Introduction: Arriving in Place

Jenn Cole and Melissa Poll

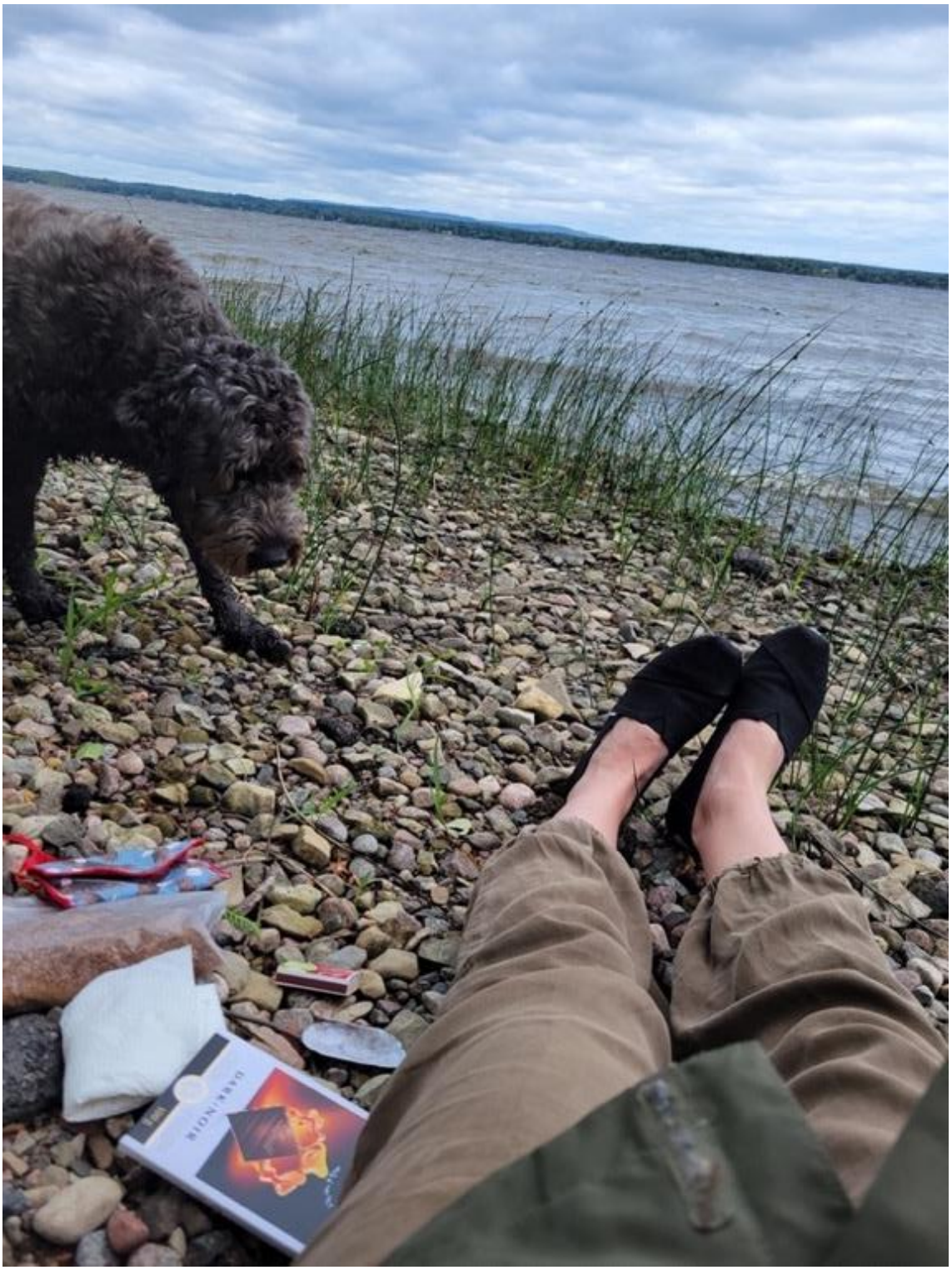
A note to readers: The following introduction to this issue of *Performance Matters* includes hyperlinks to multimedia editorial offerings.

Jenn arriving in place.

As Jenn harvests spruce roots in Kiji Sibi watershed territory, with dirty hands, her voice overlays the images:

> I think that on the inside I look like bits of birch bark, soil, mineral rock, moss, kiji sibi. That moist blue horizon. . . . I learn a lot about who I am from the Land, and it's here, where I am living now, in Michi Saagig territory, where I learn so much about how to bring gifts to my relatives, how to engage with my relations. Anne Taylor, from Curve Lake First Nation, teaches me that to say *aaniin* is to say the spirit light in me sees the spirit light in you. She also teaches me how to meet a canoe—a *jiimaan*—and I start to build a friendship with that one. Picking up teachings here and bringing them to my home territory is a gift, and being connected to the culture of my ancestors, to the Lands of them, that is one of the most beautiful parts of my universe. And being able to belong to that as research is a privilege and is one of the responsibilities that I pick up and intend to carry out with intention and care for the generations to come. Miigwech.

Jenn Cole is mixed ancestry Algonquin Anishinaabe kwe from Kiji Sibi watershed territory. She is assistant professor in Indigenous performance and gender at Trent University, artistic director for Nozhem First Peoples Performance Space, and editor for *Canadian Theatre Review* Views and Reviews. **Melissa Poll** is settler scholar, dramaturge and instructor at Kansas State University in Social Transformation and English. Her research on intercultural theatre has been published in *Body, Space & Technology*, *Canadian Theatre Review*, *Theatre Research in Canada*, *Contemporary Theatre Review*, and *Performance Matters*. She is the author of *Robert Lepage's Scenographic Dramaturgy: The Aesthetic Signature at Work* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).



Jenn sits on stones on the shore of Kiji Sibi, legs extended. Next to her, some offerings lie on the ground. In one top corner, Puddles, the wheaton terrier, walks into frame. In the other, river waves rush into the shoreline, which is lined with reeds.

It is good to be home.

Melissa arriving in place.

> I [Melissa] work at the first land-grant institution established under the 1862 Morrill Act, Kansas State University. I acknowledge that the state of Kansas is historically home to many Indigenous nations, including the Kaw, Osage, and Pawnee, among others. Furthermore, Kansas is the current home to four federally recognized Indigenous nations: The Prairie Band Potawatomie, the Kickapoo Tribe of Kansas, the Iowa Tribe of Kansas and Nebraska, and Sac and Fox Nation of Missouri in Kansas and Nebraska.
>
> Many Indigenous nations utilized the western plains of Kansas as their hunting grounds, and others—such as the Delaware—were moved through this region during Indian removal efforts to make way for White settlers. It's important to acknowledge this, since the land that serves as the foundation for the institution where I work was, and still is, stolen land.
>
> I remember these truths because K-State's status as a land-grant institution is a story that exists within ongoing settler colonialism and rests on the dispossession of Indigenous peoples and nations from their Lands. These truths are often invisible to many. The recognition that K-State's history begins and continues through Indigenous contexts is essential.

Why We Care About This Work: Editors in Conversation

Below and online, we, Jenn and Melissa, discuss our investments in this work.

The editors in video conversation.

Melissa: Well, good to see you.

Jenn: Good to see you too.

M: We're back again, four years later.

J: Yeah, here we are, at it again. Has it been four years?

M: Yeah, I think that (last) issue came out in pandemic time, or shortly after.

J: Yeah, yeah. It feels good to be doing the work in this way with you.

M: It always feels good to do it with you like this. It's such a treat and such a gift.

J: It really is. I was trying to think about Melissa, you know why I care about this work, you know? Why do I care about responsible relationships to truthful histories and embodied work that engages with place and place specificity and cultural specificity? Why do I care about performance practices that are connected to Indigenous Lands and protocols across Lands in their diversities and complexities? And it's kind of hard for me to renew that question because I think it's just most of what I care about, you know! Like, why do I care? Because it feels really important, and it's what I spend a lot of time doing.

I have to say it was really so good walking to the beach here in my home territory yesterday. I'm in home territory, I'm visiting my Mom. And we're quite downriver from where I grew up, so different horizon lines, different beach feeling on the feet, and even different waters, like, the water is really deep where I grew up and then it's a bit shallower out here, for further. I was trying in that kind of,

like, editorial responsive practice; go walking on the Land, think it all through, think about our contributors (maybe I shouldn't be using that in the possessive, but the ones who've contributed to this issue of *Performance Matters*), and I wanted to sort of, like, give a gift, with my movement and with my senses and with my Being in place.

But everything I did was just a gift to me. Not only a gift to me, but just ended up nourishing me; taking care of my own self, allowing me to sink into my own protocols that I've learned from my teachers in this territory and in Michi Saagiig territory. You know, making a fire, that's a gift for me. Standing in the water, that's a gift for me. Making offerings, that, like, fixes everything. So just to circle back to the question, you know, that I was asking myself, "Why is this work important to me?" I think it takes care of me.

M: Absolutely

J: Yeah.

M: Well, we were talking about mothering, right?

It's hugely beneficial, it's a reciprocity of care, right? You're giving care to the Land and the Land's giving care back to you. Like, I had a really long teaching day and it's just so nice to be out here on the lawn, with the sun, to have my bare feet in the grass, you know, and just to be on the Land and figuring out what it means to be accountable for the history of this Land. And what does that mean going forward for me and for you?

Especially being on this Land, colonially known as the United States, and at a land-grant university, which is very interesting because the university has profited from Indigenous Lands. So just figuring that out and, yeah, being in relation to the Land. And also, like you, I've been out walking, and I just think about our contributors and the care and concern that they have brought to the work. It really feels to me like a conversation that we couldn't have had a decade ago, with settlers and Indigenous collaborators.

So yeah, it just really refreshes me, and the way it's benefiting both sides. I mean, I'm not going to congratulate myself anymore, or us, but there's something about this that feels like a good way of working. And it's brought people to us who want to continue to work in a good way. And with the editorial practice, we're learning from them as they're learning from us. And you are always my greatest teacher, and I'm, you know, learning from you throughout this.

J: And you are a beautiful collaborator, and also a heavy lifter. Miigwech for taking on so much labour. And I know you know publication is labour-intensive. And then the authors, their work doesn't just arise out of sitting down and thinking something and writing it out and doing that work. But out of often long-back relationships, long-back working, around even embodied practice training, but also working with Indigenous nations or within people's own communities. There's so much.

I was listening to Gina Star Blanket's keynote at a conference this weekend, and she used words that I cite actually in a kind of poem or thinking piece that I did at the beach yesterday, but she described "ongoing plunder." She's really brilliant about articulating the stakes of doing, in her case,

Indigenous feminist work. She's the editor of *Making Space for Indigenous Feminisms*, the third edition, and I guess I'm just thinking; we're place people, and embodied work people, and performance people, and Indigenous / settler collaboration and relationship people, and thinking about responsible pedagogy and responsible scholarship people, and we're doing that work.

But so many others are doing the work. And the stakes are actually really high, so I know you're saying you don't want to overcelebrate the work that we've done here, and it is like something sort of small within the grand scheme of, "How do we go forward at a nation-to-nation level? At a systemic level? At an individual, the level of my skin? Like, how do I go ahead if we haven't actually figured out where the heck we are? And what that means to each of us differently?" I think it is a really important question right now, and I do appreciate the work of all the many, many people who are doing it alongside us for sure.

M: Well, it is interesting for me today being my first day back to teaching and doing it here [in Kansas], I did a Land Acknowledgement for my students and they're not used to it down here. And it was really interesting to sort of have the discussion about what it meant and I do see that they are not thinking of it as—there are some people who feel that they're being blamed for something—but the students are really seeing it as an opportunity for a different way of thinking and being accountable going forward, which is so refreshing. You know no one was bristling, which can happen down here.

I feel hopeful, but again I think it begins with the Land. Whose Land are you on and how are you living in relationship to those nations? It's everything.

J: Yeah. It also takes a really long time to get to know a place, is one other thing I'd like to share. I'm just thinking about, you know, being a little bit downriver, by which I mean like a fifteen-minute drive, you know, and probably like a twenty-five-minute paddle if you're really good (I'm not!) downriver. So even here, there are all these relatives I recognize, but even here, I feel like I'm still homesick a little bit. So interesting.

And then you know, I'm living in Michi Saagiig territory, which isn't so far from here, it's maybe three and a half hours or so to my home. I've been thinking about this a lot recently. I moved to Nogojiwanong (also known as Peterborough) in 2002. I've met a bunch of people, certainly not everyone. I've spent time outside, I've put my feet in the water, you know, made artwork in that place that is always trying to, kind of, give back and bring teachings from the Michi Saagig teachers I get to work with in that place; bring them out to those who wish. And all the same it's so, so not like here.

And partly because of special things. Like something really special in that territory is the water goes underground and then makes all these beautiful sounds in all kinds of places, like at the Teaching Rocks, and then, also at Squaknegossippi/Warsaw caves, that has old kettles and limestone rocks where the water goes under. Anyway, it's a totally different space of knowing and it feels obvious to me when I'm there how back and back and back and back they're other people's ancestors who had cool technological practices and community gatherings and songs and teachings and conversations and relationships and actions and gestures on the Land. So, coming to know, coming to know where we are and coming to know a place, I think it takes way deeper time than I have in this lifetime, even though it's one of my favourite things.

M: Well, do you feel… I feel like we have come to know our process and practice together and I feel like that's something that is going to continue to grow. And it's not something I would ever articulate, as like, these are the steps you take. But I do feel like we've created a space, and it's mostly been virtual. When did we see each other last? In 2019. But we have a way of communicating and working that is kind of the Jenn and Melissa culture.

J: Yeah, I think it's like, from my own experiences, it's like Anishinaabe culture. It's intergenerational hangout culture; you know, talking a lot about parenting and a lot about the heart and then a lot about workspaces too and how we want to navigate those in a good way.

Yeah, I think… I don't know, here's a teaching… [laughing]

We're just not supposed to hang out with beings when we're asking for help, even though you know, I know a good tree, I really like her. Oh, she sways in such a good way, when I lean on her she's still swaying and creaking. And you know, of course, I'm, like, drowning in caregiving responsibilities, with a little support or whatever, but still, I don't just want to go to her broken hearted, when I need to have that kind of talk. I also want to go when I've got a good apple and I want to sit on the ground and we just chat, we just hang out, we just spend time together. And I think maybe it's not a broad sweeping statement about process but just about my process with you; the conversation and the mutual care is part of, and inseparable from, the curatorial piece or the editorial piece

M: And I feel, like, our, again, yeah, I don't want to make it possessive, but the people who have contributed to this issue, they bring this same kind of care and generosity. And I think that's really evident in their pieces but also just in our interactions with them; every email was just an opportunity to smile, from these folks, you know? It brought a lot of light and joy, you know, in a time where you and I are doing the balancing act right? Being a Mom, being an educator, you know, being responsible to community, it's a lot. And to kind of know that there are these other people out in many places doing the work and, yeah, just doing it in a way that really inspires me.

J: I agree, and doing it, really, I agree, like, from a position of care, and considered, carefulness, as well, and also a kind of curiosity, there's a lot of work happening on its feet, and going well and taking left turns and, you know, going around that rock. And I think it's really creative work that's been shared as well, and it made me feel good to read every piece we received.

M: I kind of don't want to let them go, I want to hold them [laughter].

J: [Laughter] We'll share them! We're sharing it all with the world! And then we can all hold them. More people can come over for tea.

M: That's right, this is our cup of tea sharing conversation, this issue. Erin Hurley was at UBC when I was there, and she used to say "When you are writing a paper, you think of it like you're sitting at the table, and who have you invited to the dinner party? And who are you talking with?" And I mean, with these guys, I don't even think we're at a dinner party, I think we're outside walking on the Land... but they're the ones who I want to have the conversations with. And what they give is, it's just light and goodness.

J: Walking on the Land. And then someone busts the dance move…

M: [Laughing]

J: [Laughing]

Themes

Here, Melissa has picked up themes from each author's piece with a mind to commonalities across the authors' offerings in the context of place-based performance and pedagogy focused on Indigenous-settler relationships.

Julie Burelle and Beth Piatote: wise performance-making practices in Indigenous-settler collaborations; reciprocity; working beyond Land Acknowledgement; working beyond settler colonialism; activating settler accountability; reciprocity in performance process and practice

Yi-Jen Yu: cultural and sensorial consumption and communication; language revitalization/mother tongues; Indigenous modalities in the mainstream; challenging settler-capitalist power structures

Sammy Roth, Miya Shaffer, and Tria Blu Wakpa: possibilities of community-engaged decolonial pedagogies; impacting settler-capitalist frameworks and legacies of extractivism/appropriation; supporting cultural revitalization initiatives; Indigenous issues at land-grant institutions; what it means to be good relatives

Alana Gerecke and Karen Jamieson: connecting performance practice to the land; building relationships with Indigenous collaborators based on reciprocity, relationality, and accountability; collaborating with Indigenous artists in nonextractive ways

Leah Decter and Peter Morin: the varied intimacies of live and virtual spaces of visiting; activating noncolonial concepts of host-guest relations that enact Indigenous sovereignties; confronting the certainty of settler emplacement while considering the responsibilities of settler guesting; extractivism (James Teit's stories/Group of Seven arts); disturbing patterns of white settler entitlement and settler-state sovereignty; appropriations of Indigenous culture in the early twentieth century; ethical approaches to Indigenous-settler collaborations

Benjamin Ross Nicholson: dispossession and its repercussions, including lack of agency; ideas of property and what can be possessed; the significance possession confers in settler colonial society; emancipation and processes of de-possession; engaging with anticolonialism in material, experiential, and intuitive ways; building and amplifying a culture of care

Responses I

Editors Jenn and Melissa offer responses to the pieces in this issue of *Performance Matters* below.

Jenn: I hold all of these written and performed works in my body mind as I walk through my days, and an embodied responsive practice grows. Ideas shimmer at the edges as they form, and I trust that when I move my body on the Land, a concrete reciprocation will emerge. I know I wish to walk

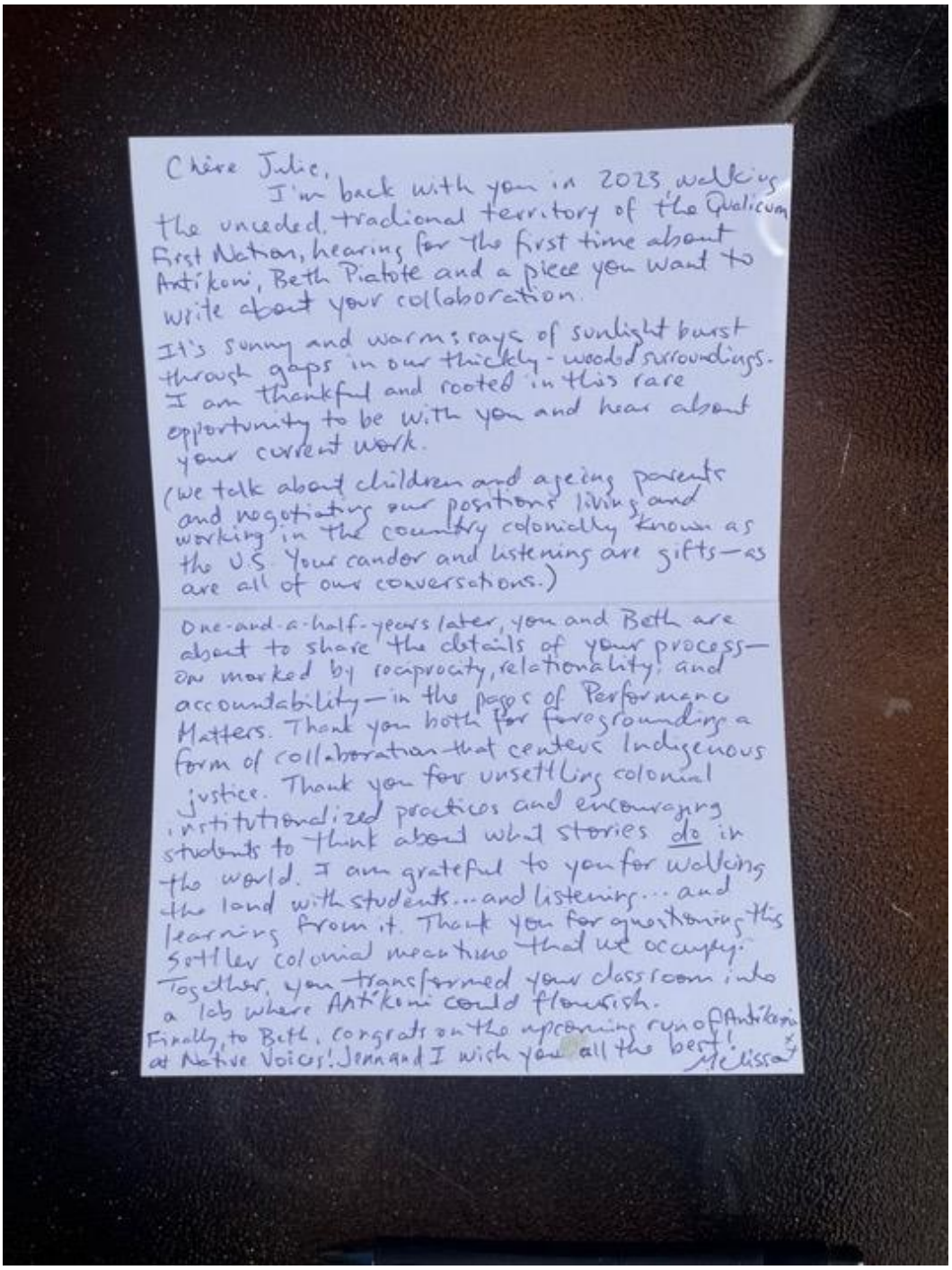
down to the river in Algonquin territory with some of the authors in mind, some of the textual and imagistic resonances and be with the stones.

Receiving a story—that is, being entrusted with it.
—Julie Burelle

I went to the shore to think it all through and somehow it became all about sea monsters.

A drawing of a sea monster who lives in the Kiji Sibi waterways by Jenn. Pink and green seaweed and dark blue sea monster hair intertwine in many wavy lines. Whiskers. Alcohol marker on paper and washi tape at the edges where Jenn's child taped this to the wall.

Melissa:



Chère Julie,
I'm back with you in 2023 walking the unceded, tradional territory of the Qualicum First Nation, hearing for the first time about Antikoni, Beth Piatote and a piece you want to write about your collaboration.
It's sunny and warm; rays of sunlight burst through gaps in our thickly-wooded surroundings. I am thankful and rooted in this rare opportunity to be with you and hear about your current work.
(we talk about children and ageing parents and negotiating our positions living and working in the country colonially known as the U.S. Your candor and listening are gifts—as are all of our conversations.)

One-and-a-half-years later, you and Beth are about to share the details of your process—one marked by reciprocity, relationality, and accountability—in the pages of Performance Matters. Thank you both for foregrounding a form of collaboration that centers Indigenous justice. Thank you for unsettling colonial institutionalized practices and encouraging students to think about what stories do in the world. I am grateful to you for walking the land with students... and listening... and learning from it. Thank you for questioning this settler colonial meantime that we occupy. Together, you transformed your classroom into a lab where Antikoni could flourish.
Finally, to Beth, congrats on the upcoming run of Antikoni at Native Voices! Jenn and I wish you all the best!
Melissa

A letter to Julie Burelle from Melissa Poll, August 2024.

The letter reads:

Dear Julie,

I'm back in 2023 with you, walking the unceded traditional territory of the Qualicum First Nation, hearing for the first time about *Antíkoni*, Beth Piatote and a piece you want to write about your collaboration.

It's sunny and warm; rays of sunlight burst through gaps in our thickly-wooded surroundings. I am thankful and rooted in this rare opportunity to be with you and hear about your current work.

(We talk about children and ageing parents and negotiating our positions living and working in the country colonially known as the United States. Your candor and listening are gifts—as are all our conversations.)

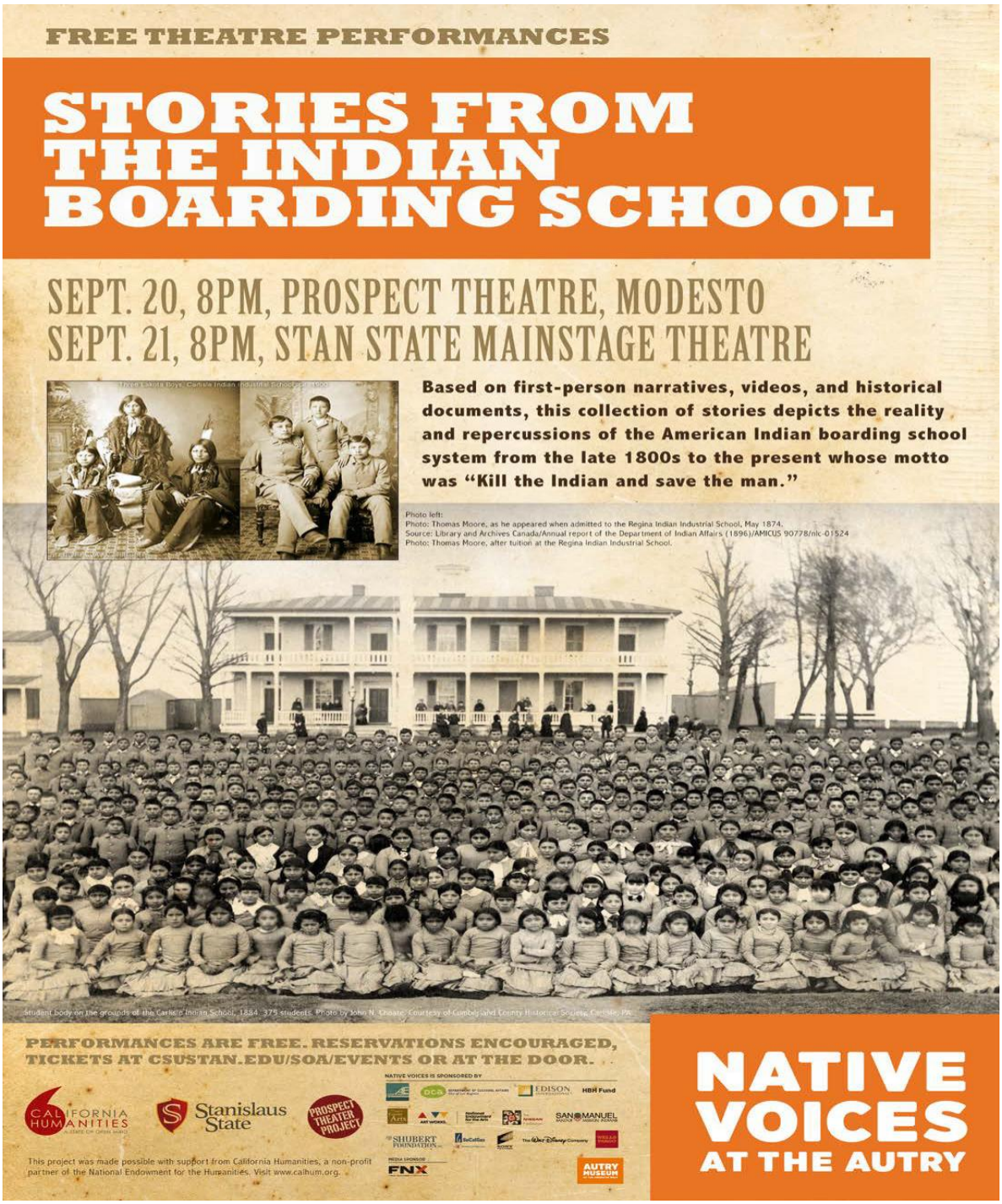
One-year-and-a-half later, you and Beth are about to share the details of your process—a process marked by reciprocity, relationality and accountability—in the pages of *Performance Matters*. Thanks to you both for modelling a form of collaboration that foregrounds Indigenous justice. Thank you for unsettling colonial institutionalized practices and encouraging students to think about what stories *do* in the world. I am grateful to you for walking the land with students… and listening… and learning from it. Thank you for questioning this settler colonial meantime we occupy. Together, you transformed your classroom into a lab within which *Antíkoni* could flourish.

Finally, to Beth, congratulations on the upcoming run of *Antíkoni* at Native Voices at the Autry! Jenn and I wish you the absolute best on this journey!

Warmly,

Melissa

For Julie, Beth, and our readers: A poster for *Stories from the Indian Boarding School*. This script has been incredibly generative in my classroom. For more information on exploring this resource with your students, please contact Elisa Blandford (eblandford@theautry.org), managing director of Native Voices



Top Photos: Three Sioux boys, Wounded Yellow Robe, Henry Standing Bear, and Chauncey Yellow Robe, at Carlisle Indian Industrial School in 1883 and 1886. Photo: John N. Choate. Carlisle Indian School Digital Resource Center. Bottom Photo: Student body on the grounds of the Carlisle Indian School, 1884. Photo by John N. Choate. Courtesy of Cumberland County Historical Society, Carlisle, PA.

Jenn:

Let's try my granny's specialties.
—Aljenljeng Tjaluvie, via Yi-Jen Yu

I am thinking of bellies. And our shoreline and river foods. Manoomin. Cattail. Wikenh. Swamp medicines. I eat chocolate by the shore and share with my relatives.

> Sea monster
> Grandmother with sea whiskers
> I saw you next to the rocks
> Seal bait
> Meat eater
> Water Memory ancestor
> You like it when the river floods
> You rest all night while the rafters blast apart

Melissa:

For Yi-Jen: Melissa's children (and friend) experiencing Abao for the first time on a late August evening. Song: "Thank You" by Abao (2019).

Jenn:

I will consider the spaces I inhabit; if I gather, I will also give.
—student, via Sammy Roth, Mia Shaffer, and Tria Blu Wakpa

A Kiji Sibi Beach Ceremony.

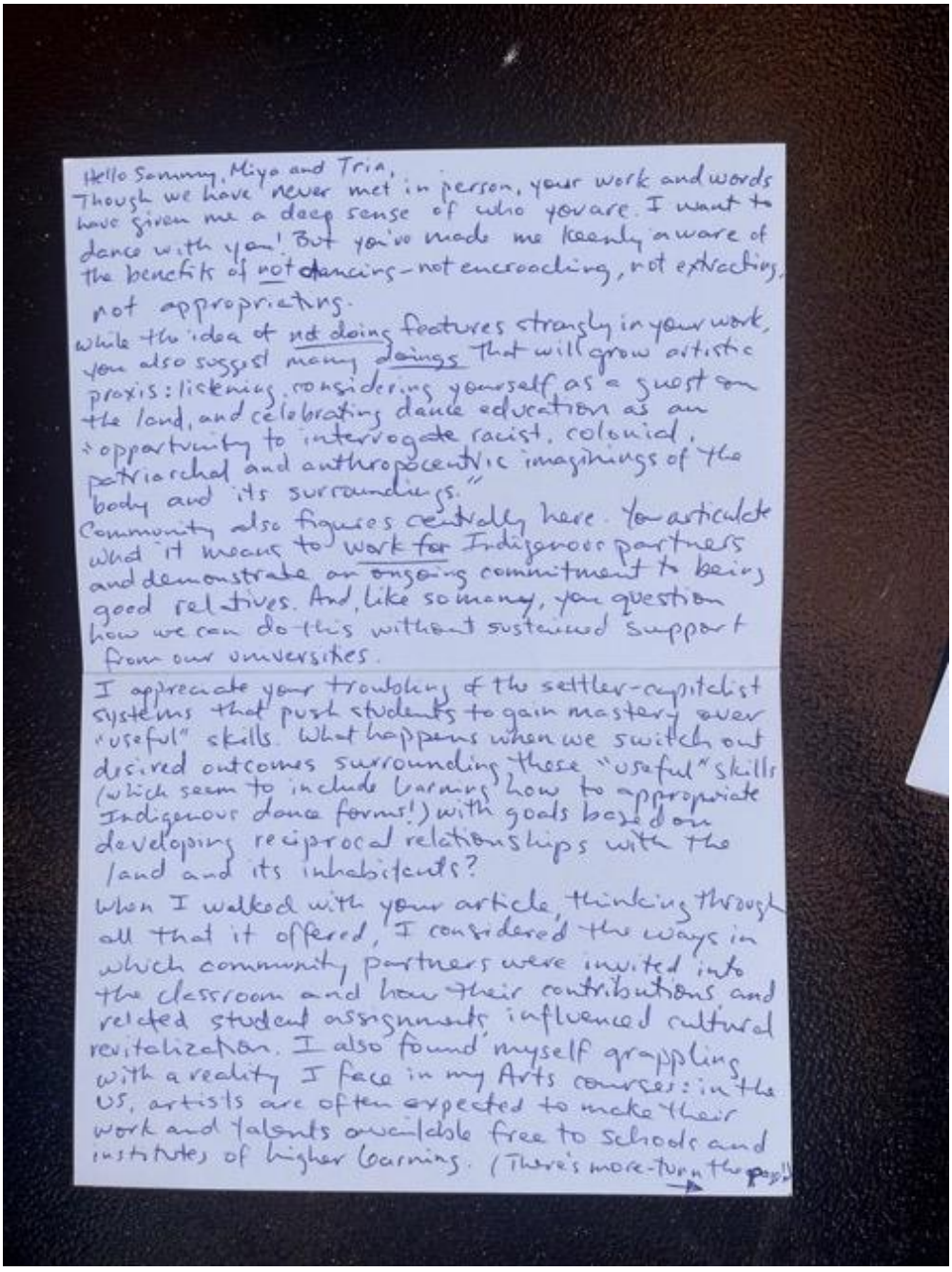
Kiji Sibi/Ottawa River moves in waves made by strong winds on an August day. A big sky hangs over a green line of hills across the river. Jenn steps through blowing shore grasses to stand in the water. She rolls up her pants, her back to the camera, her heart to the horizon, and crouches down. She places semaa, some meat, and some chocolate in the water. She rises and puts the rest of the chocolate in her pocket. She walks deeper into the river, rises, stands awhile, turns and walks back towards the shore and off camera. Her voiceover:

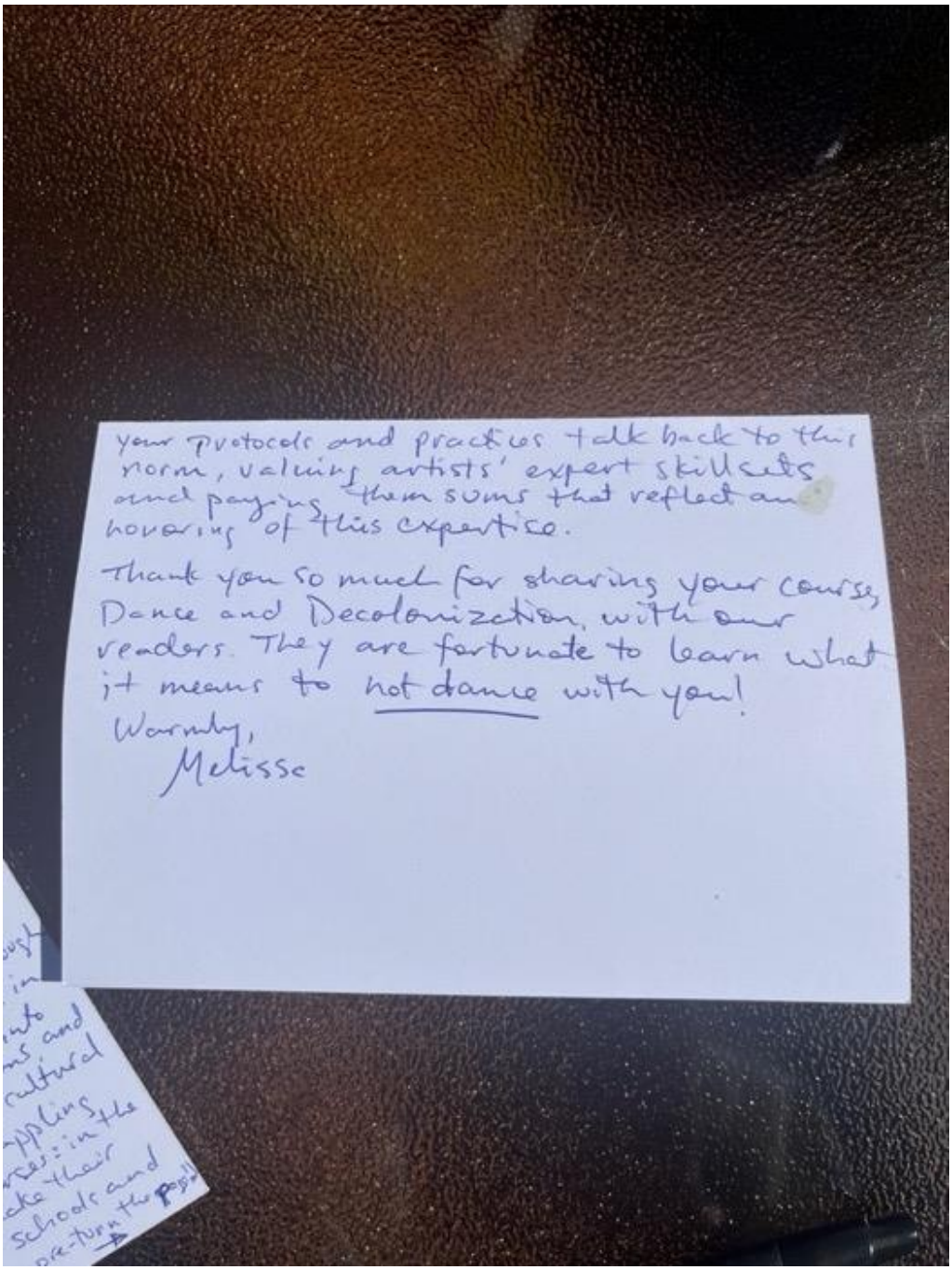
> Sometimes I have to walk it out on the shore.
> We can make our fires anywhere if we are in the right places
> I am feeding a sea monster
> Beach ceremony
>
> Semaa, meat eater gifts and chocolate in case she likes something sweet
> I can never out-gift this river
> Nibi
> Noodin
>
> Shkode
> Even the gift of fire is a gift given to myself
>
> I need Ones powerful enough to hold my sadness and my rage
> In this ongoing plunder
> In this ongoing

Life giving
Weight bearing
Land asinig skin
System
Of swaying reeds

I make an x out of matches
I am held up and together by my relatives

Melissa:





A letter to Sammy Roth, Miya Shaffer, and Tria Blu Wakpa from Melissa Poll, August 2024.

The letter reads:

> Hello Sammy, Miya and Tria,
>
> Though we have never met in person, your work and words have given me a deep sense of who you are. I want to dance with you! But you've also made me keenly aware of the benefits of *not dancing*—not encroaching, not extracting, not appropriating.

While the idea of *not doing* features strongly in your work, you also suggest many *doings* that will grow artistic praxis: listening, considering yourself as a guest on the land, and celebrating dance education as an "opportunity to interrogate racist, colonial, patriarchal, and anthropocentric imaginings of the body and its surroundings."

Community also figures centrally here. You articulate what it means to *work for* Indigenous partners and demonstrate an ongoing commitment to being good relatives. And, like so many, you question how we can do this without sustained support from our universities.

I appreciate your troubling of the settler-capitalist systems that push students to gain mastery over "useful" skills. What happens when we switch out desired outcomes surrounding these "useful" skills (such as learning how to appropriate Indigenous dance forms!) with goals based on developing reciprocal relationships with the land and its inhabitants?

When I walked with your article, thinking through all that if offered, I considered the ways in which community partners were invited into the classroom and how their contributions, and related student assignments, influenced cultural revitalization. I also found myself grappling with a reality I face in my Arts courses: in the US, artists are often expected to make their work and talents available free to schools and institutes of higher learning. Your protocols and practices talk back to this norm, valuing artists' expert skill sets and paying them sums that reflect an honoring of their expertise.

Thank you for sharing your course, Dance and Decolonization, with our readers. They are fortunate to have the opportunity to not dance with you!

Warmly,

Melissa

Keywords

Here, Jenn has moved through each piece's abstract and retrieved key and resonant words and phrases that anchor the authors' offerings in specificity around performance work in ethical and generative connection with place, especially in the context of Indigenous ways of knowing and Indigenous settler collaborations.

Antikoni
repatriation
reciprocate
transformative work
student

Aljenljeng Tjaluvie
pop
Paiwan
lyrical
transcultural conversations
stomach

performance classroom
not-dancing
listening
community
constraints of learning
good relatives

Land speed
site
dance practice
atonement
respectful

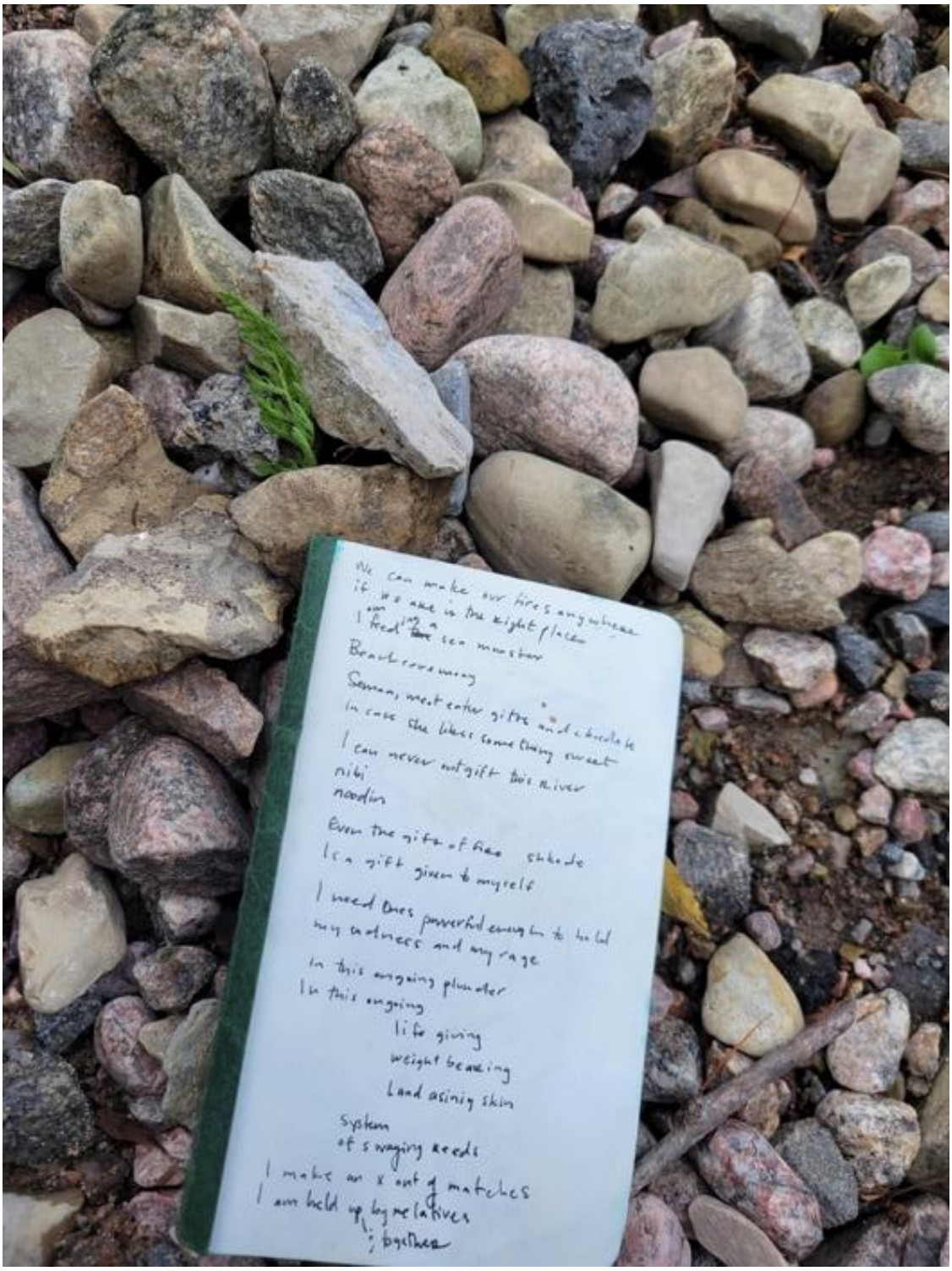
paths crossing
Tahltan Nation
stories
X
Indigenous sovereignties
settler responsibilities
tributaries

dispossession
Indigenous performance scholarship
de-occupying
material decoloniality
circulation of care

Responses II

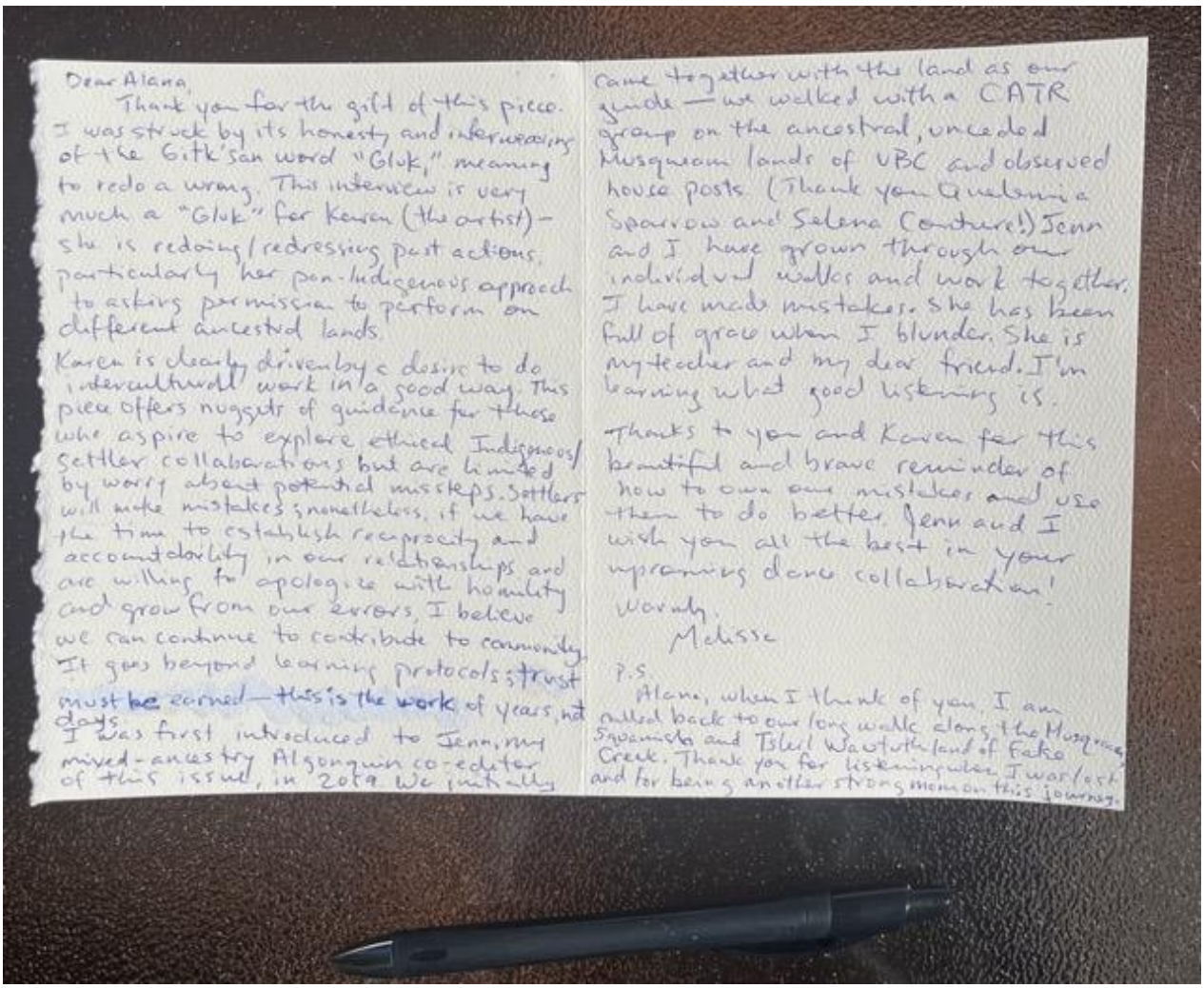
Jenn:

The speed of the Land. . . .
Just saying something isn't enough. You've got to *do* it. The ceremony, the physical enactment or embodiment is the transformative piece.
—Alana Gerecke and Karen Jamison



Photograph of river stones, yarrow plucked on Jenn's walk to the water, and a notebook inscription of some words that arose as part of the beach ceremony for the authors and relationships articulated in the issue.

Melissa:


Dear Alana,
Thank you for the gift of this piece. I was struck by its honesty and interweaving of the Gitk'san word "Gluk," meaning to redo a wrong. This interview is very much a "Gluk" for Karen (the artist)— she is redoing/redressing past actions, particularly her pan-Indigenous approach to asking permission to perform on different ancestral lands.
Karen is clearly driven by a desire to do intercultural work in a good way. This piece offers nuggets of guidance for those who aspire to explore ethical Indigenous/ Settler collaborations but are limited by worry about potential missteps. Settlers will make mistakes; nonetheless, if we have the time to establish reciprocity and accountability in our relationships and are willing to apologize with humility and grow from our errors, I believe we can continue to contribute to community. It goes beyond learning protocols; trust must be earned—this is the work of years, not days.
I was first introduced to Jenn, my mixed-ancestry Algonquin co-editor of this issue, in 2019. We initially came together with the land as our guide—we walked with a CATR group on the ancestral, unceded Musqueam lands of UBC and observed house posts. (Thank you Qualeenia Sparrow and Selena Couture!) Jenn and I have grown through our individual walks and work together. I have made mistakes. She has been full of grace when I blunder. She is my teacher and my dear friend. I'm learning what good listening is.
Thanks to you and Karen for this beautiful and brave reminder of how to own our mistakes and use them to do better. Jenn and I wish you all the best in your upcoming dance collaboration!
Warmly,
Melissa
P.S.
Alana, when I think of you, I am called back to our long walks along the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh land of False Creek. Thank you for listening when I was lost and for being another strong mom on this journey.

A letter to Alana Gerecke from Melissa Poll, August 2024.

The letter reads:

> Dear Alana,
>
> Thank you for this piece. I was struck by its honesty and interweaving of the Gitk'san word "Gluk," meaning to redo a wrong. This interview is very much a "Gluk" for Karen (the artist)—she is redoing/redressing past actions, particularly her pan-Indigenous approach to asking permission to perform on different ancestral lands.
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> Karen is clearly driven by a desire to do intercultural work in a good way. This piece offers nuggets of guidance for those who aspire to explore ethical Indigenous/settler collaborations but are limited by worry about potential missteps. Settlers will make mistakes; nonetheless, if we have taken the time to establish reciprocity and accountability in our relationships and are willing to apologize with humility and

grow from our errors, I believe we can continue to contribute to community. It goes beyond learning protocols; trust must be earned—this is the work of years, not days.

I was first introduced to Jenn Cole, the mixed-ancestry Algonquin co-editor of this issue, in 2019. We initially came together with the land as our guide—we walked with a CATR group on the ancestral, unceded Musqueam lands of UBC and observed house posts. We have grown through our individual walks and work together. I have made mistakes. She has been full of grace when I blunder. She is my teacher and my dear friend. I'm learning what good listening is.

Thanks to you and Karen for this beautiful and brave reminder about how to own our mistakes and use them to do better. I wish you all the best in your upcoming dance collaboration!

Warmly,

Melissa

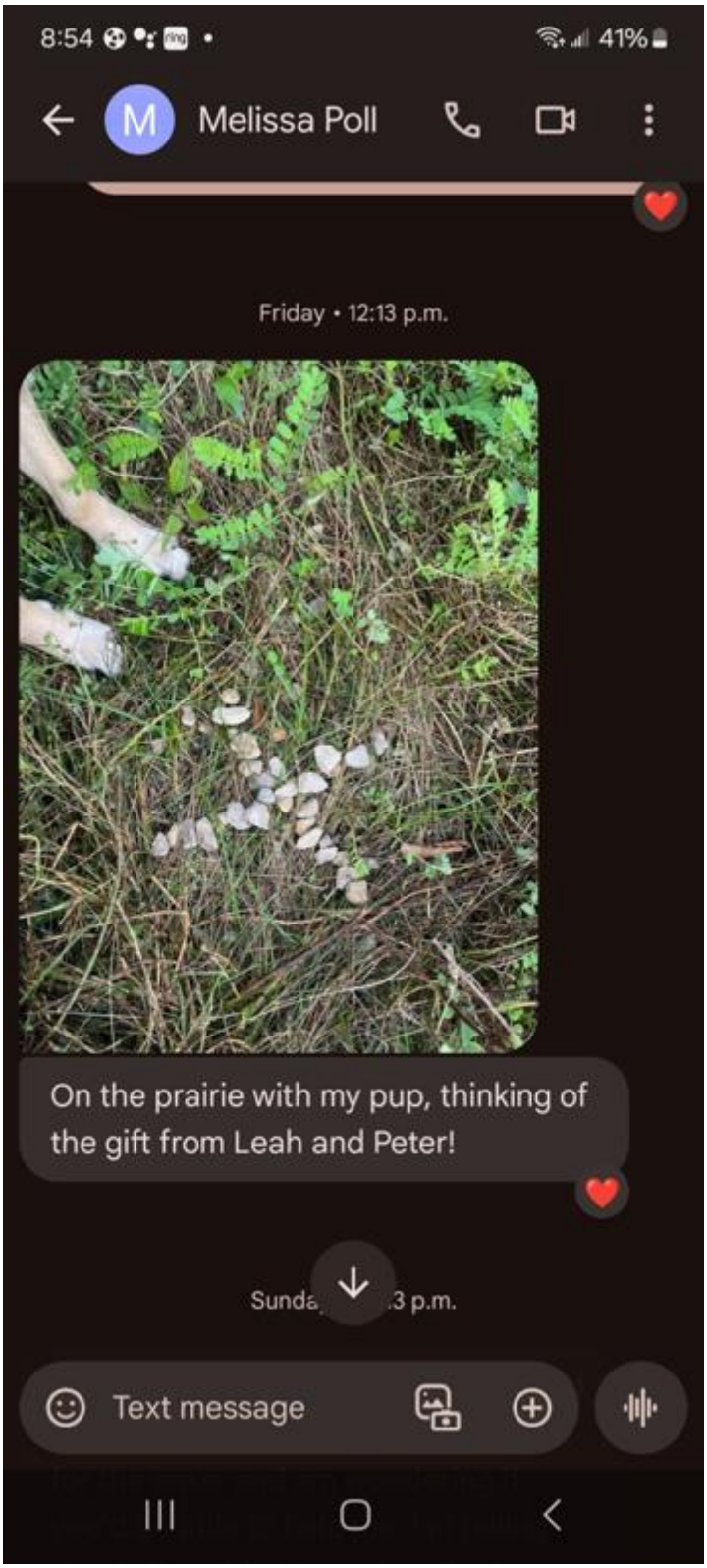
Jenn:

We draw here on Tania Willard's characterization of site/ation as a practice of citation in which the land is referenced and acknowledged as a critical contributor to developing knowledge.
—Leah Decter and Peter Morin

I make my own x.
Watershed to watershed.
In the morning, the next day, Peter sings his mother's song online and I receive their sounds as shared medicine, as love.

Photograph of an x Jenn made with matches from her smudge on a stone on the shore. Pinks and greys of granite meet vivid greens of river algae-stained rocks. The shadowed spaces between the stones make their own variations on x.

Melissa:



A text message sent to Jenn Cole from Melissa Poll, August 2024.

Jenn:

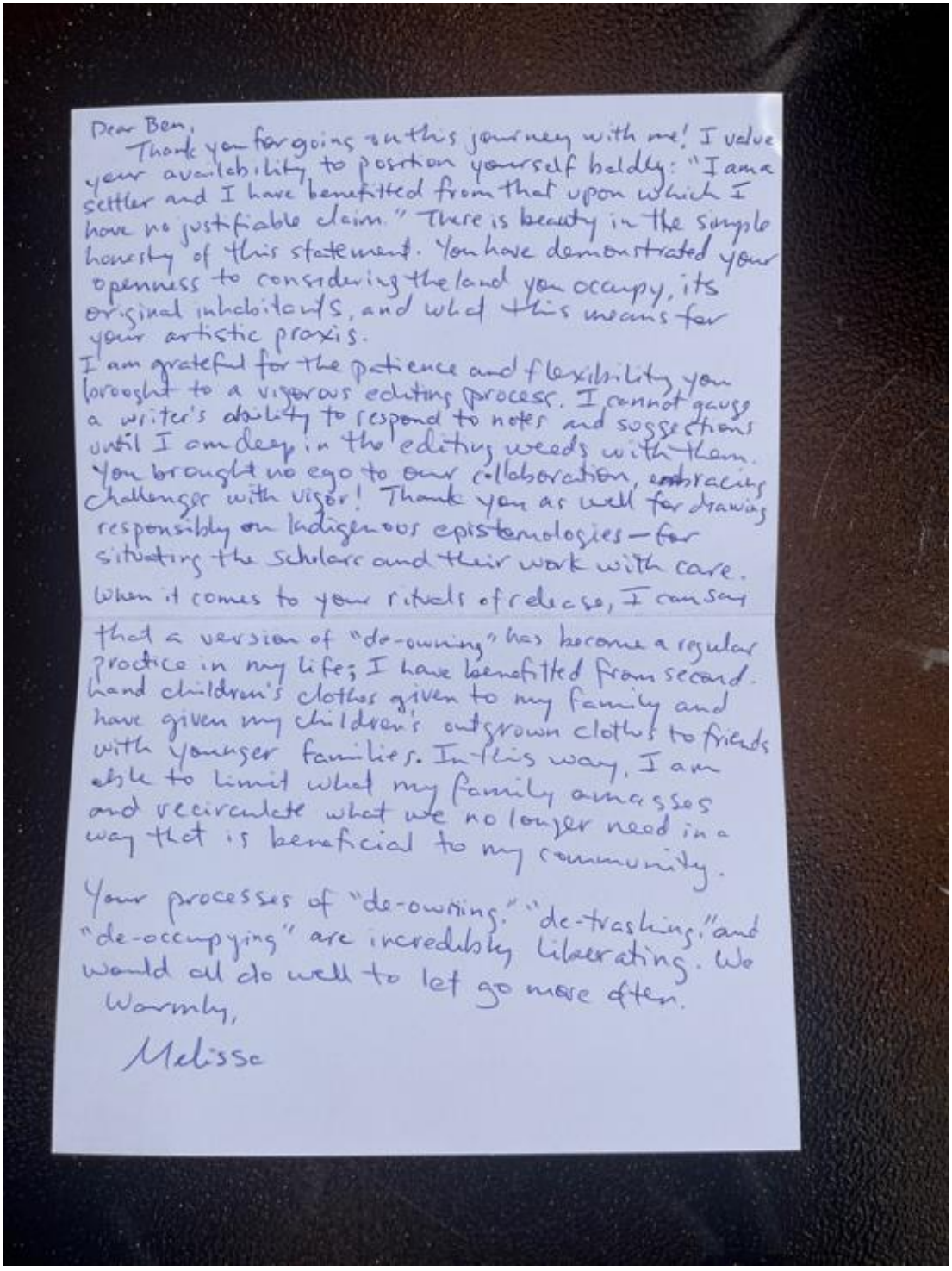
Those performances that would reverse flows of dispossession.
—Benjamin Ross Nicholson

Photograph of the remains of a small fire Jenn had on the beach. Spent matches, burnt bits of sage and white pine needles are encircled by a makeshift wreath of stones, each one placed from the plenitude of shoreline gifts. Plant life and cold, wet mineral sand peek through.

The beach ceremony follows the fullness of protocols I have learned from my Anishinaabe teachers, practices that have survived systemic and sensate dispossession. As I release offerings to feed a Being I know only a little, one who makes herself scarce, I engage in my own "circulation of care" interconnected across temporalities and geographic distances with so many relatives. This embodied

response to the ones who have shared to make this issue of *Performance Matters* possible also follows artistic intuition and gift giving performance impulses. I try to leave the river's edge as I found it, but having inscribed this practice of corporeal, material, and inspirited interdependence in this place.

Melissa:



Dear Ben,
Thank you for going on this journey with me! I value your availability to position yourself boldly: "I am a settler and I have benefitted from that upon which I have no justifiable claim." There is beauty in the simple honesty of this statement. You have demonstrated your openness to considering the land you occupy, its original inhabitants, and what this means for your artistic praxis.
I am grateful for the patience and flexibility you brought to a vigorous editing process. I cannot gauge a writer's ability to respond to notes and suggestions until I am deep in the editing weeds with them. You brought no ego to our collaboration, embracing challenges with vigor! Thank you as well for drawing responsibly on Indigenous epistemologies—for situating the scholars and their work with care.
When it comes to your rituals of release, I can say that a version of "de-owning" has become a regular practice in my life; I have benefitted from second-hand children's clothes given to my family and have given my children's outgrown clothes to friends with younger families. In this way, I am able to limit what my family amasses and recirculate what we no longer need in a way that is beneficial to my community.
Your processes of "de-owning," "de-trashing," and "de-occupying" are incredibly liberating. We would all do well to let go more often.
Warmly,
Melissa

A letter to Benjamin Ross Nicholson from Melissa Poll, August 2024.

The letter reads:

> Dear Ben,
>
> Thank you for going on this journey with me! I value your availability to position yourself baldly: "I am a settler and I have benefitted from that upon which I have no justifiable claim." There is beauty in the simple honesty of this statement. You have demonstrated your openness to considering the land you occupy, its original inhabitants, and what this means for your artistic praxis.
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> I am grateful for the patience and flexibility you brought to a rigorous editing process. I find I cannot gauge a writer's ability to respond to notes and suggestions until I'm deep in the weeds of edits with them. You brought no ego to our collaboration, embracing challenges with vigor! Thank you as well for drawing responsibly on Indigenous epistemologies—for situating the work and the scholars with care.
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>
> Your processes of "de-owning," "de-trashing," and "de-occupying" are incredibly liberating. We would all do well to let go more often.
>
> Warmly,
>
> Melissa

Thanks

Miigwech Thank you to the Lands and beings named and unnamed represented in these pieces of performance practice and writing; the authors in this issue; Peter Dickinson for heroic editorial support; Gatherings Archival and Oral Histories of Performance for funds; Elisha MacMillan for transcription work; Sanja Vodovnik for video editing support; the Canadian Association for Theatre Research for space to assemble and do the work.

Antikoni in a Settler Classroom on Kumeyaay Land: Storytelling "in the Meantime" to Imagine "Beyond" It

Julie Burelle with an epilogue by Beth Piatote

HAEMON
I see. Someday, with their full array, they might receive their rest.
And in the meantime?

KREON
My son, it is all meantime. We've been living in the meantime for 500 years.
In the meantime we do our best by the living.
—Beth Piatote, *Antikoni*

Beyond reflects decolonial possibilities through Indigenous relationality, land pedagogy, and accountability to place and Native Peoples. Land acknowledgments are not the end; they are a beginning and should lead to greater institutional responsibility.
—Theresa Stewart-Ambo and K. Wayne Yang, "Beyond Land Acknowledgment in Settler Institutions"

Prologue

Opaskwayak Cree scholar Shawn Wilson explains that relationality and relational accountability form the core of Indigenous processes (2008, 7) and that they can be put in practice by all and at all research stages (2021).[1] I thus begin this article by naming the artists/scholars with whom I have been in relation in this research process: Beth Piatote (Nez Perce), Theresa Stewart-Ambo (Luiseño/Tongva), K. Wayne Yang, as well as Dylan Robinson (Stó:lō), Shawn Wilson, Jill Carter (Ashkenazi-Anishinabe), Jade Power-Sotomayor, and Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (Anishinabe). I am privileged to know some personally and I have encountered others (some of whom I name later) through their work alone. I am grateful to all. This article humbly enters in relation with the vital questions they pose respectively and collectively. It attempts to respond to their urgent invitation to relate otherwise, to go deeper than statements such as land acknowledgments (though they are critically important), and to tangibly participate in setting the stage for "beyond [the] settler present, beyond colonial sovereignty, and beyond the human" (Stewart-Ambo and Yang 2021, 27). To do so, these artists/scholars collectively request that we, visitors on Indigenous lands, whether settlers or "arrivants" (Byrd 2011, xix), develop ways of listening that are not extractive or driven by the

Julie Burelle is an associate professor in the Department of Theatre and Dance at UC San Diego. She is the author of *Encounters on Contested Lands: Indigenous Performances of Sovereignty and Nationhood in Quebec* (Northwestern University Press, 2019) among other publications. As a dramaturg, Julie has worked with Native Voices at the Autry, Sledgehammer Theatre, and many others. **Beth Piatote** (Nez Perce) is an associate professor of English and comparative literature at the University of California Berkeley. She is the author of two books: *Domestic Subjects: Gender, Citizenship, and the Law in Native American Literature* (Yale, 2013) and the mixed-genre collection *The Beadworkers: Stories* (Counterpoint, 2019). Her full-length play *Antikoni* will premiere at Native Voices at the Autry in Los Angeles in November 2024.

insatiable, at times carnivorous, hunger that characterizes settler colonialism (Piatote 2022; Robinson 2020).[2] Importantly, they ask that we first situate ourselves in our own stories (Carter 2019, 186) and that we truly contend with the past and the present and confront the "white ignorance" (Mills 2007, 17) behind which some of us have had the luxury to hide for too long. They ask that we do so before we think of presenting ourselves as believable interlocutors and trustworthy co-conspirators in the radical reimagining of the structures that organize our living together.

Stewart-Ambo and Yang write: "Being a guest" on Indigenous lands "requires research and reflection. It means entering a relationship of reciprocity" (2021, 34). Without this sustained engagement, one is merely an "uninvited visitor" (34). I am currently such a visitor, living on the unceded territory of the Kumeyaay people and teaching at the University of California, San Diego (UCSD), an institution with a fraught relationship with the Kumeyaay and with the other Indigenous communities for whom the region is home (Burelle 2015, 2019; Mitchell and Burelle 2016; Stewart-Ambo and Yang 2021). As a settler teacher, mindful of Stewart-Ambo and Yang's call for engagement, and because I am invested in participating in the *beyond* they name in their work, I see my classes as spaces where we must unwaveringly engage settler colonial history—our collective and ongoing history; what Kreon in the epigraph drawn from Beth Piatote's play *Antikoni*, calls "the meantime" (Piatote 2022, 19)—so that it might lead to reckonings. According to Jill Carter, such reckonings are necessary to usher in "a relational shift"; that is, a radically different form of relationality between visitors and Indigenous peoples (Carter 2019, 186).

This article documents an attempt at a small reckoning through the mobilization of a ten-week undergraduate course entitled Indigenous Theatre and Performance as a possible way to listen to, reflect on, and begin to respond to Indigenous voices invested in thinking *beyond*. I taught the course in 2021 (remotely on Zoom) and in 2023 (in person), and this article focuses on the sustained collaboration between the students, myself, and author Beth Piatote, whose play *Antikoni*, an adaptation of Sophocles's *Antigone* from a Nez Perce perspective, was central to the course's two iterations.[3] This article meditates in particular on the research and reflection that led these two groups of students as well as me into a deeper and more reciprocal embodied relationship—the beginning, perhaps, of a reckoning and relational turn—with *Antikoni* and its author, but also with UCSD and its history on Kumeyaay land. This article reflects on being entrusted with a story as a way to activate settler accountability. It documents how the students and I chose to reciprocate this gift by preparing and performing two staged readings (on Zoom in 2021 and in person in 2023). Producing this staged reading in a classroom composed of mostly non-Indigenous actors raised important questions and led to complex conversations about appropriation and casting. These frank and vulnerable exchanges provided some tentative ethical guidelines about the specific contexts in which it may be possible to amplify without appropriating a story intended for Indigenous actors. Finally, this article meditates on whether this experience can extend beyond the classroom and the heightened emotional rewards of performance to participate in lasting transformative work among the campus community.

Building Relationality and Reciprocity

Before I dive into an analysis of the two staged readings, I provide here, in consultation with Beth Piatote (who also pens an epilogue to this article), a summary of how this project came to be. In 2018, a group of colleagues and I hosted "Sensory Encounters: A Conversation with Drs. Beth Piatote and Dylan Robinson" in the Department of Theatre and Dance's Arthur Wagner Theatre,

where the staged reading of *Antikoni* would, in a lovely circular return, take place five years later.[4] There, Piatote and Robinson spoke about the formal experimentations included in their respective book projects and how these worked to unsettle Western ways of doing scholarship. Robinson explained, for instance, why a portion of the introduction to his book *Hungry Listening* would be for Indigenous eyes only, following Stó:lō protocols about the conditions through which knowledge is transmitted. For her part, Beth Piatote spoke of her then-upcoming book *The Beadworkers: Stories* (2019), in which short stories would act (as they always have, she reminded us) as sites and modes of theorization. One of the stories, titled *Antikoni*, would, for instance, challenge readers to reflect on the repatriation of ancestors and the Native American Grave Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) through the prism of a Nez Perce adaptation of Sophocles's *Antigone*.[5] As a dramaturg and performance studies scholar, I was immediately intrigued. Over dinner that day, Beth (we moved to first names) and I talked about a possible staged reading of *Antikoni* at her institution, UC Berkeley, situated on unceded Ohlone territory and infamous for its own dealing with NAGPRA regarding the university's extensive inventory of captive ancestors. Beth was still thinking through various options: What if the staged reading took place in the Phoebe A. Hearst Museum, acting as a form of land acknowledgment, a reclaiming gesture at the epicentre of this violent accumulation? How might it be received by those in attendance (and by those who would choose not to come)? Would it add to the trauma felt by Indigenous communities on and around the campus? And/or, what healing effect might the play have on the attendees, but also on the museum's silent but certainly not inert residents—the ancestors—and on the land and structures that hold them? What comfort might it bring them to know that they are not forgotten?

At Beth's invitation, I attended the staged reading at UC Berkeley directed in 2018 by Jennif(f)er Tamayo and embodied by a splendid cast of many Indigenous actors.[6] In the end, as Beth will later explain, the reading was held in the Phoebe A. Hearst Museum amid artifacts that felt un-silenced in the process. The evening began with drumming that gave the play its heartbeat. The actors delivered an *Antikoni* full of classic stories from Nez Perce literature in which humans and other-than-humans ushered in the cycle of the Sun and the Moon or were overtaken by carnivorous desires that served as a warning to those hungry for power. As Kreon and Antikoni clashed about the ethical choices forced upon them by living in the settler colonial meantime, a chorus of strong matriarchs, the Aunties, told us, with palpable delight, of "Pissing Boy" and "Coyote," who faced similar choices in the time before the humans arrived. The staged reading revealed where the text was deeply resonant and where it needed further attention. Importantly, it made clear that *Antikoni*, the story as a living entity, required care and embodiment to fully unfold.

I continued to think about *Antikoni* long after my trip to Berkeley and, in 2021, knowing that Beth had submitted the play to various outlets for further development, I approached her with the idea of having students enrolled in my upcoming class on Indigenous theatre and performance read the play's newest draft in conversation with writings and performance pieces about NAGPRA.[7] Upon reaching out, I learned that Beth had momentarily set the play aside after several workshops and rounds of dramaturgical notes that led to a major overhaul. After consulting with my students, I asked Beth if a staged reading might be useful at this point: could our class serve as a low-stakes lab where Beth could perhaps reconnect with the original inspiration that led her to write this text? Could we lend our voices to the play (whichever version Beth chose), speak the characters' words aloud and in doing so, allow her, perhaps, to hear her work anew? What if we then held space for a discussion where Beth could react, ask questions, and test ideas? This felt like a tangible and hopefully useful way to reciprocate, to offer something in return for the gift of her play. It also felt

like a way for students to begin the research process that Stewart-Ambo and Yang describe as a prerequisite for all visitors on Indigenous lands. Beth was generously enthusiastic and shared the play's most recent iteration, which was indeed quite different in form while still attending to the same themes and elements from the version I had witnessed at the Hearst Museum. She indicated that hearing the play out loud would be useful in calibrating the heightened language that remained from the original adaptation with the new contemporary form developed through various workshops.

We agreed that the staged reading would be our class's final project, directed remotely (due to the COVID-19 pandemic) by Desmond Hassing (Choctaw), a then doctoral candidate in our department with many years of theatre experience. Beth would meet students over Zoom during the quarter to chat about her process and about the play's structure and themes, and we would communicate questions and share discoveries and student writings about the play along the way. The first staged reading took place on Zoom in June of 2021 with attendees from our department and campus as well as from various locations across Turtle Island who offered questions and feedback. Artfully stage-managed by Emmajo Spencer and Madeline Woch, two undergraduate students who mastered the Zoom platform to spotlight each actor with impressive timing, the online performance acted, as storytelling often does, as a gathering, a much-needed space of togetherness amid the pandemic. Students wrote about their experience after the performance, highlighting what they had learned and what they hoped to continue to explore, and I shared a summary of their responses with Beth. I will return to their comments later, but overall, the staged reading generated new ideas that Beth then integrated in subsequent drafts of her play. Beth shared: "I had been stuck in the revision process, but the openness of the students and their generosity in interpreting the text and asking questions gave the work a much-needed boost. I also picked up on their ideas for staging, even within the confines of Zoom, they were inventive" (Piatote 2023). For example, the students suggested that, given the Aunties' stories warning Kreon against cannibalism, it might be fitting to have the play begin around a tense family meal where Kreon and Antikoni's differing "hunger" for justice might come through.

When I was preparing to teach the class in 2023, in person this time, Beth was working on new revisions and felt that another staged reading could be useful. We adopted a similar approach with a few notable differences. First, the staged reading would be in person, with actors, playwright, and audience sharing space. Second, with forty students enrolled (instead of twenty-one in 2021), the project would have to grow in scope. Working with Cambria Herrera (Xicanx), a then MFA candidate in our directing program with a strong collective approach, and with Padra Crisafulli, an MFA student in sound design, this second staged reading featured a live soundscape and recorded sonic exploration, masks and props, and two casts of actors who each performed half of the play. The staged reading was followed by the audience experiencing Crisafulli's sonic exploration, which took place in the sound design lab one floor below the Arthur Wagner Theatre. Spectators were then invited into a conversation with Beth to conclude the event. Having provided this background, I now turn to *Antikoni*'s resonant story, which I examine, following many Indigenous scholars' invitation, as a method for theorizing the world.

Antikoni: The Meantime, the Eternal, and the Beyond

During the exchange with Haemon about the meantime included in this article's epigraph, Kreon, the Nez Perce director of an "American museum," is moving a crate containing sensitive and

contentious cargo that he has just "acquired" at great cost (Piatote 2022, 19). It is "a collection most rare: the remains and full catalogue of the Cayuse brothers, who, long ago, were caught in the maelstrom of war" (19). Under the cover of darkness, his young protege Haemon is helping him move the ancestors inside the museum where Kreon plans to "make a home for them. For now" (19). Haemon is uncomfortable with this acquisition and notes the perversity of having to "buy the bones of our ancestors" (19). For the older Kreon, however, there are no clean victories in what he calls "the meantime," that is within ongoing settler time, and he estimates that it is better for the ancestors to be under his care than in the collection of "a bone-grinding archeologist" or "a black-market trader" (19–20).

As in the original play by Sophocles, Kreon encounters resistance in Haemon, but his most obstinate opponent is his niece, Antikoni (who is also Haemon's betrothed), for whom repatriation can only mean returning these distant ancestors to the earth. She is not interested in tolerating this meantime, or by playing by the rules of the oppressors. Through her actions—"stealing" the ancestors from Kreon's museum and giving them a proper burial—she is pushing for something beyond this meantime that Kreon seems to have accepted. Apprehended by the Museum Guards, she remains undeterred. One guard, serving as the emissary to Kreon, provides comedic relief at first, hiding behind union jargon and servile manners to denounce the theft. His rapidly switching stance when Antikoni is identified as the "thief," servility replaced by thinly veiled contempt, illuminates Kreon's vulnerability as he navigates the meantime. Despite being a museum director, he is, as the Guard makes clear, an Indigenous subject first.

Kreon (John John Soto) and the Guard (Michael Kendrick) discuss the fate of Antikoni (Delaney Plecha). Photo credit: David Baillot.

Antikoni takes place in a time Piatote describes as "Near Future/Eternal," a moment in the meantime that echoes previous times. A drum played by Auntie 1 is listed as part of the cast as "a speaker," a living being whose presence and activation sounds the pulse of this echoing time. The play begins in a temporally vague yet intimately familiar context in which the United States is governed by "the Nationalist Party," an extreme faction hungry for a mythology that legitimizes their rule. Ever the strategist, Kreon plans to use the warring brothers' ancient tragic tale and their newly repatriated remains as "a shield," a story to appease this new batch of nationalists by letting them feel that they have (then and now) "won the war" (Piatote 2022, 12). Indeed, long ago, the two brothers that Kreon repatriated were from the Cayuse Nation, but one was taken as a child by the Crow people. As the story goes, when the Crow Nation later sided with the US Army—the "Blue Coats"—the stolen boy, now a man, unknowingly fought his own brother on the battlefield of a war where there was no winning side for Indigenous people. Now, "given the extreme pressures" imposed by the Nationalist Party on Indigenous nations, Kreon feels that "the dead must save the living" (11). "Let us trade on our tragedy, that we may be seen in our humanity" (13), he argues before an auntie who reminds him of what stories powerfully contain and enact:

> AUNTIE 1
> Nephew, you are trading in death. In pity. I fear for you.
> For one so great a storyteller, I fear you haven't listened to what our stories have to tell.
>
> KREON
> Bah! For those old stories I have no use. We are in a new time.
>
> AUNTIE 1
> Our stories are for all time. There is no time without stories as the two were born together. (12)

The chorus of aunties is wise, full of humour, and throughout the play, they refuse to let Kreon off the hook, modelling the form of accountability that good relations require. And so is Antikoni, who insistently reminds her uncle that this so-called new moment calls for the eternal teachings contained in stories. The injustice of this meantime, sanctioned by the foreign laws of settlers, is, as Antikoni tells her sister Ismene, intolerable. Antikoni lovingly berates Ismene for studying settler law (Ismene sees it as a way to better serve her people), but she proves merciless when it comes to her uncle's museum work, referring to him as "the Head of the Dead," or "the Collector-in-Chief, the Chief Collector, the collector of Chiefs" (Piatote 2022, 8). For the uncompromising Antikoni, Kreon contorts and betrays the *tamalwit*, or the Nez Perce teachings and laws, in order to strike an irksome bargain—survivance in the meantime. To hold ancestors hostage in a museum, Antikoni argues, is to violently deprive them of their final rest and participate in further dehumanizing Indigenous people. There is no justification for it.

Antikoni (Pari Meghdadi) confronts Kreon (Ulises Aguirre) in the presence of Ismene (Wesley Preis). Photo Credit: David Baillot.

Indeed, Antikoni feels what Glen Coulthard (Dene) theorizes as "righteous resentment" in a text students read in tandem with the play. Antikoni is unwilling, as an ethical resistant posture, to reconcile herself, as her uncle seemingly does, "with a structural and symbolic violence that is still very much present" (Coulthard 2014, 126). Throughout the play, Antikoni turns to the *tamalwit* encoded in the Nez Perce stories told onstage by the Aunties to imagine what living beyond the meantime might be and to enact her responsibilities toward the fallen Cayuse brothers, her distant but eternal kin. Antikoni asks, if faced with the "cruel inventory . . . that makes our families into *things,*" she should, as Ismene argues, "be patient" and trust that repatriation will eventually happen "through the law," by which she means, NAGPRA (Piatote 2022, 29)? Or should she take matters into her own hands, "break their law . . . that makes us less than human" and follow eternal laws, "our *tamalwit"* (29)?

Antikoni, fiery and revolutionary, can be unbending and she suffers from tunnel vision at times. Kreon for his part knows too well the cost of radical acts, and experience has made him weary, and at times rigid, but still deeply committed to his people. His actions may not take down the system (as Antikoni desires), but they nevertheless carve spaces of respite and Indigenous sovereignty within a larger oppressive settler colonial structure. As Beth explained to us, Kreon and Antikoni are both right and both wrong and they are both driven by a desire to do good for their people. This is the powerful story, artful in its telling and complex in its Nez Perce teaching and theorizing of the world, that Beth entrusted to the two distinct cohorts enrolled in my class.

Listening to the Aunties: Stories as Sites of Theorization and Interpellation

As Auntie 1 reminds us, we (and I understand this to include all non-Indigenous visitors on Indigenous lands), like Kreon, "haven't listened to what [Indigenous] stories have to tell" (Piatote 2022, 12). Turning to storytelling then, to the act of listening and entering in a deep relation with stories, is one way to begin the work of researching and reflecting that Stewart-Ambo and Yang urgently invite us to do. This is especially true when the story is, as is the case with *Antikoni*, intended, at least in part, as a direct address to non-Indigenous visitors, urging them to return to their own stories for teachings that might unsettle the notion of "settler permanence" as a given, an inevitable fact of life (L. B. Simpson 2014, 8). Indeed, in an interview for the *Los Angeles Review of Books*, Beth Piatote explains that she wrote *Antikoni* because she "wondered why it was that people could understand things like Greek tragedy and *Antigone* but couldn't understand why Native people, or anybody, cared about their ancestors. Doesn't this literature" she asks, "form the universal values that we're all supposed to know and understand?" Piatote adds: "I also wanted to put two classic literatures together—Nez Perce and Greek—because when I looked at those Greek stories, I saw that they're just like our stories. They're full of these unpredictable journeys and grotesque and gruesome and wild things" (Piatote in Levin 2020) Piatote, then, is asking us to return to the "eternal" stories that form the basis of Western (and settler) thought and culture, asking us, like Auntie 1 with Kreon, to consider how the theories and teachings they contain might serve today. This invitation served as a starting point for us in a settler classroom.

As the Auntie tells Kreon, "stories are for all time" (Piatote 2022, 12) and Piatote's play proved deeply resonant and acted as a conduit for our class to situate itself on Kumeyaay territory and respond to Stewart-Ambo and Yang's call to be better visitors. This took the form of readings and invitations to go for walks in 2021 when we were all remote and spread across the world. Student J (2021) notes the resulting increased awareness here: "There is a trail by my house that has a bulletin board with Kumeyaay teachings about the river. I read it for the first time recently. The first time?!" In 2023, then MFA candidate Cambria Herrera took students for a walk around campus during the first week, leading them through exercises that required listening to and engaging with the land under their feet.

As students read *Antikoni*, they also learned about NAGPRA and the land around them and the parallels were striking. Indeed, many Kumeyaay ancestors are buried where UCSD is located and around La Jolla, near the bluff, sandy beaches, and caves that make this rich enclave famous today. Many other ancestors have been disturbed, excavated from this territory, and kept, like the Cayuse brothers, in the collections of private and public institutions. Though it is not a well-known fact to most students, UCSD holds its own "cruel inventory" of ancestors that it has only recently made fully public in compliance with NAGPRA.[8] This is thanks in large part to the efforts of Eva Trujillo (Iipay-Kumeyaay) who has been the campus NAGPRA repatriation coordinator since 2021. A member of the now permanent NAGPRA advisory committee that works with Trujillo graciously attended our staged reading.

Repatriation, which is a slow process for many reasons—it requires care, consultation, and collaboration in contexts where harm was perpetrated and where trust has historically been absent—has currently only happened for a small fraction of UCSD's inventory. In some cases, the reasons behind a halted repatriation mirror the seemingly irreconcilable stances at the heart of *Antikoni*. Indeed, until 2016, that is before the creation of the NAGPRA committee on campus, UCSD was

embroiled in a long contentious legal battle concerning the repatriation of two ancestors aged more than 9,300 years old that were removed from under the chancellor's house in the 1970s by a team of researchers and then circulated among several institutions with UCSD remaining their official owner. The repatriation efforts led by the Kumeyaay Cultural Repatriation Committee, which began in 2006, were fiercely opposed by a group of UC faculty who tried to prevent the repatriation before the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals finally ruled against them and repatriation quietly moved forward in 2016.[9] Students read about this legal battle and reflected on how it laid bare the stories that solidify or challenge the meantime. Indeed, repatriation under NAGPRA not only renders visible the history of extraction and accumulation of Indigenous ancestors by institutions and individuals but it also calls our attention to the narratives that continue to solidify a *status quo* that legitimizes settler colonial presence and futurity. In this context, how do we, as faculty and students at UCSD, learn to view ourselves as visitors, unsettling our understanding of our relation to this land and its inhabitants? How do we then begin to develop better practices as visitors with the understanding that the process takes time and care? How do we move toward greater relationality and reciprocity as Stewart-Ambo and Yang urge us to do?

I took this to heart in thinking of what kind of scaffolding might help us answer this call. Many of our students have been taught a narrow definition of what art, in general, and stories, in particular, can do, whether told, written, sung, or performed. For many, stories are the stuff of fiction, and they exist on a separate plane from political and legal orders. They are not the site of theorization. But, as Dylan Robinson reminds us, "Indigenous art holds functions beyond its existence as art." He adds, "Indigenous art, cultural expressions, and artistic practices, including song and dance, have important roles as primary historical documentation (the equivalent to a book) of a family or community, as medicine, or as a legal order. Additionally, such art forms are sometimes considered by Indigenous people as having life—as ancestors, as beings, and life that is not comparable to human life" (Robinson in Belcourt, Igloliorte, and Robinson 2021, 5). *Antikoni*, then, asked for a different kind of engagement and care, for a shift in perspective and ways of listening.

To begin to instigate this shift, we engaged in class with a constellation of Indigenous scholars and activists that helped situate and illuminate *Antikoni* as well as the other plays and performances on the syllabus as "aesthetic actions." Dylan Robinson and Keavy Martin describe "aesthetic actions" as operating through "a range of sensory stimuli—image, sounds, movement—that have social and political effects through our affective engagement with them" (2016, 2). As much as possible and with appropriate compensation, I also invited Indigenous artists to visit the class to speak about their work and the protocols they follow which inevitably challenge institutional ways of doing, thinking about, and categorizing their interventions. Many students remarked that they craved more opportunities for such direct conversations.

Students were invited to think throughout the quarter about what stories do in the world—what they enact, transmit, usher in—but also about what stories ask of us, that is, the engagement they invite in those who tell and witness them. To do so, our first reading of the quarter was Leanne Betasamosake Simpson's "Theorizing Resurgence from within Nishnaabeg Thought" from *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back*. Simpson writes here for and about her Nishnaabeg community but as a class, we wondered how we might think alongside her reflection. Storytelling, she writes "is an important process for visioning, imagining, critiquing the social space around us, and ultimately challenging the colonial norms fraught in our daily lives" (2011, 34–35). Telling Antikoni's story thus became a way to contend with our different relationships to settler colonialism. For Indigenous students such as

Student S (2023): "Taking that time to do the work is the anticolonial process of trying to find what my journey is, what my family has forgotten, what my dislocated communities have forgotten, and what I'm trying to bring alive." For non-Indigenous students and for me, contending with our relationship to settler colonialism meant reflecting on how we might or might not collectively participate in tacitly reproducing its norms. Why is it, for instance, that Antigone's plight is generally presented as heroic, legitimate, and warranted when applied to certain ancestors (white, Euro-descendants, settlers) but that Antikoni exercising burial rites according to the *tamalwit* is perceived as illegitimate, anti-science, criminal even, when it comes to Indigenous ancestors?

As noted above, Indigenous and non-Indigenous students of many origins participated in this class as students and as part of the instructional team. This required particular care and exposed the limitations of a ten-week intensive course bound by lectures and section hours. In both 2021 and 2023, students attended lectures together as a larger group (on Zoom or in person) that was then split in smaller sections one day a week. These more intimate formations allowed for more flexibility and to hold space for Indigenous students and their needs. Over Zoom, Desmond and I held individual virtual "office hours" where we checked in with students. Desmond brought his own expertise as a Choctaw scholar-artist to the way he organized the rehearsal process. In 2023, with students sharing physical space, Cambria's expertise proved equally central in modelling forms of coming together that decentred Western, Eurocentric practices and foregrounded relationality and reciprocity.

Cambria Herrera addresses the class before the staged reading. Photo Credit: David Baillot.

A lot of that critical engagement and relational practices took place during table work, while students took turns reading the play out loud, listening and acting as spectators for one another and stopping to reflect on what they were hearing and feeling. For the second staged reading in 2023, partly for practical reasons (we had a larger group), we opted for splitting the play and having each half performed by a distinct cast. This solution had benefits beyond the question of logistics. Simpson highlights the deeply relational nature of oral storytelling, reminding us that "the relationship between those present becomes dynamic, with the storyteller adjusting their 'performance' based on the reactions and presence of the audience" (L. B. Simpson 2011, 34). This was certainly the case in each section and when students shared their half of the play with each other during our last week of rehearsal. More than once, students came to a deeper understanding of Beth's text, or of one of the other theory texts we engaged with in class through the process of listening to one another. This deep multidirectional listening, according to Jade Power-Sotomayor, who theorizes it in the sounding practice of bomba, allowed students to "learn from and about one another"[10] (2020, 52):

> My first day of section I sat next to Cambria and when it was time to discuss the scene in the play where Antikoni and Haemon tell the story of the Sun and the Moon, Cambria turned to me, looked me right in the eye and asked, "What do you think this means?" And so I told her my thoughts and shared it with the class. And as we shared our ideas and connections it felt like a real conversation. It was like we were all a part of something big. (Student B [2023])

> One of my favorite days was when we read the scene where Haemon and Antikoni recite the story of how the sun and the moon came to be. After hearing the actors read it, Cambria invited all of us to interpret the story. Who was the sun? Who was the moon? Who was coyote? I loved hearing the different ideas brought up and the reasons behind them. That was the day I felt best exemplified the process. We read, then we discussed and discovered as a group. (Student Q [2023])

> We are so used to performing things a certain way that we forget that there might be so many more interpretations that are just as valid as the ones we have to offer. (Student U [2023])

I recall here one particularly salient instance of this deep listening. Though students had read Patrick Wolfe (2006) and Mohawk scholar Audra Simpson (2016) and thus had come across the concept of settler colonialism as a structure rather than an event, it is really through Kreon's exchange with Haemon, which serves as an epigraph for this article, that this concept fully landed for many. He says: "My son, it is all meantime. We've been living in the meantime for 500 years. In the meantime we do our best by the living" (Piatote 2022, 19–20). After hearing it spoken out loud by a colleague, one student tentatively asked if what Kreon was describing as the meantime was this concept of settler colonialism as structure? Others reacted, switched on by their colleague's remark. The first quote below comes from aforementioned student S, who is Indigenous, and the other from a non-Indigenous student.

> The meantime. . . . It reminds me of my mom and her intersection with colonialism. It makes me think of my history. . . . If our ancestors fought through these atrocities—what do I do with that? How do I hold it? Am I not deserving of rest? Of just wanting to work a simple job, coming [home] to a family, and repeat? I sometimes just want that—to be ignorant towards the systems around us but in the

> end—how can I? Colonialism has dominated every aspect of my life. (Student S [2023])

> The idea that the past 500 years have been the meantime, that we cannot escape the meantime, is so important. It is a reminder to white settlers in this country that we have done nothing to repair. [In the play], when we are forced to wait, sometimes we need to make the move that's best for us. Sometimes that move is working with the people who stole your land while you wait to get it back. But sometimes the waiting is too much. . . . We can no longer be in this frozen state of time. We need to make moves to get us out." (Student C [2023])

This became a practice: listening to *Antikoni* as theory-making, connecting the voices of the characters with those of scholars and artists we read in class. Students listened to Ismene's and Antikoni's chosen resistance tactics as embodied theorizations of what Gerald Vizenor (2008) calls "survivance" and Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (2011) calls "resurgence." In other words, in entering in relation with the play and its characters, students engaged in deep listening and in a form of embodied theorization, allowing concepts to find ways through their bodies and finding deeper meaning in how they resonated with their classmates.

> Being able to entrench myself within this conflict, I felt as though it has helped me to see our unfolding discussion on relationality and sovereignty in a new light, arguably, incorporating a more experiential perspective. While we may share a factual, academic definition of sovereignty, I am sure that Antikoni and Kreon have vastly different interpretations of the word. For any audience watching, it should quickly become apparent that the Nez-Perce, as they are represented in this play, do not think and act as a monolith. Although this is fictionalized, we see real tensions and struggles precipitated by a settler-colonial influence and occupation. (Student A [2021])

For Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, storytelling in a Nishnaabeg context also serves the purpose of moving beyond the meantime. She writes, "The 'performance,' whether a song, a dance or a spoken word story, becomes then an individual and collective experience, with the goal of lifting the burden of colonialism by visioning new realities" (2011, 35). In our case, the idea was, for the majority of the class, not to lift the burden of colonialism but to carry it, sit with it—not in a flagellating way—but as a necessary though uncomfortable step toward thinking beyond settler colonialism in relation to the visioning that emerges from Indigenous communities and spaces. This is necessary work as Indigenous people should not be tasked, or should not be tasked alone, with solving settler colonialism. To that effect, Student A (2021) writes about the mobilization effect of the play: "Part of the power of this piece comes from once the drama is done, and we are left (as settlers) to ponder how colonialism has and continues to encroach on Indigenous sovereignty."

Relatedly, during the early stages of table work in 2021 and 2023, many students, though they had been excited with the staged reading when it was discussed as an idea, encountered (and justly so) discomfort and an ethical obstacle when lending their voices to the play's characters. Some questioned whether they should be the ones telling Nez Perce creation stories or portraying Antikoni's resistant stance. Was this appropriate? Shouldn't Indigenous characters be played by Indigenous actors? While all agreed with this principle, some pointed out that it might have the unintended side effect of further absenting Indigenous plays from theatre departments where there

are, at the moment, rarely enough Indigenous students to cast an entire production. This in turn sends a signal to Indigenous students that their presence and stories are not wanted or valued. And to be fair, others pointed out, it is not enough to simply admit Indigenous students and put on Indigenous plays if the curriculum and landscape remain Eurocentric. But how, they asked, do we get out of this bind? Where to start? This conversation, though well intentioned, felt often one-sided, and risked ending with expressions of discomfort instead of using these questions as potentially generative starting points for the work ahead.

With relationality at the core of our process, I encouraged students to discuss their specific concern about *Antikoni* with Beth who, after all, had accepted our invitation knowing that the class would not be entirely composed of Indigenous students. Students brought it up when she joined us on Zoom and her generous answer opened yet another line of critical inquiry for the class. She explained to students that their concerns were indeed warranted: in a professional setting or in the case of a full production, the play should indeed feature an Indigenous cast and creative team. Her response aligned with the voices of Lindsay Lachance (2018), Jill Carter (2021), Kim Sənklip Harvey (2019), and Yolanda Bonnell (2020), whom we read and who outline the changes they deem necessary for the professional theatre world to become safer for Indigenous artists. However, given the parameters of this staged reading, its taking place in a non-professional classroom setting, its intended role as a laboratory for students to engage in critical thinking in support of the playwright, Beth suggested that this felt like a different exercise.

Student M (2023) expressed the following:

> I suppose the more interesting concept to consider in my requests for my role in this project would be my concerns regarding whether it was proper for non-Indigenous actors to be playing these roles. While I do agree with the reasoning behind the position ultimately taken by our class and the concurring opinion of Beth Piatote, I nonetheless still had reservations when I was requesting roles to play. A part of me wanted to play Kreon, but another, larger part thought that it could be reckless for me to do so. . . . I've been considering those reservations I had, and I'm still unsure of what to make of them. I think it was appropriate to have them, but to hold on to them even after agreeing with the position that they were not an issue in the context of our class and staged reading was and still is, curious to me.

To be clear, as Student M's response suggests, Beth's response was in no way giving a blanket permission for non-Indigenous folks to appropriate her play, nor was it allowing students to eschew the responsibilities of their choices. It was rather a frank and transparent context-driven invitation to relationality and accountability sustained by a careful reflection and personal investment. Student M's reflection shows that they responded to this invitation through an ongoing reflection.

In her response, Beth echoed the words of Leanne Betasamosake Simpson who, in *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back*, writes about how Nishnaabeg stories engage with those who witness them by asking them to insert themselves in the narrative. "By inserting ourselves into these stories" she writes, "we assume responsibilities—responsibilities that are not necessarily bestowed upon us by the collective, but that we take on according to our own gifts, abilities, and affiliations. Nishnaabeg theory has to be learned in the context of our own personal lives, in an emotional, physical, spiritual and intellectual way" (2011, 41). Again, while we were aware that Simpson was not writing about us, we took this

insight to heart. How could we, as a group, come to this story with our own gifts, abilities, and affiliations? How might we insert ourselves in the story of Antikoni not in an extractive way but in order to assume our responsibilities toward *Antikoni* (the story), Beth, and toward ourselves as visitors? How might this act of storytelling serve to educate ourselves, to take ownership of our roles and various levels of complicity in the settler colonial meantime—and participate in creating the conditions for the beyond?

In terms of assuming our responsibilities to the play and its characters, I report here one particularly generative invitation Beth issued during the preparations to the first staged reading. To students asking whether or not it was appropriate for them to play an auntie because of their age, gender identity, or because of their lack of knowledge of Nez Perce cosmology and language, Beth responded that *auntie* was not a noun or a gendered role but that it was instead a verb, "auntie-ing," and a state of being that involved, among other things, a capacity for care, teaching with humour and compassion, and a no-nonsense approach to lovingly calling members of a community to task. She encouraged them to find out what the practice of being an auntie might mean to each of them or, to echo Simpson, to take on the role according to their own gifts, abilities, or affiliations, without assuming sameness or flattening differences.

Ismene (Rumi Petersen), Kreon (John John Soto), Antikoni (Delaney Plecha) and Ismene (Ashley Shilts) in the final moment of the play. Photo Credit: David Baillot.

As a result, our first chorus of aunties featured some actors who identified as gender-queer and who brought queer worldviews to their retelling of Nez Perce creation stories. These stories, bawdy and poetic, anticipate the arrival of humans and tell stories that eschew rigid binaries, embrace fluidity and shape-shifting, and speak of forms of relationality, love, and community that predate imposed

heteronormativity. They are Indigenous stories, in other words, that contain queer worldviews. Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, Kent Monkman, and many others have explored in their work how Two-Spirit individuals were valued and assigned important roles in many Indigenous cultures prior to colonization. They have also attested to the ways in which Two-Spirit people are specifically targeted by settler colonial violence and to their crucial role in Indigenous resurgence. Decolonization then, is also deeply tied to unsettling and dismantling heteronormativity and patriarchal structures. Here, listening to these stories, became what Power-Sotomayor calls a "simultaneously temporal and spatial practice" (2020, 53). We extended our listening to hear a time before settler colonialism as a way to imagine what moving beyond it might require. What do the Aunties' stories tell us about before but also beyond settler colonial time? Students took on these questions and embodied the Aunties with a fierce and vulnerable energy, carrying their stories as manifestos for the future: stories that expressed care for humans, other-than-humans, for those made ill by carnivorous desires for power and for those who outsmarted them and found ways to love and thrive—complex stories that often ended with an auntie saying "that's all," a seemingly anticlimactic ending. But, as student BM (2021) notes, "every time the phrase 'that is all' would come up in Antikoni, I would smile. It is something that is so simple, and yet wherever the phrase is scattered in the play, it changes meaning every time."

Auntie 2 (Hannah Littler) is joined by Brother (Safa Suhail), Sister (Wesley Preis) and Grizzly Bear (Claire McNerney) to retell the story of Grizzly Bear. Photo Credit: David Baillot.

Listening to the play deeply also led us, for the second staged reading, to investigate how we could respond sonically to *Antikoni*. We began with doing research about Nez Perce language, looking for guides on how to properly pronounce the words included in the play. Students produced a glossary and a pronunciation guide and, while creating it, reflected on the way that these words encoded

relationality and structures of care: "*Né;ne* a woman's older sister, *'áyi* a woman's younger sister, *qé:qe'* a mother's sister," etc.[11] In terms of the heartbeat of the play, none of our students were drummers and students felt that the kind of drumming the play intimated—the drum is after all a living being, the sounder of time—was beyond what they felt capable of providing. They learned and respected that protocols exist around drumming among the Nez Perce and many other Indigenous nations. We thus switched gears and concentrated on what the sound team felt they could bring in. Padra Crisafulli, an MFA candidate in sound design, supported them as they decided to use found objects manipulated to create sound live during the staged reading as well as some prerecorded cues to provide a soundscape for the reading. With simple objects and manipulations, water dripping into a glass, shaking branches, the team created the sounds of Pissing Boy or the Willow who saved mother and child from the carnivorous man.

Padra Crisafulli and Cambria Herrera convening with the sound team (Steve Llamas, Brandon Lopez at the back table, Mathew Durazo, Damon Pun, and Kai Uchiyama at the front table) before the reading. Photo credit: David Baillot.

Padra and Cambria also collaborated on a sound installation, using wave field synthesis (WFS), "a spatial audio rendering technique that places virtual sound sources in real places" and that, in short, allows the creation of "sound holograms" with equipment designed by my colleague Bobby McElver, the first sound designer to use overhead WFS in a theatre context.[12] I had experienced Bobby's sound holograms before we embarked on the second staged reading, and I was struck by how it allowed me to feel sound spatially. Sound moved around me, shifted as I did, and it reminded me of what playwright and director Yves Sioui Durand (Huron Wendat) once told me about theatre as a space where one could be alongside the ancestors. I wondered if Bobby's technique might allow us to sonically flesh out Antikoni's relation to her ancestors and the final moment of the play.

Contrary to Sophocles's heroine, Beth's Antikoni does not die at the end of the play. This is partly a strategic counternarrative to depictions of dying Indigenous characters that saturate stages and screens but it also aligns with Antikoni's desire to see her people live. Instead of dying, Antikoni, as Ismene laments,

> has left us, though we know not where,
> Whether she remains in our lands or moves to the Shadows
> She is beyond our reach, beyond all touch,
> Though perhaps she always was. (Piatote 2022, 58)

The stage directions in the play indicate that the image of Antikoni "appears on a large screen" as the drum stops. This image then multiplies on stage screens, forming a three-by-three grid of images. Antikoni's image proliferates spectators' cell phones before it is replaced by an avatar, and then by Antikoni again. Meanwhile, addressing us from this virtual space, she says:

> ANTIKONI
> And here I shall remain, along with the dead
> My life as theirs suspended, just as that of my kin
> Who find no comfort in grief, whose grief can never begin And thus will never end.
> In this world in-between, my voice and visage live on
> To those not-yet-human what human laws may do
> to interrupt time, to stop the Earth
> From turning and turning around itself, how such laws disturb
> The Order of the world. For this cause I sacrifice
> The warmth of flesh on mine, the company of human voice
> My sister's laugh, my lover's touch
> I retreat to this living tomb, this landless home, to
> This place that is both nowhere and everywhere at once.
> Here I will not age, nor bear
> Children for the next generation. I shall live
> Though it cannot be called *living*, a human being alone. (58)

Antikoni does not die but she retreats to a suspended virtual space as her loved ones beg her to return in an overlapping crescendo accompanied by the beating of the drum. Stage directions then tell us that Antikoni "lights a sage bundle" and looks at us, the audience (58). She is fiery, resolute. The play ends.

This open ending raised many questions not only in terms of meaning (Where is Antikoni? What does it mean?) but also in terms of how we could make this "world-in-between" where Antikoni is "with the dead," but will not age, legible to audiences. Created by Padra Crisafulli and Cambria Herrera, the installation required audiences to split into smaller groups and move to a sound lab a floor below the Wagner Theatre after the staged reading. There, the groups re-experienced the very last moment of the play when Antikoni retreats to a world beyond reach after burying the ancestors, a virtual world as the play suggests where she belongs to all time. Specifically, Padra and Cambria recorded the play's overlapping crescendo as well as Antikoni's final monologue and, with the help of WFS, created a sense for the audience of being surrounded by Antikoni and her loved ones. The sound holograms—travelling around, over, under, and through us—made her presence both elusive and enveloping. Antikoni was everywhere and nowhere, disembodied yet audible, in a space beyond,

in the making. Antikoni dares us, per her final look at the audience, to begin imagining this space in concrete terms.

Reciprocity

While the process was incredibly rich for the students, its original intent was to be useful to Beth as well. I turn here to her for a response, not wanting to speak in her name. She graciously provided the following epilogue.

Epilogue

Beth Piatote: The creation of a play is a collective act, and thus one that lends itself to collective political action. As Julie Burelle has documented here, it is possible and necessary to make real material commitments that advance well-being and justice for Indigenous people through collaborative work in theatre and performing arts. It is a beautiful response to the call for institutions to go beyond land acknowledgments and offer forms of reparation.

My play, *Antíkoni*, has been a fortunate recipient of Julie's guidance, support, and collaboration over a number of years. When I first met Julie in spring 2018, I had just begun conversations with my colleague, Mark Griffith, now professor emeritus of classics and theater, dance, and performance studies (TDPS), about holding a staged reading of the play at Berkeley. In truth, as I was writing the play, I never imagined a life for it on the stage; I thought that it would simply live on the page along with the other stories in my mixed-genre collection, *The Beadworkers: Stories*. Julie's insight about the power of holding the staged reading in the Hearst Museum—which to this day is the second-largest holder of ancestral remains in the United States—helped to clarify and imagine that possibility. As Julie notes, I worked with our team, especially the graduate students in TDPS who served as director, dramaturg, and stage manager, to provide a smudging station and other forms of care for the performers and audience members to enter that space safely. As production members we came to think of the ancestors as our primary audience, as the play itself operating as both care and advocacy for them. Having the audience seated in the gallery allowed the space to perform its own work in implicating everyone in the ethical and spiritual questions at the heart of the play.

Over the three performances, the chancellor and other key members of the university and museum administration were in attendance, as well as community members and many students from classics, TDPS, Native American studies, and elsewhere. The message of the play moved through various constituencies at once. The ethical demands of the play, including the persistent beat of the drum, reached administrators and ultimately played a role in moving repatriation processes forward. It also changed the space of the museum by shifting vibrational energies and reversing the power dynamics between audience and "object." That is, the play challenged the audience to turn their gaze inward rather than outward and to consider their own implication in an intertwined and ongoing history of colonialism and collection. These are some of the ways that site-specific performances work to unsettle colonial institutional practices at small and large scales.

Moving the play from its Greek form to one that would be marketable to contemporary audiences was the next phase of play development, and again Julie and her students were a huge part of that process. Julie connected me with Native Voices at the Autry in Los Angeles, where the play was selected for a Zoom workshop in summer 2020. Through this and subsequent workshops, I had to

radically rethink the shape of the play, including plot and diction. I had to completely take it apart, which is a normal part of the process, but I felt that I was losing some of the things that mattered to me most about it. Although I wasn't going to give up on the play, I was pretty discouraged at that time. Julie offered her class as a lab where I could experiment with fitting the pieces back together. The open-hearted creativity and support that I received from her class got me through that impasse and the play began to cohere into its new form. Despite the constraints of Zoom, the students took seriously the complexity of the characters and offered insight and creative ideas for props, staging, and interpretation. For example, one student commented that an early family dinner scene set up the motifs of cannibalism that followed; this observation spurred me to elaborate the dinner scene and thread eating more explicitly through the play. The 2023 staging, which included the mind-expanding sound installation, great acting (again), and clever props, provided me with new ideas for how to make the presence of ancestral spirits a texture through the play.

In closing, I would again express my gratitude to Julie for the collaboration over these past years and reiterate the specific ways in which the collective work of theatre and performance was channelled toward the goals of reparation and justice.[13] First, site-specific approaches to staging and teaching the play disrupted the colonial occupation of space within the institution and brought critical attention to issues of justice for Indigenous people. The performances brought participants into an intimate relationship with the moral concerns of the play and shifted the energy of the space. Second, the offering of material and creative resources—not only time and meeting space, but the offering of bodies to speak, act, and embody the work—was a true gesture of reparation. People literally carried the story. These acts made meaningful what can otherwise be dismissed as "only words" of land acknowledgments. Third, the collaboration provided critical structural and emotional support to me in the difficult task of revision. In the simplest terms, Julie and her students took up the play when it was at its messiest point of revision. That support was a real thing, and it had real effects. Finally, the collaboration supported the play through multiple developmental stages and represented a true investment in the future of the work. Many creative works get stuck in the pipeline and collaborations such as the one Julie has modelled here have tremendous potential to move theatre and performance works toward production, thus providing employment opportunities for Indigenous actors, directors, dramaturgs, and other theatre professionals. It also yields a richer world of theatre for audiences and greater representation of Indigenous arts, artists, and ideas.

Playwright Beth Piatote receiving applause at the end of the staged reading. Photo Credit: David Baillot.

Conclusion: A Continued Activation of the Beyond

As a performance studies scholar, I am deeply interested in what Dylan Robinson and Keavy Martin call "aesthetic actions," that is, of politically driven performances. These actions operate through "a range of sensory stimuli—image, sounds, movement—that have social and political effects through our affective engagement with them" (2016, 2). With this idea in mind and with Antikoni's final, daring look, an exhortation to end the meantime and move to a beyond, I asked students, at the end of class, to speak about what engagement they might make beyond this class, in their everyday life, to continue imagining beyond settler colonialism. Their answers varied greatly with some expressing trepidations, others hope, some making big pledges and others speaking at a more intimate level. Some echoed Ismene and Kreon, others Antikoni, in their call for change—incremental or radical. Others, like Student J (2023), reflected on what engaging with Indigenous stories might ask the Western commercial theatre world to change:

> If theatre is necessary, if theatre is empowering, if theatre is medicine—then how do we address the people who could never engage with our institutions because of a multiplicity of barriers? Theatre as it stands seems built on insularity, and I think this entire process has taught me to reconsider how to make theatre that is expansive both in the micro (rehearsal rooms, processes, ticket prices, etc.), and in the macro (How do we let as many people as possible tell their stories to as many people as possible?) (Student J [2023])

> If I do this incorrectly I will end up causing more harm than help. I have a starting point of what I can do. With my knowledge I can educate my peers about how Indigenous communities are still facing hate. I can tell them about Nagpra and what I have learned and I can refer them to the plays we have read in class. (Student K [2023])
>
> I would like to take that lack of knowledge and use it as fuel/motivation to figure things out. (Student T [2021])
>
> In order to give back after experiencing this class, I feel as though it is important to stay "plugged in" (even if that means being "unplugged," like Yvette Nolan may suggest) and conscious of the struggle for Indigenous sovereignty and definition. (Student A [2021])

Being entrusted with the gift of *Antikoni,* students responded to the call for relationality and reciprocity each with their own histories, gifts, and abilities. They enacted care and responsibility. Aesthetic actions such as these two staged readings and processes are one among many interventions needed to effect change. They may not return land to Indigenous people, but they do something that merits theorization and attention. They remind us that "the body is a resonant chamber" (Robinson and Martin 2016, 1), one that feels, holds on to, is moved, and can spring into action. They can also, if theorized with care, alert us to how feeling (empathy, horror, care, discomfort) is only a starting point to structural changes, not a destination.

Notes

1. Wilson (2021) has spoken of "Indigenist" processes, acknowledging that such methods can, with the right approach and without appropriation and extraction, be adopted by non-Indigenous researchers. He argued that Indigenous theories and methodologies are inherently capacious and thus can help frame a broad array of research questions within and beyond Indigenous communities.

2. *Arrivants* is the term proposed by Jodi A. Byrd to "signify those people forced into the Americas through the violence of European and Anglo-American colonialism and imperialism around the globe" (2011, xix). Not settlers, they nevertheless live as visitors on and in relation to Indigenous lands and peoples.

3. I wish to express my sincere gratitude to the students enrolled in the class in 2021 and 2023 who lent their creativity and reflectivity to the process. Not all the students wanted their responses to be identified so I elected, for the sake of uniformity, to anonymize all comments contained in this article. I also want to thank colleagues Jade Power-Sotomayor, Rishika Mehrishi, Ross Frank, Bobby McElver, Michael Francis and Laura Manning. My heartfelt gratitude goes to David Baillot, who photographed the staged reading in 2023.

4. This UCHRI-funded research group called Transnational and Indigenous Politics and Aesthetics Working Group included Drs. Kathryn Walkiewicz (Cherokee), Gloria Chacon, Roshanak Keshti, myself, and Kirstie Dorr.

5. The Native American Grave Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) was passed in 1990 and provides a process for federal agencies and museums that receive federal funds to repatriate or transfer from their collections certain Native American cultural items—human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, and objects of cultural patrimony—to lineal descendants, and to Indigenous tribes, Alaska Native Corporations, and Native Hawaiian organizations. https://www.blm.gov/programs/cultural-heritage-and-paleontology/archaeology/archaeology-in-blm/nagpra.

6. Fantasia Painter (Antikoni), Sky Chayame Fierro (Ismene), Philip Cash Cash (Kreon), Benjamin Arsenault (Guard), Inés Hernández-Avila (Auntie 1), Angel Sobotta (Auntie 2), Anna Marie Sharpe (Auntie 3), Joel Sedano (Auntie 4), Shia Yu Shih (Auntie 5), Kara poon (Tairaisias), Thomas Tallerico (Haemon), Illan Halpern (Messenger), Rose Escolano (Understudy), Carolyn Smith, Rose Escolano, Christian Nagler (Prologue), Keevin Hesuse and Josh Perez (Drummers).

7. *Antikoni* has since been supported by Native Voices at the Autry, the New York Classical Theatre, and the Indigenous Writers Collaborative at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival as well as by other individuals and institutions that Beth Piatote later names in her epilogue. It has yet to be given a full production.

8. Some ancestors are related to the Kumeyaay, others are from further away and found their way to the region through the work of researchers affiliated at some point in their career with UCSD. Information about UCSD's inventory is available at https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2023/03/10/2023-04896/notice-of-inventory-completion-university-of-california-san-diego-san-diego-ca.

9. See Dr. Ross Frank's archive on the UCSD repatriation case here: https://pages.ucsd.edu/~rfrank/NAGPRAdocs.html. See also Burelle (2015.)

10. Power-Sotomayor writes: "The danced sounding practice of Afro Puerto Rican *bomba*" is "the oldest extant music and dance form from the archipelago. This centuries-old practice that both celebrates the sacred and registers the quotidian comprises improvised drumming, dancing and singing that takes place in the *batey*—the Taíno word used to denote ball courts as well as the ceremonial space of the *areito* and today commonly used in Puerto Rico to refer to a space that is communal nonetheless separated from the outside world" (2020, 43).

11. See https://www.nimipuutimt.org/.

12. See https://bobbymcelver.com/wave-field-synthesis.

13. I wish to note that in addition to Julie and her students, *Antikoni* has received generous support from colleagues such as Mark Griffith and others at UC Berkeley; Jill Stauffer, Haverford College; Randy Reinholz, San Diego State University and Native Voices; DeLanna Studi, Native Voices; Sailakshmi Ramgopal, Columbia University; Matt Chapman, New York Classical Theatre; Courtney Mohler, Boston University; Matt Kizer, Native Writers Theater; Katja Sarkowski, Augsburg University; Patrizia Zanella, University of Geneva; Kaori Hatsumi, Seinan Gakuin University; Evangelia Keindinger, Humboldt University-Berlin; and others who have taught the work and invited conversations.

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ARTICLES

Startled Stomach: Contemporary Indigeneity and Sensorial "Culture Shock" in Aljenljeng Tjaluvie's Paiwan Pop Music

Yi-Jen Yu

Introduction

This essay expands on a moment of what I term "bodily experienced culture shock" in the music video for "Minetjus" by Paiwan pop artist Aljenljeng Tjaluvie, with a particular focus on how this shocking moment challenges notions of cultural and sensorial consumption. In 2016, Aljenljeng ended a thirteen-year hiatus and returned to the pop music scene in Taiwan with *Vavayan*, her first solo album, sung entirely in the Paiwan language. Formerly a Mandopop singer, Aljenljeng used to be known by the Mandarin stage name Abao 阿爆 and sang only in Mandarin Chinese.[1] Her choice to compose and sing in the East dialect of Paiwan (hereafter East Paiwan) for *Vavayan* therefore signals a departure from Mandopop culture and its lyrical paradigm, which normalized Mandarin monolingualism as both the index of musical contemporaneity in Taiwan and the lingua franca of Mandopop's internationalization during the 1990s and early 2000s. I argue that Aljenljeng's groundbreaking Paiwan-language pop music undermines this paradigm by immersing pop music listeners in what Stó:lō musicologist Dylan Robinson (2020) terms the "sensate sovereignty" of Indigenous musical life, thus countering Mandopop's convention of refashioning Indigenous artists as Mandopop idols by assimilating them into Mandarin-sung pop music or simply extracting Indigenous melodies as linguistically illegible compositional ornaments.[2]

To lay the groundwork, I explore Aljenljeng's turn toward her mother language as an effort to disrupt both Mandopop's consumption of Indigenous music in Taiwan and the Han-centrism that underpins the island nation's settler structure of feeling. I argue that Aljenljeng's intervention disrupts settler dominance in Taiwan's pop music not only by reinterpreting pop music idioms in the Paiwan language but also, and perhaps more importantly, by centring Indigenous notions of music and musical engagement as quotidian affective experiences of pop music. That is, the significance of her decision to sing in Paiwan rather than Mandarin Chinese or English when creating hip-hop, R&B, or techno music is more than just linguistic; by singing in Paiwan, she is advocating for a paradigm of pop music perception in which music is to be felt in any number of settings as the listener dances along with it. Her Paiwan-language music explores the significance of active listening and responding to music in such settings such as gospel events, weddings, or elementary school classrooms as the primary, instead of alternative, method of experiencing pop music. This shift in focus brings about structural changes to the binary roles of music creators and consumers that have dominated the sensory experience associated with Mandopop.

My exploration of Mandopop's and Aljenljeng's Paiwan turn is rooted in my personal relationship to place. I came to this work as a descendant of settlers who arrived in Taiwan during various historical

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periods. Born shortly before martial law was lifted in Taiwan in 1987, I grew up witnessing the twilight of authoritarianism. As a result, I have always felt the push and pull of an internal tension between dependence on order and an impulse toward rebellion. While studying at the National Taiwan University, my research focused on butoh, delving into the abject bodies and stigmatization of diseases within the context of Japanese colonization in Taiwan. I was unaware of my position in settler colonialism or my role in Indigenous activisms until I left Taiwan and began studying in the United States. Experiencing decentring and alienation as an immigrant prompted me to rethink my never-questioned Taiwanese identity and its relationship to Indigenous rights and sovereignty. During my doctoral studies in the United States, I encountered postcolonial and decoloniality theories, which led me to further interrogate settler accountability and responsibility both within Taiwan and in a diasporic context. My research on Mandopop and Indigenous music represents an effort to engage in decolonizing interventions and confront my limitations in learning from experiences different from my own.

Mandopop's engagement with Indigenous artists and materials functioned, until Aljenljeng's Paiwan turn, through what Robinson describes as the logic of "inclusionary music or performance," which "is more concerned with importing Indigenous content and increasing representation than redefining the structures of inclusion" (2020, 6). One example can be found in "Song for Jolly Gathering" 歡聚歌 by New Formosa Band 新寶島康樂隊, released in 1995. The song celebrates ethnic harmony, and its well-known intro adapts a Puyuma work song commonly known as the "weeding song" into a techno version. The song consists of sections sung in two languages connected respectively to the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of the band members—Chen Sheng 陳昇 sings in Hokkien, and Huang Lian-yu 黃連煜 in Hakka—and the weeding song serves as the transition bridging these two sections. Neither the melody nor the lyrics of the weeding song are listed or mentioned in the credits (New Formosa Band 1995). Such inclusionary performances, as Robinson argues, merely seek to "fit" Indigenous artists and sounds into "classical compositions and performance systems" in pursuit of a "display of equality" (2020, 6). Starting with *Vavayan*, however, Aljenljeng introduces the Paiwan production paradigm and creative identity she grew up participating in. I argue that her works create a productive affective disorientation that further reveals the normalization of the Mandarin language and settler listening practices in Taiwanese pop music. In contrast to Mandopop's tendency to listen to Indigenous music as rural and traditional, Aljenljeng does not seek to replicate traditions but instead presents a Paiwan-centred and contemporary praxis of Paiwan musical tradition. The refusal of extractive practices, such as sampling and cultural appropriation, serves here as her strategy for Indigenous sensate sovereignty.

My investigation also addresses the materiality of music and the musical environment, paying attention to embodiment and music as an experiential phenomenon. I argue that Aljenljeng's musical practice should be approached not as an anthology of her works but rather as a "soundstage," an acoustic space-time, that emerges between the artist and the listener(s) during the process of music-making and listening. Music is a texture instead of a text in this sense. I draw on musicologist Christopher Small's notion of "musicking" to explore this dimension of her music. The term *musicking* presents music not as a noun but as a verb, engaging "what people do as they take part in a musical act" (1998, 8). Here, music and musicking include all who "take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing or practicing, by providing material for performance (what is called composing), or by dancing" (9). The concept emphasizes the dynamic characteristics of each sound/note's immediate emergence and disappearance in space, and how this "movement" demonstrates a site or an experiential phenomenon. The concept also

renders visible the intersections between the auditory and other sensory activities, allowing music to be approached as a holistic and synesthetic experience. The notion of musicking guides my investigation of the sensory, topographic landscape that emerges through Aljenljeng's music activities and that her audiovisual expressions (such as music videos) particularly aim to facilitate. I will elaborate on this in my analysis of her 2019 music video for "Minetjus" (Tjaluvie 2020).

Before I begin, however, I provide context to understand Aljenljeng's musicking through a brief overview of the history of her nation, the Paiwan people, within Taiwan.

Taiwan: Historical and Ethnic Background

Taiwan, an island located southeast of present-day China, was ceded to Japan after the defeat of the Qing Dynasty in the Qing-Japanese War of 1895. This marked the beginning of fifty years of Japanese colonization. Prior to 1895, Taiwan had largely been considered remote and isolated by various imperial powers. Although it played a role in the conflicts during the transition from the Ming to Qing dynasties (1661–1683) and had been partially colonized by the Netherlands and Spain during the Age of Discovery (1624–1662), it did not receive significant attention from the imperial governments of the Ming and Qing. This situation changed, however, with the Japanese Meiji government's invasion of Botan 牡丹社, an Indigenous nation located on the island's southern end, in 1874. This incident exemplified one of Japan's early efforts to modernize itself in parallel with Western colonial powers through overseas expansion and subsequently pressured the Qing government to initiate preliminary modernization in Taiwan. While intranational power struggles occurred at the ports and settlements scattered along the island's western coast, the majority of the land on the island was under the rule of several Indigenous first nations (among them the Paiwan), who had inhabited the island for more than thousands of years.

Today, the intricate racial and ethnic demography of Taiwan reflects the diverse colonial histories that have shaped the island. It is commonly accepted that Taiwan is home to five main groups: the Indigenous peoples, Hokkien descendants, Hakka descendants, *waishengren* (often referred to as "mainlanders"), and Taiwanese new immigrants.[3] Within this framework, contemporary discussions about Indigeneity in Taiwan cannot be reduced to an Indigenous versus non-Indigenous dynamic; indeed, relationships, alliances, and rivalries between and among the three settler groups from China are dynamic and nuanced.

The Indigenous peoples of Taiwan, members of sixteen nations, speak a variety of Austronesian languages. According to the national census, as of the end of March 2024, the total number of Indigenous peoples in the country is 595,387, accounting for 2.54% of the total population of 23,416,375 in Taiwan (Department of Household Registration 2024). Among them, the Amis have the largest population, followed by the Paiwan and the Atayal. Each of the sixteen nations has distinct cultures and languages.

From the settler perspective, in 1684, the Qing Dynasty officially incorporated Taiwan into its territory, initially as part of Fujian Province. Between the late seventeenth century and the nineteenth century, the Minan settlers, from the Hokkien and Hakka groups, migrated across the strait from the Qing Empire's southeast corner to establish the earliest Chinese settler communities on the island. During the Japanese colonial period, the Hokkien and Hakka peoples were referred to as the native islanders, or *hontoujin*, by the Japanese imperial government, in contrast to the Japan-

born Japanese. Despite this distinction, the Hokkien and Hakka were considered less authentically Taiwanese compared to the Indigenous peoples. Later in the twentieth century, the overthrow of the Qing Dynasty in 1911 and the establishment of the Republic of China occurred while Taiwan was under Japanese rule. The island's residents therefore did not share a common historical experience with the people in continental China. United through the structural position of settlers despite their vast differences, the settler communities continue to depend on the occupation of Indigenous lands, and intramural conflicts cast a shadow over the collective oppression of Indigenous nations by successive and ongoing waves of settler colonization.

Indigenous Musicking in Popular Music in Taiwan

"Let's put it this way: from my experience as a listener, it can be said that this album of Abao's [*Vavayan*] opens a new path for the mid-1990s boom of 'Taiwanese new Indigenous songs.' Who could have imagined that singing rock songs saturated with the fullness of Black soul music in the East Paiwan mother tongue could be so unexpectedly coherent and beautiful?" (Ma 2017).[4] The above quote is from a description of Aljenljeng's 2016 album *Vavayan* written and posted on social media by the music critic, writer, and radio personality Ma Shi-fang 馬世芳. In this passage, Ma does not hesitate to show his awe at the beauty and uniqueness of this album, which he attributes to a refreshing combination of music genres (rock and Black soul music) and linguistic choices (lyrics in East Paiwan). That is, for an experienced listener like Ma, the impact of Aljenljeng's work seems to lie not in her choice of language, music genre, or theme but in how she represents contemporary musical sensibilities in an Indigenous language.

Ma's remark reveals the assumptive logic of pop music in Taiwan. His surprise makes clear a normalized and heretofore unchallenged mode of listening. That is, until Aljengljeng, pop music in Taiwan used to be, by default, *rarely in* Indigenous languages.[5] Mandarin Chinese's hegemonic hold on mainstream pop music's narrative began roughly in the 1970s as Taiwan's policies promoting monolingualism helped establish the dominance of Mandarin-language songs as the sole legible representation of musical contemporaneity. This framework dictates that listeners engage with Mandarin songs to grasp a sense of participation in the modern world. To be clear, there have been a number of openly Indigenous-identifying *and* chart-topping pop artists in Taiwan since the 1950s and 1960s, but their rise to prominence among the general public and via mainstream media coverage has largely been facilitated by Mandarin productions rather than ones in Indigenous languages (Tsai, Ho, and Jian 2019, 6–7).[6] When Indigenous languages were used in pop music in Taiwan, they often served as compositional ornaments and were treated more like humming or vocalization without semantic function. As a result, the Indigenous lyrics were dismissed from meaning-making, whether or not they had explicit lexical meaning.

Ma's "surprise" over Aljenljeng's Paiwan-language pop music points to what is and is not legible in pop music in Taiwan. Ma's surprise certainly is not about language and comprehension, as this concern rarely arises with regard to the works of Japanese or American pop artists, whose languages are equally inaccessible for Mandarin Chinese speakers. Yet behind Ma's modest comment (stating he is speaking from his experience), the sense of defamiliarization triggered by this Paiwan-language pop production is not an isolated case. As if anticipating this reaction, a sticker was included on the packaging of *Vavayan* that reads: "No need to worry that you don't understand. Listen to the music, and you'll get it." Below, a short description in smaller font promises: "It may not be a familiar language, but the songs will enter your life when the vibes feel right." [7]

The sticker on *Vavayan* album cover.

The reassuring tone of the message, "no need to worry," conveys a potential barrier that the album's marketing team sensed and sought to overcome preemptively. The subsequent text further emphasizes the holistic experience, "the vibes," music provides while downplaying the significance of the lyrics' language, suggesting that the team may be concerned that the choice of language on the album could deter listeners from giving it a chance. While it is unclear from the information on the sticker why the marketing team considered the album's language choice a potential barrier, or what convention of listening, found in pop music in other languages, is now obstructed by Aljenljeng's Paiwan lyrics, the necessity for such reassurance does indicate an underlying anxiety that Indigenous languages might render the music incomprehensible to the listener. This concern surrounding music's legibility is exclusive to the *integration* of pop genres and Indigenous languages because similar apprehension occurs less with Indigenous-language productions more explicitly categorized as folk music, such as the 2016 folk album *Yaangad* by the Puyuma singer-songwriter Sangpuy Katatepan Mavaliyw, and those productions more easily identified with imported pop cultures but sung in Mandarin Chinese, such as the hip hop or reggae work of Paiwan singer-songwriter Matzka. While Sangpuy and Matzka's works seem to lend themselves more readily to categorization—whether it be folk, rap, or reggae—the "surprise" evoked by Aljenljeng's *Vavayan* exposes the limitations of existing music categories as well as the overlooked racial performativity within Indigenous languages. That is, Indigenous languages seem to "racialize" any music performed in them due to Mandarin's monopolization of pop genres, resulting in Indigenous-language musics being overgeneralized as "ethnic" or world music. Music performed in Indigenous languages therefore does not "sound like" and cannot fit into pop music genres. This slippage resonates with the previously mentioned mode of listening that perceives songs in Indigenous languages as inherently illegible and without semantic meaning. Whatever implications extend from this assumed illegibility, Aljenljeng's Paiwan-language pop music engenders a defamiliarizing and disorienting auditory experience exactly as her language choice renders this assumption audible. By insisting on remaining "illegible," yet boldly claiming that the songs in *Vavayan* will "enter your life" on their own terms, Aljengljeng disrupts Mandopop listening norms, in which listeners assume the right to secure control over what they hear.

The Paiwan Family-House as Musicking Space and Aljenljeng's Musical Journey

Two paradigms are at play in the cultivation of Aljenljeng's musical language as both affectively Indigenous and pop musicking: commercially oriented 1990s and 2000s mainstream Mandopop productions and the quotidian practice of multicultural popular music in Paiwan musical life. The former marks the context of the professional training Aljenljeng received at the start of her music career and the success of her debut. The latter emphasizes her original musical background and acts

as the focal point for her musicking interventions since her return to the pop music scene in 2016. I approach her interventions in the second phase of her career through her engagement with the Paiwan family unit concept *qumaqan* (family-house).

In the Paiwan language, *family*, *house*, and *family-house* are three words that attend to different dimensions of the concept of family. While all three words can mean "family" according to the context, *kinacemekeljan*, or the term Aljenljeng uses in the lyrics, *kinataqumaqan*, emphasizes kinship based on blood relations.[8] *Umaq* is the physical building comprising a family residence, and also applies more broadly to any architectural construction. *Qumaqan*, on the other hand, is the main structure of *umaq* and the personified subject of the house where a family lives.[9] A building for residential use must go through a naming ceremony to transform it from a piece of architecture to a space of human dwelling, a family-house (ljavuras kadrangian 2021, 74–75). A *qumaqan* obtains the meaning of *family* and *family residence* when it is given a name, as a newborn infant is named by family elders. A named *qumaqan* begins to represent the family living in it and declares familial relationships among the family members. The Paiwan naming system associates persons with family by the name of their family-house instead of a passed-down surname.

Aljenljeng articulated the centrality of the Paiwan family unit, *qumaqan*, in her works for the first time in one of her 2019 songs, "1–10" (Tjaluvie 2019, track 8). Adopting the structure of children's counting rhymes, the song enumerates the things that bring happiness in her mother's first-person perspective, using Paiwan domestic references to embed numbers from one to ten into the lyrics. Starting with an ambient vocal that imitates the megaphone sound quality commonly heard in village broadcasts, Aljenljeng announces: "Listen up! / I'm teaching you this song / to count from one to ten." Then in the intro, the phrase "kinataqumaqan na Paiuan" (this is about a Paiwan family) is repeated.

In terms of word formation, the link between the terms for the family-house, *qumaqan*, and the state of a family, *kinataqumaqan*, is readily audible. Paiwan is a spoken language. The correlation between concepts is often expressed through vocal amalgamation of words and syllables. With *family-house* being woven into the word for *family*, announcing that her song is "about a Paiwan family" and saying the two words simultaneously conveys the idea that, for Aljenljeng, family functions as both methodology and locus for music-making.

The centrality of family and family-house further denotes the priority of collaboration in Aljenljeng's works. In an interview, Aljenljeng talked about her experience of navigating modern and traditional music genres to find her tunes for singing songs in Paiwan. The point, she insists, is not about the music styles but how close music-making is to everyday life (Liu and Chen 2021). Aljenljeng's prioritization of quotidian and domestic life is a notable aspect of her Paiwan-pop musicking. The concept of the family-house serves as a focal point for her exploration of the Paiwan worldview, wherein *qumaqan* functions not merely as an abstract site for musical expression but rather as the tangible space that encapsulates the collective experiences of a family. In this context, the meaning of music is to share it with family and friends in a space like one's *qumaqan*. More importantly, the family-house serves as an Indigenous-centric space outside of settler surveillance. Given that Indigenous houses and households were the focus of settler surveillance and governance, Aljenljeng's prioritization of daily musical engagement and the sharable quality of music according to the needs of family-centred communities gestures to the ongoing struggle and effort of cultural resurgence.

Aljenljeng's background broadly reflects the experiences of the urban Indigenous population in Taiwan, which burgeoned amid the rapid urbanization and economic boom of the 1980s. Growing up in Kaohsiung, the largest city in southern Taiwan, Aljenljeng has always identified herself as belonging to the Paiwan community in Jialan Village 嘉蘭村, Taitung County, Taiwan.[10] Located in the northern basin of the Taimali River 太麻里溪, the village spans from the foothills of Mt. Kavulungan, the sacred mountain in the Paiwan origin myth from which ancestors originated, and extends eastward to the southeast shore of Taiwan.[11] Despite maintaining ties to her family-house in Jialan, Aljenljeng relocated to Kaohsiung with her parents at a young age and has since spent her life travelling between two different geographies: Jialan, associated with her grandparents and Paiwan culture, and Kaohsiung and other cities linked to her education and professional life. The experience of living in and moving across different worlds bestows on Aljenljeng's creativity a quintessential character of cultural diversity (Su 2020).

After graduating high school, Aljenljeng relocated again to Taoyuan to pursue higher education in nursing and worked as a registered nurse before entering the music industry. In 2000, Aljenljeng (who, at the time, went by her Chinese legal name, Chang Jing-wen 張靜雯) joined a TV talent show with her classmate from the nursing school, the Amis singer Tian Xiao-mei 田曉梅. The duo ended up winning first place in the competition and, with it, the opportunity to sign a contract with the then newly established music brand Youyu Records 有魚唱片. After two years of training as idols under the name Abao and Brandy, Aljenljeng and Tian released their first Mandopop album in 2003, which won the Golden Melody Award for Best Vocal Collaboration of the year. The debut also announced Aljenljeng's official use of the nickname "Abao" in public spaces. The name, meaning literally "explode" in Mandarin, refers to Aljenljeng's tightly coiled, Afro-influenced hairstyle that Brandy designed to match Aljenljeng's sonic affinity for African American pop music (Bailingguo News 2020).[12]

Abao and Brandy's seemingly promising future ended abruptly when Youyu Records dissolved unexpectedly in 2004. Brandy changed her career path to producing, while Aljenljeng returned to nursing, maintaining only a minimal connection to the entertainment business.[13] Aljenljeng's hiatus lasted more than a decade, a separation long enough to break away from Mandopop's apparatus—its marketing strategies, idols, aesthetics, and fan culture—which dictated her previous relationship with the music world. In 2014, Aljenljeng's return to music was prompted by her family's traditional music practice, a comeback which ushered in the second phase of her career. The release of *The East Payuan (Paiwan) Folk and Three Generations* 東排三聲代 in 2014 broke Aljenljeng's silence and acted as a precursor for the Paiwan pop on *Vavayan*, which followed two years later. Initiated as a family project, *The East Payuan (Paiwan) Folk and Three Generations* ("*East Payuan Folk*") is a self-produced and partially home-recorded album. Its original aim was to preserve the voice of Aljenljeng's *vuvu* (grandmother).[14] Fearing that she might not live to attend all her grandchildren's weddings and provide proper blessings through her singing rituals, Aljenljeng's *vuvu* asked her children to prerecord the songs for future use (Huang 2014).

Aljenljeng comes from a maternal lineage of singers. Her *vuvu*, Micigu, was the leading singer of *guyao* (traditional or ancient songs) in the local Paiwan communities before she passed away.[15] And her late mother, Wang Qiulan 王秋蘭, who also went by the stage name Ay-zing 愛靜 and her Paiwan name Ljegeljege Tjaluljayaz, was one of the Indigenous pop singers who rose to prominence in Indigenous circles during the vinyl boom of the 1970s. Tracks from her records remain on the playlists of local

radio broadcasts across Indigenous neighbourhoods today (Liu and Chen 2021). This family singing tradition, however, was negatively impacted by the Chinese-only mandates in education and the standardized use of Mandarin Chinese in all public spaces before the end of martial law in 1987. These policies brought profound and long-term destruction to the natural language environment of Indigenous languages. Aljenljeng, for instance, does not speak Paiwan as a first language (Bailingguo News 2020). The singing training she received in her adulthood was also tailored to meet the requirements of Mandopop aesthetics and the musicality of Chinese lyrics. The making of *East Payuan Folk* thus holds personal significance for Aljenljeng. It was a journey of learning her mother tongue, and on a broader scale, it sparked a linguistic and cultural movement against settler monolingualism, beginning with telling a Paiwan family's story. The recording process eventually evolved into fieldwork that involved three generations of Aljenljeng's maternal relatives notating, transcribing lyrics, and at last learning to sing their *vuvu*'s songs (Tjaluvie, Wang, and Liang, n.d.). Aljenljeng's mother Ay-zing became Aljenljeng's language coach in this process. The mother-daughter collaboration has been active with the two co-writing most of the lyrics in Paiwan for her two latest albums.

When Aljenljeng returned to music-making in the 2010s, Taiwan's pop music industry was markedly different than it was when she departed in 2004; there was an increasing diversity of music styles, marketing strategies, and performance venues that accompanied the disintegration of monopolizing record labels and the withdrawal of transnational corporations from Taiwan. The industry's decentralization led to a transformation in music's relationship with identity politics: "Small live venues and their associated online bulletin boards, blogs, and file-sharing sites mediated niche tastes in indie music, cultivated ideologies of resistance, and fostered a sense of community" (Tsai, Ho, and Jian 2019, 11). I argue that the recording of *East Payuan Folk* in 2014, which inspired Aljenljeng's exploration of her cultural roots, is indicative of this particular moment in the history of pop music in Taiwan. In many senses, it also explains how this recording project led to her experimentation with Paiwan pop and, ultimately, to a broader pan-Indigenous pursuit of pop music.

Beginning in 2015, Aljenljeng initiated the Nanguaq Project, broadening her Paiwan folk music fieldwork to encompass diverse Indigenous ethnic groups. Similar to ethnomusicology fieldwork, Aljenljeng toured the island, looking for Elders willing to record their singing. Unlike ethnographers who collect and archive the recordings as data to be analyzed, however, Aljenljeng acts on the goal to gather and broadcast. The project is now growing into a long-term publication project for young Indigenous pop artists with the goal of strengthening pan-Indigenous solidarity and cultural influence.

Rehistoricizing Aljenljeng in Pop Music Made in Taiwan

In Shzr Ee Tan's research on Amis singing practice, the ethnomusicologist addresses the urgency for Taiwan Indigenous music studies to build up an Indigenous-centred methodology. She proposes that the Amis term for singing, *ladhiw*, replace the Western-centric notion of music and its Chinese equivalent, *yinyue*.[16] With *ladhiw*, Tan characterizes the Indigenous practice of music as an "ecosystem" and argues that cultural symbiosis more truthfully describes the qualities of the Amis songs and music she examines. Though Tan's research focuses on the musical life in Amis villages, her argument offers a way to reverse the disappearance of the organic musicking dynamics in the research of Indigenous music in Taiwan in general. In this framework, Tan defines the self-standing ecosystem of *ladhiw* as the "commercial and popular music dimensions of Taiwan aboriginal song"

"enjoyed within and without" the Indigenous communities (2012, 177). This definition highlights what was overlooked in the mid-1990s by Indigenous artists in Mandopop and also finds cross-generational connections among Indigenous subjects' interactions with popular music, whose isolation in language and culture-based taxonomy is itself a phenomenon of colonialism.

To understand Aljenljeng's impact on both Taiwanese pop music and the musical representation of Indigeneity in Taiwan, Aljenljeng's musicking activities after her return in the 2010s should be approached from the perspective of Tan's notion of the multicultural and multilingual "ecosystem" of Indigenous musical life. This perspective amends the limitations of Ma Shi-fang's inclination to see Aljenljeng's work as an extension or revival of "the mid-1990s boom of new Taiwanese Indigenous songs." The latter suggests a Mandarin-centred perspective on pop music history in Taiwan. Although it signifies the rise of publicly Indigenous-identifying idol-singers in Taiwan's mainstream music market as well as in global Sinophone communities, the expression of Indigeneity is conveyed through the Mandarin language, and the singers' status falls within the genre of Mandopop, the Mandarin-language pop music. This perspective perpetuates the normalized contrast between the Indigenous-language songs, depicted as traditional and outdated, and those in Mandarin, depicted as contemporary and trendy. It also risks conflating the success of Indigenous artists in Mandopop with the visibility of Indigenous cultures while paradoxically distancing these successful Mandopop productions from Indigenous-language folk songs or "world music." In Aljenljeng's work, her training in Mandopop and Paiwan folk songs or the Paiwan language do not separate from one another.

In contrast, Shzr Ee Tan suggests an ecological understanding of music in the analysis of the Indigenous musical life and "the constant re-making of aboriginal identity in relation to song" (2012, 7). Approaching music as a metaphorical ecosystem, Tan argues, helps to address the multicultural sonic symbiosis that forms the musical practice in the Indigenous communities in Taiwan. This approach emphasizes an Indigenous-centred and local-based notion of music that embraces expressions of Indigeneity "in the wider context of intersecting cultural flows." Indigenous music is therefore "concerned with different interacting dimensions of traditional and contemporary singing activity" (Tan 2012, 7), transcending the racialized divisions of music genres such as pop music, folk songs, or "world music." In this vein, the cultural and linguistic hybridity in Aljenljeng's pop music aligns with, though it is not confined by, the mass production of Indigenous singers in the 1960s and 1970s, through which Aljenljeng's mother achieved popularity among Indigenous communities. This hybridity is premised on the intersection of Japanese *enka*, Hokkien oldies, American pop songs, Indigenous working songs, and Indigenous singing traditions all circulating simultaneously across Indigenous villages (Tan 2012, 177). The significance of the contemporary continuity of Indigenous music traditions in Aljenljeng's pop music emerges only when we position her musicking within these intricate sonic textures that interweave the auditory experience in Indigenous living spaces, rather than within the context of Mandopop. In other words, what was encompassed under the broad label of "Indigenous pop" in the mid-1990s does not belong to the same system of practice in the 2010s. If the mid-1990s boom signals Indigenous artists entering mainstream Mandopop, the pop music of Indigenous artists in the 2010s gestures toward restoring Indigenous musical lives and the semantics of Indigenous languages to the mainstream pop music scene. The characteristics identified by Ma Shi-fang as innovative and alternative may only appear new as they introduce the long-standing Indigenous practices of popular music to the settler view after years of dismissal.

Compared to *East Payuan Folk* and the early stage of the Nanguaq Project, Aljenljeng's later works (from 2016 to the present) express a strong inclination toward imported and trendy music genres

and seem to diverge from her interest in traditional music and fieldwork-intensive production. However, the juxtaposition of traditional folk song recordings and an interest in the pop music market that respectively mark the early and later phase of the Nanguaq Project reflect the multicultural and multitemporal nature of the Indigenous musical life. Despite the various genres and styles, music-making on a sharable and collaborative basis serves as the common methodology in both stages of Aljenljeng's work. This continuum, identified by Tan as an ecosystem, finds its embodiment in the significance of the Paiwan family-house, *qumaqan*, in Aljenljeng's musicking and serves as the foundation for Aljenljeng's post-Mandopop creation.

Startled Stomach: Sensate Sovereignty as Strategy of Refusal

"Minetjus" is a song featured in Aljenljeng's second Paiwan pop album, *Kinakaian*, released in 2019. Within this album, the singer-songwriter experiments with a more diverse musical style, incorporating elements of gospel and techno music.[17] In Paiwan, *minetjus* means shock or startle caused by something unexpected, rather than fear or fright. The term can be applied to occasions of both surprise and intimidation (Kuljelje Maljaljaves [Wu Fan], personal communication with author, April 15, 2024). The song "Minetjus" plays out the duality of the feeling of *minetjus* and offers a moment of what I call "bodily experienced culture shock." It evokes an accelerating, jittery sensation caused by the excitement of gustatory experiences and the unexpected consequences of overly satisfying one's appetite. At the opening of the video for "Minetjus," Aljenljeng guides the camera into a canopy tent set up in an open field. There is a table full of dishes inside this small gazebo. In a pulsating intro, Aljenljeng and her friends are seen enjoying the banquet by the table: "My vuvu (grandma) misses me. I should go back home for dinner. Some non-Indigenous friends come along. Let's try my granny's specialties." Questions then arise after the background introduction: "What is the magic in the dishes? How could all the dishes be so delicious?" In response, Aljenljeng proceeds to call out the name of each dish one after another. The same sequence of dishes is pronounced in a rapping manner twice:

> *izua kinesa ni vuvu a cinavu*
> Granny makes steamed millet cakes wrapped in Lavilu leaves,
> *pinuljacengan, djinukudjuk*
> porridge with vegetables and wild herbs, pumpkin and sweet potato cake,
> *pinilaulj atua valeng*
> and millet balls stuffed with salted meat.
> (Off Screen)
> *liav, ljakua malua anga*
> Eat all you can eat, but not too much.
> *minetjus a nu vicuka*
> You would get a stomachache.
> . . . . . .
> *izua kinesa ni vuvu a qapilj*
> Granny makes blood sausages,
> *vavuy a siav pinutjanaqan*
> wild boar broth spiced with Decaisne Angelica,
> *atua valeng atua pangesuy*
> salted meat and coriander in sauce.[18]

The repeated calling of the names of the dishes and their maker here seems to act as a form of ritual, an invocation of oral tradition. It performs a speech act where the exact action of calling or rapping brings things into becoming through vocal enunciation. Engaging vocally with the syllables of the dish names connects the act of singing to the way lyrics in Indigenous singing traditions generate both semantic and nonsemantic meaning. Similar to scat singing in jazz, which is too commonly defined as vocal improvisation with "wordless" or "nonsense" syllables, a significant proportion of Indigenous folk songs in Taiwan also involve singing entirely or partially in vocables without specific lexical meanings (Chen 2013, 165). These vocables, while carrying the quintessential characteristics of the singing culture within different Indigenous nations, have a long history of being documented by settler musicologists as meaningless "function words."[19] Viewing these vocables as function words, as opposed to content words that convey semantic information, leads to the misconception that songs in Indigenous languages lack lyrics or only have lyrics that do not express any content. Amis ethnomusicologist Panay Mulu refutes the notion of function words and argues that these lyrics should be understood as "lining words," which create meaning through "accentuating melodies and atmospheric flavors" (2004, 164). The use of lining words "represents a form of singing that is non-abstract, non-coincidental, and not solely emotional; it is a meaning-contributive and remarked singing style" (Mulu 2004, 164).

Ethnomusicologist and Taiwanese Indigenous studies scholar Chen Chun-bin, on the other hand, approaches these lyrics as "vocables," vocal units that not only serve as accentuating components but can also constitute the song itself (2013, 167–69). He builds upon the works of Ming Li-guo and Wu Ming-yi, who stress that the meanings of vocables do not originate from the lyrics but rather from how vocables relate to the participatory circumstances of singing (170). Chen's theorization of vocables views the song as incomplete from the perspective of lyrics. It is only through what he terms the "interpretative process," carried out by those who participate in the singing, that a song's meaning can fully develop and gain recognition. To reach the meaning of a song, participants engage with the circumstance of singing as an immersive sonic reality and cultural arena (188).

These studies provide the framework to think about what it invokes and evokes when Aljenljeng vocally enumerates the dishes in "Minetjus." The names of the dishes undoubtedly convey semantic meanings as content words (that is, they signify specific dishes); however, I argue that by being uttered, the syllables in the dish names also function as vocables that form the sonic reality for the singer and the listeners. The vocalization of the dish names proceeds fast but evenly in pace, with one name's end attaching to the beginning of another. The adjoining voiced and voiceless consonants slide and stop as if in incantation, arousing a sensation similar to that of chewing and tasting. At the same time, the electronic beats evoke rhythmical sensations from within the listener's body, resembling heartbeats or, as the lyrics indicate, the muscle contraction during stomachaches. Just as vocables are employed at Amis ritual sites to summon ancestors' souls or spirits (Mulu 2004, 165–68), the syllables in the dish names connect musicking bodies to the frequency of immersive vibrations, thereby invoking a space of gathering and the cultural and familial meaning of food-sharing.

The syllables in the dish names resound to affirm the functions of the dishes in Paiwan family and social life and, by summoning gustatory memories, perform a private yet sharable sensate identity within the body. In thinking the meaning of food and banquet, central to Indigenous life and reintroduced by Aljenljeng to the pop music scene, Dylan Robinson's concept of "sensate sovereignty" as a strategy of "structural refusal" becomes relevant in this conversation. Recognizing refusal as a central tenet of Indigenous studies, as emphasized in the work of Audra Simpson, David

Garneau, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, and Glen Coulthard, Robinson concludes that the refusals they undertake primarily pertain to content—withholding information, affirming and centring Indigenous perspectives, and demarcating Indigenous sovereignty within academic writing (Robinson 2020, 21–23). Besides such "content refusal," however, Robinson distinguishes another form of refusal based on structural blockade. "Actions of structural refusal," he posits, "are formal and aesthetic strategies that impede Indigenous knowledge extraction and instrumentalization" (23). Considering structural refusal as "forms of sensate sovereignty," Robinson looks at forms that "act as a limit of knowledge," that which "is felt viscerally, proprioceptively, and affectively beyond the page" (24).

To demonstrate the strategy of sensate sovereignty, Robinson raises the significance of food-sharing occasions in his expansion of David Garneau's concept of "irreconcilable spaces of Aboriginality":

> Irreconcilable spaces of Aboriginality are gatherings, ceremony, nêhiyawak (Cree)—only discussions, kitchen-table conversations, email exchanges, et cetera, . . . are performed without settler attendance. It is not a show for others but a site where people simply are, where they express and celebrate their continuity and figure themselves to, for, and with one another without the sense that they are being witnessed by people who are not equal participants. (Garneau 2016, 27)

Returning to the banquet in Aljenljeng's song, it is noteworthy that although the occasion is not "without settler attendance" (the lyrics enunciate that the friends invited to grandmother's banquet are *pairang* [Sinophone settlers]), the core of the Indigenous gathering as an irreconcilable space is embodied in the video's cast—everyone showing up in the video is Aljenljeng's friend in real life, and they all belong to Indigenous nations.[20] It is evident that the ensemble does not represent the "friends" mentioned in the lyrics who are invited to the banquet; instead, they are members within Aljenljeng's family-friend circle. The significance of the banquet as a Paiwan-centred, pan-Indigenous space is celebrated through the ensemble's food-sharing and the sovereignty of the space.

We can certainly question whether the camera represents the perspective of the invited non-Indigenous guest(s), and how in this way the settler perspective may still dominate the camera view with a disembodied, scopophilic permeation. Yet Aljenljeng's "rap" of the name of the dishes obstructs any physically detached way of listening. The rap speaks to both the content and structural refusal as anticolonial strategy here. On the one hand, as much as the music and the food might seem palatable according to the Mandarin and settler audiation and gustatory orientation, there is no way to seamlessly consume either the music or the food without confronting the attack of an irreducible unfamiliarity. The unfamiliarity simultaneously speaks to the pop song and rap sung in Paiwan, a combination unfamiliar to Mandarin speakers, and the ingredients, spices, and seasoning logics of Paiwan dishes. Suffering from "bodily experienced culture shock," the settler ear and stomach must adapt to their decentred positions and confront the newly acquired otherness when entering this space of Indigenous knowledge and the Indigenous framework of feeling. The rhythmical sensations evoked by the beats also subvert the extractivist logic that regards the non-Indigenous listener or eater as the subject of consumption. In this context, the vibration inevitably enters and transforms the listener in a visceral sense, like how food enters and transforms the organism that ingests it. The settler becomes the receptive object in the act of listening/eating, being infiltrated and moved.

On the other hand, the strategy of content refusal is also at play here. It withholds knowledge and ownership—the decision of the Paiwan banquet hosts to open and share the space with "pairang" does not alter the inherent irreconcilability of the occasion. Like some Indigenous seasonal rites that grant minimal and peripheral participation to visitors by asking outsiders to keep out of the ritual space and observe quietly, the space of Aljenljeng's banquet also opens to "pairang" only within defined boundaries. These boundaries are unspoken but are performed and felt through the body.

"Eat all you can eat, but not too much," the lyrics advise, "otherwise—minetjus a nu vicuka." "Vicuka" is the stomach, and the verb for being shocked, "minetjus," refers to the unexpected disturbance in the stomach brought forth by the attempt to unlimitedly satiate one's appetite. Aljenljeng confirms in an interview that she was inspired to write this song by an actual incident.

> One time, I brought along a Han photographer for fieldwork. We had the opportunity to taste djinukudjuk, a traditional pumpkin and sweet potato cake, made by an elderly person. . . . My friend found it incredibly delicious and couldn't stop eating. The elderly person then spoke to me in Paiwan, telling me to advise my friend to eat in moderation, or else his stomach might be startled. (Luo 2020)

What causes stomachache in this case is not just eating but overeating without an awareness of the line between the eater and the eaten object, the understanding that one has limits and should not exceed their capacity. Even when the guest has no malicious intention, as is the case portrayed in this song, the host's warning serves as a reminder to the guest that they cannot, and should not, see themselves as ready to obtain all. Reading the warning with Robinson's notion of "hungry listening," what is rendered tangible through the rebellion of Paiwan food in a settler stomach is perhaps a normalized settler dispossession of Indigenous cultures, a presumed right to acquire and appropriate. In his identification of settler colonial forms of perception, Robinson employs the Halq'eméylem word *shxwelítemelh*, which translates to "hunger," to render visible this settler's desire for acquisition and consumption.

> The word emerges from the historical encounter between xwélmexw (Stó:lō people) and the largest influx of settlers to the territory during the gold rush. In 1858, thousands of xwelítem (largely men) arrived in a bodily state of starvation, and also brought with them a hunger for gold. In the context of this book, I use shxwelítemelh to refer to a form of perception: "a settler's starving orientation." (Robinson 2020, 2)

Drawing on Leanne Simpson and Naomi Klein's words, that "extraction isn't just about mining and drilling, it's a mindset—it's an approach to nature, to ideas, to people," Robinson positions the settler way of perception as "hunger" and asks: "How might we instead hear the resourcing of Indigenous music as the settler colonial resource extraction that it is?" (2020, 13–14). Aljenljeng's "Minetjus" resonates with this question through the intertextuality between food and music. The song audibly and viscerally exposes the guest's unchecked appetite as stemming from anticipation of absolute satisfaction, or more implicitly, the settler sense of entitlement to insatiable desires. In other words, the Paiwan food's appeal thrills the guest so much because it signifies the excitement of discovery and harvest, just like the Indigenous music and cultures. With an understanding yet firm attitude, Aljenljeng's amusement at the elderly person's concern that the friend's way of eating might disrupt their own stomach establishes boundaries. Paiwan food refuses to be easily digested. It conveys that, much like an unignorable physical reaction to overeating such as a stomachache, one

ultimately "feels" the consequences of listening to Indigenous music through the perception mode that caters to the settler desire for extraction. Therein lies a hidden message to mainstream Mandopop that used to extract only the melody from Indigenous songs while erasing their cultural contexts and lyrics' meanings. It renders visible, in Robinson's words, "the unmarked normativity of listening" and "the ways in which the listening continuum has historically been consigned to a framework wherein one is listening well if one is able to capture the content of what is spoken, or the 'fact' of musical form and structure" (2020, 38).

For non-Indigenous listeners familiar with Mandopop, listening to "Minetjus" entails accepting a positional shift from mere music consumers to a physically involved musicking participant. The listener must allow the "stomachache" to occur within their body, permitting the sonic reality created upon the integrated vibration of the naming of the food and the melodies to penetrate, enter, and transform themselves on the visceral level. This experience prompts the emergence of an unfamiliar self from one's awareness of being immersed in another culture and the subsequent loss of certainty. Listeners are opened up to change. "Minetjus" portrays and summons a space where music derives meaning according to both the affective and cognitive protocols of Paiwan music and cultural life. This space demands that the listener engage with music through their body—the body that is shaken, agitated, and transformed by the unknown and by the Indigenous knowledge consciously kept illegible to them. In essence, "Minetjus" initiates a process of defamiliarization to the listeners of Mandopop; the listeners cannot avoid their positionality, a positionality that used to be invisible under the settler normative trafficked in Mandopop.

Notes

1. Mandopop refers to popular music sung in Mandarin Chinese. Contemporary commercialized Mandopop is generally recognized as beginning around 1980 and drawing on musical traditions from the early twentieth century. Commercial production of popular music shifted from Shanghai to Hong Kong and Taiwan during and after the Second World War and the Chinese Civil War. This article focuses on the 1980s and 1990s, when Mandopop flourished. During this same period, Taiwan's pop music industry benefited from a stable, young audience cultivated by the campus folk-song movement of the 1970s, and the productions made in Taiwan gained favour with Mandarin-speaking communities around the world. For the definition for contemporary Mandopop, see Mozkowitz (2009). For the historicization of Mandopop, see Tsai, Ho, and Jian (2019)..

2. Sensate sovereignty is a decolonial approach to listening (Robinson 2020). The concept captures how Indigenous communities reclaim and assert their sovereignty through sensory experiences, particularly emphasizing the significance of sound and listening practices. Within Robinson's theorization of refusal as a strategy of resistance, sensate sovereignty underscores the ways in which artistic and sensory forms serve as obstructions to extractive settler mode of perception and "provide a structure of knowledge sharing for Indigenous folks to enter into" (24).

3. Hokkien refers to both a subgroup of ethnically Han Chinese as well as the dialect of the Minnan Chinese language spoken primarily in Fujian province, southeastern China. Hakka refers to another subgroup of Han Chinese with a unique migration history. Believed to have originated from northern China, the Hakka people began migrating southward to various regions and countries over centuries. The Hokkien and Hakka established significant overseas diasporas in Taiwan between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, forming the "earlier" settlers in contrast to the waishengren or "mainlanders," who migrated to Taiwan from China alongside the Chinese Nationalist government after 1945, particularly after 1949. The most recently identified group, Taiwanese new immigrants 新住民, refers to individuals who have relocated to Taiwan from other countries from the 1990s onward seeking work, education, marriage, or asylum. The term does not indicate a homogenous ethnicity but encompasses immigrants from diverse cultural backgrounds.

4. Original text: 這麼說吧：阿爆這張專輯，就我自己聆聽的經驗，算是替 1990 年代中期以來「台灣原住民新創歌謠」風潮，打開了一條全新的道路。誰能想到，用東排灣族母語唱浸透了黑人靈魂樂風格的搖滾，竟是這樣行雲流水、美不勝收？

5. Other earlier examples, such as the Paiwan singer-songwriter Matzka's reggae debut song "Mado Vado" (2010) and the Amis singer-songwriter Ado Kaliting Pacidal's techno dance hit "Pangcah" (2014), are arguably singular occurrences. The former is the only Indigenous-language song on a predominantly Mandarin album. The latter was released as a single.

6. As Mandarin monolingualism began to exert significant influence from the 1960s into the 1970s, songs in Indigenous languages ceased to serve as vehicles for emotional expression for the post-war Mandarin-speaking generation (Huang 2019, 66). However, it is worth noting that interpreting Indigenous pop songs in Mandarin Chinese and using this approach to generalize Indigenous pop music is a phenomenon specific to the settler cultural perspective, for the music environments of Indigenous communities have always been multilingual.

7. Original text: 雖然可能不是熟悉的語言，但一旦頻率對上，這首歌就進入你的生活裡了. Sticker on *Vavayan* album cover (Tjaluvie 2016), advertisement, translated by Yi-Jen Yu.

8. The word *kinacemekeljan* incorporates two independent words: the noun for "married couple," *cekelj*, and the verb for "a couple constituting a family," *cemekelj*. This connection to marriage and procreation underscores the word's emphasis on family as a group based on lineal consanguinity. A synonymous regional variation, *kinataqumaqan*, also refers to family based on blood relatives. The term is more narrative, however, as it also refers to the financial condition or state of a family (Kuljelje Maljaljaves [Wu Fan], Paiwan language lesson to the author, April 21, 2024).

9. In modern everyday conversation, *qumaqan* most commonly refers to the "indoor," as opposed to the "outdoor." The term is also used to refer to the place where the ancestral worship altar is located, which extends to the concept of the main living room in modern living spaces (Kuljelje Maljaljaves [Wu Fan], Paiwan language lesson to the author, April 21, 2024).

10. While predominantly inhabited by the Paiwan peoples, Jialan Village is far from an ethnically and politically homogenous entity. Rather, it consists of seven Paiwan nations, along with the smaller Xinfu Community, which is located closer to the mountain range and inhabited by an eastern subgroup of the Rukai peoples. According to the 2017 census (Ministry of the Interior, ROC), Jialan is home to approximately 1,500 individuals across 474 households, establishing itself as one of the most significant Paiwan agglomerations in Taiwan. See Ministry of the Interior, ROC (2017).

11. Mt. Kavulungan, also kwon as Taimu Mountain 大武山, belongs to the southern mountain group in the Central Mountain Range that runs vertically through the centre of the island of Taiwan. Over three thousand metres above sea level, Mt. Kavulungan represents the highest sacredness in the origin myth of the Paiwan and Rukai peoples living in Jialan.

12. Scholarship on Taiwanese pop music's appropriation of Black music and styles includes Schweig (2022); Lin (2019); and Tan 2012.

13. In 2012, having left the pop music scene for five years, Aljenljeng was invited by Taiwan Indigenous Television to join the hosting team. From 2012 to 2016, she worked in the hospital during the week and recorded programs in the TV station on the weekends. See Su (2020).

14. *Vuvu* stands for both grandparents and grandchildren in Paiwan. Prefix case markers distinguish between references to grandparents and grandchildren.

15. Micigu was also known by the Mandarin name Liang Qiumei 梁秋妹. She is addressed as Micigu among friends and family. The name Micigu is phonetically translated from Japanese, reflecting the fact she was born

and raised in Japanese-occupied Taiwan (Aljenljeng Tjaluvie, "Re: Several Questions," email to author, November 9, 2021).

16. Ladhiw is also spelled radiw. See "Radiw," Taiwan-Austronesian Indigenous Words and Narrations, accessed May 10, 2024, https://web.klokah.tw/vocabulary/index.php?d=2&c=23&n=02.

17. Around the 1960s, Christian missionaries made inroads into the Paiwan communities, leading to the integration of Christianity as a major religious presence alongside traditional animistic belief systems. The practice of singing Christian hymns translated into Paiwan or Mandarin Chinese is commonplace during church gatherings. The gospel song "Thank You," featured on the album Kinakaian (Tjaluvie 2019) stems from Aljenljeng's aspiration to compose music for her fellow Paiwan people to use during their church assemblies.

18. Lyrics by Aljenljeng Tjaluvie and Wang Qiulan (Ay-zing), "Minetjus," track 5 on Kinakaian (Tjaluvie 2019). The explanations of the dishes' contents are from the lyrics' official English translation on Aljenljeng's YouTube channel (Tjaluvie 2020).

19. The influential musicology project, Folk Song Collection Movement 民歌採集運動, hosted by ethnomusicologist Hsu Tsang-houei 許常惠 and Shi Wei-liang 史惟亮 in the late 1960s, provides the archival foundation for post-war Indigenous music studies in Taiwan. In their archive, the Indigenous folk songs are often listed as "function word songs" 虛詞歌謠. While elderly individuals interviewed by ethnomusicologists during fieldwork often indicate that the lyrics of the songs they sing do not have a specific meaning, less attention has been given to how syllables without lexical or narrative function still contribute to meaning-making based on the manner in which songs are sung during specific occasions. On how the elderly individuals explain the lyrics as not having concrete meanings, see Chen (2013, 166).

20. The ensemble comprises dancers from the Bulareyaung Dance Company, with whom Aljenljeng shares a long-standing and creatively collaborative friendship.

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ARTICLES

Toward Becoming Good Relatives: Not-Dancing to Centre Indigenous Presence in the Dance Classroom[1]

Sammy Roth, Miya Shaffer, and Tria Blu Wakpa

Introduction

I am going to slow down and consider the ecosystem of my surroundings. The ways that I am interconnected with my family and my colleagues. I will consider the spaces I inhabit; if I gather, I will also give . . . in my practice, I will begin by listening, considering my role as a guest to the land that I inhabit, and aligning myself with natural flow and order.[2]

—Student author, January 29, 2023

This article is an exercise in reciprocity, an expression of gratitude to Tina and Jessa Calderon (Gabrielino Tongva and Chumash), Deborah Sanchez (Chumash), Carla Marie and Desiree Munoz (Costanoan Rumsen Carmel Tribe), and Pom Tuiimyali (Winnemem Wintu), who have been participants in ongoing community-engaged research and teaching projects with Tria Blu Wakpa, an assistant professor at the University of California, Los Angeles.[3] Throughout this paper, we use the term *community partners* to refer to these participants as a group. The article is a co-authored endeavour, the result of an additional ongoing collaboration between Blu Wakpa and her two graduate student researchers, Sammy Roth and Miya Shaffer. The paper also emerges from the writing and thinking of a class of undergraduate and graduate students who learned from the California tribal individuals listed above in Blu Wakpa's ten-week course titled Dance and Decolonization, which ran in UCLA's Department of World Arts and Cultures/Dance in Winter 2023.[4] In this essay, we aim to honour the multivocal perspectives connecting these various collaborating bodies. By discussing the experiences of devising, leading, and learning in the course, we show how community-engaged research and teaching can challenge normative, "settler-capitalist" (Speed 2019) learning goals in dance education. We ultimately argue that our methods might initiate the process of becoming "good relatives," which we define according to scholarship on Indigenous and queer feminisms (Yazzie 2023; Denetdale 2020; Minthorn 2018, 71; Tallbear 2018; Yazzie and Risling Baldy 2018). As Diné scholar Melanie Yazzie contends, to be a "good relative" requires commitment to "responsible, reciprocal, respectful, and accountable" relationships (2023, 602). Although we cannot uncritically claim this title for ourselves, we explore the Dance and Decolonization class as a component of cultivating and nurturing "good relative" relations between Indigenous knowledge keepers, non-Indigenous learners, and the land on which this exchange occurs.

Mainstream discussions of US higher education throughout and preceding the 2020s demonstrate a profound concern with utility and career readiness, especially in the arts and humanities (Devereaux 2023; Harris 2018). These fields are often assumed to be "indulgent" or "impractical" in comparison

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to STEM-based disciplines, wherein job security and economic gain are perceived to be readily available (Heller 2023; Menand 2021). By emphasizing practicality, these mainstream discourses suggest that the purpose of higher education is to produce "good workers" who will comply with the demands of North American capitalist economies; at the same time, other perspectives have recognized and aimed to censor the critical potential of the arts and humanities. For example, in January 2023, Florida governor Ron DeSantis proposed a state-level plan to transform New College of Florida, a small liberal arts school, from a "progressive" educational environment to "a beacon of conservatism" (Mazzei 2023). These actions are part of an ongoing effort from several Republican state politicians who aim to limit liberal arts education and its emphasis on disrupting white supremacist, patriarchal, settler colonial, and cisnormative US societies, ultimately restricting what can and cannot be taught in the undergraduate classroom (Gabriel and Nehamas 2023; Kang 2023).[5] Dance education holds significance within these debates: at one level, it might be considered superfluous in relation to "useful" STEM fields; at another, it can provide an opportunity to interrogate racist, colonial, patriarchal, and anthropocentric imaginings of the body and its surroundings, which some politically conservative perspectives intend to stifle (McCarthy-Brown 2014; Chapman 2023; Kloetzel 2023).

This article intervenes into these mainstream dialogues, examining strategies for resisting expectations of "utility" in dance education through community-engaged pedagogies, specifically between collaborators who self-identify as Indigenous and as non-Indigenous.[6] Reflecting on the Dance and Decolonization course, we identify three "learning goals" that are alternative to those of practicality and career readiness: through *not-dancing*, and subsequently *listening* to the collective, and *working-for* our community partners, we offer a pedagogical approach that can challenge the settler-capitalist underpinnings of mainstream higher education and work toward reciprocal relationships. Standard dance pedagogies are not inherently settler-capitalist; their prioritizing of the body and its movement can be understood to disrupt the Eurocentric, colonial valuing of the written word in knowledge production (Calamoneri, Dunagan and McCarthy-Brown 2020; Chapman et al. 2023). Yet some approaches to the dance classroom can also obscure or even directly contribute to appropriation and expropriation, actions associated with settler-capitalist structures (Speed 2019, 19). Courses that expect students to demonstrate "mastery" of different dance styles can, at times, replicate cultural appropriation, especially when detached from discussions of community histories, broader cultural practices, and attention to students' positionalities (C. Davis 2018; Johnson 2020). While these pedagogies can "prepare" students for dance careers as versatile performers (Foster 2019), they might also train them to embody historically, politically, and culturally specific movement forms without attention to their communities of origin. We therefore argue for the potential and even necessity of *not-dancing* in undergraduate dance classes to offer students alternative ways to connect with, absorb, and critique their dominant dance education.

In the context of the Dance and Decolonization class, not-dancing was imperative: the course, which explored Indigenous dances with a majority of non-Indigenous students, implicated long histories of Indigenous knowledge appropriation by settler scholars, choreographers, and dancers. Dance studies scholars have shown how many revered white choreographers have appropriated Native American dances in both popular and concert dance forms (Kowal 2014; Manning 2004; Shea Murphy 2007; Stanger 2021). While many of these dance professionals were capitalizing on Indigenous knowledge for their own success, the US government formally barred Indigenous people from performing their own dances from 1883 to 1934 and did not formally protect dance and other ceremonial practices until 1978.[7] US colonizers have targeted Native American dance for many reasons, including that these movement practices have many decolonial possibilities—such as

strengthening Indigenous identities, values, and spiritualities—which posed a direct threat to US assimilation and Christian conversion efforts (T. Blu Wakpa 2024; Shea Murphy 2007).[8] Throughout the decades that the US government prohibited this practice, many Native people continued to dance in secret and fought for legal protections for their dances. Further, some Native people performed in public Wild West shows, which were frequently non-Native endeavours, in order to continue their dance practices while the ban was in effect (Moses 1999; Shea Murphy 2007; Wenger 2009, 2011; Risling Baldy 2018). The US government's changing policies with respect to Indigenous dances and ceremonial practices, as well as Native peoples' responses to settler interference in their lifeways, have fluctuated in accordance with dominant settler interests in Native assilimation and/or the preservation of Indigenous cultures (Shea Murphy 2007). Yet, overall, US policies have largely operated to secure settler jurisdiction despite their stated aims (Martin 1990).

Since the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978, which bolstered the 1934 reversal of the dance ban by providing formal protection for the expression of Indigenous spiritualities, there has been a notable revitalization of Native dances (Shea Murphy 2007, 24). However, given these histories of settler appropriation and infringement upon Native dance practices and their ongoing impacts, many Indigenous dances, which often have spiritual significance, are not appropriate to share with outsiders and are often considered inappropriate to teach and learn in the dance classroom (Jacobs 2013). The decision to dance is dependent on specific contexts and pedagogical approaches; for example, some Indigenous teachers might share select dances to develop non-Native respect for Indigenous cultures (Jacobs 2013, 30). Our approach to devising the Dance and Decolonization course sits within these debates. Following the guidance of our community partners, the class aimed to circumvent the possibility of perpetuating expropriative dynamics by explicitly not teaching students Indigenous dance practices. Instead, students learned about the histories, contexts, and politics surrounding California tribal dance practices through conversations with community partners, scholarly readings, assignments, and practices oriented toward reciprocity, by which we mean the mutual exchange of knowledge and resources to support, rather than extract from, Indigenous groups.

The Dance and Decolonization course explicitly invited students to *work for* community partners Tina and Jessa Calderon (Gabrielino Tongva and Chumash), Carla Marie and Desiree Munoz (Costanoan Rumsen Carmel Tribe), and Pom Tuiimyali (Winnemem Wintu). In doing so, it aimed to put into practice the UCLA land acknowledgement, which states: "As a land grant institution, UCLA acknowledges the Gabrielino/Tongva peoples as the traditional land caretakers of Tovangaar (Los Angeles basin and So. Channel Islands) and are grateful to have the opportunity to *work for* the taraaxotam (Indigenous peoples) in this place" (Roth and Blu Wakpa 2023; emphasis added). The course was structured around a series of research sessions facilitated on a rotating basis by the community partners; each session would first familiarize students with the tribe's location, history, and work and then prompt students to complete writing that would support dance revitalization. For example, Carla and Desiree Munoz visited the class during a session with a UCLA librarian who discussed challenges to accessing institutionally housed tribal materials; Tina Calderon joined a visit to the Huntington Library archives to examine materials pertaining to the Tongva; Jessa Calderon gave a book talk about her realistic fiction work *SisterHood*; and Pom Tuiimyali discussed the use of digital technologies to support tribal sovereignty in his session. Classroom activities and assignments were therefore tailored to the specific needs of each tribe, and students were expected to complete these assignments as methods of community support.[9] Blu Wakpa instructed the course with the support of Roth and Shaffer, who assisted with syllabus design, organized research sessions, and maintained communication with community partners and UCLA administrative staff. Not-

dancing—and instead listening and working-for community partners—was also imperative for Blu Wakpa, Roth, and Shaffer as cultural outsiders to California tribal communities. Roth identifies as a white settler; Shaffer is a settler of Japanese and Ashkenazi Jewish descent; and Blu Wakpa is of Filipino, European, and tribally unenrolled Native ancestries. Due to our positionalities, not-dancing, listening, and working-for became tactics for producing reciprocal relations without necessarily appropriating.

We suggest that, although our process in the Dance and Decolonization course required significant attention and even reevaluation, our efforts represent one possible method for non-Indigenous and community outsider instructors to explore decolonial, community-engaged pedagogies. It is a method that foregrounds relationships among us, community partners, students, broader institutional and personal communities, and the more-than-humans (non-human animals, land, water, air, the cosmos) with whom we interact. We consider this relationality as essential to becoming "good relatives," which we understand according to Yazzie's (2023) definition. Being a "good relative," Yazzie suggests, relies on an expectation of mutual respect and, in "the realm of political struggle, it is also an expectation to defend, protect, and grow hard-fought struggles for liberation in the violence of white supremacy, settler colonialism, imperialism, capitalism, and heteropatriarchy" (602). Elaborating on this approach to cultivating kinship through shared struggle against oppressive systems, we understand our process of becoming good relatives to include leveraging our academic privileges and resources to support the vital work that Indigenous people are already doing and taking cues from our community partners on how we can undertake these actions effectively and respectfully. In centring the values and knowledge of community partners, as opposed to independently determining course objectives and learning outcomes, we were able to foreground their expertise and commitments in the class, which then became a guide for what the students learned.

This article takes the form of a conversation between Blu Wakpa, Roth, and Shaffer, with additions from student or community partner voices framing our discussion of each learning "goal." Much of the conversation is drawn from an interview with Blu Wakpa that Roth and Shaffer conducted after analyzing assignments, student surveys, and syllabus design. Each section also includes excerpts from either student reflection papers following community partner visits or interviews with community partners that discussed the effectiveness of the course for their revitalization work. Blu Wakpa's research and teaching funds provided community partners with honoraria for these interviews and compensated Roth and Shaffer for their time as graduate student researchers. Our discussion also underscores how, despite its meaningful possibilities, the Dance and Decolonization class also has inescapable limitations: although it can critique settler-capitalist norms within higher education, it cannot wholly absolve or decolonize the institution. By demonstrating the possibilities and restrictions of our decolonial, community-engaged pedagogies (Roth and Blu Wakpa 2023), we present our method as open to critique, extension, and transformation from other dance educators.[10]

Not-Dancing

In this section we discuss our practice of not-dancing in the Dance and Decolonization course. In some ways, not-dancing is defined quite simply by the term itself—students did not physically learn any Indigenous dances in the class and rarely watched videos of them. However, the students did learn and perform North American Hand Talk/Indigenous Sign Language, which was the lingua franca prior to colonization in what is now known as North America (M. Blu Wakpa 2017), for one

assignment. Although it is not dance specifically, this assignment was focused on engaging students in movement and narrative through a specifically Indigenous epistemology. While the politics of non-Native people learning Native languages can be contested, North American Hand Talk has been used by diverse Native and non-Native peoples for many purposes and thus is perhaps not as implicated as Native dance regarding Indigenous spiritualities (J. Davis 2016; Farnell 2009; Scott 1918). For this reason, Blu Wakpa assigned the North American Hand Talk activity as a way for students to deepen their exploration of Indigenous movement practices in the course while respecting the need to refrain from dancing specifically.[11]

In planning meetings for the development of the course (2020–21), the community partners were clear that their Native dance practices should not be shared with students, especially ceremonial dances due to their spiritual significance. As community partner Tina Calderon (Gabrielino Tongva and Chumash) told Roth and Shaffer during her interview:

> It's sometimes a little bit difficult because we do want to share [about our culture and dances]. We do want to teach. But we don't want people taking things that are very sacred to us and selling it, or you know, teaching it themselves, because they've got this one little instruction and they think, "Oh, I'm going to go share this with everybody," and then they leave out certain things that are very critical. (T. Calderon 2023)

In this statement, Calderon invokes the histories and ongoing dynamics of appropriation and extraction of Native dances and other practices by non-Natives that we discussed in our introduction. Given Calderon's personal experiences with appropriation, including in a public workshop organized by Blu Wakpa in 2020, which we later discuss, it was of the utmost importance to Calderon, the other community partners, and Blu Wakpa that we engage in a practice of not-dancing. Although this approach went against the expectations of students, who often expressed desires to learn dances, not-dancing might also be considered a generative form of settler discipline, or sacrifice, in which giving up the possibility of physically dancing enabled other learning to occur.[12]

Photo of Tina Calderon (Gabrielino Tongva and Chumash) at the March 2024 California Tribal Gathering, held at Wishtoyo Chumash Village, and co-organized by the community partners (Tina and Jessa Calderon [Gabrielino Tongva and Chumash], Deborah Sanchez [Chumash], Carla Marie and Desiree Munoz [Costanoan Rumsen Carmel Tribe], and Pom Tuiimyali [Winnemem Wintu]), Blu Wakpa, and Roth (Wishtoyo Chumash Foundation, n.d.). Photo: Jay Lamars, 2024.

Undergirding the stakes of not-dancing is the understanding that movement itself is a vital form of knowledge, which is a major contribution that dance studies offers academic discourses. Anchored in this foundational valorization of kinesthetic knowledge, not-dancing specifically pushes back against mainstream (mis)perceptions that dance is frivolous or somehow not valuable, particularly given that Blu Wakpa structured the course to exclude physically dancing in order to protect the knowledge Indigenous dance holds. In other words, it was important to not dance because there is an abundance of knowledge in dance. Yet, it is not possible to adequately learn about Native dance, or any dance practice for that matter, without understanding the histories and contexts of the practice. Thus, although students did not physically learn dances, there was much information that they could learn about ongoing colonization, the politics of Indigenous dance practices, and contemporary revitalization efforts related to human and more-than-human relatives. Our conversation discussing not-dancing highlights how this practice enabled students to expand their understanding of what dance encompasses and protect sacred knowledge without sacrificing experiential learning:

In Conversation

Sammy Roth (SR): I am thinking about the arc of the course, from its planning in 2021 to its implementation in Winter 2023. In the planning stages, the community partners were very involved: we would gather in meetings over Zoom, where community partners would offer feedback on the syllabus; devise learning goals; suggest course readings; and conceptualize assignments that would be useful to them. In these meetings, we would often discuss what was appropriate and not appropriate for the students—some material needed to be protected by members of the tribe themselves and thus not shared. When you [Tria] planned the course, you were also navigating many institutional demands, in addition to the needs of the community partners, such as trying to structure the course work within UCLA's ten-week quarter. How did you balance student learning needs with those of the community partners? How did you, as course instructor, ultimately decide what was important for the students to read and write about?

Tria Blu Wakpa (TBW): It was imperative to involve the community partners from the beginning—this was a strategy for working against traditional, Eurocentric academic norms, which often prioritize the singularity of the instructor in course design. When it came to imagining how dance would be integrated into the course, all community partners articulated a similar goal: students should know that at the heart of California tribal dance is spirituality, but these practices are not appropriate to share with non-tribal people. In the class, the students needed to understand that the dances were not for them to engage with directly and thus the course needed to focus elsewhere. But the students were also expecting a class on dance, right? The "study" of dance in the course had to take a different form: we learned about dances through readings, which the community partners selected, and California tribal scholars wrote.[13] We also learned some about dances from the community partners' class visits. Using both approaches encouraged students to think about dance more broadly, as always involved with social and historical contexts.

I also wanted the students to understand dance in relationship to our community-engaged work, which is an ongoing process. The syllabus was not a final statement; the course continues to change and develop, as our work with and for the community partners shifts according to their priorities. Each tribal partner has different interests, and students adapted to that. For example, when Carla and Desiree Munoz visited the class, our course "agenda" outlined a discussion about dance, self-determination, and sovereignty. Carla and Desiree's guest visit ended up being primarily about the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), and they wanted us to do work for them around ICWA and its impact on California tribal nations.[14] ICWA was not on the original agenda, but I didn't see this as a detour from our course plan. It was important for the students to understand how everything, inclusive of dance and beyond, is related, which is also an Indigenous understanding.

Miya Shaffer (MS): I'm thinking about how we move forward with the course and how other scholars and instructors can possibly learn from, build on, and/or revise our pedagogies. Our methods emphasize the importance and necessity of not-dancing. We already mentioned the spiritual and social dimension of tribal dances, which are not always appropriate to share with non-Indigenous people. But not-dancing also seems somewhat antithetical to dance education, which often assumes that participation in bodily experience is necessary for dance research and training. How might we reconcile the expectations of dance pedagogies with ongoing extraction, appropriation, and exploitation of Indigenous beliefs and practices?

TBW: The students in our department dance in many other courses, so I don't necessarily feel like they're "missing out" on dancing in this class. They are also still having embodied experiences, even if they are not literally dancing—bodily knowledge and movement extend beyond learning dance techniques. For example, the students discussed the embodied experiences that they had in the research sessions, such as during our visit to the Huntington Library, and even in our interactions with the community partners over Zoom.[15] All these involvements are inseparable from the body, even if they're conducted while seated. I also think it's important to recognize, and to hope, that not-dancing might not always be an ethical necessity. At times, there are spiritual, ceremonial practices that have protocols which specify that non-Indigenous people should not participate. But in some cases, Native people do invite non-Native people to participate in certain ceremonies due to the relationships they have nurtured. In the context of the Dance and Decolonization course, we are working with California tribal communities, some of whom are steeped in the process of revitalizing their dances. While this work builds on long-standing Native knowledges, it can also be considered new and fresh, and it can contain very sacred knowledge. This information needs to be protected now and for however long into the future—possibly forever. But not all dance contexts are like this. In some dance spaces, like powwows or some protest movements such as Idle No More, non-Native people can be invited to participate (Recollet 2015). So, it is possible that the level of participation in dances from non-Native people might shift over time with strengthened reciprocal relationships.[16]

Listening

As our section on not-dancing discussed, the Dance and Decolonization class retained a focus on embodied experiences even though the students didn't physically learn dances; instead, learning through felt sensing occurred through a practice of listening. For us, listening is not merely auditory, but rather builds on dance and performance studies literature and practices that highlight how "listening [can be] done by using all the senses" (Calissendorff and Jaresand 2023, 8). More specifically, scholars have identified how movement practices can reveal culturally coded sensory hierarchies and bodily norms, with Eurocentric norms overemphasizing the visual (Dixon Gottschild 2003, 1996; Foster 2011; Sklar 2008; Cohen Bull 1997). In relation to such hierarchies, the senses can be used methodologically to challenge dominant ways of perceiving, especially when analyzing archival materials, as was done in the class during research sessions with community partners (Kosstrin 2020; Campt 2017).

The class dedicated one archival research session to fulfilling a request made by Carla Marie and Desiree Munoz (Costanoan Rumsen Carmel Tribe), who were interested in accessing genealogical records held in archives on Indigenous California languages at the University of California, Berkeley. Given resource constraints, we could not arrange a visit to the archives at UC Berkeley; however, a UCLA research librarian joined the session to discuss archival holdings broadly, including gatekeeping dynamics and how to search archival databases and access materials. Reflecting on this experience in a response paper for the course, one student wrote:

> Deeply unsettled, I observed the various privileges and positionalities in the classroom space: A) galleries, libraries, archives, and museums—or "G.L.A.M" institutions[17]—became visible as predominantly White institutions unethically holding another's sacred knowledge; B) the UCLA research librarian's identity demonstrated privilege, as both a White woman and "G.L.A.M." employee accessing

> and discussing archival findings on another's ancestry; C) the English language was our common ground for researching and dialogue; and D) I felt my position, as a student and witness of settler-colonialism's impact on the Munozes' genealogy. Conversely, Carla and Desiree's virtual presence [on Zoom and] their reliance on an elitist system and its staff to fulfill familial inquiries served as a possible tool to further combat the cultural erasure of their peoples. (Student author, February 22, 2023)

As this student's response shows, the practice of listening—that is, sensory awareness of the politics of archival research—helped students name systems of power and how they impact community partners in their revitalization work, while also allowing students to tune into their own visceral responses, such as being "deeply unsettled."

Photo of Carla and Desiree Munoz (Costanoan Rumsen Carmel Tribe), community partners who attended a research session with a UCLA librarian about accessing archival material. Photo: Scott Davis, 2021.

It was especially important for students to understand that archival materials can be read against the grain—and at times must be for ethical reasons, including when engaging colonial accounts of Indigenous peoples—and that their dance training could assist them in such subversive analysis.

Dancers are often trained to prioritize a "kinesthetic mode of attention," which can include "directing intentionality toward one's own bodily sensations, and perceptions and maintaining a particular awareness of the ways the body moves and responds to movement—a sort of listening and openness to the body and its movements in a mode of discovery" (Ehrenberg 2015, 46). By drawing on such training, not-dancing, and instead listening, students engaged their own sensory experiences in class to recognize and challenge historical and contemporary power relations, which seek to diminish Indigenous presence, even noticing moments when they inadvertently perpetuated these dynamics themselves. Thus, our discussion of listening as a learning goal highlights how not-dancing enabled students in the course to draw on performance-based methods, attuning to conversations with the community partners, other students, and Blu Wakpa at multiple sensory registers:

In Conversation

SR: When I was reading the student reflection papers, I noticed that several of them were clearly naming power dynamics in the research sessions with community partners. When I teach my own classes, I'm often working to make power dynamics present, and then challenge them. I want students to ask: how do we understand collectively how power is working in the room without overlooking how each of us experiences it differently? In the reflection papers from Dance and Decolonization, these issues were most apparent in the students' discussions of the course's focus on archival research, in which they questioned the power dynamics implied in dominant access to and gatekeeping of archival knowledge. It seemed to me that the course offered students two opportunities to reflect on what has historically been deemed "worthy" knowledge in Eurocentric education systems. First, the research sessions seemed to prompt them to consider who counts as knowledgeable and then actively decenter normatively valorized knowledge holders [like GLAM institutions] by recentring experts from communities deemed structurally nonnormative, like the California tribal community partners. Second, in writing the reflection papers, the students had the opportunity to unpack these power dynamics further. Could you speak to how the classroom offered this recognition of power dynamics and potentially challenged them?

TBW: I think it is important that, when we are doing decolonial work, we are naming the ways that power operates as clearly as possible. Then, as you shared, after we make power dynamics transparent, we can directly challenge them. When I bring California tribal people to class, I try to combat mainstream understandings of knowledge and expertise within dominant academia. I sometimes tell my students that the community partners have the equivalent of a PhD or beyond in their tribal forms of knowledge—this framing makes apparent that Indigenous understandings are valid and vital, which might be a new idea for some students. Additionally, I draw on Indigenous epistemologies, which underscore that everyone has something valuable to offer (Shea Murphy 2022, 17). This approach is important for the students in their own learning: they should understand that they can offer powerful contributions to our class and society, and they can learn from one another in ways that are significant. I also make clear to students that I'm still learning—I don't know everything! As the instructor, I don't ever think I'm not complicit in the power dynamics of the classroom, even when I'm doing decolonial work. So, I try to make power dynamics a topic of class discussion, emphasizing that everyone has something to contribute. We all learn and grow together.

Students also recognized power dynamics through the experiential components of the course, such as in our trip to the Huntington Library. Students visited the library with [community partner] Tina Calderon; Tina and her daughter, Jessa, had requested this trip, as the Huntington occupies their ancestors' land and holds archival materials that are relevant to the Tongva people. During the visit, we talked a lot about access and colonial violence, which extend beyond land theft and into academic extraction. We discussed how researchers have come into Native communities, extracted knowledge, and then not reported back to the people on their findings. Often, the knowledge is then published in academic journals, which people will not have access to unless they have a university affiliation. Throughout the visit and these conversations, the students seemed taken aback at the amount of privilege they had as UCLA students—they were suddenly going to have access to the same archive as Tina, who, due to ongoing dynamics of extraction and gatekeeping, was viewing it for the first time. I think this struck some of them as deeply unsettling.

MS: I'd like to ask a pedagogical question, which is related to the broader limitations on my experiences of the class itself. Because Sammy and I were graduate student researchers, rather than teaching assistants, we were not in the classroom while the course was ongoing.[18] Instead, I read the students' reflection papers and evaluations of your teaching: these texts provided a "gateway" to the actual classroom, illuminating interpersonal dynamics and learning experiences, even if I was not physically present for them. While reading, I did notice some moments where students applied pre-existing, stereotypical knowledge to the lessons that the community partners provided. For example, in the first reflection paper, it seemed to me that some students were conflating the more nuanced information that they were given with more stereotypical ideas about Indigenous people that they might have already acquired, as several students openly acknowledged their lack of familiarity with Indigenous philosophies and practices. In these essays, students summarized Indigenous beliefs about more-than-human relatives with statements such as "Indigenous people are one with nature." This sentiment can be understood as generalizing and oversimplifying of some Indigenous concepts. We can't control what knowledge the students bring to the classroom, but we can determine how we shape and respond to it—what do you do in your teaching to broaden that conversation and push students beyond stereotypical ways of thinking?

TBW: First, the rhetoric you mentioned, "Indigenous people are one with nature," is obviously problematic. And I've seen Indigenous scholars circulate critiques of settler scholars who write about Indigenous peoples and practices in ways that detrimentally romanticize them. On the one hand, the student's statement reifies settler colonial stereotypes. On the other, it is important to recognize that many Indigenous dances are inextricable from relationships with more-than-humans. When students offer stereotypical statements in class or their writing, I gently and diplomatically try to nuance them. As the professor for the course, I typically take on the majority of the labour in educating students about these harmful typecasts. This is in part because students have limited opportunities to speak with community partners who are often attending the session alongside them or presenting to them. At the same time—and as ridiculous as it sounds—sometimes students who are repeating problematic tropes are also making progress. In the US context, there are so many people who don't even know that Indigenous people exist in the present.[19] When a student puts forth a stereotypical observation of contemporary Indigenous people or cultures, they are also recognizing Indigenous presence in the present, which can be considered progress in itself, even if their language doesn't reflect the complex relationships among human and more-than-humans in many Indigenous epistemologies. From the perspective of conducting community-engaged research and teaching, all discussions are opportunities for growth, even if it takes time to arrive at more in-depth understandings. I want students to learn with as much nuance as possible, and—especially

since many of them have been exposed to settler colonial typecasts of Indigenous people for decades before they take the class—the process involved in arriving at that complexity can be lengthy.

SR: I think this example crystallizes the conflicts between worldviews that the course illuminates. The gap between Eurocentric frameworks, which many students have been trained in, and Indigenous frameworks, which are often new for non-Native students, can create challenges in the ways that material is learned. I appreciate thinking through how we give grace without sacrificing accountability; everyone, ourselves included, is learning in real time. We want to push beyond the repetition of problematic tropes, while being attentive to positionality regarding who is taking on this labour. Community outsiders and non-Natives with stronger relationships to Indigenous communities and greater familiarity with Indigenous epistemologies can support the ongoing work of Indigenous peoples by sharing what we know, when appropriate, with those who are less familiar.

Working-For

Beyond not-dancing and listening, a primary aim of the Dance and Decolonization class was for students to have the opportunity to work for the community partners in ways that would support the revitalization of their dances and other tribal practices. However, the form that this work took differed according to the needs of each community partner, their tribes, and what was feasible within UCLA's ten-week term structure. In the Dance and Decolonization course, working-for meant using funding for research and teaching, classroom technologies, support from UCLA staff (such as the research librarian), and student assignments in ways that assist the community partners' ongoing work. In Roth and Shaffer's interview with Carla Marie Munoz (Costanoan Rumsen Carmel Tribe), she reflected on the in-class research session we arranged for the Munozes with a UCLA research librarian, discussed in the preceding section. The aim of this session was to support the Munozes independent archival research, which they determined was not appropriate to share with students. Carla stated:

> I learned so much with a lot of the terminology that she [the research librarian] brought and a lot of the terminology that she shared was very relevant to the work that we're doing. . . . It just made me realize the bureaucracy that's actually inside of these [GLAM] entities, and how difficult it can be to navigate if you don't know the right language, or if you don't know the right way of asking for things . . . because, you know, we're not privy to that. If we're not learning that [language], we don't really know. And so, when you're Indigenous, they expect you to not only be an anthropologist, you know, all of these different titles you're supposed to wear. But it takes a lot of work, and I feel like she [the research librarian] did [offer me] a lot of clarity [for how to approach institutions housing our tribe's materials]. (C. M. Munoz 2023)

This feedback from Carla confirmed one aim of the research session in regard to working-for the community partners, namely that their time in the classroom could help advance their work at the same time that it educated students about archival research and the challenges settler colonial structures create for revitalization.

We define "working-for" broadly.[20] We also consider how working-for the community partners is not only something for the students to do in class but rather something that we undertake together as the professor, students, and graduate student researchers all engaged with the course in some capacity. For example, the time-consuming labour coordinating the research sessions for the class, including scheduling the visits with community partners, staff like the UCLA research librarian, and outside locations like the Huntington Library; facilitating and filling out paperwork for community partners' honoraria; creating promotional flyers for public sessions; and more, would not have been possible without allocating hours from Roth and Shaffer's graduate student researcher positions to meet these needs. In this section, we discuss the multiple forms that working-for has taken in the context of the class and outline direct and more diffuse types of support that the course offered to community partners:

In Conversation

SR: Can we discuss the activities and deliverables in the course? In our early planning stages, we talked about how to design the syllabus so that students could work for the community partners. But, in meetings with the community partners, issues about appropriate sharing were at the forefront of our conversations: some community partners decided that their initial ideas for student assignments were ultimately not appropriate to share in the classroom context.[21] Other unexpected projects arose and were given to us [Sammy and Miya] rather than the students due to logistical concerns. For example, Carla and Desiree Munoz requested research on ICWA, which Miya and I had more time and were more qualified to do than the students, and thus we completed this request. When I read the student reflection papers, I noticed that they expressed sentiments about wanting to do more work for the community partners. What were the students ultimately able to give back? How might you envision the balance between students learning from community partners versus working for them in future iterations of the course?

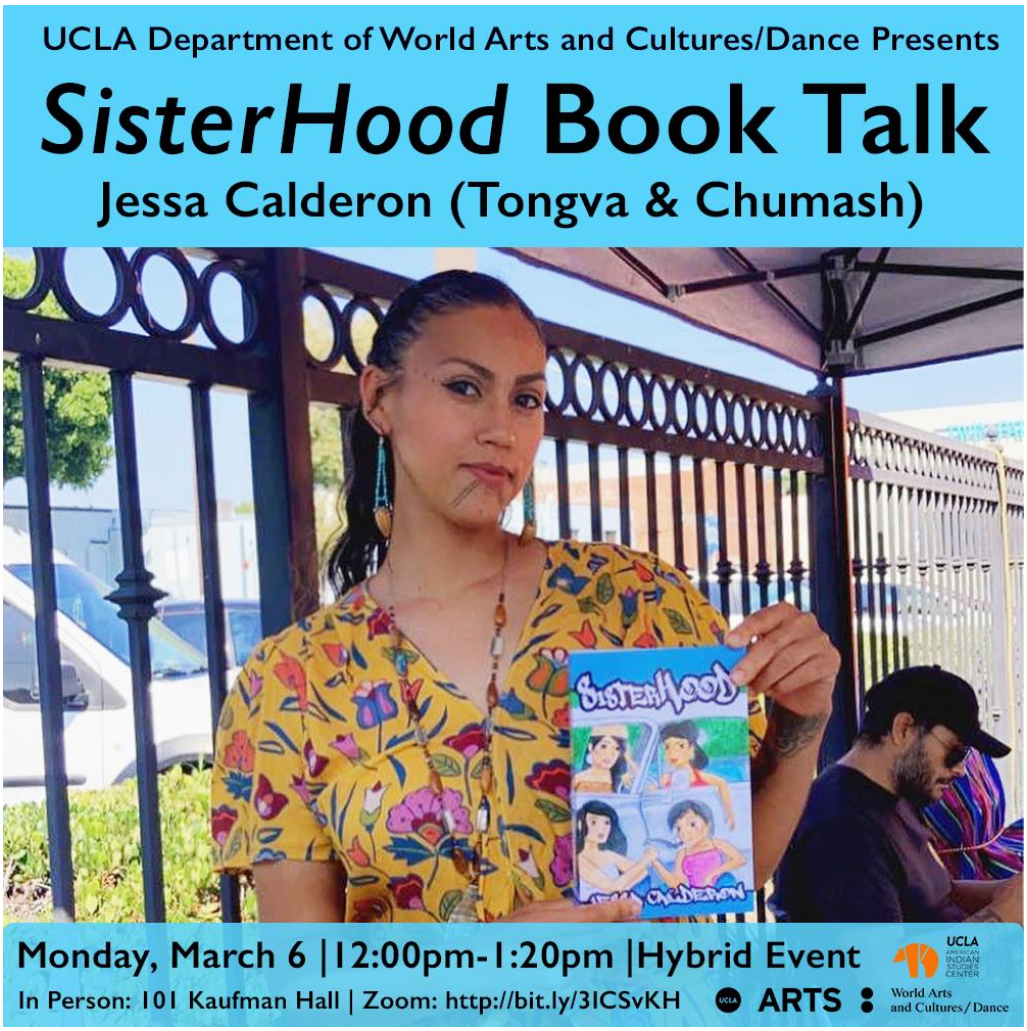
TBW: Admittedly, this course was very ambitious. Students were asked to work for experts from three different tribes, all of whom had very different goals. The community partners wanted to work together, which led to this model, and I think it was very beneficial for students to learn about and interact with individuals and representatives from the three California tribes, which share similarities, but are also diverse. Perhaps students would have preferred to have completed sustained work with only one tribe throughout the quarter's duration. We could have identified one or two specific goals—maybe exploring one archive or drafting a series of grants—and used the remainder of the quarter to delve deeper into that work. I know students wanted the experience of working more for our tribal partners. After we had a visit with one of UCLA's research librarians, students expressed excitement about knowing what archives are; they then wanted to dive into them and learn how to do archival research for community partners. But it is important to remember that our community-engaged work has its limitations. Even if students were asked to focus on a specific archive for one tribe, there is no guarantee that our community partners would deem the archival materials appropriate for students to look at. For instance, Carla and Desiree Munoz were interested in examining archives that could further the genealogical information they had about their ancestors. Understandably, they did not want to share this very personal information with the students. The question you raise about balance (between learning from and working for) will never be entirely resolved, as we will always be grappling with questions about what is culturally appropriate for students to do, and this varies according to contexts, tribal protocols, and individual understandings.

Community-engaged research and teaching should involve relationships of trust, which must be attended to and adapted. I have worked hard to build trust with the community partners, and I have developed that trust with you [Sammy and Miya] over our years of working together. But I have not developed the same level of trust with the students, who only participate in the Dance and Decolonization class for ten weeks. We risk fracturing this trust when we invite new people into our community-engaged work. We've dealt with these issues in the past: a few years ago, we hosted a public workshop with Tina and Jessa Calderon. After the workshop, one participant, who was not a student or UCLA affiliated, made a video about the tribal practices she had learned about from Tina and Jessa. The participant then posted the filmed content to Instagram, sharing Tina and Jessa's tribal knowledge with the public without their permission and inadvertently breaking tribal protocol. The participant even tagged Tina and Jessa in the video, suggesting that she had good intentions in posting the video, although, as we know, impact can significantly differ from intent. Jessa then reached out to the participant, informing her that it is always necessary to ask permission before sharing tribal knowledge, particularly when that knowledge is not culturally yours. Obviously, we do not want to create the conditions for similar situations to occur in the classroom, and so we have not offered such workshops since. Creating trust and a sense of reciprocity between community partners and students is more important than fulfilling students' desires for which archives we look at or which projects we complete.

I also want to expand the ways that we think about "working-for" the community partners. In the Dance and Decolonization course, we are not just producing deliverables; in some cases, we are also leveraging the UCLA name to give community partners a broader platform. The privilege that I have as an assistant professor allows me to contribute to this effort by inviting our community partners to the class, leveraging university resources for them, and using my teaching funds to provide honoraria. Some people might find these actions problematic. They might see my efforts as upholding UCLA as a "brand" in order to validate the community partners' own work, which does not need this external, institutional "legitimization." But it is also important to recognize how, given the way settler society works, leveraging the prestige of UCLA might support community partners in acquiring more resources, opportunities, networks, and cultural capital. Yet given that these efforts are largely individual tactics, they cannot wholly address the long-standing and ongoing disparities in access and compensation that Indigenous peoples endure within the context of higher education due to structural inequities. For example, the honoraria we provide is certainly nowhere near the equivalent of the salary for a full-time position. Still, it is always a generous sum, which can support our community partners in their work.

We also give time and space to the community partners to host their own guest lectures and workshops. We create and circulate flyers and other promotional materials for these events, many of which are open to the public and are held virtually over Zoom. We frequently co-sponsor these gatherings with UCLA's American Indian Studies Center, which is a recognized and reputable organization, and so, it can also support our community partners' connections and cultural capital. We have had people from the community partners' tribes attend the virtual events we organize from locations all over the world. In facilitating and promoting these workshops, we use the classroom as a space to illuminate the powerful work Indigenous people are already doing, and to celebrate them with people from their communities, who often virtually attend the presentations and share words of encouragement with the presenters. This is an example of "working-for" community partners, even if it's less concrete than gathering archival materials.

From the feedback I've received, several of our community partners seem excited about this type of support: for example, Jessa Calderon, who hosted a hybrid in-person/virtual book talk in the Dance and Decolonization class, shared her excitement about and appreciation for the book talk on her social media (J. Calderon 2022). My hope is that, through social media posts, flyers, and the virtual availability of these guest talks, we can help circulate information about Jessa's and other community partners' work. This might lead other educators to invite the community partners to their classes, teach Jessa's book, and so on. Of course, this support is not one-sided. Our community partners have helped us tremendously by being willing to work with us in ways that count academically and allow us to advance our careers. We could not ethically do this work without their guidance, consent, or collaboration.



Flyer for Jessa Calderon's (Gabrielino Tongva and Chumash) book talk in the Winter 2023 Dance and Decolonization class. Photo provided by Jessa Calderon; flyer created by Roth.

MS: Additionally, we can ensure that our methods remain useful for our community partners through this feedback. If the course can offer something to other educators, who might experiment with approaches comparable to those of Dance and Decolonization, then it might also be helpful to continually reassess if the course does, in fact, enact reciprocity with community partners and students.

TBW: Yes, social media has helped me to gauge whether our California tribal partners consider the community-engaged work we are doing useful. Many of our partners are active on social media and use their platforms to share about the work they undertake. They have also engaged with our posts about the community-engaged work we are doing together. In particular, they often comment on the flyers we post to advertise their public presentations. Both their individual posts and their feedback on our posts have helped me [Tria] to stay attuned to what is important to them and their communities. If the community partners like, share, or comment on our posts, they uphold us and provide helpful information for us as we continue this work.

SR: In keeping with the discussion about university resources, I'm wondering, Tria, if you might share any advice you have for leveraging institutional resources. As we have discussed, we are all complicit with the settler-capitalist underpinnings of higher education in many ways. And yet, we can repurpose higher education's resources for decolonial work. Can you share any advice for going beyond superficial actions of simply naming something as "decolonial" to other material efforts? I am interested in thinking about these questions specifically in terms of labour; this course was labour-intensive, so I am wondering how we continue these decolonial efforts accordingly.

TBW: Whether intentional or not, there is currently an increase in administrative labour for professors, which impacts our community-engaged work. Amid this increase, the university is also actively promoting community-engaged research and teaching. There is a contradiction here: professors are encouraged to do community-engaged work but are also, on some level, penalized for it because administrative duties are arduous.

When we think about leveraging resources within settler-capitalism (Speed 2019) and nurturing reciprocal relationships with Native people, we also need to grapple with issues of continuity. There is often significant emphasis on the beginning of the project, in which we strive to have the money and resources to start something new. But there is sometimes an assumption on the part of the university that, after the project is initiated, the community-engaged teaching should be self-sustainable. This is often not the reality. There is frequently a lack of ongoing, structural resources and this can make it very challenging to continue our collaborations. Working within universities, it can be really discouraging to figure out how to do community-engaged research, teaching, and service without sustained support.

Further, there are also university models that do not account for—let alone fully support—community-engaged work. For example, the Dance and Decolonization course operates with a holistic approach, linking teaching, research, and service as all components of community engagement, but most academic structures separate each of these criteria when evaluating professors' work (Roth and Blu Wakpa 2023). Universities put forth initiatives that are promotionally appealing, but they are often not providing the material support to sustain them. A similar phenomenon can occur with Indigenous communities beyond the university, such as with grants. An Indigenous organization will receive an generous grant, which they can use to expand their community programming. But when the grant funding is over, what happens to that programming? It often cannot continue, which can detrimentally impact cultural revitalization efforts and fracture trust between grant institutions and Native people.

Conclusion

This article has considered not-dancing, listening, and working-for as key actions in the process of becoming a "good relative." Being a "good relative" is an ongoing commitment, subject to critique and revision, and thus it mirrors our pedagogical process of designing, teaching, and reflecting on Dance and Decolonization, a course similarly available for critique and requiring of commitment. Shaffer and Blu Wakpa discussed this further in our conversation:

MS: Something I keep returning to when I think about this course is its urgency in our current moment, a time of intense debate about the futures of US higher education. High tuition rates and precarious employment are factors that suggest that many university degrees might be more harmful to one's economic status than indicative of economic and social mobility. For those of us in the arts and humanities, we've always known that we must "prove" why our work is important. But these pressures feel even more visceral now, as some studies show declining enrollment rates in arts and humanities subjects, as students opt for degrees which will allow them to work in Silicon Valley or wherever else (Heller 2023). For me, many of these conversations foreground mastery within utility—students become "useful" when they prove that they've mastered a particular subject or gained a skill set that is sought after. In the Dance and Decolonization class, we offer something different: how do our alternative learning goals sit within the settler-capitalist foundation of higher education, especially in this moment of public discourse about higher education?

TBW: I think it's complicated. When I recently brought my youngest daughter to UCLA with me, she asked, "Are you the boss here?" It was an interesting moment for me to reflect on the fact that I am not. After decades of formal education, two master's degrees and a PhD, I am just a worker in the capitalist system. There is no escaping our complicity in settler-capitalism, even when we do community-engaged work. But through community-engaged research, we can creatively leverage oppressive systems in anti-oppressive ways. I can use my role within the capitalist system to offer California tribal people a seat at the table because we don't currently have any California tribal scholars in UCLA's School of the Arts and Architecture. Our work in the Dance and Decolonization class, and in other university initiatives, becomes useful that way—it draws on capitalist "usefulness" to foster decolonial action.

I also think that a course like Dance and Decolonization can help us think through the limitations of how "mastery" is normatively defined. This reminds me of a lesson that my parents taught me growing up. My parents had a karate school, and they would often dispel mainstream myths in the US about what becoming a "black belt" supposedly meant. Students at the school often assumed that a "black belt" was equivalent to being an expert, but my parents reminded them that earning a black belt merely suggests mastery of the basics. I take this lesson into my own teaching: I want my students to leave the course with basic competence of California tribal histories and dance practices, as having "mastery" over them is not an achievable or appropriate goal.

For me, the goal of higher education would be to acquire basic competence and use that knowledge to establish healthy human and more-than-human relationality. My youngest daughter's next question when I brought her to campus was, "How many friends do you have here?" Essentially, she was asking, "How plentiful are your good relationships and community in this place?" Capitalist systems are very individualistic. They teach us to value being number one. But in the Dance and Decolonization course, our priority is teaching students and learning ourselves how to be a good

relative. There is no point where you've "mastered" or "completed" being a good relative. We need to think of these things as a process, and as extending beyond merely being relatives to other humans. We should also ask, How can we be better relatives to the land, air, water, and nonhuman animals? Given anthropocentric norms in settler society, being a good relative can mean seeking the guidance of people who are Indigenous to the land, and for whom the land has always been considered a relative rather than a resource.

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Ultimately, the Dance and Decolonization class impacted us all differently based on our own positionalities and familiarity with Indigenous dance and California tribal peoples, especially the Tongva, Chumash, Costanoan Rumsen Carmel Tribe, and Winnemem Wintu nations. For some students, the course might provide the beginning of continued reciprocal work with California Indigenous communities; for others, it might have offered an introduction to alternative imaginings of dance, prompting new understandings of what dance—and specifically Indigenous dances—can do. For us, not-dancing, listening, and working-for are not conclusive nor finalized learning goals. They do not represent the totality of strategies available for pursuing relationalities in the (settler colonial) classroom. Yet, in the Dance and Decolonization class, these practices enabled emphasis on Indigenous presence. Students, instructors, and assistants learned to be present for Indigenous presence, affirming the possibilities of how Indigenous dances can be understood even within the constraints of higher education and its often settler-capitalist goals. As our community partner Desiree Munoz (Costanoan Rumsen Carmel Tribe) reminded us:

> Everybody needs to start somewhere. There's a curriculum in each classroom and a syllabus, but you can adapt it to make it still have that [focus on learning about] colonization and a decolonial twist on [the material] to get [students] really thinking. . . . No matter where [the class is or] what topic you bring, always an Indigenous voice can blossom. [Indigenous perspectives] can water it, make it . . . flourish. (D. Munoz 2023)

Notes

1. This article was supported by a 2022 Instructional Improvement Grant from UCLA's Center for the Advancement of Teaching. We extend our gratitude to Marc Levis-Fitzgerald, Amy Liu, and Casey Shapiro for assisting us with the development and implementation of this course. With this support, we received Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for our methodologies, including analyzing student responses and assignments. All student responses quoted anonymously within this paper are shared with permission in accordance with our approved research protocols.

2. In this student's reflection paper, they reference their role as a "guest" on Indigenous land. Although they might merely be referring to their non-Indigeneity in general terms, Tongva and Acjachemen scholar Charles Sepulveda (2018) has also theorized the "guest" as a "decolonial possibility" for non-Native peoples.

3. Within her ongoing community-engaged research, Tria Blu Wakpa works with both tribal individuals and formal representatives of Indigenous nations. Throughout this project, they have all shared their work with us from their individual perspectives rather than providing formal statements on behalf of their tribes. Their views cannot, nor should they be expected to, represent entire nations, which are made up of unique individuals like any collective. For more information on Tria Blu Wakpa's community-engaged research, teaching, and service with California Indigenous communities, see Roth and Blu Wakpa (2023). For more

information about the work that our community partners do, see T. Calderon (n.d.); J. Calderon (n.d.); Costanoan Rumsen Carmel Tribe (n.d.); and Truong (2021).

4. In an early planning meeting for Blu Wakpa's Dance and Decolonization course held on Zoom in 2021, the community partners preferred the terminology "California tribal" as the primary term to refer to them, although noted that Native and Indigenous were also acceptable.

5. Most proposed education restrictions are relevant in K-12 classrooms; as Gabriel and Nehamas (2023) note, Republican politicians in Florida, South Carolina, and Texas, among other states, have attempted to limit K-12 class materials about race, gender, and sexuality.

6. Although the participants in Dance and Decolonization did typically self-identify as either Indigenous or non-Indigenous, this binary can perpetuate a damaging, dualistic framing that homogenizes the vast diversity of Indigenous groups. It also obscures the experiences of Indigenous peoples with mixed heritage, who might identify with both Indigenous and non-Indigenous categories or think of themselves as "falling somewhere in-between" (Dicks 2023, 261).

7. The Religious Crimes Code of 1883 banned Native dances and ceremonies and authorized extreme settler violence to enforce these restrictions. In response, Indigenous peoples utilized creative strategies to maintain their dance practices ranging from asserting first amendment rights by arguing for the religious significance of dances to secularizing dances and emphasizing their similarities to mainstream social dance practices (Wenger 2011). Many of these strategies contended with stereotypical representations of Native practices as "heathen" and "barbaric," which undergirded the ban. On January 3, 1934, John Collier, the new Bureau of Indian Affairs commissioner, issued Circular No. 2970 on "Indian Religious Freedom and Indian Culture," which repealed the dance ban (Willard 1991). Although this lifted formal restrictions on dance, mainstream misrepresentations of Indigenous peoples and their practices persisted in ways that continued to infringe upon Native traditions. In 1978, the US Congress passed the Native American Religious Freedoms Act to address ongoing interference with Native practices, citing the "denial of access to certain sacred religious sites, restrictions on the use of substances, and actual interference with religious events" (Martin 1990). Notably, many of these dynamics persist in the present day, particularly the denial of access to sacred sites, which can be essential to some Native dances. In that way, some Indigenous dance and ceremonial practices continue to be infringed upon despite these purported formal protections. For more on controversies and Native strategies to repeal the dance ban, see Wenger (2009, 2011) and Willard (1991). For more on the limitations of the ban's reversal and the Native American Religious Freedoms Act, see Martin (1990).

8. Additionally, as Shea Murphy articulates, US officials criticized Native dance by "emphasizing waste and lack of productivity," which counters Protestant and settler capitalist ideals (2007, 86).

9. Course assessments for the Dance and Decolonization class consisted of four reflection papers, which students completed after each research session. The reflection papers encouraged students to think critically about their positionalities, relationships with community partners, and contextualize the sessions in relation to course readings. Reflection papers were then shared with community partners as a way to enact reciprocity. Community partners have commented to Blu Wakpa that they appreciate reading them and knowing how their words resonated with students.

10. We use the definition of *decolonial* from Roth and Blu Wakpa's article: "collaborating with Indigenous peoples and centring them and their practices, acknowledging ongoing Indigenous sovereignty while working to shift power dynamics and the distribution of resources (including returning land)—which is inextricable from Indigenous futures (Wolfe 2016, 387)—and challenging long-standing, settler-capitalist, academic conventions and hierarchies" (2023, 76).

11. A student in the Winter 2024 iteration of the Dance and Decolonization course notably employed North American Hand Talk as a spontenous act of reciprocity during a Talking Circle in which all participants were invited to share at the California Tribal Gathering, an event co-organized by the community partners, Blu Wakpa, and Roth. In this way, the North American Hand Talk assignment directly prepared the student to enact reciprocity with the community partners.

12. For more on settler sacrifice see, T. Blu Wakpa (2021).

13. Course readings included dance-focused texts like Cutcha Risling Baldy's (Hupa, Yurok, Karuk) *We Are Dancing For You* (2018) and Tsim Schneider's (Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria) "Dancing on the Brink of the World" (2021), as well as broader scholarship on decolonizing methodologies and cultural revitalization including Charles Sepulveda's (Tongva and Acjachemen) "Our Sacred Waters" (2018) and Yve Chavez's (Gabrieleno Tongva San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians) dissertation (2017), among others.

14. The Indian Child Welfare Act is a statute passed by US Congress and enacted in 1984 that addresses policies and practices that have separated Native American children from their families. The statute aims "to protect the best interest of Indian Children and to promote the stability and security of Indian tribes and families (25 U.S. C. 1902)." At the time of teaching the Dance and Decolonization class, the US Supreme Court upheld ICWA following a challenge to the statue from a White couple, who claimed that ICWA was discriminatory, as it determines adoption of children based on "race." See FindLaw (2023).

15. Community partner Tina Calderon expressed interest in visiting the Huntington Library, a large educational and research institution on Tongva lands, which holds some archives related to the Tongva people. As part of her research session, Calderon, Blu Wakpa, and the students visited the Huntington to explore its archives.

16. Indeed, at the March 2024 California Tribal Gathering, which the community partners, Blu Wakpa, and Roth co-organized, one of the tribes did invite non-Native participants to join them for one dance. The California Tribal Gathering had a designated time for invited, non-California tribal participants to join the event as well as private components, which allowed the community partners to share solely among themselves.

17. GLAM, or Galleries, Libraries, Archives, and Museums, is a common acronym used to refer to institutions that control access to knowledge oftentimes related to cultural heritage.

18. At UCLA, graduate students are typically employed as either teaching assistants (TAs) or graduate student researchers (GSRs). TAs assist faculty with classroom activities; GSRs support faculty research outside the classroom, helping with faculty research projects and publications. Students with GSR employment are typically not permitted to attend the classes that faculty teach, even if they are supporting the faculty member with teaching-related research.

19. In a study of Indigenous representation in K-12 curricula in the US, Shear et al. found that 86.6 percent "of the state-level US and state history standards dictate the teaching of Indigenous peoples in the context of pre-1900 history" (2015, 82). Although some students in the Dance and Decolonization course might have encountered more information about Indigenous peoples through their K-12 education, this statistic provides important context for the lack of knowledge about Indigeneity that students might be entering our class with; for example, some students might be unaware that Indigenous people exist, and thrive, in our current moment, if their education limited Indigenous existence to the past. For more see Shear et al. (2015).

20. For more background on the use of "working-for" within decolonial initiatives at UCLA specifically, see Roth and Blu Wakpa (2023).

21. When planning for the Dance and Decolonization class began, another community partner, Deborah Sanchez, was included in the process. Sanchez, who is Chumash, has collaborated with Blu Wakpa on several projects; however, she ultimately decided that her potential project for the course was not appropriate to share with students.

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INTERVIEW

The Speed of the Land: An Interview with Karen Jamieson

Alana Gerecke

It is a rainy winter day in Vancouver, on the unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətaɬ (Tsleil-Waututh), and I have just climbed the steep steps into Karen Jamieson's old character house in the Mount Pleasant neighbourhood—the city's first suburb. I've been here before, seated at the end of the long, wooden table that fills her living room—a table, she tells me, that she adopted from a performance space her company used early in her career. I have been engaging with Jamieson and her place-based dance practice for a decade now, learning from her about her explorations of topography, settler-Indigenous relations, and the role of dance in creating bridges between ecosystems, cultures, and animacies.

Jamieson is a settler dance artist who has made significant contributions to place-based dance, community-engaged performance, and settler-Indigenous collaborative practice. She is currently in the midst of a multiyear retrospective project, *Body to Land*, which has her returning to three pieces she choreographed in the 1990s: *Stone Soup* (1995–97), *The River* (1998), and *Gawa Gyani* (1991–94). Jamieson's return to these key works is motivated by an effort to share with the next generation of settler artists what she has learned about collaborating with Indigenous artists and communities. I am in the early stages of a creative process with Jamieson, building on my practice-based doctoral research on *The River*. Together, we plan to co-direct a reimagined version of this site-based, processional, and community-engaged piece in spring 2025. Because Jamieson focuses on *Stone Soup* and *Gawa Gyani* in our conversation, I'll offer a bit of context to set up each piece.

Stone Soup took the form of a five-week tour of Northern British Columbia that sought to perform a "Gluk"—which the Karen Jamieson Dance company website defines as a Gitxsan concept meaning "a ceremony of redoing a wrong." Central to this ceremony was the process of asking permission, according to Nation-specific protocols, to enter and dance. Jamieson's return to this piece has resulted in the development of *Gluk* (2024), a documentary that revisits the communities *Stone Soup* travelled within. In *Gluk,* many of the Indigenous collaborators from the original *Stone Soup* tour share their memories about the events and speak about the value of returning to these memories more than two decades later. This documentary centres around Gitxsan artist, educator, and writer Doreen Jensen, who mentored Jamieson in cross-cultural collaboration from the time of their first encounter in 1987 until Jensen's passing in 2009.

Performed at the Museum of Anthropology, *Gawa Gyani* was a collaboration between Jamieson and Chief Kenneth Harris, late Gitxsan Chief and co-founder of Dancers of Damelahamid. The piece grew out of the conversations Jensen and Jamieson were having about cross-cultural collaboration.

Based in Vancouver (Canada), on the unceded territories of the Squamish, Musqueam, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations, **Alana Gerecke** is a settler scholar and artist of mixed European descent. Her exploration of the spatial politics of urban choreographies spans academic research and artistic practice, grounding her performance making, writing, teaching, and parenting. **Karen Jamieson** is acknowledged nationally for her choreographic masterworks and innovative work in community engaged and cross-cultural dance. She co-founded the experimental collective Terminal City Dance, before establishing Karen Jamieson Dance in 1983 as a vehicle for the creation and production of works exploring dance as a mytho-poetic language. https://www.kjdance.ca

Jensen's definition of *Gawa Gyani* is quoted on the KJD company website: "Sometime during our discussion, I told Karen about an ancient and still used method of Gitxsan government. When there are differences and conflicts, the two sides would be called into to discuss these differences in neutral territory for just resolution. This ancient system is called 'gawa gyani.'" In this instance, the structure of the collaboration positions performance as a site where settler collaborators are invited into a "gawa gyani" so that they might learn and have the opportunity to acknowledge, embody, and navigate differences with respect.

I prepared for my conversation with Jamieson by generating a list of questions, a list I sent Jamieson some weeks prior to this meeting. Each of my questions grows out of my positionality as a white, settler artist who is seeking to be a better guest on unceded Squamish, Musqueam, and Tsleil-Waututh land. From this vantage point, one I share with Jamieson, our conversation considers the complexities of orienting dance practice toward deepening connection with land, and of working with Indigenous collaborators in a respectful and nonextractive way. Because of its focus on settler perspectives—Jamieson's and mine—this conversation is circumscribed by its positionality, yet I also feel like there are insights in Jamieson's reflections that can serve the important work of decolonization. In what follows, I've pulled out highlights from our ninety-minute-long conversation, selecting moments that will contribute, I hope, to broader considerations of the potential of performance to reconfigure settler-Indigenous relations. In Jamieson's work, this reconfiguring is enacted through a slow growing of relationships, a centring of Nation-specific protocols, and the effort of settler bodies to physically meet and inhabit these protocols, where appropriate—all nested within a willingness to be called out and corrected.

Our conversation starts with a discussion of Jamieson's training and early career, before I lead us toward her experimental uses of proscenium spaces, her explorations with audience placement, and her choice to make place-based dances. As we discuss her innovations within and beyond stage spaces, she notes her early-career curiosities about the power of dance to transform our relationships with spaces and their communities: "Well, first of all, an underlying thing of just being in *love* with this artform and wondering: what other powers does this artform have? What other layers and powers does this artform have? What other facets to this art form can I explore?" To flesh out this point, Jamieson describes her 1990 National Gallery of Canada commission, *Passage*, a commission sited within the unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinabeg. As she describes it, this piece opened Jamieson to choreographing beyond the stage: in rotundas, stairwells, and hallways; her company found themselves "embodying the architecture [and] playing with the space."

Alana Gerecke (AG): So this is a real shift. You're doing site-based work here. . . . And did that whet an appetite for you?

Karen Jamieson (KJ): Well, what it whetted is an *old* obsession of mine, which is spirit of place. That spirit of place is real: you actually can capture it through the dancing body. [As we talk, Jamieson scrolls through her website to jog her memory about piece titles and production dates.]

And then—spirit of place—then, yes, *Rainforest* in 1987. Michael Ames, the director of the Museum of Anthropology invited me to bring *Rainforest* to show there. And then [Gitxsan artist and writer] Doreen Jensen pushed back. She said: "No! It's full of appropriation." So, Michael introduced Doreen and I, and we had a chat. And it was quite adversarial. What she said is: "It's full of appropriation. You can't do this." So I was uninvited from the Museum of Anthropology; the

invitation was rescinded. But then Doreen and Michael and I started meeting to discuss the question: *is it possible to create collaboratively with white people, European, and First Nations?* We spent three years talking, and out of that came *Gawa Gyani*. *Gawa Gyani* was a collaboration between a professional dance company and a First Nations dance group, a traditional family dance group. . . .

Ah yes, and then there was *Stone Soup*: there's a big, monster of a piece—'95–'97. That piece was instigated and kind of co-directed by Doreen Jensen. She wanted me to understand the Gitxsan concept of *gluk*. Actually, she wanted me to understand how the Gitxsan language worked—which is much more poetic than European languages; one word, like *gluk*, can have multiple meanings that gives it a kind of poetic capacity that English just doesn't have. So, she tried to teach me Gitxsan. It was hopeless. The language was simply beyond me. But I understood a lot *about* the language from trying to learn the language—and this concept of *gluk*. She explained it as a "ceremony of redoing a wrong as in replacing a rotten plank in the foundation of a structure." She introduced the concept to me and proposed that we create a dance ceremony that would fulfil a *gluk*. It is a piece in the system of restorative justice: you fulfil a *gluk* by taking this ceremony asking permission to enter and dance on each of the First Nations ancestral lands we came to. So we did! At the beginning of every performance, we would ask people who had an ancestral connection to the land for permission to enter and dance—which they always gave to us.

Stone Soup dancers standing in front of Kitsumkalum Community Hall, Tsimshian territory, 1997. Photographer unknown; image courtesy of Karen Jamieson Dance.

AG: Ok, so then, this piece is mid-1990s, and you're returning to it now…

KJ: Yes: I've been observing the up-and-coming artists in the dance community—and also being asked questions like, "how do you collaborate with Indigenous people?" And I thought, I can't *tell* anybody how to do this work. But if I could, with the significant pieces, the pieces I've created over

the fifty years that I think are significant and that carry information, insights, discoveries that I *really* want to pass on—those are the pieces that I am returning to. . . . The batch of returns that I call *Body to Land* are those pieces that revealed or uncovered connections between our bodies and the land.

AG: And that is *Stone Soup, Gawa Gyani*, and *The River*. Those '90s pieces.

KJ: Yep.

AG: And you're returning to them in different ways.

KJ: Yes, because they're very different.

AG: And you've just wrapped a phase of your return to *Stone Soup*, right?

KJ: Well, yes. As I said: deeper, deeper, deeper. I have found myself *very* dissatisfied with our original ceremony to ask permission.

AG: The ceremony that you had enacted and performed in the piece during the tour of northwest BC in the '90s—with stops in the traditional territories of the Wet'suwet'en Haisla, Gitxsan, Tsimshian, Nisga'a, and Haida Nations?

KJ: Yeah, that we did then. What was so frustrating with this return to the piece, was as I discovered as I went more and more and deeper and deeper . . . , I really understood something that I hadn't fully understood the first time around, is that the relationship to land and the understanding of the human's relationship to land is so profoundly different that I could see that we had some just *junk* in the '90s ceremony. . . . Ancestral land is the place that gave birth to the people, whoever they are, whichever nation they're from, which creates a relationship to all the flora and the fauna and everything—they're relatives.

AG: A kin relationship.

KJ: Yes. What I realized is that our original ceremony to ask permission was like: "Yo, you generic Indigenous people over there, we'd like permission to enter your generic piece of land." I realized that this ceremony needs to be redone in terms of absolute specificity of land and the people of that land. Because part of it is understanding relationships to land that are deep, and profoundly different from colonial ones—and that changes everything.

AG: It's radically specific—not pan-Indigenous.

KJ: Yes. So that's what I've been trying to think about with this return to the piece. And I'll work on a re-created ceremony to ask permission that will specifically address the land-specific people of my local context: the Squamish, Musqueam, and Tsleil-Waututh people.

AG: The process sounds like it's kind of a re-doing of the re-doing—a kind of *gluk* of the *gluk*.

KJ: Mm, hmm. Yeah, and in the meeting with the family of Doreen [Jensen], her sisters and daughter—and with Russell [Wallace, a musician from the St'át'imc and Lil'wat Nation]—in coming

up with materials and direction for Doreen's honour song, one of Doreen's sisters said: "Gluk: it means *shame*." I've been told that, but I think that's what Doreen was really after. Like Vince Jackson [Chief Ha'gbi'gwaxtu of the Fireweed Clan, Gitxsan Nation] has said—and he's in our *Gluk* video saying this—what *gluk* actually is, it's a ceremony whereby the person who has transgressed cleanses themselves of the shame of their transgression. And then they are in a position to ask forgiveness. So, do you see the parallel between Canada and some of the terrible transgressions like the residential schools? We, Canadians, have to cleanse ourselves of the shame. But I have to tell you, Alana, that shame is a hard sell. There are not many folks who want to go near it, let alone wear it.

AG: Sit with it. Process it.

KJ: Have to weep in shame and cleanse oneself. Or even acknowledge that you have to take that shame on. And when I try to explain it, you can just feel people withdrawing, moving as far away as they can—even if they are sitting where you are. Because shame is a hard sell; nobody wants it. What became clear is that the European colonizers took this big *gluk* of shame and forced these Indigenous children to carry it: shame of who they were, shame for their culture, shame for their everything. And that we need to take it back. And wear it. . . .

AG: I know that you're not interested in prescribing a process, but I do see you mentoring folks right now, and I wonder: what have you learned about approaching this sort of work from your position as a settler, and what are you interested in passing on to the next generation of artists?

KJ: Hmm, well: learning to listen, really listen—listen deeply to all the layers of meaning of what is being said. . . . Which means not necessarily asking questions, but just listen to what's being said for all the layers of meaning within it.

Back then, in the '90s, we wouldn't Zoom or any of that. I had to go there and talk to people, person to person, because that's the only way. And the talk to people meant, keep your talk to a minimum and listen, listen, listen. Meeting people. Developing a relationship of trust—which takes time. Nothing can happen, nothing can be done without building a relationship of trust. [Long pause.] And taking the time that it takes to develop a solid ground to work from. And that's hard for us Western thinkers. I remember being told, somewhere up in Gitxsan territory, "You're just not going to be able to go at the speed you're used to going. It's like you're used to going at the speed of somebody skiing over the glacier down the hill. Think, rather, the speed of the glacier itself as it moves. That's the speed you've got to go."

AG: The speed of the land.

KJ: "And if you can't slow down to that speed," they told me, "you're not going to get anywhere." So for me, you know, dependent as I am upon funding bodies who are expecting you to bang out a piece a year, you've just got to say: it takes time. Just accept that, please. Because that how it's goes. So: slow, listening, and being ready to completely change your ideas about something. You may go in with an idea, what it is you want to do and how it should unfold: be prepared to change all of that—if you're offered information that doesn't fit in with that. Be prepared to change: flexible, fluid, patient.

KJD dancers and Spirit of the Kitlope dancers on a boat heading to Kemano, BC, Haisla territory, 1997. Photographer unknown; image courtesy of Karen Jamieson Dance.

AG: I feel like there's also something I've seen in your career about continuing to show up—even when it's uncomfortable, when you've been called out, or when you've made a mistake.

KJ: Oh! Totally, totally, totally. That is really important. Yeah, I mean like the very first meeting with Doreen. You know if I had been put off, like [puts on a playful voice]: ah, I thought I did a fabulous job with *Rainforest*! How could she possibly say its…?

AG: Or just too ashamed to even show up. Just shut down.

KJ: Yes. That's true. I think that has been part of my modus operandi, is that I'm willing to be called out, told I've done something wrong, and corrected.

AG: Yeah, it seems to me that it's even part of your aesthetic: re-doing a wrong. And then re-doing that again.

KJ: Yeah, that is part of it. That's the work.

AG: So, coming back to that question that you sat with after *Rainforest*, thinking about whether it's possible…

KJ: How would you work in collaboration with Indigenous artists…

AG: From your positionality as a white, Euro-settler…

KJ: Without it being appropriation? Ah, yeah.

AG: So still holding that question…?

KJ: That question always has to be there. [Pause] Ken Harris [late Gitxsan Chief and co-founder of Dancers of Damelahamid] made me understand that learning the protocols and working within the protocols is part of the work. The protocols cannot be sidestepped.

AG: And if I'm understanding *Stone Soup* and *Gluk*, your work lives inside of trying to meet those protocols.

KJ: Yeah, yes.

AG: As we wrap up, I'll ask you this: You have spent decades of your career exploring the social, community, and healing work of dance. Thinking about healing, thinking about redressing, thinking about connection to land and kinship with land, do you have anything to say about dance as a mode of land acknowledgement, or a way of tending land or a way of understanding land, or relation?

KJ: Well, of course all of us—everybody in Canada—should participate in a *gluk*. Are we going to? Highly unlikely. But that's what we need to do. Because a basic fundamental principal of a lot of Indigenous work is that just *saying* something isn't enough. You've got to *do* it. The ceremony, the physical enactment or embodiment is the transformative piece. And what is required here is *transformation*. And I guess I do believe that dance is positioned to be able to help us along this road, but I'm not sure how much we [she gestures outward with her hands] want to go down this road.

AG: We, collectively, as a nation that runs away from shame.

KJ: We, collectively: Canada. We don't want to feel ashamed.

AG: But in an ideal—in your practice—you see a role for dance as a healing force, a way to strengthen connection to land?

KJ: Yes, connection to land, connection to self, and healing the spirit. Connection to others in a very solid and healing way.

AG: Thank you so much for sharing all of this with me—for your time and your insights. I'm really interested in offering some of your insights to people who are asking questions like this, and who are maybe at a different place on a similar path.

KJ: Yeah, and there's a steep learning curve. [Laugh] I can attest to that. This isn't anything that you can know already. Because the hugeness of the difference between, say, Indigenous cultures and European culture is just massive. There is so much to learn. We have a lot to learn. Which I guess is why I think this work is important. Better late than never.

X: where paths cross

Peter Morin and Leah Decter

X - where paths cross: In this paper, we will discuss the ways our ongoing collaborative performance(s) of "X: where our paths cross" straddle the varied intimacies of live and virtual spaces of visiting and activate noncolonial concepts of host-guest relations that enact Indigenous sovereignties and confront the certainty of settler emplacement, while considering the responsibilities of settler guesting. As the first iteration of our writing about this ongoing performance, this is by no means an exhaustive discussion of the work. As we develop new versions, we will continue to reflect on how it evolves and uncover the ways it builds on our propositions here.

"X: where our paths cross" is a series of performances that occur in virtual, in-person, and hybrid formats. They bring together Peter Morin's work with Tahltan knowledge and sovereignties through embodied activations of a publication of Tahltan stories "collected" and transcribed by white anthropologist James Teit (1919, 1921) in the early 1900s, and Leah Decter's work in disturbing patterns of white settler entitlement and settler-state sovereignty, in part through interrogations of the Group of Seven's landscape painting traditions, which date to the same period as Teit's publications. Both Teit's work, which reductively formulizes and freezes Tahltan stories as it documents them, and the Group of Seven's work, which significantly influenced/s "Canadian" national identity in celebration of settler emplacement, demonstrate forms of possession and extractivism that aim to superimpose colonial sovereignty and whiteness over existing Indigenous sovereignties and knowledges. The practices we see in Teit's work and in that of the Group of Seven extend stubbornly into the present, continuing to shape relations in the lands now called Canada. Engaging the X where Indigenous sovereignties intersect with the necessary activation of settler responsibilities across our different ancestries, the "X: where our paths cross" performances are an intentional deployment of noncolonial relations. They are part of a larger project titled "in care of" that itself results from an ongoing collaborative relationship—a friendship that necessarily extends beyond the confines of artistic production and academic discourse and outputs—between artist-scholars Peter Morin, who is of Tahltan Nation and French Canadian ancestry, and Leah Decter, an Ashkenazi Jewish white settler.

In keeping with our subversion of academic expectations (Teit) and artistic conventions (Gof7), our contribution to this issue blends writing and time-based media in the form of this text, as well as an animated poetic version of a transcript from one of our early exchanges about the project, and video

Peter Morin is a grandson of Tahltan Ancestor artists. His artistic offerings can be organized around four themes: articulating Land/Knowing, articulating Indigenous grief/loss, articulating Community Knowing, and understanding the creative agency/power of the Indigenous body. The work takes place in galleries, in community, in collaboration, and on the land. Morin holds a BFA from Emily Carr University of Art and Design and an MFA from the University of British Columbia Okanagan. He is associate professor at the Ontario College of Art and Design University in Toronto. **Leah Decter** is an inter-media/performance artist and scholar who divides her time between Treaty 1 territory and Kjipuktuk/Halifax, where she is an assistant professor in media arts and Canada Research Chair in Creative Technologies at NSCAD University. Working from a critical white settler perspective, her solo and collaborative art and research practices address and disturb social-spatial dynamics of settler colonial whiteness through the ethic of being-in-relation. Decter holds an MFA in new media from Transart Institute and a PhD in cultural studies from Queen's University.

excerpts from two of the fully virtual performances.[1] In the text, a chronicle of the work's inception is interwoven with both our reflections on its trajectory and theoretical implications as well as descriptions of its iterations. The text has elements of a performance score, using repetition as an iterative device that offers a gentle disturbance to the traditional academic paper. The animation takes the form of a deconstructed conversation that activates a metaphoric crossing—an X—while the video brings the reader/viewer into the sphere of the performance itself.

X - where paths cross: The idea of our shared work forming an X—a crossing—came from a conversation Peter had years ago. Peter remembers they were talking about Indigenous value systems in a college/room with Victor and Ellen Newman, two of the main Elders and Indigenous Knowledge Leaders working with the Camosun College Indigenous Studies department. Peter also worked there at the time. Peter can't really remember exactly what brought him to that room, on that particular day, whether it was a departmental request or just chance, but he feels luckier because of it as they were gathering to discuss Indigenous Studies, Indigenous pedagogy, and the Lewkungen knowledge practice/production.

Peter remembers these three things Victor shared with the group:

Victor said: We don't have that word *Elder*.

Peter remembers how he was saying it. He remembers that Victor expressed frustration with having to "deal with that type of word" and how much work is required by the community to negotiate its imposed/implied meaning within the established Indigenous knowledge systems. Like, we need to learn your English language to talk with you, and you haven't learned our Indigenous languages to talk with us. And we have to keep those English words as a way to live meaningfully when these words have nothing to do with us currently living well.

Victor said: The closest word in our language to indicate a similar type of meaning in English would be the Lekwungen word used to indicate a "wise person."

He went further to amplify his point about being tired of negotiating their outside meaning by talking about the X that you see signed on treaty documents. Peter remembers how clear and concise his offerings were.

Victor said: They are always misunderstanding what was being marked by those Indigenous people at those treaty negotiations on the land.

That this X is always positioned by the dominant culture as a recognition of difference, that they think we aren't able to participate in their systems because we didn't have a writing system recognizable to them. Victor said, the marking of the X is an acknowledgment of our walking paths that have crossed here, in this place, and in this time. Peter keeps imagining those earlier paper documents, those treaty documents, and seeing this mark of X alongside the drawn "representations" of that Indigenous leader's collective and held knowledge. These images are better understood as ciphers, ciphers that hold a series of potential pathways into the collective, acquired, and held knowledge(s) of the mark maker. The x, or rather this X, is a physical manifestation of these new and potential world(s). This X also makes a space to acknowledge bodies and how those bodies are moving on the land—how they intersect.

X - where paths cross: The initial premise of the "in care of" project, which led to the "X: where our paths cross" performances, was that Leah would visit collaborators, such as Peter, in the territories of their home Nations and collaborate on works that counter the colonial and extractivist practices emblematic of the Group of Seven (and colonization as a whole). This larger project aligns with Indigenous scholars, such as Michi Saagig Nishnaabeg scholar, writer, and artist Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (2008), who highlight the need for all Canadians to shift the colonial dynamics of our present moment and recognize that this requires significant changes to the prevailing Canadian consciousness, including assumptions about place and settler emplacement. It also responds to the essence of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Call to Action 46:ii (2015), which appeals for the "repudiation of concepts used to justify European [Canadian] sovereignty over Indigenous lands and peoples" (5).

"in care of" was to include videos, animations, and drawings of the land created collaboratively, following nation-specific protocols with respect to visiting and documenting or re-presenting aspects of the lands and territories. These relational components of the project would adhere to principles of reciprocity, and archives of these engagements would be part of the artworks so as to contextualize the re-presentations of place/land by making visible (where appropriate and with permissions) the processes of negotiation and care—those of hosting and guesting. In this way, rather than being transformed into landscape images that reiterate the unfettered access of settler emplacement, the representations of land in this project would offer a relational view of place that foregrounds Indigenous sovereignty and enacts respectful relations through the ethics of permission, protocol, and reciprocity. In essence, these negotiations or relations, made visible as part of the artwork, would be a form of informal, personal "treaty" or agreement that would foreground host-guest relations in noncolonial terms.

X - where paths cross: We first planned for Leah to visit Tahltan Nation territory with Peter in the summer of 2019. Days before the departure, wildfires prevented travel to the territory. Then, subsequent strains on the community meant that travelling in the area remained impossible. We began planning for travel in the next summer. However, with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, in-person visiting was at least temporarily out of the question. By May 2020, with everyone beginning to understand that travel restrictions and "social distancing" would very likely extend well past the summer, we did what many others were doing at the time: we adapted the project to an online format of visiting. These visits began at that time in 2020 and continue today.

In retrospect, both the delay due to wildfires and the shift due to COVID-19 benefited the project. In saying that these adverse situations were good for the project, we want to be clear that we recognize both have had significant negative effects—the wildfires on the local communities, human and more-than-human, and the pandemic on people globally. That said, the postponement of the initial trip proved valuable in that it slowed the project down and gave us additional time to think and feel more deeply about what we hoped to undertake. The necessity of moving off the land because of COVID-19, and our reworking of the project to an online format, was also a gift. We note here that moving online is not without responsibilities to territory consequent to practices of colonial extractivism, and following scholars such as Jill Carter (Anishinaabe/Ashkenazi), we acknowledge our debt to the Muwekma Ohlone tribal nation, on whose territory Zoom headquarters are located.[2]

We took the challenge of moving online as an opportunity to create a new tributary of visiting and decided that, in preparation, Peter would email photos of Tahltan territory, taken by him and his family over decades, to Leah. In May 2020, in one of the early Zoom meetings where we came together to begin to shape the project, post-wildfires and early in COVID times, we discussed this idea of tributaries as opposed to translations; how the photos Peter sent Leah were taken in different eras by different people and, in this way, formed different tributaries through which to "see" and "listen to" the land and its stories. The idea of tributaries arose from the presence of rivers: the Stikine and Tahltan Rivers seen in so many of the photos and the Red River that Leah could see from her window. These presences of rivers were intensified by Peter's and Leah's individual associations with rivers through their experiences, and through those of their ancestors. While we can only touch on this in the context of this text, we offer the following as a glimpse into these associations.

In 1917, at age fourteen, Leah's maternal grandfather, her Zaida, known as Ernie Field or Aaron Gottesfeld, escaped a pogrom by swimming across a river in advance of his village in the Austro-Hungarian Empire being attacked. He waited for days before swimming back to find the village razed to the ground. He was the sole survivor. He swam once again across the river and began seven years of displacement that ultimately led him to translocate to the lands now known as Canada as part of the colonial project of "settlement." This personal history and understandings of the role rivers have played in colonial invasion and expansion, together with a proximity to rivers that has afforded close observation, led Leah to consider rivers as harbingers of change; as barriers and borders; as conveyances for visiting, safe passage, and invasion; and as "always at once what was, what is now, and what will be" (Decter 2018, v). The meeting of the Stikine and Tahltan Rivers represents an important intersection of time and place for the Tahltan Nation. In the story, often referred to as the "Origin of the Wolf Clan" by anthropologists, women from different geographic locations follow along these rivers and meet each other for the first time. One woman from further north, one woman from the coast, and one woman from the interior all connect at this place. This location, where the two rivers intersect, is a place that Tahltan Nation people have been gathering for thousands of years.

With rivers at the fore, the concept of tributaries flowed naturally. The framework of tributaries has now extended into our thinking of each iteration of this project—each move to different platforms or formats as well as each performance—as another tributary that has its own route, rather than being a translation that gains or loses something in the process of passing from one mode to another.

The fluid pathways created through the exchange of photos and stories in the initial Zoom meeting laid another important foundation for us moving forward. In offering details about the photos, as admittedly provisional depictions of Tahltan territory, Peter introduced Leah to the land through his experiential descriptions of how to get from here to there, reflections on the physicality of vantage points, and recounting of family and community histories that connect to Tahltan knowledge and the histories of colonial incursion. This meant that, before hearing the stories as told by Tahltan Ancestors, as transmuted by James Teit, and as read aloud by Peter through embodied sovereignty, Leah began to get to know these places and their histories—familial and otherwise—through Peter's direct re-collection. She began to get to know the land though not with the intention of knowing the land in the way Peter does. Following along these tributaries, Peter's reading easily becomes speaking or telling these Tahltan stories. This reading as performance offers an opportunity for the

Tahltan meaning embedded within the spoken words to be felt on, and within, the body of the speaker/listener(s).

X - where paths cross: The land comes in here, especially at this time, when we were not *on* the land, as an initial layer of "site/ation" (Morin and Willard 2018). We draw here on Tania Willard's characterization of site/ation as a practice of citation in which the land is referenced and acknowledged as a critical contributor to developing knowledge.[3] Tania Willard is a Secwépemc artist and scholar whose ongoing contributions include BUSH gallery, which she started in 2014 with Gabe L'hirondelle Hill, Peter Morin, and Jeneen Frei Njootli as a site of Indigenous experimental creation. We call on site/ation as an acknowledgment of all the Indigenous territories that have participated in the development of this scholarship and this project, particularly Tahltan territory, Tkaronto, Yintah, Secwepemcúl'ecw, Kjipuktuk, Mi'kma'ki, Wolastoqiyik and Wabanaki territories, the territories of the Cree, Dakota, Anishininiimowin (Oji-Cree), Očhéthi Šakówiŋ, Anishinabewaki ᐊᓂᔑᓇᐯᒧᐎᓐ and Métis Nations as well as the Muwekma Ohlone Nation.

When we decided to move online, we had to make, out of whole cloth, a new version of, or tributary for, the kind of noncolonial host-guest coming together we had intended to take place on the land. We had to do this without proximity of bodies, without the smells and sounds and tactile feel of the land and the elements, without the kilometres and hours of process in getting there, without the proximity and relationality of community in place. It was to be the two of us in identical landscape-format Zoom frames, with audio lags and the now familiar visual glitches of the online meeting. Our first planning meeting had Peter holding his phone up to the camera to show Leah the photos, and Leah finding the corresponding version she had printed from the email attachments Peter sent. It was cumbersome, as such things were at the time on Zoom. We looked at the photos together in that meeting and Peter talked about the locations and the people, stories, and events they brought to his mind. Later in that same meeting, we came to the idea of Peter reading from the Teit publication while Leah listened and made drawings of Tahltan territory from the photos Peter had sent. As we have discussed, we did not see this as a translation of being together IRL in territory, but rather a new and fluid path for enacting the crossing of Indigenous sovereign hosting and white settler accountable guesting—the virtual crossing of our own bodies as well as those of our ancestors. This Zoom space became the first place where our paths actually crossed in the context of this project, the first of our Xs.

X - where paths cross: The beginning of Peter's reading performances that fed into this project is here in his Facebook post from May 6, 2020:

> *Been thinking about how to reach out. Years ago I thought I should make little videos of these stories and share them. I asked Aunty and Uncle what they thought… and they said I should too… bedder late than never… I'm going to make a little video and post one almost every day for folks in the community, in the communities… We are a voice culture. And nobody wants to read these really (except for nerds like me…lol). Keep in mind that these stories are in english and were written down by a non-Tahltan person… and also edited by a non-Tahltan person. So, you have to listen for the old school Tahltan knowledge… These edited versions of our stories are available online… but also, if you want copies please just message me and I will send you a digital copy. Tahltan family and community members, no point in all of us paying for a copy of these things…just message me if you want a copy and I'll email to yous.*

There is a history of thinking/making here. I've spent a lot of time considering the nature of Tahltan thinking and spent a lot of time decoding and illuminating Tahltan knowledge that is embedded within colonial frameworks like the "museum." I think there is also this consistent pressure to be an "expert" in knowledge(s) that have purposefully been silenced by Canadian Colonialism. Tahltan knowledge is a lived, and practiced, skill. During the pandemic, "we" spent time locked-down in our houses. I was in Toronto, and we spent 300+ days locked in. I started to read these older Tahltan stories out loud on FB live, this online reading took place during the day, specifically afternoons. We were just months into being asked to stay home in order to stay safe. All of us were at home. Parents working from home, and children didn't go to school at this time. I wanted to help out with parent's work at home. I thought if I read these "stories" that I could give parents some room in their day and also, maybe kids would like this too. I gave myself two parameters: the first one being about returning these Tahltan words to Tahltan breath, the second was to be entertaining. This was the direct challenge Teit's english'd version of Tahltan words. Before each reading, I would ask, "can we listen for the Tahltan meaning hidden underneath these 'English' words?" I would also offer to the folks who "tuned in" on my Facebook live that i am returning to, or trying to return to, the breath patterns of those original Tahltan story tellers. I fancied myself a Tahltan story teller even though I've only performed an old school Tahltan story once in my career. Over the course of a couple of weeks, I read the entirety of James Teit's "Tahltan Tales." 7 hours total. At the end of this storytelling cycle, I don't know if I was able to return to that original Tahltan breath/work of those original story tellers. I was, however, keenly aware of all of the places where Tahltan breath was interrupted, or disregarded. I learned that the ones who told these stories to Teit had an elegant breath, a poetic breath that prioritized being charming because you wanted the listener to "actually" feel the words.

After a period of time, I learned that in this Facebook live reading that a generous space was opened up for Tahltan folks in the community to hear these stories spoken out/loud for the first time. I was able to respond to comments/offerings from Tahltan elders about the stories and what they remember of these stories from their childhood. My Uncle Freddy was one of those listening weekly Elders. He would write in the comments things like: that's not how my mom (aunty Gracie) would tell it. He would also write things like: I remember her words when she would tell the story. And the words he would write would be in the same order of the spoken words that were written down by James Teit. I return to this echo often. Listening across time becomes an intriguing world-re-building possibility. I return to that X as a document and acknowledgement of our meeting place. It is a place to meet the expertise of Tahltan Knowledge leaders and their application of Tahltan knowledge with James Teit as a way to speak to the complicated future(s).

X - where paths cross: In the initial iteration of "X: where our paths cross" we are in Zoom windows side by side. In one window is Peter's face. He is reading the text aloud. In the second Zoom window, we see Leah's hand drawing Tahltan land/territory featured in images taken by Peter's family during trips back to their home territory. In the windows, we see two friends who are comfortable with one another. We see a crossing of trust. The language patterns between them are filled with familiarity and the breath of often joyful exchange. As we have mentioned, the written text Peter reads aloud is attributed to an anthropologist named James Teit. We also know that the shadow editor of this text is Franz Boas. The original Tahltan knowledge leaders who offered their expertise/skill to Teit from 1910 to 1914 are not named in this publication. Intermittently throughout Peter's reading, he and Leah talk informally about the text he is reading. He can't stop himself from making Tahltan-centric comments/commentary about these Tahltan ideas written

down in English by Teit. The impromptu exchanges between Peter and Leah are not always light. It takes a toll on Peter to read these words as reinterpreted by Teit and edited by Boaz—to read these words aloud and filter them through his body.

In moving to the Zoom format, we are in a space where the boundaries of the frame in landscape format echo those of early Canadian landscape painters who continue to have a profound impact on how Canada and settler Canadians see them/ourselves. Turned ninety degrees, these frames echo the pages that James Teit's renderings of Tahltan stories are confined within. The lands the Group of Seven painters saw and the Tahltan knowledge James Teit heard extend well beyond these colonially rendered borders.[4] Like the land within the picture frame and the tellings printed within the limits of a page, our bodies are artificially confined within the Zoom borders, and at the same time, they exist and extend outside of the usual frontal head and shoulders flattened visage represented in the Zoom box on our computer screens. In these Zoom performances, our paths cross in multiple ways. We reach beyond these frames and through the frames of our ancestries to see, hear, and embody in deeper and more expansive ways. In the intersection of the X, we listen for what is silenced and look for what is hidden; we search for what is deeply rooted and flourishing beyond the edges. Our embodiment exceeds the Zoom frame in ways that are inherently not visible, and at the same time, we *use* the format to engender positional embodiment. Peter speaks head-on, facing the camera and negotiating the space between the words on the page and his body, his breath and vocal cords transforming the text. His directed gaze creates a new tributary. All that can be seen of Leah is her hand negotiating the space between the printed photos of Tahltan land and the evolving re-presentation rendered in pencil on paper. Hand to pencil to paper is another tributary. This disrupts the echoing formality of the Zoom boxes. It sets up a listening that moves back and forth in the spaces between.

We are in a Zoom space where host and guest are labels denoting specific levels of access. In truth there may be something to learn from these seemingly banal parameters that define what can and cannot be done by a guest and a host. On Zoom, there are specific responsibilities for a host and equally prescribed limitations for a guest. Is it some kind of act of sovereignty to be the one who "admits" a guest into the Zoom territory? Is it a reminder of humility to understand the limits to autonomy as a guest in these spaces? One of the many ways this admittedly slight parallel fails is the randomness with which guesting and hosting duties are both granted and assumed in Zoom. They are not based in histories, experiences, and kinship ties to place but rather in those of institutional, collegial, or other forms of agency that often level the field with disregard to situatedness. This is not to say that the cyber world or institutions are not deeply encumbered by racism, patriarchy, and all the intersectional power dynamics. What we draw attention to here is that the particular cyber world of Zoom does not, within its structure, enact protocols related to place, just as when we pass through the territories of distinct Indigenous nations in the land now called Canada, the protocols of those nations are rarely followed. In this work we consider what the crossings might look like—historically and in the present—if they were.

These online performances have now expanded into a series that have happened both in Zoom land and live in public. One of these hybrid versions of the performance took place at the Arts Atlantic conference in Saint John, New Brunswick, in 2022. It brought our online practice of crossing pathways into a live in-person context while retaining the online Zoom meeting component. In it, we are both present in the performance space—Leah drawing the Tahltan territory while Peter reads about Tahltan knowledge from that specific part of the territory—so that a live audience experienced the performance in person. In addition, there is a camera focused on each of us,

creating two live streams for a Zoom meeting projected in the space so that the performance could also be viewed by the live audience in its original online format. The audience had two pathways to follow—one that could lead toward their crossing through or over the live reading and exchange between Leah and Peter on Zoom, or they could decide to bring themselves closer into the complicated political realities that are also embedded, and acknowledged, in the places where two lines cross IRL; the Xs.

X - where paths cross: The spoken voice takes up an important space within Indigenous knowledge/practice/production. The spoken voice is a type of vehicle that aids in the transmission of practised skills. Tahltan knowledge is practised, it is skills-based, and this practised-skill aids in the development of Tahltan knowledge. The spoken, or this version of Tahltan orality, within this X matrix, means that Peter's body is crossing over/through those older Tahltan speakers. This crossing over is guided by his research methodology that centres performance art. Within this specific matrix, we encounter not just the memory of these original Tahltan knowledge leaders; we also are moved by the evidence of their acquired skill. In this series of reading performances with Leah, Peter has also been reflecting on those original speakers and why they spoke with James Teit; the desire to understand what guides/drives this act of orality, or the performance of Tahltan knowledge to any qualified, and unqualified, listener. Tahltan knowledge is practised. This practice requires speaking. This speaking is guided by value systems informed by reciprocity and generosity. These two value systems aid in community survival. Reading as performance art opens up the possibility of listening through the regular complications of anthropological texts such Teit's. Tahltan orality is performance art. This type of speaking still happens today. These performative readings of these older texts have allowed Peter to stand beside these Tahltan Knowledge Leaders who were speaking to Teit. Peter can see them speaking with Teit because this knowledge will also help him to survive, and because Tahltan people like to make friends. The original performances, those first Facebook Live experience(s), were also focused on Peter's own skill building. He wanted to become a better Tahltan storyteller. One of the goals of those performances was to see if his Tahltan breathing body could, through story/telling, return, or match, the Tahltan breath of those original storytellers.

One of the critical components of our exchange is centred around a profound form of listening. In this action, sound pours into the body. This is a crossing of paths between the tangible and intangible. This is an intersecting that requires a consistent balance of sustaining and unsettling. Leah listens as she draws. In our crossings both online and offline, Leah's renderings of the land are unfinished, a gesture that negotiates the importance of not-knowing and recognizes the asymmetrical conditions that ground the necessary impossibility of settler understandings of these lands. This drawing while listening is not a way for Leah to capture or fully comprehend. This is a listening (and drawing) that, in its incomplete state, holds space for the unknowable. This factor of the unknowable is crucial to our methodology and our ethics in engaging across our ancestries and current day positionalities; in ma|r|king our Xs. This is not about Leah seeking to gain a mastery of knowledge about the land of Tahltan territories or the stories retold by Teit and breathed into the now by Peter's orality. Instead, our process reflects an understanding that Peter's "knowing" and Leah's "knowing," with regard to the land and the stories/knowledge, are inherently different. Peter's is based in lineages of placed knowledge as a form of sovereignty, while Leah's is embedded in the humility of not altogether knowing. It is a subversion of capturing the land within the frame and "canadianizing" it through un-relational interpretation and aesthetic ownership.

Peter's recounting of details relating to the land as prompted by the photos *and* his reading aloud are generous offerings dependent on a recognition of trust built into a personal relationship of duration, reciprocity, and respect and with the awareness that his knowledge will not be extracted or consumed in a manner that is predatory or harmfully "hungry" (Robinson 2020). Peter knew that he could share all of the edges in the text that he was experiencing, and how those edges were hurting him because of this deep friendship. It should not be a surprise that those English words can hurt a lot. The performative reading made the edges of those English words more prominent. This also led to a chance for Peter's Tahltan critique of the words/phrases, Tahltan critique in the form of pointed jokes (jokes that other Tahltans and friends who are in the circle would understand and laugh at). Later, when the performances took place in a room, with other human bodies, the shape of the English text took prominence. The majority non-Tahltan people in the room were able to reflect on the shape and scope of these particular English words. The comment that stays with Peter is about how the cadence of text reminded one of the older listeners in Saint John—where the public performance took place—of the editing of the King James bible. As we move into further live and hybrid performances that merge Peter and Leah's exchanges with the inclusion of audience responses, new tributaries are created and new crossings are brought into being.

X - where paths cross: We manifested the X before we travelled to Tahltan territory. This is a theoretical proposition concerning land/language and the act/ions that enable an understanding of what we know of as time, bodies, ancestries, within this place now called Canada. This work is shaped by deep listening to the older Tahltan/Indigenous knowledge(s) through the act of returning versions of these ancient texts to a Tahltan body/voice. This ongoing performance extends accepted practices around the action of "reading," including stretching them through cyber worlds into the realm of drawing. Peter is reading Teit's English-dominant version of Tahltan knowledge. Leah is drawing/redrawing images taken by either Peter or one of his family members over thirty years of travelling to Tahltan territory. In this project, these tools are being crossed on purpose. These voices are *also* being crossed on purpose. These strategies are being crossed on purpose to create new and challenging opportunities for unimagined future possibilities. Bodies are being included and acknowledged in this crossing. Time is being affected. This ongoing performance work is grounded through turning toward critically listening and slowing down enough to become more human with each other and with these places. This humanness makes more space for those original Tahltan Knowledge Leaders who spoke with James Teit on Tahltan territory in 1904 when he first came to these places. It makes more space for ethically sharing on uneven terrain.

The project and this writing and reflection are also an echo of a friendship that really started on a wintery night in Winnipeg, Manitoba, in 2013 and that includes years of laughing, thinking together, sharing food, crying, taking road trips, finding new tributaries, trust, and transformation. The performances called "X: where our paths cross," and our offering these thoughts to you, are also a record of a friendship across ancestries (Jewish, white settler and Tahltan, French Canadian) in this place now known as Canada. The X is our historic guide because it is an acknowledgment of the meeting place of Indigenous knowledge(s)/bodies and the incursion of settler investment/colonialism. This X offers a historical and theoretical frame/work that acknowledges how bodies met on this land. We learned this first from Coast Salish Elder Victor Newman, also from the artwork of Anishinaabe performance artist Rebecca Belmore.[5] X is the mark of a hand made on historical documents by invested parties. These historical documents, also known as treaties, represent a chance for relationship. X is the mark that acknowledges there is both a past and a future for all the bodies present at the making of treaties. Like the "X: where our paths cross"

performances, the reflections threaded throughout this document, together with its time-based components, offer a chance for the reader to meet us at the crossing, the place where our paths cross on the land (physical/virtual/conceptual/actual).

Travel to Indigenous territory can be perilous, affecting, and life-changing. This travel, along with this travel*ing*, can easily become rote because of histories of exploitation. It is hard to lose that Cowboy and Indian trope because it has become a collective muscle memory. For this consideration of the X, it is important to acknowledge the conflicted histories of human bodies in relation to territory. X marks the spot as a version of the colonial visioning of land. Land becomes a place of "interest." This unseen Land becomes solid because the X enables us to imagine standing there with the gold in our hands. X marks the spot. This is also a version Peter awoke with, a message that followed him from a dreaming space to this physical realm. Included with these words was a vision of a treasure map with a clearly marked pathway that led to that X. There is no calm or reassurances in searching for that type of X. Perhaps it is better to say it this way: when we show up to our activations as performance artists, we are offering a purposeful pathway for other human and more-than-human bodies to stand closer in, to shared intersections, intersections that become about crossed time, crossed land, crossed bodies, crossed histories, crossed futures. This intersection also implies and acknowledges the crossed-out component pieces that are connected with being aware of our human body. It is easier to consider the importances of the positionality of the body when considering what the X might be doing. In this ongoing and iterative performance art/work between the "human bodies" also known as Peter and Leah, we are opening up a space for a practiced institutional critique because our bodies can easily be made into the historic bodies of old Indigenous and settler people whose interactions have led to shaping our collective future. This time travel backward is not our interest. We aren't travelling back to the future. We are crossing territories like the historic crossings of Indigenous people over rivers and over land. We are keeping in mind the implications of the crossings of "settlers" over rivers and over land—and also over oceans.

We manifested the X, in cyber worlds and in breathing IRL into other places, before going to Tahltan territory. This shifting of the tributaries of embodied practice refocused our actions, bringing bodies into closer relation to Indigenous territories *before* setting foot together on the land itself. This is tricky work. The English words—*manifested*, *Indigenous*, *territory*—can all be conceptual terrains loaded with colonial baggage. In the middle of this, two friends, one Tahltan/French Canadian and one Jewish white settler, are standing together. There is work required to build the trust of good friends and collaborators. Part of this is the shared work of examining, interrogating, and dismantling colonial privileges and the shared work of remaking pathways and tributaries of care toward each other and this "Native Land." Our actions within these performances, in this text and in the project as a whole, metaphorically cross each other like an X marking our meeting place in time and on territory—whether that territory is IRL or virtual. Ultimately, by working through personal and socio-political scales of relationality and embodiment, these actions contribute to envisioning the otherwise possibilities of meeting on territory in ways that generate ripples of change in the present and for the future.

Notes

1. These fully virtual experimental performances took place on August 28, 2020, and October 11, 2020, and were funded by the Manitoba Arts Council under the project "in care of."

2. Jill Carter's email signature reads, in part: "Zoom has erected its headquarters in San Jose, CA. . . . This is the traditional territory of the Muwekma Ohlone tribal nation. Current members of this nation are direct descendants of the many missionized tribal groups from across the region. We who are able to virtually connect with each other are deeply indebted to the Muwekma Ohlone people, as the lands and waters they continue to steward now support the people, pipelines, and technologies that carry our breaths, images, and words across vast distances to others." Quoted with permission.

3. While Morin and Willard co-edited the 2018 Site/ation issue of *C Magazine*, Willard is the originator of the term site/ation.

4. The Group of Seven members are perhaps best known for painting in the territories of the Omàmìwininìwag (Algonquin), Michif Piyii (Métis), Anishinabewaki ᐊᓂᔑᓈᐯᐧᐊᑭ, Wendake-Nionwentsïo, Cree, and Mississauga nations. Members also painted in Inuit Nunangat ᐃᓄᐃᑦ ᓄᓇᖓᑦ,ᓄᓇᕕᒃ Nunavik, Tsuut'ina, Niitsítpiis-stahkoii ᖹᐟᒧᐧᐨᑯᐧ ᓴᐦᖿᐟ (Blackfoot / Niitsítapi ᖹᐟᒧᐧᒣᑯ), Îyãħé Nakón mąkóce (Stoney), Ktunaxa ʔamakʔis, Nitassinan (Innu), səl̓ilwətaʔɬ təməxʷ (Tsleil-Waututh), Skwxwú7mesh-ulh Temíx̱w (Squamish), Wabanaki (Dawnland Confederacy) and Mi'kmaq territories. In addition to depicting these specific territories, the influence of their conceptions of land and wilderness extends throughout the territories known as Canada.

5. Examples include Belmore's performances of "X," which took place in 2010 in Ode'min Giizis, Peterborough, Ontario, and "familia," which took place at the Hessel Museum of Art in Annandale on the Hudson, New York, in 2023.

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Rehearsals of Release

Benjamin Ross Nicholson

My name is Benjamin Ross Nicholson, and as a resident of Boulder, Colorado, I occupy the unceded lands of the Apache, Arapaho, Cheyenne, Comanche, Kiowa, Pawnee, Shoshone, Sioux, and Ute Nations, peoples who were violently removed from these lands to make available resources and livelihoods for colonists. I am a settler and I have benefitted from that upon which I have no justifiable claim. I further recognize that I inhabit an intersection of identity categories that the majority of prevailing institutions in the United States and Canada have been systemically cultivated to serve, often at the explicit exclusion and diminishment of others: I present as an able, white, cismale, heterosexual United States citizen who has had continual access to high-quality education and healthcare. Though I encounter struggles, I recognize that *I am recognized by power* as a viable candidate for the reproduction of white supremacy, neoliberalism, and colonialism, those dispossessive operations that perpetuate the elevation of a few at the cost of harm, violence, and death for many others. Though there is ample reason to be skeptical of my words, this writing is an attempt to accept the responsibilities of acknowledging the injustice of my position. It is an effort to leverage the relative ease with which I am afforded life-sustaining resources in order to turn myself—and hopefully other settler readers interested in change-making praxis—away from ongoing acts of dispossession and toward what I consider to be a repertoire of *de-possession*.

To be clear, the "rehearsals of release" I will soon detail are primarily intended for those who are the present beneficiaries of settler colonial systems; this writing is an address to those (myself, as a white settler, included) who have long been enculturated to invest in and seek reward from performances of dispossession. Whether in the guise of career competition, the hoarding of wealth, or the maintenance of unjust hierarchies, such performances erect, in aggregate, a world in which success is rivalrous; my importance is delivered through acquisition that denies access to others. This is not only a call to recognize the white settler tendency toward the perpetuation of possessive individualism and the dispossession it feeds, but also a call for those invested in the regime of possession to *do the work* of undoing this tendency in their thoughts, actions, and relations. This de-possessive work is not for symbolic purposes of placation or self-flagellation, but rather to take responsibility for one's contributions toward a world of immiseration and to redirect those performances toward a world of cooperative care. Such work, on its own, is not sufficient to eradicate those entities whose very existence is presently derived from dispossession (corporations, banks, nation states, and distributed systems of oppression), yet it is a necessary step in building a shared capacity for intervention; as long as so many remain seduced by the promises of possession and continue to contribute to its torrential flows, it will be difficult to assemble a critical mass of collaborators who might challenge the momentum of dispossession.

Indigenous peoples "have always done" the work of performing relational resurgence in resistance to colonial violence, as articulated by Mississauga Nishnaabeg scholar Leanne Betasamosake Simpson in her 2017 book *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom Through Radical Resistance*: "It is

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not happenstance or luck that Indigenous peoples and our lands still exist after centuries of attack. This is our strategic brilliance. Our presence is our weapon, and this is visible to me at every protest, every mobilization, every time a Two Spirit person gifts us with a dance at our powwows, every time we speak our truths, every time we embody Indigenous life" (L. Simpson 2017, 6). And yet there remains a major impediment to the dissipation of the structural harms meted out to Indigenous peoples through the nexus of neoliberalism, colonialism, and white supremacy: too many of those inhabiting Western-possessed nations are normatively routed toward performances of dispossession as a virtue and, thus, reproduce the social structures of neoliberalism in every competitive performance. Attempts by equity seeking groups to refuse the mandates of neoliberalism are absolutely crucial in prefiguring a world of care and collaboration, demonstrating how communities can move and thrive against the overwhelming inertia that centuries of genocide, dispossession, and structural entrenchment have wrought. Neoliberalized settlers, that majority of Western peoples who appear to normatively benefit from neoliberal white supremacy, need to begin to do their part to engage in performances of *de-possession*. Should this occur, settlers may form coalitions of affinity with those who, often at tremendous risk given the systemic violence so readily levied upon them, have long struggled to undermine the world-ending extractions of our prevailing socioeconomic regime. The protests against the Dakota Access Pipeline provide a compelling glimpse of what Indigenous peoples and settler allies can accomplish in comradeship (Wallace 2017); when a critical mass of performances align against dispossession and toward cooperation, colossal systems of immiseration might be abolished.

De-possession is a performance movement with two simultaneous aims. First, de-possession seeks to deprogram lifetimes of indoctrination that lead neoliberal subjects to presuppose that significance is granted through a "having" that deprives others of the same; neoliberal performances must be recognized for the harms they produce and there must be a *desire* to mitigate those harms. Second, de-possession must offer a program of possible performances that would *affirm* practitioners and instantiate alternative, viable models of meaning making in the absence of virtuous dispossession, performances that allow for communion between those long-involved in anti-oppressive work and those just beginning. Given that the neoliberalized are psychologically devoted to efficiency, attempts to guide nascent practitioners toward de-possession would be aided by suggesting concrete performances that can be materially and apparently realized relatively quickly and with abilities most practitioners are likely to have on hand; these gateway activities might then encourage learning and a gathering of capacities that would enable practitioners to engage in more complex, subtle, and thorough performances of de-possession.

Those who wish to initiate or further develop capacities for dissolving neoliberal, colonial, and white supremacist tendencies *for the sake of cultivating healing affinities* would do well to receive the already-shared wisdom of Indigenous peoples who have persisted despite colonial dispossessions. Such wisdom can inform new approaches to confronting the insidious entrenchment of dispossessive performances in the social repertoires of white settlers. For example, in *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, Linda Tuhiwai Smith (of the Ngāti Awa and Ngāti Porou Nations) collects accounts of twenty-five "Indigenous Projects," efforts toward "cultural survival, self-determination, healing, restoration and social justice" that serve as a helpful starting point for imagining possible de-possessive performances (Smith 2008, 142). Projects identified by Smith include: *intervening*, "literally the process of being proactive and of becoming involved as an interested worker for [structural and cultural] change" (147); *connecting*, "position[ing] individuals in sets of relationships with other people and with the environment. . . . To be connected is to be whole" (148); and *creating*, "transcending the basic survival mode through using a resource or

capability which every indigenous community has retained throughout colonization. . . . [Imagination] fosters inventions and discoveries [and] facilitates simple improvements to people's lives" (158). Each of these projects suggests a simultaneous recognition of ongoing harms and a horizon of possible alternative worlds in which such harms are mitigated; the spirit of this epistemological disposition can help ground decolonial endeavours while also orienting them toward healing.

We might further draw on the work of other Indigenous scholars to inspire the design of new performance practices that could lessen practitioners' alignment with possessive individualism. Leanne Betasamosake Simpson's notion of "grounded normativity" ("relat[ing] to land through connection—generative, affirmative, complex, overlapping, and nonlinear *relationship*" [L. Simpson 2017, 43]) suggests that one ought not to *occupy* a place so much as *inhabit* it, to be in continuity with space rather than territorializing it. Anthropologist and citizen of the Kahnawà:ke Mohawk Nation Audra Simpson's "interruption" (refusal of "the story that settler-colonial nation-states tend to tell about themselves . . . that they are new; they are beneficent; they have successfully 'settled' all issues prior to their beginning" [A. Simpson 2014, 177]) compels vigilance for and retellings of narratives that foreclose emergence and change, narratives that insist upon the essential fixity of dispossessive systems. And xwélmexw artist and writer Dylan Robinson's call to relinquish "hungry listening" (the settler practice of *consuming* audio content as a kind of instrumental data rather than *listening* to sound as an affective experience [Robinson 2020, 38]) elevates the body's encounters with the world and legitimizes one's experience of those encounters as *coextensive* with thought rather than separate and subordinate. With respect for this wisdom, I propose a set of performances in the style of *rehearsal*, what Black studies and performance scholar Fred Moten describes as "talking and walking around with other people, working, dancing, suffering, some irreducible convergence of all three, held under the name of speculative practice" and as "being in a kind of workshop, playing in a band, in a jam session" (Harney and Moten 2013, 110). In rehearsal, practitioners can be given a structure to their de-possessive acts without prohibitive pressures of "mastery," encouraging performances to become habitual and iterative. In time, a coinciding emergence of de-possessive intuition might generate a more pervasive movement toward total de-possession as practitioners come to recognize acute flows of dispossession in their own milieus and how to respond to them longitudinally. I call these performances *rehearsals of release*, and they go a little something like this.

Rehearsals of Release

A rehearsal of release relates three elements in a unified gesture: it *responds* to an extant performance of dispossession, it *replaces* that performance with a performance of cooperative circulation, and it iteratively *repeats* in the day-to-day doings of its practitioner. It is not sufficient for each of these elements to be executed by rote, for without an intrinsic motivation, a performance is hardly sustainable, particularly if it is to be enacted not through coercion but by election; a rehearsal of release ought to fulfill some *desire* if it is to become habitual. Thus, a rehearsal of release must emerge from the performer's recognition that some ongoing performance (the anti-sociality of careerist competition, the extractions of unconscious consumerism, or the telling of stories that justify white supremacy/neoliberalism, for example) is actively harmful, offer an alternative to that performance that is meaningfully affirming *to the performer*, and seem materially and psychologically manageable. While these criteria create challenges, one must remember that rehearsals of release are an attempt to intervene in a performance repertoire that is normatively given, that is "common

sense," under neoliberalism; this isn't going to be easy, which is why rehearsals of release must be joyful if they are to have a chance of persisting.

Activist and performance theorist Augusto Boal offers a framework that encourages the intermingling of pleasure and radical political performance, what he calls "Theatre of the Oppressed": "In Theatre of the Oppressed, reality is shown not only as it is, but also, more importantly, as it could be. Which is what we live for—to become what we have the potential to be" (Boal 2002, 6). Though communicated in the language of theatre, Boal's approach is intended both to offer greater access to experimentation with emancipatory performance ("we all are theatre, even if we don't make theatre") and to enable the *prefiguration* of a possible alternative future ("let us, we and they, create [a new world] first in the theatre, in fiction, to be better prepared to create it outside afterwards, to extrapolate into our real life"; 17). By presenting a set of exercises, games, and techniques that are couched in the guise of rehearsal, Boal helps to lower the stakes of social intervention for those who have been convinced neoliberalism is "too big to fail," promoting playful experimentation with the possibility of *otherwise* that ultimately deconstructs those psychic barriers. In that so many white settlers automatically reproduce neoliberalism and white supremacy in their daily performances, it is important to provide frameworks for performance in which white settlers can practise departures from ingrained habits. For Boal, a crucial principle of Theatre of the Oppressed is that it doesn't presuppose a strict hierarchy between actors and spectators, but rather assumes the continual interchange of action and witnessing in which everyone is a "spect-actor":

> When an actor carries out an act of liberation in a normal play where intervention by the audience is not allowed, he or she does it in *place* of the spectator, which . . . is thus, for the audience, a catharsis. But when a *spect-actor* occupies the stage and carries out the same act there, he or she does it in the name of all the other spectators, because they know that, if they don't agree, they themselves can invade the stage and show their opinion—and the event is thus for them not a *catharsis* but a *dynamization*. (25)

In this way, rehearsals of release are designed not to be private experiences or unidirectional broadcasts but social exchanges that lead to the further exploration, elaboration, and emergence of the eventuation of otherwise.

The first rehearsal of release that I would like to suggest is one that I call "de-owning." For the sake of the visceral, I will address you directly, reader, in hopes you may imagine taking part in rehearsal yourself. To engage in a performance of de-owning (as a response extractive performances of "consumption"), examine some subset of the place you inhabit: assuming this is some kind of normative sedentary homestead, this might be a bedroom, a bathroom, a kitchen, or a closet. With a notepad and pencil in hand, generate a written catalogue of all the individual items *you would claim to own* that are contained within the region you've selected. While this may become a lengthy exercise depending on the space to which you're responding, the time it takes to generate a full account of that which is contained will potentially reinforce the breadth and depth of your possessions. For example, as I begin to examine the room from which I am presently writing, I already notice a clock radio, a guitar, a potted plant, a framed photo of me and my partner, a Wi-Fi router, a rug, a bathrobe, a white dresser I painted brown, dozens of books, and my sickly dog curled up beside me (oblivious). Though a full list would exacerbate the length of this writing beyond tedium, I can assure you there are many more items that I have acquired, purchased, found, or been given over many years that I would catalogue. This record making might be an intervention unto itself for those

who rarely consider the mass of accumulation that is expected under capitalism, yet I will compel you to further your efforts through a social performance of sharing.

With your list in hand, circle each of those items that you imagine could bring joy, pleasure, sustenance, amusement, or well-being to someone who does not presently claim to own said items. For each item you've circled, pencil in the name of a person you know and to whom you have some proximate access who you believe would benefit from that item (you may attach the same person to multiple items). For each person you've identified, reach out to them in whichever manner seems most likely to be received and ask them, in your preferred vernacular: "Would you like to help me to steward this item?" To the degree that your comrade is interested and willing, offer to bring that item to the space they inhabit; arrange a time when the item might be further shared with a confidante of your comrade; invite others to partake in the movement and enjoyment of those things you once hoarded; confound easy assertions of ownership by allowing the matter of your life to circulate in and out of your hands.

Referring to the *respond/replace/repeat* paradigm that undergirds rehearsals of release, de-owning is a performance that acknowledges harms of accumulative settler tendencies, routes practitioners toward friendly acts of sharing, and requires very little logistic effort to initiate. Through de-owning, you become responsive to a lifelong compulsion to acquire and store materials away from others, recognizing your contribution to the world-rending economics of accelerating production/consumption. Further, you begin to replace assumptions of fixed private ownership with the possibility of performing care for those around you, finding well-being in the joy of others rather than the lonely cultivation of your private collection; your relationship to objects becomes explicitly socialized rather than solipsistic. Finally, de-owning does not require the mandates and energies for material growth that neoliberalism promotes, instead offering a far more repeatable repertoire of letting go of objects in lieu of clutching tight; there is often less exertion in sharing than in hoarding.

As Leanne Betasamosake Simpson's notes in her considerations of grounded normativity, pressures to consume can override imaginaries of making: "Colonized life is so intensely about consumption that the idea of making is reserved for artists at best and hobbies at worst. Making is not seen as the material basis for experiencing and influencing the world" (L. Simpson 2017, 23); transforming your possessions into generative gestures of care allows you see the matters around you not as commodities to take inward but opportunities for creative acts that you emit outward, into the social. By periodically rehearsing this performance, you may come to uproot the possessive hierarchies that seem to organize the world around you and begin to imagine that all those forms you have aggregated are not *proper to you* but rather can exist in innumerable configurations of the material/social; de-owning suggests that you are not the sum of your amassed possessions, but rather you and all other forms gain meaning and significance from the provisional relations through which they flow.

The second rehearsal of release I will introduce is "de-trashing." While de-owning concerns those matters you hold dear, de-trashing is an address to the *refuse* you generate, those things you extradite to landfills and incinerators. For this rehearsal, return to the place you reside and begin with one of the following: approach the nearest trash bin and remove the item closest to the top (don't worry if it's dirty or, perhaps, is dirt); look around the room you presently occupy and home in on an item that you no longer desire; approach a closet, cabinet, or drawer you rarely open and delve into its deepest reaches, removing whatever item you find there. Take the item you've obtained and bring it

to a well-lit and uncluttered location. To the extent it is physiologically safe to do so, probe the item, rotate it, observe its surfaces and the pathways to its interior; smell it, shake it, manipulate it in any way that you believe would grant you some kind of access to the nuances of its form.

Once you feel you have intuited something previously unknown about the item, first ask: in this item's present or prospectively rehabilitated state, could it be of help to someone else? If you respond in the affirmative, determine who might appreciate the item's receipt; give the item to this person and tell them that you rescued it from the exclusion of waste and it now finds them in a moment of care. If, however, the item seems beyond the socially acceptable bounds of use, proceed to disassemble the item into any constitutive parts of which it may be comprised. For example, I've just lifted an old pair of scratched reading glasses from the drawer of my nightstand; I've popped out the cheap lenses, removed the metal screws holding the temples to the black plastic frame, and have sorted these elements into small piles on the counter in my kitchen. It has now become your responsibility to determine the material content of the various elements of your dismembered item (in my case, what kinds of plastics compose the temples and frame?; what metals compose the screws?; what glass-like composite composes the marred lenses)? There is a possibility that you will not find this information immediately forthcoming; don't give up! Ask friends and neighbours, pursue experts, call the manufacturer, exhaust every avenue of discovery until you understand your item's manner of being.

After having developed a strong sense of your item's material makeup, pursue one last line of inquiry: what must you do to distribute each of the item's elements to environments where they might become nutritive rather than "waste"? Again, while processes of production and consumption might occlude the possibility of your item's transformation into nourishment, the effort involved in unveiling your item's capacity for sharing its energies with other forms will draw you into communion with the world of *commodities* that capitalism would try to cleave from the realm of the *consumer*; de-trashing denies the atomization of the possessive individual and affirms your relational entanglement with all matter that appears to exceed the would-be boundaries of your body.

Though certainly more logistically elaborate than de-owning, de-trashing responds to the neoliberal settler error of believing that that which is no longer wanted can be simply "disappeared" without impacting the world from which it emerged, a blithe assumption that chokes life systems and creates further hordes of matter whose energies are prevented from returning to the earth. In removing the possibility of thoughtlessly discarding objects into a dumpster, de-trashing replaces a willful ignorance of the provenance/constitution/gifts of objects with an appreciation for and understanding of how the materials that arrive in so much consumer packaging might serve in the rejuvenation of a septic world. While the effort required to perform de-trashing is non-trivial, it is well suited to repeatability for those settlers who enjoy research and investigation (though applied to gaining an understanding of an object on hand rather than one to be purchased).

De-trashing takes its cues from Audra Simpson's idea of interruption, that which "happens when we refuse what all (presumably) 'sensible' people perceive as good things" (A. Simpson 2014, 1). Through an investment in a story of trash, settlers receive a convenient concept of disposability that abdicates the responsibility to care for matter. The cost of such a story is matter's inability to harmoniously reintegrate with the world; the story of trash piles over the truth of poison. The next time you move to banish an item to the trash bin, stop and consider: shall I perform the rehearsal of de-trashing? The enacting of this performance will give rise to at least two premises that counter neoliberal narratives: first, the treatment of matter as "trash" is a performance of harm that demeans

the particularity of matter and deprives the world of its necessary recirculation and, second, with conscientiousness and attention you can become a steward of the materials you encounter and assist them in their return to reservoirs of regeneration.

The last rehearsal of release suggested in these pages is potentially the most threatening to the logics of neoliberal dispossession and, thus, involves the greatest risk: I call this performance "de-occupying." Logics of dispossession are heavily situated in the private possession of *land*, those surfaces above and beneath which resources may be pilfered and transformed into monuments to Man's permanence. Observe the present circumstances of your habitat: Do you "live in" a house, an apartment, a mobile home, a hotel? Do you have a legal claim of ownership over this place, do you rent, do you squat? Do you have a tract of land covered in grass that collects dew in the morning? In brief, what are those *places* you consider to be *yours*? And, through your occupation, what ontological processes are stifled that might otherwise be nurtured?

Further still, in the establishment of your places of occupation, what others (human and non-human alike) had to be nudged to the periphery, coerced into departing, or forcibly eliminated in order for your proprietary presence to be possible? This is not to ask who has the greater claim to this property, but rather, how did this place exist prior to its rendering as possession? Is it still imaginable what such a place might have been like? Is there some archive that hints at stories of ongoingly negotiated access and use prior to exclusionary ownership?

With these questions floating in various states of answerability, ask yourself one more: of the spaces I currently enclose, could any of them be opened to be joyfully shared with others? While it might be logistically, materially, or legally infeasible to cede your territory in such a way that it would not be immediately reabsorbed by some other possessor, you can recognize the potential deprivation your occupation asserts and perform care for those excluded. Perhaps you occupy a small apartment that you rent from a landlord. Perhaps you presently keep the doors locked at night. Because it might present challenges to your well-being to offer this space and prepare additional resources for the embodied *stay* of another, consider how the resources situated within the bounds of the land you occupy might be made available to those outside. Let it be known to the neighbourhood that if anyone, housed and unhoused alike, would like to the drink the water from your faucet, they can knock on your door and you will bring them a full cup; if they are cold, offer them a blanket from your closet; if they are hungry, retrieve for them an apple from your fridge. Whether it be running an extension cord out of your window to allow someone to charge their phone or setting up a lending library of books at your doorstep, rehearse a ceding of dominion over the materials of your territory and an offering of those materials to those who might be bereft.

While de-occupying might simultaneously seem like a small gesture (in that it cannot, on its own, dismantle systems of dispossession) and a non-normative risk (as the "privacy of home" is meant to be a sacrosanct ward against the presence of others who, at times, have the potential to inflict harm), this rehearsal and the performances of resource reallocation it requires chafe harshly against the foundational premise that one's relationship to place is rivalrous, that it must be wrought from the eviction of those outside the legal circle of the registered "household." Releasing your vice grip on the benefits of your home while welcoming access to those benefits to others allows you to initiate the emergence of a world where occupation is replaced by offering.

In adopting this rehearsal of de-occupying, it is possible to unlearn the knee-jerk fear of "trespass" and to cultivate a more sophisticated and conscientious regard for those beyond the sphere of

privacy. The complete atomization that accompanies turning one's sites of occupation into doomsday bunkers systematically prevents flows of material support from reaching those most in need, generating desperation and despair. If we can invert the prevailing social logic that places distrust before good will, we can develop capacious intuitions for how to *be with* those outside our homes and increasingly experience that tendency in people which accompanies ongoing performances of care, what we might call love.

"My" Shall Be Released

Given the centuries of social reproduction that have contributed to our contemporary white settler neoliberalism and the challenges of sustaining performances that would reverse flows of dispossession, I do not claim that these rehearsals of release will in themselves bring about a de-possessive social reality. The movement toward de-possession must not be rendered in terms of Silicon Valley's "problem/solution" paradigm, but rather as an attempt at *de-calcification*, an initial softening and erosion of hard edges, in the face of what appears to be an intractable system of harm. While none of these rehearsals are likely to eradicate white settler neoliberalism on their own, they permit practitioners to meaningfully engage with decoloniality in material, experiential, and intuitive ways. Further, such rehearsals encourage the emergence of a shared consciousness that turns away from one-way flows of dispossession and toward the circulation of care.

Further, much of neoliberalism's narrative involves corporations, banks, and governments sloughing off responsibility for their instantiation of systemic immiseration and placing onus upon workers and the dysselected to "own" their difficulties via *personal responsibility*; my invocation to perform de-possessive rehearsals comes from, instead, a desire to transform the sensibilities of those presently oriented by possessive individualism away from private competition and toward impulses of collective action. Rehearsals of release are intended to meet burgeoning decolonialists between their present habits of atomized consumption and a possible sociality of circulation. I've studied, with gratitude, approaches and premises developed by Indigenous peoples who have long resisted dispossessive violence with survival and thriving; I've also leveraged an awareness of my own neoliberalization to conjure performances that would seem a mixture of meaningful intervention, feasibility, and fulfillment, performances that would appeal to those steeped in neoliberal logics and yet begin to dissolve those logics in the same gesture. To the extent the specific rehearsals I've enumerated do not feel responsive to *your* feelings of neoliberal entrapment, I invite you to craft and share others; rehearsals of release are not precious things; rather, they are grounded measures to encourage social motion against the lonely torpor of possessive individualism.

As you are released from this text, I propose an additional micro-rehearsal you might carry with you: as you hope to communicate to another in English, allow yourself a small cognitive hiccup whenever you are about to inscribe or intone the word "my"; does this word come to your mind from a place of jealousy, fear, avarice, exclusion, or rivalry? If so, consider freeing the word from enunciation and letting it fall silent, unsaid. Or, if the matter at hand permits, allow a different word to fall from your lips, your fingers, your pen: speak "our," imagining that band of belonging to extend beyond the mappable geography of your home, your town, your county, your country, until it recedes beyond all horizons. Any day now, we shall release.

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