responses to #sealfies[37]

In other words, there is great risk in dismantling the human-animal equation in non-Qallunaat terms.

Even though this incident happened in 2014 and even though the Tweets are from 2018, they are illustrative of the context for a short 2009 film by Félix Lajeunesse and Paul Raphaël in which Tagaq starred and whose screenplay she co-wrote: *Tungijuq,* translated as "what we eat"

[37] Tanya Tagaq, (@tagaq), "Im issuing a formal thank you to the vegetarians and vegans who have been supportive of indigenous sovereignty and economic viability," *Twitter*, April 28, 2018, https://twitter.com/tagaq/status/990138161668882432.

(Lajeunesse and Raphaël 2009). Though the film is advertised as a talking back to Brigitte Bardot and other anti-sealers, *Tungijuq* is framed in ways that are strikingly accessible to Qallunaat. Unlike *Atanarjuat*, the film that I mentioned before, which holds audiences hostage with its slow, Inuit pace and which is also co-produced by Zacharias Kunuk, *Tungijuq* is face-paced and conventionally interesting. If, as Raheja puts it, in *Atanarjuat* "Kunuk and the Igloolik Isuma team operate as technological brokers and autoethnographers of sorts, moving between the community from which they hail and the Western world and its overdetermined images of Indigenous people," *Tungijuq* appears almost Hollywoodesque in its abundance of special effects, shots from above (bird's-eye view), and expensive production values (Raheja 2012, 78).

Nevertheless, Katherine Athens's explication of the film in Inuit terms is helpful here:

> The film opens with a creature that is neither human nor wolf, but rather the representation of the "personhood," or *inua*, that has taken wolf form. This person-wolf kills a caribou and through the act of killing, the caribou's *inua* is revealed and released as she sensually fingers her own cut-open abdomen. The transformed caribou-person staggers to the edge of the ice floe and links the margins of the worlds of land and sea as she falls into the water and becomes a ringed seal. This narrative echoes the cycling of the fetus in the myth of "Arnaqtaaqtuq" through the bodies of different species until he can resume the form of a knowledgeable human. In this feminist version of the tale, the seal-woman is shot and the next scene is of a man (Kunuk) cutting open the seal while a woman (Tagaq) looks lovingly down at the seal's body. When the seal's abdomen is open and revealed in a manner similar to the caribou's, the woman reaches down and, in a gesture that mirrors the caribou-person fingering her wound, touches the seal and gently pulls a piece of the meat into her mouth. The film displays in a visual register what the story "Arnaqtaaqtuq" narrates: that is, it reveals the complex interaction and interrelationship of humans and their partners in living, whether they be seals, caribou, walrus, or wolves. (Athens 2013, 114–115)

While a more conventional approach to interpreting this film might involve further explicating the references to Inuit stories, I attempt to approach this film the way a mainstream Qallunaat viewer might. I argue that the film relies on Qallunaat-friendly frames ultimately to serve Qallunaat, a perspective that we may usually find abhorrent and would otherwise reject much earlier. If I were to make a human-animal comparison, I might say that it is as if Tagaq is feeding a dog a pill hidden in

cream cheese.[38]

As a way into examining these Qallunaat-friendly frames, something I do more extensively through an analysis of *Tungijuq*, it is important to contextualize Tagaq's methods. One way – and perhaps the most obvious – to talk back to anti-sealers in front of Qallunaat would be through a counterargument that can be framed in terms of cows: are cows' lives worth less than seals' lives? Seals are not endangered and they have free lives before they are hunted. No seal is wasted, whereas even vegetarians eating yogurt, milk, and cheese are paying into the common practice of dairy farms of killing off male calves. However, this argument requires mainstream Qallunaat to follow the guidance of Inuit to look at their *own* bodily practices (eating), something that does not have a strong historical precedent. What Tagaq does instead is take advantage of a world structured by an imperative that Inuit bodies are made visible and provide the content of material to be consumed by Qallunaat. She puts her own (often naked) body on display.

Throughout the film, Tagaq becomes a wolf who kills a caribou, a caribou whom the wolf kills, a seal whom a human kills, and a human who eats seal. In a way, by becoming a seal, Tagaq makes a similar rhetorical move to that of vegans by using her naked, female, Inuk body: "I am like this seal," she says to Qallunaat. What is unexpected is that she uses these very palatable, expected, and typical strategies to lure viewers into scenes in which they are confronted not only with the expected cultural displays of difference where they can remain comfortably removed, but with images similar to the ones that vegans use, images that cause the visceral reaction of shock. In other words, Tagaq *does* get Qallunaat to consider or feel their own bodies.

A Brief Analysis of *Tungijuq*

[38] Of course, films are collaborative projects. By arguing that Tagaq makes all of these specific moves, I do not mean to suggest that Tanya made all the decisions in the film, but rather refer to Tagaq as a protagonist in the film's narrative.

Whether or not it is intended, for this Qallunaaq, there's a kind of escalating "gotcha" feeling to the film. Whereas in her reclamation of *Nanook of the North* in order to redirect Qallunaat viewers from Flaherty's commonplace framing, Tagaq refuses both to mimic the sounds of animals and to make the gramophone scene funny, in *Tungijuq* Tagaq's singing supports the visual representations with little friction. Her throat-singing becomes growling for the wolf and becomes the sound of a caribou gasping its last breaths. When the wolf bites the caribou's throat, we hear a simultaneous growling bite-exhale of the wolf and sharp gasp-inhale of the caribou, both in Tagaq's voice. There is no obvious judgment passed on predator or prey.

As the scene changes and we see Tagaq dressed as the caribou, bleeding on the ice, the violin comes out in its first unmistakable melody, outlining a minor triad – mediant, dominant, tonic – as if to hold the scene with its tiny lament. Similarly, the camera pans along Tagaq's bloody footsteps in the white snow. Blood on snow and pathos, dying Indigenous people and dying animals, all have a long history in Qallunaat media. This scene works well for eliciting some pleasurably painful cathartic feelings. All of a sudden in the next scene, the camera takes us by surprise, soaring into the air at a side angle. It looks as if Tagaq is naked, leaning up on a white wall, but then the camera pulls up out of the sideways nosedive, turns, and hovers above her: Tanya Tagaq *is* naked but she's lying on the snowy ground, and, caressing a huge and bloody piece of meat at the centre of her body. The painful writhing of the caribou has turned into the writhing of sensual pleasure. Tagaq is wearing little earrings, tiny markers of modernity, miniature "fuck yous" – to use a term that Tagaq might. In other words, the earrings puncture any illusions that Tagaq is playing the role of someone in the past. The earrings say clearly that this is not a documentary film. It's a performance. Blood runs down Tagaq's neck.

Finally, the camera zooms all the way out, giving us a bird's-eye view of Tagaq writhing on the ground. Then the film cuts to the sea. We hear a booming of a gun and then water darkening, inkily,

as Tagaq kicks, naked, out of the scene. And repeated with a seal (similarly plump) who swims with the same bounciness as Tagaq, circling towards the light at the surface of the water until we hear another boom, watch the seal grow still. Tagaq stops singing at this moment, as if her throat-singing had also been the voice of the seal.

Finally, we come from above and see the most realistic scene of the film. Zacharias Kunuk (the director of *Atanarjuat*) is slitting a seal. A rifle and a gaff (seal hunting tools) are lined up conspicuously in parallel as if to say that this is no *Nanook of the North*, Tagaq and Kunuk's heads bowed as if in reverence in concentration over the seal who is being slit down the length of its belly.

We watch Kunuk (blurry in the background of a shot that focuses on Tagaq) take a bite of seal. Then, in a moment reminiscent of the caressing-of-the-meat scene, Tagaq fingers the sides of the slit, turning her hand over as different parts of her fingers graze the steaming opening. It is very sensual, almost sexual, and the shape of the seal in the position is almost vaginal.

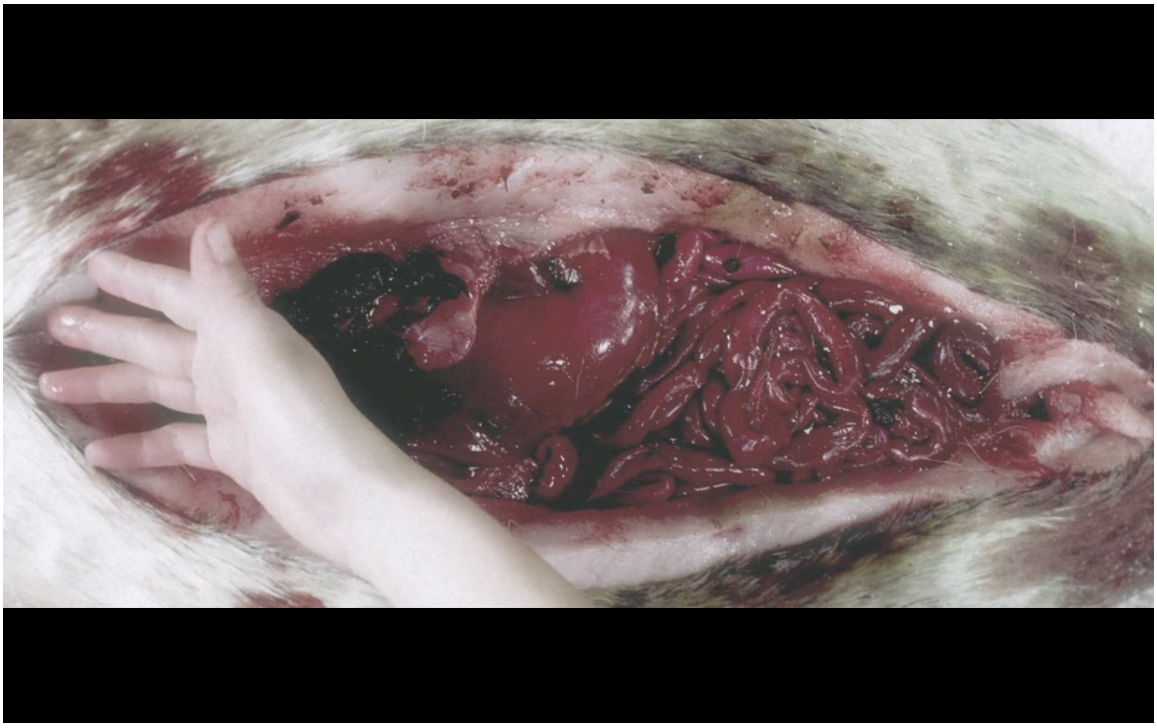

Figure 1.4 Tagaq touches seal innards in *Tungijuq*[39]

Finally, the film cuts to a close-up of Tagaq's face. Her blood-stained fingers enter the frame as she brings a piece of seal meat to her lips. Her lipstick – functioning perhaps like her earrings – is the same colour as her fingertips. She is looking into the camera as she chooses, a hint of a smile playing at her lips, as if daring us to do something.[40]

[39] Lajeunesse and Raphaël 2009.
[40] "The wound on the caribou and seal abdomens is the shape and texture of female sexual organs, again highlighting the dynamism between concepts of life and death in Inuit stories about hunting and eating seals." (Athens 2013 , 114, fn. 47).

Figure 1.5 Close-up of Tagaq in *Tungijuq*[41]

Figure 1.6 Close-up of Björk in "Hunter"[42]

[41] Lajeunesse and Raphaël 2009.

This smile, though, is not Nanook's smile, but Björk's. The way that this scene is framed – white background, direct gaze, close-up – bears a striking resemblance to the framing of Björk's "Hunter" music video in which Björk becomes a vaguely metallic-looking polar bear while singing over and over again "I am a hunter" and "I'm going hunting." By referencing Björk at this key moment, Tagaq again draws attention to the Nordic and the "civilized." In fact, one of the most striking phrases in "Hunter" is "how Scandinavian of me." Even though Björk says that this line is supposed to be derisive, referencing an Icelandic disdain for Scandinavian organization, the words work to ally Tagaq with what is desirable, whiteness.

At the same time as viewers might make the connection with Björk, Tagaq continues to chew raw seal meat and continues to be an Inuk. Qallunaat viewers, however horrified, are forced to confront seal hunting – however conflated with caressing raw, bloody organs while naked – as a *cultural* practice. In anthropologist Elizabeth Povinelli's words "following one law means violating another. They discover that their reasoning and their affect are out of joint: I should be tolerant but you make me sick; I understand your reasoning but I am deeply offended by your presence" (2002, 5). While Povinelli is describing the conundrum of the "liberal diaspora" – a group whose name is meant "to gesture at the colonial and postcolonial subjective, institutional, and discursive identifications, dispersions, and elaborations of the enlightenment idea that society should be organized on the basis of rational mutual understanding" (2002, 6) – find themselves in when considering land claims cases in Australia, I suspect she is describing the same felt sense of offence or revulsion.

In conclusion, while *Nanook of the North* depicts Inuit eating seal as something exotic and barbaric and thrilling, Tagaq represents graphic images of seal meat using Qallunaat-friendly frames,

[42] "Björk – Hunter (Album Version)," posted by JRE 2 on September 18, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ky2cbRGrrLA.

and says, "Look how civilized this is." In fact, "civilized" is a word that Tagaq herself uses: "How civilized," she said, "to slip your hand into the skin of a seal" (pers. comm.). Words like "uncivilized" and "barbaric" have historically identified the channels through which Indigenous peoples have been critiqued. Instead of "covering," which in this situation would mean performing Qallunaat-ness as well as possible, Tagaq goes right back up those channels to recast seal-hunting as civilized, perhaps offending the sensibilities of mainstream Qallunaat in the process.

When I reflect on *Nanook of the North* after watching *Tungijuq*, I think of something Rony writes: "At a screening of *Nanook*, the audience of Inuit community members of Inukjuak is shown convulsed with laughter over the famous seal hunting scene so beloved by Bazin and usually received with solemnity by Western audiences" (1996, 319). What to do with this information? To focus on correcting Western audiences' analyses of the film-as-art-object is myopic, especially without attention to the broader context to which *Tungijuq* is so attuned. The broader context is what Rony calls the "history of the media cannibalism of the Inuit," noting that "a white viewer may identify with the Nordic qualities of Nanook, but still participate in the 'hunt' for the body of Nanook, as vanishing race, as First Man" (ibid., 322, 314). The point of *Tungijuq*, then: eat seal, not Inuit!

Bodies Across the Distance

We are still eating Inuit, and Tagaq is still getting into our bodies. Reviews of Tagaq's music draw attention to her body and bodies in general: her Inuitness – a quality that resides in a body – is a focus of her music, and her use of breath draws attention further attention to her body. A feature in *The Walrus* in 2015 describes Tagaq as "authentically" Inuk with the influence of Western popular music:

> She felt a kinship with the land and with animals; she caught lemmings out on the tundra, after which she would bring the rodents home and lie on the floor, where they burrowed

> into her long hair, claws scratching against her scalp. Animals also provided some of her earliest sonic memories. She gathered snails from a fish tank in her living room and, after saying a prayer, crushed their shells between her fingers, relishing the moist, percussive explosion. She found less eccentric musical inspiration in her father's rock and reggae records – Peter Tosh, Bob Marley, the Beatles, Led Zeppelin.[43]

Embedded two-thirds of the way through a long and somewhat nuanced article, the quote does not read as shockingly exoticist as it does here. Tanya Tagaq tells me that the information is true. That said, it is telling that this Qallunaaq writer won a 2016 National Magazine Award for his feature about Tanya Tagaq. Is he, perhaps, a modern-day Flaherty?

Writing in 1994 about African and African American musics, McClary and Walser reference "the dismissal of the body that recurs consistently throughout Western culture," tracing this way of thinking back to well-documented colonial origins and diagnosing this as a problem when Euro-Westerners are approaching African-derived musics (McClary and Walser 1994, 75). "The cost is enormous," they write when they discuss the dancing body being conceived as what is left when reason and civilization are flung away (ibid., 76). The throat-singing Inuit body is not so different (in a colonial imagination) from The African American dancing body.

McClary and Walser conclude that "The first step away from this trap of polarities is to recognize that black music is not the universal unconscious or the primitive body projected by romanticists of various stripes but rather a highly disciplined set of practices" (ibid., 76). While I, too, believe that Tagaq's music is the result of a "highly disciplined set of practices," Tagaq pushes us further than McClary and Walser. Tagaq actually steers people not only towards her own body but also past it into their own. Through Tagaq and the Qallunaat journalists who notice Tagaq's effects on their bodies, we can understand something of Qallunaat audiences and Qallunaat bodies. An article in *Musicworks* begins, predictably, with Tagaq's body: "She unleashes something fierce and

[43] Drew Nelles, "Howl: Why Tanya Tagaq Sings," *The Walrus,* January/February 2015, accessed December 13, 2018, https://thewalrus.ca/howl/.

powerful that comes from deep within her body, yet seems positively unearthly. . . . It's visceral, earthy, and unabashedly sexual, frightening, mesmerizing, and exhilarating."[44] Although the writer does not elaborate, she does state that the "effect [Tagaq] has on audiences" is "what has sparked avid interest around the world." Finally, Tagaq herself comments on her relationship with audiences, "It feels like I'm a filter. . . . The audience is giving me this massive amount of energy, and I'm siphoning it through my throat and giving it back."[45] Another journalist compares Tagaq with nature but allows himself to be part of that nature: "She calls herself a sound sculptor, but what I experience when I hear Tagaq perform is always more like a weather system, swirling unpredictably through her body, the room and myself. ***You can't stay at a distance when she's singing***. You either let the elements do what they will, or head for shelter elsewhere" (Everett-Green 2014, my emphasis). In all of these descriptions, distance begins to melt away. Tagaq is feeding her audiences and feeding off them. In her own words, "The lowest common denominator in humanity is the breath. Being able to communicate with every single person at a concert by the mere fact that we're all breathing is so celebratory to me. I can feel all the energy from all the people in the audience. It comes into my stomach and then out my mouth. I'm feeding off them to make what I'm making" (ibid.). This is a far cry from performing behind the real glass wall of a museum case or the metaphorical fourth wall of a concert stage.

It is important that it is specifically Euro-Western concert halls that Tagaq is dissolving, especially by taking advantage of "the primitive body projected by romanticists of various stripes" (McClary and Walser 1994, 76). As the *Vice* reporter pointed out, Tagaq, though she is influenced by heavy metal, does *not* "tear up smoky basements or bars." Rather, she performs at concert venues like the Chan Centre in Vancouver, Canadian Stage in Toronto, and the Bing concert hall on the

[44] "Tanya Tagaq Grabs the World By the Throat," *Musicworks Magazine,* accessed July 13, 2018, https://www.musicworks.ca/featured-article/featured-article/tanya-tagaq-grabs-world-throat
[45] Ibid.

Stanford campus, places that program Western classical music, have assigned seating, and include Tagaq's concert as a part of their subscriber's series. She associates herself, then, with places that have very specific traditions. They are spaces where high art, Euro-Western art takes place. They are places that bear those histories with them: the artist as God, the individual genius. Within these spaces, Tagaq positions herself as an avant-garde artist. She collaborates with the Kronos Quartet. And her bandmates, Jean Martin and Jesse Zubot, are classically-trained new-music musicians. It's not the Tanya Tagaq band (because it is not jazz; it is new music); it's Tanya Tagaq, lone genius. The concert hall allows her to be in charge, and ultimately, to force her audiences into felt relationship with her, either in "body-shaking fun," as Everett-Green calls it or in terror (2014).

Retribution

At that concert in March 2018, I remember feeling thrilled and a little afraid by the idea of Laakuluk, tall and commanding, face blackened with paint, stalking around in the dark, ready to pounce on us as if the fourth wall had never really existed. These – concert halls like the Chan Centre – are spaces that I feel regularly uncomfortable in, despite having performed in them often and despite my better-than-average familiarity with music performed in these spaces. Suddenly people who seemed regularly comfortable seem deeply uncomfortable. I, conversely, felt something I'd never felt in this space or any like it: I felt protected by my liminality. I was a brown woman. I watched Laakkuluk, tall and commanding, face blackened, approach a Japanese-Canadian-looking woman behind me and began to rock back and forth in front of her. The woman gazed back, intensely but not aggressively, listening intensely, seemingly not intimidated, rocking back and forth in complement. Tagaq meanwhile was panting and grunting.

Later on, Gabrielle, a Euro-Canadian woman in her mid-sixties told me that what Laakkuluk was doing to her partner during that concert was "deeply inappropriate," especially since she (her

partner) had appeared visibly uncomfortable (pers. comm.). "I was ready to kick her," Gabrielle told me, something she said she would have done if Laakkuluk had engaged with her in this way. While Gabrielle wasn't specific about what exactly Laakkuluk was doing to her partner, the act appeared to be a sexual one. Gabrielle framed her critique not in terms of taste or comfort but consent: "No consent was involved," she said, contrasting the experience with going to a strip-club where one knows from the space that there might be lap dances. Gabrielle said that the audience should have been warned before they entered the space (pers. comm.).

Gabrielle's comments and certainty in her indignation, in her sense of personal space that should not be violated, stayed with me for days. Gabrielle seemed unable at first to see the irony of the situation: that she, a settler used to bodily autonomy and respect, was being unsettled against her will and without warning in a space that she felt comfortable in by a woman who represented a group whose bodies were routinely denied, ignored, sterilized, experimented upon, and killed. While Audre Lorde would say that "the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house." Eve Tuck and C. Ree point us in different and disturbing directions, and it is their "A Glossary on Haunting" that I turn to here (Lorde [1984] 2007; Tuck and Ree 2013). The writers compare American horror films to Japanese ones in order to discuss the concept of haunting. In American horror films, the heroes are supposed to be innocent. In Japanese horror, however, "because the depth of injustice that begat the monster or ghost is acknowledged, the hero does not think herself to be innocent, or try to achieve reconciliation or healing, only mercy." (ibid., 641). Settler horror, then, involves "the looming but never arriving guilt, the impossibility of forgiveness, the inescapability of retribution." Laakkuluk seems to be haunting us, especially Euro-Canadians. "[Haunting] is the price paid for violence, for genocide" (ibid., 643). "Revenge requires symmetry with the crime" (ibid., 644). And therefore Laakkuluk is making people feel uncomfortable in their skins, without consent, making them feel uncomfortable because of nonconsensual sexual acts (think: Missing and Murdered

Indigenous Women and Girls and the general disregard for Indigenous women's bodies in general) putting them on edge knowing that she might come around but not knowing when. And doing it in classical concert halls, venues that feel *clearly* their territory.

The behavior required in concert halls reinforces Tagaq's work, especially since "total silence and as nearly as possible total immobility are enjoined," and since audience members are to be "non-active participants in the event" (Small 1987, 10). Tagaq who has always seemed settler-facing but alone seemed to have a partner in crime and therefore thoroughly delighted. The rhetoric at this concert is not the same rhetoric that she has used in interviews with Qallunaat, the "*all* Canadians need clean drinking water," type of enlightenment-esque logic.

"Revenge," write Tuck and C. Ree, "is wronging wrongs, a form of double-wronging. You [and the "you" is an Indigenous "you"], like me, have been guided/good-girled away from considering revenge as a strategy of justice" (2013, 654). Suddenly, Tagaq had a playmate, and anything could happen. She provided the sonic space and container for Laakkuluk's dance and she seemed ecstatic. In 2014 during an interview with the Wendy Mesley, Tagaq had talked about reconciliation.[46] By March 2018, she had produced an album called *Retribution*. And why retribution, she was asked. "Because reconciliation is too slow, because it's not happening."[47] Laakkuluk says a similar thing. When asked about her and Tanya's "tackling themes of reconciliation and retribution," Laakkuluk skirts the question saying, "Tanya and I talk and talk and talk."[48] This transforms the public space. Suddenly, Laakkuluk is not talking to publics shaped by the goal of "reconciliation" or "multicultural Canadian" values. Bodies matter and it is visible how bodies matter. Perhaps mercy is

[46] "Tanya Tagaq on the Polaris Prize, the Seal Hunt and the 'Sealfie'", *CBC News: The National*, September 26, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4wKRz562MY8.
[47] Talia Schlanger, "Tanya Tagaq on World Café," *NPR Music,* May 17, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4wKRz562MY8.
[48] "Q & A with Laakkuluk Williamson Bathory," *The Chan Centre for the Performing Arts,* January 9, 2018, https://chancentre.com/news/q-a-with-laakkuluk/.

shown to some Euro-Canadians but it is mercy rather than "all getting along."

Indigeneity here allows Laakkuluk to be in what looks like blackface. No Qallunaaq could do that without severe repercussions. The performance also could not just be a Qallunaat experimental performance because someone would raise the hue and cry. It is Qallunaat conceptions of Indigeneity coupled with concert hall spaces and histories that allow a performance like this to happen. It is "cultural." But it is not "cultural" in the sense of Canadian multicultural, curated for appreciation by Euro-Canadian masses. It draws attention to Canadian history by making those histories apparent via the racialization of every body in the room. It is precisely the difference between publics and people that allow Tagaq and Laakkuluk to do this.

Figure 1.7 A Tweet from Laakkuluk W. Bathory[49]

"Publics" and counterpublics, however, seem to have a particular affect attached to them, a positive valence. In talking about particular song lyrics that "not only identify listeners *as* an aboriginal public but also encourage them to *be* one," Byron Dueck says that "the song does explicitly what acts of public address typically do implicitly: it hails a particularized audience . . . a

[49] Laakkuluk W. Bathory (@laakkuluk), "Last night during our concert, I stared at an elderly be-pearled woman . . .," *Twitter*, March 24, 2018, https://twitter.com/Laakkuluk/status/977535706045104128.
"Audience members can anticipate the possibility of coming into physical contact with her: a reciprocal experience that adds the tactile to the emotional and cerebral. The idea is that through this kind of confrontation with emotions often considered taboo audiences can learn how to react and respond to these emotions when they occur in real life."
Arpita Ghosal, "Tagaq and Laakkuluk: throat-singing + uaajeerneq (mask dancing) = 1 hot ticket," *Sesaya,* March 23, 2018, http://sesaya.com/2018/03/laakkuluk/.

listenership whose members share experiences and hopes, a sense of social transformation in process, and a feeling of solidarity" (2013, 6). Warner, in differentiating a public from persons writes, "To address a public, we don't go around saying the same thing to all these people. We say it in a venue of indefinite address and hope that people will find themselves in it" (Warner 2005, 86). Crucially, Warner identifies a specific kind of public who are used to reading in a Western tradition. There is a stance that we have learned *as* these publics: "Individual readers who participate in this discourse learn to place themselves, as characterized types, in a world of urbane social knowledge, while also ethically detaching themselves from the particular interests that typify them, turning themselves by means of a 'Spirit of Benevolence' and 'Love to Mankind' into the reading subjects of a widely circulating form" (ibid., 105). These are the reading publics (the ones that also go to concert halls and art galleries). Warner also writes that these reading publics come with a naturalized "critical reading" stance. So, we have a public who understands a particular mode of address. They are coming to concert halls to be addressed in this way. But Tagaq marks them, making her and Indigenous counterpublics the centre and her audiences the periphery, making her audiences Qallunaat. She addresses the people in the public. And she can do this because of a history of public address, because this concert hall is this public's home, and because Tanya Tagaq is part of the subscription and even Tagaq herself used to address them differently, for example, in her earliest collaboration with Björk. It is precisely all of the other situations and texts and discourses that allow this concert to happen.

Publics Outside the Concert Hall

Who, however, are the publics when they leave the concert hall? Before answering this question and focusing on Tanya Tagaq, it is worth zooming out extensively and considering the place of the present chapter in the dissertation. I said that this chapter was about Tagaq's "publics," but it is also

about music studies and our methods. We are Tagaq's publics. This dissertation is ultimately about humans forging relations with a more-than-human world, something that I do not discuss directly in the present chapter, but for which this chapter lays the foundation. When I give this description – about humans and nonhumans – whether to lay people or to academics, I run into difficulty. Ethnomusicologists tend to identify a problem of scale: how does an ethnographer – someone who works with individuals and who does qualitative research – look at something so large and so general as relationships between "humans" and "a more-than-human world?" A clear cultural group or groups, and a defined geographic area or network of events (tar sands development protests, for example) would make this statement more legible. In other words, as I understand it, though we have moved away from "village ethnography," where ethnomusicologists came from a distinct culture – or, more accurately, a vague culture, Euro-Westernness writ large, held distinctly apart from the "culture of study" – and then went to a bounded geographic site to observe a community of people (clearly defined: a village) who were obviously different from ethnographers, we were still defining our research questions in terms of a more expanded version of this model. We "follow the things" as Marcus might say, studying Iranian music in both Iran and in LA, or Indigenous music in many genres, or electronic dance music in a few different cities.[50] The purpose of *all* of these is to say something – ethically, compassionately, skillfully – about *other* people, people we form relationships with. And, yes, we "locate" ourselves, but in much less detail than we "locate" the *other* people because we do not want to navel-gaze, be self-indulgent, or perform mesearch. But we do try to find "emic" ways of listening, understanding that our ways of listening are not necessarily how people in that "culture" hear their music. Consider the oft-used example of the call-to-prayer, or *adhan*: "we" hear it as music, but Muslims say that it is absolutely *not* music (Nelson 1986). "Humans" collapse this difference into something that looks deeply uncomfortable: it looks like the

[50] Quote George Marcus, Hemmasi, Manuel Garcia, Dueck.

universalist, enlightenment, humanist rhetoric that denies difference but then treats non-white people as subhuman. In other words, "humans" looks hopelessly naive or apolitical.

Generally, then, we do not group as "everyone." We group as "cultures," as women, as people of various converging intersections. Even then we run into other problems: of course, not everyone within a group is the same. I want to rehabilitate the word "humans" so that it is a strategic alliance without a core of whiteness. In other words, I do not mean "humans" in a humanist sense. I *am*, however, referring to a kind of public and I do think that some people interpret it this way, assuming that "humans" means something similar to "people." "People tend to think that sweet potatoes are healthier than regular potatoes." That "people" often includes you and the person you're talking to. It's looser. It's familiar even if we're strangers. As Michael Warner would say, this "people" is a *public*. Publics do not refer to *all* people although their mode of address acts like it. But also publics are not *quite* people either.

This slippage between publics and people is disciplinarily important. In fact, before the birth of the New Musicology, before – to use Nicholas Cook's words – we were all ethnomusicologists (Cook 2008), this was where ethnomusicology and musicology had frictive differences: "Which people?" ethnomusicology wanted and still wants to know. Of course, the most obvious guilty answer to this question is why "History of Music" classes are now called something like "History of Western Music," this move marking a previously naturalized Eurocentric focus. Still, though many scholars are moving away from this, it is permissible to identify things that "'we' hear" without identifying who hears and how. I want to suggest that this is because musicology has traditionally included musicologists and composers within the same public, a public that shares a history and practice of an idealized listener, a position that we assume stays intact with only minor deviations, when we talk about, say, what Romantic audiences *actually* heard and thought. There are cultural differences, yes, but not perhaps as great as ethnomusicologists have historically encountered.

Musicologists have been taught ways of listening, a kind of "critical listening" akin to English literature's "critical reading." Michael Warner suggests that critical reading is naturalized and should not be: "Critical reading is the pious labor of a historically unusual sort of person. If we are going to inculcate its pieties and techniques, we might begin by recognizing what they are" (2004, 25). Further,

> We tend to assume that critical reading is just a name for any self-conscious practice of reading. This assumption creates several kinds of fallout at once: It turns all reading into the uncritical material for an ever-receding horizon of reflective self-positing; by naturalizing critical reading as mere reflection it obscures from even our own view the rather elaborate forms and disciplines of subjectivity we practice and inculcate; it universalizes the special form of modernity that unites philology with the public sphere; and it blocks from view the existence of other cultures of textualism. (Ibid., 16)

Warner concludes that "one of the deepest challenges posed by rival, uncritical frameworks of reading is recognizing that they are just that, rival frameworks" (ibid., 24). Susan McClary writes thirteen years earlier of a similar listening practice in music: "Today most people who have not been trained as academic musicians (who have not had these responses shamed out of them) believe that music signifies – that it can sound happy, sad, sexy, funky, silly, 'American,' religious, or whatever. Oblivious to the scepticism of music theorists, they listen to music in order to dance, weep, relax, or get romantic" (McClary 1991, 20–21). McClary is still talking about a lay audience that might not have the exact training of a musicologist but has enough "training" in Western harmony to "dance, weep, relax or get romantic" when the music suggests these activities. We are talking here about sub-cultural differences rather than people who were brought up in thoroughly different systems. In a sense there has not been a need to look at these . . . until musicologists started considering the social. Again, in the words of Susan McClary: "But neither would I accept the charge that my readings are 'subjective' in the sense that they reflect only my own quirks. Rather, I take my reactions to be in large part socially constituted – the products of lifelong contact with music and other cultural media. Thus I regard them as invaluable firsthand evidence of how music can influence listeners affectively,

how it can even participate in social formation" (ibid., 22). We would not, however, usually distinguish between an etic and an emic in musicology. The "object" of study grew up with the "subject" of study. There's no need. However, there is also no need to throw out publics with Euro-centrism.

All this is to say that both ethnomusicology and historical musicology are identifying problems with the people who are listening and how they should be listening. When ethnomusicologists want to hear the answer to "Well, *which* people? *Where*?," they are talking about specific, socially constituted *other* people (who are usually not the ethnomusicologist's family unless the ethnomusicologist is culturally or ethnically marked). For example, while it should be hypothetically acceptable for a graduate student to write a dissertation on the listening practices of the music faculty at her, his, or their own university, a project like this might be dismissed as disrespectful, navel-gazing, uninteresting.[51] Whereas, from an anthropological perspective the potential project violates the norm that interlocutors must be "different" and "less powerful," from an "ideal listener" perspective the project simply does not make sense. Music faculty *were* – before performers like Tagaq and musicologists with vastly different listening histories – roughly speaking, the public that the music was meant for.[52] Tagaq, then, using our norms and our histories for her performances, demands that we mark those norms and histories.

[51] Anthropologists Laura Nader and Paul Rabinow would likely wholeheartedly support this idea, calling it "studying up" (Nader 1972; Rabinow [1986] 2010).

[52] Popular music, of course, troubled this simplistic view. In David Brackett's words, "If musical meaning is conveyed through a code that is sent or produced by somebody then it also must be received or consumed by somebody. This raises the question of 'competence': what is the relationship between sender and receiver, and how does this affect the interpretation of musical messages?" ([1995] 2005, 9).

II. Singing to Rivers

"What happens when you sing to a river every day?" I don't know how the river reacts. But if you sing to a river every day, you might not throw garbage into it. You might feel closer to the river. You might become curious to see what the river looked and sounded like on any particular day. You might want to get to know the river better, finding yourself looking up all the cities the river runs through. You would likely notice with more subtlety the river's changes. You would probably listen to the river for responses to your singing. You might listen to the river as you sang. Your songs might change depending on the river's mood. You might even start listening to people differently. You might start to notice things on the walk or drive to the river. You might go to the river to be comforted. You may feel a kinship with other beings who gather at the river. You may take other people to be healed by the river. You may start to think of that river more and more often when you turn on your tap. You may particularly be concerned with what happens upstream and downstream. You may start to wonder about other rivers. And other people may start to wonder about you and your river-singing. Maybe singing to rivers becomes a metaphor. Maybe it also begins to mean walking to the river, fishing from the river, strewing flowers into the river, and greeting the tree by the river.

Figure 2.1 Strewing flowers (and a dog!) into the North Saskatchewan River

Snapshots

2009. The first Healing Walk takes place in northern Alberta near Fort McMurray. Hundreds of people, led by the beat of Dene drummers, walk sixteen kilometers around a tailings pond: a lake of toxic waste water and sludge left over from processing tar sands. The walk is not a protest, but a way of praying for the land and the people who live on it.

2009. Historian Dipesh Chakrabarty publishes his "The Climate History: Four Theses" in *Critical Inquiry*. This marks a departure from his focus on postcolonialism in South Asian contexts. Seven years later, South Asian novelist Amitav Ghosh will make a similar transition with *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable*.

2012. The Unist'ot'en Nation of British Columbia interrupt a pipeline information meeting with a war song. Their website states, "The spirits of our Warriors could not be stopped. The War Song is likely still echoing in the hallways of the Moricetown Multiplex."[1]

2013. Danielea Castell, a settler sound healer, and song weaver from Northern British Columbia, makes a pilgrimage to the headwaters of the Athabasca River to ask for guidance.

2014. March 28. Internationally renowned Inuit throat singer Tanya Tagaq posts a #sealfie, in this case, a picture of her baby beside a dead seal. The internet erupts. Seal hunting, Tagaq argues, is essential to Inuit life. "People should wear and eat seal as much as possible," she tells audience members as she concludes her Polaris Prize acceptance speech a few months later.[2]

2014. At the fifth and final Healing Walk, the sound of air cannons punctuates the singing, reflection, and praying. The cannons are a sombre reminder: the birds that land on the toxic tailings pond face instant death.

2014. October 17. Thirty people from a dozen different Indigenous nations do a war dance in traditional regalia. They then paddle their traditional hand-carved canoes into a narrow channel. Followed by hundreds of Australian settlers in kayaks, they effectively block coal ships from the world's largest coal port: the Port of Newcastle in Australia.[3] The news story floods the Facebook pages of Indigenous activist groups across Canada.

2014. I go to the house of a friend, vegetalista, and shaman. He is a shaman in the sense that he uses psychologically altered states to heal people. He offers me blue lotus tea. Though it is illegal to sell blue lotus for ingestion, it is still readily available in Canada. I learn afterwards from the internet that blue lotus is an extreme relaxant. I sit cross-legged on the floor, slowly sip the tea, and – do I imagine it? – feel my insides turn a brilliant blue. Prompted by my friend, I begin to sing and drum. He tells me that he can hear from the song I made up that the blue lotus had a say; it moves song in particular patterns.

2014. A month after publication, Naomi Klein's *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. The Climate* (2014) becomes a *New York Times* bestseller. It sits on the prominent tables in the middle of Chapters, the big box bookstore on a main street in Edmonton.

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[1] Unist'ot'en Camp, "Hereditary community members say NO! to PTP at Moricetown meeting," accessed April 3, 2017, https://unistotencamp.wordpress.com/2012/12/08/hereditary-community-members-say-no-to-ptp-at-moricetown-meeting/.

[2] Jason Newman, "Throat Singer Tanya Tagaq Beats Arcard Fire, Drake to Take Polaris Prize," *Rolling Stone*, September 23, 2014, http://www.rollingstone.com/music/news/tanya-tagaq-arcade-fire-drake-polaris-prize-20140923

[3] Aaron Packard, "Four Ways the Pacific Climate Warrior Coal Blockade Reshaped the Future," *Huffington Post*, November 6, 2014, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/aaron-packard/four-ways-the-pacific-cli_b_6112078.html.

2015. June. Pope Francis issues an encyclical – a letter sent to all bishops of the Catholic Church – entreating all people to protect the environment.

2015. Twelve people, none Indigenous, attend "Music as Medicine in Our Planet-Time," a workshop in Bolinas, California dedicated to "bring[ing] a new way of being in the world, thus freeing us from the assumptions and attitudes that now threaten all life on Earth."

2015. A friend tells me that she has found an ayahuasca circle in Chicago. I hear of two others in Alberta, several in the Bay Area, and one in Minnesota. "Mama ayahuasca," the songs call her. *Icaros*, or wordless songs "given" by plant medicines, also begin to appear in the sonic world around me.

2016. There are posters advertising shamanic healing all over the walls at Remedy, Edmonton's most popular independent coffee shop. They weren't here five years ago. Neither were the references to "medicine" in yoga classes throughout the city.

2016. Despite warnings from Alberta Health about the toxic blue-green algae that have recently appeared due to warmer temperatures, Indigenous Catholic pilgrims wade into Lac Ste. Anne, a sacred lake in Alberta, trusting its healing powers far more than they fear the blue-green algae's toxicity. So far, no one has reported illness. Blue-green algae is also on the list of ingredients in most commercial kombucha and in the macro greens you can buy from Costco.

2016. When I was sixteen, hiking the West Coast Trail on Vancouver Island changed something about how I felt about the greater-than-human world, and I became a pure vegetarian. Thirteen years later, I eat a piece of fish caught in Greater Slave Lake and brought to the Healing Gathering for Land and Water at Gregoire Lake in northern Alberta

The photo at the beginning of this chapter was taken at a water ceremony held at the North Saskatchewan River as it passes through Terwillegar Park, a dog park in southwest Edmonton known for its extensive river-valley trails, striking abundance of wildflowers, and views of the stark bluffs on the cutting edge of the gently winding river. How did it come to be that ten of us – all settlers except for three-year-old Jordan – were standing on the bank of the river, dipping our fingers into the water, and singing? Put another way, what makes singing to a river come into view? What makes it thinkable?

The snapshots that follow the photo offer a response to these questions. The snapshots say something, I argue, about how the question of singing to rivers comes into form: they get at a broader context in which the idea of singing to rivers can flourish. If the previous chapter considered three staunchly separate groups of players – Tanya Tagaq, settler mainstreams, and animals that people consume – to examine the selective listening practices through which Tagaq gets interpreted, this chapter considers how similar groups of players – Indigenous, settler, and nonhuman – become perhaps dangerously entangled when singing to rivers becomes an option. The chapter wends its way through large-scale discussions of pilgrimage, animism, Indigeneity, and climate crisis to theorize how heterogeneous flows of people – rather than mainstream publics – find themselves singing to rivers. It also explores the ethical stakes of this practice, ultimately arguing for an expanded and indigenized understanding of sound studies.

Working at another register of this chapter is a broader argument to do with ethnographic practices and scale. Answering the question of how ten of us ended up singing to the North Saskatchewan could easily involve tracing networks of the people present: Adanya knew Leo who had promised to come. Shanna brought her two sons, her partner, her sister, her sister's son, and her son's grandmother. I found out about the event on Facebook through Danielea Castell whom I had met at Gregoire Lake close to the tar sands and who had hosted a water ceremony in exactly this

spot last year. I knew Leo already, though, and knew *of* Shanna, who was leading. An answer might also involve inquiring past more superficial networks into how Shanna had learned to sing to rivers, into where she had first seen this being done, into whether she was connected with other people who sang to rivers, into where the songs we were singing had come from, and into how they might circulate.

In considering a different scale – not what did happen but what could – this chapter opens a lens onto something traditional, localized ethnographic methods might not be able to: groups of people who are not always groups but might sometimes be or become groups, and who piece together practices that may appear to be similar but come with thoroughly different histories.

Ritual, Pilgrimage, Flows

> "Nibi Wa-bo, Nan-da-ya, Akee Musqui Nibi Wa-bo." I learned the song on the grass beside the North Saskatchewan River at a park in downtown Edmonton. My friend Leo was hosting a water ceremony, and I was one of four people attending. Leo and I were having a tussle about the pitches. A tenor, Leo was singing – soulfully and with his eyes closed – in a range that was uncomfortably high for most women. We were all women besides him. "Could we sing it lower?" I asked after the first round. "Oh, do you guys need it lower?" he asked. "We're fine," everyone else said, but I was the only one who had been singing louder than a whisper. On the lyrics sheets I had volunteered to print out for Leo were songs in Sanskrit, Japanese, Yoruba, and Ojibwe.[1] This was one of the Ojibwe songs. On the handout, Leo credits the creator of the song, Julie Vachon. She gives him permission to pass it on, he writes.

Since then, I have been surprised to hear the song elsewhere: through another person doing another water ceremony on the banks of the North Saskatchewan (though that became less surprising after I found out that she was a friend of Leo's), and at a water ceremony in Berkeley hosted by a woman from Santa Fe, no connection of Leo's. Like a few others I have encountered in the California Bay Area and in Alberta, it is a song that people at water ceremonies seem to know. In fact, Leo's lyrics sheet situates this water song as belonging to a global movement with "folk"

[1] Also known as Anishinaabemowin.

blessings for the water from around the world. These songs change hands, are sung in different ways, by particular bodies that know particular ways of singing. But they reference the original space in which they were sung or born.

I read this Ojibwe song – and there are others that function this way – as what ethnomusicologist Philip Bohlman calls musical colportage. Pilgrimages, Bohlman reminds us, are and have been full of the "symbolic tools of worship, borne by portable images and through votive cards," which traditionally "functioned as forms of religious pedagogy and the deepest expression of belief" (2013, 63). Colportage, in particular, provides a tangible means for pilgrims to bridge the gap between their pilgrimage experiences and their everyday lives: in the case of musical colportage, songs can recall pilgrims to the sacred time and place of the pilgrimage even when they are back in their everyday worlds.

Singing to rivers is connected to broader concepts of pilgrimage and ritual as well. Anthropologist Victor Turner in *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* famously identified *communitas* and anti-structure as key characteristics of pilgrimage. As Dubish, Winkelman, and others point out, "Pilgrimage is a highly flexible ritual that can be adapted to a range of needs and spiritual beliefs, thus drawing a wide spectrum of participants" (Dubisch and Winkelman 2005, ix). People embark on pilgrimages for different reasons: spiritual reasons, social pressures, entertainment, atonement, to list a few. But then they converge in a kind of shared camaraderie: *communitas*. Pilgrimages, as Turner sees them, also provide a sort of foil to everyday life. They are liminal spaces where class differences are eased (slightly) and where people can behave in ways that they might not on a daily basis. The temporariness of the pilgrimage allows for this. Pilgrimage and ritual are closely linked. While a pilgrimage may be more extended in time and place than a ritual might be (performing Hajj vs. going to mosque), the two have considerable overlap. Rosaldo, writing about Ilongot head-hunting, identifies rituals as "busy intersections" – something that refers to people

participating for different reasons – "where a number of distinct social processes intersect" (1989, 17).

Both pilgrimages and rituals have been described by the oldest literature on pilgrimage as involving a healing element. Known for its healing powers, Lac Ste. Anne lies just 80km east of where we gathered at the North Saskatchewan River. Called "Spirit Lake" or Mânitow Sâkahikan in Cree, has long been a sacred site for First Nations people: it was first a gathering place, and then, beginning in 1889, a pilgrimage destination for Indigenous Catholics. Each year 40,000 people visit, attending services and ceremonies, enjoying food and crafts sold by vendors, filling bottles with lake water, and, on the first Sunday of the pilgrimage wading in thousands into the lake to be blessed by priests and to bless the lake.

Figure 2.2 A Priest Blesses Pilgrims in Lac Ste. Anne [2]

In recent years, however, blooms of blue-green algae have made an appearance. Though the Alberta government issues health advisories cautioning the pilgrims not to drink or even touch the water, many still wade in, trusting the healing powers of the lake to counteract the effects of the algae. Their faith seems warranted. Pilgrims have reported all sorts of healing miracles:

[2] Photo by John Walsh who has given me permission to include it.

eyesight restored, mobility restored, emotional healing, and much more. An entire wall is filled with crutches that people have cast off.

Figure 2.3 Crutches on the wall at Lac Ste. Anne

Similarly, rituals have long been part of healing practices, as medical ethnomusicologists have long agreed (Roseman 1991; Janzen 1992; and Friedson 2009). The expansion of understandings of the "embeddedness of healing practices in individual, social, and historical contexts" to consider ecological healing (Roseman 2008, 19), a concept that seems to be at the fringes of medical ethnomusicological literature already, is something that both singing to rivers and the Lac Ste. Anne pilgrimage necessitate. If healing is said to occur in some cases not because of an intervention into the biomedical body, but because of a performance within a ceremonial context, or a relationship between healer and patient or between spirits and patient, why not consider the possibility that similar relationships also facilitate ecological healing (Laderman 2006; Scheper-Hughes 1987)? Or the possibility of the healer being of nonhuman form? These look-alike gatherings – a ritual on the banks of the North Saskatchewan River and a pilgrimage to the banks of Lac Ste. Anne – both

demand that we look to the environment as an actor. Both gatherings open themselves up to flows of people who would be interested in both events.

While pilgrimages and rituals are seen as anti-modern, they are making a renaissance in contemporary times, as newer writers on pilgrimage point out (Bohlman, Winkelman, etc). What seems to be emphasized in this newer literature is still a healing element but an even greater spread of reasons for going on pilgrimage and an even more diffuse set of people. Bohlman, considering European folk music practices, contra the Turners who thought of pilgrimage as an "anti-modern" ritual, "[reflects] on reasons for the renewed relevance of pilgrimage as a mirror of modernity" (2013, 61). Dubisch and Winkelman write about the trek to Burning Man (a leave-no-trace art and music festival in the Black Rock Desert in Nevada) as a kind of secular pilgrimage, and Bowman writing about Glastonbury also resonates strongly.

Pilgrimage has lately, both through interlocutors like Leo and newer academic literature, been linked to shamanic practices and altered states of consciousness. Even the language used to talk about these has to do with space and travel: a trip, a journey. "A number of factors suggest that pilgrimage incorporates aspects of a shamanic past. The travel that is inevitably part of pilgrimage is a transition experience that may reflect the primordial and ever-present 'shamanic journey,' a travel to inner space and consciousness. Pilgrimage externalizes that sacred movement, bringing the pilgrimage into contact with the sacred other" (Dubisch and Winkelman 2005, xxxv). Michael Harner, who has written one of the most lay-famous books about shamanism, uses pilgrim and place imagery in his writing about shamanism: "They searched in the books of Castaneda and others for road maps of their experiences, and sensed the secret cartography lay in shamanism" ([1980] 1990, xii). The two, pilgrimage and shamanism, often go together as places become part of rituals (Dubisch and Winkelman 2005, xxxv).

The ritual or pilgrimage holds together an intention, something that a category like "place" might not necessarily do on its own. Along with retreats, workshops, and ceremonies in general, rituals and pilgrimages hold together the ideas of place *and* intention. The flexible structures of ritual and pilgrimage are able to take form, dissolve, and take form again. A focus, then, only on the "events" of a pilgrimage may obscure the many different reasons why pilgrims come to pilgrimage. The pilgrimage, to me, becomes a site for many things to happen, for like-minded (self-selecting) people to come together (much the same as at protests). Looking at pilgrimages and events and what happens at them gets at a loose group of people. It is hard to define flows of people who are coming because they know a community, especially if that community is not defined by friendships, kinship, or even relationships cultivated in person. This is why I look at intentional communities, people who read the same books by Starhawk (an eco-pagan philosopher), people who have seemed to make mass transitions from Goenka-style vipassana (a type of meditation) to shamanism. The point of looking at pilgrimages is to use them as a kind of loose structure (rather than what Turner calls an "anti-structure"). The flows of people into pilgrimages, workshops, concerts, and ceremonies provide the grounding for this dissertation. Ideas and practices can be as solid as objects. What I am also suggesting is that these temporary communities provide a space for people like Leo to learn songs where the boundaries of everyday life are temporarily suspended.

Encountering Indigeneity

Consider a white settler standing by the edge of the North Saskatchewan River on Treaty 6 Cree territory, beating a rawhide frame drum she bought at Ascendant Books[3] and singing a Cree song. She is the only human around. Recent developments in scholarship and tensions around non-

[3] An alternative bookstore in Edmonton filled with books of all sorts, tarot cards, crystals, singing bowls, and sweetgrass.

Indigenous people wearing Indigenous headdresses encourage me not only to interrogate the ethics of this practice, but also to read them in a specific way: as appropriation. I resist this kneejerk reading, and ask, instead, after the ethics that get played out in the rest of this story: imagine that this white settler, born and raised in Edmonton, is concerned about climate change. She walks her dog daily in Terwillegar Park, a local dog park that the North Saskatchewan snakes through. She does a daily gratitude practice because she read in Gretchen Rubin's bestselling (by using the term "bestselling" I mean to signify the book's ubiquity rather than its authority) book that giving thanks makes people happier. There is a particular spot at which her dog loves to jump into the river. It is there that she sits on a bench and gives thanks for the river. Recently at a yoga class, her yoga teacher played some singing bowls, mentioning that Emoto did tests on water and found that water organized itself according to music. The human body is mostly water. She also learns at the public library's Truth and Reconciliation Programming that Cree is the language of the land. It comes from the land. She begins to sing to the river, hoping that she will help it heal, little songs at first. Then, she starts to wonder if she should be singing to the river in its own language.

To read this situation *only* through the lens of Indigenous and settler relations not only dam(n)s a life-giving impulse in this particular white settler, but also misses a vitally important player: the river. Similarly, to read the situation only through the lens of human and nonhuman relations runs the risk of erasing Indigenous presence in these discussions and conflating differences that are key to understanding what is at stake in these practices. Instead, I propose in this chapter that we consider three messy, entangled but provisionally (strategically, for now) separate groups of players: settlers, Indigenous people, and the greater-than-human world. Then we can again turn our attention to practices like singing, listening, and walking, with renewed energy: what do these practices *do*? If we take practitioners seriously and accept that they are not singing solely for entertainment or self-healing, what are they singing for?

Taking Indigeneity

> I would *not* invite them onto my land. They'll break your heart." She tilts her chin upward, tightens her lips, her forehead. Her blue eyes are piercing. "This project would have done nothing but help them. I wanted to put *walking* trails in.
>
> —An Albertan settler (pers. comm.)

> She came from a mixed race family. There was a lot of incest in the family, sexual abuse. She felt safe with her grandparents. Lived with them up north for a long time and spent time outside on the traplines. There were forces outside of the relationship that were too strong. We couldn't have solved it. I think she felt safe with me because I wasn't white. But once she got to know me . . . well, there were some things that were still there. . . .
>
> —An Albertan settler (pers. comm.)

"You still take, you still take, you still take . . . exploitation, anthropology, excavation." Pura Fé, Tuscarora singer, was singing softly, bent over her slide guitar. She was singing to herself, but I winced, wondering if she was singing this for my benefit. We were at the Indigenous Arts Residency at the Banff Centre in 2015, Pura Fé as an invited artist, and I as the Program Assistant.

Later on Pura Fé told us that the Sioux word for white person was "fat eater," because white people would take the best parts of the buffalo (the fat) and leave the rest to rot; this is still happening, she said, with Indigenous knowledge: take the knowledge, leave Indigenous people to rot. Strongly and articulately expressed by Pura Fé, this is a problem with many layers both in academia and outside. The most salient examples involve people with no cultural knowledge or connection lifting Indigenous objects and ideas for their own profit. Consider the design team in the UK that marketed a very expensive sweater that was an almost exact replica of an Inuit shaman's parka. What is often overlooked is that a theft like this is not equivalent to one designer pilfering another's work. The significance of this shaman's parka likely extends beyond the aesthetics of the design to include a web of meaning whose reach might include personal and cultural history and a rich set of stories and associations. This is what was traded for profit.

Figure 2.4 A model in a parka and a shaman in a parka [4]

There are, however, more complex and ethically murky variations of the story. The following is an excerpt from the blog of Zoe Todd, a Métis thinker from my hometown, Edmonton, Alberta, and currently Assistant Professor of Sociology and Anthropology at Carleton University. This post later went viral and Todd was invited to publish an expanded version of it in the *Journal of Historical Sociology*.

> Personal paradigm shifts have a way of sneaking up on you. It started, innocently enough, with a trip to Edinburgh to see the great Latour discuss his latest work in February 2013. I was giddy with excitement: a talk by the Great Latour. Live and in colour! In his talk, on that February night, he discussed the climate as sentient. Funny, I thought, this sounds an awful lot like the little bit of Inuit cosmological thought I have been taught by Inuit friends. I waited, through the whole talk, to hear the Great Latour credit Indigenous thinkers for their millennia of engagement with sentient environments, with cosmologies that enmesh people into complex relationships between themselves and all relations.
>
> It never came. He did not mention Inuit. Or Anishinaabe. Or Nehiyawak. Or any Indigenous thinkers at all. In fact, he spent a great deal of time interlocuting with a Scottish thinker, long dead. And with Gaia. (Todd 2014)

[4] CBC News, "U.K. fashion house pulls copied Inuit design, here's their apology," November 27, 2015, http://www.cbc.ca/radio/asithappens/as-it-happens-friday-edition-1.3339772/u-k-fashion-house-pulls-copied-inuit-design-here-s-their-apology-1.3339779.

The interlocutors one chooses – literary and otherwise – are a political and material choice. The time that might go into situating my research vis-à-vis Latour is time that is not spent with Cree elders, not spent listening to the cosmologies implicit in Indigenous languages, not spent reading writers that do not fit as easily into a trajectory of established philosophers.

Orientation I: Beginnings and Place

I began to ask about singing to rivers after a summer of raging wildfires in Alberta. These wildfires are part of a cycle that has been in motion since time immemorial--long before Viking Leif Erikson became the first European to end up in Turtle Island, before Cristoforo Colombo left his native Genoa and began calling the inhabitants of the present-day Bahamas *indios,* before bananas appeared on North American breakfast tables (Soluri 2003, 55). Wildfires return nutrients to the soil through their nourishing ash. They burn off fungi along with ailing plant populations. They allow sun to reach forest floors. Their scorching heat brings new life. In 2014, though, the wildfires raged beyond their habitual scope.[5] They displaced almost 90,000 people from Fort McMurray, sending them north into tar sands sites, south into Edmonton (a few of them into my living room), and even farther south into Calgary. They singed the needles off all but the tops of the spindly pine trees along Highway 63 so that they pointed like blackened arrows into the sky. As thousands of people, sweating under the heat of the approaching flames, fled via this jam-packed highway, we could smell the burning 450km away in Edmonton.

[5] Richmond Vale, "Climate Change Is Threatening Canada's Indigenous Communities," June 3, 2016, http://richmondvale.org/news-climate-change-threatening-canadas-indigenous-communities/.
Many people deny this (including Prime Minister Justin Trudeau), but there's also a strong contingent of people who acknowledge it: Naomi Klein and the Minister of Indigenous Affairs (supposedly).

Figure 2.5 Trees along highway 63

The Athabasca tar sands, close to Fort McMurray, have long been a symbol for ecological crisis: occupying a Greece-sized chunk of the province Alberta, the tar sands constitute the third largest oil reserve in the world. Tar sands development is much more energy and labour intensive than typical oil sands development since the bitumen (heavy oil) must be separated from its admixture with sand, water, and clay in order to be used. This process releases more carbon dioxide than conventional oil processing, and, significantly for neighbouring communities, requires much more water. Aerial views of these expansive, barren, and grey lands, and stories of Indigenous resistance to tar sands development in the area are what people in the Bay Area seem to think of when they think of Alberta: before spring 2016, I was surprised to find that at almost every environmentally-oriented event I attended in the Bay Area, Indigenous resistance in northern Alberta was chosen as stand-in for the less easily graspable notion of action against "ecological

crisis." This has changed since the development of the Sacred Stone Camp at the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in North Dakota, a direct action camp organized by the Standing Rock Sioux to stop the development of the Dakota Access pipeline, which would stretch from North Dakota to Illinois.

Similarly, certain Albertans look Bay-ward. While it is difficult to identify the settler groups who sing to rivers, many of the organizers of water ceremonies belong to what I have decided to call the "conscious community." This is an attempt on my part to use the most palatable term possible in defining a "group" whose borders are blurry, and whose members may not, in fact, see themselves as belonging to this much-mocked group. Members of the conscious community may practice yoga, read Buddhist texts, attend Burning Man and rainbow gatherings, practice sound healing, drink kombucha, meditate, practice reiki, know who Goenka and Starhawk are, have had dreadlocks until deciding it was cultural appropriation, be vegetarian or vegan, practice ecstatic dance, engage in shamanic practices, support Indigenous sovereignty movements, own a frame drum, like feathers, aspire to travel, work on an organic farm, have slowly begun to talk about "medicine" as much as they used to talk about "lovingkindness," and, of course, sing to rivers. For Albertans with an affinity for a cluster of these practices, the Bay area, with its rich remnants of the countercultural movement, serves as a mecca of "conscious" activity.

The present chapter is not "about" northern Alberta or the California Bay Area, but rather an ethnographically-grounded argument about ecological crisis and place.[6] It is about the difficulty of thinking about so large, apocalyptic, and slippery a concept as ecological crisis, and about a set of easily overlooked material practices that constitute a response to the crisis, or that *do something* about it. Singing to rivers is one of these material practices. In fact, as the dissertation unfolds, singing to rivers becomes a synecdoche for the related practices it draws.

[6] I use the word "ethnographic" to designate a commitment to "located" knowledge practices.

The question "what does singing to a river do?" becomes a ground that runs throughout the chapter. My intended purpose is to let the question echo in a series of developing contexts, letting it orient the reader to contexts that ecological crisis draws.

Orientation II: On Scale and Mediation

Like so many others writing about ecological crisis, I have found that I must address scale, zooming in and out of local, global, particular, and universal (or, more accurately, "earth-wide") concerns (Choy 2011, Fortun 2001, Nading 2014, Tsing 2012 and 2015, Povinelli 2016). Northern Alberta – its oil sand refineries that tower with the sort of sublime magic you see in the landscapes that villains inhabit in movies like *Lord of the Rings*, its toxic tailings ponds whose eerie silence is punctuated by the soft boom of air cannons to scare away the birds, its drinking water reeking of petroleum, its soaring cancer rates, its explosion of wildfires – is what I know of ecological crisis through smell, touch, taste, hearing, sight. But my understanding is shaped also by news: of hurricanes, fracking-generated earthquakes, typhoons, pipeline spills, ocean acidification, species extinction, biome shifts, and melting ice caps. Most of this news is curated by the specific filter that is my Facebook feed: posts by left-leaning graduate students in the humanities and social sciences; members of the "conscious community," including yoga teachers, sound healers, shamans, and Burners; Indigenous activists and sovereignty groups, including Unist'ot'en Action Camp and Idle No More; and Alberta environmental groups like the Keepers of the Athabasca and the Healing Walk community.

My lived experience and the information I receive are necessarily particular to me. However, the *multiplicity* of the registers of information and methods of transmitting it that I encounter, as well as the tendency for the scope of ecological crisis to morph, expand, contract, and shift in an instant, are not. A keen global and translocal awareness pervades even fora focused on a specific "local" issue. For example, groups focused on the impacts of oil extraction on the five First

Nations of the Wood Buffalo region in Northern Alberta – the Fort McMurray, Fort MacKay, and Athabasca Chipewyan First Nations, and the Mikisew Cree, and Lubicon Cree – are acutely aware of how Pacific Islanders have been fighting extractive industries. As Choy suggests in his *Ecologies of Comparison: An Ethnography of Endangerment in Hong Kong*, this easily expandable scope of vision is key to what he calls "environmental action": "rather than interpreting some parties in environmental controversy as universalizing and others as grounded in a particular context, we must reckon with how the terms we use to think about scales and locations are themselves produced self-consciously in environmental action" (2011, 14). Furthermore, as Povinelli argues, the slipperiness of scope is inevitable:

> The global nature of climate change, capital, toxicity, and discursivity immediately demands we look elsewhere than where we are standing. We have to follow the flows of the toxic industries whose by-products seep into foods, forests, and aquifers, and visit the viral transit lounges that join species through disease vectors. As we stretch the local across these seeping transits we need not scale up to the Human or the global, but we cannot remain in the local. We can only remain *hereish* (2016, 13).[7]

While chapters 1, 3, and 4 focus on in-person ways of connecting with the greater-than-human world, it is important in the present chapter also to invoke the busy-ness, urgency, and earth-wide stakes that not only clamour at the borders of these slow, embodied practices, but also necessitate them. I emphasize this because there is an obvious parallel between this project and Steven Feld's *Sound and Sentiment*, and yet it would not be possible to write *Sound and Sentiment* in 2016. There is a stark difference between the Kaluli in 1976 and 1977 and the Kaluli today. As Feld points out in his introduction to the third edition, the Kaluli have "absorbed in the shock of a mere fifty years of world contacts what other indigenous places and peoples absorbed over the course of one to five hundred years of colonial and postcolonial experience" ([1982] 2003, xiii). In the wake of far too much "colonial and postcolonial experience," both climate crisis and *thinking* about climate

[7] Povinelli is also problematizing the boundaries of humans, something I don't deconstruct or take on in this dissertation although I agree with it. The "virus" reference is part of this.

crisis, as my lists at the beginning of this section aim to demonstrate, take many, insistent forms. What's more, when people open their mouths to sing to rivers, they are aware of these many and insistent forms. They might be singing to the North Saskatchewan River while knowing that Tuvalu is sinking due to rising ocean levels. Why? What is it about singing to rivers that seems useful in the face of such urgency? The answer is not simply that it is part of "these people's" cosmology and that the river will not flow if they do not sing to it. "These people" also participate in direct action movements and pipeline protests, lobby their governments, and even write dissertations in ethnomusicology.

Orientation III: The Greater-Than-Human World

Choosing to talk about singing to rivers allows me to skirt a particular problem, but only for so long: what do we call a world that necessarily includes both humans and nonhumans and yet accounts for long traditions – in Euro-Western secular society, in Abrahamic religions, and even in Buddhism – of splitting humans and nonhumans and hierarchizing various forms of life? Many of the motivations for singing to rivers rest on subtly but radically different ways of conceptualizing human and nonhuman relations. It is critical to note here that the category "nonhumans" includes not only living beings, but also stones, wind, water, etc. These "different" ways of knowing – some of them new and some of them very old – hail from several genealogies: Indigenous thought writ large, systems theory, thing theory, quantum physics, and feminist science studies, to name a few. In these ways of knowing, relationships among various (non)human actors, and on a dynamic, interconnected, earth-wide system are foregrounded, while differences between humans and nonhumans are backgrounded. Because this way of knowing is key to understanding both the motivations for and impacts of singing to rivers, I choose the term "greater-than-human world" to remind and orient the reader of and towards this worldview.

The double meaning of "greater" is intentional: a world with humans and nonhumans is indeed greater than a world with only humans; humans can be part of a greater-than-human world too.[8] In fact, the term works to rectify the particularly cavernous human/nonhuman split that words like "nature" and "earth" carry with them. "Nature" commonly connotes something that (white middle class) people go out into and return from, refreshed;[9] "a backdrop and resource for the moral intentionality of Man" (Tsing 2015, vii); something that must be looked after by humans; and a foil for culture (Descola 2013, Ortner 1974). Similarly, the slippery concepts "earth" and "Gaia" are terms that accompany nostalgia for an Edenic world and a desire to return to that world (Thoreau 1908); a predilection for goddesses and earth mothers (Haraway 1991); and an eschewal of technology as incompatible with "nature."

The move away from a paternalistic sense of intelligent humans stewarding (or exploiting) a less than intelligent earth, a theme that undergirds a significant stream of environmental rhetoric with a conservationist bent (Bird-David 2013), also frees necessary space for thinking about places as entanglements of human and nonhuman actors. What might it mean, in the context of ecological crisis, to see landscapes as co-produced by humans? To see, as Simon Schama proposes in *Landscape and Memory,* its "scenery… built up as much from strata of memory as from layers of rock" (Schama 7)? "Landscapes," Schama argues, "are culture before they are nature"' (Schama 61). Whether or not we side fully with Schama (I don't), a stance on human-nonhuman relations becomes vitally important where legal systems are involved. Consider, for example, the stakes in creating a provincial park or assigning a UNESCO World Heritage site a "natural" designation. What might that mean for those – particularly Indigenous groups – for whom that particular land forms the

[8] David Abram, I recently found out, uses the term "more-than-human," and Graham Harvey and Donna Haraway use "larger-than-human" (Abram 1997, Harvey 2013, Haraway 1991).
[9] Ryan Kearney, "White People Love Hiking. Minorities Don't. Here's Why," September 6, 2013, *New Republic* https://newrepublic.com/article/114621/national-parks-popular-white-people-not-minorities-why

bedrock of an understanding of the world, and, more materially, survival in it? Julie Cruikshank, in *Do Glaciers Listen?: Local Knowledge, Colonial Encounters, and Social Imagination*, argues that this designation "[breaks] the bond between people and place along arbitrary lines that separate cultural heritage from natural environment" (2005, 251). Grounding the decision-making process in something other than "arbitrary lines" involves more than adjusting the lines, of course: transposing Indigenous people to the "nature" side of the equation, thereby allying "them" with animals and "us" with humans, does not quite work. Transposing all of "us," however, just might.

Beverley Diamond's work (2013) has also convinced me of the necessity of softening arbitrary lines in engaging with the more overtly historical materials of my research: archival materials, written (mostly by settlers) records, and oral histories. Writing about Native American history, Diamond points out the "incompleteness of human-centered historical accounts" (2013, 159). She argues that since creation stories, narrative, and mythology constitute some of the most important texts of Native American history, and since "giants and spirits, birds and animals, are historical agents in this context," considering the greater-than-human world is vital. Acknowledging these other-than-human historical agents, however, may create some friction: "with their numerous nonhuman characters, early time periods (or timeless ones), chronological discontinuities, and unquestionable 'truth' value, [Native American texts] pose one of the greatest challenges to Eurocentric constructs of history" (Diamond 2013, 159). Overcoming the tendency when working with print documents "to equate history with the written records of colonizers and to describe earlier events as prehistory" and "assess[ing] the purposes and priorities of history" become important to this project (Diamond 2013, 159).

Animism

> We were sitting outside under the blaze of a noonday sun, having just finished a water ceremony. Four elders had prayed in English, Dene. We had sung to Lake Gregoire, sipped

> tiny sips from the glass jar of water we had passed around, and sat in reverent silence. The ceremony now over, we relaxed a little. Nitanis, a key organizer of the Healing Walks, held her youngest son in her lap, telling us again the story of his birth. He was born three years ago at the third Healing Walk. A strong thunderstorm raged outside. Delivered by traditional methods, his immediate world one of ceremony, prayer, and soft deerskins, he had been born in the tipi that stood a short walk away. His name was Kimowanihtow, Cree for "thunder."
>
> "But he's afraid of thunder, right, Kimowan?" Kimowanihtow said something softly into Nitanis's neck. Suddenly a huge clap of thunder sounded. The sun still blazed.
>
> Silence.
>
> Kimowan again spoke softly.
>
> *BOOM.* And then both the sky and Kimowan were quiet. Did the thunder hear?

Part of an answer to our echoing question – what does singing to a river do? – can be found in what the question hints at: that the river (or thunder) might be able to hear. Singing to a river may have something to do with humans cultivating a relationship with the greater-than-human world. When I use the word "relationship," I mean a reciprocal relationship, predicated on listening. In some places, territories and rivers are considered persons under the law: Te Urewera, an 821 square mile national park in New Zealand, for example. The Whanganui River, a river on the north island of New Zealand, is also being considered for legal personhood status, something that it has long held in Maori eyes.[10] I give these examples to illustrate that the recognition of territories and rivers as persons has been powerful enough to enter settler-designed legal systems. Seen in this light, inquiry into relationships between two people – one human person and one river person – becomes not a fanciful activity, but one with material implications.

Animism I: Does the River Hear?

There is a strong contingent of thinkers who focus on how "the river" (standing in for plants, rocks, land, soil) receives song. This line of inquiry frequently appears in the "conscious community" world

[10] Bryant Rousseau, "In New Zealand, Lands and Rivers Can Be People (Legally Speaking), *The New York Times,* July 13, 2016, http://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/14/world/what-in-the-world/in-new-zealand-lands-and-rivers-can-be-people-legally-speaking.html?_r=0.
Te Urewera is considered a person under the law.

as so-called pseudoscience: internet articles claiming scientific proof of plants growing better if you speak nicely to them, for example. "Have you heard of Emoto?" is one of the questions I receive regularly when I describe my research to yoga teachers, neo-shamans, and participants at sound healing events. In fact, a song promoted by Emoto is the lone Japanese song that showed up at Leo's water ceremony on the banks of the North Saskatchewan. Emoto is a Japanese scientist who has developed a system of relating to water. Water is central to our lives, he says. The bedrock of his claims is his series of experiments that show that ice crystals viewed under a microscope arrange themselves differently depending on how they have been treated: For example, "'Let's do it!' creates a lovely shape [of ice crystal], while 'Do it!' creates a crystal similar to that created by the word 'Satan.' This might indicate that force and commands are alien to the principles of nature" (Emoto 2001, 10). Many of these difficult-to-prove theories open worlds of possibility and help both me and my interlocutors forge a way of being in the world: while I remain skeptical as to whether Emoto's experiments are replicable – he has, apparently, turned down a million-dollar opportunity to replicate them under the scrutiny of the James Randi Educational Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to educating the public on critical thinking when it comes to paranormal claims and pseudo-science – it has been fruitful for me consider instead the other side of the equation. Rather than focusing on the effect my words have on water, I turn my attention to how I treat "things" that I have been taught are inanimate: how does it feel to think harsh thoughts about water, to act indifferently towards it while it quenches my thirst, to allow a feeling of gratitude to arise as I recognize it as a force that sustains my life and the lives of all the beings I love?

On the more academic side of the spectrum, scholars of quantum physics and feminist science studies have been problematizing subject and object relations, arguing that subject and object – singer and river – are not separate as commonly believed. Karan Barad does this through the philosophy-physics of Niels Bohr. "Bohr rejects the atomistic metaphysics that takes 'things' as

ontologically basic entities," Barad writes, going on to explain that "[f]or Bohr, things do not have inherently determinate boundaries or properties, and words do not have inherently determinate meanings," and suggesting that ultimately Bohr presents a "radical challenge" by "[calling] into question the related Cartesian belief in the inherent distinction between subject and object, and knower and known" (Barad 2007, 138). Though this line of thinking does not in itself lead to a tidy explanation of what singing to a river might do for the river, it certainly loosens the idea that a bounded entity called a human acts cleanly and uni-directionally on a bounded entity called a river.

The work of Emoto and his community, quantum physicists, and feminist science scholars forms collectively an important intellectual context both for the philosophizing of my interlocutors and for my own theorizing and for allowing the singing to a river to become thinkable. That said, my focus in this chapter continues to rest *exclusively* on the human side of the relationship. In other words, whether or not the river can hear song is a question that will remain unanswered in this dissertation. Instead, I find it productive to ask: how are humans changed from interactions with rivers? And, secondarily – since rivers are undeniably changed by humans who write policies about them, ignore the policies written about them, spill oil into them, and then try to take the oil out of them – how are rivers changed by the humans that have experienced singing to them regularly? It is a single answer to the first question that I hope to flesh out in remaining "animisms" sections: I suspect that singing to rivers fosters what I will imperfectly term "animist thinking."

Animism II: In Anthropology and the Everyday

Especially for anthropologists, the term "animist" may conjure images of musty "history of religions" books in dimly lit areas of the library stacks, survey courses, social Darwinism, the names Lewis Henry Morgan and Edward Tylor, and a very specific definition from 1871, Tylor's: animism is "belief in spirits." Graham Harvey, however, who came to animism through Paganism, points out

both that animism is flourishing in contemporary times, and that the term is being used in at least two "seemingly contrasting" ways:

> Some Pagans identified animism as the part of their religious practice or experience which involved encounters with tree-spirits, river-spirits or ancestor-spirits. This animism was metaphysical and would have been recognized by Tylor. Other Pagans seemed to use 'animism' as the larger-than-human, multi-species community. This animism was relational, embodied, eco-activist and often 'naturalist' rather than metaphysical. (Harvey 2013, 2)

In fact, a broad definition of animism allows us to make the observation that animism is flourishing in mainstream contemporary culture. Consider, for example, the most famous of all de-cluttering books: Marie Kondo's wildly popular *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up*, a book that encourages its readers to keep only things that spark joy in them, throwing out (yes, controversial) the rest. Kondo explicitly advocates speaking to the objects in one's house:

> One of the homework assignments I give my clients is to appreciate their belongings. For example, I urge them to try saying, "Thank you for keeping me warm all day," when they hang up their clothes after returning home. (Kondo 2014, 168)

She advocates for the well-being of socks, recounting how she admonished her client for storing socks in a way that didn't let them relax: "I pointed to the balled-up socks. 'Look at them carefully. This should be a time for them to rest. Do you really think they can get any rest like that?'" (Kondo 2014, 81). After explaining how successfully to fold socks, she instructs, "Store the socks on edge, just as you did for clothing. You'll be amazed at how little space you need compared to your 'potato ball days,' and you'll notice your socks breathing a sigh of relief at being untied" (83). Statements like these join some of our long-held animistic traditions that endure beyond what Piaget would identify as the animistic phase of a child's development (Slee 2002, 273): the practice of refusing to place a doll face-down on the floor, or wearing a lucky T-shirt, for example. As Graham Harvey points out, "It seems likely that all humans are tempted to personalize even the artefacts with which they live: if they do not ask 'fetishes' to guide them or amulets to protect them, they are likely to name their vehicles or weapons (from spears to atomic bombs)" (Harvey 2013, 7). As more explicitly animistic

practices like Marie Kondo's enter our lexicon, it becomes easier to see the similarities between these and longer-held traditions.

Animisms III: Settler Mainstreams Meet Indigenous Thought

Mild, mainstream animist thinking has been intensified by the arrival of more potent force: a mainstream effort (particularly in Canada) to take Indigenous people seriously. Most recently, Canada's 150th anniversary of confederation has been sparking controversy to do with Canada's history of colonialism. Steve Bonspiel, a Mohawk writer, published an opinion piece for CBC News in which he wrote:

> [If] you come to Mohawk Territory, the ones who have felt the brunt of colonialism longer than most other surviving First Nations in this country, don't expect to see any signs with the number 150 emblazoned on them…. Montreal, or Tiotiá:ke as we call it, is celebrating 375 years of occupation. That number tells part of the story of why we would be more angry and frustrated with stalled land claims and assimilation tactics; eradication measures and genocide: we have dealt with it much longer than, say, any nation out west.[11]

Canada's 150th celebration is intensifying the effects of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), launched in 2008 and dissolved in 2015, which put Indigenous concerns into the view of the Canadian public eye. Conceived of as a key part of "an overall holistic and comprehensive response to the Indian Residential School legacy," the TRC, according to the Canadian government, served as a public "acknowledgement of the injustices and harms experienced by Aboriginal people and the need for continued healing."[12]

Following on the heels of the TRC, two universities – Lakehead University in Thunder Bay, Ontario, and the University of Winnipeg in Manitoba – made Indigenous studies a mandatory component of public school curricula; Vancouver admitted that it was on unceded Musqueam

[11] Bonspiel, Steve. "Canada's 150-year celebration doesn't fly here," February 25, 2017, CBC News, http://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/canada-s-150-year-celebration-doesn-t-fly-here-1.3992457

[12] "Introduction," *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*, accessed December 21, 2018, http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/index.php?p=7.

territory; and Edmonton decided to name streets with Indigenous names. Ten years ago, most settlers did not know that the original name of the land Edmonton was built on was Amiskwaciwâskahikan (Beaver Hill House); today, most have heard the name though perhaps cannot spell or pronounce it. The racism that was particularly salient in the 1990's has abated somewhat or at least sought more covert avenues. With these changes, something else important has happened: Indigenous ideas, ceremonies, and ways of knowing have begun to trickle into public consciousness via official Canadian frameworks: a creation story told at the beginning of a writer's festival; drummers singing songs in Anishinaabemowin, Cree, Dene, or Nuu'chah'nulth, behind a processing line of Royal Canadian Mounted Police and other officials; sage and sweetgrass filling the air before a panel discussion begins; traditional territory acknowledged at the opening of a building. And with all of these small gestures – gestures that in many cases are only gestures and not part of structural change or reparations – have arrived powerful ideas, ideas that are so subtle you might miss them, ideas that resound in the thanking of water, talking to a stone, praying to the spirit of a mountain: water, stones, mountains are more than just things. And, though these ideas were here before – since time immemorial, some might say – it is only since we settlers started listening to Indigenous people that we started drinking in these ways of being.

I remember going to a talk in 2008 by an Indigenous writer at UBC's Museum of Anthropology. He was holding a glass of water that someone had handed him, and he was hunting around for a place to put it down. "We don't put our glasses of water on the floor," he said, "because water sustains us, and we show reverence towards it." How incredible, and how incredibly foreign, I remember thinking at the time.

Animism IV: Ayahuasca Cultures

Simultaneously, more potent and explicitly animist practices and ways of thinking have begun to emerge strongly enough in a few places that reports of them have begun to trickle into the general public's awareness. 2008, incidentally, was also the year that the celebrated Vancouver doctor Gabor Maté began using ayahuasca to help his patients with drug addictions. Author of the best-selling *When the Body Says No*, Maté said that he had run out of strategies to help his most severely addicted patients. In 2010, *The Globe & Mail,* a major Canadian newspaper, printed a story on how the Canadian Medical Association had threatened to revoke Maté's licence if he didn't stop running these clinics. Ayahuasca was, and is, after all, illegal in Canada (and in the USA). This incident was how many Canadians came to hear of ayahuasca.[13] Originally "plant medicine" used by shamans in Peru and Brazil, ayahuasca is a brew of at least two plants. Becoming psychoactive only when the plants are combined, ayahuasca is known for producing brilliant visions (Fotiou 2014, 176). Most partakers of ayahuasca I have encountered in my fieldwork (and "life"), none of them Indigenous, imbibe ayahuasca only in ceremonial context, and refer to ayahuasca as a person: she. Songs *to* Mama ayahuasca abound: they show up at campfires, on friends' Facebook pages, and at sound healing events. Songs *from* Ayahuasca, *icaros* or medicine songs that are "given" during ceremony, are perhaps guarded more closely, but still appear with some frequency. Ayahuasca apparently shows people things they need – but might not want – to see. She has particular patterns of movement, vine-like, more organic, apparently, than chemical drugs synthesized in labs. Lizards and many-eyed creatures lurk in the background. My interlocutors would be read by the editors of *Ayahuasca Shamanism in the Amazon and Beyond* as "transcendental tourists [who] understand ayahuasca as a kind of shortcut from individual to world consciousness (Nature, Great Mother, caring Pachamamma)"

[13] I cannot yet trace as clear a story in the States, but is worth noting that the California Institute for Integral Studies (CIIS) has long been pioneering research in psychoactive drugs and even offers a "Certificate in Psychedelic-Assisted Therapies and Research."

and "profitable neophytes" amongst the shamans of the Amazon for whom ayahuasca "is mostly about sociality: a negotiation among human and nonhuman companions and neighbors," among other things (Labate and Cavnar 2014, xx). This stance, popular amongst many anthropologists, bears mentioning early on, but it is another movement amongst scholars of the humanities and social sciences that I find useful for thinking through animism in a way that an unwavering focus on Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations makes difficult.

As scholars have started identifying animist thinking in contemporary contexts and stopped considering Indigenous people "primitive," scholarly frames have changed. Tylor located animism strongly as an epistemological phenomenon: "primitive" people believed in spirits, the subtext being that spirits did not exist ("of course"). Given the current context discussed above, it becomes more difficult to dismiss animist thinking as epistemology. Enter the "ontological turn." Annemarie Mol defines the ontological turn as "Not a politics of *who* (who gets to speak; act; etc.) but a politics of *what* (what is the reality that takes shape and that various people come to live with?)" (Mol 2014). Asking *what* rather than *who* revolutionizes a central question in anthropology. To use anthropologist Eduardo Kohn's words, dominant "critiques of the ways we in the 'West' represent nature only [asks] how other humans come to treat nonhumans as animate" (2013, 93). What would it mean to take seriously, for example, that the idea that some humans *are* jaguars? To this end, Kohn describes the forests around Ávila, a village in Equador's Upper Amazon, as "full of *runa puma*, shape-shifting human-jaguars, or were-jaguars" (2013, 2). Note that he doesn't write "believed to be full of."[14] In a similar move, "thing theory," an area of critical theory growing out of literary studies, problematizes subject-object relationships in the realm of inanimate objects, focusing on "a kind of indeterminate

[14] Kohn actually goes further than just taking the Runa seriously. He also takes jaguars seriously: "If jaguars also represent us we cannot just ask how it is that some of us humans happen to represent them as doing so" (2013, 94).

ontology, in which the being of the object world cannot so readily be distinguished from the being of animals, say, or the being we call human being" (Brown 2015, 2). The humanities and social sciences, then, are beginning to respond to the idea that there are different worlds, not just different interpretations of the same world. As I begin to ask myself if that implies that we can *create* different worlds through our practices and thoughts, my attention is drawn to the table beside me.

Animism V: A Jaguar at Berkeley

> "So a jaguar would be part of my family line," says a pink-haired woman over her neon pink pencil case to the man across from her. I am writing this section at the Blue Door Café, close to the University of California Berkeley's campus.
>
> "The Xapiri's Gaze" is the article in front of the man. A Google search tells me that it is the fourth chapter of a book called *The Falling Sky: Words of a Yanomami Shaman*.
>
> The woman gets up from her seat and as she disappears into the bathroom, I catch a glimpse of the words on the back of her black hoodie, "May all beings be released from suffering." A healthy dose of Buddhism.
>
> When I rise to leave I see her hand, fingers tucked back into the cuff towards the wrist, back of the hand cloaked by the hoodie's fabric. Suddenly, as the cuff-shadow shifts, I see it: the face of a jaguar (or maybe a leopard, but it is hard to tell with a tattoo), fierce and bright.

(Bodily) Practices

When I think about how to answer the question of what singing to a river does, I have the idea that I will ask my interlocutors what they think, that I'll stand on the riverbank and listen, that I will practice singing to the river. The repetition of singing to the river is what makes it a practice. I look to what might be called "Practice Theory" to help me understand this, as well as some "Anthropology of the Body" literature because that is the kind of literature that talks about the practices that *become* bodies. In other words, there is no hard line between practices and bodies. And what about the environment or space? Practices don't happen in a vacuum. What role does the space play? Does it become part of the practice? Does it shape the practice? And what about the

community? Does there have to be an explicit community for a true practice to exist? Throughout my dissertation I attempt to respond to these questions in order to contribute to literature on practice by fleshing out the idea of space (rather than habitus), and considering practices that are "made up" by individuals but that are shaped by many "traditional" practices.[15]

First, I turn to three French scholars, all born before 1930. Marcel Mauss was one of the first in our tradition to talk about what he called "Techniques of the Body." For Mauss, bodily postures were not solely "natural," but partly learned. Mauss argued that they must be looked at through a "triple viewpoint": sociological, biological, and psychological. However, Mauss also stressed that in order to call something a "technique," it has to be an "action which is *effective* and *traditional*," meaning that it has to be transmitted and not just made up by one person as a kind of conglomerate practice (1973, 75). What Mauss is really talking about is groups of people or "determinate societies" (1973, 70), as we can see from this hilarious anecdote about swimming: "I was well aware that…the Polynesians do not swim as we do, that my generation did not swim as the present generation does,…the habit of swallowing water and spitting it out again has gone. In my day swimmers thought of themselves as a kind of steam-boat. It was stupid, but in fact I still do this" (1973, 70–71). Bourdieu took up Mauss's term "habitus" and, too, developed his ultra-famous *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, in which he argued that the most mundane of physical acts were culturally constructed. While Mauss gave plenty of examples, however, Bourdieu didn't. He did, however, popularize the term "habitus," which became a good tool for looking at "society" but not necessarily individuals. And gave us a brilliant question: if unconscious bodily practices change how we think, how are our bodily practices contributing to and changing climate change?

[15] Thing theory promises to be a productive tool here in considering how space achieves ontological meaning via objects in it.

The problem with "habitus," though, is that the people I know who sing to rivers are not a cohesive "society" or "group." Because of this, we need to consider the individual, something Merleau-Ponty does through his phenomenological approach and his focus on the habit-body. And though Merleau-Ponty himself doesn't flesh this out, sociologist Kirsten Emiko McAllister does insightfully when she talks about bodies in Japanese internment camps, since members of the camps are used to living in very cramped spaces (and even when they're not in cramped spaces, their body postures still reflect this). Judith Butler and Michel Foucault both – Butler through gender and Foucault through power – popularized the notion of the body as something whose seeming solidity comes out of the repetition of acts. Some obvious examples might be a muscular body shaped by the practice of lifting weights, or perhaps a student writing a dissertation shaped by the practice of sitting at a computer: rounded back, tight shoulders, quick fingers. But almost no practice is *just* a bodily practice, a practice that remains confined to the "bodily realm," whatever that might be. Saba Mahmood, writing of practices of piety among Egyptian Muslim women, gives the example of cultivating shyness (a desired quality in the context) by acting shy until one feels shy. She writes that "it is through repeated *bodily acts* that one trains one's memory, desire, and intellect to behave according to established standards of conduct" ([2005] 2012, 157). Mahmood, in holding that bodily practices can also be ethical practices, joins a confluence of other scholars, both of religion and ethics: Hadot, arguing that philosophy for the ancient Greeks was not just an intellectual practice but something material – a way of life – sees spiritual practices as a means to "a transformation of our vision of the world, and to a metamorphosis of our personality" (1995, 82). "Each [of the ancient Greek's philosophical schools] had its own therapeutic method, but all of them linked their therapeutics to a profound transformation of the individual's mode of seeing and being. The object of spiritual exercises is precisely to bring about this transformation" (Hadot 1995, 83). Lynn Davidman describes bodily practices as a primary vehicle through which former Hasidic Jews

"practice" un-Orthodox ways of being as they try to leave their religion behind (2014). Similarly, Matt Rahaim broaches the idea of ethics in transmission in the Hindustani vocal tradition, suggesting that teachers' instructions to students, while seemingly about how to produce vocal sound, carry with them an ethical valence that students absorb (2012). Nina Eidsheim tackles this subject head-on, offering a powerful argument that "every listening practice and its attendant theory arises from and reinforces a particular set of values" (2015, 6).

Similar to the way that ethical practices colour bodily practices, bodily practices bleed into knowledge practices. Many scholars also use their own repository of embodied knowledge, knowledge laid down through practice (or a repetition of acts), in ways that steer the course of their scholarship. A repository of embodied knowledge, knowledge laid down through practice (or a repetition of acts), for scholars who are aware of it, can overtly direct the course of their scholarship. Tomie Hahn, for example, writes about transmission and embodiment of Japanese dance through the lens of her practice of *nihon buyo* (2007). Priya Srinivasan, watching a video of Ruth St. Denis, and realizing from her own *bharatanatyam* practice that the *mudras* (or gestures) that St. Denis was making had to have been taught to her by an Indian classical dancer rather than just learned from pictures, was led on an archival search to figure out where St. Denis has learned the mudras (2011). Similarly, Elisabeth Le Guin, employs what she calls carnal musicology by playing Boccherini's cello pieces and letting her own musicking body guide her to insights about Boccherini's compositional process (2005), while Loïc Wacquant – so transformed by his time spent boxing for the sake of fieldwork at a Southside Chicago gym that he contemplated rejecting a position at Harvard to become a pro boxer instead – argues for the practice of carnal sociology being a prerequisite for understanding realms of practice that are so overtly embodied (2006). By extension, I should be singing to a river regularly – and I am – but I also hope to focus on something more radical and more elusive: the relationship between knowledge and practice.

(Knowledge) Practices (and Place)

As I reflect in this chapter on singing to a river in this chapter as a means of understanding the relation between knowledge and practice, I seek to join, in Margaret Lock's words, "conceptual approaches to the body [that] have tried to overcome a radical separation of knowledge and practice . . . largely through decentering the cognitive construction of knowledge" (1999, 136). Writing on this subject is scarce, as philosopher Peter Sloterdijk does not hesitate to point out: "None of the circulating theories of behaviour or action is capable of grasping the practicing human – on the contrary . . . previous theories had to make it vanish systematically, regardless of whether they divided the field of observation into work and interaction, processes and communications, or active and contemplative life" (1999, 10).[16] Arguing that the twenty-first century should "present itself under the sign of the exercise" the way "the nineteenth century stood cognitively under the sign of production and the twentieth under that of reflexivity," Sloterdijk defines practice as "any operation that provides or improves the actor's qualification for the next performance of the same operation, whether it is declared as practice or not" (2013, 4). The crux of his argument is that by looking at practice, we can get at something that is both "natural" and "cultural," a divide that Sloterdijk embraces in his thinking: "In truth, the crossing from nature to culture and vice versa has always stood wide open. It leads across an easily accessible bridge: the practicing life" (2013, 11). What I find useful is Sloterdijk's willingness to expand the category of "practice" to almost everything. Practice does not have to be predicated on a specific community that "enculturates" the practitioner. This understanding of practice, which could be anything from drinking coffee in the morning to studying tai chi in the evening, coupled with an understanding of bodies – thanks to Foucault and

[16] Lock agrees with him: "Nevertheless any connection between knowledge and practice remains essentially obscure" (1999, 136).

Butler – as "elusive, fluid, and uncontrollable" (Lock 1999, 134), becomes a very useful tool for approaching singing and listening and their place in a complex of practices.

Particularly important in the present chapter is an understanding of relationships (and entanglements) between place and practice. Writing about a group of people who have volunteered to create a tourist map for home in the Italian Alps, anthropologist Grasseni highlights how "different capacities to relate to the landscape are closely bound up with the skilled practices that unfold in it" (2009, 204):

> The group included, amongst others, expert mountain-goers, a university student, a cheese retailer, a marathon runner, a botanist and a hunter. As alpine guides, amateur photographers and habitual hikers, they all engaged in an exercise of embodied imagination, so to speak, namely reliving the experience of walking along the paths in order to better describe it in the guide. But *each* saw the landscape differently. Their description of the hiking routes matched their experience of the landscape in ways that were closely related to their visual and bodily experience of the land, and to their social ways of appropriating it. There were in fact different timescapes and different landscapes. (2009, 204)

Unlike the homogeneous group of people that a term like "habitus" seems to imply, or even an identifiable group identified by their practices of playing the cello, learning to box, or practicing a form of Islam, this explicitly heterogeneous group is selected based on time spent in a certain environment, presumably apart from each other. Practices in specific places, of course, have everything to do with Indigeneity. "Traditional land use," the set of activities like hunting, fishing, and picking medicines so often used for land-claims cases, are what many Indigenous peoples say make them Indigenous and what leads to *miyupimaatisiiun*, a word that Cree people in Northern Quebec use to mean "being alive well," a sentiment I have also heard from Cree and Dene peoples in Alberta (Adelson 2000).

As I consider the practices and their relationship with ecological thinking, I necessarily consider these practices that Indigenous people identify as the ones that make them Indigenous. What does Indigeneity have to do with practice? What do practices teach us about place?

Sound(scape) Studies

I would like to begin this section by arguing that soundscape is changing how we think of sound studies both in scholarly registers (reacting to Schafer's anthropocentrism) and in popular registers. A focus on singing to rivers *necessarily* reconfigures the idea of soundscape into something relational. A term famously coined by composer R. Murray Schafer who strongly subscribed to a split between humans and the greater-than-human world, a rural-urban split, and an aestheticizing of the landscape, the word "soundscape" has strong connotations of a conservationist environmentalism ([1977] 1994). Focusing on "noise pollution [as]…a world problem," Schafer suggests that we attend to the "world soundscape," asking, "Which sounds do we want to preserve, encourage, multiply?" Mosquitoes are certainly not implied in that "we." Humans, at the top of the perceived hierarchy, are the ones who are in charge of cultivating the soundscape or "improving the orchestration of the world soundscape" ([1977] 1994, 4). Schafer goes on: "When we know [the answer to this question], the boring or destructive sounds will be conspicuous enough and we will know why we must eliminate them" ([1977] 1994, 4). In other words, not only are humans in charge, but there is an ideal universal human who will be able to discriminate between "boring or destructive" sounds and "good" sounds. Presumably, this human will have the same fine judgment as Schafer who frames his distress, interestingly, in terms of taste: "the world soundscape has reached an apex of *vulgarity*" ([1977] 1994, 4, emphasis mine).

Granted, Schafer is writing in 1977. Modern-day versions of a similar argument are framed less anthropocentrically and less aesthetically. For example, Bernie Krause, a musician and scientist "argues that human activities cause ecological and sonic disruptions that really are rendering the world silent or discordant, submerging the 'animal orchestra' beneath noise" (Whitehouse 2015, 53). In this reading, animals get to be orchestrators too. "A healthy natural environment can be heard, according to Krause, in a rich and harmonious soundscape that has evolved over millions of years. The loss of wildness thus

elicits a loss of harmony" (Whitehouse 2015, 53).[17] That said, I argue that Schafer's rhetoric is still a quiet hum beneath current thought. Aesthetics, as we saw in the previous chapter, are often inseparable from politics.

This inseparability parallels a shift that has been happening in ecology for some time: what is the difference between growing a garden and permaculture? Do we cultivate in ways that we think are beautiful or do we let things grow beside each other that do well together, where each plant replenishes what another is taking? (This question may be a bit simplistic, as biologist Robin Kimmerer points out with her argument about asters and goldenrods: purple and yellow are opposite each other on the color wheel, making them striking to us, as well as to (in fact) bees. There is an aesthetic-functional reason that the two plants seem naturally to grow beside each other (Kimmerer 2014, 46). Do we watch and listen to a landscape before cultivating? Penny Livingston Stark, a prominent permaculture teacher in Bolinas, California recommends that people watch and listen to a landscape for one year before intervening (pers. comm.).

Similarly, what about listening with an intention other than to prune? I think here of the visual example Graham Harvey gives from a powwow he attended at the Mi'kmaq reserve at Conne River:

> During the final "honour song" for veterans and elders, an eagle flew a tight circle over the central drum group and was greeted with exclamations of greeting and pleasure. More than a few people told me that although eagles are commonplace there, nesting just across the Conne River, this flight in this style at this moment was an auspicious sign. The eagle was celebrating the Mi'kmaq community's efforts to regain indigenous pride and cultural

[17] Hildegard Westerkamp, who describes herself as a "sound ecologist" on her website, might be someone else to consider. Her website comments on her time with Schafer's "World Soundscape Project" at SFU in the early seventies: "Her involvement with this project not only activated deep concerns about noise and the general state of the acoustic environment in her, but it also changed her ways of thinking about music, listening and soundmaking. Her ears were drawn to the acoustic environment as another cultural context or place for intense listening"
"Biographical Details," *Hildegrad Westerkamp – Composer,* accessed December 21, 2018, https://www.sfu.ca/~westerka/bio.html.

> knowledge. No one spoke about "animism" but several became excited about "tradition." For me, however, this moment has become definitive of the kind of *inter-species communication* that exemplifies what I have come to think of as the "new animism" in contrast with Tylor's old approach. (Harvey 2013, 2, my emphasis)

It is fruitful to transpose this onto my own example of Kimowan and thunder after a water ceremony. Thinking of a "soundscape" here and what to weed out does not quite make sense if what we think of as sounds also as communication. Further, when we think of listening to this communication as a skill that needs to be developed, we can begin to ask questions about how a relationship with a river affects a person's practice of listening. Considering the relationality of listener and landscape (or soundscape) opens a path that allows us to return here to "music," a term that sound studies has largely veered away from. In the history of music and sound studies, "music" has been a loaded term. First, "music" too often meant "Western music." Western music history courses used to be called "music history." Some of the musics studied by ethnomusicology used not to be considered "music" but "noise." As Novak puts it, "Noise is an essentially relational concept. It can only take on meaning by signifying something else, but it must remain incommensurably different from that thing that we do know and understand" (2015, 126).

Music is something that people listen to, and listen to in a specific way. "Music is a shifting subset of sounds that assume particular properties depending on one's orientation to them" (Sakakeeny 2015, 122). "That's music to my ears" means something specific. But, as the existence of sound studies attests, there is an "arbitrariness of the conceptual separation between music and sound" (ibid.). Sound studies explicitly reorients implied ways of listening by expanding the scope of what is worth listening to, "[engaging] with the ways that music has been naturalized as distinct" (ibid.). This is particularly useful for considering the sonic expressions of the greater-than-human world. In Western music studies, our best-known examples are those of R. Murray Schafer, of course, and John Cage. Both of them get us to consider, in traditionally musical contexts, sounds that we would usually ignore. In singing to rivers, this is really important. However, this situation is

different in that there is the possibility that the river has some kind of personhood: you are singing to the river and the river is making sound and the river can possibly hear (you).

Christopher Small's "musicking" also becomes useful here (1998). Musicking expanded the possibility of what musical interaction looked like. It was not just music practitioners that were "being musical" but also people who were listening to music. If the river is listening to your singing, might the river be musicking? The river might be listening and singing too. The possibility of this is not just whimsical: it is deeply political. It totally decentres human practices and puts us into ethically charged relationship with the greater-than-human world. How do we treat someone who is able to sing and listen?

I have traced an uncommon path from Schafer to this project by addressing the anthropocentrism implicit in his work. But Schafer's work has received a lot of criticism not for the anthropocentrism in his rhetoric but for the universalism that was au courant then:

> Presumptions of universality have also led scholars to treat sounds as stable objects that have predictable, often technologically determined, effects on a generalized perceptual consciousness, which might even be reduced to an entire 'human condition.' This bias is detectable in the work of sound studies' de facto founder, R. Murray Schafer (1977), who did not explicitly recognize the constitutive differences that participate in the 'soundscape' as a multivalent field of sounds with divergent social identities, individual creativities and affordances, biodiversities and differing abilities. (Novak and Sakakeeny 2015, 7)

Anthropologist Steven Feld offers a powerful alternative to Schafer's soundscapes with his term "acoustemology" by which, he writes, he "[wishes] to suggest a union of acoustics and epistemology, and to investigate the primacy of sound as a modality of knowing and being in the world" (Feld 2000, 184). In other words, acoustemology is something that imbricates people and sounds. Perhaps most importantly, Feld argues, "Hearing and producing sound are thus embodied competencies that situate actors and their agency in particular historical worlds" (Feld 2000, 184).

Already in the concept of acoustemology (as with "musicking") we can see the distance closing between human and sound, subject and object. Other scholars of sound have provided more

tools for this gap-closing: Veit Erlmann uses the term "aurality," which in Jonathan Sterne's words "considers both 'the materiality of perception' and the 'conditions that must be given for something to become recognized, labeled and valorized as audible in the first place'" (cited in Sterne 2012, 8). "Aurality" implies mediatedness and *relationship*, especially between the perceiver and the thing perceived. Ochoa's book with the same title, then, "is about ontologies and epistemologies of the acoustic, particularly the voice, produced by and enmeshed in different audile techniques, in which sound appears simultaneously as a force that constitutes the world and a medium for constructing knowledge about it" (3). The "audile techniques" that Ochoa refers to are listening practices. The term was coined by Sterne (2003). Since it can be easy to assume that listening happens in one way (you are either listening or you are not), "audile techniques" reminds us that there are many different techniques – ways developed in specific contexts – of listening, something I will take up more extensively in the next chapter. Benjamin Steege, through an intellectual history focused on Helmholtz of how the West came to understand the ear and listening in modern times (2012). In other words, he looks at the kind of understandings and audile techniques that are so normalized that they might otherwise be invisible.

Writing over twenty years after he introduced the term "acoustemolology" in 1992, Feld now explicitly locates "acoustemology" with "relational ontology," the idea that discrete objects with specific essences don't exist. It is through relationship that they come into being (Feld 2015). The "acknowledgement of conjunctions, disjunctions, and entanglements among all copresent and historically accumulated forms…compelled a theorization of sounding and listening aligned with relational ontology" (Feld 2015, 12–13). The genealogy Feld traces for relational ontology leads to a group of scholars that come up regularly in thinking about relationships with the greater-than-

human world: Latour, Strathern, Haraway, Descola, and Viveiros de Castro.[18] And right at the cusp (or maybe at the center) of the arguments that these writers make is Indigenous thought.

The scholars I have discussed in this section have been in conversation with each other, which makes for a cohesive read. An intervention highly worth considering from outside of this corpus is Rebecca Belmore's "Ayum-ee-aawach Oomama-mowan: Speaking to Their Mother," a "sound installation (1991, 1992, 1996) in various locations within Canada and the United States. Response to the Oka Crisis of 1990." Belmore writes:

> This artwork was my response to what is now referred to in Canadian history as the "Oka Crisis." During the summer of 1990, many protests were mounted in support of the Mohawk Nation of Kanesatake in their struggle to maintain their territory. This object was taken into many First Nations communities – reservation, rural, and urban. I was particularly interested in locating the Aboriginal voice on the land. Asking people to address the land directly was an attempt to hear political protest as poetic action.[19]

While "sound studies" provides a fruitful context for thinking about singing to rivers, the understanding of sound – including audile techniques and notions of aurality – developed in this chapter and elsewhere is strongly tied to place. As I was writing this section, I struggled to integrate the notion of a river musicking (rather than happening to make sound as an inanimate force) and Rebecca Belmore's work into a sound studies framework. Both phenomena arise from specific understandings of place and specific understandings that come from a place. In an attempt to create a scholarly framework in which musicking rivers and Belmore's art can be other than peripheral I suggest that we focus explicitly on the relationship between sound and place, attempting to flesh out

[18] "The notion that actors plus relationships shape networks both within and across species or materialities is part of how more contemporary theorists – such as Donna Haraway (2003), Marilyn Strathern (2005), and Bruno Latour (2005) – have schematized relationality's critical logic. These themes are likewise present in contemporary writings on interspecies and nature/culture relations by Philippe Descola (2013) and Eduardo Viveiros de Castro (2000), as well as in post-humanist theories refiguring human relational presence and action within all technological, animal, and environmental others (Wolfe 2009)" (Feld 2015, 13).

[19] Belmore, Rebecca. "Speaking to Their Mother." Accessed April 5, 2017. http://www.rebeccabelmore.com/exhibit/Speaking-to-Their-Mother.html.

what Schafer originally called "soundscape studies." We can simultaneously take other steps towards an Indigenized sound studies: Helena Simonett cautions readers against "overhearing" or focusing our ears over our other senses. She writes, "To rethink sound as a multisensory experience is to recognize the human-environment relationships as holistic, connective, and relational" (2014, 127).

Kath Weston argues that "political ecologies of the precarious," deeply tied to "anxieties about making a living during the period of neoliberal or late capitalism," cultivate in people a particular "affective stance" (2012, 433, 429). This stance, solidified by practices of interfacing with capitalist structures, "new car smells" being one of them, is what "allows people to live with apparent contradictions, reassuring them that they can poison the world without limit even as they recognize that a limit must be out there somewhere and suturing them to ecological demise even as they work against it" (429). The car, for example, which is "associated with the introduction of industrialized mass production and the paving-over of wildlife habitats" still "refuses to be upstaged" (439). This is Weston's answer to the question "why are we not *doing* anything about ecological crisis?" We are stuck in habits to which we are complexly affectively bound. I would like to propose that singing to rivers becomes a way to create those affective relationships ourselves. Singing to rivers becomes *doing* something about ecological crisis.

III. On Listening on Indigenous Land

In June 2018, I learned that the squat, hill-like mountain in Victoria, BC I had known as Mount Doug was called PKOLS. I had walked the hour and a half to the summit from my aunt and uncle's house, past the yard with an overabundance of figs, past the rows of blackberries, up the dusty path bordered by the scorched oceanspray flowers, and found at the top a sign that hadn't been there the last time I visited. "PKOLS" it said in large letters under a carving of a thunderbird. Underneath it began: "Located in W̲SÁNEĆ territory and on the border of Lekwungen territory, this *has been, and remains,* an important meeting place for many nations" (emphasis mine). The wording "has been, and remains," especially in the context of Victoria's usual signage, was striking.[1] Only a few weeks previous, I had been struck by a sign outside the Royal British Columbia Museum entitled "Native Plant Gardens." After a brief, general description of the gardens, the sign concludes, "Several species [of plants in this garden] *were used for* food, medicine and clothing by First Peoples throughout the province" (emphasis mine).

[1] Geographer Reuben Rose-Redwood identifies Victoria's deeply-entrenched "royalist-colonial imaginary," pointing out the ubiquity of "streets named in the honor of European explorers" (2016, 194).

Figure 3.1 *Native Plant Gardens: A Living Collection*, a sign outside the Royal BC Museum

The phrasing "were used" tells visitors either that First Peoples are no longer here or that First Peoples no longer use these materials, neither of which is true. Ironically, the plaque's subtitle is "A Living Collection."

Figure 3.2 Two signs on PKOLS

The sign on PKOLS, on the other hand, goes on, "The reclamation of PKOLS to replace the colonial name Mount Douglas recognizes the nation-to-nation agreements negotiated here and supports ongoing efforts of Indigenous and settler people to restore balanced relationships to the lands they call home." Beside this wooden sign, affixed to a rock, is a smaller and perhaps more enduring plaque that proclaims itself to be Mount Douglas Park Charter. After years of ignoring it, I finally read:

> The lands known as Mount Douglas Park are hereby reserved in perpetuity for the protection and preservation of the natural environment for the inspiration, use and enjoyment of the public.
>
> This land has been transferred by the province of British Columbia to the corporation of the District of Saanich on the condition that it be maintained and preserved as a public park.
>
> With this charter, the spirit and intent of the original crown grant of 1889 is maintained

> while its scope is expanded to include within Mount Douglas Park all adjacent municipal parklands, present and future, so that the whole will continue as a wilderness preserve for generations to come.
>
> Proclaimed this 22nd day of November, 1992, by the council of the Corporation of the District of Saanich on behalf of the citizens of Saanich.

There are many reframings of lands as Indigenous. These reframings are by nature as frictive as these two signs standing beside each other. This chapter asks what reframing North American land as Indigenous means for music studies. This question accompanies the many efforts to "decolonize" the academy.

What does it mean to listen on Indigenous land? In a sense this question is about the very material and the very practical: what is listening? What does Indigenous land have to do with it? And how do I do this – listen on Indigenous land? Before I go any further, I must make a crucial distinction: the word "Indigenous" here is *not* supposed to connote my engagement with Indigenous musics, just the way the PKOLS sign does not address itself only to Indigenous peoples. This question – of listening on Indigenous land – would be just as relevant if I were engaging with contemporary Canadian opera or Americanized Indian *kirtan*, for example.

The pronouns in this chapter, as in the first chapter, are necessarily slippery. Note that the opening question of the last paragraph doesn't specify who is listening. What if I added the not-quite-as-elusive-but-still-elusive "we?" There are many people – Indigenous and otherwise – for whom this chapter, like the PKOLS sign, will be obvious. But the "we" of this chapter is a different "we." I'm addressing the majority of people – almost all non-Indigenous – in music studies whom I see at conferences, in classrooms, read in books and articles, and I am trying to talk to this dominant scholarly public. In other words, this question of listening on Indigenous land is not an "area studies" question, but almost the inverse: it is a question for those who might never have thought to ask it.

What does it mean to listen on Indigenous land? It is a question that demands an astonishing reorientation: it requires that we look at the earth below us, almost invisible in its stability, and discover that what we thought was material is actually discursive. These foundations we call "North American contexts" are structures that were built by "us," an older and different "we" than the "we" that we became. And that older "we" built them the way they knew how to build, made in their image and in the image of what who imagined future versions of "us" to be. This chapter is an invitation to build some other structures, perhaps temporary ones.[1] It is an invitation to come out of the concert hall of Chapter 1 as default and try to build a new listening-place that is not a theme or variation on the concert hall. I attempt this building through the very material constraints of my body, through questioning ethnographic methods, and using old tools for new purposes.

This settler-facing chapter never *quite* gets to land. This is strategic: if I explain how several Indigenous thinkers "ground" this question, I run a risk of losing settler bodies. We are so used to floating up into the bird's-eye position. Let's keep our feet on the ground. I'll keep reminding us that I have a body. I'll keep saying "we," hopefully reminding us that *we* have bodies. Instead of centering Indigenous bodies in Western frames, or centering Indigenous bodies in Indigenous frames, this chapter centres settler bodies in Indigenous frames. The question I start off with is an awkward one for us. Connecting Indigenous land with listening is hard to do. Like the signs in Victoria, there's a kind of catachresis that doesn't make sense when I ask this in Western contexts. We asked in the first chapter what it might mean to listen in a concert hall. What about expanding the contexts outwards so that we ask about contexts even more fleshed out than just the concert hall. How did we get into the concert hall? In a sense, this is about the "we" settlers that come out of the concert

[1] "I do believe in the wholeness of the whole, no less than in the stupendous artificiality of a beginning followed by a middle followed by an end. Yet at the same time I very much like sleeping in a half-constructed house with, say, the roof in place but the rafters exposed and no walls, or at least no sheetrock with its seal, smooth whiteness producing that choking feeling of the straitjacket" (Taussig 2011, 33).

hall.

I begin this chapter from inside music studies by considering a history of one analytical tool – modal analysis – we have historically used within music studies. I narrow the question of listening on Indigenous land to another question about listening to Indigenous music that is even more settler-facing: are Indigenous musics modal? Through this question, I provide a history of settler musicologists (with the exception of Tara Browner who is Choctaw)[2] listening on Indigenous land, ending with the present where ethnomusicologists have been much more interested in using emic methods. Then, still within a music-analytic framework, this settler ethnomusicologist narrates her own experience trying out a more relational analytical tool with Sadie Buck's "Aboriginal Dance Opera," *BONES*. That tool relies specifically on my own moving body. After these more traditional musical contexts have been established, I broaden the conversation to include land in the twenty-first century by considering the land acknowledgements that are becoming more common both in Canada and in the US: if we, the intellectual progeny of those older scholars, acknowledge Indigenous land before our conference presentations, what does that require us to do in order for that not just to be a performative act but also a speech act? And then the next question: bodily acts are also things that become sedimented over time. I examine two bodily practices: listening for healing and listening as a racializing technique. Then I discuss how "receiving" this racializing listening technique from Euro-Western music studies shaped my fieldwork and accidentally gave me a useful ethnographic method.

In other words, this chapter has a few strands each of which involves the body in very

[2] This is not to suggest the absence of many Indigenous experts – be they musicologists or collaborators – who were writing at the time that these settler musicologists were. Francis La Fleshe and Charlotte Heth are two whose names come to mind. The scholarly forms, however, that these Indigenous scholars were expected to produce to be legible were strongly settler controlled and dominated. In other words, the purpose of this history is to consider settler traditions of Indigenous-focused musicology.

different ways. I consider an absence of Euro-American bodies in music scholarship; musical embodiment in the traditional sense of paying attention to bodily practices the way scholars like Hahn, Rahaim, Miller, and Le Guin do; less solid bodies undergoing processes of racialization (reminiscent of Eidsheim's work on voice); and finally bodies emplaced in specific geographic contexts (which might suggest Feld's *Sound and Sentiment*, but which becomes something else entirely).

A Short History of Listening (via Mode)

How have Western people listened to Indigenous musics? Why might it be useful or not useful for Western listeners to characterize Indigenous musics in specific ways? What stakes do they have personally in how Indigenous musics are seen? Using this question "Are Indigenous musics modal?" as a touchstone, I attempt to trace a genealogy of the pairing sometimes made between Indigenous musics and the idea of modality. I attend not only to the work, but also the *positions* of a few nineteenth-century scholars, including Frances Densmore, Alice Fletcher, and John Comfort Fillmore, as well as that of some contemporary scholars, including Tara Browner, Christopher Scales, and Michael Pisani. Through an analysis of these positions, I argue that the pairing of Indigenous peoples and modality represents a specific relationship between Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous Westerners, a relationship that has shifted as more Indigenous voices are listened to and heard. At the same time, I begin to build an ethical stance, in the mode of scholar Greg Sarris who takes a holistic approach to Indigenous texts: that those looking have as strongly defined a position as those looked at (1993). There must be two parties in order to have a relationship.

Before I go any further, I should explain my use of the term "modal." Harold Powers, writing at length on mode, begins by highlighting the relationship between Western and non-Western music that mode mediates: "it is essential to distinguish between 'mode' as a concept in the

history and theory of European music and 'mode' as a modern musicological concept applied to non-Western music, though the latter naturally grew out of the former" (Powers 2011). When ethnomusicologists talk about "modal" music, they are often referring to something more than something that has a scale where specific pitches are missing. Usually, there are also other parameters at work: repeated motivic materials, or specific ways of approaching and leaving pitches, for example, as in the cases of Persian and South Asian music. In Powers's words

> If one thinks of scale and tune as representing the poles of a continuum of melodic predetermination, then most of the area between can be designated one way or another as being in the domain of mode. To attribute mode to a musical item implies some hierarchy of pitch relationships, or some restriction on pitch successions; it is more than merely a scale. At the same time, what can be called the mode of a musical item is never so restricted as what is implied by referring to its 'tune'; a mode is always at least a melody type or melody model, never just a fixed melody. (Ibid.)

Modes can also describe rhythmic patterns, though that is not my concern here. Western music studies, looking beyond the West, associates modes with weighted tones and with complex, non-Western art music – Hindustani, Karnatic, and Middle Eastern musics, for example. When Indigenous music is called "modal," however, "modal" is often synonymous with "pentatonic," a word that denotes a lack of weighted tones and further away from scale function. The word pentatonic has historically had a valence: Powers points out "the late 19th-century presuppositions . . . that the pentatonic scales are regarded as more 'primitive'" (ibid.).

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries Western peoples had various, often-polarized stakes in Indigenous musics that made them want to categorize Indigenous musics as modal. A considerable amount of the interest in Indigenous musics came from sentiments Dvořák so famously expressed: that along with African American music, Native American music "could and perhaps should be the basis for a purely American style" (Beckerman 2012, 139). If Indigenous musics were supposed to be the "folk music" foundational to American art music, some – American composers primarily – wanted Indigenous musics to be *good* "folk music." One method of

"elevating" Native American music was to ally it with Ancient Greece (read: cultured and foundational): as the Greeks had modes, so did Native Americans.[3] Though modality – allied with an upstanding and revered antiquity – became the link between Ancient Greece and America, it did not describe a quality that was unique to or even particularly salient in Indigenous musics. In this way, "modality," a term used by people who did not work directly with Indigenous peoples and musics to describe Indigenous musics, says less about Indigenous musics themselves than about the relationship between Western classical composers and Indigenous musics from the Western classical composers' perspectives.[4]

Musical representation was another factor that drove composers to understand Indigenous musics as modal. According to Michael Pisani, "Early twentieth-century composers, steeped in the notion that Indian cultures would soon vanish from the earth, felt it their right, if not their responsibility, to borrow what they saw as distinctive characteristics from Indian tribal musics" (2003, 228).[5] Both the privileging of melody in Western musical thought, and the materials of Western art music at that time narrowed the range of "distinctive characteristics" ready to be borrowed: fluctuations in pitch, irregular rhythms, and distinctive timbres were difficult both to notate and to play on Western instruments. Turning to pentatonicism was a viable alternative. In this process, however, "Indigenous music" easily became conflated with "depictions of Indigenous

[3] This is an idea that, though not widespread still persists: "Technically," writes a professor of religion in his book on sacred song in America, "Native American melody is quite complex. In her 1918 collection of 240 Lakota songs, Frances Densmore found Sioux melodies to be built on five different scales comprised of the tones G, A, C, D, and E. Each scale used the same tones, but began on a different tonic note, similar to the seven modes of classical Greek music" (Marini 2003, 27).

[4] As Philip Bohlman reminds me, the "civilizing force of art music had to give modes to Indigenous peoples" (personal communication).

[5] Densmore echoes this in the poignant ending to one of her books: "Our composers are showing an appreciation of the fact that the old Indian, taking his music with him, is passing quietly into the Great Silence" (1926, 143).

peoples through Western music." Further, modality did not mark Indigeneity as Indigenous but rather as non-Western. The example that Michael Pisani provides is apt: Sousa's march "The Red Man" "was *perceived* by many to be authentically Indian because, aside from the general timbre of the concert band's instrumental forces and its toe-tapping beat, it has a distinctive referential character and doesn't sound like any of Sousa's other marches. And its title, of course, pointed listeners in the direction of native America" (2005, 214). The slippage between modality and the music it is supposed to describe becomes particularly apparent in the fact that what once signified Indigenous music soon after began to signify Chinese music. Pisani gives the particular example of Loomis's "The Chattering Squaw": "Loomis harmonized a pentatonic Cree melody in parallel fourths . . . While this feature might seem to us today to resemble some Tin Pan Alley Chinese stereotype, vaudeville songs about Asians at this time did not yet contain this particular theme" (ibid., 229). In other words, "modality" represented a relationship that Westerners had with Indigenous musics: they wanted them to be Other even as they subsumed them into Western music.

Around this time, Westerners who were working directly with Indigenous peoples and musics were encountering a very different representational problem: how should they hear, interpret, and write down the Indigenous music that they heard? John Comfort Fillmore, writing in the early 1900s, was among the many who underlaid Indigenous melodies with Western functional harmony. This decision seems not to have been made without some anxiety: according to Pisani, "[w]hen Fillmore sought to harmonize an Omaha song, he could find no satisfactory scheme of known chords that would exclude the missing scale tones" (ibid., 215). In adding the new scale tones in the chords he wrote underneath, however, Fillmore removed pentatonicism from the music: indeed, much of the music looks exactly like Western art song. Fillmore seems to have been concerned, understandably, with the Omahas' reactions to his handiwork. That the "Indians" seemed to prefer

his harmonizations of their songs on the piano seems to have been a relief (Fillmore 1899, 311). Alice Fletcher, referring to Fillmore's work, expresses similar sentiments: "I first detected this feeling for harmony while rendering to the Indians their melodies upon an instrument; the song played as an unsupported solo did not satisfy my memory of their unison singing, and the music did not 'sound natural' to them, but when I added a simple harmony my ear was content and the Indians were satisfied" (1994 [1893], 10).[6]

In Fillmore and Fletcher we see both a desire for relationship with the peoples whose music they are transcribing, and a desire to make something out of their music that was somehow aesthetically pleasing for all involved. In their quest not only to transcribe but also to harmonize Indigenous songs, composers and scholars like Fillmore and Fletcher were in a sense subsuming Indigenous music into Western music, changing something that *was* pentatonic into something that was not. But how do we evaluate that? Did it matter? In order to answer that question, we would have to know on which parameters of music Indigenous peoples placed most emphasis. Perhaps to Westerners, setting Indigenous songs this way was the opposite of using modal tunes in their compositions. This might have been a way of erasing "Indigenous" from music, civilizing it, and therefore understanding Indigenous people as people (read: rational people, people Enlightenment thinking would call persons), something that they could perhaps only do through a Euro-Western lens. But harmonizations might also have been a clumsy way of finding understanding, of seeing whether modality was actually important, testing its weight, seeing what the "Indians" as "Indians" thought. In Fillmore and Fletcher both, we see consciousness of the idea of a relationship.

Theirs, of course, is not the only approach. Others expressed a more explicit understanding

[6] As to whether the "Indians" had a "natural harmonic sense," Fletcher's description of both her and her interlocutors' reactions to the solo transcription contains what might be an unwitting clue: could it be instead that harmony serves a similar function to whatever was lost in the translation from Indigenous singing to piano rendition?

that their engagement with Indigenous materials marked a relationship, rather than solely an analysis. In these examples, we see ideas of modality being challenged and reframed. Densmore documents her own sense of relationship with Indigenous musics, and her changing sense of the nature of Indigenous musics. Subsequently reaching out to help other people understand her point of view, Densmore adds the markers that outside listeners need in order to understand: though she does not explicitly use the word "modal," Densmore dedicates a three-and-a-half page chapter – "Scale in Indian Music" – to explaining "the mooted question of whether Indian music is based upon 'our scale'" (1926, 136). "Whether speaking of Indian or other music," Densmore writes, "it is incorrect to say '*the* pentatonic scale'" (ibid.). Most importantly, Densmore shows people *how* to listen, explicitly identifying the problems of "translation." For example: "The Indian trains his ear to distinguish sounds which we fail to notice, but there is no evidence that he trains his ear to discriminate between the pitch of slightly different tones in his songs" (ibid., 137). Eschewing a discussion of modality altogether, Densmore leans towards the idea that "Indian" music must be understood on its own terms:

> All who are familiar with Indian music will admit that it loses its native character when played on a piano. An Indian may sing a tone of the same pitch as the piano but his manner of producing the tone and of passing from one tone to another is such that it cannot be imitated on any keyed instrument. The only way to preserve an Indian song so that it can be generally understood is to transcribe it in the musical notation with which we are familiar, but the best way to learn an Indian song from such a transcription is to hum it, tapping the time on a table or heavy book. This will be found more satisfactory than playing it on a piano, even for the purpose of memorizing it. (Ibid., 127–128).

Densmore's conclusion, several pages later, is anticipated: "it is urged that Indian music be studied as an expression apart and different from our own music, and that its structure be compared with that of our music as little as possible" (ibid., 139).

Modality Now

Present-day scholarship embraces Densmore's conclusion and takes it a step further: Indigenous peoples are asked for how *they* conceive of their own music. Though he does not mention the word "mode," Christopher Scales documents some of the same problems in listening that the previous scholars discussed hint at, namely intonation and the difficulty of transcription. Instead of modality, in addressing powwow music Scales discusses musical texture, which "[features] unison singing to the accompaniment of a steady drumbeat"; vocal production: "high, tense, loud" is "generally preferred"; melodic shape: "terraced, descending melodic line"; suitability of the music to dancing; and "'rhythmic displacement' of melody and drumbeat, the melody being sung slightly behind or slightly ahead of the beat" (2012, 81). Though Scales's analysis is his own, his conclusions come from extensive conversations with the practitioners of powwow music. Similarly, Tara Browner discusses powwow music using emic terms: each new verse is called a "push-up," the word "harmony" "describes how singers adjust the strength of their accompanying rum stroke so no one person will play louder than the others at a Drum" (2004, 74, 75). Unlike nineteenth century transcriptions of Indigenous songs, Browner's include drum transcriptions. Both scholars discuss timbre and fluctuations of intonation, features of Indigenous music that are often significantly different from Western classical music.

Does the relative absence of modality from current scholarship mean that modality is no longer important in looking at Indigenous music? Perhaps modality is not as emically important as people once thought. There is, however, a risk in this conclusion: to go back and correct a thought, to say that modality is not emically important might be to perpetuate the idea of an "unsullied" Indian music from the past, to perpetuate the idea of Indian music dying out, instead of acknowledging its increasing hybridity. What if modality has *become* important? Is there a way in which modality functions not only as a bridge to help Westerners understand Indigenous musics, but also as a characteristic of Indigenous musics themselves?

Bearing this last question in mind, I turn now to analysis, applying the question of modality to two pieces. Like Pisani and Densmore, the modal system developed by Helmholtz and still in popular use today (ibid., 128). The first song, "November Winds" by Gabriel Desrosiers, is an intertribal powwow dance piece. Unique in that they are not supposed to represent a single Indigenous nation, intertribal pieces are played when all communities are invited into the arbour (round powwow space) to dance. Because the music is meant to be intelligible "intertribally," it often takes the same form: "The basic form of a powwow song is standardized, allowing singers from different nations or communities to perform together at times, and facilitating the exchange of repertoire" (Diamond 2008, 129). The transcription below represents one verse or "push-up" of "November Winds." There are four push-ups in total, each begun by a different soloist. The rhythmic values are approximate.

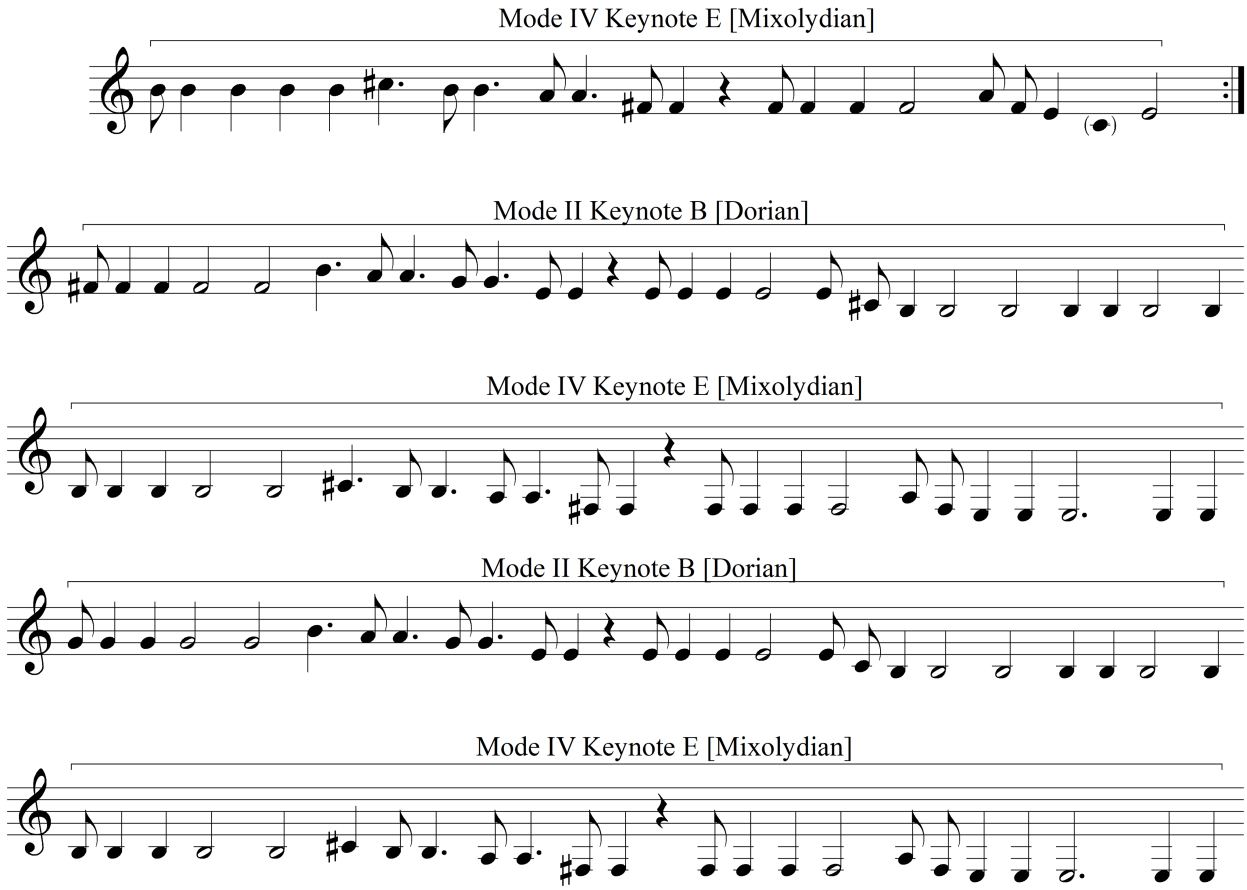

Figure 3.3 Modal Analysis of "November Winds"

Pisani determines that "[m]ost Indian modes . . . while pentatonically based do not necessarily remain in one mode" (2005, 217). "November Winds" is no exception: it alternates between Mode IV (Mixolydian) and Mode II (Dorian), the "melodies migrating from one pentatonic mode to another," a phenomenon that Romanian composer and ethnomusicologist Constantin Brăiloiu called *métabole* (ibid.). In Mode IV, the most structurally important note or the note that anchors us in the mode is E, while in Mode II it is B. While Fillmore identified these "keynotes" in an attempt to find a major or minor tonality for each mode, Densmore, as I do, "[determines] keynote by such criteria as frequency, rhythmic stress, and final rather than relevant to a Western tonal center" (ibid.).

This analysis, however, remains unsatisfying. It says nothing about what powwow musicians might identify as most salient about the piece: the relationship between the drums and the singers, the structural divisions that the drum signals, and the timbre, for example. Nor does it address what a Westerner unfamiliar with powwow music might find salient: different styles of the soloists, the fluctuation of pitch, and complicated yet repetitive structure. At the end of this analysis the question of modality seems irrelevant.

Much of the work of Haudenosaunee composer, dancer, and singer Sadie Buck, however, challenges this answer. Consider "Travelling Song" sung by the women of the Indigenous Women's Voices program, a program run by Buck at the Banff Centre. Though the song with its repeating motivic material and call-and-response style with different singers sounds like a powwow song, "Travelling Song" is sung only by women, something that would be non-traditional for a powwow song. Even more strikingly, the women use timbres that index Western music: the pitch does not fluctuate. This song may ask for different listening practices than Desrosier's powwow song. Is this music *meant* to be listened to as modal? Whose ears is it designed to reach? And whose ears with what hybridity shaped it? Might it make sense to look at this piece of music through the lens of modality?

Another of Buck's works is well positioned to help answer that question. Diamond writes of Buck: "Sadie Buck herself is no stranger to fusion. Indeed, she explains that fusion is the only means by which contemporary artists can actually own their work, since the traditional songs belong to her nation" (Diamond 2008, 113). Indeed, *BONES: An Aboriginal Dance Opera* by Sadie Buck and Alejandro Ronceria contains mostly pentatonic songs. "Oma Bema," "a song that is introduced in Act I, Scene 3 and repeated in Act III, Scenes 3 and 5," is particularly striking (Diamond 2011, 49). Diamond writes:

The song, a three-measure phrase repeated . . . is easily remembered; its return in Act III

> consolidates its importance as the aural "ground" of the opera. Significant, however, are the stylistic nuances of the repetitions, each shifting the ground, especially in the final scene where the phrase is sung in turn by each performer, individualized by each, often with blues inflections. Contemporary pop styles now transform the tune, aurally symbolizing the impact of encounter in the vocal delivery while also intensifying and individualizing the lullaby. (Ibid.)

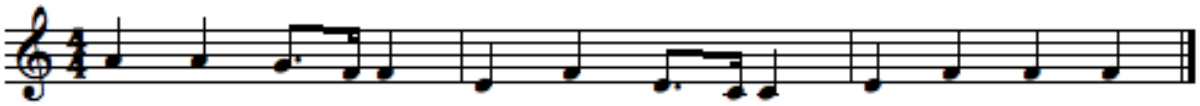

Figure 3.4 "Oma Bema" from Sadie Buck's *BONES*

The piece is in Mode I (Ionian) with a keynote of F. The melody is strikingly modal when it first appears as sung by three singers, Wind Spirit, Water Spirit, and Fire Spirit. However, closer to the end of the opera, the piece is harmonized with Western diatonic harmonies so that the piece becomes almost unindentifiable as modal. Is Buck playing with our perception of Indigenous musics, showing us how Indigenous melodies might have been harmonized with Western music, coopted? Or maybe just changed through hybridity? Is she showing us how Indigenous music (represented through modality) is adaptable and modern, much like Indigenous peoples themselves? Is Buck acknowledging the Western gaze and then deflecting it, using non-Indigenous materials the way Western composers have so often used Indigenous materials?[7]

Perhaps modality can shift as our relationship shifts. In one case it might be important (either for characterizing the listener or the listened to), and in another it might not be. Modality, however, must be recognized for the political project it is, something that sheds light on relationships among the studied and the students.

From Modality to Relationality

[7] These questions of hybridity are precisely the questions asked by scholars about Indigenous Christian hymns, many of which were original Indigenous songs harmonized with Western harmonies, created by Jesuits in the eighteenth century for missionary purposes. See, for example, Levine 2002.

If modality says something about relationships across difference, what might it mean to use an explicitly relational analytical method? What follows is an experiment from 2013 in which I tried to use my own body – with no fieldwork experience and very little knowledge of Indigenous traditions of any kind – for a kind of relational analysis. I include the experiment here not because it is particularly successful but because it represents a kind of wholehearted commitment to the body. I later argue in the meta-commentary that follows this section that the experiment with relational analysis takes into account only my most immediate body, my moving body, rather than the histories that also reside in my body. Here is the relational analysis in question:

> Indigenous dance of all kinds used to be banned in Canada. Generations of wisdom were lost as students entered residential schools where the motto was "kill the Indian in the child." In other words, a lot of Indigenous cultural dance was lost, was not transmitted well, was not cultivated. So it's a big deal that dance is happening in general. It's a big deal that it's not being packaged as traditional Indigenous dance like an unchanging history book, that it's about a group of Indigenous people coming together and joining in a way that they might not otherwise, trying to communicate across a gap. It's a model for us in a way.
>
> *BONES* seems to be designed so that bodies and their histories, cultures, and contexts are visible. They happen to be participating in this dance, creating relationships without forgetting their personal histories. *BONES*, I believe, is less a "dance opera" that you go to and watch be performed than something perhaps closer to Indigenous traditional dances: not for entertainment, but for relationship.
>
> ***
>
> *BONES* was created at the Banff Centre by Sadie Buck, the director of the Centre's Indigenous Women's Voices program and Alejandro Ronceria, the director of the Centre's

Indigenous dance program. "For Haudenosaunee people," says Buck, "music and dance go together. All of our songs have a dance to it . . . There is no separation for us." In a way, this project is a marriage of the two programs both conceived at a Western institution, and an acknowledgement of what, in Indigenous eyes, is a single art form. However, the work does not just draw on Haudenosaunee traditions (though Buck locates her desire to be inclusive in Haudenosaunee tradition), but includes seventeen indigenous cultures from around the world (Native Dance Website). In this way, *BONES* takes a non-traditional form, and is pan-Indigenous in its scope, a feature that makes this piece ideal to work with since insights gained about understanding and receiving this piece may apply elsewhere also. At the same time as they draw on a broad, collective sense of Indigeneity though, Buck and Ronceria avoid erasing the individual cultures that they work with: Buck gives the example of some cultures moving clockwise for the dead and others, like hers, moving counter-clockwise. Buck notes, "*BONES* is the sound of what I hear on earth transferred to an actual voiced rendition of it. I think that was the appeal of *BONES*. Indigenous people understood it at a core level. The [non-Indigenous part of the] audience had it too but had no vocabulary for it . . . " (Buck 2012, 149).

***

I was clotheslined by a sentence from *The People Have Never Stopped Dancing*: "Indigenous dancers' bodies, despite the physical effects of colonization, are a location of ways of being and knowing, held in bodies and everyday movements. And movement practices – including contemporary movement practices – are a tool for locating and unearthing these ways of knowing," writes Jacqueline Shea Murphy (2007, 10). I got caught up in the idea that I could look at Indigenous bodies and then somehow mine them for Indigenous culture. After all, the idea of culture being constructed and constructed in bodies is a much-discussed issue in

current scholarship: Kyra Gaunt in *The Games Black Girls Play*, for example, disputes the idea that there is a "black" way of being that is natural rather than constructed (Gaunt 2006). But for all that this is true, for me looking at Indigenous dance, there is an element of violence to "mining," however well meaning I might be. Indigenous dance and culture are premised on relationship. How can I relate if I've got out my microscope and float upward to become an omniscient and floating eye with no subject position? Relationships are about roots, about positions, and about human beings. I choose to root myself for the sake of relationship.

Therefore, I think that the best and perhaps most radical thing I can do here is listen. I struggle not to bring a voice of elitism with me. I think about emplacement. How did I get here? What are my intentions? What are the channels that my history opens, closes, distorts, sharpens? How do I listen through/past/with those channels? I have to admit that I feel the weight of the task. I want to champion these people that I am representing, and I feel that in order to do that I have to use language that is tough, quick, discerning, logical, decipherable. I feel that I have to use structures that are unchanging, linear, non-narrative. But this is not the language that *BONES* asks for. I have been taking a risk: here is the voice of the non-expert, breathing, rooted in her own history, listening, listening.

***

I don't know as much as I want to know. I worry that I might be representing people badly. I am running out of time. The archival DVD keeps breaking down, and I can only use it in the library. How can I listen when I feel defensive?

I think about young singers trying so hard to be right that they don't listen to their pianists. I think of Laura Loewen, a coach and collaborative pianist at the University of Manitoba, telling me once to put my arms around Deena, my pianist, as she played and as I sang. We were singing very complicated Ravel pieces and we were having trouble

coordinating some passages. With my arms around her, I could suddenly hear what I had been struggling to listen for the whole time: phrases, direction, Deena's voice.

I start to do that with *BONES*. This is a relationship and not a dissection, I tell myself. I remember Susan Foster and acknowledge that I am bringing my changing self to this relationship, myself now, my coconut yogurt-fuelled and caffeine-fuelled self. But I don't know if those steps are specifically belonging to specific Indigenous groups. Could I phone someone? What else can I read that might tell me? My desk is covered in piles of books. *This is a relationship and not a dissection.* I am afraid of not being rigorous. But this is the problem! It is a different sort of commitment and rigour that is called for in order to understand compassionately. *This is a relationship and not a dissection.*

***

Call my writing scattered. Its visions and revisions do not work in a straight line. And where is *BONES*? Getting there is part of it. Struggling into a relationship is part of it. This is the groundwork for ethical listening. I try to say this firmly and unapologetically: I am half of the relationship, and this is a responsibility.

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How can I find my way in? I look at bodies. I can do the actions that are happening on the screen. At first I am unimpressed because they are singing flat and the middle one looks like a bad dancer. Then I am impressed with Fire Spirit because he reminds me of someone I dated a long time ago. I notice that I have trouble getting into his body because I am admiring him rather than relating to him. This feels icky against my skin.

***

I watch and watch, and I feel myself slipping into a way of thinking and being that is different. I feel held. My mind feels calmer. I am breathing more deeply. I start to realize that

there is choreography. It seemed so improvised before. It is clear, though, now that they are all making approximately the same movement shapes. How could I have missed that before? I think it's because I am seeing them close up and perceiving them as particular individuals with particularly different characters rather than bodies executing the same choreography. I write down the form of the piece, which is what I would have to do if I were going to learn it myself. I realize (obviously) that they must have had to memorize it. I work my way back.

***

Looking involves listening eyes: eyes that have mouths, breath, weight, roots behind them. There is a living quality to looking. What is there on the screen has been produced by living bodies and comes to life in me differently each time as my changing self – different levels of caffeine, slowly growing knowledge about Indigenous traditions, less food, more sleep, a difficult conversation – receives it. I nearly described this as looking at a kaleidoscope: the materials are the same, but the patterns are never the same. But these are listening eyes. There is no room for a panopticon, even a colourful one, in recognized relationship. Instead I look/listen through cycles, through different iterations of a breath cycle, letting the images and bodies behind those images filter through my moving, reflecting, desiring, struggling-for-openness body (mind).

I have found a way into a sense of cycle that feels like my own. Cycle is about relationship, allows for changes in each iteration, allows a shift of weight, attention, mood, plurality. Dissections are not cycles; they are linear: beginning, ending. From this understanding, I bring my listening eyes to the cycles Sadie Buck might have had in mind. Can I relate?

***

I focus on "Oma Bema," the first song of Act 1, scene 4: Mother and Child #1. The text

and translation are simple:

Oma Bema	Earth Baby
Ne ema se	With me exist
Omasespa	in love

The piece, similar to the majority of them in *BONES*, is built on the repetition of a single, pentatonic line. Fire Spirit, Wind Spirit, and Water Spirit sing the piece and move simultaneously. Minimal supporting percussion can be heard non-diegetically.

***

Fire Spirit takes slow bent steps forward, his hands holding an invisible small earth, one hand supporting its bottom, the other resting on top. The slow, knee-bent steps seem to signify some sort of respect or importance. Wind Woman is the only one singing. At 12.39 Fire Spirit comes into centre and puts himself at a slight angle to Wind Woman who is leading the singing. He is listening and deferring, but not losing his centre in all of this, a perfect example of rootedness. "Earth Baby" this piece is called.

At ~12.43 Fire Spirit shifts his weight as he protects a small-soccer-ball-sized earth between his cupped palms: right hand on top, left hand on bottom. He moves not just from side to side but also twists a little, a tiny quarter-circle with his hips. I do this. There is a small shift and then I am sensuously enjoying my own body. Roots come through me, and I remember that I am not just self-sacrificingly loving Earth Baby; I am in relation. Fluidly, Fire Spirit releases the earth. It does not tumble onto the floor, though, because he has created a different space where perhaps the earth is less literally perceived. At ~12.50 just as the first "omase spa" group of three has begun, Fire Spirit's right arm accelerates slightly as it travels upward, elbow up first and down first, guiding the movement. Elbows become prominent, leading, up and then down, allowing the palms and backs of hands off-phase

with each other to stroke in parallel lines, up and then down, knees bending, weight in the pelvis, well-oiled, curve-making, but also firm. At 13.05 Fire Spirit's left hand crosses his body (a gesture that echoes his previous holding of the earth), and slows down, for a moment becoming a support in the structure as his right arm continues to stoke. Then he releases his left hand and both hands are travelling up and down once again, elbows leading.

It is at a structural break, at ~1.35, where they begin singing the first of three iterations of the words "Oma Bema," that Fire Spirit enters a different space once again. His left hand acts as support, and his right hand traces large and deliberate circles as if he is wiping the perimeter of a round table. His knees are flexible. Effortlessly, he is again holding the small earth.

Though I am enveloped in sound, I find it easy to forget that Fire Spirit is producing some of that sound. Somehow I associate the singing with Wind Spirit. She is, after all, producing *more* sound. I go back, trying to determine whether the exact words that Fire Spirit is singing correspond with specific actions. I don't think this is the case. The melody is important for the meaning, yes, but not in a quick, cerebral, 1:1 mapping of words to meaning. After all, this is a language based on vowel sounds that Sadie Buck has invented. Movements, somewhat choreographed (and we can tell this because Wind Spirit and Water Spirit have similar movements) line up with larger structural divisions. The melody seems more like a home or a heartbeat, something that is there, that you need, that does influence everything you do, but whose every beat is not rife with significance.

***

I watch Wind Spirit for the same amount of time. It is still very difficult to try to be in three other bodies and my own all at the same time. When I watch Wind Spirit, Fire Spirit and Water Spirit disappear from my awareness. I have to listen to each individually.

***

Wind Spirit stands as if she is holding her breath, small pockets of air under her armpits, stiffly facing forward. She is not holding her breath, though, because she is singing. With Fire Spirit it was easy to forget he was producing the sound he was moving to. Wind Spirit, in contrast, seems like a source of sound, her movements existing to flank the sound. At the first "ne ema se," she turns her palms upwards, small wings, as if to invite the men to join her. Indeed, coinciding with this gesture is more sound from Fire and Water Spirits. Her arms cross in front, separating upwards in parallel lines, book ends. She looks upwards, but her arms don't reach past her eyes even though I expected her fingers to continue reverently towards the sky. Quickly, her arms come back down, and at the "e" of "ema" in the second "ne ema se," her hands reach forward, again parallel lines, palms upwards, offering. The movements seem close to the text: Wind Spirit seems simultaneously to be offering love to Earth Baby and to be pleading with the Earth Baby to exist with her in love (as opposed to elsewhere). In this way, Wind Spirit's movements appear as stylized gestures that nuance the words she is singing. I read pleading into Wind Spirit's movements because her chest is a bit sunken sometimes, because of the slight tilt of her head, and because she keeps her elbows close to her sides as she extends her hands, as if she is not sure of herself, or not sure that Earth Baby will remain with her. That being said, watching Wind Spirit's performance throughout the duration of *BONES*, these seem to be part of her own habitual bodily comportment rather than part of her expressive vocabulary for "Oma Bema."

Partly for this reason, because the movements are so non-virtuosic, and because all three of them embody their movements so differently, when I look both at Wind Spirit's movements and at Water Spirit's, I am seized with the urge to speculate about their lives and the stories that their lives tell through their bodies. Is *BONES* set up in a way that

encourages this way of looking? Am I being intrusive?

***

Some internet research tells me that Jani Lauzon (Wind Spirit) is primarily a puppeteer, actor, and singer.[8] I find a YouTube video of her too.[9] She is giving a talk on Indigenous storytelling, and is introduced by – surprise of surprises – Elaine Keillor. Would she have been the one who introduced Elaine Keillor to *BONES*? This video tells me that a sunken chest is part of Jani Lauzon's everyday bodily comportment, but, most importantly and more respectfully, Lauzon strengthens my conviction in my methodological approach to *BONES*. Quoting actor Yoshi Oida, she says, "Knowledge isn't knowledge until you've repeated it ten thousand times." I picture her believing that as she learned the choreography to *BONES*. "When you're immersed in an oral culture you have to repeat and repeat and repeat . . . That's what we used to do. We used to memorize or learn our stories by repetition or by living them." "Our bodies are our books," she says.

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Then, I look up Kalani Queypo (Fire Spirit) and discover a strange YouTube video dedicated to pictures of him against the sonic backdrop of Cut Copy's "Feel the Love."[10] All of the comments underneath discuss how handsome he is.

When I find a video of him doing an interview, I am surprised at how fast-moving he is, how high his voice is.[11] His real-life bodily comportment is different from his dancing, faster and stiffer. I wonder whether I previously over-read his dancing for sensuality and

[8] "Jani Lauzon," accessed December 13, 2013, http://www.janilauzon.com/.
[9] "Indigenous Storytelling with Jani Lauzon," accessed December 13, 2013, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BwRUXCEqZlE.
[10] "~Kalani Queypo~," accessed December 13, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e5dzwbu0KfM.
[11] "Kalani Queypo at the SAG Screening of Reel Injun, American Indian Actors at LA Skins Fest," accessed December 13, 2013, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=al5r4rPh_sQ.

idealized him for a rootedness in the slow rhythms that come from being in touch with one's body because that's how the person he reminded me of was: slow and sense-oriented, pausing when he spoke as if he were listening to what his body was telling him and translating it into words.

More importantly (once again), I learn about his acting. He talks about his experience doing period pieces and historical reenactments, and expresses his excitement about being part of contemporary works that work to fight "the idea that [Indigenous people] are a relic from the past." He alludes to the ubiquity of Indigenous language reconstruction for the movie industry. I make the leap and picture him learning Sadie Buck's language with serious integrity. Speaking of the film *The New Earth* "We were shooting on the land that these occurrences had happened [on]. We were speaking the language. We were calling upon the spirits that were in that region. And it still gives me goose bumps to this day . . . because there's a responsibility to walk the way they did . . . and there's a lot of research that goes on your part that no body ever know that you do."

***

Finally I find Jody Gaskin (Water Spirit) on YouTube, singing a song listed as "Oldsmobile."[12] He has the same slow movements. "Papa Bear" is his stage name. How fitting, especially in the context of "Oma Bema." I think at first that he is the odd man out, the only one who is not talking about his Indigenous background. Then he sings, "Get me to that powwow on time," calling out, "Get me to that powwow, man. I love the powwow!" At the end of the song, we see Gaskin cleaning up slowly, putting his guitar away. Later on, someone picks up the camera and points it at Gaskin who now has an unlit cigarette hanging

[12] "Oldsmobile – Jody Gaskin LIVE at El Alamo," accessed December 13, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P0ssf1Xu3xo

out of his mouth. The cameraman calls him a sweaty Indian.

"They call me Chief Raincloud," Gaskin smiles.

"Papa Bear Chief Raincloud," replies the cameraman.

There is a poignant posting in the comments from his daughter that she might not want me to repeat here.

***

I return to the *BONES* DVD and finally focus on Water Spirit. I watch the first minute of "Oma Bema" again and again. His movements are so smooth. I watch Water Spirit again and again lift his arms reverently to the sky (12.44), bow his head and kneel to engulf space in his arms (13.11) like a powerful bird drawing his wings in, bring his hands towards his chest (13.17) so tenderly as if to hold this precious Earth Baby.

Analysis of the Relational Analysis

In the version I wrote five years ago, I wrote

> Somehow I feel healed, held, and full of joy. I can't stop grinning. I move as he moves, my hands occasionally brushing the purple cord of my headphones, connecting me to sound. It looks like I am the only one in this room, but I can feel their bodies, feel their love, their relationship. And this listening stance allows them to teach me things: respect, reverence, love, openness. Meegwetch, Fire, Wind, and Water Spirits. Kalani Queypo, Jani Lauzon, and Jody Gaskin, meegwetch.

I remember feeling this way – "healed and full of joy" – and I remember writing that paragraph hastily to signal some kind of ending before the seminar paper submission deadline. However, it makes me uneasy to read this now. It is not that I am embarrassed by the writing's cheesiness (though I am). It is that feeling good can sometimes be misinterpreted as being good or doing good. (Chapter 4 will take this up in more depth.) To be clear, feeling these feelings alone in a listening room at the Regenstein Library is not a problem. However, I was not just listening

disinterestedly in the context of the Regenstein Library. I was listening in a larger context of academic production. I have referenced the graduate student incarnation of pressures that continue throughout an academic life: we must produce. We must "publish or perish." While I suspect that the dancers would not have minded my response, especially that *BONES* was produced also for settler audiences, publicizing my response unmediated is risky. Academic stances are generally expert stances, and, as open as I am about my own desire to produce a "relationship" as I then called it, my response masquerades as some kind of knowledge *about* this Indigenous dance form, perhaps strengthened (or perhaps weakened if my readers think that I am "playing Indian") by writing "thank you" in Ojibwe.

What I am particularly concerned about is another type of performance that might be confused with *BONES*: the "inclusionary music performance," a term coined by Stó:lō ethnomusicologist Dylan Robinson (Robinson 2014, 277). Like *BONES,* inclusionary music performance might appear to combine Euro-Western and Indigenous music and might appear at elite venues such as the Banff Centre's Margaret Greenham Theatre. Unlike in *BONES*, in inclusionary music performances "First Peoples are included but are not in large part involved in the creative choices of composition or presentation" (ibid.).

As an entrée to his critique, Robinson writes about crying at a musical that concerns "the salvage of totem poles from Haida Gwaii" and their relocation to the Vancouver campus of the University of British Columbia (which happens to be my alma mater) (ibid., 275). According to Robinson, the musical focused on the "poles' accessibility for the Canadian public," the justification for the poles' removal playing into "salvage paradigm principles": "that the Haida were supposedly unable to care for the poles, and their deterioration necessitated their removed and preservation" (ibid., 291, 290). What the musical does not reveal, though, is that these totem poles were mortuary poles, poles that often contain the remains of high-ranking Haida people (ibid., 295). In other words,

to remove them would be more severe than removing a tombstone from a graveyard for its aesthetic beauty; it would be analogous perhaps to exhuming bodies along with gravestones.

Robinson goes on to argue that "performances involving First Peoples and non-Indigenous performers are not merely symbolic reflections of reconciliation for settler audience members – representations of 'working together' by playing and moving together on stage – but a primary site for audience members to feel reconciliation's non-representational pull of resolution" (ibid., 278). In other words, if I understand Robinson correctly, cathartic feelings – elicited by "the push and pull of harmonic progression and cadential resolution" able to "arouse and sustain desire" of settler audiences – convince settlers that something like reconciliation has actually happened (ibid.). Of course, however, reconciliation requires more than just goodwill towards First Peoples. Robinson writes, "the fundamental tenets of Western musical genres and form remain intact; the inclusion thus reinforces settler structural logic: that the structure of the aesthetic might be enriched by 'other' sights and sounds without unsettling the worldview it supports" (ibid., 277). Robinson himself cries with rage while the audience is crying with something more pleasurable. He speaks directly to his readers, "Perhaps you have yourself witnessed intercultural music featuring Indigenous performers and have felt moved; perhaps you have risen to your feet, propelled by the wave of movement around you or feelings its surge of peer pressure; perhaps you have cried. But what, exactly, is at the heart of all this crying?" (ibid., 276).

And what exactly is at the heart of my celebratory good feelings? If, as Sara Ahmed argues, emotions "have still remained at the centre of intellectual history" even if they "have been subordinated to other faculties" and if "good emotions are cultivated, and are worked on and towards [thus remaining] defined against uncultivated or unruly emotions, which frustrate the formation of the competent self," what do these celebratory feelings mean for intellectual projects (Ahmed 2014, 4, 3)?

Land Acknowledgements and Changing Research Contexts

I am in British Columbia in the deserted law library on the University of Victoria campus admiring the abundance of ferns outside the open window and trying to connect to the internet. When I join the visitor network, the popup page redirects me to a video: "University of Victoria, Territory Acknowledgement."[13] Ostensibly, this is the first thing the University of Victoria public relations team wants any campus visitor to see or know. I click "play," hear a man's voice singing from behind the UVic logo. There are no words or syllabics, just the vowel "o" that occasionally morphs into various mixed vowels as the singer adjusts the height of his tongue but keeps the same lip position. If the volume is turned up and I listen carefully, I can hear a frame drum as well. If a person watched the beginning of the video without paying close attention and was asked to recall what the music was like, that person might say that it sounded like "Gregorian" chant, the perfect "timeless" backdrop for the foregrounded voices. After all, Indigenous peoples have been here from "time immemorial." As the logo disappears we hear the voice of Elmer Seniemten George, Esquimalt Elder, speaking Lkwungen, a language shared by both the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations. George is walking with the President of UVic, Jamie Cassels, on the shore of the Pacific Ocean at Cadboro Bay, a few hundred metres from where I am now editing this text (at least I think so, based on the shape of the shoreline and the few houses I see in the background). The two men seem friendly, collegial. George shows Cassels a map and they continue to stroll side by side, occasionally smiling at each other. George welcomes viewers to his traditional territory, following up the Lkwungen with English, and Cassels performs a "land acknowledgement," stating that the university stands on Songhees, Esquimalt and W̱SÁNEĆ traditional territory.

[13] "Territory Acknowledgement," YouTube video, 3:08, posted by UVic, September 14, 2017, https://www.uvic.ca/services/indigenous/facultystaff/territory-acknowledgment/index.php.

This video is a tantalizing ethnomusicological object. In fact I am already feeling its pull, getting ready to sink my analytical teeth into it. Instead of taking a bite out of this fruit, of pursuing the analysis, I want to follow a less well-trodden path, maybe even a goat trail, to rockier and more arid territory, ultimately considering "the land acknowledgement" as a speech act.

Land acknowledgements can take many forms, depending on the relationship of the visitor and the people for whom the land is home. There isn't necessarily one right way to do it. (And, of course, "Indigenous" isn't a blanket term: Indigenous peoples outside their traditional territory will often acknowledge the Indigenous peoples on whose land they stand). That said, universities and other institutions have begun to consult with Indigenous communities to draft "stock" land acknowledgements to be used at talks and conferences, or, according to the UVic website "any time we come together as colleagues" (ibid.).

Land acknowledgements became prevalent in Canada after and during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which was supposed to respond to the effects of residential schools where Indigenous children were separated from their families, stripped of their languages and traditions, and often starved and abused. However, it is important to point out that land acknowledgements are often associated with a broader understanding "reconciliation" in a Canadian context, reconciliation referring generally to the reparation of relationships between First Peoples and Canadian settlers. As promising as reconciliation sounds, many people are skeptical about reconciliation that goes beyond "good feelings," especially since it is the Canadian government that has been framing, defining, and advertising reconciliation. For example, *The Walking Eagle News,* a satirical Indigenous news site, regularly parodies Trudeau by depicting him using "reconciliation" as a façade:

> Prime Minister Justin Trudeau marked the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples by saying something about "meaningful reconciliation."

> "Something something something meaningful reconciliation," Trudeau said. "Something something something Indigenous rights legislation, something something something vote Liberal."
>
> Trudeau told a reporter he didn't understand the question when asked whether 'meaningful reconciliation' meant giving at least some land back to First Nations.[14]

Other scholars, too, have pointed out a darker purpose that so-called reconciliation and land acknowledgements can serve. Glen Coulthard, in *Red Skins, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* argues that the "host of rights specific to Indigenous communities" that Canada has "[recognized] over the last forty years" function as "evidence of [the Canadian nation state's] ultimately just relationship with Indigenous communities, even though this recognition continues to be structured with the colonial power interests in mind" (2014, 155). Gestures, then, like acknowledging traditional territory, including Indigenous faces on university brochures, and asking Indigenous elders to perform ceremonial openings for events stand in for material reparations like instituting a land tax for settlers to pay to Indigenous nations whose territory they are occupying, like the voluntary Shuumi land tax for settlers living in the California East Bay. These "symbolic" gestures, gestures of "recognition," can also distract from treaty violations and human rights crises: pipeline development even on federally recognized Indigenous lands or lack of clean drinking water and housing for example in Attawapiskat in northern Ontario.

Critical Indigenous Studies scholar Leanne Betasamosake Simpson also argues that settler-colonialism is not a solid structure or thing-of-the-past, but rather a much present shape-shifter: "If we experience settler colonialism as a structure made up of processes, when the practices of settler colonialism appear to shift, it can appear to present an opportunity to do things differently, to

[14] "Trudeau marks world Indigenous peoples day by saying 'something meaningful' about reconciliation," *Walking Eagle News*, August 9, 2018, https://walkingeaglenews.com/2018/08/09/trudeau-marks-world-indigenous-peoples-day-by-saying-something-about-meaningful-reconciliation/.

change our relationship to the state" (2017, 46). If Canadians are busy, for example, congratulating ourselves on our progressive values when we listen to Tanya Tagaq or celebrating the fact that Mrs. Canada is Ashley Callingbull, an Indigenous woman from the Enoch reserve in Alberta (an hour east of where I grew up), it might look as if things are changing. Meanwhile, the lackluster "National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls" is growing cold and Tagaq herself gets followed "on the streets of downtown Winnipeg," gets called a "sexy little Indian," and is asked for sex.[15] We just may not notice. "Things are changing," we say when what is changing are the symbols.

Simpson also points in particular to the appearance of change in the Canadian government: Steven Harper was obviously dismissive of Indigenous peoples, whereas the "Prime Minister [Justin Trudeau] and his Haida tattoo were flanked with Indigenous drummers and dancers, clouds of smudge seem to follow him wherever he went, and Indigenous territories were being acknowledged at the beginning of events."[16] Despite the smudging and despite intense opposition both from settler environmentalists and affected Indigenous nations, the Trudeau government later went on not only to support the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project, which was supposed to twin the existing Trans Mountain Pipeline that currently brings crude oil from Alberta to British Columbia, but later to buy the 715-mile pipeline once the oil company Kinder Morgan abandoned it due to the financial risks it posed.[17] The satirical *Walking Eagle News*, "quotes" Trudeau as saying, "Mark my words, we

[15] "Tanya Tagaq says she was sexually targeted by man in Winnipeg, *CBC News*, October 9, 2014, https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/tanya-tagaq-says-she-was-sexually-targeted-by-man-in-winnipeg-1.2793123.
[16] Leanne Betasamosake Simpson,"A Smudgier Dispossession is Still Dispossession," *Active History,* January 11, 2016, http://activehistory.ca/2016/01/a-smudgier-dispossession-is-still-dispossession/.
[17] Ian Austen, "Canada Court Halts Expansion of Trans Mountain Pipeline," *The New York Times*, August 30, 2018, https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/30/world/canada/alberta-oil-pipeline-trudeau.html

will rain fiery reconciliation upon Indigenous communities until this pipeline is built."[18] Further, Leanne Simpson argues that there are consequences for launching critiques against symbolic gestures:

> [Neoliberal states] manipulate Indigenous emotional responses, for instance, to get us [Indigenous peoples] to support these slight shifts in process by positioning those who critique the state-controlled processes of reconciliation or the national inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women, for instance, as angry radicals who are unwilling to work together for the betterment of Indigenous peoples and Canadians (Simpson 2017, 46).

Is the UVic land acknowledgement just another version of meaningless settler smudging? This is the place where settler paths might diverge from Indigenous paths. Many Indigenous activists, Leanne Simpson included, have turned away from a focus on reconciliation – a practice that is necessarily settler-oriented – and turned instead to Indigenous resurgence, a redirection of energy towards Indigenous communities rather than towards convincing, cajoling, pleading with, or negotiating with settlers or settler-states (Simpson 2017). Simpson distinguishes between cultural resurgence and political resurgence: "In the context of settler colonialism and neoliberalism, the term *cultural* resurgence . . . which refers to a resurgence of story, song, dance, art, language, and culture, is compatible with the reconciliation discourse, the healing industry, or other depoliticized recovery-based narratives" (2017, 49). It is *political* resurgence, which can include practices like hunting on traditional territory in spite of federal laws prohibiting this, which can include reclaiming PKOLS without consulting settler governments and installing the PKOLS sign without "permission" (2017, 240).

Meanwhile, we settlers are still standing around on Indigenous land. I'd like for us to get moving. What might a settler academic response be besides documenting Indigenous activists and

[18] "After major Trans Mountain setback, furious Trudeau threatens First Nations with 'fiery reconciliation,'" *Walking Eagle News*, August 30, 2018, https://walkingeaglenews.com/2018/08/30/after-major-trans-mountain-setback-furious-trudeau-threatens-first-nations-with-fiery-reconciliation/

Indigenous resurgence? We are people who believe in the symbolic. We write books and believe that they matter.[19] We believe in ideas and their worldliness. How can the symbolic become material? This is a critical question. If we cast our work as political and important, we *must* believe in the material power of our work. Here I would like to think about performing land acknowledgements as speech acts with material implications for research. When I say speech acts, I am talking about utterances that do something. Writing against the "assumption of philosophers that the business of a 'statement' can only be to 'describe' some state of affairs, or to 'state some fact', which it must do either truly or falsely," J. L. Austin gives counterexamples of performative utterances that do something in the world, for example: "'I do (sc. take this woman to be my lawful wedded wife)' – as uttered in the course of the marriage ceremony" and "'I name this ship the *Queen Elizabeth*' – as uttered while smashing the bottle against the stem" (Austin 1962, 1, 5).

How to Do Things with Land Acknowledgements

Here is a land acknowledgement in its most basic form: "I want to begin by acknowledging that the land on which we gather is the traditional territory of the Ho-Chunk Nation." This text is an iteration of a fairly common form found on government and university websites. This acknowledgement is not a thank you. Nor is it a promise. But it *is* a context. It emplaces this talk literally upon (arguably unceded) Ho-Chunk territory. It also emplaces *us* – our bodies – on Ho-Chunk land: "on which we gather." And if this acknowledgement – becoming more common in American settings and on its way to ubiquity in Canada – is allowed to mean something, it becomes a catalyst for a massive reframing of what research might be. Juxtapose the humanistic, Enlightenment, universalist "pursuit of knowledge 'for its own sake,'" – and I am quoting the

[19] If we do not believe this, we should be more publically honest about why exactly we are writing books. If this necessitates a discussion about our own working conditions and the intertwined academic and financial pressures to write, the yields might be surprisingly positive.

research handbook *The Craft of Research* here – and the non-Ho-Chunk bodies gathered on forcibly taken Ho-Chunk land ((1995), 2008, 61). These are *very* different contexts for research. And how do we respond to these changing contexts? If we say that it's important to reconcile and to move forward and if our universities are on often stolen sometimes given Indigenous land, what does that now mean? This is no small question.

And what does it mean to adjust our research contexts? A walk through a land acknowledgement, especially if a land acknowledgement is a speech act, might be a good place to start. Here is an example of one I gave at a talk in Dejope, the Ho-Chunk name for a territory that includes Madison, Wisconsin:

"I want to begin by acknowledging that the land on which we gather is the traditional territory of the Ho-Chunk Nation." This is the land acknowledgement, very simple. I didn't say "unceded," because, although I suspected that the land was forcibly taken, it was very difficult to find Indigenous histories of Madison or even other written land acknowledgements for Madison that I could use as a model.[20]

"I would like to thank David Crook, Charles Dill, Soh-Hyun Park Altino, Susan Cook, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Mead Witter School of Music for so generously hosting me in the warmest of ways possible." This is a fairly common place to put a thank you at a job talk. It

[20] A quick search eight months later yields more history and another way of introducing settlers to Indigenous land: "As the sun sets behind Dejope residence hall, Aaron Bird Bear [UW-Madison School of Education's assistant dean for diversity] stands before a group of students seated around the building's sacred fire circle, a gathering place and monument honoring Wisconsin's Native American tribes. First, he greets them in Ho Chunk, the language of the mound-builders whose history in Madison dates back thousands of years. Getting no response, he tries Ojibwe, the language used for trade in the Great Lakes region; then French, the language of the fur trappers and missionaries who came to Wisconsin in the 1600s; and finally English, the language of the colonists and the Americans who attempted six times to forcibly expel the area's indigenous people from their ancestral homeland."
Allison Geyer, "The Story of this Land," *Isthmus*, September 20, 2018, https://isthmus.com/news/snapshot/the-story-of-this-land/.

comes after the land acknowledgement so that the land acknowledgement enfolds this. Then I try to acknowledge the sources that inform my work.

"Thanks to the Indigenous scholars Leanne Simpson, Dylan Robinson, Glen Coulthard, Audra Simpson, and Linda Tuhiwai Smith whose words hum through and beneath this talk." I try to centre these voices *as* Indigenous theorists, the first names of any academics I mention. This, too, is a response to a context: I have heard conference papers in music studies that give the impression that the Indigenous music being studied is somehow prehistoric and completely inaccessible today. For example, I have listened to a room full of scholars at a talk about the 1893 wax cylinder recordings of Kwakwaka'wakw (or Kwakuitl) music become very interested in the dances that belonged with this music. They expressed this interest by questioning the speaker about historical (read: settler-written) documents that might tell them more about that dance, and the speaker responded that there was very little information available (read: settler-written documents) about this type of dance. No one mentioned talking with Kwakwaka'wakw musicians or scholars. It was as if it didn't occur to anyone. A quick internet search yields the name of Kwakwaka'wakw scholar John Medicine Horse who co-edited the *Encyclopedia of Native American Music of North America*, and the Le-La-La Dancers, a traditional Kwakwaka'wakw dance company. They have phones and the internet! I am not saying here that ethnographic methods (in the case of the Le-La-La Dancers) are a panacea. They are not. That said, there are pitfalls to attempting to historicize Indigenous cultural forms by consulting exclusively settler-written documents in an archive *unless* the focus of inquiry is explicitly on settler hearings (and misunderstandings) of what they encountered. Therefore, if settlers are currently being taught, however implicitly, that settlers are the (academic) authorities on Indigenous traditions, it is a good idea to counteract those teachings. However, Lee Veeraraghavan, a friend and fellow ethnomusicologist warned me that a list of Indigenous scholars could just be name-dropping without deep engagement (a little bit like the "meegwetch" in my choreomusical analysis of

BONES). I saw her point – and mine – so I deleted and undid the delete and deleted and undid the delete, ultimately leaving it.

"I would also like to acknowledge the many settler scholars – both in and outside this room – who have devoted their time, care, minds, and selves to this discipline that has become one of my homes." I want to remind us that settler scholars are not just books but also bodies and, if we're thinking about Indigenous people as interlocutors, it does well to get settlers in there as well, settlers as embodied. It also foregrounds the idea of a disciplinary "home," a place that is not a place.

"Thank you."

In a sense, even a simple land acknowledgement like this becomes a map: it prods us to research the histories of the land we are on (or realize that they are not so readily accessible and that they might require consultation with Indigenous communities in those areas). It opens up new questions: we are not naming a generalized "Indigenous land," but rather, specific Indigenous land, Ho-Chunk territory. What does that specificity mean? If I am giving a talk on Ho-Chunk territory and I don't live on Ho-Chunk territory, should I cite Ho-Chunk scholars, especially if I am theorizing what it means to listen on *specific* Indigenous land? It makes me realize that we usually assume that we know where we are, but here we have to confront that we maybe don't know where we stand. Perhaps this uncertainty suggests a new frame for our work, all of our work. If we take seriously the opening acknowledgement, especially because these acknowledgements are now becoming part of research contexts that have, ostensibly, nothing to do with Indigenous peoples, what does this mean?

Let me suggest that if we are standing on Indigenous land, if we say that we are standing on Indigenous land, and if we mean it, research contexts have changed. In other words, land acknowledgements are the speech acts that change research contexts. Let us figure out how to adapt.

But What Is Listening NOW?

What does it mean to *listen* on Indigenous land? And when I use the word "listen" I mean it in a relational sense: we don't merely listen *to* something but we also listen *from* a place. The places that we listen from are specific: we listen from geographic places and discursive places and dispositional places. We also listen through a set of relations and through our own histories, practices, and techniques of listening. Ana Maria Ochoa Gautier's sense of "aurality" (Ochoa Gautier 2014); Harry Berger's "stance" (Berger 2009); Dylan Robinson's "critical listening positionality" (Robinson forthcoming); and Nina Eidsheim's "sound as vibration" (Eidsheim 2015) have all helped me understand sound in this way. Writing about the "archive full of listening practices" that she found in the archives of the National Radio in Colombia, Ochoa Gautier argues that the "acoustic dimensions of the colonial and early postcolonial archive are not presented to us as discrete, transcribed works . . . or identifiable genres" (2014, ix, 3). Instead, they are "dispersed into different types of written inscriptions that transduce different audile techniques into specific legible sound objects of expressive culture" (ibid., 3). In other words, Ochoa identifies the specific ways of listening or "audile techniques" that listeners used to create sound objects. If Ochoa's argument for relational listening rests on a technique of listening, Berger's rests on a more spatial metaphor: stance. Berger defines stance as "an element of lived experience," "the valual qualities of the relationship that a person has to a text, performance, practice, or item of expressive culture . . . frequently the pivot of meaning, the point around which turn the interpretations of expressive culture" (2009, 5). Highlighting the distinction in Western art music between "the composition and "the interpretation" to describe "performative stance, Berger writes, "Audiences familiar with this tradition literally *hear* the performer's facility or clumsiness with the work's technical demands, literally hear a loving attention to detail, a misunderstanding of nineteenth-century harmony, or a creative approach to traditional material. In such a context the performer's approach to the

performance of the piece is a form of stance" (ibid.,7). What counts as a performance is culturally dependent and what counts as stance is also culturally dependent. My sense is that Robinson, in his yet unpublished book also uses spatial thinking involving histories and listening practices to theorize what he calls a "critical listening positionality" instead of assuming a kind of neutral listener (forthcoming).[21] Eidsheim gets at something similar with her call to consider vibration – something that passes through bodies as well as other materials – instead of looking at discrete musics, especially since the "same" "music can both restore and destroy" (2015, 154). She questions "how it is that what we think of as the same music can have radically different effects, at different times, on a single person" (ibid.).

Here I would like to think about a loosely theorized "place," places of listening. Sometimes we reveal our listening-places. I revealed something of mine, for example, when I described the mixed vowels and moving tongue at the beginning of the land acknowledgements section: I knew what I would have to do with my tongue to imitate the sounds I heard. That I focused on this, as opposed to focusing on how the sound made me feel, for example, or the melodic contour of the song, says something about the listening place I occupied in that moment. That said, it is as difficult to pin down a listening place as a subjectivity. We listen in ways that are taught to us explicitly and that we have imbibed unconsciously. We listen differently on different days.

While there are many variables that go into a listening relationship, I want to draw out several. They aren't absolute truths, but these murky clusters have power. They're as real as race, meaning not "real" but discursive with material effects as tangible as murder. Nina Eidsheim in her dissertation, "Voice as a Technology of Selfhood: Towards an Analysis of Racialized Timbre and Vocal Performance," cites the work of linguist Nancy Niedzielski, something I find so useful that I'll

[21] To clarify, I have not yet read Robinson's book, but Robinson has discussed "critical listening positionality" with me, mentioning that it is a focus of his book.

summarize it here (Eidsheim 2008; Niedzielski 1999). Niedzielski carried out an experiment in which she played forty-one Detroit residents a recording of someone speaking. She then asked them to choose from a set of computer-synthesized vowels the one that best represented a specific vowel that they had heard. Although the speaker on the recording was from Detroit, some listeners were told that the speaker was, in fact, Canadian. Those that were told that the speaker was a Detroiter picked the unraised diphthong sample, whereas those that were told that the speaker was a Canadian picked the raised diphthong sample. In other words, people believed a Canadian identity and heard a "Canadian" diphthong. They did not say, "Wow, this Canadian sounds a lot like me. I wonder if they had parents from Detroit and grew up hearing Detroit pronunciations." Even though a Detroit accent is probably the accent that they are most intimately familiar with, the listeners *could not hear* the speaker's accent as a Detroit accent. How we see each other, and how we *listen* is shaped by – filtered through – the assumptions we carry with us. While I have written this as a manifesto that I have delivered at a majority white choral educators' conference, complete with concrete suggestions about how to create communities where people of colour might feel welcome, something incidentally that largely ignored Indigenous land, I am not exactly writing to tell you what to do. We can't anticipate how that knowledge will make change. But what would it be to consider that listening wasn't what we thought it was? What are the institutional histories of "music" and "song" that we bring to our listening? What about these histories combined with our assumptions about Others?

That is listening loosely theorized as place. What about listening as technique? Considering that it's something we *can* have some control over even if we do it unconsciously, the way we can have some control over how we breathe, I want to draw out an active side of listening here by considering listening in two realms, one conscious and one unconscious, the first healing listening technique and the second a racializing listening technique.

A Healing Listening Technique

The Berkeley Free Clinic, founded in 1969 and located in a grubby basement in downtown Berkeley, is what it sounds like: a miraculous, volunteer-run organization that offers – along with free dental care, referrals, STI testing, HIV treatment, "Saturday services" open to women-identifying and trans people only, and services provided to male-identifying and trans people only the Gay Men's Health Collective – a free peer-counseling service. After six months of training, I have recently begun to volunteer at the clinic as a peer counselor. We – and the organization has operated on non-hierarchical, consensus-based decision-making for the last five decades – try our hardest to offer non-judgmental listening. Judgments can go both ways, positive and negative: "That sounds great," is a judgment, for example. We also do not provide advice, especially since we are not licensed therapists.

We practice saying "I heard you say that you feel angry" *not* "you said that you felt angry" and *definitely* not, "You feel angry." But "I heard you say." This wording does something: it gives clients a chance to explore and to change their minds. They can always be in the driver's seat. "Am I hearing that right?" is another question I use. Sometimes I will respond just with "Angry?," mirroring the client's language and posture. Often we will summarize the session for a client, or paraphrase partway through what we have heard the client say. This is, of course, interpretive, but ideally not jarringly interpretive.

I am sometimes proud of the analyses I pull out, of the themes I pull together, the words I use. I sometimes find myself getting a bit virtuosic in my attempt to summarize, searching for words that mean, words that evoke what I think clients have been describing to me. Some clients *love* this. Hearing their ideas and feelings repeated back to them slightly reframed catalyzes something for them. For others it falls flat (and, strictly speaking, this way of summarizing risks straying from our

peer counseling model). I watch their bodies tense as I say things to them in language that is not quite theirs. In these moments, I have to remind myself of what I am listening for: I am listening *for* healing. I am *not* listening to revel in my own virtuosity, to satisfy my own curiosity, to create art, or even to illuminate an underlying structure. Even in silence, the listening is *active*. It is listening with an open posture. It is sitting with another person and their pain without turning away.

To be clear, I am not advocating the peer counseling collective's model as the best method of counseling. Licensed, professional counseling psychologists do interrupt, prod, and redirect counseling sessions. But it is too much of a risk to take to allow a group of unlicensed volunteers – however rigorous the application process, however rigorous the six months of training – to begin offering these services. Built into our model is a kind of failsafe for our biases and judgments. We saw from the Detroiters' listening that their preconceived ideas about the speakers caused them to hear something that was not there. If I am going to make assumptions about someone who is unhoused and struggling with addiction, the counseling model provides no outlet for those assumptions to make their way back to the clients, especially if my job is to listen using the clients' words and not my own. It keeps the client safe from my interference and it keeps me safe from interfering. Listening here has a promise. It holds the promise of healing. It *does something*. Not always. You can't control it. But, if a session goes well, a client walks away feeling a little bit lighter, a little bit clearer, heard and held. It creates change. Not through my virtuosity but through my attention.

Racializing Listening Technique

This second technique is one that is also taught, but taught implicitly. First, I introduce racializing listening techniques via autoethnography. Then, drawing on fieldwork at the Indigenous Arts Program at The Banff Centre for the Arts in Alberta Canada, I delink whiteness – often

conflated with "settler" – from white bodies to focus on how whiteness might appear in power relations between interlocutors and ethnographers even when there are no white bodies in the room (or on the land).

To be clear, racializing listening techniques do not inherently have to do with settler colonialism, though, surprisingly some of their unintentional effects can be coopted as productive tools to use in settler colonial contexts. Nishnaabeg scholar Leanne Simpson writes simply, "My body and life are part of my research, and I use this knowledge to critique and analyze" (31, 2017). And, albeit with very different connotations, the sword cuts both ways: settler ethnographers' bodies and lives – whether made explicit or not – colour their lenses also. I want to begin thinking about racializing listening techniques by considering an example from my own archive of experience. Just like healing listening techniques, racializing listening techniques also have the ability to transform those being listened to. But often the result is unintentional. I would like to share how racializing listening techniques gave me a certain lens.

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When I was seventeen, I moved to Vancouver from Edmonton. I had decided I was going to be a singer, and I called up one of the most famous voice teachers there to ask if I could take a lesson with him. "Nadia," I had told him my name was. On the agreed-upon day at the agreed-upon time, I waited for him in a little waiting room area bordered by office doors. At one point, a man opened one of the doors looked around – and went back into his office. I was the only one there. Some time passed, and then I realized that maybe he was looking for me, but couldn't identify me. I mustered the courage to knock on his door. He opened it, poked his head out, and stared at me, completely baffled. I extended my hand.

"Are you [insert name of well-known voice teacher]?"

"Yes." Still total bafflement as he slowly shook my hand.

"I'm Nadia," I said.

"Oh, I thought you'd be blond." And then I think we had a pretty typical voice lesson. Beyond a typical outraged response, I'd like to break down what was happening in this all-too-common scenario. Obviously this voice teacher had trouble pairing my body with the idea that I was going to walk into his studio to produce a Western classical sound. He was maybe also having difficulty with my Slavic-sounding name. His assumptions, I suspect, had to do with a racialized understanding of Western classical singing: Western classical singing goes with white bodies the way smoke goes with fire.[22]

This difficulty the voice teacher was having had to do with what ethnomusicologist Tamara Roberts calls "sono-racialization." "Sono-racialization is a process of racial definition that sutures sound to racial meaning within a larger system" (Roberts 2016, 34). While Roberts uses the term to talk about how music producers choose certain people to record certain music so that you see a tight correlation of "race" to "types of music" – black bodies singing the blues, white bodies singing country, etc. – the term is also applicable here. This voice teacher is used to seeing people who may look closer to Renée Fleming or Cecilia Bartoli or Anne Sophie von Otter (all white singers) or, to complicate things, maybe Leontyne Price (an African American singer). In other words, I can *understand* why he might have made this assumption.

I want to suggest that this voice teacher is using something called "racializing listening techniques." I use the word "techniques" because the word implies that they, these techniques, are "for" something. I want to suggest that "racializing listening techniques" are techniques *for* listeners – white or otherwise – to categorize, circumscribe, and make knowable elements of non-whiteness in contexts both musical and otherwise.

[22] George Lewis discusses this phenomenon extensively as it relates to jazz in his foreword to *Jazz Worlds/World Jazz* (Lewis 2016).

Racializing listening techniques might be what enable some listeners to enjoy, say, a set of seguidillas by Fernando Sor sung by a South Asian singer: a brown skinned singer can easily be imagined as a Latina singer, or so I am told by voice teachers recommending that I sing in Spanish for "legibility." Implicit in this recommendation is that listeners will use racializing listening techniques to square brownness with Latina, and then, satisfied, turn their attention towards the musical materials of the song or the performance**.** But on the other hand, if I sing "du holde Kunst, ich danke dir," which might be recognizable to some of you as the Schubert song, "An die Musik," I can almost guarantee that the techniques some will use to listen to this will be not musicological interpretive techniques to understand the expressive choices I might be making, at least not until the racializing listening techniques have done what they're supposed to: provide an understanding of why a nonwhite singer is singing music in German.

If I have sung particularly well, then, I may be asked if I am half white (this is not hypothetical!), or, more often, I am asked where I am from. Suddenly, this question takes me from what we commonly call "the music itself" or the specific performance of "the music itself" to the extra-musical or broadly contextual: the histories that got me to singing that music. The question "Where are you *froooooom*?" asked in a way where "Edmonton, Alberta" or Amiskwaciwâskahikan (which is the Cree name for Edmonton) does not "work" as an answer. Racializing listening techniques are for a specific purpose: they must circumscribe non-whiteness, *and* they get me – for completely the wrong reasons – to do a very productive thing. They get me to *historicize* and contextualize myself.

My intent is not to minimize a significant structural issue when certain bodies are made to rehearse histories and stand in for a group of people and others get to make interpretive choices within the "music itself." If your life hinges on singing, this can be heartbreaking. But I want to suggest something other than the predictable conclusion that everyone should be able to be heard

making interpretive choices regardless of skin colour. A reversion to "interpretive choices" and "the music itself" without regard for a larger context is precisely the myopic problem that the question of listening on Indigenous land gets at.

I want instead to suggest that everyone should and should be able to contextualize themselves regardless of skin colour. Racializing listening techniques demand that nonwhite bodies or materials account for themselves via place-based explanation, providing something to anchor listeners' expectations of "difference." As a result of my singing and as a direct response to racializing listening techniques, I am able to trace the immigration histories on both sides of my family, and think about what larger structural forces got me singing nineteenth-century German art song. Considering "home" and history, I want to suggest, is exactly what we need to do when we're settled on Indigenous land. What histories got any body singing here on Ho-Chunk territory, for example? And if you do not know which Indigenous territory you are on, why not? What are the structural conditions that got us there? And perhaps for the opening acknowledgement of Ho-Chunk territory to mean something, we will have to make a diligent practice of asking that question over and over. It's not an easy one to answer. If our go-to is context always, let's take that seriously.

The other question that arises here is one of my own identity. If I simply focus on demanding that I be "heard" the way Euro-Canadians are, a demand for inclusion that so-called "model minorities" have often made, I am not demanding that the structures be changed. I am asking for inclusion within those structures: to be heard, recognized, and integrated. Instead, I would like to focus on reskilling the listeners: what would it mean for these audiences, academics included, to develop a deeper understanding of listening and a wider palette of listening techniques? One place to start is by examining how our contexts become our (often naturalized) lenses, as we did with the concept of mode. To this end, I want to ask how racializing listening techniques have shaped our *ethnographic* tools in particular. How are these tools marked, and how do we use them to listen?

Anthropologists and ethnomusicologists, after all, have from the very beginning been listening on Indigenous land. The premise I am making here is that framing North American research as something that happens on Indigenous territory comes with an ethical valence. In other words, how can we use these tools to centre Indigenous land, voices and presence without putting them under scrutiny?

Tools Created by Listening

In 2015 Olivia Bloechl, Melanie Lowe, and Jeffrey Kallberg published the edited volume *Rethinking Difference in Music Scholarship* in which they interrogate music studies' sustained focus on difference. Spurred by a similar impulse to question the ethics and outcomes of a focus on difference, here I question an emphasis on difference in ethnographic fieldwork: how well does a strong focus on difference equip us to counter injustices both in the discipline and elsewhere? What gets overlooked when we keep returning to difference as a way of seeing?

In asking these questions, I am not suggesting that we – remembering, as I discussed at the beginning of the chapter and in the previous one, this variegated "we" is itself a fraught category – abandon difference as a heuristic tool. I *am* however suggesting that this tool was developed – as tools are – for specific people, bodies, and contexts, many of which have changed. The people and bodies in both "fields" – the field of ethnomusicology and "the field" in which we do "fieldwork" – have become more plural and heterogeneous, as have field "sites." It *may* be difficult to guess who is an ethnomusicologist and who is an interlocutor. It *may* be difficult to tell whether we are "at home" or "in the field." Part of the project of rethinking difference, then, might be to ask what foci might be available in contexts where "difference" doesn't seem to work the way it was designed to.

In this last section of the chapter, I both argue for and enact one rethinking of difference by directing the focus to difference's close kin: critical self-reflexivity. I employ obliqueness, repetition,

and shifts in voice – including two italicized asides told as if from alternate realities – as techniques for building an argument, an argument that uses my particular experiences to reveal something broader about race and racialization: that both have strongly shaped ethnographic tools.

As a starting point, it is important to consider intersectionality. As queer theorist Jasbir Puar writes, "Categories – race, gender, sexuality – are considered events, actions, and encounters between bodies, rather than simply entities and attributes of subjects" (2012, 58). Pointing out the fluidity of categories that come into being during encounters offers a powerful corrective to understandings of intersectionality that, in feminist philosopher Linda Alcoff's words read location as "an insurmountable essence that fixes one, as if one's feet are superglued to a spot on the sidewalk" (1991–92, 16). Prior to this intervention, however, Puar argues that intersectionality, one of our key tools for addressing difference, like diversity, has become emptied of meaning in what she calls the "changed geopolitics of reception" (2012, 53): "In this usage intersectionality always produces an Other, and that Other is always a Woman of Color . . . who must invariably be shown to be resistant, subversive, or articulating a grievance" (ibid., 52). And since we are calling up this specter, it would be fit for our context also to invoke the ethnographer archetype Native American writer and activist Vine Deloria describes in his 1969 *Custer Died for Your Sins*: "a tall gaunt white man wearing Bermuda shorts, a WWII Army Air Force flying jacket, an Australian bush hat, tennis shoes, and packing a large knapsack incorrectly strapped on his back. He will invariably have a thin sexy wife with stringy hair, an IQ of 191, and a vocabulary in which even the prepositions have eleven syllables" (Deloria 1969, 79). Could it be that many of our tools for ethnographic fieldwork are shaped by these two archetypes, the anthropologist and the Woman of Color?

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But, for now, I am a dog who moves through a field, looking for sticks, (or perhaps doing philosophy if I'm a "Diogenes the Cynic kind of dog . . . or, ethnography). But there are structures – mostly holes or tunnels – on this field

and the structures that I move through catch on my fur, rubbing it backwards against the grain. A slight tilt – just fifteen degrees – of these structures and going through the holes would give me a good scratch. But they don't tilt slightly and my skin chafes, hair bending back against the grain and dragging along the top of the tunnel. These sore hair follicle make me so irritable. The pain is a constant, inescapable hum beneath everything else. "Go through the holes differently," someone tells me. "Bend your right leg a little more than your left, tuck your tailbone under about 30 degrees. Oh, uhhh, yeah, try lowering your tail?" "Not all holes are the same!" says another. "Stop looking at the holes! Look at the field*! It's interesting and beautiful and political. Stop being so self-involved!" says a third. "No one cares* how *you found the sticks. Just get them! That's just the work that we* do.*"*

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Deborah Wong, in her 2006 article "Ethnomusicology and Difference," theorizes frictive difficulties to which this dog might relate. Situating ethnomusicology as a "career that often carries the burden of nested differences (what we teach and who we are)," Wong writes of her development as a scholar (268, 275) as tied to her "gendered, raced, and ethnomusicologically disciplined location within the academy": "I was driven by an untheorized instinct that my gender and ethnicity had a bearing on how I might make a place for ethnomusicology at the institution – and more deeply, a place where I might explore my own need to situate ethnomusicology as a vehicle for thinking about difference" (ibid., 260). It was colleagues in Women's Studies and Asian American Studies who "led [her] to a world of scholarship that essentially redirected how [she] was thinking – or was *able* to think – and gave [her] research a totally new trajectory" (ibid.).

Reading this now, twelve years after the publication of Wong's article, I think immediately of one more level of nested differences that is seldom addressed: situations in which an ethnographer of colour works with interlocutors who are *also* people of colour but racialized in very different ways. I think in particular of my own fieldwork in autumn 2015 at (Re)Claim, a collaborative residency offered by the Indigenous Arts Program at The Banff Centre. Growing out of two previous

programs that explored Indigeneity, land, and voice, (Re)Claim focused on representation of Indigenous peoples during the silent film area. Working with Indigenous faculty, the eight Indigenous participants developed live music and spoken word compositions to be performed with the silent films in order to "reclaim" them, redirecting the eye through the ear. As Program Assistant, I spent nearly ten hours a day for two weeks with the participants as they discussed a constellation of interrelated issues that they wanted to address in their performances: Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, the 60's Scoop (or the "scooping up" of First Nations children and placing of them in foster care or adoptive homes, a less formalized version of which still continues today), residential schools, and climate crisis. Strongly and unanimously, the group located these issues as direct results of colonialism. In my understanding, first came the explorers, then came the missionaries, and then came the anthropologists. And in this way whiteness is still present even if there are no white bodies in the room.

In fact, the specter of the white, Bermuda-shorts-wearing anthropologist is still here, sometimes in me, sometimes not. I remember Tuscarora singer Pura Fe at the Banff Centre singing softly, bent over her slide guitar. "You still take, you still take, you still take . . . exploitation, anthropology, excavation." She was singing to herself, but I winced, wondering if she was singing this for my benefit. Later she told us that the Sioux word for white person was Wasicu "fat eater," because white people would take the best parts of the buffalo (the fat) and leave the rest to rot; this is still happening, she said, with Indigenous knowledge: take the knowledge, leave Indigenous people to rot.

The space of the residency, as I saw it, and as the Artistic Director Sandra Laronde may have directly told me, was an all-Indigenous space. Replacing the Indigenous Arts program manager who was away on medical leave, I was there to book rooms, haul amps, print lyrics, and be on hand for anything that was needed. I was also not there to take up space. Part of my job, then, was to show

up to rehearsals clear and present, ready to support, remaining open but not centering myself in any way. I often cried because I was moved but I tried not to cry in a way that demanded attention, but rather that reflected empathy. (There are as many ways of crying as there are of listening!) As I heard discussions unfold, my own relationship to whiteness kept trying to surface.

I had been to the Banff Centre twice before, both times as a Western classical singer, blindly negotiating the categories that seemed to emerge as I encountered white Western classical teachers and singers and not yet able to articulate or even trust that I was being racialized in particular ways. It was the polite lack of understanding, notice, or willingness to listen that eventually led me to ethnomusicology. Here, back at the Banff Centre, surrounded by people where Woman of Colour wasn't my most salient identity marker, I was reliving my past experiences, realizing that they had been quietly heartbreaking.

Nearing the end of six years in a PhD program in ethnomusicology, having found understanding, notice and willingness to listen, I have new skills that I didn't have during my first visits to the Banff Centre.

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Sometimes, during Special Meetings, I am one of the only blobs in a mostly brick room. I sense that the blobs are a little hesitant to talk because the bricks are very sharp-cornered, authoritative, and have been encouraged for much of their lives to talk because they are bricks. Often, I work hard to, say something. Partly this is to contribute. But partly this is: 1) To show the bricks that blobs talk too; 2) To open space for blobs to talk: if one blob said something maybe another could as well. I also do something I like and don't like and feels heavy and too much: I feel that I should be lucky to be at these Special Meetings because I am a blob. And everyone thinks they're really egalitarian meetings – or I think everyone thinks that – and, every time, we reach the magical moment at which someone says, "Well, what do you all think?" or, "Well, what shall we do?" This is a Decision Making Moment. What is supposed *to happen, or so I* feel *or* sense *is that there is supposed to be a pregnant pause, and then, after the perfect amount of time, 3.4*

seconds, a brick will humbly and graciously say, "We should walk through the field orthogonally." And what he will imply but not say – he is too couth to say it; I, on the other hand am uncouth – is that this is the best way to walk through the field. This is what usually *happens but sometimes I do that thing that makes my heart beat really fast and that I like and don't like and feels heavy and too much: during the holy and humble pause, I leap up with great enthusiasm and a big grin because "goodwill toward bricks, toward bricks"- imagine this being sung to the tune of "goodwill toward men, toward men" in "Glory to God" from Handel's* Messiah, *if you know it – and say, "I know what to do."*

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But these would be the very *worst* strategies to use at the Indigenous Arts Program. Instead I practice decentering myself, realizing, of course, my position as a settler. But realizing also something more subtle: though whiteness mostly recedes into a backdrop with no white bodies in the room, I am one of the two people in the room that carries the most whiteness. I don't mean in skin tone: I am definitely the darkest. And yet I present pretty white – my Special Meeting Skills are part of this. I am pretty good at what legal scholar Kenji Yoshino calls "covering," a term he uses in contrast to "passing" to refer to the practice of minimizing traits (particularly along identity lines) that may seem unpalatable (2006). In my case, I minimize my brownness, performing "whiteness."

I realize this when one of the faculty members astonishes me by asking me one morning if I could lead, at the beginning of the afternoon rehearsal, a warm-up for the group. Almost never, in musical contexts, am I a "natural choice" for this sort of opportunity. I say yes, happy to help. And then, after a few hours have passed, realize that perhaps my "whiteness" was getting me this opportunity while other people in the room might have similar – or better – skills. I tell the faculty member that I'm happy to lead if no one else in the group wants to do it. And . . . someone from the group did!

We talk about relationships often when we talk about ethnographic fieldwork, something

that the Bermuda-shorts-wearing anthropologist wasn't necessarily considering. And we, ethnomusicologists, make up half of that relationship. Without denying anyone's agency – with the understanding that we are mysteriously multiple and that we come into form in relation to others – does it not make sense to develop explicit tools and methods for understanding ourselves as rigorously as we do tools and methods for understanding our interlocutors? What if – and I'm thinking here of feminist science studies thinkers like Donna Haraway and more recently Karen Barad – we tried to see ourselves as apparatuses that do the fieldwork?

I also want to suggest, again via Puar, that the way we often think of difference is "difference *from*," the term on the other side of the "from" often being a dominant identity vector. As I suggested at the beginning of this section, tools are built for specific people, bodies, and contexts. I suspect the many of the ways we are taught to consider difference in our fieldwork are taught to us as correctives for people who materialize as the Bermuda-shorts man and not necessarily the Woman of Colour. Similarly, I suspect that these tools were built with foregrounded whiteness – or a white body as one half of the relationship – in mind. And even with no white bodies in the room, whiteness was still there. Stepping into structures of whiteness – as I did briefly in Banff – doesn't require a white body. Just the way one doesn't require a white body to sing a song in German.

In conclusion, I want to ask a series of questions: what would it mean *not only* to acknowledge that we listen from a place as much as we listen to things and people, *but also* to take heart in it, to use the affordances of this knowledge? How might, for example, the sore skinned dog's particular sensitivity be mobilized as a keen fieldwork tool? In fact, what if in admitting that difference might never be circumscribed, we turned to a new kind of virtuosic and necessarily messy critical self-reflexivity? As we gather on Ho-Chunk territory listening, trying to figure out how to adjust our research to stand truthfully within new frames, we must, I think, acknowledge where we stand: for now, and maybe for always, our listening is never neutral.

Excursus: A Story from Ryan Beauregard

While this excursus or journey is about storytelling, it is also about relationships with a more-than-human world on Indigenous land. Ryan Beauregard's story – the heart of this excursus – has found its way into the dissertation because, like the dissertation, it comes from the perspective of a settler who is deeply invested in human and nonhuman relations in the wake of ecological crisis. Both times Ryan narrated what follows I was at times moved to the point of weeping. Yet the story is striated with moments that give me pause. I will, even here, resist circumscribing it: it speaks for itself, alternately resonating and causing dissonance with the larger dissertation that houses it. Instead, I focus on the form of this excursus, discussing the scholarly practice of including life stories and how it might relate to a Critical Indigenous Studies[1] framework.

The practice of interpolating stories told by interlocutors, leaving them occasionally unmetabolized by the encompassing text, has a long tradition in folklore, ethnomusicology, anthropology, and Indigenous studies (Mitchell, Frisbie, and McAllester 1977; von Rosen 1994; Hutchinson 1994; Field 2008; Qureshi 2007; Mitchell 2001). Scholars in these fields and others have used stories, life stories especially, to focus largely on techniques of narratives and on human lives as told by the very humans being discussed. In the words of Margarete Sandelowski, "Narrative analyses of texts force scholars to attend first to what is placed immediately before them – stories – before transforming them into descriptions and theories of the lives they represent. Narrative analyses reveal the discontinuities between story and experience and focus on discourse: on the tellings themselves and the devices individuals use to make meaning in stories" (1991, 162). Further,

[1] I follow Moreton-Robinson in capitalizing "Critical Indigenous Studies," a term associated with a newer wave of scholars, primarily Indigenous. "Indigenous studies," by contrast, is a more diffuse term that might include Critical Indigenous Studies. However, a key difference is this: historically, "Indigenous studies" referred to texts *about* Indigeneity and Indigenous peoples. Most of these texts were produced by non-Indigenous scholars.

the form quite literally lets interlocutors speak for themselves, rather than, as anthropologist James Peacock argues, letting the stories "be cannibalized" by the writing (Peacock 1984, 96). Stories are associated with Bakhtinian polyvocality; they allow difference power; they allow the marginalized voice; and they decentre the main author of the text. Put simply, life stories have been understood as showing immense respect for interlocutors and the ways in which they speak and see the world.

More recently, however, the life story as a positive form of representation has been called into question by a newer wave of scholarship coming particularly from the field of Critical Indigenous Studies. I will say more about this friction specifically, but first James Clifford can help us consider the process of academic change, especially when led by groups historically marginalized in the academy: in his essay "Feeling Historical" Clifford reflects on the reception and afterlives of *Writing Culture* (2015). He recounts a conversation with the anthropologist Raymond Firth in which the latter "shook his head in a mixture of pretended and real confusion" and said, "'Not so long ago we were radicals. We thought of ourselves as gadflies and reformers, advocates for the value of indigenous cultures, defenders of our people. Now, all of a sudden we're handmaidens of empire!'" (ibid., 27). Clifford goes on:

> Feeling historical can be like a rug pulled out: a gestalt change perhaps, or a sudden relocation, of being seen from some previously hidden perspective. For Euro-American anthropology, the experience of a hostile identification as a Western science, a purveyor of partial truths, has been a troubling, alienating, but ultimately enriching process. The same learning opportunity challenged many scholars of my generation with respect to gender and race. (Ibid., 28)

As more and more Indigenous scholars – meaning scholars who have embodied experience being Indigenous – enter the field, perspectives that rival academic traditions both in age and in validity are beginning to enter the scholarly literature. For scholars who might identify with Clifford, these "hidden perspectives" are now being revealed, including in the domain of life stories: the genre is not a neutral one for the field of Critical Indigenous Studies. Following Moreton-Robinson, I understand Critical Indigenous Studies – differentiated from the broader Indigenous studies – to be

a field "where the object of study is colonizing power in its multiple forms, whether the gaze is on Indigenous issues or on Western knowledge production" (Moreton-Robinson 2016, 4). Critical Indigenous Studies expands from a focus *on* Indigenous peoples; it "disrupts the certainty of disciplinary knowledges produced in the twentieth century, when the study of Indigenous peoples was largely the knowledge/power domain of non-Indigenous scholars" (ibid., 3). It is under a Critical Indigenous Studies framework that Andrea Smith argues that the life story, likely because it has become so common for presenting the stories of Indigenous peoples, is one of the only ways that Indigenous knowledge becomes legible to non-Indigenous scholars: "The life stories of Native peoples are important, but their theorizing and analyses are not" (Smith 2014, 210). In other words, the critique is not that life stories are a disrespectful way to represent Indigenous peoples; rather, the critique pertains to who gets to do the representing and why.

The way I respond to foundational works in Critical Indigenous Studies – and I have not yet seen too many settler responses – is the following: while I would not present the life story of an Indigenous thinker unless already published or unless that thinker was intimately familiar with academic practices, I present the words of someone whose ideas have not historically been limited to stories about his own life, especially since he was willing, eager even, to tell his story. Within the dissertation Ryan's narrative forms a contrast with the interview with Anishinaable elder Sharon Brass in the following chapter in which she, herself involved in academic research, critiques various academic practices.

That said, framing a Euro-American man's story the way settler scholars (themselves sometimes Euro-American men) have often framed Indigenous thinkers' stories is not the full story of the framing of the story. If I take seriously the situatedness of knowledge, as feminist science scholars as well as Critical Indigenous Studies scholars have repeatedly recommended, my own subject position comes in here: while I am not yet feeling historical, my experiences with Indigeneity

and settler-colonialism are comparatively few. Contrast seven years of reading and a few years of fieldwork with entire lives of experience fleshed out by knowledge passed down from generation to generation. This is important: the time it is taking for Indigenous scholars and thinkers to be recognized as experts in the humanities and social sciences does not match pace with the comparative speed it takes to read books and articles, cite them, talk to interlocutors, and learn from them. If I zoom out, I might ask myself what might be the implications of learning (comparatively quickly) from Critical Indigenous Studies scholars who might be fighting for acknowledgement and of my then deploying that knowledge so that other settler scholars recognize an expertise that is not quite there. I will say it here, and I will keep saying it. I will never be an expert in anything to do with Indigenous experience (or experience of any other subject position where one is forced – one does not choose – by an oppressive normalizing structure to learn one's place within it). In Moreton-Robinson's words:

> we invoke the "critical" to qualify Indigenous studies by making a separation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous analytics. This separation is warranted because Indigenous knowledges, modes of inquiry we deploy, methods we develop, and ethical and cultural protocols that inform our academic practice are not the same as those of non-Indigenous scholars. Indigenous-embodied knowledges means non-Indigenous scholars can engage with Indigenous analytics but not produce them. (2016, 4)

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One weekend in September 2015, I attended a workshop called "Music as Medicine in Our Planet-Time." I had arrived early because the person I was getting a ride with wanted to "spend some time on the land" before the workshop, as she put it. We drove there in her sky-blue Prius. The farm was in Bolinas, north of Berkeley, accessible via winding roads that overlooked the ocean. None of the participants had ancestors who knew that land or even land close to it. As I was putting up my tent, one of the only men at the program came up to me. He had been enthusiastically helping the several other women put up their tents, and approached me with equal friendliness and enthusiasm. I told him I knew how to put up my tent, but he insisted that it would go faster with two people. As the

tent went up, he told me the following story:[2]

> When I graduated college, I spent a couple years in a very corporate job, a very traditional cubicle world of government. I met a couple that was teaching wilderness survival to at-risk teens. And so that turned me on to a deeper way of venturing and connecting – on some level, empowerment of the human condition. You can get away from the idea of having a job, and come back to a connected way of living with the environment, which all just resonated with me. But this was kind of the first group I ever found doing it in a deeper way, so I quit my job. I worked for this crew in San Diego for a while the year before I moved out to Santa Barbara, and worked with a group called "Wilderness Youth Project" for about six years.
>
> So through that I've met people and certainly am more dialed into the way of being outside and people living like that and the lifestyle. What it really turned me on to was these bigger rites of passage, specifically a traditional Lakota Vision Quest.
>
> What had really turned me about that – I had been involved a little bit with a group called the "Mankind Project," and they're an international group. It encourages men to make relationships with their masculine and each other, and live in a place of service and being connected to our purpose and our mission to help the planet. I needed something a little bit more, and a little bit more Indigenous-based. At the time there was a man in the community who was running traditional sweat lodges, and so through him I got involved in asking for [inaudible] traditional Lakota vision quest [Humblecha = Lakota, "crying for a vision"]. Through that I needed to learn I think it was just one song but I ended up learning two or three and the other part of it was that through Wilderness Youth Project I'd been introduced to a lot of – I guess Indigenous songs as well as songs about nature that we taught to kids and one of the fun things that we'd do often when we did overnight or weekend camping

[2] Ryan was kind enough to repeat the story to me on Skype three months later so that I could have a recording. While the story was as vivid as the first time I heard it, the Skype connection was a poor one, something that shows up in the transcription as the many "inaudible" markings. I showed Ryan a version of the transcription close to this one and he was able to replace some of the "inaudibles" with his own words. When this excursus consisted only of Ryan's story, I had asked Ryan if he wanted a title. He suggested the following: "Discovering a Reluctant Voice through Medicinal Music."

trips is we would wake up before the sun, climb to the top of a mountain with a few of the kids and greet the sun with one of these songs. It was a really beautiful way – to not only learn these songs but to embody them in a traditional way and how the Indigenous kind of meanings came up in prayer and in song.

And so at the traditional vision quest, I learned a few of the Lakota songs and what they meant. I'd sung them pretty much, you know, I don't even know how many times a day, but a lot during my four days up on the hill. And although I felt a lot of resonance with them, I still didn't have my voice, or fully appreciated the ability to be able to sing to creation on some level and in a way that had some more lineage to it. And so a few months after that, one of the members of the community introduced me to a traditional Peruvian shaman who was coming up to visit and was doing an *ayahuasca* journey. So I did my first ayahuasca journey a few months after that vision quest and in addition to the powerful work of that medicine, I was really blown away and moved by the *icaro*s that are called ceremony songs, and learning that those are actually invocations and prayers made into songs.

Through the next three or four years I really sought to understand the power that was embedded in that – music is one way to put it, but I guess "traditional song." And . . . so that was definitely powerful, and I remember one night towards the end of the three-year stint I was doing – maybe every three or four months doing this yearly – that I felt this kind of humming kind of deep in my chest and my heart. It began and then became kind of like a humming in my throat and it was this song that we were singing to me felt like a love song. It felt like a love song with medicine and it kept going and going and finally came to the point where it I felt like it liberated my voice to be able to match tone and pitch and make harmony with the other man who was singing. It was kind of the first time I had ever thought in ceremony or some other – it felt so natural on some level and it felt like I was given this gift of discovering my voice beyond my throat, but through more of a resonance from my heart and chest. Opening up those chakras and just allowing the thing, and as I felt that, it really felt like that embodiment of singing a love song to the plants and to the medicine with deep appreciation.

And later – or maybe it was even before that – one of these women that came up [from

Peru], another woman then the first woman I had my first ayahuasca experience with. She was also a Peruvian woman who'd been doing this for a long time and worked with my teacher and I got it as a way that I felt it. And I was able to take some of these recordings home from the ceremonies. The impact being of the deep grief and the tears that this heart activation that they were able to bring both inside and outside the ceremony was just profound and really powerful experience. And at one point listening to these songs after a weekend in ceremony, the prayers that came to me was that this woman is singing life back into existence. Like through these songs . . . the water, the soil, the air, the everything. The energy inside of life needs to be refreshed through this music and through these songs, and this is our gift and command that we can use our voices to do these prayers.

And so it really hit me in a profound way and I really noticed that it really created a deeper sense of presence, you know, often my monkey mind could just be a lot of chatter if I let it. And I could really focus myself differently. I saw myself often when I was doing my solo wanders up a creek or in the forest that I would go and find a spot and sit and sing these different icaros or sing these traditional Lakota prayer songs or sweat lodge songs. And I felt that I was giving a gift back and feeling such deeper sense of connecting with the world around me and being able to appreciate these places of pure silence but even more able to feel like I was just singing my prayers and appreciation back for the planet which I had loved for so long.

And through that . . . I think . . . somewhere in the late nineties I got really resonating and curious about the Aborigine – the Australian aboriginal instrument, didgeridoo. I started teaching myself how to play and circular breathe and also felt myself really fascinated by [inaudible] and started to teach myself that as well. So it was an interesting mix as I'd go into nature. I'd be finding some beautiful caves where I would go and play didgeridoo and [inaudible]. Different songs. Just really noticing for myself that there was this different place of deep resonance and connection when these messages, these prayers were coming from that chakra of heart in the chest, rather than just finding [inaudible] on my head, feeling a deeper resonance not only in my body but deep in touch with the world around me, so it's more about fifteen years since this medicine journey I had up in Washington, the one that I was telling you about when you first arrived at the Bolinas farm.

Um, I just felt a real . . . a pull, to shout out to the world how much I appreciated my life, my deep gratitude for all that was coming – even in this, you know – all the ugliness and challenge that I've faced and came around the corner to this clearing. I could see out Puget Sound and see out over this beautiful farming valley and just shouted out the words, "I love you," and it was so moving, I mean, just from this really beautiful place. I was so moved from a place of deep gratitude, and as I'm shouting that out, I turned around. Actually, as I found the place to shout it out, that place was me climbing on top of this giant tractor, backhoe. Just climbing onto the roof of it to shout out to the valley I LOVE YOU, and after I said that a few times, after I shouted it out a few times I stopped to like take in the spot, and I looked behind me and I noticed the devastation that this tractor that I was standing on had done.

You know, a lot of just, I don't know. I'm not sure if it was necessarily mining per se or strip mining or anything like that. But I mean it had certainly done a lot of decimation of the hillside and trees, and I mean, there was just this giant hit and [inaudible] from the mountain where it had taken all this stuff down, and logs that were just lying strewn all over the place. And I just broke down. I lost it. I just went into this deep sobbing, wailing, deep grief. Loud wailing. So, it had its own song almost. It had its own kind of [inaudible] resonance. And from that place, I was hanging out with three other men who I knew somewhat but didn't know very well, and my thought was when I looked up that I had just created such a display and spectacle that they were going to be kind of a little embarrassed or just not know what to do with it, and kind of going to be off in their own little world, or like, kind of "'kay, let's get out of here," and instead I looked down and all three of them had their hands on the tractor, kind of with their heads bowed in reverence, in appreciation for what I was able to connect with and channel for all four of us.

That I was being the microphone or conduit for this deeper thing that, as masculine, that we were recognizing what we're doing to this world, and even though none of the three of us were at fault for this thing directly, that we recognized that on some level that it's the relationship of masculine with the current state of the world that we're here to feel, and prove, and here to take ownership with, responsibility for. And I recognized that. I just

looked up and held one hand over my heart and one hand to the sky and started humming this song that felt so familiar to me, and so powerfully connected to the situation I was at, and with my eyes closed, I could see this beautiful vortex of – uhh . . . to put it simply – just the connection of all things, flowing in and out of – I guess a [inaudible]. The light and the dark all folding in on itself, making this beautiful passage through one side and out the other, and kind of folding in on itself and coming together, and becoming all things that in existence.

I kept humming the song and singing it, and thinking, "It sounds so familiar, but I can't remember what the song is." I just kept humming it, you know, and not really [inaudible] the lyrics until I heard myself actually singing the lyrics to it and recognizing a Lakota song, and recognizing that it was the Lakota song that was given to me to learn for my vision quest. And it's called the "Buffalo Eagle Song." And it's a really powerful song. It's about basically bridging heaven and earth, bridging the buffalo and the eagle, and really powerful connection between all things. And it was the song that I repeatedly sang for four days while I was out on my vision quest without water for four days and [it inaudible] me on some level and made a relationship with those things that I am not even fully aware of – that I am connected to but on some level I know I am.

And it was the song on top of this tractor [that] went on for five or ten minutes. I know I certainly lost track of time, but it felt like such a beautiful resonance, like I was reformatting the tractor. And even the tractor as this tool, you know, it's like what's the difference between a tool and a weapon? And it's our use. It's our intention. What we're actually doing is seeing this tractor and recognizing "oh, this thing can be used for a major rainwater harvesting technique, or building [inaudible] for swales, or earthen [inaudible] or creating [inaudible] forest. Really different things. Not that the tractor is bad. I can look at the wake of the devastation and I could say, "It's the tractor's fault." And I felt that I was doing almost this ninja blessing or this ninja kind of christening of this tractor. Like initiating it into a new world, and being like, "You've been kind of adopted into our new tribe, only being able to do good in the world. You're not going to be a tractor that is going to be able to tear up things anymore. You're a new tractor! You're reborn as this tractor that's only going to be, you know. And you're not going to start for people who are – you know, or you're going

to have flat tires, or whatever – some kind of breakdown, you know, not intentionally, but know that you have to do good things in the world."

We all kind of joked that night that you know we're going to have to go around blessing tractors, kind of like covert ninja, like night time run, you know, like find all these tractors around the countryside and initiating them into this tribe of like, "yeah, you're doing good work. You're working for the environment, not against it."

And the deeper conversation that it's brought up from me over the last five years kind of relates to finding our voice and our music and our purpose. Because there's – at least in the world of men – and I'm not going to say that initiation and rites of passage – they are certainly powerful for all and both genders, both sexes, you know, masculine and feminine, male and female alike. That being said, there's a natural connection that the feminine has. It's an innate ability that females have, being connected to this planet and their rites of passage are the ability to bear life. You know it's that first moon time, that first menstruation is that rite of passage from being a little girl to being a woman, in being connected to the web of life, to creation [pause] flowing through your body. I mean it can't – there can't be a more obvious or direct pattern. This is life force that you shed through your body every month. . . . In the cycle of moon and sun and all these connected seasonal things that is [inaudible] into and embedded [inaudible, quite a few words] and that as men it's just a necessity to actually have that experience, to be initiated into understanding our connection to all things.

Because otherwise traditional thing how males don't recognize this, don't realize that this is true. Otherwise we see ourselves as these individuals [inaudible] as many indigenous cultures, we initiate the youth, the adolescents so we don't burn down the village. Because it's not even an intentional or a malicious thing to burn down the village. It's just an ignorant thing. It's like "Oh fire, this is fire, this beautiful thing that we use to cook, and transmute and boil water and create all of these fantastical transformations in our world." But I can also pick up a stick on fire and set it down out over by somebody else's hut, and then their hut's on fire and all of a sudden the entire village can burn down just because I don't know. Or I think it's fun. Or I'm fascinated by the power of fire. But that idea of initiating these young men so that they understand that there is power to be wielded in a responsible way and that any

harm that they are doing is [inaudible, a few words] is connected to all things. That it has impact, that it has consequence, and that there is something beautiful about that rite of passage that is literally not only a metaphorical death but creating a death to the old self, creating a death to that child, which isn't getting rid of the child, but acknowledging making relationship with all things.

And that's, I think, so what is the essence of where we are headed and what is possible in the healing in our relationship with the natural world and making relationship. So often we have corrected small boundaries and created artificial environments: you know, air conditioning, heating, and all this stuff to remove ourselves [plant inaudible, animal inaudible], and on some level exploiting the natural world so that we can get more profit instead of actually making relationship with and accepting it in all of its good and all of its bad. Without shunning anything to say, "Well, this is good and we're going to keep all of it, and this is bad and we have to get rid of it." Saying this is good and bad and we get to make relationship with *all* of it, not just some of it, not just the things that are comfortable and good and soft and edible, but the stuff that's fierce, that fights back and eats us, and is there [inaudible] to poison us. There is medicine in most poison. There is benefit in those things that's like [inaudible], and we can see that from this world of naturing and working with [teens?] that allows them to see that all their parts are welcome. It's the parts that maybe wanted to destroy things shouldn't be in the driver's seat, but they're welcome. They can sit shotgun sometimes, and they can have a conversation and there is a creative force. There is actually a caretaking force in that destruction when properly channeled. I mean, that's digging rain – water- swales, pruning trees, that's taking down a structure that needs to be composted or rebuilt or any of that. That destructive energy is actually a beautiful thing to make relationship.

I wish that a lot of us would wake up. I mean not all of us but as a collective we're out of touch in trying to have healthy relationship with nature and art of ourselves. And on some level, [inaudible] spiritual bypassing that idea of being like, "Oh these shadow sides of myself are these like bad sides. Let's just not even talk about them. Let's just get over them and just be all of the love and the light that [inaudible] like spirituality and transformation and the life it can be." On some level it seems like that's such a detriment and I've met a lot of people

> that are not in right relationship with themselves or the planet, or the [inaudible]. And it's like, "oh yeah, I'm this way, and you know," and a lot of "yeah, it's all love and light," but then it's like "well [inaudible] but then it's like "Fuck Republicans" or "Fuck people who love guns, you know."
>
> But they're okay too. Like, yeah, they *challenge* me, and I'm like, "oh man, I think there's maybe some ignorance going on there," but like, yeah, *some* things. Like some things I am in right relationship with, and ultimately you have to forgive. Well, I mean you have to.

***

In a certain way, Ryan's story contains a key or a method to its own interpretation. What does Ryan do when he sees things that are wrong in the world? He doesn't say that different people have different opinions. He says that they're misguided – or rather he says that they are "spiritually bypassing," a psychological term popularly used in the conscious community to refer to the avoidance of confronting difficult feelings by instead clinging to spiritual ideas and practices – but that "they're okay too."

Potawatomi biologist Robin Kimmerer takes a similarly gentle approach when considering something that Ryan does not consider in his story, though its spectre is very much present: the relationship of settlers to Indigenous land. Kimmerer writes, "Like my elders before me, I want to envision a way that an immigrant society could become indigenous to place, but I'm stumbling on the words. Immigrants cannot by definition be indigenous. Indigenous is a birthright word. No amount of time or caring changes history or substitutes for soul-deep fusion with the land. . . ." (2014, 212). By "immigrants," she means settlers of any kind. She goes on to ask, "But . . . can they nevertheless enter into the deep reciprocity that renews the world? Is this something that can be learned? Where are the teachers?" (ibid.). Kimmerer finds these teachers in plants: "Our immigrant plant teachers offer a lot of different models for how not to make themselves welcome on a new continent. Garlic mustard poisons the soil so that native species will die. Tamarisk uses up all the

water. Foreign invaders like loosestrife, kudzu, and cheat grass have the colonizing habit of taking over others' homes and growing without regard to limits" (2014, 214). However, Kimmerer does not stop there. Emphasizing how it is not merely *being* "foreign" that but rather particularly harmful *practices* that wreak havoc, she tells a story of the common plantain, a round-leafed and bitter plant that "arrived with the first settlers and followed them everywhere they went" (ibid., 213). Known as White Man's Footstep, the common plantain grows many places, including in Northern Alberta in Cree and Dene territory where I have eaten it along with dandelion greens and berries in so-called "bear salad." Kimmerer extols the virtues of plantain: "In spring it makes a good pot of greens. . . . The leaves, when they are rolled or chewed to a poultice, make a fine first aid for cuts, burns, and especially insect bites. Every part of the plant is useful. Those tiny seeds are good medicine for digestion. The leaves can halt bleeding right away and heal wounds without infection" (ibid., 214). Unlike loosestrife, kudzu, and cheat grass, plantain's "strategy was to be useful, to fit into small places, to coexist with others around the dooryard, to heal wounds Plantain is so prevalent, so well integrated, that we think of it as native. It has earned the name bestowed by botanists for plants that have become our own. Plantain is not indigenous but 'naturalized'" (ibid.).

While Kimmerer quietly resists a moral dualism, a team of scholars involved in "an urban Indigenous land-based education project in Chicago" do so more explicitly as in their project to "remake relationships with [their] plant relatives" (Bang et al. 2014, 37, 46). In their research they also had to confront their relationships with non-native plants, plants who were not their relatives. In particular, they focused on common buckthorn, a European plant that, like kudzu in the south, is "particularly destructive" to Chicago's ecology in particular to woodlands and oak savannahs (ibid., 47). While the research team originally used the Western scientific term "invasive species" to refer to buckthorn, they ended up – aided by an elder who encouraged them to "find words to express Indian thought" – reconsidering the term: "while they may not have been *our* [the Indigenous

researchers'] relatives, they were *someone's* relatives. The researchers then began to call buckthorn and other non-native species "plants that people lost their relationships with" (ibid.).

Perhaps Ryan and I, the people who have lost their relationships with their plants, are practicing relationships with new places and new plants, plants and places our ancestors never saw and perhaps barely dreamt of. Borrowing from all over, like magpies, we are rechristening tractors, repurposing life stories, wielding instruments that could be tools or could be weapons, singing in old and new tongues, and fighting for our sight. Perhaps we are finally – however messily, however blindly, however clumsily – waking up to the things that the people of this land have known from time immemorial.

IV. Of Desks and Altars

> Living as we did – on the edge – we developed a particular way of seeing reality. We looked from both the outside in and the inside out. We focused our attention on the center as well as the margin. We understood both. This mode of seeing reminded us of the existence of a whole universe, a main body made up of both margin and center.
>
> —hooks 2000 xvi

> As any immigrant knows, everyone is not like us, and we are not even like ourselves. . . . I fight for my own liberation precisely because I fight for that of the stranger.
>
> —Haider 2018

> You have come here, like the others from your land, looking, looking, looking. That is good, that is where the power begins. But looking cannot go on forever. It must change; it must develop into giving or it will become merely taking.
>
> —Starhawk 366

Desks and altars are places of writing and ceremony. There is a perhaps-accidental academic tradition of writing about one's desk as a kind of opening vignette. Taussig writes of his desk: "I have seashells I picked up from the high-tide mark on the beach at Seal Rocks just north of Newcastle on the east coast of my native Australia that I place close to my keyboard, as well as a heft fossil from Colombia and my hard-of-hearing cat named Norman" (2011, 77). He then goes on to theorize writing as an activity similar to talking with spirits: audiences – whether they are future selves or projections of people the writer knows – are rather ghostly and immaterial. Elizabeth Povinelli, writes of her desk as an entrée to deconstructing the concept of Indigeneity:

> A pair of conch shells sits on my desk. Beside them sits a carved and decorated gourd. The shells are painted in the vibrant dot style most people associate with the Aboriginal aesthetic of the Central Desert and with Aboriginal art more generally. The carved gourd is decorated with costume jewelry, a rodent head, a golden figure affixed to a red seed, and a cheap plastic tiara clasped around the base. It is a piece that few people know how to classify when they see it. (Povinelli 2006, 95)

I participate in this tradition by making a substitution, altar for desk. This is another way of exploring the kinds collapse of subject-object relations I both enact and advocate for earlier in the dissertation in directly addressing readers, considering ethnomusicological publics, and asking what it

means for "us" to listen on Indigenous land. On my altar is a picture of my mother hugging my dog (they are both in the spirit world now); two rose quartz hearts, one of which belongs to my partner; some sweetgrass that my friend Allison gave me when I gave a talk at the Decolonize Meet-Up in Berkeley; a statue of Saraswati, the goddess of wisdom and music; a cedarwood statue of the protection Buddha; a long, white quartz crystal that a mentor once gave me; a thin black plastic bracelet from a senior scholar who thinks with her whole body, who has held onto her playfulness, who cryptically gave the bracelet to me at a Society for Ethnomusicology meeting a few years ago; a seashell with large hair-like fronds growing out of it from the Pacific, and some stones from the North Saskatchewan River and the Alberta Rockies. A bag containing a rawhide drum hangs from a hook beside the altar.

My desk is for relating with others. The altar is only for myself. If my bibliography has only books that are important to me in it, I think of the potential problems with it. If my altar has only things which are important to me, that is the point. The present chapter is also about how we pick up things and how ceremonies become real, how we try them on, how they become ours, how we weave them into our writing. But what is the space between altar and bibliography? They tie me, my work, my songs to people – living, dead, never met, close.

Rather than focusing on realist representation, on argumentation, polemic, or rhetoric to convince readers to see my point of view this chapter has already begun to structure itself as a ceremony, considering our bodies as if we are in the room together, slowing down, repeating, returning, weaving us together through practice. We bring our own selves and practices to ceremony; I necessarily use for the ceremony the things that I have metabolized, the things that I know, but I try to foreground stories of ceremony in academic settings, of which I suspect you have many of your own. I explore music, ancestry, writing, and race through many stories. I enlist the help of an elder who has strengthened my understanding of what I am doing here. Ceremony enters

the body differently from argument or exposition. The goal is not exactly to get on the same page. I have my own ideas of what these stories mean, but they are also, I hope, open enough for you to bring your own life experience to them. The stories are not exactly stories with morals: instead of pulling each theme apart to treat separately, I turn them over together in different ways, placing them beside each other like objects on an altar to resonate how they may. I play with the idea that it is chains of practices that make ancestors, whether we are talking about our intellectual genealogies, our biological genealogies, or our histories with places: practices we have learned from our traditions of reading, practices we have learned from being around people who have been around the same people (family), practices taught to us by people who have been in the same places as we have. The space between desks and altars begins to shrink.

Practicing Metta, Practicing Judgement

Like desks and altars, formal and informal practices – as I discuss at length in the "practices" section of the second chapter – have something in common as well. They can bleed into other practices. As a little girl, I used to imagine reddish, warm rings of light encircling people, sliding down them and warming them from head to toe. This was not a consciously cultivated practice, but it was something I used to find myself doing. It felt as if I were giving them something nice – love, not necessarily *my* love, but love in general – without their knowing it. Later on I learned about lovingkindness practices. Coming out of a mix of Buddhist (primarily Tibetan Buddhist, in my opinion) practices, the version that is most familiar to me goes: "May you be happy. May you be healthy. May you be at peace. May you live with ease." At various points in my life, I have practiced this so much that my first, "instinctive" reaction to other living beings was to wish them these things. At other points in my life, I have seen every human the way I often see children: wise, creative, needing love, loving, vulnerable, capable of change and growth. Over the past month, I have found my first reaction to

people hostility.

During the summer, when my partner and I were visiting the British Museum, a large East Asian tour group swept through the otherwise quiet room and came to a stop in front of the Rosetta Stone, phones drawn. I felt my hackles rise, not towards the tour group but towards everyone else, a flood of judgments hardening my body as I thought of what *other people* were thinking about the East Asian tour group and East Asians in general. I won't repeat them here, because I believe that it is important not to perpetuate the details of violence. Details of violence circulate more easily, for some reason, than the care needed to address them. Suffice it to say that, standing behind a few people from the tour group and in front of the Rosetta Stone, I marshaled an entire literature about difference – Audre Lourde and Grace Wang, who wrote *Soundtracks of Asian America: Navigating Race through Musical Performance*, were the two writers who first came to mind – and somehow made these books much less luminous than I think they are. I made them anti-intellectual and reduced them down to one application: the other, non-East Asians (and not just white) were thinking bad things about the East Asians, therefore they were practicing racism, therefore they were racists, therefore they were bad.

My mind rounded this circuit at lightning pace. It felt like instinct, but in reality it was the result of practice. I had learned to see what could go wrong with any situation, to hesitate before saying something was true, to be skeptical about generalized claims, to be critical of the status quo, to wield what some might call the sword of discrimination. These are valuable skills – necessary, powerful, even life-liberating. And they are embedded in a constellation of other practices, embodied or not. I have always been interested in these practices. But the constellation of other practices I learned these in were: worrying about precariousness with other graduate students, working frantically without enough time to finish said work, grieving the death of a parent, isolating myself so that I could work, imbibing the sorrows of dear friends who were on the job market, and

reading some less luminous but no less powerful books, books born out of despair and rage that were not balanced with compassion. Ironically, I ignored subtlety and the reservation of judgment (also disciplinary practices), cultivating instead – not to say that I alone am responsible for my ways in the world – a veneer of cynicism.

While I was not exactly racializing the people who were not in the tour group and while I do not rationally believe the circuit that I found my mind taking, racialization is itself a similar practice. We learn how to do it, always to others, sometimes to ourselves, unevenly distributed. For some, practicing racialization on others feels and remains unconscious or natural, akin to the way they may screw up their noses while playing the cello. But screwing up one's nose is completely different in a singer than in a cellist. A nose screwed up in concentration can be naturalized for a cellist as "just the way she plays." In a singer, screwed up noses – along with ticks and wiggles and hands that become claws – are read not as natural but as untrained.

Intensity without Consensus

I have shared the peculiarities of my own mind in the British Museum with you. We are not always thinking the same thing: people may turn to each other after feeling the atmosphere of a room change[1] and say, "Oh my god," perhaps leaving the conversation at that, an acknowledgement that something happened. But the event that happened might be completely different from each. What one person might mean is "I can't believe how rude B was," while the other might mean, "I can't believe A would have brought that up so insensitively at a time like this." Other people at the British Museum might have felt the intensity in the room as incredible annoyance at the East Asian tourists. Of course, our perspectives are shaped by many things, including race. But what are these things – if

[1] Teresa Brennan begins her *Transmission of Affect* with the following sentence: "Is there anyone who has not, at least one, walked into a room and "felt the atmosphere?" (2004, 1).

we are to be non-essentialist about them – but practices, some of which we choose and some of which are chosen for us?

Connections Everywhere

> *Throughout my fieldwork, hearing that mountains and oceans were connected, hearing that someone "spoke with the wisdom of the stars," I kept assuming metaphor. But Sheridan later explained to me the glacial melt of mountains flow down them into rivers, which eventually flow into oceans. Someone else explained to me that we have to breathe in order to have breath to speak, that the oxygen we breathe comes from photosynthesis, that the plants need light in order to do this, that the light comes from the sun, that the sun is a star.*

Sheridan and I have been deep in conversation. I had found her drinking a glass of wine and eating a chicken sandwich in the back garden at Lost and Found, a bar in Oakland that has kombucha on tap. Too absorbed by her stories to get up and order, I had been sitting with her for nearly half an hour. We are at a mutual friend's birthday gathering, and the outdoor area is closing. Coming inside, we're debating about whether or not to sit at the main table right in the middle, especially since we're having such an involved conversation that is not easy for other people join. "I see you!!" says a brownish woman with long black braids, "I see you POC questioning whether you should take up space!! It's for you!! Sit!" and, gesturing towards the table, "Who else would it be for?" All three of us laugh, and we sit down. Sheridan weaves this in, "See?!?" she says, "this is *exactly* what we were talking about."

She had been describing to me how a woman had sailed traditional Hawai'ian canoes around the world for three years using only traditional navigation. They had been having a ceremony in the Bay Area to celebrate and apparently people (glossed as settlers) had been walking by in front of the ceremony, in front of the singers as if nothing at all had been going on. Sheridan had been theorizing about this being about white settlers feeling entitled to take up space wherever they were without ever questioning it.

Sheridan also tells me about an Indigenous Hawai'ian professor who changed the course of how people understood traditional navigation, promising to send me a video about her. She, Sheridan, seems to be making a link between me and the professor:

"It's no accident that I ran across this video this morning and that I'm running into you this evening!"

"But I'm NOT Indigenous, Sheridan!" I say. She knows. I keep saying this and she keeps weaving me in as well, telling me that I, like her, walk between worlds.

Sheridan is weaving me in *not* as a "good settler who gets it" – a position that Tuck would caution us against – but as a woman of colour. It is the same move that the ground-breaking anthology *The Bridge Called My Back* makes. It is a move of solidarity and acknowledging my POC (person of colour) experiences. The term, POC, too, is telling. It is a term that is defined explicitly in relation to whiteness. People of colour are created in relation to whiteness. Whiteness, too, is something that relies, completely differently, on nonwhiteness.

I also know why I strongly assert my non-Indigeneity. It can be too easy for people whose struggles they are not to find resonance and run with it, taking over and becoming blind to the context. In psychology they call this countertransference. In activism it looks like a white activist grabbing the microphone and yelling the loudest about how black lives matter while black activists are forced to take a back seat. In everyday life it looks like someone going through a divorce and seeking comfort from a friend and the friend taking all the space to talk about their own break-up.

I keep trying to ask Sheridan about ceremony: "Yes, I'm not saying things about *other* people that they wouldn't want me to say, but I may be saying things about *myself* that I don't want to say."

"Why? Because you're afraid of being vulnerable?"

"Not just that." I try a different tack, "Like you know how you wouldn't give away sweat-lodge ceremony songs, but you might write about water songs because everyone needs to sing them

anyway?"

She does not respond with as much enthusiasm as I had hoped. I try again, "Well, should I be telling people about everything that's on my *altar*!?" Sheridan answers sideways, "There's a way that I talk about Run4Salmon that is true but doesn't give away the ceremony."[2] And she also quotes an elder saying, "The real ceremony begins when the ceremony ends."

Sheridan asks about the chapter: "What are you going to call it?"

"I think something like 'Of Desks and Altars,'" I say.

She had high-fived me for my description of the previous chapter, but now she says, "There are a million articles about that. Why should I care?" Sheridan has a Master's in Cultural Studies. The question – a response to a mishearing of "desks" as *deaths* – is loving and rhetorical.

Two of Three River Stories

September 29, 2016

I finally walked down to the river to sing to it. Everything smelled like autumn. Bare trees, lots with yellow leaves, some with green. There was something so poignant about all the scenery. It was almost painful in its beauty, the river too.

I crossed the bridge, took the first path on the left, and came down onto the first sandbank. The sand was quite fresh. There was only one set of old footprints. The rest were new and wet. There were seagull feathers in the river, and this made me a bit reluctant to touch the river. I did anyway. The water was very clear, and the stones sang beneath the clear water. I began to sing the "Nibi wabo" song again and again. It finally started to feel natural in my voice, and I was a little bit

[2] Run4Salmon is a prayerful journey organized by the Winnemem Wintu tribe in northern California as part of the process of reintroducing salmon into the McCloud River.

disconcerted to notice myself wanting a frame drum to beat while I was singing. The song seemed so strong and appropriate to sing to the river.

I trailed my hand in the river. Should I touch the river while singing? I listened for the river but it was quite quiet. What I did hear was the cawing of seagulls on the opposite bank. I alternated between watching the river flow and feeling as if it were flowing with my singing or that my singing was helping it flow or that it was helping my singing flow, and looking straight down at the clearish water right in front of me.

A river can be looked at in so many different ways. I found three very striking and beautiful stones. They were multi-coloured: one jade and red; one split down a line of red and pink; and the last black and yellow. I picked them up, and then put them back into the water, framing the pink rose quartz heart that I took from my pocket and that I also set down on the riverbed. They looked so beautiful. I was a little (irrationally) worried about the river carrying them away, maybe symbolically worried? Anyway, it was as if I had made an altar beneath the surface of the river.

October 6, 2016

Today I also went to the river. It had snowed really heavily last night. And it felt like a spring day this afternoon because the sun was out and the snow had started to melt. Such a beautiful landscape! I wore my green Sorels and they made my right heel bleed, so that was something I was aware of the whole time. I was also taking off and putting on layers most of the time. I didn't go straight down to the river this time, although I was greeting it (in my head by singing continuously – though not on purpose – the "Nibi wabo" song). Instead, I took the small path that goes by it (if you turn left as soon as you get off the bridge). The path was small and snowy and muddy and I was surprised to see both footprints and bicycle tracks (the fat tire ones) on it. Snow, I guess, shows you with more

precision than mud who has been there and when. Surprises. There were lots of green things poking through the snow and some red berries and yellow leaves. It was quite beautiful, though slippery.

At one point I noticed a lot of felled trees crossing the path: beaver territory. Or maybe that coupled with the fact that there had been heavy snow. At any rate, that's the place that Mom and I saw that big beautiful beaver some months ago. Soon after I made that observation, I passed under a large tree arch, and it felt very ceremonious. It's funny how attuned you become to ceremony when you're outside and thinking in that way. It's almost as if that passing through initiates a new thought or a new way of being or a new atmosphere, the way stepping through a doorway into a new room would.

I was looking for a way to get onto that sandbank or bar. I took a left turn at one point and walked through some untouched snow, ending up at that place where Leo and I had sat and sung to the river awhile back. I sang a bit and held some balled-up snow in my warm hands until it melted, and that was a time-marker in a way: it signaled that it was time for me to keep walking. Everything in nature can be a sign like that. Making up ceremonies and trying to communicate with the river relies so much on stuff like that. In another place I sang and made a snowball and threw the snowball into the river as a ceremony after touching it to my forehead – right thought – my lips – right speech – and my heart – right action. And then I stayed until I couldn't see the snowball anymore, floating away.

As I was standing there I was thinking about this development of ritual. I was singing this Ojibwe song and no one was there to hear it. Was I harming anyone? No, it was using what I had to try to communicate with the river. And using what I knew from Buddhism, too, was helpful. It was like pulling out all my tools. And when I was walking most of the time I was thinking about my legs and hips and glutes, something that happens because of my Sattva yoga practice. Walking solidifies

the practice of yoga, or lets it settle, rather, and see how it lands in my body. (But not too much because too much walking makes the practice of walking settle in my body).

After that, I walked back to the bridge quickly, and, before crossing it, I went back down to the river. I was surprised to see that there were no human footprints, only pawprints. Were they coyotes' or dogs'? Some beings trying to drink? More singing. I always have a resistance to going straight to the river or to touching it straight away. I always wonder if I can just sing to it from the bridge. Anyway, the steep sand drop-off was covered in snow, and my tracks were the only ones. I went down after having watched the water lap so clearly and gently the sand (and it was like it beguiled me into seeing how sweet it was), and I spread my palms and rested them on the top of the water, taking them off and touching them to my forehead, lips, and heart. And then I walked back home, faster because my job was done.

* * *

We do not sing to a river unmediated, no matter how much we wish that we did. And we intertwine these practices with other memories and practices. In January 2017, two months after my mother's death, I was about to move to Berkeley. My partner and I were loading up my mom's old Corolla to drive to Berkeley.

"Don't you want to say goodbye to the river?" John asked. We walked down the hill outside my childhood home. The sun was shining and everything was snowy and glittering. After I had sung to the North Saskatchewan and said goodbye, John surprised me with a ring that he had made. In a way, because of that, the river flows through my relationship with him. The river will also flow here long after I have died, long after everyone I know is gone.

Three Stories about Ceremony and Difference

Someone who was leading a healing workshop told me, in front of the group of forty or so people,

that I could see people's souls. A beautiful Dene elder came up to me afterwards and gripped my arms with such incredible trust. "What do you see in my soul?" she asked, beaming up at me. It was incredibly intimate; she was so vulnerable to me. I looked into her eyes and I held her arms as well and I said, "Beauty. Immense beauty." I felt as if I had blessed her. But it wasn't me. It had nothing to do with my personality. It wasn't premeditated. I think that is what ethnographers mean when they do not want to navel-gaze. They want to get out of the way and allow something else to happen, something bigger than themselves. But I have trouble with this, often. I want to stretch so big and porous that I am the world, that the world becomes visible through the blade of grass that is me.

***

Ceremonies can go wrong, especially if people need difference for their ceremonies to work: I once took a voice lesson from a well-known Canadian opera singer who asked me about the mole in the centre of my forehead. English was not her most comfortable language, so the question went through several iterations as she asked it. In its final form, it sounded something like, "Do you have this mole in the middle of your forehead because you are Indian?" I said something like, "No, it's just a mole and it just happens to be in the middle of my forehead. You could easily have been born with this mole. I just happen to be East Indian." "East Indian" was the term that Western Canadians, at least, were using for people like me. From my perspective, this exchange was not a good start to the lesson. It made me feel as if perhaps she would not be able to make enough sense of my Indianness to teach me how to sing.

Later on in the lesson, I cried out of sheer frustration. It was 2007 and I had not yet figured out a singing technique that worked for me. I could not do the things this teacher was asking for, no matter how many times she told me to do them. This, coupled with her initial question about my mole, attaching to the snowball of every other comment I had been receiving "what made you want

to sing *this* music?" "I can tell you're East Indian because of your singing!" "Your eyes are just like a cow's!" left me feeling utterly humiliated, as if there was something so un-belonging, dark, and even dirty about me – "your sound will never be perfectly clear" – that I would never sing well.

Something thoroughly different, however, was going on for this voice teacher: she took my tears as trust. This young East Indian singer with a magical mole in the centre of her forehead *trusted* her. How honoured she was that I trusted her, she told me at the end of the lesson. "Nadia, I will never forget you as long as I live!" So far, she hasn't.

***

"Let go of your perfectionism," a facilitator whispered to me during a ceremony. All of the participants were lying on the floor, defenseless, and experimenting with sound. We had been chorusing into a wail. It was understood that our wailing meant something – different things for different people – but nevertheless something. Taking a guess at a process that might be unfolding in someone and then supporting that process can be very powerful. It can be powerfully terrible if you are wrong. I felt as if this facilitator just knocked the wind out of me, and reacted less gracefully than I would have preferred, whispering back, loudly, "MY MOTHER IS DYING – NOTHING TO DO WITH PERFECTIONISM." She took a risk that was very specific. You can't take those risks unless you know someone really, really well. Otherwise even just a little, "Let it all out," or a simple witnessing presence can work just fine. If you read people right, you can help them along those channels, and, if you don't, you can violate them. It is deeply personal.

Ancestors in Our Bodies

An organist and retired professor at UBC somehow got my number.

"Are you able to sub for our soprano section lead?" he asked. I didn't catch his name. I was hurrying to the bus as I took his call. I said that I couldn't. I was about to move to Winnipeg.

"By the way," he said, as we were about to hang up, "do you know what your name means?"

"My last name?" I asked, "Chickpea?"

"Yes," he said, "but there's another meaning from the Sanskrit."

"Oh," I said.

"It means _____" he said.

"Thank you," I said, and we hung up. I have always thought it was funny that I first learned about my last name because someone was interesting in my Western classical singing. I have wondered since if knowing about the meaning of my last name changed my relationship to Buddhism. There are traces of those practices in my name, evidence, perhaps, that my ancestors were doing old versions of what I sometimes do now. I am not sure that I can claim those practices as "more authentically mine." Though I am compelled by stories about blood memories and epigenetics, I am talking here about even the little things that are passed down from practice. I never pointed my feet towards people because it felt rude and egregious. No one had ever told me not to do this, but my parents never did. I learned much later that this is a South Asian thing.

Here is another thing: crossing the ankle of one leg above the knee of the other, interlacing fingers behind head with elbows splaying outward, pressing body firmly into the chair, and leaning backwards until the front legs of the lift off the ground. It looks funny in my body, but sometimes I try it out. How powerful and yet vulnerable. How relaxed one must feel to sit this way. I am always protecting my vulnerable spots: crossing my legs, keeping my legs together, crossing my arms, keeping my arms glued to my sides, sometimes hunching. Don't notice me. Don't touch me. This is taught and learned also.

* * *

My "tone" is unprofessional. But actually I think it's profoundly responsible (and scholarly) to signal

when you're unsure of what you're writing. It makes for a cordial hand-off to the people who can help you out, whose work intersects with yours. Rhetorical sleights of hand I use sometimes because they're fun and they give my work the sheen of credibility, but I most often I try not to. What kind of havoc do rhetorical sleights of hand wreak? We're not novelists after all. Creative non-fiction is as close as we get. We hope for some truthiness, as much as we can manage.

And yet we might be sorcerers. When I was a child, my historian-neighbour invited me to her house where she told me that the word "spell" said something both about magic and about words. It was an initiation.

* * *

On a Refinery Corridor Healing Walk, Sheridan said that I had a lot of grandfather energy, that she could feel my grandfather on my dad's side around me really strongly. That's very interesting. I kept worrying that Sheridan – who did not yet know me – would say something that would hurt me, that would be a twisted truth, true enough to get in but insidious enough to gut me in a way. But she didn't tell me anything bad. Just the grandfather energy, and that I was experiencing a lot to do with roots and trying to find roots here, but that my grandfather "really rocked that adventuring energy." I didn't know either of my grandfathers. One had died before I was born and the other before I could meet him.

She also said that I had recently come into a lot of confidence but that there was a lot about voice for me. I had to express myself through my voice. Blue. The throat chakra. And something else there. I think she said something about that being the way that I had to come into leadership, or that I had to let my voice be heard and not play small. She is right. And, for the first time, thanks to Sheridan, I feel as if I get how people like her do what they do. She told me that I was clairsentient, I think, and later, claircognizant. I told her that I did not have visions but had a really strong intuition. She said she was the same way. And she told me not to be surprised if I started hearing things. Like

hearing sounds or voices. This sounds creepy, but she told me this in a non-creepy way. She also told me that she is not always poking around with other people. Part of being respectful is not to try to sense or intuit things about them without their permission. Similarly, she told me that it would be important for me to learn clearing practices, to let other people's stuff wash off me by walking in the grass, being by the ocean, taking salt baths, singing. All of this conversation happened in little spurts because other people kept talking to us.

When we were walking along a highway in single file, Sheridan asked if I wanted to play an intuition game.

"Sure!" I said, excited. She thought for a long time. Meanwhile I was thinking, "Blue! Blueberry! Wait, sage. No, orange! Her thoughts are changing." Finally she said that she was trying to think of an interpersonal situation. I said, "Dang! I was thinking about blueberries the whole time." But then she asked what plant came to mind when I thought of Marnie, a prominent Bay Area Indigenous activist.

"Sage."

"What colour do you associate with sage?"

"Silvery green, grey."

"And what do you feel about it?"

"Comfort and community, kind of, but not from my childhood."

I talked about trusting sage but not necessarily knowing what my relationship with it was. Sheridan then talked about how that was maybe how I felt about Marnie. She acted like it was obvious and simple. In a way, it is: displacing my feelings about Marnie onto something else, which kind of frees up space for honesty. But that told me something about what people do. Sheridan was also talking about the blueberry: blue, throat chakra, expression. Ah ha. And there's something real here. What I don't get, though, is how that's an intuition game. Maybe for her, but I thought I was

supposed to intuit something in that game? Was I supposed to intuit something about what she was thinking?

A year and a half later, after having read the above passage, Sheridan texts me, "The answer is no. The 'intuition game' is really about trusting your intuition. Being intuitive is not something to fear . . ."

* * *

We paused on a road outside a refinery. Pennie Opal Plant, Indigenous activist and organizer of this particular set of refinery corridor healing walks, talked about a message that someone had received from oil, "I'm not your enemy. I am doing important things in the ground. I don't want to be extracted." According to Pennie, we were torturing oil, extracting it against its will and burning it. The top executives were scared of us, and we had to pray for them that they could become human again. "No one wanted to be an earth destroyer when they were four." Pennie stressed that we had to try to reconnect with who they were before they lost their heart-connection.

Closer to home, Metis scholar Zoe Todd in "Fish and Kin" quotes elder Leroy Little Bear quoting another elder saying that maybe the dinosaurs disappeared because they did not do their ceremonies. Todd asks, "What does it mean to approach carbon and fossil beings, including those spilled into the kisiskâciwani-sîpiy, as agential more-than-human beings in their own right? (2016, 106). Kisiskâciwani-sîpiy is the North Saskatchewan. "To speak of Edmonton/amiskwaciwâskahikan," Todd writes,

> is to speak a water truth. It is nestled along, and spans, the banks of the mighty kisiskâciwani-sîpiy, which has carved its way deep into the soil and clay and sand and stone to yield steep banks that cut through Edmonton like an artery, supplying the city with water, with life. The river binds Edmonton to a broader watershed. The clear mountain waters, which originate deep in the Rocky Mountains at the Columbia Icefield, become turbid and inscrutable by the time they flow past the factories and sewage plants and homes and bridges of amiskwaciwâskahikan. But upstream of Edmonton, a four-hour drive south-west of the city, near Rocky Mountain House, you can still see the river running clear and with promise.

(2016, 103)

The Third River Story

October 4, 2016

Did I really not write here about the black rock I picked out of the river last time? It's big, heavy, oily-looking but flaky. It's sitting on my desk beside the speakers and cacti and palo santo. That day I found a new path and made an offering of smoky gunpowder tea and lit palo santo. Sharon Brass had recommended that I make an offering and ask the ancestors for help. Listening to the trembling aspens tremble and finding my way into ceremony felt really good and grounding. The sky was blue. The path was quiet. I passed some men working on something pipeline-related in a clearing.

I felt much more comfortable with trees and cracking of branches and things than the river. I had been feeling unsettling feelings about the river, little ones, but present. I was also feeling guilty for not visiting the river as much as I had planned. Anyway, the ceremony led to me coming down to the river and noticing that the bank had changed (at the closest spot you can get down), and it was now a steep shelf of sand. You couldn't see any rocks there anymore (like when I picked up those three other rocks the first time), and then I found this big black rock. It was the only one. And there was something magical-feeling about it. I debated about whether I should take it. I felt as if there was a big responsibility or something that came with taking the rock. But I took it because I felt I should. And it made my thin black gloves wet, and I hid it from people as I took it home. Mom was very curious about it and what I had been doing and why I had a lighter. Nala, the dachshund, sniffed the rock long and hard. I told Mom that I had been making offerings and I lit the palo santo for her. Reading this over two years later, I wonder if that rock was an oil shale rock.

A Story from the Field about Race

I went to a panel discussion on Western classical music and race sponsored by a group of undergraduate musicians who were mostly East Asian, just the way Western classical musicians are predominantly East Asian now. Except the panelists were all black and white. Exclusively black and white. After the discussion – which was productive but very black and white – it was the audience's turn. White hand after white hand after white hand went up and up and up.

I could feel myself begin to sweat, my blood sugar drop after the spike of having eaten something sweet on an empty stomach. But maybe it was the caffeine turned adrenaline of the coffee, perhaps the fact that my mother had terminal cancer. It all collided in a state of panic. Not one East Asian hand. A comment about white singers not being able to sing *Madame Butterfly* without an understanding of how nonwhite singers are invisibly prevented from singing other operas. I tried to intervene, stumbling through a comment that sounded like, "Race! Voice! Singing! Bodies!!!" But what I meant was: What about all of the young East Asian musicians in the room? Had they felt the way I had felt? Is this a problem? Is the room melting? Why doesn't anyone else feel the room melting? We have to get out of here! Wait, am I crazy?

Flashback to the old basement of a church where I learned music theory at age fourteen: "Oh, yeah, East Asians are not very expressive . . . but very technical." Where I couldn't believe my ears that someone had just said that. Should I say something? What should I say? My blond, blue-eyed friend merely agreed. Did she think that about me? Was South Asian different from East Asian? Some weeks later, on the way to choir, she speculated, "Nadia, I can hear in your voice that you're Indian . . . like it's not quite clear." "Mary!" her mom said, but she, her mom, said nothing else. She didn't contradict the remark, only acted as if that something you should not say in public. And what was that supposed to *mean*? Later, at that same theory class, she told me that I had beautiful big brown eyes just like a cow, our theory teacher nodding her approval. I really like cows

and I wasn't insulted that my eyes were compared to the eyes of an animal. I didn't – and still don't – feel as if humans are superior to animals. But I felt the "something else" behind her remark. It was the same "something else" that I felt at fifteen when I teacher suggested that I wear "a hint of pink lipstick" on stage but not red because I would "look like a prostitute."[3] To this day, I cannot bring myself to meet Mary. She sends me kind texts asking about my mother, saying that she would like to get together. She is married now and has a beautiful, blue-eyed baby boy with a beautiful blue-eyed name. And he will likely sing with enormous relish and success in many a Gilbert and Sullivan production.

I, on the other hand, will not. I did sing the role of Phoebe in *The Yeoman of the Guard* for a production in Toronto. But, since then, my engagement with Gilbert and Sullivan has consisted of storming out of an audition saying furiously to a confused, benevolent, exclusively white jury, one of whose members said something vaguely paternalistic to me about something self-deprecating I had said, "I am not a professional musician, so I can say anything I want to," and throwing my score into the recycling bin. I became very tired. I grew very tired of explaining why it was that I liked to sing classical music. I applied for doctoral programs in ethnomusicology, a place where I could talk about race and be taken seriously, a venue where people would listen to the things I thought.

One way to put this is: race *may* have something to do with why I stopped singing. I am not sure. Every time I look at my relationship with singing, I feel as if I am looking through a kaleidoscope. Sometimes what I see does not move me. Sometimes singing is the only thing that can save me. Sometimes I am resigned. And other times I find it almost unbearable. Like after this panel.

Two dear friends, both white, who had been at the panel too wanted to talk about it. They did not seem to notice the gaping omission of a racialized group that made up so much of the Western classical world, reinscribing the classic move of invisibilizing Asian Americans. They did

[3] In fact, this is how I learned that prostitutes in Edmonton were mostly non-white.

not seem to notice that so much of the silent audience was East Asian. It was like they were not even there. I remember being shocked by how cerebral the panel discussions seemed to these friends of mine. They were almost giddy. But how suddenly different they were from me – and how eternally distant – in that moment where I realized that they were leaving behind an intellectual discussion that for me was as real and inescapable as my skin. They were light enough to float upwards, to escape while I was trapped.

That is, however, not the point of the story; that is the context, and it is a ubiquitous context, if invisible to many. Here is the point: later that day I realized that I could escape missing and murdered Indigenous women. I could escape residential schools, a large variety stereotypes, the death of my language, genocide, and many forms of colonialism. I had never tangibly *felt* this, though I knew it intellectually, until a few hours after the panel: still reasonably shaken and unable to work, I spoke with a friend about the race panel, a longtime Euro-Canadian friend from college. I could feel the gulf yawning between us, a heaviness that would not lift. Finally, after a silence, he asked about my work. I started talking about Tanya Tagaq's activism. Almost horrifyingly, a weight lifted from us: we could *both* escape. Together we floated upwards, escaped missing and murdered Indigenous women, residential schools, a large variety stereotypes, the death of our language, genocide, and many forms of colonialism. But where did they go when we escaped? Did we leave them behind for other people to carry?

Holding Darkness and Light

At the same time, we have to learn to hold darkness and light. It is really a skill, and often a skill that is hard-won, that comes from some kind of initiation that never should have happened. Like the hard-won skills that come from being racialized, a very specific type of initiation that should never happen, this skill is often unevenly gained. The story:

I used to think that mentors were somewhat God-like until one of them, when I was twenty-one, professed his love for me and pursued me intensely. It had never occurred to me to think of him romantically. I was thousands of miles away from home and anyone I knew well, vulnerable, and deeply confused: did I want to *be* him or did I want to be *with* him? Either way, it wasn't that he was three times my age that prevented me from succumbing to his desires, but the fact that he was married. At that time, my moral compass had only two settings for this situation, right and wrong, and this was Wrong with a capital W: this was the way in which so many women were wronged and I would not become a part of that and wrong his wife. Solidarity. Meanwhile, I continued to have arguments about Goethe. The Goethe that this mentor described did not seem to care who the women he wrote about really were. It was all about his feelings his feelings his feelings. Caustically, I kept saying that it wouldn't matter whether you replaced the women with a plush elephant; the poetry would still stay the same. But still the experience shattered my world in a sense. There was such betrayal in the knowledge that he had never seen me in his own image, the next in a long line of practitioners of art song, and that what I thought we were sharing was not purely a coming-alive-together in music and poetry. It took me a long time to learn how to trust mentors, but I have a working draft of the practice now: I recognize that my mentors do some things wonderfully and, even if I can't see it, I trust also that they have a crack of darkness running through them. I trust my instincts like nothing else.

***

There is a tendency, I think, for people who are used to living in a pure world – where mentors mentor them, where their gifts are recognized, where their flourishing is taken as a priority – to blanket-condemn things upon discovering – a rare experience – a crack of darkness: throw the person out! Keep the world pure! We cannot afford to use this strategy anymore. We cannot contain toxic waste anymore, although it is those in the global south and on reserves that know this fact. We cannot contain the toxic effects of racialization. They are not going anywhere. Let us bring them out into the light. Let us look at them. Let us not turn away or make excuses. Finally, let us work with them.

Let me say it again and more clearly: holding darkness and light is a skill, something we all

must learn how to do. People of colour, for example, often know it because they have to deal with the very real racism – often unconscious, the premise being here that everyone struggles with racism to different degrees – of people in power. We know intimately that someone can unknowingly shower you with a barrage of microaggressions and then very warm-heartedly help you out of a pickle or teach you how to write or sing. Perhaps some of us become masters at holding darkness and light as a survival skill. I keep talking about race, but there are other experiences – experiences of being working class, of being LGBTQ2S, of being a woman, of having disabilities, to name a few – that become practice rooms for learning this skill: how many women have forged what we thought were close collaborative or mentoring relationships with men and found out not necessarily even though an advance but through a swift cold shoulder once romantic interest was lost that the relationship was never about collaboration or mentorship?

In other words, as much as this is a personal story, it is also a story about contexts, contexts that border the contexts of knowledge production. If we move those who do not live in a pure world to the centre of the world, it becomes a near-universal story. At the heart of this story is an incredibly needed skill, unevenly distributed: at one end of the spectrum, some have been forced to become virtuosos; at the other end, others have never thought it useful. For many of us, stories about learning these skills silently crisscross other stories of learning our craft, our voices, our writing, our singing. How exciting to begin to acknowledge these skills, and to use them publically! How exciting to watch pure-worlders begin to learn about them, and to embody them in their own unique ways![4]

I have a perhaps-impossible prayer for children growing up now in a time of climate crisis:
May you have a life in which your flourishing is prioritized *and* in which you have the opportunity to

[4] Pure-worlders, of course, is a heuristic category, one that applies to all of us to some degree.

learn how to hold darkness and light.

* * *

It was only until after this mentor died, and I saw all of the tributes to him that decades of his students had written, that I was able to remember how much he taught me about the living world and about German poetry and song. I learned from him to thank the flowers that I smell. When I stop by people's front yards to smell roses, I thank those roses. It has become second nature. It was he that taught me to listen to the wind as if it were speaking, to think of flowers as animate. These are practices that feed into my understanding of Schubert and Schumann *Lieder*, repertoire that filled those long and painful days.

The white crystal on my altar is from this mentor, from his home. When I look at its white light that diffracts into many colours I think about perspective and about Goethe's theory of colours. I think about the songs I heard, learned, and sang then, this music that became somehow real to me. These are very much with me still. They have become mine as they were his. "Wandrers Nachtlied II" is one of them, a Schubert setting of a Goethe poem:

Wandrers Nachtlied II

Über allen Gipfeln
ist Ruh,
In allen Wipfeln
Spürest du
Kaum einen Hauch;
Die Vögelein schweigen,
im Walde.
Warte nur,
Warte nur balde
Ruhest du auch.

Wanderer's Nightsong II

Over all the peaks
is peace.
In all the treetops
you can hear
scarcely a breath;
The birds are silent,
silent in the woods
Just wait,
Just wait, soon
You too will rest

The original key is B flat major, but I have it etched into me in G flat. I feel it in the voice of the bass-baritone who sang it that summer, I feel it in Bryn Terfel's voice on the recording on my computer, and I feel exactly where it sits in mine. To me, in G flat, it is a song that rumbles with repeated octaves that reach as low as G flat 2 in the bass and which sometimes dip down to the D flat below that. These octaves make the beginning solemn, declamatory, even a little insistent. The introductory two bars summarize the song – "Über allen Gipfeln ist Ruh" and "Ruhest du auch" – but you do not find that out until later. Then the voice enters, clarifying what the piano just said, "Über allen Gipfeln ist Ruh." On a repeated G flat the statement sits at the very centre of my voice. When I sing it, it does not feel sung. I just open my mouth and say it. On "Ruh," the first [u] of the piece, everything goes still: a G flat major chord, home. It is possible to stay there for almost an eternity (meaning one or two seconds), and in that eternity you can scarcely hear a breath. Then launching from the "in" up to the open [a] of the "allen." We are moving. On "spürest" or "hear" or "feel," the piano dances syncopated, a slight breath, maybe a heartbeat. The "schweigen" of "Die

Vögelein schweigen" is surprisingly active, and its repetition is like a secret moment of sentimentality: the vocal line's sixteenth notes line up with the sixteenth notes in the piano, coinciding with the readjustment of the syncopation, the first note a little yearning appoggiatura. It is as if the narrator is yearning for, echoing even, the singing of the birds, remembering it even if they will never sing again for him. But after "im Walde," the open [a] having recalled the open [a] of "allen," the piano drops suddenly: drops the syncopation, drops in tessitura. Suddenly the piano and the voice are together: another open [a] on "warte" but paired with the [u] of "nur." The assonance of "nur" in retrospect foreshadows "Ruh." But for now we are solemn like the beginning. And then there is a pause even though everything is so regular now, even though we are marching forward slowly. "Warte nur" again, higher. "Balde," the open [a] – there it is again – stretching upward, an ascending scale, a question, a vulnerable place in my voice, a D flat. Then silence, suspense, the singing of no birds. And then there it is: "Ruhest du auch." You too will rest. Then again: the whole "Warte nur" section until the end. We hear the foreshadowing this time. Finally, "Ruhest du auch," the piano agrees.

* * *

In 2016 as my mom began to decline severely, I started experimenting with combining art song and oratorio with journaling exercises and prompts. I began to sing "Wandrers Nachtlied II" and "Bist du bei mir" – previously attributed to J. S. Bach and now attributed to G. H. Stölzel – as a pair. Together, they catalyze letting go. "Bist du bei mir" asks, "Are you together with me? I will go with joy to my death and to my rest." The narrator makes this sentiment more material by referencing her own body, asking that the addressee shut her (the narrator's) eyes once she has died. It is a song that says, "I am ready to go, and I want you to be with me when I go." In a sense, it asks the addressee, obviously very close to the narrator, to be on the same page, to accept that that person is dying and, in a sense, give them permission to go. "Wandrers Nachtlied II" is the permission song. It says "I

see you, and I love you, and I give you permission to go." It situates this understanding within the natural world, weaving it into something bigger than just the relationship between the two.

I sang this pair of songs to my mother before she died. There is a huge story that I will tell you sometime if you are interested, but for now I will keep most of it off paper. Suffice it to say that it was a day full of incredible coincidences. That morning, I had done a "rounds talk" about music and healing for a team of palliative-care doctors, nurses, and psychologists at an Edmonton hospital. I had included that pair of songs. This team had wept and hugged me and thanked me. They said that they rarely got to feel those things together and that they needed to. When I returned home my mom wanted to know how it had gone. I told her.

"You know this song?" I hummed a bit of "Bist du bei mir." Of course she did. It was a song that had played often in our house on a compilation CD, a background to many years of household life. "Do you know what it means?" She shook her head. When I told her the translation, she smiled with what seemed like awe that this song – always there, much beloved, never translated – could mean this, the perfect thing at the perfect moment.

"I imagine that's you singing to me," I said. She smiled her faint smile as I sang it. She smiled her faint smile as I translated and sang the permission song. "That's me singing to you." She died two hours later.

It was a year after that that my old mentor died, right when we sold the house. There, at the top of the service program was "Wandrers Nachtlied II."

They're Taking All the Grants

It is November 2017 and I am not "doing fieldwork." I am sitting in the kitchen of someone I love and somewhat trust. She had emailed me to say that she had a fever, the kind of panic email that

says "don't come." But I didn't get that email in time, and when I showed up on her doorstep she beamed at me and said that though she couldn't teach today, she would love to have a quick tea with me. In the sunlight of her kitchen, all wood and tiles and old Canada, over cups of rosehip tea whose steam curls upward, illuminated, she interrupts me, " – *Speaking* of diversity." She's having trouble getting funding for her show because "they" are "taking all the grants." There's no doubt that it's a great show. I believe her, I believe that this feels terrible, especially after years of her male peers not valuing her as the visionary she is and themselves taking all the grants. But she's not actually angry that her male peers used to take all the grants. She is concerned about now: she wanted her moment, the moment for white women artists of her generation, and she didn't get it. "They're not *good*," she kept saying, her shiniest flaxen smooth grey hair glinting in the sun. She says that "they" need more mentorship to *become good*.

There has been a sudden decrease in arts funding, "resulting in a decrease in funding for older male artists as well," Lenneke is quick to point out offhandedly. She is feverish and angry and, whether she knows it or not, is taking it out on the people – namely Indigenous artists and artists of colour – who are "taking all the grants." She is also taking it out on me, her listener: white enough for her confidence, brown enough that I am a great sideways target. We do have to honour our feelings and be honest about them, but perhaps I was not the right person to help her honour those feelings.

What I see is a chain of blindness. What I want to say is: why do you keep collaborating with people – in this case older white men – who disrespect you? And, where were you before the diversity grants? Diversity grants come about not out of nowhere but because a community is failing, for whatever reason, to include certain other people. Where were you when "these people" needed mentoring? "They" were always there. Were they just invisible to you because they weren't powerful enough for you? I do not say these things, however.

When I started learning from Lenneke, I had to make a decision. I knew that I could trust her *somewhat* as a woman, but that I had to leave my brownness at the door. I came without expecting understanding or opportunities or even mentorship in a larger sense. I trusted her with my audible voice, and I kept my metaphorical mouth shut. In this moment, I do not confront her. It is not only because she leaves no gaps, it is also because an honest conversation with her could cost me what I have yet to learn from her.

In her book, *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life*, Sara Ahmed defines whiteness as "something we 'pass through'" (2012, 42). She writes:

> It is important to remember that whiteness is not reducible to white skin or even to something we can have or be, even if we pass through whiteness. When we talk about a "sea of whiteness" or "white space," we talk about the repetition of the passing by of some bodies and not others. And yet nonwhite bodies do inhabit white spaces, we know this. Such bodies are made invisible when spaces appear white, at the same time as they become hypervisible when they do not pass, which means they "stand out" and "stand apart." You learn to fade in the background, but sometimes you can't or don't. (Ibid.)

Bay Area Spirituality

February 10, 2017

I went with Sneha, a new acquaintance, to a women's singing circle that was being hosted at a house in Oakland. We were twenty minutes early, and Sneha opened the door to a house after knocking a few times. I wouldn't have been so bold. Sara, the host, was a little reserved but friendly. She made a tea that she'd mixed together herself: oat straw, mint, lavender, chamomile. People began to arrive. Like Sara, most of them were wearing flowy things. Like Sara, they could all have passed for white.

Sneha and I sat down, the two brown faces, and we all introduced ourselves. "I'm Annie," said someone with big blue eyes and a messy blonde ponytail, "the very technical term is Annie Bananie but you can call me Annie." She said that she was writing a book about women and water, and that she wanted to heal her relationship with her voice. Timed with the new moon and therefore

occasionally conflicting with the Indigenous Grandmothers' New Moon Ceremonies hosted by Pennie Opal Plant and other Indigenous elders by the bay at Cesar Chavez Park, this circle was supposed to be a ceremonial space in which to honour women's voices and to pray for water.

Hinting that she had learned from Lakota elders, Sara said that she arranged her altar in the Lakota way, adding that one could arrange an altar in many ways. The medicines from the earth – cedar, sage, and palo santo among them – facing north; the fire, a candle, in the south; a heart-shaped container filled with what Sara called "medicine water" from many places including Standing Rock in the west. In the centre were feathers and potable water from Mount Shasta, Sara's childhood home and heart place, as I think she called it.

We blessed ourselves by passing around the little earthen vessel with a burning coal and the cedar and sage. After the time it took to warm up bodies and voices and get settled into the space, Sara taught us a humming song by Grandmother Flordemayo, a Nicaraguan *curandera* or healer.[5] The humming song is four hummed notes repeated over and over, a descending three-note scale with the second note repeated. The song worked well for the group because the scale was easy to harmonize or improvise over if one were so inclined.

It was this song that we sang when we passed the clean Shasta water around and each woman spent time with it using it to heal or bless herself and using any objects on the altar she wanted. A pregnant woman wearing a necklace whose large pendant was like an arrow or a crystal coming down just to the top of the rounded top of her belly took off the necklace, dipped it into the water, put it on her head, dipped and pressed it to her forehead, dipped and lowered, dipped and lowered. The humming song was also the song we were singing when it was Sneha's turn to sing for

[5] "Mayan Indigenous Grandmother Flordemayo Delivers Keynote at 2015 Parliament," posted by Parliament of the Worlds Religions, January 29, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4sje1LPb_Lc.
Grandmother Flordemayo sings this song at about 5.16:

the woman on her left. Sneha, who had been beating *taal* or keeping time in the way that one might in Hindustani or Karnatic music, asked us to keep singing while she chanted. On top of these western harmonies, repeated in regular four-bar phrases, came Sneha's Vedic chants, completely different in pitch and metre. No one seemed to be upset by the dissonance of the Vedic chanting and grandmother humming song together. Everyone, Sara included, was humming *very* loudly with their eyes closed blissfully. Were they even listening to Sneha?

By the time it was my turn to heal or bless myself, the women were singing a variation of "Woman I Am," a song that also resounds at Wiccan gatherings, a women's drum circle, and a Women's Spirituality Group where women "women enjoy learning about spirituality, Torah, feminism and themselves" and sing this song at the end of each meeting.[6]

Woman I am
Spirit I am
I am the Infinite within my Soul
I have no Beginning
And I have no End
All this I am

It felt so *good*, though I have since learned to be skeptical of making the leap between something feeling good to its being beneficial. The ritual aligned with what I was doing alone with the river. I first allowed myself to stop singing, to pause and look at the water and feel grateful for it and feel grateful for the women's songs over me. I *did* find this healing. And then I moved with dipping my fingers, putting them to my forehead, putting them to my lips, throat, heart, sternum, solar plexus, all the way to right below my navel, then doing something similar with the very clear

[6] "The Chants Page," *Wiccan Web*, accessed December 21, 2018, http://wp.wiccanweb.ca/2004/04/02/chants/.
"Events," *TAO: Temple Adath Or,* accessed December 21, 2018, https://www.taocenter.net/events/wsg-south-2017-11-20/.

crystal on the altar. I was thinking beforehand as I was looking at the altar that I love all the very Indigenous things on the altar but that I maybe shouldn't use them for my practices, instead using what I *know* I feel comfortable with, like very light bright crystals. There is something about them that I understand.

It was after this that I sang "Wandrers Nachtlied II," giving a translation beforehand, saying that this piece was about letting go of what you no longer needed. A surprising thing happened. At the repeated "warte nur," I heard another voice singing along. It was Annie (Bananie), singing and swaying and shaping her very pink lips into an oooh on "nur." The "warte nur," as Milan Kundera points out in his novel *Immortality*, is very regular metrically. It is the part of the poem that the characters in his novel could march to in the woods. If there was a place where this lied could be even remotely participatory, it was there. "Yeah, I thought, 'I'm gonna get on this German opera train,'" Annie told me afterwards.

It was a white space, and yet I didn't feel compelled to perform whiteness there. Whiteness felt somehow visible. The group accepted Sneha and me, both embodied similarly, similarly despite the different songs we chose; we drew our genealogies of practice differently. There was a clear absence of racializing listening techniques, perhaps even an understanding that we have different kinds of ancestors – given and chosen. We were developing a common repertoire from Native American, Hindu, Jewish, and Christian songs, and weaving them together, making up our own rituals. And yet there are things that make me uncomfortable.

For now, I've left that circle because I would rather put that $20 towards Indigenous-led circles. But I'm also interested in a move that looks more like collaboration rather than judgment-passing. I wonder how that circle would look if Sara used her own traditions and left the Lakota traditions for Lakota people, or found another way to make money, or found a Lakota collaborator she could share skills with. What if she used her skills with marketing and her moderately-sized

following to benefit those whose traditions she is using? After this dissertation is written, I'll have a chat with Sara. Unlike Lenneke, I suspect she will listen. The questions also extend outwards: what if white scholars who have spent comparatively little time thinking about race collaborated with lesser-known scholars of colour whose life experience has given them worlds of knowledge? What if settler scholars *refused* to elaborate Indigeneity and Indigenous practices but focused instead on illuminating settlers?

Differences between Writing and Ceremony

The Decolonize Meet-Ups at the University Press Bookstore feel like ceremony. Held at the University Press Bookstore adjacent to the UC Berkeley campus, dedicated to dismantling settler-colonialism, and organized by Allison Shiozaki – a POC settler who is always welcoming other collaborators, none of whom have materialized – the meetings begin with a territory acknowledgement and prayers. If there are Ohlone people (the people whose home territory we occupy in Berkeley) at the meeting, they are invited to do the land acknowledgement, since it is their territory the bookstore occupies. If not, Allison invites other Indigenous Turtle Islanders to open. We go around the room and introduce ourselves, no matter how long it takes, sometimes over an hour. We talk about colonialism and race extensively after we know who is in the room. While timing is loose there is also a strong adherence to the principle of "not about us without us." Unhoused people talk about homelessness, Indigenous people are the ones who talk about Indigeneity. Settlers talk about what it means to be on Indigenous territory. There is an understanding in the room that talking about these things might *feel bad.*

One meeting, I picked frozen elderberries off their stems so that Allison could make elderberry syrup later on. She was planning to take it to a ceremonial event being organized by the Winnemem Wintu tribe. I shared a cooking pot with the woman beside me who was also

"processing" elderberries. There was something intimate about this, an awareness of her and her body as we listened to Hartman Deetz, an Indigenous activist from the Mashpee Wampanoag tribe, talk about their fight for sovereignty on their own lands. In the background was the clunk of the hard berries as they fell into the pot, the checking to make sure Lara had enough elderberry stems, occasional picking out stray stems, the elderberries melting into blue. I got to know Lara's rhythms, faster than mine, patiently waiting while I fished out unprocessed elderberries for her from the cloth bag that was just out of her reach, the woman on my right making her own pile in a bowl. Occasionally I stopped to pick up a pen with my elderberry stained hands, thoroughly staining my fieldnotes book.

On Meaning

I went for a hike with my uncle and my dad a few months ago, and we were joking about the "meaning" of the views. The joke started because my dad misheard my uncle when my uncle was telling him about a kind of hawk. My dad said, "So, *what's* the significance?" And my uncle said, "I'm not sure what the significance is. . . . Sometimes there are hawks here?" So we kept arriving at these beautiful overlooks of this inlet and asking, "What is the significance of *this* view?" "What does *this* mean?" It was truly funny to me, but sometimes there *are* meanings: "I just saw two eagles flying over there, and this shows us that the creator is getting our message," I heard an elder say at a water ceremony.

In a completely different context, however, I went to a ceremony in English and Spanish in the Bay Area. There were no material plant medicines at this ceremony, but it was structured around icaros, plant medicine songs. I had to fess up at the beginning that I didn't understand Spanish that well and another woman fessed up that she didn't understand English that well, so the entire thing was bilingual. I felt very Other. The curandera, a medicine-woman from Peru, talked and talked and

left her meanings really open. One thing she said pierced me so that I felt really seen. She talked about a jaguar (remember Eduardo Kohn's work in Chapter 2) and then, as if she suddenly remembered something important, she had meant to say, she said, "Ah, and the bear!"

"There is a bear with glasses who is very vulnerable right now," she said, looking in my direction. And, suddenly, meaning! This was me, this bear was me. (I was one of the only people in the packed room wearing glasses, and a long history of stories and nicknames linking me to bears, was activated). As she continued, I realized that she was talking about a type of bear that was going extinct in the Amazon, the spectacled bear. But I had already been woven in or welcomed in, bound to those songs about mother moon and mother earth, grandmother ayahuasca, grandfather peyote, san pedro, and the younger plant medicines, mushrooms.

A Conversation with Sharon Jinkerson Brass

March 21, 2018.

Sharon Brass, an Anishinaabe elder I met at the Healing Gathering for Land and Water in Northern Alberta in 2016 has come to a dry run of a job talk I practiced at UBC, my alma mater. Also there were the professor who had taught me my first ethnomusicology course, and the professor who supervised my honours English graduating paper, and my childhood best friend. The talk was very, very rough. In fact, it was unfinished and I was a wreck. But the room was filled with incredible love. Everyone offered me something: more references, encouragement, perceptive critiques, and Sharon Brass gave me a drum. As we trickled out of the East Asian Studies building and into its gardens, I remember thinking that this love was worth far more to me than a job.

In the car, Sharon suggests that we record all our ranging conversations in case I want to use them for my fieldwork or she wants to make a documentary film. We are going to pick up her friend Mary from the Tsawwassen ferry terminal just south of Vancouver. Sharon turns on her more

powerful recording equipment, getting me to keep an eye on it in the cup-holder of her car. "We find ourselves fascinating!" she laughs. The recording begins midway through a conversation about my mother who had died a year and a half earlier, and whom Sharon Brass had felt at the job talk.

SB: I felt – I felt like I was like a stand-in –

NC: Ohhhhh, that's so lovely.

SB: – being there to stand in and that your mom was speaking to me, to just be there, gift her, take her picture, adore her, on her behalf. I – *yeah*.

NC: Ohhhhh . . . that's *so nice*.

SB: I just want you to know that because I'm really tuned in to the spirit world.

NC: Yeah, awwwwww.

SB: And I'm not trying to play a head game. I usually don't even say things, but it just –

NC: – No, I felt like that actually! And that's really nice.

SB: There was just like a little whisper there. So I know that if your mom was there that's what she would have done. She would have wanted to take your picture and be loving you up.

NC: That's true. Awww . . . thank you.

SB: Awww. Yeah, you had a beautiful mom.

NC: *Yes*. Yeah, and I feel really close to her, funnily. I didn't expect this, but every time I do academic things, I feel her there.

SB: Yeah well I'm picking that up just from tuning into you, I'm picking that up I guess . . . and if your mom was here she would have wanted every moment.

[We're interrupted by the knowledge that we may have missed a turn to the ferry terminal. After we get back on course, Sharon returns to something we were talking about much earlier.]

SB: But, yes, of course you can quote, and I think that will help having the confidence of a Turtle Islander saying . . . having a little bit of meat on those bones. I would be honoured because we need medicines. That's why with Mary I encourage her too with this UBC talk, because there's a point of integration that's so important, like what Tanya [Tagaq] has brought to the world with her artistry that we need to expand and elaborate and give up the preciousness of "Oh, this is my culture" and embrace oneness within respectful boundaries and acknowledgement and preservation and encouraging people if they're feeling protective

to hold onto those things too, to create the space for that to happen. But also to be, yeah – because it's the only way we're going to save the planet. It's to get on the same page. . . .

I had a friend of mine, Sarah, phone me today because she wanted me to do a water ceremony tomorrow at the protest for the pipeline, and we had this big conversation about oneness. And I said, "You know, I don't usually go to protests, not because I'm not onside politically, but I find the spirits and the behaviours, the aggressions really – I just don't think that it's where we – what *I* bring to the world. And so, I respect the protests. I think it's vitally important. But – and that is a chant – a oneness or something for to bring everybody and to give a drum there for a cop there to sing. Because they feel it too. They have kids and – because Sarah was telling me that they were calling the police pigs and things like that. . . . It's the opposite of what's going to heal the planet and bring us on the same page.

[We talk more about academia and I describe an experience I had writing a conference paper.]

NC: It seems that you're helping out a lot of people that are doing academic work.

SB: Yeah, well I'm doing this research and I'm even beginning to enter into, like, the medicine wheel –

NC: Yeah that's yours.

SB: – is a metaphoric tool and I made this medicine wheel when Sol was in kindergarten as a way to teach students about Sol's world and the culture that he comes from. And I made all these little creatures out of felt, and I was trying to use my granny's methodology. I had figured it out by then and was conscious of it. So what I would do is throw hints – big heavy hints out if they were kindergarteners and go "Where does the sun come up?" and "There!" they'd point, and I'd go "Well, ask your teacher where's 'there'" and she'd go, "It's the East!" and then we'd have a little symbol for the sun coming up in the east and then each little kid walks around the wheel putting the sun down and we'd do this with everything. So they tell me about it and I tell them, "You know all about the medicine wheel. It's symbols that belong to mankind. So then, it's all of the things that connect. So then in doing the research I had this idea – let's put a medicine wheel down, and rocks are the first storytellers of the Anishinaabe people. (We have a legend that goes with it.)

And, so the women, we sing, we have these rocks in a basket and we pass these rocks around from the circle and we sing a song, and we bless those rocks. And I tell a little bit about the story of the first storytellers. And then when the women answer a question, I

pass the basket around and the rocks all have their own personality. Sometimes I'll hold the basket up and say, "Don't peek! You gotta pick a rock." And then that's their grandfather. To anchor the question. And then they walk around the medicine wheel, and I tell them, "Put the rock to your heart and put it down on the wheel." and where they put the rock on the wheel – and I introduce the different realms of the medicine wheel and things like that. I do a little bit of teaching – tells us something about how they feel about the question. But it's also a little ceremony at the same time. So it's beyond words and into ritual. As a way of gathering data, and so it's – and then another day, the questioning is more about hopes and dreams and we use feathers instead of rocks. We do the same thing. We sing a healing song and gradually it becomes a ritual and the women get acquainted and they just can't wait. They want to see – and I surprise them – they don't know what's in the basket. And I put little cloths over it, and they just walk into the room and they see the little baskets. And "what are we going to get today?"

They're inspired when they're answering questions. It wakes up – all aspects of their being are awake because it's exciting. Like, what are we going to get? And which feather am I going to get when I talk to my neighbour? What is it telling me? It opens up the ability to spontaneous – to spontaneity. And why did I get *that* rock? And so there's another realm of reality going on within the question that we're asking. They're asking themselves, "Now why did I get that rock?" Some of them will speak to it and say, "I know this feather." Some of them will become deeply moved instantly because either something about the feather or the qualities of the rock is a message. It's very powerful work in research and so now I've gone from being whatever it is – from an elder-collaborator to being an actual team member. We just had a meeting the other day, and I'm going to write a paper about the methodology because there's so much more to it than they had anticipated me doing at the top end.

But it's a combination – It's like what we were saying about Tanya. It's using my creativity and my imagination . . . and making our culture relevant because we're researching women with AIDS and HIV, and we're taking ancient metaphor like the medicine wheel, and the teachings that I received from my grandmother and we're creating something that's really helpful and connecting. And the women, they just own the circle. On the first day they're almost like, "What do they want from us? We'll tell them what they want, and we'll be all nice girls and we won't talk about how we've hooked or how I really wanna have a fix." But by the second day, they're just completely – they own the space. They walk in with

confidence. They sit down. They realize that this isn't heavy. They can touch everything on the wheel. I tell them, "You can touch everything on the altar." I just open the way for them to own the space.

So the other thing that we do is we light a candle for the murdered and missing women and for the ancestors, and then we put tobacco or cedar boughs in each corner of the room to make our own territory the way we do in vision quests, so I've taken that ancient ritual and reworked it to fit – because what would be more fitting, and our ancestors, I know, they're just dancing with joy to think that they can – it's now creating a safe space for women to talk in a real way about their journey with hepatitis or AIDS in a *real* way. And that's what is actually going to help us to create the healing tools for a whole – medical model – and when we get to the hopes and dreams and they're doing their feathers, it's just so amazing how they're in their power, so they're able to dream more than you'd get if you kind of asked them. They'd kind of shrug, and say [she imitates a nasal voice] "I don't know. . . . I guess it would be nice to have coffee in the waiting room." [Sharon laughs.] But I notice that they're so like, "Oh! We want a garden!" or "We want to grow herbs and have this and that," and they're so able to do that. Because it's like what we're saying about academia – it's because they're connected. There's a ritual and there's beautiful respect and they're all hooked in and connected so magic happens.

NC: Yeah, that's amazing.

SB: And so that's what I was thinking too, like, I don't know in your fieldwork or you'll be supervising, but it's some of those same methodologies and techniques in all of what we're doing. So if you're going to go talk to Tanya, tell her, "I have a song for you, to share with you." Make it – create – connect with her! With her medicines, and it might stop her from having an ethnomusicologist just probing and asking her. Go up to her and say, "I have a song and I want to share it with you . . . the way you did with *me*!"

NC: Oh yeah. . . .

SB: You just – You were like a little hummingbird. It was so beautiful. And you registered and weighed in and nobody else asked, or wanted to give me something. And so I think is there a way to always upend and make the research – bring equality into the equation through gifting or sharing, so it isn't just, "We're looking at you. Ha! And we're gonna define you and we're going to pathologize you and, you know . . . be experts on who you are."

[I then describe an email exchange with Tanya Tagaq in which she expressed burnout and I

told her that I did not want to take energy she did not have.]

NC: People do need to have space for themselves to flourish, and to – like, that *is* her gift, I'm sure among many, a very strong one. I don't just want to be taking things from her. Because it's the same goal. Like, if she's doing this in the world, and she's doing it really well, then why would I want to take away from her care? You know what I mean? Anyway. . . .

SB: Well, I totally understand what you're saying and there's giving for the sake of giving and – but if you think that she, that your work can help put tools and experiences in the hands of people who need it or could bring oneness to the world, that's a good thing. And she might – she's got something there. And so . . . and some of it might be protected . . . protected teachings of her people but then there's a methodology that can be talked about. Like, there's things about my people's customs and I've learned how to speak about it in a way that I feel I'm not . . . it's my own original thought. I don't feel like I'm selling my granny's medicines. Because it's my own original thought, so . . . and I know Tanya struggles. I know from those women. And other times – it's not the only time I've met and worked with Inuit people. And, all Indigenous sisters, we want to be part of the restoration. And she is doing enough.

But then what we need are resources and if you – if what you do down the road ends up in creating resources and putting them into schools where children need it, then that's where – that's the – that's important. Because, unfortunately . . . and that's the real world I understand. Why I do what I'm doing is because I want to save lives. I'm going to do everything I can in the best way I know how, but I'm going to take some risks with my – with an institution and my culture because I'm a grandmother and I want a world left intact. And I don't think of myself as a grandmother just to my grandchildren, I think of myself as a grandmother to all children in the world. Tanya's a bit younger but . . . she's still at the stage of putting herself out there and everything, but I'm sure she . . . she values reaching her people. And, in fact, in some ways I think for a lot of Indigenous artists they become sort of a commodity, and it becomes empty and meaningless and they almost suffer from depression and fallout from being just a star and they need a way to have meeting. And, you know, but anyway, I just – You have such a beautiful spirit and beingness about you that . . . is not like . . . you have a good chance at connecting with her.

NC: *Thank* you. I do think that we'll connect in the future. But I also want it to be in a way that feels like. . . .

SB: Inspired?

NC: And good for her as well. . . .

SB: So, as you're formulating this presentation, tell me what your thesis statement is or how it's changed after today.

[I respond at length.]

SB: One of the challenges that I think about is how, just what we were saying before in how compartmentalized in a way people are situated and placed in a certain hole because of certain accepted in academia factors that place them here, and what I love about someone like Tanya, and even A Tribe Called Red, is that they are taking ancient aspects and weaving them into a whole new – a whole new expression that's relevant today. And in two hundred years that will be the reference for ancient date – we're tomorrow's ancestors, right? So, it's so interesting how we seem to –

And I think our people we've bought into that we're living things doing traditionally. Is that necessarily a good thing? Do we want to embrace and respect our ancestors and be ourselves? Do we want to try to emulate something from a bygone era? That's impossible. That's impossible to achieve because it's so fragmented what we have. And then I also believe that we are born – it's in our DNA. And that someone like Tanya has looked in *her* DNA. She's found a place of confidence, ownership, and empowerment to look, take the threads of things in her world that have been offered up, but then she's taken it and done what her ancestors did which is to make something that's relevant and immediate, and I think academia . . . conversations . . . they seem to filter a lot of our world – discussion seems to centre on emulating our ancestors instead of creating a relevant culture that's meaningful for today.

So I'm doing in research what Tanya's done in her music. I'm taking my medicines and making them work. It's not that I'm not paying attention, but I see how limiting and almost – like the AIM movement was so exciting and wonderful because it was this big renaissance in the 70's but then it became a bit of a parody, almost, of our ancient traditions, and people even bought into it. My grandmother was sort of *irreverent*. [Sharon laughs.] She had ways of letting me know "That guy thinks he's cool, but it's just him who thinks so." You know what I mean? [Sharon laughs hard and I do too.] She has a way of being respectful and irreverent and not rejecting or critical. That was in her DNA to be accepting and loving but at the same time pointing it out to me. And I wanted that myth to be true. I wanted the Russell Means,

and all those big Indian activists to be real and kind of what Hollywood was putting on the big screen. I wanted the romantic highway. And then. . . . It's like when you go to Europe and look at pictures of the Eiffel Tower and you get there are there are all doughnut shops. It's *sort of* – but not *quite* – It's a rendition but it isn't really what one is perceiving.
And I think I had perceptions and then reality and it took me a long time to really integrate what was actually there and what wasn't there and what paths to turn away from and which ones to go down for myself and which ones were really creating self-actualization, and which ones were actually me trying to be a "good Indian."
NC: *Yeah*. . . .
SB: And losing myself in being a good Indian.
NC: Right. Right.
SB: And so. And I think in academia it is almost cementing an ideology and things that's – sometimes it isn't. I've seen other papers about toxic ceremonies and things like that. There are some conversations out there. But it's like documenting things – It's like taking a picture of what's going on right now because it is so exciting. And Tribe Called Red in two hundred years will be the tradition. It will be like, "Do doot doot do do" with their electronic thing, and it will be like, "Oh my grandfather, this was his equipment, you know what I mean?"
NC: Yeah.
[We both laugh.]
SB: And it will all be in a bundle because it will be ancient by then, right? It's kind of funny when you think about it that way. It will be like, "*Oh my god*, you've got a dual turntable! And it's got all the original stuff." It's like us with, "Oh my God, there's a buffalo skull! That's right from the ancestors. I am so inspired." It's like today's turntable is tomorrow's buffalo skull or something. [Sharon laughs hard.] And so I find those aspects really interesting because I've lived that. I wanted the romantic highway myself . . . and was *so good at smudging just right,* you know? It doesn't mean that I've thrown those things out. Far from it, I revere it. I just had a different container now about what's actually going on.
NC: Yeah . . . I think I have some of this stuff about gurus and meditating. All of my roots. . . . I definitely read the *Yoga Sutras* and practiced yoga really intensely and meditated in these really specific . . . I don't know . . . there are lots of male revered people that will try to just tell you they know everything. [I laugh.] But I mean I – there are also good things. . . .
SB: So, they have a template but that they're creating hierarchy, and they're creating – like,

that's where I love ceremonies where people will say, "Well, we really don't know what's going to happen next. That kind of consciousness-raising. Like, I've seen that too where some guru and they're just kind of a big know-it-all and then you are at a retreat and look at the magazine and the coffee tables and you see that they've got their Buddha clocks. It's so – Something is lost in those moments when you see them with their own personalized clocks and handbags and things like that, yeah, and I saw that . . . [She tells me a long story about the Dalai Lama who has a mask on his altar that was carved by her late husband, the Tsimshian carver Victor Reece.]

SB: There's the place of connection and what singing and things can do is the link . . . the missing link. And that's what in academia, in the world, with the Dalai Lama even his gatherings that become performances with no real connection. And somehow he either doesn't know that about connection or he's been swept up in . . . a big machine.

NC: Yeah, I don't know . . . I was always really surprised. I don't know *that* much about Buddhism. But I really read a lot of things at one time and was a very devout meditator. And a lot of Hindu texts are quite close, like they were in the same country at the same time and often people would practice a mishmash of things. And I do feel it in me really deeply. My last name, also. It comes from the same root as the word "zen" does.

SB: Wow . . .

NC: It tells me that people in my past – my ancestors were practicing.

SB: I'm not surprised. You have a gift, and that's what I mean. I think that it's all there. Just like Christianity. The wisdom bits are in most holy texts around the world. But somehow there's a big disconnect. There's something missing now.

Tonglen

Subject-object relations are dealt with in very different ways in anthropology and in Tibetan Buddhism. Tonglen, or "giving and taking," is a way of dissolving a sense of "self," or, subject-object relations. It can be a scary way to practice meditation, especially if I haven't been practicing regularly. Luckily, there is a long history of people being afraid of this practice, so there are many ways to make this practice of dissolving the boundary between self and an other, less scary: practice giving and taking with yourself, practice with a friend. It doesn't have to be a stranger or an

"enemy."

Saraswati and the Buddha were the first on my altar, from my mom and dad. The Buddha smells like sandalwood. Saraswati is slightly bigger and heavier than the Buddha and I like what this says about her femininity. I would often do tonglen in front of them when I was an undergraduate living in Vancouver. May I share this practice with you? If not, please feel free to skip to the next section. If so, you may choose to follow these prompts quite literally or you may find yourself doing this in your head as you read. There isn't a "right" way.

Find a comfortable sitting position, ideally with your knees beneath your hips. Don't worry if you have to sit on many, many cushions or on a chair. Many of us are not so used to sitting on the floor.

Allow your pelvis to become very heavy,
sinking down into the chair or cushion.

The earth is underneath you,
underneath the floor,
all the way down.
Let your pelvis sink earthward.

And then imagine that your head is a helium balloon
and that your spine,
connected to your rooted pelvis,
is a string.

Your head floats gently upward,

your spine mobile.

You may want to make some micromovements to feel this levity.

Perhaps you sway very gently from side to side as if a breeze is passing through. When you're ready,

let your body become still.

Let your body become a frame for your breath.

Where do you feel that breath?

In your chest, ribs, abdomen?

Perhaps even in your lower back?

Allow that breath to soften what it needs to.

Your breath might be shallow,

deep,

ragged,

smooth.

Any of these is just fine, exactly as it is.

Just notice your breath. There is no judgment to be made here.

The breath flows in and the breath flows out.

From here imagine a jewel or a diamond in the centre of your forehead. It is brilliant and clear.

This is your wisdom.

And at your heart centre is a red rose.

This is your compassion.

Travel the diamond all the way up around the top of your head and down a tiny channel to the rose at your heart centre.
This is the diamond in the rose, your wisdom and your compassion.
With these, the diamond in the rose, you can handle whatever comes your way.
Breathe this in.

Then imagine someone who needs healing: it might be yourself, a friend, a person you don't know very well. You're going to take this person's pain from them. If it feels too vulnerable or dangerous to choose someone else, you can always choose yourself.
Imagine that person sitting in front of you.

You see their pain in their body like thick black smoke. Don't go into the details and stories about what that pain is, just notice the black smoke that it is.

When you are ready, feeling the power and strength of the diamond and the rose at the centre of

your heart, knowing that these will protect you, you decide that you are willing to take this person's pain.

You know that it can't hurt you.

Gather the smoke in the person's body, gather it from all their limbs and collect it in their body until it is a tiny black ball. Pause again and feel again the diamond and the rose.

When you're ready, in one quick, sharp breath, you'll breathe in the dark ball of smoke.

It will meet the diamond and the rose.

Instantly, the diamond and the rose will dissolve that dark ball.

Maybe all that you'll see is a little wisp of steam.

And there is stillness and the vivid red of the rose,

the bright light of the diamond.

Notice that your friend is feeling much better.[7]

And at the centre of your friend's heart is also a diamond and a rose, vivid red and shining bright.

You send from your heart centre to their heart centre a bridge of blue light. Connecting your hearts.

Over that bridge you send them six gifts.

The first is the gift of generosity. This is not necessarily the way that we usually think of generosity.

[7] Technically, this concludes the tonglen practice, but I was taught a second part when I was learning it.

This is a special kind: the ability to give what is needed, not what another person wants but what they absolutely need. Think about how much it would help your friend if they had the ability to give what was needed. When you're ready, you can say aloud or in your head to your friend, "I give you the gift of generosity."

Let it sink in.

Let it travel across the bridge of blue light.

The next gift is the gift of kindness. This isn't just about being nice or smoothing things over. It's about never harming another living being.

When you're ready, "I give you the gift of kindness."

This gift is the gift of patience.

This is not the gift of waiting around. It is the gift of being able to see that all beings have the possibility of enlightenment in them. In other words, it's about having patience of vision. Even if someone is acting cruelly now, the gift of patience allows its holder to see the possibility of every living being realizing enlightenment.

"I give you the gift of patience."

The next gift is the gift of joy. It is the ability to rejoice in other people's good fortune as if it were your own. When you're ready, "I give you the gift of joy." Send the gift across the bridge of blue light.

The gift of stillness is the ability to focus on what is absolutely important – not just seemingly important, but really truly important. Stillness is the gift that allows us to cut through all the busy-

ness to feel those things. What would you friend's life be like if that friend could become still enough to see what in their life to focus on the most important things?

"I give you the gift of stillness," over the bridge of blue light, from your heart centre to theirs.

The final gift is the gift of wisdom. It is the gift that weaves all the other gifts together. It helps you see what someone might truly need so that you can practice the gift of generosity, what might harm another living being so that you can practice kindness. Wisdom helps you be patient in skillful ways, letting you know when you need to act and when you need to wait. It shows you that all beings are connected and that others' joys are yours. It helps you figure out what is important so that you can use the gift of stillness to focus on that.

Imagine how much the gift of wisdom would help your friend. Imagine the gift of wisdom knitting together the other gifts that your friend has received.

When you're ready, again in your head or aloud, tell your friend, "I give you the gift of wisdom."

Send the gift from your diamond and rose to theirs.

Look at your friend. Maybe you smile. Maybe you notice how much better that friend is feeling.

Gently, when you are ready, dissolve the bridge of blue light.

Come back into this space and time.

Noticing your material body again.

Noticing your breath.

Where do you feel it?

What are its qualities?

Shallow, deep, ragged, peaceful?

Just noticing.

Feeling your sitting bones against the floor,

the temperature of the room against your skin,

the sounds of the room.

Perhaps it would feel good to roll your shoulders

To make some micromovements.

When you're ready, you can open your eyes.

Thank you for practicing with me.

Conclusion

My premises in this dissertation are that we are sharing a world that we have influenced (Latour 2014); that histories are not neutral (Chakrabarty 2000); that we must mark the ways in which we write histories; that all forms of writing have structures that have histories and reasons and do specific things in this world; that we humans are each multiple and come into being in relation to each other (Barad 2007, Mol 2003); and that, both on the ground and in academia (perhaps a false binary), humans (not always but very often) need to work together across difference for larger, shared goals. The dissertation unfolds from these premises in various ways: if we influence the world which we thought previously uninfluence-able (primarily through anthropogenic climate change), if the world was once something that we stood apart from and looked at, an object to our subject, what does it mean to acknowledge the blur between the two? Where do we end and the earth (or nature) begin? But this "we" is a false binary: those who created climate crisis (the centre) and those who feel its most powerful effects (the periphery) are not the same humans. So: if the forms of writing we once did come from the centre – the "ethno" in "ethnography" meaning "folk" or "people" to which groups the writer doing the "graphy" did not belong – what might it mean to turn ethnography on its head? To reinterpret the "ethnos" as the subject instead of the object? What might it mean for the people to write?

A few threads running through this dissertation are textuality, relationality, and audience: what and who are audiences and publics? How does listening work as a relational act? Who is "we?" Comparing ethnography to "more literal modes of transport," the editors of *Crumpled Paper Boat* note our proclivity for getting "caught up too often in the ideas of origin and destination – where someone is coming from, where a text must go" (Pandian and McLean 2017, 1). They want to focus

instead on how this happens: "the means of conveyance, the transformative potential of movement, the techniques our works rely on in taking their readers elsewhere" (ibid.). The chapters each focused on ethnographic relationships via pillars of ethnographic methods – chapter 1 on music performed specifically with "us" in mind, chapter 2 on multi-sited research, chapter 3 on self-reflexivity, and chapter 4 to the "how" of ethnographic writing.

When I ask "What might it mean for the people to write?," I am not asking what it would mean for the traditionally "interesting people to write about" to practice eurandrography (writing about the centre). They have. Instead I am asking for an alliance: I am asking what it would mean for us – a broad "us" – to write ourselves, ourselves the multiple, ourselves the earth, ourselves the centre. Of course, other people have been doing this work. *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (1981), *This Bridge We Call Home: Radical Visions for Transformation* (2002), *Women Writing Culture* (1996), and *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (1986) are ancestors of this dissertation. However, there are three big differences between the contexts of these books and the contexts of this dissertation: Climate crisis has become a broad, everyday, and urgent backdrop (or foreground). Indigenous knowledge has become more prominent and valuable in the public eye (Povinelli 2016). We the people have become so hybrid that we have to pay much more attention to differences that were before elided without much consequence: Indigeneity, race, and culture, for example, are three different analytics. When Indigenous peoples from different territories collaborate in the place we call Berkeley; or when an Indo-Canadian ethnographer enters an all-Indigenous space; or when we look around a room and find that there are no men and everyone is brown; or when a group of self-identified white people gathers to dismantle white supremacy, heuristic categories like insider, outsider, and, even, "halfie" break down. This is, of

course, not to say that we are all the same now.[1] It is also not enough to rely on solid, racialized categories without interrogating the practices through which they were formed. We have all had different practices, and it is also to these practices that this dissertation turns: practices of gender, of being racialized, of racializing, practices of singing, of listening, practices of writing, of becoming scholars, practices of ceremony, of ritual.

Recognizing these – singing, listening, writing, becoming scholars, participating in ceremony, enacting ritual, racializing, being racialized as *practices* that we do or experience both consciously and unconsciously – is a corrective to common uses of the "intersectionality," which, as I discussed in chapter 3, can be used to map someone's identity vectors until they create the outlines of a person glued solidly into an identity position. Considering things as different as writing, ceremony, and racialization as practices also enables critical intervention into to discussions of affect, ecology, climate crisis, and relationality, which often do not account for the powerful ways in which race inflects both understandings of and manifestations of all of those forms.[2] In recognizing all of these things as practices – unconscious and conscious – and in considering these practices at the scale of individual, embodied humans is, I believe, an immense source and act of hope. There are many brilliant macro-analyses of capitalism, of genocidal histories, of climate crisis, those huge things that

[1] There is an article in satirical *Walking Eagle News* about how Indigenous people read a comment online claiming there was only one race – the human race – and how they have now renounced their Indigeneity. All this to say that I recognize the dangers of claiming alliance. The important thing here and in "all lives matter" is that the centre is a dominant centre. Alliances with a decentred whiteness (or other dominant identity vector) can look very different.

[2] As Asad Haider points out, the term "identity politics" (which goes hand in hand with intersectionality) functioned very differently in its original use by the Combahee River Collective, a collective of Black lesbian feminists who were fighting not *only* for better lives for Black lesbian feminists, but against overall oppression, knowing that centring their own positions at the crossroads of interlocking systems of oppression would necessarily end in oppression in many directions: "Black women, whose specific social position had been neglected by both the black liberation movement and the women's liberation movement, could challenge this empty class reductionism [they were not just raceless, sexless workers] simply by asserting their own autonomous politics" (Haider 2018). In other words, this kind of politics worked specifically for their intersections of identities.

leave us looking at each other with clarity and helplessness. We ask an Indigenous person in Northern Alberta or a resident of Flint, Michigan, both of whom still lack clean water, or an African American colleague who is regularly profiled by a private campus police force, or our trans* acquaintance in the wake of a rash of trans* murders, "What can I do?" And they look at us and perhaps thank us for caring or encourage us to donate to various organizations (something immensely important). I am not proposing that there exists a panacea, but I wonder if looking at practices (read: repetitions of acts, something that we can tweak, something that gives us skills) is one way of looking at how these large structures of inequity and oppression come to rest in individuals in different ways and might help us organize collectively with the tools that we have at our immediate disposal.

I recognize that in my close focus on race and racialization, I risk merely excoriating settler-colonialism, higher education, or Western classical music scenes, doing what Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick calls "paranoid readings," readings that focus on unveiling hidden violence, in this case racialized violence (Sedgwick 2003, 126). This is not my intent. In fact, my goal here is simple: I want to write this dissertation, chapter 4 especially, as a ceremony that at the same time compares writing and ceremony, pulling them closer together in their potential as world-shaping practices. However, there is no unmediated (unmarked) way of practicing writing or ceremony. An important part of creating a ceremonial space is making sure that everyone feels safe, not necessarily comfortable, but safe. I would like people of colour to feel safe in this ceremony. Therefore, I try to speak what I know with my own body, which is that it is very rare that dominant interests are not centred. I hope therefore that these stories about race are a form of care for those who know these stories too well. I tell them again and again, hoping that your stories get easier to tell if you want to tell them. This is also a form of care for those of you who do not know that these stories are unfolding everyday around you. These stories are not stories of victimhood, though they can appear

that way if you accidentally fall into that tired perspective; instead, they are stories of sight. By practicing these stories, if a version of them is not familiar to you, you can start moving from (colour)-blindness towards sight. Part of telling them over and over again is to let you practice a felt sense of how ubiquitous they are. In inviting you to this ceremony, in writing this, I am saying that I believe in your compassionate intentions.

If you – and here I am shifting to speak especially to people who have a practice of being racialized – feel rage or trauma because I am letting you slip out from this ceremony, creating yet another space that does not promise to centre you and falls short, I am incredibly sorry for the pain that *my* blindness causes. If you choose to come talk to me about it, please know that my door is open, that I will breathe through any defensiveness that may come up for me, that I will value the difficult things you might tell me as an incredible gift towards sight. Blindness is unequally distributed.

Making Space, Getting Clear about Race

If *Shadows in the Field* remains a kind of beacon for considering fieldwork in particular, this dissertation extends the perimeter of the area *Shadows in the Field* illuminated: whereas *Shadows in the Field* focuses particularly on the fieldwork itself rather than ethnographic writing, this dissertation blurs the practice of becoming disciplinarized in an academic field with the practice of spending time at a field site. If the first activity is done with the goal of "becoming native," in other words, becoming an ethnomusicologist, the second is done at a so-called critical distance. In this dissertation, both are glossed as "fieldwork." As the word "ethnography" itself elides both writing and fieldwork, so does this dissertation. As chapter 3 explicated the tools that being still somewhat invisibly marginal in the academy – the sore skin that becomes a finely-tuned instrument of analysis, like it or not, brings – the other chapters, chapter 4 especially, use them.

While invisible to many white settlers, something I discuss shortly, my liminality is often remarked upon by visibly Indigenous people, mainly through a plethora of "Columbus wanted you but found me" jokes. I suspect that this is because they see in me someone who is also racialized, albeit in different ways. For example, "You look multicultural! You should go sneak around," my Cree teacher said with a wry, harsh laugh when I offered to go looking for the chairs that had gone missing from the inner-city classroom that we used two evenings a week for Cree classes. The chairs were presumably being used in the adjacent room whose door bore a handwritten sign marked "Multicultural Party." As for the wry, harsh laugh, I suspect it had to do with what Deborah Wong calls "multicultural ideologies that encourage ethnic celebration but discourage communities from asserting ownership of their own traditions," a particular strain with which Indigenous peoples in Canada are all too well acquainted, and another particular strain of which this Indo-Canadian is also too well acquainted (Wong 2006, 88).

This dissertation extends the work done by *Shadows in the Field* by focusing specifically – if we take up only for an instant the insider-outsider heuristic – on a situation in which the nonwhite ethnographer appears to be an outsider both in her "home" and in the field, the double outsides occasionally converging. This specific case is important because it engages productively with the frictions between race and culture, two categories that are too often conflated both by interlocutors in my fields. Throughout my fieldwork, I was thoroughly blindsided by something that kept happening: in the midst of discussing Indigenous and settler relations with white settlers, it became clear that they – the white settlers – equated my experience vis-à-vis Indigeneity as analogous to their own, remarking alternately with surprise or even distaste that I seemed to consider myself an insider. My suspicion is that they thought that I was "playing Indian," what they felt that they would be doing if they themselves spoke the way I was speaking.

My position, however, is not their position. This is important not just for understanding the lens I am using, but also for something much bigger: our understandings of how racialization and Indigeneity are overlapping but distinct. Rather than claiming "Indianness" that is *not* mine, I am claiming the Indianness that *is* mine, not only the Indianness that is baked into the histories of colonial encounter beginning with Columbus's use of the word, but the racialization that historically signaled not-quite-human and today still bears those traces. Just the way that "humans" masks the uneven distribution and creation of ecological crisis, the uneven racialization of settlers does not suddenly disappear when we invoke an Indigenous-settler binary, though it becomes productively backgrounded in order to centre the concerns and wellbeing of Indigenous communities.[3] I suspect that the gap that I encounter in white settler understandings of my position has to do with practices of embodiment: Indigeneity is almost always intertwined with racialization. I have to separate the two because I am racialized in particular ways (and racialized especially strenuously in Western classical music contexts, which are also the contexts in which I learned to write about music, which is the marked activity that I am doing here), but I am not Indigenous. If one occupies a white body that is rarely racialized and a subjectivity that is not Indigenous, there would be no need ever to disentangle racialization and Indigeneity (and no need to disentangle "settler" from "whiteness"), since both categories operate similarly according to logics of centres and margins. But they can and must be to work productively with settlers of colour. If racialization involves a subject, someone who does the racialization. In other words, I do *not* share Indigeneity or cultural specificity with Indigenous people. I *do* share a similar relationship to whiteness.[4]

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[3] In fact, some scholars have started to use the term "arrivants" to refer to POC settlers. Jodi Byrd, for example, borrows the term from poet Kamau Brathwaite (Byrd 2011, xix). Others have argued for the examination of relationships among white settlers, people of colour, and Indigenous peoples (Day 2016).

[4] I think here of Deborah Wong who is not Japanese but whose Asian-Americanness leads her to be similarly racialized in Euro-American contexts, writes gently, "If you are not Asian American and

This would not be so critical if writing were supposed to function as a kind of realist mapping or mirroring of the world. If, however, writing does something to change the world, if we are building alliances to change the world, we must learn to work together. If settlers of colour, especially non-Black settlers of colour, are constantly falling off the written earth, there is no alliance. We need everyone on board. This dissertation works towards getting everyone on board.[5]

Writing, Race, Trauma, Reading

Selamawit Terrefe, a scholar of African-American literature, is interviewing Christina Sharpe, scholar and author of *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being*. They are talking about "a Black psyche which is never formed or conditioned outside of how white people are viewing [Black people]" (Terrefe 2016). Terrefe makes a connection between the response in the academy to Afropessimism "sometimes seems much more violent from Black academics than from non-Black academics." Christina Sharpe narrows the focus:

> The only people who can be and embrace it are particularly these white, male, young academics who are so excited. They're *excited* by it. And it's an invigorating theory because it's a purely intellectual enterprise for them. This is something *we* have to experience and re-experience viscerally when we read Frank and Jared's work.[6] It's a traumatic experience. But

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perhaps have had a similar response to seeing taiko performed, your response doesn't contradict or negate mine. It's not impossible that your subjectivity and mine have points of overlap, but our responses are not, and can't be, equivalent" ([1997] 2008, 79–80).

[5] To be clear, I am not arguing that it is always productive to work together. Indigenous resurgence and the "generative refusal" of engagement with settlers (cf. Leanne Simpson) is incredibly productive, as are spaces where settlers come together to work out their own strategies around decolonization. One such space closer to home was the "Intersectional Approaches to Music and Settler Colonialism" workshop convened by Patrick Nickleson, Dylan Robinson, and Jeremy Strachan in May 2018. With the exception of Dylan Robinson (and I do think it was important that he was there, especially since it is only Indigenous people who understand the *lived* experiences of settler-colonialism), we were a mix of settler scholars ranging from graduate students to senior scholars.

[6] Wilderson III, Frank B. 2010. *Red, White, and Black: Cinema and the Structure of U.S. Antagonisms.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
and likely:
Sexton, Jared. 2008. *Amalgamation Schemes: Antiblackness and the Critique of Multiracialism.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

> it's not a trauma that is being imposed by us – by the theory or by those of us who write and critically engage with the work. It's a trauma that we're reliving because we're never outside of this trauma. So I think Black people's responses, Black academics' responses in particular . . . it's not a foreclosure the way white or non-Black academics would respond. If it's a negative response it's foreclosing on their own . . . ethical relationship. (Terrefe 2016)

Most obviously, the disparity of experiences is striking. Imagine a group of academics in working on similar topics in the same field (in ostensibly similar conditions): some of them have to recover from reliving trauma again and again in order to do their work; others are energized and enlivened by those same ideas.

Less obviously, Terrefe draws the dividing line between Black and non-Black, while Sharpe zooms in on the "young, white, male" and then differentiates between "white" and "non-Black." I wonder about non-Black (and white) academics' responses to reading this interview and the critical reading practices that we (non-Black [and white]) academics might use to interpret it. Like Warner, I argue that critical reading, instead of being what we assume it is, "a name for any self-conscious practice of reading" is actually "the folk ideology of a learned profession, so close to us that we seldom feel the need to explain it" (Warner 2004, 14). While Warner focuses on "the rigorous extraction of oneself from the ethical demands of direct textual address . . . [which] requires a manipulation of intergeneric relationships that can only seem characterless once they have become second nature – as to most of us they have," I want to elucidate another way in which this practice "obscures from even our own view the rather elaborate forms and disciplines of subjectivity we practice and inculcate (2004, 25,16): Books are supposed to talk to "everyone." A good reader is able to identify with the audience the writer implies even if the reader does not fit exactly into the audience. In other words, we're trained to do this. We're trained, especially in reading, *not* to be attuned to things that *do not* include us. If I read George Eliot's *Middlemarch* (a Victorian novel) for inclusion or something from a century ago that referred to people as "men" and put it down because I was not being addressed, I would be missing some of the codes of "critical reading" as I know it.

Critical reading practices get us to be chameleons in a very particular way: they cause us to (over)identify with the protagonist or with the group of people who are central to a text. In fact, I suspect that it is this critical reading practice Deborah Wong is trying to counter when she suddenly switches to addressing her readers as "you" when she distinguishes between her experience as an Asian American watching taiko from the experience of non-Asian-Americans watching taiko ([1997] 2008, 79–80). In other words, what might it mean for me to take as seriously the possibility that I am like young, white, male academics as I take the possibility that I am like Black academics? What changes if I open myself up to a variety of reading techniques?

Healing from Trauma, Sharing Space

We have seen two particular problems that unmarked whiteness poses: in one case, a white centre prevails and white settlers are happy to occupy that centre as everyday life, invisibly and unthinkingly. In the other, a white centre prevails and white settlers are happy to occupy that centre as everyday live and engage in practices that are ethnically marked. Kimberley Lau calls this latter case "ethnomimesis." She writes:

> To eat Japanese foods, cooked according to Japanese principles, using Japanese kitchen utensils is to live a Japanese life. When ethnomimesis is enacted in such a physical way, when it is literally taken into the body, the cultural consumption inherent in any such act of imitation takes on a more literal significance. It is not just a Japanese meal which is consumed; rather, it is an iconically Japanese way of life, an essentialized attitude, a stereotyped physicality. (Lau 2000, 93)

The counterargument to this position is the following: if you are not Japanese but are surrounded by Japanese people, how can you not be transformed by the encounter? The problem that I think Lau is naming is a kind of extractive mentality here: a white centre takes what is Japanese and throws Japanese people away, or, takes what is Japanese, advertises it through whiteness and profits off it at

the expense of Japanese people.[7] But we know that whiteness also is a way of being that is not quite analogous to Japaneseness.

A common diagnosis of (white) settler violence is that it stems from lack of an anchoring culture: historian Vine Deloria writing in 1973 speculates on the idea that what he calls "white America" was losing its "physical, cultural, and spiritual heritage": "If the propensity of whites during the summer of 1971 to grasp some bit of authenticity by locating, excavating, and embracing Indian skeletal remains can be interpreted as a frantic attempt to discard their own physical, cultural, and spiritual heritage, then the collective psyche of white America was indeed in deep trouble" (18). More recently, particularly on social media, networks of Indigenous activists have been reiterating those sentiments more scathingly. One Instagram post from La Loba Loca depicts a thin, European-looking woman, eyes blissfully closed, sitting cross-legged and beating a frame drum. The text superimposed says "Stop using other's cultures to fill up your empty white settler soul."[8] Instagram blocked the first post within an hour - someone had reported it as hate speech - but not before another activist had reposted it with her own comment: "Spiritual white people have a lot to look at and admit when it comes to their participation in colonialism and white supremacy. You will never have any true success with any of this anyway so just set it all down, give it all back, and *return to your own roots so you can actually tap into something real*" (emphasis mine).[9]

Taking the lesson without taking the vitriol, what might it mean for "white" people to move from whiteness towards something else? In 2014 at a Healing Walk in Northern Alberta, I overheard two white settlers posing their own solution. We were at an Indigenous-led event, and, in

[7] Analogously, I must ask myself always whether I am using the structures of settler-colonialism for self-gain: there's a kind of "cultural capital" in academic spheres that working with Indigenous activists provides. Representing activism does not in itself constitute activism.
[8] La Loca Loba Shares, "Stop using other's cultures to fill up your empty white settler soul,"*Instagram Story*, November 5, 2018.
[9] Life as Ceremony, *Instagram Story*, November 5, 2018.

this microclimate where whiteness was decentred, they were talking about finding their own Indigeneity. By this, presumably as a corrective to the kind of taking Lau describes above, they meant turning towards pagan traditions, land-based traditions that their ancestors might have practiced before they were Christian. In other words, instead of trying to mimic Cree and Dene relationships with their traditional territory, these white settlers were looking to their ancestors' practices for clues about how *they* might develop relationships with land and with the more-than-human world. Over four years later, I have seen a surge in identifying and correcting for whiteness. I hear more and more white settlers, especially those I have met at Indigenous-led healing walks and ceremonies, characterizing whiteness as trauma.

Interestingly and expectedly, marking whiteness, a process that defines it against another category of race or culture, takes many forms. An online workshop called "Before We Were White" advertises "ceremony and ancestral recovery for anti-racist action":

> "Before We Were White" is an online workshop series for white-identified people seeking greater emotional resilience in their work against racism and for a sustainable future. Together we will explore how ceremonial practice and ancestral identity help us challenge white supremacy as whole people.
>
> Each of us belongs to a collective body of people with a story (or stories) that reach before us and after us in time. Before we were ever classified as "white," our ancestors were distinct peoples with their own unique culture – their own unique "medicine" What happened to us? And what have our ancestors done? What can we do, now, to stop the trauma from continuing, repair the harm, and build a better future?[10]

Among the goals of the workshop is this to "explore techniques to support the recovery of the Original Instructions our oldest, indigenous ancestors received; mourn and repair the damage that has been done to us and by us; and open ourselves to further instructions for our work at this moment in history." In other words, though challenging "white supremacy" rather than settler-

[10] "Before We Were White: Ceremony and Ancestral Recovery for Anti-Racist Action," accessed December 21, 2018, https://www.eventbrite.com/e/before-we-were-white-online-workshop-series-tickets-41224464483.

colonialism is the workshop's goal, the workshop implicitly defines whiteness as trauma, as something that happens to people when their Indigeneity and relationships with land are stripped away.[11]

A white settler echoed these views to me when we found ourselves sitting next to each other at a Winnemem Wintu and Ohlone ceremony in the Bay Area, saying something like, "*Of course* we came here and enacted the most horrible forms of colonialism, she told me. We burned our medicine people at the stake. We've lost our songs, our religions, our relationships with land. Until we heal this trauma, we're going to perpetuate it wherever we go."

In other words, what are being advocated are not just "wisdom traditions" as Sharon Brass calls them, like Christianity, but Indigeneity in particular – something to do with relationships to land and place – specifically. The characterization of whiteness as trauma also squares with the metaphor of a bird's-eye view for white-inflected scholarship. Trauma is something that makes people dissociate, come out of their bodies, float up to the ceiling, pretend they are not there, get into their heads. A kind of omniscient view makes sense. (At the same time, becoming a bird and flying also sounds wonderful). Getting closer to the ground and coming back into the body is what healing seems to promise.

Deloria, writing in 1973 asked, "Who will find peace with the lands? The future of humankind lies waiting for those who will come to understand their lives and take up their responsibilities to all living things. Who will listen to the trees, the animals and birds, the voices of the places of the land?" (296) He then made the following prophecy: "As the long-forgotten peoples of the respective continents rise and begin to reclaim their ancient heritage, they will discover the

[11] There are many other "white allyship" circles and organizations that are dedicated specifically to undoing white supremacy, but do not position themselves in terms of a lost Indigeneity or in terms of trauma.

meaning of the lands of their ancestors. That is when the invaders of the North American continent will finally discover that for this land, God is red" (296). Though I am not sure that Deloria would have applied his prophecy to the "invaders," the "invaders" are also "[rising] and [beginning] to claim their ancient heritage."

A Prayer of "I Wants"

I want us to be humble, instead of assuming an expert position on non-dominant groups we don't belong to. I want us to be courageous. I want us, all of us, together, to listen, to look at ecological crisis head on, to use our very different skills to get us out. I want to trust that I can tell you when you hurt me and that you will be bigger than your defensiveness, and vice versa. I want us not to be fooled by this universalist language: I want us to understand that in practice people who are used to be "right" are going to hear that they are causing a lot of pain. I want us all to know that many of the things we talk about as if they were academic subjects pull along with them deep trauma that is unevenly distributed across our communities, academic and otherwise. I want a universal, a true and strategic universal, not a white universal. From here, we can finally begin to talk about singing to rivers. . . .

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