In the Balance
Indigeneity, Performance, Globalization

edited by
Helen Gilbert, J.D. Phillipson
and Michelle H. Raheja

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Introduction: Indigenous Performance and Global Imaginaries

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[O]ne positive force that encourages an emancipatory politics of globalization is the role of the imagination in social life.

<div align="right">Arjun Appadurai (2000: 6)</div>

Arjun Appadurai's assertion, made nearly two decades ago, that globalization might be creatively yoked to 'an emancipatory politics' that would benefit grassroots communities now seems ripe for reassessment when vast structural asymmetries in the global distribution of resources, capital and power have rarely been more evident – or more destabilizing. Wherever we stand in the world, it is not too difficult to see (or at least sense) what Judith Butler (2009) calls the 'precarity' of those disenfranchised by war, irregular migration, poverty, discrimination and other socially fragmenting forces. Combined with natural disasters and anthropogenic changes to climates and environments, these social ills make the humanist ideals of global peace and prosperity seem ever more elusive. How much of the current world disorder can be attributed to globalization is likely to remain a fiercely debated issue, but there is little doubt that the relentless penetration of 'culture' by capital on a global scale has had deleterious effects on some communities, often deepening 'precisely those channels between rich and poor cut by European imperialism' (Dale and Gilbert 2007, xiv). The violent incursion by multinational mining, forestry and hydro-power conglomerates into indigenous territories and lifeways in many parts of the world is but one of the more visible signs of capitalism's rapaciousness, a trait often glossed over in discourses that champion global alignments of disparate economic and political systems.

In this context, the late twentieth-century cultural theorists who put faith in globalization as a common good[1] may now find few reasons to celebrate its effects. Clearly, as manifest in recent times, the much-vaunted global flow of culture's constitutive elements – information, values, technology, images, artefacts and, not least, people – has been, at best, a flawed and profoundly partial engine of progress for social and political democratization.

Yet, in its culturalist forms at least, globalization seems to have retained the capacity to inspire a cautious and sometimes compelling optimism, even (and perhaps especially) in fields of study focused on those who have least access to a just share of the world's resources. Peter Phipps, among others, stakes out an enabling space for minority perspectives amid the opportunities for social reimagining that modern transnational interchange ideally affords:

> As globalization in all its forms grows in intensity, not only at the level of transnational institutions of justice but also global communications, travel, and trade, so do opportunities for the insertion of marginalized cultures into an emergent 'global imaginary': the deeply routinized ways we think about ourselves and our world from an increasingly global perspective. (2009, 32)

What is evident in Phipps's embrace of a 'global imaginary', as in my epigraph's stress on the imagination, is a focus on people, first and foremost, as social, relational and creative beings. This approach tempers conceptions of globalization as primarily an economic phenomenon involving accelerated flows of capital, labour and commodities across vast expanses of the world. Whereas economic studies have revealed how globalization harnesses apparently less-developed societies to capitalist markets in a new post-colonial architecture of core–periphery relations requiring the management of social divisions (see Hoogvelt 2001), cultural analysis has taken up the challenge of exposing and critiqueing those divisions, to discern how they are, or at least could be, dissolved, bridged, transcended, circumvented or otherwise lessened.[2] This manifestly political project has gained traction, ironically, from other developments integral to the global networking of production, trade and finance, especially the broad (though by no means universal) dissemination of digital communication technologies and the rapid rise of the Internet and social media as public platforms with unprecedented visibility and reach. Such potent new tools for engaging in, and with, human creativity have shifted the grounds on which vested interests in different forms of culture play out, fostering the emergence of myriad trans-border social, political, intellectual and

artistic alliances in the interests of the marginalized. The simultaneous rise in international advocacy groups and supranational governance bodies concerned not only with human rights but also social and environmental justice has likewise heightened awareness of the inequities and exclusions that globalization entails. With the widening and deepening of global connectivity and, crucially, increased public consciousness of that fact, has come the tantalizing prospect that disempowerment and injustice could be effectively mitigated, or at least forcefully exposed, in the cultural realm. That possibility has been particularly attractive to indigenous cultures, the key focus of this book, as they navigate ongoing legacies of colonization amid the promises and threats of our (apparently) new world order.

Cultural action offers more than simply the symbolic redress of material or ideological forms of oppression – or a momentary diversion from their effects. Bart Moore-Gilbert has observed that globalization reinforces the need for 'close analysis of contemporary cultural and textual artefacts' because struggles for and against hegemony are increasingly pursued 'at the level of representations'. In this respect, he argues, 'vast transnational information and entertainment industries and ever more sophisticated communications technologies [are] mediating relations of power quite as effectively as trade agreements, diplomatic alliances or military adventurism' (1998, 64). We need only to consider social media trending – or the ways in which populist politicians have dismissed critical or inconvenient press reports as 'fake news' – to see how readily global flows of information affect, and sometimes skew, what Anna Tsing calls 'the awkward relationship between representation and its object' (2000, 329). The deterritorialization of social and cultural life, said to be a hallmark of globality, further complicates the ways in which images, discourses, material objects and indeed people come to represent different things to those who encounter them, whether in real or imaginative realms. While some critics have worried that 'localities' are losing their capacity to make and control meanings in this context (e.g. Bauman 1998; Waters 2001), Appadurai seems to have been justified in disputing the thesis that globalization inevitably homogenizes societies and thereby purloins their agency. People everywhere, he maintains, selectively move global media images and discourses 'into local repertoires of irony, anger, humor and resistance', thus actively shaping meaning-making practices (1996, 7). This argument subtly acknowledges what is too often forgotten in mainstream theorizing of our epoch: that representation, a key vector of globalization, necessarily entails embodied labour, be it visible or not, working in tandem, or in tension, with ideology. How and why specific indigenous

constituencies creatively invest in such labour, and to what apparent effects, are the common concerns addressed in the following chapters.

Our triangulation of indigeneity, performance and globalization as the conceptual heart of this volume rests on the premise (and paradox) that 'marginality has become a powerful space' in our contemporary world, as Stuart Hall declared almost two decades ago. 'The most profound cultural revolution has come about as a consequence of the margins coming into representation', he argued, 'in art, in painting, in film, in music, in literature, in the modern arts everywhere, in politics, and in social life generally' (1998, 34). This observation seems even more pertinent today as we witness the broad resurgence of indigenous societies in many regions and forums, along with reassessments of their role in the global cultural matrix. By opening access routes to information, technology and audiences previously out of their reach, globalization has armed those pushed to the margins of Western modernity with the necessary resources to be seen and heard in public spheres and on matters of consequence to their cultures and communities. The resulting movement of indigenous subjects into self-representation, however mediated, has increased public interest in indigeneity as both a mode of belonging to specific places and a particular way of looking at the world. Cast as an ethical touchstone in some arenas and a thorny complication in others, indigeneity is now belatedly recognized as mattering in global debates about natural resources, sustainability, heritage, governance, representation and social justice, to name just some of the contentious issues that continue to stall the unfinished business of decolonization. Indigenous arts, simultaneously attuned to local voices and global cultural flows, have frequently been the vanguard in communicating to international as well as grassroots audiences what is at stake in such debates. At the same time, the global circulation of these arts as cultural capital has affected the ways in which indigeneity is activated and understood across different social, political and aesthetic platforms. This book's explicit focus on performance examines the specificities of these related movements at the level of embodied praxis. It also prompts vital questions about the interactions, contradictions, disjunctions, opportunities, exclusions, injustices and aspirations that globalization entails.

Indigenous artists and activists find themselves navigating complex and often conflicting agendas in this mix, but most have been quick to grasp the opportunities afforded by our global 'network society',[3] even if they are wary of its potential to assimilate minority voices and art forms. The Aboriginal Australian dancers pictured on the cover of this volume seem to perfectly capture such tension in their elegantly visceral presentation of indigenous cultural muscle and vulnerability. At a different level, the

image visually indexes the book's central question: if indigeneity and globalization are seen to articulate (with) each other in cultural as well as political spheres, what hangs in the balance? Collectively, we offer answers to that question by examining recent performance making in a range of international sites and modalities that open windows on the power and the precariousness of indigeneity as a politicized cultural force in our unevenly connected world. The various essays and images assembled here thus speak *to* the growing visibility of indigenous peoples' embodied arts on a global scale over recent decades, and *of* the transnational networks and ideological coalitions they foster. In analysing specific strands of this cultural shift, the contributors urge a fresh look at the mechanisms of post-colonial entanglement and the particular rights and insights afforded by indigeneity in that process.

A consistent thread among the works and practices discussed in the following pages is a deep investment in public performance as an expression of indigenous agency, however circumscribed, and as a possible means to self-determination. Analytically, what ties the collection together is the authors' shared interest in understanding not only the semiotic thickness of embodied arts but also the participatory processes involved in their making. Although most of the essays are concerned at some level with the matter of representation in both figurative and political senses of the term (the respective processes of speaking about and speaking on behalf of indigenous constituencies), the volume as a whole is much less about identity politics than about the practical workings of indigeneity as an active sensibility in artistic, political and social realms. Performance is harnessed as a usefully elastic concept through which to explore such workings. It is interpreted broadly here to include not only theatre, film, dance and music, but also embodied activism and other expressly performative public acts, including live art displays and ceremonies in the museum sector. By exploring different correspondences between indigeneity, performance and globalization in a range of geographical locations and cultural domains, our book aims to contribute to current scholarship in three fields: postcolonial studies, which has not yet engaged extensively with insights developed in performance theory and practice; contemporary performance studies, where there is limited focus on indigenous work on a transnational scale; and indigenous cultural studies, where performance is increasingly of interest but often subsumed under the banner of anthropology.

The conjunction of indigeneity and globalization may initially seem at odds with the fact that indigenous cultural activism draws its main energies from deeply local histories and claims to difference, even as it is often undergirded by recourse to universal human rights. Moreover,

assertions of cultural sovereignty by indigenous peoples are chiefly directed towards states responsible for their colonization and broadly aim to reform the processes of post-colonial nationhood. With these factors in mind, Jeffrey Sissons argues that 'the increasingly global reach of indigeneity reflects not so much the transcendence of … particular national struggles as their spilling over into a wider political arena and global market-place' (2005, 8). Yet indigeneity has long been a concept conditioned by global events and geopolitics, notably the 'civilizing mission' of European imperialism as an early global system, the transcontinental civil rights movements of the 1960s–70s, and the social justice agendas of supranational bodies such as the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (created in 1989). The recent forging of 'indigenous' as a self-conscious if sometimes contentious identity reflects all of these influences as well as responding to translocal and intertribal dialogues variously enabled by evolving communications technologies. At its widest scale, indigeneity now operates, simultaneously, as a portmanteau category establishing commonality among different peoples with distinct histories and geographies (Castree 2004, 153) and a heuristic framework for thinking about that commonality in relation to origins, affiliations, cultural genealogies and place-based connections. In turn, this framework, in conjunction with the on-the-ground activism it underpins, has begun to exert pressure on international relations in subtle ways. The Anishinaabe political theorist Sheryl Lightfoot (2016) shows, for instance, how distinct indigenous movements towards self-determination in Canada and Aotearoa New Zealand, bolstered by the 2007 passage of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, not only challenge Westphalian models of state sovereignty but also demand a broader rethinking of territoriality, (neo)liberalism and human rights. In the light of these various intersections, it is crucial to resist the notion that indigenous stakes in local and/or national matters are only incidentally connected to global affairs.

Saskia Sassen, among others, urges cultural studies researchers to consider how global processes become embedded in national settings:

> One way of opening up the subject of globalization … is to posit that the global – whether an institution, a process, a discursive practice, [or] an imaginary – both transcends the exclusive framing of national states and also partly emerges and operates within that framing. Seen this way, globalization is more than its more common representation as growing interdependence and formation of self-evidently global institutions. It includes subnational spaces, processes, [and] actors. (2010, 1)

These points chime with Tsing's broader argument that we need to investigate not only 'what projects of globalization *do* in the world', but also 'what else goes on with and around them' (2000, 329). Appadurai 'opens up' the subject much more bluntly from a grassroots perspective: 'Which parts of the national state are protectors of stakeholding communities', he asks, 'and which parts are direct affiliates of global capital?' (2005, 2). We have found such prompts useful in steering this volume, since the urgent concerns of indigenous peoples, however they connect to global issues, are so often writ large through encounters with state power. The months-long Dakota Access Pipeline protest, forcefully suppressed by the US National Guard in February 2017, is but one such flashpoint, in this case folding efforts to protect local Sioux water sources into wider objections to the disastrous effects of the global fossil fuel industry, especially in polar and desert environments where many indigenous people live. In a very different mode, reassertions of indigenous locality are sometimes strategically routed through state-based channels, particularly in the entertainment industries where even local markets tend to be embedded in rapidly shifting global mediascapes (see Hilder et al. 2017). Creatively reconfiguring histories and geographies of the settler state, as some indigenous arts do, can also be way of negotiating paths into (and out of) globality. At these levels and others, both material and discursive, the nation-state haunts and perversely energizes the kinds of performances discussed in the following chapters. This enduring, if uneven, influence in shaping cultural praxis should remind us that globalization is best seen not as one monolithic process but as many interlinking ones (Lonergan 2009, 19).

In keeping with such multiplicity as well as the different speaking positions of the 22 distinct voices that contribute to this book, the editors have not prescribed how globalization should be understood or which of its dimensions should take analytical precedence. Instead, we have curated the volume to open windows on this complex phenomenon as it affects indigenous performance making across a range of sites and contexts, rather than to delimit a conceptual field. We have also made spaces for constructive refusals of globalization's epistemic force in framing connectivity, itself built on 'disjuncture and difference' according to Appadurai (1996). Not everyone has (or wants) access to a global cultural economy – or even to the technologies that seemingly make it possible. Pertinent here is James Ferguson's point that 'the "global" does not "flow," thereby connecting and watering contiguous spaces; it hops instead, efficiently connecting the enclaved points in the network while excluding (with equal efficiency) the spaces that lie between the points' (2006, 47). Fittingly, then, ideas about the global percolate through the

essays at varying levels of intensity as the contributors each grapple, explicitly or obliquely, with the cultural flows (or hops) most relevant to their chosen case studies and viewpoints. Some authors trace performative exchanges and dialogues across different regions and constituencies; others analyse the ways in which indigenous performance makers have appropriated globally popular art forms to speak to their own contexts and aspirations; yet others focus on translocal networks that bypass global circuits, or on localized events or practices that resonate with comparable initiatives elsewhere as distinctive forms of 'globalization from below'. Taken together, the chapters reveal not only how indigenous artists and activists harness performance to think globally, but also how they *rethink* the global–local–national nexus and in so doing build connections and coalitions of different scales.

How globalization is implicated in the apparently shrinking social vision of Western neoliberal democracy has been an underlying concern of postcolonial scholarship for some time, and one taken up across a variety of disciplines, including political science, philosophy, literature and, not least, media and cultural studies. In opening up thresholds between local, national and global imaginaries, indigeneity, once mainly a local theme in the critical apparatus of postcolonial theory, now increasingly figures as a pivotal concept. James Clifford notes in this respect that the three signal narratives carried forth from the national liberations of the 1950s and 1960s into the twenty-first century are 'decolonization, globalization, and indigenous becoming', each representing 'distinct historical energies, scales of action, and politics of the possible' that 'construct, reinforce and trouble each other' (2013, 8). These intersections urge renewed efforts to fine-tune postcolonial analytical tools to better serve indigenous studies. *In the Balance* contributes to that objective by attending to the spatial, kinetic and sensory languages of performance-based arts, insisting on both their validity as forms of embodied knowledge and their broad legibility as ways of communicating among and across cultures. At the same time, taking a lead from Byrd and Rothburg's explorations 'between' indigeneity and subalternity, this book illuminates ways in which ongoing colonial relations constrain not only what indigenous performance makers can say or articulate about global affairs, but also what settler audiences are able to hear or interpret (2011, 5). We use 'postcolonial' in this context to encompass a range of responses to colonization rather than suggesting a definitive progression beyond colonial hierarchies. Clifford's argument that 'decolonization names a recurring agency, a blocked, diverted, continually reinvented historical force' seems resonant here (2013, 6). While many of the following chapters speak to decolonizing projects, we

are equally interested in how indigenous performances can be co-opted by state agendas, neoliberal policies and multinational regimes of capital.

Methodologically, *In the Balance* draws inspiration from Chickasaw scholar Chadwick Allen's model of 'trans-Indigenous' research, a process that 'locates itself firmly in the specificity of the Indigenous local, while remaining always cognizant of the complexity of the relevant Indigenous global' (2012, p. xix). This mode of analytics, built on synchronic, diachronic and transdisciplinary juxtapositions, aims to 'invite specific studies into different kinds of conversations, and to acknowledge the mobility and multiple interactions of Indigenous peoples, cultures, histories, and texts' (2012, xiv). To foster such conversations, our book's geographical scope is intentionally broad, encompassing analysis of performances in and/or from Australia, Brazil, Canada, Guatemala, Aotearoa New Zealand, Samoa, South Africa, the United States and the trans-border Sámi territories in Norway, Sweden and Finland. Also among the subjects discussed are film festival circuits reaching across Latin America and a multi-arts exhibition in Britain. Critical approaches and methods are equally wide-ranging as contributors draw from performance studies (itself a hybrid discipline), history, film, literature, visual culture, musicology, anthropology and, not least, practical experiences of performance making 'on the ground'. This international and interdisciplinary canvas responds to Allen's call for meaningful juxtapositions of indigenous experiences, concepts or practices across different times and/or places. We have aimed to be as inclusive as possible in this compilation, soliciting contributions from early-career researchers and indigenous artist-practitioners to sit alongside those of more established scholars. Such contributions have come with fresh insights into the ways in which digital technology conditions subjective experiences of indigeneity and how day-to-day creative practices are influenced – or not – by market forces. In keeping with the expanding global reach of indigenous networks across linguistic as well as cultural borders, the book also reaches across the common linguistic divisions in postcolonial studies to bring indigenous performances in Latin America, Québec and Sápmi into dialogue with initiatives in the Anglophone settler regions.

Among the many trans-indigenous juxtapositions Allen advocates – e.g. 'across genre and media, aesthetic systems and world views, technologies and practices' – are those that cross 'the Indigenous–settler binary' (2012, xviii). This particular conjunction, intended as part of a multi-perspectival method for literary studies, raises immediate queries for our project, given the collaborative nature of most performance-making ventures and the relative scarcity of theatre, film and television made solely by indigenous creatives.[4] What then might constitute the indigenous and

settler elements to be purposefully juxtaposed in a performance studies version of Allen's radically comparative analytical practice? How might authorship – and artistry – be reconfigured amid the complex process of labouring with others across cultural and epistemological divides? This book provides no definitive answers to such questions even though the individual contributors are generally clear about which histories, affiliations, practices and markers of identity are being mobilized as indigenous in the performances and practices under discussion. Many of these incorporate non-indigenous input of some kind, whether through the efforts of key collaborators such as directors, curators, scriptwriters and producers or, at the other end of the spectrum, through the small-scale embodied acts of those working in solidarity with indigenous groups as co-performers and/or helpers. Amid the intricacies of such entanglements, the analytical task is to decipher what social, political and cultural work indigenous performance is called to *do* in different contexts, rather than to settle on fixed definitions of what indigeneity *is* or could be.

Our emphasis on contingent interpretations of indigeneity aligns with recent critical thinking in political as well as artistic realms. Despite much debate at forums ranging in scale from the local to the supranational, 'indigenous' as a cultural category has remained resistant to codification, with most definitions based on flexible parameters that are not only sensitive to genealogical and place-based connections but also cognizant of their fluidity (see Gilbert 2013, 174). Here, following Sissons, we have opted to focus on 'cultures that have been transformed through the struggles of colonized peoples to resist and redirect projects of settler nationhood' (2005, 15).[5] This approach sees indigeneity as co-constitutive in settler contexts and as distinct from, albeit sometimes in dialogue with, broader (contested) notions of indigenous peoples as characteristically tribal, traditional and non-urban. While such essentialist tropes can be strategically harnessed as part of a powerful brand in the global arts market, as Arifani Moyo's essay in this volume shows, they are often vigorously resisted by artists and activists whose urban lifestyles may be seen in comparison as somehow calling their indigeneity into question. In the essays that follow, indigenous is thus used (sometimes interchangeably with First Nations, Aboriginal or Native American) as an inclusive, pluralist term to encompass a wide range of specific identities and affiliations that are named, where relevant, following the norms of the tribes, clans, nations, iwi or regional groupings at issue.[6]

Performance is an apt platform through which to trace global patterns of indigeneity as an iterative mode of public being and belonging that responds to distinct historical and geopolitical factors. It covers a wide spectrum of embodied 'doings' – from quotidian acts of self-fashioning to

highly aestheticized creative semblances that are rehearsed and executed with an eye to effect – and is not only an artistic medium but also, and expressly, a 'system of learning, storing, and transmitting knowledge' (Taylor 2003, 16). In this sense, performance provides a potent conceptual lens as well as a rich material arena for our study. Scholarly interest in indigenous performance has increased considerably over the last five years, yet most comparisons in this field have been confined to national or regional scales and/or particular disciplines, notably theatre.[7] One exception is Laura Graham and Glenn Penny's broad-ranging volume, *Performing Indigeneity: Global Histories and Contemporary Experiences* (2014), which brings together detailed ethnographic analyses of cultural displays, diplomatic exchanges, (cross-)gender enactments and ceremonial events from a wide variety of contexts. Equally international in scope but focusing more squarely on artistic genres, recent special issues of *Interventions* and *Theatre Journal* likewise attest to the prominence and power of performance as a multifaceted vehicle of indigenous cultural resurgence (Gilbert 2013; Knowles 2015). *In the Balance* builds on these studies by attending to the ways in which aesthetically coded performative acts work to actualize that resurgence (however fleetingly) amid, alongside, against or beyond the amorphous, world-making forces of globalization. In this endeavour, we treat performance as 'both the act of remaining and a means of appearance' (Schneider 2001, 103) that potentially enables resilience and visibility, key concerns for contemporary indigenous communities.

Thinking about performance as embodied cultural action in our current digital age can tempt efforts to delineate live and recorded work in terms that obscure their complementarity or, worse, valorize live expression as more authentically indigenous. Such hierarchies, as Pamela Wilson and Michelle Stewart's *Global Indigenous Media* (2008) amply shows, fail to recognize the extent to which indigenous performance makers have taken command of new media technologies to craft culturally distinct art forms and shape the interpretive repertoires through which they are understood. In this context, online video has become a key means by which indigenous activists, for instance, creatively communicate cultural and environmental concerns to audiences within and beyond their communities. Video is also widely integrated into live performance production, whether as a marketing strategy, an element of the show or an accessible and durable mechanism for archiving, re-presenting and analysing artistic work. Experiences of live events are likewise often mediated by digital technology as spectators see (and share) performances through multiple optics. The photograph below, showing Maya hip-hop artist MC Tz'utu framed through an iPhone during a live performance in London, neatly

Fig. 1: A spectator films Maya artist MC Tz'utu (René Dionisio) performing
hip-hop at Bargehouse, London, 8 November 2013.
Photo: Victoria Falco.

captures this trend. More broadly, intersections between live and digital
art forms have stimulated discussion not only about performativity and
spectatorship, but also about the circulation, preservation, transmission
and custodianship of intangible culture in indigenous contexts. Questions
about 'visual sovereignty' (following Raheja, 2010) ensue from such

discussions and are taken up here in essays by Faye Ginsburg and Thomas Hilder analysing popular Australian and Scandinavian television shows featuring indigenous talents.

Like many edited essay collections, this one began as an ephemeral event encompassing a wide range of performances that can only be hinted at in these pages. In its live version, 'In the Balance: Indigeneity, Performance, Globalization' unfolded as a four-day interdisciplinary conference that I convened in London in late 2013, hosting approximately 150 scholars and artists from 17 different countries around the world. My co-editors were integral to this gathering: Dani (J.D.) Phillipson took the role of lead conference organizer, while Michelle Raheja contributed as both an invited delegate and one of several cultural advisors who helped us to curate *EcoCentrix: Indigenous Arts, Sustainable Acts*, an international exhibition of performance-based arts staged by my research team in tandem, and in dialogue, with the conference. Among the dozens of indigenous delegates who attended, some came primarily for scholarly exchange, others were showing work in the exhibition, and yet others were simultaneously involved in the Origins Festival, a celebration of First Nations cultures held biennially in London and scheduled that year in conjunction with our project events to build an unprecedented buzz around indigenous performing arts. Like most of our guests, I was acutely aware of the irony inherent in staging the conference in a European metropolis marked not only by its imperial past as the hub of the largest empire in history, but also by its neo-imperial present as a nerve centre of global capitalism. Could this resource-hungry city, implicated in the conquest, dispossession and impoverishment of so many indigenous peoples, prove a fertile place for excavating subaltern ways through – or around – the imposing architectures of globalization? Who was missing from the conference table, perhaps stymied by distance or discriminatory border controls? Was there sufficient common ground on which to collectively imagine an emancipatory politics of cross-cultural interchange – or, more daringly, a new and more equitable global polity?

In the event, the location proved generative for our discussions precisely because of its history. As Coll Thrush (2016) has shown, London has been a stopping point, and sometimes a final resting place, for countless indigenous visitors and denizens whose labour – as captives, envoys, entertainers, diplomats, athletes, artists, poets, protesters and more – has helped shaped cultural life in the city over the last 500 years. Home to a sizeable Māori and Pacific Islander community since the 1970s as well as to other indigenous cosmopolitans, including visual artists, curators and performance makers, London figures in indigenous cultural networks in sometimes surprising ways. Several installations and live performances in

our exhibition dramatized that specific point. Likewise, the poetic photo essay crafted for this book by Pasifikan 'tusitala' (teller of tales) Rosanna Raymond claims London, business district and all, as emphatically local ground. Today, indigenous performances find their way into the city through multiple channels: music, dance and theatre venues, exhibitions at the British Museum and other institutions of its ilk,[8] cultural events at various embassies and high commissions, and community gatherings such as the Native Spirit Film Festival, Diá de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) celebrations, the Notting Hill Carnival and ANZAC Day ceremonies.[9] Seen in this broader perspective, London is not only a global city but also occupied ground – in short, a fitting place for a conference committed to radical comparisons on indigenous themes. These were presented not only through standard academic panels, but also through dance, oratory and song, as well as an impassioned debate at the closing cabaret.

One of the immediate challenges facing indigenous performance makers as they navigate the global terrain of representation is how to creatively counter stereotypes and long histories of commoditization. Here, in a reprise of the conference opening, the acclaimed Cree actor, director and choreographer Michael Greyeyes throws down the gauntlet on this issue with a witty, performative disquisition about 'playing Indian' in the public eye. His embodied memories of acting as Bromden in the stage version of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* are interspersed with a fragmentary account of his career journey from Saskatchewan to Canada's National Ballet School, to Hollywood, then graduate studies in Ohio, and finally back to Toronto as a tenured professor at York University. Conscious of being 'inside the machine' of the establishment, Greyeyes turns the ethnographic gaze back on to white society, hijacking its spaces, audiences and funding to reassert indigenous protocols as the foundation for a twenty-first-century performance practice. Such provocations are echoed in different registers later in the book, notably in Rosanna Raymond's multiform rendition of Polynesian self-fashioning in Europe. Taking on the mantle of the indigenous cosmopolitan, Raymond presents herself as a 'circulating body', an 'activator' whose inhabitations of the urban landscape trouble binaries between insider and outsider, self and other, citizen and denizen. Her version of indigeneity is moulded not only by enduring Samoan and oceanic genealogies, but also by mobility, trade, reciprocal obligations and, like the different characters in Greyeyes' monologue, the shape-shifting power of dramatic embodiment. Raymond's artistic vision is mythic as well as historical in so far as it conjures multiple worlds and temporalities, giving the time-space compression of globalization an indigenous slant. Her striking image-and-text juxtapositions also

work to unsettle colonialist visual regimes with explicit reminders that exoticism lies in the eyes of the beholder.

As several of the essays attest, the politics of performativity tend to become entangled with investments in cultural authenticity, belonging and diplomacy in situations where state-driven narratives of post-colonial nationhood play out in global arenas. Tracy Devine Guzmán interrogates contradictory demands on indigenous Brazilians interpellated by the ideology of the *nação mestiça* (mestizo nation), arguing that this government-sanctioned, post-racial identity discourse seeks to deny indigenous claims to land and cultural rights. Two defiant performances of Guarani resistance against such hegemony ground Guzmán's analysis: the first by a youth enlisted to represent traditional Native Brazilianness at the FIFA World Cup opening ceremonies in 2014, the second by a Guarani Kaiowá leader fighting to recover his community's lands, as depicted in *Terra Vermelha* (*Birdwatchers*), a 2008 film exposing the effects of agribusiness land-grabs in Mato Grosso do Sul. The broader backdrop to such performances is Brazil's rapacious national development programme, progressing in lockstep with the relentless march of globalized resource-extraction industries. Whether Native disruptions of popular and political discourses can advance decolonization in this context remains a moot question for Guzmán, but she clearly shows what is at stake, for both human and environmental well-being, in the enactment of sovereignty on indigenous terms.

While the situation in Brazil finds echoes in other parts of the world covered in this book, as Morna Macleod's analysis of ethical tribunals in Guatemala suggests, possibilities for indigenous agency are not always so bleak. In assessing how the demands of globalization are implicated in nation-building as it affects South African cultural production, Arifani Moyo sees a 'labour of soft power' unfolding, with some positive outcomes. His essay focuses on performances of indigeneity and cosmopolitan patriotism in the spectacular, long-running musical hit, *African Footprint* (2000). In this case study, post-apartheid visions of the nation's progress towards a harmonious multi-ethnic and multilingual democracy are taken as the drivers of a more subtle developmentalist agenda, manifest in the overlapping sectors of tourism and the arts. Moyo links *African Footprint*'s international success to its dramatization of a pluralist, pan-African version of indigeneity widely recruited as a national brand beckoning geopolitical insiders and outsiders alike; yet he does not condemn this strategy as mere opportunism. Instead, his essay boldly argues that the show assimilates globalization, politically and aesthetically, to create a platform on which African performance making does the work not only of cultural diplomacy but also of social uplift.

Margaret Werry also explores the agency available to actors and communities involved in the global circulation of indigenous cultural products, but in very different circumstances: the repatriation of *toi moko*, preserved Māori heads that were traded as commodities in nineteenth-century colonial networks, often ending up in European museums. Her analysis of the theatricalized ceremonies that attend the heads' homecomings show repatriation to be a powerfully performative practice that both affirms bicultural nationalism in Aotearoa New Zealand and brokers new knowledge economies in wider museum circuits as indigenous histories and burial protocols are acknowledged and respected. Yet, Werry argues, what becomes starkly visible in these international co-performances of diplomacy and redress are tensions between Māori understandings of political community, temporality and personhood, and those of (neo)liberal states. The essay ends with a dare: 'What if we were to refrain from staging grand performatives of global cultural politics *around* the dead, and instead allowed *them* to perform?' At the heart of this question is an exhortation to engage more deeply with indigenous epistemologies, to recognize the dead as vital participants in Māoridom's global diaspora. A similar concern with the performativity of the indigenous dead runs through Kester Dyer's examination of the legacies of Québécois nationalism as manifest in *Mesnak* (2011), Yves Sioui Durand's cinematic reworking of *Hamlet*. Dyer reads the film through critical theories of haunting, harnessed to suggest both fundamental schisms in Quebec's long-running quest for nationhood, and the ghostly agency of a revenant indigenous world fighting back against corruption and greed. In keeping with *Mesnak*'s localization of the *Hamlet* story, Dyer does not key his analysis primarily to global issues but rather interprets the film as working towards sociopolitical and ecological equilibrium that is planetary in spirit if not in scale. On another front, *Mesnak*'s creative appropriation of this canonical tale resonates with strategic adaptations of Shakespearean texts for indigenous purposes in a range of international locations. The Māori staging of *Troilus and Cressida* during London's Globe to Globe Festival during the 2012 Cultural Olympiad is one case in point.

What Phipps calls the 'globalizing sphere of indigenous cultural production' (2009, 30) is illuminated here in complementary ways by Faye Ginsburg and Amalia Córdova as they each weigh the material conditions affecting media makers' access to national, regional and international audiences. Focusing on the popular urban television drama series, *Redfern Now*, set in inner-city Sydney, Ginsburg traces the coalition of state-sponsored initiatives and local innovation that has built capacity in Aboriginal Australian screen arts over the last three decades. Her theory of 'televisual sovereignty' isolates ways in which indigenous control of

production processes not only generates products whose distinctiveness benefits from a range of Aboriginal talent, but also sets up the conditions of possibility for fruitful collaborations, including with non-indigenous creatives. In this instance, the alignment of indigenous and national interests has helped to position Aboriginal performance makers as global players, while building and branding local works to increase their market-ability. Córdova shifts our attention to indigenous film festivals, seen as sites that catalyse new projects and audiences by offering platforms for self-representation, training opportunities, spaces and protocols for practitioner forums, occasions for cross-cultural dialogue and, in some cases, access channels to international circuits. Her account of the recent proliferation of such festivals across the Americas shows how they connect a dispersed community of stakeholders, but by no means evenly or permanently. In this context, globalization does indeed hop rather than flow, with enclaved sites in North America generally more able to support and sustain indigenous film-making than their counterparts in the South. With this divide in view, Córdova proposes that the strength of trans-indigenous networks in the region largely depends on itinerant and nomadic tactics. Both essays detail how indigenous media makers navigate 'the expediency of culture' – globalization's accelerated 'transformation of everything into resource' (Yúdice 2003, 28) – and how their material products resist the homogeneous branding that John and Jean Comaroff decry in *Ethnicity Inc.* (2009).

Popular entertainment, a key vector of globalization, has long been an important arena for indigenous innovation and activism despite its summary dismissal in some quarters as a corrupting influence on traditional art forms and social structures. Such criticisms are often inextricable from broader debates about urbanization, poverty, intergenerational conflict and assimilation, obscuring the creative ways in which popular genres have been indigenized and politicized, through performance, as practices of cultural revival. Moyo's discussion of fusion aesthetics in *African Footprint* attends to such practices, as do three other essays in this book: Anna Haebich's examination of the continuities between post-war dance-hall gatherings and 1990s karaoke-style nights in Noongar communities in Australia; Michelle Raheja's analysis of the decolonizing strategies at the core of Native North American, Aboriginal Australian and Sámi hip-hop; and Thomas Hilder's study of intercultural exchange in *Sápmi Sessions*, a show that borrows the conventions of reality television to stage creative encounters between Sámi and non-indigenous musicians in spectacular Nordic locales. In each case, indigenous uses of evolving mass entertainment technologies – ranging from simple gramophones or microphones to mobile digital recording and transmitting devices – has

gone hand in hand with selective appropriations of aesthetic forms that can be shaped to empower artists and/or communities. African American music and dance (sub)cultures have been influential in this respect, as Haebich and Raheja note, suggesting alignments between marginalized groups differently but consistently concerned with social justice. *Sápmi Sessions* takes another tack, embedding empowerment in shared processes of decolonization enacted through the gift of collaboration. All three case studies show how globally popular performance genres can be harnessed to create bridges across generations and/or cultures; they also confirm that the oft-debated 'authenticity' of indigenous forms lies as much in innovation as it does in tradition.

Performance is often a compelling vehicle for the embodied work of empowering indigenous constituencies whose specific experiences of gender and/or class oppression might otherwise go unnoticed. Morna Macleod and Julie Burelle address this issue in the context of grassroots activism in Guatemala and Canada respectively, examining projects that call for social and environmental justice in the wake of systematic discrimination. Macleod analyses Maya ceremonies and testimonials at an ethical tribunal staged in the Guatemalan village of San Miguel Ixtahuacán in 2012 to scrutinize the impacts of the Canadian mining giant, Goldcorp, on local inhabitants and ecosystems. Inspired by regional and international tribunals of its kind, the event drew judges and additional witnesses from other parts of the Americas, showing trans-border allegiances at work. Such gatherings, Macleod argues, engender a politics of hope by giving indigenous groups visible platforms on which to denounce abuses and air grievances when access to state justice is denied. By comparison, Burelle focuses on intimate group performances that gain in scale and resonance by dint of their slow unfolding over time and place. Her case examples – *Indian Act* (1999–2002), a communal beading project initiated by visual artist Nadia Myre, and *La Marche Amun*, a long-distance walk undertaken by a group of Innu women in 2010 – each protest the ongoing legacies of gendered exclusion and violence instituted by Canada's Indian Act. These endurance performances, as Burelle calls them, not only enact a form of obstinate presence in the face of profoundly assimilatory laws, but also carve spaces in which women's authority is respected. Fundamentally participatory in nature, the projects described in these two essays vernacularize international rights discourses, providing models of performative redress that are potentially global in application.

Of all the contributions to this book, Chadwick Allen's is the least overtly concerned with globalization; yet his speculative exploration of ancient indigenous earthworks in North America mobilizes precisely the kind of planetary consciousness required to rethink cultural flows

in genuinely radical terms. Allen sees these mounds as dynamic earth models of human movement and spatialized knowledge that potentially hold traces of the musical processions, rituals, ceremonies, dances and storytelling events central to the performance cultures of pre-Columbian civilizations. His method of 'reading' indigenous performativity at and through existing earthworks in Ohio combines insights from history, anthropology and archaeology with embodied experiences and improvisations at the mounds. This research also draws from, and feeds into, place-based dramaturgical models being developed by the playwrights Monique Mojica (Kuna/Rappahannock) and LeAnne Howe (Choctaw). What emerges from Allen's ruminations is not only a sense of continuous, adaptable trans-indigenous connections across space and time, but also a new *post-national* cartography of human mobility and reciprocal relations, though he does not put it explicitly in those terms.

In editing this volume, we have aimed to keep alive the spirit and practice of the trans-indigenous juxtapositions that animated our gathering in London. As a conference, 'In the Balance' was always intended to be the beginning of a longer conversation, a kōrero in Māori terms. A kōrero invites people to 'share and reflect, move forward and backward in time, debate and wonder'.[10] The virtual roundtable curated by Dione Joseph enacts this story-weaving process as it brings together the voices of artist-practitioners Alberto Guevara, Tia Reihana-Morunga, Jill Carter, Liza-Mare Syron and Jesse Wente to reflect on the vital role of indigenous epistemologies in making performance in *and* for a globalizing world. Less obvious kōrero have also been integral to the long unfolding of this book. Some of the following chapters grew from germinal ideas presented at the conference while others emerged from later conversations; all have evolved through in-depth dialogues among contributors, editors and anonymous reviewers, with added input at times from local artists and stakeholders. In keeping with our international remit, this work has unfolded in different parts of the world and often across great distances. Washington, Los Angeles, Toronto, Auckland and Brisbane, each with its own distinct indigenous and settler occupations, became ad hoc meeting points when our academic paths crossed or took us into the orbit of other contributors. Such gathering places have shaped the book's conceptual arc even though their presence here is largely invisible. Also invisible, but integral to this project, are the distinct knowledges and cultural backgrounds we have brought to the task of editing – Michelle as a Native American specializing in literary and cultural studies, Dani as a London-based Canadian combining creative research and practice, and I as an itinerant Australian working across theatre and performance studies. This mix has helped us serve as critics and sounding boards to a wide range

of indigenous and non-indigenous voices. In doing so, we have sought to build bridges across cultures as well as disciplines while remaining alert to the different positions we nevertheless occupy 'inside the machine', to borrow Greyeyes' conceit. The following chapters offer vital insights into the many creative ways in which indigenous performativity works within and around globalization to keep such positions in balance.

Notes

1 The early claims of globalization theory are usefully surveyed and scrutinized in Krishnaswamy (2003); also see Bartolovich (2000) and Dirlik (1996).

2 Recent book-length studies in this vein focusing on indigenous peoples include Clifford (2013), Hall and Fenelon (2009), Stewart-Harawira (2005) and Wilson and Stewart (2008).

3 In the sense popularized by Manuel Castells (2000), the term 'network society' indexes not only the effects of electronic communications systems on modern social organization but also the cultural, economic and political interdependence wrought by technological advances.

4 As the indigenous hip-hop scene shows, this pattern is changing in screen-based arts with advances in digital technology now providing the means to shoot, edit, produce and circulate good-quality small-scale films and videos. Live performance makers usually have fewer opportunities to work autonomously if they wish to reach audiences beyond their local constituencies.

5 Sissons makes a clear distinction between 'New World and Third World indigenisms', arguing that they 'are politically and conceptually grounded in different forms and phases of nationalism' (2005, 18).

6 Some authors have requested that 'indigenous' and 'indigeneity' take upper case in their essays, reflecting specific uses of, and claims upon, these terms in different geopolitical contexts. Otherwise, we have followed house style by adopting lower case.

7 Notable regional and national studies include edited volumes by Däwes on indigenous North American drama (2013) and Nolan and Knowles on performing indigeneity in Canada (2016). Among more broadly based, discipline-specific studies are Däwes and Maufort's book on ecology in indigenous theatre (2014) and Hilder, Stobart and Tan's volume on indigenous music and digital media in Australia, Scandinavia and the Americas (2017). Gilbert and Gleghorn also focus on the Americas, taking an interdisciplinary approach to commodity and spectacle in a range of indigenous contexts (2014).

8 Two recent examples of popular London events featuring indigenous cultures in very different registers are A Tribe Called Red's electronic powwow concert (2017) and the British Museum's major exhibition, *Indigenous Australia: Enduring Civilisation* (2016), which included live performances by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups.

9 Māori and Aboriginal performances are now a common part of ANZAC Day ceremonies held annually in central London to honour Australian and New Zealand troops (including indigenous soldiers) who died on Europe's battlefields during the two world wars.

10 Email by Dione Joseph to the editors, 8 March 2016.

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1

Inside the Machine: Indigeneity, Subversion and the Academy

Michael Greyeyes

This performative keynote address was originally presented on 25 October 2013 at the University of Notre Dame, London, UK, as part of the conference 'In the Balance: Indigeneity, Performance, Globalization', organized by Helen Gilbert.

[The title of the keynote address projects on to a screen behind a standard academic podium. A tall actor, an Indigenous man, walks up to the podium, regarding the audience politely. He speaks into a microphone.]

I once played Bromden.

Chief Bromden.

Created by Ken Kesey in his 1962 novel *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and subsequently made into a play by Dale Wasserman, and then famously transformed into a film directed by Milos Forman.

[A production still of Will Sampson, from the 1975 film, appears on the screen behind the actor.]

The image of this man, Will Sampson, is iconic. His portrayal of Chief Bromden in the film is legendary.

Interestingly, the work is known for the epic battle between the protagonist, R.P. McMurphy, and Nurse Ratched, but both the play and the book that inspired it featured Chief Bromden as the narrator. It is Bromden's point

of view that frames the entire journey of the men in the State Hospital and provides us with the portrait of McMurphy.

What is noteworthy here is that Bromden is crazy.

[There is a shift in the actor. Confusion clouds his eyes; he speaks in a huskier voice, clearly terrified.]

> Papa? They're foggin' it in again. Somethin' bad is gonna happen, so they're foggin' it in.

[The audience hears the sounds of machinery, grinding and metallic.]

> There! You hear it, Papa? The Black Machine. They got it goin' eighteen stories down below the ground. They're puttin' people in one end and out comes what they want. The way they do it, Papa, each night they tip the world on its side and everybody loose goes rattlin' to the bottom. Then they hook 'em by the heels, and they hang 'em up and cut 'em open. Only by that time they got no innards, just some beat up gears and things. And all they bleed is rust. You think I'm ravin' 'cause it sounds too awful to be true, but my God, there's such a lot of things that's true even if they never really happen! (Wasserman 2000, 8)

[The image of Sampson fades. The actor continues as himself.]

When I saw the film as a young boy, I was drawn to Bromden. The only Indigenous character in the movie, the only brown face visible. Much like the situation I found myself in growing up in a white suburb of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, in western Canada. Of course, my family was connected to our communities to the north and west of the city, in Battleford, Muskeg Lake, Prince Albert, Poundmaker and Sweetgrass, but I found myself – like Bromden – surrounded by that which was not me.

[Sing-song.]

'One of these things is not like the other?'

Part of my early identity was framed by difference. This is a trope that I would return to again and again.

But in a weird twist, my journey brought me from Saskatchewan through

the worlds of classical ballet, through Hollywood, and then for nearly eight years to north-western Ohio. Middle America. And Kent State University, where I pursued my graduate degree.

The Theatre Department at Kent State ran Porthouse Theatre, a professional theatre company that performed each summer at the Blossom Music Center in the Cuyahoga Valley. In 2002, I was cast as Bromden – the six-and-a-half-foot Indian giant – in their remount of the Wasserman play.

I'm six foot two inches, 220 pounds. *[Aside.]* Nearly sixteen stone for you traditionalists.

And I was the only Indigenous person in my programme.

[Beat.]

I believe I was a natural fit for the part.

Not simply because I look like the character. But, for a long time now, I've been inside the machine, too.

[As Bromden, but somewhat matter-of-factly, almost detached.]

> There's a shipment of frozen parts come in downstairs—hearts and kidneys and brains and the like. I can hear them rumble into cold storage down the coal chute. A guy sitting in the room someplace I can't see is talking about a guy up on Disturbed killing himself. Old Rawler. Cut both his nuts off and bled to death, sitting right on the can in the latrine, half a dozen people in there with him didn't know it till he fell off it to the floor, dead.
>
> What makes people so impatient is what I can't figure; all the guy had to do was wait. (Kesey 1973, 102–03)

[An urgent whisper!]

You're inside the machine, too! But you just might not know it.

[The actor continues.]

Kesey's novel distorts the traditional storytelling omniscient. We are conditioned to trust our narrators. They've been through it, we reason. They wouldn't lie to us. But at least we know they're sane. Bromden isn't. His mind is full of hard, cruel images. The novel suggests where those images come from – his time in the Army, from boarding school … *[beat]* from Maitland Street …

My school was an old Quaker church in the middle of downtown Toronto, 105 Maitland Street, near the area known as Cabbagetown. The National Ballet School – one of the world's finest training centres for classical ballet.

[An image of Canada's National Ballet School appears behind the actor. We see the wide interior of what was known as Studio A and B. Light wooden floors, the rich wood of the original church, beautifully preserved, with sunlight streaming through the room's many windows.]

It was here they taught me to speak. *En quoi. Devant. En arrière. Pizhalsta.* 'Lengthen your spine!' I learned their grammar and the aesthetics embedded in it: Symmetry. Refinement.

[Beat.]

Conformity.

I like to say that my cultural identity – my Indigenous one – was unimportant to them. It didn't matter that I was brown. I wasn't singled out. *[With a sly smile.]* They didn't like any of us! And the technique was light years beyond the capacities of our young bodies. It was an unscalable mountain that we pitted ourselves against daily. Week after week. Month after month. Year after year.

In such a crucible, we were either forged with stainless steel spines and calloused feet or we got melted down and shipped home.

[The image of the ballet school fades.]

Due entirely to the support of my family, I was successful. I graduated from the school in 1984 and danced with the National Ballet of Canada, then with the company of Eliot Feld in New York City. I danced on the great stages of the world: the Met, the National Arts Centre, the Royal

Opera House. But outside the window of my profession, my chosen institution, another path beckoned.

[An image of the actor, as the character Tecumseh, from the PBS documentary film Tecumseh's Vision, *part of the landmark mini-series* We Shall Remain.*]*

I believe that I was always an actor.

When I was a student at the ballet school, I'd tell people that I was not an actual dancer, but an actor involved in an eight-year performance art piece, in which I played a dancer.

I injured my leg, quite severely, in 1990 and had to take a year off from dancing. I stepped off the treadmill, got down out of my hamster wheel.

It's dangerous to give someone time to think.

It's inevitable, really, that one begins asking questions. That's why they got us runnin'. That's why they extended the broadcast window for television. I remember when, in my country, the television channels – both of them – would go off the air at midnight. Grainy images of Mounties, the national anthem, the colour bars.

The world quieted. The fog cleared. They don't have to worry about that now.

The televisions never turn off. I email and get emailed in the middle of the night. We never sleep.

[The image of the actor as Tecumseh fades. Then, again, he speaks in Bromden's voice.]

> I remember one Christmas, Papa … here at the hospital. It was right at midnight and there's a big wind and the door blows open whoosh! And here comes a fat man all dressed in red with a big white beard and moustache. 'Ho ho ho', he says, 'like to stay but I must be hurryin' along, very tight schedule you know.' Well, the Aides jumped him and pinned him down with their flashlights and gave him a tranquilizer and sent him right on up to Disturbed. They kept him six years, Papa, and when they let him go he was clean-shaved and skinny as a pole. (Wasserman 2000, 36)

[The actor takes a moment to return to the space, to reflect on those words.]

Playing Bromden was very powerful for me. I understood his silences. I didn't have to pretend that I was filling big shoes. Bromden believes he is a smaller, paler version of his father. I was performing in Sampson's shadow. I got that smallness for nothing. But it was a focusing event for me. I've always played Indians. I don't think I've ever been cast as anything else. I went back to university as a thirty-year-old actor to widen my craft and to engage with roles that I would never reasonably be considered for, given the issues of diversity in Hollywood. I went back for the classics: Shakespeare, Ibsen, Williams, among others. I didn't really know what I was getting into.

And so, *unbelievably*, I paid to go back inside the Machine.

But my experience there was surprising. Extraordinary. Great professors: Rosemarie Bank, Terry Burgler, Yuko Kurahshi. I went to get a practitioner's degree, but it was the studies areas that caught me in their currents. Postcolonial theory, postmodernism. Derrida. Baudrillard. Foucault. Shohat. Stam.

My thesis was titled 'Re-Inventing the Indian: Subversive Performance in Film and Theatre'. Playing Bromden was a key part of my research. And I found myself caught between opposing forces: history, representation, cultural authenticity and authentic performance – forces working against a naïve approach to the role. In one scene, the stage direction has Bromden drinking heavily during a party. I've been careful about denying to a predominantly white audience the image of myself, a brown man with long black hair, drinking heavily. Acting drunk.

Mmm. What to do? What to do?

In the end, I played the part as I felt he needed to be played. And my Bromden, in that scene, was the life of the party. Huge and bold and unafraid of what anyone would see or think.

He was free …

I was free.

And that peculiar journey took me back home to Canada, to York University. After I defended my thesis, I sent applications to twenty

different schools. Only two responded (which I know is pretty fair in that job market), with York University in Toronto putting me on a short list. I drove up from Ohio to interview and taught a demo class.

Then the offer came: assistant professor, tenure track. Like many junior faculty, I literally had no idea what I was doing those first few years. I was the youngest person on faculty. And I was the only brown face in my department. In the grand tradition of academe, I was saddled with one committee after the other, particularly the onerous ones that senior faculty had already cut their teeth on, years before. I was back on the wheel, runnin' hard.

Midway through my tenure process, the world economy melted down and a new breed of administrators moved into power at York and other institutions, at least they did so in Canada. They looked at the books scrupulously and asked why we were running in the red by several hundred thousand dollars per year.

Studio classes are expensive, they argued.

Small classes are a selling point, we countered! Our undergraduate reviews reflect this!

I have come to understand our short history in this way: some time in the 1950s or 60s, practising artists convinced the powers-that-be that fine arts can and should be taught at the university level. And they got their open-toed sandals in the door.

And to be frank, it was great and everyone came out ahead.

Fine arts practice and the methodologies used to teach it were approved by the Senates, and there was a tremendous demand for arts education. And universities were the better for it, especially when you could have serious-looking students holding cellos or standing at a ballet barre with their legs in developpé on the front covers of their brochures!

I mean, the arts *are* great, just so long as the sons and daughters of the elites don't end up actually doing it *[in disbelief]* for a living! But then in the middle of the recession, when the endowments began to run thin, the bean counters realized it was and always will be a money-losing proposition. It was time to kick the hippies out. They had a glorious run.

[Another image appears on the screen: distorted, clinical, visual white noise, two white bars of light in soft focus.]

> Whatever it was went haywire in the mechanism, they've just about got it fixed again. The clean, calculated arcade movement is coming back; six-thirty out of bed, seven into the mess hall, eight the puzzles come out for the Chronics and the cards for the Acutes … in the Nurses' Station I can see the white hands of the Big Nurse float over the controls. (Kesey 1973, 140)

And so I joined with my colleagues in defending our programmes, and the intentions of those programmes, and their unspoken biases. Self-preservation was part of it certainly, but I honestly believed that our training, the basis of our curriculum, was worth saving. Then I was asked to teach a course on intercultural theatre.

[The image of the white bars of light fades.]

I believe I was a natural fit for the part.

I had worked extensively with Native Earth Performing Arts, a major Indigenous theatre company in the city. As well, most of the artists that we would study were my friends and peers, many of whom I had already worked with, or they had worked with my friends and collaborators. My *bona fides* for teaching such a course were exemplary. And for my students, having me, an Aboriginal man, at the front of the room, talking about colonialism, identity, the colonial gaze and interculturalism gave my presentation of the material a clear urgency – an authenticity, if you will.

This raises an interesting point … I'll call it a flaw in the Machine. By asking me to teach something, I had to learn it well enough to impart it to others … And it politicized me radically. *[With eyebrow raised.]* It appears someone was asleep at the controls. Because this is what I began teaching them …

I borrowed from a brilliant reader titled *Theatre and Interculturalism*, written by my friend and colleague Ric Knowles. One afternoon, the students walked into the lecture hall to find these words projected on the screen:

> Whiteness Studies 101

Department of Caucasian Anthropology

[Assuming the guise of an all-too earnest 'Caucasian anthropologist' – not a white anthropologist, but rather an anthropologist who studies Caucasians.]

Good afternoon! Welcome to Whiteness Studies 101. My name is Michael Greyeyes. I'm an Associate Professor here in the Department of Caucasian Anthropology. My research includes Cultural Whiteness and White Dance Forms through History. I'm also a published author. Some of you may be familiar with my most recent publication: *What it Means to be White.*

Now I'm sure you've noticed that I, myself *[placing a hand upon his chest]*, am not white. But please be assured that I have a great deal of expertise in this area. Not only do I have an MA and a PhD in Whiteness Studies, but my field work in this area is extensive. I have lived with white people my entire life. I have lived in their communities, worked alongside them. They've shared their stories, their mythologies. Opened their homes to me, initiated me into their rituals, their ceremonies.

But this course examines far more than just this. We shall journey to the very heart of Whiteness.

We shall ask: What is the unquestioned cultural frame?

Today's lecture will cover the Culture of Whiteness, as well as Whiteness as a Frame of Mind …

But let's begin with …

Significant Historical Events and Achievements of the White People.

Starting with architecture. Their influence on world architecture is unquestioned.

[The lecturer changes slides, looking towards the screen behind him at the Greek Parthenon against an impossibly blue sky.]

And where would we be, where would this venerable institution be, without *this* invention?

[An early lithograph of two men standing at a printing press, with the caption: The Gutenberg Galaxy Now Appears.]

White people initiated several cataclysmic social and economic movements …

[A bleak charcoal drawing of a factory, with smoke spewing from the building's many stacks. A bridge in the foreground spans a river, undoubtedly polluted and toxic, flowing before the factory. The caption reads: The Industrial Revolution, 18th and 19th Centuries.]

As well as an array of ingenious devices …

[A drawing of a 'Penny Farthing', an early bicycle, with a gigantic front wheel and small rear wheel.]

White people were intrinsically involved in various political movements, including, for example, the French Revolution!

[He changes the slide, now showing Liberty Leading the People *by Eugène Delacroix, 1830.]*

White culture has always celebrated the unique contributions of individuals, but it is when individuals come together, forming collectives and communities, that their achievements truly become remarkable.

This device *[a 1950s tabletop radio flashes on to the screen]* emerged from the work of many individual inventors, as did …

[We see a slide of the Hoover Dam, still under construction, with the caption Depression-Era Construction.]

And …

[We see a bright colour advertisement for The Snuggie: a white woman lounges on her couch in a garishly red, fuzzy gown, reading a book, a tremendous smile on her face. An 'As Seen on TV' sticker is emblazoned at the corner of the advert.]

[As the laughter of the audience subsides, the lecturer continues.]

In the first part of the semester, we'll explore the rich and varied history of white people, their culture, population, society, law and art.

[The next slide appears showing an oil painting of a Viking ship with rows of oars extending from its sides. A large caption above it reads Emigration. The lecturer regards the image.]

White people have an extensive history of emigration and settlement. There are white people on literally every continent in the world!

This is a picture of typical white male.

[An aged silverprint image of a white man, circa late nineteenth century, with slicked hair, parted in the middle, and a huge, bushy handlebar moustache.]

Dance.

[An Edgar Degas painting of two white ballerinas at the barre, replete with Romantic-era tutus and satin pointe shoes.]

Music.

[An oil painting of J.S. Bach with a starched white wig, holding a piece of paper with bars upon bars of musical notation. We hear the strains of Baroque music.]

Aahhh. Marvellous. This music is so wonderfully complex. Beneath its

driving and insistent rhythm lies a veritable symphony of musical lines, startling counterpoint and invention.

[The music fades.]

But white people are not simply craftsmen and artists; they also enjoy a physical lifestyle in both organized sports and leisure activities.

[A sepia-toned photograph of four dashing white men from the 1920s, with knickerbockers, cardigans, crisp white shirts and ties. Reminding us of the 'lifestyle' advertising from Hollister and Abercrombie & Fitch.]

An example of their domestic life.

[Another colour lithograph of a typical American family from the 1950s. A tall, blonde wife, a dark-haired husband in a suit jacket, with V-neck sweater and tie, three young boys with horizontal-striped shirts and a young blonde girl in a pink dress, with white socks and black Mary-Jane-style shoes in their kitchen, with an open fridge, packed with food. They're all laughing. A small terrier-style dog appears to be barking merrily.]

[Beat.]

Of course, I would be remiss if I did not mention that NOT ALL the activities of white people contributed to the greater good.

[A stark, black-and-white image of Adolf Hitler riding in a car, saluting a seemingly endless column of his troops. The lecturer takes a moment to allow the unsettling and suddenly sombre mood to lift.]

Here is a typical white wedding.

[An image of the wedding of Prince William and Princess Kate, he in full regalia, she in a stunning gown, sitting in an open, horse-drawn carriage, beaming. Men on horseback can be seen riding alongside the carriage, their costuming equally resplendent. A big caption on the photo reads: White People.]

[A new slide appears with the title: Deconstruction. The 'Caucasian' lecturer is now put aside.]

[The actor takes the audience through an unpacking of what they just witnessed, discussing:

topsy-turvy: a reversal of a typical lecture on 'ethnography', during which you became vividly aware of the lecturer's identity and point of view;
the cultural frame was no longer 'unquestioned', no longer hidden; it was, in fact, under scrutiny;
my frame of reference was Eurocentric (i.e., Europeans = white people);
examples of European history, and by extension the European influence on American history;
highly curated images;
constricting the discussion of a complex array of phenomena, literally thousands of years of history, into a mere sixteen images;
a condensation/reduction of an incredibly diverse matrix into a monolithic statement of fact, e.g., 'White people play golf'.]

[A new slide appears.]

Whiteness Studies

Ric Knowles, further, adds that 'whiteness studies reverses the ethnographic gaze, racializes whiteness, and investigates the invention of "normal"' (Knowles 2010, 50). It asks, 'where whiteness comes from, how it became the ordinary, neutral fallback position from which "others" could be viewed and judged …' (Knowles 2010, 51).

[A final slide appears, asking the audience to remember …]

Whiteness
… cannot be taken for granted as:
Neutral
Invisible
'Unmarked'

'Unaccountable' (Knowles 2010, 53).

[The final slide fades from the screen. The actor continues as Bromden.]

The glass came apart like water splashing, and the nurse threw her hands to her ears. He got one of the cartons of cigarettes with his name on it and took out a pack, then put it back and turned to where the Big Nurse was sitting like a chalk statue and very tenderly went to brushing the slivers of glass off her head and shoulders.

'I'm sure sorry, ma'am', he said. 'Gawd but I am. That window glass was so spick and span I com-*pletely* forgot it was there.' It took just a couple of seconds. He turned and left her sitting there with her face shifting and jerking and walked back to the day room to his chair, lighting up a cigarette.

The ringing that was in my head had stopped. (Kesey 1973, 155)

The budget woes have not lessened at my institution; they've only gotten worse. But now my perspective has shifted, realigned itself. If this thing has to go down, then perhaps it's time. It is, after all, 2013. Much has changed since these departments opened for business, and the rate of change today is very swift.

But while everyone else in my department was seemingly focused on the lack of funds, the hiring freeze and other budgetary responses, I was looking at what we were teaching.

I brought my concerns to my colleagues, beginning with the 'Origins Project'. This project was created to address the fact that our department had very little diversity in the curriculum – all Western, all white, all the time. 'Origins' asked the participants to study a particular world culture, specifically its origins mythology, and to use it as a starting point for a collectively devised work. I had always thought the work that was produced was weak, in some cases embarrassingly so – but I had no vested interest in challenging it. After all, we produce – Peter Brook's definition – a lot of 'deadly' theatre in the Academy. But everything had changed for me, and in one meeting I just said it aloud: 'It's racist. We can't let it continue in any way.'

The 'R' word.

Stunned silence is the best way I can describe the response. I felt obliged to continue, 'We might as well call it the Colonial Project.' One of my

colleagues ventured, with a frown, 'How so? I don't understand.' Well, I answered, it's completely in line with the larger colonial movement, in which the West 'mines' world cultures for their ideas, symbols, stories, natural resources and even people for the West's economic, political and cultural benefit.

Gulp.

It got axed.

But I couldn't stop there. I began conversations about play choices, faculty hiring and lack of diversity in the classrooms, in the hallways, in our department meetings – with anyone who would listen. Why was our department so white, in an institution that is so amazingly diverse?

It was interesting to see where my colleagues began aligning themselves. A few surprises certainly, but sides were created when I started to question canonicity. You see, when Whiteness is marked and its neutrality challenged, when the Emperor is told what's up, the limits of tolerance become quite evident, quite quickly.

[Shocked.]

That guy is asking us to retool the factory! I've built my whole career on the use of this particular wrench. I mean, honestly, it seems late in the game to suggest such wholesale changes. Babies, bathwater and all!

I teach movement to the actors in our conservatory. I teach Viewpoints improvisation, the vocal and physical technique of Tadashi Suzuki, the dance technique of Jose Limón and until quite recently classical ballet. In a very recent meeting, I announced I'd no longer be teaching it to the actors – ballet in a five-week module has always been a joke, even though I'm probably the best ballet teacher the department will ever have. It is also the most easily identifiable part of the Eurocentric canon and training platform, upon which our department is founded.

And the interconnectedness of such a curriculum is pervasive. When I announced I'd no longer teach ballet, my colleagues questioned that choice, as ballet was a very good way to formalize our twenty-first-century students' bodies for their work investigating Restoration drama, for example. It's one pin connected to the next, one bolt holding up the

strut on which five other things are built. Pull that one pin, that one connector, and the whole thing is imperilled.

[Beat.]

Exactly.

I don't understand why we are still doing Restoration drama at all. That's personal preference, admittedly, but if Restoration drama should go the way of melodrama and Gregorian chanting, I won't need to gather with friends to toast its demise. It's why I left the National Ballet of Canada so many years ago. I understand intellectually the 'enduring' power of the classics, but standing in a wig, with buckles on my high-heeled shoes and lace hanging in festoons from the cuffs of my shirt, didn't seem to make all the years of gruelling labour seem so necessary, seem relevant.

In fact, I've only just realized that I'm *fracking* my own department. I didn't intend for this to be the case. I wasn't lying when I joined the faculty and for a long time now have been waiting in the shadows to strike. But as I wrote this keynote, I realized that I am the 'Indian' *Manchurian Candidate*. I didn't know that I was meant to blow up my programme! Or at least try. My true consciousness was buried and then something triggered me, and the hijacker, the shooter, was reawakened.

You see – I am Bromden.

I was hired to teach ballet and my *bona fides* were impeccable. I was already broken. Reprogrammed. They'd hooked me by my heels long ago. And all I bled was rust.

My pedigree was unquestioned because it was born from the so-called neutral and unmarked foundation from which my colleagues, themselves, had emerged. Imagine in my job interview for York, stating that my primary intention was to teach the students traditional Grass Dancing as the foundation for their physical work. I wouldn't have been on the short list very long, no matter my skin colour! The value or merit of classical ballet is unquestioned. Grass Dancing could produce many of the same benefits – stamina, flexibility, reducing unwanted tension in our students' bodies – but it would not have reordered or reprogrammed them to stand around in fair Verona in the desired way.

Does my desire to do any of this betray the trust of my colleagues, many of whom I call friends? Does it denigrate their lifelong study and support of the canon? Does it negate and mock their wish to pursue it still, make it their practice?

My response comes from Ken Kesey.

In the novel, the moment when we realize that Bromden is beginning to heal, to stop that ringing in his head, is the night he finds himself alone, looking out through the bars of the hospital.

> Looked out the window and saw for the first time how the hospital was out in the country. The moon was low in the sky over the pastureland; the face of it was scarred and scuffed where it had been torn up out of the snarl of scrub oak and madrone trees on the horizon. *The stars up close to the moon were pale; they got brighter and braver the farther they got out of the circle of light ruled by the giant moon.* (Kesey 1973, 128, my emphasis)

For me the 'stars' are the work and the art produced by the members of my community, their brilliance only apparent once I had removed myself from the false and glaring light of the Moon. By immersing myself in their processes, their protocols, their energy, I have begun a reawakening and a defogging. By doing so, I have reordered my canon.

At the top of the list come new works:

Almighty Voice and his Wife by Daniel David Moses,

Pimootewin by Tomson Highway,

Tombs of the Vanishing Indian by Marie Clements.

These are just a few of the works that I aspire to. This is the new canon, the new mountain I seek to climb. You could pay me a million dollars and I still wouldn't want to direct *Hamlet* …

[He stops for a moment, actually realizing what he just said. Then with the air of a politician, backtracking at one hundred miles per hour, he continues more contritely.]

Okay, let me rephrase that.

[Beat.]

I'd *take* the million dollars, *certainly*, and then devise a new work about a small town! And then fund another 50 new works, for audiences starved for something else, anything else!

I am not alone in wanting to see the very foundation of the Academy shift. Both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students and artists want to see themselves, their interests, their politics reflected in the curriculum we offer. As one of my colleagues asked me in a recent meeting, if I no longer believe that this model can be sustained or championed – what do I suggest to replace it with? I said I didn't know but that the discovery of that new path would excite me for the next twenty years.

In closing, I would like to recall the memory of Malcolm X. In his autobiography, he describes an all-too-brief engagement with Islam. For him to embrace Islam beyond the definitions and history of the Nation of Islam meant, I think, a slow unravelling of his hatred. In doing so, he moved towards a richer, more complex understanding of his religion and his purpose as a human being.

For me, there is a significant parallel – I've lived for a long time in the Machine – and this, too, has required a slow unravelling of the colonial mentality, extricating myself …

[with a growing fierceness]

… from its grammar, its narrowness, and its arrogance.

[He regards the audience intensely.]

I played Bromden once … and that was their first mistake.

[The actor, finally free, steps back from the podium.]

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Acknowledgements

2

Beyond the '*Nação mestiça*': Post-Racial Performance, Native Sovereignty and Political Community in Contemporary Brazil

Tracy Devine Guzmán

The Guarani-*mestiço* writer Olívio Jekupé published his first volume of poetry in 1999, as Brazilian society prepared to commemorate five centuries since the arrival of Portuguese explorers at the place they called Porto Seguro (secure port), on the country's north-eastern coast. As Jekupé explained to me years later in 2011, reflecting on the trajectory of his work, that turn-of-the-millennium manuscript, *500 anos de angústia* (*500 Years of Anguish*), was born of despair over the precarious situation of Native peoples and territories across the country, which had come into greater light with the intensification of social turmoil around the controversial anniversary. 'There have been … centuries of suffering for our indigenous people', he wrote at the outset of the new millennium. '[I]n moments of sadness, I write' (2009, 25). In one poem entitled 'Século XXI' (Twenty-first Century), Jekupé linked the annihilation of Brazilian Native peoples to the devastation of Brazilian lands, and wondered if either would manage to survive:

No século XXI, pelo que	In the twenty-first century, from what
estou vendo,	I am seeing,
porventura não existirão	perhaps those creatures –
mais aquelas criaturas	all of them
que são todos elas	important on the land
importantes na terra	where we live –
em que nós vivemos.	will no longer exist.
As árvores não veremos mais.	No longer will we see the trees.
As aves, também não;	Or the birds;
aliás, nem os animais.	Or the animals.
Os rios, todos poluídos.	The rivers, all polluted.
Quem sabe até os índios	Who knows if the Indians
serão todos exterminados.	will all be exterminated.
Oh, que tristeza.	Oh, what sadness.
Como os seres humanos	My God.
são perversos, meu Tupã.	How perverse, human beings.
Eles são todos maus?	Are they all evil?
Que destroem tudo	They destroy everything
o que é belo e sublime.	beautiful and sublime.
Se eles fossem gente,	If they were human,
a natureza não seria destruída.	nature would not be destroyed.

(1999, 33)

As Jekupé planned a book presentation for members of his community on the *aldeia* Laranjinha (Paraná),[1] the Brazilian government prepared to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the country's 'discovery' alongside its Portuguese counterpart. Buoyed by a powerful media industry and the Globo media empire,[2] President Fernando Henrique Cardoso's administration campaigned to memorialize five centuries of conquest with an elaborate re-enactment of the arrival of Western civilization to the Americas. Romanticized 'Indian' imagery circulated widely in support of this narrative, and the event organizers summoned numerous indigenous peoples to play their putative role in national lore as grateful recipients of colonial goodwill. Over the April 2000 anniversary month, however, the memorial celebration was challenged as myriad social and political activists joined ranks with Native protestors to lament the uncritical remembrance of the colonial encounter and the rampant use of racist images in those festivities. In short, the administration's whitewashed performance of colonialism stood in patent contrast to Brazil's anaemic commitment to indigenous well-being, and the opposition expressed by Native individuals and communities across the country.[3] This essay

examines the consequences of these discrepancies to show how the work of Brazilian Native peoples has engaged, challenged and at times managed to upend dominant tropes of colonialist performativity since the outset of the twenty-first century.

Eleven years before the tumultuous events of April 2000 and the publication of 'Século XXI', Brazil emerged from two decades of military rule with a new national constitution – the sixth in the country's Republican history[4] – that was ground-breaking for its robust emphasis on social rights. Among the beneficiaries of the post-dictatorship document, which was crafted by a Constituent Assembly elected in November 1986 and convened three months later, were the Native peoples living inside national borders. Although indigenous Brazilians comprise over three hundred ethnic groups speaking nearly as many languages,[5] the text referred to them simply as índios, stipulating for the first time in the nation's history that they would hold the right to remain as such. That is, in contradistinction to the 1973 Indian Statute, which was promulgated during Brazil's most recent military dictatorship,[6] indigenous peoples would no longer be governed as wards of the state or with the promise of emancipation from their Indianness. Instead, the new document promised, they would be entitled to remain indigenous indefinitely. Article 231 of Chapter VIII of the 1988 Constitution hence specified: 'Indians shall have their social organization, customs, languages, creeds, and traditions recognized, as well as their original rights to the lands they traditionally occupy, it being incumbent upon the Union to demarcate them [and] protect and ensure respect for all their property.'[7] Although an additional provision stipulated that the pending demarcation of indigenous territories would be complete in five years, that guarantee was never met, thus providing fuel for condemnation by Jekupé and a host of empathetic critics.

Another reminder of the state's unfulfilled promise occurred in June 2014 at the world's most viewed sporting event: the FIFA World Cup. While Brazil's selection as host country was met with great celebration in 2007, the two years leading up to the games were filled with strife, as the embattled Partido dos Trabalhadores (Workers' Party) faced demonstrations from hundreds of thousands of protestors complaining that the massive investment in sporting infrastructure was grossly inappropriate in light of so many ongoing struggles: shoddy public services in transportation, education and healthcare; police brutality and political corruption; land grabs by development companies at the expense of the poor; and increasing environmental degradation for the benefit of multinational companies – often to the detriment of indigenous peoples and lands. Echoing the negative response to the year 2000 quincentenary celebrations, widespread public opinion rejected the mandated performance of national

unity that accompanied the World Cup propaganda, highlighting instead the political corruption and social disparity that FIFA's rapacious profit structure brought to the fore. A counter-discourse to the anticipated soccer euphoria took hold of the protests: *Não vai ter Copa* (there will be no [World] Cup). Even if the games could not be stopped, the bread-and-circus enactment of nationhood would not proceed without intense public disapproval.[8]

The opening ceremony in São Paulo took on extraordinary political significance amid such sweeping discontent. Insisting on the narrative of national celebration and unity, against all evidence to the contrary, event organizers arranged for three adolescents – one Euro-Brazilian, one Afro-Brazilian and one Native Brazilian – to release doves of peace at midfield before Brazil's match with Croatia. In keeping with the dominant society's favoured notion of itself and to the exclusion of the many other ethno-racial groups in Brazil, these young people staged the three foundational pillars of nationhood for a global audience of millions. Event managers were unpleasantly surprised, however, when the 13-year-old Guarani boy, Wera Jeguaka Mirim (Olívio Jekupé's son), pulled a small red pennant from his pocket with the message '*Demarcação já!*' (Demarcation now!) in condemnation of the state's blatant failure to safeguard indigenous lands. The young man was escorted swiftly off the field and images of his protest were quashed by the Brazilian and international press, making their way into the public sphere only through informal news outlets and on social media. Between 1988 and 2014, a lot had changed on paper while virtually nothing had changed in practice.

Looking back now from nearly two decades into the twenty-first century, Article 231 of the 1988 Brazilian Constitution seems conservative, perhaps, in light of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007) and the identitarian Native politics now at play across Brazil, the Americas and the globe. But in 1988, in the wake of a twenty-year dictatorship that had repressed the political and civil liberties of all Brazilians, the newly won capacity to be officially Native and national was revolutionary and indeed held great promise. After all, the notion of an Indigenous Brazilian citizenship – hitherto a legal contradiction in terms – countered a century of state-backed tutelage and the eternally popular ideal of a 'democratic' amalgam of ethno-racial components so readily associated with Brazil's social formation and national identity.[9] The provocative anthropologist, educator and politician Darcy Ribeiro had gone so far as to characterize Brazil as the birthplace of a distinctive civilization: a 'new Rome' where artistic and cultural creativity could flourish because, as he idealized it, 'miscegenation [there] was never a crime or a sin' (1995, 455). For Ribeiro and kindred racial optimists, the concept of Brazilianness would forever

Fig. 1 Thirteen-year-old Wera Jeguaka Mirim's plea for indigenous land
rights at the 2014 World Cup in São Paulo.
Photo: Luiz Pires.

exceed the limits of legal-political community, for *brasilidade* also held
in store the 'ethno-national' identity of a diverse people mixed in spirit,
as well as in blood (1995, 453), thus comprising what he called the *nação
mestiça*, or miscegenated nation.

The social egalitarianism romanticized into this thinking on racial,
ethnic and cultural mixing, and on national *mestiçagem*, in particular,
harkens back to the whitening discourses and policy initiatives of the late
nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when eugenic-minded social and
political leaders sought to save their young country from the prophecies
of degeneration made notoriously by Joseph Arthur, Comte de Gobineau
(1915, 209–11) and comparable critics from Europe and the Americas
(Schwarcz 1993). Popular renderings of *mestiçagem* still have a foothold in
that logic, for according to dominant thought, 'mixing' continues to imply
the dissolution of pre-colonial 'types' and the subsequent formulation
of still-emerging ethno-racial and cultural groups (Maciel 1999). The
nationalist spin on these 'new' groups provides an inverted discourse of
racialist social improvement to explain and bolster national development,
on the one hand, and the teleological march of history-as-progress, on
the other.

In Brazil's current political schema, still fuelled by old ideals of
modernization, dominant thought characterizes the *nação mestiça*

not only as a deeply miscegenated society, but even a post-racial one. Collapsing long-standing social categories related to phenotype, ethnicity and geographically based identification into an all-embracing, glorified nationalism,[10] post-racial *mestiça* thought privileges the so-called *raça brasileira* (Brazilian race) above all other categories of identification. The Manaus-based organization, Nação Mestiça, rationalizes, for example, that:

> The Brazilian *mestiço* is a person who identifies as such, whether brown-skinned or not, who is descended from *mestiços* or any miscegenation among Indian, white, black, yellow, or [any] other non-*mestiça* identity; who identifies as distinct from these and, ethnically, from any other [identity]; and who is … recognized by the ethnic Brazilian community –national, native, unitary, indivisible, engendered, constituted during the formation process of the Brazilian Nation, and identified exclusively with it.[11]

Following this line of thought, any identification with a racialized or ethnic individuality or collectivity beyond the sphere of *mestiça* nationhood is antiquated, undemocratic and, at worst, anti-Brazilian. Material claims stemming from such identifications – claims to traditional lands or affirmative action policies, for example – likewise sin against the unified, 'mixed-race' nation. Along these lines, the Nação Mestiça organization demonizes interest groups currently working for Native and Afro-Brazilian rights to protected lands and affirmative action measures by likening their social and political claims to those of Nazism and South African apartheid.[12]

Whether in these hyperbolic, popular formulations or the more intellectualized versions emulating from Ribeiro and the numerous racial theorists who have succeeded him, the foundational discourses of *mestiçagem* continue to reduce Native ways of being, knowing and remembering to 'Indianness'. By flattening indigeneity into a singular, pre-colonial 'Indian race' alongside the only other two 'races' that presumably matter (the Portuguese and the African), post-racial *mestiçagem* forces indigenous peoples repeatedly into facile performances of nationhood. The Brazilian indigenous movement – a diverse collectivity of cultural, intellectual and political actors whose interests manifest across the country – thus confronts such opposition in response not only to its concrete initiatives but also to its denomination as indigenous.

In light of prevailing *mestiço* discourse, indigenous Brazilians such as Wera Jeguaka Mirim, or the Native communities expected to stand metonymically for the national indigenous population during the 2000

anniversary of 'discovery', are in fact *not* called upon to represent indigenous peoples in the present, but to perform the historical, post-racial notion of Indianness that inheres in prevailing understandings of Brazilianness. It was perfectly desirable, therefore, for Jeguaka Mirim to release doves of peace alongside his Euro-Brazilian and Afro-Brazilian compatriots at the World Cup opening ceremony. Unacceptable and in fact incomprehensible for many Brazilian observers was the political claim that the Guarani teenager made known to the world – *Demarcação já!* – hence drawing attention to the irony of those doves amid the unrelenting violence that Native peoples continue to face as a combined result of developmentalist policy and the dominant society's unwillingness to implement or even acknowledge indigenous land rights.[13]

Also embattled during and since the time of Mirim's protest are another Guarani people – the Guarani Kaiowá of Mato Grosso do Sul – who for decades have fought with little success to defend their lives and *tekoa* (sacred burial grounds) from a host of political and economic stakeholders.[14] Indeed, the consecrated nature of the territories at the heart of these struggles makes their defence synonymous with the defence of life itself.[15] The indivisibility of land and life, summed up in the Guarani adage *terra, vida, justiça, demarcação* (land, life, justice, demarcation) (Vernon 2016, n.p.), lies at the heart of the Chilean film-maker Marco Bechis's Italian–Brazilian co-production, *La Terra Degli Uomini Rossi*, translated into Portuguese as *Terra Vermelha* and into English as *Birdwatchers.* A product of indigenous–non-indigenous collaboration, the 2008 feature film depicts the destructive consequences of fragile indigenist policy at the outset of the new millennium. At the same time, the film critiques the post-racial thinking and developmentalist discourses that walk in lockstep towards the horizon of a modern, *mestiça* nation on the way to liberating itself from the age-old 'Indian problem'.

Terra Vermelha depicts the conflict between Guarani Kaiowá communities and the settler ranching families who for decades have held state-recognized title to traditional Guarani lands (FIAN International 2014). As we discover through the eyes of Bechis's Native collaborators, resource conflicts have resulted in widespread political violence and grave communal and individual suffering from malnutrition, murder and suicide. Although statistics from various sources reveal minor discrepancies in the number of indigenous deaths, they unequivocally corroborate a situation of enduring crisis: even according to the conservative count of the National Health Ministry, the Native suicide rate is the highest in the country (Waiselfisz 2014, 143). Between 2000 and 2013, indigenous suicides were twenty times the national average, and 662 were registered in Mato Grosso do Sul alone (see CIMI 2014, 20). Seventy-six indigenous

residents of the state took their lives in 2013 – the highest index in twenty-eight years (CIMI 2014, 20–22). What is more, the Guarani Kaiowá have lost generations of community members to assassination, including *Terra Vermelha*'s protagonist, Ambrósio Vilhalva, who subsequent to his participation in the film was stabbed to death amid controversy, probably in retribution for his activism.[16] Regardless of the circumstances surrounding Vilhalva's death, however, the context in which his life was stolen is undeniable: 349 indigenous murders occurred in Mato Grosso do Sul during the preceding decade. Whereas the 2010 Census determined that 9 per cent of the indigenous population resided in the state, 62 per cent of indigenous murders nationwide took place there in 2013 (CIMI 2014, 18; Instituto Brasileira de Geografia e Estatística 2012, 11).

Terra Vermelha was filmed in Mato Grosso do Sul amid the social and political crises it portrays. As Bechis has explained in interviews, the 230 Guarani Kaiowá men, women and children who collaborated on the film were not professional actors. In fact, Bechis and his Brazilian screen-writer, Luiz Bolognesi, were compelled to revise or eliminate parts of the storyline based on the input of indigenous cast members who found some of the original dialogue implausible (Academia Brasileiro de Cinema 2008; Watson 2013, n.p.). As practitioners of a primarily oral historical tradition, the Guarani performers often rejected the written word to recreate lines spontaneously – 'as they saw fit', according to the directors – hence making *Terra Vermelha* a true indigenous–non-indigenous co-production (Watson 2013, n.p.).

Since its 2008 debut, and with renewed political impact after Vilhalva's murder five years later, *Terra Vermelha* has been influential internationally for shedding light on the devastation of Guarani Kaiowá communities, including Guyrá Roka, where Vilhalva once fought alongside his father to recover lands taken from them by sugar farmers. Having begun that struggle in 2004, Vilhalva witnessed the Justice Ministry decide in favour of his community in 2009, but lost his life without seeing that favourable decision enforced. One of the film's crucial scenes depicts this crisis with cruel irony, when against a backdrop of political violence, Vilhalva's character, the Guarani leader Nádio, confronts Moreira, the head of the wealthy settler family which has occupied the Guarani *tekoa* for decades. Desperate to maintain title to territories he believes are his, Moreira grabs a handful of parched earth and holds it up dramatically, announcing to Nádio, several members of the indigenous community and a representative of the Justice Ministry that the land has been in his family for over sixty years; that his grandfather purchased the locale where he and his daughter were born; and that he toils from 'dawn to dusk' to make the soil 'productive'. He shakes his fist and yells: '*Eu planto comida para as pessoas*

Fig. 2 Protagonist Ambrósio Vilhalva (Nádio) eats sacred land in Terra Vermelha (2008), dir. Marco Bechis.

comerem!' (I plant food for people to eat!) In turn, Nádio also grabs a fistful of dry earth, and without uttering a word, shoves it into his mouth, chewing noisily while returning Moreira's hostile stare. Disgusted and bewildered, Moreira walks away while the state representative declares feebly that contested lands must remain unoccupied until pending legal conflicts have been resolved.[17]

While the focus of *Terra Vermelha* is this struggle for land-as-life, I wish also to draw attention to the film's inverted rhetoric of *mestiçagem* in relation to the post-racial performance of Indianness, on the one hand, and a counter-discourse of lived indigeneity, on the other. The English title of the film – *Birdwatchers* – refers to the tourist groups who visit Mato Grosso do Sul to watch birds, spot interesting animals and see 'real Indians', unaware of the ongoing human crisis. The film's opening scene depicts the Guarani Kaiowá engaging in a palimpsestic performance: they don face paint, wade half-naked in rivers and clutch spears for the pleasure of the newly arrived 'birdwatchers' who stare on in excitement. When the performance within the performance comes to an end, the participating community members put on their jeans and T-shirts, receive their meagre pay from a local landholding family, and continue with the everyday task of enduring a permanent state of siege.

Fig. 3 Guarani Kaiowá pose for tourists in the opening scene of
Terra Vermelha (2008), dir. Marco Bechis.

In light of the punishing campaigns waged relentlessly against Native peoples across Brazil who fail to perform authenticity to the satisfaction of their non-Native compatriots – especially when valuable resources rest in the balance – *Terra Vermelha*'s opening scene is a courageous one. The Guarani Kaiowá performance lays bare their insertion into the local, national and international capitalist order as a result of the loss of once-forested homelands, which have been cleared for farming and livestock and rendered unsuitable for traditional modes of hunting and fishing. On the other hand, the creative and audacious acting within the non-acting – the duping of bird-watching tourists for material gain – is a radical counterpoint to the slave-like labour through which the Guarani Kaiowá eke out survival on the plantations now covering their territories. On both fronts, Guarani Kaiowá protagonism in *Terra Vermelha* counters popular notions of nationhood by refusing the temporal displacement into an idealized, pre-colonial past or post-racial, *mestiço* future so often demanded of indigenous peoples in contemporary society. The film's critical assessment of the developmentalism that posits Native Brazil as the country's sacrificial lamb thus hinges on the quandaries of lived indigeneity in the present, with all of its contradictions, complexities and possibilities.

In contrast to this message, the farmer Moreira's litany of legal claims and exaltation of material labour ('I work from dawn-to-dusk to make this a productive place') are grounded in a neocolonial order and reiterate an argument commonly heard among detractors of Native peoples in Brazil: that Indians are 'useless' because their resource management results in zero surplus value. Nádio's response – to eat the earth while Moreira looks on in incomprehension –underscores the fundamentally irreconcilable conceptualizations of the land on which they stand. What for one man represents a paycheck is for the other an epistemological and ontological claim to life: a form of existence that is commensurate with the land and makes no sense without it. The catastrophic epidemic of suicide by Guarani youth that informs the film is thus recontextualized by Nádio's peaceful defiance, for as Olívio Jekupé put it in *500 anos de angústia*, '*se eles fossem gente, a natureza não seria destruída*' (if they were [truly] human, nature would not be destroyed) (1999, 33). When humanity destroys nature, in other words, it simultaneously destroys itself.

As the texts under study here indicate, contemporary indigenous cultural and political critique in Brazil raises the fact that conquest is not only an incomplete process but a strengthening one, driven primarily by a national industry of globalized agribusiness with the backing of the Brazilian state and the overt or tacit approval of the majority of Brazilian society. And so, as has been the case since national independence in 1822, the 'Indian problem' remains mostly a problem of the land: it has been a mixed blessing for Brazil and for Brazilian Native peoples that the country is the fifth-largest holder of arable land (in absolute terms) in the world, possessing approximately 14 per cent of the global total (Chaddad 2016, 41). As congressman and agribusiness enthusiast Nilson Leitão put it in a 2013 defence of landowners from Mato Grosso, 'the government does not have the right to transform Brazil into an indigenous nation. [The country] cannot be an Indian reserve and an agricultural power at the same time' (Junqueira and Borges 2013, n.p.).[18] As politicians like Leitão relentlessly pit indigenous interests against national progress, economic development and the well-being of the landless poor, dominant sovereignty in the Westphalian tradition continues to indicate that the rights of some exist only conditionally and in the shadow of others. As such, they can be suspended whenever 'exceptional' measures (Schmitt 2005) are deemed necessary – which in Brazil and elsewhere tragically proves to be quite often (see Devine Guzmán 2013, 168–76).

The ongoing, compulsory sacrifice of indigenous rights to majority interests reveals the limits of the Peruvian political philosopher José Carlos Mariátegui's once influential theorization of the 'Indian problem' as a frustrated state mission to absorb indigenous peoples into a progres-

sively homogeneous national society (1928). Indeed, the social, political, economic and cultural challenges that Native communities continue to face nearly a century after that essay was published might lead us to assert instead – adapting Mariátegui – that the Indians' problems have long centred on the unrealized right to protected territories and the numerous impediments to personal and collective well-being stemming therefrom.

Nearly twenty years ago, the Brazilian anthropologist Antonio Carlos de Souza Lima referred with irony to his country's paternalistic indigenist apparatus, founded in 1910 under the auspices of the Indian Protection Service, as a 'massive siege of peace' (1995, 131).[19] This characterization captured both the state's ambiguous stance vis-à-vis indigenous peoples, akin to what Giorgio Agamben calls 'inclusion through exclusion' (1998, 18), and the lore of pacific miscegenation with its resulting 'Brazilian race' – both notions that gained momentum over the second half of the nineteenth century and burgeoned into a state-sponsored, nationalist discourse during the twentieth (Williams 2001). For indigenous peoples, alas, national belonging before 1988 meant ceasing to be who they conceived themselves to be in order to accept 'baptism' into the 'national communion' (*comunião nacional*). While forging nationhood has always been an inherently violent process, one might not have predicted that two centuries post-independence, even the rhetoric of benevolent protection would be displaced so wholly by hastening territorial encroachment, unyielding violence and the assurance of more violence to come.

The first decade of the new millennium, anticipated to be a period of relatively benign governance for Native peoples under a nominally progressive party committed to poverty alleviation, human rights and environmental protection, proved quite the opposite. The Workers' Party rule oversaw the proliferation of anti-indigenous legislation, the expansion of massive modernization initiatives at indigenous expense and continual dismantling of the state's already eroded indigenist apparatus, known since 1967 as the National Indian Foundation (FUNAI), which has never had indigenous leadership and from 2012 to early 2017 had no permanent leadership whatsoever.[20] The impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff in May 2016 by a national congress plagued by corruption and replete with the interests of agribusiness bodes poorly for FUNAI and indigenous well-being in the short and long term.[21] From the proposed constitutional amendment to transfer authority over land demarcation from the executive branch to the legislature (Instituto Socioambiental 2016), to the ongoing construction of massive hydroelectric dams across the Amazon, the processes and structures of neocolonialism once again evoke Mariátegui, for they all coalesce around the tenure, ownership and use of the land. Even a perfunctory consideration of current affairs thus leads

us to characterize the situation of indigenous peoples in Brazil as a crisis that stems overwhelmingly from the enduring hegemony of dominant sovereignty at the heart of national and global politics.

One then wonders: in a country where Native peoples comprise less than 1 per cent of a national population of over 200 million, can indigenous challenges to institutionalized notions of post-racial *mestiçagem* and the policies stemming therefrom ever have any impact? Can indigenous interventions in the cultural sphere disrupt the colonialist politics in which they are embedded? Can any engagement with the compulsory performance of romanticized, national 'Indianness' ever be compatible with a decolonial project? Non-dominant notions of sovereignty inhere in many forms of Native cultural production to make it always already political, to the extent that, as Taiaiake Alfred puts it, all indigenous peoples are born into politics by their identification as such (1995, 1). However, while Native cultural production in Brazil is clearly political by dint of its very existence, as well as by the nature of its content, its modes of direct engagement with political and legal structures and practices are not self-evident: President Temer and the members of the Brazilian National Congress are unlikely to have read Olívio Jekupé's poetry or to have seen Ambrósio Vilhalva's acting. However valuable and constructive, such performative efforts alone will not unravel five centuries of colonial legacies.

In this inauspicious context, then, what interpretation of indigenous affairs should we impart to students and other broad publics who are distant from, and generally unfamiliar with, these stories and events? Should we recount the outrage and hopelessness expressed by Native communities who find themselves besieged by many of their purported benefactors, and whose struggles often go unnoted by anyone other than themselves and a small group of advocates? Or should we detail, more hopefully, the undying efforts of those same communities to achieve political representation and social justice against all the odds, and the unremitting demonstrations of solidarity from environmentalists, feminists, student groups and Afro-Brazilian rights advocates (for example), who continue to accompany them in the darkest of times? Both renderings, as historian Hayden White showed us long ago (2009), might be equally true; and yet, the ways in which each account – each coalescence of distinct events – frames and shapes indigenous thought and experience are hardly equivalent. And if we reject a metanarrative of pre-ordained defeat on either ethical or methodological grounds, to what extent are we forced to privilege the stories we want to tell – and perhaps also to hear? As I have aimed to suggest, the stories that Native peoples now choose to tell inform my own efforts to grapple with these difficulties,

for the question of how and for whom stories are told – how they are performed, repudiated and reformulated – also hints at the usefulness of reconceptualizing political community itself more broadly at this critical and precarious juncture.

By questioning dominant thinking about indigeneity and challenging comfortable performances of post-racial Brazilianness, indigenous cultural and political activists urge us to rethink the cultural landscapes in which they and others live and work. How can their interventions destabilize the colonialist regimes of transnational state politics in which they are inevitably embedded, and by which they are enduringly limited? This familiar query is rooted in asymmetric ignorance (Chakrabarty 2000) and political double binds; in border thinking, border epistemologies and border performances; in multiple forms of consciousness and overlapping ways of being, knowing and remembering – all of which transform and signify differently across space or over time.

Formulated out of this conceptual quagmire and in a political context that proves increasingly hostile to its very existence, the indigenous movement in Brazil chooses to confront the violence of dominant sovereignty by articulating Native subjectivity in terms of self and other. One motivating principle in this struggle is the maxim, 'I can be what you are without ceasing to be who I am' (*Eu posso ser o que você é sem deixar de ser quem sou*),[22] which defies the notion that indigenous peoples are impervious to change while simultaneously challenging entrenched identitarian politics of all persuasions. Grounded in the histories of indigenous perseverance that Gerald Vizenor (1999) characterized in North America as 'survivance' (a term that does not circulate in Brazil, but certainly reflects a practice that has existed there for centuries), this theory of interpersonal and intercommunal relations obviates the homogenizing logic that advocates the undoing or disappearance of indigeneity as the horizon of modern, developed nationhood. Surrounded by modernizing initiatives that fail to acknowledge their human and environmental costs, as well as by sociopolitical discourses that cannot account for human behaviour unmediated and unmotivated by profit, intellectual activists such as Jekupé, Mirim and Vilhalva counter the narratives that strip Native peoples of their place in space and time, not only by drawing on an indigenous past, but by insisting on an indigenous (and not only *mestiço*) future. As Cacique Juvenal Payayá from the state of Bahia puts it, indigenous peoples' 'appreciation for their own cultural legacies is the first, indispensable step to keep on existing'.[23]

Native Brazilians deploy their cultural inheritances and the alternative universes they fashion to unshackle themselves from the *nação mestiça* while advocating for a notion of community wherein difference can

ground belonging rather than force conversion or exclusion. Unlike Nilson Leitão and other anti-indigenous policymakers, the scholars and activists whose work is examined here posit political, social, cultural, economic and ecological prosperity not as a zero-sum game, but as an interwoven set of shared interests that must go hand-in-hand for the sake of human and environmental well-being. As a practice of solidarity, Native Brazilian sovereignty comprises an imperative of respect without insisting on post-racial homogeneity or compulsory *mestiça* performativity. As a theory of community, it embraces varied, simultaneous ways of belonging and urges us to consider what it might truly mean to 'be like one another' and appreciate the common denominator of our fragile humanity before it is too late.

Notes

1 Jekupé sought to draw attention to the intellectual and literary traditions of Brazilian Native peoples and their struggles for demarcated territories. He later moved to Krukutu, a small Guarani community in the state of São Paulo that has since informed his activism. Legally recognized in 1987, Krukutu has doubled in population over the last thirty years. Its residents have sought territorial expansion unsuccessfully for over a decade (Associação Guarani Nhe'ê Porã 2007, 14; Guaditano 2006, 54).

2 Organizações Globo became Grupo Globo in 2014 and is the largest media conglomerate in Latin America. Founded by Roberto Marinho in the 1960s, it is known for its penetration of Brazilian society through news and *novelas* (soap operas) as well as for its support of the 1964–85 military dictatorship and conservative political movements.

3 On these celebrations, see Devine Guzmán 2013, chapter 4.

4 The Brazilian Republic was declared on 15 November 1889; the first Republican Constitution was enacted in 1891.

5 Drawing for the first time on self-identification, Brazil's 2010 Census counted nearly 900,000 people nationwide as indigenous, including approximately 80,000 who considered themselves (simultaneously) of another colour or 'race' (mostly *pardo*, or brown). Relative to earlier surveys, the 2010 study revealed increased identification with indigeneity (nearly 300 per cent) over less than two decades, provoking controversy among supporters and denigrators of Native peoples alike, especially those concerned about language and other indicators of 'authenticity'. The 1988 Constitution identifies Portuguese as Brazil's official language; however, Article 231 guarantees indigenous peoples' right to maintain their Native languages, as well as their social organizations, beliefs, traditions and lands. Approximately two dozen Native languages, including Guajajara, Sateré-Mawé, Xavante, Yanomami, Terena, Macuxi, Kaingang, Ticuna and Guarani, are each spoken by more than 5,000 people. Hundreds of other languages are at risk of extinction with fewer

than 400 speakers. Portuguese is thus a crucial language for Native political activism and intellectual and cultural production.

6 The country's last military dictatorship began in 1964 with the overthrow of the democratically elected President João Goulart and ended in 1985 with a gradual transition to a democratic regime that has yet to be fully achieved and has suffered grave setbacks since the beginning of 2016. For scholarship on this period, see Atencio (2014), Ferreira (2011), Green (2010) and Napolitano (2014).

7 This translation and all others are mine unless otherwise specified. The Indian Statute and 1988 Constitution were qualified by the 2002 Civil Code and the 2015 Brazilian Law for the Inclusion of People with Deficiencies. The former stated in Article 4 regulating the rights of *incapazes* ('incapable people') that: 'the capacity of the Indians will be regulated by special legislation'. Article 114 of the 2015 law changed the language slightly, substituting 'indigenous peoples' for 'Indians'. On these legal predicaments, see Silva Filho (2007).

8 Football has long been a barometer of Brazilian politics, perhaps most notably during the 1970 World Cup, which was staged during the military dictatorship (see Kittleson 2014).

9 Scholarship seeking to unravel the myth of racial democracy so often associated with Freyre is ample and diverse. See, for example, Da Costa (2014), Hanchard (1998), Santos (2014), Skidmore (1974), Twine (2001) and Warren (2001).

10 The tradition of ultra-nationalism was named *ufanismo*, after the 1900 book by Celso Alfonso, *Porque me ufano do meu país* (*Why I Take Pride in My Country*). The tradition has been taken up by various other political causes, including the military governments of the 1964–85 dictatorship.

11 The original language is obscure and controversial: '*Mestiço brasileiro é pessoa que como tal se identifica, de cor parda ou não, e que é descendente de mestiço ou de qualquer miscigenação entre índio, branco, preto, amarelo ou outra identidade não-mestiça, que se identifica como distinto destas e etnicamente de qualquer outra e que é assim reconhecido pela comunidade da etnia mestiça brasileira—nacional, nativa, unitária, indivisível, originada e constituída durante o processo de formação da Nação brasileira e exclusivamente identificada com esta*' (Nação Mestiça).

12 For images of such demonization, visit the Nação Mestiço webpage: http://nacaomestica.org/.

13 Brazilian development under the Partido dos Trabalhadores was carried out after 2007 through the Programa de Aceleração do Crescimento (PAC, or Growth Acceleration Programme), which under President Luis Inácio Lula da Silva emphasized development in energy, infrastructure, sanitation and transportation. Many projects carried out under the PAC, and particularly those related to water and land resources, pitted the interests of Native Brazilians against those of the non-indigenous poor. The Rousseff administration continued the programme with a similar initiative called PAC2. See http://www.brasil.gov.br/infraestrutura/pac (accessed 19 February 2017).

14 For a brief history of indigenous–non-indigenous relations in Mato Grosso do Sul, see Fian International (2014).

15 In October 2012, the Guarani Kaiowá community of Pyelito Kue published a letter to the Brazilian Justice Ministry stating that they could not survive without access to their sacred lands. Lamenting the state's failure to protect them from incursions by local ranchers, the community suggested that collective suicide was the only possible response to their situation. Their letter went viral in a matter of days, provoking national and international responses. See Comunidade Guarani Kaiowá de Pyelito Kue (2012) and Devine Guzmán (2015).

16 For a brief obituary detailing Vilhalva's activism, see Watson (2013). The indigenist organization CIMI (Conselho Indigenista Missionário) speculated that Vilhalva could have been killed in retaliation for his 'general antipathy', which they suggested had been augmented by 'heavy alcohol use' and the 'mind-blowing velocity' with which he had been displaced from his 'social universe' after participating in Bechis's film (2013).

17 According to Bechis (2016), this scene was inspired by the action of another Kaiowá leader whom he had met years before.

18 *'O governo não tem o direito de transformar o Brasil em uma nação indígena. … Não dá para ser uma grande reserva indígena e ao mesmo tempo uma potência agrícola.'* Two years after making this statement as chairman of the Special Commission to study PEC 215 (Congressional Amendment 215), which would take power to demarcate indigenous lands out of the Executive Branch and give it to Congress, Leitão was investigated for incentivizing incursions into Xavante territories and found guilty of accepting campaign contributions from Galvão Engenharia (60 per cent) and Maggi (vehicles and agricultural machinery) (30 per cent) (The Social and Environmental Policies Portal 2015).

19 On the Serviço de Proteção aos Índios (SPI), see Diacon (2004) and Souza Lima (1995).

20 In early 2012, director Márcio Meira was replaced by the anthropologist, Martha Azevedo, who stepped down in June 2013 amid controversy over land rights in Mato Grosso do Sul. Two additional interim directors followed: Maria Augusta Assirati (June 2013–October 2014) and Flávio Chiarelli (after October 2014).

21 Michel Temer's administration considered several controversial candidates for the presidency of FUNAI before offering the position in January 2017 to Antônio Fernandes Toninho Costa, an evangelical dentist with experience in indigenous health issues.

22 This tenet of the Brazilian indigenous movement is attributed to Marcos Terena, a founding member of the União das Nações Indígenas (UNI). Hailing from Mato Grosso do Sul, Terena has sought election in local and national politics, but has not been successful in those endeavours.

23 'Reflexões indígenas sobre direito e propiedade' (qtd in Potiguara 2005, 39).

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3

Assimilating Globalization, Performing Indigeneity: Richard Loring's *African Footprint*

Arifani Moyo

Richard Loring's *African Footprint*[1] constitutes easily the most salient attempt at making the diversity of indigenous South African cultural heritages visible within the global theatre market. This large-scale, 90-minute dance-musical pageant with a boldly didactic, multi-ethnic nationalist message developed over two years from choreographic workshops[2] and, after its official launch, quickly became one of the most nationally and internationally successful commercial theatre projects in South African entertainment history. The synopsis on *African Footprint*'s website hints at the nation-branding import of the show: 'Since its inaugural performance in front of Statesman Nelson Mandela and world leaders on Robben Island on Millennium eve, "African Footprint" has gone on to become South Africa's longest running musical … entertaining people all over the world' (Welcome to African Footprint, 2010). In addition to the Robben Island performance, the show has had many dramatic highlights, from audiences with various international celebrities, politicians and royals such as Prince Charles, to numerous prestigious commissions, including FIFA banquets in anticipation of South Africa's hosting of the 2010 football World Cup. Touring destinations have included New York, London and South Africa's major casinos, as well as venues across Australia, China, India, North America and Europe. The show has also screened on television in different countries, attracting many millions of viewers,[3] and footage is available in a commercial DVD release. Accolades include not only numerous South African theatre awards but also recognition as a model job creation and professional empowerment[4] enterprise in the South African entertainment industry. Through *African Footprint*, the website proclaims, 'dancers, singers and drummers – drawn from South Africa's cities, townships and rural areas alike – have gone on to amazing

success stories in their own right' (Welcome to African Footprint, 2010). On Loring's own (separate) theatre producer's website, a description of the show's visibility seems both figurative and literal, celebrating 'Africa's emergence onto the world stage' of cultural diplomacy in a process that 'has put more than approximately 200[5] South African performers into the international spotlight' (Richard Loring – African Footprint, 2009). After more than four thousand performances, this is surely the greatest example of the live, global performance of an African nation's identity and cultural heritage through theatre.

African Footprint exemplifies the assimilation of the commercial, the political and the cultural at the convergence between indigeneity and globalization. My essay contributes a long-overdue analysis of the show's multifarious value-creation processes by exploring the salient features of this assimilation, which, I argue, is not only a politics, but also an aesthetic, a business practice and even an epistemology. 'Value-creation' refers to ways in which the commercial project defines its own merits and benefits – its values – through its own discourse, and verifies these in its execution. With minimal narrative intricacy and a revue-like format, *African Footprint*, according to the DVD cover, 'celebrates the culture, rich history and people of South Africa, through a unique journey of song and dance that fuses the rhythms of both ancient and contemporary Africa'.[6] To facilitate that journey, the performers present a series of nostalgic ensemble sketches stylizing iconic scenes of ordinary life and extraordinary moments in various centuries and decades of South African history. Nineteen DVD chapters suggest the nation's epic journey from 'Creation/Genesis' right through to the beginning of the twenty-first century. The aesthetic focus is on the cultural heritages of indigenous peoples and proletarian groups in traditional or modern settings. Partly mimetic portrayals of specific social environments alternate with musical interludes featuring performers in modern African costumes with traditional design embellishments. The spectacular choreography continues the cosmopolitan and intercultural experimental movement of South African 'Afro-fusion' dance. This matches a typically South African 'fusion' soundtrack that merges rock, pop and jazz influences with world music, drawing on local traditional, folk and urban genres. Live and non-live elements are combined in the musical accompaniment, the live sound involving traditional as well as modern harmonic and percussive instruments, some of which occasionally appear as props on stage. All this adds up to an intensely synaesthetic, multi-textual performance with patriotic rhetoric that cites the poetry of the influential South African anti-apartheid writer Don Mattera. Press releases mention the fusion aesthetic as one of the main attractions of the show: 'This dazzling

musical fuses the hypnotic heartbeat of the African drum, the cheerful pennywhistle and the inspiring words of Don Mattera with Kwela-jive, traditional gumboot, tap, contemporary ballet and hip-hop pantsula into an "explosive stampede of song and dance"' (Bambalele 2010, 20).

In terms of its performance genealogy, *African Footprint* emerges from several different roots at once, including the legendary and controversial South African 'tribal musicals' as exemplified by Bertha Egnos and Gail Lakier's *Ipi Tombi* (1974),[7] international rhythm pageants such as Michael Flatley's *Riverdance* (1995) or Dein Perry's *Tap Dogs* (1996), and South African black culture in its vastness and diversity, ranging from popular practices that have mostly local audiences to those that have developed within cultural tourism markets. At least one other big-budget, similarly successful South African show, Todd Twala and Thembi Nyandeni's *Umoja – the Spirit of Togetherness* (c. 2000), has the same influences, aesthetics and politics as *African Footprint*. Twala and Nyandeni started their careers as performers and toured internationally in *Ipi Tombi* during its day, before becoming successful post-apartheid South African television personalities and dance-musical entertainment entrepreneurs. *Umoja* likewise narrates South African cultural history and modernization, from pre-colonial traditional settings to the beginning of the twenty-first century, through ensemble dance-musical sketches that emphasize indigenous cultural vibrancy and diversity. *Umoja* also achieved its commercial ambitions, global reach and institutional acclaim with the same nation-branding strategy as *African Footprint*. The similarity between the two works emphasizes that *African Footprint* is special not because of what it does, or even how well it does it, but because it best epitomizes a particular, replicable method of cultural value-creation in South Africa. Its uniquely multiracial cast, as well as its most memorable highlights (especially the 2000 Robben Island launch and the attendance of former presidents Mandela and Mbeki), give *African Footprint* the symbolic edge as the definitive achievement in post-apartheid theatrical nation-branding.

Indigeneity features strongly here as a pluralistic concept within the bounds of pan-African political agreements. Intra-continental diplomacy applies the word 'indigenous' to all African Union national peoples who have descended from pre-colonial societies (ACHPR & IWGIA 2005, 88). In southern African countries, this means that the ethnically hetero-geneous black majorities are considered indigenous, usually in contrast to descendants of settler populations that arrived during or after European colonization (Crawhall 1999, 3–4). The ethnicities in question are complex intercourses between lineages, and there have emerged different political usages of the concept of indigeneity in diverse circumstances across the region (Pelican 2009, 52–53). In recent decades, indigeneity has revitalized

the identity poetics and activism of smaller, aboriginal subaltern groups who historically precede black majorities in their respective countries (Hodgson 2002, 1042). The new pan-African indigenous peoples' movement has cited both historical precedence and extreme disadvantage as bases for a special advocacy of their rights (Sylvain 2002, 1075). This new indigeneity has caused controversy in some instances while bringing about much activity in the humanitarian, developmental and communitarian sectors (Tauli-Corpuz 2010, 45–46). Communicating such activity has involved generating new ethnologies, which frequently emphasize marginality as a key identifying characteristic of indigenous peoples (Marschke, Szablowski and Vandergeest 2008, 484–85).

Post-apartheid South African definitions of indigeneity have developed within this pan-African context.[8] The aboriginal ancestral peoples of southern Africa, occupying the land since the Stone Age, were the Khoesan groups, including San hunter-gatherers and Khoekhoe pastoralists, each a multi-ethnic and multilingual collective. During the Iron Age, large 'nations' of west-central African agrarians and pastoralists speaking numerous 'Bantu'[9] languages dispersed southward and established politically complex 'mediaeval' kingdoms, from which the myriad large and small ethnic collectives of the post-colonial southern African black majority have descended. In South Africa, the descendants of this ancestry include the Zulu and Xhosa national majorities, as well as minorities such as the Ndebele, Venda and Tswana peoples. Colonialism treated all pre-colonial peoples as racial others, but apartheid also placed many of the Khoe and San descendants in the category of 'coloured', which was essentially for 'biracial' populations. Mixed ancestry certainly applies to most South African social groups, but an ethnic erasure also occurred in the demographics of apartheid, so that at the beginning of the post-apartheid dispensation, Khoe and San identities were 'invisible' to 'political discourse' (Crawhall 1999, 3). This situation changed in the last half-decade of the twentieth century as the new indigeneity revealed South Africa's aboriginal subaltern minorities, some of whom abandoned or added to their 'coloured' status in a restitution of ethnic identities. Such cultural reclaiming was part of movements for community development that included humanitarian campaigns for land restitution. These campaigns led to ground-breaking government resolutions as the Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki administrations incorporated the new indigeneity and its politics of restitution into the post-apartheid agenda of reconciliation, multicultural integration and nation building. This process of incorporation set South Africa apart from most other African Union states, which have often interpreted the new indigenous peoples' movement as a potential form of post-colonial political dissent.

African Footprint uses this South African reconciliatory version of indigeneity, sometimes extending it to pan-Africanist poetics, in the portrayal of national history. The performance begins by framing its content explicitly in terms of patriotism, specifically a pan-Africanist, South African populist pride. During the theatrical prologue, singers in regal, colourful traditional textiles proudly present themselves as 'Africa's children, its future, its hope and its soul', while a drum-wielding traditional herald praises the majestic and historic South African landscape before leading his drumming team in a mighty rhythm in the midst of a spectacular storm, complete with lightning, thunder and smoke effects. This opening immerses the performers in the natural environment as the foundational backdrop for social history, thus grounding a sense of belonging in country.

The social narrative begins with the theme of ancestry. A group of highly agile dancers simply adorned as prehistoric South African hunter-gatherers leap on to the stage, performing stylishly 'tribal' acrobatics in a jungle-like atmosphere evoked by dappled sunlight and mallet percussion. Halfway through the dance, the ensemble walks towards the auditorium in slow motion, suggesting the long walk of evolution, and then ripples into energetic marching and stamping as a segue to spectacular disco choreography. We are whisked through centuries of South African ethnic history, until the militant pre-colonial Zulus appear, wielding their distinctive short spears and broad shields for a courtly warrior dance. By this point, the assimilative portrait of ancestry, suggesting diversity but also generalizing indigeneity, has completed its course, arriving at the second theme, tradition, which implies the existence of earlier societies and the establishment of their norms.

The second movement of the social narrative develops a portrait of tradition as an ongoing way of life. A tribesman and his maiden dance a tender duet to the strains of orchestral world music, their surroundings a forest paradise, until a second tribesman interrupts the courting and initiates an energetic stick fight with the rhythmic uplift of various traditional percussions. The drama transitions to a celebration of the Tswana people, who perform a complex ensemble stick dance, then an intimate spiritual chorus with a few men singing and dancing around the dusk fire – a human flame – before cheering on the woman's balletic 'tribal' solo to ambient drumbeats. As her dance ends, the performance breaks away from historical representation for a grand musical interlude, during which lead singers in designer costumes made from traditional textiles celebrate nature, spirituality and history in an upbeat Afro-fusion pop song. This signals the change from tradition to modernity.

Fig. 1 'Genesis' ancestors in Richard Loring's African Footprint.
Photo courtesy of Richard Loring.

The transitional performance sets up modernity as both rural and urban, with indigenous and exogenous practices equally contributing to a cosmopolitan South African national culture. The next scene features a group of modern rural musicians performing Bushman folk music with traditional instruments and hearty chanting. A 1950s Sophiatown saxophonist joins the Bushman rhythm and heralds the transition to an iconic urban township, where various celebratory jazz, tap dance and comic interludes unfold. Three lead performers enact the theme of modernity's duality through a character drama featuring a love triangle between a migrant city man and two women, one his homely-looking, rural, traditional wife, the other a glamorous, urban, cosmopolitan mistress. The rural woman leads the cast in a gentle musical lamentation about the disruption of the traditional family in an age of urban migration, as acoustic guitar, flute and choir arrangements contrast with the exciting jazz music earlier. Then the forces of apartheid interrupt the lives of all the characters when the leading man ends up in prison, fighting for survival in a spectacular martial dance, and eventually becoming militant in the struggle for justice as his thoughts, in a poetic voiceover, declare his opponent a new 'dark brother', with whom to fight for 'freedom's dream'.

Fig. 2 'Inyoni Yaphezulu' – traditional celebrants in
Richard Loring's African Footprint.
Photo courtesy Richard Loring.

The traditional woman and her cosmopolitan counterpart undergo a somewhat magical reconciliation through a pop ballad about heartbreak, the pains of womanhood and the pressing duty to put differences aside for the sake of becoming 'mothers of the nation'. The anti-apartheid struggle is thus the furnace in which the characters, as patriotic citizens, forge their complex new modernity and politicize their culture.

In the final movement of the social narrative, iconic figures of South African culture dance, beat percussion and sing their way into the post-apartheid era, celebrating diversity and asserting collectivism. A large group of mine workers – an image of both apartheid-era and post-apartheid black culture – opens the new chapter of national history with a fierce djembe drum session. The performers take this rhythm into an eye-catching showcase of gumboot dance, a distinctly urban South African genre with complex clapping and stamping routines influenced by both martial acrobatics and choral chanting. A group of tap-dancing factory workers joins in for a mock competition between gumboot and tap, beginning with a duel between two team leaders, then moving to a spectacular showdown between the two dance armies. This poetics finally establishes the ground for consolidating the theatrical celebration of

history, heritage and identity in a multicultural South Africa. A few of the gumboot dancers take their positions in the background, as musicians with both traditional percussion and modern instruments, for the Afro-fusion pop ballad, 'Footprints'. The lead singer wears a designer dress with elements from the attires of different ethnic groups – most recognizably, the conical shape of Zulu women's hats, the long cut and stripe patterns of Xhosa women's dresses, and much bead work, which is an aspect of several South African traditional material cultures. The song is a meditation on 'footprints, across the sands of time', marking 'our destiny, our history'. As it progresses, several characters from different centuries, cultures and vocations enter and stand still at various points onstage to form a tableau of difference and dispersal, recalling the title theme of the 1980s hit song 'Scatterlings of Africa', by legendary South African fusion rock artist Johnny Clegg. The consolidation of history and hope soars to a lofty choral climax as *African Footprint* concludes its main message that heritages and legacies of the past colour the present and deserve a future.

African Footprint ends by bestowing the responsibility of maintaining the indigenous cultural rhythm on to the new millennial generations of South Africa's children. It is here that the show also makes a forceful assertion of globalization as part of South Africa's reality, prospects and aspirations. The final scene portrays the nation in the grip of the excitement that characterized its decade of preparing to host the 2010 FIFA World Cup, which was a major opportunity for South African tourism (Cornelissen and Swart 2006, 117). *African Footprint* exemplifies the response from the arts sector. A charismatic impressionist opens the scene with a brisk soccer commentary delivered against the background noise of a full stadium and the honking of vuvuzelas (loud plastic trumpets), which found a new international audience during the competition by representing South African soccer culture to the world. The impressionist also represents youth culture, with his football fan's hat, referee's whistle, black tennis shoes and sports T-shirt over loose, colourful rag-style trousers that increase the pop vibrancy of the look. The next image is a row of restroom cubicles, behind which a group of football players combine ball tricks and tap-dance in impressive choreo-graphic unison. Soon, street dancers arrive to energize the performance, their clothes matching those of the impressionist apart from the change to kengo hats and various complete rag outfits. They bring in the frenetic footwork of the 1980s anti-apartheid street dance movement of pantsula, but dance to a soundtrack of kwaito, a phenomenon that began during the 1990s and mainly involved the fusion of South African hip-hop and house music. As the dance ends, national flags wave behind the ensemble while the traditional herald who opened the show returns, in modern ethnic

Fig. 3 Pantsula dancers in Richard Loring's African Footprint.
Photo courtesy of Richard Loring.

clothes, to give the final message: 'Look at us. We are the future. Our feet are drums, beating the heritage of our native land. Yes, look at us. We are tomorrow.' The musical finale takes the soaring choral voices of the whole cast from a highly emotional, patriotic ballad about the hope of Africa's children to a celebratory disco.

The themes of ancestry, tradition and modernity synthesize into a poetics of heritage that puts *African Footprint* in a context of wider national practices. Ciraj Rassool notes that heritage pageantry has contributed to the proliferation of 'visual histories', which 'erupted into the public sphere' at various sites from the onset of the post-apartheid era (2000, 5). He lists 'tourism, monuments, museums, televisual histories, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission' as arenas in which such 'visual histories are presented as "revelations of hidden heritage", previously submerged by apartheid' (2000, 5). Famous memory works such as the District 6 Museum and the Robben Island Museum feature among the sites Rassool discusses as contributing to the performance of national identity (2000, 21). This performance includes the participation of spectator-visitors and is central to teaching citizenship and fostering patriotism since 'responsibility for the ideological work of national identity formation, and the task

of the creation of "good citizens", are in some ways being shifted away from the schools to heritage institutions and mediums of public culture' (Rassool 2000, 1). The nationwide presentation of heritage is also key to cultural tourism, which 'has been given the responsibility of constructing, packaging, and transmitting images and representations of the "new" society and its past to a perceived growing audience of international visitors' (Rassool 2000, 5). The new society, Rassool notes, 'is framed as a "rainbow" or "multicultural" nation, one characterised by "diversity"' (2000, 1) as well as a unity that is hard won through historical struggle, resilience and leadership. South Africa engages with cultural diplomacy and globalization through 'this hidden heritage, discovered and imaged in the tourist gaze' (Rassool 2000, 6).

The 'tourist gaze', which John Urry's influential work has shown to be an international habit, has made the aesthetics of exoticism, and consequently the performance of colonial stereotypes, highly marketable and thus economically expedient in South Africa (see Cornelissen 2005, 677; Witz, Rassool and Minkley 2012, 280). *African Footprint* deliberately resonates with other internationally high-profile 'rhythm shows' that self-consciously package national or ethnic identities. The show's generic links with *Tap Dogs* and *Riverdance* position it as effectively South Africa's answer to what is already a global phenomenon of using spectacular dance-musical-rhythm pageantry to achieve national and ethnic visibility on the international stage. In this regard, the show not only executes but also assimilates a previously available praxis of cultural diplomacy. The historical epic is another, politically and commercially significant, aspect of the rhythm show as international genre, which is quintessentially 'theatre for tourism'. Susan Bennett, looking at commercial centres such as London and New York, describes 'the important niche that theatre now fills in … marketing cities as tourist attractions' (2005, 417). Yet, in this context, 'theatre's importance may not be the artistic product per se but what it contributes literally and symbolically to the contextual commercial environment' (2005, 412), and success seems to be 'less about content and more like real estate: location, location, location' (2005, 416). All kinds of shows can thus qualify as 'theatre for tourism', which is identifiable through commercial context rather than subject matter.

As well as being implicated in the commercial dynamics that Bennett describes, *African Footprint* also tailors its subject matter for tourists with an interest in South African indigenous cultural heritage. If watching any show in New York is now a tourist experience, then watching *African Footprint* there would constitute a kind of meta-tourism, as the theatre-going tourist in New York gets to imagine being a heritage tourist in South Africa. In this way, the show not only exports tourist entertainment, but

also exports tourism, which certainly increases the risk of exoticism and stereotyping. The recent effects of globalization, however, include 'a massive shift from a more or less single tourist gaze in the nineteenth century to the proliferation of countless discourses, forms and embodiments of tourist gazes now ... as multiple gazes have become core to global culture' (Urry 2002, 160–61). Multiple gazes and their respective politics can converge on one spectacle, as Helen Gilbert shows in her analysis of indigenous pageantry in Olympic Games opening ceremonies over the last several decades. Hence 'the intricacies of spectatorship' should call our attention to 'diverse investments' evident in cross-cultural encounters in theatre and performance and how they 'play out in artistic, political, and material domains' (Gilbert 2014, 157).

Patriotism is arguably *African Footprint*'s strongest, and certainly its most salient, investment. Press coverage revealingly highlights the theme of pride, which has informed both local and overseas reporting on the efficacy of the show in producing affect as asset. The South African *Sunday Mail* notes that *African Footprint* 'showcases the pride and spirit of Africa to an audience who now wants to go there' ('Amps Full-on for this Folkloric', 2003, 95). The *Toronto Star* announces a show in which the cast 'celebrate at once their diversity and their common pride in their African heritage' (Walker 2008, E01). In Sydney, the *Sun-Herald* quotes *African Footprint* associate producer Debbie Batzofin commenting on the ensemble: 'They love being in the show and they're proud of their country' (Iaccarino 2003, 4). The second interviewee, principal dancer Thabo Komape, 'is very proud that his nation's story has found its way on to international stages'. Komape himself speaks of the imperative to 'show a different picture of Africa ... show that it's not just poverty', an imperative that requires 'a celebration of our culture' (qtd in Iaccarino 2003, 3). In New York, the *Buffalo News* specifies the show's intention of 'offering a message of hope and pride in mother Africa' through the 'tale of how today's generation of Africans – more specifically South Africans – walk in the footsteps of their ancestors and need to be reminded of their roots' (Sucato 2008, C7). Such rhetoric enacts a proactive political confidence that displaces the abasement of the apartheid years.

This national pride is so strongly emphasized that it occasionally frames itself, even for the overseas market, as a kind of 'healthier alternative' to banal exoticism. In an interview with the *Buffalo News*, Loring mentions the goal of 'promoting South Africa', stressing that its full ethnic makeup 'is Tswana, Zulu, Xhosa, Afrikaans-speaking, English-speaking, male and female' (qtd in Dabkowski 2008, C1). Such diversity, he adds, is 'saying to you, this is us, South Africa, celebrating not only our democracy, but our freedom of spirit and our cultural heritage'. This message requires

theatrical content that Loring expects to surprise or educate the overseas target audience:

> [When] you think of Africa, you think of leopard skins, you think of spears, you think of shields, you think of lions, you think of elephants … But you don't certainly think of 12 people onstage doing a tap dance or 18 people onstage doing a Pantsula, which derives from the townships of South Africa, heading soccer balls to each other and tap dancing at the same time. (qtd in Dabkowski 2008, C1)

The interviewer steers the conversation to situate *African Footprint* within the history of South African cultural diplomacy. Loring recalls: 'Even through apartheid and the embargo, there would always be somebody who would break through that embargo … a tennis player, or a Louis Armstrong'; yet he is quick to differentiate apartheid and post-apartheid cultural diplomacies. He sees the latter as engaging geopolitics and theatrical professionalism with the imperatives of economic and social uplift. In this respect, *African Footprint* has served to 'create a living for a number of people' and 'given them a platform, given them acknowledgment, given them pride in who they are' (qtd in Dabkowski 2008, C1).

Such comments also show how the pride of patriotism overlaps with the pride of artistic and professional achievement on the international stage. The latter is most evident in newspaper features that focus on individual biographies and personalities. In *African Footprint*'s tenth anniversary year, for example, South Africa's *Pretoria News* interviewed Komape with fellow dance leader, Alfred Phakathi: 'They are proud to say that they've danced on every continent. Not only are they seasoned travellers, they feel empowered as men, and businessmen, by what they have seen and learned' (Sichel 2010, 4). Overseas, Melbourne's *Sunday Herald Sun* confirms that Phakathi 'has earned the right to be proud', having overcome the odds in a typical struggle to become a professional artiste:

> For the past three years his explosive and enthralling performances have won standing ovations all over the world. He has provided his wife and child with a house and car – a luxury for a black man living in Johannesburg – and his mother is never without groceries, thanks to the regular income he receives from the show. (Zwar 2003, 107)

The personal uplift of the proud artiste means a vicarious uplift for those sharing in the boons; thus even personal achievement engenders a collective rather than a private pride. Phakathi reports his mother's response to his success: 'She's so happy I'm in *African Footprint*. I make her proud' (qtd in Zwar 2003, 107). The publicity materials do not separate

the messages as I have done here to suggest the difference between national pride and the pride of achievement. In the general prose, it seems that the latter brings agency into patriotism, since the grounds for national pride is 'natural' citizenship, which is a passive, accidental citizenship by birth, while the pride of achievement celebrates an active person with responsibilities, volition and notable prowess, thus grounding patriotism in heroic citizenship.

There are, of course, problematic aspects of patriotism itself. South Africa has, unfortunately, seen how post-colonial nationalism, fostered by 'a conception of citizenship founded exclusively on indigeneity', creates an environment in which 'xenophobic violence has effectively been legitimized by the state' (Neocosmos 2008, 587, 589). The aesthetic of *African Footprint* certainly involves pride in home and indigeneity; however, the publicity's emphasis on achievement, prowess and diplomatic efficacy has outweighed the recognition of hereditary citizenship, even in local press coverage, which finds all the glamour in celebrity success stories and high-profile world tours, rather than idolizing heredity and location. The publicity's readership, moreover, far outnumbers the audience for live performances or even the DVD – which are not appealing, affordable or accessible to everyone – and this readership includes those who do end up watching the show, most likely after some exposure to the press's messages. Politicians may have endorsed the performance, but it is not a professional demagogue who prepares prospective local audiences for patriotic spectatorship. The centre of attention is the itinerant, cosmopolitan artiste who has become a national cultural ambassador – an attractive sight for tourists while a global tourist herself – and a citizenship model with the politically heroic vocation of 'cosmopolitan patriotism'. This kind of patriotism has to do with being 'a rooted cosmopolitan, attached to a home of one's own, with its own cultural particularities, but taking pleasure from the presence of other, different places that are home to other, different people' (Appiah 1997, 618). The cosmopolitan patriot's willingness to accept 'responsibility to nurture the culture and the politics of their homes' (Appiah 1997, 619) is integral to heroic citizenship.

African Footprint's artistes have immersed themselves in this respon-sibility even through their training, cultivating their own 'cosmopolitan bodies' within an ensemble that represents the pluralistic nation. The cast is multi-ethnic and multiracial, though mostly black. Performers are highly capable 'all-rounders' who can sing, dance and act, their fit physiques making them also good-looking models. They have not only gained skills in different performing arts disciplines, but also mastered socially and culturally diverse performance traditions and trends. Each versatile, intercultural performer personally embodies the very principle

of cultural diversity, and casting for the show is effectively colour-blind and ethnicity-blind. The historical sketches, requiring the cast to portray many different characters and contexts, make heritages corporeally interchangeable, so that the collaborative mimesis of heritage is a gesture towards universalism rather than a divisive activity. Cosmopolitan bodies are not something unique to *African Footprint*, but rather part of a national performance culture. Scholars such as Loren Kruger (1999), Martin Orkin (1991) and Temple Hauptfleisch (1997) have each written substantial theatre and drama genealogies showing how cosmopolitan syncretism, whether as a 'problem' for (apartheid) ideology or as an opportunity for creativity, constitutes the very core of South Africa's performance legacies. David Coplan (1985), Peter Larlham (1985) and Duncan Brown (1999), among others, have argued in a similar vein while detailing the crucial role of indigenous and black urban performance praxes in generating South Africa's hybrid culture (Hauptfleisch 2010, 281–82). This background means that South African cosmopolitan bodies are constantly visible in the entertainment industry, and everywhere that its influence reaches through television or street culture. The cosmopolitan body sets indigeneity in a complex relation with difference as performance facilitates the renegotiation of otherness at the very moment of its suggestion.

The assimilation of diversity and syncretism in *African Footprint* suggests a way of apprehending identities beyond the stage. The celebration of South African cultural and social heterogeneity is part of the pursuit of an ideal of uplifting the nation on stage, in the auditorium and beyond the theatrical occasion. Local and global spectators are an even more heterogeneous community. The tourist gaze, looking at *African Footprint*, is the gaze of global heterogeneity seeing a reflection of itself in the spectacle of South African indigeneity. In a nation that has been exporting testimonies about its continuing uplift from the brutality, alienation and backwardness of apartheid to a new national reality, this gaze is not only about visibility, but also about visual power engaging the world in cultural diplomacy. As Joseph Nye argues, the 'soft power' attainable through 'intangible power resources such as culture, ideology, and institutions' aims at establishing preferences and setting political agendas without the 'hard command power' associated with 'military and economic strength' (1990, 181). Soft power is certainly essential for a post-colonial African country seeking security in diplomatic relationships, especially with more powerful counterparts. *African Footprint* is indeed a labour for soft power, one whose interesting method assimilates indigeneity, nationalism and globalization to establish a preference for a future in which Africans can succeed.

Acknowledgement

Notes

1 Loring's role is that of initiator, producer and creative director. *African Footprint* premiered in 2000 and still has scheduled local and international dates at the time of writing. I therefore use the present tense to describe the show and its general impact, though I also narrate specific past highlights as historical.

2 The project began as a performing arts school for underprivileged youth in Soweto before moving into more privileged parts of Johannesburg. The outreach component has remained integral to the company's work throughout the show's history.

3 In 2002, for example, a Beijing performance of *African Footprint* was broadcast as part of the *Bravo China Television Spectacular*, viewed by approximately 400 million people (see Browne 2012).

4 This includes mentorship in business, arts administration and creative directorship as some of the older performers have risen to such roles within the show's multiple companies (email communication with associate producer Debbie Batzofin, 25 December 2016).

5 The number has since grown to 300 (email communication with producer Richard Loring, 21 December 2016).

6 All subsequent quotations from the DVD cover, and all my descriptions of the performance itself, use the film documentary director John Bonham Carter's 2007 DVD release.

7 *Ipi Tombi* was controversial because it attracted accusations of racist stereotyping and apartheid apologetics, but South African theatre professionals from diverse backgrounds often remember the show as just another prestigious production that launched careers (and was not exempt from the apartheid government's general suspicion of multiracial theatre companies). My association of *African Footprint* with *Ipi Tombi* here is strictly genealogical, not ideological, and refers only to the artistry, not to any notion of Loring's personal background or motivation, apart from the collective motivation of the company that he has founded.

8 The following summary draws from Nigel Crawhall's 1999 report, which African Commission and South African human rights documents cite as a source of academic guidance on genealogical and anthropological questions. The report exemplifies the understanding of indigeneity that has found

the widest institutional recognition in South Africa. This is precisely the understanding implicit in the aesthetics of *African Footprint*.

   9 The appellation 'Bantu' etymologically means 'peoples' and refers to a large family of languages with a common origin. The word also functioned as a colonial ethnological designation, but denoted such a substantial and diverse population that it was effectively a racial term. While the ethnological usage became derogatory and is no longer acceptable in political and intellectual forums, the linguistic usage remains, though rigorous tact is often advisable in its deployment.

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4

Repatriation, Rights and the Political Lives of the Dead

Margaret Werry

This essay examines the international repatriation of indigenous 'cultural property' by museums, universities and other institutions. Repatriation, I argue, can be understood as a significant emergent genre of indigenous – or more accurately, intercultural – performance. On the one hand, repatriations frequently involve ceremonies that stage indigenous cultural forms of oratory, dance, music and ritual practice alongside the no-less-ritual formalities of the repatriating institutions. On the other hand, repatriation is a broadly, and powerfully, *performative practice*: the repatriation process announces and enacts a change of status in the repatriated 'property', and with it a change in the communities and institutions with which that property is entangled. In repatriation, indigenous ontologies and epistemologies, indigenous ways of thinking about entitlement, value, ownership and political authority are cited in public and institutional spheres from which they had previously been excluded (Geismar 2013). Indigenous identities and sovereignties are recognized and publicly validated. Sometimes those identities are even reconstituted through the process of negotiation, and through the healing, revitalization and (re) discovery of old/new traditions occasioned by the return of treasured possessions. New relationships are formed, or old ones reformed, between the parties to negotiation: tribes, states, former colonial powers and their most powerful institutions. And the new laws, principles, policies and protocols that repatriation calls into being can also internally reform the language and practice of those parties. Many in the global museum community cite repatriation as a major factor in the transformation of old museums (mausoleums of imperial booty) into 'new' ones (spaces of reconciliation, partnership, dialogue and contestation).

If we understand repatriation as performance, the key protagonist of

that performance is the entity to be repatriated – the 'repatriatable', as Kakaliouras has termed it (2012). On the one hand, these entities' claims on human actors make repatriation happen; on the other hand, repatriatables' claims have urgency and power because they are understood by their communities of origin as, in some way, 'alive'. To generalize about this aliveness, and the specific qualities of vitality, motility, agency, or expressivity the term connotes, would be a mistake: repatriatables are as diverse as the worlds from which they hail. Nevertheless, most cases of repatriation of indigenous entities begin by extracting them from the regime of objecthood to which the museological apparatus of Western modernity consigns them – in which the object is inert, indifferent, passive, dumb, ineffective, 'natural' matter, and thus available as property – and reinstating them as participants in social collectives, inalienably bound to the living by relations of reciprocity and responsibility. Repatriation, then, originates in the reconstrual of the repatriatable as a subject rather than an object of knowledge.

To think of repatriatables as actors in this way presents an invitation and a challenge to analysts of indigenous performance, hailing as many of us do from resolutely humanist disciplines (theatre studies, anthropology) which conceive of actors as irreducibly human. Likewise, the demands of repatriatables have transformed museum practice over the last two decades: welcoming indigenous communities as partners in research and interpretation has meant reckoning with radical ontological alterity, opening to the possibility that indigenous things manifest not just different world-*views* in the space of the museum, but different *worlds* (Henare, Holbraad and Wastell 2007). Within the academy, 'new materialists' have made common cause with indigenous challenges to the ontological foundation of Western post-Enlightenment thought – namely, the objectification of the non-human world – by reconsidering the promise of material vitality, animism and the political alternatives immanent in things. In many museums enjoying new collaborations with indigenous groups, this principle is expressed in a simple dictum: 'Museums and the things in them should be alive' (Busse 2008).

When the repatriatables in question are human remains, this dictum is doubly powerful. Museums' collection, housing and display of the indigenous dead have historically – and rightly – been regarded by many indigenous peoples with horror and outrage. In the current moment, with museums refigured as spaces of partnership, dialogue and global amity, rather than as expressions of the raw sovereign power of the state, collections of remains are an institutional embarrassment. In fact, their repatriation has proved one of the beachheads of contemporary change in museums. I would venture, however, that this is less because

museums have reckoned with the ontological alterity of remains, and more because moral repugnance at the mistreatment of the human dead is culturally shared, constituting a new universal in an era in which the other universals (civilization, progress, even humanity) that founded museums and their states have been discredited. In this essay, I ask what happens when repatriation enters the public sphere of global politics. What institutional and political imperatives, what narratives about rights or ethics, does repatriation advance, and to what extent might its success come at the expense of the more radical political agency immanent in ancestral entities themselves?

This essay focuses on toi moko, preserved Māori heads that have recently become pivotal actors in the reconciliation of the formerly colonial museum establishment with its indigenous critics. The campaign to repatriate toi moko to Aotearoa New Zealand is one of the most successful, high-profile and comprehensive efforts to globally repatriate indigenous human remains. The condition of this success is a consensus between a robust Māori museum community, the iwi and hapū (extended kin groups) it serves, the New Zealand state (which provides the policy mandate and financial backing), and Euro-American museums – a consensus exactingly crafted in diplomatic and institutional negotiations, and ritually staged in the ceremonial events that enact the repatriation process. However, while these events perform recognition of the vital personhood of toi moko, the repatriation process then forecloses on the most radical challenge that that personhood presents – that the dead might *act* as members of the social and political collectives of the living. By insisting that repatriation is an act of closure, this process isolates toi moko from the politics of the present even as it makes them available to present political imperatives, circumscribing their capacity to raise difficult questions, challenge current doxa or perturb existing orders. What does the insistence on closure accomplish, and for whom? I argue that – even as they enact the interpenetration, reformation and mutual recognition of global, state and tribal worldings – these repatriations take place under the aegis of normative liberal constructions of rights, personhood and political community secured by the state. The literal and/or symbolic burial of toi moko performs an act of historical revision that symbolically re-orders both the space and time of the bicultural state, extending its purview to before its foundation, delimiting the forms of sovereignty it recognizes and furnishing an ethical, universalist foundation to the new assemblages of the global cultural economy with which it is entangled.

In writing this, I am acutely aware of the depth of feeling – the outrage, pain and grief – associated with the repatriation of toi moko for Māori. It is not my goal here to produce knowledge about toi moko, to opine on what

should be done with them, nor to criticize the efforts of those who labour to restore them to their communities of origin. As a Pākehā expatriate scholar, I am aware also that I risk repeating the injury that colonial and contemporary commentators have exacted in their sensationalist trafficking in discourse about toi moko. This is not ethnographic or kaupapa Māori research. That is, I am not using indigenous protocols to engage a specific community in the co-production of knowledge of use to them. Nor do I seek to generalize about repatriation on the basis of this one example: in many instances those seeking repatriation face the most basic refusal of rights and recognition. Instead, my analysis is critical: I am interpreting material available in the public domain in order to pose an open question sympathetic to the concerns of many indigenous artists, thinkers and allies working with museums to secure cultural sovereignty. To what extent does liberal humanism operate – in practice, and often insidiously – as the normative horizon delimiting how the political alternatives presented by indigenous *actors* get taken up?

Toi moko*: A History*

The entities in question, toi moko, are human heads, preserved by a process of smoking and drying. What scholars have recorded about the status and role of toi moko in pre-contact Māori communities comes largely from a handful of European writers, many of whom were implicated in their trade. Certain facts are nonetheless widely accepted. Heads were preserved in two contexts: mortuary ritual and warfare. In the first, heads of beloved family members and venerated leaders were kept as a way of extending their presence in the community beyond death. According to early accounts, they were kept in homes to be mourned over, caressed and consulted, and brought out for important ceremonies and rituals. Toi moko were also produced in the context of inter-tribal warfare, where the heads of slain enemies were preserved by the victors as trophies, or commemoratively preserved heads were captured in raids. The more prestigious the warrior, the greater the prize of his head, which might be mocked or displayed as a taunt to shame the vanquished. Toi moko could restore the mana (status, prestige, power) of their people by being recaptured in further warfare or exchanged as part of peace treaties. That is, toi moko were a means by which political actors continued to act well after their demise.

Toi moko loosely translates as 'tattooed head', and the moko, or tattoo, was central to their social significance. The male full-face tattoo is a badge of mana and achievement, a document of lineage, a highly individual 'signature', that is, a techne that extends the efficacy and authority of an

actor – marking it, amplifying it, but also enacting it, as when Māori used the image of their moko to sign treaties (Te Awekotuku 2006, 128).[1] Insofar as they preserved the head and the moko, toi moko were a technology that spatially and temporally extended personhood beyond death. All human remains are tapu (sacred, dangerous) to Māori, but as the head is the most spiritually powerful part of the body, toi moko were doubly so. Those of relatives were thus closely guarded, and if buried, the sites were kept secret.

Early European visitors' fascination with toi moko was immediate. In the first decades of the nineteenth century, conflict escalated between historically warring Māori tribes, fuelled by new trade opportunities with Europeans. Toi moko soon became the currency of a brutal arms race: Māori leaders would capture heads in battle, or custom manufacture them by tattooing and then decapitating slaves taken in war, trading them for muskets. The preservation of family members (according to the self-appointed Pākehā authority on toi moko, H.G. Robley) died out at this time, largely in response to the risk of capture and trade (1896). The trade was so vigorous that, according to Paul Moon, the market became saturated and the price of a head had fallen from £21 at its height to £2 by 1820 (2012, 29).

An estimated 300 heads were in global circulation by the time the trade was outlawed by the Queen's representative in New South Wales in 1831. But dealing in heads continued covertly well into the middle of the century. The subsequent journeys of toi moko through imperial markets and collections could be the subject of a whole other essay. Beginning as storied personal mementos, scientific trophies or anonymous 'curiosities', many made their way through several hands: gentlemen's collections, antique shops, tin-pot regional museums, amusement arcades or the hoards of curio dealers – one was even displayed in a Paris department store. By the century's end, most had found their way to museums of natural history or ethnology, university collections or medical schools. There they joined the remains of other socially marginal individuals (the poor, the criminal, the unclaimed) whose bodies produced the facts of race in the nineteenth century, and with them the policy mandates of imperial capital. Their semiotic role in these collections was multivalent: representatives of 'primitive' art, metonyms of the history of a supposedly vanished race, specimens of racial science and documents of native barbarism, a barbarism that was ironically propelled by the West's barbaric consumption.

Toi moko as Repatriatables

Toi moko have several qualities that make them both particularly apt and particularly difficult candidates for repatriation. The first is their indeterminacy with respect to museological categories: are they relics of commemorative ritual, works of mortuary art, records of moko artistry, grave goods or human remains, pure and simple? Were they destined for publicity or privacy, for interment or active presence within living communities? The second quality that makes the heads somewhat unusual is what we might call, borrowing from Levinas, 'faciality'. Toi moko are human visages, highly individual and affectively commanding. Faciality, according to Levinas, establishes the ground for communication: to behold a face is in some way to be accountable, responsible to an Other. Toi moko are charismatic actors. They have none of the (supposed) anonymity of other repatriatables, such as disarticulated bones; instead they seem to demand our attention as persons (Levinas 1969; Levinas 1998; Erickson 1999).

The third quality is their historical and social indeterminacy. Provenance records for toi moko are mostly scant and unreliable, not only because of the collecting practices of the time and the illegality of the trade, but also because many passed through several hands before they even reached the metropole. The commodity regime into which heads were entered conflated slaves with chiefs, hostages with ambassadors, cherished family members with victims of trafficking and murder. Even when the point and conditions of acquisition can be traced, this does not necessarily illuminate iwi affiliation: slaves, many of whom lost their heads to the trade, were usually prisoners of war far from their own tribal territory. Other evidence (DNA, textiles, moko style) is often informative but not definitive. A percentage of the repatriates are, and are likely to remain, tribeless. Under the treaty principle of tino rangatiratanga, or the absolute sovereignty of iwi and hapū, these groups have the right and obligation to care for their own members, living or dead: to handle or bury someone else's ancestor, or to have one's own handled or buried by another iwi, would violate that principle. Who, then, should be responsible for taking care of and determining unidentified heads' fate?

This indeterminacy distinguishes toi moko from other Māori remains in international collections. As the mounting evidence gathered during the last ten years of repatriation shows, most kōiwi/kōimi tangata (human remains) have clearer provenance records than toi moko: the majority of the former were acquired after 1840 (after the formal act of colonization and foundation of the New Zealand state), and obtained largely through grave-robbing, which the Crown failed to prohibit or police. New Zealand

museums, including the Colonial Museum, frequently traded kōiwi for items from their metropolitan counterparts to augment their own collections. Kōiwi tell plainly of the Crown's responsibility for trafficking in the Māori dead. However, this story is overshadowed in Pākehā public discourse by a fascination with toi moko. While press coverage lauds the repatriation effort, the comments sections in newspapers suggest that many Pākehā see the heads, with their complicated origin stories, as signs of Māori barbarism and complicity with colonial violence, enlisting them to undermine Māori political claims based on historical injustice or cultural ethics. Toi moko, then, are not only ontologically and historically but also historiographically and politically contested entities.

The Repatriation Process

Early Māori advocates for repatriation were inspired by the activist and revitalist energy of pan-Māori nationalism in the early 1980s; for them, questions of provenance took a back seat to the urgency of redressing colonial injustices. Maui Pomare, a Ngāti Poneke elder, established the Mokomokai Education Trust and (without government funding or mandate) repatriated 37 of the heads in the two decades before his death in 1995, when the work was taken up by his kinsman Maui Dalvanius Prime, an entertainer and national personality. In 2003 (a year after Prime's death), a cabinet directive made the newly reopened state museum Te Papa Tongarewa, the National Museum of New Zealand, responsible for the repatriation of human remains. Established by an Act of Parliament in 1993 as the cultural flagship of Aotearoa New Zealand's neoliberal, bicultural state, Te Papa made bicultural partnership with iwi central to its governance and practices (see McCarthy 2007; Werry 2012). Te Papa's role in repatriation is somewhat controversial; some (including leaders in regional museums) have felt that the authority Te Papa wields as a state agency is at odds with the *rangatiratanga* (sovereignty, autonomy) of *individual* iwi in their affairs – a central tenet of post-treaty biculturalism. The Karanga Aotearoa ('the call of New Zealand', hereafter KA) team appointed at Te Papa to oversee repatriation has nonetheless been remarkably successful: to date, over 400 sets of remains have been returned from 15 countries.[2]

Behind this success is a unified position, powerfully articulated, supported by state mandate and the documented backing of iwi: that toi moko should not be considered part of any collection; 'rather they are the remains of ancestors to be treated appropriately at all times' (Te Papa Tongarewa 2010). Their continued possession by museums is injurious to their kin and to Māori at large, while undignified treatment

as commodity, chattel or worse, charnel, calls for redress: 'Māori …
believe that through [their] ultimate return to their domestic homelands
the dead and their living descendants will retrieve their dignity' (KA
Repatriation Programme 2011). Repatriation by KA rests on three key
points of consensus: first, that the heads should be returned to New
Zealand, and from there to the tribal territory from which they originated,
or an appropriate 'final resting place' (Te Papa Tongarewa 2010); second,
that the state should be the responsible party in this process; and third,
that return achieves their retirement from all circulation and closure of
'the hurt and misdeeds of the past'.[3]

KA's success is also a product of an ideological ground-shift in interna-
tional museum practice – the project not just of post-coloniality but also
of neoliberalism – that makes Euro-American institutions receptive to
repatriation requests. Divested of traditional forms of authority – ideas
about publicness, paternalism, citizenship and (self)-government secured
by the evolutionary schemae and racial order materialized in object
display – former 'universal museums' of the imperial era now seek not
valuable, complete *collections*, but new *relationships* with communities
to which they are responsible. A museum's glocal networks and ethical
capital are the new markers of its status (Jenkins 2011).

The KA team systematically inventories holdings of kōiwi/kōimi and
toi moko in international institutions, and presents formal requests for
repatriation. Should a request be approved, KA's advisory board of Māori
scholars and cultural experts is responsible for ensuring appropriate
handling abroad, in transit and at home, and for maintaining the
relationship with the repatriating institution as tikanga (protocol) and
ceremonial arrangements are established. Once repatriated, the toi moko
and kōiwi/kōimi tangata are placed in a wāhi tapu, or consecrated space,
maintained at Te Papa by a tohunga, or ritual expert, affiliated with the
museum. If provenance – linking the remains to a specific iwi, hapū
or rohe (territory) – can be established by Te Papa's research staff, the
museum initiates domestic repatriation. In contrast to the spot-lit arena
of the international repatriation ceremonies, repatriation within Aotearoa
is guided entirely by iwi and hapū. Te Papa does not publish information
about these events or about the iwi/ hapū's intentions for the repatriated
remains, lest it impinge on that community's privacy. Unprovenanced
remains remain indefinitely in the wāhi tapu at Te Papa.

Debating Repatriation

Many repatriation campaigns internationally are marked by divisive battles
between scientists and indigenous communities, pitting incommensurable

epistemologies against one another, or by bitter contests over ownership, contests always also about history, legitimacy and recognition. In contrast, the repatriation of toi moko has been remarkably free of such conflict. The consensus behind toi moko's repatriation points in part to the strong hand that the state has taken in the process. Prior to Te Papa's involvement, there was little agreement among Māori about the ultimate ends or even the advisability of repatriation. Until the early 2000s, debate took place not only within Māori communities but also in the national media, where coverage seemed to recapitulate the long-standing Pākehā fascination with toi moko. For some, immediate return to Māori custodianship – regardless of iwi – followed by ritual burial was the best way to ensure spiritual safety and end the outrage perpetrated on toi moko. For others, however, the drive to bury these remains colluded with the European cultural logic that makes a sharp ontological distinction between living and dead matter, and demands sequestration of the dead. 'Internment with tons of dirt piled on top of them is a western practice', Dalvanius Prime argued, 'and should we choose to resign them to that fate, it would be our final admittance to colonization' (qtd in Te Awekotuku 2004, 90). Toi moko are, he claimed, 'not ghouls but genuine people', entities intended not for burial but for publicness and posterity, created precisely so that the ancestors might continue to speak, to presence in the present (cited in McLean 2002, 3). They are, he argued, knowledge bearers: 'the encyclopedia … the repository of the history of our people. Not only Māori, but the heritage of this country' (qtd in Te Awekotuku 2004, 88). Their kaupapa (their mission, purpose or destiny) would, it followed, be better served by letting them *teach* us in the context of a public educational facility. Many in the Māori arts community concurred: for those working to revive ta moko, for instance, the heads represented a potential mine of artistic inspiration and design material.

As a performer and cultural ambassador, his descendants have suggested, Prime felt a special affinity with the heads. But he was not alone in questioning the necessity of their burial. Many others saw toi moko as taonga, a Māori concept that might be loosely translated as treasure or ancestral possession. While often used as the equivalent of the museological term of 'portable cultural heritage', taonga denotes a much more capacious category: taonga refers to both tangible and intangible, human and non-human entities. A carving, cloak, diary or mountain, an elder, a prayer, a plant or medicinal wisdom derived from it: these all can be interpreted as taonga by Māori. Taonga are the responsibility of iwi/hapū/whānau because they are inalienably part of Māori kinship and political collectives: many refer to taonga as simply 'tupuna' or ancestors. As such they demand protection and nurture. But they are also

dynamic rather than static or passive entities: they often circulate through exchange and use, accumulating value, stories and mana as they pass through hands and time and space. For all these reasons, many taonga also have a quality of tapu associated with them, the residue of their close contact with historical individuals, particularly the dead. Taonga, moreover, are *articulate* agents. In the words of Paul Tapsell, 'Taonga represent pathways of understanding. They are items, empowered by the ancestors of the Māori, capable of communicating multiple messages to multiple audiences. They allow ancestral pasts to guide their descendants' present.' In this capacity, they enlist their kin as spokespeople, charged with keeping alive the korero (stories) associated with them. In return, they 'collapse time', presencing the ancestral world in the contemporary one (Tapsell 1998, 13–14).[4]

Taonga, then, defy the ontological separation of human and non-human, living and dead. Māori speak of them as if they possess both volition and sentience: they have trajectories, the capacity to resist or assist, to affect both emotionally and materially; they can be dangerous and expressive. They have a palpable wairua, or spirit.

Many Māori embraced toi moko as taonga, insisting not on their return, but on their appropriate and respectful cultural treatment by foreign museums. They were part of Māoridom's global diaspora, ambassadors for Māori culture. 'Maybe it's not wrong to leave some things overseas', Hinemoa Hilliard stated. 'Are our taonga only to speak to us? Have they got nothing to say to anyone else?' For Emily Schuster, discovering toi moko overseas meant 'You're not mokemoke [lonely] in a foreign land, because you've got your tupuna [ancestors] there, and you're not alone' (qtd in Derby 1997). For these individuals, museums were treasuries of mana, where taonga could be protected and speak to the broad publics befitting their standing. For others, more attuned to the colonial museum's history of debasing mana, the animate quality of toi moko as taonga was precisely the reason to bring them home, into intimacy with living communities. For these people, repatriation often presented an ambivalent and painful conflict: burial was not these taonga's necessary ontological destiny, as much as a strategy to protect them from future violation.[5]

As the KA process gathered momentum, however, this debate died down. In policy and public discourse, toi moko lost their ontological and historiographic complexity: they were now simply the ancestral dead, to be returned for burial. In 2007, when the British Museum representative Lissant Bolton researched a report to advise her board on KA's repatriation request there, she suggested that many of the crucial questions had been repressed rather than resolved (2007, 110–12).

Repatriation Performatives

Prior to the ascent of KA as the principal mediator of discourse about toi moko, then, many commentators described them as animate to the extent that burial would be inappropriate: they have trajectories, a capacity to affect and express, and an autonomy and dignity, implying that acting unilaterally on their behalf to abridge that agency would be ethically and culturally problematic. The ambivalent effect of repatriation performances since the turn of the twenty-first century, however, has been to first *honour and enhance that animacy* – making toi moko (again) global travellers, historical dignitaries, members of a political community and motive forces in an intercultural field of exchange – and *then to extinguish it*. Repatriation sets toi moko in motion in order to consign them to stasis, to a 'final resting place'. This is the language of Te Papa's kōiwi policy: significantly, the phrase preceded and framed the iwi consultation process that the KA team went through to ensure that there was a broad Māori consensus behind their work. That repatriation should mean a 'final resting place' for toi moko seemed a foregone conclusion, with the phrase not only connoting the cessation of circulation, but also evoking (in its formulaic ring) the trappings of modern, *Western* mortuary convention: sequestration, the opposition of the strife of the living to the peace of the dead.

The ceremonies that mark the return of heads to Te Papa are the key performatives in this process. These have become a fixture on the calendar at Te Papa, involving an array of diplomatic, museum, media, state and indigenous actors, and of course the heads themselves. The rituals follow the tikanga (protocol) devised by the Repatriation Advisory Board, taking place at Te Papa's marae (Te Rongomaraeroa) and resembling both pōwhiri (welcomes) and tangihanga (funerals) – in fact, museum documents and spokespeople use both words to describe the same events.[6] They begin outside the marae, on the forecourt of the museum or its harbour-side entrance, where the caskets of remains are accompanied by a party of representatives from the repatriating nation. In keeping with both tangihanga and pōwhiri protocol, a female elder representing Te Papa gives the karanga, calling the visitors (the remains themselves, as well as their foreign caretakers) on to the marae. The events enrol foreigners bodily into this Māori dramaturgy, enjoining diplomats and European curators to perform as pallbearers, orators and fellow mourners. As in the tangihanga, the welcoming, wailing women are clad in black and wear wreaths of kawakawa leaves, and the caskets are placed at the focal point of the *marae*, draped in cloaks and surrounded by weeping mourners, while the visitors and hosts (arrayed on opposite sides of the space)

Fig. 1 Repatriation powhiri at Te Papa 2016.
Photo: Mike O'Neill, courtesy of National Museum of New Zealand
Te Papa Tongarewa

exchange speeches and performances. Significantly, in Rongomaraeroa, the focal point is not the porch of the meeting house (as it would be in a traditional marae), but a raised dais – almost a stage – at the centre of the opened-out wharewhakairo structure; the effect is highly theatrical.

In the broader practice of both pōwhiri and tangi, the dead are participants: in pōwhiri, the hosts' karanga hails the visitors' ancestors who accompany them, invisibly but palpably, on to the marae; in the tangi, where the deceased is welcomed back to his/her home marae and community, mourners address his/her spirit as if it were living. In the repatriation ceremonies, Euro-American, Pākehā and Māori orators alike address toi moko in the present tense, as warriors, ancestors, living emissaries of the past: 'French voices were heard by these ancestors. I think they understand me. Listen!', spoke the French ambassador, Francis Etienne, at the Te Papa ceremony repatriating 20 heads from France in 2012.[7] The performative effect is to reanimate toi moko, incorporating them into contemporary social and political communities by acknowledging them as vital participants in historical and diplomatic processes and as interlocutors of living actors.

Te Papa's invented protocol differs in one key respect: the tangi farewells

Fig. 2 Repatriation powhiri at Te Papa 2016.
Photo: Kate Whitley, courtesy of National Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa

to the wairua (spirit) of the deceased on its journey to Te Pō (the afterworld). Mourners bid the deceased to 'go to the belly of the land', bringing dead and living together in an unbroken chain (Salmond 1975, 185; Oppenheim 1973). Instead, Te Papa's performatives conclude not with burial but with the head's seclusion from the world of the living. Te Papa's rule (for unprovenanced remains) is this: no new associations. Kōiwi policy states that the only physical interaction in the wāhi tapu by museum staff will be to prevent deterioration: the remains will not be viewed or handled, reconstructed or displayed, or DNA tested; only authorized staff will have access and media are strictly excluded; Te Papa retains and forbids public access to all images, records of provenance, and all research and knowledge pertaining to them.[8] The stated reasons for this policy are unimpeachable. Any interaction with the heads could violate tapu, and would abrogate the authority of their (eventually determined) whānau to care for them. Equally, the prohibition on display or publication interrupts the cycle of fetishization and commodification initiated by colonial trade, re-establishing their personhood. These sorts of prohibitions, however, can be paradoxically at odds with a recognition of that very personhood. When 20 toi moko were repatriated in January 2012 from France, the

resident iwi at Te Papa, Tainui, asked that the boxes be opened so that the heads could be viewed during the ceremony in keeping with tangi protocol, in which display of the body uplifts the mana and facilitates the community's intimacy with the deceased ('Tikanga Regarding Te Papa Toi Moko Powhiri to Be Discussed', 2012). The KA team declined to do so. Such choices circumscribe the heads' vital force, their capacity to affect and connect.

Vital Force: Reanimating the Universal, the State and Global Cultural Economies

What, then, is accomplished by the (re-)animation and sequestration of toi moko? Why have these rituals become such highly public, spectacular, unanimous and mediatized *state* occasions? In the service of what new global, political and social imperatives and processes are toi moko now acting? In what follows, I suggest that the performance of repatriation shores up the legitimacy of the neoliberal state as a bicultural partnership, affirming its universalist and nationalist precepts by extending them *to the dead*, and propelling global circuits of cultural economy. This process has four dimensions.

First, even as these ceremonies are powerful affirmations for Māori communities, the indigenization of museum performance in toi moko's repatriation has the paradoxical effect of renovating the Euro-American museum's universalist claims. Te Papa's repatriation ceremonies combine indigenous dramaturgies with the cultural diplomacy of liberal internationalism, but the two are not equivalent. Where the former uphold sovereignty and mana, and the relations between place and people, dead and living (whanaungatanga), that underpin it, the latter dramatizes the mutual recognition of equals. The process of translation in intercultural performance is never fully symmetrical, and in this instance, the ceremonies tend to re-energize liberal precepts as the founding principles of the global museum economy, rather than indigenous ones. The language of dignity, respect and recognition assumed by museum officials (Māori and Euro-American), diplomats and commentators, and circulated in English-language publicity, claims repatriation as an 'ethical gesture of respect for Māori people', marking a willingness to include living Māori in the existing liberal social contract ('No Homecoming for Preserved Head', 2008). Insofar as toi moko's repatriation is hailed as the sign of 'a process that has universal scope', it makes good on the museum's long-dishonoured promise of universality.[9] But it does not promise to transform the operative logic of that institution in line with indigenous principles. When, for instance, Bill Jeffries (Swedish honorary consul-general) claimed that

these ceremonies were a reminder that humans (dead or alive) could not be regarded as chattel, he invoked a classically liberal formation defining sovereignty as the inalienable freedom (self-possession) of the individual (Hunt 2011b, A6). While few Māori commentators would contest the claim itself, such a definition is fundamentally incommensurate with the logic of rangatiratanga informing Māori engagement with the museum apparatus, which affirms the absolute self-determinative authority of the tribe.

Second, Te Papa's repatriation ceremonial appeals not only to the universalist impulses of liberal internationalism but also to those of bicultural nationalism. Why should the occasion of the repatriation of ignominiously traded remains be a 'proud day for *all New Zealand*'? Katherine Verdery's work on political reburials in post-Soviet states is strikingly, and surprisingly, resonant. Reburial, she argues, is so affectively and symbolically powerful because our handling of the dead bears on the political present by reordering the time and space of nation. The shape and trajectory of national history, the logic of ethnos and belonging, the contours of territory, are all reconfigured when groups seek to honour 'their' dead by burying them on 'their' land (Verdery 2000). We might see similar processes afoot in Aotearoa New Zealand, a state still arguing for its bicultural legitimacy. When participants in the repatriation process proclaim that toi moko are coming 'home' to 'New Zealand', they rhetorically incorporate as citizens those whose lives predated the 1840 founding of the state, and who would have known no sense of belonging to anything other than a tribal territory and collective. Subtly, the state extends its historical purview to a moment prior to its foundation, and its protection of rights to previously inadmissible subjects – those who have neither knowable tribal membership nor juridical citizenship. Nobody's ancestors thus become everybody's ancestors.

Third, repatriation ritualizes the work of historical closure. On the one hand, it redresses the insult and injury perpetrated by imperial museums, a claim repeatedly made by Māori and global museum agents alike. On the other, it resolves the historical betrayals and brutalities by which toi moko were launched into the global museum circuit in the first place. On both counts, the rhetoric of repatriation alludes to the social turmoil, lawlessness and violence of capitalist accumulation in the early nineteenth century, without assigning blame, to enact national, indeed international, absolution: '*Their* genuine commitment to the repatriation of indigenous remains allows *our* country to resolve a very dark period in *our* history' (Ministry of Culture and Heritage 2014, emphasis mine).

If repatriation reconciles the past, however, the revitalization of toi moko also revises it. While the process helps to 'bring Māori communities

and their ancestors closer together', it does so in part by effacing crucial distinctions between the two.[10] Acknowledging the tapu and mana of toi moko, for instance, assigns them to a category of personhood they may not have historically occupied. Slaves, many of whom lost their heads to the trade, had neither mana nor tapu: they could be killed at the convenience of their owners, and their bodies defaced or disposed of casually (Moon 2008). At odds with Te Papa's arguments for repatriating kōiwi/kōimi, the slave was a category of Māori personhood who had no rights, dignity or recognized bonds to ancestry or place that demanded posthumous honouring. This dissonance engenders discomfort for Māori commentators in the iwi press who allude delicately to 'macabre' practices or an 'ugly past' that is best forgotten.[11] It also resonates in terminological disagreements. Preserved heads were, prior to the early 2000s, usually called moko mokai (tattooed slaves), but because in te reo Māori calling someone a slave is inherently derogatory, the terminology shifted to toi moko (tattooed heads, ancestral heads), upoko tuhi or upoko tuhituhi (inscribed heads). Some (such as Amiria Henare) choose to call them, simply, 'ancestors', reincorporating them into the body politic (Henare 2005).[12] To embrace toi moko as honoured warriors and kin, then, is to engage in reverse social engineering along liberal lines. By amending the social status of toi moko, repatriation reconstructs political community, bridging the gulf between Māori subjects of neoliberal Aotearoa New Zealand and their non-liberal ancestors.

Fourth, repatriation not only reconciles the past, but clears the way for – indeed propels – the future, brokering new global knowledge economy networks in which both museums and indigenous groups play an instrumental role. Te Papa has been, since its 1998 inception, the emblem and laboratory of Aotearoa New Zealand's bicultural, neoliberal, knowledge economy makeover, the ambassador and enabler for the national brand. As the driver of repatriation, it offers other global museums the opportunity to remake *themselves* as less object-centred and more relationship-centred institutions through entering into partnerships. As John Terrell of the Chicago Field Museum put it, when his institution repatriated several toi moko in 2009: 'Museums are not impersonal places where we simply exhibit material for people to gawk at or admire or learn from, but museums are also places where we are reaching out to people, to other parts of the world to form partnerships, and this is a very real demonstration.'[13] These partnerships are actionable, reaching across states and museums, for-profit and non-profit agencies, indigenous and non-indigenous populations, in an ecology of good global government. Repatriation negotiations initiate a complex series of exchanges, often beginning with the sharing of curatorial knowledge, or hosting of staff

(interns or curators) by partner institutions, but also potentially forming wide-ranging networks that also subtly rewrite colonial history.

When Te Papa requested the repatriation of a head held by the Museum Volkenkunde in Leiden, for instance, the curators used it as an opportunity to 'bring NZ to the attention of the Dutch' by contracting a Māori navigation expert (Hector Busby) to build a canoe as a living culture exhibit that also recalled Dutch exploration and migration in New Zealand. Teams of Māori oarsmen organized by a Māori global arts-promotion body and Tourism NZ affiliate, Toi Māori Aotearoa (TMA), have had residencies in Leiden, while Dutch students have apprenticed in oarsmanship at Waitangi in New Zealand. Dutch students and Māori youth (participating in TMA's iwi-based cultural revitalization work) have travelled together to indigenous canoe festivals in the Pacific Northwest. The waka has appeared in openings, commemorations and promotions all around Europe, including at the opening of Musée du Quai Branly's *E Tu Ake* exhibition (2011–12), a high-profile Te Papa production conceived in the discussions that led to the mass repatriation of toi moko held by French museums. This, in turn, built on the branding work that Tourism NZ was conducting in France in association with the Rugby World Cup, and involved Māori artists to infuse the national knowledge-economy brand with a sophisticated, contemporary, indigenous 'point of difference'.

Conclusion

Even when removed from the commodity system, toi moko remain embroiled in the global traffic in culture. Even in the process of being rescued from the classificatory apparatus of the (post-)imperial museum, they anchor its renovated universalist, globalizing prerogatives. Even when reclaimed by Māori, they refurbish the claims of the liberal state. The acknowledgement of toi moko's vitality makes them potent political actors. Yet, perversely, it is the circumscription of that vitality – of the agency which stems from a specific, alien and incommensurable ontology – that makes it possible to enrol toi moko in these contemporary causes, and disqualifies them from the work of critique.

What if we were to grant the indigenous dead the most basic of rights that their living descendants claim: what if we were to listen to them, rather than speak for them? What if we were to refrain from staging grand performatives of global cultural politics *around* them, and instead allowed *them* to perform. I imagine that toi moko would have much to say about globalization – their perspectives rooted not in the apotheosis of late capital but in its brutal inception. What might these entities tell us about dispossession, statelessness and the underlying violence of the

traffic in culture? What might they have to say about the disingenuity of liberal logics as they cleave human from non-human, bodies that matter from those that don't, the living from the dead? It would be a dangerous politics indeed in which we allowed the dead to act on and in the future: a politics of dissensus, which asserts that the misdeeds of the past are better continually presenced than absolved, and that the qualities of politics' actors cannot be known in advance (see Braun and Whatmore 2010; Rancière 1999).

There are signs that the consensus around the sequestration of toi moko may be shifting. Currents of thought that were repressed earlier in the repatriation effort are now being aired. Pou Temara (Waikato University professor and current KA Advisory Board chairman) suggested to press agents after the 2012 repatriation from France that Māori should ask themselves whether, in burying toi moko, they are burying works of art (cited in Tahana 2012). Te Herekiekie Herewini, Te Papa's Manager Repatriation, imagines toi moko's role in expanding Te Papa's research base: 'We have to have conversations around them and how they would have perceived the world', he contends.[14] This would not mean public display, but does suggest their ongoing institutional presence as agents of historical alterity. It is possible, even, to interpret Te Papa's slowness to establish a national wahi tapu (the 'final resting place' for unprovenanced remains) as an attempt, whether deliberate or not, to pause the rush towards closure, and perhaps to allow these obdurate remains to hold the state accountable for its as-yet-unacknowledged role in their traffic.

Interestingly, Māori artists themselves have not shied from imagining a political community in which toi moko are participants. Many have taken toi moko up as contemporary interlocutors, the as-yet-unimaginable echo of the past-in-the-future. Wayne Youle's installation in the ground-breaking *Pasifika Styles* exhibition at Cambridge University consisted of replicas of the boxes in which museums store toi moko, arrayed in a glass vitrine, with breathing holes drilled in their sides. Using earphones, the visitor could listen to rustlings and murmurs from within (*Pasifika Styles* 2006). George Nuku, invited by the director of the Rouen museum to develop an exhibit in its re-opened space, engages toi moko on the same plane as other ancestral figures of Māori art, controversially using contem-porary materials (Perspex and other plastics) and theatrical lighting to create environments that translate the earthy matter of Māori carving into ghostly, science-fiction future-past (David-Ives 2013). In a series of oil works by Nga Puhi artist Shane Cotton, the heads appear like icons on the flat plane of a computer screen (Paton et al. 2007). Playing on the trope of the icon or living-remain of the relic, these heads are portals between the realms of the earthly and the divine; but they are also cyber-icons, as if

they were part of an apparatus of signs, and were you to click on them a *system* would be activated. At the heart of the work of these three artists, toi moko – in absentia – speak a silence, exert an unsettling force, torque the space of the museum. Dare we?

Notes

1 Te Awekotuku describes moko as an animate prosthesis or 'companion' of the body, with 'its own unique individuality' (2006, 136).

2 For records of repatriation numbers, see https://www.tepapa.govt.nz/about/repatriation/international-repatriation (accessed 5 July 2016).

3 Te Herewini Herekiekie, quoted in 'Swedish Museum Hands Back Māori Remains' (2009, A8).

4 See also Hook (2011) and Te Papa's theorization of mana taonga as an operative principle (http://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/Topic/1702).

5 See, for example, Klaricich (1990) or the opinions of Hook's interlocutors (Hook 2011).

6 I am reconstructing these events from publicly available video footage, newspaper coverage and materials published on Te Papa's website.

7 Details of the speech were published by Te Papa at https://www.tepapa.govt.nz/about/repatriation (accessed 5 July 2016).

8 In one instance, forensic research by a French museum was allowed prior to repatriation as part of the agreement, but the publication of detailed images of the head that accompanied it was controversial (Charlier et al. 2014; 'French Photo Offends' 2011; Hunt 2011a).

9 Arapata Hakiwai, quoted in Ministry of Culture and Heritage 2014, n.p.

10 Michelle Hippolite, quoted in http://www.tepapa.govt.nz/AboutUs/Repatriation/france/Pages/OrganisingrepatriationfromFrance.aspx (accessed 5 July 2016).

11 This terminology is common in Māori television news coverage. See also 'To Bury or Not to Bury' 2003.

12 Te Papa translates toi moko as 'ancestral head', 'because it recognises that the toi moko are tūpuna (ancestors)'. See https://www.tepapa.govt.nz/learn/for-educators/teaching-resources/topic-toi-moko (accessed 15 June 2013).

13 John Terrell quoted in clipping found in Te Papa Tongarewa, Repatriation news file. Identified as 25 February 2009, Public Radio International, 'The World' website.

14 Te Herekiekie Herewini, personal communication, 11 July 2016. I thank Te Herekiekie for sharing his expertise and insight with me in an illuminating conversation.

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5

Indigenous Cinema, *Hamlet* and Québécois Melancholia

Kester Dyer

In 2011, the Huron-Wendat playwright and film-maker Yves Sioui Durand released *Mesnak*, the first feature by an Indigenous director in Québec. Deploying a narrative based on Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, the Western canon's most exemplary portrayal of melancholia, this film follows a young Innu-born actor who is rehearsing to play Hamlet but finds his own life mirroring that of his stage persona. Alienated from his community since childhood, he returns to discover his mother about to marry his murdered father's rival, meets an ill-fated Indigenous Ophelia and witnesses the social disintegration that threatens his people. *Mesnak*'s source text, the 2004 play *Hamlet-le-Malécite* by Sioui Durand and Jean-Frédéric Messier, like several other adaptations, uses Shakespeare's work 'to bring attention to the stories of First Nations peoples' (Drouin 2014, 16–17). However, Sioui Durand's cinematic appropriation of *Hamlet* is distinctive for the ways in which it illuminates the persistently melancholic character of Québécois cinema, a trait manifest in self-victimizing representations of identity (Poirier 2004, 70–71) and linked to Québec's failure to attain political independence (Weinmann 1997, 36–38).[1] Indeed, Québec's singular historical trajectory makes it a fertile setting in which to ponder melancholia and Indigenous responses to it. France's colonial interests in this region succumbed to British conquest in 1760, and the desire to assimilate the French-speaking population quickly followed (Dumont 1996, 123). This intent became manifest after the repression of the Patriotes Rebellions of 1837–38 calling for more democratic representation. Lord Durham's infamous 1839 report on the causes of these uprisings described French Canadians as 'an uneducated and unprogressive people', asserted the anachronistic character and inevitable doom of their culture, and recommended they be assimilated into English society so as to 'elevate

them from that inferiority' (Durham et al. 2001, 94). This complex settler colonial history places Indigenous peoples living in what is now known as Québec in a distinctive situation, while instilling Québécois society with an ambivalent sense of being at once colonizer and colonized. In light of this ambivalence, I contend that Québécois melancholia is attributable not simply to the damaging effects of conquest, assimilation and failed attempts to achieve sovereignty, but also in considerable measure to repressed anxieties surrounding the legitimacy of constructing an independent settler state on traditional Indigenous territory.

My reading of *Mesnak* aims to elucidate the performative (and in this instance cross-cultural) function of haunting, a phenomenon important to both Indigenous epistemologies and Québécois melancholia, and one that the film deploys in opposition to the global hegemony of Western culture and world-views, which tend to overshadow and appropriate other cultural symbols and histories. Indeed, haunting has specifically Indigenous functions, notably in the potential for prophecy outlined by Michelle H. Raheja (2010, 145–89), who demonstrates that images of ghosts portrayed by Indigenous film-makers act not only as reminders of a history of colonial brutality, but also 'as a means of drawing attention to the embodied present and future' (2010, 146). At the same time, haunting is associated with the Western notion of melancholia. This condition, famously pathologized by Freud in opposition to the healthy process of mourning, results from a failure to assimilate loss, causing the ego to identify narcissistically with the idealized lost object. The melancholic subject reacts to this loss by turning from admiration to uninhibited criticism of the lost object, now identified as the self, thus giving rise to overt expressions of self-reproach.

Postcolonial scholar Ranjana Khanna understands haunting as emanating from melancholia and, contra Freud, seizes this latter concept as a positive condition that triggers ethical self-reflection. While critiquing the colonial underpinnings of psychoanalysis, Khanna acknowledges its potential anti-colonial applications and reassigns value to melancholia over the assimilative tendency of mourning (2003, 23). Haunting, she argues, emerges from melancholia in formerly colonized societies that adopt the nation-state framework they had previously experienced as oppressive. These insights are particularly useful for grasping the predominance of melancholia in Québécois cinema, given Québec's strong self-perception as a colonized society and as a region of Canada that has ambiguously moved towards nation-statehood. In this respect, the Mohawk scholar Taiaiake Alfred notes a historical convergence between Indigenous and Québécois nationalisms, which he understands as 'two parallel reactions to the nationalism of the Canadian state, that is to say to Anglo-European

hegemony'. In spite of this overlap, however, Alfred stresses the divergence of Québécois nationalism from its decolonizing impulse following concessions on linguistic and cultural autonomy accorded to Québec by the federal government since the 1960s. These gains, according to Alfred, render untenable the rationale linking sovereignty to cultural survival (1995, 13). A significant flashpoint that illustrates both the shifting alignments of Canadian and Québécois colonialisms and their common denial of First Nations' rights was the 1990 Oka crisis, which saw Mohawk protestors stand fast against municipal plans to expand a luxury golf course on to their cemetery. With non-Indigenous interests ostensibly backed by the Québec provincial police and then the Canadian army, this violent, highly mediatized land dispute shattered Québec's self-perception as the victim of colonization (Kalant 2004, 16). In light of such divisions, we can posit haunting in Indigenous films as prompting separate, but synergetic experiences. On the one hand, for Indigenous viewers, it invites recognition of ongoing Indigenous presence as well as past colonial injustices, both of which have been suppressed in settler texts by what Raheja describes as 'historical uses of the ghostly effect' (2010, 146). On the other hand, for non-Indigenous Quebecers, haunting works to trouble a framework for national liberation that excludes Indigenous peoples' unconditional independence and territorial rights through a privileging of Québec's own colonized status. Ultimately then, Indigenous haunting in Québec provokes a latent melancholia that acts not to inspire guilt, but rather, as Khanna would have it, to foster an ethical imperative towards the future (2003, 23).

In this essay, I place Raheja's understanding of haunting in conversation with Khanna's to show how *Mesnak* defiantly and effectively deploys this powerful trope. Whereas Indigenous ghosts have been used for centuries in literature and decades in film to conceptually bolster settler dominance, Sioui Durand, like other Indigenous performance makers, harnesses ghostly images for anti-colonial resistance. By appropriating a key European symbol of haunting and containing it within Indigenous epistemologies, the film demonstrates how a living Indigenous spiritual tradition can 'swallow up' within the conditions of its own system an emblematic Western text such as *Hamlet*, hailed for capturing the dilemmas of Europe's passage into the early modern period and its concurrent transition towards the nation-state as the unit of political organization. This filmic challenge to the global hegemony of the Western canon overturns the purported limits of indigeneity, intuitively perceived by settler populations worldwide as confined within nation-statehood, and instead engulfs the nation-state within indigeneity. *Mesnak* thus helps to 'undermin[e] the premise of the state as the highest and most

liberating form of human association', a process already catalysed in the era of globalization by the 2007 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Anaya 2007, 9). Certainly, *Hamlet*'s global resonance signals the broad interconnecting ambitions of the film, but Sioui Durand's most striking innovation, which gives the film its title, transposes the ghost of Hamlet's father into the figure of Mesnak, an Innu animal spirit represented as a snapping turtle.[2] Through Mesnak, 'an intermediary between material and spiritual worlds [...] that reminds men and women that they must live in harmony with nature' (*'Mesnak*: Dossier de presse' 2011, 13),[3] the film foregrounds haunting, suggests the ongoing presence of an embattled Indigenous spiritual tradition, and highlights the ethical imperative that should underlie mainstream Québécois society's necessary revision of its own political choices.

Indigenous Cinema in Québec

Although *Mesnak* represents his first foray into cinema, Sioui Durand has worked in theatre since 1985, as co-founder of the first professional First Nations company in Québec, Ondinnok, which, tellingly, was 'born of the urgency to repatriate a cultural world that has been swallowed up'.[4] Much of this company's work exhibits the desire to repurpose Indigenous performance traditions from across the Americas for contemporary audiences. By contrast, the play on which *Mesnak* is based, *Hamlet-le-Malécite*, explicitly broaches the immediate context of reserve life via a non-Indigenous source text.[5] While carving out a space for resolutely Indigenous drama, Sioui Durand has collaborated with luminary settler figures in Québec theatre, including Robert Lepage and the late Jean-Pierre Ronfard, who directed Sioui Durand's *La conquête de Mexico* in 1991. This play constitutes a particularly powerful example of Sioui Durand's endeavour to 're-emphasize the Amerindian narrative over the Euro-American one, to reinsert Euro-American history inside Amerindian continentality and temporality' (L'Hérault 2005, 117). One year after his collaboration with Ronfard, Sioui Durand appeared in Robert Lepage and Marianne Ackerman's *Alanienouidet*, based on the exile from London of controversial Shakespearean actor Edmund Kean, who was honoured by the Huron-Wendat nation with the name that gives the play its title. *Alanienouidet* mixes dramatized historical material with references to *Hamlet* and highlights the cultural encounter between Indigenous and non-Indigenous characters. Sioui Durand also acted as the production's consultant on Huron-Wendat culture and history (Lafon 1992, 166). His more recent collaboration to write the screenplay for *Mesnak*, working with celebrated Québec independent film-maker Robert

Morin and award-winning novelist Louis Hamelin, continued to trace a path for uniquely Indigenous expression amid Québec's dramatic, literary and cinematic traditions.

Mesnak was developed alongside other significant Indigenous cinematic initiatives in Québec. Indeed, the film's conception coincided with the launch in 2004 of the Wapikoni Mobile project ('*Mesnak*: Dossier de presse' 2011, 2), co-founded by documentary film-maker Manon Barbeau, the Council of the Atikamekw First Nation, and the First Nations of Québec and Labrador Youth Network. Initially using two camper vans converted into mobile film-making studios, staff working on this project travelled to Indigenous communities across Québec, providing youth with film-making tools and training. Within its first ten years, Wapikoni Mobile had produced over 600 short films, expanded to four camper vans, and multiplied the variety and scope of its activities, offering exchange and training opportunities worldwide and contributing to the development of transnational Indigenous media networks. Scholarship on this pioneering project has considered its social impact as intra- and intercultural mediation (Sédillot 2010), its distribution as alternative media practice (Serpereau 2011), its effects on notions of citizenship (Marceau 2013), and its participation in the renewal of the sacred through First Nations cinema (Bertrand 2013). Karine Bertrand suggests that the success of Wapikoni Mobile favoured Sioui Durand's efforts to secure funding for his feature project (2013, 229). Conversely, Barbeau herself speculates that the success of Wapikoni in Québec may be attributable to the convergence of multiple factors, and cites the completion of *Mesnak* as an important milestone (Barbeau 2014, n.p.).

In this context, the parallel development of *Rhymes for Young Ghouls* (2013) by Jeff Barnaby (Mi'kmaq) as an English-language feature constitutes another important iteration of Indigenous cinema in Québec. Such breakthroughs inevitably look back to celebrated documentary film-maker Alanis Obomsawin (Abenaki), whose *Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance* (1993) works to archive melancholia through an affective evocation of deceased Mohawk leaders and images of a cemetery under threat from commercial development during the Oka crisis. This documentary provides an audiovisual foundation which subsequent Indigenous films build upon to periodically incite Québec's engagement with the haunting effects of loss. Barnaby in particular has expressed his debt to Obomsawin in spite of his vastly different style, which favours horror and science fiction.[6] In this respect, *Rhymes for Young Ghouls* tackles the pernicious abuses of colonialism allegorically as it tells the story of a strong, independent and resourceful teenage girl's battle with the nearby residential school and a sadistic Indian agent. The film focuses particularly on the protagonist's

bonds with her dead mother and an inspiring grandmother-figure. Just as a deceased female character haunts Barnaby's story, the untimely death and emblematic memorialization of Wapikoni Awashish, a vibrant 20-year-old woman and community role model, prompted the Wapikoni Mobile project's creation and conceptually focuses its objectives. The ghosts in Sioui Durand's film, with its evocation of melancholia, also parallel the haunting figures stimulating this sentiment in Obomsawin's account of the Oka crisis.

Indigenizing *Hamlet*

Mesnak tells the story of Dave Brodeur, adopted into a Québécois family at the age of three after his father's murder and his mother's descent into alcoholism. Though Dave is cut off from Innu culture, sepia-toned flashbacks suggest the resurgence of incomplete but traumatic memories, which remain cryptic until the final dénouement. When Dave receives a photograph of his biological mother, Gertrude McKenzie, he travels to the (fictitious) reserve of Kinogamish to shed light on his past. Meanwhile, Gertrude is engaged to Claude St-Onge, suspected of killing Dave's father during a hunting trip twenty years earlier. Claude is now Chief of the community and advocates an unsavoury collaboration with a logging company seeking to exploit the land around the economically deprived reserve. In parallel, Dave begins an affair with Osalic, a young woman interested in reconnecting with Indigenous traditions, as evidenced by her photographs of ancestors, her respect for Mesnak, her burning of sacred herbs as a purification ceremony, and her desire to discover Innu traditional territory. However, Osalic remains caught in an incestuous relationship with her half-brother and is ultimately incapable of mitigating the damage caused to her family and community. While the film offers a bleak view of First Nations society, and while Dave resembles Hamlet, a quintessentially Western figure, Sioui Durand indigenizes the ghost of Hamlet's father, representing him as Mesnak, the master spirit of aquatic animals and one of the most important in Innu taxonomy (Bouchard and Mailhot 1973, 64; Armitage 1992, 8). Thus, the film weaves the theme of First Nations acculturation into a powerful Indigenous counter-narrative that dismantles the authority of the canonical text.

Sioui Durand establishes this interlocking structure by enclosing the main plot within poetic wide shots of an imposing river and extradiegetic close-ups of the snapping turtle. After the title credit, the camera pushes in towards the open mouth of the turtle as it hisses, announcing a transition to the first sepia-toned flashback of Dave's original trauma. This image shows the young Dave on the fateful hunting trip with his

Fig. 1 Ghostly flashback of Dave's childhood hunting trip with his father and uncles. Screen still from Mesnak (2011), dir. Yves Sioui Durand.

father, accompanied by Claude and his blind uncle Sapatesh, the only other witness to his father's death. Since we have yet to encounter the adult Dave, the turtle spirit seen previously appears to actively summon the memory-image that holds the key to his childhood trauma. As these ghostly characters fade from view, we first meet the adult Dave mid-rehearsal, delivering a speech from *Hamlet.* A play within a film, this excerpt evokes Shakespeare's own use of the device whereby Hamlet attempts to 'catch the conscience of the King'. Indeed, in Sioui Durand and Messier's earlier stage adaptation, Dave exposes the theatre-going audience to ghostly video images of the American Indian Movement activist Leonard Peltier, whom he associates with his father, as he delivers Hamlet's speech describing the ruse to provoke Claudius. In *Mesnak*, the scene of Dave's rehearsal commandeers *Hamlet* as a device to 'entrap' the film's (non-Indigenous) spectators as we are lured into a familiar dramatic structure that ultimately forces a recognition of settler privilege and its consequences for Indigenous communities. Among its multiple functions in Sioui Durand's film, then, *Hamlet* fulfils a metatheatrical role analogous to *The Murder of Gonzago* in Shakespeare's drama, but instead of provoking fictional characters as it does in Shakespeare, the embedded play here acts directly on the film's audience. Just as memory is configured as not fully controlled by human will but rather deliberately governed by a spiritual entity, so the provocation *Mesnak* orchestrates

through *Hamlet* intimates the working presence of elements, including film images, deployed to haunt the viewer's psyche.

At the film's outset, Dave's drama teacher critiques his performance as one-dimensional, driven only by vengeance, and adds that Hamlet is stirred by 'a quest for redemption roused by pain'. This premise then underpins Dave's journey to expose his father's murderer and recover his own lost identity, but also nuances the principles that guide a parallel non-Indigenous journey. While Dave's character is aligned with Indigenous people forcibly alienated from their cultures, non-Indigenous viewers are implicated in his dilemma, thereby encouraging a difficult interrogation of national identity and memory. Thus, Dave's narrative recounts a turbulent reconnection with indigeneity, but leaves room for analogous reflection on Québec's as yet oversimplified search for political redress following a history of colonial subjugation. By accentuating Dave's non-Indigenous upbringing and situating the plot within a Western dramatic structure, Sioui Durand disarms mainstream spectators and leads them on a journey that unsettles received notions about Québec's decolonizing objectives. The construction of Dave's character (an Innu actor, played by Peruvian-Québécois actor Victor Andrés Trelles Turgeon, who then plays a Danish prince) works to trouble ethnic categories, and simultaneously allows Indigenous and non-Indigenous viewers to follow mutually enriching yet distinct narrative arcs with distinct, but interrelated goals.

In spite of Québec's still incomplete struggle for political autonomy, Khanna's notion of a haunting proper to decolonized nations finds appropriate instance here. Khanna argues that in 'the context of new formerly colonized nation-states, the critical response to nation-statehood arises from the secret embedded in nation-state formation: that the concept of nation-statehood was constituted through the colonial relation, and needs to be radically re-shaped if it is to survive without colonies, or without a concealed (colonial) other' (2003, 25). During the 1960s, Québécois nationalism adopted the discourse of left-wing struggles and worldwide decolonization movements, but failed to apply its principles in solidarity with First Nations. Decades later, although political independence remains unrealized, Québec enjoys a degree of autonomy similar to other post-colonial nations, and nationalist discourse has progressively shifted towards the consolidation of Québec state authority. This proximity to nation-statehood therefore complicates Heinz Weinmann's attribution of Québécois melancholia to 'post-referendum syndrome', or the loss endured by the failure to achieve independence (1997, 36). In its drive towards independence, Québec failed to radically reshape the concept of nation-statehood or to fully address the fundamental contradictions this model poses. As Daniel Salée notes, Québec's 1985 legislation on

the distinct character of Indigenous peoples goes further than any other Canadian jurisdiction in recognizing Indigenous identity or endorsing self-determination, but such recognitions seem 'more rhetorical than authentic' when confronted with Québec's uncompromising affirmation of territorial integrity (2013, 331). This position is inevitably tethered to the goal of nation-statehood and consequent refusal to unconditionally recognize Indigenous sovereignty. Although it is tempting to attribute melancholia simply to the incompleteness of the nation-statehood that has eluded Québec, more profoundly Québécois melancholia points to the incompleteness of the social aims of 1960s nationalism, the unwitting loss of its decolonizing ideals and the demotion of the parallel aspirations of Indigenous peoples, which together provoke melancholic self-criticism in Québec cinema. As Dave's drama teacher points out, Hamlet's quest is a complex one. Thus, the fragmentary nature of Dave's identity, and of the character he seeks to construct, also echoes, for the non-Indigenous viewer, the deficiency of Québec's political identity as a decolonized nation.

Raheja connects Indigenous haunting to prophecy and an apocalyptic vision that predicts not only the coming of colonizers but also the end of Western domination and the survival of Indigenous world-views (2010, 182–84). Certainly, the stark portrayal of reserve life in Sioui Durand's film reads as apocalyptic, and a regenerative dimension surfaces through Dave's final reunion with Gertrude. In parallel, Osalic's imminent drowning calls forth Western pictorial representations of Ophelia's famous destiny. But by leaving this suicide pending as Osalic drifts downstream, Sioui Durand hangs her fate in the balance. If one reads this image as apocalyptic, it tends to predict the death of Western symbols as unilaterally dominant. In this final scene, where Osalic wears a powwow dress that she has fashioned herself, Western theatrical imagery is interlocked with Indigenous elements, including Osalic's own body, to announce a precariously joined fate in epistemological, political and environmental terms: the impossibility of non-Indigenous survival separate from the flourishing of Indigenous counterparts. At the same time, Osalic's decision to end her life in this way echoes Anne Anlin Cheng's observation, in reference to the traumatic history of racism in the United States, that suicide, for the powerless, encompasses a potentially rebellious choice. For Cheng, 'racial melancholia […] has always existed for raced subjects both as a *sign* of rejection and as a psychic *strategy* in response to that of rejection' (2000, 20). Thus, Osalic's fate does not diminish her purpose or agency, which are signalled by the ceremonial manner of her act, notably through her attire and disappearance into the river that has served as her ancestors' pathway to identity-defining practices.

While Hamlet's objective is to ensnare the king's conscience, and while Freud likens the 'critical agency' of melancholia to a kind of conscience (Khanna 2003, 23), this trope seems inappropriate for reading *Mesnak*. Conscience evokes settler guilt, which, as Raheja points out, 'does not serve contemporary Indigenous communities invested in visual technologies that reflect the creative, robust vitality of a living people' (2010, 146–47). Moreover, the Huron-Wendat historian Georges Sioui views guilt as serving only to divide Euro-Americans and Amerindians (1989, 3), while Renée Bergland indicts settler guilt as working perversely to justify the usurpation of Indigenous lands and identities. Native American ghosts, Bergland argues, differ from the spectres of other groups in American fiction because, although they cause feelings of guilt over the treatment of Indigenous peoples, they also provide pleasure through settler possession of the spirit of the land (2000, 19). Avoiding melancholia's association with guilt-driven conscience allows us to see it instead as an ethical imperative to respond to the epistemological violence that accompanies nation-statehood in post-colonial contexts (Khanna 2003, 25). In this respect, *Mesnak* constructively channels the pain that drives Dave's 'performance' of Hamlet in his own life, and acts on the non-Indigenous spectator's ethical sense of critical agency rather than on feelings of national guilt.

The film connects two aspects of haunting, Dave's memories and the turtle, but, contrary to popular literature and cinema featuring Indigenous ghosts, it does not work to invisibilize the Innu or render them as abstract entities. Rather, haunting memories, seemingly conjured by Mesnak, provoke Dave's journey to Kinogamish, which brings us into contact with the stark representation, by a predominantly Innu cast, of contemporary reserve life and its colonial underpinnings. Thus, memory fulfils the purpose observed by Khanna: '[w]hen official narratives show that the state has chosen to forget the uncomfortable past of those it claims to represent, the political use of memory is to right a wrong, make visible the invisible, or give knowledge where ignorance reigned' (2003, 13). In *Mesnak*, the ghost of Dave's father, represented visually as the memory of trauma, becomes not only the impulse that drives Dave, but also the audiovisual evidence he needs to carry out justice and reveal the truth about his own past and that of his community. When, during a struggle with Osalic's brother near the end of the film, a gunshot accidentally rings out in Dave's ears, the sepia-toned images reappear and his memories of the gunshot that killed his father become clear. Memory aligns with the retributive violence of the gun, which then falls into Dave's hands and is used to right a wrong, to correct a lie by Claude, the community's leader. Extended to Québec and Canada, the film's use of memory, expressed audiovisually as a ghostly remainder, suggests Indigenous cinema's potential for unsettling

the state's pretensions to fairness and mutual enrichment, thereby making visible the deliberate structure of colonialism.

According to Sioui Durand, the turtle is a messenger that represents the origins of the Earth and its memory ('*Mesnak*: Dossier de presse' 2011, 13). Thus, not unlike melancholia, Mesnak is deployed as a traditional and ecological imperative to act ethically. The social disintegration portrayed in the film through scenes of corruption, violence, drug abuse and incest allows Sioui Durand to criticize the rupture from tradition in Indigenous communities, but in a more damning allusion *Mesnak* links the turtle/ghost's haunting to the political direction taken by mainstream Québec society. When Claude stops to look at Mesnak crossing a road, a truck full of lumber drives behind him, distracting him momentarily. When he turns back, the turtle has vanished. Claude's position between, on the one hand, the turtle representing moral obligation as well as the spectre of his past deeds, and on the other, the exploitative capitalist forces to which he has sold out his community, not only pulls Claude himself in opposite directions, but also draws attention to the destructive activity taking place in northern Québec for the benefit of non-Indigenous consumers in the south.

Swallowing *Hamlet*'s Ghost

Mesnak does not stop at interlocking Indigenous and non-Indigenous haunting, but goes on to invert the centuries-old practice of erasing Indigenous peoples through their portrayal in ghost stories. As Bergland writes on haunting's potential for toppling a contradictory national ideology, '[g]hostly Indians present us with the possibility of vanishing ourselves, being swallowed up into another's discourse, another's imagination' (2000, 5). Sioui Durand deploys Indigenous ghosts according to Raheja's model, signifying an embodied presence, but also realizes Bergland's premise by enclosing a famous Western ghost within a living Indigenous spirit. 'In telling ghost stories to the colonizer', Colleen E. Boyd and Coll Thrush argue, 'Indigenous writers claim one of the most powerful North American narrative tropes and use it for their own ends, replacing settler guilt with Indigenous mourning, and imagined spectral ancestries with actual genealogies embedded in the land' (2011, xx). With *Mesnak*, Sioui Durand indeed reclaims the Indigenous ghost story, but also appropriates the powerful Western narrative trope of the European ghost encompassed within *Hamlet*.

In contrast with Boyd and Thrush's 'Indigenous mourning', which designates the positive outcome of the reappropriation of Indigenous ghost stories, melancholia describes an alternative response to loss and

the potential for resistance through a repurposing of past suffering. Indeed, Eric Wolfe's analysis of William Apess's *Eulogy on King Philip* demonstrates that melancholia acts to counter a settler mourning that enables feigned sympathy for and dissolution of the memory of injustices visited upon Indigenous peoples (2008, 14). Wolfe notes that in 'rewriting the past of King Philip, the direction of the *Eulogy* is toward the future. Apess reopens a dialogue with loss, the past, and history in order to imagine a different relationship to and within the present' (2008, 19). The idea of reopening the past is central to *Mesnak*, and through its grim treatment of contemporary issues the film points warningly ahead. Both Dave's memories and Osalic's attraction to traditional ways evoke the past's persistence in the present and beyond. Osalic's rapport with the river and contemplation of suicide focus the film around Hamlet's celebrated 'to be, or not to be' speech, and she insists that it is only in the traditional territories situated upriver that one can *be* an Innu. The word 'Innu' itself means 'human' in the Innu language, thereby further inflecting Osalic's dilemma. Her implicit 'to be, or not to be *an Innu'* engulfs Québec's melancholic relationship to national identity through its emphasis on inclusivity and the global reach of Hamlet's existential question. Thus, Osalic's reflection on cultural loss both encapsulates the interconnected nature of contemporary human destinies and questions the future of humanity in a world dominated by Western epistemological traditions and capitalist ambitions.

Like Apess, however, Sioui Durand risks representing Indigenous peoples in ways that play into the colonizer's hands. Wolfe notes Apess's gamble in seemingly drawing on the 'sympathetic mourning' of colonial discourse (2008, 3). But, as with Apess, melancholia allows Sioui Durand to reawaken past losses while simultaneously resisting comfortable closure. In his discussion of Apess, Wolfe evokes Gerald Vizenor's 'survivance' as a concept that rejects tragedy. In contrast, Sioui Durand affirms the film's subversion of Shakespeare's canonical authority, but insists on *Mesnak*'s tragic nature (2014, n.p.). His version of tragedy, however, like other Western devices appropriated by the film, is enclosed within and ultimately subordinated to an Indigenous conceptual design. Certainly, the closing image announces Osalic's 'beautiful' death, but this moment remains off-screen. The camera overtakes Osalic who slips out of frame, giving way to a shot of the rapids ahead, the site of her impending destruction. Not allowing her to float back into view, the film cuts to the credits. This final, slow, upward tilting shot of Osalic drifting ceremonially downriver signals her tragic failure to return to the territory of her ancestors upriver, to where one can *be* an Innu, but Sioui Durand's final image remains ambiguous. He boldly treats suicide through Western iconography, yet

cuts early, depriving the audience of the expected Shakespearean trope of the doomed heroine's death. While this strategy flirts dangerously with discourses that keep Indigenous peoples always 'on the verge of disappearing' (Wolfe 2008, 8–9), Sioui Durand checks that threat precisely through an appropriation of Western imagery. Thus, Osalic's immediate local future embodies Ophelia's globally recognized and aesthetically reified destiny. Their predicaments, joined in this way, evoke the threat of apocalypse for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in the face of Western ideology's continued global political and economic domination, but refrain from totally obliterating the hope of collaborative renewal.

Despite its harsh representation of reserve life, *Mesnak* counteracts negative views of Indigenous society by participating in what Raheja conceives as the 'virtual reservation', 'a site that displays Indigenous knowledges and practices in sharp relief against competing colonial discourses' (2010, 149). On the surface, Kinogamish apparently fits the stereotype of a dysfunctional community whose Indigenous culture is disappearing. However, the dystopian world Sioui Durand creates, like those in Jeff Barnaby's fictions, offers the 'possibility and renewal' Raheja also associates with versions of the virtual reservation as 'offering counter-narratives that reveal the often dismal and depressing aspect of inhabiting homelands that are still colonized in an otherwise seemingly postco-lonial world' (2010, 153–55). *Mesnak*'s reserve therefore constrains the non-Indigenous viewer just as the turtle contains the ghost of Shakespeare's King Hamlet. Aside from the opening scenes, all of the film's action takes place in Kinogamish, which grows increasingly claustrophobic and impossible to escape, suggesting Québec's own entrapment within (neo)colonial space and consequent obligation to confront the structural inequalities historically undergirding settler colonialism. As Julie Burelle argues, *Mesnak* 'challenge[s] Québec's amnesic identity discourse by holding a mirror to the reserve and demanding that audiences truly contemplate the oppressive nature of this space as an enclave of exclusion, tortured filiation and violence created and maintained by Canada and Québec as settler colonial forces' (2014, 60). Sioui Durand draws the spectator on to the reserve and exposes its degradation, synecdochally suggesting the 'rottenness' that underpins the structure of Québec's territorial hierarchies, and invoking feelings of entrapment that potentially strike a nerve with Quebecers besieged in Anglophone North America.

Containment within spiritual and physical boundaries paradoxically presents opportunities for empowerment in *Mesnak*. Trapped within the living manifestation of an Innu master spirit, the ghost of King Hamlet relinquishes its Western form and makes alternative perspectives available to non-Indigenous viewers. As Dave holds a turtle skull contem-

Fig. 2 Dave holds a turtle skull contemplatively. Screen still from Mesnak (2011), dir. Yves Sioui Durand.

platively in an obvious reference to *Hamlet*'s gravediggers' scene, the skull evokes both his murdered father and Yorick, Hamlet's childhood fool. Here, the implicit line, 'he hath bore me on his back a thousand times', signals the turtle's significance in Indigenous creation stories, including Sioui Durand's own Huron-Wendat heritage, where the North American continent takes shape on the back of a turtle (Sioui 1999, 16). Thus, through a subverted reference to Hamlet's graveside monologue about Yorick's decayed body, the film acknowledges the Earth's support of human life and deplores its environmental putrefaction. Haunting in *Mesnak* therefore moves progressively towards diffuse incarnations that ultimately reach planetary dimensions, seemingly looking to redress sociopolitical and ecological equilibrium via the interconnectedness and mutual envelopment of human and other beings.

Conclusion

In moving from the interpenetrations that link *Hamlet* and *Mesnak* towards the Indigenous film's englobement of its Shakespearean ur-text, I have intimated that this process has global ramifications. In this respect, my analysis finds potential transnational applications converging towards a position consistent with Georges Sioui's argument, in *Amerindian Autohistory*, that Indigenous world-views generate global intercultural

understanding (1989, 50). Sioui posits that Indigenous thought 'recognizes the universal interdependence of all beings (physical and spiritual), [and] seeks by all means possible to establish intellectual and emotional contact between these so as to ensure … abundance, equality, and therefore peace' (1989, 3). Although he notes that Amerindian ideas disseminate beyond the North American continent and that their influence is pervasive globally, he does not see Indigenous epistemology as seeking to efface the Other, but rather as demonstrating a complementary imbrication. With *Mesnak*, Yves Sioui Durand offers a representation of this process: Indigenous haunting 'swallows up' its non-Indigenous counterpart precisely as it is being overwhelmed by Western views and systems. In addition, *Mesnak* entangles the supernatural world of spirits and contemporary realities. Indeed, the film's 'swallowing up' of a global narrative that emanates from a dominant culture tending to absorb marginalized views and practices also stresses the interdependence that exists between humans, between ghosts, and between humans and the spiritual world.

In stressing the emotional component of universal interdependence, Georges Sioui targets the weakness of guilt as a divisive tool for the enforcement of power. He recognizes humankind as now 'unified at the planetary scale', and argues that to return Indigenous epistemologies to prominence for the benefit of the whole world, one must proceed by stimulating the emotions first to generate clarity of thought (Sioui 1989, 9), an approach inspired by Iroquois condolence rituals and seemingly consistent with the stimulation of melancholia towards developing a clear ethical path forward. The intensity with which *Mesnak* exposes viewers to negative aspects of Indigenous life that is estranged from tradition seemingly inhibits the film's potential to illustrate the broad relevance of Indigenous thought. However, the narrative and cinematic treatment of haunting via the spirits of deceased family members and those of the living natural world nevertheless communicates the relational aspect of all things, which is at the heart of Indigenous epistemologies. The film thus realizes Sioui's proposal that the Amerindian become 'the unlikely guide' of settler society towards an Indigenous culture that 'has slowly, but without interruption transformed, and continues to transform, views and attitudes of all other civilizations'. For Sioui, this potential for positive influence lies in Indigenous culture's acute refinement of interdependence as an idea applicable to humans and other beings alike (1989, 52–53). Equally, Yves Sioui Durand sees in *Hamlet* characteristics that speak not only to Western cultures, but that hold true for Indigenous understandings of the supernatural as well. In *Mesnak*, he uses *Hamlet* to echo issues central to Indigenous societies grappling with the violent imposition of Eurocentric ways of life, but also to facilitate the journey

of non-Indigenous spectators into a setting where the supernatural and the everyday can coexist, where their relationship to one another is both possible and logical.

Notes

1 In 1980 and 1995, Québec held referenda on political independence, with the 'yes' campaign obtaining 40.44 per cent and 49.42 per cent respectively.

2 The name of the Innu master of aquatic animals is often spelled 'Missinak[u]' (where the superscript 'u' indicates pronunciation of the 'k' with a puff of air after it), as is the Innu word for turtle. See http://www.innu-aimun.ca and http://www.native-languages.org/montagnais_guide.htm (accessed 3 March 2017). The spelling used in this essay reflects that employed in Sioui Durand's film.

3 All translations from French source texts are my own unless otherwise indicated.

4 Ondinnok is a Huron-Wendat word meaning 'secret desire of the soul'. See http://www.ondinnok.org/fr/?m=accueil (accessed 13 June 2014).

5 Ondinnok's interest in Shakespeare was signalled early on, however, in the conception of its 1996 production, *Sakipitcikan*, as an Atikamekw *Romeo and Juliet*.

6 'Alanis is the reason that I'm a film-maker ... I think her doing a kind of politically charged film (*Incident at Restigouche*) about my reserve really kicked off my film career in my brain.' Jeff Barnaby quoted in '"Big Year" for First Nations Films at TIFF', http://www.cbc.ca/news/arts/big-year-for-first-nations-films-at-tiff-1.1344791 (accessed 19 July 2014).

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6

Beyond the Burden in *Redfern Now*: Global Collaborations, Local Stories and 'Televisual Sovereignty'

Faye Ginsburg

The series *Redfern Now* came about from a deep desire, from myself and Sally Riley [head of the Indigenous Department, Australian Broadcasting Corporation], to ensure that an urban Indigenous community, a contemporary Indigenous community, was represented on our screens in some way. It was never any other place; it was always Redfern in our minds.

Hopefully for us it creates a place where we can more regularly see black faces on screen. Certainly, the talent's there, we've got the writers, we've got the directors, we've got the actors and we've got the ability now with the support of places like Screen Australia and ABC to be able to produce the material. It's early days … It's important to tell these stories because they've never been told before. They are firsts.

<div align="right">

Erica Glynn (Kaytej), former manager,
Indigenous Branch, Screen Australia

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Redfern is such a colourful place and it has such a great history and – I don't know – it excites the imagination. It does that for me. The people who live there are just like you and me. They are ordinary people with similar problems, similar situations, similar issues …

The fact that it is written, produced and directed by Indigenous film-makers is more than I could have hoped for. It helps people to understand Indigenous people, Indigenous life, Indigenous culture.

Sally Riley (Wiradjuri), head, Indigenous Department, ABC TV[1]

On Thursday evening 1 November 2012 at 8.30 p.m., Australians who switched on their televisions to the nation's flagship public service broadcaster, the ABC, were part of a ground-breaking moment in the nation's media history. They witnessed the inauguration of a new, outstanding, six-part Indigenous drama series, *Redfern Now*, testimony to twenty-five years of struggle by Indigenous media makers to gain control over almost every aspect of a mainstream Aboriginal television production. Both on and off screen, *Redfern Now* speaks forcefully to the unfinished business of decolonization. On screen, the series tells riveting, complex stories about urban Indigenous lives that have not been told before, reaching out to Indigenous audiences as well as to a broad Australian public as part of a televisual national imaginary.[2] Off screen, the show was the result of an astonishing coming together of both new and seasoned Indigenous talent in the writing, acting, directing, shooting and editing of this first Aboriginal dramatic series to be broadcast on Australian national television. Because of the control and participation of Indigenous media makers, from producers and scriptwriters to actors, set designers and extras, I make the case in this chapter that *Redfern Now* constitutes a project of 'televisual sovereignty'.

Redfern Now consists of two seasons (2012, 2013) of six loosely connected one-hour episodes that explore the lives – and unexpected moral dilemmas – of Sydney-dwelling Indigenous families living on the same street in Redfern, a working-class neighbourhood (now gentrifying) long known for being home to the city's Aboriginal community. The series has raised the bar for what Indigenous media makers can achieve through influential contemporary media platforms, such as the ABC, that have considerable resources and wide reach across the nation. In particular, it brings recognition to Indigenous urban experiences that have been more or less invisible in Australia's public culture, which, until now, has tended to cast Aboriginal people as remote-living people engaging in either traditional performance practices or dysfunctional activities (Hartley and McKee 2000). The excellence of the writing, acting and production in *Redfern Now* are such that the issue of indigeneity is almost taken for granted in some of the reviews of the show in the discursive field that emerged around the series. Ironically, to have indigeneity ignored is considered by some to be one of the most valued signs of success. While Karl Quinn, the national film editor for one of Australia's newspapers of record, the *Sydney Morning Herald*, headlined his positive lead review on the eve of the launch of *Redfern Now* with 'Getting Aboriginal Stories out of the Ghetto' (2012), another respected critic described the series simply in terms of its quality:

> The characters are caught at moments that in time define them: a decision to pick up the phone, to ignore a cry for help, the refusal to sing the national anthem, a moment of sexual jealousy, a seemingly insignificant car accident, a thought that suddenly consumes. Their response to these moments threatens their work, their love lives, their equilibrium, and their identity. And ... we can only gape in amazement at how elegantly those involved in this production have taken these moments and filled them with resonance and meaning. Each episode is like a beautifully constructed short story that sees straight to the fragile hearts of *Redfern Now*'s characters, without the stories becoming sentimental or stubbornly political. (Blundell 2012)

Such critical reception, based on the show's excellence in terms of plot, acting, scriptwriting and pacing, rather than its exceptionalism – that Indigenous artists are capable of creating a fantastic and innovative television series – is yet another long overdue marker of arrival.

As is the case with Indigenous media everywhere, space and location are foundational; in this case, the series itself underscores the under-represented significance of Redfern to Aboriginal Australians. Every episode takes place in inner-city Sydney, each set around The Block, a precinct in Redfern known historically as the centre of Aboriginal political action beginning in the 1970s. At that time, Redfern gave birth to Australia's first Aboriginal-run housing company as well as health, legal and children's services and also served as a focal point for civil right demonstrations, leading some to call it a 'modern sacred site' for Aboriginal families. Despite poverty, low employment and discrimination, Redfern was also the place where then Prime Minister Paul Keating made his now historic 1992 reconciliation speech, publicly acknowledging that European settlers were responsible for many of the difficulties Aboriginal communities continued to face. Controversially, Redfern's iconic status as an Indigenous place/community is now threatened by gentrification and the demolition of buildings that have long characterized the neighbour-hood's rough street sensibility, as we see in *Redfern Now*. In the series, the careful choice of place makes a serious if understated claim to the area's significance in Aboriginal Australian history on the streets, in homes and public space, and now on screen.

I want to consider *Redfern Now* as exemplary, not only for its considerable accomplishments in the present as a form of Indigenous media, but also for its capacity to illuminate the history of how what we might think of as televisual sovereignty came into being in Australia. My goal here is to open discussion about what Indigenous control over screen media representation has meant at the local and national levels, in both remote

Fig. 1 Deborah Mailman (centre left) pictured against the background
streetscape in the final, feature-length episode of Redfern Now, 2015.
Photo: Mark Rogers.

communities and urban settings. In other words, this work has a history
and a context, one in which I have been involved for over two decades. I
first encountered Indigenous television in Australia in 1988, when I made
my initial research trip to Central Australia to understand what had
enabled the lively emergence of Aboriginal TV in remote communities, in
particular at the Warlpiri settlement of Yuendumu, where the American
activist scholar Eric Michaels had gone to learn about – and advocate for
– the 'Aboriginal invention of television' emerging there and elsewhere
(1986). Despite the small scale of such work, the experiment in radical
alterity that it represented – to create television on distinctly Indigenous
terms – brought it to the attention of many people, including myself,
living at some distance from Australia (see Ginsburg 1991). Like others,
I was curious about how different cultural protocols might reshape our
ethnocentric assumptions about televisual media practices.

That same year, after considerable struggle and demands for greater
representation on the national stage following Aboriginal protests during
the 1988 Bicentenary, Indigenous units were created at Australia's ABC
and SBS (Special Broadcasting Service), the nation's two key public
service broadcasters, both located in Sydney (see Ginsburg 2010). What
Indigenous control over television meant in these different contexts –

the remote central Australian Indigenous settlements with a relatively traditional community and the more mainstream context of national television with bicultural urban Aboriginal participants – was a source of considerable contention at the time, as there were few opportunities for Indigenous Australians to gain the experience needed to make Aboriginal television a self-determined enterprise (Ginsburg 1994). A few years later, in 1994, after further agitation by Aboriginal cultural activists who demanded more opportunities for Indigenous actors, directors, screen-writers and cinematographers, training programmes for Indigenous media makers were established via the Indigenous Unit at the Australian Film, Television and Radio School (Ginsburg 2010). Eventually, these initiatives were headed by Sally Riley, a Wiradjuri woman with film and theatre credits to her name and, as it turned out, an incredible creative ability to nurture talent and build capacity in the emerging Indigenous media sector (see Riley 2007). Through her initial position at the Indigenous Branch of the Australian Film Commission, and then as head of the Indigenous Department of Screen Australia from 2000 to 2010, Riley guided a phenomenally successful Indigenous media training programme. These initiatives have been central to developing the capacity and vision that anchors not only *Redfern Now*, but also much of the Indigenous media work that speaks compellingly to, and about, the circumstances of contemporary Aboriginal Australians. Included in this field are films that have won major awards at some of the world's most prestigious showcases, such as the Cannes, Sundance and Telluride film festivals, to name a few. As scholars and supporters of Indigenous performance and media arts, one of our tasks is to understand what makes such achievements possible, especially at a time when funding for the arts sector is often at risk. If we confine our interest in Indigenous media practices to textual analysis alone, however important such work might be, we fail to fully understand the historical, cultural and social dynamics, and the value of infrastructure, funding and other forms of support, that are the crucial off-screen realities in making these art forms both lively and possible. To rephrase a popular idiom, televisual sovereignty is in the details and (like God) may not always be evident through what we are actually able to see on screen.

While my focus in this essay is on *Redfern Now* as a contemporary instance of televisual sovereignty, it is important to recognize that the series is part of a complex Indigenous Australian mediascape incorporating works that circulate in global venues. These include feature films that have gone on to win major awards, such as Central Australian Aboriginal film-maker Warwick Thornton's extraordinary work, *Samson and Delilah* (2009), the second Indigenously directed film to capture the *Caméra d'Or*

award for best first feature at the Cannes Film Festival (Ginsburg 2012).[3] Through a variety of outlets, Aboriginal documentaries, dramas, experimental works and comedies have been reaching broader audiences in and beyond Australia in recent years, particularly with the growth and intensification of specialized platforms and festivals connecting Indigenous media producers across the planet (Ginsburg 2009; Wilson and Stewart 2008). Igloolik Isuma's NITV global portal for national Indigenous broadcasters worldwide (launched in 2007), the imagineNATIVE festival of film and media arts held every October in Toronto since 2000, the Sundance Institute's Native and Indigenous Program (begun in 1998), and the global gatherings over the last decade at the International Sami Film Centre in Norway are all important platforms created by and for Indigenous media makers to meet, exchange ideas and see each other's work.[4] Additionally, there are meetings for Indigenous national broadcasters (now numbering 12) who have been represented collectively since 2008 through the World Indigenous Television Broadcasters Network. Such initiatives have been essential to the emergence of a transnational Indigenous counter-public in which media practices play a central role. Through this network, *Redfern Now* has been shown not only on the ABC in Australia via the Indigenous Unit, but also on Maori TV in New Zealand and the Aboriginal People's TV Network in Canada.

In Australia, *Redfern Now* has been an unqualified success. When it was launched in October 2013, the show was seen not only on the small screen in the proverbial living room but also on a huge outdoor display in Redfern itself, by an audience of over 3,000 residents. Kim Dalton, then director of ABC TV, a former director of the Australian Film Commission and a crucial supporter of Indigenous media (including *Redfern Now*) for nearly two decades, gave a heartfelt speech to the crowd, indirectly referencing his own role as a strategically placed advocate of Indigenous media within the Film Commission:

> Rarely is it more appropriate to begin proceedings by acknowledging and paying respect to the original owners of the land on which we stand tonight, past and present, the Gadigal people of the Eora nation. And beyond this protocol, going further and acknowledging and paying respect to the original owners of all the lands we now call Australia, past and present, including those of you here tonight.
>
> Tonight, we are here to celebrate a moment of great achievement in a long journey. *Redfern Now* is born of, is resonant of, and speaks of Australia's Indigenous culture, its deep and profound historic roots and its vibrant and contemporary expression. A far-sighted Australian Film Commission initiated that journey over 15 years ago by recognizing that if the mission of our industry is to tell Australian stories, then

Fig. 2 Aboriginal cast members introduce Redfern Now at sunset
premiere on the Block, Redfern, 2012.
Photo: Isabella Moore.

Fig. 3 Audience gathered for sunset premiere of Redfern Now, 2012.
Photo: Tamara Dean.

Indigenous people need to have a place and number amongst our storytellers, on and off the screen. (Dalton, qtd in Meade 2012b)

Here, Dalton not only offers a well-deserved tribute, noting the journey that led to *Redfern Now*'s achievement. He also indexes the significance of allies in helping provide support and open doors to bring the experiences and narratives of a remarkable range of Indigenous media makers to the screen in such compelling ways.

In addition to enthusiastic support from Indigenous audiences, the series received positive reviews in Australia's often scathing press, strong audience ratings and exceptional professional recognition. Awards included Most Outstanding Drama Series for both the 2013 and 2014 Australian Logies (the television industry awards, named in honour of John Logie Baird, the Scotsman who invented the world's first television), as well as Outstanding Television Show of the Year at the 2013 Deadly Awards (the annual celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander achievement, deadly meaning 'fantastic' in Aboriginal English). In 2014, *Redfern Now* also won Best Television Drama Series at the Australian Academy of Cinema and Television Arts Awards (AACTA). Perhaps its most ringing endorsement was its renewal for a second season, especially considering the particularly brutal cultural economy of television in the current climate. Moreover, the show's off-screen value is not to be ignored. As the largest Australian Indigenous television drama production ever undertaken, it has given hundreds of people a start in the film and television industry, embracing the local Aboriginal residents of Redfern as non-professional actors and extras (Meade 2012a). Two key players in the production team commented on its fundamental connections with the local community:

You know, Redfern has had its ups and downs and its major triumphs. We wanted the rest of the country to share in those joys and ups and downs, you know. As long as the Indigenous community there were happy with us exploring that turf, which they were, we were keen to go there. I mean, we would have been mad if we didn't go there. (Erica Glynn, in ABC TV 2012b)

The enthusiasm with which people really got behind this project amazed all of us. And people were very supportive, letting us into their homes, up to five days, you know, having 50 people in there. We really did want to stay in the radius of Redfern, and kinda be true to the series and also show contemporary inner city Sydney. (Darren Dale, in ABC TV 2012b)

As long-standing Indigenous cultural activists for close to three decades,

Erica Glynn and Darren Dale make clear that their fundamental commitments in media making continue to be the connection to local communities – whether in central Australia where Glynn grew up or in the Aboriginal neighbourhood of Redfern that is the centrepiece of the series.

Going Global

Redfern Now is not only a product of robust local collaborations – the Indigenous Unit of the ABC, Blackfella Films, and the experienced Indigenous directors, writers and actors involved in each episode, all in consultation with Redfern community organizations and elders. It is also a product of a particular global aspiration to work with the legendary working-class Liverpudlian screenwriter Jimmy McGovern, who, at Sally Riley's request, came to Australia to work on the first season and who continued for the second season in his role as script advisor. In thinking about how to bring Indigenous stories to the small screen, Riley had been inspired by McGovern's highly successful UK television dramas, including *Cracker*, *The Lakes* and *The Street*, which played to considerable acclaim in Australia. The last bears a strong resemblance to *Redfern Now*. It follows the residents of different households on a modest unnamed street in Manchester, charting in each episode how their lives are changed by seemingly insignificant incidents.

When her total budget of $5 million a year was approved for *Redfern Now*, one of Riley's first missives was an email to ask McGovern if he would work with her writers on this series. Riley approached him not only because of her admiration for his disciplined and riveting screenwriting. She felt that, regardless of his cultural background, his sensibilities, as someone brought up in a poor working-class family and able to successfully capture in his dramas a sense of lives lived on the margins, would resonate with the stories her writers wanted to tell about the issues affecting a range of Aboriginal families in Redfern. McGovern, in turn, loved the idea of collaborating on this very original debut series and went to Australia to work intensively with the Aboriginal writers and directors. As he put it, 'This invitation came out the blue. Like a shot I said I'd love to do it … to work in Australia with indigenous people on stories about indigenous people, it really gripped me' (qtd in Fulton 2010). This transnational collaboration was clearly successful. In speaking to *The Guardian*, McGovern called the work 'some of the most rewarding I've ever done. The end product is very important, but the process is equally so. If people don't come out of this having learned a great deal, then we've failed' (qtd

in Rourke 2012). Leah Purcell, Indigenous actor and director on the series, gives a sense of the writing process with McGovern:

> He brought expertise and reality. He didn't care who we were … He fine-tuned our stories. I talk blunt and he talks blunt and we learned the s-word – story. I sat and watched him for a few days until I said to him I've got a story and [when he heard it] his eyes lit up. One guy threw out seventeen stories and he slammed them. So story became a sacred word. He's a good bloke and he made us comfortable, as green as some of the writers were. He told us things straight. (qtd in Leys 2012)

Clearly, this strategy – of grounding the work in local stories and Indigenous talent, but bringing in a consultant from beyond Australia – was very successful in sharpening the writing and storytelling.

The Question of Sovereignty

The broadcasting of an all-Indigenous television series on prime-time TV in Australia is being rightfully celebrated as a ground-breaking moment. My choice of the phrase 'televisual sovereignty' to capture a sense of this social fact is inspired by the term 'visual sovereignty', initially deployed to characterize certain works by Indigenous artists in the North American context. To the best of my knowledge, the term was first used in 1995 by the Tuscarora scholar, artist and curator Jolene Rickard, who argued that Native Americans' legal-political assertion of sovereignty in the twentieth century has always coexisted with a complex, expressive Indigenous visual imaginary (Rickard 1995). In 2011, the Seneca scholar Michelle H. Raheja elaborated on the term and gave it well-deserved recognition in her important book, *Reservation Reelism*: *Redfacing, Visual Sovereignty, and Representations of Native Americans in Film*, where she argues that this concept 'intervenes in larger discussions of Native American sovereignty by locating and advocating for Indigenous cultural and political power both within and outside of Western legal jurisprudence' (2011, 194). Raheja builds on the work of a number of scholars. As well as amplifying Rickard's call to extend the discourse of Indigenous sovereignty to the arts, she acknowledges the Tewa/Dine (Santa Clara Pueblo) writer and film-maker Beverly Singer's influential use of 'cultural sovereignty' to describe Native American film-makers' strategies of trusting 'in the older ways and adapting them to our lives in the present' (Singer 2001).

Raheja also recognizes the Osage scholar 'Robert Allen Warrior's term "intellectual sovereignty", which in turn builds on the Lakota activist and intellectual Vine Deloria Jr's understanding of sovereignty "as an

open-ended process" that involves critical and kinetic contemplations of what sovereignty means at different historical and paradigmatic junctures' (Raheja 2011, 194). Raheja concludes her book with a powerful statement about Native American media makers and visual sovereignty that could easily be extended to other relevant contexts, such as Indigenous Australia, and more specifically *Redfern Now*. She writes that video-makers and cultural artists are doing more than simply resisting and surviving, they are interrogating the powers of the state, providing nuanced and complex forms of self-representation, imagining a futurity that militates against the figure of the vanishing Indian, and engaging in visual sovereignty on virtual reservations of their own creation (2011, 240). Kristin Dowell has taken up this conversation in the Canadian context, using the term 'sovereign screens' to capture the sense of how the First Nations film-makers she worked with incorporated 'Aboriginal cultural protocols, languages and aesthetics on-screen as well as off-screen' (2013, 1).

I want to build on this robust intellectual legacy in my exploration of the term 'televisual sovereignty' by acknowledging the different infrastructural demands of particular media regimes, drawing on a classic legal definition of sovereignty as having authority over an area. Here, I am extending the idea of sovereignty's usual reference – to political authority over a land and populace – to consider the significance of achieving technical and creative control over representations of Indigenous lives shown on the medium of television, particularly those that claim a place in the national imaginary of a surrounding settler-state, as in the work of the Indigenous Unit for Australia's ABC. I have had the privilege of witnessing the two-decade-long struggle on the part of Indigenous Australian artists and cultural activists in both remote and urban contexts to develop their voices and visions in moving image media. These Aboriginal writers, directors, actors, musicians and producers have gained increasing control over the means of film and television production to tell their diverse stories on their own terms.

Developing a concept like 'televisual sovereignty' demands attention to two contextual frames: the material conditions of the platforms on which work appears and the local histories that shape Indigenous projects in particular locations. *Redfern Now* was scheduled at prime time across the country on the ABC, arguably the most prestigious national television platform, enabling this Indigenously produced work to intervene in an Australian national imaginary that for two centuries has excluded, for the most part, the self-authored representation of Indigenous lives in the public sphere, what Raheja aptly identifies as the violence of invisibility. In addition to being mindful of who is in control of creating visual imagery, I want to consider how ideas of sovereignty might also take into

account the question of audience. For example, *Redfern Now*, as an ABC production, brings Indigenous stories into thousands of viewers' lives, whether via the domesticated space of what Australians call the 'lounge room', long associated with leisure time built around analogue, and now digital, satellite or cable television, or in the highly mobile locations and potentially time-shifted realities of the digital age for those watching on their iPads in cafés or on laptops while snuggled in bed. Current debates about the impact of television versus film in terms of audience outreach in the cultural hierarchy of funding in Australia are worth noting here. The Australian media critic Lynden Barber raised this issue effectively in a blog with the less-than-subtle title of 'Better to fund high-end global TV than back Australian films':

> For too long Australia has been hobbled by a model in which feature films are the Rolls Royce, and TV dramas the Holden, even as it has become increasingly clear that that way of thinking is outdated. Meanwhile, many Australian feature films struggle to make an impact. While the Indigenous drama *Satellite Boy* got enthusiastic reviews this year … it managed to earn a week average of only $3,270 a screen in its crucial opening week (double that number is considered a good figure). But feeble cinema turnouts do not mean that Australian viewers are shunning Australian-made stories. The success of quality Australian television shows like ABC's *Redfern Now* shows that audiences are keen for more. (Barber 2013)

This quote helps clarify the complexity of the discursive field potentially encompassed by Indigenous televisual sovereignty, including the shifting status of television's infrastructural reach and its value in the hierarchy of national funding of Indigenously directed projects.

While the work of creating *Redfern Now* (and other scripted dramas and comedies coming out of the ABC's revamped Indigenous Department under Riley's leadership since 2010) is at last nearly completely in the hands of Indigenous media makers, we would be remiss to look at any of this contemporary work without understanding the historical precursors that emerged out of very different Indigenous local histories. Another, earlier version of televisual sovereignty was achieved in the 1980s in the aforementioned media experiment by Indigenous communities in remote central Australia, which captured local and world attention due to the inventive creativity of the Warlpiri Media Association (WMA) and Ernabella Video and Television (EVTV), both on and off screen. Comparing the circumstances of *Redfern Now* and of these historical precursors, I suggest, draws our attention to the specificity, contingency and diversity of Aboriginal television in different times and locations,

rendering the idea of televisual sovereignty more enduring and complex. When the traditional communities of Ernabella (Pitjantjatjara lands) and Yuendumu (Warlpiri lands) in south and central Australia respectively established their own local television with EVTV and WMA, they were originally considered to be 'pirate' stations as there was no licensing category by which these could comply with existing state regulations for television stations at that time. I think of these stations as an early distinctive assertion of televisual sovereignty; they were based on local control, organized along principles and values of local social life and imagined as performances for their own communities, using the languages of Warlpiri and Pitjantjatjara as well as cultural idioms drawing on their histories and repertoires. The work emerged initially as a defensive response to the launch of Australia's first communications satellite over Aboriginal lands and the cultural impositions that followed this event; the sudden availability of dominant commercial television was seen as particularly threatening to young people's engagement with Indigenous cultural practices. Indeed, in the mid-1980s, Aboriginal Australians often regarded satellite television as the 'third invader' – to borrow a term from Inuit counterparts – following guns and alcohol (Kuptana 1988). As creative acts of resistance, these early innovations in creating television by and for people living in remote communities offered alternative ways to imagine what media could mean in terms of Indigenous collective self-production, outside the hegemonic model of Western television.

Scholars and media activists, myself included, saw this work as empirical evidence of a kind of embedded cultural critique, an aesthetic, socially creative, political alternative to mass media that was not beholden to either governmentality or late capitalist interests (Ginsburg 1994). Eric Michaels first articulated this sense of possibility in his 1986 report on his research with the community of Yuendumu, published with the intriguing title *The Aboriginal Invention of Television in Central Australia*. Among other things, Michaels showed the complex epistemologies surrounding moving image production in traditional Aboriginal life – including the significance of which kin, clan and ceremonial group members were in front of and behind the camera for particular kinds of performances. The presence of particular ritual custodians, for example, served as a source of authentication, indicating the truth-value of the final product for local viewers. Restrictions on images of people who had passed away, or on ceremonies meant to be seen only by those who had been initiated (usually elder males or females), meant that certain works could not be circulated for long stretches of time or could be seen only in very restricted contexts. Now, over a quarter of a century later, Warlpiri Media is linked to a network of local Indigenous media initiatives called PAW Media.[5] This, in

turn, is part of a broad web of media now called Indigenous Community Television, 'an open forum to promote and celebrate remote Indigenous talent, culture, language, history and innovation'. Launched in April 2013, it enables full-time programming of community-produced Indigenous media for remote Aboriginal audiences across central Australia.[6] The Indigenous Remote Communications Association (IRCA), founded in 2001, was instrumental in launching this initiative.[7]

The Indigenous Department at the ABC also has a history that goes back to the 1980s as discussed briefly above. The ABC's Aboriginal Programs Unit, as it was called then, was formed in 1988, during Australia's Bicentenary, as a response to demands made by Indigenous protestors seeking to remedy their lack of representation on national television (Ginsburg 1991). At that time, every Indigenous person involved in the unit was a trainee under the direction of a Euro-Australian professional. There simply were not enough Aboriginal writers, directors, producers and actors to fulfil the ideal of an Indigenously governed entity, a utopian formation that is foundational to a claim to sovereignty but which was only realized a quarter-century after the Aboriginal Unit was first created. Given the lack of capacity and budget for producing drama or fiction, most Indigenous productions at that time were non-fiction works, what film-maker Frances Peters-Little (Kamilaroi), one of the few Indigenous women on staff at that time, described in 1991 as the documentary ghetto. Her concern about the limitations she and others faced at that time were combined with a prescient prediction of what was to come:

> It's still like you've got to run to a non-Aboriginal person to make decisions about Aboriginal people. Ethically that's wrong. And it's not as effective … We're being very realistic, and we know that the Aboriginal person who takes a position as Executive Producer or whatever for our unit has got to be someone who not only knows us, but has got to be someone who knows the ABC. We need to be more in contact with more community based filmmakers or artists or whatever to give us more influence within mainstream television. Because one of these days, most Australian people will get to see the sort of programmes that Aboriginal people will have complete control over, and then they will get to really see what an Aboriginal perspective is. At this moment, we know we're compromising so that they can swallow what we have to say. (qtd in *Satellite Dreaming*, 1991)

In these early years of Indigenous efforts to change the Australian media landscape, it was as if young activists such as Peters-Little were seeking the equivalent of land claims on the televisual spectrum. With the help of more experienced Euro-Australians, they hoped eventually to gain

skills and recognition for a place in the national imaginary on their own terms, an acknowledgement that had long been denied them, and which in 1988 still seemed a distant hope. Much as the long-standing Aboriginal settlement of Australia was denied by British occupiers through the legal fiction of *terra nullius* – land inhabited by no one – until it was finally overturned in the famous *Mabo* v. *Queensland* case in 1992,[8] the absence of Indigenously directed representations on Australian screens left a vacuum that, until the 1980s, was never even challenged as anything other than the imagined natural order of things.

Peters-Little was one of a new generation of Aboriginal Australian storytellers who had moved from the traditional media available to their forebears – justifiably famous for their remarkable ceremonial song, dance and graphic designs painted on their bodies, bark and the desert sand – to film and television, the dominant media of the surrounding settler culture of the late twentieth century. This sense of passage across media forms was captured in the title, *From Sand to Celluloid*, given to the first series of remarkable short films made through the Indigenous Unit of the Australian Film Commission, the first Aboriginal films to be broadcast on the ABC in 1996.[9] They were created by Indigenous film-makers who got their start in that now seemingly distant analogue era of 16 and 35 mm film, here metonymically identified as celluloid.

Australia's Indigenous media activism bears comparison with the workshop movement that started in London with Black British media artists such as Isaac Julien and John Akomfrah (Fusco 1988). This first generation of diasporic media makers in the United Kingdom and their Aboriginal counterparts in Australia faced similar dilemmas. As the postcolonial scholar Kobena Mercer famously argued in his landmark 1990 article, 'Black Art and the Burden of Representation', those first acknowledged as black artists carried a distinctive responsibility. They were expected to fill an enormous gap in a representational economy devoid of their stories, and to immediately be able to depict some imagined cohesive collectivity, despite their diverse sensibilities, backgrounds and locations. Like these artists, Aboriginal media activists were responding to what one might think of as a sense of narrative urgency. They seized the opportunity to create work expressive of their distinctive experiences and concerns but also faced the burden of intervening in an imagined community in which Indigenous voices were either absent, framed as exotic or primitive, or worse, associated with crime and social decay.

Now, a generation of Indigenous media makers who came of age in the same period as their Black British counterparts – in the late 1980s and early 1990s – is secure in its capacity to shape and indigenize Australian screens.[10] As a result, diverse Indigenous voices across Australia have access

to a range of platforms appropriate to their circumstances. Individually and as a group, they have gained experience through the variety of above-mentioned remarkable programmes (and more) that have helped launch their work into the Australian mediascape as well as on to the world stage. Exposure at film festivals and other global screening circuits has been an important source of cultural capital for these activists, helping them gain the status and recognition that ensures their ongoing value to funding bodies within Australia. Crucial to what one sees on screen are the off-screen opportunities, thanks in no small measure to the extraordinary capacity building in the Aboriginal media sector that took place under Sally Riley's visionary training programmes during her decade-long tenure as head of the Indigenous Unit at the Australian Film Commission.

In 2010, Riley was hired by Kim Dalton; he had been her boss at the Film Commission and then moved to the ABC in 2006 to revamp its Indigenous Unit into a department. At that time, the unit was producing 42 episodes of the 30-minute Sunday afternoon magazine programme *Message Stick* and three or four documentaries a year. As Dalton explained, 'It was good work, but it was peripheral. It sat on the edges, outside the mainstream. For the most part, Indigenous faces and stories and creative talent have not been represented on our TV screens, particularly in prime time' (qtd in Quinn 2012). Dalton hired Riley with a clear brief to 'get Indigenous material out of the ghetto'. The documentaries remain but her department focuses on drama and comedy. *Redfern Now* was the first product of the new department, the initial test of a change of direction in how Indigenous stories are told on the national broadcaster. Riley stepped into that role with nothing less than plans to change the place of Indigenous Australians in the country's televisual imaginary, much as she helped to indigenize Australia's film world during her prior ten years at the Australian Film Commission. As she explained in an article for *The Guardian*: 'for so long we have had other people telling our stories and the government telling us what we should be doing to help ourselves. This is a chance for us to comment on our own problems, our own issues' (qtd in Rourke 2012).

With *Redfern Now*, as well as other dramas currently in production, the Indigenous Department has the relatively newfound luxury of a range of experienced Aboriginal talent to write, direct, stage and act in these productions. They are well aware of the need to interpellate Indigenous, Euro-Australian and other audiences by creating work that speaks to circumstances that resonate with a variety of viewers. No longer consigned to graveyard timeslots, magazine formats or the more limited audiences for documentary, dramatic series such as *Redfern Now* are part of a burgeoning range of increasingly complex representations

of Aboriginal lives on large and small screens, from both remote and urban communities, part of Australia's Indigenous New Wave. No single film, programme or theatre piece has to carry the weight of the collective need to be recognized and represented in all its diversity (Ginsburg 2012). *Redfern Now* demonstrates how far Indigenous Australian television has come in twenty-five years. Not only is this series an outstanding exemplar of contemporary Indigenous media by any measure. Now, its makers are able to lay claim to televisual sovereignty, expanding far beyond the burden of representation that haunted the work of the Indigenous producers who entered this arena a quarter-century ago.

Acknowledgements

Notes

1 Both of my epigraphs are drawn from ABC TV's *The Making of Redfern Now* (2012).

2 Outback images persist as indicators of Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander people's locations, despite the fact that by 2006, 32 per cent of Australia's Indigenous population lived in the country's major cities with a further 43 per cent in areas classified as regional but not remote. See http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/lookup/4704.0Chapter210Oct+2010 (accessed 15 February 2015).

3 In 2001, *Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner*, made by Zacharias Kunuk and the Igloolik Isuma collective, was the first Indigenously directed film to win this award. See http://www.isuma.tv/atanarjuat (accessed 15 February 2015).

4 The following websites give more information about these respective initiatives: http://www.isuma.tv/nitv, http://www.imaginenative.org/home/, http://www.sundance.org/programs/native-program and http://www.isf.as/eng/about/ (all accessed 15 February 2015).

5 PAW is an acronym drawn from the initial letters of the three primary language/cultural groups in the Tanami area that make up the network: Pintubi, Anmatjere and Warlpiri. See http://www.pawmedia.com.au/about-us/history (accessed 15 February 2015).

6 See https://ictv.com.au (accessed 25 February 2017).

7 See https://www.irca.net.au/about-irca/history (accessed 15 February 2015).

8 For the text of that decision, see http://www.foundingdocs.gov.au/item-did-33.html (accessed 15 February 2015).

9 For information about this remarkable series, see http://sa-staging.com/search-programs/program/?sn=4710 (accessed 16 February 2015).

10 Recent programmes include a dramatic series, *The Gods of Wheat Street*, and a comedy series based in Alice Springs and entitled *Black Comedy*. See http://www.abc.net.au/tv/programs/gods-of-wheat-street/ and http://www.abc.net.au/tv/programs/black-comedy/ respectively (both sites accessed 15 February 2015).

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7

Her Eyes on the Horizon and Other (un) Exotic Tales from Beyond the Reef

Rosanna Raymond

My Polynesian body is the vessel for the ancestor, the space where the genealogical matter comes together, binding the past with the present. It's not that I left everything behind – the land, the blood ties, the ocean resides inside me. I am a circulating body not a diasporic one and these are snapshots of my London, my Europe, my Eyeland culture, which I have constructed and inhabited.

In the Balance

Drifting amid the debris of frigid clouds
Atua … fall from the trees

Selected, Resurrected, Revitalized, Realized, Revibed

Reconstituted in an Aural Actuality

Though I am not talking to them today

They can just have a physical presence and keep quiet in the background
……… blending in with the constant babble of London town

Excerpt from 'Godless Daze'

Fig. 1 Matariki Celebration UK SaVAge Portrait Series.
Acti.VA.tor, Fabricator: Rosanna Raymond. Photo: Salvador Brown, 2014.

Why are First Nation peoples and 'indigenousness' usually associated with a static rootedness to a place? I think about the movement of people, the circulation of bodies, trade, reciprocal relationships, knowledge, and legacies steeped in historical ties, not just whakapapa (genealogy) or a fixed notion of a homeland that can confine people to a particular time and space, making it easier for the indigenous to be excluded from the global and the contemporary ... framing us in the past.

Fig. 2. SaVAge Wares.
Acti.VA.tor: Kimiora Burrows (Ngati Maru, Ngati Porou and Aitutaki).
Fabricator: Rosanna Raymond. Photo: Kerry Brown, 2013.

We can't push the hands of time back but we can empower people by ensuring that all histories are told and have equal mana (presence and power). The SaVAge K'lub presents twenty-first-century South Sea SaVAgery, influencing art and culture through the interfacing of time and space, deploying weavers of words, rare anecdotalists, myth makers, hip shakers, navigators, red faces, fabricators, activators, to institute the non-cannibalistic cognitive consumption of the other. It's a space where I try to decolonize mind, body and soul.

Fig 3 Inaugural Acti.VA.tion for the UK SaVAge K'lub, founded by Rosanna Raymond. Commonwealth Day theme, 'Women as Agents of Change', celebrating the 63rd birthday of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Marlborough House, London, 2011.
Fabricators, Acti.VA.tors: Jo Walsh, Emine Jones-Burke. Photo: Kerry Brown.

My peers recognize fibres, tusks, teeth, movements, chants, tatau, patterns, sounds … these are not exotic to me – this is your exotic … framed by the West. To me exotic is something used for fruits or birds … animals … and pole dancers. I am none of these.

Fig. 4 The Dusky Aint Dead She's Just Diversified-Rave On Maiden
Acti.VA.tor: Rosanna Raymond. Fabricators: Amanda Luise Barnes and Rosanna
Raymond. Photo: Kerry Brown, 2009.

See Through Me

I am the invisible woman, with invisible people inside me. I come from an invisible land, nurtured by an invisible sea. I have an invisible past, with an invisible crown of tusks on my invisible head. I wear invisible tattoos they cover my invisible body. I am crying invisible tears, they leave an invisible trail of salinity.

It has been said, we cry the sea, so you don't have to worry, the salt-water people will look after me.

So here I sit with invisible men so black I get lost in their skin, their voices sound like old stones turning into gravel

They look through me

I am just an invisible rock, rising from that invisible sea

That's ok … we just trying to survive the city.

Poem written on the 68 bus in London

Fig. 5 Would the Real Tusk Please Stand Up
Acti.VA.tor, Fabricator: Rosanna Raymond. Photo: Kerry Brown, 2014.

Long God

A long god is digging his way into soft skin
taking with him 9 layers
of heavens and a cycle
of reciprocal obligation

sit is my job
to make the ava
and sit by his side

he digs deeper
and I get caught in the stars

there is no flesh involved
just skin

he tells me to drink the ava
but the stars say 'no'

I am just there to serve
and sit by his side
that is why they tattooed me

Poem written on train to Normandy, 2014

Fig. 6 Pe'a.
Acti.VA.tor, Fabricator: Rosanna Raymond. Tohunga ta moko: Inia Taylor, Te Rangitu Netana, Rangi Kipper, Tufuga Malu: Croc, Paulo and Petalo Suluape. Photo: Kerry Brown, 2014.

I will sing to her, the very existence of the world … not a scientific rendering nor will it involve any sort of preacher.

from 'Observational Outlooks through the DNA of the Atua Tagaloa'

Fig. 7 Masi Maidens – Masi Vulavula (detail)
Acti.VA.tor, Fabricator: Rosanna Raymond. Photo: Greg Semu, Alcaston Gallery,
2013.

In the Balance

Cling to the sea
And I'll stay here and hide on the moon
Gaze away
Dream your exotic dreams … and I'll excrete the seamen that came to
   visit me
They flew in double-hulled canoes, through the heavens
Tracing the celestials in the coconut altitudes

Excerpt from 'Cling to the Sea'

Fig. 8. Soli I Tai – Soli I Uta (Tread on the Sea – Tread on the Land), Berlin Museum of Ethnology, 2013.
Acti.VA.tor: Rosanna Raymond. Intervention facilitated by the Indigeneity in the Contemporary World project. Photo: Tallie Renouf, 2014.

Nafanua born of a blood clot …

I am the living representation of the ancestors; they live through me and I through them. I am the progeny of Nafanua, warrior goddess, born of a blood clot, sheltered in the land, an inspiration to me. We walk barefoot so as not to hurt the mother earth, the mana of the Moana adorns me as I bring the ancestral presence to the heart of the business district in London. Wry smiles greet us – they are clothed in empire I am clothed in ceremony.

Fig. 9 Nafanua's Daytrip.
Acti.VA.tor: Rosanna Raymond. Intervention at Canary Wharf, London, facilitated by Indigeneity in the Contemporary World project. Photo: Simon Owen, Red Photographic, 2013.

8

Following the Path of the Serpent: Indigenous Film Festivals in Abya Yala

Amalia Córdova

During his opening night welcoming remarks for the 2011 Native American Film + Video Festival (NAFVF) at the Smithsonian Institution, the Cayuga actor and director Gary Farmer, the host of the festival, greeted the spectators by reading a list of participating tribes: 'Tonight we are honouring 76 Native Nations, tribes, communities, represented in this year's festival: Acoma Pueblo. Akuntsu. Algonquin. Anishinaabe. Chiricahua Apache…'[1] This moment performed hemispheric inclusiveness, demonstrating a turn from the festival's early focus on North American film traditions. It exposed the usually Anglophonic 'accented' MC to friendly correctives shouted out by audiences from the tribes mentioned, turning a singular, solemn speech into a dialogic, multivocal ritual that indigenized the space. Such moments, rare in the hush of mainstream film festival openings, are typical of an Indigenous film event. The irruption of dialogic oral tradition breaks through carefully scripted speeches held in elegant buildings, turning rote opening remarks into collective performances in themselves.

The space of the Indigenous film festival – where creative works reach diverse audiences and film-makers interact with their peers, collaborators and supporters – is a central theoretical and performative site for articulating and theorizing Indigenous media movements. Such gatherings constitute shifting circuits that mediate among diverse cultural, social and political forces. This essay examines seminal festivals that have played decisive roles in shaping the field of Indigenous cinema, reworking traditional exhibition mores and bringing democratizing and Indigenous methodologies to bear on circulation practices. Building on geographically dispersed studies of the use of audiovisual media in Latin American Indigenous struggles for self-representation,[2] I trace the ways in which

these festivals participate in global networks that link Indigenous media training, production and exhibition across Abya Yala, a Kuna name for the Americas used increasingly in the circuits described here to evoke an Indigenous sense of place. Festivals, I argue, reconfigure Indigenous film praxis from a marginal practice to a vibrant transnational and transcultural cinema. In the process, they provoke a productive reckoning, updating and reimagining of what counts as Indigenous cinema, contributing sophisticated renderings to questions that haunt indigeneity across diverse public spheres worldwide.

Research on Indigenous media in Latin America has largely taken the form of case-by-case ethnographies focused on regional media projects, notably in Brazil, Chile, Mexico and Bolivia (see Turner 2002; Salazar 2004; Schiwy 2009; Zamorano Villarreal 2017). Approaching media making as a site of political discourse and a means of social action, these studies illuminate ways in which contemporary Indigenous practices are rooted in a conjunction of community values, contexts and methodologies, which media anthropologist Faye Ginsburg (1994) has called 'embedded aesthetics': qualities that denote the mode of production and determine the process as well as the product. Circulation practices have also been addressed within the context of regional studies. Jeff Himpele (2008) investigates the modernization of Bolivia through the lens of cinematic media, showing how the country's contemporary Indigenous video movement has forged new publics and political discourses. In turn, Erica Cusi Wortham (2013) describes how shifting relations between Indigenous video-makers and Mexican cultural agencies have influenced the visibility of Indigenous media within both local and hemispheric networks.[3] My specific focus on film festivals in Abya Yala shows how such events have greatly enriched the field of Indigenous media on a transnational scale, serving as constitutive sites of performance and memory and, in some cases, providing singular platforms for informed discussion among producers themselves. I draw on festival catalogues and reports (called *memorias* in Spanish) as well as my own experiences as a curator of Indigenous film to construct my account of the field. Implicitly, I also advocate for culturally sensitive approaches to securing and exhibiting festival content and navigating cultural protocols so as to avoid replicating exploitative practices or hierarchical 'contact zones' (in Mary Louise Pratt's sense of the term). In a nutshell, if Indigenous film is crafted with a sense of responsibility, so is exhibiting it.[4]

Early Indigenous Festivals and Gatherings

In many ways, Indigenous film festivals preceded the flourishing of Native film-making, arguably advocating for its emergence. Taking root in North America in the 1970s, the decade of Native American political and cultural affirmation, these festivals soon expanded to take on hemispheric and global dimensions. A few festivals served as springboards to gather and form organizations in support of Indigenous film production. The 1985 Festival Latinoamericano de Cine de los Pueblos Indígenas, held in Mexico City, saw the founding of the Latin American Council of Indigenous People's Film and Video (Consejo Latinoamericano de Cine y Comunicación de los Pueblos Indígenas or CLACPI) while the 1992 Dreamspeakers Festival held in Edmonton, Canada, led to the formation of the First Nations Film and Video Makers World Alliance (Ginsburg 1994). The earliest documented, continuous Indigenous film festival in existence is the American Indian Film Festival, founded in Seattle in 1975 by the Lakota activist Mike Smith. Since 1977, this nine-day event screening works by or about Indigenous peoples of Canada and the United States has taken place annually in San Francisco, with support from the American Indian Film Institute, a non-profit organization whose mission is 'to foster understanding of the culture, traditions and contemporary issues of Native Americans'.[5] While this festival maintains its regional scope, most other festivals of its kind are moving towards creating a dialogue around a more global Indigenous cinema.

In addition to community-generated festivals, museums, while historically problematic for colonized peoples and fraught with conflicts over representation, cultural rights and stewardship of collections, have also been important venues for the exhibition and preservation of Indigenous film. The Margaret Mead Film and Video Festival, for example, presented at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City since 1976, has contributed to the public exhibition and awareness of Indigenous media through an annual ethnographic showcase that often features Native-themed and produced works. The number of new and classic Indigenous films presented at the festival has grown in recent years, largely due to the influence of advisors such as Faye Ginsburg. In 2013, the Mead Festival offered a retrospective of the Through Navajo Eyes project (1966), with a contrapuntal screening of films by young Native American directors, including Teresa Montoya (Navajo), whose documentary *Doing the Sheep Good* (2013) follows her own screening of one of the Through Navajo Eyes films to her relative's Navajo community, Pine Springs, where it was made. In 2014, the museum offered an installation of Aboriginal Australian mobile phone films in its south entrance and brought a delegation from

the Yolngu community to discuss the work. Such curatorial interventions offer a more complex rendering than previously of the way anthropological and ethnographic practices impact Indigenous lives to this day, and how Indigenous communicators navigate the Western archive and bring it into dialogue with the present. These museum initiatives indicate a profound sea change in the field of anthropology due to scholarship over the past twenty-five years on Indigenous media, which has contributed significantly to the recognition and valorization of Indigenous audiovisual self-representation. Also in New York City, *auteur*-focused venues such as the Museum of Modern Art, the Film Society of Lincoln Center and the National Museum of the American Indian have exhibited Indigenous film and video since the 1990s.

Most significantly, the Native American Film + Video Festival (NAFVF) originated in 1979 from a film series assembled to accompany the Museum of the American Indian's feature exhibition, *The Ancestors*, which presented Indigenous arts from across the Americas.[6] The film series quickly became an expansive showcase, outgrowing its initial scope and leading to the founding of the museum's Film and Video Center (FVC). A multilingual approach was key to this hemispheric mission. The FVC devoted resources specifically to Latin American outreach, which required language skills as well as political and cultural awareness for rapport with a variety of Indigenous agencies and community liaisons. Media works submitted to the centre were often received without subtitles or supporting materials in English, and in the absence of distribution agencies, staff would produce the promotional material in English on-site. Similarly, the festival's call for entries was issued in English, Spanish and occasionally Portuguese, mailed in hard copy to an international list of Indigenous media, advocacy and political organizations, posted online and sent via email.

As a result of the targeted outreach conducted for the festival, the centre developed a study collection of over 6,000 works, of which half have been catalogued. Many works are not in distribution, and many master versions are on a variety of formats now considered outdated (e.g. U-matic, Super VHS). The study collection was also an accessible resource, open to scholars and the general public by appointment and serving as a 'testimonial archive' (Sarkar and Walker 2010), or 'a place where the Native American community [could] both voice and record their own experiences of suffering *and* healing (past and present), for both native and non-native audiences alike' (Monani 2013, n.p.). To disseminate the vast amount of audiovisual material that the festival was collecting, the centre obtained support from the New York State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts to publish the seminal catalogues *Native Americans on Film and Video* (Weatherford and Seubert 1981;

1988), and in 2001 launched 'Native Networks/Redes Indígenas', a bilingual (English/Spanish) website devoted to Native media. While most of the films and videos have been authorized by the producers to remain in the study collection for educational purposes, the Smithsonian does not hold the rights to them, complicating any efforts towards digital preservation. The NMAI's decision to move the study collection to New York University raises further questions about its future accessibility.

The focus on first-person expression of Indigenous people's contemporary experience – a staple of the NMAI's innovative curatorial approach – drove the selection process of the Native American Film + Video Festival. Like the CLACPI Festival, the NAFVF has provided a significant gathering place for an otherwise dispersed transnational community of Indigenous film stakeholders – film-makers, media trainers, producers, funders and advocates – who rarely have the means to travel or convene. The dynamic experience of screening their works for fellow Indigenous film-makers and transnational audiences also reinforces the film-makers' sense of purpose. Leshu Torchin notes the potentially activist character of film festivals in such contexts, where they become 'places for the renewal of commitment' (2012, 6). In addition, being showcased in a venue in New York City such as NMAI provides considerable cultural capital to artists (usually from distant locations) whose films are marginalized or off the cultural radar, helping them to leverage support for their work at home, or from state or international funders.

One way these festivals set themselves apart from the mainstream film festival circuit is by bringing in a broad range of intercultural – First Nations, Native American and Indigenous Latin American – directors, scholars and/or cultural activists, representing diverse cultures, nations or communities, to be jurors for the selection of works. Along with the FVC staff, guest selectors usually include a New York-based Native producer, one from Canada and one from Latin America, and there is an effort to balance gender, urban/rural origin and experience in the panel as a whole. Interestingly, the museum's directors have never been part of the selection team. This approach provides a relatively collegial space for a jury highly conversant with the field of Native media to select works based on both personal and community appeal, within the constraints of screening the selected works in a museum intended to serve general audiences (including children). As part of a publicly funded, federal institution, NAFVF has no submission or admission charges, is non-competitive (it does not grant awards) and strives to have at least one advocate physically present at the festival to represent each work at its screening. This aspiration, made possible only with creative fundraising and volunteer help, has entailed hospitality services for invited participants, including provision of visa

application guidance, travel, lodging and language interpretation during the entire festival.

The NAFVF has also presented offshoots such as one-time showcases at film festivals in New York City, and elsewhere in the United States and abroad, prompting programmers of other festivals to take interest in Indigenous works for screening at their own events. In an extraordinary collaboration staged in New York City and Washington, DC, in 2005, the Museum of Modern Art, New York University and the Smithsonian NMAI produced First Nations/First Features, a one-time retrospective presenting 26 Indigenous feature-length films and their directors from the Americas, Europe and the Pacific.[7] The film-makers and curatorial team travelled together between the two cities, allowing for more informal exchanges in an immersive, ongoing conversation that sparked critical discussions on film-making, exhibition practices and cultural protocols.

Reaching Inward and Outward through Festival Spaces

As Julian Stringer suggests, festivals function as spaces of mediation where 'cross-cultural looking relations' are established and maintained (2001, 134). In this respect, they have the potential to renegotiate ways to engage with and reciprocate Indigenous knowledges by fostering what Miriam Ross aptly terms 'active curating', a self-reflexive approach 'that take[s] into account the mediation and power structures at work in the festival's organizing strategies' (2010, 171). Active curating has become an intrinsic component of Indigenous film festivals, as evident in the making of spaces for both in-house and public debate. The NAFVF adopted the term 'Native Networks' to encompass activities ranging from film-maker workshops and panels to pitch sessions with funders and distributors in attendance, to thematic roundtables open to the public. At CLACPI festivals, the International Meeting of Indigenous Communicators runs throughout the event and includes hands-on training workshops in new technologies as well as break-out sessions. Some film showcases are presented as highlights of multidisciplinary festival programmes bringing together a range of Indigenous art forms in ways that trouble neat (Western) distinctions between different genres. Montreal's First Peoples Festival Presence Autochtone, for example, features film screenings alongside music and dance performances, visual art, side exhibitions, conferences, lectures and participatory activities across the city. This ten-day, annual cultural festival, founded in 1990, is produced by non-profit organization Terres en Vues/Land InSights and driven by a board that includes members from the Mohawk, Huron-Wendat, Abenaki, Innu and Cree nations.

The most innovative Indigenous screen festival to date is imagineNATIVE

Film + Media Arts Festival, held annually in Toronto since 2000. Screening only work directed, produced or written by Indigenous peoples, imagineNATIVE's founders initially saw its overarching mission as 'showing the world the sweeping relevance of Aboriginal arts as we chart our course in the new millennium'.[8] The festival's inauguration came at a particular moment in Canadian Aboriginal media that was auspicious for an initiative seeking to connect the accomplished creativity of Indigenous producers with the distribution circuits in demand of new content, such as Aboriginal Peoples' Television Network. Two partnering agencies presented the festival: the Centre for Aboriginal Media and V Tape, Canada's largest distributor of independent video art with a focus on the artist and not on profit. By profiling its selected directors as media *artists*, the festival effectively flipped the trope of Indigenous film as presumed ethnography to emphasize instead a showcase of real, Indigenous *talent.* This approach has made imagineNATIVE an event known for its creativity and originality – 'Original. Indigenous', as its tagline reads.

From its inception, the festival has included film-maker workshops, roundtables, pitch sessions and live discussions. It champions a wide variety of interdisciplinary screen practice and has been quick to harness the creative potential of new technologies by incorporating digital art and mixed media installations into the festival fare. Long-standing executive director Jason Ryle (Anishinaabe/Saulteaux) has been instrumental in fomenting imagineNATIVE's professionalization and recognition, building key partnerships with major film institutions such as the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) and, further afield, the Berlinale, whose NATIVE programme he has helped steer since its 2013 launch. As an anchor festival with myriad international connections, not only across the Americas but also in Europe, Australia, New Zealand and Asia, imagineNATIVE's influence on the global ecology of Indigenous film production is considerable. Its many transnational collaborations include a recent project with the Wurhu Daruy Foundation and New Horizon Films to mount the inaugural Winda Film Festival in Sydney in 2016, sponsored by Screen Australia. Closer to home, imagineNATIVE serves Canadian stakeholders by screening works from its archive at multi-ethnic centres in the greater Toronto area and touring selected shorts and features to First Nations communities across the nation. In the spirit of the land-rights reclamation movement in the Amazon rainforest, I see these diverse Indigenous occupations of artistic platforms and civic spaces as acts of cultural demarcation in the interests of the marginalized and misrepresented.

Some independent film festivals not specifically dedicated to Indigenous works have successfully drawn in participants and audiences from that

constituency by actively reaching out and intervening in the circulation process. One strategy has been to offer targeted labs and awards that seek Native talent for professional or project development, often in exchange for the option to premiere the result. The Sundance Film Festival has played a leading role in helping to raise the profile of Indigenous work through such initiatives, particularly its dedicated Native Forum, which was launched in 1994 under the leadership of the Cherokee film-maker Heather Rae and subsequently developed as both a public showcase and a dynamic space for building a trans-Indigenous film community. A year-round Native American and Indigenous Program run by the Sundance Institute since 1998 nurtures the talents of emerging film-makers through grants and Native Lab Fellowships, fosters networking opportunities at the festival, and scouts for Indigenous projects that can be supported through the Institute's various programmes. However, few Latin American Indigenous producers have accessed this support, perhaps because the labs are conducted in English, script submissions must be in English and the application process, with the fee payable by credit card only, can be daunting. Moreover, Indigenous directors from Latin America seeking Sundance support are often referred to its international (but not Native-versed) streams such as the annual Feature Film Program. This divide has been a source of frustration for Indigenous Latin Americans who would like to learn from, and share their own realities and creative projects with, their peers in the North, but feel excluded. For such artists and producers, alliances are crucial and have already been established in political arenas through a growing Indigenous sovereignty movement that is both hemispheric and global.

One festival in Mexico has made a difference: Festival internacional de cine de Morelia (Morelia International Film Festival), founded in 2003 in the state of Michoacán. A four-hour drive from Mexico City, Morelia was already a tourist destination known for the arts and crafts competitions staged by the Purépecha communities around Lake Pátzcuaro. Festival organizers sought to distinguish their initiative from the more industry-driven Guadalajara International Film Festival, Mexico's annual premiere red-carpet event. Largely inspired by Sundance's structure and independent spirit, the Morelia festival features international, national and regional film competitions, which often include Indigenous work.[9] Its second edition (2004) hosted the first roundtable of Indigenous film-makers of Michoacán, focusing on the region's Purépecha directors.[10] The following year's festival hosted a bi-national conference, 'Native Agents', on Indigenous and Indigenist media, with scholars, programmers and film-makers from the United States and Mexico. By the fifth edition, over 30 Indigenous works were screening across the free three-day programme,

both in competition and at the First Nations Forum.[11] The festival's commitment to showcasing Indigenous film continues and has grown in scope to embrace productions from around the world. Organizers have also garnered partnerships to offer local film-makers more funding options, including a Tribeca Film Institute award that has benefited Indigenous producers.

Opportunities such as these are rare for Indigenous producers anywhere else in Latin America. The physical proximity of a major film festival to a region with active community producers and its willingness to open doors to these Indigenous projects have had great impact on Indigenous film- and video-makers in Mexico. In turn, Indigenous practitioners are able to participate in networking and professional development opportunities that are not a priority (or are luxury items) for more politically driven and often under-funded Indigenous film festivals in the region.

Itinerant and Nomadic Tactics

Unlike mainstream European and industry festivals, most Indigenous festivals in Latin America are deterritorialized, moving every two or three years to a different location in order to support emerging local processes. This circulation practice evokes the movement of the serpent, as reflected in the names of at least two major festivals, the Festival de Cine y Video de las Primeras Naciones de Abya Yala, also known as the Festival of the Serpent,[12] and the Anaconda Awards. By shifting locations, festivals effectively renew their organizing teams, refresh their outreach and funding strategies, and may even adjust their scope. Some festivals have changed names, logos, web servers and duration according to the aesthetics and politics of the local hosting team. This renewal is both pragmatically site-specific and conceptually resonant, since in Indigenous cosmologies the serpent is traditionally associated with water, renewal, life-force, fluidity and endlessness. For the film and festival director Alberto Muenala (Kichwa): 'Each video, like the serpent, symbol of fertility and wisdom, will know how to sting the sensitive hearts of men and women of our communities and cities. Every bite will be a push to the processes that we as Indigenous nationalities are building across the continent.'[13]

The Latin American Council of Indigenous People's Film and Video (CLACPI) shapes the most vocal discourse on Indigenous self-represen-tation in Latin America. Since 1985, CLACPI has organized twelve festivals in ten countries, countless training workshops and a number of interna-tional seminars devoted to strengthening the development of Indigenous media in the region. While the CLACPI festival is recreated in a new
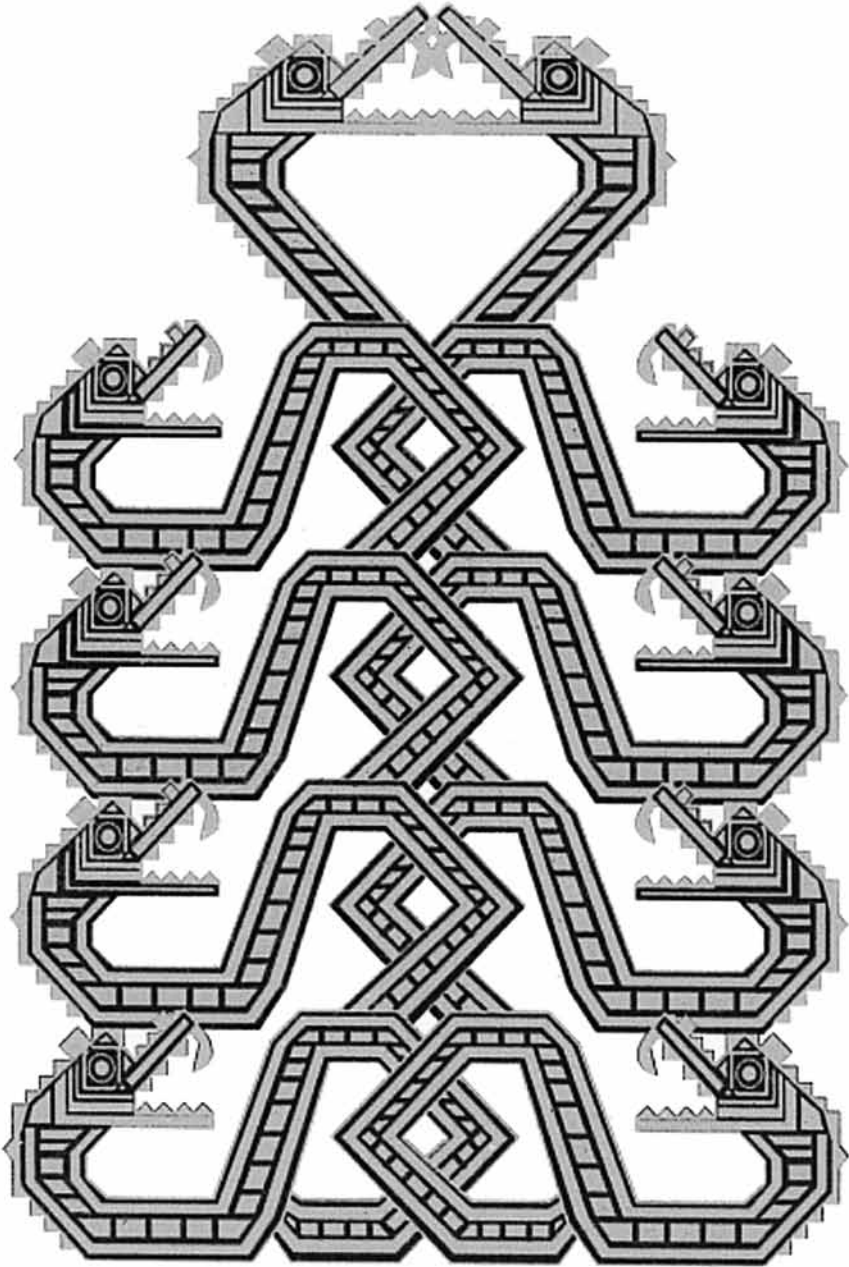
Fig. 1 Image used as logo for the VI Festival Americano de Cine de los Pueblos Indígenas, 'Tras la Huella de la Serpiente', held in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala, in 1999.

location each time, its overall structure tends to stay the same: training workshops and community screenings usually precede a main showcase in an urban centre with an opening night event and a closing awards ceremony.[14] Works may be submitted in diverse languages and selected to circulate abroad in a travelling showcase after the festival. Participants are invited to present screenings, moderate discussions, translate as needed or document events, often acting as festival staff in the spirit of public action or 'minga', a Quechua word widely used to refer to personal effort for the collective good. Following traditional Indigenous practices, CLACPI conducts an assembly after each festival, reporting from each region, voting on the location of the next festival and drafting declarations that address pressing social concerns, such as the plight of Indigenous peoples in particularly conflicted areas, or the persecution of Indigenous leaders and spokespeople. The festivals are just one node in a wider net of CLACPI initiatives. Although not a formalized distribution network, CLACPI promotes the circulation of its award-winning works, packaging them and sending them on the road. The organization has collected a vast video archive of submitted works in La Paz, Bolivia, and in 2000 launched the itinerant Anaconda Awards, a competitive biennial film festival focused on the Amazon and the tropical rainforests of Latin America.

Other training initiatives have opted for the video tour as a form of outreach and border-crossing. From 1998 to 2008, the Smithsonian NMAI organized several such tours, notably 'Video América Indígena/Video Native America', which brought directors Beverly Singer (Tewa/Dine), Randy Redroad (Cherokee), Daryl Lonetree (Hocak) and Marlon White Eagle (Hocak) to present their work in Indigenous communities in Mexico (see Singer 2001). Tours of Indigenous video from Bolivia, Mexico and Brazil followed, screening across the United States. The Chiapas Media Project (CMP) turned the video tour into a primary means of awareness-raising and fundraising for its work, visiting US universities and key academic conferences such as the annual Seminar on the Acquisition of Latin American Library Materials.[15] Wapikoni Mobile, a Quebec-based youth media development initiative, brings training programmes and exhibitions to under-served First Nations communities. In 2012, Wapikoni partnered with Ojo de Agua in Oaxaca to bring First Nations youth to a video tour in southern Mexico. Wapikoni has also toured in Chiapas (2013) and among Mapuche communities in southern Chile (2014), engaging in co-productions as part of the exchange process, as well as collaborating with other Indigenous groups in the Andes and the Amazon basin.

In Latin America, independent film collectives also circulate films to remote regions in largely sporadic democratizing efforts led by agencies

outside the communities themselves. Ambulante, based in Mexico, is perhaps the most ambitious circulation initiative to emerge in recent years. Initially a travelling documentary exhibition reaching new or remote audiences in Mexico, it has grown to become a production house and exhibition venue for documentary works, with a dedicated training initiative, Ambulante Más Allá, for new producers in Mexico and Central America. Targeted outreach to under-served communities has also been taken on by the Sundance Institute's Film Forward programme, which tours US documentary and narrative films internationally. In 2012, Andrew Okpeaha MacLean (Iñupiat) travelled to Colombia with his feature film *On the Ice* (2011), engaging with audiences in Bogotá, Cali and Manizales. In his reflection on the experience, he remarked that '[t]he indigenous people of Colombia are still locked in a life and death struggle for their land and basic human rights, and they've embraced film and video as an essential tool in that fight' (MacLean 2012, n.p.). Such direct encounters with diverse audiences are an effective way to begin to bridge the multiple gaps between North and South in Abya Yala.

For many Indigenous directors, the goal of reaching new audiences, and sometimes even their own constituencies, is beyond their means. YouTube and other apparently democratic internet platforms provide only limited solutions to this quandary when access to internet technology is itself socially and culturally stratified and when audiences turning to such platforms for entertainment can be fickle (amid an endless array of choices) and even unpredictable. Through targeted circulation mechanisms such as video tours and travelling film festivals, Indigenous productions are breaking out of a marginal and unstable circuit of Indigenous showcases in urban centres far from home. Very often, these works are not seen in the traditional film venues of their countries of origin until an international festival or agency brings them there, validating local work though the leverage of transnational allies.

A Global Indigenous Cinema?

Over the past decade, Indigenous film festivals have grown exponentially across the world, as have sidebars dedicated to Indigenous-produced cinema. This growth indicates a breakthrough not only within local film circuits but also in national and global arenas, each with distinct challenges. For imagineNATIVE, a fundamental challenge for even mapping out the state of the field is the lack of clarity and consistency around what constitutes an 'Aboriginal film' (see Goulet and Swanson 2013, 1–5). As more Indigenous festivals appear, such debates are intensifying, often redefining the concept of indigeneity as well as expectations of

specific screen genres and production practices. From the moment of inception of a festival, programmers, selection teams, juries and even online audiences participate in this debate as they assess the current spectrum of Indigenous audiovisual work. Festival selectors are also faced with adjusting their scope within a changing mediascape, where technological shifts quickly impact upon the craft and alter forms of viewership. The rise of digital submission platforms may enable more precarious independent collectives to submit to renowned festivals, but they will still be 'unknowns' to the inner circle of more established festival circuit programmers, particularly in Europe.

Within the last two decades, nevertheless, a handful of Indigenous film-makers, primarily from Australia, Canada and New Zealand and often supported by national film funds, have been lauded at mainstream international film festivals. In 2001 and 2009 respectively, the Cannes Camera d'Or award went to Zacharias Kunuk (Inuk) for *Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner* (Canada) and Warwick Thornton (Kaytetye) for *Samson and Delilah* (Australia). Taika Waititi (Māori) was nominated for an Academy Award in 2004 for his short film *Two Cars, One Night* (New Zealand) and Andrew Okpeaha MacLean (Iñupiat) garnered a Best First Feature Award and the Crystal Bear for Generation 14plus at the 2011 Berlinale for *On the Ice* (United States). A side effect of these 'top-tier' film festivals validating such works and directors is that, at last, festival circuit curators are taking an interest in seeking out 'smaller' Indigenous films to premiere.

These achievements are a result of longer processes that include sustained advocacy for screen media policies that are inclusive of Indigenous peoples' demands for access to communications technologies. This work has taken root in settler states where the film industry is seen as an important agent in enhancing the nation's presence on the global cultural stage (which often valorizes rural and Indigenous stories for their 'novelty') and where Indigenous advocacy has made its way into film schools and boardrooms. Successful efforts to foment local Indigenous cinema production are culturally attuned to community uses for such media; they work at stabilizing access to media training for Indigenous producers and fostering 'Indigenous media literacy' among general audiences through information, resources and interaction with Indigenous producers at screenings.

There are over 90 film festivals worldwide that present work exclusively related to Indigenous peoples, many homegrown and subsisting with little or no state support. In Canada, First Nations film festivals are on the rise, with new events such as the Asinabka Film and Media Arts Festival of Ottawa (founded in 2012), Mispon (Regina), Dreamspeakers Film Festival (Edmonton), Weeneebeg Aboriginal Film and Video Festival

(Moose Factory) and the Vancouver Indigenous Media Arts Festival. With the growth of both First Nations film policy and a robust Aboriginal film and television industry, Canadian screens are more open to First Nations content. Film festivals dedicated to Indigenous work are also running regularly in Australia, Europe and the Pacific region, with the majority emerging after 2000.[16] Alongside the recent expansion of such festivals, there have been significant changes and closures. In the United States, the Smithsonian's Native American Film + Video Festival has been in indefinite 'hiatus' since 2011, while the All Roads Film Festival, active from 2004, closed in 2012. Combined, these two festivals, along with Sundance, accounted for a great proportion of the international Indigenous work screened in the United States to large audiences. They also provided the only major east coast hubs for the hemispheric gathering of Indigenous film-makers from the Americas.

Among the western states, California has several well-established platforms dedicated to Indigenous cinema, including San Francisco's American Indian Film Festival, the Festival of Native Film & Culture in Palm Springs and the LA Skins Fest of Los Angeles, while Alaska boasts the Indigenous World Film Festival, held annually in Anchorage since 2005. Smaller, annual Native film showcases abound in diverse regions of the country, often lifting programmes from larger festivals but focusing on North American content with occasional offerings of notable Aboriginal work from other Anglophone territories. Overall, there is little targeted outreach to Latin America, mainly due to a lack of resources. By not investing in such outreach, this American circuit reinforces larger divides between North and South that impede the much-touted coming together of 'the Eagle and the Condor'.[17]

In primarily Anglophone regions of the world, film-makers, funders and festivals are developing a circuit of what is being called a global Indigenous cinema, with limited participation by Indigenous communities from developing countries. Few Indigenous works from Australia, New Zealand, the Pacific or North America are ever subtitled into languages other than English and French, or submitted to Latin American Indigenous film festivals. Yet many Latin American Indigenous film festivals regularly solicit and programme Indigenous and Afro-diasporic cinema from the 'Global North', as well as from Africa and Asia, as models for alternative cinematic practices and as works that resonate thematically with local Indigenous audiences. The conceptual frameworks of 'national', 'Latin American' and 'world' cinema offer no legibility for the community-based practices prevalent in Indigenous cinema, which challenge ideas of the nation-state and carry distinct social concerns and commitments, as expressed in collective authorship, for instance. In fact, mainstream film

festivals and distributors can occasionally become neocolonial 'contact zones' where marginalization is reinscribed or tokenism takes the place of thoughtful engagement.

In Latin America, CLACPI is now just one of several regularly occurring Indigenous festivals, demonstrating that such cinema has a following and a community beyond those directly involved in its creation. This development has stabilized the pulse of local nodes so they can collectively become circuits. In Mexico, Puebla's bi-national Indigenous Film and Video Festival sends work from Mexico to the United States to serve its migrant communities, and two festivals serve the Yucatan region: the experimental biennial Festival de Cine y Video Geografías Suaves (Smooth Geographies Film and Video Festival) and the state-supported annual Festival de Cine y Video Kayche´: Tejidos Visuales (Kayche´ Visual Fabrics Film and Video Festival). In Colombia, the annual Daupará showcase has rotated between cities each year since 2009. The Muestra de Cine Indígena of Venezuela, established in 2008, also tours, and counts on government support, but it is run by an Indigenous foundation. These festivals simply screen works, offering no awards or incentives. Brazil, a major site of Indigenous video production, has only two dedicated, itinerant festivals in this field, Video Índio Brasil and Cine Kurumin, which focuses on screenings in Indigenous villages. However, mainstream festivals in Brazil have granted top distinctions to works made by Video nas Aldeias, a non-governmental agency working for over twenty-five years in Indigenous video training. In the Southern Cone, there is scant policy for Indigenous film-making, as most funding is geared towards strengthening the national film industries. Nonetheless, in Argentina's rural province of Chaco, the country's first annual Indigenous showcase, the Festival de Cine de los Pueblos Indígenas, took root in 2008, backed by CLACPI.

What we see today, particularly across Latin America, is a joining of forces by diverse agencies to spread awareness of both the widespread marginalization of Indigenous peoples and the creative cultural resources they are mobilizing in response to that situation. While festivals in the Global North often prefer to 'sample' regionally, Latin American Indigenous festivals tend to be more inclusive than exclusive. The festivals that persist align themselves with the overarching mission of Indigenous communication: the defence of their rights. With a few exceptions, the Latin American Indigenous film and video movement has yet to secure the resources to channel the more individual creative needs of Indigenous producers in terms of fellowships, professional development and seed grants. The support offered is of a more intangible nature: a connection to a larger movement, and a sense of inclusion and recognition, which for communities facing constant erasure, displacement and neglect, is powerful and lasting.

Conclusion

I have outlined the major trans-Indigenous circulation initiatives that promote and exhibit Indigenous film and video, in an imperfect genealogy and within a shifting landscape. Indigenous festivals are on the rise, yet operate under a distinct ethos, constituting spaces of mediation between diverse cultural, social and political forces. In the struggle for Indigenous affirmation, such festivals offer significant and potentially potent international arenas for self-representation. As well as venues for the celebration of artistic and cultural achievements, Indigenous film festivals become precious meeting grounds for communities of film-makers and their allies. They support the recognition of Indigenous groups and individual directors, they enable directors to access new funding sources, and they offer fertile spaces for taking stock of salient issues, including the impact of technology and globalization on Native lives. In short, they *perform* the field of Indigenous cinema, increasingly in dialogue with digital and social media.

Many festivals form part of transnational networks that support Indigenous media training, production and exhibition, forming pathways for creative projects that are alternative in their grounding yet capable of sustaining dialogue with established festival circuits. The concept of Indigenous cinema, which used to be met with scepticism, now has traction beyond the circuits of 'alternative', subaltern and community-produced events. Indigenous works are screened more often than before at mainstream festivals across the world and are also selected by a host of special interest festivals focusing, for instance, on animation, documentary, ethnographic or experimental genres, or on issues such as human rights or environmentalism. Yet, given that the initiatives described here are somewhat precariously linked – and still fragmented to some extent by geography, language and policy – a major challenge for the field's consolidation is the lack of opportunity for truly global exchange and reciprocity (despite the promise of advances in communications technologies). The largely unacknowledged North–South divide within Indigenous cinema, in the Americas at least, can be seen in the nature of the works created, their modes of production and, most evidently, their uneven access to major distribution networks. Moreover, the suspension of internationally oriented initiatives such as National Geographic's All Roads Film Festival and the Smithsonian Institution's Native American Film + Video Festival has cut off entire communities from in-person conversations on building a global Indigenous cinema. Such developments serve as reminders that formal cultural spaces – even within such robust institutions – are still subject to local and national politics. In this context, the strength of the

Indigenous film festival circuit in Abya Yala, and beyond, depends on its adaptability, mettle and guile; its ability to follow the pattern of the serpent's movement – pulsating, resilient and ever-renewing – as it builds paths across continents.

Notes

1 Native American Film + Video Festival, opening night, 31 March 2011, George Gustav Heye Center, New York, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I1s48vHJzHw (accessed 30 March 2017).

2 See Shohat and Stam (1996), Turner (2002) and Wilson and Stewart (2008). Film festival literature, for its part, has largely bypassed Indigenous initiatives to focus on regional and Ibero-American circuits of independent and industry films (Ross 2010).

3 For a list of annotated resources on Indigenous media, see Wilson et al. (2015).

4 A Mapuche *werkén* (leader) once told me that he would be looking out for me spiritually, because I was carrying forth the voice of his people through the videos I was projecting in New York City (José Treuquil, personal communication, January 2004, Santiago de Chile).

5 See www.aifisf.com/what-we-do/ (accessed 8 August 2017).

6 The Heye Foundation's Museum of the American Indian was a private institution founded in 1916 by the New York City-based collector of Native American art, George Gustav Heye. This collection was incorporated into the Smithsonian Institution in 1989, becoming the National Museum of the American Indian. See http://nmai.si.edu/explore/collections/history/ (accessed 30 March 2017).

7 The exhibition's website is archived at https://www.moma.org/calendar/film/724?locale=en (accessed 28 November 2016).

8 Mission statement, 2001 imagineNATIVE festival, http://www.imaginenative.org/2004/in2003/2002/2001/index.html (accessed 24 August 2014).

9 See www.moreliafilmfest.com/en/ (accessed 8 August 2017).

10 The panel, 'Forms and Destinies of Indigenous Media', featured Dante Cerano, Raul Máximo Cortés, Aureliano Soto and Pavel Rodríguez.

11 Panels and screenings took place at Teatro José Rubén Romero, a multiplex cinema averaging 25–50 people per programme.

12 This festival presented just four versions from 1994 to 2001, organized by the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE), with an online presence at http://www.hosted.nativeweb.org/conaie/cine.html (accessed 31 December 2015).

13 My translation of the original Spanish text: 'Cada video, como la serpiente símbolo de la fertilidad y la sabiduría, sabra picar en el corazón sensible de hombres y mujeres de nuestras comunidades y ciudades. Cada piccadura será

un empuje a los procesos que en el continente estamos construyendo las Nacionalidades Indígenas' (qtd in de la Ossa Arias 2013).

14 Emulating the Havana International Film Festival, CLACPI festival award categories reflect social commitment; distinctions are determined by a mixed Indigenous and non-Indigenous jury.

15 In 2004, the CMP toured works of Indigenous video-makers from Chiapas and Guerrero across Australia, in collaboration with Aboriginal Australian media associations (Halkin 2008).

16 Europe is home to Indianer Inuit (Germany), the Native & Indigenous Film Festival (Czech Republic), Native Spirit (UK and Spain), the Sámi Film Festival (Norway) and Skábmagovat Film Festival (Finland). New Zealand has two annual festivals, the Wairoa Maori Film Festival and Maoriland, launched in Otaki in 2014. In Asia, the annual Nepal International Indigenous Film Festival was established in 2006 in Kathmandu, with a global scope and an affiliated archive.

17 This anticipated meeting refers to an ancient prophecy, versions of which are told by many Indigenous nations across the Americas, that when the eagle of the north comes together with the condor of the south, the earth will come into balance.

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9

Performed Pasts from Noongar History: Coolbaroo Dances and Noongaroke Nights

Anna Haebich

Indigenous peoples in settler colonies have participated to varying degrees in globalizing webs of empire and settler colonialism from earliest contacts. Scholars once documented the impact of globalization on indigenous cultures (constructed as traditional, authentic and localized) as inevitably destructive; now we celebrate indigeneity as a vital politicized cultural movement on the global stage. This echoes the optimism of the performance activist Inés Hernandez-Avila in celebrating the twenty-first century's 'post-apocalyptic' era of indigenous survival and the new force of indigenous 'activism (cultural, linguistic, political, spiritual), revitalization and world renewal' (2010, 140). But where does this celebration of the global leave analysis of the local? What of the situation in settler colonies where activists remain caught up in endless local battles for sovereignty and self-determination, their struggles not so much transcending national platforms as 'spilling over into a wider political arena and global market-place' (Sissons 2005, 8)?

Drawing on the rich legacy of generations of struggle against settler colonialism, this essay addresses the specificity of local cultural dynamics in an Australian context where indigenous performance activism has engaged strategically with what is loosely termed global popular culture. Tracing the contours of such activism requires close attention to intersecting viewpoints, circumstances and knowledge systems, as a recent reassessment of Australian indigenous studies priorities reminds us:

> Indigenous agency is premised on forms of analysis that are historically layered, responsive to changing social conditions, often traditionally-grounded, and often forward-looking. These reflect a practice of

intelligent, self-interested, and pragmatic sense-making based on a distanced observation of the external colonial order being imposed, via the logic and reasoning of traditional modes of analysis, and against the oppressive and often seemingly absurd logic of colonial reasoning applied in local and everyday contexts. (Nakata et al. 2012, 125)

My localized case study analyses the conjuncture of indigeneity and performance in Noongar Country in the south-west of the settler colonial state of Western Australia. Instead of focusing on public corroborees, festivals or theatre, I identify a new site of indigenous performance for historical research: performative gatherings staged for community enjoyment, away from the gaze of non-Aboriginal spectators. These mid and late twentieth-century gatherings – Coolbaroo dances and Noongaroke nights – combined an eclectic mix of songs and dance from Noongar cultural 'repertoires' with selectively incorporated items from global popular culture. The kinds of entertainments incorporated reflect the communities' continuing attachment to their own cosmologies and histories and, rather than cultural domination, demonstrate Noongar agency in complex cultural interactions. Previously overlooked or rejected as inauthentic by scholars, these gatherings provide a rich vein for historical inquiry that challenges narratives of Noongar cultural loss and assimilation. Rather than the enforced absence and silence of the historical record, they demonstrate 'dynamic and resilient presence' and 'survivance' (see Vizenor 1994, 14). Stories of these lively gatherings animate Noongar history and memory and they form a principal source and inspiration for this study.[1] Documenting such stories contributes to the decolonizing of Australian history.

The following discussion takes up Rachel Fensham's challenge to historians to extend their research beyond the 'performative or entertainment accomplishment', to embed embodiment in performance and to attend to its historical significance for indigenous peoples (2009, n.p.). Performance becomes not only an 'aesthetic medium' but also 'a system of learning, storing and transmitting knowledge' (Taylor 2003, 16). Like the 'historical scenarios' theorized by Diana Taylor (2003, 28–33), the Coolbaroo dances and Noongaroke nights are embodied performances of Noongar cultural values, knowledges, behaviours, spiritual practices and memories transmitted across generations and structured according to ancient relationships of obligation and reciprocity between participating family members. Together they form a repertoire or genealogy of 'kinesthetic vocabularies' (Gilbert 2013, 177) for scholarly study of the interplay of continuity and innovation in indigenous performance.

For Fensham, such gatherings are also 'public statement[s] linking

embodied experience to political dynamics on all sides'. Their performative elements are political choices, whether for the individual 'dancing body' or the community, that together create 'a communicative structure to advance land claims as well as to affirm spiritual and secular indigenous identities in the face of dominant policies of erasure and containment' (2009, n.p.). For Noongar communities, participation in such gatherings maintained cultural strength, resistance, solidarity and the determination to survive, despite the devastating legacies of invasion and colonization. The events created feelings of community well-being and resilience as people engaged in 'social spaces in which the lived reality of Indigenous culture could assert itself over and against the social construction of that reality by non-Aborigines' (Morrissey et al. 2007, 245).

Noongar gatherings harness the kind of performance strategies adopted elsewhere by other indigenous peoples interacting with global music cultures. Byron Dueck identifies in the Aboriginal music scene in Manitoba, Canada, similar 'intimacy' events featuring informal interactions among people with 'closely calibrated' expectations: 'kin, friends and members of small communities, and of musicians and dancers who regularly perform together' (2013, 7). Like Noongar gatherings, these Manitoban events are 'anti-publicity', excluding outsiders to ensure the desired atmosphere of social intimacy, mutual respect and face-to-face engagement with others (Dueck 2013, 14). A further common feature is that participation is valued over the quality of the performance (Dueck 2013, 11). Also the popular music genres are indigenized, being adapted to local styles in public spheres that are 'conspicuously distinct from nonaboriginal ones, whether in terms of membership and attendeeship or sociability' (Dueck 2013, 15). Michael McNally (2000) describes a similar process of indigenization at the White Earth Reservation in Minnesota where Ojibwe elders transform old mission hymns by singing them in their own language and in customary styles at wakes held in community spaces beside the bodies of deceased loved ones.

Noongar communities inhabited the south-west region of Western Australia for 50,000 years prior to the British invasion of their lands. Whadjuck people, the Noongar custodians of the site that became Perth, bore the full force of colonization – the sudden influx of strangers with an oppositional culture and way of life, violent conflict and deaths, destruction and loss of land and resources, repression of cultural practices, then starvation, illness and more deaths. Words such as invasion, ethnocide, genocide and apocalypse are not too extreme for naming their experience. Noongar people first encountered the globalizing webs of visiting commercial whaling and sealing crews and maritime exploration in the late eighteenth century. Settler colonial invasion from 1829 drew them

as quasi-subjects of the British Empire into its mercenary expansionism where the mix of 'civilizing' philanthropy and demeaning racism that shaped government policies made a misery of Noongar lives.

The Noongar novelist Kim Scott (2010) and the ethnomusicologist Clint Bracknell (2014) have documented their people's keen interest in the newcomers' songs and dances and shown how Noongar communities creatively negotiated and incorporated, or rejected, foreign elements in their own performances. For their part, colonists' initial curiosity about Noongar corroborees quickly gave way to opposition to their large gatherings, which served vital functions for maintaining their way of life. By the end of the nineteenth century, Noongar people and their culture had been reduced to the status of Stone Age remnants of a dying race. From 1905, new laws created a rigid system of discrimination that lasted nearly seventy years; it swept away remaining Noongar rights, including guardianship of their children, who were taken from their families. The implicit goal of these policies was the disappearance of Noongar people and culture from the settler colonial landscape, but performances continued, as documented by the amateur anthropologist Daisy Bates in the early 1900s (Bates 1936; n.d.). Jacqueline Shea Murphy notes that similar repressive measures introduced in North America were influenced by officials' sense of the social, political and ideological agency of Indian dance for maintaining Indian cultures (2007, 31).

Today, most Noongar people live in the suburbs of Perth and country towns. Numbering 40,000, they constitute the largest Aboriginal language group in Australia. Many identify as members of a distinct Noongar nation within the settler state. A boost for this ideal came in 2015 when a majority of Noongar groups endorsed the landmark South West Native Title Settlement, the only successful indigenous claim to metropolitan lands in Australia. The settlement, valued at AUS$1.3 billion, recognizes Noongar people as custodians of the South West area, including Perth, and will provide an estate of up to 320,000 hectares of Crown land and significant financial grants over a thirty-year period for economic development, housing programmes and a heritage regime. However, community divisions remain over what the settlement means for the Noongar nation's claims to sovereignty and self-determination. Regardless of this official recognition, the public perception is that Noongar people are assimilated and have no distinctive culture. Largely invisible to outsiders are the ancient lineages of the families and the people's connections to country, their values, obligations, practices, spiritual knowledge, rituals, songs, dances and elements of language, all woven into dynamic relationships with kin, land, animals, plants, sky, water and long-remembered events. Keeping their culture invisible was a vital Noongar strategy for evading

the police and punishment over much of the last century. Such intangibility also meant that a simple well-told yarn and a song sung around the campfire could create a powerful sense of Noongar identity and belonging.

There are few recorded Noongar memories from the 1900s to the 1940s. Anecdotally it is known that community music-making and dance continued as families enjoyed their own entertainment and company around campfires in the bush, free from segregation and surveillance in the towns. There were also covert corroborees, with men painted up and dancing to traditional singing. Bush camp dances mixed Noongar and settler styles, with singers performing versions of mission hymns and popular English and Australian songs, accompanied by musicians playing the harmonica, piano accordion, fiddle and guitar. A sophisticated version of these Noongar community gatherings led by the newly formed Coolbaroo League emerged in Perth after the Second World War. Considerable information survives about these events, which occurred within living memory and were documented in the League's own newspaper. They were also the focus of official surveillance reports and, more recently, the subject of numerous projects memorializing the League's accomplishments.[2] The Coolbaroo dances followed Noongar people's age-old love of dancing and singing together and their capacity to draw from this to negotiate their way through difficult political circumstances.

The League was a conjuncture of people, places, politics, gatherings and performances operating in Perth from 1946 to 1960. The years leading up to its establishment brought significant changes for indigenous peoples globally, with new freedoms and opportunities opening up. Indigenous men in Australia, like their counterparts in Canada, the USA and Aotearoa New Zealand, enlisted as servicemen, many to fight for peace and freedom, while at home the war effort freed up controls and employment, triggering indigenous migration into urban areas. Afro-American and indigenous cultures mingled in Perth where the visiting servicemen shared their dance and music styles with Noongar people and their views that racial discrimination there was worse than in the United States. As servicemen, indigenous recruits were largely treated as equals; then came the shock of returning home to the same racism and discrimination, including, for example, legal prohibitions on drinking alcohol, entering hotels and being in urban centres. These restrictions led to protests that contributed to the successful 1967 referendum to amend the Australian Constitution,[3] influenced by the Civil Rights movement in the United States.

Globally, the United Nations led humanitarian initiatives to reduce racism and promote universal human rights. The United Nations' Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (1960) endorsed decolonization in India, Africa and Asia but

excluded indigenous peoples in settler states on the grounds that they were assimilated subjects within their respective countries (see Haebich 2008). Indigenous rights of sovereignty and self-determination were made invisible (Stewart-Harawira 2005, 77). Australia was criticized for its denial of Aboriginal rights by communist Russia and China as well as by decolonizing nations in Africa and Asia, which compared the racially unjust regime to apartheid oppressions in Southern Rhodesia and South Africa at the time (see Haebich 2008, 58). These international pressures prompted the federal government to adopt an official national policy of assimilation in 1960, though some states had pre-empted this action by instigating their own policies. In 1948, Western Australia announced plans for equal rights and improved living conditions for Aboriginal families who assimilated but, in practice, many politicians as well as members of the public were opposed to the changes, particularly the erosion of racial segregation. Discriminatory legislation that had been established under the 1905 Aborigines Act and other statutes took twenty-four years (from 1948 to 1972) to repeal. At the same time government promises of jobs, housing and schooling were frustrated by a lack of political will and funding, so that many families continued to live in dire poverty. Noongar families sought to maintain their identity and aspirations during this time while they kept a low profile and adopted a tactical wait-and-see approach to engaging with assimilation (Marsh and Haebich 2008, 274).

Perth had a diverse Aboriginal population of descendants of the original Whadjuk custodians and other long-term Noongar residents, with youth increasingly based there for vocational training. There were also 'newcomers', many forcibly sent south as children to missions and settlements, then shuttled between work in the country and accommodation in Perth, and Aboriginals who moved to the city in growing numbers independently after the war, several of them Coolbaroo League founding members from the Pilbara. They worked respectfully to appoint Noongar elders to leadership positions to draw in all communities, including families in country towns, through cultural and social activities. Such undertakings were integral to the League's political activism as its leaders lobbied for access to rights and benefits as Aboriginal people and not 'cultured imitations of white Australians' (Marsh and Haebich 2008, 288). They simultaneously negotiated the dictates of the all-powerful Department of Native Welfare and of policing practices that controlled Aboriginal people's lives in Perth: where they could live, walk and work, their associations, their children's futures, their choice of entertainment and so on. This did not gag their outspoken political statements in the *Coolbaroo News* (later *Westralian Aborigine*), which carried topical local, national and international news stories.

Similar organizations and gatherings developed in other Australian cities during the 1950s and 1960s to build a sense of community and promote Aboriginal political agendas as urban migration increased. The Sunshine Club in Darwin,[4] the Boathouse in Brisbane and Bill Onus's indigenous revues in Melbourne provided social occasions for entertainment and fundraising as well as relief from prejudice, discrimination and the hardships of limited employment. The Coolbaroo dances for Aboriginal people were held on Friday nights in Perth from 1946 to 1960 and intermittently in country towns. They were the League's main outreach activity. An annual Coolbaroo Ball took place in Perth Town Hall. The League also ran corroborees as fundraisers for youth accommodation in Perth. At the 1952 National Flower Day concert, hundreds watched dancers 'from at least twelve tribes' perform a corroboree of 'graceful and quick tempo rhythm' with 'their bodies painted for the occasion and carrying spears, dancing sticks, boomerangs, etc.' (*Coolbaroo News*, September 1952, 5). In 1955, Perth's first Aboriginal business, the Coolbaroo League art shop, began selling souvenirs and arts and crafts by local Aboriginal artists (*Westralian Aborigine*, June–July 1955, 1).

As the heart of the League's many activities, the Friday night dances were not something 'other' but were part of shared Noongar traditions and histories being performed in a place that participants made their own. They followed the style of campfire corroborees and featured repertoires of old-time dancing and popular songs played on the harmonica, accordion, fiddle and piano, with new styles from American popular culture added, this time from jive and rock 'n' roll and the latest Afro-American songs and moves to the accompaniment of rock and swing bands. The mix of musical styles and sentiments left Noongar performers free to improvise and creatively appropriate songs to suit their tastes and interests. This unique atmosphere contrasted with Perth's sophisticated, adults-only supper dances and nightclubs, which favoured white American music and dance styles. Aboriginal people of all ages were welcome at the Coolbaroo evenings. An invited reporter from the *Sunday Times* expressed his amazement that 'women changed their babies' napkins' at such gatherings, while 'cigarettes passed from one pair of lips to another [and] shabby small boys with bright faces danced together beside a couple of 74' (*Sunday Times*, Perth, 17 August 1952, 22).

The dances were the bright spot in the dreary weekly routines of domestic service, factory and labouring work, cheap rooms, rough camps and making-do with little money. Visiting and playing cards were the main alternative entertainments.[5] For the price of a ticket you could relax with Aboriginal family and friends, see new faces, dance and sing, enjoy humorous items, take part in competitions and show off your new outfit.

Familiar old-time steps like the Pride of Erin, Canadian Barn Dance, Hokey-Pokey and waltzes were intermixed with jive and rock 'n' roll as well as short-lived 1950s dance sensations such as 'The Creep' and the novelty 'Roo-Roo-Kangaroo', described as 'lively, fun packed and easy to learn' (*Westralian Aborigine*, July 1954, 2). Classes in modern dance were also provided before the weekly events.

Organized as Aboriginal-only events, the Coolbaroo dances were relatively problem-free, with community rules of respect enforced and alcohol banned by law for Aboriginal people prior to 1964. Hiring venues was a recurring problem, given racism and prohibitions on movement around the city. When disturbances did occur, high-level government officers were quick to intervene to close the premises (*Sunday Times*, Perth, 25 January 1948, 7). The release of physical stress, depression and anxiety through performance and social activities was vital for bodies constantly constrained by the threat of racist humiliation or troubling grief from being kept away from family and home. Crucial here was the exclusion of non-Aboriginal people, creating a space free from the racism of everyday life. There was freedom to experiment with energetic new dance styles without fear of ridicule, or to revive memories in the familiar steps of dances from the old days. Being at the dances was also a political statement celebrating Aboriginal identity and survival and rejecting assimilation. They were places for learning about Aboriginal politics, for developing self-confidence and social skills, and nurturing new leaders and office bearers for the League. The dances were also meeting places for young men and women; several couples who went on to marry and raise large families fell in love on the Coolbaroo dance floor.

Accomplished musicians regularly performed at the dances while amateurs were welcome to step up and were warmly applauded for their efforts.[6] Song styles, preferably those of black performers such as Fats Domino, Harry Belafonte, Nat King Cole and the Platters, included rock 'n' roll, calypso, crooning and vocal harmonizing. This created a sense of long-distance identification with African American popular culture, which was reinforced by the excitement and glamour of visiting entertainers who attended Coolbaroo dances to enjoy their relaxed ambience in a racially divided city. These included Nat King Cole, the Platters, Harlem Blackbirds Revue and the Norma Miller Dancers, who performed their 'zazzy dance routines' (*Westralian Aborigine*, June–July 1957, 4). The column 'Music News' in the *Westralian Aborigine* kept readers in touch with the visitors' successes back home, such as the Norma Miller Dancers joining Cab Calloway at the world's 'most famous night spot, the all-negro "Cotton Club" at Miami Beach, U.S.A.' (*Westralian Aborigine*, May 1957, 4; June–

July 1957, 4). Country music was also popular, with Ray Price's 'You Done Me Wrong' a firm favourite.

Items and puns that bent popular culture to fit Aboriginal sensibilities and humour added to the evening's fun. Aboriginal humour comes from the daily struggle to survive, makes light of stressful times and frequently mocks pompous behaviour and self-important authority figures (Holt 2009). This explains the attraction of African-American-style comedy routines that ridiculed racist behaviours. Popular items included Noongar impersonations of Al Jolson, a black man imitating a white man imitating a black man; the Cakewalk, a satirical dance from the slave plantations and black minstrelsy, which mocked the arrogance of the 'white boss'; and a band called Kickett's Kustard Kreek Killers in counterpoint to the white supremacist Ku Klux Klan in the USA. Miss Coolbaroo Bathing Beauty parades parodied popular mainstream competitions: prizes might be awarded to boost a girl's self-esteem and were generally shared by all contestants. The Coolbaroo Glamour Boys lampooned idealized femininity in mock parades, wearing dresses, bathing suits, make-up and wigs (Marsh and Haebich 2008, 291–95). Singing competitions and debuts by Noongar 'talent discoveries' and 'teenagers' idols' 'shook up' the dancers and brought 'hysterical applause'. There were also fancy dress nights and, at country dances, exhibitions of new dance steps that spread to campfire gatherings in the bush (*Westralian Aborigine*, May 1957, 4; June–July 1957, 4). These embodied activities for all ages were vital in creating a strong sense of community for Aboriginal people in Perth. The shared body laughs, the proximity of caring people and the filling suppers created the special atmosphere of security and warmth typical of Noongar gatherings but denied in other public spaces at the time.

The Coolbaroo League closed in the early 1960s in the wake of leadership changes but left an example that still challenges misrepresentations of the post-war assimilation era as a time when Aboriginal people lost their identity and culture, being 'trapped between two worlds'. Another legacy was a generation of articulate, skilled activists who took up the struggle for rights that led to the 1967 referendum. In the early 1970s some joined Aboriginal political protests and street performances inspired by the Tent Embassy in Canberra and the National Black Theatre in the inner-Sydney suburb of Redfern. Visiting Redfern at the time for drama workshops was the activist and playwright Jack Davis, who staged the first Noongar play, *Kullark*, in Perth in 1979. Davis's subsequent stage works *The Dreamers* (1982) and *No Sugar* (1985) achieved national and international acclaim and influenced the development of *Aboriginal theatre across Australia. Other prominent performing arts initiatives building on Noongar creativity after the post-war period were Middar Aboriginal Theatre, initiated in*

*1978 by the da*ncer and didgeridoo player Richard Walley in partnership with the actor Ernie Dingo, and Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company, which has quickly expanded since its founding in 1993 to become Australia's largest Aboriginal arts organization. *The* Coolbaroo dances also set a precedent for youth dances in Perth in the 1970s involving Noongar bands and singers, some going on to perform on the popular national television shows *Bandstand* and *The Johnny Young Show*.

By the time Noongaroke emerged in the late 1990s, the cultural and political landscapes had shifted dramatically, but there was still a need to bring people together to celebrate being Noongar through song and dance away from the difficulties of everyday life, and to fundraise for the community. In the 1980s, Noongar activism was crushed by state and federal government rejection of campaigns for a treaty, land rights and reform to policing in Aboriginal communities. The 1990s promised an unprecedented global focus on indigenous issues with the 1993 declaration by the United Nations General Assembly of the First International Decade of the World's Indigenous People (commencing in 1995), to resolve issues concerning human rights, the environment, development, education and health. This declaration provided a distant context for local events that brought both celebration and tragedy for Noongar people. The 1992 Mabo victory for land rights was overshadowed by revelations about the 19 West Australian deaths investigated by the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (see Dodson 1991). Then came the *Bringing Them Home Report* (Wilson and Dodson 1997) documenting the systematic removal of Aboriginal children from their families and communities and the resulting trauma of Australia's Stolen Generations. The extent of institutionalized racism exposed by both inquiries was a visceral reminder of the violence that characterized Noongar history and the terrible losses of land, language, family and dignity. In the early 1990s, Noongar families grieved for several young people killed in crashes during high-speed police car chases in Perth, their anguish augmented by hostile media reports of a terrifying crime wave by Noongar youth who were stealing cars and endangering the lives of Perth citizens (Mickler 1996). Families began to talk of the need for community healing, mirroring indigenous arguments globally that change can only come 'once we heal our spirit from all of our past pains, traumas and tragedies' (Wanganeen 1997, 284). Noongaroke was an inspired intervention, providing a special Noongar way of healing.

Karaoke is a global phenomenon accessible to all audiences that began as a humble form of public singing using the simple technology of a microphone and sound system and a book of lyrics. Dubravka Ugresic (2011) uses karaoke metaphorically to denote the 'unoriginality' of global

culture that is repeated everywhere, endlessly, and that encourages bad late-night performances such as Bill Murray's singing of 'More Than This' in the movie *Lost in Translation*. Zhou Xun and Francesca Tarocco present a more realistic account of the positive transcultural role of karaoke as 'an interactive global network' moving out in all directions, taking on different forms as it 'rushes and trickles' through different communities (2007, 3–4). People incorporate karaoke into their cultural traditions and imbue it with their own 'cultural-specific meanings and symbolisms'. In the process, local cultural traditions are preserved and new forms are developed, with examples ranging from Buddhist chanting to 'pornaoke' (adlibbing words and sounds to old sex movies) (Xun and Tarocco 2007, 3–4).

For Noongar people, karaoke's simple technology, with its portability and accessibility, provided an attractive way to sing and dance together. From it, they created a process for cultural healing and well-being that dealt at a profound level with the anguished politics of death and poverty in the community. Like the Coolbaroo dances, Noongaroke fitted the tradition of Noongar community gatherings and brought people together in a place of warmth and friendship, away from the emotions and rituals of grief, to celebrate ways of being Noongar together. It was this combination of the past in the present that powered the performances.

Leading the charge was the 'deadly Noongaroke singing DJ' Jim Morrison, whose parents were both members of the Stolen Generations. His father, a soldier and prisoner in the notorious Changi prison in the Second World War, raised a large family now prominent in Noongar community services and politics in Perth and nationally. Jim has taken a strong local and national leadership role in promoting reconciliation and healing of the Stolen Generations. When Noongaroke began, community finances and emotions were at breaking point. In 2000, there were funerals every week. Jim recalls: 'it was a bad year. That's the time I did 62 functions in one year. Supported 62 families.' Times were so bad that 'people never sung'. But then 'they come to Noongaroke and then, "Oh, I can do that." Get up and the voices that would come out from these people are just too deadly. There's some lovely voices, some real good singers' (Morrison 2013). The embodied power of singing and dancing together at Noongaroke nights reverberated in the community and attendances soared: 'It grew and grew and grew. If you did a head count, you know thousands and thousands of people have come through Noongaroke. There are people who were just there every night. They just love to sing. It's always a good atmosphere' (Morrison 2013). In fact, this was a *unique* atmosphere of Noongar pride and enjoyment.

Noongar culture was on full display. The atmosphere was relaxed,

warm and friendly, with family members talking, singing and dancing. Jim explains: 'when you go to a karaoke night, it's mostly singing. But ours was about singing *and* dancing … you had to do it – it was a bit of a balance' (Morrison 2013). The audience and singers were all Noongar people. Everyone is related. The events were held on licensed premises due to the lack of alternative venues, so children and young people could not attend. 'Sadly we had to use a hotel', Jim says. 'We don't have our own places' (Morrison 2013). Noongaroke was also an expression of Noongar political activism, as evident in the Aboriginal colours – yellow, black and red – that were everywhere to be seen in flyers, decorations, flags, coloured lights and clothing. Always prominent at Noongar events, the colours symbolized Noongar pride, community and sovereignty. Noongar protocols replaced the usual impersonal rules for behaviour in karaoke bars, most of which were alcohol-free. Jim explains, 'there's a code of conduct based on respect: respect yourself, respect others, respect other people's property and respect other cultures. And that was the Kanya Code of Conduct – Kanya meaning, shame, behave yourself' (Morrison 2013).

There were the unmistakable sounds of 'Noongar talk' in the words, tones and accents, the families reminiscing, the texture of the singers' voices and the choices of nostalgic rock and country songs. Evoking memories of loved ones and happier times, songs such as 'Johnny B. Goode', 'Brown-eyed Girl', 'Neon Moon', 'Satin Sheets' and 'Seven Spanish Angels' figure on Jim Morrison's personal Noongaroke Top Ten. Young girls and women danced together and older couples negotiated their way around the dance floor. These nights were community events providing relief for families experiencing constant death and mourning, and opportunities to fundraise for funerals. Jim explains that 'everybody would come because they felt the need to support their loved ones' as well as 'to socialize, express their grief with the family, give some money' (Morrison 2013). Noongar Idol was added to the evenings as another fundraising idea, again incorporating a global entertainment form into Noongar culture, and drew a large following. Jim recalls that voting was strictly controlled to prevent the large family groups from simply voting for their own people: 'You had to be there by a certain time so everyone voted for everyone. And no family favourites' (Morrison 2013).

Performing at Noongaroke nights cleared distressed bodies and minds of sorrow and haunting spirits. Jim enjoyed this physical release: 'It was really good for therapy, you know, to really tear yourself inside and sing a good rock and roll song. It's just your energy and with all the people in the room, the temperature goes up' (Morrison 2013). New research confirms this link between singing and well-being, known intuitively by performers. Singing with others improves physical and mental fitness,

reducing stress, depression and anxiety in all age groups. A recent survey of the outcomes of group singing (among non-Aboriginal participants) reports benefits such as joy and accomplishment, improved social and friendship networks, increased sense of well-being and safety, and greater social involvement (Gridley et al. 2011, 5). In the Aboriginal context, well-being also includes feeling 'a level of control over [one's] own life, which requires the freedom to make choices about how one lives and what is a good life' (Phipps and Slater 2010, 87).

Noongaroke songs originated in popular global music practices but, like the Coolbaroo repertoire, they were indigenized. Even within the constraints of karaoke's set musical accompaniment, singers transformed the songs to fit their own styles and purposes and to carry the load of their treasured memories. The songs became part of an oral tradition transmitting wisdom across the generations. In this way they have become spiritual songs for Noongar families, just as Ojibwe elders transformed mission hymns for their ceremonial wakes. As McNally explains, the elders' singing created 'a bundle in which all those fleeting moments spread out over the years are wrapped into one' (2000, 189). These performances brought spiritual reassurance and pride in identity, and united the people in a 'community of sound', refreshing grieving families with the 'beauty of human voices and the recollection of previous generations … who faced similar struggles with fortitude and song' (McNally 2000, 178). In the same way families gathered at Noongaroke events to mourn the passing of yet another loved one, joining together with honour and respect to celebrate in song and dance everything that really mattered to them: family, culture, country, history and being Noongar.

Noongaroke reached a turning point in the mid-2000s as the number of deaths subsided and the government began to contribute more funding for funerals. After Jim's sons warned him, 'Dad, you're doing this every week; we'll be burying *you* soon' (Morrison 2013), he decided to stop the Noongaroke nights. The community found new places to sing and dance and set up bands and choirs. Some members auditioned for the globally inspired television talent shows *X-Factor* and *Australian Idol*. Tragically, the need for Noongaroke returned in the late 2000s with the heart-breaking epidemic of Aboriginal youth suicide, which continues today and is also happening nationally and globally in indigenous communities. Jim began organizing occasional Noongaroke nights for the young people's grieving families but at present it seems that the impetus for the events has inexplicably fallen away. Nonetheless, Jim insists that the need for the community gatherings continues: 'We're relaxed when we're with our own mob. There was no need to accommodate the dominant culture's stupidity. The more involved you are with your culture, the better your

emotional well-being is. You've got to be proud of who you are' (cited by Illich 2014, n.p.).

The Coolbaroo dances and Noongaroke nights are both potent examples of indigenous people engaging creatively and strategically with global popular culture within the changing environments of a settler colonial nation. As embodied performances, these grassroots events present a model of indigenous activism grounded in the local and engaging selectively with the global. Attending to the specificities of that embodied engagement enables us to recognize indigenous and indigenized elements of performances that might otherwise be seen as merely mimicking global trends. In this context, performance-based analysis generates new historical insights that have previously been 'resistant to articulation' (Gilbert 2013, 176). As this essay has demonstrated, Noongar people have a resilient tradition of coming together to resolve local issues in times of change using their own rich cultural and political strategies and protocols, in combination with selected outside elements, indigenized for their own purposes. Such community gatherings recreate in contemporary guise the ancient embodied Noongar performances of singing, dancing, remembering and being together that have been transmitted across the generations. In the process, Noongar spaces are deliberately created to bring about individual and community healing and well-being. Like the large Aboriginal festivals now being held around the nation, these dynamic performances help to increase 'self-esteem and cultural confidence, develop local leadership, [foster] social, cultural and economic initiatives [and] open creative spaces of individual and collective opportunity' (Phipps and Slater 2010, 87).

The Noongar community gatherings also work as practical models of cultural maintenance and political negotiation. In the current pivotal time of uncharted change for Noongar people, with the implementation of the South West Settlement proceeding and divisions over sovereignty and self-determination unresolved, the future development of the Noongar nation remains unclear. In this context gatherings forged in the spirit of the Coolbaroo dances and Noongaroke nights have a role to play in bringing people together across their differences to celebrate the unity and strength of the Noongar people and to negotiate their way forward.

Acknowledgements

Notes

1 Noongar contributions to this research were vital: Jim Morrison generously shared his Noongaroke journey in interviews with Darryl Kickett and me that are quoted extensively here, and we discussed and wrote about the events together, publishing a joint article in *Griffith Review* (2014). The Noongar curator Barbara Bynder invited me to contribute to the exhibition *Wildflower Dreaming: Shirley Corunna and the Coolbaroo League 1952–1962* (2014) and the Mirrawong scholar Steve Kinnane generously shared his knowledge of the Coolbaroo League dances. The non-indigenous writer Lauren Marsh and I co-wrote a chapter on the Coolbaroo League and assimilation for my book *Spinning the Dream: Assimilation in Australia 1950–1970*. My methodology also included participant observation, in particular at Noongaroke nights.

2 These include a feature documentary, a major award, two exhibitions, interviews, an artist photograph series and published historical accounts. See *The Coolbaroo Club* (1996), Kinnane (2003), Marsh and Haebich (2008), Darbyshire (2010), Jones (2010) and Bynder (2014).

3 The referendum amended the constitution to enable Aboriginal people to be counted in the national census and to allow the federal government to pass legislation for Aboriginal people. This enabled federal entry into Aboriginal affairs on a national scale, bringing increased funding, forward-looking policies including self-determination for a brief time, and bureaucratic expertise.

4 The acclaimed Murri director Wesley Enoch's stage musical, *The Sunshine Club* (1999), took its title from the Darwin initiative but was set in Brisbane.

5 Steve Kinnane's *Shadowlines* (2003), a biography of his Aboriginal grandmother, sheds light on lifestyles and pastimes of Aboriginal people in Perth.

6 These included the Noongar singers Jean White, Gladys Bropho and Lloyd Taylor, along with Joan Dick who also performed on radio 6KG Kalgoorlie. Bands included Chiko's Band and Ron Kickett's Strutter's Quintette (information provided by Steve Kinnane, 2014).

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10

'Feelin' Reserved': Global Indigenous Hip-Hop and the Settler Colonial State

Michelle H. Raheja

Several years ago, I co-organized an Indigenous hip-hop symposium and concert at the University of California, Riverside (UCR), featuring the work of Raymond 'Short Dawg Tha Native' Galvan (Serrano/Cahuilla), Brian 'DJ Shock B' Frejo (Seminole/Pawnee), Marcus 'Quese IMC' Frejo (Seminole/Pawnee) and Cynthia 'Fawksie 1' Lucero (Apache). Our aims were to show how these particular artists (and others like them) reference and index critical concerns in Indian Country; how Indigenous hip-hop traditions articulate these concerns through, and in dialogue with, a popular African American cultural form; and how the resulting performances synthesize Indigenous artistic and narrative practices with a decolonial politics for a global Indigenous and youth audience. The symposium began with a dynamic and active roundtable conversation that opened up space for the artists to discuss their work alongside academics in the field, as well as to engage directly with the audience. Connections soon emerged between hip-hop as an insurgent, powerful and provocative African American cultural form and its broader operation as a vehicle for marginalized peoples globally.

The symposium and concert were the concluding events of the UCR campus's annual College Information Day, sponsored by the Native American Student Association. This initiative hosts elementary and high-school-age Native American prospective students and provides orientations and workshops for parents, students, caregivers and teachers on how to transition to higher education. Although we planned an all-ages event in a small, intimate campus facility that does not serve alcohol, the campus's Office of Risk Management became concerned that our gathering would potentially be violent or would incite violence. In conversations with risk management staff, it became clear that our event was flagged

because it featured rap music. Anti-black racist and white supremacist sentiment typically associates hip-hop culture with negative, pathological values and reduces it to a movement (rarely an art form) trading in socially fragmenting tropes: misogynistic representation, the valorization of violence, the glorification of youth, the demonization of the elderly, the desecration of childhood, widespread criminality, the privileging of urban life and rampant consumerism. In the end, we were required to hire and post a police officer at the event and assure administrators that it would not become violent. We complied reluctantly while also resisting a narrative that rendered Indigenous concerns and projects as oppositional to African American hip-hop.

The association of hip-hop with perceived threat – with risk that requires management – often to the settler colonial and racist state status quo, simultaneously points to hip-hop's enduring revolutionary and liberating aesthetics, politics and culture, what the founding member of Public Enemy, Harry Allen, has called 'hip-hop activism'.[1] As the younger sibling to blues and jazz, with its origins in African griot traditions and African American and Puerto Rican youth resistance struggles in New York boroughs in the late 1960s and 1970s, hip-hop became a complex artistic, aesthetic, musical and dance-oriented phenomenon that celebrated African American life and grew out of, engaged, enlarged and critiqued the Civil Rights movement, while at the same time carrying forth its anti-racist discourses.[2] As Tricia Rose notes:

> Rap music brings together a tangle of some of the most complex social, cultural and political issues in contemporary American society. Rap's contradictory articulations are not signs of absent intellectual clarity, they are a common feature of community and pop cultural dialogues that always offer more than one cultural, social or political viewpoint. (Rose 1994, 2)

The enduring popularity and sophistication of hip-hop attests to its ability to empower, make visible and render complex the relationship between African American and other marginalized peoples and the dominant discourses (and performance conventions) that this cultural tradition punctures.

Indigenous hip-hop, now performed in many parts of the world, draws its lyrical, political, social and aesthetic power most obviously from African American hip-hop. Paying homage to the broader origins of rap, Indigenous hip-hop artists emulate its forceful critique of racist, settler colonial institutions and its appeal to youth cultures while sampling from its repertoire of physical gestures, musical beats, clothing styles

and visual media. Perhaps slightly less obviously, what I am casting as a *global* performance phenomenon is a continuation and creative expansion of tribally specific, autochthonous forms of expression that create cohesive communities and audiences, as well as building coalitions around particular social and environmental causes across the borders of countries and continents. Indigenous hip-hop artists and musicians in places as far-flung as Sápmi, the northern European homelands of the Sámi people, and throughout Pacific Islander, Aboriginal Australian and Latin American communities continue to do with hip-hop what Indigenous people have always done: borrow from and adapt practices originating in other places to broaden, improve and make relevant traditional art forms and other modes of social and cultural expression. Pre-modern forms of globalization in which Indigenous peoples have engaged can be exemplified by the vast migrations of people and the mass movement of goods and ideas along trade networks across the Americas, leading to the development of transnational, architecturally significant cosmopolitan spaces. Such structures include, for instance, the intricate, mathematically precise earthworks that served as home, spiritual site, meeting ground, burial plot and safe haven for thousands of people (see Allen 2016; Hedge Coke 2007).

The visual and musical productions of Indigenous performance makers who borrow from and also transform hip-hop's aesthetics, technologies and idioms are participating in what is an unprecedented promulgation of Indigenous language preservation, political expression, culture, musical traditions, rhetoric and philosophy. Global Indigenous hip-hop has historical roots in the 1980s to mid-1990s. Early Indigenous rap musicians, influenced by Afrika Bambaataa, Public Enemy and other hip-hop founders, include Brothablack and Native Rhyme Syndicate in Australia; Sisters Underground, Dam Native and Upper Hutt Posse in New Zealand; X Plastaz in Tanzania; War Party in Canada; and Melle Mel, Funkdoobiest and Litefoot in the United States. With advances in digital media, the first decade of the twenty-first century saw an explosion of hip-hop across a wide range of Indigenous communities, both rural and urban, in the Americas, Europe, the Middle East and the Pacific. As a potent trans-Indigenous vehicle for social commentary, hip-hop became most visibly enmeshed with specific political movements in 2012 with the creation of Idle No More in Canada, one of the largest Indigenous movements for sovereignty and environmental protection in history. This grassroots campaign, initiated in response to legislative attacks on First Nations, Inuit and Métis treaty rights, quickly drew support and social media interest across North America and beyond, with solidarity actions mounted in Auckland, Berlin, Los Angeles, London, Minneapolis,

São Paulo, Stockholm, Sydney and numerous other locations. Hip-hop performance continues to be a strong visual, musical, gestural and literary component of Indigenous-led activism, having been recently harnessed by sovereignty and land and water protection groups working to stop the Keystone XL and Dakota Access pipelines as well as fracking operations and other capitalist projects that threaten major waterways, environments and climates across the Indigenous world. In a different vein, hip-hop has also provided a powerful way of publicizing the crisis of missing and murdered Aboriginal women in Canada and the United States.[3]

Many of these political movements have been created by Indigenous women and youth, and many participate in what Stephanie Noelani Teves terms 'defiant indigeneity', a hip-hop political process that resists 'delegitimizing indigenous claims, racializing Native peoples, and normalizing white subjectivity' (2011, 76). A key example of Teves's concept of 'defiant indigeneity' can be found in the MTV Rebel Music segment released in November 2014, one of a six-part series highlighting Native American youth, music and social change. Featuring the work of hip-hop artists Inez Jasper (Kole First Nation), Frank Waln (Sicangu Lakota), Nataani Means (Dakota, Diné, Oglala Lakota) and Mike 'Witko' Cliff (Oglala Lakota), the video examines gendered violence, the #NativeLivesMatter movement and the current state of North American Indigenous hip-hop as well as its connections with traditional narrative and musical expression, among other critical issues.[4]

Increasing scholarly attention has been paid to global Indigenous hip-hop as an articulation of political, artistic and cultural sovereignty and language reclamation projects. Since I began research in this field four years ago, a number of monographs and critical essays have emerged, developing critical hip-hop theories at the intersections of Indigenous and settler colonial studies.[5] Jenell Navarro contends, for example, that Indigenous hip-hop is not only emancipatory and political; it also functions as a decolonial process:

> [W]hile revolutionary cultural texts like the hip-hop produced by politically conscious Indigenous artists address various historical dominations and racist violence experienced by different Indigenous communities in their local and regional contexts, they also aid in the processual work of decolonization by reinforcing this collective pan-Indigenous consciousness that forms the foundation of transnational movements for Indigenous rights in the Americas. (Navarro 2016, 569)

I would add that this assertion is true for Indigenous communities across the globe, particularly those resisting settler colonial regimes.

In an important revision of her landmark work on the Faustian bargain and its relationship to new forms of Indigenous cultural production in the digital age, Faye Ginsburg posits that, contrary to some scholars' assumptions that the 'uptake of media' would diminish so-called authentic cultural practices, it has in fact proliferated in creative, critical and enabling ways in vastly different locations across the world (2016, 582). Many Indigenous media-making projects, she argues, 'support the maintenance or even revival of ritual practices and local languages … while building forms of cultural expression that frequently serve to repair fraying inter-generational relationships' and 'bring much needed sources of productive activity' into communities (Ginsburg 2016, 583). Such projects work largely on their own terms, bypassing or upsetting the primitivist represen-tations circulating within settler colonial discourses. Like the other media forms Ginsburg discusses, instead of being yet another negative influence on Indigenous communities, hip-hop, in many cases, has operated as an extension of intellectual and artistic forms and methodologies that constitute pedagogy by bringing Native concerns to the forefront of transnational dialogues about rights, justice and equality. Manifest in such performances is what Freya Schiwy (2009) has called an 'Indianizing' function – or what might be termed in this broader, global context, an 'Indigenizing' function – transforming virtual public spaces into sites that reconfigure and reconsider gender relations, cultural hierarchies and settler colonial frameworks. In addition, Indigenous hip-hop challenges mainstream representations of Native people by offering creative and political self-representations that rework and overturn outdated, static stereotypes. The seemingly democratic aspect of new media, particularly the 'comments' space that often appears as an open invitation for dialogue immediately following a video on YouTube, also demonstrates one of the ways in which Indigenous hip-hop artists function as public intellectuals, provoking often heated debate about the issues and representations raised in the videos. While the comments can be virulently racist and support ideologies of white supremacy, the increasing number of self-identified Indigenous interlocutors who correct offensive assertions and/or engage more broadly in these informal online discussion forums creates a kind of 'virtual reservation' that peoples and privileges alternative histories and viewpoints in a field otherwise inclined to silence Native voices.

What is most significant about this global Indigenous movement for social justice and creative self-representation is that it has been led, for the most part, by young people, the demographic statistically most at risk of suicide and violent injury, particularly sexual assault, and often seen as the

most assimilated into dominant cultures. Thus, the kinds of interventions Indigenous youth hip-hop artists make are, quite literally, a matter of life and death for many in their targeted audiences.

Far from adhering to the tenets of assimilation and repudiating Indigenous culture, hip-hop artists living under conditions of settler coloniality are making a case for language revitalization, the value of intergenerational relationships, gender complementarity, cultural pride and the reinvigoration of traditions, while at the same time making critical intellectual intercessions by challenging stereotypes, both within and beyond their communities. New media articulations of hip-hop appeal to Indigenous MCs because of the low cost and ease of producing videos on sites such as YouTube, as well as Indigenous-specific platforms such as RezKast, IndigiTube and the music video channel RPM (Revolutions Per Minute). There are also widely accessible digital communities dedicated to promoting this mode of performance. For example, Beat Nation defines hip-hop in Canada and beyond as 'Indigenous future', Indigenous Hip Hop Projects has chronicled the growth of Aboriginal Australian artists from diverse backgrounds since 2005, and Native Hip Hop terms itself the 'original showcase for indigenous rap and hiphop across the globe'.[6] Artists need neither formal training nor specialized expertise to post videos on the Internet; neither do they need to leave their home communities to produce work in metropolitan sound and video studios. According to Andrew Warren and Rob Evitt, 'rather than assume cities and urban centres are hubs for creativity, hip-hop production [among Indigenous artists] is geographically mobile, operating in locations removed from large population centres' (2010, 141). Hip-hop is also a cultural form with mass appeal, which permits and fosters what Chadwick Allen (2012) calls 'trans-Indigenous methodologies' by opening up spaces in which Indigenous artists and scholars can connect with each other around common issues of disenfranchisement, colonization and violence, as well as sharing humour, joy and creativity. Shari Huhndorf anticipates such possibilities in her earlier study of Indigenous transnationalism, seen as simultaneously encompassing 'alliances among tribes and the social structures and practices that transcend their boundaries' while also operating in tension with 'processes such as colonialism and capitalism' (2009, 2).

Indigenous hip-hop makers generate what Warren and Evitt have called a 'semi-formal, political, transnational and anti-colonial creative industry', sampling from other cultures in order to strengthen and refine their own (2010, 141). Such artists put forth a provocation to conventional notions of tradition by contending that it is not hidden away in a box on some shelf waiting to be opened. In other words, tradition is not a panacea that

is just out of our reach for the experiences we are living today, or some static, unattainable set of rules governing a given culture, ideas that are guaranteed to ensure the further entrenchment of 'vanishing Indian' discourses. Instead, tradition is fluid and performative, enmeshed with the past, but also invested in an Indigenous futurity that has always been mutable and changing.

An increasing number of artists and scholars envision hip-hop as a profound engagement with and continuation of Indigenous culture. One leading advocate is the multidisciplinary artist and hip-hop performer Skeena Reece (of Metis/Cree and Tsimshian/Gitksan descent), who co-curated 'Beat Nation: Art, Hip Hop and Aboriginal Culture', a 2012–13 travelling exhibition that opened at the Vancouver Art Gallery. In her curatorial essay introducing the project, Reece argues:

> The hip hop subculture that is being engaged by Native people today, is one of the strongest and most valued and respected streams of consciousness … In the lyrics of Indigenous hip hop today you can hear some of the most valuable accounts in our human history and evolution … Through the visual work and documentation of Indigenous hip hop artists, the amalgamation of our time on earth can be seen. This is very important … As adults, educators, helpers, historians and just plain human beings we need to honour this subculture as we honour our own families. In doing this, we honour ourselves, our people, and our humanity. (Reece 2012, n.p.)

Reece folds hip-hop into a broader narrative about promoting Indigenous healing, extending kinship and fostering support in ways that fill the needs of communities. Tania Willard, a Secwepemc hip-hop artist, makes a similar claim, contending that this art form is very much a part of a long, unbroken Native tradition: 'Our ancestors must be dancing for us: To see our culture thrive and survive they must be dancing to the beats' (2012, n.p.). For Willard and others, hip-hop is not something that is imposed upon and substitutes for tradition, but rather is a cultural phenomenon that builds upon traditional knowledges and performative vocabularies and, in its most joyful articulation, envisions connections between generations: those dancing relatives from the past as well as those extending into the future.

In what follows, I identify twelve common themes and strategies in the creative, critical interventions that many Indigenous artists are making through their hip-hop videos. In outlining each of these, I focus on Indigenous aesthetics and idioms in the hope of tracing patterns in Indigenous hip-hop practice and discerning its important political,

Fig. 1 Beat Nation Remixed, Vancouver Art Gallery, 26 March 2012.
Photo: Sandra Cuffe

decolonial, cultural and artistic concerns. This critical project is not meant to be exhaustive, nor do I want to suggest that other forms of US-based and global hip-hop do not also feature many of these commonalities, particularly since Indigenous hip-hop both draws from and influences broader, contemporary work in this genre.

Indigenous Languages: Reclamation and Pedagogy

Indigenous words and lyrics feature prominently in many Indigenous hip-hop videos as a way of eschewing or de-emphasizing English and other colonial languages. Some videos document the musician's struggles to learn her or his ancestral language, some highlight a selection of Indigenous words with English subtitles, and some show performers rapping entirely in their languages, engaging in dialogues with ancestors, spirits and future generations. For example, in songs such as 'Experience', Christie Lee Charles (Miss Christie Lee aka Crunch) remixes an archival Musqueam recording as a way of recognizing the importance of her elders' labour ('you did us good') in helping her to learn and express her own language.[7] While most of Miss Christie Lee's song is in Musqueam, Paul Wenell (aka Tall Paul), an Ojibwe MC from Minneapolis via Leech Lake, uses both English and Anishinaabemowin in 'Prayers in a Song'

to illustrate his journey in learning what he calls his 'first tongue'. His frustration at being denied access to Anishinaabemowin as a child are expressed through lyrics such as 'I was full of heat like a furnace 'cause I wasn't furnished with the language and traditional ways of my peeps'. These words echo through scenes filmed behind a cracked windshield at night and through a chain-link fence.[8] When he shifts to Anishinaabemowin, joined by a background chorus, the sequences feature Native American murals and Anishinaabemowin subtitles that have the effect of reclaiming urban space through language performance. Another music video, 'Suhtadit', by rapper Nils Rune Utsi (aka SlinCraze) is entirely in Northern Sámi.[9] Set in Guovdageaidnu (Kautokeino), Norway, the cultural capital of the Sámi, and using hard-hitting lyrics and graphic images as part of its parodic grotesquery, the video condemns settler colonial violence as well as Sámi acquiescence to assimilation. These videos mark – and perform – language reclamation as a critical, ongoing process, demonstrating how Indigenous words, concepts and vocabularies inflect ways of experiencing and understanding land and culture (see Leonard 2008).

Rapping the Land: Decentring the Anthropocentric

Indigenous hip-hop videos are rarely filmed entirely in studios, but nearly always make the land a character in the performance, whether that land is evidently rural or transformed into an urban centre such as South Auckland, Minneapolis, Vancouver, Winnipeg or Darwin. The lyrics and visual artefacts reference and acknowledge the rappers' ancestral relationships with the land (or, in Australia, with 'country'). This acknowledgement has the effect of deconstructing colonial fantasies of Indigenous people as inhabiting the past and having no present or future, a fantasy that serves to discursively empty settled and contested spaces of Indigenous populations. By featuring images of contemporary Indigenous people living on, working with and protecting the land, the videos also puncture the idea that Indigenous homelands exist only as part of a settler colonial regime. In addition, the preference for filming outside the studio demonstrates how important specific sites and geographical features are to Indigenous epistemologies.

Cradle to Cane: Intergenerational Cast

Nearly all the videos I have viewed for my research self-consciously present intergenerational portraits of Indigenous society and often feature mini, one- to two-second portraits or shout outs foregrounding

the diversity of faces and individual styles that make up the particular community depicted. They also show community members interacting with the artists, typically by dancing to their music. One striking example is the Indigenous Hip Hop Project production, 'Rockhole', co-produced with the Wurli-Wurlinjang Health Service in the Northern Territory, Australia. As the video opens, we are introduced to Kevin Rogers, who raps, 'we are the elder Rockhole community, strong as we get, in our community'. In the following sequence, an elder woman sitting by a fire raps, 'we tell our stories from the dreamtime, to keep our culture strong and alive'.[10] The entire video is in English and features snapshots of a broad swathe of the community, from infants to elders, each singing about the kinds of activities they enjoy: fishing, eating traditional foods, swimming, attending school, learning their history and living drug and alcohol free. Didgeridoo instrumentals and traditional dancing are also showcased.

Combating Gendered Violence and Misogyny

Indigenous hip-hop, like all forms of hip-hop, has historically been dominated by straight male artists.[11] However, their performances, with very few exceptions, do not promote patriarchy or the degradation of women as many mainstream, commercial hip-hop videos do. Instead, Indigenous hip-hop can be seen as providing a counter-aesthetics to combat the hegemony of dominant cultural representations of beauty. Rather than objectifying women or representing them solely as sexual objects, the performances show sex-positive, healthy images of a wide range of Native bodies. As a corollary to the project of combating misogyny, female artists have been making inroads into this terrain, as highlighted recently in an article on the 'First Ladies of Canadian Indigenous Hip-Hop' (Dobuzinskis 2016). Gender-based stereotyping has also been tackled as part of broader healthy living campaigns. A case in point is the Indigenous Hip Hop Project production by the Gununa Girls, 'Time to Party', created in partnership with the Queensland Cervical Screening Programme on Mornington Island in Australia. Images of the girls playing sport, fishing and dancing along dirt roads accompany rap lyrics such as 'we got no fear, we got no shame, Gununa girls on top of the game' and 'I like when the girls get real low, shaking our bodies, go go go'.[12] Their performance is primarily in English, but also features Lardil language subtitles that reinforce the visual and lyrical messages: *karwa lelmari* (strong minds), *karwa yurra* (strong bodies) and *merralkubar nalmu bidngen ruba* (keep our women healthy).

'A Mic as My Tomahawk': Lyrical Warriors

While some Indigenous hip-hop artists document the settler colonial violence enacted on Native bodies, very few promote or fetishize violence, particularly gun violence. When violence is referenced in the videos, it is usually metaphoric and overtly or tacitly related to social justice. For example, K.A.S.P. (Rob Sawan), a Cree MC, raps on his track 'On a Roll' (featuring Indelible): 'I walk this land with a mic as my tomahawk. Raid the block to stop the evil doers, stop the pursuers' (while the camera focuses on an image of a church).[13] K.A.S.P. grew up in East Vancouver and hails from a family recovering from decades of residential school trauma. According to the International Indigenous Speakers Bureau website, he spent his childhood in group homes and part of his young adulthood homeless, alcoholic and a drug abuser.[14] Hip-hop offered him an alternative to street life and has been an avenue for learning about Aboriginal culture and traditions.

Instruments of the Future, Present and Past

Many Indigenous hip-hop videos incorporate traditional Indigenous instruments (didgeridoo, flute, drums) and put what are often considered traditional musical forms in active, creative juxtaposition with new music produced on a turntable or digitally. In 'Prayer Loop Song', Apsáalooke artist Christian Parrish Takes the Gun (aka Supaman) plays the hand drum and flute, sings, beat boxes, DJs, remixes powwow tracks and fancy dances in his music studio.[15] Bringing seemingly different musical traditions into conversation with each other, especially traditions that are thought of as inhabiting different ethnographic, temporal and spatial dimensions (like the flute and the turntable), makes clear the ways in which contemporary Indigenous artists engage in productive dialogue with their musical and cultural genealogies. They do so in sophisticated ways by drawing from visual and sonic aesthetics that are already part of the interpretive repertoires of most audiences (as in the case of powwow music and regalia, for example) in order to create work that is both familiar (flute music) and unfamiliar (beat boxing to a hand drum).

Indigenous Dance Aesthetics and B-Boying

Many Indigenous hip-hop videos appropriate mainstream hip-hop body movement aesthetics, primarily B-Boying (breakdancing) and stylized hand gestures, but they also show artists adept at executing local and/or traditional dance forms or include clips of Indigenous dancers

performing in other, non-diegetic contexts. In her germinal work on Native American stage dance, Jacqueline Shea Murphy argues that the state-sanctioned theatricalization of Indigenous dance forms – a process historically achieved in part by prohibitions against ceremonial dancing – worked to enforce compulsory Christianity, to surveil Native people and to outlaw particularized social, cultural and spiritual dimensions of dance in Indigenous communities (2007, 23). Staging Indigenous dance was a way of making it appealing to settler audiences, commodifying it for Wild West shows and other travelling entertainments of their ilk, and removing it from its tribally specific context. Yet Shea Murphy also shows how the dances themselves and the process of creating movement reflected the agency of the dancers and choreographers and became a transmissible archive. Dance elements of contemporary hip-hop videos often draw from the staged performances of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as well as from contemporary Indigenous artists' concert performances at festivals and other stage venues. Like the remixed musical compositions in the videos, the choreographies of indigenous hip-hop typically draw from and regenerate an evolving archive, creating new dance forms in the spaces afforded by new media.

Expressing Cultural Pride and Positive Cultural Images

While the videos illustrate some of the harsher realities of life in Indigenous communities, they also strive to represent their respective constituencies in positive, healthy ways. Some of the videos appear to be public service announcements and the work they do in supporting mental, physical and spiritual health initiatives is significant. Through energetic and inclusive performances finely attuned to their audiences' interests or experiences, the featured hip-hop MCs, artists and dancers make Indigenous culture appeal to Indigenous communities, particularly young people, a Herculean task given 500 years of marginalization and genocide. For example, K.A.S.P.'s 'On a Roll' features vignettes of an intergenerational cast of Okanagan community members in British Columbia engaging in quotidian activities such as dancing and standing in front of their homes. In these scenes, they gaze directly into the camera, implicitly acknowledging – and staging – an exchange of Indigenous looks as a means of resisting the anthropological, settler eye that has historically been trained on marginalized subjects. These vignettes demonstrate that the community members are contemporary people rather than static stereotypes.

Showcasing Indigenous Art

Many Indigenous hip-hop videos also feature elements and examples of Indigenous art, whether in the form of graffiti, murals or more 'traditional' works such as totem poles and petroglyphs. Tall Paul's 'Prayer in a Song', for example, includes one scene of a man offering his beaded artwork for sale on a chain-link fence, another of brightly coloured Native graffiti at a public park and a third of a small-scale, faded, sepia-coloured, chipped and water-damaged mural of men on horseback hunting buffalo. These insurgent art practices mark Minneapolis as an inherently Native space, one that not only comprises part of the territorial homelands of the Dakota and Anishinabe peoples, but which has also been a major relocation centre for Native people forcibly displaced from rural and reservation communities in the 1950s by governmental mandate. The graffiti, the street vendor's art and the public art of the mural combine to produce what Dylan Robinson and Keavy Martin (2016) have termed 'aesthetic action' by linking Minneapolis's Indigenous past and present to its future, circumventing settler colonial interventions. Likewise, Miss Christie Lee's 'Henqeminem Hip Hop' video and interview are set in and outside the Musqueam Cultural Centre Gallery on the Musqueam Reserve near what is now known as Vancouver. The gallery features contemporary work by Indigenous artists, including c̓əsnaʔəm (the city before the city), an exhibition displaying over 4,500 years of history and culture in the Musqueam homelands. By situating her decolonial intervention inside this culturally and politically relevant territory, Lee draws a connection between Native space, place, art and architecture, while also creating Musqueam art for predominantly Musqueam audiences.

Decolonial Economies

With few exceptions, most Indigenous hip-hop promotes ideas rather than the acquisition of material things. When 'bling' is present, it often takes the form of handcrafted jewellery and other adornments (functioning as identity markers). In 'Indigenous Holocaust', for example, a video directed by Missy Whiteman (Arapaho/Kickapoo), the performer, Wahwahtay Benais (Anishinabe), wears a handmade black-and-white beaded medallion featuring a bear.[16] This medallion might be read as a talisman projecting and protecting the artist's indigeneity against the intergenerational traumas of compulsory assimilation that the video decries through its rap lyrics, meshed with archival photographs of those who lived and died in boarding schools. Another decolonizing strategy common in Indigenous hip-hop is to borrow material items from mainstream commodity culture

and present them as part of a broader critique of Western capitalism. This approach is evident, for example, in the ironic use of baseball caps in some videos to index the appropriation of 'Indian' mascots in the North American sports industry.

Hip-Hop as Settler Colonial Critique

Critiquing settler colonialism, whether tacitly or explicitly, is a hallmark of Indigenous hip-hop, as many of my observations above suggest. As part of this critical project, some artists directly tackle the racialized violence and discrimination that constrain their everyday lives. SlinCraze, for example, not only raps about being physically assaulted by Norwegians but also stages a disturbing version of this abuse in a cartoonish vignette where pitchfork-wielding settlers attack his effigy. Taking a more rhetorical tack in 'Feelin' Reserved', Hellnback, a Cree MC with War Party (from Hobbema, Alberta), one of the first North American rap groups, likewise confronts the violence endemic to settler colonialism. In this case, the video interpellates non-indigenous viewers (the 'you' called forth in Hellnback's accusatory lyrics) as complicit in that violence: 'genocide makes me live my Native life deadly ... we never brought residential schools to this place, we never brought alcoholic fluid to our table, we were never gonna try change you, what you did to my descendants changed the elders' lives too'.[17] Circulating in public spaces that would not have otherwise been open to them, the critiques launched in these videos present important counter-histories to the foundational myths of the settler colonial nation.

Hip-Hop as Social Critique

Perhaps most importantly, hip-hop makers are launching courageous self-critiques directed at Indigenous people, calling attention to negative behaviour or attitudes, often when no one else does. Tall Paul, for example, criticizes urban Indians for believing that Native culture is 'no deeper than fry bread and powwows'; Lindsay 'Eekwol' Knight treats the theme of domestic abuse in 'Too Sick';[18] the rappers in the 'Rockhole' video condemn community members who drink, do drugs and gamble; and SlinCraze admonishes Sámi who continue to quietly accept injustices, allowing the Norwegian government to take their land and erode their rights. Raymond Galvan (aka Short Dawg Tha Native), one of the featured artists at the hip-hop symposium held on my campus, openly critiques his tribe for failing to attend to the problem of drug abuse. Galvan is a bird singer and MC from San Manuel Reservation in southern California who claims to live at 'the intersection of rez life and hip hop'. His video

'Trouble' – which features 1970s Native American band Redbone's song 'When You Got Trouble' – stresses the urgency of this issue: 'before I could even finish this song I got a text telling me my cousin was gone, died of an overdose'. This performance makes clear, in images as well as words, that it is the responsibility of all members of the community to come together to 'teach these kids that drugs can kill'.[19]

Conclusion: Decolonizing the Future, One Beat at a Time

Prior to the beginning of the hip-hop concert on my campus, I spoke to several elders who were in attendance. They seemed apprehensive about attending hip-hop performances and even more concerned that elementary and high school students would be exposed to hip-hop music. Yet, after the concert was over, one of the elders approached me to say how much he enjoyed the performers' work, even though he had initially been reluctant to see it. Less surprisingly, the elementary, high school and college students had clearly revelled in the concert, singing, dancing and crowding to the front of the stage and staying afterwards to chat excitedly with their peers. The power of the evening's event resided in the performers' ability to embody Indigenous musical, aesthetic and gestural forms through hip-hop.

Indigenous hip-hop is engaged in a global movement of social, environmental and spiritual justice, inviting its audiences to reconsider the past, participate in contemporary struggles for sovereignty in the present, and imagine a decolonized future rooted in hope, joy and a rearticulation of our relationships with each other and all beings that share this planet. The forward-looking impetus of global Indigenous hip-hop will become even more critical as the planet contends with the rise in neo-fascism, authoritarian sentiment and populist nationalism exemplified by Donald Trump, Rodrigo Duterte and a host of other xenophobic, sexist, homophobic, racist and intolerant politicians across otherwise disparate parts of the world. These regimes instantiate what Zygmunt Bauman has termed the 'wholly negative globalization' characterizing our contemporary period: 'unchecked, unsupplemented, and uncompensated for by a "positive" counterpart which is still a distant prospect at best' (Bauman 2006, 96). Michael Hviid Jacobsen elaborates this view, aligning 'negative globalization' with 'a highly-selective globalization of trade and capital, surveillance and information, coercion and weaponry, crime and terrorism, that all show disdain for State boundaries' (2008, 147). We are experiencing the destructive effects of that trend under the terror of the current political climate.

Indigenous hip-hop is a decolonial movement that reconfigures, remixes

and reimagines the future through the multiple registers of the past. At the same time, it engages in conversation with the African American histories of enslavement, dispossession, violence and marginalization that produced (and still condition) hip-hop culture, as well as the joy, creativity, pleasure and liberation that continue to give it life. As a popular and flexible art form that has penetrated and sometimes initiated political, environmental, social and cultural movements among marginalized Indigenous peoples across the globe, hip-hop represents the possibility of a positive globalization working to create dialogue outside of the totalizing gaze of a single global culture; to deconstruct anthropocentric epistemologies; to articulate specific critical concerns through a universal idiom; and to suggest alternatives to capitalism, sexism, homophobia, heteropatriarchy and racism.

Hip-hop demonstrates the power young people have, in an increasingly mediated and mediatized world, to disseminate information along non-commercial and non-conventional channels and social networking platforms. The mastery of such communication platforms seeds the possibility of mobilizing global audiences around critical Indigenous issues while employing specific lyrics, performances and visual images to narrate the place of Indigenous history at the centre of worldwide social, political, cultural and environmental movements. Indigenous hip-hop is part of a long performance genealogy reaching back to pre-modern, trans-local and transnational cultural movements that activated conversations between different artistic and social forms, all the while harnessing the synergy created when apparently traditional forms came into contact with new ways of doing and being in the world.

Notes

1 Harry Allen's Twitter feed shows the ways he envisions hip-hop as activism and hip-hop artists as 'media assassins': https://twitter.com/harryallen?lang=en (accessed 11 April 2017).

2 I follow the convention of thinking about rap as the poetic, rhyming element of hip-hop culture (the others being DJing, graffiti and dancing). Hip-hop, in this essay, is treated as a varied, vibrant culture, of which rap music is part. This approach acknowledges Indigenous hip-hop artists as equally participating (alongside African Americans and other innovators) in what India Arie has called a 'way of life' (qtd in Perry 2004).

3 On Idle No More, see http://www.idlenomore.ca; on the efforts to protect land and water against corporate greed and crude oil pipeline transportation, see http://www.nodapl.life and the Twitter hashtags #NoDAPL, #WaterIsLife, #MniWiconi, #RezpectOurWater and #StandWithStandingRock. More information on violence against Indigenous women in North America is

available in Amnesty International's Maze of Injustice and No More Stolen Sisters Reports: http://www.amnestyusa.org/our-work/issues/women-s-rights/violence-against-women/maze-of-injustice and http://www.amnesty.ca/our-work/campaigns/no-more-stolen-sisters (all accessed 13 September 2013).

  4 To view the video, see http://www.mtv.com/news/2154171/rebel-music-native-america-7th-generation-rises/. Mays (2016a) offers an incisive review of this work.

  5 At the forefront of this critical initiative are publications by Del Hierro (2016), Llanes-Ortiz (2015), Mays (2016b), Minestrelli (2016), Navarro (2016) and Recollet (2016).

  6 See http://www.beatnation.org, https://indigenoushiphop.com and http://www.nativehiphop.net (all accessed 14 September 2016).

  7 See 'Henqeminem Hip Hop' at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qNACDc8c0DM (uploaded 23 September 2013) and Miss Christie Lee's Soundcloud recording of 'Experience', https://soundcloud.com/rpmfm/miss-christie-lee-experience (accessed 14 September 2015).

  8 Tall Paul, 'Prayers in a Song', https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=61V69jRF5ys (uploaded 13 November 2012).

  9 SlinCraze, 'Suhtadit', https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aOWH0W6t6eM&list=RDaOWH0W6t6eM#t=43 (uploaded 22 October 2012).

  10 Indigenous Hip Hop Project, 'Rockhole', https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mHuhMSyJTF0 (uploaded 9 March 2013).

  11 With the notable exception of Angel Haze (Cherokee) and Dio Ganhdih (Cherokee and Mohawk), there are, as yet, few queer-identified Indigenous hip-hop artists of prominence.

  12 Indigenous Hip Hop Project, Gununa Girls, 'Time to Party', https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8t14PHn4ds0 (uploaded 9 June 2012).

  13 K.A.S.P., 'On a Roll' (feat. Indelible), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FHCCL8yGR_s (uploaded 27 May 2011).

  14 See https://www.iispeakersbureau.com/our-speakers/rob-sawan/ (accessed 14 July 2016).

  15 Supaman, 'Prayer Loop Song', https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_0jq7jIa34Y (uploaded February 20 2014).

  16 Missy Whiteman, 'Indigenous Holocaust', https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vmaSF2aIxZM (uploaded 8 August 2008).

  17 War Party, 'Feelin' Reserved', https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nvCleNb1vB4 (uploaded 29 November 2006).

  18 Lindsay 'Eekwol' Knight, 'Too Sick', https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0XuYikRUl7g (uploaded 5 May 2009).

  19 Short Dawg Tha Native, 'Trouble', https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vA9BX2XuNAI (uploaded 7 January 2012).

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11

Sámi Musical Performance, Media and the Politics of Globalization: The Case of *Sápmi Sessions*

Thomas R. Hilder

'It will be bloody good work in the studio, filled with people. It might go pear-shaped but it might also be completely great.' With these words, the Swedish music producer Tobias Fröberg sets the scene for the artists Maxida Märak, Aki and King Fari Band on one episode of the television documentary series *Sápmi Sessions*. Broadcast over two series in 2011 and 2014 on Sveriges Television (SVT), *Sápmi Sessions* enjoyed international popularity and critical acclaim by offering insights into musical collaboration between artists from Sweden and the Nordic region's indigenous people, the Sámi. Each 30-minute episode follows the same basic concept: one Sámi artist or group is paired with a Sweden-based artist or group and sent to a disused music studio in the Sámi town of Vássejávri, in a mountainous region of north Sweden. With the help of Fröberg, the guest musicians have three days in which to compose, perform and record a new song together. The documentary primarily traces critical moments of musical creativity in the studio as well as occasions of bonding between the artists as they embark on brief activities in the surrounding environment through a well-versed 'fly-on-the-wall' documentary style interspersed with personal interviews. Featured artists have included the Finnish Sámi singer-songwriter Niko Valkeapää, 2012 Eurovision Song Contest winner for Sweden Loreen, the late Norwegian Sámi *joiker* Inga Juuso and the Stockholm-based Norwegian singer-songwriter Ane Brun. Often the show addresses Sámi histories of Christianization, assimilation and land dispossession and highlights diverse experiences of indigeneity in the Nordic peninsula today. At the same time, the programme offers audiences insights into Sámi musical performance, articulates certain local indigenous aesthetics and presents new possibilities for cultural dialogue between Sámi and non-Sámi. As a spectacle of musical performance

and cross-cultural encounter, *Sápmi Sessions* offers a rich case study for inspecting the politics of media, globalization and Sámi indigeneity.

Fröberg's opening remarks highlight the experimental and unpredictable nature of the musical collaborations, features that have been a central part of the emergence of a Sámi popular music scene. To a large extent, this scene has fostered new creative possibilities, institutional spaces and transnational audiences for the Sámi vocal tradition of *joik*, thought to have been performed since time immemorial throughout the Sámi region, *Sápmi*, and considered unique within Nordic music repertoires in its melodic, rhythmic and vocal quality (Graff 2004). *Joik* artists such as Nils-Aslak Valkeapää began experimenting with instrumental accompaniment, incorporating *joik* into popular music forms and releasing recordings from the late 1960s (Jones-Bamman 1993). Meanwhile, other Sámi musicians began to perform in Sámi languages and sing about Sámi themes in diverse popular music genres, including jazz, rock, techno and rap. Many of these artists have embarked on creative and professional collaborations with other artists, producers and record companies, both within and beyond the Sámi community. They have also experimented with a range of media – radio, recording studio technologies, the Internet – as they attempt to create innovative work and seek local, national and global audiences. In these ways, Sámi music production reveals aspirations towards sovereignty within and across Norway, Sweden, Finland and the Russian Kola peninsula at the same time as it articulates indigeneity in a globalized world (Hilder 2015).

In her study of Sámi musicians' experiences in music studios, Beverley Diamond shows how music production is subject to the homogenizing forces of media technologies and aspirations for global audiences, even while it works to strengthen forms of cultural revival (2007; 2017). Fröberg's allusion to the music studio as both a productive and a volatile site for musical encounters between indigenous and non-indigenous artists is itself suggestive of globalization's wider challenges and potentials for indigenous artists. Over the course of two series of *Sápmi Sessions*, the studio offers a stage for moments of aesthetic experimentation, harmonious creative collaboration, collision between diverse musical ontologies and personal reflection on cultural difference. The various scenarios extend a long history of Sámi mobilization within national Nordic media through attempts to build autonomous Sámi media institutions in order to resist cultural hegemony and foster self-determination (Hætta 2003; Pietikäinen 2008; Hilder 2017). Attuned to global audiences, the show is produced and directed by mainly Sámi film-makers, producers and editors (Lisa Marie Kristensen, Mariela Idivuoma, Samuel Idivuoma and Per-Johannes Marainen) who clearly intend to raise awareness of Sámi music, explore

contemporary Sámi experiences and propose indigenous aesthetics and world-views. In *Sápmi Sessions*, media technologies also become non-human protagonists that enable and negotiate cultural encounter and creative innovation. The show highlights how the technologies of globalization – high-specification film equipment, digital studios, smartphones – have become central for indigenous communities to foster cultural revival, address political issues and propose alternative indigenous futures.

This essay analyses the political work of *Sápmi Sessions* by drawing on research in Sámi music, globalization theory, indigenous media studies and ethnomusicology. As scholars of indigeneity note, on the one hand globalization can be experienced as 'simply an extension of colonization', enabling the 'power and domination of a hegemonic value system imposed on other societies and cultures' (Tabobondung 2011, 135). On the other hand, indigenous activists, academics and artists have exploited the institutions, technologies and ideologies of globalization to work towards forms of indigenous self-determination. According to Peter Phipps, 'Indigeneity is arguably one of the most broadly dispersed and deeply lived examples of "actually existing" identity globalism' (2009, 30). Communication technologies, considered one of the main driving forces of globalization, are particularly politicized in indigenous contexts (Landzelius 2006; Wilson and Stewart 2008) and have considerable emancipatory potential, as Rebeka Tabobondung maintains:

> Autonomous Indigenous media creation is one example of the historical and continued resistance of Indigenous peoples to colonial and hegemonic rule, including their present forms under neoliberal globalization. Indigenous media creation is aimed at building alliances and creating support and space for self-determination. To the extent that such activities can become globally present, an alternative Earth globalization may emerge. (Tabobondung 2011, 130)

In particular, globalized contemporary media afford opportunities for indigenous storytelling and envisioning alternative local and global futures addressed to both subaltern and mainstream audiences (Tabobondung 2011, 135–36).

Noting media technologies' complicity in phases and facets of globalization – be they colonial, neocolonial and/or anti-colonial – Michelle H. Raheja proposes the notion of 'visual sovereignty' to describe the creative acts by which indigenous film-making has asserted authority in representing and fostering indigenous constituencies. Screen works exercising visual sovereignty may speak to multiple indigenous and non-indigenous audiences, transmit indigenous knowledge, articulate

political positions and bring about new forms of orality (Raheja 2010, 196). Applying Raheja's theory, I argue that *Sápmi Sessions* supports forms of Sámi cultural revival that nurture Sámi ways of knowing and being, performing an indigeneity that at once reveals histories of past representations of Sámi music and proposes possibilities for indigenous creative innovation within a globalized world. In particular, I explore notions of place, the politics of media, indigenous aesthetics and cultural encounters against a backdrop of fraught histories of assimilation, ethnic stereotyping and struggles for Sámi agency. Drawing on ethnographic research into Sámi musical performance that I have been conducting over the past decade, I thus reveal through media analysis how *Sápmi Sessions* presents alternative Sámi ontologies and epistemologies and proposes new visions of cultural dialogue, storytelling and gifting between indigenous and non-indigenous artists in an era of digital media and intensifying globalization.

Localities

Globalization has catalysed increasingly fraught relationships between notions of the local and the global. Within indigenous communities, such tensions play out in terms of how indigenous localities are imagined, how they have been and continue to be transformed through colonialism and neocolonialism, and how indigenous artists and activists, often global travellers themselves, harness international discourses of human rights to secure local mobilization and stewarding of indigenous homelands. Many sequences in *Sápmi Sessions* offer distinctive visual and sonic clues to a particular locality while also leaving room for various interpretations of place in ways that highlight the politics of globalization. 'It's like being in a Western', comments one of the members of the Swedish band Looptroop Rockers, as he steps on to the Vássejávri train station platform. While this remark highlights the continual exoticization of the Swedish North, much of *Sápmi Sessions* works to challenge such tropes. The very first shot in the second series shows a black amplifier in a sunny field of yellow grass with mountains in the background accompanied by the buzzing of mosquitos. What follows is a 20-second preview of the episode that invites viewers into the drama and fun of the artistic collaboration. The next lengthy image depicts a noisy cargo train passing in front of a station building, when a jazzy, electronic theme tune begins, its metric pulse suggesting the urgency of passing time. This theme is the track 'Smoke and Mirrors' released in 2002 by the US artist RJD2, though remixed here to fit the visuals and narrative of the documentary opening. Subsequent stills of a mountain lake and then a disused red wooden building form the

backdrop for a voiceover that introduces the concept of the programme. A disembodied male voice explains with a deep serious tone in the North Sámi language:

> An old, rundown studio in the mountains. A deserted village in northernmost Sweden. Some of the most acclaimed Sámi and Swedish artists. They've never met before. No one knows how it will work out. What we know is: This is Vássejávri. There's a studio. Tobias Fröberg, one of Sweden's top music producers. There isn't much time.[1]

Accompanying this introduction are spectacular shots of Vássejávri and its surrounding environment, though with traces of people, music and technical equipment. On a grassy hillside lies an abandoned electric cable. A microphone stands beneath a few birch trees. The town's buildings stand unassuming but seemingly empty among various networks of electricity cables. A forgotten cymbal and tambourine adorn a mountain pass. And Tobias Fröberg sits contemplatively in the studio among shining percussion instruments, guitars and a MacBook. We are then presented with written words in slow succession: '3 days. 2 artists. 1 new song. Sápmi Sessions.' The music surges while vocals intone the lyrics: 'Who knows what tomorrow will bring? Maybe sunshine or maybe rain.' The visual collage likewise accelerates, including shots of the town at night under dancing northern lights as well as a picturesque sunrise, until the title of the programme appears on top of headphones sitting on a rocky outcrop and the electronic textures of the music draw to a close.

While acknowledging the show's multiple audiences and their potentially divergent readings of this music documentary (see Mera and Morcom 2009, 5), one could readily interpret the opening sequence as a representation of the globalized North. The images primarily evoke a northern Swedish setting with spectacular mountain scenery. As each artist is introduced in the ensuing three minutes of the programme, we are presented with a rough map of the Nordic peninsula detailing the respective current home cities of the two artists/groups and the distances they have travelled by car or train to arrive at Vássejávri. Such details emphasize a sense of remoteness for the majority of the show's audience living in or coming from southern parts of Sweden and Norway. However, the images of dwellings and technology add a modern touch. The buildings are, according to the narrator, empty and the studio is in decay. This sense of a post-industrial landscape is emphasized by the rusty train that rushes across the screen, in transit between the distant, urban, former imperial centre and the supposedly provincial northern outposts of the Nordic peninsula. The station is the last stop before the Norwegian

Fig. 1. Deportees band members Anders Stenberg, Peder Stenberg and Mattias
Lidström with Niillas Holmberg in Sápmi Sessions.
Photo: Lisa Marie Kristensen.

border and finally the Norwegian coastal city of Narvik. Notions of
wilderness and remoteness are underlined when one of the King Fari
Band members asks nervously on the train journey, 'Are there bears here?'
While old, the studio houses state-of-the-art recording facilities. As we
find out in one episode, it used to be a dance hall, evoking memories and
soundscapes of rural life in the decades following the Second World War.
By the second series, the studio has been furnished with a stuffed rabbit
and a picture of a bear in a quirky Nordic-style blend of rustic and urban
features, mirroring the 'natural landscape', which is adorned with musical
instruments and digital devices. The Vássejávri presented is thus one of
paradoxes – wilderness, post-industrial decay and postmodern aesthetics
– all of which are suggestive of complex local, national and transnational
histories and imaginaries of the European Arctic.

   Another layer of cartographic meanings, however, is embedded within
Sápmi Sessions. The programme's name itself reveals a commitment to
Sámi historical and politicized understandings of a Sámi homeland, where
Sápmi denotes a sense of a people, culture and geographical region. While
located within the Swedish nation, Vássejávri is also a place rich in past
and present meanings within the Sámi community. A Sámi setting is
suggested by the North Sami voice that introduces each programme. The
maps showing the distance travelled by the musicians mark Vássejávri

Fig. 2. Sápmi Sessions video still featuring Tobias Fröberg, Roger Ludvigsen and Jonathan Johansson in the studio.

with its indigenous Sámi name and not the Swedish name imposed following state expansion in the late sixteenth century. The reclaiming of Sámi place names as part of post-Second World War Sámi political mobilization has been a powerful way of articulating indigenous attachments to place, though it has also provoked heated debates and at times violent responses (Helander 2009). The Sámi artists' various excursions into the surrounding natural landscape, where they reveal particular indigenous practices and relationships to the environment, actively situate *Sápmi Sessions* as host and guide for a transnational audience. This performance of indigenous sovereignty has a linguistic element, with the narrator and Sámi artists using North Sámi when they can, even though much of the studio work is undertaken in Swedish, the mother tongue of Fröberg and of the largest audiences on SVT. Norwegian Sámi communicate mostly in Norwegian (which is mostly mutually comprehensible with Swedish) and Finnish Sámi in Swedish. When multiple nationalities are present, the dialogue resorts to English, a language that nearly all citizens of the Nordic countries, including Sámi, can use confidently at a high level. In the show, Sápmi is presented as the hosting indigenous homeland and revealed as a complex configuration of transnational spaces, linguistic diversity, and internal national and Nordic boundaries.

Sápmi Sessions also emphasizes the different local, national and

international spheres of Sámi music and the global mobility of Sámi artists. When introducing Mari Boine, the most famous Sámi musician, Fröberg alludes wittily to her success by mentioning that she has featured on a stamp in Norway. Sámi artists also position themselves in multiple, and often vastly different, localities. Describing his career as a reindeer herder and international *joik* artist, Lars-Ánte Kuhmunen elaborates, 'It is two different worlds. The job as a reindeer herder on the mountain is lonely. You chase reindeer and wonder how you will survive the winter. Then you go on stage and suddenly stand in front of [crowds of people] … That's unbelievable contrasts.' Meanwhile, when asked about her current musical schedule, Inga Juuso unassumingly replies that she is about to go on tour to Washington, Chicago, New York, China, Mongolia, Japan and Argentina, adding that she has just performed in Switzerland and France. She then politely asks her young Swedish collaborator Markus Krunegård if he has been abroad much, to which he replies meekly, 'no, not especially'. Here, popular notions of who is conventionally associated with the local and global, the cosmopolitan and provincial, are turned upside down.

Various cultural and musical references likewise position *Sápmi Sessions* in a globally networked artistic space. The opening music by RJD2, with its jazzy soundscape and electronic textures, itself suggests contemporary international musical tastes in the Nordic region and Sámi community, while at the same time evoking a dense constellation of places through the multiple samples it incorporates. Featured innovations in genres during the series such as rock, reggae and rap also point to the performers' connections with a range of locales, both global and local. SlinCraze, one of the first Sámi rappers, talks openly of his own creative growth and nurturing of a now global phenomenon in a north Norwegian context, expressing his gratitude for what he has learned from his collaborators, Mohammed Ali and the Mack Beats from the multi-ethnic Stockholm suburbs. Meanwhile, the Swedish artist Jonathan Johansson admits that his own recorded parts begin to 'sound like an Icelandic band', most probably referring to the wordless vocals of Sigur Rós. Similarly, in one of the programme's early sessions, Fröberg chuckles as, tongue in cheek, he compares the Rundberg siblings to the Gallagher brothers (from the UK 1990s Britpop band Oasis) and the Beatles. Such moments point to complex transnational flows of cultural products and processes as well as the indigenization of performance genres and tastes in Sámi contexts, challenging any stable global–local binary.

Mediation

Part of the tension between the local and the global in Sámi and other First Peoples' musical cultures stems from the rise in communication technologies, which has precipitated and accelerated globalization while also strengthening indigenous mobilization and cultural revival. Digital media play a significant role in *Sápmi Sessions*, becoming key to forms of musical creativity and exchange and enabling reconfigurations of indigenous agency. Throughout the two series of the technology-savvy show, digital innovations are themselves foregrounded. 'He can make music out of anything', Fröberg explains as he introduces the Sámi guitarist and composer Roger Ludvigsen, highlighting the experimental aesthetics and technological adroitness of one of *Sápmi*'s most important musical collaborators. As well as punctuating the landscapes of the opening musical sequences, technical equipment features prominently in the recording studio where the musicians experiment with different microphone techniques while Fröberg captures these sounds on his MacBook. Some of the sounds incorporated into the sequence's sonic texture resample earlier media technologies – radios and analogue recorders – that buzz, whirr or beep in the process of tuning in and recording. Many of the resulting tracks also foreground their digital mediation. Loreen's vocals, for example, are given a metallic but intimate effect, and the thud of Wimme Saari's heartbeat is digitally manipulated to provide the foundational soundscape for his track with the Looptroop Rockers. Moreover, many of the episodes quietly celebrate the prevalence of new media technologies when, for instance, musicians take their own smartphones out into the surrounding natural environment to record soundscapes that can be incorporated into the texture of the music or at least provide inspiration for the resulting musical composition. Such scenes highlight the significance of digital technologies in enabling local forms of musical composition, studio production and collaborative socialities.

In *Sápmi Sessions*, however, the post-production studio work by Fröberg is hidden and never explicitly documented (see Diamond 2007). Fröberg's role, at least as portrayed through the show's narratives, is that of a creative nurturer and diplomat. He negotiates disagreements between musicians, pushes for consensus and offers his experienced opinion, but never takes an authorial position in the process, performing a kind of new Nordic masculinity. Likewise, the studio as such is by no means the central stage in *Sápmi Sessions*: in all episodes of the show, the cameras follow the musicians into the surrounding environment, which itself becomes a source of creative inspiration for song lyrics, *joiks* and sonic textures. These trips also seem to offer significant opportunities for social bonding

and creative collaboration. With its particular approach to making and recording new works, *Sápmi Sessions* suggests a history of media practices within the Sámi musical revival. In this context, the studio is a broader assemblage that encompasses the musicians, portable digital technologies and the wider social and natural environment that enables and shapes the flourishing Sámi music industry.

With its apparently unscripted dialogue and fly-on-the-wall perspective, the show itself draws from reality TV and popular documentaries, which have been a mainstay of European (including Nordic) TV broadcasting repertoires since the late 1990s. Within each episode, the narrative arc revolves around the musicians' curiosity about cultural and personal differences and their forging of new, meaningful friendships and creative collaborations across perceived disparities. The camerawork is always slick, juxtaposing diverse and polyvalent images, capturing the artists at intimate moments in the creative process, eliciting interesting commentaries and conveying intimate exchanges between collaborators. At the same time, the show speaks in different ways to different audiences through its multilingualism. Airing on both SVT and NRK (the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation), *Sápmi Sessions* has reached multiple publics in both Sweden and Norway. Its transnational consumption has also been facilitated by Internet TV archives on both broadcasters' websites and YouTube uploads of some of the episodes as well as many of the final songs. The high production value and familiar (pop-media) format provides a cultural product that is accessible and digestible, both aesthetically and technically, to wide audiences.

It is perhaps the very globalized format of *Sápmi Sessions* that enables its own quiet but salient intervention on a transnational stage. As Raheja has argued in relation to Inuit film-making, the critique and appropriation of earlier ethnographic techniques is itself a strategy of visual sovereignty (Raheja 2010, 207–08). *Sápmi Sessions* also alludes to a longer ethnographic gaze focused on the Sámi. Scenes in the show are often punctuated with numerous old black-and-white shots and footage (presumably from the early twentieth century) taken from the SVT and NRK archive collections. These interjected images, clearly made for ethnographic purposes, are of Sámi families wearing *gákti* (traditional Sámi costumes), standing in front of *lávvu* (traditional Sámi summer tents) and herding reindeer in mountainous landscapes that resemble Vássejávri's surroundings. They are accompanied by brief muffled sounds of what might be a phonograph recording of a *joik*, thus alluding to the history of collection, documentation and archiving of this unique musical form.[2] Interestingly, the 'Smoke and Mirrors' theme tune by RJD2 incorporates musical samples in ways that leave him open to criticism for appropriating the work of subaltern

musicians. *Sápmi Sessions*, like the examples Raheja discusses, playfully investigates earlier mediated images of Sámi while also commenting on broader notions of cultural appropriation, thereby refracting (neo)colonial gazes and empowering forms of indigenous agency.

Epistemologies

Sápmi Sessions also strengthens Sámi agency by transmitting forms of indigenous knowledge to local and international audiences. In this respect, it builds on other models of Sámi film in which sound and music are harnessed to articulate particular conceptions of the sacred, the environment and the postcolonial (Ramnarine 2013). Highlighting the centrality of Sámi aesthetics and ontologies in processes of encounter and collaboration within *Sápmi Sessions*, Maxida Märak explains at one point, 'For me it's important that the *joik* pervades the whole song'. Crucial aspects of Sámi epistemology, as presented within the show, coalesce around notions of time. The urgency of time is itself one of the key driving forces for the show's concept, where the musicians must compete against the clock. The pressure of time is underscored through the theme tune, where the pulse is marked by a percussive sound that resembles a clock ticking, though one whose second rate is slightly higher than sixty beats per minute. As Loreen is driven to Vássejávri in a private car in one episode, she muses on the task ahead, joking that she normally takes three months to write a song. In contrast, Lars-Ánte Kuhmunen confesses that he finds the collaboration a little laborious as he normally likes to compose songs as quickly as possible. Nonetheless, we are always given the sense that the resulting song is composed and recorded only just in time by the evening of the third day. While these songs have circulated on the Internet, none has been made commercially available. Thus, on the one hand the temporal momentum of the show conveys a world of professional musicians whose creative muse is under the command of a capitalist musical industry dictated by tight deadlines. On the other hand, the focus on the social aspect of collaboration and the performance-making process rather than a final commercial product suggests a creative philosophy in which the demands of (post)modern temporality are put into question.

In a similar vein, *Sápmi Sessions* presents competing ontologies of place. As well as evoking a transnational Sámi homeland through the use of Sámi place names, the show also offers more nuanced insights into the ways that place signifies within Sámi cosmologies. Lars-Ánte Kuhmunen, whom Fröberg wittily calls the 'Sámi Rambo', teaches his collaborators how to fish, explaining that he wants to show them his place of work. Whereas

one of the Looptroop Rockers posits nature as inspirational in terms evoking a nineteenth-century nationalist narrative that comes across as naïve within a Sámi context, their collaborator, Wimme Saari, turns the environment into a musical source, making acoustic recordings of his own heartbeat for the track as well as recording the lapping of gentle waves on the lakeside. Water has a particular significance in Sámi cosmology, being not only a source of life, but also marking potential doorways between the realms of the living, the spirits and the dead (Mulk and Bayliss-Smith 2007). Moreover, as famously recounted in the multimedia exhibition at Sápmi Park in Karasjok, in the Sámi creation myth a reindeer's heartbeat is audible within the earth and provides a sonic guide for humans. The collaborators' final track, 'Váimmuluohti' (Song of the Heart), thus reveals Sámi spiritual meanings, to which a large part of the audience may be oblivious. In these ways, *Sápmi Sessions* offers a vision of the northern Nordic landscape embedded in indigenous livelihoods and cosmologies, thereby destabilizing its perception among southern audiences as an untouched 'wilderness'. Like other indigenous film-making examples discussed by Raheja, *Sápmi Sessions* nurtures 'Indigenous aesthetics with their attendant focus on a particular geographical space, discrete cultural practices, social activist texts, spiritual traditions, and notions of temporality that do not delink the past from the present or future' (Raheja 2010, 203).

Sámi cosmologies, myths and traditions also emerge in telling dialogues among the featured artists. In one episode, the camera team accompanies Inga Juuso and Markus Krunegård on a walk to a *sieidi*, a rocky outcrop which would have acted as a sacrificial site and marked a doorway into the realm of the spirits and the dead within Sámi indigenous cosmology and shamanic practices (Mulk and Bayliss-Smith 2007). On the way, Krunegård asks, concerned, 'Isn't it sacrilegious [to walk to the stone]? … Won't the ghosts be angry with me?' Soon after, Juuso asks Krunegård, 'What do you know about Sámi offer stones?', to which he replies, 'I know nothing.' Here, the joint walk becomes a vehicle for *Sápmi Sessions* to subtly poke fun at Nordic ignorance of Sámi spiritual practices, which Swedish missionary projects sought to extinguish from the seventeenth century (Rydving 1993). In a tone that is half sincere and half mocking, Juuso exclaims, 'We should perhaps offer something so that we can compose a nice song.' In a more intimate encounter between Loreen and Ingá-Máret Gaup-Juuso by the lakeside, Loreen reveals, 'I love silence.' Gaup-Juuso nods in agreement and adds modestly, 'You can just hear the voices of nature.' *Sápmi Sessions* thus offers insights into Sámi indigenous cosmologies and renders visible spiritual understandings of the environment, but in a way that never comes across as either pedagogical or self-exoticizing.

Encounter

Such dialogues between musicians stage the politics of encounter, a central element in *Sápmi Sessions*. That this encounter should specifically be between Sámi and non-indigenous artists charges the programme with tropes of cultural 'difference' while also offering the potential for cultural exchange. As Inga Juuso warns at the beginning of her collaboration, 'To mix *joik* and song is not so easy, so we both have to compromise, so that it becomes something which sounds good and not simply jam.' Her words do not just address artistic collaboration in general, but bespeak a particular history of Sámi *joikers*' experiences from the beginning of the 1960s revival of Sámi musical traditions. In particular, *joikers* tend to emphasize the difficulty of conforming to Western scales, not rising in pitch during a *joik*, keeping to strict rhythms and pulses, and following the short and accessible structure of globalized popular music forms. This notion of encounter, built on perceptions of difference between two musical worlds, is continually foregrounded throughout the shows. On hearing Kuhmunen's *joik* on the first evening, Johnossi remarks, 'It sounds like we're in Morocco … crazy Arab.' Such a pronouncement shows that *joik* can still evoke notions of 'otherness', expressed in this case through orientalist language. Likewise, Loreen, herself a Swede with Moroccan parents, seems startled by the creative practice of Inga-Máret Gaup-Juuso, noting the differences between her own structured pop music writing technique and Gaup-Juuso's *joik*, but also *joik*'s expressive qualities: 'When you *joiked* I disappeared into a trance.' In these moments, *Sápmi Sessions* consolidates the notion that *joik* is an oral practice that is somehow difficult to capture and that defies understanding within Western epistemologies (Gaski 1999; Somby 1995). As with the indigenous festivals discussed by Phipps, *Sápmi Sessions* presents 'ritualized cultural encounters' between indigenous and settler populations that have the potential to 'disrupt the colonizing-national narrative but which are not open for the colonizer's easy interpretation' (Phipps 2009, 36).

The politics of encounter can have aesthetic, personal and cultural dimensions. Wimme Saari emphasizes the need for equal relationships in collaboration: 'When I *joik* together with someone, I want that the *joik* be heard. I'm not here for fun. When we collaborate, it should work for us all.' His comment is juxtaposed with the Looptroop Rockers' approach: 'We hope for a cool music clash.' Not surprisingly, creative and personal conflicts arise on the first evening when Saari announces that he is unsatisfied with the day's work and walks out on the other musicians. Criticizing the fact that the Looptroop Rockers have come with a ready-made beat, Saari explains in a personal interview: 'They could

have made it in Stockholm, if it is such that *joik* cannot be heard … I felt I couldn't manage to listen to it again. I had to go out and get fresh air.' This tense standoff might feel partly contrived by the editors, but it does give an insight into the politically laden process of indigenous studio recording. Over the following two days, the artists start again from scratch and eventually compose a track that satisfies them both. Collaboration, as articulated in *Sápmi Sessions*, thus requires bridging apparent personal, musical and cultural differences. Sometimes this involves considerable cultural diplomacy, especially on the part of the Sámi artist.

At the same time, the show espouses the possibility of commensurability and exchange between Sámi and non-Sámi knowledges, experiences and cosmologies. Several Sámi participants attempt to teach their collaborators vocabulary in North Sámi, while some of the non-Sámi musicians express a desire to learn more about, and sing in, a Sámi language. During the episode featuring Niillas Holmberg and the Deportees, the artists decide it would be a nice idea to swap English and Sámi texts. Ane Brun also exclaims at one point, 'It feels so great to sing in Sámi.' Likewise, Aki remarks, 'We were inspired after Maxida sang. That whole thing with *joiking*, one doesn't sing words, but it feels like she's singing out. It was like a huge feeling. We took it from there.' In one of the filmed jamming sessions, Loreen attempts to imitate the *joik* technique of Gaup-Juuso, who confides later, 'She has an openness to *joik*. That's very nice. It warms my heart.' Such examples highlight positive moments of cultural exchange that draw on a longer history of indigenous gifting. As the Sámi scholar Rauna Kuokkanen has argued, in the realm of indigenous and non-indigenous knowledge exchange, 'the gift foregrounds a new relationship – one that is characterized by a reciprocity and a call for responsibility for the "other"' (2007, 2).

Furthermore, encounter can lead to revelation and learning. While Mari Boine and Ane Brun sit next to an outdoor fire, they confess their own personal musical pasts. Boine recounts her history of growing up in a home where music was forbidden but then forming a band and beginning to sing in North Sámi: 'For me it has been important and correct to sing in Sámi. We were taught that Sámi was not as good. It has been part of my project to free myself from that inferiority complex to gain access to the heritage that I think is so exciting.' Enquiring deeper into this process of mental decolonization, Brun asks, 'Do you think you have cracked the code?' Boine responds, 'Yes, and it feels so good, it's so great to be there.' Different ideas about indigeneity are negotiated in another episode when Linnea Henriksson announces to the Rundberg siblings that her grandmother was Sámi. This elicits an intimate discussion about personal notions of Sámi and indigenous identity. As the siblings explain,

in the coastal Sámi community where they grew up, they did not have reindeer herding, cultural bearers or an indigenous language through which to learn about 'being Sámi'. Instead, it was music that allowed them to access and articulate their Sámi heritage. Indigenous resistance to (neo)colonial oppression is also evoked in the collaboration between Maxida Märak and Aki. Märak is introduced as a political activist and 'protest *joiker*' who plays an important role in current heated debates about mining and indigenous land rights in northern Sweden. During the programme, Aki reveals his own politicization as a musician belonging to an ethnic minority in Stockholm's urban neighbourhoods: 'One doesn't have a choice but to sing out, and everything we talk about is relevant.' To this Märak replies, 'I know exactly what you're talking about … [What] exists up here is often forgotten, just like the urban neighbourhoods are forgotten by the rest of Sweden.' As these vignettes suggest, the cross-cultural encounters at the heart of *Sápmi Sessions* foster interpersonal exchanges and new senses of affiliation that are instrumental in situating Sami identities as both indigenous and cosmopolitan.

Conclusion

Sápmi Sessions constitutes a performance of indigeneity that exercises forms of sovereignty – both visual and sonic – in an era of digital media and intensifying globalization. As it meditates on different notions of local and global, which are partly contingent on the various artists' standpoints and experiences, the show also foregrounds the politics and potentials of contemporary media technologies for indigenous creativity and agency. Its presentation of indigenous conceptions of time, place and spirituality positions Sámi knowledge systems as both intrinsic to Sámi self-determination efforts and as alternative philosophies to those offered by a seemingly hegemonic global modernity. Not least, *Sápmi Sessions* proposes ethical models of cultural exchange and intercultural dialogue for local and international audiences. In doing so, the series participates in a longer history of Sámi storytelling and gifting, offering new models of orality and cultural diplomacy by harnessing and transforming the apparently hegemonic aesthetics, institutions and technologies of globalization. But these processes are not without their own fraught political paradoxes. Raheja reminds us of the challenges visual sovereignty entails for indigenous film and television makers, especially in creating media for multiple publics and in interrogating representations of indigenous peoples while employing some of the conventions of the visual technologies and narratives that gave rise to such representations (2010, 200). Likewise, Phipps has noted the potentially competing multiple meanings and

political effects of indigenous cultural performance (2009, 32–33). *Sápmi Sessions* is willing to engage in complex transnational negotiations to make its own powerful, if often subtle, political interventions. In particular, it commits to a Sámi philosophy of gifting even if colonial histories and persisting power hierarchies render its constituent acts of exchange fragile and burdened. According to Kuokkanen, gifting, which is 'integral to many indigenous worldviews', stresses 'individual and collective responsibility for preserving the balance of the socio-cosmic order' (2007, 7). Phipps writes, moreover, that 'gifting includes a strategy for cultural survival and renewal, but also a gesture towards a deeper intercultural dialogue about being: at the level of ontological relations of space, time, epistemology and embodiment' (2009, 37). By providing insights into Sámi musical performance, *Sápmi Sessions* invites wider audiences to engage in new understandings of – and dialogues about – Sámi culture. For Phipps, this kind of gifting functions as an inherent part of indigenous resistance and sovereignty as well as 'a deliberate pedagogical model for how the colonizing-national story might be constituted very differently in a globalizing context through a shared process of decolonization' (2009, 42). More broadly, the Māori scholar Makere Stewart-Harawira posits the importance of such indigenous philosophies for the sustainability of cultural diversity and 'the development of transformative alternative frameworks for global order' (2005, 24). *Sápmi Sessions* tells local and global stories about dialogue and exchange and actively performs the gifting of indigenous knowledge by harnessing the affordances of digital media. In these ways, it offers new perspectives on, models of, and approaches to globalization in *Sápmi*.[3]

Notes

1 I have translated this and later quotes from the Swedish or Norwegian dialogue and subtitles.

2 One of the most famous documenters of *joik* was the Swedish amateur folklorist Karl Tirén, who travelled in areas of northern Sweden and the Norwegian coast around Vássejávri where he recorded and transcribed *joiks* by local Sámi communities for his famous study *Die Lappische Volksmusik* (1943).

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12

On the Ground: Making Indigenous Performance in a Globalizing World

Conversations curated by Dione Joseph

Indigeneity conditions performance knowing as well as performance making in differing ways. In an age of rapid globalization and the expectation of instant, if not always inevitable, connectivity, one of the key challenges for Indigenous arts practitioners is to retain local specificity while developing international relevance and growing new audiences. Five scholar-practitioners working across theatre, dance and film were invited to discuss this challenge and joined me, Dione Joseph, in a retrospectively curated conversation. Alberto Guevara (Nicaragua/Canada), Tia Reihana-Morunga (Ngati Hine/Aotearoa New Zealand), Jill Carter (Anishnaabe and Ashkenazi/Canada), Liza-Mare Syron (Birripi Nation/Australia) and Jesse Wente (Ojibwe/Canada) spoke to me in person and via Skype, sharing a broad range of insights, thoughts and reflections that have been condensed and juxtaposed to create the following virtual roundtable.

One of the key preoccupations during our conversations was the ongoing tension between Indigenous and settler communities and, subsequently, the impacts of this tension in making performances that are legible across cultural and geographical borders. This raised further questions. What are the changing forms and structures needed to present Indigenous stories and concepts in a rapidly globalizing world? What is the role of political performance as an instrument of social justice in post-colonial societies? Who are the audiences for Indigenous works and how can new audiences grow? And finally, how can we foster different forms of trans-Indigenous dialogue (such as this) so that they extend beyond the politicized rhetoric of identity politics to contribute to new conversations and ways of working?

Dione Joseph: Alberto, as an Indigenous performer and director from Nicaragua living and working in Canada, how do you find yourself experiencing indigeneity in Turtle Island?

Alberto Guevara: To be honest, when I first arrived in Canada I felt even more colonized than in my own country. Because my skin was marked as different, I wore colonialism and the shame of it on my body. I don't speak an Indigenous language and I live in exile away from my country, so it was hard to pinpoint myself. However, I eventually became aware of my connections to an Indigenous diaspora, which helped to transform that shame into pride. The idea of the diasporic 'Indian' is interesting to me because moving across borders brings new experiences, informed by generational knowledge, and this opens up new strategies to respond to racism. In Canada, diasporic indigeneity is increasingly becoming more visible. For example, Monique Mojica's work is highly inter-experiential as she gathers and embodies the experiences of diverse scholars, artists and historical figures across the Americas, some Indigenous, some not. This is a way of working I have seldom seen in Latin America, with some exceptions in Peru, where Indigenous experiences of violence were rescued and put into testimonial performances.

DJ: When multiple layers of colonialism are active, what lessons or experiences do you draw on from Nicaragua to guide your artistic practice in your current place and context?

AG: Theatre has to be taken out of conventional locales – it's not mainstream venues but the other spaces we should be decolonizing. During the Sandinista Revolution of the 1980s, I worked as a theatre soldier with Alan Bolt's group, *Nyxtayoleros*, which means 'new dawn' in Nahuatl. Using the techniques of *teatro comunitário* (community theatre), we tried to bridge the cultural – and, to a certain degree, the political and economic – gap between the rural (mainly Indigenous and peasant) and urban populations in Nicaragua. Misunderstanding and a lack of knowledge about each other was causing friction between these two constituencies. First, we spent several months in rural communities gathering information not only on their socio-economic problems, but also on their cultural beliefs, rituals and popular customs. Then we discussed these findings with the communities and began to design the form and content for a play. Many people were incorporated into this process in various locations and also participated as actors. After rehearsals in the community, we would take the play to the capital, Managua, to present it to an urban audience, including influential personalities in the Sandinista government, with public discussion afterwards. What we learned

from this intervention was the power of theatre as a mediating social activity for communities that operate at the margin of the governing political circle.

DJ: Were you using particular Indigenous traditions or art forms in this work?

AG: There is no aspect of Nicaraguan Indigenous epistemology that I don't use. The oldest theatre of the Americas comes from the satirical anti-colonial masterpiece, Nicaragua El Gueguense – it's a culmination of different kinds of folk performance and narratives, and sometimes they don't make sense but when they come together they do. In this form, you're always questioning things and together trying to find solutions; it's a way of looking at the world that comes from an Indigenous aesthetic.

DJ: Tia, Indigenous epistemologies shape your artistic practice as a dancer, choreographer and educator who crosses (Western) disciplinary boundaries. You've worked in Britain and Australia as well as Aotearoa New Zealand – what have you taken with you on this international journey?

Tia Reihana-Morunga: Being Māori is skin, it's blood, it's water, it's heart, it's air, it's whenua. Sometimes for non-Māori that can be difficult to understand. For me, Māori performance is about whakapapa.[1] It's about connection and it's a way of being in the world and how that is supported through the creative process. The idea that a colonizing imagination can force a naming, claiming and appropriation of something that is unique and distinctly connected to wairua, wana, mana and ihi is problematic. Take the word dance – the notion that it is separate from the waiata, separate from moteatea, is debatable. This needs unpacking in the vocabulary that surrounds contemporary performances.

DJ: If we translate whakapapa, albeit inadequately, as genealogy, how does that specifically inform your performance praxis?

TRM: The movement is whakapapa and in Māori performance there are diverse styles and representations of what that means, looks and feels like. The way a person brings their whakapapa to their movement – whether it's a wiri or a poi, a walk, a pause, a song – that's an important part of Māori performing arts.

DJ: And this is something that informs not just how you dance, but also how you share that knowledge and wairua with others?

TRM: Yes, I have a humbled understanding of what I'm teaching, and that comes with a big responsibility for me. My son, my whanau, my hapu, my tūpuna – they're all the things I bring into the room. But, at the same time, I can be perplexed by these ideas of who I am as

a Māori, and the expectations that may bring in distinct contexts. Indigeneity leads to ways of being in the world where you discover the world through your own place, not by being positioned so you see yourself through another's lens. It's important that I'm seeing things from my unique space as a Ngati Hine, wāhine, teacher, student and as a performer.

DJ: Harnessing body memory is a powerful mode of cultural preservation in your work as well, Jill. Can you elaborate on this, not only as a (trans-border) performance maker from Canada, but also as an academic invested in understanding what role theatre can play in strengthening the connective tissue of contemporary Indigenous societies?

Jill Carter: Affirmations of our Indigenous identity are what we do in ceremony; we do this to build communitas, to uplift the human spirit, to engender transformations and to honour the creator. So many of us have been dismembered by the colonial project, severed from family and community and our own sense of self. A ceremony that re-members us and that helps us to *re*-member can be our gateway back in. Wherever you look, theatre was birthed in ceremony, communitas and transformation. Wherever it is corrupted, bastardized, emptied of all sacrosanctity and meaning, it dies. Theatre is not the only way in [to Indigenous experience], but it's a way to share those stories. It's a way to think about missing and murdered Aboriginal women, to think about our (f)ailing biotas, to think about elders and their concerns and their day-to-day reality.

DJ: But theatre that exists outside a Eurocentric paradigm can often get Othered. How do you respond to those challenges?

JC: I ask, why should this be? Why should our artists feel Othered on their own lands? This sense of exile is something we must resist. And I believe we *do* resist it – most effectively – by 'writing' (on/with our bodies, on/with the land) in ways that reaffirm and strengthen the kinship that has always bound our peoples to our living relatives who comprise the biota within which we do life.

DJ: Are there parallels here with Australia, Liza-Marie? What's the current state of play in Aboriginal theatre from your perspective as a scholar and performance maker looking to bring research and practice into closer alignment, both within and beyond the academy?

Liza-Marie Syron: Through theatre we are still telling stories of the past, of real people and their lived experiences, to reclaim our histories and connections with the land. This isn't surprising when the silencing of First Peoples in this country was supported by the colonial doctrine of *terra nullius*, which was only overturned in 1993.

Being able to tell our own stories in *our* way is crucial; otherwise we just end up making shelf pieces – a commodity or object on display. The question is, are we brave enough to tell stories about ourselves that aren't based on the 'realness' of being an Aboriginal person? Or will we always be defined by our past?

DJ: What strategies could open up ground for changes in this context?

LMS: Sometimes we need our own space to explore new ideas and new ways of creating work. It becomes problematic when other people think we need to be one thing or the other. Multiple skills, multiple practices, multiple forms, multiple contexts – why not? It's about empowerment and choice. Self-determination.

DJ: Jesse, can you comment on the ways in which identity politics and self-determination have played out in the development of Indigenous cinema over the last few decades? Have these issues shaped your own career as Canada's first professional Indigenous film critic?

Jesse Wente: As a kid growing up loving *Star Wars*, it was not until I saw an Alanis Obomsawin film that I realized there could be an intersection between being an Indian and movies, other than being shot by John Wayne! Even when I was in film school, the idea of being an Indigenous film-maker wasn't a reality; the only exceptions I came across were Merata Mita and Alanis Obomsawin, both primarily documentary makers. I didn't know Tracey Moffat's experimental work at that point and there was no suggestion that such things were possible here. The new wave of directors (much like the French New Wave and other cinematic movements) grew up as Indigenous cinema was becoming visible, at least in Indigenous communities. If you ask Jeff Barnaby how he got into film-making, he would say he saw an Alanis film and that inspired him. While their baseline is radically different, it's interesting to see the new-wave directors take on fairly traditional cinematic genres and alter them to tell Indigenous stories. Jeff's *Rhymes for Young Ghouls* (2013) is a film noir, Warwick Thornton in Australia has basically made a ghost film with *The Darkside* (2013) and Toa Fraser's *The Dead Lands* (2014) is a Māori kung fu movie!

DJ: What affects the stories being told and the factors that drive circulation – locally and internationally?

JW: Contemporary Indigenous cinema in Canada is only about forty years old. However, the international Indigenous film-making community shares an expanding lexicon that is responding, if not collectively at least in conversation, to a growing desire for sharing our stories in ways that are specific to us. What's interesting now is that we're seeing how artists are beginning to transform colonial narrative

structures into Indigenous ones. This ultimately might mean the movies can be understood by audiences in lots of very different ways. So they become much more sellable. I know artists bristle at the idea of the commodity but it's necessary to grow new audiences, and having an Indigenous film seen by non-Indigenous people is a really key moment in film-making. *The Dead Lands* has the potential to become the most watched Indigenous movie ever, largely because it uses a popular genre but has absolutely nothing to do with contact or colonialism – it's taken something not of its culture, that is colonial, and repurposed it to tell an ancient story.

DJ: How well do these innovations register when films are being selected for international festivals? I've noticed content tends to determine indigeneity rather than the creatives involved and how they go about their work.

JW: It's frustrating. The way I've often defined an Indigenous film is according to the writer or director, because if you're going to ascribe an authorial voice and agency in a movie that's typically where you go. Films also include producers and other behind-the-camera talent. I think what's confusing for some audiences is that Indigenous subject matter is one of the lowest qualifications for us. It's much more about *who* made the work rather than *what* they made it about.

DJ: What other kinds of expectations constrain how Indigenous performance is made and circulated across cultural boundaries? What about professional training programmes and networks, for instance?

JC: Even in theatre programmes that are actively working to include Indigenous bodies and black bodies, the message these performers receive is that their instruments require radical transformation to become acceptable and remain accepted. We must reconfigure speech patterns, so as not to speak with our 'rez accents'. We must sanitize our body language, so that our somatic expression is not too 'street'. The Other body must either be 'enfreaked' for public consumption or be disappeared to minimize the threat it is seen to pose in either motion or rest. Indeed, urban colonial spaces root their legitimacy in the marginalization of the Indigenous body – a body deemed too alien (too ill equipped) to participate in its ecosystem. As artists and scholars, Monique Mojica and I are beginning to identify strategies that have been (and are being) employed by Indigenous artists and activists to push back against the enfreakment of their bodies, the consumption of their suffering, and the dismissal of their resistance. A key question that confronts those who place their bodies in the fray ('hands up; don't shoot') is this: 'How am I in service to this

time and place?'[2] This question anchors our ruminations about Indigenous resistance as a performance that is inseparable from the Indigenous body. Our bodies wear our nation's teachings and perform as human shields, protecting a multitude of other bodies (a multitude of kin) – bodies of land, bodies of water, missing and murdered bodies – from the capricious depredations of the restless spirit of the West. What of those rare and precious instances when the imperial gaze is reversed? When the Indigenous body performs the 'mirror', reflecting back to latter-day denizens of the Old World visions of their own monstrosity? What aesthetic strategies and representational modes do (might) Indigenous performers utilize to somatically interrogate the European Other – and to what purpose? It seems always to come back to the structures that carry our stories – our narrative frameworks, our dramaturgical frameworks. We must think about our forms and how they serve our stories.

JW: As far as screen work goes, traditional cinematic language has worked as a powerful medium to capture Indigenous people, or what was assumed to be their disappearance, but film as such is not *of* our communities. We are taking the images and structures of that pre-existing language and making it into an Indigenous art form, using what is essentially a colonial storytelling technique to tell alternative stories that are either definitively anti-colonial or outside the realm of colonial experience. We've seen some shifts in terms of narrative approaches in this process, especially with films that look to undermine the three-act structure conventionally used in screenwriting – moving from set-up to confrontation and finally resolution – which is not an Indigenous structure at all. I've always considered narration more circular as opposed to having a defined beginning and end.

AG: I think aesthetic forms should be shaped by experience as well as what's happening in the moment, not by directives or structures that the artists feel pressured to follow. The notion of trans-genre risk can be liberating. That's why I like Kent Monkman's work. His paintings and performances propose that Indigenous people bring together a range of subjective experiences connected to the structures of external and internal colonialism. It's the combination of all those things that makes us who we are, and we need to convey that same complexity to our audiences, who are not simply a single community. When I talk about community, I mean everyone who goes to the theatre to be touched and inspired by something – an idea, a burning desire to change something. That's what I appreciate – the type

of theatre that would create an experience, that would leave you a different person.

JC: We must think about how our stories are serving our communities. Are we crafting good medicine, or are we spinning sugar? I have seen many, many mainstream pieces where I'm so impressed by the intellect and artistic cleverness and the innovation that I forget what the story is about. Scholars, as well as directors, producers and other creatives still don't seem to recognize that the content of our works is only part of the story.

DJ: It's a careful curation, isn't it – holding both content and form in balance? And audiences always bring their own interpretive repertoires, whether they're coming to see film or live performance work, or other art forms for that matter. This raises the vexed issue of how much, if at all, Indigenous art forms should be trying to address the very different expectations that seem to attend them, especially within multicultural settler societies.

TRM: I'm interested in what non-Māori expect from Māori culture and performance because it's not about packing Māori under one banner, but recognizing the distinct iwi, hapu and whanau that exist within our communities. Our art forms are much more intricate and detailed than stereotypical ideas about kapahaka imply, especially when it's understood as simply traditional song and dance. Recognizing this complexity starts to shoot down those generic concepts of our culture and therefore of our performances. The variety in Māori performance is huge. One transformative piece of work I recall is *Hine 2012* by Tru Paraha, who is a dancer and choreographer, and Cat Ruka, a performance artist. By staging the body as a site of inquiry, it disrupted stereotypes that can be part and parcel of being an Indigenous wāhine and artist in Aotearoa. The work starts off with Cat in a beautiful blue sequin dress. She seats Tru down and wraps a cloth around her, one that you would find in a barber shop. Cat leaves then comes back in platform heels and a blue sequin dress with a machete, and very calmly proceeds to hack off Tru's hair! Watching these amazing wāhine, I felt liberated from the colonial constructs that have impounded and continue to antagonize Māori women and limit our autonomy. Lots of people were asking 'what the hell is going on here' and I loved the fact that they were asking those questions.

DJ: Multiple narratives and art forms are emerging to challenge the status quo in terms of identity politics, but are critical discourses lagging behind in creating useful frameworks for understanding and supporting the variety in Indigenous work?

JC: Let's go back to 2000. The Centre for Indigenous Theatre, Deba-jeh-

mu-jig Theatre, Full Circle and Native Earth Performing Arts were well established in these territories north of the 49th parallel. Yet there was *still* a dearth of serious scholarship on Indigenous theatre and among the few Indigenous voices published, the majority were the artists being interviewed. Often, however, these artists were not theorizing or being given the space and respect to theorize, and the non-Indigenous scholars seemed to be saying, 'I get it, I'm down with the people: those Aboriginal folks are angry about residential school. I understand this.' The plays written about at the time, or more accurately the plays the critics 'got', were the ones that adhered to the narrative of victimization with which Euro-Canadian audiences were (and still are) so comfortable. Consequently, these are the plays that live on in the national imagination. But the (limited) interest in our perspectives hasn't extended to invitations to interpret Western experiences through indigenist lenses. I have yet to meet an Indigenous Shakespeare lecturer or to be invited (except in the context of a 'Red Reading' for an Indigenous literature class) to lecture on any work from the Western canon. Today, Indigenous voices are out there, speaking about cultural foundations, aesthetic principles, dramaturgical structures, performance methodologies. But we have much more to do because our ideas still, by and large, seem not to have been apprehended by mainstream critics and reviewers.

DJ: Apart from holding stereotypes and ethnic labels up to scrutiny, what are the implications of Indigenous teachings and practices for thinking about ways to craft cross-cultural and transnational dialogues through performance-based arts?

JC: These dialogues need to happen in our own territories first. As Robin Wall Kimmerer points out, the Sky Woman creation story that my Anishinaabeg relatives share with the Haudenosaunee and other Indigenous nations on Turtle Island is a story of relocation from one world to another. It provides a teaching about how to be a 'good immigrant' – how to settle in a good way and how to participate in the processes of creation and recreation. The story of Sky Woman teaches us how to indigenize our foreign bodies by adhering to natural law and working in cooperation with the created world (Kimmerer 2013, 8). We made treaties with the land, and we taught our children to respect those treaties and to carry out the responsibilities built into those treaties. Indigenous title is predicated upon our adherence to these treaties. So my question is to our partners in treaty – to those who have come from across the globe to make their homes on these territories now called Canada: What must change in

your lives, so that you can properly live as a treaty person on these lands?

LMS: What's interesting on the performing arts front is that many Indigenous practitioners are now looking beyond settler constituencies to forge new conversations and respectful connections across like-minded cultures. One instance of this is the Yellamundie tri-nations international exchange that I manage in my role as co-artistic director of Moogahlin Performing Arts, a First Peoples company based in Sydney. The tri-nations initiative involves a partnership between Moogahlin, Tawata Productions in Wellington and Native Earth Performing Arts (NEPA) in Toronto. We're working to develop and apply a dynamic model of exchange for hosting, rehearsing and presenting First Nations work internationally. As well as sharing knowledge about local and national arts contexts, the exchange involves workshopping each other's scripts in a collaborative process that the Māori playwright Hone Kouka calls 'our people with your culture'. *Mata-ki-mata* or face-to-face contact is crucial to this process.

DJ: Can you describe what happens in practice in this kind of in-person exchange – perhaps with an example?

LMS: In 2016, members of Moogahlin went to Toronto with the Kamilaroi playwright Billy McPherson to work with First Nations artists there on a public reading of his play, *Cuz*, for NEPA's annual development festival, Weesageechack Begins to Dance. The workshop began with an in-depth discussion of themes in *Cuz* that could speak beyond its Australian context to the parallel history of colonization in Canada – themes such as the intergenerational effects of government-led child removal practices and related issues such as homelessness, substance abuse, unemployment and high death rates among young people in Indigenous communities. Then the local actors, Clifford Cardinal and Ryan Cunningham, faced the challenge of tackling the pronunciation and rhythms of the Wirradjiri (Were-adge-er-ee) language embedded in the script. Billy explained each word's historical, cultural and everyday meaning, and the words were exchanged back and forth repeatedly, echoing across the rehearsal room until the actors felt happy with their responses. When it came to embodying the characters, Ryan and Cliff drew on their experiences and memories of growing up on Native reservations and, by the end of rehearsals, the two young Indigenous Australian protagonists of Billy's play had become two young First Nations boys in Canada, speaking Wirradjiri with local inflections, rhythms and tones. Everyone in the rehearsal room that day acknowledged

that we were coming from very specific geographical locations and working across significant cultural differences. The aim was to find common ground while respecting the author's intentions and heritage as well as the local context in which the play was about to be presented. I'm not suggesting this model would be appropriate for cultures that do not share the same level of sovereignty. There are mutual responsibilities involved in hosting and visiting First Nations artists. Local cultural protocols of engagement must be respected and it's important to develop the capacity for reciprocity. This can happen through welcomes by elders, eating together, visiting sites of cultural significance and providing opportunities for observation and curiosity.

DJ: Apart from building solidarity and vital platforms for sharing skills, how does such work map into global trends or concerns in Indigenous performing arts?

LMS: Transnational connections and conversations are increasingly important for developing international markets and audiences for First Nations theatre. They afford opportunities for us to compare national and regional contexts and to learn about how our brothers and sisters in other colonized countries navigate Western systems in developing, presenting and touring their work. Showcase platforms and network events hosted by the Australian Performing Arts Market (APAMS) and Conférence Internationale des Arts de la Scène (CINARS) in Canada are also making room for Indigenous cultures and arts practices.

DJ: Jesse, what about the international forces shaping Indigenous film production? How do new films get taken up and championed?

JW: What's key is the channels we create in the dissemination of Indigenous artworks, (whether they be live performances or films) and the ability to make the space to create more. But distributors are waiting for proof of concept. For example, *Smoke Signals* (1998) and *Atanarjuat* (2001) won awards at film festivals in various parts of the world and were considered successes, but they didn't move the needle for the studio folks at all. And the thing is, in film you don't get access to reasonable budgets usually until you've got some proof of concept. In North America in 2014 there were only five Indigenous features – *Maïna*, *Rhymes for Young Ghouls*, *Drunktown's Finest*, *Empire of Dirt* and *Uvanga* – not counting feature-length documentaries. So much depends on how public funders define success. If we're talking box office, that can be the roadblock for Indigenous film-makers because, for our stories, there aren't as many outlets as there are for

non-Indigenous film-makers. What we need to do is start breaking the mould.

DJ: It sometimes seems that arts markets have pressured indigeneity into acquiring a brand that might help local works reach international audiences. Does the process of making accessible art in a globalizing world inevitably homogenize cultural differences?

LMS: The idea of an Indigenous brand is not something I consider relevant to First Nations theatre – it doesn't encapsulate the multiplicity of forms and practices being employed. Globalization is a Eurocentric paradigm, but it doesn't necessarily entail a flattening of difference. What ultimately drives our experiences with other First Peoples artists is an apprehension of place. When we work across cultures we consciously orient ourselves in new places and spaces by marking local cultural histories and memories.

AG: In my own work, I try to create common ground between the need to attend to local concerns and the need to bring to the fore issues of importance to Indigenous peoples on a global scale, such as gender discrimination, nationalism and identity negotiations. Over the years, my classroom has been an important site for research dissemination. In my courses, students are encouraged not just to learn about other societies and art forms but also to sense and embody specific cultural manifestations: they research, negotiate, produce and present their own fieldwork through mini-ethnographic performances. This interdisciplinary pedagogy challenges them to engage in their own learning process and it sharpens their critical thinking and appreciation of citizen responsibility.

TRM: Indigeneity is a way of being in the world or a way of responding to the environment. Some people argue that it's a human state-of-being in the world, which is not necessarily isolated to Māori or other Indigenous cultures. In that case, how Māori iwi attend to those relationships is about being Indigenous to place and landscape. There's a kōrero there. Our engagement with Western European discourses doesn't have to be limited to just one conversation about decolonization.

DJ: How do we develop these intercultural conversations?

JC: I'm interested in what Diane Glancy calls 'intertextual facings' and 'interfactual textings' (2002, 203). These are rhetorical strategies traditionally utilized by Indigenous storytellers across Turtle Island as they crafted and performed our nations' entangled histories. On the contemporary stage, we see these strategies powerfully employed by Spiderwoman Theater, (the now defunct) Turtle Gals Performance Ensemble, Monique Mojica and the Chocolate Woman Collective

and Jani Lauzon. These are strategies that might also be used to reverse the gaze and to disrupt the complacency of the settler who is *the* other on these lands. The Indigenous body (as archive) in conversation with canonical Western stories presents powerful intertextual facings and interfactual textings, allowing settler audiences to see themselves reflected through our eyes.

DJ: Can we talk more specifically about the opportunities and/or traps that globalization presents for performance-based activism? Alberto, your work comes to mind here.

AG: Some elements of globalization can be harnessed in the struggle for social justice for Indigenous and other marginalized communities. Take, for example, the ease with which initiatives, priorities and actions can be advertised, organized and implemented at a grand scale through the use of social media. One example that comes to mind is the anti-G7 and G20 protests that brought people together from around the world in a very limited time to speak out against neoliberalism. However, such empowerment comes with its own traps, as it is not sufficient to superficially and in some cases uncritically dump issues out there without evaluating the pros and cons for the communities in question. Theatre, on the other hand, is more than a platform for the dissemination of issues; it can also be a bridge for communicating across cultures especially when communities come together to choose which issues they are presenting to the world and to direct their concerns to specific audiences. Look at the various Indigenous protests happening in the Americas right now. Whether it involves exposing human rights violations against Indigenous activists in Honduras – or Mexico, Colombia etc. – or protesting against the construction of the inter-oceanic canal of Nicaragua, theatre can become a comprehensive space for mobilization.

DJ: With recent movements such as the Dakota Access Pipeline protest, we're seeing more grassroots coalitions coming together to resist the resource-driven capitalism that makes Indigenous water protectors synonymous with criminals. But Indigenous perspectives on ecology tend to go unheeded in the corridors of power and, it seems, in most sectors of settler society. What are the impediments to creative dialogues that would value the different knowledge systems Indigenous communities can bring to the table in debates about urgent global issues such as sustainability and food distribution, for instance?

JC: In Canada, there is no truthful speaking across difference because the roots of those differences have been forgotten. The settlers'

notions of ownership rather than stewardship; the settlers' notions of rights without responsibility; the settlers' notions of governance, leadership, urban design, the movement of time, narrative structures, social structures – all of these come from root creation stories and interpretations or misinterpretations of those stories. How can we speak across difference when our audiences have forgotten their ontological, axiological and epistemological foundations? The 'ghosts' of those foundations still direct their lifeways and attitudes, but how are audiences to confront or interrogate something in whose existence they do not believe? I seek through my work to converse with those 'ghosts', to create the spaces in which settler-witnesses will be compelled to remember themselves and their own origin stories. There are multiple portals through which to access these spaces, and these portals are made manifest within contemporary performance when Indigenous artists consult the knowledge systems specific to their nations and allow these systems to inform their works. For instance, Floyd Favel and Monique Mojica have devised methodologies (first collaboratively and then separately) through which they locate the essence of ceremonial experience (the dwelling place of a particular force that produces a specific affect), translate this essence through theatrical processes, and transport it to the theatrical event. In my understanding, ceremony is a mechanism that marks, facilitates and celebrates individual-and-world-transformation. It facilitates communitas, connecting the two-leggeds with every other element of Creation. The Western performative tradition has broken away from its gods and separated itself from its ceremony.

DJ: What are the implications of this break for thinking about theatre's efficacy as a tool for strengthening the social fabric of our societies?

JC: I believe colonial constructs of theatre in the West are dying. Audiences just do not go to the theatre any more. I have spoken with many Canadian directors and artistic directors and so often the conversations come back to the problem of attracting audiences into the theatre. When I ask them what community or communities they aspire to serve, they have no answer. They don't serve communities; they strive to serve their own artistic and professional aspirations. And then, they get angry and wonder why the community support is not there.

DJ: So what do we need to do?

LMS: We need to talk about Indigenous research approaches and cultural protocols. How would an Indigenous audience respond to this? We need to have opportunities to stop in a particular place and time to experience the momentousness of being there. We have a poverty

mentality and we need to fight against that because we're also part of a global community. We need to connect with international Indigenous audiences and get our funding bodies to understand that we need to be talking to each other, performing for each other, exploring similar issues and supporting each other. It's challenging, but it's also exciting and exhilarating and brave.

DJ: Can these trans-Indigenous connections help us to navigate a way through the complexities and paradoxes of globalization?

AG: It takes acknowledging the importance of local concerns to create a global polity that is responsible for our entire planet. There is no possibility to build and maintain a healthy planet if we are not paying attention to what's happening in individual countries and national territories. We need to be more cognizant of the environment, not only in our own backyards but also anywhere in the world. Take the Nicaraguan rainforest, for example – what does it mean for all of us that one of the most important oxygenators on our planet is being destroyed?

JW: Indigenous knowledge and learning and experiences are going to be key to the survival of our race and humanity. Settler cultures, which have never been great at placing themselves in the larger context of existence, probably don't see it that way, but indigeneity is going to return here in Canada – and I would suggest the same for New Zealand and Australia.

DJ: It sounds like you think it's inevitable?

JW: Actually, I do. Canada to me is a native place and won't ever not be. I don't think we would have had so many missing and murdered women in this land if we had a larger understanding of Indigenous philosophies and learning. Ultimately, this is why movies and art are so important because they will get people to understand the larger issues of life and death; not just for Indigenous people but for all of the other tribes who have come to visit and have stayed. The next question, of course, is what will the process be for bringing them into an understanding of the land, and then, how long will it take for them to realize it is inevitable? There needs to be a grand rethink of all sorts of systems that we have put in place, starting with the acceptance and dissemination of Indigenous ideas. It's a big responsibility but Indigenous people have always been keepers of the land. We've been denied and stripped of that knowledge and understanding. It's really the retention of our culture and its expression through art that will get us to the larger dialogue – and that, I believe, is fundamentally inevitable. It's time we started to move towards that: to dance, to perform, to dream – that's the direction we need to be headed.

Acknowledgements

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Notes

1 For translations of Māori words, see the glossary at the end of this book, page 000.

2 Mojica, personal communication, 20 January 2017, Toronto.

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13

Ethical Tribunals: Maya Incursions into Symbolic Social Justice

Morna Macleod

Jun no'j, keb no'j, oxib' no'j, kajib' no'j, job no'j … oxlajuj no'j, count the Maya *ajq'ijab'* (spiritual guides or day-keepers), one coin-like piece of fragrant resin for each *nawal* or essence of the twenty-day sacred calendar.[1] After citationally invoking each *nawal*, they throw the resins into the fire. A circle marked out on the ground and filled with flowers and petals, sugar, honey, resins, chocolate and candles makes up the fire. At different moments, more resin, sesame seeds, alcohol and small, thin candles are cast into the blaze by the day-keepers and ceremony participants. The four cardinal points frame the fire. Red flowers and candles adorn the east where the sun rises; black in the west, marking sunset, death, a place of rest. White designates the north, the wisdom of the elders, and yellow, the south, harvest and abundance. In the centre of the circle are blue and green: *ukax kaj, ukux ulew*, heart of the sky, heart of the earth. The day-keepers, heads covered in brightly woven cloths, name and give thanks to mountains, sacred sites and ancestors, enumerate the days of the Maya calendar, and petition for a positive response to their request for justice for indigenous Guatemalans. Around the fire are hundreds of Maya women and men, young and old, a few children, some *mestizos* and foreigners, all intent on the fire, occasionally adding their offerings. Behind the circle of fire looms Guatemala's National Congress. The ceremony takes place on the steps of the legislative building, on the pavement and in the street, surrounded by downtown Guatemala City's dilapidated buildings, amid the noise of cars and bus horns, street-vendor shouts and city buzz. But all this is blocked out, as everyone's attention is intently fixed on the fire. The ceremony begins in the late afternoon, lasting all night when the energies are strongest. There is but one (shared) aspiration on this particular occasion: that on the following day, 5 June 1996 – or No'j in the

Maya calendar, happily representing wisdom and intellect – Congress will ratify the United Nations International Labour Organization Convention No. 169, the legally binding international instrument that protects the rights of indigenous peoples.

The brief ethnography above highlights the use of political, cultural and spiritual performance by Maya peoples in Guatemala to position their claims and, in this case, press their government to comply with international legal frameworks. Performance here takes on a form of 'public pedagogy' (Denzin 2003, 9), breaking through what Dwight Conquergood calls 'sedimented meanings and normative traditions' (qtd in Denzin 2003, 4) and exposing passers-by to ancestral Maya practices unknown to city-dwellers. The relocation of Maya ceremonies from intimate contact with nature – on hills and sacred sites and sometimes in caves – to Guatemala's brick-and-concrete capital illuminates the symbolic force of the performative to advocate for indigenous rights in front of the country's foremost site for formal decision-making. The staging of Maya ceremonies in public spaces is an intentional, recent strategy to create awareness of cultural and political indigeneity and embodied presence in a context of historical exclusion and structural racism. At the same time, the ceremony on the steps of Congress is illustrative of the Maya peoples' strategy to 'make culture, affect power, and reinvent their ways of being in the world' (Madison and Hamera 2006, xii). Performance here is cultural and social, as presented through ceremony, Mayan languages and women's bright and beautifully woven garments. The aesthetic of the ceremony is pleasing to the eye, but also challenges the country's decision-makers to recognize the culture and customs of indigenous peoples. Thus, what Madison and Hamera identify as the citational force of performance comes into play here: Maya ceremonies, drawing on millenary, ancestral practices through repetition, acquire a radically different meaning in this late twentieth-century urban scenario, articulating a politics of hope (Denzin 2000, 404).

This essay explores Maya use of ethical tribunals to highlight grievances and put forward claims. In the face of military and government impunity in Guatemala, ethical tribunals create a space to denounce human rights abuses and enact social justice. While Maya women and men have participated in a range of ethical tribunals in Guatemala over the last decade, my particular focus is on the 2012 Health Tribunal, which scrutinized the impacts of a Canadian mining company on local inhabitants and ecosystems. The ensuing discussion reflects on Maya use of global forms of performance to elicit recognition of harm and seek symbolic redress.

Maya Peoples in War-torn Guatemala

Maya intellectuals and leaders refer to 'five hundred years' of suffering since the Spanish 'invasion' in 1524. This suffering has entailed loss of land, loss of traditions following the imposition of Catholicism and the Spanish language, and cultural discrimination. Maya, treated as a minority in their own country, make up more than half of the Guatemalan population, and have tended to occupy the lowest rungs in society as farm labourers and servants (Cumes 2014). Cleavages run deep in Guatemala in terms of ethnicity, class and gender, due to a long history of skewed land tenure (2 per cent of the population own 60 per cent of the arable land), dire working conditions for indigenous *campesinos* in large coffee, sugar and cotton export plantations, scant state services in education and health, and grinding poverty. These conditions gave rise to a 36-year internal armed conflict (1960–96), which began in the eastern part of the country shortly after the US CIA-backed military coup overthrew president Jacobo Arbenz and the 'democratic revolution'. In the 1970s, after Guatemala's military dictators brutally suppressed resistance to their regime in the east, the conflict shifted to the mainly indigenous western highlands. There, it involved a mass incorporation of indigenous people into the rebel forces as insurgency organizations recognized the revolutionary potential of impoverished rural indigenous communities. The army resorted to unprecedented levels of terror: after decimating urban social organizations, it turned with a vengeance to the countryside, implementing scorched-earth strategies and perpetrating massacres, forced disappearances and selective and indiscriminate killings, accompanied by torture, mutilation and rape. Guatemala has the worst human rights record in Latin America: the 1999 UN Truth Commission documented 626 massacres and more than 440 villages that were destroyed as part of a military strategy to 'remove the water from the fish' (isolate the rebels). More than 200,000 people were killed and widespread rape, mainly of indigenous women, went largely unreported. Maya were the victims in 83 per cent of all human rights violations documented by the UN Truth Commission.

Maya cultural revival in Guatemala began in the 1970s, was curtailed within a decade amid widespread state repression, and wondrously re-emerged and flowered in the late 1980s. Breaking away from traditional class-based struggles and drawing on indigeneity as a cultural and political resource, the Maya movement emerged as a loose coming together of intellectuals, non-government organizations and social justice movements. It 'imagined' a collective identity through indigenous theorizing around world-views, rights and grievances. As the Council of Maya Organizations in Guatemala (COMG) puts it in a book title, the Maya movement is

Building a Future for Our Past (1995). In this context, indigeneity is not static or inevitable, nor is it simply invented (Hernández 2010, 379). Rather, like the Zapatista revolutionary movement in Chiapas (southern Mexico), Maya indigeneity involves 'changing while remaining' by preserving symbolic and cultural repertoires as well as struggling for recognition. Pan-Maya mobilizing, which has strengthened cultural and political links among Maya in Mexico, Belize and Honduras, brings together recognition of modern individual and collective rights and indigenous world-views and practices.

In Guatemala, the Maya movement adopts United Nations terminology to legitimate demands, frame grievances and gain leverage (Tarrow 1998). Since the 1996 peace accords, survivors and human rights organizations have attempted to bring military perpetrators to trial for massacres and genocide. These efforts have produced some results – as well as threats, harassment and killing of key witnesses – but prosecutions proceed only with great perseverance, time, energy and expense. Five commandos responsible for the Dos Erres massacre (1982) were imprisoned in 2011–12, and on 10 May 2013, General Ríos Montt – seen by many as the most brutal of the military dictators – was sentenced to prison for genocide and crimes against humanity. His 80-year prison term was overturned just ten days later, however, and the Guatemalan Congress subsequently passed a decree ruling that genocide did not occur in Guatemala. Given the almost insurmountable difficulties in achieving justice through established legal channels, many people and organizations, in particular Maya women, have looked to ethical tribunals as an important alternative public process for making their voices heard and their grievances acknowledged.

Ethical Tribunals as Performance

Ethical tribunals are symbolic courts that serve to break the silence surrounding human rights abuses, bring to light the nature and extent of the crimes committed, and expose state impunity. These tribunals are non-governmental quasi-legal initiatives, a 'weapon of the weak', or a strategy of the subaltern in the face of immense power imbalances, injustice and scant space for the representation of those whose rights are violated. The post-Second World War Nuremberg Trials were clearly a source of inspiration, although these were government-led and resulted in war criminals being incarcerated, whereas ethical tribunals are merely able to promote moral condemnation. Such staged performances by public intellectuals create spaces of recognition for victims, publicize emblematic cases and point to what justice *could* look like and what courts and governments *should* do (Corporación Humanas 2011). In that sense,

they go well beyond court mandates in democratic countries with robust legal systems, as they address structural issues and government policies as well as specific human rights abuses.[2] An obvious limitation of ethical tribunals, however, is that they lack juridical 'teeth' since their resolutions are not legally binding; this is also the case in many (though not all) government and UN-sponsored truth commissions.

The 1967 path-breaking International War Crimes Tribunal launched by Bertrand Russell and other public intellectuals, including Jean-Paul Sartre and the Argentine novelist Julio Cortázar, investigated and evaluated US foreign policy and military intervention in Vietnam. The Italian jurist and Senator Lelio Basso subsequently emulated the process in 1979, creating the Permanent People's Tribunal (PPT) to examine and pass judgment on human rights violations. To date, the PPT has organized 42 tribunals on human rights violations in different parts of the world. The tenth tribunal, held in Madrid in 1983, drew international attention to, and condemnation of, human rights atrocities in Guatemala. Another early ethical tribunal was the first International Tribunal on Crimes Against Women, in Brussels in 1976, which brought together over 2,000 women from 40 countries. The event publicly condemned a wide range of oppressive practices, including forced motherhood, persecution of non-virgins and unmarried mothers, compulsory heterosexuality and violence against women (Russell and Van de Ven 1990). Echoing this symbolic court of justice a quarter of a century later, the Violence Against Women's Network in Asia launched the 'Women's International War Crimes Tribunal on Japan's Military Sexual Slavery' (Matsui 2000) to make visible and reprehend the widespread sexual enslavement of Asian women to 'comfort' Japanese soldiers before and during the Second World War.

Ethical tribunals constitute symbolic political action, using quasi-legal theatrics to enact justice through the presentation of testimony and expert reports, while judges listen, deliberate and make statements, condemnations and recommendations. Through these public enactments, the tribunals constitute 'a performative, pedagogical politics of hope [that] imagines a radically free democratic society' (Denzin 2003, 5). Following legal-like procedures, victims become empowered through giving testimony. This process has the potential to challenge social and political hierarchies, as Baz Kershaw's analysis of radicalism in drama and theatre suggests: 'the mechanisms of discipline, which in fact generally hinge on an act of performance – in legal systems the law court is paradigmatic of this – can sometimes be turned back on themselves to produce resistant and transcendent empowerment' (1998, 80). As they rely on social capital, ethical tribunals can have considerable impact if they use the media (mainstream and alternative) strategically and effectively. They also

transcend national borders, particularly through the Internet, mustering solidarity and the support of international organizations and movements.

While ethical tribunals are a recent development in Guatemala, Mayas have a longer history of giving testimony in international forums. During the 1980s, Maya leaders such as Rigoberta Menchú (awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1992) spoke at UN conventions in New York and Geneva, denouncing the massacre of indigenous communities and other gross human rights violations taking place in Guatemala. Solidarity campaigners in Europe, the USA and Canada frequently invited Maya leaders and survivors as keynote speakers at international meetings and press conferences. Mayas also often gave testimony to the UN Special Rapporteur as well as international delegations, both in Guatemala and from exile in Mexico. Some Maya women participated in the 1983 Permanent People's Tribunal in Madrid and the 1985 World Conference in Nairobi, which reviewed and appraised the achievements of the UN Decade for Women. Maya activists drew on these international experiences when organizing the first ethical tribunal on racism in Guatemala in 2002.

In his thought-provoking analysis of protest dramaturgies, Kershaw intriguingly suggests that 'the political *in* theatre', as in Brecht's or Fo's work, has given way to the 'performative *in* the political' (1997, 256) through the spectacle of protest. The 'synecdochic nature of protest events may produce enormous political potency', he argues, 'for they double society back on itself … [and] present a reflexive critique of the foundations of authority' (1997, 257). Ethical tribunals also double society back on itself through the performance of what courts should do but do not do. Kershaw considers the performative *in* the political to be particularly relevant to regions such as western Europe or North America:

> Late-capitalist multi-party democracies produce societies in which performance is central to all socio-political processes, producing a 'performative society'. In such a society, the performative becomes a powerful weapon of political conflict, and therefore the aesthetics of performance are relevant to the analysis of political – especially politically conflictual – events. (Kershaw 1997, 257)

While this is clearly the case, I would argue that the performative *in* the political also acquires a special salience in 'low-intensity' democracies such as Guatemala's. Here the performative provides a strategy for social and cultural justice, whether through Maya ceremonies, ethical tribunals or street occupations by Maya protesters. Performance in this context enhances 'strategies of meaningful social, political, and cultural positioning' (Carlson 2004, 7) and provides an enabling environment 'to

gain political and social visibility' (Carlson 2004, 167). How visible performances can be beyond the local arenas depends in part on efficient use of mainstream and alternative media, and particularly of the Internet, where coverage can be cumulative over time and travel globally.

In the 2002 'Tribunal of Conscience against Racism', Maya men and particularly women testified to discrimination in educational institutions, government bodies and workplaces, and detailed the lack of respect shown to Maya spiritual sites and practices. The tribunal took place in Guatemala City's prestigious Miguel Angel Asturias Cultural Centre and judges concluded that ingrained racism and discrimination are a serious problem in Guatemala, fostering genocide, ethnocide and ecocide. They condemned the racism prevalent in the general population, the army, courts of law, public ministries, the police force, schools and private enterprise in open violation of international conventions signed by the government, and urged the state to take legal action to put an end to racism. The tribunal helped to precipitate the Presidential Commission on Racism and Discrimination against Indigenous Peoples in Guatemala, set up in October 2002.

The rape of women during the armed conflict was the theme of another ethical tribunal in Guatemala City in March 2010.[3] Women travelled across continents to act as 'judges' for this event, organized by an alliance of mainly women's organizations. To ensure the safety of those giving testimony, witnesses, almost all Maya women, were dressed in white and sat behind screens, projecting only their silhouettes. The following testimony illustrates the tone set in the tribunal, through the rhetorical delivery and repetition of words that convey the victim's grief:

> The pain I carry in my soul is what I suffer from now. So much grief, so much sadness resulting from suffering, I feel this hurts me deeply. [The army] threw me down a ravine, the rocks hurt me … the army also raped me. Despite my long-term suffering as a woman, I know I have my rights. I am here to appeal on behalf of the women who stayed behind, demanding that we, as women, have rights. God knows why I was left alive. That is why I am present here: for the women. I thank you for being here and listening to me. This was my voice. (Testimonio 3, qtd in Alvarado et al. 2012, 40; my translation)

This moving testimony also displays resilience and a concern for the well-being of other women. The tribunal testimonies were dramatic as they named and denounced the hitherto unspeakable issue of rape as a weapon of war. Shock and indignation rippled through the audience, but also admiration for the Maya women's agency and refusal to be passive victims.

The People's International Health Tribunal

Unlike the urban events discussed above, the People's International Health Tribunal took place in a remote municipality, San Miguel Ixtahuacán, in San Marcos, neighbouring the south of Mexico. Nestled among hills and mountains scantly covered with pine trees, the municipality's population is almost 98 per cent Maya-Mam. Although many of these people have lost external markers of their indigenous identity, such as dress, Mam thrives as a language, perpetuating a cosmology rich in close relations between human beings and nature. This local cultural wealth is juxtaposed with material poverty, compelling the region's inhabitants to migrate at harvest-time to work on the large coffee plantations on the southern coast of Guatemala or in neighbouring Chiapas, in Mexico. Women from San Miguel also find employment in cities as domestics. In 2005, the Nevada-based company Glamis, later taken over by Goldcorp, and its Guatemalan subsidiary, Montana Explorada, began open-pit gold mining in San Miguel and neighbouring Sipacapa. Although the mine has brought money into the area in the short term, it has disrupted community life and caused irreparable ecological and social damage.

While conducting fieldwork on Maya women's resistance to the gold mine in San Miguel in 2012, I received an invitation to take part in the People's International Health Tribunal.[4] The tribunal provided an opportunity to channel the indignation I confess to having felt upon seeing how a Canadian corporation had assaulted the environment and profoundly disrupted the social fibre of community and indeed family life. In another essay, I have explored the way governments and transnational corporations have doomed local communities in similar circumstances to silence by dictating the terms for mediating conflict (see Macleod 2017). Disputes pass through expensive court cases based on highly specialized technical reports concerning specific issues, such as the levels of heavy metals and toxic substances in the water, or the causes of cracks in houses. These processes literally leave local inhabitants speechless. At one point, I foolishly repeated to a Maya woman from San Miguel what others had told me: given that there is no baseline data, it is extremely difficult to establish the exact damage the open-pit gold mine is causing to local people's health. Her answer shamed me: before the mine, she noted, ailments such as skin diseases were simply unknown to the community. I realized that I too was contributing to what Boaventura de Sousa Santos terms the 'active production of non-existence' (2007, 45), whereby local people's lived experience and knowledge, deemed inferior to technical and scientific expertise, is effectively erased. At the same time, responses readily available to local communities, such as marches, roadblocks and

other forms of direct action, are often violently suppressed. The health tribunal was a rare opportunity for local women and men to speak out and have their words and feelings put on record.

Among the tribunal participants were four Maya-Mam – three women and a man – whose experiences constitute particularly striking examples of intimidation by and resistance against the mining corporation. Doña[5] Crisanta Pérez Bámaca, a feisty, born leader from Agel, a village besieged by the mine, had defiantly pulled up the 'anchors' of a high-tension electricity post in her garden. The mining company claimed her consent to the pole's planting after making her sign a blank piece of paper. Seven women supported Doña Crisanta in her act of rebellion; all received arrest warrants (see Macleod and Pérez 2013). Doña Crisanta's own brother handed her over to the police. They put her in the back of a pick-up truck and were taking her to prison when villagers, hearing of her arrest, stormed the truck and secured her release. Doña Crisanta was forced into hiding for several months. Tz'ununija', a national indigenous women's movement, provided her and the other seven women with legal support and developed a political strategy that led to the charges eventually being dropped. Another villager, the elderly, widowed Doña Diodora Antonia Hernández Cinto, steadfastly refused to sell her land, although the mine had engulfed her house and plot. Her flat refusal to give up her property made her many enemies. In 2010, she was shot in the eye and left for dead. Later, to escalate the pressure on her to sell up, the mining company summoned her to court. She exclaimed in broken Spanish when I visited her, 'There is no law for me' (interview July 2012).[6] The third of the four witnesses of note was Sister Maudilia López Cardona, who initially headed FREDEMI, the Miguelense Anti-Mining Front, a local coalition against the open-pit gold mine. Maudilia is unusual as a Catholic sister, given her deep involvement in Maya spirituality, and she transgresses assigned gender roles by playing the marimba. Last was Don Matías Modesto López, a music teacher who plays and teaches the marimba in church services. Don Matías was attacked in reprisal for his opposition to the mine.

The idea of holding a health tribunal arose from community discussions with a doctoral student keen to reciprocate support she had received during her fieldwork. The initiative, which grew to include communities affected by three Goldcorp mines (located respectively in Guatemala, Honduras and Guerrero, Mexico), received the backing of six Guatemalan organizations and 36 international social movements, collectives and community radio stations. This alliance coordinated national and international aspects of the tribunal, selecting judges from across the Americas as well as health, legal and human rights practitioners to provide expert

Fig. 1 Rosa Elbira Coc Ich lights a candle during spiritual invocations
at People's International Health Tribunal, 2012.
Photo: James Rodríguez/mimundo.org.

reports. Maya-Mam women and men from San Miguel took care of local arrangements, commandeering the Catholic Calvary Church hall in San Miguel as the venue. When the two-day tribunal began on 15 July 2012, the 'judges' – doctors, ecologists and academics from Canada, the US, Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala and Chile – were ushered into a hall bursting with hundreds of people, young and old. There were rows and rows of local Maya men and women, with children and babes-in-arms; delegations of Mayas from other parts of Guatemala, who stood out by their regional dress; international visitors from El Salvador, Honduras and Mexico; and Europeans and Canadians, many of them involved in community and alternative media.

Centre stage, pine needles and reddish purple flowers marked the ceremonial circle, while coloured earth, fruit, candles and woven cloths marked the four cardinal points. Only a discreet cross on one wall revealed the venue as a church hall. Around the circle, local Maya hosted the event, played the marimba and gave testimony, joined by men and women from Mexico, Guatemala and Honduras. The thirteen judges sat at tables covered with Maya weavings facing the ceremonial circle. Behind them sat most of the audience. The witnesses and those invited to give expert reports on health issues and human rights arranged themselves on the other side of the ceremonial circle. Around the microphones, to one corner, dozens of alternative media huddled, filming, recording sound and taking photos to transmit the event live on local radio and the Internet.[7] The hall was so crowded that people spilled out through the door on to the terrace. There was constant movement in the hall, comings and goings, children running around, babies crying, people talking in hushed voices in Mam, a few dogs shooed from entering, and the sound of roosters in the distance.

The tribunal started with a Maya invocation. While this may have been uncomfortable for some outsiders and Maya-Mam Christians, the effect of honouring the four cardinal points was to bring about a sense of coming together. Sister Maudilia then set the tone in her opening speech, framing the proceedings in terms of long-lasting historical grievances:

> This activity seeks to express our sentiments, to express everything that hurts us as indigenous peoples, as women, who have suffered, everything that has happened to us historically … It's [a long history] of total injustice. We lament our governments' posture throughout history; none have had the will to defend us as peoples and as persons, as human beings that we are. They only want to get rich, to see to their own interests, but they forget about us.

Fig. 2. Sister Maudilia and Don Matías playing the marimba,
People's International Health Tribunal, 2012.
Photo: Manuela Arancibia Macleod/Hijos de la Tierra.

Fig. 3 Children showing their drawings around the ceremonial circle,
People's International Health Tribunal, 2012.
Photo: Manuela Arancibia Macleod/Hijos de la Tierra.

The experience of being treated as 'less-than-human' echoed throughout the tribunal. Maudilia's rhetorical speech patterns, common in everyday exchanges in Mayan languages, here addressed a wider public, the repetition serving to emphasize suffering. Witnesses were then called to give testimony. In her theorization of such performative acts, Caroline Wake distinguishes between the *scene* and the *account* of the witnessed event, the former apprehended through the senses and potentially involving multiple perspectives, the latter related to public (oral) testimony delivered for the record (2009, n.p.). Attestation in the health tribunal provided accounts for the record and even, at times, new events. Those giving testimony assembled their own narratives, deciding what to present and what to leave out. Inevitably, such stories involve 'slippages between different kinds of truths', as Ronald Niezen has argued in relation to testimony at Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission on the impact of enforced residential schooling on indigenous children. 'What witnesses convey in their narratives', he notes, 'is commonly understood to be unadulterated, veridical reports of lived experience rather than instrumentally limited reports that are subject to selectivity and omissions of memory and that are "rhetorically organized"' (Niezen 2013, 84).

Live performance, with its instant audience feedback loop, played a powerful role in the rhetorical organization of witnesses' stories as the health tribunal unfolded. Testimony after moving testimony by women and men from Valle de Siria, Carrizalillo, San Miguel and Sipacapa shook the audience, creating a sense of collective outrage and indignation that increased as the floor was opened up to delegations reporting environmental conflicts in other parts of Guatemala. People gasped as a Honduran ex-Goldcorp worker simply took off his shirt and showed his back covered with lesions from working in the mine. Here the boundaries blur between witness to the event and witness to the account (Wake 2009), as the damaged body of the worker becomes a testimonial spectacle. Visual meaning-making marks this quasi-legal performance. As Niezen observes, 'there is an eloquence and excess of meaning in [such] images': 'the poignant dignity of a victim wrongfully harmed, the implicit malice of one who has perpetrated ... an act of violence' (2013, 14).

When Doña Crisanta's turn came to speak, her loquacity meshed together her grievances against Goldcorp, her cry for respect for Mother Nature and her demand that individual and collective rights be upheld:

> I want to present my denunciation against the mining company operating in my community. This corporation has caused me many problems while defending my personal rights and rights as a people. Not only this, but also for defending water, Mother Earth and natural resources ... I have given my life to defend all that nourishes us.

Suffering is countered here by the vernacularization of rights (Merry 2006), whereby Doña Crisanta has appropriated rights discourses and translated them to her local reality. Doña Diodora's performance was more restrained but none the less critical of the mining venture. She delivered a particularly heart-rending testimony in Mam, translated into Spanish. Standing perfectly still in a red bandana and bright green blouse, hands folded in front, she described how she had been shot in the eye and left for dead. 'I am guilty of no crime', she kept repeating. Other testimonies conjured the invasive sensory effects of the open-pit mines on the villagers: toxic dust in the air they breathe, foul smells and the loud clanging and thudding of machinery breaking rocks, so different from the usual fresh air and rural sounds of birds and community life.

Don Matías López captivated the audience with his oratorical style, suffused with biblical references, his voice rising for emphasis and then dropping to a mere whisper. He told how, after being attacked and robbed because of his opposition to the mine, he went to talk to the local authorities, who said that they knew nothing: 'the town is calm', they said, 'we are neutral'. 'Neutral', he repeated indignantly, 'I don't understand. Is this life? Is it death? Is it heaven? Or is it hell?' While the logic of his narrative was lost on many of us, the Maya-Mam in the audience were riveted. 'It's death', they shouted back. Don Matías continued passionately: 'Today we in FREDEMI tell the mining company to leave us in saintly peace. We tell them to leave us in peace and to go home to their lands, to their country'; his voice dropped as he murmured under his breath, 'may God forgive them'. Then his voice reached another crescendo: 'But before they leave, they must pay for the mortal damage they've caused to Mother Nature's creation.' Applause broke out, whistles and comments of 'how true' coming from the audience as Don Matías finished his speech defiantly. 'Our struggle will continue, because our struggle is to defend the life of humanity, to defend our rights and to defend our territory.' More applause erupted as he left the microphone to take his seat. These dramatic techniques – the modulation of his voice, the call and response – created a vivid and memorable performance that captivated the audience.

Expert reports, questions from the judges and deliberation followed. Then came the theatrical moment when the judges stood to face the audience while their spokesperson read the verdict, categorically condemning Goldcorp. The company's mining operations were judged to be 'highly damaging to health and to quality of life, [affecting] the environment [and] the right to free determination of indigenous and *campesino* communities'. The judges also found the Canadian, Guatemalan, Honduran and Mexican governments guilty of complicity and irresponsibility. Witnesses felt recognized, thus fulfilling the goal of testimonial

performance, as Niezen puts it: 'to be listened to and ideally to have what they say preserved, not just in the memories of their listeners but noted, recorded, and archived' (2013, 87). The health tribunal verdict has been one of the few ways of creating justice, albeit symbolic, for the affected communities. As a way of articulating Denzin's 'politics of hope' through the agency of Maya women and men, the tribunal also portrayed, figuratively and rhetorically, how justice could occur.

The testimonies clearly touched the audience and jury members, creating a collective feeling of indignation and sympathy. This response to the embodied performance and *mise-en-scène* of public narratives of deep suffering has the potential to form what Myriam Jimeno (2011) terms 'emotional communities'. The basis of such communities 'is not simply momentary compassion', she explains, 'but rather a political bond … that can contribute to protest action to demand justice, truth, or punishment or establish what has happened, promoting the integral reparation of victims' (Jimeno 2014, n.p.). The momentum of collective emotion is in itself a form of reparation, particularly in contexts of extreme impunity. The explicitly emotional quality of the tribunals disrupts prevalent hegemonic notions that courts and the administration of justice belong to the realms of impartiality and rationality. In this sense, the health tribunal gave a human face to abstract stories of victimization while also pointing accusatory fingers, reminiscent of Zola's *J'accuse* (Felman 2001), at Goldcorp – and to a lesser degree at local authorities and governments for allowing abuses to take place. In turn, the judges' acknowledgement of local people's grievances and the pain they have faced with the onslaught of predatory extractive practices by transnational corporations achieved some sense of public shaming of corporate greed as well as increased recognition of its damaging effects.

Final Reflections

The ethical tribunals I have discussed not only denounce impunity and the complicity of state justice systems in contravening human rights in Guatemala, but also evoke an alternative paradigm of justice, based on collective civil action and raising public awareness. At the level of embodied politics, these events both enact and explicitly model participatory processes through which citizens can contribute to social memory without having their stories and experiences silenced or censored by state institutions. The Maya who have promoted and participated in these tribunals transcend victimhood, gaining some control and autonomy in their lives, and agency in their collective well-being. More broadly, ethical tribunals constitute an innovative and highly visible performative strategy

to bring to light social injustice and human rights violations that have been naturalized or erased in official histories. Such 'courts' are strategically employed by subaltern groups with little access to formal justice mechanisms, to judge and morally condemn the powerful: governments, armies, transnational corporations, rapists and dictators. At the same time, the tribunals provide a space for victims to be heard and to be recognized, to exercise agency, and indeed to rehearse *for* agency in international forums such as solidarity events and meetings with UN bodies.

In this context, the use of Maya ceremonies and cultural traditions in ethical tribunals plays a significant part in actualizing the kind of reflexive protests that Kershaw sees as crucial to democracy in an era of increasing globalization. In so far as they involve 'opening up new views of difference and otherness [and] enhancing pluralism', the tribunal performances 'have the potential to disrupt hegemonies, and to stimulate new kinds of civil desire' (Kershaw 1997, 274). Mayas have both appropriated and vernacularized international rights discourses, making them relevant to their specific contexts of disenfranchisement. Giving testimony in ethical tribunals and international forums, forging strategic alliances with organizations and actors in other countries, and using the Internet and other popular media have launched Maya activism into the global arena. Drawing both on Maya epistemologies and globalized codes of individual human and collective indigenous rights, Maya position performance *in* the political to further their demands and visions of social justice. These strategies have the effect of 'disrupting the spectacle of hegemony and … opening up new forms of ideological exchange between civil society and the state, new social movements and institutional power' (Kershaw 1997, 274). They also bring a global and multicultural lens to civil society and social activism.

Notes

1 The twenty *nawales* of the *cholq'ij* or sacred calendar are arranged on a cycle of one to thirteen. In ceremonies, day-counters invoke each *nawal*, counting through the numbers.

2 I thank Arifani Moyo for this observation during the conference 'In the Balance: Indigeneity, Performance, Globalization', 24–27 October 2013, London.

3 The Commission for Historical Clarification registered 1,465 reports of rape, and was only able to verify 285 cases, though many thousands more are suspected. Women and girls comprised 99 per cent of the cases and the vast majority (80 per cent) were indigenous. According to the UN Truth Commission, rape was by far the most under-reported human rights violation (Alvarado et al. 2012).

4 As Dwight Conquergood states: 'When working with minority peoples and disenfranchised subcultures … one is frequently propelled into the role of advocate' (1985, 2).

5 'Doña' and 'Don' are courteous honorifics in Spanish to refer to elder and/or respected women and men.

6 This and other translations of testimony from Spanish are by the author.

7 Given the large media presence, surprisingly few accounts of the event subsequently appeared on the Internet: a radio programme, photographs and only snippets of videos. See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aAJdmMfaoHk and https://archive.org/details/ProgramaEspecialSobreElTribunalPopularInternacionalDeSaludContraLa (both accessed 8 August 2017).

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14

Endurance/Enduring Performance: Nadia Myre, *La Marche Amun* and the Indian Act's Tumultuous Geographies

Julie Burelle

> Native women are going to raise the roof and decry the dirty house which patriarchy and racism have built on our backs.
>
> <div align="right">Lee Maracle (2002, 22)</div>

Between 1999 and 2002, the Anishinaabe visual artist Nadia Myre, aided by her friend, the curator Rhonda Meier, enlisted the help of 250 friends and strangers to bead over the 56 pages of Canada's Indian Act, hiding the words of this wide-reaching colonial law with more than 800,000 red and white glass beads. A veritable feat of endurance, Myre's monumental artwork denaturalizes the Indian Act and renders it illegible: a network of beaded lines erases the words of the text, giving each page the semblance of an aerial map capturing a disorienting visual landscape in which red dominates white. As a result, the piece calls attention to what has long lain under the law's text: the very nations, bodies and territories that have been and continue to be violently marginalized by the Act's potent words.

In 2010, as if surveying Myre's unsettling map, a group of Aboriginal women completed *La Marche Amun*, a long-distance endurance protest march to demand an end to the gendered discrimination embedded in the Indian Act. Led by the well-known Innu activists and leaders Michèle Taina Audette and Viviane Michel,[1] the women walked more than 500 kilometres, departing from Wendake, a Huron-Wendat community enclaved by Quebec City, to arrive in Ottawa, Canada's capital, a month later. En route, the women's moving bodies performed what Rebecca Solnit calls a 'conscious cultural act' (2000, 351), patiently surveying, crossing and illuminating a landscape marked by an ensemble of gendered

exclusionary lines created and naturalized by the Indian Act. They walked through towns such as Trois-Rivières and Donnaconna, and the cities of Montreal, Gatineau and Ottawa, where they attended informal gatherings and media events organized by indigenous and non-indigenous groups. Through their journey, the women traversed what the Seneca scholar Mishuana Goeman calls 'tumultuous geographies constructed around differing and constantly shifting power structures' (2013, 1). In Canada, these tumultuous geographies exclude Aboriginal women from social and political power along lines demarcating reservations, settler communities, urban and rural landscapes, provinces and linguistic groups. First Nations communities themselves are shaped by such lines, which separate those who have Indian status from those who do not. Historically, this situation has rendered Aboriginal women among the most vulnerable in the nation to violence and dispossession.

It is not a coincidence that the interventions performed by Myre and the women of *La Marche Amun* both target the Indian Act. As the Mi'kmaq scholar Bonita Lawrence argues, Canada's Indian Act is more than a body of laws; 'it is a regulatory regime – a grammar – that has controlled every aspect of Indian life for more than a century [...] functioning discursively to naturalize colonial worldviews' (2003, 3). Despite some Canadian politicians downplaying the original genocidal intent of the law,[2] critics stress that the Indian Act was created with the specific goal of bringing the so-called 'Indian problem' to an end by forcibly assimilating First Nations people. Duncan Campbell Scott, the deputy superintendent of the Department of Indian Affairs between 1913 and 1932, famously argued in support of the Indian Act: 'I want to get rid of the Indian problem. Our objective is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic [...]: that is the whole object of this Bill' (qtd in Leslie 1978, 114). To achieve these ends, the Indian Act radically remapped richly diverse First Nations into a single category, the 'Status Indian', which is 'the only category of Native person to whom a historic nation-to-nation relationship between Canada and the Indigenous people is recognized' (Lawrence 2003, 6). Since its creation in 1876, the Indian Act has been repeatedly amended, and the category of Status Indian increasingly restricted, in an effort to accelerate assimilation and extinguish this legal category.

Lee Maracle claims in this essay's epigraph that Canada enacted its settler colonial project on the backs of First Nations women, targeting them with particularly damaging and violent policies. Following Maracle, Audra Simpson argues that First Nations women's bodies 'have *historically* been rendered less valuable because of what they are taken to represent: land, reproduction, Indigenous kinship and governance, an alternative to

[settler colonial] heteronormative and Victorian rules of descent' (2014, 156). Among the Haudenosaunee, for example, it was the women who owned land and transmitted status and clan affiliation, thus ensuring the renewal and stability of the community. In stripping Aboriginal women of their Indian status if they married non-Aboriginal or non-Status men (that is, non-Status Indians, Métis or Inuit, or members of tribes located in the United States), the Indian Act 'sought to divest Indian women from land by divesting them of their legal rights as Indians' (Simpson 2014, 149). Many matrilineal nations were profoundly altered in concrete terms by these transmission rules as well as by the imposition of systems of governance that decentred clan mothers and the philosophical and political practices and understandings of sovereignty for which they acted as stewards. This divesting of Indian women's authority and agency also took place at the symbolic level: American and Canadian literature and visual culture, for example, have relied heavily on assimilative tropes whereby Aboriginal women, standing in for indigeneity as a whole, fall in love with settlers and ultimately die, ensuring the stability and futurity of settler existence on the continent (see Green 1975; Acoose 1995; Mojica 1991). As Simpson writes, echoing Andrea Smith: 'theirs are bodies that carry a symbolic load … [s]o it is that they must be eradicated' (2014, 149). Saturated with such signifying power, Aboriginal women's bodies indeed threaten Canada's proclaimed trajectory towards the end of 'the Indian problem'. The Indian Act's rules regarding the transmission of status targeted precisely this embodied power as they systematically conjugated assimilation. A staggering number of First Nations women lost their Indian status for marrying non-indigenous or non-Status men and were consequently barred, along with their children, from residing on reserve land or taking part in the life of their communities.[3] Amid the broader effects of settler colonialism at large, the disproportionate violence that First Nations and Aboriginal women face today – indicated, for instance, by the 1,181 Aboriginal women who disappeared or were murdered between 1980 and 2012[4] – is a direct repercussion of the Indian Act's gendered violence.

In recent years, the emphasis of Canada's official discourse concerning First Nations communities has evolved from overt assimilation to recognition and accommodation – a discourse no less problematic according to Elizabeth Povinelli (2002) and the Dene scholar Glen Coulthard (2007) because it reproduces rather than alters the asymmetrical relations of power that define settler colonialism, ultimately subsuming indigenous sovereignty under that of settler nations. Despite the change of tone, Canada's settler colonial project rests on what Patrick Wolfe calls 'a logic of elimination'; it requires for its stability and expansion the perpetual

erosion of First Nations communities and territories (2006, 389). The passing of omnibus bill C-45 in 2012 by then Prime Minister Harper's Conservative government exemplifies this erosion. The bill, which sparked the grassroots Idle No More protest movement, unilaterally amended the Indian Act and the Navigable Waters Protection Act, effectively opening protected First Nations territories to commercial development and removing environmental protections on a series of waterways vital to First Nations communities. Clearly, Canada's settler colonial project imagines only two possible structural and ontological positions for First Nations peoples: within settler society's body politic through assimilation, or outside of it, living – enduring – under a body of law that constantly erodes their rights to specific territories, resources and cultural practices, and thus to self-determination.

Myre's *Indian Act* and *La Marche Amun* consciously embody and perform the structural position of endurance into which settler colonialism has forced First Nations peoples, and particularly First Nations women. Together these two performance pieces meditate on what it means to endure against a colonizing project whose intended trajectory culminates with the end of First Nations' endurance. I employ endurance to describe performances that stage or foreground the testing of a performer's physical, emotional and/or spiritual resources; that insist on and render visible the performer's presence under trying circumstances. Here, the concept of endurance performance captures a different project from the one embodied in the 1960s and 1970s by artists such as Chris Burden or Tehching Hsieh, who voluntarily staged their bodies' struggle under self-imposed conditions such as hunger, immobility, or isolation. In mobilizing First Nations women's endurance as a performative language, *La Marche Amun* and Nadia Myre's beading project seize the state's grammar of extinction and erasure in order to expose its effects and to counteract what Taiaiake Alfred terms 'a self-congratulatory version of Canadian history' in which the settler is positioned as a 'benevolent peacemaker' (2010, ix). Against this orthodoxy, the women's endurance performances challenge viewers to consider structural violence against First Nations people not as a distant tragedy or a past event, but as the product of settler colonialism and a condition for its continuation.

As performance pieces, *La Marche Amun* and Myre's *Indian Act* challenge the current theoretical vocabulary surrounding endurance performances, a genre often imbricated with notions of individual bravura and masculinity. Unlike the solo endurance feats and spectacularized bodies that marked the genre in the 1960s and 1970s, *Indian Act* and *La Marche Amun* conjugate endurance through communal participation and seemingly less spectacular quotidian practices. In fact, these works

provoke us – as viewers and scholars – to think of endurance not as a metaphor for an individual's malaise vis-à-vis society (as endurance performance art often is) but as a positioning within settler colonialism's structure of power and assimilation.

(Re)Mapping the Indian Act's Tumultuous Geographies.

The imposing scale of Nadia Myre's *Indian Act* strikes the viewer first: it comprises 56 white letter-size canvases striated with white and red. Each beaded canvas is mounted on a black mat and, while some are clearly completed, others, roughly attached to the mats with masking tape, appear to have been voluntarily left unfinished. The piece, which has travelled across Canada and the United States, demands space: when it was presented at Canada's National Art Gallery in Ottawa as part of *Sakahàn: International Indigenous Art* in 2013, *Indian Act* occupied an entire room, spreading over three walls. However, this composite artwork only reveals its complex intervention when viewers zoom in on its unfinished frames, discovering that each canvas, before being covered, consisted of an actual transcription of the legal text of Canada's Indian Act. Using a traditional beading technique called *manidoominensikaan*, Myre, Meier and their beading acolytes covered the text (partially or completely) with white beads and used equally minuscule red beads to cover the text's background, calling attention to the document's topography, to its negative space (Tougas 2011, 18). As a result, *Indian Act* reorients our gaze away from the words of the law and focuses our attention instead on the background, on the very material surfaces on which the law enacts its power; that is, on the canvas that stands here for the bodies, territories and communities of First Nations people.

By rendering the text opaque and visually foregrounding First Nations' presence, *Indian Act* symbolically unravels the Indian Act's logic of erasure and assimilation as it labours 'in the simultaneously metaphoric and material capacities of map making, to generate new possibilities' (Goeman 2013, 3). In a potent symbolic gesture, Myre uses a traditionally feminine Anishinaabe beading technique to undo a Eurocentric and patriarchal document. In her (re)mapped version of the Indian Act, white lines cut across the red landscape like so many imposed borderlines, or like scars that simultaneously evoke injuries and the possibility of healing.

The women of *La Marche Amun* performed a similar (re)mapping feat by walking through Huron-Wendat, Abenaki and Mohawk unceded territories to protest against the ongoing effects of the Indian Act's violent reordering of First Nations territories, communities and families over many generations. In particular, their march decried the exclusion
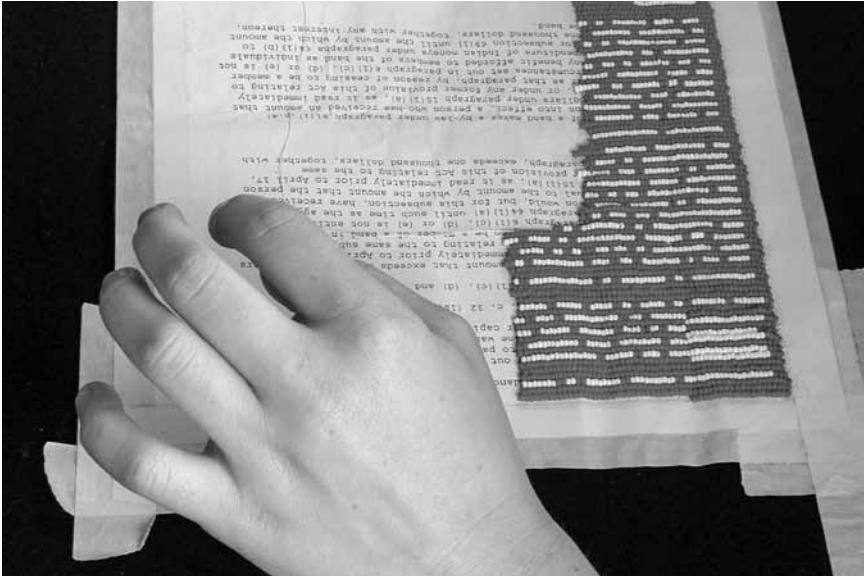
Fig. 1 A page of Nadia Myre's Indian Act.
Photo: Paul Litherland.

of more than 150,000 First Nations women and their descendants from their communities as a result of gendered regulations concerning Indian status, a process that broke ties and separated children from their parents physically as well as in legal terms. Connecting territories and communities through the performed labour of walking, the women's bodies 'broke through the abstraction' of the Indian Act, to borrow Rebecca Solnit's words (2000, 244), casting light on that which the Act sought to contain, absorb, or erase. The march was named after Michèle Taina Audette's oldest son, Amun, who at the time counted as one of the excluded. He only regained his status after Audette, Michel and other First Nations women successfully lobbied the government for change. This victory followed hard-won court battles by First Nations women, whose decades-long lawsuits to reclaim their status led to the landmark 1985 Bill C-31, which amended the Indian Act to correct some of its most discriminatory clauses.[5]

La Marche Amun, then, is part of a tradition of political work by First Nations women that pits endurance and persistence against the government's seemingly deliberate inertia when it comes to forging a just political relationship with First Peoples. In *Quel Canada pour les Autochtones*, Renée Dupuis describes stalling as the primary strategy

Fig. 2 Michèle Taïna Audette and Viviane Michel of La Marche Amun
arrive in Trois-Rivières, Quebec.
Photo: Stéphane Lessard, Le Nouvelliste.

harnessed by the government to deflect its obligations towards indigenous Canadians. This apathy, she suggests, forces First Nations communities to use the judicial system to protect their rights, transforming what should be a political, nation-to-nation relationship with Canada's polity into a judicial one (Dupuis 2001, 37). This lack of political will on the part of the settler state, this deliberate strategy of letting things fester (as in the case of the missing and murdered Aboriginal women), constitutes yet another test of First Nations communities' endurance.

As a long-distance walk, *La Marche Amun* demanded stamina: the women walked more than 500 kilometres between Quebec's and the nation's capitals, braving the elements and facing thirst, fatigue, blisters, stiff joints and the waves of flies that appear around June in Quebec, not to mention the probable indifference or hostility of some segments of the populations they tried to educate. The women walked without fanfare, followed by a van, their numbers varying from day to day. They carried four walking sticks adorned with red, black, yellow and white ribbons marking the colours of the medicine wheel. Their sustained engagement with the land unfolded with a slow and reflective rhythm anchored in its contours, a rhythm that refused the catchphrases and quick fixes often deployed by governments reluctant to admit to their present complicity in

settler colonialism. From a quotidian action, walking became a political project. A rural highway is not a benign place for Aboriginal women in Canada: indeed, given the great number of such women (between 18 and 40) who were abducted and murdered along British Columbia's infamous Highway 16 between 1969 and 2011, walking on public roadways is a loaded political performance, a reclaiming of the road as a space for change.

First Nations women have had to struggle not only against the settler-state but also against their own communities in their quest to regain Indian status. Much has been written about the negative reactions of some indigenous leaders and communities to Bill C-31 and other judicial victories against the Indian Act that allowed excluded families to regain their status (see Lawrence 2003; Simpson 2014). This negativity can be explained in part by the cultural and economic pressures that these new band members may put on already struggling communities, but it also illuminates what Frantz Fanon describes as internalized colonialism, here manifest through the naturalization of imposed patriarchal structures and practices as 'traditional' within some First Nations communities (Lawrence 2003, 15). Speaking with a Radio-Canada host about her experience during *La Marche Amun*, Audette recalls meeting Aboriginal men and women for whom the Indian Act's regulation of status had come to be understood as the extension of customs that pre-dated settler colonization (2012). The marchers worked to destabilize such beliefs by talking with people they met as they traversed the province and holding gatherings in communities to foster discussions about the Act's effects. They also gave interviews to non-indigenous as well as indigenous media along the way, before arriving in Ottawa for a final rally in front of Canada's Parliament.

As Audette's experience indicates, addressing the problems caused by the Indian Act's oppressive body of law requires time, vigilance and a conscious blurring of the lines that underpin its regulatory regimes – be they the literal lines of the legislation or the geographical lines that have served to isolate individuals from communities. Myre and the women of *La Marche Amun* perform this vigilant undoing. Myre's *Indian Act* entailed sustained communal work during 66 beading bees, with each page taking over 70 hours to complete. Even if none of the participants reached the level of complete exhaustion often associated with endurance art, the creation of *Indian Act* was a form of endurance practice. Claxton notes that 'the artist's own experience was very physical, moving into the realm of the spiritual. The physical rhythm of beading, the space and the sound of beading became a shared act of doing' (2007, 44). For Myre, this common doing helped to create a safer space than is generally available in the public sphere in which to confront colonialist lawmaking. The project brought together beading volunteers from different origins and walks of

life, reducing the distance, real and symbolic, between them. At a material level, participants performed the Indian Act's undoing by puncturing its text with needles, effectively lacerating the words and erasing them with beads. At a political level, the sustained encounter between beaders from indigenous and settler communities performed an undoing of the public silence that surrounds the Indian Act's legacies. Endurance is thus articulated in multiple ways in Myre's work: it exists not only in the lengthy communal effort that covered each canvas but also in the final product, which asserts and archives First Nations' resourceful tenacity in the face of settler colonialism.

The (re)mapping performed by *La Marche Amun* and Myre's piece is hopeful, healing even, but, in leaving some of the pages of her *Indian Act* unfinished, Myre deliberately avoids closure. Her work does not evacuate the notion of 'ressentiment', currently shunned as counterproductive in Canada's push for reconciliation with First Nations people through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission on Aboriginal Residential Schools (TRC), among other structures. Although the formal TRC process was desired by many First Nations communities and has served as an invaluable healing space in some instances, it is aggressively built on the ideas of forgiveness and closure. The Canadian government wants First Nations' pardon, yet continues to deny in more or less overt forms a colonial past that it constantly rearticulates in new policies that erode indigenous sovereignty. In reaction to this ongoing colonialism, Glen Coulthard (2011) argues:

> [r]esentment is not only an entirely defendable position, but actually a sign of our critical consciousness, of our sense of justice and injustice, and of our awareness of, and unwillingness to reconcile ourselves with the structural and symbolic violence that is still very much part of our lives.

Likewise, the Stö:lò scholar Dylan Robinson (2013) maintains that resentment can be a productive and ethical stance, a form of resistance that refuses to reconcile itself with the demand that First Nations continue to endure the effects of systemic injustice. In other words, reconciliation demands work, commitment and endurance from all parties; it is not a form of facile intimacy.

The scope (both in time and in effort) of Myre's project allowed for the expression of this resentment, thereby avoiding the trap of superficial togetherness. Settler participants (who, as a group, tend to deflect First Nations' resentment) had time to 'sit with' other participants' resentment during the beading sessions and, perhaps, let its power affect and

Fig. 3 Nadia Myre (bottom right) during one of the beading sessions.
Photo: Paul Litherland.

unsettle them. As Rhonda Meier recalls, 'participants came for all sorts of reasons'; her own contribution was 'fueled by a sense of refusal, a desire to deface the legislation' (2014). While no participants were ever asked to explain why they wanted to help create *Indian Act*, some openly discussed their motivations in doing so. Robert Myre, Nadia's father (who is non-indigenous), beaded over a number of pages, while France Trépanier, a member of the Mi'kmaq nation, beaded 'for deeply personal reasons, to connect with her ancestors' (qtd in Meier 2014). For his part, Barry Ace (Anishinaabe/Odawa) chose to bead over a page on taxation because he had been recently stuck in a Byzantine situation about this particular clause of the Indian Act.

Myre's beading sessions suggest that, for once, the burden of enduring (against and under) the Indian Act could be more evenly distributed, rather than resting solely on the shoulders of First Nations subjects. For non-indigenous participants, to endure in this context implies the fortitude to let oneself be affected by resentment, to contemplate one's complicity in colonialism as a member of the settler community. In the same way that the rhythm of walking for a month allows for a sustained reflection, sitting for hours beading over a text that imagines the end of First Nations as distinct people can be disorienting and unsettling. Both Myre's and *La Marche Amun*'s lengthy participatory processes invest time

with affective power, investigating how endurance shapes one's perception of the organizing forces at play in the formation and understanding of one's own identity, be it personal or communal.

Endurance Art, Social Contract and Diplomacy

While endurance is central to both of these collaborative works, they resist being categorized as endurance art of the kind that took the European and white American art scenes by storm in the 1960s and 1970s, when Chris Burden and Tehching Hsieh (among others) staged their bodies in states of sustained encounter with physical danger, injury, deprivation, solitude, boredom, homelessness and other 'modern' afflictions, often reifying notions of individualism and exceptionalism.[6] Patrick Anderson sees these performances as characterized by 'masculinity deeply rooted in [a form of] masochism' and notes their reliance on individual acts of prowess and the spectacularization of the body under duress (2010, 25). The position from which Myre and the women from *La Marche Amun* interrogate the act of enduring is radically different: their exploration stems from being in a structural relationship of endurance vis-à-vis an ensemble of assimilatory policies deployed by a settler state. Here, endurance is not performed as a self-imposed gesture of individual bravura or a metaphor for something else, but as a communal seizing of the settler-colonial grammar, forcing its logic of violence and extinction into the open.

Myre's work and *La Marche Amun* challenge endurance art's normative notions of exceptionalism and masculinity in their use of collective labour and seemingly unspectacular strategies. In both projects, the burden of endurance is shared by an ensemble of participants rather than restricted to an individual who can be deemed exceptional. Unlike staging a hunger strike, courting danger or vowing to remain immobile for days, there is nothing particularly spectacular about such quotidian gestures as walking or beading. However, when performed as community actions against settler colonialism's logic of elimination, these gestures acquire a specific political resonance and a productive spectacular quality. Walking and beading become affirmations of sovereignty and what the Anishinaabe scholar Gerald Vizenor calls 'survivance'. 'Native survivance', he writes, 'is more than survival, more than endurance or mere response; the stories of survivance are an active presence […] an active repudiation of dominance, tragedy, and victimry' (Vizenor 2000, 15). To walk or to bead, that is, to continue to invest territories and traditional practices as markers of indigenous presence and as organizational structures, is indeed politically charged.

Avant-garde endurance art of the 1960s and 1970s explored and challenged the notion of an implied contract between performer and

audience as an organizing force in the public and artistic spheres (O'Dell 1998, 2). Anderson argues that these performances summoned 'audiences to bear witness to their own spectatorial responsibilities in producing a scene of artistic encounter that would potentially endanger the life of the artist' (2010, 25). Myre and *La Marche Amun* similarly call attention to conveniently hidden social transactions – in this case the erasure and exclusion of First Peoples, which organizes settler societies and allows them to exist. To be clear, the Indian Act qualifies as neither a contract nor an agreement: it does, however, constitute a form of social contract in Canada, one that guarantees settler privilege and allows members of the settler community to tacitly agree to a profoundly asymmetrical society.

Nadia Myre's *Indian Act* challenges this operative social contract by echoing the visual and performative language of wampum belts, which were central to traditional First Nations diplomacy of the north-east coast of North America. Wampum belts, as Sandra Dyck explains, enabled communication, exchange and reciprocity and 'served as invitations to enter into discussion, as documents of proposals tabled at or agreements made during meetings and, particularly for the Iroquois, as records of laws, constitutions, and histories' (2011, 49). By beading *Indian Act* as a form of wampum belt – emulating the belt's two-colour and horizontal beading motifs as well as its function as an archival device – Myre gives her piece a multivalent quality: it can be read as a proposed new social contract, as a history of resilient endurance or as an invitation to dialogue. *Indian Act* is both the product and the archive of a form of diplomatic encounter in which beading volunteers from First Nations and settler communities came together to (re)write, (re)imagine and (re)map the set of rules that shape their relationship with each other. This encounter continues when the piece is presented in galleries and museums where it is accompanied by a list of the beading volunteers' names, like signatories in a (re)imagined contract. Audiences are envisaged as participants in, as well as witnesses to, this contract. By appearing unfinished, the artwork gestures to the living nature of the Indian Act and invites viewers to play a part in rethinking and decolonizing the relationship between First Nations and settler communities.

As the Mohawk activist and artist Ellen Gabriel noted at the 2013 TRC gathering, 'it was the women in matrilineal cultures that were weaving the belts' and thus acting as the archivists of their nation's diplomatic relationships (TRC Roundtable 2013). The women of *La Marche Amun* similarly wove and recorded new alliances and new roadways by physically traversing the lines of exclusion imposed by the Indian Act. As they walked across Quebec's vast expanse, crossing rural and urban landscapes, they invited those who witnessed their pilgrimage to position themselves

vis-à-vis the Indian Act. Their walk does not signal that the premise of this contract is in itself acceptable or that enough amendments will one day make the Indian Act a just piece of legislation. Instead, *La Marche Amun* does complex and contradictory diplomatic work: it resists colonial rules as a whole and strives to carve spaces of respite within the Act's coercive legal framework. Solnit argues that walking is a way to be 'among people' without being 'of' that people, a way to navigate an ecosystem and its various textures and inhabitants while maintaining one's individuality (2000, 532). Against the spirit of containment and assimilation that characterizes the Indian Act, the very act of walking embodies a resistant way for indigenous people to be among settler communities without being of them. In a radio interview two years after *La Marche Amun*, Audette reflected on its success: 'I see change as incremental [...] it happens through the stubborn steps of First Nations women' (2012). The walk, then, prepared the terrain for destabilizing the Indian Act's tumultuous geographies; it also performed a first step in laying the foundations for new forms of social contract between First Nations and settler communities and among First Nations communities themselves.

The women of *La Marche Amun* carved spaces of sovereignty and diplomacy within an oppressive system. In *Tshissinuatshitakana-Bâtons à message* (Message Sticks), the Innu poet Joséphine Bacon describes how the Innu, who are a nomadic people, traditionally left wooden sticks in various positions on their territory to communicate visually with other nomads. These sticks served as warnings of dangers or illness ahead and acted as an invitation to help one another by sharing information. As words, thoughts and intentions travelled through these sticks, 'speech was always in motion' (Bacon 2009, 7). Bacon employs the image of the message stick to describe her practice as a contemporary poet, but the metaphor captures equally well the work performed by *La Marche Amun* as the women traversed territories between communities that do not normally cross paths. Every discussion in which they engaged acted as a message stick, marking the Indian Act's ravages and inviting help in healing them.

Conclusion

While endurance performances are not new or unique among First Nations artists and activists, they have been under-theorized as decolonizing practices. Performing endurance in the face of colonialism is more than merely reactive; it is assertive, strategic and generative, as this essay argues. By employing traditional art forms and embodied vocabularies to address contemporary challenges confronting their communities, the beaders and

walkers who laboured to produce *Indian Act* and *La Marche Amun* model ways to imagine and enact spaces where women's rights coexist with indigenous sovereignty. Such enduring performances, as Jolene Rickard suggests, 'resituate traditional subjects from a frozen past' – and, I argue, from a frozen frame within the law – 'to a dynamic present' (2011, 472). They create breaks or gaps in the unrelenting grammar of the Indian Act, moments where its logic of erasure comes undone, where specifically indigenous stories of women and children can be retold. Walking the territory across imposed borders, reimagining women's agency within communities, reclaiming lineages that have been interrupted by the Indian Act – these are all performances of indigenous sovereignty anchored in non-Western understandings of the term.

The Quechan playwright Preston Arrow-Weed refers to such endurance projects as a form 'of praying located in doing'. Speaking of his own experience organizing a walk from the Quechan community of Fort Yuma, California, to Washington, DC, Arrow-Weed (2013) locates transformative power in sustained reflective motion through, or contact with, a landscape, particularly contested ancestral terrain. Since the Harper government's 2012 scaling back of environmental protections in First Nations territories in Canada, a number of endurance walks have been organized under the rallying banner of Idle No More, which is self-styled as 'a peaceful revolution to honour indigenous sovereignty and to protect the land and water'.[7] A prominent example is the 2013 *Journey of the Nishiyuu*, described as a performance 'that votes with its feet' (Galloway 2013). In support of the Idle No More movement, a group of young Cree men marched 1,500 kilometres from northern Quebec to Ottawa in temperatures reaching as low as –50 Celsius to ask then Prime Minister Harper to honour his obligations to indigenous Canadians.[8] The following year brought the 34-day, 700-kilometre *March for Mother Earth* in Quebec, mobilizing First Nations and settler Canadians against the development of tar sands oil pipelines by the Harper government.[9] In Alberta, a series of *Healing Walks* begun in 2010 to render visible the devastation of First Nations territories by the tar sands industry were also bolstered by the Idle No More network, which has galvanized a new generation of indigenous leaders and creators in Canada and elsewhere.[10]

Social media has served as a catalysing force for indigenous performances globally, be they marches, round dances, musical numbers or video art. Navigating various websites and YouTube channels, one can see marches taking place around the world to protest local threats to indigenous populations and urge responsible action on global problems such as climate change. The Idle No More Facebook page unites under the same banner such endurance performances as the Sámi Manifesto

15, performed in 2015 in Sweden by a group of Sámi activists; the Paiute Nation's protest against clear-cutting practices on their ancestral territory in February 2015; and a 2013 anti-fracking march performed in Cape Town, South Africa.[11] In a sense, social media platforms and practices are also performatively remapping the virtual world of communications, investing it with decolonizing potential and claiming it as a space in which indigenous sovereignty can be articulated to a global audience.

These instances of endurance protests are certainly opening the settler public sphere, penetrating media that have historically been resistant to First Nations' voices. However, the gains are often precarious, as elder Tshaukuesh Elizabeth Penashue reminds us. After leading walks through her traditional territory in Labrador for the last thirty years 'as a symbol of Innu dedication to protecting the land, the children and the Innu way of life', Penashue was denied access to Muskrat Falls in spring 2014 by the provincial energy corporation Nalcor (Brake 2014). The Innu have hunted at Muskrat Falls for generations and it is a place 'full of stories' according to Penashue (qtd in Brake 2014). This restriction of Penashue's rights on her ancestral land is a clear reminder of the inherently political nature of walking, of surveying contested territories and illuminating the other stories, lineages and tumultuous geographies that settler colonial states and their laws have tried to erase.

Notes

1 Michèle Taina Audette has served two periods as the president of Quebec Native Women (1998–2004; 2010–12) and also a term as president of the Native Women's Association of Canada (2012–15). Viviane Michel has been the president of Quebec Native Women since 2012.

2 CBC has reported the controversy surrounding the use of the word 'genocide' at the new Canadian Museum for Human Rights in Winnipeg, Manitoba, to describe the 'past injustices' perpetrated by the Canadian government on First Nations communities. See, for instance, http://www.cbc. ca/news/canada/manitoba/human-rights-museum-sparks-debate-over-term-genocide-1.1400154 (accessed 10 May 2014); also Palmater (2013).

3 Loss of status has multigenerational repercussions. When Bill C-31 was passed in 1985, there were only 350,000 Status Indians left in Canada (Holmes 1987, 8). Approximately 100,000 individuals regained status with Bill C-31 (Lawrence 2003, 9).

4 The RCMP's national overview report into this issue concludes that Aboriginal women are 'over-represented among Canada's murdered and missing women' (RCMP 2014, 3). In December 2015, newly elected Prime Minister Justin Trudeau launched a national inquiry into the matter.

5 Sandra Lovelace (Maliseet), Jeannette Corbiere-Lavell (Wikwemikong)

and Yvonne Bédard (Six Nations), among others, have waged battles in court against the Canadian government, eventually leading to Bill C-31 in 1985. This bill, 'An Act to Amend the Indian Act', allowed women who married Status Indians from other bands to retain their own band membership. It also allowed the limited reinstatement of those who lost or were denied status because of the gender discrimination contained in the Indian Act. In 2011, Bill C-3 corrected the gender bias of Bill C-31's 'limited reinstatement' clause, allowing grandchildren of women who had lost their Indian status through marriage to regain it.

6 Endurance performances of this ilk are not entirely new: similar impulses have long been recorded in rituals and religious practices around the world. In *So Much Wasted* (2010), Patrick Anderson discusses the self-starving spectacles of Dr Henry Tanner and Molly Fancher in the 1880s as precursors to the works of Chris Burden and his contemporaries.

7 For information on Idle No More's vision and reach, see http://www. idlenomore.ca/vision (accessed 19 March 2016).

8 Instead of meeting the walkers on their arrival in Ottawa, Harper chose that day to greet a panda on loan from China to the Toronto Zoo, sparking criticism from First Nations leaders (Galloway 2013).

9 See Free Speech Radio News, http://fsrn.org/2014/06/canada-peoples-march-for-mother-earth-430-miles-along-pipelines-path/ (accessed 10 February 2016).

10 The series of five walks lasted until 2014. See Free Speech Radio News, http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/hundreds-march-in-final-healing-walk-in-fort-mcmurray-1.2691294 (accessed 10 February 2016).

11 See https://www.facebook.com/IdleNoMoreCommunity/ *(a*ccessed 19 March 2015)*.

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15

Earthworks as Indigenous Performance

Chadwick Allen

> Mounds were built by layering different kinds of soils one upon the other. As Indigenous playwrights, Monique [Mojica] and I hope to employ the deep structure of earthworks as dramaturgical models. Our soil layering will be represented in the stories we layer in the play.
>
> LeAnne Howe (2013)

Contrary to centuries-old stereotypes, and contrary to the wishful thinking of settler cultures (or is it a deliberate *un*thinking?), prior to the arrival of Europeans the so-called New World was no 'virgin land' expectantly waiting the builders of civilization, no 'howling wilderness' in need of taming by the righteous movers and shakers of the earth. South, Central and North America lacked neither intelligent individuals nor sophisticated technologies. By the common era's fifteenth century, these continents comprised elaborate systems of moved earth and built environments: intricately managed land- and waterscapes, expansive cities, suburbs and towns, intersecting trade routes for objects and ideas, flexible networks of human mobility and of intellectual, artistic and spiritual exchange. Indigenous peoples from Peru to Canada quarried, carved and positioned stone; fashioned, stacked and plastered bricks; piled, packed and reformed the soil of the earth itself, basket by 50-pound basket.[1]

In the North American context, thousands of earthen mounds, embankments and enclosures remain extant, though often obscured, eroded, desecrated or dislocated, sometimes partially or wholly destroyed, and occasionally reconstructed. The compound noun *earthworks* evokes the collective presence of these remarkable structures, their remnants

and the traces of their memory. Moreover, the word's internal juxtaposition – grounded *earth*, dynamic *works* – indicates these structures' synthesis of artistry and engineering: projects in applied science staged as ceremonial complex, social forum, sports or civic arena, busy marketplace, artistic workshop, open air theatre in the round, square or octagonal. Constructed across a large expanse of the continent over a period of thousands of years, these sites of 'worked' earth suggest the multiplicity of their original functions, and they suggest the extent, purposefulness and complexity of Indigenous interactions with land and engagements with technology, sometimes singularly and within remarkably short intervals of time, but also cooperatively among diverse nations and over multiple generations. The ongoing presence of these works – massive, well engineered, aesthetically exquisite structures, intricately planned, mathematically and geometrically encoded, and multiply aligned with waterways, with ridges and other natural features of the landscape, and with the visible patterns of the moving cosmos above – reveals the false premises that undergird settler fantasies of a primeval world untouched by human hands or human minds.[2]

In what are now the central and southern regions of the US state of Ohio, where I lived and worked for seventeen years, these structures include hundreds of large burial mounds and hundreds of large embankment walls formed into roadways, enclosures and geometric figures, built between approximately 2000 and 500 years ago. Many of the burial mounds were looted in the nineteenth or early twentieth centuries, or systematically destroyed in the building of settler towns, highways, railways or canals. Several, however, were excavated by archaeologists and, once evacuated of their human remains and funerary objects, subsequently reconstructed. Such is the case with the impressive Seip Mound located near Paxton Township, whose emptied, restored and manicured form measures 130 feet long by 30 feet high. Other burial mounds remain intact, although typically obscured by an overgrowth of weeds and an encroachment of non-Native civilization. A telling representative is Jeffers Mound: sited along the Olentangy River in what was once a complex of mounds and embankments but is now a near-suburb of Ohio's capital city Columbus – all ironies of the name apparently intended – the 20-foot-high conical mound is covered by brush and trees and literally surrounded by middle-class homes, several of which regularly display US flags. An isolated survivor, Jeffers remains a political and ideological captive. The geometric earthworks consist of thick embankment walls that create outlines of circles, squares and octagons. Some of the most awe-inspiring are located in the town of Newark, an hour north-east of Columbus, including the monumental Octagon Earthworks – the outline of a mathematically
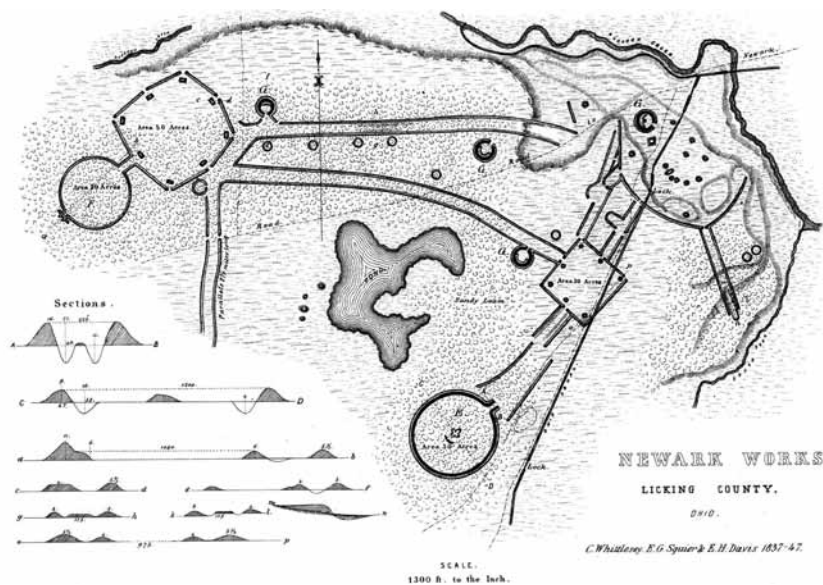
Fig. 1 Ephraim G. Squier and Edwin H. Davis's 1837–1947 map of the
'Newark Works'.
Source: Ancient Monuments of the Mississippi Valley (1848).

perfect octagon enclosing 50 acres of land connected by a corridor to the outline of a circle enclosing an additional 20 acres, all of which functions as a lunar calendar – and the Great Circle Earthworks – a walled enclosure with a diameter measuring nearly 1,200 feet.[3] In addition, Ohio hosts several large effigies: earth mounded into discernible mimetic shapes, such as animal figures. Best known is the Serpent Mound located in Adams County in south-west Ohio, whose uncoiling form undulates for a quarter mile along the ridge above the Brush Creek Valley, its body aligned to true astronomical north, its head to the summer solstice sunset point on the horizon.[4]

Our understanding of earthworks and both their original and ongoing significance remains limited by the dominant discourses of standard archaeological, historical and popular narratives. Part of that limitation is the discursive severing of the planners, builders and first users of the earthworks, who lived hundreds or thousands of years ago, from historical and, especially, contemporary Indigenous peoples of North America.[5] The idea of continuous genealogies and clear links from the distant past of earthworks production and original use to the contemporary period of Indigenous appreciation, reclamation, repatriation and potential reactivation of earthworks has proven too problematic for dominant

archaeological and historical communities, as well as for a host of other non-Native communities that wish to claim kinship with or ownership over the mounds, such as versions of the New Age movement.[6] But another part of that limitation is the relative absence of *embodiment*, *process* and *performance* as categories of analysis in earthworks research.

One of my objectives in this brief essay, then, is to move beyond typical analyses of earthworks as sources of ethnographic data about so-called prehistoric peoples cut off from living Indigenous communities to speculate, instead, how earthworks might be understood as forms of Indigenous *writing* still relevant in the present and perhaps key to Indigenous futures.[7] In other words, I ask: How might earthworks be understood as systems of signs arranged into systematic patterns, as systematic encodings of knowledge produced through Indigenous technologies? And how might our understandings of earthworks change if we highlight not only how they represent technologies of marking or *in*-scribing surfaces (often an early stage in the process of mound construction) but also of layering carefully selected rocks and soils into scripts that rise *above* the earth's surface, adding to and altering the landscape? If we notice that earthworks create raised scripts of platform, conical, linear, ridge-top and, perhaps especially, geometric and effigy 'mounds', can we begin to imagine earthworks as forms of Indigenous writing not simply *on* the land, but literally *through the medium* of the land itself? And if we acknowledge that these modes of land-writing, these raised scripts of encoded knowledge, create complex patterns for human thinking *and* for human movement around, into, through, between and among their physical forms, how might we understand their functions and use, conceptual *and* physical – in the past, in the present, or in possible futures?

Embodiments of Place

The actress and playwright Monique Mojica, of Guna and Rappahannock descent, and the Choctaw writer and intellectual LeAnne Howe are co-developing a new performance piece, *Side Show Freaks and Circus Injuns*, that grounds its dramaturgy in the materiality, abstract patterning, multiple alignments and multiple discursive and practical functions of Indigenous earthworks. Central to their processes for gathering material for both the structure and content of the new play has been an extensive tour of earthworks from Louisiana to Ontario. At each site, the playwrights have engaged in what Mojica calls an 'Indigenous artistic research methodology … that speaks to the embodiment of place' (2012, 219). Mojica and Howe's methodology is based in the idea of an 'embodied research': approaching

earthworks in an appropriately respectful manner, spending significant time with their forms, walking their contours, making physical contact, engaging the full range of the human body's senses to listen and feel for song and story contained within these earthen bodies, remnants and remains (Mojica 2012, 220). Their methodology also involves an 'embodied improvisation': actively connecting one's human body to earthworks as sign systems and systems of encoded knowledge by imagining one's way *into* the lives that have been lived at and through the mounds (Mojica 2012, 220). In her essay, 'In Plain Sight: Inscripted Earth and Invisible Realities', Mojica writes, 'The land *is* our archive and our embodied relationship to the land defines Indigenous identities, history, science, cosmology, literature – and our performance' (2012, 219). Moreover, she states, as an Indigenous artist it is her responsibility 'to make visible that which has been made invisible. It is a responsibility that compels me to remember things I never knew and restore them to consciousness' (2012, 221). Rather than rely exclusively on journal or camera, Mojica asserts, 'I record and document with my body' (2012, 221).

In an unpublished abstract for the new performance, Howe and Mojica emphasize processes of layering and, as a result, of transforming the materials they gather from various sites: 'We are mound building with our theatre.' Their practice thus aligns with that of other Indigenous researchers, such as the Cree scholar Shawn Wilson (2008), who advocate approaching research as an operation of ceremony, and with that of a growing cadre of Indigenous archaeologists. This latter group is exploring how methodologies based in Indigenous epistemologies transform the field's orthodox approaches to sites, artefacts and living communities. The Cree archaeologist Tara Million, for example, argues:

> Practicing archaeology within an Aboriginal philosophy transforms the person of the archaeologist. The archaeological site becomes a ceremonial area and the archaeologist a ceremonial practitioner. In addition to being the holder of a sacred site, the archaeologist is the holder of artifacts and ecofacts – all sacred objects, given by an aware archaeological record … An Aboriginal archaeologist is the locus for a relational web that incorporates past, present, and future, living and non-living, academic and community, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. As an embodiment of the *axis mundi* [central, connecting pole and hollow tube] she receives powerful gifts from the animate archaeological record that carry the obligation of redistribution and reciprocity throughout all of these relationship networks. (Million 2005, 43–44)

The challenge is to relearn how to access Indigenous knowledge encoded in the land all around us, in Ohio and in other parts of the Americas,

written through Indigenous technologies and practices, waiting not to be 'discovered' by outside explorers but rather to be recorded and documented through living Indigenous bodies in order to be reactivated in Indigenous presents for Indigenous futures.

In October 2011, I had the opportunity, along with local Native colleagues, to assist Mojica in visiting research sites in Ohio, including the Newark Earthworks, Seip Mound, Jeffers Mound and Serpent Mound. In May 2013, my colleagues and I then had the opportunity to assist Mojica and Howe together in making return visits to the Great Circle and Octagon Earthworks, as well as in making first visits to additional sites near Newark and Columbus.

We participated in embodied methodologies for research, for example, when, in 2011, we accompanied Mojica to south-western Ohio to visit Serpent Mound. As we approached the entrance to the small state memorial on a bright autumn morning, we encountered a large number of butterflies, living symbols of transformation, which then seemed to follow us. Mojica commented that this had been a common experience at other sites. After smudging ourselves in the parking lot, we established our bearings by first viewing the effigy from the elevated platform built by the Ohio Historical Society for this purpose. Only from this aerial position is it possible to see the Serpent as a whole: the performance of vivid energy that begins in the triple-coiled tail, moves through the seven convolutions of the extending body, and culminates in the broad head, mouth apparently wide open, preparing to swallow an oval-shaped disk. We remarked on the Serpent's beauty, its sinuous power as it arches to follow the arc of the ridge. And we remarked on our mixed feelings of awe at the effigy's survival and grief at its colonial capture in the state memorial. We then walked beside the graceful contours of the undulating body, noting how differences in elevation and perspective affected our perception of each part of the Serpent, and noting the difficulty of perceiving the effigy as a whole while standing on the ground. Full perception required our physical movement. Finally, having walked the length of the effigy up and back, from triple-coiled tail to seven-part sequence of pulsing sine waves to triangular head and oval disk, we ignored the State of Ohio's official edicts, posted on threatening signs, and laid our small human forms against the grass surface of the Serpent's massive form so that we could listen and feel.

Each perspective was informative and emotionally powerful in its own way: bird's-eye view hovering above, human's-eye view walking the ground, up close, mound's-eye view lying upon grass warmed by the sun. But it was when we made physical contact, body resting upon body, that we experienced the most intense feelings that the effigy is more than a remarkable feat of engineering, more than an iconic symbol linking us

to the past, more than a system of encoded knowledge and astronomical alignments, although it is certainly all of these. The Serpent remains a living entity. With our hearts pressed against its warm and fluid body, we were again made aware of the Serpent's unmistakable performance of energy. Instead of perceiving movement from above, however, we now felt waves of subtle motion from below. And suddenly, from our prone positions we again perceived movement visually as well: threading the grass atop the Serpent's back were orange and white woolly caterpillars, more living symbols of transformation. We began to imagine the many forms through which such transformations might manifest.

Scripting Ohio

In the week following my experience with Mojica and Native colleagues at Serpent Mound, I had what seemed like an unrelated opportunity to attend an Ohio State University football game. OSU football is a form of civic religion in central Ohio; an invitation to the homecoming game, played at night under the lights, represents a high honour. Moreover, the surprisingly elegant Ohio Stadium, designed in 1918 to rival its counterparts in the Ivy League, occupying 14.5 acres of the Olentangy River flood plain west of central campus, is itself a local and national sports icon – a kind of civic sacred site.[8] Most fans do not realize it, but the distinctively shaped stadium, known as the Horseshoe, can be likened to a geometric earthwork. Although constructed of poured layers of concrete rather than packed layers of soil, like an earthwork the stadium is an intricately planned, well engineered and multiply aligned enclosure designed for gathering and exchange, situated along the same river as the extant Jeffers Mound several miles to the north. Unlike comparable Indigenous structures, such as the Great Circle at Newark, the Horseshoe opens to the south rather than to the east. And while it is aligned to the north-south axis of the Olentangy River and the east-west axis of the 11 acres of open space on central campus known as the Oval – a geometric shape related to that of a horseshoe – the stadium is not known to be aligned to the sky world, although its upper deck does provide a raised platform from which spectators can view the movements of the sun, moon and stars if they so desire. At the game I attended, my assigned seats were positioned on the eastern arm of the horseshoe at the 50-yard line, in the raised upper deck, facing west, where my companion and I had horizontal views of a simultaneously setting sun and rising full moon, and a bird's-eye view of the field.

Beyond its football team and stadium, OSU is celebrated for its award-winning marching band and an eighty-year tradition of marching out the

word *Ohio* in a cursive, connected, living script.[9] Band members compete to 'dot the i' as the final act of becoming Script Ohio. Before the game I attended began, the band warmed up the crowd by playing familiar music while marching in time through a series of large ideographic figures. The communicative effect of the formations was accentuated by the bright colours of the uniforms moving under the stadium lights and by the relationships created between the songs the band members performed and the living figures they collectively embodied. At half time, when the band was scheduled to perform Script Ohio, OSU faculty and staff who had won major awards were invited on to the field. Standing on the manicured grass altered perspective, but it also altered one's visual, aural and embodied experience. Without the distance of a bird's-eye view, positioned in the end zone before the horseshoe's opening, under the bright lights, close to the source of sound, it was impossible to discern the creation of connected cursive letters. Instead of an embodied script, at ground level what was most notable was the kinetic energy of the synchronized movements and the intense volume of the horns, cymbals and drums, the orchestrated chaos of so many bodies and sounds set in choreographed motion in the large and yet restricted space of the concrete Horseshoe. The stadium's landscape – similar to that of embanked enclosures like the Great Circle – was actually several landscapes, depending on one's location, elevation and resultant point of view, as well as one's specific embodied role as musical performer, other mobile participant, or relatively fixed spectator. The type and scale of the performance context mattered; watching from the raised deck and participating on the field were both exhilarating, but they were not the same.

After these distinct yet unexpectedly related experiences, I began to wonder if Ohio earthworks do more than mark territory, do more than align physically with natural features in the landscape and mathematically with each other, do more than record astronomical knowledge. It seems indisputable that these structures record traces of the physical activities of their building and repair, the movements of their making and remaking over time. Is it possible that earthworks record, as well, the presence and recurrence of other multi- and trans-media activities? Is it possible that the shapes and forms of geometric embankments, and perhaps also of effigy mounds, record traces of musical processions, rituals, ceremonies, dances, storytelling events or other performances? What about political debates and councils, communal games and competitions, or other forms of social and political engagement?[10]

(Earth) Bodies in Motion

My thinking about these possibilities expanded in May 2013 when my colleagues and I assisted Mojica and Howe together in their ongoing research. When four of us visited the effigy located in Granville, Ohio, known as Alligator Mound, we first offered tobacco, then walked the contours of this animal form – which looks nothing like an alligator – made physical contact with its body and contemplated its location. Similar to Jeffers Mound in north Columbus, the Alligator is an isolated captive surrounded by middle-class homes. But because it is sited at the highest point in the landscape, the effigy still commands panoramic views of the valley below. A stream runs along the base of the hill, in effect encircling the Alligator with water. Similar to Serpent Mound, the effigy's body appears arched, as if caught in motion or preparing to spring into action. And it faces west, away from the geometric earthworks nearby at Newark. Mojica and Howe intuited that the four-legged animal, with its rounded head and 'paws' and its long, hooked tail, models not a crocodilian reptile but a cat. It is perhaps a version of the underwater panther, common to many North American traditions, that is often also a sky panther. The researchers imagined this transformative feline as a protector for the region as well as an iconic emblem for the cyclical movements and reciprocal relationships among upper, middle and lower worlds – sky, earth and water. And they suspected that the round appendage extending from the animal's midsection represents an externalized womb, marking the dynamic figure as female and productive. Finally, all of us were heartened by a distinct sense that this female protector mounded from layered earth was not only poised for action but still breathing – still in motion, still performing her primary function for the valley.

We then made a return visit to the Great Circle at Newark, arriving as dusk turned to twilight. This evening encounter with the enclosure was a first for all of us, and it was especially productive for imagining the types of performances that might have taken place there in the past. As noted above, the Circle's embankment opens to sunrise. Burning sage, our small group processed through this eastern gateway into the contained circular space as the sun set behind the western wall before us, the sky darkened and lights from the surrounding town began to glow in the distance. Large moths and small bats, more living symbols of transformation, appeared in a slow procession of their own, and we imagined past visitors following their lead to gather in this Great Circle for evening ceremony. When we arrived at the low, 'winged' effigy at the centre of the site, known as Eagle Mound, we felt a warm force emanating from beyond the western wall, from the direction of the Alligator Mound we had encountered only a
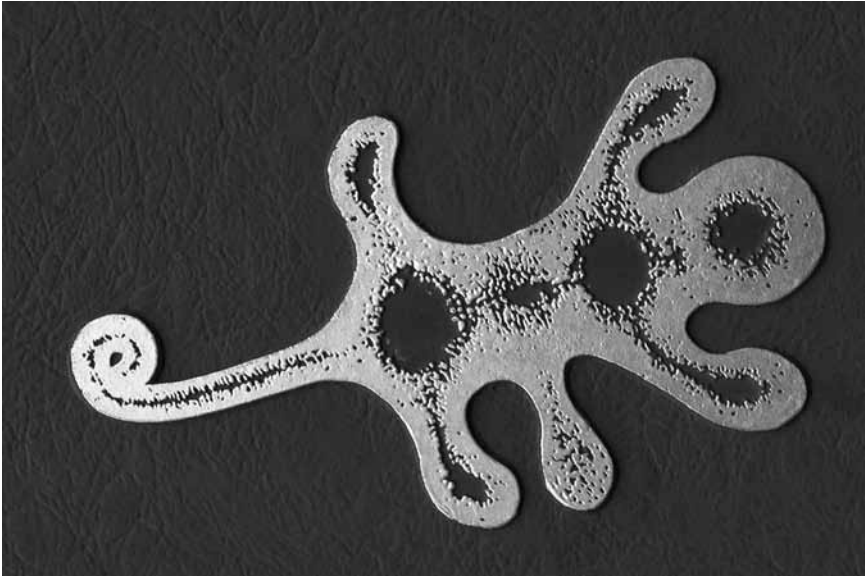
Fig. 2 Detail from official marker at Alligator Mound, Granville, Ohio.
Photo: Chadwick Allen.

few hours earlier. Standing at this centre, leaning into the strength of
the warm force, we thought again of the panther's round head and round
paws, her hooked tail, the circular appendage.

At the base of the high embankment wall, a moat dug to a depth of
between five and eight feet follows the interior circumference; archaeol-
ogists believe both moat and wall were covered in clay when the Great Circle
was a fully functioning site for communal gathering. After spring rains,
the moat would have become a vernal pool, host to chirruping small frogs
known today as peepers. Moonlight from above or ceremonial firelight
atop or within the embankment would have danced as reflections on the
singing water. Similar to Ohio State's concrete stadium, the clay-covered
Circle would have become a multi-media event space, alive not only with
human movement and performance but also with atmospheric colour,
light and shadow, and with reverberating sound. Perhaps people perched
along the 'upper deck' of the rim of the thick circular wall to watch
activities on the central field below, or gathered in groups to 'tailgate'
outside the embankment, listening to the sounds and imagining what
might be seen within.

As the sky darkened to night and we reversed direction to process back
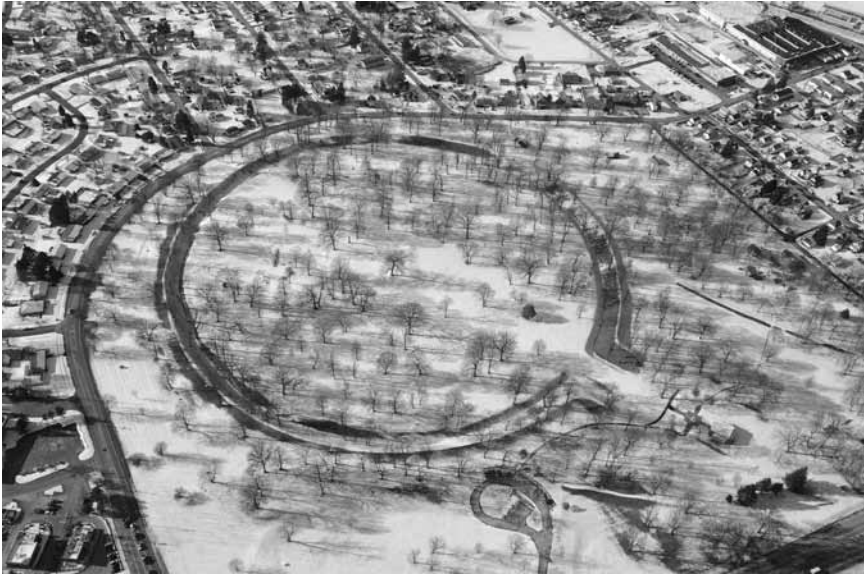towards the eastern gateway, we realized that the Great Circle had been

Fig. 3 Aerial view of the Great Circle in winter.
Photo: Timothy E. Black/Newark Earthworks Center.

engineered not simply to endure for millennia – which it has, despite the lack of appropriate human upkeep and despite all manner of colonial desecrations – but also, and perhaps more profoundly, to spark *future* performances, such as our own that evening.[11] The Great Circle had been designed to spark future renewal.

Trans-worlds Performance

In addition to the celebrated works at Granville and Newark, in May 2013 we visited a lesser-known geometric site, the Holder Wright Earthworks, located north of Columbus outside the town of Dublin, near a small stream that flows into the Scioto River, which itself flows on south to the Ohio. Homesteaded and farmed for 150 years, the site has been repeatedly ploughed, sown and harvested. Part of a circular enclosure remains, damaged and diminished, while the outline of a large rectangular embankment and the conical mound it once enclosed are barely visible to the naked eye. As they engaged in embodied research and improvisation at Holder Wright, Mojica and Howe felt a distinctly female energy emanating from what remains of the rectangular embankment and its mound, and, remarkably, the researchers were able to gather a song from

the site that they will incorporate into their evolving performance. I photographed Mojica and Howe crouched low to what appeared to be barren ground, recording themselves singing into a smartphone as the ancient song came up from the razed but still encoded earth to ride the wind skyward, traversing and thus linking the three worlds. As at other sites where they received song, Mojica and Howe's experience at Holder Wright confirmed a central Indigenous understanding about the vitality of earthworks. It is not only selected rocks and soils that are carefully layered in these structures; words are spoken, songs are sung, dances are danced *into* earth during mound construction, during subsequent ceremonies, during regular upkeep and renewal. The layers of soil are thus imbued with the power of sacred discourse, the energy of rhythmic movement.[12] It is this communal power and energy that builds and later sustains the mounds. It is this communal power and energy that raises scripts.

The image I have of Mojica and Howe singing at Holder Wright is difficult to translate into words. Simultaneously, it was an event of Indigenous research *about* performance, an event of Indigenous research *and* performance, an event of Indigenous research *as* performance. Neither the photograph I took nor the audio recording the researchers themselves produced, however, conveys the full complexity of this scene of embodied improvisation. Mojica and Howe crouched, sang and recorded only a few feet in front of me, slightly to my left; but just behind me, to my right, stood the non-Native park ranger who had guided our tour of the site, recently acquired by the City of Dublin, and he was now explaining the possibilities for the site's restoration as a public park. The Native women's impromptu performance made the ranger obviously uncomfortable. Although he did not comment directly on the women's actions, he continued to speak loudly into my ear when first one and then the other began to sing, telling me about parks regulations and the difficulties of site maintenance at remote locations. In that moment of trying to listen and see and remember and record Mojica and Howe, I was caught – not, I later realized, unlike the earthworks themselves – in the embodied experience of standing between competing discourses, between communal, gendered and multi-dimensional Indigenous performance and the patriarchal insistence of authoritative non-Native settler monologue.

Efforts to perceive, understand, appreciate and engage earthworks from Indigenous perspectives are similarly devalued, perhaps especially within the academy. Standard archaeological and historical narratives, produced almost exclusively by non-Native (and predominantly male) researchers, continue to dominate authoritative discourses and to direct funding for research. But despite persistent impediments, we find ourselves in

an extraordinary period of possibility. Earthworks seem suddenly to be on every (Indigenous) body's mind: not only trained archaeologists and historians, park rangers and museum docents, but writers and artists, public intellectuals and activists, communities and nations and their keepers of knowledge, story and ceremony. In texts, performances and built environments, encoded knowledge from Indigenous pasts is being reactivated in the present in order to rewrite Indigenous futures. These works respond to dominant discourses – which typically code earthworks as silent, static and dead, cut off from living communities – by recoding earthworks as alive, articulate, generative and in motion. These works encode earthworks as sites of both ancient and ongoing energy (see Allen 2015a).

Based in Place in Six Directions and Four Dimensions: An Afterword

In developing *Side Show Freaks and Circus Injuns*, Mojica, Howe and their production team, of which I have been a small part, are actively exploring how to engage earthworks principles of duration, alignment, convergence and integration as a generative basis for dramaturgy. As the team has gathered for workshops and rehearsals, I have come to think of the emerging performance less as a fixed text and more as a set of embodied processes.[13] Similar to mounds, these processes are multiply aligned, and they are based in place in six directions and four dimensions: a horizontal plane encompassing the cardinal directions intersected by a vertical axis linking worlds above and below, traversing standard Western delineations of past, present and future but, at crucial junctures, bypassing such distinctions or effecting their collapse.

The primary point of convergence for Mojica and Howe's multidimensional, time- and space-travelling protagonists, Invisible Woman (an avatar of Grief) and Panther Girl (an avatar of Rage), is the sideshow and circus of the 1904 World's Fair staged at St Louis, Missouri. Attempting to outrun traumas from the past, each protagonist boards one of the hundreds of trains that speed eager guests and necessary provisions to the St Louis fairgrounds literally around the clock between May and December 1904; when an overworked switchman falls asleep at his lever, two of these trains famously crash head-on. Thus, at the very epicentre of settler celebration, at the site of its violence, an unbounded Indigenous Grief collides with an unbounded Indigenous Rage. Photographs of the collision, widely circulated in newspapers of the time, are projected as backdrop, the black metal of the trains grotesquely bent into a massed heap beneath sensationalist headlines. Slowly, the dark image of the trains morphs into still darker shadow; the outline of collision becomes

the outline of a burial mound, deformed but discernible. Grief and Rage emerge from the smoking wreckage of this ghosted train-mound, beneath a confetti rain of advertising leaflets for the Fair, amid the mangled bodies of the tourist dead. The projected shadow continues to morph, and the collision become a burial mound now becomes a 'big top' circus tent. As the performance progresses, this backdrop image will transform again, conflating an archaeological mound-diagram rendered in the cut-away style, irreverently exposing carefully layered soils and hollowed chambers for burials, with a series of sideshow stalls arranged into a similarly layered cabinet of curiosities, filled with exotic peoples and living 'freaks' of nature. It is within this simultaneously anthropological and carnivalesque sideshow that Indigenous Grief and Rage perform as Invisible Woman and Panther Girl. They hide in plain sight within the settler's profane forms of display.

The 1904 World's Fair marked the centenary of the 1803 Louisiana Purchase, the 1804–06 Lewis and Clark 'corps of discovery' expedition, the so-called opening of the American West to US expansion. But even prior to 1803, St Louis was a location multiply aligned in time and space, already a locus of multiple convergences. Situated on the western bank of the Mississippi in the shadow of Cahokia, a complex centre of large platform and burial mounds built roughly a thousand years ago on the eastern bank, what is now St Louis was once urban Cahokia's mounded suburb, part of a vast network of Mississippian mound-building cultures. Well into the nineteenth century riverboat captains and other travellers knew St Louis as Mound City. By 1904, all but one of the earthworks at St Louis had been looted and destroyed.[14] Extensive destruction began during the city's rapid development in the 1830s and 1840s, which was also the period of large-scale federal removal of Indian nations from heavily mounded homelands in the south-east and midwest to the Indian Territory, what is now Oklahoma. The largest of the earthworks at St Louis, a prominent landmark known as Big Mound, overlooked the river north of what is now downtown; its destruction began haphazardly in 1850, but then, despite modest protest from settler citizens concerned about the region's posterity, between November 1868 and April 1869 labourers were hired to perform a more systematic dismantling. The men posed for photographs documenting the various stages of the mound's deconstruction; the huge mass of carefully layered soils was hauled away to become fill dirt in the building of the North Missouri Railroad (see O'Neill 2013).

The site chosen for the World's Fair, St Louis's 1300-acre Forest Park, had been dedicated to public use on 24 June 1876, precisely one day before the Battle of Little Bighorn, also known as Custer's Last Stand. This

Indian victory in Montana shocked the celebrators of the US Centennial gathered in Philadelphia and around the still-emerging settler nation-state, including in St Louis, but it also marked the beginning of the end for independent Plains Indian nations. At the turn of the twentieth century, when extensive preparations were begun for hosting the 1904 celebration – including the draining of swamps and the razing of broad stands of brush and trees – sixteen mounds remained extant within the expansive grounds of Forest Park. Similar to the destroyed Big Mound, several were photographed before their bodies were levelled and their soils dispersed in 1903. Today, these grainy images are all that remain of their memory, digitized and searchable on the Internet; indeed, although I lived in St Louis for two years during graduate school and spent considerable time walking the grounds of Forest Park, I only stumbled upon the trace of these mounds while conducting research for *Side Show Freaks and Circus Injuns*. No memorial exists on site. Although Mojica and Howe were unaware of the Forest Park mounds before determining the primary setting for their performance, their revelation confirmed the inevitability of the original choice. Sixteen ghost mounds haunted the settler celebration of the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition and World's Fair. Sixteen ghost mounds witness and assist the multiple collisions of Indigenous Grief and Rage.

Development of *Side Show Freaks and Circus Injuns* continues. To conclude this essay, I note two additional ironies linking Mojica and Howe's earthworks-based performance to the scene of the 1904 World's Fair. The first is the transitory nature of the 1,500 buildings that housed the exhibitions in St Louis, the grand amusement halls displaying the wonders of electricity and serving ice cream on newly invented waffle cones, the massive 'palaces' displaying powerful turbine engines alongside the spoils of colonial conquest. Not unlike the venues in a travelling circus, these spaces of ostentatious display were conceived as temporary; the brightly painted facades looked bold and magnificent, but the wood frames were covered in little more than plaster of Paris mixed with hemp fibres, materials that deteriorated with minimal exposure to inclement weather or indelicate crowds. Although meant to last a year or more, some structures degraded so rapidly they had to be repaired while the fair was still ongoing. Settler ephemera was set upon razed Indigenous mounds that had endured a thousand years.

The second irony is the unintended consequence of one of the Fair's major attractions, the so-called Series of International Congresses, which were not, in fact, a series of diplomatic exchanges among representatives of the world's nations, an early precursor to the UN, but rather a series of living ethnographic dioramas, a series of human zoos and sideshow

attractions that put conquered Indigenous peoples from around the globe on display, often in 'authentic' village settings, for the purposes of colonial edification and settler amusement. The unforeseen outcome of these human displays, of course, was that the celebration of trans-colonial dispossession created opportunities for trans-Indigenous interaction. Indigenous peoples from around the Americas and from around the globe were able to meet each other, many for the first time, and to reflect on the similarities and differences of their colonial experiences in a series of extraordinary juxtapositions.[15] These are the conditions under which Grief and Rage meet, through their avatars Invisible Woman and Panther Girl, in a colonial sideshow and settler circus built upon destroyed Indigenous mounds.

Among many Native individuals and communities, earthworks are still recognized as encoded knowledge written and performed through the medium of the land itself, and they are still understood as gifts from the ancestors meant to be accessed and reactivated by their descendants when needed. As Howe asserts in a recent essay, 'Mounds [are] storied bodies' and 'Mounds embody stories'.[16]

Notes

1 This kind of Indigenous building is not limited to the Americas, of course, and evidence of ancient earthworks, in particular, is found across the planet, including in parts of Europe and Asia. Blumenthal, for example, details the 'revelation' of 'colossal earthworks' in Kazakhstan (2015, n.p.).

2 I have made a number of the general points about earthworks discussed in this paragraph and those immediately following in several previous publications; see especially Allen (2015a).

3 Like Jeffers Mound, the Octagon Earthworks is a contemporary captive: the Moundbuilders Country Club has leased the site since 1910 and has run a members-only golf course on the grounds since 1911.

4 I write more extensively about Serpent Mound and its contemporary representations in 'Serpentine Figures, Sinuous Relations' (2010) and 'Performing Serpent Mound' (2015b).

5 The independent scholar Jay Miller makes a similar point in *Ancestral Mounds* (2015).

6 The anthropologist H. Martin Wobst examines a number of these issues in his useful overview essay 'Power to the (Indigenous) Past and Present!' (2005).

7 I employ an expansive definition of 'writing' that includes any form of encoding knowledge in any medium, rather than a narrow definition that would apply the term 'writing' only to alphabetic scripts. For a full discussion of these distinctions and an argument for employing an expansive definition of writing in the Indigenous Americas, see Boone and Mignolo (1994).

8 A unique set of double columns around Ohio Stadium's U-shaped exterior allows for wider archways; a domed rotunda at its main entrance at the apex of the U evokes the remarkable dome of the Roman Pantheon; upper and lower 'decks' of seating allow more fans to be closer to the field. At the time of its completion, with a capacity of just over 62,000 spectators, it was the largest structure in the world built from poured concrete. After several renovations, Ohio Stadium now holds over 104,000 spectators.

9 Autumn 2011 marked the seventy-fifth anniversary of Script Ohio.

10 LeAnne Howe makes a compelling argument that Bird Mound, part of the large south-eastern earthworks complex at Poverty Point, Louisiana, is a 'performance mound that embodies the story of the red-tailed hawk from conception to first flight – the story of its creation' (2014, 82).

11 The many settler impositions at the Great Circle are well documented, including using the site for county fairgrounds, an amusement park and a racetrack. See, for example, Pickard (2009).

12 Miller makes a similar point about contemporary, ritual mound building, use and upkeep among south-eastern peoples relocated to Oklahoma: 'As air sustains life, so song sustains the land. Singing sets the rhythms of the Feather, Ribbon, and Buffalo dances, while the distinctive stomp step pumps these into the ground, where some bubble up into mounds. Song is the vehicle for *powha* [power], strengthened in these instances by their sacred, communal expression' (2015, 122).

13 Other members of the production team have also written about the development of the project, including Ric Knowles (2014) and Jill Carter (2015).

14 Only what is known as Sugarloaf Mound remains within the city limits of St Louis. It was purchased by the Osage nation in 2009.

15 Danika Medak-Saltzman (2010) analyses the provocative photographic evidence for one of these trans-Indigenous interactions, between an Ainu woman and an Indigenous woman from Patagonia.

16 The quoted phrases are taken from subheadings in the two versions of Howe's recently published essay about earthworks as tribalography (2013; 2014).

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Glossary of Māori Terms

The te reo Māori words presented in this book can only be roughly translated here; most have more than one simultaneous meaning and reference world-views or concepts distinct from those encompassed by English. Glosses are guided by the *Māori Dictionary* accessible at http://maoridictionary.co.nz/. In most cases, the authors have made meanings clear for non-Māori speakers in the individual essays; the list below follows their specific uses as relevant to the topics at hand.

hapū: extended kin groups
ihi: psychic forces (as distinct from spiritual power)
iwi: tribe, nation
kapahaka: Māori performing art, usually with dance and song
karanga: ceremonial call
kaupapa Māori: using Māori approaches, customary practices and/or principles
kaupapa: mission, purpose or destiny
koimi / koiwi tangata: human remains (male/female)
kōrero: speech, narrative, story, news, account, discussion, conversation, discourse, statement, information
mana: spiritual power, influence, status, authority
marae: the open area in front of the *wharenui*, where formal greetings and discussions take place. Often also used to include the complex of buildings around the *marae*.
moko: Māori tattooing designs on the face or body done under traditional protocols
moteatea: traditional chant, lament, sung poetry
ngati Hine: an iwi descended from a female ancestor, Hineamaru

pākehā: New Zealander of settler descent
poi: dance with light ball on a string.
pōwhiri: welcome, welcome ceremony
rohe: territory
tangi: lament; tangihanga: funerals, rites for the dead
taonga: treasure, ancestral possession (applied to socially or culturally valuable objects, resources, phenomenon, ideas and techniques)
tapu: sacred, dangerous, prohibited
tikanga: protocol
tino rangatiratanga: self-determination, sovereignty
tohunga: ritual expert
toi moko: tattooed preserved Māori head
tūpuna: ancestors, grandparents
upoko tuhi / upoko tuhituhi: inscribed heads
wāhi tapu: consecrated space
wāhine: woman, female
waiata: song, chant or psalm
wairua: spirit, soul
wana: energy, passion
whakapapa: genealogy, lineage, descent
whānau: extended family
whanaungatanga: relationship, kinship, sense of connection
whare whakairo: carved house, meeting house
whenua: land (often used in the plural); also country, nation, state
wiri: trembling hand movement used in performance