Sounding Unsettlement: Rethinking Settler States of Mind and Re(-)cognition through Scenes of Cross-Cultural Listening

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Theory and Criticism
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Abstract

In this dissertation I consider how listening to music produced by Indigenous peoples might convince settler listeners to surrender settler states of mind. I focus on the elements of settler colonialism that are exemplified in and challenged by the experiences of listening to music produced by Indigenous peoples. I focus on these aesthetic encounters as a way of exposing the everyday presence and power of settler states of mind and, more importantly, exploring how settlers might go about rebuilding states of mind through these moments of aesthetic surrender that are spurred by embodied experiences of sound. My project builds on the work of writers, theorists, and musicians such as African American writer James Baldwin, Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg scholar, writer, and artist Leanne Simpson, and Stó:lō scholar Dylan Robinson. I think about what it means to listen cross-culturally in the context of ongoing settler colonialism in North America (Turtle Island) and increased rhetoric around “reconciliation” in response to the conclusion of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) in 2015. I speak to the intimate level of listening to music from across cultures in this dissertation so that settlers might begin to engage in a critical self-reflection necessary for the rebuilding of settler states of mind—a reflection that involves a sense of surrender that requires settlers to learn how to participate in new worlds opened and led by various Indigenous peoples and nations.
Keywords

Settler colonialism; Unsettlement; Indigenous Resurgence; Decolonization; Listening; Aesthetic Surrender; A Tribe Called Red; Tanya Tagaq; Jeremy Dutcher; James Baldwin; Nirvana; Frances Densmore; popular music studies; sound studies; musicology.
Summary for Lay Audience

In this dissertation I start by considering what it means for non-Indigenous people to listen to music produced by Indigenous people and begin to critically reflect on the music, lyrics, and conditions of the artists. I push this analysis further by considering how listening to music produced by Indigenous people might encourage a self-reflective listening or an “aesthetic surrender” amongst non-Indigenous audiences. The surrendered elements are what I am calling “settler states of mind.” Settler states of mind are the ideas, ideals, and ways of thinking involved in settler colonial identities—reinforced through physical acts and ways of speaking—that persuade and allow some non-Indigenous people to believe that they are the rightful “owners” and beneficiaries of the land and resources on Turtle Island (North America). The rights of Indigenous peoples are often devalued, ignored, removed, or violently attacked in attempts to protect and promote settler identities.

I consider an aesthetic surrender relating to these states of mind to be an early part of a process of unsettlement; that is, moving beyond a life governed by the values and beliefs tied to settler colonialism. This includes surrendering ideas and ways of thinking that devalue and attempt to eradicate Indigenous ways of life. I challenge non-Indigenous readers to reflect on how everyday moments in their lives support these brutal and discriminatory ways of thinking and being. I turn to the music produced by Indigenous peoples and the opportunity to listen to these performances as avenues and opportunities to learn to listen differently. I turn to music as an example of everyday encounters with the reproduction, negotiation, and dismantling of settler states of mind. I turn to these moments with the hope that learning to listen differently might lead to more significant social, political, cultural, and economic change.
Land Acknowledgement

During my time as a PhD student at the Centre for the Study of Theory and Criticism at Western University I lived and worked in London, Ontario. London is situated on the land of the Anishinaabek, Haudenosaunee, Lunaapewak, and Attawandaron peoples and has long-standing relationships with three First Nations communities including the Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, the Oneida Nation of the Thames, and the Munsee Delaware Nation. I include this territorial and community acknowledgement as part of a commitment to respect the land and sovereignty of these nations and peoples, including the ways they know and understand the world. I am a settler scholar and I continue to navigate what this means in the 21st century on Turtle Island. As empty as land acknowledgements can be at this point in history, they do serve a purpose. I am indebted to the guidance of Indigenous students, staff, and faculty at Western University including Candace Brunette (Faculty of Education) and Chantelle Richmond (Faculty of Social Science) for the structure of this acknowledgment. I am also indebted to the work of Leanne Simpson, in particular Simpson’s discussion of land acknowledgements in As We Have Always Done.¹

¹ Leanne Simpson, As We Have Always Done, (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2017): 64.
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Introduction

Settler States of Mind Through Ongoing Settler Colonialism

On June 3rd 2019 the Final Report of the Canadian National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (NIMMIWG) was released to the public. While featuring more than 200 recommendations for how the various institutions and people of Canada might address the ongoing crisis, the initial furor within the settler colonial media focused on the use of the term “genocide.” Genocide is used by the authors of the report to describe the range of targeted acts of violence against Indigenous women and girls in Canada since contact with early settlers. In the report, genocide is used without the sometimes previously attached qualifier “cultural,” a term that attempts to dampen or allow the settler state and its citizens to ignore the weight of an accusation of committing genocide. Now faced with this bald charge—an accusation levelled by artists such as Buffy Sainte-Marie long before the release of the Inquiry’s final report—some settlers are working to find ways to stay committed to a path of what they believe to be reconciliation, while challenging the charge of committing genocide.

The outcry against the use of the term—including Conservative Party leader Andrew Scheer’s outright rejection, claiming the cases of MMIWG do not fit the definition of genocide—speaks directly to the depth and continued prevalence of settler colonialism in Canada. It shows that many settlers are unsure about what reconciliation...

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3 Instead of sharing a list of articles that decry the use of “genocide” by the NIMMIWG Report, I have included two that discuss the furor in the Canadian media: Danielle Paradis, Tim Querengesser, and Shama Rangwala, “Canada’s Media was Always Going to Dismiss Genocide Against Indigenous Women” for Canadaland, published June 13, 2019, accessed at: https://www.canadalandshow.com/media-was-always-going-to-dismiss-mmiwg-genocide/; and “Government will be hesitant to adopt genocide conclusion from the MMIWG report” Naomi Sayers for Power and Politics. Published on May 31, 2019. Accessed at: https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/powerandpolitics/government-will-be-hesitant-to-adopt-genocide-conclusion-from-the-mmiwg-report-naomi-sayers-1.5158601

might mean and what might be involved in the process, in larger socio-political terms and at the level of the everyday. Although there are settlers who accept the charge of genocide and are attempting to navigate new paths of agreement between nations, the outcry also signals the maintenance and, indeed, reinvigoration of settler states of mind. These states of mind are based on manufactured ideas that contend that settlers, through a (false) sense of superiority about European ways of being and interacting with the world, are the rightful inhabitants or masters of the land in North America. To be the rightful inhabitants in these settler colonial terms means to have the right to own, exploit, and be the first or only to benefit from the land. These ideas uphold images of settlers and their ways of life as the symbols of progress and civilized life in colonial narratives.

These notions of the settler have been and continue to be reproduced by settler institutions and settlers themselves, in both conscious and unconscious ways. Some elements of images of settlers are more staunchly protected than others as settler states of mind adapt to include different realities like the increasing migration of people from non-European cultures to North America. However, the idea that settlers are the rightful owners of the land tends to be an unwavering element of these states of mind for many settlers. This often includes the sentiment that whatever early settlers did to gain this power and whatever is done to maintain this power are sometimes regrettable but understandable or justifiable acts. This sentiment is present in the rejection of the use of genocide in the Final Report of the NIMMIWG.

The rejection is a significant event, like the annual celebration of key colonial dates and people, that reinforces the dominance of settler colonialism on Turtle Island. Unlike these annual events, however, this outburst is a spontaneous display of more general settler states of mind. These reactions exemplify a collective disregard for actually listening to the Final Report of the NIMMIWG and reveal the mainstream media’s involvement in protecting a settler mentality. It is important to critique the larger events or moments because they often get framed as innocent celebrations or common sense. There are many daily moments, however, that make a collective reaction such as the one
given in response to the use of the term genocide in the Final Report appear natural. These seemingly innocent quotidian expressions of settler states of mind are in need of further critique and, in general terms, are the focus of this analysis.

In this dissertation I am interested in the everyday moments where settler states of mind are reinforced and where they can be broken and rebuilt. Settler states of mind are the ideas, ideals, and ways of thinking involved in settler identities—reinforced through physical acts and ways of speaking—that persuade and allow some non-Indigenous people to believe that they are the rightful “owners” and beneficiaries of the land and resources on Turtle Island (North America). The rights of Indigenous peoples are often devalued, ignored, removed, or violently attacked in attempts to protect and promote settler identities. I follow the work of Mark Rifkin who has sought to examine the ways settler colonial realities are manifested at the level of the everyday, particularly as “a structure of feeling.” Rifkin approaches these structures from a queer perspective as a way of “disjointing the settler field of possibility produced through the routine normalization of state sovereignty.” That is, Rifkin works to expose and unsettle the ways the settler state and other settler institutions normalize their imposition on the daily lives of citizens, ultimately getting non-Indigenous citizens to do the work of reproducing and normalizing settler sovereignty. I utilize a different critical approach than Rifkin but look to achieve a similar goal. I focus on the elements of settler colonialism (material and psychological) that are exemplified in and challenged by the experiences of listening to music produced by Indigenous peoples. I focus on these aesthetic encounters as a way of exposing the everyday presence and power of settler states of mind and, more importantly, exploring how settlers might go about rebuilding a state of mind based on these moments of aesthetic surrender.

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While keeping in mind the conditions of musical creation, I focus on the conditions which make critical listening possible in order to examine how the creative and collaborative work of Indigenous musicians is encouraging a process of aesthetic surrender amongst settler listeners. Aesthetic surrender is a key term for this project and merits further explanation. For this project, “aesthetic surrender” is a process, spurred by an embodied experience of sound, where listeners engage in a self-reflexive reconstruction of their subject position, relinquishing false and potentially violent ideals of themselves, in response to encouragement presented through critical articulations—the conveying of conditions, emotions, and affective experiences through sound and lyrics—in music produced by people from other cultures. Aesthetic surrender is not specific to settler colonialism or processes of unsettlement. However, in this dissertation, I am utilizing and thinking through what aesthetic surrender means in relation to the work of unsettlement and decolonization on Turtle Island. This reconstitution involves settlers surrendering colonial images of themselves and land gained through the violence of colonialism. It also involves settlers beginning to embody new ways of being settlers in Indigenous-led worlds on Turtle Island. The surrender is both psychological and material.

Aesthetic surrender expands on the work of African American writer and scholar Sarah Lewis, who evocatively describes a similar process as a “benevolent surrender.” Lewis introduces the phrase in a discussion about the possibilities of aesthetic experience in cross-cultural encounters. Using photography as her example, she posits hope in the “imagination inspired by aesthetic encounters” between members of different cultures. Lewis is responding to anti-black sentiment in the United States, but the surrender she urges is not intracultural. Lewis’s response is geared toward the surrendering of white supremacist states of mind to make way for new versions “of our collective selves.” I am encouraged by this sentiment. By providing an avenue for the articulation and transformation of experiences under colonization and connecting to listeners through

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8 Ibid.
9 Ibid.
unique embodied experiences of sound, the production and performance of music has the potential to shift the colonial states of mind of non-Indigenous people. My contention is that these listening experiences can encourage a self-reflective critical response that can help create the psychological and material conditions for settler unsettlement, conciliation, and decolonization. I focus on the element of surrender here and open up the idea of the process of surrender itself to unpack what might be involved in this experience and what it might feel like in the settler colonial context.

Though I am encouraged by Lewis’s sentiment and phrasing, it is also important to recognize the danger and violence of “benevolence” in the settler colonial context. I strive to push past the cloak of benevolence and think more deeply through the initial levels of surrender from settlers working through unsettlement. This project proceeds from the idea that unsettlement involves a process of dismantling the established sovereignty of colonial cultures in order to restructure social, political, cultural, and economic relations between Indigenous and settler cultures on Indigenous terms. My project seeks to understand the value of music in this transformation. How listening to music produced by people from other cultures might provoke this kind of aesthetic and unsettling surrender is the central question of this dissertation.

A surrender is not guaranteed, however. There is a risk that settler listeners may engage in appropriative acts as a result of listening to music produced by Indigenous peoples—a process Stó:lō scholar Dylan Robinson includes as “shxwelítemelh xwlala:m” or “hungry listening.”

Robinson notes, “hungry listening names settler colonial forms of perception.” Actions resulting from some of these forms of perception include settlers wearing Indigenous headdresses to concerts of Indigenous artists, settler corporate or political leaders appearing to consult Indigenous nations on nation-to-nation issues but disregarding the voices, concerns, and sovereignty of the Indigenous nation, settlers offering to help Indigenous nations with social, political, and economic concerns but only

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11 Ibid.
on settler colonial terms, and settlers eagerly wanting to understand every element of an Indigenous nation’s way of life without respecting the values, the sacred nature of many elements, and the right of Indigenous peoples not to share every element of their culture. My characterization of listening as part of processes of surrendering settler states of mind is a response to Robinson’s concept of “hungry listening.” How settlers might avoid these acts by engaging in a process of aesthetic surrender is an important question in this dissertation.

I also take inspiration from the work of African American writer James Baldwin for my discussion of aesthetic surrender. Baldwin’s account of listening to Billie Holiday’s music is significant because it spurs a discussion of surrender from Baldwin. However, his listening experiences and relationship to these records remains undeniably different from the experiences of white settlers who listen to music produced by African American or Indigenous peoples. Baldwin brought the records of Holiday, Gertrude Ma Rainey, and Bessie Smith with him to Europe. These records maintained his connection to black Americans, relating the spirit and struggle through the unrest and targeted violence many faced during the 1960s and ’70s. This music spoke to him deeply and in unique and important ways. It played a part in encouraging him to return to America to support the Civil Rights movement.

While recognizing Baldwin’s distinct position, I take note of those moments in his work when he speaks to or about white audiences. Specifically, Baldwin asserts that for a white audience to “face the facts of a life like Billie’s or, for that matter, a life like mine, one has got to…accept the fact that what he thinks he is, he is not. He has to give up, he has to surrender his image of himself.” I build on this idea of a surrendering of states of mind through a discussion of a different kind of cross-cultural listening encountered as a process of aesthetic surrender. As Baldwin gestures towards, listening has been a one sided and violent process for marginalized peoples in settler colonial North America. This

12 Ibid.
is due to falsely constructed ideas about white settlers, African Americans, Indigenous peoples, and immigrants by white settlers. I discuss what it means to reconstruct and what is involved in a reconstruction of processes of cross-cultural listening by white settlers as encouraged by music produced by people from cultures that have been and continue to be marginalized through settler colonialism. The surrendering of states of mind is central to this process. I also consider the rebuilding of settler states of mind to be a necessary part of a process of working towards accepting Indigenous sovereignty and developing nation-to-nation respect on Turtle Island.

The question of how settlers might rebuild images of themselves and settler states of mind in the wake of a history of settler colonialism, most recently exemplified by the charge of committing and being unable to properly address the genocide against Indigenous women and girls in Canada, is a complicated but important question to face. Calls for self-determination and decolonization by Indigenous leaders and nations requires that settlers 1) rethink sovereignty on Turtle Island, 2) interrogate the ways this sovereignty is reproduced on a daily basis, and 3) think about the ways they are being challenged to engage in new worlds. My dissertation is a process shaped by these three elements as a response to calls for self-determination and sovereignty by Indigenous peoples. It is a process of self-reflection that, following the lead of African American writer James Baldwin, comes out of a sense of responsibility to “try to tell the truth” about our private lives or moments where we feel engaged with someone or something.14 I speak to the intimate level of listening to music in this dissertation so that settlers might recognize the depths of colonialism in their lives and begin to engage in a critical self-reflection necessary for the rebuilding of settler states of mind. This rebuilding involves a sense of surrender that requires settlers to learn how to participate in new worlds opened and led by various Indigenous peoples and nations.

My project builds on the work of writers, theorists, and musicians such as African American writer James Baldwin, Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg scholar, writer and artist Leanne Simpson, and Stó:lō scholar Dylan Robinson, asking how listening to music produced by Indigenous peoples might convince settler listeners to surrender colonial images of themselves. I think about what it means to listen cross-culturally in the context of ongoing settler colonialism in North America (Turtle Island) and increased rhetoric around “reconciliation” in response to the conclusion of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) in 2015. For this project I consider cross-cultural listening to mean experiences where listeners or audience members can engage material productions (music, video, texts) or voices of people from cultures that they do not belong to. This re-thinking of what it means to listen across cultures is only one piece of a larger project, but it requires a deeper examination, especially from members of settler cultures.

Decolonization “is necessarily unsettling.” It is the “repatriation of Indigenous land and life” and involves the Indigenous-led work of reclamation and self-determination. Therefore, I consider the work of settlers in response to decolonial process of Indigenous cultures and nations the work of unsettlement. Specifically, unsettlement is a larger process of surrender on the part of settler cultures—a surrender which is both material and psychological. As a white settler, this project is focused on the processes involved in unsettlement, and I propose that surrendering colonial self-images is one starting point for meaningful engagement with Indigenous-led processes of decolonization.

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15 Where it is appropriate in this article, I refer to the settler colonial name of the land of “North America,” as well as Turtle Island. Turtle Island is a name that comes from the Haudenosaunee creation story and is commonly used in what is now called southwestern Ontario to refer to the land now called North America. I do not want to suggest that they are interchangeable terms or that one is more appropriate than another by placing one in parenthesis. Rather, it is an attempt to acknowledge that the borders created through settler colonialism do not reflect the way that all people think about their relationship to the land.


17 Ibid., 21.
My dissertation is also a response to Theodor Adorno’s writings on listening by way of Indigenous critical scholarship. I start with Adorno because this is my theoretical background, but also because his work belongs to a history of thought that many settler thinkers will recognize. It is a history of thought that they feel like they belong to and in some cases protect. As part of my own ongoing process of surrender I turn to the words, voices, and sounds of the many Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island to re-read the settler colonial system that supported Adorno and supports myself. I want to re-read a small piece of the history of Euro-western thought as the complex work that it is, but re-read it into the context of my position as a settler studying Adorno on the land of the Anishinaabek, Haudenosaunee, Lunaapewak, and Attawandaron peoples on Turtle Island. I want to read it into the context of aesthetic surrender and work to articulate what this might mean. This is why I turn to the words, voices, and sounds of different Indigenous peoples from different nations.

This is a difficult task. The noise of settler colonialism is loud. It aims to drown out the voices, music, and sounds of Indigenous peoples. When the sounds of Indigenous peoples do break through, settlers are often confused and prefer to retreat to familiar sounds or overstep boundaries during moments of “hungry listening.” Not all settlers will feel encouraged to rebuild settler states of mind. For those who do, this analysis of the process may help navigate the discomfort. For those who do not, this may unpack the processes involved, and perhaps, explain why it is valuable. Nevertheless, this retreat to comfort often takes the form of fetishizing sounds which appear “exotic” and fit into a settler colonial fantasy of indigeneity. This appropriative act is a constant risk when settlers listen to music produced by Indigenous artists. Coming to terms with a sense of surrender begins to mitigate this risk which is why I place so much focus on this process. The challenge for myself and other white settlers is that as settlers work through a process of surrender as a breaking down and rebuilding of settler states of mind, settlers are doing so for a future that they want to participate in but cannot fully understand. A Euro-

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18 Robinson (2020).
Western settler colonial sense of Being or the Euro-western man “no longer functions as the telos” of society.\(^\text{19}\) This is a full sense of surrender for settlers on Turtle Island.

*Unsettling Loaded Terminology*

There are a few important terms to clarify before getting deeper into the analysis. Throughout my dissertation I appeal to general notions of “Indigenous peoples” and “white settlers” as developed under settler colonialism. However, I do this cautiously. I use “Indigenous peoples” as a general term that is meant to include the many First Nations, Inuit, and Métis nations on Turtle Island, but I recognize the faults in grouping the many different nations and peoples under one term. Among these many nations there are different languages, beliefs, ceremonies, and traditions. Where appropriate I have indicated the specific nation or culture that individuals identify with in an attempt to respect the sovereignty of each nation. Similarly, I recognize that when I speak of Indigenous nations, the settler understanding of nations as nation-states will likely be read into this phrase. Readers should avoid loading this phrase with settler colonial meaning and surrender their understanding of conceptions of Indigenous nationhood to the various understandings actualized by different Indigenous peoples.

I use “white settlers” to identify descendants of the many European and American cultures who are often considered “early settlers” of North America. I use “settlers” to acknowledge and include the many positions that continue to be occupied by peoples in North America from various cultures around the world. I recognize the heterogeneous nature of the experiences of readers and listeners from different cultures, and within the same cultures. In a similar sense, it is important to note that while I speak to white settler states of mind and listening experiences in many cases throughout my dissertation, I do so carefully with the awareness that there is a wide array of settler experiences in North America. As settler scholars Emma Battell Lowman and Adam J. Barker note, “there are many people caught between Settler and Indigenous identities, and [are] therefore subject

to conflicting social treatment based on how they are subjectively perceived and/or claimed by other Settler or Indigenous people(s).”  

I do not intend to close off the discussion to the various settler listening experiences outside of white settler experiences. I recognize that are many different settler and Indigenous listening experiences on Turtle Island, as well as many other listening experiences of people “living on the lands of Indigenous nations, but not doing so as settler colonizers or in a way recognizable to the Settler identity, and most importantly, not in opposition to indigeneity.”  

All of these experiences are involved in the ongoing production of collective ideals and states of mind in North America (Turtle Island).

I draw from and turn to my own experiences of surrender and listening experiences in this dissertation. They serve as the basis from which this analysis began. Though I turn to these moments frequently, I am not suggesting that my position as a male white settler listener is a universalized experience, nor am I holding it up as the experience that listeners from different positions should attempt to mimic or achieve. I employ the plural form of white settler listeners, settlers, listeners etc. in order recognize the multiplicity of listening experiences of non-Indigenous listeners, settler listeners, and white settler listeners. I do not want to eliminate any potential listening experience from this discussion. I draw from my own experiences for three key reasons: (1) as an attempt to unpack one experience of re-cognition and aesthetic surrender; (2) to turn towards the vulnerability encouraged from listeners working to navigate an unsettling; and (3) perhaps begin to find moments that connect different listening experiences of settlers and non-Indigenous people and allow for the advancement of processes of unsettling.

In a similar vein, it is important to be attentive to the connotations loaded into language such as “one,” “others,” “margins/marginalized,” “centre/dominant,” “Being,” etc., that discreetly speak of and have a history of universalizing a white male, Euro-North American position. Where possible, I avoid using these terms in an attempt to

21 Ibid.
discontinue this pattern. Larger theoretical discussions often involve the regular use of general terminology. “Settlers” has taken on this role in this dissertation, but as noted above, I work to recognize the heterogeneity of these experiences even as I use it in a general sense. I am careful to be as specific as possible where necessary.

Regarding discussions of music specifically, some genres of music discussed in this dissertation are the result of deep cross-cultural exchange, often between Indigenous peoples and other racialized groups who are minoritized in Canada and the United States. It would be too simplistic of an understanding of the production of music and listening experiences within these genres to narrow the analysis of the exchange to moments between Indigenous and white non-Indigenous settlers. My focus is the result of a desire to find ways to examine and articulate my own experience of surrender. It is also the result of a larger existential acceptance that there are other theorists, writers, musicians, and artists that have and will speak to different experiences with more depth and responsibility than I ever could. Furthermore, I have chosen to use phrases such as “music produced by Indigenous artists, musicians, or peoples,” in an attempt to avoid using phrases such as “Indigenous music.” The generalization of “Indigenous music” erroneously implies and perpetuates a settler colonial notion that Indigenous peoples only make one kind of music, or that all Indigenous peoples make the same kind of music. It essentializes the music made by Indigenous peoples and places music produced into one of two categories: “traditional” or “contemporary.”

I recognize that the phrase “music produced by Indigenous artists” is still a generalization and fails to break with the connotation of the alternative phrase, so where it is appropriate, I specify the artist I am discussing and the genres they create in to avoid generalities.

I also recognize that not all Indigenous musicians chose or want to create music with larger political goals or with what I have called critical articulations, conveying critical conditions, emotions, and affective experiences to encourage the surrendering of

settlers and privileged members of society. I do not want to erase the agency of Indigenous performers and assume that all Indigenous musicians must or desire to engage in critical and pedagogical performances for audiences across various cultures. For this project I engage with musicians who have or continue to create music with critical and political undertones, or who speak openly in interviews and public speeches about the socio-political and socio-economic realities that their music exists in. In general terms, these acknowledgements are part of a larger process of supporting the reality that Indigenous peoples have and continue to experiment with and contribute to the production of many styles of music. There is a complex and ongoing production of noise, sounds, and music by Indigenous peoples across Turtle Island that challenges a restricting idea promoted by the phrase “Indigenous music.”

A Note on Scenes

My dissertation is structured by moments where an experience of deeper listening opens listeners to a new way of hearing and seeing certain aspects of the world. These instances or “scenes” as I describe them, facilitate my process of exposing and rebuilding settler mentalities that becomes a process of unsettlement towards a future that is unknown. These scenes support the dissertation and provide different opportunities to unpack the concepts introduced and examined. They are not all cross-cultural, nor are they all encouraging, but they are all related to music and involve complex moments of recognition, even if they do not all exemplify how this recognition becomes a process of critical self-reflection.

Will Straw notes that “a decade of writing in popular music studies has sought to refine the notion of ‘scene,’ but the slipperiness remains.”23 I play with the fluidity of the term in this project, referring to two common iterations. I refer to the idea of scenes as communities that stem from or seemingly revolve around certain objects or actions. I utilize this idea of scenes in discussions of the characteristics and potentialities of the

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people that make up music scenes. I also refer to scenes as moments where something is played out, a moment of a larger picture. This is important because I am interested in public moments revolving around aesthetic materials and performances, where the working through of larger cultural issues is encouraged. The scene is both the site of this process and the community that sets the limits of this public pedagogical experience. Ultimately, the flexibility of the term allows me to borrow from discussions of “scenes” in relation to music or food scenes for example, in order to conduct an analysis of listening in “scenes”—moments or images within a larger picture, process, or history.

Both senses of scene outlined above are often present in my use of the term in this dissertation. As I pull scenes of listening together from distinct places—literature, first person accounts, and a critical reflection on my experiences with specific records—I am also constructing a kind of historical and continuous “listening scene.” Indeed, what unites most of the distinct scenes discussed in the dissertation is the centeredness and significance of listening. The objects of significance are still recordings in most cases, but the act of listening to these objects is of most concern here. I do not discuss the rise of what might be spaces devoted to the listening to records or “listening scenes” in this project, but my interests perhaps overlap in some ways with the people who run these “listening bars.”24

I analyze scenes for an examination of listening because scenes formed around musical objects influence the dissemination of records and the booking and promotion of concerts—that is, they influence the way people listen to music—and, particularly, they offer the flexibility of looking at particular moments while speaking to larger processes that operate within these moments. In “Some Things a Scene Might Be,” Straw discusses this further. Specifically, I follow Straw’s depiction of scenes as potentially things that “make cultural activity visible and decipherable by rendering it public.”25 This is

significant for moments of listening that can be thought of as largely private and isolated. However, these scenes of listening help reveal the work undertaken in processes of listening and the public reality and socio-political consequences of the processes. There is a personal, private responsibility of listening made public when these scenes come together, but there is also a collective work of listening made public that needs further analysis.

Scenes are inevitably “workplaces” through this understanding, including geographical locations for assembly. These locations for assembly—concert venues in this case—are not always the places where the work of a scene is conducted. Records and music offer the flexibility and portability for the work of listening to be engaged almost anywhere. Further, it is not always the work of listening that is made visible or audible in places of assembly, but I value scenes because they are places or moments where “transformative work” is carried out. For my project, I focus on the transformative work involved with the re-formation of collective states of mind as shaped by the records we listen to collectively: popular music. The making public of the kinds of work of listening in the scenes within this dissertation allows for an analysis of the re-formation and potential unsettling of settler colonial states of mind in North America.

Rebuilding Recognition

This dissertation consists of four chapters. Chapter One is a review of literature from the three areas of critical theory brought together for this analysis: Indigenous resurgence and settler unsettlement, critical listening studies (as a subarea of sound studies), and popular music studies. I provide a justification for this theoretical engagement and set out the parameters for key ideas used throughout this project (settler states of mind, re-cognition, performance). Chapter Two begins to set up and unpack the ideas of deep critical listening, critical self-reflection, and aesthetic surrender examined throughout this dissertation. I employ three different scenes of listening in this chapter including an exchange between ethnomusicologist Frances Densmore—known for her early recordings of songs of various Indigenous peoples across Turtle Island and her well-
documented presence in historical images with Mountain Chief, Chief of the Montana Blackfoot—and the Ute Chief Red Cap. Chapter Three digs deeper into the processes of making new worlds audible in cross-cultural listening experiences and then on how these newly audible worlds might be made real. I focus on an undertheorized aspect of the history of cover songs—instances where Indigenous or African American peoples reimagine songs written by white people—by unpacking an experience of listening to Inuk singer Tanya Tagaq’s cover of Nirvana’s song “Rape Me.” The analysis of this kind of reinterpretation helps outline how new worlds are made audible. I also think through Tagaq’s performances and the ways she begins to make these newly audible worlds manifest.

Chapter Four focuses on the release of DJ and producer collective A Tribe Called Red’s (ATCR) powerful album We Are The Halluci Nation and the rebuilding of recognition that it encourages. Part of this analysis of recognition and its unsettled form as “re-cognition” is an attempt to articulate my experience of surrender as it unfolded alongside the release of this album and the re-cognition spurred by a performance by ATCR. This process of “re-cognition” differs from a moment of “recognition” in its self-reflective turn and in the move to confront and re-think the structures that govern a sense of self in cross-cultural engagements. Yellowknives Dene political scholar Glen Coulthard makes clear that recognition is often nothing more than an empty acknowledgement of immediate presence and otherness, followed by a return to engrained colonial power structures. The focus remains on the act of seeing the otherness of the other under the structures that continue to see the person or peoples as other. While Coulthard has unsettled the idea of large-scale and directly political dimensions of recognition and pushed for a focus on processes of self-determination and self-recognition for Indigenous nations, Jonathan Lear, among others, has provoked another kind of thinking about inter-personal recognition—which may build to larger-scale and collective dimensions—for non-Indigenous peoples. Lear’s sense of “re-cognition” is not

26 The group currently consists of Bear Witness (Ehren Thomas—Cayuga, Six Nations), and 2oolman (Tim Hill—Mohawk, Six Nations).
centered around the temporary process of acknowledging the race, ethnicity, or cultural difference in another. Though this moment may be part of, or initiate, a move to “re-cognize,” the process of re-cognition is a move to self-reflection conducted by those engaged in acknowledgement, that works to re-constitute an individual’s sense of self as a subject engaging with and responsible for another.\(^{27}\)

When I say “responsible for another” I do not mean taking control of another’s life or imposing a system of understanding. By responsibility, I mean having a sense that continued co-inhabitance on this land requires a nation-to-nation respect and recognition of sovereignty. To be responsible for another in this case is to face the realities of the conditions of social, political, and economic existence of one another and provide support only in the manners determined by the individual(s) requesting support. It is the ultimate commitment because it involves a surrender to another’s ways of knowing. The process of giving support involves acting when called upon without the presuppositions, impositions, and violence of assumption. “Re-cognition” as a process of critical self-reflection, reconstitution, and sense of responsibility is noted throughout this dissertation by the use of the hyphen.

I conclude the dissertation by gesturing to the ongoing production of important music by artists such as Jeremy Dutcher (Wolastoq, Tobique First Nation in New Brunswick). I also briefly tie in the earlier discussion of Frances Densmore in response to the cover design of Dutcher’s album. The cover, designed by the prominent Cree artist Kent Monkman, engages an ongoing interrogation of settler colonialism by playing with the notable images of Densmore and Mountain Chief (fig. 1). Dutcher’s music is a result of a deep listening experience. Dutcher listened to the words, sounds, and songs of the Wolastoqiyik peoples that were preserved on wax cylinder recordings. Dutcher decided to transcribe what was heard and write new arrangements around the voices and melodies

on the recordings. The result was the Polaris Prize winning album *Wolastoqiyik Lintuwakonawa*.

This dissertation is part of an attempt to break down and rebuild settler states of mind. This rebuilding is necessary for learning how to participate in new worlds opened and led by Indigenous artists, leaders, and nations. Learning to participate in these worlds is part of a process of respecting sovereignty of all nations on Turtle Island. This dissertation is written with these goals in mind but is only a small part of this process. This dissertation aims to articulate an experience of surrender and encourage and unpack a rebuilding of recognition. This is part of an attempt to think through the position of settler audiences in Indigenous-based encounters and processes. I aim to find ways to listen and support the creation of new ways of seeing and being in the world. I have and continue to be opened to new possibilities made audible through music produced by Indigenous peoples and I have heard the encouragement to learn to be responsible for these possibilities.
Chapter One

Listening to the Work of Indigenous Resurgence and Working at the Intersection of Settler Colonial and Popular Music Studies

The aim of this project is to analyze different scenes of cross-cultural listening to articulate how music produced by Indigenous artists might be challenging settler states of mind through unsettling listening experiences. I also aim to explore how these instances can contribute to processes of “conciliation” between Indigenous and non-Indigenous nations. I follow Métis scholar and artist David Garneau’s use of the term conciliation in contrast to reconciliation. Garneau notes that the current use of reconciliation “presses into our minds a false understanding of our past and constricts our collective sense of the future.” In other words, in the Canadian context, there is no “previously existing harmonious relationship” to return to and “reconciliation” cannot be a reparative project with the singular goal of addressing the violence and traumas brought about in and by residential schools. Conciliation, on the other hand, “is an ongoing process, a seeking rather than the restoration of an imagined agreement.” It acknowledges the continual work needed to recognize sovereignty, difference, and the agreements which guide sovereign nations.

Garneau cites an Oxford English Dictionary (1981 edition) definition of “conciliation,” noting the phrase “the action of bringing into harmony” in his unpacking of the term. Harmony stands out to me as a key term, politically and musically. Politically, I think of what I refer to as a nation-to-nation harmony as the ongoing process of two or more nations recognizing the “pre-existing and ongoing sovereignty of the

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29 Garneau notes that it is the “re” of re-conciliation that is misleading in this sense, implying a previous period of positive relations. He emphasizes that there is no such relationship to return to. (2016): 30.
30 Ibid., 31.
31 As cited in Garneau (2016): 30.
conciliating parties.” Garneau cites “two-row treaty wampum belts” as “living agreements” that convey an understanding of this kind of relationship. He emphasizes that “two states, acting as states, can establish a neutral space of negotiation between their communities in which treaties are established as living agreements, in relationships that do not compromise each other’s core spaces.” Nation-to-nation harmony relies on respecting mutual sovereignty.

Musically, I understand harmony as an instance where distinct notes or voices are heard simultaneously. I highlight this not to add to or uproot Garneau’s discussion of conciliation, but because thinking through harmony in musical terms emphasizes a listening to distinct notes or voices, a key theme in this dissertation. Audiences must listen to the distinct and simultaneously performed notes to hear the harmony. The moment the audience stops listening to one of the notes or voices, the harmony is lost. Harmony requires work from performers and audience members and an ongoing commitment. In this dissertation I understand the complex and ongoing process of conciliation to be part of the development and maintenance of a complex and ongoing process of nation-to-nation distorted harmony between Indigenous and non-Indigenous nations on Turtle Island.

I add the adjective “distorted” because I want to recognize that this is not a general harmony covering all aspects of life on Turtle Island. Social harmony or a harmonious relationship between members of different cultures can exist while recognizing that Indigenous nations hold responsibility to the land. That is, Indigenous nations will, and rightly so, make and enforce decisions that will affect all peoples living on the land. The harmony is “distorted” in the sense that the idea of equality of power potentially loaded into the concept of harmony is unsettled. It is a positive distortion that recognizes a dismantling and reconstruction of social, political, economic, and land-based structures in

33 See Garneau’s (2016) example of a two-row treaty wampum belt: 31-32.  
a decolonized North America. Power over life on Turtle Island is not shared equally between all peoples. It must be returned to Indigenous peoples and nations.

More specific questions guiding this project include: How does music help challenge or dismantle settler colonial structures in North America? How are cross-cultural tensions negotiated through music? What kinds of listening experiences provoke a restructuring of recognition? Let me briefly define a key term. By critical listening, I am emphasizing an awareness of the embodied experience of sound and referring to experiences where listeners are consumed by the music to the point where their awareness moves beyond the basic structure of the song to the conditions and the social contexts (and conflicts) from which the music emerges. Based on this awareness, listeners may be encouraged to become more critically self-reflective and undergo a process whereby they begin to reconstitute their subject position. Put another way, listeners respond to the “musical interpellation” and begin a transformation of their understanding of their positionality.35

My project recognizes music as a significant force for creating conditions for processes of unsettlement. Focusing on music under a scope of theoretical and political analysis necessitates an interdisciplinary approach. My project brings together work from three fields: Indigenous resurgence, sound studies, and musicology. Work from Glen Coulthard and Leanne Simpson from the field of Indigenous resurgence frames the discussion of decolonization, while the work of Mark Rifkin, Jonathan Lear, Eva Mackey, and Nadine Hubbs offer vital contributions to the emerging field of what might be called “unsettlement studies,” a sub-field of settler colonial studies. Sound studies scholars Jacques Attali, Don Ihde, and Steve Goodman outline the terms related to a discussion of critical listening. Work from Robinson, Diamond, Jennifer Lynn Stoever, and Adorno—together creating an area of research in musicology I consider “listening studies”—shapes the discussion of the relationship between Indigenous and non-

Indigenous peoples as encountered through music. A discussion of the genres of hip hop and electronic dance music (EDM), including their musical and socio-political genealogy, is framed by the work of W.E.B. Du Bois, James Baldwin, Paul D. Miller, Lindsay Knight, and Karyn Recollet. I discuss a range of music genres and the various contributions of Indigenous musicians to them throughout this project, but I provide a deeper discussion of hip hop and EDM in this chapter because they are the popular genres of choice in the early 21st century and the fourth chapter revolves around the work of DJ and producer collective A Tribe Called Red. Bringing these fields of inquiry together sheds new light on the relationship between music produced by Indigenous artists and the work of conciliation, decolonization, and settler unsettlement.

*Indigenous Resurgence, Decolonization, and Settler Unsettlement*

Literature on Indigenous self-determination is important for this project because it frames a key element of a process of decolonization. If decolonization is a process by which Indigenous nations work to reclaim land and assert cultural, political, and economic sovereignty, this work directly challenges the states of mind and structures of the neoliberal settler state. Therefore, literature on Indigenous self-determination begins to reveal the theoretical and practical framework from which Indigenous nations may draw upon for their own unique moves of reclamation. It also potentially serves as the frameworks to which settlers respond and have responsibility towards in processes of unsettlement.

Unangax Education scholar Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang assert that “decolonization is not a metaphor.”[^36] They explain:

> Though the details are not fixed or agreed upon, in our view, decolonization in the settler colonial context must involve the repatriation of land simultaneous to the recognition of how land and relations to land have always already been differently understood and enacted; that is, all of the land, and not just symbolically.[^37]

[^37]: Ibid., 7.
Though this definition is clear, elements of the concept can remain elusive. For example, the practical work of decolonization often remains unclear to settlers and people not directly confronted by the negative effects of colonialism. Individuals may understand the goal of decolonization but not the practices and processes—socially, politically, and psychologically. Alternatively, reconciliation becomes a catchword that eases these tensions. Reconciliation is dangerous however, because it is often a settler-controlled process that gestures towards an imagined state of social and political equality, but in reality, masks a desire for social and political disparities to remain intact. Tuck and Yang assert that “Reconciliation is about rescuing settler normalcy, about rescuing a settler future.”

Reconciliation has been used as another mask for white supremacy by which settler cultures willfully neglect and attempt to assimilate Indigenous peoples. This is why leading scholars of Indigenous resurgence posit that a move to self-determination is necessary for Indigenous peoples.

One of the most significant texts regarding Indigenous cultural self-recognition is Yellowknives Dene scholar Glen Coulthard’s *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*. In this text, Coulthard outlines the unsuccessful history of Indigenous communities attempting to work with a settler state in order to achieve social, political, and cultural recognition. Alternatively, he stresses the need for Indigenous communities to move beyond the attempts to be recognized by and within a settler state and instead work to achieve self-recognition that can facilitate processes of decolonization. Coulthard engages Marxist thought from a Fanonian perspective in order to show how a system of settler colonial politics of recognition ultimately repeats itself, even if it is challenged and seemingly reformed. As a result, Coulthard lays out a different, Indigenous-based engagement that moves to work outside of settler colonial

38 Ibid., 35.
frameworks of recognition. He describes these engagements as a force of “grounded normativity”:

I call this place-based foundation of Indigenous decolonial thought and practice grounded normativity, by which I mean the modalities of Indigenous land-connected practices and longstanding experiential knowledge that inform and structure our ethical engagements with the world and our relationship with human and nonhuman others over time.  

This sense of grounded normativity, though forceful in its theoretical form, is open to being moulded by the teachings of many different nations. There is room for it to develop based on the unique desires of each community.

In the final chapter of his book, Coulthard lays out five theses that challenge a settler colonial politics of recognition and encourage Indigenous self-determination. For example, as outlined in the notion of “grounded normativity,” Coulthard emphasizes the need for land-based direct action. He argues that petitions and lobbying do not have the same strength and power for Indigenous nations as physical blockades as affirmations of Indigenous land rights. Land is the key issue that can unravel a settler colonial politics of recognition. Coulthard also puts forth a thesis concerning the increasing size of urban Indigenous communities. He notes that cities were “originally conceived of in the colonial imagination as explicitly non-native spaces—as civilized spaces.” Coulthard acknowledges that this history has been and must continue to be complicated by rapidly growing urban Indigenous populations. Coulthard suggests that ties must be made between urban Indigenous and reserve-based populations in order to utilize the unique strengths that are developed in different situations. For Coulthard, the work of decolonization is political work that breaks the settler colonial socio-economic framework. Music may not be directly valuable for Coulthard in a decolonial sense, but

41 Ibid., 165.
42 Ibid., 173-174. Emphasis original.
there is a significant role played by music produced by Indigenous artists in relation to unsettlement.

Music assists with the unfolding of the realities of some Indigenous people who have transitioned from reserve-based lifestyles to an urban lifestyle or have grown up in urban areas and are looking to connect with reserve-based traditions. Music produced by Indigenous artists simultaneously exposes the disconnect between urban and reserve-based Indigenous populations and works to create new connections. The ties Coulthard calls for—between urban and reserve-based Indigenous communities—are often based in and built through music and music culture. The resistive elements of music should be considered. My project focuses on how these resistive elements effect listeners. In more general terms, I analyze the relationship between music and settler processes of recognition, surrender, and unsettlement.

Coulthard focuses on land-based political processes as the primary forces of decolonization. Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg scholar Leanne Simpson also takes this position but considers the reach of cultural materials as decolonial forces for Indigenous people. Simpson is a prominent writer and musician and is a member of Alderville First Nation. Her text, *Dancing on Our Turtle’s Back: Stories of Nishnaabeg Re-creation, Resurgence and a New Emergence*, is an act of community-based self-recognition, the kind called for by Coulthard. Simpson turns to her community and Nishinaabeg ways of thought to theorize a sense of Indigenous resurgence for her community. This text is not a traditional text in terms of Western European thought. Anishnaabe elders are often cited as sources of knowledge, especially when there are conflicting understandings of terminology and ideas – a common occurrence since ideas have been allowed to grow and waver in significance for different communities and generations. By inserting itself into patterns of Western European styles of authority—being published as an academic text—the book encourages settler readers to open to different understandings of what academic work is and what it means to do academic work on Turtle Island.
Simpson is not attempting to explain Nishnaabeg thought to non-Indigenous people. Rather she is trying to theorize Indigenous resurgence from the perspective of the Anishinaabe peoples. This is an important point for my project. Most of the music considered is not written for non-Indigenous people, however, the musicians recognize the pedagogical opportunity involved in producing materials that are likely to be engaged by larger audiences from various cultures. As a musician, Simpson also writes for her community first, while understanding that non-Indigenous people will hear the music and engage with it in unexpected ways. I recognize here that the danger involved in encouraging non-Indigenous people to listen to music produced by Indigenous musicians for Indigenous peoples is that settlers might engage unreflectively and appropriate ideas of indigeneity. Robinson’s “hungry listening” names a history of settler colonial listening that includes countless moments of these appropriative acts.\(^{43}\) However, to turn away from discussions of the ways non-Indigenous people are engaging with music produced by Indigenous people is a disservice to the work Indigenous musicians are putting into the creation of their music and, in many cases, the education of non-Indigenous listeners through the music and performance. These discussions are essential for learning how to listen differently. They also reassert the agency of the artists. I recognize the balance that must be maintained between respecting Indigenous agency and analyzing settler unsettlement in these moments of cross-cultural listening. I take up music and moments in my project where Indigenous artists have chosen to engage with their audiences and teach or encourage them to listen differently.

As an academic Simpson takes great care in not publishing ceremonial or sacred stories and acknowledges where other elders may have different understandings of certain teachings. Through these discussions, Simpson brings forth many terms and topics that, though meant for an Indigenous audience, can have a significant effect on non-Indigenous readers as well. For example, Simpson discusses the concept of *Aanj Maajitaawin* (which roughly translates to “the art of starting over”), in contrast to the

\(^{43}\) Robinson (2020).
almost empty use of the term “reconciliation.”

Though most non-Indigenous people are likely unfamiliar with the concept and will fail to grasp its historical meaning it can encourage the non-Indigenous reader to rethink and understand the limits of reconciliation. If reconciliation is, as Simpson notes, simply “being promoted by the federal government as a ‘new’ way for Canada to relate to Indigenous Peoples,” encountering and struggling with *Aanji Maajitaawin* might mean can help members of settler cultures challenge and work through their settling frameworks of knowledge.

**Settler States of Mind and Unsettlement**

The idea of settler unsettlement as a field of study relates to wider discussions of settler colonialism and Indigenous resurgence. It stems from the recognition that if decolonization hinges upon the repatriation of land to Indigenous peoples and nations, then there should be a process that unfolds amongst settler cultures alongside the work of Indigenous peoples and nations. Some writers that speak to topics that considerably overlap with themes of settler unsettlement have already been mentioned and will be unpacked further in other sections, including writers such as Robinson, Diamond, and Baldwin.

It is important to note however, that Baldwin did not think of himself as a settler. Baldwin was marginalized by settler colonial cultures due to his race and sexuality. He sought “exile” in Europe, including Paris and Switzerland, to escape the violence and limits placed on him by North American settler cultures. To employ Baldwin’s work in the context of settler unsettlement studies as I do here, involves a careful and reflective process. The nuance of his position as a queer African American writer must be recognized in the context of settler colonialism. Baldwin did not write from a position of privilege in the way other non-Indigenous writers did and continue to do. He did not

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write with the intention of undergoing a process of surrender and unsettlement, similar to the processes I argue for in this dissertation for non-Indigenous, particularly settler, audiences. Baldwin did not use the phrase “settler unsettlement” but he did speak to the need for the historically and unjustly privileged to surrender a violent sense of self—a key element of surrender discussed in this dissertation. Indeed, my discussion of surrender and unsettlement expands on Baldwin’s emphasis on the need for this process, but he should not be folded into a category of non-Indigenous settler writers.

Four other writers and a key text by Emma Battell Lowman and Adam J. Barker, inform my approach to thinking about unsettlement. These writers arguably fit in other categories discussed in this chapter, but I have highlighted them as non-Indigenous writers who engage in a self-reflective practice. These writers are Mark Rifkin, Jonathan Lear, Eva Mackey, and Nadine Hubbs. The key text by Lowman and Barker is titled *Settler: Identity and Colonialism in 21st Century Canada*. I will unpack its significance for my project briefly before addressing the work of Rifkin, Lear, Mackey, and Hubbs.

Lowman and Barker’s text informs my understanding and use of the term “settler” throughout my dissertation. I noted in the Introduction that settler is a heterogenous concept in the settler colonial context in North America. I also carry forward from their work the understanding that there are many people whose positionality exists in between the concepts of “settler” and “Indigenous” peoples.47 Indeed, “settler,” “Indigenous,” and other identities such as African American and “newcomer,” “arrivant,” or recent immigrant exist only as or in relationship to one another.48 That is, these markers often say more about a person’s relationship to the settler state than they do about themselves as humans. I recognize this reality as I employ the language of settler colonialism—“settler” and “Indigenous” peoples. Despite the colonial basis, for settlers, “Settler” can carry an important weight: “It is analytical, personal, and uncomfortable. It can be an identity that we claim or deny, but that we inevitably live and embody. It is who we are,

48 Ibid., 16.
as a people, on these lands.” Further, I understand the term “settler” as “a tool we can use to confront the fundamental problems and injustices in Canada today.” It represents “a way of understanding and choosing to act differently.” For my project, I still employ the term settler when discussing the position taken up by members of settler cultures in new Indigenous-led worlds because settlers cannot occupy a different position, but they can rebuild and perform a different kind of settler identity.

This shifting settler identity is important for my dissertation. It is important to understand that there is no transcendence for settlers. To clarify this, I borrow from Lowman and Barker at length:

We do not expect (or believe it is possible for) any individual Settler Canadian to successfully transcend these [settler colonial] structures on their own. Rather, individual choices and efforts building to collective action are required to create change. All the same, systems and structures should never be abstracted from society. All of these systems and structures are occupied and operated by people, and they function because of many people operating in concert, agreeing actively or passively on certain principles (such as who owns the land and as such who has the right to make decisions over what kind of society should exist on the land). No one—including us—can simply step outside of these structures and systems, but we can begin to become aware of our own surroundings, our own complicity, and to make choices about how and why we will struggle against them (or not).51

The rebuilding or shifting of a settler identity is a rebuilding conducted within a settler colonial reality. Nevertheless, it can be a different kind of settler identity created for different kinds of (Indigenous-led) understandings of lives lived on Turtle Island. I build on this recognition by Lowman and Barker for my understanding and discussion of settler unsettlement; that is, settlers surrendering colonial ideas and land, performing different roles, and participating in Indigenous-led worlds on Turtle Island.

49 Ibid., 2.
50 Ibid.
51 Ibid., 16.
Mark Rifkin’s work is important for this project because he signals what he calls “settler structures of feeling” and outlines their significance to processes of settlement and unsettlement. He notes, “Understanding settlement as a structure of feeling entails asking how emotions, sensations, and psychic life take part in the (ongoing) process of exerting non-Native authority over Indigenous politics, governance, and territoriality.”52 I have already touched on the significance of Rifkin’s work in the introduction to the dissertation, but I will expand upon it here, particularly the importance for the theoretical basis of what I have constructed as settler states of mind. I have framed surrender as a psychological and material process informed through embodied experiences of sound. That is, I am thinking through encounters with aesthetic materials where settlers are encouraged to turn inward and re-think settler ways of understanding of daily existence. Rifkin’s insight into “settler structures of feeling” is essential for understanding how it might be that psychological and emotional processes relate to the work of unsettlement. Working through the emotional bases of surrender and unsettlement is an attempt to rethink “settler structures of feeling.”

Settler as a state of mind is a significant part of this dissertation. It consists of the psychological myths, patterns, and structures that allow and encourage settlers to continue to believe that they are the rightful owners and primary beneficiaries of the land on Turtle Island. I maintain that there are different versions or states of mind for settlers to occupy because there are a range of settler positions. However, there are fundamental elements shared by these states of mind, primarily a sense of entitlement or historical justice in a settler occupation or right to occupy and benefit from the land on Turtle Island. This normalized occupation has, over time, created an image of settlers as the standard of contemporary socio-political civilization, an image that settlers need to surrender in order to face the reality of the damage these states of mind and images do to others and themselves. Addressing settler states of mind in this dissertation is essentially a narrowed discussion of Rifkin’s structures of feeling. At points in this dissertation these

notions will undoubtedly overlap, but I try to focus on how the unsettling of settler listening experiences might be challenging the ways settlers think about themselves in North America.

Rifkin’s notions of “settler structures of feeling” and “settler common sense” are key components of settler states of mind.53 I am also informed by Baldwin’s discussions of whiteness, not as a colour or race, but as a mentality or way of relating to the world.54 Baldwin complicates the comfort of being white and the mentality that can come with it, pushing people to confront the illegitimacy of their “whiteness.” By speaking of whiteness as a mentality Baldwin suggests that the individual is in a stage of development, importantly, one which they can improve and reform. That is, by making “whiteness” a mentality he also makes room for people to develop another variation of the state of mind.

Baldwin’s discussion of whiteness as a state of mind informs my thinking about settler states of mind because it speaks to the disconnect with a reality on Turtle Island that settlers continue to uphold through the maintenance of an image of themselves as the rightful owners of the land. Speaking of settler as a state of mind also addresses the reality that not all settlers are white or Caucasian. Settler is not a race or ethnicity. It is a constructed mentality that is lived by those who look to benefit from the historical disconnect fostered by settler colonial ways of life. This disconnect permits the perpetuation of myths of settler civility and naturalization. It has been made real and physical through the many attempts by the settler state to contain and remove Indigenous peoples. Breaking with settler colonial states of mind is a process of accepting the reality of life on Turtle Island; settlers are uninvited people on the land and conciliation between nations does not occur without Indigenous sovereignty.

53 “The notion of settler common sense seeks to address how the varied legalities, administrative structures, and concrete effects of settler governance get “renewed” and “recreated” in ordinary phenomena by nonnative, nonstate actors, in ways that do not necessarily affirm settlement as an explicit, conscious set of imperatives/initiatives or coordinate with each other as a self-identical program.” Rifkin (2014): 10.
54 James Baldwin, “How Can We Get the Black People to Cool It?” interview in Esquire, July 1968.
I pick up on the space that Baldwin opens by discussing whiteness as a mentality. I consider settler states of mind to be malleable psychological positions. I mean this in two ways. First, the state of mind adapts to new issues presented and is constantly working to fold into itself realities that may seem threatening but can be made part of this settler mentality. For example, artifacts that belong to Indigenous peoples (representing the longstanding presence of Indigenous peoples on the land) are often taken from the land and placed in a museum as historical objects. Placing these objects in an institution of the settler state displaces what meaning they have for the people and culture they come from and infuses them with a settler colonial purpose. They become a piece in a settler colonial story.

Second, and more importantly for this project, I consider settler states of mind to be malleable in the sense that within one state of mind there are varying positions, all informed by a sense of past, present, and future.\(^55\) In the constant “alternation between gazing at the self in a mirror, and looking out through a window at the lives of other people” an individual can shift positions within a single state of mind.\(^56\) For my dissertation, this means that settler states of mind are not bound to the destructive notion that settlers are the rightful owners and inhabitants of Turtle Island. There is a space within this state of mind that allows them to surrender this idea and rebuild something else, something that allows them to learn to participate with Indigenous nations calling for respect and sovereignty. In other words, there are settler states of mind that exist in Indigenous-led worlds on Turtle Island. But these states of mind are significantly different from those under settler colonialism. White settlers do not transcend their whiteness, but they can rebuild what it means to be white on stolen lands. There are settler states of mind that function in Indigenous-led worlds because settlers do not become Indigenous in these realities, nor do they forget the history of settler colonialism. Settlers do, however, move through states of mind that maintain the reality of settlers—


\(^{56}\) Ibid., 9.
uninvited people—and adapt to the appropriate roles and responsibilities that come with living these positions in new worlds.

The malleability of settler states of mind is important for this project. I am not looking to create a new state of mind as a way of erasing settler colonial history. Settler states of mind need to be rebuilt. For this reason, I am concerned with contemporary music in my dissertation. Focusing on contemporary music enables me to find the moments where the strength and unquestioned presence of settler colonial states of mind can be interrupted and new realities confronted. I am not, in this project, interested so much in the history and development of colonial states of mind, beyond certain moments that are useful for understanding the contemporary music and realities discussed. Put another way, I am focused on the now of popular music and, in doing so, reinforcing the fact the Indigenous musicians continue to contribute and work at the center of the production of many genres of popular music.

Despite Indigenous musicians producing music in a range of genres, I recognize that not all listeners will hear the cues to learn to listen differently. When music features lessons of this sort, some listeners will fall back to the familiarity of settler states of mind. To suggest that unsettling listening experiences are simple, easy, or inevitable is to clean up the reality of the experience. However, responding to the encouragement to engage in the work white settler listeners on Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, Blackfoot, or Mi'kmaq land, for example, are faced with upon hearing some of these songs, is a move towards articulating this experience of surrender for other listeners and a way of performing the responsibility to meet Indigenous artists in spaces of “audiospatial interdependence” on Turtle Island.57 It also begins a process of rebuilding settler states of mind that involve learning to participate in the worlds created by Indigenous artists. The experiences and responsibilities of listeners will be a focus of this project.

A significant part of the discussion of rebuilding settler states of mind is based in my working through a process of recognition as re-cognition. Music is a main avenue for cross-cultural exchanges or processes of recognition. I recognize that Coulthard is interested in large-scale, political dimensions of recognition, and I think through a rebuilding of recognition at a more inter-personal level—at first at least—but I take inspiration from Coulthard’s examination of the emptiness of recognition and related processes for Indigenous nations in a settler colonial system. I also acknowledge and respect that his work is accessible to settlers but contains many elements written for an Indigenous audience. Settlers are invited to do their own work of rebuilding recognition as it operates within settler states of mind. I turn to Jonathan Lear’s work in this dissertation to begin this process.

Lear has not addressed the pervasiveness of settler colonialism to the same depth as other writers throughout his body of work, but Lear’s notion of instilling a sense of responsibility into the idea of recognition is important for this project. Lear’s philosophical-psychoanalytic background led him to analyze the roots of recognition in order to shift the process. That is, he asked, directly, what it means to recognize something. To recognize, in his view, is to engage in a re-cognizing or re-thinking in the moment. Lear shifts the emphasis from the act of distinguishing between one another to the person or people engaged in the act of recognition. The point of this turn is not to neglect the other or the differences, but to think again about the ways people are encouraged to understand the nature and structure of the process of recognition and, of course, the other.

This turn is reminiscent of Sara Ahmed’s “double turn.” Ahmed emphasizes that “the task for white subjects would be to stay implicated in what they critique, but in turning towards their role and responsibility in these histories of racism, as histories of

\[58\] Lear (2015)

this present, to turn away from themselves, and towards others.”\textsuperscript{60} It is a complex move of turning inwards, but turning inwards only to re-turn again to others. Ahmed states that the “double turn is not sufficient.”\textsuperscript{61} I recognize this insufficiency and hear this sentiment echoed in the work of Tuck and Yang who caution against the “front-loading of critical consciousness building” for settlers.\textsuperscript{62} Emphasizing psychological over material surrender is a mistake I do not want to repeat. Psychological surrender needs to unfold alongside material surrender. At times I pause in the moment of the “double turn” in order to examine what can happen in this movement. That is, the movement that “clears some ground” in a psychological and material sense.\textsuperscript{63} And yet, decolonization as the repatriation of land remains undone. I do not mistake my writing or the work of others that I discuss in this dissertation as the work of decolonization. Nor am I encouraging a simple case of “free your mind and the rest will follow” on the part of settlers.\textsuperscript{64} Indeed, it is in these moments of unsettling spurred through musical engagements that settlers begin to come to terms with the fact that the greater work of surrender should begin. The surrender is not characterized by the “double turn”\textsuperscript{65} or the rebuilding of recognition. This is only one part—a starting place for many. More uncomfortable work follows, which is undertaken with the understanding that “relinquishing stolen land”\textsuperscript{66} is the purpose. For many settlers however, understanding this purpose is a difficult process. Therefore, settlers educating and pushing other settlers to engage in psychological and material surrender becomes a necessary part of the greater process of surrender. I work through this early part of the process of surrender to unpack what is being relinquished, the ways in which it might take place, and the ways it might support work by the very people white settlers are urged to turn towards as they turn inwards. Part of this unpacking involves the

\textsuperscript{60} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{61} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{63} Ahmed (2004).
\textsuperscript{64} Tuck and Yang (2012): 19.
\textsuperscript{65} Ahmed (2004).
continued breaking down and rebuilding of recognition as constructed within settler colonial states of mind.

On the other side of this rethinking of recognition, Lear finds responsibility. To go beyond passive acknowledgments is to understand the mutual support at the basis of the process. In this mutual support is the reality of having responsibility for one another. To recognize (or re-cognize as I am using it to mark the difference) then, is to understand and take up responsibility to and with another as beings in the midst of a life lived on the same land. This is not an opening to impose or assimilate. It is a moment of exposing personal vulnerabilities and opening to the vulnerability of another. The responsibility is to support the other in this moment of exposed vulnerability and to not collapse into personal vulnerabilities in order to subsume the other. There is no reality without recognition and, therefore, no reality without this responsibility—a responsibility that exists on a personal and collective level. If nation-to-nation (distorted) harmony as respecting the sovereignty of all nations on Turtle Island is the ongoing goal of conciliatory processes—as I outline in the introduction—a re-cognition or an understanding of a collective responsibility as one nation to other nations living on the same land is part of this process.

In more general terms, Eva Mackey’s text *Unsettled Expectations: Uncertainty, Land and Settler Decolonization* has also informed my approach to thinking through unsettlement. Mackey provides some key insights when she works through examples of different land negotiations with different nations on Turtle Island. She specifically cites the Cayuga Nation of New York and the Onondaga Nation’s individual land negotiations with the state of New York. Her examination of these negotiations highlighted the deep “epistemological shift” that can happen in cross-cultural encounters. That is, her analysis detailed moments where the divide in understanding between different ways of thinking about, understanding, and knowing the world is revealed. In the specific

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instances detailed, settlers participating in the negotiations—from landowners, to lawyers, to judges—could not easily grasp the weight and significance of the claims made by the Onondaga Nation for example. Citing community member and author Robin Wall Kimmerer, Mackey emphasizes that it was not possession or ownership of the land the Onondaga wanted, but “the right to participate in the well-being of the land” and the “freedom to exercise their responsibility to the land.”69 This revelation opens a discussion of the ways settlers hear and see themselves in relation to Indigenous peoples and the land. In more complex terms, Mackey reveals how the “anti-colonial epistemology of the Onondaga land rights action”—something the settlers involved in the negotiation did not clearly grasp—“entails a radical reshaping of relationships as citizen-subjects around conceptions of relational responsibility.”70 Mackey’s discussion of the “epistemological shift” in ways of understanding the world is significant for my project because it exists in the conditions of creation of music and during listening experiences. I take up the space opened by Mackey’s discussions of “epistemological shifts” and “relational responsibility” in my dissertation and allow music produced by Indigenous peoples to lead the process.

Mackey is also strategic about her discussion of the land negotiations. Alongside discussions that reveal this epistemological divide, she includes examples of cross-cultural engagements that flourish despite the often deep division between ways of understanding and knowing the world. In the last two chapters of her book she includes examples of community groups comprised of mostly non-Indigenous people who work alongside and follow the lead of the nations enduring land negotiations with the settler state. Mackey emphasizes cases of active treaty making in the present or where people practice “treaty as a verb” to demonstrate ways Indigenous and non-Indigenous people enact “decolonizing relational ontologies.”71 She discusses how non-Indigenous people

71 Ibid., 165.
affected by the land negotiations but sympathetic to the Onondaga Nation and Cayuga Nation of New York’s treaty rights navigated the uncertain unfolding reality. In some cases, non-Indigenous people sold their land to the Nations as an acknowledgement of the Nation’s land rights and to dismantle fears of other non-Indigenous people. In other cases, non-Indigenous groups bought land with the goal of repatriating it to the Cayuga Nation. The non-Indigenous group ran a co-operative farm and education centre on the land until relinquishing their ownership and returning the land to the Cayuga Nation in 2005. This discussion is valuable, not as a way of congratulating settlers, but as an affirmation of the ability of settlers to engage with and find new ways of participating in worlds based on Indigenous ways of knowing despite the incomplete understanding of these worlds.

Mackey’s work is significant for two reasons in particular. First, her discussion of land negotiations, including the challenges faced and alliances formed, and the place of uncertainty is valuable as support for my discussions of aesthetic surrender and the uncertainty that runs throughout this process. Her concrete examples of land negotiations get to the heart of the issue of decolonization. I build off her work by thinking through particular processes of how settlers will emotionally, psychologically, and materially get to the point of confronting the reality of land repatriation. She approaches her discussion on a nation by nation basis and reminds readers that there is no single generalizable process for working through the details of unsettlement and decolonization.

Mackey’s work is also significant because she does not treat her position as author as including the role of cultural translator. That is, she does not set out to explain to settlers the practices and beliefs of certain Indigenous peoples. Rather, her text serves as an attempt at articulating her experiences of engaging with and discussing different land negotiations between different nations. Throughout the book there is a sense of Mackey working through her own understanding of the negotiations and her experience of them, while relating the observations and reactions of other settlers and the Indigenous peoples.

Ibid., 170.
that led the way. She sets the scene and unfolds the reality of the negotiations while attempting to breakdown the nuances of her own—and sometimes other settlers’—emotional, psychological, and material experiences with these processes. Her approach to balancing critical analysis of land negotiation cases and her own position or experience (critical self-reflection) provides one example of how I might go about doing something similar with an analysis of the production of music by Indigenous peoples, the unsettling of listening experiences and settler mentalities that structure these experiences, and my experience of surrender. Our approaches inevitably differ in some instances, but Mackey’s text is valuable for thinking through how to approach maintaining this critical balance and why it is significant for the work of unsettlement.

If unsettlement is a process undertaken as a response to action and calls for land repatriation to Indigenous nations, then it needs to exist beyond the walls of the academy and its abstract boundaries. It should become real for the people living on the land that will be repatriated. Nadine Hubbs’s work is important for understanding this move because it allows for the making real of abstract but grounded concepts such as unsettlement that can have real life, physical, psychological, and material consequences. Hubbs is a musicologist, critical theorist, and cultural historian. Hubbs’s work covering the history of postwar country music is of particular interest for this project because of the critical spaces Hubbs opens in the genre. Hubbs opens these spaces by reading the history of the genre through the lenses of gender, sexuality, class, and race. Where country music is considered by many to be a genre for and by heterosexual, working-class white people, Hubbs argues that it has not always been so and is not necessarily the case. Hubbs reads the narrative of popular country music history against the stories of queer and “outlaw” country musicians. These stories unsettle the received narrative of the

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white, heterosexual, conservative history of country music. This approach reveals spaces within the genre and the history of criticism related to it that “turn away” from established narratives and allow for “progressivism.”74 In a keynote address in February 2017, Hubbs gestures towards the larger socio-political significance of this analysis of country music:

While writing and researching Rednecks, I came more and more to wonder where U.S. dominant culture might afford any space for representations of white working-class social tolerance and progressivism. And if the answer is “nowhere,” what does that mean for working-class people—or for middle-class people? What does it mean for American society overall?75

Hubbs’s uncertainty, though personal in this reflection and stemming from an analysis about a particular genre of music, is tied to larger questions of collective ideals, cohabitation, and progressivism.

Hubbs maintains that space should be left for the presence of progressive-minded people amongst the groups considered most resistant to challenging ideas—namely, white working-class people. To refuse this space is to close the very possibility for the development and actualization of progressive ideas. Further, if there is no space for the presence of radical white working-class people, there is little reason to believe that unsettlement can occur or occur without deeply violent confrontations between nations. Hubbs’s insistence on a space for progressive thought and people amongst the groups considered least progressive makes room for the very engagements that are discussed throughout this dissertation. Indeed, I undertake this project with the assumption that it is counterproductive to close off from the people that feel the most distant ideologically speaking. Cross-cultural processes of recognition are highly dependent on the presence of spaces where people can break from or at least challenge the norms of their socio-cultural

75 Ibid., 20.
backgrounds. The process of unsettling discussed in this dissertation also relies on the assumption that people deemed ignorant, intolerant, or resistant to progressive change can find spaces where they engage ideas that challenge themselves, their ideological foundations, and political backgrounds. This process of unsettlement as it might unfold to settler listeners is a focus of this project. I will turn to literature in the field of sound studies in order to begin thinking through the terms of this critical listening.

*The Audible Future: Why Sound?*

In 1977, Jacques Attali published *Noise: The Political Economy of Music* which has become a foundational text in the area of sound studies. Attali’s book starts: “For twenty-five centuries, Western knowledge has tried to look upon the world. It has failed to understand that the world is not for beholding. It is for hearing. It is not legible, but audible.” Attali follows this by adding, “Today, our sight has dimmed; it no longer sees our future, having constructed a present made of abstraction, nonsense, and silence.” For Attali, Western European knowledge has failed to listen to the world. By placing the Western European eye and mind at the centre of the world, Western Europeans have imposed one understanding of reality and silenced the noises of different realities. Emphasizing hearing the world places the human body within a world as one potential source of noise amongst many others. Through this composition of reality, the anthropocentrism of the Western European world is diminished. Various frequencies and noises are produced and can be heard. For humans, Attali suggests that these noises are often contained and expressed through music—a molded collection of noise—and are forces that make audible new worlds in the future that will gradually become increasingly real. He differentiates between music and noise, but adds that they act simultaneously upon listeners. Noise is violent for Attali because it disrupts orders, and since music

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76 The English translation arrived in 1985.
78 Ibid.
79 Ibid., 11.
channels noise, it carries with it this disruptive force. Though noise can be presented to humans by the world if they are attuned to listening to it, music—combining practices of listening to the world and shaping noise—must be created.

Attali gives great weight to composition as a process that upsets old orders to produce new ones. As a result, music becomes a site of conflicting structures. He notes, “music, like cartography, records the simultaneity of conflicting orders, from which a fluid structure arises, never resolved, never pure.” For Attali, these various orders contribute to the production of different codes for social and economic relations. Though Attali’s focus is on the history of the political economy of music, he makes an important statement in relation to the transformation of these orders and structures, a change which emerged from listening rather than the production of music: “a change in the nature of listening changed the code.” Attali is referring to how the rise of the desire to pay to hear music changed and prefigured a “bourgeois individualism…before it began to regulate political economy.” Though the individualism emphasized by Attali is challenged by later writers, his assertion about the significance of changes in the nature of listening is significant to the debates about unsettlement.

The question of how listening is encouraged and might help to bring about social transformation is the focus of my project. I will seek to take account of changes in the orders or structures of intercultural relationships as exemplified in the realities present in the music produced by Indigenous artists. Specifically, I intend to examine how music produced by Indigenous artists challenges settler states of mind and is making new realities audible.

The question of silence and the inaudible in the field of sound studies is worth briefly touching on. In relation to processes of conciliation, silence and the inaudible represent what is not being heard in current cross-cultural negotiations, as well as the

80 Ibid., 45.
81 Ibid., 57.
82 Ibid.
varying ideas of future collective selves that are inaudible or are pre-emptively colonized and silenced. In different ways, Don Ihde and Steve Goodman frame discussions of silence and the inaudible—or what Goodman calls “unsound.”"\(^{84}\) Ihde focusses on how technological advancements have made once “silent” realms audible to the human ear.\(^{85}\) His task is not to point out a lack of silence, but rather that “by living with electronic instruments our experience of listening itself is being transformed, and included in this transformation are the ideas we have about the world and ourselves.”\(^{86}\) In other words, silence and the inaudible structure human realms of hearing and thought just as much as what is actually being heard. Conversely, Goodman (aka electronic musician Kode9) looks forward to what is currently silent or inaudible as the unsound of potential new ways of hearing the world. Goodman’s focus is on the use and abuse of frequency by authoritative institutions and its contrasting use in artistic projects. He notes, “by zooming into vibration, the boundaries of the auditory are problematized. This is a necessary starting point for a vigilant investigation of the creeping colonization of the not yet audible and the infra-and ultra-sonic dimensions of unsound.”\(^{87}\) For Goodman, interrogations of sound and the use of sound for certain ends can be a critical move to maintain openness to unfamiliar sounds and worlds in the future.

For this project, the sounds produced by musicians and the unsound produced or harnessed become most significant in the moments where listeners experience a kind of encouragement within a performance. That is, when listeners become aware of their being addressed as a subject through the embodied experience of sound that they experience by engaging with a performance. To use the Althusserian language from

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\(^{86}\) Ibid.

\(^{87}\) Goodman (2010): xvi.
which this sense of interpellation stems, a subject is “hailed” in this moment. This hailing occurs with the boundaries of “ideological recognition.” In this moment of recognition, the individual understands their position as a subject of ideology. It is a process of reaffirming the rule of ideology and the concreteness of an individual’s subjected position. This hailing is another significant element in the realm of recognition and in a process of the rethinking recognition as re-cognition.

I follow the lead of John Mowitt in this project and adapt Althusser’s concept of interpellation for the realm of music, listening experiences, and settler colonialism. I expand on Mowitt’s notion of “musical interpellation.” “Musical interpellation” addresses the literal sound of hailing and the ways musical performances can address listeners as subjects. I am particularly interested in this experience of being addressed as listeners and potentially encouraged to become aware of and rethink the structure of personal subjectivity. Specifically, I consider the hailing experienced through music as containing the ability to challenge listeners to engage in a rebuilding of elements of their subjectivity—the state of mind. In these embodied experiences of sound, listeners become subject to the music and the conditions of the experience, temporarily upstaging and relieving their subjectivity to the ideology of the state (though, of course, never stepping outside of it). Indeed, Althusser’s emphasis on the body and the corporal signification during the interpellation is not lost. The subject in both cases is addressed from a “place one cannot see” and confirms their awareness of this experience through corporeal motions. For Althusser the example is a hail from behind. The subject turns and responds without complete assurance that they are the one being addressed in this instance, yet the subject—whether aware or not—is always already being hailed as a subject. During the engagement with a performance as an embodied experience of sound,

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89 Ibid., 172.
91 Ibid., 46.
listeners are addressed by a performance that critiques and offers new worlds and ways of being in the world. The performance creates and comes from a liminal space of destruction and construction. Listeners engage with the performance but cannot “see” or simply cannot understand where this hail is coming from. Listeners experience a response to this interpellation as a psycho-affective unsettling. The body may not necessarily always visibly move as a response, but there is a process of receiving the sound and affecting in response to the performance. This includes a psychological rearrangement that may happen as listeners temporarily lose themselves to the world of the performance.

The unsettling experienced through “musical interpellation” is a key moment in the rebuilding of settler states of mind. During a performance that hails listeners from a new world or way of being, listeners may be encouraged to address their own subjectivity in relation to the performance—the new world presented. Listeners return to the reality of their subjection to the dominant settler colonial state of mind after the performance, but the interpellation from a new world begins to shake the foundation of the dominant state of mind. It offers an alternative view and experience to the hailing experienced through the dominant ideology. The vibrancy of the address within the performance can also linger with listeners. Repeated or similar experiences strengthen the interpellation and continue to encourage listeners to re-cognize or take up responsibility for the rebuilding of settler states of mind and engaging new worlds – a material surrender.

*Musicology: Why Adorno?*

As a companion to the calls for self-recognition advocated by Indigenous scholars, I will draw from Theodor Adorno’s discussions of the value of deep critical analysis of music in order to describe the possibilities of inter- and cross-cultural listening. Adorno’s work is valuable for a number of reasons, primarily, because he makes a distinction between a regressive form of listening, which aims at simple recollection, and a critical listening that can productively engage unfamiliar cultural forms. In *Introduction to the Sociology of Music*, Adorno powerfully outlines how “the joy of consumption for the consumer outweighs the enjoyment of the music itself as a work of art that makes demands on
them."\(^{92}\) This distinction was first made in the article “On the Fetish-Character in Music and the Regression of Listening.”\(^{93}\) Adorno’s infamous pessimism is present in this essay, but this should not justify a complete abandonment of the argument. Adorno’s first point—the fetishization of music—outlines how music has become completely commodified, designed purely for entertainment. He simultaneously questions who this entertainment still entertains. Adorno’s query serves as a foundation for his deeper argument that, “the counterpart to the fetishism of music is a regression of listening.”\(^{94}\) He clarifies that this “does not mean a relapse of the individual listeners into an earlier phase of [their] own development, nor a decline in the collective general level” but rather that listeners “fluctuate between comprehensive forgetting and sudden dives into recognition.”\(^{95}\) Adorno says this fluctuated listening is made possible by a deconcentrated activity of perception. Most concerning for Adorno is how “deconcentrated listening makes the perception of a whole impossible.”\(^{96}\) The whole in this case is the beauty of the technical structure of the work as well as the social conditions surrounding the production and consumption of the work.

At his harshest, Adorno notes that in regressive listening there is “a neurotic mechanism of stupidity,” particularly, “the arrogantly ignorant rejection of everything unfamiliar.”\(^{97}\) I think there is something to be gleaned from Adorno’s illumination of the pitfalls of deconcentrated listening—an insight which is particularly prescient in a world where the likelihood of cross-cultural encounters is much higher. Indeed, Adornian regressive listening reveals itself in different ways under modern conditions. For example, non-Indigenous fans have attended ATCR concerts wearing headdresses and body paint. This display of cultural appropriation stems from a kind of regressive


\(^{94}\) Ibid., 303.

\(^{95}\) Ibid.

\(^{96}\) Ibid., 305.

\(^{97}\) Ibid., 307.
listening. As listeners however, we should not avoid engaging with music produced by members of cultures that are not our own. As these challenges are faced, an education process is opened. Unfortunately, these moments force many Indigenous performers into the role of the educator alongside their chose role of creator and performer, but in these moments, greater percentages of non-Indigenous audiences are pulled in to learn and assist in the education process moving forward. Instances of appropriation are dangerous and inappropriate, but they do not reflect the experiences of all non-Indigenous listeners. The level of uncritical engagement in moments of modern regressive or, similarly, “hungry listening,” breeds a critical pessimism, but the potential found in working through pedagogical listening experiences encourages more critical engagement.

Adorno might have been too quick to close off new possibilities in the world of popular music, but I push this kind of analysis beyond his limits. Doors are being opened by artists who engage in a critical, reflective, and self-reflective production of popular genres of music. Indigenous musicians are continuing to open and step into this space of aesthetic production, encouraging more critical kinds of listening within and beyond aesthetic encounters. Though it has it limits, Adorno’s work serves as one starting point for thinking through questions of musically-centered listening experiences.

While Adorno’s work on the regression of listening is significant for this project, critics generally agree the philosopher’s work on popular music is “considered the least convincing aspect of his otherwise impressive analysis of the predicament of Western music in the twentieth century,” in part, because “Adorno is prejudiced, arrogant and

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98 The issue of cultural appropriation is complex. For instance, in 2019 Connie LeGrande (Cree) was accused of cultural appropriation because her album featured elements of what were considered by some—including Tanya Tagaq and other Inuit artists—a style of Inuit throat-singing. LeGrande’s album was nominated for Indigenous Music Awards, prompting some artists to boycott the awards unless LeGrande withdrew. The IMAs ensured that LeGrande’s nomination would not be withdrawn. These issues are difficult. I do not enter this conversation as a judge of what is or is not cultural appropriation, especially between cultures which are not my own. As I argue above however, we should not turn away from these instances because of their complexity. Indeed, these moments require more critical engagement to help us—audiences and performers—work through the cross-cultural encounters.

Max Paddison is a specialist in the area of Adorno’s aesthetic theory and his critical theory of music in particular. Paddison’s text *Adorno, Modernism and Mass Culture: Essays on Critical Theory and Music* serves as one of the key texts in the critical engagement with Adorno’s ideas. Paddison outlines a critical theory of music, asserting that, as an object of analysis, music is significant because, though it appears to be one of the most individual and personal activities, music is “also always social.”

This means that music can tell us something about the world that “lies ‘outside’ it” even when listeners are pulled into the seemingly inescapable world of the work itself. Paddison notes that a critical theory of music “would consider music particularly in the context of the power relations which underlie the relations of musical production…[and] would consider music in terms of ways in which our cultural identities are constructed.” Paddison takes time to outline how a critical theory of music is different from music criticism. A critical theory of music does not remain confined to the world of the body of work. Rather, it has the task of “illuminating connections between…the ‘closed world’ of the musical work and the world outside.”

Most importantly, Paddison outlines that philosophizing about art should not attempt to explain the “unintelligibility” of art, but work to understand why art denies and should deny “the contradictions presented by its form to be reconciled.”

The second half of Paddison’s text addresses Adorno’s infamous criticism of popular music. This project does not aim to save Adorno from the endless criticism that his unreflective stance deserves. His goal is to engage with the project that Adorno laid out through his critique of popular music. Though Adorno failed in his own attempt to engage with popular music, Paddison notes that the “blind spots of Adorno’s view on popular music becomes the most interesting and necessary gaps to open up and look

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100 Paddison (1996): 81.
101 Ibid., 24.
102 Ibid.
103 Ibid., 23-24.
104 Ibid., 25.
105 Ibid., 51.
Paddison argues that popular music has an ability to be both reflective of society and critically self-reflective. Adorno believed that popular music could not both reflect and be self-reflective. He saw the commodity nature of popular music as enveloping any critical ability of popular music. Though Paddison provides an important critique of Adorno’s position on popular music, he does not attempt to posit popular music as a potentially revolutionary object of critical thought. Instead, he continues to ask critical questions such as: how long can a piece of music exist within the tension of encouraging radical self-reflection and being a commodity used for pure entertainment?

Paddison’s work is a necessary addendum to Adorno’s work because it extends the critical theory of music and essentially frees popular music from the chains of commodity and critical fetishism given to it by Adorno. Paddison does not wholeheartedly reject Adorno’s claims because of his (mis)characterizations of popular music, nor does he ignore their role in the larger picture of Adorno’s project. Paddison engages the gaps in Adorno’s thinking in combination with the beneficial elements. In this same fashion, my dissertation will seek to open space by thinking through a process of critical listening and analyze how it plays into the work of unsettlement. Paddison’s work helps set the conditions by which an analysis of popular music in relation to socio-political movements can be productively undertaken from a non-Indigenous perspective. If music is to be able to help create the conditions for which conciliatory practices can be undertaken from varying perspectives, its relationship to the world through listeners, beyond its seemingly complete structure as an individual piece, should be established. Paddison creates a path for settler listeners into the challenges of critique and larger socio-political thought surrounding objects of popular music.

Edward Said’s *Musical Elaborations* is another key text for rethinking Adorno. This book engages Adorno’s work on critical theory and music, but also works to expand on the blind spots in Adorno’s system of thought. Said’s route into a discussion of music is the experience of performing music. For Said—a trained pianist—playing music, as its

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106 Ibid., 92.
own practice of re-creation, is the most fulfilling engagement. Interestingly, this sentiment echoes the level of significance that Attali places on composition, a similar concept. After dealing with the uniqueness of performance and the initial act of composition, Said focuses on the listening aspect of what he calls “elaboration,” which entails these three different elements. As Said works through the chapter on listening he suggests that unravelling creation and re-creation or the initial performance and the performance work of listeners as two unique events is too strict of a division of the elements of musical engagement. Said is more satisfied with a sense of “heterophonically” hearing and thinking about performance and listening. This means that performance and listening are understood as re-creation and individual but necessarily social acts. To listen or play is to bring forth an individual’s prior experiences with music and work through the co-presence of musical and non-musical thought. Listeners are not isolated, though it may feel that way increasingly so in contemporary times. This act of listening as a new performance brings different meaning to seemingly stale worlds. By working through a discussion of listening, Said also offers a way of thinking about music. He notes:

Music thus becomes an art not primarily or exclusively about authorial power and social authority, but a mode for thinking through or thinking with the integral variety of human cultural practices, generously, non-coercively, and, yes, in a utopian cast, if by utopian we mean worldly, possible, attainable, knowable.

Said casts music as an art form that encourages people to think through multiple lines of thought and bend them in order to refute the authority contained in a false sense of

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107 Said is again touching on a tension in the work of European writers between performing and composing music. European writers, such as Adorno and Attali, find most value in the process—or at least the metaphor—of composition. Said is no different, but suggests a way to begin to think about the act of performance and engagement of listening as kinds of composition as well. This suggests an incompleteness about musical composition and a loose but deeper connection between composer, performer, and audience member or listener.
109 Ibid., 97.
110 Ibid., 105.
completeness projected by an individual piece. Therefore, Said leaves space in his definition of elaboration to avoid making it one kind of authoritative engagement with music. To elaborate and engage musically is to follow through different lines and allow for a “leisurely, majestic unfolding.”

This elaborative approach is important for thinking through how music creates conditions for conciliation because it can encourage listeners to “work on the piece,” not in the sense that they re-create, appropriate, or give ill-conceived meaning to a piece, but in the sense that listeners approach the act of listening as a performance or process that opens to the multiple lines being spoken through the piece. People know how to engage with music as a commodity, but it is the form and engagement beyond this structure that Said emphasizes that is necessary for cross-cultural listening experiences.

**Indigenous Musicology**

Philip J. Deloria’s text *Indians in Unexpected Places* and Michael Pisani’s text *Imagining Native America in Music* interrogate the history of a politics of listening between Indigenous and settler cultures. Though these texts focus more on late 19th century and early 20th century musical relationships, the questions brought forth have importance for contemporary projects. For example, Deloria explores the rush by settler cultures to record a constructed sense of authentic “Indianness” from a settler perspective. Deloria notes, “from the instant it was recorded, through the multiple translations that followed it into print and then into piano music, song, and opera, Native music became part of a mixed-up world of cross-cultural production.” Deloria analyzes the products of this mixed up cross-cultural production and extracts the expectations created and lodged into a settler cultural memory. In other words, he works to “consider the kinds of frames that have been placed around a shared past.”

111 Ibid., 102.
113 Ibid., 199.
114 Ibid., 7.
Deloria’s work urges the reader to think about collective memory and identity through an unsettled lens. Near the end of the text, he notes that shifting cultural and economic structures pushed Indigenous performers to the cultural margins in the twentieth century. For my part, my dissertation aims to show that Indigenous artists are challenging the dominant public consciousness in Canada. Indigenous musicians are producing music, which is being heard by increasingly more people, breaking cultural stereotypes set during the 19th and 20th centuries, and unsettling ideas of current and future collective identities.

Pisani’s project is similar to Deloria’s, but Pisani focuses primarily on how “Indianness” was imagined by European cultures through music. Pisani—a settler scholar—notes that members of European cultures were and often continue to be “seduced” by what is “largely an imagined native America.”\(^{115}\) This imagined native America is the result of European mischaracterizations of the sounds and images of Indigenous cultures and the perpetuation of these mischaracterizations. Following Deloria’s lead, Pisani is also interested in thinking about identity construction through music, but adds that “music, like social and even political discourse, establishes, reinforces, and redefines the cultural margins of even ‘imagined communities,’ serving to establish boundaries between various peoples and nations.”\(^{116}\) Pisani is noting that members of settler communities largely had and only wanted to have interactions with indigeneity and Indigenous peoples through an imagined reality. This becomes the most pressing question of Pisani’s work: what role does music play in constructing relationships between real and imagined Indigenous peoples?\(^{117}\) In the twenty-first century, the terms have changed once again. There continue to be relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples that are structured by the tensions between constructed senses of real and imagined peoples. However, new music produced by Indigenous peoples is capturing the imaginations of Indigenous and non-Indigenous

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\(^{116}\) Ibid., 6.

people in ways that are breaking these conceptions. The international recognition of work by Indigenous musicians is reinforcing the strength and resiliency of Indigenous peoples, despite cultural genocide. My project will think through how music produced by Indigenous artists is opening more space for alternative and contradicting ideas, unsettling out-of-date identities and resulting relationships.

Beverley Diamond is a prominent writer in the area of Indigenous musicology. Her work covers topics including the Yukon music scene, Indigenous artists and recording practices, and Indigenous music in eastern North America.118 Most important for my project is her article on “Decentering Opera.”119 This article is particularly valuable because Diamond makes three key assertions. First, she notes that an unsettling is arguably most needed within social groups that were historically privileged and the colonizers.120 Second, through a discussion of two operas in the early 21st century—a Sámi opera from 2006 called Skuvle Nejla, and an Aboriginal Dance Opera from 2001 called BONES—which she notes, “have continued the process of transforming intercultural relationships well beyond the final curtain,” Diamond points towards an unsettling of the audience through aesthetic engagements.121 She believes that through contemporary work, Indigenous artists are inviting settler audiences “into a new relationship.”122 Third, Diamond believes that these engagements and the new relationships created through them “might be the most transformative.”123

120 Ibid., 56.
121 Ibid.
122 Ibid.
123 Ibid.
Indigenous artists are creating these new relationships through what Diamond calls “new concepts of embodiment.”\textsuperscript{124} These new senses of embodiment for non-Indigenous audiences stem from unsettling experiences with art. The discomfort comes from engaging with stories that do not repeat tropes of settler colonialism as beneficial for all. The sense of embodiment is most important in this case because it reasserts the primacy of the body in an experience of listening. Diamond’s discussion of unsettling experiences with art is important as a way of beginning to think about questions addressed by my project including, what is the role of music in processes of unsettlement? And, what kinds of cross-cultural recognition occur through music and the experiences of listening to it?

Stó:lō scholar Dylan Robinson is another key figure in the area of contemporary Indigenous musicology. I have already discussed his notion of “hungry listening” in the introduction and how this dissertation serves as a response. He addresses similar questions of cross-cultural exchange and collaboration in other work by thinking through the genre of opera, one of the earliest colonial public musical genres that staged cross-cultural interaction. As noted above, Deloria and Pisani’s texts highlight how opera became a genre through which non-Indigenous artists attempted to capture and portray a sense of indigeneity to non-Indigenous audiences. Opera also became a genre through which Indigenous artists could perform, sometimes “obscuring” identities.\textsuperscript{125} Robinson focuses on what he says is a subtle, but repetitive collective interest to “return to the musics of first contact” in an attempt to represent a collective identity.\textsuperscript{126} He uses examples of the turn to “early music” in order to think about the kinds of intercultural encounters that happen through music and how these encounters are “being used” in larger social communities.\textsuperscript{127}

\textsuperscript{124} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{127} Ibid., 247.
Robinson provides a list of potential explanations for an increase in interest in early music “intercultural music encounters” between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.\(^{128}\) He notes that the interests of the federal government perhaps play a role as a way of serving a desire to see and demonstrate a “commitment to multiculturalism.”\(^{129}\) Of most interest for this project is Robinson’s discussion about how these encounters are framed as an indication “of Canada’s having entered an age of reconciliation.”\(^{130}\) However, this “age of reconciliation” is marked more by “the discourse, images, and perhaps even sounds of reconciliation over the actual challenges of dialogue and substantive change for which many First Nations and Inuit communities continue to call.”\(^{131}\) Robinson’s critique connects with the work of Coulthard and Diamond on the questions of the legitimacy of recognition and the potential for unsettling audiences. Ultimately, the aesthetic encounters should reach beyond repeating the same mistakes found in the political sphere. Robinson’s work encourages readers to think about how aesthetic encounters might encourage artists and audience members to reflect on and challenge notions of recognition and reconciliation instead of merely “staging ‘togethering’.”\(^{132}\) These questions are relevant to intercultural music encounters within all genres of music. Therefore, as this project works to think through moments of intercultural listening experiences, these questions will be at the forefront.

In relation to Robinson’s discussion, it is important to note Kofi Agawu’s brief discussion and dismantling of a myth of intercultural music encounters. In the text *Representing African Music: Postcolonial Notes, Queries, Positions*, Agawu makes two important points in this regard. First, he asserts the need to focus on specific moments in music or listening experiences:

The development of strong interpretations of the products of African musical genius has been hampered by the overemphasis on the

\(^{128}\) Ibid., 244.

\(^{129}\) Ibid.

\(^{130}\) Ibid., 245.

\(^{131}\) Ibid.

\(^{132}\) Ibid.
ethnomusicologists’ classificatory schemes. We read of musical types, repertoires, and genres—always in the plural, as if the individual products were unworthy of analytical attention. Yet the aesthetic experiences of many Africans are shaped most memorably by a certain dirge, a certain song, a certain poetic text, a certain singer, a certain drummer, a certain occasion.133

This specificity works to ensure that non-African or non-Indigenous people who engage with African or Indigenous music attempt to do so in a more Said-inspired fashion of musical elaboration as opposed to a process of “objective study” defined by genres and categories of Western thinkers. Agawu argues that musicologists should avoid studying African music like a scientist or ethnographer and instead engage with it like a performer or impassioned listener because it works to dispel a longstanding myth that African music is purely functional and without a contemplative element.134 Agawu notes that African music has been thought of as purely functional because it is believed its sole purpose is ritualistic or for some other direct purpose. This stands in contrast with the high art of European music which was long thought of as for contemplation and aesthetic pleasure. Agawu dismantles this dichotomous myth by going through various African songs and highlighting their contemplative elements. Furthermore, he highlights a ritualistic element of European art. European music is structured by ritual, function, and the distance pleaded for by contemplation, in the same way that Agawu demonstrates that African music entails all these elements as well. Dismantling this myth works to unsettle a larger sense of African music as only traditional music and, therefore, continually undervalued by musicologists due to reinforced prejudices and colonial frameworks of thought.135

134 Ibid., 98.
135 Ibid., 118.
This sentiment is echoed by Lindsay Knight (aka Indigenous hip hop artist Eekwol) in her MA thesis, *Resistance in Indigenous Music: A Continuum of Sound*. Knight dismantles a sense of divide in Indigenous music that considers music produced as either traditional or contemporary. Instead, Knight suggests thinking about Indigenous music as a continuum of sound that unfolds many elements and forms of Indigenous life. By maintaining music’s place in all elements of life and not distinguishing it as an art form separate from other aspects of life as Western European cultures tend to do, Knight highlights the forces of resistance bound to music in Indigenous communities. Beyond re-establishing music’s place as a part of life, Knight also acknowledges other elements of resistance, such as the significance of the drum, the role of women, and the force of language revitalization that occur through music produced by Indigenous artists. Through these discussions, Knight re-asserts the role of musicians in processes of resistance and decolonization.

*Music of Resistance: From Slave Songs to Blues and Hip Hop*

My project understands artists as key players in processes of resistance, unsettlement, and decolonization. The work of certain artists challenges the psycho-aesthetic conditions of listeners which begins to open opportunities for collective challenges to larger socio-political structures. Not all artists do this, nor must all artists push listeners with political goals. However, the artists I engage encourage these psycho-aesthetic encounters. I consider performance, in the words of José Esteban Munoz, to be “imbued with a great deal of power.” While Munoz focuses primarily on performance art by queers of colour, his theorizations inspire my own analysis of musical performances throughout this project. In this context, I use “performance” loosely throughout, often simultaneously referencing the act of performing on stage, as well as the carrying out of daily rituals which become part of a constant remaking of identity. I emphasize Munoz’s sense of performance because of this fluidity and because of the socio-political significance

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136 Knight (2013).
Munoz gives performance—that is, its “worldmaking” potential. Munoz’s discussion of performance as potentially “worldmaking” is significant because it brings focus to the way performances “have the ability to establish alternate views of the world.” These alternative views made real through artistic performances may begin to challenge the states of mind of audiences that inevitably become part of this “worldmaking” process, if only temporarily during the performance.

Munoz is interested in the “worldmaking” of queer performance, particularly “Chusmeria,” which is “a mode of articulating a queer world…through the auspices of Latina performance.” Chusmeria is an example of “disidentificatory performances” which “deform and re-form the world…by slicing into the façade of the real that is the majoritarian public sphere.” For Munoz, disidentificatory performances “disassemble that sphere of publicity and use its parts to build an alternative reality” and “uses the majoritarian culture as raw material to make a new world.” This slicing, reshaping, and deconstructing all become part of the building of new ways of understanding, being, and knowing the world through performance. I discuss performances by Tanya Tagaq, A Tribe Called Red, Jeremy Dutcher, and, briefly, Kent Monkman as examples of disidentificatory performances by Indigenous artists that deconstruct and build worlds and encourage a rebuilding of the states of mind of settlers.

The resistive elements of these “worldmaking” performances draw force from the lived realities embedded in the creation of the music. Lyrics play a part in expressing these realities and are often the focus of analyses, but there is more to the listening experience. Music is able to move listeners in multiple ways because of its ability, in the words of Baldwin, to “contain the toughness that manages to make this experience articulate.” “This experience,” according to Baldwin, is the “particular experience of

138 Ibid.
139 Ibid.
141 Ibid.
life and [the] state of being”—the emotional reality or “facts of life”—that enables the creation of certain anguish-ridden and yet joyful kinds of music. These realities are powerfully conveyed in hip hop today because the genre allows the artist to preserve, articulate, and transform their experiences. I provide a deeper discussion on the literature of hip hop and electronic music here because it is critical for working through Chapter Four of this dissertation, which focuses on listening experiences around the music of DJ and producer collective A Tribe Called Red. The power of the innovation found within the hip hop genre is noted by writers and artists, but this power also comes from its place in a larger history of music that has transformed realities.

Paul D. Miller (aka DJ Spooky That Subliminal Kid) notes that the mixing culture of hip hop and electronic music is an extension of the work of blues and jazz musicians who “went to the crossroads” or played a “call and response” style in which multiple voices were heard through similar songs, if not the same one. The emotion embedded in the patterns and structures of music containing these multiple voices reaches further back and comes from a place of anguish, as Baldwin notes, as well as a striving for transformation. This reality is captured in the songs of slaves as outlined by W.E.B. Du Bois in *The Souls of Black Folk*. Du Bois focuses on the songs of slaves because it was through these songs that “the slave spoke to the world.” Yet, it is not a simple speaking to the world that Du Bois and authors after him such as Baldwin, Angela Davis, and Miller, outline. The slave song helps Du Bois articulate the notion of “double consciousness.” As Du Bois notes, “one ever feels his twoness,—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one

13 Ibid.
147 Ibid., 16.
dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.” Du Bois asserts that an African American individual pressed with the reality of a double consciousness does not seek to eradicate their ancestral history in favour of assimilation, nor do they seek to impose on the future in order to eliminate the oppressor. Rather: “This, then, is the end of his striving: to be a co-worker in the kingdom of culture, to escape both death and isolation, to husband and use his best powers and his latent genius.” By acknowledging the speaking occurring through these songs, Du Bois hoped that others would “listen to the striving in the souls of black folk.”

For my project, it is important to note that in hip hop and electronic music the reality of the double consciousness has not been erased. Instead, it has become more complex. Mixing culture brings together many voices, alluding to a reality that when speaking through this music, “the voice you speak may not be your own.” This does not deny the authority of the direct lyrical voice speaking through the music. It acknowledges the complexity of the act of articulation through music. Furthermore, the cross-cultural engagement conducted through these genres has added new layers to the articulation and transformation of realities through the music. Hip hop produced by Indigenous artists is inspired by African-American hip hop, bringing into conversation multiple histories and voices of anti-colonial struggle. At the same time, however, Indigenous hip hop is also informed by various Indigenous traditions such as the importance of rhythm in Indigenous drumming traditions, as well as oral storytelling traditions. Experiences of the pains of colonization, slavery, and racism against black and Indigenous subjects speak with one another through hip hop, creating a solidarity against anti-black and settler colonial oppressive forces. For example, when Mob Bounce (Gitxsan and Cree/Métis Vancouver-based Indigenous hip hop duo) mix their rhymes with a beat, they are speaking of and transforming their experiences under colonization

148 Ibid., 17.
149 Ibid.
150 Ibid., 22.
through a genre that is built on a history of transformations of experiences of racism and brutality which link back to the lives of slaves. Hip hop and electronic artists create music which possesses, reveals, and articulates what Miller describes in other discussions as a “multiplex consciousness.” Miller charts a progression from Du Bois’ discussion of double consciousness to jazz legend Charles Mingus’ discussion of triple consciousness in order to construct a sense of “multiplex consciousness.” He asserts that though multiplex consciousness moves away from Du Bois’s initial revealing of the double consciousness, it does not deny the history of oppression connected to Du Bois’s term. The key point for my project is that music that involves multiplex consciousness is necessarily informed by the many voices of the social history of the conditions that fostered the artist and the music.

However, different audiences do not hear all voices equally or in the same way. Jennifer Lynn Stoever develops this point after acknowledging a point of listening found in Du Bois’ work. Through concepts she calls “the sonic color line” and “the listening ear,” she asserts that racialized listeners experience the same sounds differently. For Stoever, “the sonic color line” is the process of racializing sounds and listening practices, while “the listening ear” is the “dominant racialized filter” of sound. She articulates how “blackness” and “whiteness” become aurally racialized as cultures think of themselves as colour-blind or living in times of “post-racial identities.” Once aurally racialized, “blackness” and “whiteness” get placed in a hierarchy which normalizes white listening practices and develops “conflicted listening practices” for black, Indigenous, and other colonized peoples, that need to be “navigated, brokered, and challenged.” Du Bois declares that the slaves spoke to the world through their songs, but Stoever illustrates how the sonic color line shaped their translation for certain listeners and

153 Ibid., 61.
154 Ibid.
156 Ibid., 7.
157 Ibid., 5.
158 Ibid, 32-33.
effectively silenced them for white listeners. This is not to deny the agency of African American and Indigenous artists, however. Though their work may be subject to these filters in the minds of some non-African American and non-Indigenous listeners, the artist’s power to upset, manipulate, and challenge this reality is not erased. The way African American and Indigenous artists challenge this filtered listening will be discussed later in the dissertation.

Stoever’s insights are beneficial for my project because the sonic color line and listening ear also operate outside of a white/black binary. Normalized “white” listening practices in North America create expectations of sounds of indigeneity and submissive listening practices for members of non-white cultures. It also shapes white audiences’ unreflective engagement with work from Indigenous cultures. White audiences put the most weight on recognizing racialized points of indigeneity. However, these points of indigeneity are constructed through the sonic color line and mediated by the listening ear. This means that white audiences are already listening for points of indigeneity previously constructed as representing Indigenous cultures. This causes the repetition of racist listening patterns and the failure to hear beyond the racialized connections made between sounds and sights of indigeneity. Hip hop and EDM produced by Indigenous artists faces these racialized challenges, but also works to challenge the complacency and expectations of settler colonial listening practices by containing and conveying the power of the transformation of the realities of the artists. As expectations collapse, listening practices should reach across the sonic color line and beyond the racialized connections made between sight and sound. Through this collapse, the once silenced voices contained within the multiplex consciousness of the music negotiate new understandings of listening and cross-cultural listening practices.

Miller describes the engagement with the reality of a multiplex consciousness as a performative writing and a move to become literate. This is a becoming literate in the sense that attempting to engage many voices is a process of familiarization with existing material in specific areas. However, Miller asserts the significance about the process of
becoming literate in a genre of music is that “people have a more emotional approach toward music.” For Baldwin and Miller, the emotional attachment expressed through and developed with music becomes the strongest connection and most important element of the relationship. This emotional strength and commitment come through in the creation of new music as a form of articulating and transforming realities. To listen in new emotionally committed ways requires a process of stepping back and “becoming literate” in new forms of listening, just as the artist is encouraged to become literate with the genre during the process of creation. For example, Stoever uses the phrase “embodied ear” to challenge readers to recognize that what is encountered through listening practices is “experienced by the entire body and interpreted in conjunction with other senses.”

This challenges settler understandings of listening and asks settlers to think beyond the ear as the sole bodily representative. Critical listening is a bodily experience where the processes of listening and thinking are experiences incorporating multiple senses. Music creation as a kind of bodily writing and translation of realities becomes the writing of new realities, which the performer and critical listener can begin to cohabit and expand. More concretely, hip hop and electronic music as genres of multiplex consciousness that allow for the capturing of certain conditions of existence, enable Indigenous artists to articulate and transform the experience of colonization. This is a crucial point for my project because these transformations encourage a new “aural literacy” and settler listening subject.

**Conclusion**

Some scholars have noted that in certain contexts non-Indigenous people are invited to serve as witnesses, and their listening experiences as acts of witnessing “how sonic creation, mediation, and reception play a role in people’s lives and how those often-hidden processes are shaped by intercultural attitudes and actions.”

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161 Ibid., 47.
present in the daily solitary interactions with popular music produced by Indigenous artists, though I must acknowledge the difference between the emotional labour involved in listening to popular music and the witnessing as an experiencing or engaging with the performances at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission events.\textsuperscript{163} It is, nevertheless, important to consider what it means to listen as a witness, or as I develop in this dissertation, a listener engaged with a performance through an embodied experience of sound navigating processes of re-cognition. Most importantly, non-Indigenous listeners lack the knowledge and capacity to engage in valuable “witnessing” of performances and sonic creations by Indigenous artists. It also risks letting listeners defer the responsibility of unsettlement because they might feel that they have done their job by simply witnessing a performance or testimony. This scenario is characterized by a complete turning outwards, lacking in critical reflection.

In most cases, settler listeners are unfamiliar with the totality of what is being heard. This is not so much an obstacle as an opening. The unfamiliarity can encourage a critical listening on the part of listeners. Yet, a tension exists in that if unfamiliarity is a condition of critical listening and conciliation, preserving this unfamiliarity is as much a condition as being challenged by it. As Garneau notes, non-Indigenous people should not strive to know everything about Indigenous communities. Rather, he notes there should be “irreconcilable spaces of aboriginality” where indigeneity is not on display for white settlers.\textsuperscript{164} Listening as re-cognition then, should be a process that encourages non-Indigenous people to learn to work when confused and uncomfortable. This contradicts a tendency in Western European thought to constantly try to understand and colonize unfamiliar knowledge systems.

Resisting the colonization of sound, listening experiences, and sonic imaginations is a move towards creating conditions for conciliation. Understanding listening to music as an affective experience helps this process. However, in order for non-Indigenous

\textsuperscript{163} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{164} Garneau (2016): 27.
listeners to engage in acts of conciliation and face the facts of the articulation and
transformation of the experience of colonization, the non-Indigenous listener needs to
surrender settler states of mind and colonial images of themselves. Some music produced
by Indigenous artists is encouraging people, on collective and personal levels, to open to
this surrender and rebuild settler states of mind. My project seeks to understand this
process.
Chapter Two

Scenes of Cross-Cultural Listening Through Ongoing Settler Colonialism

In my final two years of high school in Kenora, Ontario (Treaty 3 territory)—a town of about 15,000 people located on Lake of the Woods in Northwestern Ontario—I played in a five-piece hard-rock band called The Pums.165 We played enough shows to gain a minor following. One year, the coordinators of Kenora’s annual August long-weekend music festival decided to have a “Battle of the Bands” to see which local band would play the final day of the festival. The Pums signed up without hesitation, hoping to play the biggest stage of our career. The festival was always one of the highlights of the summer, but it catered to an older demographic by bringing in pop and rock bands from the 1970s and ’80s who still toured. It is not clear if the organizing committee had a smaller budget that year or if they simply wanted to support the local music scene, but The Pums were ready to play.

165 Kenora is a town about 200 kilometers east of Winnipeg and nearly 500 kilometers west of Thunder Bay. Its population largely consists of members of white Euro-American (settler) cultures, First Nations peoples, and Métis people. In the early 2000s, my family moved into a house less than two kilometers from Anicinabe Park, a campground in the south end of the small city. I did not know that for some 39 days in July of 1974, many Indigenous people had occupied Anicinabe Park. In addition to specific demands about local judges and police officers, the occupiers wanted to reclaim the land that had been theirs until purchased by the federal government in 1929 and sold to the municipal government in 1959. They also wanted better medical and dental services for First Nations peoples, to stop the continued harassment of their peoples by police, and better opportunities for education. The occupation began as a conference for members of the local Ojibway Warriors Society including Lyle Ironstand and Louis Cameron. Members of the American Indian Movement (AIM) attended the conference and participated in the occupation. Tobasonakwut Kinew was the Grand Council Treaty #3 Chief and President at the time and participated in the negotiations with members of the municipal government of Kenora. For discussion about the occupation and interviews with Lyle Ironstand and Louis Cameron see James Burke, Paper tomahawks: From Red Tape to Red Power. (Winnipeg, MB: Queenston House, 1976), 353-396. See also Wab Kinew, The Reason You Walk. (Toronto, ON: Viking Press, 2015).
The battle of the bands occurred at the local Royal Canadian Legion branch, a place devoted to providing a space for veterans and celebrating memories of battles fought on other soil. The Pums had not played at the Legion before, but it offered a welcoming space for bands. There was a small hardwood floor that acted as the stage area. This space looked out towards tables and a bar along the left side. Most of us were underage so it was unclear why the event was at the Legion. Nevertheless, when our band arrived that evening for sound check, we were informed that there would only be one other band battling for the final spot at the festival main stage. We were excited because it meant our chances were higher, but we felt more pressure to play well.

I am a rhythm guitarist and am conscious of the cost of playing music and participating in music scenes. I have been using the same guitar and amplifier that my parents bought for me when I was thirteen. When The Pums played shows, I would borrow bigger amps that had more wattage than my ten-watt practice amp. Ten-watts is generally not enough power to compete for sonic space in a full band performance. On the night of the battle, I borrowed a Marshall half-stack amplifier—much more than I needed but one of the few options available—from one of our friends who was a fellow local musician. He had helped us along the way, letting us play opening spots on shows for his band and the few touring bands that would come through Kenora. We played our set, which largely consisted of originals written by the lead guitarist, with a couple of covers added to balance the set and help catch the attention of those who were unfamiliar with us. We felt good about our performance and our chances. We started clearing out our gear when the friend who lent me the amplifier leaned in and said, “don’t let that guy use my amp.”

He had apparently been watching the next band get ready for their set and noticed they were short some equipment. I was confused. The small music community had largely been supportive of one another. We shared what equipment we had, though we knew who had the “better” equipment. A moment later, when the guitarist and lead singer of the other band did indeed come over to ask to borrow the amp, one of my bandmates
stepped in and said he could borrow his if he wanted to. The Marshall half-stack, a cliché symbol of classic—whitewashed—rock, stood tall and silent behind the second band that night.

Initially, I planned to watch the set of the next band because I wanted to see if they could challenge our performance. This quickly changed when the band started playing. Our challengers ran through a full set of Nirvana covers, which was an unusual but enjoyable choice for a battle of the bands event. Most battles require that bands lean heavily on original songs. Nevertheless, the band rolled through six or seven Nirvana songs before wrapping up.

That night at the Kenora Legion the force of Nirvana and Cobain was present. Our challengers consisted of a three-piece band (like Nirvana) that played Nirvana’s hits as well as deep album tracks that only dedicated Nirvana fans would recognize. The lead singer pushed his vocal chords too far too early and struggled to make it through the set. He displayed the same intensity and desire to push the limits of “a good performance” as Cobain was frequently known to do. Coincidentally, we had covered Nirvana as well, but we played the most recognizable Nirvana song—“Smells Like Teen Spirit.” I was a Nirvana fan in high school and was connecting deeply with the performance of the second band, and yet, I felt unsettled while witnessing the performance. Nirvana was a white band and their fan base was overwhelmingly white, even though they rejected the masculinity, sexism, and racism of the white working-class towns they came from.166 It made sense to me that I identified with the music of Nirvana; it was something I did not even have to think about. I also recognized the power of music to distort racial, cultural, and ideological lines and affect people from various backgrounds and experiences. I did not think I owned the right to enjoy the music of Nirvana as a white man. But the performance of Nirvana songs that night—by a group of Indigenous musicians—gave the songs a new force and affected me in new ways.

166 This was and still is the reality in many cases unfortunately at many concerts for many bands. This simply emphasizes the overwhelming presence of toxic heteronormative masculinity in the music industry.
The festival judges did not appreciate the band’s set of covers or the lead singer’s strained vocals. When I went over to commend the other band on the power of their set, I sensed that they were not there for the “battle.” Of course, part of them hoped they might sway the crowd and the judges and win the festival spot. They knew the obstacles they faced as Indigenous musicians playing in a small town Legion hall that night, but they did not seem to care. They were ecstatic about their set and about how authentic they sounded. The bassist was proud to say he played the exact line from “Lounge Act,” the ninth track on Nirvana’s commercial breakout album *Nevermind*.167 They knew they were good and enjoyed the performance, even if no one else could hear or see it.

My dissertation will not match the intensity of Nirvana’s songs or the performance of the band that night. It is also unlikely that it will produce a desire to dance. It will however, serve as a place to explore the emotional logic of feeling, expressing, and relating a sense of aesthetic surrender and rebuilding of settler states of mind—a process which reaches toward larger structural change. I begin with this scene in order to articulate this experience. Taking my cue from Alexandra Vazquez, rather than think through the technical aspect of the music, I want to explore “the felt impressions [in order] to read performances closer.”168 I want to reconsider and reflect on that experience of the “battle of the bands” in order to parse what it might mean to listen cross-culturally. My initial experience of listening to the group of Indigenous musicians provoked something that I could not grasp in the moment. I could not understand what I was hearing, but I felt the responsibility to carry it with me, even if only subconsciously. That night at the Kenora Legion, I heard sounds that affected me.169 The songs were familiar. The sounds had captured the angst of a teenage life many times before. But when the trio

167 “Smells Like Teen Spirit” is the first track on *Nevermind* and was the released as the lead single on September 10th, 1991. “Lounge Act is the ninth track. *Nevermind*, DGC Records, Released September 24th, 1991.
169 Vazquez asks the reader to remember sounds experienced as “directives” that “made listening directly impact you everyday.” She notes for example, “a voice that shaped your adolescent rage, a guitar that made you skip class.” Ibid., 38. For a discussion of “musical interpellation” see Mowitt (2002).
at the Legion played the songs, I was opened to a listening experience that would come to shape my life. The performative life of the music of that night wove itself into the fabric of my daily being to the point where I was compelled to return to it.\textsuperscript{170} It was the unfamiliar pull of the band’s articulations, working in contrast with the familiarity of the songs that became embedded in my consciousness. Though I was unaware at the time, and perhaps for some time after, what I experienced was a sonic provocation. This provocation pushed me to question familiar sounds, and, more importantly, question what it meant for certain sounds and performances to be familiar. This dissertation is one attempt at exploring what it means to respond to this cross-cultural aesthetic encouragement and listen to the world in new and challenging ways.

I also offer the initial scene as a way of entering into the vulnerability involved with cross-cultural listening experiences. In such moments, the vulnerability of one individual’s process of disclosing thoughts, feelings, and sounds (the performer) attempts to meet another individual’s vulnerability in risking seeing, hearing, and feeling the performance, being affected by it, and, ultimately, being forced to step out of the frame of innocence that structured their life prior to this experience (the listener). Yet, these moments are even more complex because they are conditioned by a number of socioeconomic, political, and historical factors based on settler colonial structures. A meeting and simple recognition of vulnerability is insufficient and works to reinforce colonial structures and disparities, as stressed by Glen Coulthard (by way of Frantz Fanon).\textsuperscript{171} These conditions place marginalized groups in a state of perpetual vulnerability, while those that make up the dominant culture exploit the power and fail to

\textsuperscript{170} In a discussion of the famous grunt of Cuban composer Pérez Prado, Vazquez makes note of her focus on the performative life of the grunt, “a life that moves well beyond its actual recordings or typical interpretive places.” She adds, “what I’m after is not what the grunt seems to be saying…but what it is also doing.” In a similar sense, I am interested in exploring how music might be spurring moments of surrender in listeners. In other words, what the music is doing to listeners—over a prolonged period of time, beyond an initial listening experience—and, more specifically, a listener’s critical consciousness and sense of self and responsibility in cross-cultural engagements. Vazquez (2013): 133-134. See also Christopher Small’s discussion of “musicking” in \textit{Musicking: The Meaning of Performing and Listening}. (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1998).

\textsuperscript{171} Coulthard (2014): 17.
recognize the weakness in denying the reality of their own vulnerability. I am pushing back against this weakness and denial by exploring moments where cross-cultural vulnerabilities meet. My examination of vulnerability explores the sense of psychological and material surrender encouraged by the interaction and attempts to convey how this process of surrender becomes its own meaningful way of interacting with another’s aesthetic process of disclosure.

In this chapter, I have compiled three further scenes in order to explore conditions of cross-cultural listening present through ongoing settler colonization in North America. My use of these scenes is an attempt to “hear together” the work and voices of Indigenous musicians, writers, and theorists, as well as the responses of white settler audiences. I listen and think through these elements together in order to explore the ways white settlers understand what it means to listen to sounds, voices, and ways of living in the world that are not their own. My dissertation is concerned with Indigenous voices in particular, but the scenes here are instructive for their characterization of what it means to listen across cultural divides. This project is not an attempt to re-centre the position of white settlers regarding issues of colonization in North America. Rather, I focus on the conditions of the interactions and responses of white settlers because these are the elements with the greatest need for critical reflection and analysis. I follow Beverley Diamond’s assertion that the most critical reflection is needed within social groups that were historically privileged. I am particularly interested in instances of cross-cultural listening as moments that reveal the responses and responsibilities of white settlers in cross-cultural interactions and, potentially, elements of processes of settler unsettlement.

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Scenes of Listening: An Analysis of Settler Colonial Listening and the Turn to Recognition

Each of the following scenes is important because they help unfold elements in processes of surrender. The first scene is a problematic case. It stems from the accounts of early ethnographer Frances Densmore who strove to “salvage” the sounds of Indigenous peoples based on the settler colonial assumption that Indigenous peoples would inevitably lose their cultures through assimilation or by disappearing altogether—a principal that underlies settler colonial approaches to listening to Indigenous peoples. This scene was selected because it illustrates a moment of unreflective and uncritical listening—the type of listening dominant throughout ongoing processes of settler colonization.

The second scene depicts an instance of cross-cultural listening and is taken from constitutional anti-segregation lawyer Charles L. Black Jr.’s essay “My World With Louis Armstrong” (1979). Black Jr. articulates the experience of first witnessing genius in Louis Armstrong as a white man in Texas in 1931.174 Black Jr. notes this experience was “a structurable part of the process” that turned him towards his work on the Brown v. Board of Education case.175 This scene serves as a counter example to the initial scene of settler colonial listening.

The third scene depicts the unsettling depth of critical listening and opens towards a deeper understanding of the experience of surrender. It comes from “Sonny’s Blues,” (1965) a short story by African American novelist and critic, James Baldwin.176 The scene consists of the story’s narrator attending a musical performance by his brother—with whom he has a strained relationship—and being shaken by the experience of listening to and re-cognizing the transformative encounter. Though this scene does not depict cross-cultural listening directly, there is an important tension and self-reflective insight provided by the author that is invaluable as an exemplar of an aesthetic surrender,

175 Ibid.
176 Originally published in 1957 in Partisan Review.
by which I mean an aesthetically provoked re-cognition of the violent imposition of a colonial framework of understanding on marginalized cultures and a psychological and material relinquishing of settler colonial states of mind.

This move is followed by an acceptance of a responsibility for the conditions of existence of others—as self-determined by the members of marginalized cultures. A feeling of identification or attunement can often be part of the surrender despite some opacity. For instance, I identified with the band’s performance at the Legion even as the performance unsettled my view of the world. A sense of harmony can be felt with part of what simultaneously unsettles and opens new worlds. This attunement becomes dangerous however, when it becomes the primary or sole point of the interaction and becomes “hungry listening”\(^\text{177}\)—pushing to know everything or taking advantage of this sense of harmony and imposing a familiar framework of knowledge on another. The experience is therefore a re-cognition and a surrender. The surrender aspect encompasses the act of dissolving part of the ego, leaving or returning space for the self-determination of another, and feeling responsible for the success of this process, despite an incomplete understanding.

It is important to acknowledge that Baldwin’s scene is a surrendering and moment of solidarity between two African American individuals encouraged by jazz music—a genre coming out of African American traditions. The scene depicted in “Sonny’s Blues” cannot be read as a foundation for all experiences of aesthetically encouraged surrender because there are specific cultural conditions that make this experience unique. This experience should not be appropriated. I do, however, recognize elements of an aesthetically provoked surrender in this story and have been encouraged through my engagement with the text to explore what listening experiences framed by surrender mean in a cross-cultural context. Aesthetically encouraged surrender is not limited to intra-cultural experiences, but it is important to understand the cultural significances of the surrender portrayed in “Sonny’s Blues” and not perpetuate an appropriative violence.

\(^{177}\) Robinson (2020).
Figure 1. United States Library of Congress caption: “Piegan Indian, Mountain Chief, listening to recording with ethnologist Frances Densmore, 2/9/1916.” Supplementary caption: “Part of a series of pictures depicting Frances Densmore at the Smithsonian Institution in 1916 during a recording session with Blackfoot chief Mountain Chief for the Bureau of American Ethnology.” From United States Library of Congress: https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/93503097/

David Samuels notes that the photo—alongside two other similar and well-known photos—were staged moments. In February and March of 1916 Densmore and Mountain Chief posed for the photos at the Smithsonian Institute, with Fig. 1 staged inside the building in February of 1916, while others were taken outside in March. They are most likely intended as images of Mountain Chief listening to wax cylinder recordings and Densmore working the machinery. Interestingly, Samuels also notes that even in 1916, the use of an Edison cylinder recorder was relatively dated—“the
“Salvage Recordings”: Settler Colonial Listening

Frances Densmore was an American ethnographer known for her work with Indigenous populations across the United States and parts of Canada. She was an early proponent of the phonograph—a device used to record and playback sound. Densmore kept thorough notes of her experiences with various Indigenous nations across North America and sent detailed reports to the Bureau of American Ethnology. She considered her work valuable to the history of America and to the Indigenous peoples she worked with.  

In an article summarizing a decade’s worth of her work called “The Study of Indian Music,” she states “My work has been to preserve the past, record observations in the present, and open the way for the work of others in the future.” This belief in her position as an unbiased preserver of the past—a marker of settler states of mind and a false understanding exemplifying the danger of benevolence in the colonial context—is a theme throughout her work.

On two separate trips to the Ouray Reservation in Northeastern Utah—in 1914 and 1916—Densmore met with the Unita and White River bands of the Northern Utes nation. Densmore used the phonograph on both trips. In 1917, the year following Densmore’s last trip to the Ute nation, she wrote an informal report about her experiences with the Utes and sent it to the Bureau of American Ethnology for their archives. The report includes a retelling of an interaction with the Utes—Chief Red Cap in particular—that

180 Ibid., 114.
has been of particular interest to scholars. I am interested in this scene because it provides an example of settler colonial listening, “hungry listening,” settler states of mind, and a larger white settler belief in a lack of responsibility to Indigenous peoples that continues today.

The exchange between Densmore and Red Cap was initiated because Densmore was unable to convince the Utes of the value of the phonograph. At one point, she reflects and notes that the Utes must be confused by her desire to record their songs while the United States government forbids the performance of these songs. Densmore offered to pay for each song recorded as an incentive. Members of the band resisted until Densmore called upon Red Cap and asked him for help by noting that she was “known far and wide as the adopted daughter of Red Fox, the Sioux chief” and he would not be pleased with the unaccommodating treatment she felt she was receiving from the Utes. Red Cap told the interpreter that he would get his best singer to sing and stayed for the performance of the songs. Red Cap spoke with Densmore (through a translator) after the recording of the songs and Densmore recounted her exchange with Red Cap in the report:

Red Cap said, “I have done as you wished. Now I want to ask a favor. I do not sing, as I said, but I would like to talk into your phonograph. Will it record talking?” Guilelessly I said it would record any sound.

“Well,” said the wily old chief, “Then I will talk and I want you to play the record for the Indian Commissioner in Washington. I want to tell him that we do not like this Agent. We want him sent somewhere else. We don’t like the things he does. What we tell him does not get to the Commissioner but I want the Commissioner to hear my voice. I want you to play this so he will hear my words, and

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182 Robinson (2020).

I want you to give him a good translation of my speech. We want to get rid of this Agent.”

…About six months later I kept my promise to Red Cap and played the record for the Commissioner, explaining that I had absolutely no responsibility in the matter. He was accustomed to the ways of Indians and I had kept my promise to an Indian singer.\textsuperscript{184}

Erika Brady notes that Densmore later wrote that “numerous employees of the Indian Office were asked to hear the recordings, but no one understood the Ute language and the contents of the speech remained a mystery. The record has not been played since that day.”\textsuperscript{185} However, Brady also documents that the recording was translated years later.\textsuperscript{186} According to this translation, Red Cap did not directly attack the agent as he had suggested. Instead, Red Cap spoke of his “approval concerning Densmore’s activities” and asked the commissioner to allow the Utes “free participation in the pastimes and religious ceremonies of their tradition.”\textsuperscript{187}

This exchange is well-documented by theorists who have outlined how Red Cap “masterfully” controlled Densmore and how she failed to provide any translation of the recording, only keeping her promise in part.\textsuperscript{188} Throughout the description of the exchange, Densmore repeatedly uses derogatory phrases such as: “He was accustomed to the ways of Indians,” and “his face wore the smile that I do not like to see on the face of an Indian.”\textsuperscript{189} This language exemplifies Densmore’s “hungry listening.”\textsuperscript{190} She believed that through her work, without even attempting to learn the Ute language, she was able to understand the lives of the Utes. Her understanding of the Ute nation, however, was constructed through settler states of mind and the colonial narrative of the settler state. As Troutman notes, Densmore and Indian Agent Officials believed and operated as if “their vision of Indianness, one that wed public desire with federal Indian policy directives of

\begin{itemize}
\item[Ibid., 41.]
\item[Ibid. (1999); 93.]
\item[Ibid., 131.]
\item[Ibid. (1999); 131.]
\item[See Brady (1999); 93, and Troutman (2009): 166.]
\item[Densmore (1968): 40-41.]
\item[Robinson (2020).]
\end{itemize}
allotment and assimilation, was the only one that would matter in the end.”¹⁹¹ Densmore brought the phonograph to Indigenous nations and wrote reports on these experiences under the belief that she was recording people who would never be heard again—a pillar of settler states of mind.

Adding to the work of Brady, Troutman, and Scales, I take interest in Densmore’s account of this exchange between herself and Red Cap because it exemplifies her commitment to the myths expounded by settler cultures about Indigenous peoples and, specifically, a larger beliefs within settler states of mind concerning white settler roles and responsibilities in cross-cultural exchanges. The former myths are exemplified by Densmore’s language describing stereotypical beliefs or “the way of Indians” as she notes, while the latter issues come through in Densmore’s explanation to the commissioner that she had “absolutely no responsibility in the matter” of producing and sharing the recording.¹⁹²

Densmore’s failure to provide a good translation of Red Cap’s speech is a failure to live up to the verbal agreement between them. However, Densmore’s shirking of responsibility in the exchange exemplifies larger patterns of settler states of mind. Densmore reveals her belief in not having any responsibility (or a narrowed one at least) in the exchange before she brings the recording to the commissioner. For example, Densmore repeatedly tells the Ute peoples that the phonograph is beneficial because their songs will be kept in the house that “would not burn down.”¹⁹³ Though Densmore believed this was beneficial to Ute culture, this process contributed to the dispossession of land and attempted eradication of the Utes. It displaced the sounds of the Ute people from the people, traditions, and land, as the United States government continued to physically displace the people from their land, something the settler state still does today. Densmore travelled to the land of the Utes, but failed to recognize the need to surrender a settler state of mind which carried assumptions, myths, and a false sense of superiority.

¹⁹³ Ibid., 40.
Learning the Ute language appears to have been unnecessary and Densmore’s presence in Ute territory grew increasingly bothersome. Her assumption concerning the significance of the process of recording reveals a failure to question the assumptions from which she operated and from which the project was based. From its inception, the project was embedded in the narratives of white settlers and operated according to a myth of salvaging Indigenous sounds.

The choice to record Indigenous peoples’ songs was not innocent. Philip J. Deloria states “music enveloped Native life [and] proved a natural place for cross-cultural meetings.” The choice to record songs was therefore motivated by two factors. First, there was a lack of willingness to learn or understand Indigenous languages. Speeches or dialogue would have less value for white settlers. White settlers could not understand the spoken content of most songs sung by Indigenous singers without the help of a translator, but there was a sense that the sentiment of a song could be understood. As dispiriting as this focus on what Jon Cruz describes as the “emotional noise” is, the sense that white landowners were encouraged to listen differently because of the songs they heard is significant. In later chapters I will explore how a rebuilding of settler states of mind is being spurred once again by Indigenous and African American artists through an unsettling of settler listening experiences. Unfortunately, though early settler ethnographers were drawn to the perceived comprehensibility of the emotional elements of the Indigenous songs they recorded, a significant renegotiation of settler states of mind did not occur. If a renegotiation did occur, their cultural defense against this process was strong enough that it resulted in the reestablishment of settler colonial practices and states of mind.

The second factor behind settler ethnographers’ move to record these songs was the extensive embrace of music in Indigenous cultural life. Other authors and artists such as Lyndsay Knight (Muskoday First Nation) and Jarrett Martineau (nêhiyaw and Dene

suliné from Frog Lake First Nation) echo Deloria’s assertion that “music enveloped Native life.”

Knight dismantles an understanding of music produced by Indigenous peoples that categorizes the music as either traditional or contemporary. Instead, Knight suggests thinking about Indigenous music as a continuum of sound that is fundamentally connected to many elements and forms of Indigenous life. Martineau speaks to the resistive power of music and “art-making” as acts of creation. These acts of creation connect Indigenous peoples “not only to the long continuum of resistance that Indigenous people have waged against colonial invasion and dispossession, but also to antecedent creative forms that have existed since the world was first created.” This is part of a process of “creative negation” where Indigenous artists refuse the “colonial normative order and [turn] toward Indigenous alternatives and potentialities.”

Deloria, Knight, Martineau, and other Indigenous writers and artists treat music as part of larger structures of Indigenous ways of knowing and life. Music is not “art” in a settler colonial sense, where it becomes a distinct aspect of life separate from larger systems of knowledge or ways of being. Though early settler ethnographers may not have been aware of the expansive significance that music had and has in Indigenous ways of life, they were aware that music held a certain significance for the Indigenous communities they visited. This hunger to capture the entirety of Indigenous culture and ways of life, in combination with the rise in the use of the phonograph for ethnographic work and the state’s desires to eradicate Indigenous populations, led to the “salvaging”

197 Knight (2013), 1.
199 Ibid.
200 Ibid., 43.
work of ethnographers such as Densmore.²⁰² By recording and, therefore, displacing songs from Indigenous peoples and the contexts they were performed in, white settlers were displacing Indigenous ways of life with greater effect. Settlers could attempt to “manufacture the death of a culture that is still alive.”²⁰³ Music, as a “natural place for cross-cultural meetings,” became a significant site of cultural dispossession beyond the physical dispossession of Indigenous bodies from Indigenous land.²⁰⁴

The reach of settler states of mind governing ethnographic work extended beyond the recording process. These recordings had and continue to have effects beyond the perceived value of preserving the sounds of Indigenous cultures. Specifically, these recordings worked to uphold the myths and expectations of members of settler societies about Indigenous peoples and about white peoples’ responsibilities to Indigenous peoples. As Deloria outlines, “from the instant it was recorded, through the multiple translations that followed it into print and then into piano music, song, and opera, Native music became part of a mixed-up world of cross-cultural production.”²⁰⁵ This world of cross-cultural production includes the production of expectations of sounds and images of indigeneity for the collective memories and identities of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people on Turtle Island.²⁰⁶

Notable drumming sounds and singing styles became the marker of an “Indian” stereotype. The music itself became an artifact. Through these records, settlers could demonstrate the existence of Indigenous peoples and the work of settlers to document it. In other words, recording the music of Indigenous peoples allowed white settlers to

²⁰² Robinson (2020) for more on “hungry listening.”
²⁰⁴ As contemporary Indigenous artists such as Jeremy Dutcher uncover and engage with recordings like the kind made by Densmore, a new reality is made through them. The recordings Dutcher engaged with for the 2018 Polaris Prize winning album Wolastoqiyyik Lintuwakonawa, were held in the Canadian Museum of History. The reality around this engagement is complex. The dispossession persists as Dutcher had to spend hours in the museum listening to the recordings, but the preservation of the recordings by the settler institution gave Dutcher an opportunity to connect with the songs of Wolastoqiyyik ancestors. This discussion will be taken up in more depth in the final chapter.
²⁰⁶ Ibid., 222-223.
operate as if they had respected the original peoples of the land without acknowledging the recording’s place in processes of elimination. Densmore’s utterance, “I had absolutely no responsibility in the matter” exemplifies this sentiment. For white settlers, the responsibility of recording the songs of Indigenous peoples was to the settler state.

When it came time to explain the recorded songs to other settlers, Indigenous voices were not consulted, which adhered to the settler colonial desire to eradicate Indigenous populations. Troutman notes that Densmore herself would in fact transcribe certain songs and mold them to fit into the scales and notation systems of settlers. She would perform her version of the songs on piano and transcribe more songs that students would sing. Densmore’s versions of Indigenous songs were “far removed from the Indigenous systems of knowledge that originally structured their meaning.”

Indigenous writers continue to challenge settler colonial states of mind, stories about Indigenous songs, and the interpretation of music as static processes. Troutman also challenges this understanding of music suggesting, “if we understand music as an action over an artifact, then our interpretation of music goes beyond a lyrical, descriptive, or notational analysis and toward the context that produced and contained it.” Thinking about the creation and interpretation of music as processes that continually require acts of careful listening challenges stagnant and inattentive approaches to listening to and interpreting music. The move towards treating music as “action” can produce an engagement that moves to re-cognize deeper contexts of the song. On another level, this move can be a re-cognition of and surrendering to the deeper contexts “that produced and contained it,” where the surrendering becomes its own meaningful form of engagement.

208 Ibid.
Charles L. Black Jr. was a white man from Austin, Texas, who became a constitutional lawyer described by Thurgood Marshall as being there “all the way” for the *Brown v. Board of Education* case that ran from December 1952 to May 1954. The case was a significant moment in United States legal history in which the Supreme Court declared that state laws designed to enforce segregation in public schools were unconstitutional. The decision recognized that all Americans deserved access to adequate education facilities and resources and that separating students led to severe inequalities. It also confirmed that individual states did not have the right to enforce laws that perpetuated deep inequalities. Despite Black Jr.’s committed presence and work on the *Brown* case, his most memorable reflection about the case reaches back before he started his career as a lawyer. As a 16-year-old, Black Jr. attended a dance where Louis Armstrong played “at the height of his creativity.” This was the “first meeting” with Armstrong’s music—a meeting Black Jr. notes as having a greater impact than any other first encounter in his life. Though Black Jr. does not remember “the process of realization,” he describes the experience of hearing Louis Armstrong that night as “seeing genius, for the first time.” However, it was not simply the fact of witnessing genius that challenged and changed Black Jr. – it was the fact that it was during a time when Southern white boys “literally never saw a black, then, in any but a servant’s capacity.”

Black Jr. describes this encounter with Armstrong’s playing and hearing the antiblack racism of a fellow student expressed while they listened to the performance as what started him on the path toward the *Brown* case. Although the experience of cross-cultural listening is more complex, Black Jr. describes the initial experience as hearing
two conflicting voices and walking in the right direction. Black Jr. acknowledges this complexity later during his reflections, stating “music cannot be written about directly—not the feeling part of it…you have to listen to these records.” In his numerous attempts to express the effect Armstrong’s playing had on him Black Jr. is most articulate when he describes how “Louis opened my eyes wide, and put to me a choice.” The choice, for Black Jr., seemed to involve a challenge to listen beyond the structures of anti-black racism and open himself to the articulations and transformations expressed by the artist.

Black Jr. collected Armstrong’s records, listened to them repeatedly, and played them for family, friends, and students. His lifelong commitment to listening to Armstrong—a commitment to the challenges of cross-cultural listening—became “a slow and thorough realization, of living oneself into the work of an artist.” Black Jr. suggests that repeated experiences of listening to music are part of this process, but the phrase is ambiguous enough to welcome speculation about what else might be involved. Simon Frith uses a similar phrase when describing instances of white artists who attempted to “learn to play black musics” and engage musical idioms cross-culturally. He notes that it is not that white musicians had to “become black to play black, nor that the blues could only be expressive of a specifically racial experience, but rather that to ‘feel’ the music he had to get inside it.” Most importantly, Frith adds, “this is true for listeners as players.” This phrase—getting inside the music—is helpful for thinking through what Black Jr. might be getting at in his own words.

Getting inside and “living oneself into the work of an artist” are processes of surrender as they are acts of commitment. Listeners re-cognize a process of surrender when engaging live and recorded performances. The musician’s surrender is their

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214 Ibid., 1598, 1599.
215 Ibid., 1598.
216 Ibid., 1599.
performance of the music that seemingly overtakes them, even though they are in control. Listeners are encouraged to follow the lead of the performer and surrender, if not to the different musical or lyrical elements of the performance itself, then to the embodied experience of re-cognizing the performance. This is not about becoming the musician and occupying their identity or positionality. It is not a momentary becoming black or Indigenous for white listeners. It is a dissolution or surrendering of the ego. Where the performer surrenders to “let the music out,” as it were, listeners surrender to let the music in. In other words, it is not an active opening up of the artist’s life or music in order to make space and occupy a piece that becomes listeners’ own. It is a surrender and making space for the reality that the musician articulates. Listeners allow this reality to unsettling, inform, and reform a sense of self and world. Ultimately, the activeness of Black Jr. and Frith’s phrases describe the active work of critical self-reflection and the dissolution of the ego. Getting inside and living oneself into the music are processes of learning how to re-cognize and participate in the worlds articulated and made real through the music.

Black Jr. recognizes that he could not “live himself” into the life or experiences of Armstrong. However, Armstrong’s music was a piece of a larger project that spoke to him. Armstrong’s music was the sound that made Black Jr. feel responsible for and compelled to respond to this challenge. For Black Jr., this process suggests a surrendering of an image of America as a white country. This became part of a move to re-cognize the “facts of life” that condition the life of an African American artist working in the “afterlife of slavery.” It was a moment of re-cognition as a making real of these realities for white listeners. What was previously ignored or not recognized by white listeners became undeniable in those sounds and moments. Louis Armstrong’s music articulated the conditions of the black artist and the conditioning of white listeners to hear this music as insignificant noise. These musical articulations revealed to Black Jr. the myth of white settler colonial and anti-black states of mind. Black Jr.’s challenge was to

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learn how to surrender this ideal—a process that involved a dissolution of collective attachments and, ultimately, part of his own sense of self.

Black Jr.’s experiences were conditioned by what Jennifer Lynn Stoever calls the “listening ear” and “the sonic colour line.”220 The sonic color line is the process of racializing sounds and listening practices, while the listening ear is the “dominant racialized filter” of sound.221 Through the sonic color line and listening ear, racialized listeners experience the same sounds differently.222 “Blackness” and “whiteness” are heard as distinct sounds, which are constructed as being aligned with distinct visual cues or experiences. Once aurally and visually racialized, “blackness” and “whiteness” are placed in a hierarchy, which normalizes white listening practices and develops “conflicted listening practices” for Black, Indigenous, and other marginalized peoples, that, as Stoever suggests, need to be “navigated, brokered, and challenged.”223 By manipulating these cues, white people gave themselves the dominant voice and the power to avoid listening to others. Subverting this structure requires the process of re-cognition and perpetual surrendering on the part of white listeners. This is why Black Jr. returns to Armstrong’s Savoy Blues, even after the Brown case finished. As Black Jr. notes, on the night he was honoured for working on the Brown case, the first thing he did when he arrived home after the ceremony was put on Armstrong’s Savoy Blues and listen “to it all through.”224 The music continued to reflect the world he lived in and it continued to challenge him to listen in new ways.

Surrendering is the condition that opens up the listening experience beyond the limitations of what Cruz calls “ethnosympathy.”225 For Cruz, ethnosympathy is “a cultural complex and a complex cultural development that centered progressively upon the recognition of meanings and the psychic interiors that became accessible behind the

221 Ibid.
222 Ibid., 33.
223 Ibid., 32-33.
cultural expression of a subordinate group.” Moving beyond the limits of ethnosympathy is not a move to understand the experiences of the other in a cross-cultural engagement. Rather, it might shift the framework of the experience for white listeners. Sonny’s brother could come to recognize the anguish and conditions of Sonny’s music as familiar conditions of his own life. However, Black Jr. can only come to recognize the conditions of Armstrong’s life before reaching a limit of understanding. The framework of the listening experience shifts from trying to understand the experiences of the oppressed other to recognizing that these experiences cannot be completely understood by settlers—working against “hungry listening.” At this point, re-cognition becomes a process of re-thinking and taking responsibility for listening to the voicings and sounds of peoples he was conditioned not to hear. The move beyond the limits of an ethnosympathetic framework challenges white listeners to hear how they have silenced the African American or Indigenous person. This revelation includes re-cognizing how colonial listening practices can work to silence another and impose a specific framework of understanding.

Black Jr. recounts that he was with a friend from high school when he first encountered Louis Armstrong’s music. After listening for a while, the friend finally turned to him, “shook his head as if clearing it—as I’m sure he was—of an unacceptable though vague thought, and pronounced the judgement of the time and place.” Black Jr.’s companion could only hear Armstrong’s music as noise. As Stoever notes however, it is not just the sounds of African American or Indigenous peoples that are constructed as noise. Rather, the “bodies, voices, and culture” also become part of the wave of noise that white people are conditioned to hear and see from African American and Indigenous people. This is significant because listening is revealed to be “multimodal”—an

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226 Ibid., 198.
227 Robinson (2020).
experience sensed or processed by the entire body. White listeners can listen with the “embodied ear,” pushing beyond visual or aural racialized cues. In this case, Black Jr. engaged this multi-sensory experience and opened towards the articulations within Armstrong’s music. In contrast, Black Jr.’s companion might have heard something challenging, but saw the noise he was conditioned to see in Armstrong’s body, which thwarted the significance of the musical articulations.

Black Jr.’s description of his experiences with Armstrong’s music is a significant account of a white man surrendering to the musical articulations of an African American artist and hearing the collective challenges of a nation. Armstrong’s “sonic imaginaries” opened Black Jr. to the conditions of African American experiences, revealed the conditions of his position as a white man, and encouraged him to feel responsible to work through the challenges of the new imaginaries. For Black Jr., this sense of responsibility came through in his work for the Brown case. Unfortunately, many white Americans continued to see and hear America as a white nation, refusing to recognize African Americans. Black Jr. resisted the white image of America and he specifically credits Armstrong’s music.

In some ways, I recognize my own experience in Black Jr.’s. The sense of being immediately shaken in the initial moment of cross-cultural listening, despite not understanding why, is present in both of our experiences. The need to carry this unsettled feeling forward and listen again to work out what is being re-cognized is also a familiar part of the process. However, each instance of surrender will have its own circumstances, challenges, and processes. For instance, in the group of Indigenous musicians that played at the Legion I saw three people, close in age to myself, with similar passions and dreams. We all enjoyed playing music and just wanted to play for an attentive audience.

232 Ibid., 23.
There was a familiarity that drew me in, but I was also being unsettled, if only slightly at first.

Under different conditions, Black Jr. recognized superior talent in a musician who subverted discriminatory ideas through music. There was little sense of familiarity governing this interaction. Too often, these moments—moments of listening to talented people cross-culturally—are cast off as anomalies and folded back into settler colonial structures of domination. The talent of Armstrong deeply affected Black Jr. however, and moved him to accept the opportunity to challenge settler colonial ideals about the rights of African Americans in the education system. It set him on the path of contributing to a process that led to a significant shift in the legal framework of state-sponsored racial discrimination.

My own experience of surrender and re-cognition is pushed in different ways when read against contemporary circumstances. That is, through this experience I hear the challenges to the settler colonial framework itself. I hear Indigenous sounds and voices challenging the legitimacy of settler colonial geographical, legal, academic, sociopolitical, and economic frameworks as an authoritative force on Turtle Island. I hear the calls for sovereignty and self-determination. This encourages a unique surrender that includes accepting a position where it is very difficult to begin to imagine what the outcome might look, feel, or sound like. The complex challenges to sovereignty do not discourage white settlers from engaging in the kind of work Black Jr. undertook as part of his larger process of surrender. They do, however, require that individuals acknowledge and push for Indigenous-led and nation-based processes where possible, because the frameworks white settlers operate under reinforce social, political, and economic disparities. A future on Turtle Island should be led by Indigenous peoples. Listening to sonic imaginaries becomes a key part of settlers beginning to accept a position of uncertainty and hear new potentialities. These processes, though unfamiliar, disorienting, and without a clear end, become their own meaningful form of engagement.
James Baldwin was an African American writer from Harlem in New York City. He was a novelist, essayist, and one of the central voices of the civil rights movement. He was not a trained or practicing musician, but often wrote about music and the life of African American musicians as a metonym for his life as a writer.\textsuperscript{233} The music of artists such as Bessie Smith, Gertrude “Ma” Rainey, and Billie Holiday became his most significant connections to the rise of the civil rights era in the United States of America while he was living in Europe. Baldwin faced his own struggles during his “exile”\textsuperscript{234} in France, but these records affected him, asking him to continue to listen the struggles of African Americans in the United States. These records encouraged him to return to his country more than once: “Sonny’s Blues” (1965) focuses on the African American artists’ struggles on personal, familial, and social levels. “This Morning, This Evening, So Soon” (1962), is essentially a continuation of the previous essay and addresses the “painful necessity of “singing” in one’s own land” as an African American.\textsuperscript{235} “Of Sorrow Songs: The Cross of Redemption” (1979) speaks to the reality of the history of being black in America and how black artists have necessarily turned these experiences into song. In “The Use of The Blues” (1964), Baldwin works to articulate the feeling of joy present in blues music. He is careful to note however, that this joy is not a sense of happiness, but part of a feeling that comes from facing reality, despite the deep anguish present in this reality.

Baldwin’s engagement with music is not limited to critical discussions about creative processes. Baldwin engages with the records and reflects on the deeply personal experience of listening to the records of Smith and Holiday. These records are particularly important because they achieved a significant level of notoriety and popularity. The popularity of these records did not limit his engagement however. Indeed, his “highly personal, nearly intimate investment in the commodified recordings and

sounds-objects” of musicians such as Smith and Holiday demonstrates that listeners can enjoy the music as entertainment and be deeply affected by its presence and continued performance. 236

Baldwin contributed to the continuing performative life of the music that he loved so deeply by speaking to the effect the music had on him and his contemporaries. Baldwin’s mentor, Beauford Delaney, used these records to teach Baldwin what it means to be a black artist in the United States and how to hear the struggles articulated through the music. Delaney became not only a mentor as an artist, but a “teacher of jazz and blues,” playing records by Ella Fitzgerald, Ma Rainey, Louis Armstrong, and Bessie Smith, among others. 237 Delaney taught Baldwin that taking time to listen to these records was important. Their engagement with the music became a way of confronting the lonely life of the African American artist and re-cognizing the truths the recordings held. Baldwin also used these opportunities to think through the anti-black myths that would come to define Smith and Holiday. These critical listening experiences opened an avenue for reflection about how he was also battling the myths of a heteronormative white supremacy that worked to define the limits of his reality. 238 These exploratory listening experiences were crucial for Baldwin and the results were often expressed in his writing.

In “Sonny’s Blues,” Baldwin explores the position of the African American artist in the United States through a fictional narrative. Using short story form, Baldwin provides valuable insight into the conditions and lack of understanding of the African American artist’s experience. He articulates these concerns by portraying the complexities of the relationship between the musician, Sonny—a character based on Baldwin’s experiences—and the narrator, Sonny’s concerned brother. The second character is

238 Ibid., 163-164.
largely based on James’s closest sibling David Baldwin (Jr.). Baldwin articulates his struggles and speaks to the reader through Sonny’s hesitant voice and the more self-assured, yet still deeply vulnerable voice of Sonny’s concerned brother.

The story moves through various allusions to and discussions about Sonny’s drug addiction. These discussions are presented by Sonny’s brother and through his recollection of the various moments he was confronted with his brother’s struggles. On one Saturday afternoon, the brothers enjoy a beer and hear a woman singing in the street. They are captivated by the singing. Sonny declares, “it struck me all of a sudden how much suffering she must have had to go through—to sing like that. It’s repulsive to think you have to suffer that much.” The brothers agree that “there’s no way not to suffer,” but argue over the nature of such struggles. Sonny tries to explain his experience to his brother:

It’s terrible sometimes, inside,...that’s what’s the trouble. You walk these streets, black and funky and cold, and there’s not really a living ass to talk to, and there’s nothing shaking, and there’s no way of getting it out—that storm inside. You can’t talk it and you can’t make love with it, and when you finally try to get with it and play it, you realize nobody’s listening. So you’ve got to listen. You got to find a way to listen.

Sonny is left wondering what to do after he uses all his strength to articulate the darkness inside, only to realize that no one cares to hear it. He decides, or more appropriately, is faced with the reality that there is no alternative but to “find a way to listen” to himself making audible this darkness. The struggle shifts to trying to hear how the darkness might have transformed into something new. At the same time, I cannot help but feel like Baldwin is challenging the reader and listener in this passage. Baldwin asserts his commitment to finding a way to listen to his own articulations of struggle, but in Sonny’s

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239 Ibid., 135.
240 Baldwin (1965): 132
241 Ibid., 133.
assertion to his brother, the reader might feel that they are also encouraged to find a way to listen. The process of coming to this point might differ, but it nonetheless becomes a responsibility. The discussion between the brothers ends with Sonny acknowledging the enduring presence of his past.

The story’s final scene is in a nightclub where Sonny is well-known as a “real musician.” Baldwin takes a moment to confess both his vulnerability about speaking about music and the emotional depths of his struggles as a creator (writer) via Sonny’s brother who witnesses the performance:

All I know about music is that not many people ever really hear it. And even then, on the rare occasions when something opens within, and the music enters, what we mainly hear, or hear corroborated, are personal, private, vanishing evocations. But the man who creates the music is hearing something else, is dealing with the roar rising from the void and imposing order on it as it hits the air. What is evoked in him, then, is of another order, more terrible because it has no words, and triumphant, too, for that same reason.  

Baldwin’s concern is that “nobody’s listening.” He pushes further, admitting that despite a lack of knowledge about music, he recognizes that when people listen to jazz and the music of Bessie Smith or Billie Holiday, they rarely hear beyond the surface or the “vanishing evocations” expressed in the music. Beyond these evocations are the articulations of the African American experiences, the “facts of life” that Baldwin emphasizes are transformed into music that carries heavy sentiments of anguish and joy. This is perhaps the “storm inside” that Sonny describes.

Conveying the complexity of the expressions and work of African American artists is only one element in “Sonny’s Blues.” Baldwin reaches the pinnacle of the story when he articulates the experience Sonny’s brother has of listening to and witnessing Sonny

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242 Ibid., 136.
243 Ibid., 137.
and his band play at a club. Creole, one of Sonny’s band members, uses his instrument to set the scene for the audience. Sonny’s brother describes this moment:

Then Creole stepped forward to remind them that what they were playing was the blues. He hit something in all of them, he hit something in me, myself, and the music tightened and deepened, apprehension began to beat the air. Creole began to tell us what the blues were all about. They were not about anything very new. He and his boys up there were keeping it new, at the risk of ruin, destruction, madness, and death, in order to find new ways to make us listen. For, while the tale of how we suffer, and how we are delighted, and how we may triumph is never new, it always must be heard. There isn’t any other tale to tell, it’s the only light we’ve got in all this darkness.\(^\text{245}\)

Sonny takes the lead and urges listeners to surrender to the music. Sonny’s brother picks up this encouragement:

Then [Sonny] began to make it his…I seemed to hear with what burning he had made it his, with what burning we had yet to make it ours, how we could cease lamenting. Freedom lurked around us and I understood, at last, that he could help us to be free if we would listen, that he would never be free until we did. Yet, there was no battle in his face now. I heard what he had gone through, and would continue to go through until he came to rest in earth. He had made it his: that long line, of which we knew only Mama and Daddy. And he was giving it back, as everything must be given back, so that, passing through death, it can live forever. I saw my mother’s face again, and felt, for the first time, how the stones of the road she had walked on must have bruised her feet. I saw the moonlit road where my father’s brother died. And it brought something else back to me, and carried me past it…And I was yet aware that this was only a moment, that the world waited outside as hungry as a tiger, and that trouble stretched above us, longer than the sky.\(^\text{246}\)

\(^{245}\) Baldwin (1965): 139.
\(^{246}\) Ibid., 140.
This passage is significant because it depicts the surrendering that Sonny’s brother experiences while listening to the music played by Sonny. The music encouraged Sonny’s brother to engage with Sonny’s condition in ways that Sonny’s words never could. When Sonny tries to explain his struggle to his brother in the earlier scene, his brother is focused on trying to understand the message of his words. He does not hear or feel the struggle. The deeper anguish and joy of articulating his reality are ignored in a listener’s quest to impose an understanding. However, when Sonny plays the piano his brother is invited to submit to the reality of not understanding and open himself to the new sounds and feelings that become at once Sonny’s and his. The notes played have no meaning or message in themselves. It is only through Sonny’s performance of these notes and the audience’s openness to the worlds that the sounds create, that the music can begin to express something.

Sonny is asking his brother to perhaps feel something familiar, but more importantly, to hear something new. This unsettling combination of familiarity and unfamiliarity awakens Sonny’s brother to his hurtful way of thinking. Through this awakening, Sonny’s brother reaches a point where he can begin to lower his critical consciousness and potentially allow himself to hear something new. Thus begins the process of surrendering his ego. Though Sonny’s brother is aware that he has not escaped the realities of everyday life, this musically induced surrendering of the ego has changed his disposition towards Sonny’s struggles. The story ends with Sonny’s brother acknowledging this shift in understanding. He expresses this by sending Sonny’s preferred drink to his piano before the next set.

I emphasize the surrender experienced by Sonny’s brother because it exemplifies what Cruz calls the “psychic movement” of a listener opening towards the unfamiliar experiences and transformations articulated through music.\(^\text{247}\) Baldwin articulates this “psychic movement” by portraying and working through his brother’s misunderstanding about the artist’s condition. Awakening to some of the common feelings and moments of

\(^{247}\) Cruz (1999), 92.
their experiences as African American siblings pushes Sonny’s brother to surrender his understanding of Sonny’s struggles as an artist, and work to re-cognize the transformations Sonny consistently produces in his music. The music challenges Sonny’s brother. The challenge is to hear beyond what society has conditioned listeners to hear.248 Facing this auditory and psychic challenge as a sonic navigation breaks down the psychic obstacles that prevented Sonny’s brother from acknowledging the conditions of Sonny’s experience. Sonny’s brother articulates the moment of re-cognizing the challenge: “I seemed to hear with what burning he had made it his, with what burning we had yet to make it ours, how we could cease lamenting.”249 Sonny’s compositions open the way for his brother to make the struggle “his own” and work through it. The ego eventually returns from this moment of surrender and is encouraged to confront the reality of re-cognizing this vulnerability and struggle.

Baldwin was a key voice amongst civil rights leaders. Part of what Baldwin spoke to concerned the damage that white oppressors do to themselves by perpetuating erroneous myths of racial superiority.250 This concern has a parallel in the musically incited engagement between Sonny and his brother. When Sonny’s brother begins to understand the challenge of listening to Sonny’s music, Baldwin speaks to fellow African Americans and reaches cross-culturally to white readers, noting, “Freedom lurked around us and I understood, at last, that he could help us to be free if we would listen, that he would never be free until we did.”251 On one level, Baldwin is speaking to the need to recognize the struggle of the African American artist. In a similar sense, he is speaking to the continued oppression of African Americans and the strain this often puts on familial relations.252 On another level however, Baldwin is speaking to the self-induced psychic

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248 Ibid., 43. See also Stoever (2016): 71.
249 Baldwin (1965): 140.
250 Ibid.
251 Baldwin (1965): 140.
252 Baldwin’s “difference” within his own family and his desire to have this recognized by them is also a point of contention present in the story. Baldwin’s mother left his biological father due to his drug abuse. She re-married a preacher named David Baldwin and had eight children with him. He had one child from a previous marriage but he was already nine years-older than James. This left Baldwin feeling estranged from
damage of white oppressors. He is challenging them to hear beyond the noise they have conditioned themselves to hear when listening to African American people.

Framing the sounds of black musicians as noise is meant to make these sounds appear insignificant to the white ear. Yet, if noise is the unsettling force of music where music is “a channelization of noise,” the white ear is encouraged to confront the ever-present complexities of the “noise” of black musicians. Music makes noise audible to listeners, but the noise persists, upsets, and makes audible new worlds that will gradually become real. When white listening practices mark black and Indigenous bodies, voices, culture, and music as an insignificant kind of noise, they attempt to avoid hearing the articulations and transformations within the music of black and Indigenous artists. Nevertheless, the unsettling world-revealing power of the music as a force of noise still exists.

Historically, many white listeners have refused to recognize the value of this surrender. Instead of surrendering sonic and physical space for the self-determined socioeconomic and cultural experiences of marginalized communities, white settler cultures continue to impose their own frameworks of understanding. Baldwin’s challenge to listen in “Sonny’s Blues”—a challenge made mid-twentieth century—illustrates the persistence and force of this limited listening. The problem with employing an ethnosympathetic perspective is that white listeners and readers do not understand how the socioeconomic conditions of their daily lives do not reflect the socioeconomic conditions of the lives of every human being. As a result, white listeners do not recognize the implicit limitations of their processes of attempting to understand another’s

his family. His feelings of estrangement were significantly deepened by a number of factors, including David’s (stepfather) consistent disdain towards him and disapproval of him, by being gay, and by eventually becoming a writer who struggled with a lifelong alcohol addiction.


254 Chapter Three focusses in more depth on the process of making audible worlds visible. I analyze instances where Indigenous artists cover and perform songs first written or recorded by non-Indigenous artists as a way of opening up this question. Ibid., 11.
experiences and, ultimately, “erase and misunderstand the Other’s experiences,” continuing to see them as less valuable than their own.²⁵⁵

This process of universalizing individual conditions reveals a contradiction at the basis of understanding existence as a white settler and in the very processes of understanding employed by white settlers. On one level, white settlers may recognize the humanity of another—familiar conditions of coming into existence and living with the possibility of death—and desires to universalize the apparent freedom and potential to change the state of existence. However, white settlers may also fail to make a distinction between conditions of coming into existence as humans and the socioeconomic conditions of continued existence. This desire to universalize white settler positions and conditions distorts the settler’s understanding of the extreme difference and range of conditions of continued existence for people all over the world. This process fails to connect to the other’s existence as a fellow human being. Unfortunately, when white settlers move to preemptively understand another before surrendering to listen, they perpetually re-centre the experience of white listeners and re-assert the myths of settler states of mind.

Myths of white supremacy condition listening experiences and curtail potential moments of surrender. The mere act of “tuning in” to the noise, sounds, and music does not immediately produce or open listeners to a process of surrendering the ego.²⁵⁶ In Baldwin’s story, Sonny’s brother is moved enough to allow his brother’s music to address the conditions of his experience. This work of listening to the other is a cultural practice itself: “the practice of hearing the practices of others.”²⁵⁷ Sonny’s brother begins to experience the complexities of an engagement where listeners begin to hear another’s practices and conditions of practice. Yet, this practice of listening is never easy, especially across cultural difference.

₂⁵⁵ Stoever (2016): 75.
₂⁵⁶ Stoever (2106): 268.
₂⁵⁷ Cruz (1999): 44.
It is important to acknowledge that the engagement between Sonny and his brother is not a cross-cultural experience. It is a case of awakening and an acknowledgement of the role of music in building solidarity between African American siblings. It is important to acknowledge (and not appropriate or mischaracterize) the cultural conditions in this story, particularly the role of African American music in this exchange between two African American individuals. While recognizing the cultural conditions which make this scene unique, I analyze and build on the idea of an experience of surrender that is not limited to intra-cultural experiences—an aesthetically encouraged surrendering. Exploring moments where these experiences become cross-cultural is the next step.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has explored conditions of critical and cross-cultural listening through ongoing settler colonialism. The chapter began with an attempt to hear again and in different ways a personal moment of vulnerability. It progressed to an anthropological scene—a moment that captured settler states of mind and expressed a lack of a sense of responsibility in cross-cultural interactions. I turned to the work of Frances Densmore, a white settler ethnographer and early proponent of the phonograph. Music given life by Indigenous peoples is the centerpiece of the moment and the reason for Densmore’s intrusion onto Ute territory. However, her commitment to settler colonial myths concerning Indigenous peoples and colonial states of mind become the most revealing parts of the exchange. In this scene, the key interaction is between Densmore and Red Cap, but she is watched by other members of the Ute nation and is aware of this.\(^{258}\) She is putting on a performance in order to get the songs she came to record. Her retelling of this experience in her article is another performance itself. Densmore’s confused pride about these interactions and her responsibilities fueled her retelling of this interaction and my interest in the scene.

\(^{258}\) Densmore (1968): 39.
Acknowledging the move beyond innocence and towards accepting the responsibilities of being implicated in the realities of others brought the discussion to moments of cross-cultural listening. Charles L. Black Jr.’s experience of first witnessing genius in Louis Armstrong was the scene used to explore what it might mean for a white settler—man, in this case—to experience a multi-sensory address that encouraged him to surrender ideas of white supremacy and hear the realities of a black man. Black Jr. heard the realities and accepted the responsibilities he was encouraged to accept through the articulations and transformations present in Armstrong’s music. Black Jr. also recognized that responding to this address encouraged him to commit to living differently. He was to commit to grappling with what it means to continue a multi-sensory cross-cultural listening from that moment forward. The work of this commitment revealed itself through his role in the *Brown v. Board of Education* case.

The chapter ended by looking at a literary scene that explored a sonically provoked moment of surrender. The sonic disorientation opened a discussion of what it means to listen critically. I turned to James Baldwin in order to articulate what this might mean. Baldwin speaks to the move past innocence in the story “Sonny’s Blues.” Watching Sonny perform and hearing beyond the “noise” he is conditioned to hear causes Sonny’s brother to experience a moment of critical listening. He surrenders to the experience and responsibilities of witnessing his brother articulate his conditions as an artist. Through the position of Sonny’s brother, Baldwin articulates the moment where listeners recognize that they cannot continue to live as they have been—that is, in the innocence of continually imposing their familiar ways of thinking and listening. Sonny’s brother acts to re-cognize Sonny’s struggles and accept the consequences of this re-cognition and the responsibilities that come with it.
Chapter Three

“Worldmaking”: Tanya Tagaq Covers Nirvana

First Nations, Inuit, and Métis women, girls, and 2SGLBTQQIA people in Canada have been the targets of violence for far too long. This truth is undeniable. The fact that this National Inquiry is happening now doesn’t mean that Indigenous Peoples waited this long to speak up; it means it took this long for Canada to listen.


Our mother grows angry,

Retribution will be swift.

—Lyrics from the introduction to “Retribution” by Tanya Tagaq.

In 1967, Aretha Franklin released her tenth studio album I Never Loved a Man the Way I Love You. About 12 seconds into the first song, Aretha’s vocals explode onto the track after a brief interjection from the backup singers: “(Ooh) What you want / (Ooh) Baby, I got it. (Ooh) What you need / (Ooh) Do you know I got it? (Ooh) All I’m askin’ / (Ooh) Is for a little respect when you come home / (Just a little bit) Hey baby / (Just a little bit) When you get home / (Just a little bit) Mister / (Just a little bit).”259 How Aretha

Franklin’s cover of “Respect” (originally recorded by Otis Redding) came together has been covered in greater detail elsewhere and retold across many platforms since Aretha Franklin’s death in 2018.\textsuperscript{260} I acknowledge Aretha Franklin’s version here because beyond the chart success and ubiquity of the song, the gendered reimagining makes the cover a uniquely significant moment in the history of cover recordings and popular music.

Musically, the two versions of “Respect” are quite similar, with Franklin’s version maintaining the upbeat tempo and feel of Redding’s. The insertion of the female voice, however, shifts the song’s narrative. Lyrically, Aretha Franklin changed some lyrics to fit the female-centric narrative. Instead of conveying a man’s demand for respect when he gets home, the song communicates a woman’s demand for respect from a man when he comes home. Aretha Franklin also adapts Redding’s outro and changes it from “Respect is what I want from you / Respect is what I need” and “Give us, give us some baby, everything I need” to “I get tired (just a little bit) / Keep on tryin' (just a little bit)” and “(Re, re, re, re) ’spect / When you come home (re, re, re, re) / Or you might walk in (respect, just a little bit) / And find out I'm gone (just a little bit) / I got to have (just a little bit).”\textsuperscript{261} The lyrical additions, including the most memorable piece, the “R-E-S-P-E-C-T” section, extend the song slightly and highlight Aretha’s abilities as a songwriter for listeners who might not have been familiar with her earlier work.

I am particularly interested in the gendered shift of Aretha Franklin’s reimagining because it is relatable to a more recent cover—Inuk throat singer, writer, and artist Tanya Tagaq’s cover of Nirvana’s song “Rape Me.” Aretha Franklin’s cover is not necessarily cross-cultural in its performance in the same way as Tagaq’s cover, but these recordings


represent and permit a discussion about aesthetically based “worldmaking” processes of racialized women.\textsuperscript{262} In this chapter, I engage with this specific subset of cover songs—gendered reimaginings—to think about the way music produced by Indigenous and African American women on Turtle Island make new worlds audible. This analysis expands on José Esteban Munoz’s writing on “worldmaking” and performances that “have the ability to establish alternate views of the world.”\textsuperscript{263} I am also adapting the work of Jacques Attali, who argued that new worlds are necessarily opened up through music, where a future that can become real over time is heard first.\textsuperscript{264} Working at this juncture, I analyze Tanya Tagaq’s cover of Nirvana’s song “Rape Me” and engage with a striking performance she gave before winning the 2014 Polaris Music Prize. Before I get to this point, I will briefly unpack the relationship between race and cover songs within the larger context of my analysis cross-cultural listening.

\textit{Cross-cultural Cover Songs: Race in a Brief History of Cover Songs}

The history of the performance of cover songs in popular music involves a complex story of artists reshaping worlds and attempting to make new worlds real. It also represents a history of commercialism in popular music as hit songs were often covered by artists from different record labels to cash-in on the popularity of a song. A history of recorded cover songs is full of similar contradictions. This makes tracing a lineage difficult. The search for an origin moment of the “cover song” ultimately reveals a history of an obsession with a confused understanding of artistic authenticity in Western popular music. The search for the first cover song ends up “parodying the idea of the original” and mocking the empty authority of notions of artistic authenticity in Western music criticism.\textsuperscript{265}

\textsuperscript{262} Munoz (1999): 195.
\textsuperscript{263} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{264} Attali (1985): 11.
\textsuperscript{265} Erik Steinskog, “Queering Cohen: Cover Versions as Subversions of Identity” in \textit{Play It Again: Cover Songs in Popular Music}. Ed. by George Plasketes. (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2010), 139-154.
When these questions intersect with discourses of race, the discussions only become more complex. Music critics and scholars continue to think through questions such as what was it about Elvis Presley’s recordings of blues songs that grabbed the attention of so many people, and why was Jimi Hendrix challenged as a black man playing rock music, a genre considerably white-washed by the late 1960s, but given life through early African American artists such as Chuck Berry and Little Richard? Elvis and Hendrix have two of the most significant and interesting cover songs in the history of popular music, so it is useful to address these questions briefly before I address Tagaq’s cover.

Elvis’s first single, “That’s All Right” is a cover of African American blues musician Arthur “Big Boy” Crudup. Crudup recorded his version in 1946 and Elvis recorded his in 1954 with Sam Phillips at Sun Studios in Memphis, Tennessee. Some of the lyrics are traditional blues verses first recorded by Blind Lemon Jefferson in 1926. This single is worth noting because it sprung Elvis into popular music history, but more importantly, it allowed Elvis and white audiences to explore a different identity through the covers of songs by black artists. Indeed, the most significant rise in cover records is “largely associated with white interest in ‘race’ and R&B records through Elvis.” This identity negotiation continued to make room for the acceptance of sounds produced by black musicians through a white artist’s performance. However, these recordings and


267 Other significant cross-cultural cover performances not touched on here but discussed elsewhere include Aretha Franklin’s versions of “Let It Be” and “Eleanor Rigby” by the Beatles, Stevie Wonder’s cover of “We Can Work It Out” by the Beatles, Marvin Gaye’s cover of “Yesterday” by the Beatles, Otis Redding’s cover of “Satisfaction” by the Rolling Stones (also covered by Aretha Franklin), and the intricate exchange between versions of “Son of a Preacher Man” by Aretha Franklin and Dusty Springfield. See Hamilton (2016).


performances still worked to distance the “whiteness” of the artists from the “blackness” of the sounds covered. In other words, the racialization of sound facilitated appropriation. White listeners could hear and explore the sounds of “blackness” that had been coded to black blues musicians but reaffirm their “whiteness” through the markers attached to the performances of white musicians. This listening experience moved white listeners in different ways but may have silenced the worlds made audible by black musicians. In other words, though Phillips was primarily interested in recording blues musicians including Howlin’ Wolf before he recorded Elvis, he recognized the potential reach and appeal of Elvis’s performance of blues songs in 1950s America.

When Elvis’s version of “That’s All Right” was played on Memphis radio, white rock and roll fans and critics could collectively hear “race records” through white supremacist and settler colonial states of mind. Popular rock and roll music was given life through cross-cultural exchange and various cross-cultural collaborations. As it was eclipsed by rock music in the 1960s, however, this cross-cultural foundation was slowly erased as white rock music record labels, fans, and critics white-washed the genre. Though “the differences within African American or white music cultures were more extreme than the differences between black and white music cultures,” white listeners continued to emphasize the perceived white history of rock and hold onto this perception and the music connected to it as “their own.” This misidentification led to confused ideas about authenticity in the creative processes of artists. That is, black artists were considered successful blues and R&B artists by tapping into an “essential blackness” that was thought to give rise to blues and R&B music, while white folk and rock artists were seen as having moments of creative virtuosity. Black artists remained tied to their race,

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272 Sam Phillips was deeply committed to recording blues musicians to the point where he initially passed on Elvis. Elvis first recorded in Sun Studio in August 1953 with administrative assistant and sometimes recording engineer Marion Keisker. Elvis eventually recorded “That’s All Right” with Phillips in July 1954. Info from Sun Studios tour taken in March 2018.
while white artists could transgress various identities through creative expression—an essentialist way of thinking tied to white supremacist and settler colonial states of mind.

Further, black artists who played something other than classic blues or R&B music—like Jimi Hendrix—were sometimes regarded as not being “authentic” enough. Consequently, when Hendrix rose to prominence in the 1960s, he faced questions about his engagement in a “white” genre and a lack of African American authenticity. Hendrix has influenced many popular white rock guitarists including John Frusciante of the Red Hot Chili Peppers and Stone Gossard and Mike McCready of Pearl Jam. However, his style and contribution to the history of popular rock and roll was questioned and often sexualized through the racialization of his body. White critics remained fixated on his sexuality in relation to the guitar, while black listeners challenged his commitment to a “white” rock music culture. Hendrix did achieve great success and was admired by his contemporaries, but compared to other guitar virtuosos of the time—such as Eric Clapton—the scrutiny he faced was overly racialized and sexualized.

Hendrix died in 1970, only three years after the release of his first studio album, *Are You Experienced*. His highest charting single was a cover of Bob Dylan’s “All Along the Watchtower.” Hendrix released his version in 1968 on his final studio album, *Electric Ladyland*. Dylan’s version was released on the album *John Wesley Harding* in December of 1967. The album was Dylan’s return to the acoustic-folk sound of his earlier albums—a sound heavily influenced by Black blues musicians. Hendrix’s version of “All Along the Watchtower” ultimately eclipsed the reach and popularity of Dylan’s. Dylan has acknowledged that he prefers Hendrix’s version and has only played the song in the style of Hendrix since Hendrix’s death. The “collaboration” carried out through the performances of the song challenges the authority reserved for “original” recordings of

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songs. The song became both Dylan’s and Hendrix’s in its continued performance and continues to exist in a space between original and cover.

Through Dylan’s own repeated performances of the song in Hendrix’s style, the original is revealed as one of many versions and the performances as covers of covers where the repetition allows for subversive moments of challenging the perceived authenticity of white folk music. Similarly, repeated engagements and moments of listening to Hendrix’s version allow for stronger experiences of subversion to the authority of originality and racial essentialism in music. Hendrix does not bring legitimacy to the song through his blackness. The transformations he makes, however, can shift a listener’s understanding of the song and the way it is perceived. Instead of legitimizing a new—and continually racist—white identity in contrast to and through “black” sounds, Hendrix’s sounds challenge the normalized authority of white folk originality and authenticity, ideas of rock as white music, and black blues and jazz essentialism.

If “too much confusion” leaves listeners with “no relief,” as Dylan and Hendrix proclaim in their performances of “All Along the Watchtower,” how might listeners navigate the discomfort enhanced through different versions and performances of a song? If I return to my own confusion and revisit the performance of the band at the Legion in Kenora, I hear no overt claim to originality in the performance. However, the performance of a set of Nirvana songs at a Legion in a small city in Canada by three Indigenous musicians is its own original performance, even as it appears to copy the work of three white American artists. The originality came through in the way these musicians

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278 For more on a Butlerian reading of the performance of cover songs and the subversive moments involved” see Steinskog (2010): 152. Hendrix was also not interested in performing “All Along the Watchtower,” though the reasons for this vary. Hendrix was perhaps not interested in playing such a popular single, as noted in John McDermott (with Eddie Kramer). Hendrix: Setting the Record Straight. (New York, NY: Warner, 1992), 163, whereas other writers note Hendrix’s struggle with remembering the lyrics to the song, see Reising (2010): 160. Dylan’s role in normalization of white folk authenticity, though not explored in this project, is interesting in itself when his Jewish-American heritage is considered and the assimilation and melting of Jewish heritage in America, specifically during the 20th century. For a discussion of the performance of Jewish culture in assimilationist USA, see Josh Kun, Audiotopia: Music, Race, and America. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2005), 48-87.
spoke with such power to a primarily white audience through songs written by a white artist. They employed the anti-macho, anti-racist, anti-toxic masculinity sentiment of many of Nirvana’s songs and added an emphasis on an anti-white supremacist and anti-colonial sentiment to the mix. They molded the songs with their personal histories, joy, and anguish, and asserted a continued Anishinaabe presence that I was aware of as an individual living on Anishinaabe land, but had not thought more deeply about. This performance changed the way I perceived long-enjoyed songs, and, ultimately, my place in the local music community and city. It allowed me to hear, see, and begin to think through and eventually talk about the intersecting realities in the community.

The experience of re-cognizing the cover performance of some of my favourite songs produced an unsettling of myself—an unsettled me—based on an embodied experience of sound. Many listeners scoff at artists who attempt to cover well-known songs because they will usually fall short of sounding like the original performances. Familiarity becomes the basis of critique. However, this experience was different. It was not a case of “too much confusion” and “no relief.” The uncertainty about the performance undoubtedly produced some apprehension, fear, and anxiety, but re-cognizing the performance produced its own relief. The relief comes from re-cognizing the settler states of mind that clouded my life as a white settler and acknowledging that I cannot hide behind them anymore. Restructuring these states of mind is a difficult process that requires commitment and continual critical attention. It leaves listeners disoriented, but this process can encourage an acceptance of disorientation as a basis of the beginning of a reality that challenges settler colonial structures. This is a positive moment of awakening. Disorientation is not necessarily clouded by feelings of negativity or emptiness. Rather, turning away from the structures that support the settler states of mind opens the possibility to hear the world in different ways and hear new worlds. This involves working through what a cover song might be uncovering about itself, the social dimension of music, the listening experience, and listeners.
The performance of Nirvana songs by Indigenous musicians was not a case of one performer legitimizing the songs of another due to their racial identity. To hear various black or Indigenous identities being articulated is not in itself problematic. However, to only hear a “black authenticity” in blues, jazz, and hip hop genres, and an “Indigenous authenticity” in “traditional” music is essentialist.279 Hearing performances by white musicians strictly as modes of transgressing identities is equally problematic. Both instances refuse the possibility of transgression for black and Indigenous performers and deny the cross-cultural exchanges at the heart of certain white-washed music genres. The dismantling of strict ideas of “black,” “Indigenous,” and “white” musical authenticities works to unsettle experiences centered in “white authenticity.” This dismantling also produces an understanding of North American experiences that includes African American and Indigenous identities at the very core.

In the rest of this chapter I will explore further what it means for an Indigenous artist to cover music created by white artists, what it means for listeners to be able to work through acts of re-cognizing this performance, and how these engagements might work as part of a larger process of making new worlds real—“worldmaking”—that challenge settler states of mind. I focus Tanya Tagaq’s cover of the Nirvana song “Rape Me” and attempt to hear the exchange between the versions of this song and what it means for listeners to enter this discussion.

279 In a discussion of discourses around soul music in the 1960s and three women—Aretha Franklin, Janis Joplin, and Dusty Springfield—who became performers of note for people arguing for or against the inherent “blackness” or “democratic” nature of soul music, Jack Hamilton notes that through these discourses music was abstracted to a magical realm. He notes, “instead of music being something people did, music became something people were” (emphasis original). Hamilton (2016): 212. This connection between an artist’s body and physical identity and the music produced remains forceful in contemporary thought. I am attempting to add to discussions that try to think through these issues, hear these limiting structures, and, ultimately, hear the complexity operating throughout. See also a discussion about the shift in expectations of listeners for artists from “employing” racialized sounds to “embodying” them in Hagstrom Miller (2010): 4.

In 1993 Nirvana released their final studio album, *In Utero*.\(^{281}\) The album featured 12 tracks and was designed to expand their sound, or at least showcase the range of it in contrast to what Cobain believed to be a more one-dimensional sound of their previous album, *Nevermind*.\(^{282}\) The fourth track on *In Utero* is called "Rape Me." It was released as the second single split with "All Apologies" in December of 1993. Written by Cobain, the song produces an uncomfortable listening experience for different reasons. On one level, the phrasing structure of the chord progression is noticeably similar to "Smells Like Teen Spirit," though the chords themselves are different and the vocal melody is also distinct. Musically, it is essentially a dark parodic cover of their biggest hit. It follows the same clean to distorted pattern where clean guitar sounds are used during the verses and distorted guitar sounds are used during the chorus. The chord progression is largely the same throughout the song, with the changes in volume and distortion being the major shifts. It also features the same soft to loud dynamic where the clean verses are much softer than the loud distorted choruses and outro. The song begins with this gesture to familiarity through the music before the declaration "rape me" enters at about eleven seconds into the song, followed by "rape me, my friend." The vocal dynamic follows the musical dynamic where the lyrics in the intro and verses are sung softly while the lyrics of the chorus are sung loudly, more aggressively, and often screamed. Yet, the softness of the initial declaration does not subtract from the disorienting effects on listeners.

Cobain’s declaration is assertive, commanding that the perpetrator commit their act. It is difficult to ignore the commanding exclamation of the lyrics despite Cobain’s fluctuation between a soft and loud delivery. Relating to the narrative, the commanding form comes across as an attempt to reclaim what agency the victim can in the moment. In the song, Cobain takes the perspective of a victim who has accepted their fate by reaching the conclusion that the perpetrator, as someone willing to commit rape, if not to the song’s

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narrator then to someone else, will face justice in the end from the judgement of the world around them. The victim is left to imagine a moment of justice only by way of working through the inevitability of the experience. It is a deeply unsettling narrative.

Some critics allude to Cobain’s frustration with media attention and an increasing lack of privacy as the basis for the lyrics of the song. This is superficial, especially in light of Cobain’s own assertion that “Rape Me” is an anti-rape song. It was also written during recording sessions for *Nevermind* in 1991—prior to the band’s massive popularity. Lyrically, the song relies heavily on the repetition of the phrases “rape me” and “I’m not the only one.” “Rape me,” is yelled 17 consecutive times during the outro of the song. The only lyrical variation comes in the first verse where Cobain says, “Hate me / Do it and do it again / Waste me / Rape me, my friend,” and in the bridge, “My favorite inside source / I’ll kiss your open sores / Appreciate your concern / You’re gonna stink and burn.” In the first verse, Cobain sings with the same uncomfortably calm, yet demanding tone as the introduction. The lyrics also suggest the same resigned but defiant attitude as the narrator acknowledges that the perpetrator will not be persuaded otherwise. When he arrives at the bridge, Cobain becomes sarcastically sympathetic to someone, before declaring that this person or people he is addressing will meet a deserving fate.

Though there is little variation in the lyrics, Cobain conveys a complex narrative through the song. Listeners can hear and feel the strength and anguish in the narrator’s repetitive declarations to the perpetrator. The play between a sense of calm, urgency, fear, and confidence built throughout the lyrics and Cobain’s variation in expression conveys

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285 Ibid., 56-57.
286 As Gaar notes in *In Utero*, Cobain “conceded the “favorite inside source” line, added to the bridge later, was intended as a direct jab at the media (among the album’s thank-yous was a listing for “Our favorite inside sources across the globe”).” This might suggest a double meaning for the bridge section, but Cobain asserts it is primarily an anti-rape narrative. See Gaar (2006): 57.
287 Cobain recorded an acoustic demo version of “Rape Me” in 1992. This version, featuring only Cobain on vocals and acoustic guitar, tells a similar but seemingly more personal narrative. Despite being quite opaque, the narrative in this version reinforces a sense that the song is intended as a blunt discussion of rape. See “Rape Me” (acoustic demo). *With The Lights Out*, Disc 3, Track 1. DGC, 2004.
an emotionally complex process. The narrator is reassuring themselves and listeners of their strength as they call out the perpetrator. Notably, the perpetrator’s voice and perspective are absent from the song—though their presence is felt nonetheless—and the narrator is the one heard asserting control through the increasingly intense vocalizations. Indeed, for the outro of the song where Cobain repeatedly yells the commanding title, Cobain’s vocals were recorded in a way that they are clearly heard over the rest of the band and become a “really uncomfortable presence” or “frightening” as the song’s producer—Steve Albini—notes.288

Of note is another take of “Rape Me” by Nirvana featured on the 2004 box set With The Lights Out. The demo, recorded in October of 1992, features “the wails of Cobain’s daughter, Frances Bean Cobain” at the beginning of the track as Cobain begins singing.289 This suggests that “Kurt held her on his lap as he cut his vocal.”290 The contrast between the lyrics, Cobain’s childcare duties, and the innocence of the child is striking. As I discuss further later in the chapter, Tagaq creates a similarly striking contrast with her vocal delivery in her version. With a softer delivery, Tagaq is nevertheless more direct with her message. In Cobain’s case however, the song navigates a cautiously hopeful sentiment as it paints a deeply dispiriting picture.

This was not the first time Cobain wrote and sang of rape in a song. In the late 1980s, he began working on a song that was a reaction to the abduction and rape of a 14-year-old girl in Tacoma, Washington in the summer of 1987. The girl was abducted after leaving a concert, a detail that also likely struck Cobain. The song, “Polly,” was released on Nevermind as one of the more subdued acoustic tracks on an album known for explosive songs such as “Smells Like Teen Spirit,” and “Lithium.” “Polly” primarily revolves around four chords (Em, G, D, C) and moves at a slow pace. The chords are strummed in a seemingly disinterested way and with a very heavy hand. This matches Cobain’s vocal delivery as he sings in an unusually subdued manner at that point in

289 See Gaar (2006): 20; and “Rape Me,” on With The Lights Out, Disc 3, Track 2, 2004, DGC.
Nirvana’s recorded career. This subdued manner is highlighted by a softness in his voice that demonstrates a recognition of the heft of the subject matter and perhaps a discomfort and disapproval of the tendencies of white heterosexual men.

An electric version called “(New Wave) Polly” was recorded in November 1991 and released in 1992 on *Incesticide*, an album of B-sides and alternate recordings. This version is much more upbeat despite no change in the lyrics. Cobain did not pass on the opportunity to make a statement to the fans, however. 291 When *Incesticide* was released, Nirvana was widely recognized around the world. In the album’s liner notes Cobain calls out parts of Nirvana’s fan base, some of whom he wanted to distance himself and the music from: “At this point I have a request for our fans. If any of you in any way hate homosexuals, people of different color, or women, please do this one favor for us — leave us the fuck alone! Don't come to our shows and don't buy our records.” 292 His disgust for ignorant, obnoxious, and hateful fans—some of whom might be depicted in “Polly”—is evident.

In the song, Cobain takes the position of the perpetrator and plays on the thought process of this individual. He sings lines such as “Polly wants a cracker / Maybe she would like some food / She asks me to untie her / A chase would be nice for a few” and “Polly says her back hurts / And she's just as bored as me / She caught me off my guard /

291 Nirvana’s song “In Bloom” from *Nevermind* is believed to be about the distance Cobain felt from some fans who enjoyed the aggressiveness of some of Nirvana’s music without understanding what might be living in the lyrics. These fans were the “tough guys” who went from show to show moshing about without concern for anybody else. The lines “He’s the one who likes all our pretty songs / And he likes to sing along / And he likes to shoot his gun / But he don’t know what it means / When I say …” speak to the blind aggressive participation of some fans. Cobain did not like the toxic masculinity exemplified by the gun toting nature of these fans. In other words, the expectation placed on fans through songs such as “Rape Me” and “Polly” was completely missed by some fans. Nirvana’s other albums feature songs with similar themes. “Mr. Moustache” from *Bleach* and “Very Ape” from *In Utero* ridicule and mock the toxic macho personality that Cobain despised and witnessed plenty of in his hometown of Aberdeen, WA. For more on “In Bloom” and some contemporary cover versions see Michael Hann, “Why Nirvana’s In Bloom is Busting Out All Over” for *The Guardian*. Published 5 April 2016. Accessed: https://www.theguardian.com/music/musicblog/2016/apr/05/nirvana-in-bloom-nevermind-ezra-furman-sturgill-simpson. See also Gaar (2006): 46-47.

It amazes me, the will of instinct.” Cobain wanders through more space of the mind of the perpetrator in “Polly” than he does the victim in “Rape Me.” This does not necessarily suggest an easier process of identification, but perhaps the level of attention and care taken in the writing process for both songs. The perpetrator is ridiculed in both cases. These songs became part of Cobain’s way of attempting to shift and shake a dynamic of identification for an overwhelmingly heterosexual male audience.

Putting Nirvana’s version of “Rape Me” in conversation with another performance—Tanya Tagaq’s version on her 2016 album *Retribution*—reveals further complexities of the listening experience. One reading of Nirvana’s version of “Rape Me” suggests that perhaps Cobain overextended feelings of empathy, resulting in the aestheticization of sexual violence. Turning rape into a metaphor for “media violation” would undo any of the anti-rape sentiment asserted by Cobain. That is, Cobain’s potential third-person narration as a white heterosexual male—despite its intentions—risks clouding the reality and severity of the issue: women are much more likely to face rape than men. The risk taken by Cobain is that his voice—potentially the only voice other white heterosexual males might associate with having authority—might disorient white, male, heterosexual listeners to the pain and fear of this reality. The risk, however, is that such listeners may disregard the push to empathize and feel responsibility in the song as easily as they disregard the consent of potential sexual partners.

However, a deeper reading of the initial recording gives more room to Cobain’s process and challenges the media violation metaphor reading. The song is not denying the reality that women are more likely to be raped than men, but there is a sense that he is re-asserting the possibility of being raped as a man and—in a complex manner—suggesting

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294 In an attempt to get countries that initially banned the album due to this song and other content deemed profane and obscene, Nirvana’s manager, John Silva, wrote a letter explaining the use of the term “rape” along the same lines that media speculation already believed. He said that Cobain used “rape” as an analogy articulating the violation felt as a major celebrity. This ultimately added to the confusion and controversy. As outlined above, the lyrics were largely written before Nirvana’s massive increase in fame. Cobain also continued to insist that the song was an “anti-rape” song. Nevertheless, it is clear why the “media violation” reading of the song persists. See Garr (2006): 57-58.
that the overwhelmingly male fan base confront this reality and recognize the vulnerability that women feel. For Cobain as the songwriter, part of this confrontation involves finding a way to convey a re-cognition of the emotional processes and strength required to live with this possibility. For listeners, particularly heterosexual men, this confrontation involves re-cognizing how the presence and threat of sexual violence structures social relations. This song serves as one of the few public attempts to talk about what unpacking this reality might mean for men as victims, as vulnerable to this possibility, and as the primary perpetrators. Further, this complicates a simplistic reading of Tagaq’s cover as a version that saves or validates the song simply by way of her gender or race. Rather, Tagaq’s version opens a conversation with Nirvana’s and opens new worlds for listeners to learn to participate in.

_Tanya Tagaq Unsettles Nirvana_

Tanya Tagaq is an Inuk artist from Cambridge Bay (Iqaluktutiaq), Nunavut who is known for her performances of a style of throat singing. Tagaq first started practicing throat singing as a teenager after she moved to Yellowknife, Northwest Territories. She later studied at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design in Halifax and is an accomplished visual artist. Tagaq released her first full-length studio album, _Sinaa_, in 2005 on the Jericho Beach Music label. The album was produced by Tagaq, Juan Hernandez, and internationally recognized Icelandic experimental artist Björk. Tagaq’s second album, _Auk/Blood_ (ᐊᐅᒃ), was released in 2008 on Ipecac Recordings. _Animism_ is Tagaq’s third studio album. It was released in 2014 on Six Shooter Records. The album received significant and widespread attention from music critics and fans around the world. The album won the 2014 Polaris Music Prize, an annual award given to the album

295 Tagaq often notes in interviews and before performances that her style of throat singing is not a traditional style. Though it has roots in an Inuit throat singing tradition, she addresses audiences and interviewers by stating that her performances push and pull these techniques well beyond their roots. She says she has also faced criticism from members of her community who feel that her performances are an inappropriate “desecration” of traditions. Ben Raynor, “Tanya Tagaq addresses her art, and her critics, at Nunavut Music Week” in _Toronto Star_. Published September 29th, 2017. Accessed at: https://www.thestar.com/entertainment/music/2017/09/29/tanya-tagaq-addresses-her-art-and-her-critics-at-nunavut-music-week.html
considered the best recording by a Canadian artist, based solely on artistic merit.\textsuperscript{296} That is, it is judged without considering factors such as album sales, record label notoriety, or touring success. The album also won the 2015 Juno award for Aboriginal Album of the Year and was a nominee for the 2015 Juno award for Alternative Album of the Year. The album opens with a cover of “Caribou,” a song by American (Boston, MA) alternative rock band the Pixies.\textsuperscript{297}

Tagaq’s version of the song unfolds elements of her life growing up with the animal. It is an homage to the caribou and a restructuring of the articulation of this relationship. In the Pixies’s version, Black Francis—the principle songwriter, vocalist, and guitarist—identifies with the animal and rejects the “cement” and “streets” of cities.\textsuperscript{298} There appears to be admiration for the Pixies in the cover. Tagaq picks up the surrealism of the Pixies and adds her own element to it with additional throat signing in the background. She also mirrors the pop vocalizations of parts of this song which is a rare occurrence. Tagaq subtly challenges the song’s aestheticization of the animal, however. She asserts her authority and sings as someone who has a unique relationship with the caribou, an animal of deep significance to her life as an Inuk woman. She slows the song down to sound more like a lullaby honouring the caribou. She sings softly in English and adds a directedness to the lamentation of the narrative in the Pixies’s recording. The Pixies identify with the caribou as an expression of the violence of mass concrete development. Tagaq identifies with the caribou as a victim of colonization as exemplified through the violence of hunting laws, land rights violations, and the denial of northern sovereignty which involves a close relationship with the caribou for many Inuit peoples. The song still allows for an identification with the animal, but it complicates this

\textsuperscript{296} Tagaq’s winning of this award and, particularly, her performance at the award night gala will be discussed in more depth later in the chapter.

\textsuperscript{297} The Pixies were a major influence on Kurt Cobain. For some music fans Nirvana is the more pop-friendly version of the Pixies. The Pixies often veer into a surrealist-influenced style of writing, playing with different uncanny sounds and imagery. Tagaq is also evidently familiar with the work of the Pixies and arguably influenced by their music as well. See for example the song “Tame,” track 2 on the 1989 album \textit{Doolittle}.

identification, and becomes more of an anti-colonial, life-affirming, appreciation of culture and the caribou.

In 2016 Tagaq released her fourth studio album, *Retribution*, on Six Shooter Records. The album is comprised of ten songs including the title track “Retribution,” and “Centre,” which is a collaboration with Canadian hip hop artist Shad. The video for the title track is a collaborative piece with Inuk artist Laakuluk Williamson Bathory. The album features collaborations with her bandmates Jesse Zubot (lead violinist and producer) and Jean Martin (percussionist), and other artists including Tuvan throat singer Raddick Tulush, traditional Inuk singer Ruben Komangapik, and her youngest daughter, Inuuja, who is featured on the opening track “Ajaaja.”

Tagaq has collaborated with many artists over her career, including A Tribe Called Red, Buffy Sainte Marie, Iskwé, Weaves, July Talk, Fucked Up, the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, and many more.

*Retribution’s* final song is a cover version of Nirvana’s “Rape Me.” On Tagaq’s website there is a description of the cover as “at least a hundred times more chilling than the original” alongside an open challenge to listeners which states, “We defy you to listen to this album without weeping, without shuddering, without feeling its intense power and immediacy. This is dramatic, relevant, stunning music. ‘Retribution will be swift.’”

Indeed, the album and the cover of Nirvana’s song is a direct response to the crisis taken up by the Inquiry into MMIWG. Tagaq has repeatedly spoken out against the continued neglect and targeting of Indigenous women and girls and the halfhearted approach to the crisis illustrated by the responses of political leaders to the Inquiry’s findings (discussed in the introduction to this project).

Tagaq’s version of “Rape Me” is significantly re-arranged. The presence of electric guitars is minimized, immediately unsettling any familiarity and expectations of the song. It features the work of Zubot on violin and Martin on percussion. The song moves at a

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299 http://tanyatagaq.com/about/
300 Ibid.
301 This is discussed in great depth later in this chapter.
slower pace than Nirvana’s version and Tagaq sings with a whisper that remains assertive despite its softness. This contrasts Cobain’s increasingly intense screams of the title phrase, yet she still manages to carry forward the intensity of the lyrics. The shift in gender of the vocalist, although not the only significant difference, is an important factor to note in itself. Tagaq adds “kill” and “beat”—which are not in Nirvana’s version—to “rape” and “hate” to emphasize the range of violence committed against Indigenous women, girls, and land. Tagaq also forgoes the lyrics in the bridge and opts for a slower fade out to the song instead of the repeating screams. There are also multiple vocal tracks repeating the key phrases underneath Tagaq’s main vocals. The song is not necessarily an attempt to reach out and create a path of identification for listeners. The many voices in this remake gesture towards the wide-reaching and detrimental effects of rape on a community. Tagaq alludes to this violence against the community because it brings forth a key narrative shift: rape is part of the structures of settler colonialism. This shift gives the song a new force as the final moment of an unfolding narrative that declares, “retribution will be swift”—as she states directly on the title track. The song serves as a powerful conceptual and aesthetic conclusion to an album that directly challenges settler states of mind.

Tagaq’s covers are deliberate selections. “Caribou,” “Rape Me,” and, most recently, “Run To The Hills,” are songs of a life—perhaps hers and perhaps not just hers. As much as listeners might admire the surrealism, intensity, self-reflection, and empathy of all three original performances, Tagaq’s covers of these songs are not performances in a Euro-western sense. They are not aesthetic products that can be read as simply producing pleasure or, its opposite, a sense of jouissance. They are performances of life itself. They do something as it were—that is, they unfold a world to listeners. As “creative negation,” these songs command “a distinct kind of labor—an affectively

302 See Lindsay Knight in Chapter One for a discussion about the distinction between how some Indigenous artists understand music as a part of many elements of life and a Euro-western understanding that designates music as a distinct category of art, not directly related to a colonial understanding of life or existence itself.
303 Martineau (2015a): 43.
charged mode of thinking that involves something more than reason or aesthetic appraisal.\(^{304}\)

Yet, her songs and performances also occupy space in the Euro-western mind as songs that are heard as saying something first to listeners in a Euro-western tradition. These covers in particular, are performances of a specific life itself and a critique of settler colonial states of mind. They are “disidentificatory performances,” to use Munoz’s phrase.\(^{305}\) Their presence is fluid as they can exist in a liminal space that makes real new worlds. They say something as they are the continued unfolding of a life—that is, alive. This becomes more convoluted when white settler critics work to know what the songs are saying and how they can convey it to others in different words. It is only in the “after-life” of the initial experience—through the trace of aurality and carried listening history—that listeners can try to put into words what they believe the song “to be saying.”\(^{306}\) Yet as Tagaq makes new worlds real she simultaneously unsettles the settler tradition and the language used to describe them.\(^{307}\) Her act of “creative negation” refuses being captured by settler language.\(^{308}\)

This refusal protects the opaque elements within and behind the music that unsettled listeners cannot hold, experience, or understand.\(^{309}\) Listeners temporarily ground the sound during the performance but not the experience that gives life to the sounds. The settler cannot make the jump to claiming an understanding of the experience because they engage with the unfolding of a world framed by the experiences of the


\(^{305}\) “Oppositional counterpublics are enabled by visions, “worldviews,” that reshape as the deconstruct reality.” See Munoz (1999): 195-196.


\(^{308}\) Martineau (2015a): 43.

artist. Settler listeners are encouraged to remain aware and respect this reality or risk imposing their language and structures of violence once again. Indeed, these covers are significant because Tagaq takes up the language of the settler to perhaps meet the reach of the empathetic settler listener, but, more importantly, to unsettle the language used to articulate an empathetic position.

Tagaq’s version of Nirvana’s “Rape Me” unfolds certain realities and experiences faced as an Indigenous woman living through settler colonial North America and challenges the acceptance and perpetuation of these realities. Her version is also a process and performance of cross-cultural recognition. She listened closely to Nirvana’s version and advances this process through the song by simultaneously unlocking and deepening some of the tension of the initial version. She picks up the tension involved in Cobain’s process of speaking about rape as a white male—even if he is trying to confront the predominantly male fan base—and deepens the tension by asserting that she does not have to work to imagine this reality because it is very real for herself, Indigenous women, and Indigenous land. She suggests that Cobain’s commands be heard in a new way—as voices, represented by the multiple vocal tracks, urging listeners to take responsibility for the sexual violence ignored in communities across the land. She maintains the defiance, but performs a different perspective as the commanding voice, that is underwritten with an assertion of retribution. This is a command to listen and hear those already victimized and left vulnerable by current realities. She challenges listeners to hear the renewed personal and cultural defiance in her performance. Her command maintains the defiance of Cobain’s performance, but it carries with it the life-affirming exclamation present throughout her album. Colonization is a failed project and “retribution will be swift.”

Tagaq is undoubtedly aware of the historical context of contemporary sexual violence against Indigenous women. She is also aware of the tension between revealing what can be deeply traumatic details of sexual violence for many people for the sake of seeking justice, and employing it as part of testimonies and reports that non-Indigenous Canadians should re-cognize and take responsibility for. Tagaq has spoken to this tension
as well. For example, in an interview with an Ottawa-based publication, Tagaq noted that, in reference to her cover of “Rape Me,” the song “went from third person like Kurt Cobain singing about rape to first person, as a woman who has gone through these things, as a mother concerned for her child.”

I have already provided a detailed reading of the cover above, but Tagaq’s point about the tension revealed by the shift in performative context—the who behind the voice of the song—is valuable and worth noting here. That is, Tagaq’s shift of the performative context carries with it a particular history of violence against Indigenous women in Canada. Her assertion, beyond the one discussed above that “retribution will be swift,” is that this violence and history cannot be dealt with alongside other forms of violence and should be addressed as a unique situation with this particular history in view at all times. This does not mean that this violence gets situated in a hierarchical ranking. It does however, mean that violence against Indigenous women should be understood as part of a particular and ongoing settler colonial history. Put another way, audiences are urged to recognize that Indigenous women are targeted by perpetrators of violent crimes because Indigenous women are neglected by the systems, structures, and states of mind meant to protect people in Canada.

The cover performances given by Tagaq are part of a process of pushing listeners outside established listening experiences, states of mind, and settler colonial structures. Tagaq has extended “Caribou” and “Rape Me,” by nearly two minutes in both cases, pulling listeners outside their established listening experiences associated with the rock recordings of these songs. This push and pull is also a process of revealing possibilities of adapting to new ways of hearing and being in the world that challenge settler colonial structures. The cover performance is crucial in this case because it opens the possibility for something different. The processes revealed by these covering performances emphasize the liminality experienced by listeners and their participation in the re-cognition. That is, listeners first navigate and re-cognize ways of hearing their world in transition before beginning to navigate and decipher the new ways of being that come

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with a new world’s unfolding. Tagaq is a master of finding different ways to augment her performance and, therefore, continue to push listeners to find ways to re-cognize the worlds she challenges and creates through her performances. Her 2014 performance at the Polaris Music Prize gala in Toronto is one of the most notable examples.

_Tanya Tagaq’s 2014 Polaris Music Prize Performance: Making New Worlds Real_

The Polaris Music Prize (also referred to as the Polaris Prize or simply Polaris) is an award given annually to a Canadian artist who produces a record of artistic distinction. The panel is made up of music critics and journalists from across Canada. The award is well-respected but has faced criticism from members of the music community, including artists, for a number of reasons. These include the charge that the award remains too “mainstream” despite its claim that it does not consider the commercial success of the artists. Other critics note the potential overrepresentation of “independent” or “indie” artists. Critics noted that the “indie” genre is primarily made up of white male artists, therefore leading to an overrepresentation of white male nominees and jurors for the award. Some artists have added to the controversy around the award including 2013 winners Godspeed You! Black Emperor. The Canadian experimental music collective originally from Montréal, Québec, won the award but refused to attend the gala citing what they considered a self-serving artificial competitive atmosphere brought about by the prize, and the inherent contradiction of a corporate-sponsored extravagant gala held during a “time of austerity and normalized decline.” A representative from the band’s record label noted that they chose to “use the prize money to purchase musical

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instruments for, and support organizations providing music lessons to, people incarcerated within the Quebec prison system.”

The award continued in 2014, where Tagaq became the first Indigenous artist to win the prize for her album *Animism*. Tagaq’s victory had its own controversies. She ended her acceptance speech by exclaiming “Fuck PETA,” in reference to the organization, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, who she feels disregard the cultural significance of the seal hunt for Inuit peoples in their defaming of seal hunters. Tagaq also used the interviews and press coverage she received after winning the award as an opportunity to turn attention to the crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG).

In the fall of 2014, the Canadian government had yet to respond to the ongoing crisis of MMIWG. This is despite the fact that a number of reports had been released, calling for an end to violence against Indigenous women in Canada. This includes a 2004 Amnesty International Report called *Stolen Sisters: A Human Rights Response to Discrimination and Violence against Indigenous Women in Canada*, and nearly ten years after that, in 2013, a Human Rights Watch (HRW) report titled *Those Who Take Us Away: Abusive Policing and Failures in Protection of Indigenous Women and Girls in Northern British Columbia, Canada*. The second report draws attention to the severely strained relationship between the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and Indigenous women and girls who live in Northern British Columbia. It explains how “police have failed to protect this population from violence, but more significantly, it

314 This also made Tagaq the first person of colour to win the award (in its ninth year). Feist was the first female artist to win the award in 2012 (the seventh year of the award) for her album *Metals*.
documents cases in which the police have been the chief perpetrators of this violence.”

That is, members of an authoritative arm of the settler-state were repeatedly committing horrific acts of violence against a particular segment of the population and the government was unwilling to take responsibility and act.

Other organizations, including the Native Women’s Association of Canada, have been working to document and bring this crisis to the attention of the government and members of non-Indigenous cultures in Canada. In 2016, the Canadian government decided, after public outcry and scrutiny, to launch the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. The Inquiry has faced criticism from several people, including one of the top commissioners and other committee members, some of whom have resigned over issues with the way the Inquiry was carried out.

In 2017, HRW released a second report outlining the police abuse of Indigenous women in Saskatchewan. The release of this report, at the time, emphasized the fact that the crisis is not an issue based in one area of the country. The significance of the National Inquiry, in one sense, is for members of non-Indigenous cultures to acknowledge that these are not isolated cases relating to a few troubled or neglected areas of the country and a few corrupt police officers. It is a national crisis that reveals the depth and force of colonialism within the country’s history and continued existence. Indeed, the HRW reports situate “this contemporary sexual violence within a historical context.” That is, they unpack how these cases are tied to the history of colonialism. This is the same history that produced and maintains reservations without clean drinking water, Indian Residential Schools, the Sixties Scoop, and intergenerational trauma for Indigenous cultures.

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317 For more on particular cases and other organizations involved in documenting cases of MMIWG see Sliwinski (2018): 8-10.
peoples across Turtle Island. The reports ultimately speak to the settler colonial history that non-Indigenous Canadians should feel responsible for when they witness cases of MMIWG:

We do know that thousands of Indigenous women, girls, 2SLGBTQQIA have been lost to the Canadian genocide to date. The fact that First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples are still here and that the population is growing should not discount the charge of genocide; the resilience and continued growth of these populations don’t discount the many actions detailed within this report, both historical and contemporary, that have contributed to endemic violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people. Ultimately, and despite different circumstances and backgrounds, what connects all these deaths is colonial violence, racism and oppression.

Canada is a settler colonial country. European nations, followed by the new government of “Canada,” imposed its own laws, institutions, and cultures on Indigenous Peoples while occupying their lands. Racist colonial attitudes justified Canada’s policies of assimilation, which sought to eliminate First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples as distinct Peoples and communities.

Colonial violence, as well as racism, sexism, homophobia, and transphobia against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people, has become embedded in everyday life – whether this is through interpersonal forms of violence, through institutions like the health care system and the justice system, or in the laws, policies and structures of Canadian society. The result has been that many Indigenous people have grown up normalized to violence, while Canadian society shows an appalling apathy to addressing the issue. The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls finds that this amounts to genocide.320

The language of the report is clear. Witnessing these testimonies and reading these reports is not meant to be a process that relieves a heavy burden for non-Indigenous

Canadians. I understand these processes to be acts undertaken, first and most importantly, for the benefit of the victims and their families, and second, so that space for those who feel that they can exist as an unaffected innocent bystander in this matter of collective concern is eliminated. The tension involved in the carrying out, production, and consumption of these reports should also be observed. Sharon Sliwinski lays this tension out clearly for HRW and other human rights organizations, but I think the sentiment applies to individuals as well: “the key question becomes: how to make this form of violence visible without subjecting its victims to further harm?” An addendum to this question written for the individual is reflected in the general thesis of this dissertation, but it might read like: how might non-Indigenous Canadians grapple with the realities of a settler colonial identity and re-build settler states of mind without subjecting its victims to further harm?

Tagaq carries this history and tension beyond her cover of Nirvana. Many performances involve bringing this reality of violence against Indigenous women to the fore. Some performances are more subtle about this history, while others are more explicit. Tagaq’s performance from the 2014 Polaris gala, however, was not a simple moment of celebration and recognition of her artistic accomplishments. In general, her performances often push the limits of human emotion and comfort. She produces sounds that make listeners uncomfortable, mixing low and high, guttural and dulcet sounds—sounds that other people might only feel comfortable making in private. For this performance, which was available for streaming over the internet, she carefully crafted visual elements that, in addition to the sonic elements, became part of one of her most direct acts of making the history of violence against Indigenous women in Canada real to settler audiences.

\[321 \text{ Sliwinski (2018): 12.}\]
For the gala, Tagaq chose to perform “Uja” and “Umingmak”—two songs from *Animism*.\(^{322}\) During her performance she moved about in the centre of the stage with a spotlight on her, while her violinist (Zubot) stood on the far right (when facing the stage from the audience) and the percussionist (Martin) played on the far left. An improvisatory choir sang behind Tagaq and Zubot. The visual elements for this performance were simple, but profound.\(^{323}\) On four separate screens raised off of the stage and behind Tagaq were photos of Emanuel Vigeland’s mausoleum in Oslo, Norway.\(^{324}\) On another screen just above and to the left of Tagaq, the names of 1,200 MMIWG scrolled upward on a screen.\(^{325}\) Though she did not vocalize the names on the screen, a “trace of aurality” remained through Tagaq’s push to listeners to hear the names on the screen and hear the voices of the missing and murdered women and girls.\(^{326}\) This performance is of significant interest because it exemplifies one artist’s attempt to ignite a process with audiences where they are encouraged to find a way to participate in the building of a world that challenges the settler colonial one revealed in the performance. This idea stems from Ronald Radano’s discussion of “resonance.” This movement of sound into text and back again operates as a “social articulation” or “utterance” that moves around an “unlocatable origin.”\(^{327}\) I emphasize the movement of sound from the aural, to the visual, to the imaginary and back as part of the continued process of re-cognizing a

\(^{322}\) In an article on *The Walrus* Drew Nelles notes, “although the Polaris credits stated that the band was performing “Uja” and “Umingmak,” they had never found the time to replicate the songs from *Animism*, and had practiced with the choir only briefly, during sound check.” See Drew Nelles, “Howl” from *The Walrus*. Published January 15th, 2015, updated August 23rd, 2017. Accessed at: https://thewalrus.ca/howl/.

\(^{323}\) Tagaq has also performed live musical accompaniment to screenings of *Nanook of the North*, a 1922 silent film by American Robert Flaherty which depicts Nanook (an Inuk man) and his family in northernQuébec. Tagaq was commissioned by the Toronto International Film Festival in 2012 to create live accompaniment to the film. She has performed this accompaniment around the world including in Toronto, Halifax, New York City, and Hobart, Tasmania.

\(^{324}\) Tagaq had taken the photos on a trip to Norway. See Nelles (2015).

\(^{325}\) This estimated number only covers Canadian cases over a 30 year period, from 1984 to 2014, the year of her *Animism* Polaris performance.

\(^{326}\) This idea of the “trace of aurality” stems from Fred Moten’s discussion in relation to “the possibility or trace of aurality of [James] Baldwin’s gaze, conferred upon himself and others.” This trace is present in Tagaq’s performance and through her own gaze turned on herself and the audience members. She wants to see people hearing these names in her performance. See Fred Moten, *In the Break: The aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition*. (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 183.

performance and “worldmaking.” This movement of “resonance” also becomes a key part of informing listeners where and how their body is located in relation to the performance and the reality articulated. In other words, it becomes and demonstrates part of her process of making the anti-colonial sounds and resulting worlds real to listeners deeply embedded in settler colonial practices and ways of being, seeing, and hearing.

This process of “worldmaking” works to support the power of the sonic forces Tagaq brings to life. Her sounds move to upset settler listeners’ comfortable states of mind and listening experiences by encouraging and gesturing to new ways of hearing the world and the future. This is a process of “creative negation” in the words of Martineau. That is, it refuses as it turns “toward Indigenous alternatives and potentialities.” The live aspect of the performance means that audience members are drawn to Tagaq as she performs. They engage with her performance of an embodiment of sound as they begin to experience their own embodiment of the sound. The use of additional visual components such as the screen featuring the scrolling of names of MMIWG shape moments of performer and audience beginning to visualize different ways of being in the world (critiques of current realities) and different ways of being in the future. That is, the visual components of the performance do not simply act as the concrete visible translations of the sounds performed. Rather, they support the sonic imaginaries in movement and encourage listeners to begin to make real the new worlds created by the artist.

Though the performance is temporary, it continues to move listeners. That is, though the performance ends, the embodied experience of sound lingers, encouraging listeners to continue to hear and see the new worlds performed. This push asks listeners

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329 The live element of this performance is lost when the performance is viewed online. Yet, it remains an emotionally impactful performance and difficult to watch repeatedly. It unsettles and drains the viewer’s emotional and psychological strength. The live element is lost but the viewer still feels an encouragement to take up a different kind of responsibility. The music affects and communicates this encouragement through the bodies of the performer and listeners despite the distance. It is a significant moment in Tagaq’s larger body of work as well. It can be placed and read alongside and against the wide range of work she has undertaken including painting, writing a memoir/literature, and performing in music videos.
to re-cognize different elements of the “performative life” of the music, to borrow Vazquez’s phrase again.\textsuperscript{331} This process has a life beyond the initial moment of re-cognizing the performance of the music. Listeners often experience and understand this reality on a musical level. They hear a song and the song remains stuck in their head, repeating catchy or noteworthy parts. Thinking about this common occurrence can help listeners recognize that the body also continues to feel, hear, and see the performance, even if the thinking faculties are focused on the hooks of a song or performance. The unsettling parts of a performance continue to move the sound and affect listeners. Listeners, in a sense, carry forward a piece of this performance and the new worlds it alludes to, despite not necessarily addressing it immediately or continuously after an initial acknowledgement. In other words, there is a history to this listening. The challenge becomes learning how to commit to surrendering settler states of mind and listening to what this performance and piece of a new world continues to project outwards. Listeners become responsible for helping to continue to make these new worlds real, even if it is just a small piece.

These responsibilities vary, however. In the instance I described above, an Inuk artist is challenging established narratives through cover performances and encouraging listeners to embody new realities. White listeners are encouraged to recognize however, that the boundaries and structures of these worlds are set by the artist. Part of the setting of new limits and boundaries is done through the act of revealing the settler colonial structures of current realities. This revealing and setting of limits operates simultaneously through the performance. As new worlds are created, audiences come to re-cognize that it is an Indigenous created and led world that they are invited to participate in.

\textit{Reconciliation Unsettled}

Engagements between artist and listeners reach beyond the limits of private listening experiences and concert venues. I have explored what Tagaq’s performances of cover

\textsuperscript{331} Vazquez (2013): 133-134.
songs and her push to make new worlds real might be doing as performances in themselves and to the listening experience of listeners. Specifically, I explored how these performances affect a listener’s understanding of their relationship to the performance—responses and responsibilities—and to the structures of a settler colonial reality. I will now explore what these performances might mean for larger socio-political questions of reconciliation in North America (Turtle Island).

Indigenous writers and theorists regularly note that efforts towards “reconciliation,” as a discourse of settler colonial Canadians, continue a settler colonial project of working to assimilate or eradicate Indigenous peoples. To many settler subjects of the settler colonial state, a move to reconcile relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous nations seems like a step in a progressive direction. The settler colonial state frames reconciliation as a productive move, while many Indigenous artists, theorists, and leaders recognize that social, political, and economic disparities will likely remain regardless of the reconciliatory events strung together by the settler state. Challenging leaders of the settler state to reframe the discourse of reconciliation masks the larger issue: the settler state continues to dictate the terms, limits, and processes of what they have called reconciliation.

Tagaq’s performances work to challenge and unsettle the idea that a settler colonial state can lead a process of reconciliation with Indigenous people on Turtle Island. As settler listeners continue to commit to the surrender involved in processes that build new Indigenous-led worlds, they begin to re-cognize this larger socio-political potential. In other words, by working to realize potentialities beyond those upheld by settler colonial structures, settler listeners are encouraged to re-cognize alternative realities. For Indigenous artists and Indigenous peoples, living and recognizing alternative realities is a regular practice. For settler listeners however, opening to the possibility of new realities outside of settler colonial states of mind and structures is a significant part of the listening

332 See Alfred (2005); Coulthard (2014); Garneau (2016); Robinson (2012); Simpson (2011) and (2017); Tuck and Yang (2012).
experience. The crucial moment for settler listeners is that in this re-cognizing of the possibility of new worlds, they are encouraged to re-cognize that these possibilities are led by Indigenous peoples.

In more concrete terms, Tagaq’s Nirvana cover performances and her Polaris performance resist the move to reframe discourses of reconciliation in settler colonial terms. They assert and name the death and trauma that has and continues to occur under settler colonial systems. These performances also work to reclaim the idea of what a process of reconciliation might involve. That is, settler colonial reconciliation is unsettled and revealed as an insufficient move for creating new realities for Indigenous nations. Indeed, Tagaq’s album Retribution pushes beyond this and names a possible future reality that might unsettle white listeners. The move to name a future possibility as “retribution” denies settler colonial reconciliation as a future and requires white listeners to listen again to the music and the transformations within it.

This experience of lingering in the music and the continued life of the performance moves collective ideals away from its dominant white centre set out by settler colonial structures. The potential surrendering of white listeners reinforces this shift to see “the whole” and a place where white listeners no longer sit at the centre dictating the terms of cross-cultural engagements. The performance as a movement of sound can move listeners away from one kind of collective ideal towards others. As Fred Moten describes, as “you move through a soundscape you get moved by and enter another scene.” In this move towards another ideal however, white listeners can commit to maintaining a certain distance from the centre. For listeners to continue re-cognizing the creation and “worldmaking” of new realities, they are urged to remain at a distance from this

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333 “As Baldwin knows…to receive the blessing of this substance—to see and hear and touch and smell and taste it; to receive the gift that does not cohere but exists in its abounding of its own internal space; to receive and in so doing to acknowledge the fact of the whole as a kind of distance: this is what it is to linger in the music.” Moten (2003): 192.
334 Ibid., 229.
process. Yet, it is this distance that maintains a listener’s responsibilities, connection, and significance to the future realities.

Lingering in the music and facing this distance means learning how to linger in uncertainty. This includes uncertainty about what is heard, what critical changes might be in the future, and what responsibilities are in the future. Furthermore, lingering in uncertainty means that white listeners learn to navigate different worlds and realities where they no longer dictate the terms of the engagements. Where uncertainty represents the limits of understanding under settler colonial structures, these positions become the fundamental experiences of new realities for white listeners. This means that white settlers re-cognize their position as participants or contributors, not experts or leaders. This includes surrendering the desire to have a complete understanding of different Indigenous-led realities. At the same time, these futures require a more involved and critically aware participation from white listeners.

For questions of reconciliation, this means that white listeners are encouraged to surrender to the fact that the terms of a collective moving forward should be set by Indigenous nations. This does not relieve white settlers of responsibility. They are invited to remain deeply involved in this process, as outlined above, but they remain deeply involved on new terms set out by the nations urging conciliatory action. White settlers will hear their world in different ways and should work to move beyond settler colonial structures of understanding relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. Recognizing that reconciliatory projects continue to serve non-Indigenous people more than Indigenous peoples, cultures, and nations, is a necessary step in moving away from projects controlled by settler colonial institutions. Tagaq’s Retribution denies the legitimacy of settler colonial projects of reconciliation and helps move listeners beyond settled boundaries of understanding. Indigenous nations are and have been calling for new realities that challenge, and indeed, dismantle settler colonial structures. For white

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settlers to move in new ways with the many different Indigenous communities across Turtle Island, they are encouraged to first surrender their colonial states of mind.

Other Indigenous artists who have taken up unique visual avenues in an attempt to accompany and make sonic utterances and the worlds they support real to listeners include Jeremy Dutcher, Leanne Simpson (with artists, producers, and directors such as Tara Williamson (Opaskwayak Cree Nation and was raised in Gaabishkigamaag (Swan Lake, Manitoba)), Cara Mumford (Métis/Chippewa Cree), Elle Máijá Tailfeathers (Blackfoot and Sámi), and Amanda Spotted Fawn (Amanda Strong, Michif)), and A Tribe Called Red. Dutcher uses songs and performances, in one sense, as a way of reviving the Wolastoqey language of the Wolastoqiyik peoples. Simpson’s music and the visual representations of it work to accompany and present the poetry, short stories, and Nishnaabeg intellectual practices in her books. Dutcher’s work will be explored in more depth in the final chapter. A Tribe Called Red’s performances feature a range of visual elements, including the work of Bear Witness, who collects, covers, re-covers, and displays various images of Indigenous peoples as portrayed by settler artists throughout the history of settler dominated popular entertainment. This visual re-covering works alongside the sonic utterances to make real ignored implications of settler realities and set the foundations of new ones. The reconstruction of recognition encouraged by the many levels of the album We Are The Halluci Nation and of performances by A Tribe Called Red is explored in the next chapter.
Chapter Four

A Tribe Called Red’s *We Are The Halluci Nation*

*And it's hard to listen—but listen,*

*Cause it's much harder living it than listening to the hardships*

—Lyrics by Shad from “How I Feel” by A Tribe Called Red featuring Leonard Sumner, Shad, and Northern Voice.

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On March 25th, 2018, the Juno awards ceremony—the most widely-known annual music industry awards event in Canada—was held in Vancouver. The televised ceremony contained performances from some of the country’s most well-known and internationally successful bands, including Arcade Fire and Lights, as well as some younger musicians quickly making a name for themselves such as Daniel Caesar and Jessie Reyez. Few awards were given during the broadcast, as most were awarded the previous night at a Juno’s gala. This included highly regarded awards such as “Songwriter of the Year,” “Single of the Year,” and most genre specific “Album of the year” awards. The award for “Group of the Year” was given at the gala. With Arcade Fire winning the award for “Album of the Year” for their 2017 record *Everything Now*, audiences might have assumed that they were the favourites to win the “Group of the Year” award as well. However, the Ottawa-based collective A Tribe Called Red (ATCR)—riding the waves of support from their 2016 album *We Are The Halluci Nation*—won, becoming the first Indigenous group to receive the award. A quick recap of the gala’s events during the

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336 Other nominees for this award included Alvvays, Broken Social Scene, and A Tribe Called Red.
337 By the time ATCR won the 2018 Juno for “Group of the Year,” *We Are The Halluci Nation* had been available to listeners for nearly a year-and-a-half and they had toured the world extensively. The record
March 25th broadcast informed viewers that ATCR had won the award. It was the group’s first Juno award since 2014 when they became the first Indigenous group to win “Breakthrough Group of Year” following the release of their 2013 album Nation II Nation.

On the one hand, the Juno’s can be a nice celebration of music made in Canada, a place that has a confusing history of managing influences from other countries and attempting to celebrate work produced by people living within the borders. It is also uplifting to see A Tribe Called Red be acknowledged for their work on a wide-reaching platform. Yet, it is also not a secret that industry awards are tools of the industry. They can be part of a cycle of promotion where the artists that are signed to major labels and are given considerable resources by these labels win the awards and receive more resources. It can be a circle that benefits the few “hot” bands in a moment. I want to think through the processes of award ceremonies on a more critical level. Specifically, industry awards such as the Junos allow me think through another element of cross-cultural listening—recognition, or more appropriately for my project, re-cognition and the surrendering of settler colonial states of mind.

On multiple levels, the Juno awards represent an attempt at a process of surface recognition by a media industry, while deeper issues stir underneath. Superficially, nominees and winners get acknowledged for their work and are given airtime—if only briefly—on a heavily promoted and nationally broadcast event. The acknowledgements may help record sales or streaming numbers and may improve the number of concert bookings. Discussions of what categories of awards should be handed out happen from time to time and reflect some awareness of larger cultural discussions of representation. On a deeper level, these awards allow me to think through what it means to recognize one

made the short-list for the 2017 Polaris Prize, won the award for “Album of the Year” at the 2017 Canadian Independent Music Awards, and was nominated for “Electronic Album of the Year” at the 2017 Juno awards. The first major single from the album— “R.E.D” (ft. Yasiin Bey, Narcy, and Black Bear)—won “Video of the Year” at an annual video award show in Canada. The song was released in July of 2016, nearly two years before the 2018 Juno award ceremony that finally recognized the effect that the group and music was having around the world.
another across cultures, how this recognition is carried out, and what responsibilities face certain participants in these processes.

As I discussed in Chapter One, Glen Coulthard has written about the dangers of a politics of recognition for Indigenous nations within neo-liberal settler colonial frameworks. He argues that a politics of recognition fails the efforts of Indigenous nations working to reclaim land and regain sovereignty. If recognition from the settler state is part of a process of regaining land and sovereignty, the process is bound to the limits set by the settler state and unlikely to succeed. Aiming for recognition from and within a settler state maintains the subjection of Indigenous nations and peoples to the structures and abuses of settler colonialism. Indigenous nations might regain sovereignty however, through self-determined processes of recognition and socio-political restructuring.

Coulthard should not be taken out of context; he is focused on the issue of land repatriation and political self-determination of Indigenous nations. However, his argument regarding a politics of recognition operating between a settler colonial liberal regime and Indigenous nations spills into the realm of art and performance in these moments of artistic cross-cultural recognition. If I borrow from Coulthard’s political argument, the danger in these moments of cross-cultural artistic recognition dictated by the structures of settler colonial recognition involves a situation where, for example, A Tribe Called Red wins multiple Juno awards throughout their career for their work—which includes critiques of settler colonial structures and the abuses of settler colonial systems—but larger issues of land reclamation, sovereignty, and the socio-political and economic well-being of Indigenous nations and peoples are left unaddressed. This is an example being recognized but not heard—one where settler colonial institutions honor the work of marginalized artists but fail to make any significant changes to the structures and power imbalances that work against these same artists.

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338 Coulthard (2014).
Coulthard calls for a focus on self-determination on the part of Indigenous nations in processes which seek to regain sovereignty. A similar process could be utilized in the world of the arts; indeed, there are what could be considered self-determining processes in place in the arts including the annual Indigenous Music Awards ceremony, Jarrett Martineau’s CBC radio program *Reclaimed*, and RPM’s *Constellations* concerts. I am not suggesting that Indigenous artists should only seek recognition from Indigenous run institutions. It was a significant moment when A Tribe Called Red won the coveted “Group of the Year” award at the Junos. It meant that they pushed past the obstacle of being categorized by their race and limited to applying for “Indigenous Album of the Year.” They did not reject the significance of the “Indigenous Album of the Year” award, recognizing that they could apply for “Group of the Year” only once they reached a level of success reserved for mainstream artists. What I seek to clarify in this chapter are the intricacies of how this process of re-cognition—the moments of hearing the power and cross-cultural encouragement in the work of A Tribe Called Red—is carried out on the part of settlers. Indeed, I want to further differentiate between a recognition of a superficial sort and the re-cognition as an attunement to a push for a kind of responsibility that I began outlining in Chapter One.

In this chapter, I will explore how and what it means for A Tribe Called Red’s *We Are The Halluci Nation*—an album containing powerful critical and utopic imaginations—to encourage white settler listeners to engage in cross-cultural interrogations of notions of recognition and reconciliation, key concepts at the heart of settler colonial states of mind. Specifically, I will utilize a case of listening to *We Are The Halluci Nation* as a basis for articulating an experience of re-cognition from my perspective as a white settler listener. I work through a process of surrendering a settler colonial state of mind spurred by embodied experiences of sound. I will provide a brief history of A Tribe Called Red’s career and then specifically address the release of *We Are The Halluci Nation*. I recall an A Tribe Called Red performance in London, Ontario as a way of working through my own experience of re-cognition. I then discuss the value of
this process of re-cognition and its related components of surrendering settler states of mind in order to underscore why listeners might engage such a process.

In order to unsettle the work of recognition on the part of settler listeners and make real the processes of re-cognition I turn to the work of Jonathon Lear. Lear’s work adds to the dialogue advanced by Coulthard and Audra Simpson on recognition in settler colonial states. Where Coulthard and Simpson are concerned with the paths, processes, and futures of Indigenous nations however, Lear provides a basis to begin engaging with the roles and responsibilities of settlers in interactions with Indigenous peoples undertaking the work of decolonization. Lear’s work comes as a necessary response to the self-determining work of Indigenous peoples. That is, settlers should do more than simply sit back and congratulate the movements for land reclamation and sovereignty by Indigenous peoples. To do so is to remain complicit with the settler colonial system that continues to push against the possibility of Indigenous-led worlds on Turtle Island.

The main element of Lear’s work that I draw from is the idea of pushing beyond recognition as a mere acknowledgement of the difference of another. The notion of recognition that I outlined in Chapter One builds on Lear’s unsettling of the concept. Recognition’s key elements are moments of self-reflection which begin a re-constitution of settler states of mind. Through this self-reflection, participants begin to understand their position in the engagement with another as carrying a responsibility. Participants are responsible for one another and not simply engaged in a process of noting differences. Recognition on the level of pure acknowledgement may persist, but the process of recognition pushes past this and asks more of the individual. Further still, the individual is encouraged to understand what the push for an acknowledgement of difference really means. It is not a moment of naming the difference. It is a push to understand the structures and imbalance of power governing the interaction. I understand calls for self-determination and sovereignty on the part of Indigenous nations and peoples as also encouraging settlers to acknowledge, re-think, and re-structure the imbalance of power at

the core of the settler colonial system. This begins with a restructuring of settler colonial states of mind. I hear *We Are The Halluci Nation* as part of a collection of calls for Indigenous self-determination and I attempt to articulate one listening and re-cognition experience below. Like the album however, this articulation is not a general blueprint for the future, for a nation-building process, or a process of aesthetic surrender. It is an attempt to bring to the fore discussions of what it means to surrender in different aspects of life (aesthetic, social, political, economic, cultural), and continue to reveal the necessity of surrender.

*The Rise of A Tribe Called Red*

2018 marked ten years since the group started making songs and hosting monthly “Electric Pow Wow” parties at the Babylon nightclub in Ottawa. The parties were conceived as a reason to play music they had been creating and provide a safe space for Indigenous people in Ottawa to gather and dance. Karyn Recollet describes the dancing at the Electric Pow Wow as “embodied sovereignty” and part of a “process of claiming Indigenous territories in urban spaces.”[340] These gatherings allowed an urban Indigenous population to navigate, articulate, and determine what it means to be an Indigenous person living in an urban area in settler colonial Canada in the twenty-first century. As people from other cultures took notice, the parties became a space of cross-cultural recognition despite always remaining a space of Indigenous self-determination and “embodied sovereignty.”[341] The parties also became the basis of ATCR’s live show when they toured.[342] Audiences are given a glimpse of this atmosphere and experience in the video for “Sisters” (ft. Northern Voice).[343] The song samples “C Kisakitin Mama” sung by the Northern Voice Singers. It is distinct amongst ATCR’s samplings because the

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sampled song does not feature drumming or male vocals. The video begins with three Indigenous women (Sarain Carson-Fox, Kawennáhere Devery Jacobs, and Aria Evans) excitedly preparing for an Electric Pow Wow. They drive down a snow-covered highway and dance in various locations on their way to the club. This drive emphasizes their location outside of the city limits and alludes to the arbitrary boundaries and appreciation for the distinct and overlapping lives—community life (often) on a reservation and life in urban centres—that some urban Indigenous populations negotiate. Recollet also notes that the video “ignites a shift wherein spaces considered unsafe—as in the forested area beside highways, and small-town gas bars—are seemingly transformed into sites wherein girls and women can feel free to dance and move.”

The sky changes colour in step with the music in a magical realist way as the women drive down a snow swept highway. The changing colours of the sky are indicative of the lights of the dancefloor at the Electric Pow Wow and suggest that the dancefloor reaches much further than the confines of the club. The final scene is at the Electric Pow Wow, where the women are amongst many people dancing while ATCR deejay. Close-ups of people dancing and illuminated DJ equipment indicate the confident, proud, and uplifting atmosphere and party experience. As the song ends, the video flashes back through the journey the women took to get to the party. The video ends by focusing on the Nation II Nation patch sewn on the back of a jacket worn by DJ Shub (Dan General—Mohawk, Six Nations), a former member of ATCR.

The Electric Pow Wow parties are where ATCR developed the sound that they eventually became known for—a combination of pow wow drums and vocals, and the sounds of hip hop and electronic dance music. The Electric Pow Wow parties served as an anchoring moment for the album. Yet, it also served as a jumping off point and challenged them to push the boundaries of people who might be listening from afar—geographically and ideologically. Indeed, the song that made people outside of Ottawa

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take notice was “Electric Pow Wow Drum,” the opening track from their 2012 self-titled debut album. Most people beyond ATCR’s inner circle had never heard the “pow wow-step” sounds like those featured on the album in songs such as “Electric Pow Wow Drum” or the remix of Northern Cree’s “Red Skin Gal.”

In its uplifting feel and reclamation of sounds and images of indigeneity created by a white settler dominated popular culture, the album responds to years of continued mistreatment and racial injustice. It also asserts an Indigenous presence that settler colonial practices and states of mind tried to eliminate and continue to ignore. At the same time, the record insists on being taken seriously as a dance record. This is a political move and something that the group’s subsequent records also assert. As the group toured North America and other parts of the world, they welcomed more people to the party and to the inclusive cross-cultural community that grew out of these encounters.346

Their second full-length album—*Nation II Nation*—continued to push the boundaries of what their sound could be and, particularly, what it could do. The album had its own unique anchoring moment in the gestation of the Idle No More movement. Idle No More was started by four women—Jessica Gordon (Pasqua Treaty 4 Territory), Sylvia McAdam (nêhiyaw), Nina Wilson (Nakota and Plains Cree from Kahkewistahaw), and Sheelah McLean (Canadian)—in Saskatchewan, who were concerned with the continued mistreatment of Indigenous peoples in Canada and the continued violation of

346 As ATCR were exposed to new and larger audiences, they also faced more issues of cultural appropriation, including non-Indigenous audience members wearing headdresses and body paint as signs of indigeneity as mentioned in Chapter One. I recognize here again that the danger involved in this cross-cultural engagement, but I reassert my argument for the continued listening to and discussion about these engagements. These are essential discussions and it is dangerous to avoid listening to music produced by members of cultures that are not our own. Of course, these listening experiences are encouraged to be undertaken respectfully and without “hunger.” Further, the burden of Indigenizing institutions and challenging settler colonialism is not only that of Indigenous peoples. Non-Indigenous peoples are invited to take up the responsibility to place Indigenous created content at the centre of cultural analysis and enjoyment, but we should do so reflectively. Indigenous artists have produced records, books, and paintings and taken up the opportunity to create public discussions and spark pedagogical processes across the cultures of their audiences. These moments arise despite the fact that the materials were created by Indigenous artists for the members of their own culture. Non-Indigenous peoples are encouraged to continue to listen, take up the lessons to learn to listen differently, and follow the lead of Indigenous artists and leaders. See Robinson (2020) for more on “hungry listening.”
treaty rights by the Canadian government. Specifically, it was a reaction against impending legislation that involved changes to the management of land on reservations, a clear treaty violation. This movement spread across the country, gaining support from nations across Turtle Island. In December of 2012, the movement merged with a hunger strike started by (then) Chief Theresa Spence of the Attawapiskat First Nation. Spence started the strike in protest of the continued mistreatment of Indigenous peoples in Canada, which was exemplified by a housing crisis in Attawapiskat. She also demanded that the government—led by Stephen Harper at the time—and (then) Governor General David Johnston meet with Indigenous leaders to discuss the continued violation of treaties by the settler state. Harper eventually agreed to a meeting, but Johnston was not present.347

Later that month ATCR released “The Road” (ft. Black Bear) in support of the movement.348 It also essentially served as the lead single for Nation II Nation, which came out five months later, in May of 2013. The release of “The Road” (ft. Black Bear) was released subtly (self-released on the internet) but defiantly in the midst of growing tensions between the Idle No More movement and the Canadian government.349 Cree/Dene CBC radio host, scholar, artist, storyteller, and founder of the first Indigenous-run record label and media platform RPM, Jarrett Martineau, described his first engagement with the song in a discussion of Indigenous resistance and resurgence:

An update blinked across my timeline…I clicked through to listen. It began with the drums. “The Road” is an introspective

instrumental with a haunting lead melody, an insistent rhythm and a pow-wow-sampled vocal chorus that departs from the group’s more overtly dance floor-oriented club tracks. It reverberated with a prescient sense of the movement’s evolving form and affective potency: at once melancholic and triumphant, longing, hopeful and defiantly resistant. It captured in sound and carried in spirit the essence of the movement’s resonant tension between force and restraint, outrage and introspection; it pushed and pulsed with a determined, rhythmic insistence and restless motion—an intangible, dynamic and energetic flow that, haunted by memory, resounded a renewed presence. It was moving. Inevitably, relentlessly forward. “The Road” was the calm before the storm, the anticipation of a future anterior world that will have already arrived. The world was not ending; it was beginning again.  

Martineau extends this “beginning again” in his own work for RPM, supporting the musicians and artists associated with the label. In the above moment of his academic work however, he is describing how it is that audiences might hear and feel “The Road” within the context of the movement that it is responding to—a reality that might be lost on listeners engaging with the song years later or under different circumstances. Martineau teaches readers how to listen by unpacking his listening experience. This process also helps make some elements of the song audible for listeners that might only hear noise. Yet, Martineau respects the opacity of certain elements of the song. As Martineau’s description informs white listeners of the weight of the song and names what they might hear and feel, but not be able to name themselves, he protects those elements that should be left unexplored by white listeners. He entices settlers into thinking about what this future looks like—“the anticipation of a future anterior”—as he tells them that it has “already arrived.”


Martineau’s work for RPM including the RPM Live series, and his work for the CBC radio program Reclaimed will be discussed in the final chapter. 

I came to the music of ATCR around this time. My engagement with this song coincided with the beginning of my engagement with the Idle No More movement. This connection between music, sociopolitical consciousness, and action is significant for my experience. I considered myself a politically aware and engaged citizen, but this song and movement turned my attention to the issues faced by Indigenous populations in North America. I lived on Mi’kmaq territory at the time in what is considered Nova Scotia. I participated in the local events held in response to the call for a National Day of Action on December 10th, 2012. Although the widespread attention given to the Idle No More movement subsided and my direct engagement with the movement also ended, I continued engaging with the music and exploring my relationship to the sounds produced, the people producing them, and the ideas and issues put forth.

ATCR’s Nation II Nation came out in the spring of 2013 and served as the basis from which I would re-think my engagement with the many realities of Indigenous peoples in Canada.\(^{353}\) The books I read at the time explored historical relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in North America, but ATCR’s music opened my awareness to an urban Indigenous reality in Ottawa. This challenged the boundaries of my sense of responsibility of engagement. I knew that the population of Kenora includes a high Indigenous-identifying constituency, but not being an urban centre, I grew up assuming that Indigenous peoples were largely reserve-based and therefore “new immigrants to the city,”—a common element of settler states of mind.\(^{354}\) Winnipeg has the highest urban Indigenous population in Canada. I was born in Winnipeg, lived there for a brief period in the early 1990s and return frequently, but it took hearing music by ATCR in the early 2010s to recognize the realities of urban Indigenous populations in Canada. The music made me realize that understanding urban

\(^{353}\) Nation II Nation received Best Group, Best Producer, Best Album Cover, and Best Pop CD awards at the 2013 Aboriginal Peoples’ Choice Music Awards (now called the Indigenous Music Awards).

\(^{354}\) The idea that Indigenous peoples are foreign to certain land or way of living perpetuates the settler colonial mentality. Kyle T. Mays, Indigenous Detroit: Indigeneity, Modernity, and Racial and Gender Formation in a Modern American City, 1871-2000. (Dissertation for University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2015), 6.
history in Canada means recognizing the presence and role of Indigenous peoples.\textsuperscript{355} Settler colonial structures and states of mind permit the work of trying to keep Indigenous populations hidden, but the “rhythmic insistence” and “restless motion” of ATCR’s music spoke to current realities, challenged my ignorance, and encouraged a new engagement.

Over the next three and a half years, I committed to exploring music and literature produced by Indigenous peoples in North America. These creations continued to guide and challenge my engagement. At the same time, I awaited what would come next from ATCR. While I was listening, reading, and watching intently, ATCR toured extensively in support of \textit{Nation II Nation}. After a long tour, DJ Shub left the group in 2014 and 2oolman (Tim Hill—Mohawk, Six Nations) joined, bringing his own spin and unique background to the music. As ATCR prepared to make a new record, it appeared that they were consciously trying to make a different kind of dance record. The trio travelled to Melbourne Australia, northern Norway, and Manawan First Nation (Atikamekw) in central Québec—the home of drumming group Black Bear—to collaborate with Indigenous peoples around the world. This album marked the first time that ATCR worked with a drumming group to create and record new sounds, a move that added to their earlier work that focused on remixing older pow wow recordings. These collaborations expanded the community that had been forming since the Electric Pow Wow parties in Ottawa and on tour.

Released on September 16th of 2016, \textit{We Are The Halluci Nation} transformed the rhythmic limits of many nations. At the time of recording and release of the album, the group consisted of DJ NDN (Ian Campeau—Ojibwe, Anishinaabe from Nipissing First Nation), Bear Witness (Ehren Thomas—Cayuga, Six Nations), and 2oolman (Tim Hill—Mohawk, Six Nations).\textsuperscript{356} \textit{We Are The Halluci Nation} is ATCR’s third full-length album and provides sonic accompaniment to the words and ideas passed on by the late Santee-

\textsuperscript{355} Ibid., 10. See also Coll Thrush, \textit{Native Seattle: Histories from the Crossing-Over Place}, (Seattle, WA: Washington University Press, 2007), 13.
\textsuperscript{356} The group currently consists of Bear Witness and 2oolman.
Dakota author, activist, and musician John Trudell. The idea of the Halluci Nation comes from a poem Trudell wrote for ATCR before his death. Trudell recorded the piece and his voice is the first sound on the album. He opens the record by characterizing the Halluci Nation:

We are the tribe that they cannot see
We live on an industrial reservation
We are the Halluci Nation
We have been called the Indians
We have been called Native American
We have been called hostile
We have been called Pagan
We have been called militant
We have been called many names
We are the Halluci Nation
We are the human beings
The callers of names cannot see us but we can see them
We are the Halluci Nation
Our DNA is of earth and sky
Our DNA is of past and future
We are the Halluci Nation
We are the evolution, the continuation
Hallucination
The Halluci Nation
We are the Halluci Nation
The members of ATCR characterize the Halluci Nation as a “fantasy reality of the future” where a group of like-minded people—led by Indigenous people, but open to anyone willing to build a different life—break off from society and work to create a better reality.\textsuperscript{358} The Halluci Nation is not a reserve community kept hidden from other cultures, nor is it a gated community trying to shut out those whom it does not wish to understand. It is a community of great utopic inclusivity and cross-cultural engagement, but a complex engagement that encourages more analysis.

Put another way, Trudell and ATCR are issuing a politically charged, musically based statement. On one level, \textit{We Are The Halluci Nation} is a rhythmic opening to all cultures to welcome them to the dancefloor, a space—or what Mary Louise Pratt might call a “contact zone”—that offers the opportunity for a different kind of listening.\textsuperscript{359} On another level it is a political push to re-recognize and address how Canadians might go about engaging in cross-cultural interactions beyond the dancefloor. It is a statement that urges white settler listeners to ask what it means for members of Indigenous cultures to open up rhythmic spaces today, welcome members of settler cultures to the dancefloor, and invite audiences “into a new relationship.”\textsuperscript{360} Additionally, it encourages white settler listeners to think about what it means for members of settler cultures to recognize this


\textsuperscript{358} A Tribe Called Red. “What The Halluci Nation Means To Us,” Video, 1m 35s. Published on Youtube.com on September 20, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2cqj9HAOsyM.

\textsuperscript{359} A “contact zone” as described by Mary Louise Pratt is a space where “subjects previously separated by geography or history are co-present.” From Mary Louise Pratt, \textit{Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation} (London, UK: Routledge, 2008), 8.

\textsuperscript{360} In a discussion of the transformative power of “new concepts of embodiment” that arise through two particular operas created by Indigenous composers, Beverley Diamond notes that “it is audiences whom the indigenous creators of these recent works are inviting into a new relationship.” The audiences are those “historically privileged” members of the population, who she suggests, are in most need of an unsettling transformation. Diamond (2011): 56.
welcoming, accept the invitation, and feel addressed to take up the responsibility to re-
cognize and re-think relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultures.

Re-cognizing the Revealing of the Halluci Nation

ATCR released “We Are The Halluci Nation” (ft. John Trudell and Northern Voice) as
the first single from the album in July 2016. This song features the voice of John Trudell
introducing the Halluci Nation. The music video is simple and stunning. It features a
blank screen at the beginning with only Trudell’s voice. A shot of a lake enters,
eventually cutting to the main scene which is a long aerial shot of what is slowly revealed
to be a white mat with “The Great Seal of the Halluci Nation” on it. This mat is spread
out on a rock in a clearing in the forest just off the shoreline of the lake shown at the
beginning. Words spoken by Trudell appear in the form of the patch of the Halluci
Nation.\textsuperscript{361} The pace of the song is slower and resembles more of the calmer, thought
provoking ambiance of “The Road” (ft. Black Bear) from Nation II Nation. Just days
later however, the second single, “R.E.D” (ft. Yasiin Bey, Narcy, and Black Bear), was
released. This song was no less thought provoking, but certainly more immediately
energetic. This was the dance single that was meant to explode onto the scene and make
people nod their heads and move their bodies. The song is essentially the ATCR song
“Stadium Pow Wow” (ft. Black Bear) with extended verses and lyrics with featured
artists. The song is a collaboration with two Muslim performers—Yasiin Bey (formerly
known as Mos Def) and Iraqi-Canadian MC Yassin “Narcy” Alsalman—and Atikamekw
drum group Black Bear. The video shows Bey and Narcy in Cape Town, South Africa.

ATCR notes in a Facebook post on August 17\textsuperscript{th} of 2016:

The Halluci Nation has no barriers, it sees no borders and their
operatives are everywhere. Yasiin Bey is an ally of the Halluci
Nation who has been unjustly detained in Cape Town, South Africa
by the ALie-Nation. Narcy is one of the Guardians of the Halluci
Nation and he has been given the job of helping to free Yasiin and

\textsuperscript{361} The patch of the Halluci Nation was created by artist Ernesto Yerena Montejano, who also designed the
cover for Nation II Nation.
lead him to the Halluci Nation territory. We Are Of Earth And Sky. We Are The Halluci Nation.\textsuperscript{362}

In the video Bey and Narcy literally cross a border in what would seem to be an “illegal” manner as they “hide” in the back of a pickup truck. Their drivers show the border guards “ALie-Nation” passports and are able to cross the border.

Together these songs and videos opened listeners to what the Halluci Nation might encompass or represent—Indigenous sovereignty and solidarity across the globe. The words of Trudell lay the foundation for the concept, but the lyrics of Bey and Narcy, vocables of Northern Voice and Black Bear, and the images of the videos all contribute to the greater images of the Halluci Nation. At the core of all these elements and the key to encouraging listeners to hear and feel the Halluci Nation were the sounds. When the songs were released, I listened to them repeatedly, enjoying the contrasting sonic arrangements and the uplifting and defiant feeling that both tracks produced in different ways. I was excited for the album and curious about what was going on with both songs. Their sonic layouts were distinct, like their visual accompaniments. They appeared to be creating or coming from two different worlds, when in fact they were pushing the boundaries of the world I knew. ATCR wrote that “The Halluci Nation has no barriers,” and I was beginning to see that this declaration reached beyond a simple understanding of the sonic makeup of the music.\textsuperscript{363} The album is full of collaborations with artists across various cultures from around the world including, but not limited to Saul Williams, OKA, Lido Pimienta, Maxida Marak, Shad, Tanya Tagaq, Leonard Sumner, and drumming groups such as Northern Voice and Chippewa Travellers. The process of creating the album was itself a gesture towards the power of working with people that are outside of familiar “borders” and soundwaves and to the power of Indigenous solidarity. However, what was beginning to become clear was that the Halluci Nation contained a strong political critique through its sonic imagining. It challenged the borders of settler colonial

\textsuperscript{362} ATCR, Facebook Post, 17 August 2016.

\textsuperscript{363} Ibid.
ways of living and thinking—specifically, the ways the settler state has reinforced settler colonial states of mind (refusing to accept the charge of genocide against Indigenous women and girls for example) and segregated and placed borders around pieces of Indigenous land (reserves) which it continues to intrude.

On September 2nd of 2016 the group released the music video for the final musical track on the album. The video for “ALie Nation” (ft. John Trudell, Lido Pimienta, and Tanya Tagaq) shows a mat with the word “ALIE” upside-down and backwards and the “ALie Nation” symbol which appears to be a watchful eye, located on top of a skyscraper. Initially, the director utilizes the same bird’s eye view mobilized in the “We Are The Halluci Nation” video. For the rest of the video, the main perspective appears to weave through buildings in an urban centre. The video moves through a downtown cityscape with words spoken by Trudell appearing and disappearing over the buildings. The words appear in a calculative manner, shifting from numbers being computed to the words being spoken. “Alienation,” “Subjects,” and “Trauma” are words of note. The video ends with a perspective shift. The viewer now looks up towards the sky and the top of one building. The “ALie Nation” symbol hangs in the sky as if it is watching the city, which, perhaps, speaks to the closeness with which the settler colonial state monitors Indigenous peoples.

The song features Tanya Tagaq’s style of throat singing (in addition to the words of Trudell and the voice of Pimienta). Noticeably, the song ends with what feels like an exhausted exhale from Tagaq ringing out like a final breath. This feel contrasts with the rest of the album which pushes forth as if to assert the strength and vitality of the Halluci Nation. For example, Tagaq is also featured on “Sila”—released August 12th, 2016 as the third single. Tagaq’s presence on “Sila” is energetic and insistent, whereas her presence on “ALie Nation” is more subtle and heavy. The exhausted final breath at the end of the “ALie Nation” song is not a sign of Tagaq and ATCR giving into the forces of settler

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364 A spoken word track “Soon” featuring author Joseph Boyden finishes the album.
colonialism. The breath represents, first, the end of the explosive introduction of the Halluci Nation, and, second, the coming end of the settler colonial “ALie Nation.”

The video for “We Are The Halluci Nation” presents a setting on a lake and in a forest, while the video for “ALie Nation” is set in an urban core with concrete, steel, and glass all around. The first video features primarily natural materials and a connection to the land, where the second video features the synthetic materials of a downtown. This seems to set up a dichotomy between urban and rural settings and appears to imply that the utopic Halluci Nation would exist in the latter, while the ALie Nation operates and thrives in the former. Though this may certainly be the case, ATCR is also undercutting this dichotomy as it gets rebuilt. This move calls back to their appearances at Electric Pow Wow in Ottawa. The album reinforces Indigenous relationships to land in settler colonial North America, but ATCR does this as they assert one sense of urban Indigeneity. Just as the Electric Pow Wow nights helped ATCR reveal one sense of urban Indigeneity in Ottawa, We Are The Halluci Nation articulates a sense of urban Indigeneity, but one that reaches across cultures and arbitrary borders. It denies the borders of town, city, province or state, country, and nation, as well as urban and rural, attempting to articulate the complex reality of someone who exists in both and neither in settler colonial North America. This album does not attempt to speak for all urban Indigenous peoples however, but it does assert that there is a place—however it may be expressed—for indigeneity in urban areas. Though the Halluci Nation appears to be set predominantly in non-urban settings, the album also continues to reinforce to listeners that indigeneity is actively present in urban areas across the world. Ultimately, the utopic sense of the Halluci Nation may, at the most fundamental level, be represented by the desire and ability to exercise a relationship or responsibility to the land. Where this relationship manifests, however, should not be determined by the desires of the settler colonial states of mind of the ALie Nation.

With the sonic layout and picture of the opposing worlds presented, the listening experience had more of a guiding principle. This experience was at once an imagining of
a different cross-cultural world and a critique of the structures of the current settler colonial world—another strong example of “creative negation.” Through this critique and sonic re-imagining, white settler listeners are encouraged to recognize the reality of the world—the ALie Nation—that they live within. Many can and surely will dance when engaging with the album, but the contrast set up through the early singles encourages a re-cognizing of what it means to engage with the songs and move or simply be mobile as a white person on Indigenous land. White settlers confront questions such as, how do settlers continue to benefit from the structures of the ALie Nation? What does accepting this critique and engaging in something like the Halluci Nation mean for settlers? Facing these questions became a regular occurrence when I engaged with the album. Though answers were not readily available or easily graspable, it was the act of returning to these questions that became important when opening to the sonic world presented.

These moments of critical self-reflection are significant but cannot determine or lead the experience. Though it feels counterintuitive, white settler listeners are urged to surrender their settler states of mind to the world set out by the artist, in this case ATCR and Trudell primarily. There are moments where critical self-reflection will be encouraged and moments where audiences should only listen. The specific responsibilities for white settlers will vary depending on the self-determined processes set out by the Indigenous nation and peoples. This may confuse white settlers further—ATCR are working and speaking in a global sense, for example, by presenting the nation-state-border-denying notion of the Halluci Nation, but they are not representing a global idea of indigeneity.

When the album officially came out on September 16th of 2016, music review platforms such as Pitchfork, Now Magazine, the Ottawa Citizen, and Exclaim! gave the album favourable reviews. Pitchfork gave the album an 8.1 out of 10 and said “A Tribe Called Red have created a landmark soundtrack for a world in which we all are

365 Martineau (2015a): 43.
connected.” Now Magazine emphasized the political elements of the album in a brief review and gave it a four out of five on their rating scale. The Citizen unpacked the story behind the album, mentioning Trudell, and calling it a “lightning rod” album, which came from a phrase used by Campeau (DJ NDN) in an interview for the piece. Exclaim! reviewer David Dacks spoke highly of the album giving it a ten out of ten on the rating scale and stating “This record is a milestone in Canadian music.” These reviews reveal that a sense that the album was doing something more than shaking up the nightclub scene or providing a soundtrack to a movement.

This last review illustrates the tension involved in a politics of recognition at work in the arts. Here is another example where Coulthard’s argument might be relevant. Dacks is clearly affected by the album and is positive and supportive. He avoids describing the album as a milestone for “Indigenous music” or even Indigenous peoples and instead reaches for a less racially specific designation with the phrase “Canadian music.” Yet, this phrase fails the settler colonial and nation-state defying feel of the album. The phrase recognizes the import of the album, but subtly folds it back into a process of ongoing settler colonial Canadian identity formation at the same time. It intends to avoid dealing with the music in terms based on the identities of the producers, but it reinforces a settler colonial sense of the “invisibility” (assimilation) of urban Indigenous peoples.

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The issue is complex. Indigenous artists should not be expected to represent their cultures in every element or performance of their art in ways that white artists are not expected to or are free from doing. ATCR evaded this idea of responsibility—given to Indigenous peoples by the gaze and ears of dominant white cultures—in 2014 when they won the Juno award for Breakthrough Group of the Year. The group submitted their album to the Breakthrough Group and Electronic Album of the Year categories, electing not to submit their album for nomination in the Aboriginal Artist of the Year Award. Bear Witness noted that “It was time for it. We felt that we had the opportunity now to compete in the mainstream. We don’t have anything against the Aboriginal Award, and we definitely don’t want to take anything away from that award. But we felt that we had the opportunity to win an award outside of just our Nationalities, outside of being judged based on our backgrounds.” 371 Complicating the matter further is the reality that there are songs that come from specific areas, nations, and peoples that are protected by the peoples who choose not to risk their songs being subsumed by a larger settler colonial framework or made invisible. A Tribe Called Red are asked to carefully balance what elements of various Indigenous cultures they make known for wider consumption as they push into the worlds of popular settler-dominated culture. This is the same approach and balance that Leanne Simpson navigates in her academic writing which I discussed in Chapter One. 372

I focus on ATCR and their work on the album *We Are The Halluci Nation* because as they developed and released the album they were modifying their musical-conceptual process, continuing their rise as a widely-known group, and not subtle about portraying their articulations of a sense of modern-urban indigeneity. Their choice to continue to highlight elements of indigeneity as expressed by various peoples as they gain more attention is what makes it difficult for settler colonial structures of recognition and integration to subsume their music into a world of “Canadian music.” This does not mean

that Indigenous artists who portray more elements of their sense of indigeneity in their art and performance necessarily combat the forces of a politics of recognition with more force. Rather, it is the element of the self-determination of Indigenous artists to portray some combination of a sense of indigeneity, mixed with elements of other cultural practices found in the music performed—hip hop as originating as an cultural expression of African American peoples for example—that challenges the strength of settler colonial states of mind on aesthetic and political levels.

A Halluci Nation Revealed

After the release of the album ATCR set out on a brief tour of Turtle Island before the end of 2016 and released a video for the pulsating song “The Virus” (ft. Saul Williams and Chippewa Travelers). The video takes place in a cave-like undisclosed location on Turtle Island in the year 2047. It shows members of the Halluci Nation including ATCR, Saul Williams, Narcy, and others surrounding the Halluci Nation symbol on the ground. The video cuts between scenes with the members surrounding the symbol and dancing, and scenes of protest and violence occurring outside in the ALie Nation. A police force of the ALie Nation is shown entering the location where the members of the Halluci Nation are dancing. The officers point their guns with flashlights at the face of Saul Williams in particular, before the video cuts away.

On December 8th of 2016 ATCR performed in London, Ontario. I attended this performance and experienced an aural, visual, and physical revealing of the Halluci Nation. Wolf Saga (Johnny Saga, Anishinaabe), a London, Ontario-based electro-pop musician opened the show. Saga’s music is heavily influenced by 80s pop sounds of artists such as David Bowie. Saga is Anishinaabe, but like ATCR, does not necessarily think of his music as being necessarily identified by his Indigenous heritage.373 This

emphasizes the range of ways that Indigenous musicians—like any other musician—relate to and engage their heritage when producing music. After Wolf Saga’s set and a brief changeover of the stage setup—ATCR noticeably hooking up their own DJ equipment—ATCR walked onto the stage wearing the patches of the Halluci Nation on their jackets and bandanas that covered their noses, mouths, and throats. Looking like sonic warriors, they began their set.

The words of Trudell filled the venue to start the show. In a way it felt like an opening to a gathering of members of the Halluci Nation. Trudell’s words led into the title track from *Halluci Nation* and then into a live-mixed medley that included samples of well-known hip hop artists such as Kanye West. The cross-cultural exchange between African American and Indigenous cultures involved in musical production within the genre is given an early acknowledgement even as it always already serves as the foundation from which the ATCR show builds a sense of community. With these sonic acknowledgements, the revealing and temporary making real of the Halluci Nation began.

As ATCR worked through songs and mixed in different sounds and samples that do not appear on the recorded versions of songs, Bear Witness, the visual specialist, produced images and videos that appeared on a screen behind the group. The images are often cartoon depictions and clips from films that have been created by white settlers on Turtle Island. For settlers, these images are seemingly created from a place of innocence. But during the performance the images are recontextualized as part of a larger settler colonial framework. They portray the various racialized and prejudiced ways that Indigenous peoples have existed in the imaginations and states of mind of settlers. ATCR’s project is one of reclamation as they display these images alongside and in step with their music. In some instances, older video clips of dancers appear to be dancing to the rhythm of ATCR’s music. Ultimately, the sounds of ATCR’s articulation of actively unfolding urban Indigenous identities and a future Indigenous-led collective unsettle racialized and historicized settler-produced images of “indigeneity.”
Throughout the show DJ NDN (Campeau) took to the microphone to address the crowd, shout out to Indigenous peoples present, and acknowledge guests that performed. Guests included dancers dressed in regalia who performed in front of ATCR. The dancers contrasted ATCR’s presence in that the DJs remained in the same place towards the back and centre of the stage. They nodded and swayed along to the music throughout the show but remained at their post to work the equipment. The dancers on the other hand, made full use of the rest of the stage when they performed. Their regalia and dances were a striking visual accompaniment to the sonic unsettlement. They were also the only apparent “traditional” signs of indigeneity on Turtle Island during the concert that settlers might have previously been aware of. For white settlers, the dancer’s performances may have become moments that reinforced the active presence and complex realities of Indigenous peoples in cities, towns, reservations, and communities around the land.

When the show ended after an encore, I remained in the venue for longer than usual trying to grasp something of the evening to take home with me to continue exploring what it was that I was experiencing. I spoke with some friends about the show and purchased a Halluci Nation patch to serve as the material symbol of my commitment to listening to ATCR and thinking about what the Halluci Nation means. The evening and the performances involved became another moment in my own process of surrendering. I felt unsettled but welcomed. I felt responsible for re-cognizing the performance of the actively unfolding and complex identities of these musicians. Yet, in other ways, the evening’s performances challenged my sense of this responsibility. As important as it was and is, I was not there just to witness the performances. People were free to purchase a ticket and attend the show without worrying about any sonically provoked sense of surrendering settler states of mind or engaging deeper responsibility. There are undoubtedly a few unreflective listeners at ATCR concerts. However, even these attendees are encouraged to feel the rhythm and hear the vocalizations, if not the transformations, in the performances. It is difficult to avoid these elements at a concert. Where the unreflective listeners falter is in their decision to ignore and turn away from
the invitation and encouragement from the artist to find new ways to listen, surrender, and transform settler states of mind.

ATCR’s performances are not subtle. They confront cultural appropriation as a way of refusing settler colonial ideologies and, importantly for this project, guiding audiences to at least enjoy the music respectfully, if not, begin to listen differently. Sonic and conceptual boundaries are pushed to disorient listeners’ sense of the world, requiring the emotional strength to persist amongst the disorientation. Another white settler attendee, admittedly unaware of ATCR’s music beforehand but interested in the energy of their music, turned to me and said “I didn’t know there were so many Native people in London.” Perhaps she could not name the structural processes of settler colonialism and the critique involved with the Halluci Nation, but her presence permitted her to experience the active presence and contribution of Indigenous peoples in the city and the negotiation of certain identities. Her articulation of her experience also reinforced my own commitment to these processes of surrendering settler states of mind.

**Surrendering Settler Colonial States of Mind and the Value of Re-cognition**

The Halluci Nation is a world, unknown to some, and made audible by a poet, three DJs, and a collective of musicians. It defies the rigid border controlled, identity reducing realities of the nation-state system and settler colonial states of mind. The process of “creative negation” has opened a space for itself as it continues to connect with the bodies and minds of people looking for another world. Another world, not in the literal sense of a new planet, but in a new way of being on the planet—the land—we inhabit. As the structures of the current world shift and adapt to the increasingly cross-cultural realities in many facets of life, so should the people living these realities. Unfortunately, it is too easy for members of some cultures—traditionally the settler, oppressor cultures—to long for romanticized days past and work to maintain the structures of a self-serving system without recognizing the effects it has on others. White settlers remain stuck in a world

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374 Martineau (2015a): 43.
that they believe was built for them by their ancestors. These states of mind are what should be surrendered.

Surrender, as I have tried to work through here, is not a surrender of existence, of entire cultures, or of value. It is not part of a process of alleviating guilt, reconciling with past injustices, or dealing with current cultural differences. It is not a move to speak to or from a universalized human experience or return to a vaguely idealized understanding of existence before industrialization or urbanization. It is a process of recognizing the existence, cultures, and value of people who do not reflect one culture’s ideas about the world. It is about recognizing difference, but not pretending that recognizing difference is an end in itself. It is part of an attempt to understand the place of white settlers in a world that is encouraging them to look at themselves and think about how they want to be included in a world that is changing drastically and increasingly cross-cultural. Further, it is part of an attempt to think about the position of white settlers on Indigenous land (Turtle Island) and in an Indigenous-led world such as the one presented by ATCR.

The re-cognition serves to open white settlers to worlds wherein they are not and do not see themselves as the gatekeepers of knowledge, history, and power. It reveals the value in supporting someone else’s world and vision especially when the foundations of these may be unclear for white settlers. It is not about blindly following the orders of different leaders or the practices of different cultures for the sake of co-existing or recognizing difference. It is about engaging and connecting with people from different cultures on a deeper level, despite the fact that the participants do not completely understand each other. I cannot completely understand the experiences of ATCR simply by listening to their music and re-cognizing their performances. Listening becomes a moment of surrender, not at act of hunger. What is communicated however, is an acknowledgement and understanding of value despite the many other communicative, ideological, cultural, or psychological obstacles imposed on the process.

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375 Robinson (2020) on “hungry listening.”
The surrender of a destructive state of mind is part of an acknowledgement of another’s value as a being. Cultural differences and the difficulties they might produce for processes of recognition become the basis from which white settlers navigate a process of surrender. Settlers should acknowledge and respect the elements that distinguish the person or peoples and, despite all the differences, still see the value of their being. Navigating a surrender—whether cross-cultural, across different histories, languages, or across different species—and recognizing this fundamental value allows settlers to identify the place of vulnerability in their own sense of being and see the significance in letting others produce and perform their own identities and practices as they have self-determined. For white settlers, particularly those having difficulty with coming to terms with the reality of their living on Indigenous land and on land where many cultures engage in varying practices, this process is vital.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter I set out to listen again to ATCR’s album *We Are The Halluci Nation* and engage with it in the openings it reveals between current understandings of collective life on Turtle Island and potential future ones it presents.\(^{376}\) The songs, videos, performances, reviews, and listening experiences are all part of this process. This was not an attempt to try to sift through the album and critique the various elements of the utopic imaginations presented. Nor was it an attempt to try to present the album as a complete work with a clear statement to be either supported or rejected. Most of all, this was not an attempt to explain a single expression of urban indigeneity to members of non-Indigenous cultures. The focus was to step into the openings revealed and try to reflect on a process of re-cognition and surrendering of settler colonial states of mind.

Surrendering settler colonial states of mind is part of a process of giving sonic, emotional, and physical space back to the people who have been forcefully pushed to the margins. This is not a question of determining a contemporary “Canadian identity.” Nor

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\(^{376}\) ATCR continue to tour as a duo (Bear Witness and 2oolman) and have released new music.
is it an issue of selecting appropriate symbols to represent a determined “Canadian identity.” It is a challenge of unsettling the settler colonial structures—psychological and physical—that continue to uphold and enforce settler colonial identities across a land with a range of different cultural and national identities. A reality where all nations on the land contribute to the negotiation and renegotiation of collective identities is a potential state of being. A land of different nations could negotiate their realities with one another, contributing to constantly evolving co-produced collective identities of the people on the land. It no longer becomes one national identity, but collective identities of many nations on one land: Turtle Island. The bodies of the occupants exist in the same place, but the relationships and structures of existence would necessarily shift as new worlds are created on the land. These worlds would, of course, be led by the people of the nations who first exercised a responsibility to the land.
Chapter Five

Music and Reclamation

"Canada, you are in the midst of an Indigenous renaissance. Are you ready to hear the truths that need to be told? Are you ready to see the things that need to be seen?"

"To do this record in my language and have it witnessed not just by my people, but every nation from coast to coast, up and down Turtle Island — we’re at the precipice of something. It feels like it.

—Selections from Jeremy Dutcher’s acceptance speech given after winning the 2018 Polaris Music Prize.

On the cover of his 2018 Polaris Prize winning album Wolastoqiyik Lintuwakonawa, Jeremy Dutcher (Tobique First Nation in New Brunswick) sits in a chair wearing a traditional jacket of the Wolastoqiyik people. Dutcher faces a cylinder recording machine that sits on a small table with wax cylinders at its feet. A painting by Cree artist Kent Monkman called “Teaching The Lost” is visible in the background – particularly notable, because Monkman designed the album cover. Dutcher is a classically trained operatic tenor and composer. The album consists of songs that Dutcher composed based on this classical training and alongside the sounds and Wolastoqey language heard on 110-year-old wax cylinder recordings. The recordings were collected by anthropologist William H. Mechling, who spent seven years in the early 1900s with the Wolastoqiyik peoples in the New Brunswick region. The recordings are kept in the Canadian Museum of History. Dutcher was encouraged to listen to them by an elder, Maggie Paul (Passamaquoddy),
who knew they were in the museum. Dutcher did not seek out the recordings to make an album:

It was never part of my intention to go to the museum and write an album. It was simply to go and to witness, to sit down and see what there was. But of course, once I heard it and came in contact with it, it was sort of an immense sense of responsibility to go and share it with people, to get it back to the community.  

After listening to the recordings, Dutcher began transcribing them over multiple visits to the museum. The transcription process became a way for Dutcher to essentially take the recordings out of storage in the museum—a settler institution—and bring the songs back to the Wolastoqiyik peoples. After transcribing the recordings, Dutcher wrote new arrangements around the sounds and melodies. This revitalization brings to the fore Wolastoq sounds and language while blending them with European musical traditions. For Dutcher, this process is a way of “trying to complicate the narrative that Canada has been telling itself for a very long time” and press “two histories together [to] see what’s in the middle.”  

It is about examining the story of these two histories while “building a cultural project and a new musical language” for the Wolastoqiyik peoples. This “creative negation” is developed on Dutcher’s terms.  

Wolastoqiyik Lintuwakonawa is the result of this reimagination process.

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377 Melody McKiver, “Art Is Our Language: Inside the Indigenous Renaissance with Jeremy Dutcher and Snotty Nose Rez Kids,” for Exclaim! Published: 5 December 2018, accessed: https://exclaim.ca/music/article/art_is_our_language_inside_the_indigenous_renaissance_with_jeremy_dutcher_and_snotty_nose_rez_kids?fclid=1wAR0FFGP36QUA0c1OPozZ57drzTs3p_fRp0PUaexOmWxGXVm7p26_Q5cVMcs
378 Ibid.
379 Jeremy Dutcher, “Jeremy Dutcher – Art, Community & Crucial Conversations” interview conducted by Andrew King for Canadian Musician Podcast. (Published on May 8th, 1h 3m. Accessed: https://www.canadianmusicianpodcast.com/episodes/314), 30m 08s.
380 Ibid., 24m.
381 Martineau (2015a): 43.
Dutcher has described the engagement with the recordings as a “process of deep listening.” The image on the cover of the album appears to depict a version of this activity as well. Dutcher sits looking into the wide mouth of the horn of the cylinder recorder, presumably listening to the recordings that are sitting on the floor. Dutcher’s posture is strong, calling back to the presence of Mountain Chief in the photo with Frances Densmore (fig. 1) shown in Chapter Two. Noticeably, there is another stool behind the table with the cylinder recorder. There is nothing, or more appropriately, no one on the stool. The absence is significant.

Figure 2 The cover of Dutcher’s album Wolastoqiyik Lintuwakonawa. Photo credit: Matt Barnes Photography.

The cover image of Dutcher’s album is a direct response to the Densmore and Mountain Chief photo(s). Monkman is known for playing with settler colonial stereotypes of indigeneity to make space for the critique of these stereotypes and the realization of continued expressions of indigeneity. This album cover unsettles the historical image of the ethnomusicological or anthropological scene. By incorporating the stool but leaving it empty, Monkman literally removes the settler from the scene. The work of preservation is present in the image and in the conditions of creation of the album, but with the settler removed, the goal or end of this story is shifted significantly. The work of preservation as depicted in the Densmore image gave Dutcher the opportunity to engage with the recordings more than 100 years later. Yet, the initial motivation and conditions of the work of preservation—dispossession—and the continued preservation in a settler institution complicates the reality of the cross-cultural encounter. Dutcher unsettles this reality through a process of deep listening and musical and linguistic repatriation. Dutcher listens for a future. Dutcher listens to what has been recorded, but without direction or intent. Dutcher is not listening to the recordings in order to interpret the music for the settler—as some captions included with the photos of Mountain Chief have him doing for Densmore. The work of the anthropologist is no longer the primary subject of the scene. The cover is a visual cue for how Dutcher came to create the music on the record and how listeners might engage with it. Through Monkman’s design the songs become the subject and the scene becomes one of deep listening.

Monkman’s design is not the first to play with the Densmore image. In August 2017, multi-cultural group Khu.éex’ (pronounced koo-eex) released their second album called They Forgot They Survived. The band features Bernie Worrell (Cherokee) on keyboards, Preston Singletary (Tlingit) on bass, Skerik on saxophone, and Captain Raab (Blackfoot) on guitar. The album cover is a reproduction of the Densmore and Mountain Chief image with one noticeable change. The front of the cabinet that the recording machine sits on has been reworked to resemble the face of modern electronic instruments. The album title, along with the repurposing of this image, offer a critical and resurgence-
inspired reading of the Densmore image, similar to the critique and affirmation of Monkman’s work.

Deep listening remains the focus on the back cover of *Wolastoqiyik Lintuwakonawa*. Dutcher now occupies the once vacant stool on the left of the image and the chair facing the wide-mouthed end of the horn where Dutcher sits on the front cover, is now empty. The backdrop and setting remain the same. Dutcher’s attire changes, but
what is conveyed or transferred through the image on the back cover is the responsibility of deep listening. Dutcher’s hands are on the bottom half of the machine where the controls are. It appears as if Dutcher is about to play back recorded music. Dutcher is in control of the music, the community’s songs, and the listening process. The “listener’s chair” is unoccupied suggesting that now someone else should occupy the seat and engage in deep listening with the material on the album. It is simple and profound. As past and present languages, sounds, and technologies come together and engage with one another through Dutcher’s work, the encouragement and sense of responsibility to listen remain unchanged.

Dutcher listened deeply to the recordings, a process early settlers did not commit to during or after the creation of the recordings. The continued containment of these recordings in a settler institution also limited access for members of the Tobique First Nation. However, Dutcher’s intervention unsettles the accepted narrative of preservation and settler authority over this process—who gets to preserve it and how will it be preserved. Settler colonial ears are unsettled through this cross-cultural (European and Wolastoq musical traditions) and cross-generational (the voices of Dutcher’s kin) reimagining, while the settler colonial gaze is upset by Monkman’s parody of a familiar ethnomusicological and anthropological scene.

Dutcher is one part of an “Indigenous renaissance” that is spread across many genres of music and aspects of life. This reach demonstrates the heterogeneity of the experiences of Indigenous people on Turtle Island. Dutcher is a key voice of this moment and movement, which has grown through the work of Buffy Sainte-Marie since the 1960s, Willy Dunn through the 1970s, ’80s, and ’90s, and continues to grow through people such as A Tribe Called Red and Tanya Tagaq since the early 2000s. Dutcher asserts that these artists have “broken down the door,” permitting Dutcher to walk through and pick up this work. As Dutcher recognizes the significance of this moment

384 Dutcher (2019): 22m 26s.
and a necessity to perform, settler listeners should recognize the necessity to surrender and listen.

Dutcher’s process of deep listening, transcription, and musical reimagining became a meaningful way of engaging with the sonic material of previous generations. Dutcher is working through a past but working through it to hear and reimagine the future. Dutcher listened with a sense of responsibility, not with a settler colonial hunger. These are the voices of his kin, speaking the Wolastoqey language attacked by settler colonial systems. Dutcher explains some Wolastoqey words to settlers in concert, encouraging settlers to reflect on the language and take up the responsibility to listen, try to speak the words, and think about different ideas. Dutcher asks audience members to try to put their mouths around a word and put their mind around an understanding. Dutcher argues that in these attempts, this forming of the mouth and mind, we form new relationships. This was the responsibility avoided in exchanges of the past. Densmore and the agents of the settler state refused to learn the Ute language or have the songs translated. Settler colonial states of mind guarded the preservation of the recordings, but Dutcher listened in order to let the recordings unfold and perform under contemporary conditions. Dutcher’s album re-introduces these sounds, songs, and words into history in a different context. The album also presents audiences from many cultures with the opportunity to engage in their own deep listening.

I offer a brief analysis of Jeremy Dutcher’s music and album artwork to bring together the ideas discussed through the dissertation and emphasize the active production of music by an Indigenous artist in a different genre from the artists discussed earlier. Though all the artists discussed throughout this dissertation engage cross-cultural realities to create music, they create very different kinds of music. The sounds covered in this dissertation range from guitar and distortion-heavy grunge sounds, interpretations of Inuk throat singing, jazz, electronic, and hip hop sounds growing from African American

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385 Robinson (2020).
386 Dutcher (2019): 18m 55s.
387 Ibid.
traditions, pow wow style drumbeats and singing, fiddle sounds, Euro-Western classical sounds, and traditional Wolastoq sounds. There is no denying the “Indigenous renaissance” asserted by Dutcher. Equally important is the fact that this “renaissance” cannot be reduced to one genre. These artists cannot be confined to a single sonic or physical space and ignored. These artists cannot be assimilated and folded into a greater understanding of “Canadian music” because their music challenges the principles of current settler colonial understandings of what it means to live on Turtle Island.

Pedagogical Performance: Jarrett Martineau, RPM, and “Reclaimed”

The unique range and work of the artists covered in this dissertation, and many other artists, is supported and sometimes made available through the work of Jarrett Martineau and the people at Revolutions Per Minute (RPM). RPM is the first Indigenous-run record label on Turtle Island. It also serves as a media outlet and is based in tkaronto but supports Indigenous artists from across Turtle Island.388 The organizers started an RPM Live series in August 2016 to showcase the music of artists on the label, as well as others that are not. There is no specific theme regarding the kinds of music performed. The performances have included hip hop artists (Mob Bounce (Gitxsan and Cree/Métis), Snotty Nose Rez Kids (Haisla), Leonard Sumner (Anishinaabe)), DJs (DJ NDN), folk artists (Leanne Simpson, Ansley Simpson (Michi Saagiig Nishnaabe), Inuk singer Elisapie, Binaeshee-Quae (Biigtigong First Nation)) electronic artists (Ziibiwan (Anishinaabe), Boogey The Beat (Anishinaabe), Exquisite Ghost (Peguis First Nation)), experimental artists (Elisa Harkins (Cherokee/Mvskoke), Laura Ortman (White Mountain Apache), Mourning Coup (Siksika Nation)), and heavier guitar-based psychedelic artists (Yamantaka//Sonic Titan, nêyi'hawak (Cree), WHOOP-Szo). The overarching goal however, is to create a space for Indigenous artists to showcase their work and create new

These spaces have primarily been created in urban areas including tkaronto, Montréal, and New York City. RPM performances continue to demonstrate the active presence of Indigenous peoples in urban areas and the ongoing contribution that Indigenous peoples make to these places.

By creating a space for the performance of different articulations of indigeneity, these concerts also create spaces and opportunities for people to learn how to listen and engage with the work of the artists as guided by the artists. There are various logistical benefits, but holding these performances in urban areas across Turtle Island also allows for a wider range of people to experience the work showcased. The cross-cultural engagement continues as people who identify with various cultures come together to experience the performances. Further, audience members are given the opportunity to continue a process of listening as a way of surrendering and engaging in re-cognition.

Martineau also hosts a CBC Radio show called Reclaimed, where he plays a range of music created by Indigenous artists from around the world with no genre limitations. “Reclaimed” refers to the practices and processes of the Indigenous artists who work to reclaim the sounds, images, voices, and languages of their people in the music they produce. “Reclaimed” carries another meaning directed at listeners. That is, Martineau and the artists he plays are reclaiming how listeners listen or learn to listen differently to the music played. Dutcher, for example, engages in this kind of pedagogical performance by explaining some elements of the Wolastoq sounds, traditions, and language to audiences. Dutcher also explains some elements of the creative process or “creative negation.” Dutcher notes that it “is not the job” of all Indigenous artists take up this pedagogical responsibility, but explains that underneath this statement is the sentiment that if Indigenous peoples are doing the work of educating non-Indigenous peoples about

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390 Martineau (2015a): 43.
Indigenous ways of life, then non-Indigenous peoples need to show up: “we’ll walk
together, but we need you to come.”

Martineau engages in his own pedagogical performance. He does not attempt to
explain specific elements of the music or processes of artists because he respects each
artist’s identity and does not attempt to explain Indigenous music creation in blanket
terms. Artists often record tags for the show (where an artist states their name and that the
listener is listening to Reclaimed on CBC Radio), but they do so in their own language
without an English translation. Martineau does however, if only subtly at times, guide the
listener through the hour of the show as part of a process of learning to listen differently.
He started a punk and hardcore themed show on December 18th, 2019, by shaping an
Indigenous relationship to more aggressive sounding music:

When you’ve been kicked down, removed from your family, told
you don’t matter, and had your land stolen, you need an outlet.
Those feelings of frustration and rage need to be expressed. In many
Indigenous cultures, we’re told about what it means to hold in your
anger; how it can corrupt your mind and your spirit. You need to
cleanse yourself. And that’s why so many of our people smudge,
brush themselves with cedar, or go into the sweat. We need
ceremonies to purify and restore balance. But that’s not the only way
to channel those energies. For a lot of people, music is a way to get
out your rawest emotions—unfiltered, angry, ecstatic, or frustrated—
anything you’re feeling can come out in a song. And today on
Reclaimed you’ll hear Indigenous bands that channel generations of
resistance and struggle into the fury of punk and rock and metal and
hardcore. It’s gonna get loud.

Martineau shapes the narrative around the songs and artists for listener. He creates
Indigenous and nation-specific narratives as he negates settler colonial states of mind that
try to keep Indigenous creative production in the margins or fold Indigenous creative
work into settler colonial life. Punk is not only aggressive music in this case. It is a way

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391 Dutcher (2019) 21m 29s.
392 Jarrett Martineau, “Punk and Hardcore” episode 92 of Reclaimed. Original air date: December 18th,
to “purify and restore balance” for some Indigenous artists.\textsuperscript{393} It has its own ritualistic properties that allows Indigenous artists to “channel generations of resistance and struggle.”\textsuperscript{394} This process of self-recognition refuses the authority of the settler ear as a marker of taste or value and encourages settler listeners to learn to listen differently—against “hungry listening.”\textsuperscript{395} Listeners can recognize similar elements in British or North American punk, but they cannot fold these into the same history and erase the presence of indigeneity and Indigenous identity. This guided process encourages an unsettling and invites settler listeners into new relationships with Indigenous music, ways of life, and peoples.

Through these renewed engagements listeners can begin to understand the different ways to meaningfully participate with work produced by people from cultures that are not their own. Audience members engage with the performances as a form of entertainment and continue to work to find a way to listen to the artists on a deeper level, potentially beginning to see the worlds created. Live performances can be disorienting and overstimulating to multiple senses, but the audience member often regains focus when they see openings to new worlds made audible through recordings—as is the case with Martineau’s radio show and through the work of Tanya Tagaq discussed in Chapter Three. There is more time to reflect and revisit the work. Nevertheless, this mobile live series and radio show demonstrate, at the very least, the continued presence and new sounds and interpretations of indigeneity of some Indigenous peoples on Turtle Island. Additionally, these performances also address and bring together people of many cultures to re-cognize and negotiate their responsibilities to one another.

\textit{Revolutions Per Minute and Gizhiwe: Music, Land, and Repatriation}

The key component of RPM and the newly established Gizhiwe (a label started by Anishnaabe singer/songwriter Ansley Simpson) is Indigenous ownership. Before these

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\item \textsuperscript{395} Robinson (2020).
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labels, if an Indigenous artist wanted the support of a record label, the rights to publish, release, and profit from the release of music would likely be owned someone else. There was little chance of Indigenous representation or support with issues such as publishing rights. Early in Buffy Sainte-Marie’s career she was taken advantage of and signed away the publishing rights to one of her most famous songs, “Universal Soldier.” The Highwaymen, a country supergroup comprised of Johnny Cash, Willie Nelson, Waylon Jennings, and Kris Kristofferson, wanted to record it after seeing her perform the song. A contract was written up haphazardly by a member of The Highwaymen’s touring band, requiring that The Highwaymen pay Sainte-Marie one dollar for the rights to the song. Sainte-Marie signed the contract without understanding the significance of publishing rights at the time and believing that the song might reach a new audience. It took Sainte-Marie “ten years and $25,000 to buy the song’s rights back.” The music industry has changed in some ways since the early 1960s, and there are ways around relying on a major label, but a musician has to have an established revenue source and the resources to record music without the money and services provided by a record label.

Signing to a label or publishing house is often considered a positive moment in an artist’s career, representing the reality that there is or may be a significant amount of interest in their creations (enough to make a profit for the label). This is considered a normal process within the music industry and for many years was the main avenue for aspiring professional musicians. However, patterns and issues of colonialism are present in this process. Traces of colonial recording practices haunt the recording contracts of Indigenous artists who sign a record deal with no chance of Indigenous representation or ownership. Not all recording contracts are skewed in favour of the label, but only established artists have the power and resources to negotiate with a label. Further, not all Indigenous artists want or have to work exclusively with Indigenous representation, but, as with any negotiation over rights and ownership between Indigenous peoples and white

settlers, a colonial haunting or threat of colonial dispossession and cultural isolation is present. This is part of the pressure placed on Indigenous artists in a settler dominated music industry.

RPM and Gizhiiwe provide an alternative to this reality. They have created an opportunity for Indigenous control and ownership in a settler dominated industry by removing white settler intermediaries and owners. There are only a few releases on these labels, but RPM and Gizhiiwe represent a future where Indigenous artists do not have to sell their music or sign their publishing rights away to white executives. This is now a reality for Indigenous artists simply looking to record music in and for their own community, as well as artists looking to achieve a wider level of popular success. For Indigenous artists with local or global goals in mind, the settler owner as record executive or salvaging ethnographer is no longer required and, indeed, eliminated.

For Dutcher, an artist who made Wolastoqiyik Lintuwakonawa for the Wolastoq peoples and is achieving levels of popular success, this elimination is real in more than one way. The independent release of the record avoids the settler control almost guaranteed by signing with a major label, while the Monkman designed album artwork removes Densmore (the white ethnographer) from the recording scene. The empty stool lays bare this removal. Through Dutcher’s process the songs are returned to their people, culture, and land. Music and language revitalization become a communal process again, a process once taken from Indigenous peoples and, in many ways, still monitored by the settler state. That is, cultural practices are permitted until they interfere with the goals of the state and settler economy. However, through Dutcher’s process of returning the music and recovering the language, the white settler no longer controls the use, release, and life of these Wolastoq songs and the Wolastoqey language.

Dutcher protects Wolastoq traditions from a colonial gaze and ear during performances of Wolastoqiyik Lintuwakonawa (only translating small selections of the Wolastoqey language), but clear messages for members of Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultures are included. This album is about reclamation and repatriation.
Monkman’s removal of the white ethnographer in the album artwork and Dutcher’s process of listening, writing, recording, and performing the album in conversation with sounds on cylinders more than 100 years old speak to and embody the significance of song and language reclamation and the repatriation of land for Indigenous peoples on Turtle Island. The album recovers the music and language of a previous life lived on Wolastoq land as it represents an ongoing presence and Wolastoq life on Wolastoq land. Similarly, for Martineau and Ansley Simpson, RPM and Gizhiiwe represent the first two Indigenous-run record labels primarily for Indigenous people on Turtle Island. Indigenous musicians can now turn to a record label that understands what is at stake in the creation and performance of music for Indigenous peoples—the protection of language, cultural traditions, land, and life.

Put another way, this ownership and responsibility over music and art as creation or “creative negation” is part of a decolonial process. It is part of a decolonial process that, to revisit the words of Unangax Education scholar Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, is about the “repatriation of land…that is, all of the land, and not just symbolically.” Indigenous ownership as protection of music, language, culture, community, and land, refuses a “colonial normative order and [turns] toward Indigenous alternatives and potentialities.” These potentialities live in the work of Indigenous artists. In Dutcher’s recovery of recordings of Wolastoq songs and language, the music and language support a reconnection to life as a relationship to land for Wolastoq peoples. A real connection once broken by the settler state is reclaimed through Dutcher’s process and performance on Wolastoqiyik Lintuwakonawa. The music and language are life, past, present, and future, on Wolastoq land. It is the music and language of the land. Without independence as an Indigenous musician, this reconnection might have been difficult or monitored and limited by various settler institutions. Simply put, Dutcher’s independence as self-determination helped facilitate this reclamation. Protection of Indigenous music, artistic

397 Martineau (2015a): 43.
399 Martineau (2015a): 43.
creation, responsibilities, potentialities, and relationships to community and land are part of a decolonial process. With RPM and Gizhiwe working to protect these relationships for other Indigenous artists, similar acts of reclamation may, indeed, proliferate.
Conclusion

Towards New Worlds

This dissertation grew out of a sense of unsettlement and need to explore a complex sense of responsibility spurred by listening to music created by artists such as A Tribe Called Red and Tanya Tagaq. My sense of this responsibility shifted as I worked my way through different scenes, from Frances Densmore and Mountain Chief to Dutcher and Monkman. This notion of responsibility shifted because it moved through different worlds and into new ones. Indeed, Monkman and Dutcher destabilize the world of Densmore with the album and its cover images and are encouraging audiences to enter into the worlds they are opening up—that is, new ways of being in and thinking about the world that challenge settler colonial structures and states of mind. This dissertation ultimately became part of a process of thinking about how settlers might learn to participate in these new worlds. This process begins with a surrender of settler colonial mentalities.

The work of the artists discussed in this dissertation is the key catalyst. The surrender spurred in these aesthetic encounters is not equivalent to surrendering stolen land and resources. My aim in this dissertation is to break down and discuss the elements of an initial surrender—psychological and material—that becomes part of a much larger process of land surrender. This work cannot be relegated to future generations because these realities are unfolding now. There are ongoing land claims that, in different ways, challenge the basis of the settler colonial legal and political system. For example, as I touched on in Chapter One, Eva Mackey articulates that some Indigenous communities do not make land claims for the sake of owning land in the settler colonial sense. Many Indigenous nations’ understanding of their relationship to the land cannot be contained by settler colonial understandings of relationships to land and non-human beings. Instead, as representatives of the Onondaga nation explain, title over the land (back) is significant.
because it reinstates an ability to exert a responsibility to the land.\textsuperscript{400} This can feel meaningless or confusing to settlers, but it is powerful. It is not about owning the land for the sake of exploiting it. It is about a sense of responsibility and the reality that this has been denied. This example struck me because it connected with some of the ideas and affectations I encountered when listening to music of ATCR, Tanya Tagaq, and Jeremy Dutcher. These artists incited a psychological and material re-structuring that encouraged me to begin to think about relationships and responsibilities in different ways. This relationship to land is not complex. That is, these artists and communities want responsibility for their own lives back. They want the freedom to be responsible for their lives, the lives of their peoples, and all the beings that give and preserve life that settler colonialism has worked to deny for so long.

Unfortunately, settlers have and, in many cases, continue to reject the reality of their own responsibilities. In general and aesthetic terms however, it is the artistic autonomy and power of Indigenous artists that settlers engage in these aesthetic encounters that continues to push the settler to understand the necessity of Indigenous socio-political, economic, and geographic sovereignty. The settler engages the many worlds opened up through these aesthetic encounters and begins a long and ongoing process of learning to participate in these worlds. As these worlds become real, the socio-political consequences will have to be faced. By addressing the necessity of rebuilding settler states of mind, this dissertation began to unpack some of the nuances of these processes.

What these worlds and a rebuilding of settler states of mind offer in terms of concrete benefits to the settler is perhaps not clear. But these are the wrong questions to be asking. The settler does not re-cognize and learn to participate in Indigenous-led worlds as a process of becoming Indigenous or helping a settler colonial society sustain itself. It is not a process of assimilation or appropriation. This “convenience approach” maintains settler colonial structures. It is the value of the collective justice of conciliation

\textsuperscript{400} Mackey (2016): 146.
or distorted harmony between nations mutually respected as sovereign that pushes this work. The reality of this distorted harmony, however difficult it may be for settlers to realize or accept, is that there can be no conciliation without Indigenous self-determination, sovereignty, and self-governance. Put another way, this means that settlers are encouraged to continue to find ways to surrender socio-political, economic, and physical space—which includes the responsibility over these spaces—to Indigenous peoples.

New ways of being are always going to be complex, but they need not be frightening. Indigenous artists are offering many ways into the worlds created through their work. Learning how to listen again, and perhaps for the first time, can help alleviate the reactive rush of fear that clouds our emotions and minds when confronting unfamiliar ways of being. Indeed, as we collectively navigate the post-TRC era, settlers are encouraged to confront the reality behind the many aesthetic encounters and political processes such as land acknowledgements, inquiries, and land claims—processes that can be, whether small or large, a significant part of a way of preparing for new worlds. The reality that settlers are invited to face is that new worlds are being created and we are being encouraged to find a way to listen and find new ways to participate in them as cross-cultural realities on Turtle Island. Conciliation is not a forgive and forget situation, nor a transitional phase into the next chapter of settler colonial domination. Unsettlement is a process that operates in response to and alongside the efforts of Indigenous nations and peoples to decolonize, regaining land and sovereignty. It is an opportunity, as new worlds and ways of being open up through the work of Indigenous artists, to take up the new roles and responsibilities. Settlers cannot transcend their existence as settlers on Turtle Island, but we can change the way we think and live in this world, becoming more responsible settlers in Indigenous-led worlds on Turtle Island.
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Appendix A: Permissions

Figure 2: Permission for the use of the album cover for Jeremy Dutcher’s *Wolastoqiyyik Lintuwakonawa*. Photo credit: Matt Barnes Photography.

Troy Junker

Date: February 24th, 2020

Re: Permission to Use Copyrighted Material in a Doctoral Thesis

Dear Troy,

I am a University of Western Ontario graduate student completing my Doctoral thesis entitled “Sounding Unsettlement: Rethinking Settler States of Mind and Re(-)cognition through Scenes of Cross-Cultural Listening”. My thesis will be available in full-text on the internet for reference, study copy. Except in situations where a thesis is under embargo or restriction, the electronic version will be accessible through the Western Libraries web pages, the Library’s web, and also through web search engines. I will also be granting Library and Archives Canada and ProQuest/UMI a non-exclusive license to reproduce, loan, distribute, or sell single copies of my thesis by any means and in any form or format. These rights will in no way restrict republication of the material in any other form by you or by others authorized by you.

I would like permission to allow inclusion of the following material in my thesis: a hi-res photo of the *Wolastoqiyyik Lintuwakonawa* album cover.

The material will be attributed through a citation.

Please confirm in writing or by email that these arrangements meet with your approval.

Sincerely
Ryan Shuvera
Settler Ph.D. Candidate
Centre for the Study of Theory and Criticism
Western University

Permission granted for the use of the material as described above:

Agreed to: [Signature]
Name & Title: LABEL MANAGER
Company/Affiliation: VARIOUS ARTS MANAGEMENT
Date: MAY 11, 2020
Figure 3: Permission for use of the album cover image for the Khu.éex' album They Forgot They Survived.

Date: May 8th, 2020

Re: Permission to Use Copyrighted Material in a Doctoral Thesis

Dear Khu.éex’,

I am a University of Western Ontario graduate student completing my Doctoral thesis entitled “Sounding Unsettlement: Rethinking Settler States of Mind and Re(--)ognition through Scenes of Cross-Cultural Listening”. My thesis will be available in full-text on the internet for reference, study and/or copy. Except in situations where a thesis is under embargo or restriction, the electronic version will be accessible through the Western Libraries web pages, the Library’s web, and also through web search engines. I will also be granting Library and Archives Canada and ProQuest/UMI a non-exclusive license to reproduce, loan, distribute, or sell single copies of my thesis by any means and in any form or format. These rights will in no way restrict republication of the material in any other form by you or by others authorized by you.

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Sincerely
Ryan Shuvera
Settler Ph.D. Candidate
Centre for the Study of Theory and Criticism
Western University

Permission granted for the use of the material as described above:

Agreed to: Khu.éex’ Name & Title: Preston Singleton
Company/Affiliation: Date: 5/8/20
Curriculum Vitae

Ryan Shuvera

Education
2015-present: PhD candidate at Western University (Theory and Criticism)

2011-October 2014: Master of Arts-Acadia University (Social and Political Thought)

2013-May 2014: Bachelor of Journalism-University of King’s College (Journalism)

2007-May 2011: Bachelor of Arts (Honours)-Lakehead University (Philosophy major, minor in Political Science)

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Popular music, Cross-cultural exchange, settler unsettlement, listening studies, Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations, music, technology, and cultural practices.

Publications

Journal Articles


Other Writing


https://rye89.wordpress.com/2016/12/19/through-fight-and-light-a-reflection-on-flight-with-leanne-simpson/


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Academic Honours/External Funding Received

2020: Lynne Lionel Scott Fellowship, $1,000.

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2018: Alumni Graduate Award, $1,000.

2007-2011: Queen Elizabeth Aiming for the Top Scholarship $14,000 ($3,500/year).

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Fall 2011-Spring 2012: Graduate assistant for Acadia Social and Political Thought department, Acadia University, Wolfville, Nova Scotia.