

TWO

WRITING ABOUT MUSICAL INTERSUBJECTIVITY

I wonder about language with its raw frayed fringes
delicately trying to express spirit
as each word drips from lips to rest in blank spaces
between us

—Lee Maracle (Stó:lō), *Talking to the Diaspora*

Roland Barthes begins his essay “The Grain of the Voice” with a pointed question: “how . . . does language manage when it has to interpret music?” (Barthes 1977, 179). His answer: “very badly. If one looks at the normal practice of music criticism . . . it can readily be seen that a work (or its performance) is only ever translated into the poorest of linguistic categories: the adjective” (179). To address music performance, or what he elsewhere prefers to call “the body in a state of music” (Barthes 1985, 312) requires something other than mere description. To counteract adjectival overreliance, Barthes argues, involves neither “diverting the adjective you find on the tip of the tongue towards some substantive or verbal periphrasis” (1977, 180), nor developing different structural and formalist models of analysis for understanding music’s internal coherence. Instead, Barthes proposes a sonorous, sensate form of writing aimed at articulating music’s subjectivity through the materiality of writing itself, what he calls “writing aloud”:

writing aloud is not phonological but phonetic; its aim is not the clarity of messages, the theater of emotions; what it searches for (in a perspective of bliss) are the pulsional incidents, the language lined with flesh, a text where we can hear the grain of the throat, the patina of consonants, the voluptuousness of vowels, a whole carnal stereophony: the articulation of the body, of the tongue, not that of meaning, of language. (Barthes 1975, 66–67)

According to Barthes, writing aloud involves no less than articulating the body through sensorially charged prose: transcribing the proprioception of musical experience through kinaesthetic syntax, or recirculating the grain of the voice through the texture of the text. Scholars have drawn upon Barthes's "The Grain of the Voice"—and his discussion of opera singers therein—to discuss vocality (Dunsby 2009), opera (Halliwell 2014), and the concepts associated with the text including "pulsion" and "grain" (Szekely 2006). What has received less attention in Barthes's writing is the intersection between musical voice in performance and authorial voice in scholarship/writing, that is, how the space between singer/performer and listener-writer is rendered through writing. As Michael Szekely notes, Barthes was largely concerned with the interstices between gesture, writing, and sound. These spaces are encoded in the very separations between terms—*image music text*—given by Stephen Heath as the title of his translated collection of Barthes's essays. We may conceptualize these spaces as the grain between forms of visual, sonic, and tactile perception (as is the case in Laura Marks's concept of haptic visuality addressed later in this chapter), or the trace of body in the media of music, text, and performance: "The 'grain' is the body in the voice as it sings, the hand as it writes, the limb as it performs" (Barthes 1977, 188).

In proposing a form of writing that seeks to articulate this materiality through the "pulsional incidents" of song, Barthes suggests writing itself should move as an active agent, tracing and tracking that which moves music and listener. This movement, he continues, "is carried not by dramatic inflections, subtle stresses, sympathetic accents, but by the grain of the voice, which is an erotic mixture of timbre and language . . . the art of guiding one's body" (Barthes 1975, 66). Moving beyond the adjective, Barthes's writing aloud models a form of what I call *sensory-formalist analysis* where writers' and readers' bodies move alongside music's body. Sensory-formalist analysis is a strategy of apposition where the particulate matter of musical experience is materially engaged through the atmosphere of the page, screen, or other medium. It is a revision of what Susan Sontag, in "Against Interpretation," called an "erotics of art" (Sontag 1966, 10) that turns away from making content out of art, avoiding analysis that "excavates, and as it excavates, destroys; it digs 'behind' the text, to find a sub-text which is the true

one.” “What is needed,” in this turning away from instrumentalizing art, notes Sontag, “is a vocabulary—a descriptive, rather than prescriptive, vocabulary—for forms” (8).¹

Following Barthes’s and Sontag’s calls for different orientations toward and relationships of art writing, this chapter surveys a number of sensate and apposite forms for writing about musical experience often referred to as “performative writing.”² Language, syntax, and grammar operate upon sensorial and affectively rich terms in performative writing, and often foreground intersubjectivity between viewer and artwork, spectator and performance, listener and music, and writer and reader. More specifically, *Hungry Listening* focuses on the intersubjective experience between human and nonhuman actors in music performance by considering object agency in non-representational and new materialist theory alongside Indigenous knowledge regarding nonhuman relations. While Phillip Vannini describes non-representational research as “privilig[ing] the study of relations” emerging from a belief “that life arises from the entanglement of actors—human and non-human animals, organic matter, and material objects” (Vannini 2015, 8), other more critical voices like those of Zoe Todd (2016) and Jessica Horton and Janet Berlo (2013) remind us that the “more-than-human” agency described in new materialism and non-representational theory has long been a quotidian fact of Indigenous lives and epistemologies. There is nothing new, as Zoe Todd asserts, in the way Indigenous kinship extends toward our nonhuman relations, and a large majority of the theoretical work in this area has elided these Indigenous epistemological frameworks. While some of the critical engagement that identifies this elision has been oppositional, I see no reason not to consider these two streams of thinking as mutually exclusive. Considering non-representational theory and Indigenous epistemologies alongside each other can here provide a more nuanced understanding of nonhuman relations, and can help move beyond the anthropocentrism that reinforces the subject’s mastery over an object. For the aims of this chapter, and book more generally, I bring these discourses together to consider how performative and other writing forms affirm relations between human and nonhuman subjects, and how the content and aesthetics of this writing challenges the dichotomy between music’s limited agency as passive “object,” and the listener as the active partner.³ I also challenge the critique that the

author of performative writing acts as an overbearing partner in this dyad, drowning out the musical subject by increasing the volume of the writer/scholar's own voice. Such criticism operates both on an explicit level, as I will later illustrate in the work of musicologist David Levin, and more implicitly in professional guides to writing about music.

Professional guides for writing about music are primarily geared toward postsecondary and graduate students, and thus are mostly concerned with establishing basic writing principles. Among these principles an equation is sometimes made between creative, poetic, and performative forms of writing and "stylistic excess." "Stylistic excess," notes musicologist Jonathan Bellman, "consists of attempts to fortify an argument (in the same way that breakfast cereals of dubious nutritional value are fortified with added vitamins and nutrients) with superlatives, overly colourful adjectives, or exaggerated wording . . . [and] dulls the reader's senses with its procession of highly charged, multisyllabic words" (Bellman 2000, 76). Bellman later describes such writing as mere "authorial musing" and "authorial whim."⁴ While we might note a similar resistance to Barthes's critique of adjectives, we should question what criteria are used to determine the efficacy of language in conveying musical experience. At what point does a language composed from "the patina of consonants, the voluptuousness of vowels, a whole carnal stereophony" (Barthes 1975) become "overly colourful" or "exaggerated"? When, in other words, is such writing read as a marker of authorial excessiveness, and when is it read as a marker of the exact excessiveness of our experiences listening to music or other experience of art? By addressing musical experience as an encounter between subjectivities of listener, music, writer, and reader, this chapter unravels the hierarchies of subjectivity that assert the primary importance of the musical subject. The chapter concludes by introducing a third partner in the play of subjectivities: space. Whereas space is often considered as the context within which an encounter takes place, I consider it here as an active subject in itself. I approach this in two ways: first, by considering the space of performance or other sites at which music is listened to, and second, by considering the space of the medium that conveys the experience of listening: the space of the written page or screen, or, in the case of practice-based research, an artistic medium. By considering space as a third subject, I extend my engagement with sensate, apposite forms

of writing toward how other arts-based formats for music scholarship might be developed.

To experiment with different forms of writing resonant theory that consider intersubjectivity between listener, music, and space and reach beyond adjectival reliance, I engage in what I call *apposite methodology*. Apposite methodologies are processes for conveying experience alongside subjectivity and alterity; they are forms of what is sometimes referred to as “writing with” a subject in contrast to “writing about.” They also envision possibilities for how writing might not just take the form of words inscribed on the page but also forms that share space alongside or move in relationship with another subjectivity. “Writing” in this sense might be considered either a textual or material form: song writing, sculptural writing, and film writing. At the heart of these experiments in resonant theory are anticolonial epistemes for sharing experience, that emerge out of the history of performative writing.

Performative Writing, Apposite Methodology

Performative writing, according to Peggy Phelan “enact[s] the affective force of the performance event again” (Phelan 1997, 12). In the realm of music, the affective force of the event is intertwined with the relationship between the listening subject and musical and spatial subjectivity. While performative writing encompasses a wide range of work across the arts and humanities, I begin with examples by writers who explicitly center this relationship between listener and musical subjectivity, and in particular, writing by Wayne Koestenbaum, Kevin Kopelson, and Suzanne Cusick that articulates the positionality of the listener and musical subjectivity.⁵ In doing so, the performative writing by these writers names the unmarked normativity of listening through explicitly marking listening positionality. Part of what *Hungry Listening* seeks to expand in musical scholarship is this action of marking the normative discourses of listening positionality (primarily though not exclusively in relation to Western art music) as white, heterosexual, able-bodied, and middle class, through writing that explicitly illustrates and materializes other listening values in/and/from musical subjectivities. In emphasizing the writer-subject’s identification (or dis-identification) with the musical subject, a partial aim of performative writing is to expose

normative listening practices. Giving voice to identification and dis-identification, the writer-subject destabilizes and unsettles scriptural economies that demand compliance with standardized, “plain English” (Strunk and White 1999). Performative modes of writing by feminist (Cixous 1976, Gallop 2002, Minh-ha 1989), queer (Koestenbaum 1993, Kopelson 1996), Indigenous (King 2003, Sarris 1993, Morin 2016), crip (Eales 2016, Forfa 2016), and black writers (hooks 1992, Lorde 1981) have long worked to disrupt writing’s colonizing imperatives, racializing and ableist legitimacies, and phallogocentric norms. The opening that *Hungry Listening* seeks to create in music studies for decolonial writing otherwise draws on this long tradition of performative writing.

In the tripartite context of subject–subject(–subject) relations I outline above, the proximity between listener, music, and space give rise to the methodologies of “apposition” proposed in this chapter.⁶ As with its root “to appose,” meaning to place side by side or in proximal relationship, an apposite methodology involves a proximal relationship between the method of writing and experience of the writer. While this might lead to the assumption that apposite musicology is an essentially mimetic form (a copy or transcription), I would instead emphasize that the nature of proximity between subjects (listener/music; musical experience and writing) is treated as relational. Apposite forms of writing, through their form, grammar, and language, convey how the writer/listener moves alongside musical or artistic subjectivity. This movement alongside music is not exclusively aimed at conveying intimacies of music’s presence; it may equally result in a variety of apposite relationships including keeping music at a distance, oscillations between intimacy and distance, or a kind of “marking time” similar to the experience of traveling alongside other vehicles moving at varying speeds or when gridlocked in traffic.

The vast majority of scholars choose their methodologies for their apposite (that is, in the other sense of the word, “appropriate”) capacity to examine the particular objects, phenomena, or experiences we seek to understand. Yet while “methodological framework” implies an appropriate application of theoretical context to the object of study, writing itself (the medium by which we give our ideas form) is largely considered a mere by-product of scholarship. Yet if the method we use to measure phenomena in large part actually determines the result of

this measurement, should we not actively pursue writing that is aware of how its form constitutes knowledge and experience? Often referred to simply as writing “style,” the choices made in the structure, language, and even typography of writing are usually not considered constitutive of the research itself. No language or writing form is value free. Forms of structural music analysis, for example, enact epistemic violence against Indigenous music, blunting the life it carries. Given this context, apposite methodologies seek a more proximal relationship between writing’s form (its materiality, its flow, rhythm, or pace, and the way it structures time) and the form we sense in musical subjectivity. They seek to engage the materiality of writing, in order not to enact violence against musical subjectivity.

The study of music’s presence has received sustained attention in the work of musicologists Suzanne Cusick (1994), Christopher Small (1998), Carolyn Abbate (2004), Lawrence Kramer (2004b), Nicholas Cook (2014), and Georgina Born (2019), and philosophers including Vladimir Jankélévitch (2003) and Jean-Luc Nancy (2007), among others. Yet within this work there has been a lack of attention toward how listeners come to understand musical intersubjectivity; musicology and music aesthetics’ “tin ears” have largely continued to disregard non-Western perspectives that emphasize music’s life and subjectivity. It is these same tin ears that have responded with heteronormative disdain toward queer performative writing. Queer performative writing in particular has been cast as excessively oriented to the writer rather than the object under examination, where the excessiveness of authorial tone, poetics, and reflexivity has been accused of narcissism. To address these critiques of performative writing’s narcissism, I turn now to examples where listening and viewing are treated by queer writing as intimate and intersubjective experiences.

Queer Vocal Narcissism and Linguistic Excess

Performative writing’s *indisciplinarity*—its violation of disciplinary norms—is the subject of David Levin’s essay “Is There a Text in This Libido? *Diva* and the Rhetoric of Contemporary Opera Criticism.” Levin’s text is to a certain extent representative of the general mistrust by musicologists of performative writing’s excess. In particular, Levin

expresses concern with the “Neo-Lyrical” queer performative writing of Wayne Koestenbaum’s *The Queen’s Throat* that “aims for an adequation with operatic form: it emulates the object of its affections; and, perhaps more important, it seeks to render (but not necessarily analyze) the intense affect that can suffuse the experience of opera” (Levin 2012, 122). Such writing loses sight of the musical experience it seeks to engage, according to Levin, and replaces a close reading of music with “a world of emotive stratospherics” (123). Koestenbaum’s writing represents an academic crooning “that aspires to *be* a bravura performance as much as a *record* of bravura performances” (124; emphasis in original). In short, Levin argues that Koestenbaum’s writing replaces an engagement with musical phenomena with an engagement with the writer’s own voice. Koestenbaum is found guilty of logophilic narcissism, expressing (or professing) his love for the sound of his own text over that of the opera. And yet Levin also clarifies that he has nothing against excess itself. Rather, his main concern is that such writing legitimates enthusiasm “at the cost of nuanced textual analysis” (129). Yet can writing that is in an apposite relationship to the subject of analysis not serve as an analysis of the subject? Might the qualities of that apposition (the grain of the text, the rustle of language, the patina of consonants) together actually constitute a non-representational form of analysis in itself?⁷

Levin’s language choice of “crooning” and “stratospherics” additionally speaks to performative writing’s linguistic excess. This is writing that “gushes” and is seen to constitute a relapse to earlier models of music criticism: the excessive description and verbose effluence of nineteenth-century musical description such as that of E. T. A. Hoffmann, the overuse of metaphor, or worse, what is colloquially known as “purple prose.” As Mark Evan Bonds notes:

Until the 1920s, debates about expression tended to centre on *what* music expressed, not *whether* it could express anything. In the years after World War I, however, a variety of “hard” formalism arose in part as a backlash against what many perceived to be the overwrought expressivity of works from the pre-War decades. (Bonds 2014, 250)

The important distinction between such early forms of music criticism and performative writing is the intention of the author in the latter to use language and structure as a way to comment on their relationship with the subject. While the end goal of music criticism was to a signif-

icant extent the embellishment of a poetic writing style, performative writing uses this embellishment (or sparseness, or roughness) to convey something about the subject in question: it attempts to elucidate the non-representational aspects of the subject through forms of sensuous, material textuality. Levin's critique of Koestenbaum is here more applicable to nineteenth-century music criticism's silencing of the particularity of the music it treats by ignoring language as a vector of analysis. In contrast, performative writing might adopt a manic verbosity as an explicit strategy to examine particularly anthemic music (for instance in the postminimalist music of John Adams) or a language of campy excess to speak to music of similar expression (for example the theme song for the 1980s TV show *Dynasty*) and the effect of this music on the listener. In such linguistic miming we should not assume that the writing represents the unrestrained extravagance of the author's voice; just as we are able to pose different (and perhaps at times contradictory) arguments across our scholarship, so too may we expound those arguments through different sensory and affective writing structures and linguistic timbres. The materiality of musicological discourse has an indissoluble relationship with the music it seeks to describe. Moreover, in most instances, this discourse imposes a time and structure upon our understanding of musical meaning that at times runs contrary to the music it considers. Although not focused on music, Svetlana Alpers notes the incongruity between writing and the experience of viewing a visual work:

the repertory of concepts it [writing] offers for describing a plane surface bearing an array of subtly differentiated and ordered shapes and colours is rather crude and remote. Again, there is an awkwardness, at least, about dealing with a simultaneously available field—which is what a picture is in a medium as temporally linear as language: for instance, it is difficult to avoid tendentious reordering of the picture simply by mentioning one thing before another . . . [The] lack of fit here is formally obvious in an incompatibility between the gait of scanning a picture—in a series of rapid, and rapidly shifting, eye movements—and the gait of ordered words and concepts. (Alpers 1983, 3)

Alpers draws our attention to the disjunction between the experience of viewing an artwork and the reader's experience in reading about an artwork. Musical experience, unlike visual experience, takes place as an

aural palimpsest of simultaneously unfolding sound events, and thus is even more remote from the hierarchy of syntax used to convey meaning in writing. By acknowledging that writing is not an empty vessel for knowledge transfer, it becomes imperative to understand how this medium, whether explicitly concerned with its own aesthetic (style) or not, constructs knowledge through its form, structure, language use, tone, and voice. Given this fact of writing's aesthetic signification, we might pay increased attention to writing's craft in practicing what Kevin Kopleson calls "critical virtuosity" (2002). Or perhaps writing is *not* always the best medium for understanding the presence and time of certain musical experiences. Other than its supposed efficiency and efficacy in communication, what makes writing better, for instance, than live dialogue as a mode of working out (thinking) these aspects of musical meaning? By acknowledging the limits of writing as more than argument, we become responsible not just for the arguments we put forward but the form through which we express them. Rather than discounting performative modes of writing as self-indulgent or needlessly opaque, we might instead reconsider how they enable us to engage more precisely with musical performance, or the sensory and affective qualities of artistic experience more generally. We might consider how the structure, form, and language of writing allows us to convey those particular moments of music's sensory presence that draw us toward (or repel us from) music in the first instance. They also provide us with an aesthetic means toward writing intersubjectivity.

Intersubjective Relationships with Ancestors

Intersubjective relationships are not at all extraordinary in Indigenous life and artistic practice. In museums across the globe, glass vitrines display cultural belongings of Northwest coast First Peoples—masks in particular—to the public. Often these displays are filled with a particular kind of mask, depicting its many variations across a region or across time. Such displays offer a cornucopia whose abundance is intended to show artistic and cultural variance. While such displays are offered to members of the general public primarily for their aesthetic contemplation, for Indigenous people the experience of such displays can often be traumatic and triggering. This experience occurs not only

because of the histories of cultural prohibition, including the seizure of cultural belongings and the separation of such belongings from our communities, but also because the very “objects” that are held behind glass are not objects at all. Instead, what exists behind the glass goes by other names; they have life, they are living beings, or they are ancestors. Indigenous people have intimate kinship with these beings. As such, the fact that they are “held” behind glass, in drawers, in storage might be understood in terms of the containment and confinement of life. Encountering “loved ones” behind glass, in drawers, and in storage puts into question the ways in which museological standards of “preservation” and “conservation” might instead be understood as containment or even incarceration. In many Pacific Northwest communities, we understand that such beings must be cared for as loved ones; the work that they do is treated as precious and sacred. They are not expected to be in continuous use, but are allowed to rest once they have completed their work. They also have a life cycle, and are not expected to live on forever. In this context, Git Hayetsk Dance Group leaders Mike Dangeli (Nisga’a) and Mique’l Dangeli (Tsimshian) have called museum display a form of “life support” that extends the life of these loved ones beyond their natural life span (Dangeli and Dangeli 2015). Moreover, such beings have specific roles and work to do. The energy these beings expend is respected—for example when drums and masks are used in performance—by “putting them to sleep” after their work is done. Under the continuous gaze of museum display, however, they are forced to perform—to labor—without rest (Hopkins, n.p.).

Increasingly, Indigenous artists have sought to address this context of the museum as carceral space that disconnects ancestors and beings from our communities. The work of Peter Morin (Tahltan) and Tanya Lukin Linklater (Alutiiq) in particular engages in forms of reconnection through music and song. Their use of music and song in these instances bring life, hold life, and serve as intimate acts of reconnecting kinship. For her work *Accompaniment* (2015) at EFA Project Space in New York, Tanya Lukin Linklater invited Laura Ortman (White Mountain Apache) to perform on electric violin. Ortman was asked to perform as one part a larger work that included a bowl Lukin Linklater had commissioned from Alutiiq artist Doug Inga and four small Yup’ik dance fans she purchased at Cama’i Dance Festival in Bethel, Alaska. These fans and

bowl were placed unassumingly on top of and beneath a wooden bench, without the typical protection (and disconnection) imposed by a vitrine. Given the title of the work (which was also the title of the exhibition), Ortman's performance might be misconstrued as an "accompaniment" that provides background music for viewing the dance fans and bowl. To understand these belongings as holding life, however, is to recognize that Ortman's work was instead providing company, a form of speaking toward and with the life of these belongings. Ortman subverted the hierarchy of the classical musician as soloist and the attendant value of this system where attention is expected to be directed solely toward the performer. From Ortman's movement toward and around the dance fans and bowl, she established a relationship of performing toward and with *shxwelí* that takes the form of "bowl" and "dance fans." I speak here of *shxwelí* as a *xwélmexw* audience member who felt this connection between the life of sound, materiality, and space. Her movement and sound challenged the inflexibility of hungry listening as a teleological and fixated form of attention. Ortman's performance made visceral relations of intersubjectivity and vitalized life through sound, just as the location of these subjects, with bowl positioned upside down upon the bench with dance fans resting casually on top of and underneath it, refused the normative system of object display. Such intersubjective reconnection is characteristic of much of Lukin Linklater's work that brings Indigenous voices and bodily presence back into relationship with ancestors and the life of Indigenous belongings that have been kept from our communities by museums. This work of reconnecting kinship is also a central feature of work by Tahltn artist Peter Morin.

Morin's work frequently uses song as an intimate form of reconnection with ancestors that have been given nonhuman material form, and in doing so refuses to uphold the museum's imposition of objecthood upon the lives of these ancestors. Examples of this include Morin's work at the Museum of Anthropology in Vancouver in 2013 (see Figure 6) and at the Royal BC Museum in 2012 where he gave a comedy routine for the poles, and my previous discussion in chapter 1 of Morin's performance at Saint Olave's in London in honor of the Inuit infant buried there. We will turn again to Morin's work in chapter 5, where I discuss his Cultural Graffiti series, also performed in London, England. The commonality between all of Morin's work discussed with-



Figure 6. Peter Morin singing to an ancestor at the Museum of Anthropology. Photograph by Kate Hennessy, 2013.

in this book is its focus on intimacies of reconnection. Below, I offer an extended transcription of one of Morin's performances in order to give weight to his words as sovereign expression. The transcription is excerpted from a presentation Morin gave at the Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts in Kingston, Ontario, where he explained his work as a performance artist to a nonhuman ancestor: an amhalaayt (Chief's Headdress). Morin's presentation that evening of February 3, 2016, was part of a series I have organized since 2015 called *Conversations in Indigenous Arts*, intended to bring together primarily Indigenous artists, scholars, and community members to discuss a common theme. The focus of this particular event was how Indigenous people carry our history in the body and how historical documentation (the archive) takes place through dance, song, and oration. In addition to Peter Morin, it featured leaders of the Git Hayetsk dance group Mike Dangel (Nisga'a) and Mique'l Dangel (Tsimshian), and settler historian Coll Thrush. In the lead-up to the event, Mike and Mique'l Dangel had visited the Agnes Etherington Arts Centre to see cultural belongings from Northwest coast First Nations that had found their way into the collection. Out of

this visit, the Dangelis had asked whether it was possible to dance one of the belongings—an ancestor in the form of amhalaayt. The excerpts below are transcribed from this evening of performance and oration, beginning with Morin and followed by Mike and Miquel Dangeli discussing the life of the amhalaayt ancestor:

Peter Morin [*addressing the amhalaayt*]: I want to say that there's been a lot of violence that's happened . . . and we wear it on our bodies.⁸ We all wear it on our bodies. I have dreams about making things which refer to Tahltan Nation ways of being . . . but there's a lot of distance between me and the land. Also, there is a lot of distance between me and the original makers as a result of things like the residential schools and governmental policies which were designed to limit our freedom. Also it's so beautiful to see you here, it's so very, very beautiful . . . And your removal also is a part of that loss that we feel.

I do something called performance art that moves inside of the body, and tells partly the history, and the present and future ancestors, as well as provides the chance for moments like this. And so I make things which come from dream spaces . . . because I believe it is people like you who talk to us, and through those places that you are in right now . . . to the places we are in, right now.

I have been trying to sing, as a part of the practice of being alive, and being alive also means making things, and those things fit within what I think of as Tahltan Nation art history. And your history and my history walk side by side, and I want to thank you for that. . . . I know four songs. The first song was composed by a guy named Beal Carlick. The second song is . . . I'm not sure who wrote it . . . it's called 'this little light of mine.' The third song was composed by William Wallace-ton. I'm not going to sing all the verses of these songs. The fourth song was composed by Johnny S. Carlick. I want you to know that I . . . I love you.

[*Morin sings these songs into the surface of the drums, for the amhalaayt*]

Mike Dangeli: I really want to thank the staff for giving us this space [*pointing at black curtain*]. The reason we came from behind the curtain wasn't for theatrics [*light laugh from audience*]. It's actually because we don't normally keep our ceremonial beings on display, especially when they have so much power. Because they share that symbiotic relationship like my wife was saying, they see what we see, they breathe the same air that we breathe. And so for us, we treat



Figure 7. Peter Morin speaking to an amhalaayt ancestor as part of Conversations in Indigenous Arts, at the Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts.

them like our young ones. We keep them in the back . . . you wouldn't change your young ones in front of people, you wouldn't feed them . . . you wouldn't have those intimate times with them in front of an audience . . .

Mique'l Dangeli: It's a restorative practice is what we're saying. Our masks have expended so much of their *nox nox*—their energy—tonight. So when we are not dancing them, we wrap them in blankets and we put them away, to allow them to have that time to regenerate and to restore their energy so that when they come out again, they can have their full strength. And that's why when we walk through museums and we see our *nox nox* everywhere . . . we want to visit them . . . but at the same time it's so hard to see them there. We would never do that, to just keep them out everywhere!

Of unique importance for this event was the way in which the staff at Agnes and the Art Conservation program enabled not only the use of the ancestor in the performance but its relocation to a performance space that was not within the white walls of the gallery. As Mique'l Dangelis later noted about the performance,

The amhalaayt was collected from our people (Tsimshian) in the late 1800s and was more than likely received through trade with the Heiltsuk or Kwakwaka'wakw. Since the frontlet is without the rest of

the headdress, we couldn't dance it. Instead we asked the staff of the museum if they could make a temporary mount that would hold it upright so this powerful ceremonial being could be an honored guest and witness to our work in Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe territory. At the beginning of our performance, we sang the amhalaayt into the room and placed behind it eagle down in the same manner that we do when we dance. As Mike sang, I blew the down so it would spread into the air from the amhalaayt itself as it was meant to do. We addressed this ceremonial being (I prefer not to use the term object or artifact) in our language as we would our Sm'igiyet (Chiefs) and gave it a prominent place among the other witnesses facing us as we shared our oratory, songs, and dances. (Mique'l Dangeli, Instagram note, February 5, 2016)

Dangeli notes that their treatment of this ancestor is no different than how they would treat their chiefs and matriarchs, giving them a place of honor from which they might receive the song-sustenance offered. Indeed, in the middle of their performance Mique'l Dangeli noted, "I wish we had the opportunity to be fed by and to feed our ancestors—our ceremonial beings—outside of plexiglass . . . like this, more often. It's one of the reasons why we sing and dance in museums, regardless of that history, because it's important that they know we acknowledge them, and that we still love them . . . it's just that we're separated." Song in the work done by Morin and the Dangelis is a form of sustenance used to feed ancestors that take material form. It is life-giving and itself has life. It is part of a system of sustenance that represents "being fed by and feeding ancestors" and as such is part of a relationship of mutual well-being. In relation to the queer and Indigenous intersubjective relationships with songs I have discussed, how do we write about the experience of intersubjective encounter, in ethical ways that do not enact violence against such life? To address this question, I turn to writing that seeks to transmit the intimacy and erotics of nonhuman intersubjectivity.

Song's Intimate Touch

When I go to the opera house, the performance is a physical sex act between my body and the singer's voice-body. When I listen to an opera recording, the erotic experience becomes a private masturbation fantasy.

—Sam Abel, *Opera in the Flesh: Sexuality in Operatic Performance*

Our relationships with nonhuman environmental, musical, and visual subjects (or what Bruno Latour calls “actants”) has been the subject of wide-ranging discussion across disciplines, and across the theoretical discourses of posthumanism, new materialism, and non-representational theory. The very titles of Julie Cruikshank’s *Do Glaciers Listen?* (2005) and W. J. T. Mitchell’s *What Do Pictures Want?* (2005) evidence this focus on nonhuman agency. Less central in these discussions are questions of how writing engages the tactility and affective sensibility of intersubjective encounters, and reconsiders our ethical responsibility to how we treat nonhuman subjects in the forms of description and analysis we use. While there are numerous trajectories we might follow to begin addressing these questions, two writings in particular on the intimate encounter with artistic subjectivity provide a useful starting point for theorizing what I call *sensory-formalist analysis*.

Laura Marks and Suzanne Cusick are two authors who position the intimacy of artistic encounter as central to their work on film and music, respectively, and through their writing enact what Kevin Kopelson calls *critical virtuosity*. As if responding to David Levin’s critique, Kopelson notes that virtuosic criticism, is a form of writing that “should give pleasure—to the reader, not the writer” (92–93). Following Kopelson’s focus elsewhere on pianism (Kopelson 1996), critical virtuosity is a sensory domain that includes the haptic and kinetic aspects of dexterity, agility, and the potential for suffusion/drenching of space. Marks’s and Cusick’s writings are critically virtuosic to the extent that they transduce the intersubjective pleasure of touch in writing, seeking “to make the dry words [of writing] retain a trace of the wetness of the encounter” (Marks 2002, x).

Marks’s *Touch: Sensuous Theory, Multisensory Media* (2002) differentiates between three kinds of haptic relationships, each of which may be perceived or enacted independently from the other: haptic visuality, haptic images/cinema, and haptic criticism. Marks begins by noting that haptic visuality is a mode of perception where “the eyes themselves function like an organ of touch” (Marks 2002, 2). This mode of looking “tends to rest on the surface of its object rather than to plunge into depth . . . it is a labile, plastic sort of look, more inclined to move, [to linger, or caress as Marks later states] than to focus” (8–9). Moreover, she continues,

the term haptic *visuality* emphasizes the viewer's inclination to perceive haptically . . . [alternatively,] a work itself may offer haptic *images* that do not invite identification with a figure so much as they encourage a bodily relationship between the viewer and the image. Thus it is less appropriate to speak of the object of a haptic look than to speak of a dynamic subjectivity between looker and image. (3)

Marks's differentiation between haptic *visuality* and haptic *images* allows the two to function independent of one another: we may perceive artistic works haptically that are not intentionally textured as such by their author. Completing Marks's triad of haptic concepts, haptic *criticism* speaks of perception and objects through writing that itself models "touching, not mastering" (xii). Marks contrasts this model of haptic writing with the project of hermeneutic mastery. Haptic writing has "no need to interpret," Marks notes, "only to unfold, to increase the surface area of experience. By staying close to the surface of an event, I hope to trace a connection between the event's material history, the event itself, me, and you" (Marks 2002, xi). Elsewhere, she describes her aim "to move along the surface of the object rather than attempting to penetrate or 'interpret' it, as criticism is usually supposed to do" (xiii). While such distinctions are important for Marks to distinguish haptic writing as distinct from more traditional hermeneutic criticism, to say this writing operates *outside* of interpretation would be inaccurate. The forms of proximity and connection Marks seeks to effect through her writing bring forward another kind of interpretation, one that I would call *sensory-formalist analysis*. In sensory-formalist analysis the writer seeks to extend the form and structure of the listener/viewer/reader's sensory engagement through their writing. It is an analysis of sensory perception intended to chart the effects of the work's "pulsional incidents" upon the body of the listener/viewer/reader to the same level of detail we would find in any other close reading. To be clear, sensory-formalist analysis is not in and of itself intersubjective. Instead, in foregrounding haptic relationships among film, writing, and *visuality* through an "un-cool, nose-against-the-glass-enthusiasm" for film and media works "as tangible and beloved bodies" (Marks 2002, xi), the sensory-formalist analysis that Marks's work takes part in attunes us to touch as a fundamental component of the intersubjective encounter.

Suzanne Cusick's essay "On a Lesbian Relationship with Music: A

Serious Effort Not to Think Straight” joins Marks in giving attention to the intersubjective intimacy with beloved bodies. Cusick describes her experiences of pleasure and power in these relationships as akin to a relationship with an intimate partner:

If music might be for some of us, or for all of us sometimes, in the position sometimes called “significant other,” then one might look for scrambling and shifting roles with it, for funny power relationships with it, moments when it is the lover—that is the active, pleasure-giving partner—and moments when it is the beloved—the partner who somehow receives pleasure or empowerment. And one might find oneself to be acting out all sorts of, well, positions and “sexual” behaviours with this “lover”/ “beloved.” (Cusick 1994, 74)

For those of us who feel that our relationships with music and song—and our experiences *within* them—are central to an analysis of the music itself (and admittedly not all of us do), how should we write in a way that responds to these works as friends, lovers, and kin? How do we get at the sense of touch in writing, or convey being touched by sound, following Marks’s lead? Cusick’s answer to this question is that, because she identifies the music she loves as another woman, “I try to treat her analytically as I would be treated: as a subject who may have things to say that may be totally different than what listeners expect to hear” (Cusick 1994, 76). Cusick’s relationship to music as a significant other bears resemblance to Ingrid Monson’s (2008) statement that, like individuals, music has many things to say and may not always act consistently. Perhaps most importantly, because Cusick loves the music she discusses as a significant other, she is compelled by a methodological ethics to describe and understand this music through nonessentializing and nonviolent methods:

By what feels like instinct, the strongest of instincts, I pass quickly over what feel like essentializing strategies (e.g. describing a work as an example of such and such a form, or Schenkerian analysis). I pass almost as quickly over discursively valued strategies (analysis of harmony, tonal structure) to less-valued “sensual” features like texture and timbre. I feel a deep reluctance to engage in what feels like the dismemberment of music’s body into the categories of “form,” “melody,” “rhythm,” “harmony.” Because, I think, both the essentializing and the dismembering categories feel akin to those violences as they are

committed on the bodies and souls of real women, and because I am being serious when I say I love music, I cannot bear to do those things to a beloved. (Cusick 1994, 77)

I have quoted Cusick at length to demonstrate how, although she disavows the analytic strategies (formal or harmonic analysis) that she feels dismember music, she does not abandon close engagement with elements of music's materiality such as texture and timbre. To this list of sensory-formalist description we might add other material qualities we are put into relationship with including mass, temporality, movement, and proprioception. Although Cusick describes her partnership with music as one of intimacy, the power relationships that we have with music and sound are undeniably diverse and not exclusively positive. Articulating how power and pleasure circulate in the subject–subject relationship between listener and music here necessitates taking into account the varieties of relationships enacted between a specific listener and a specific piece of music.

Spatial Intersubjectivity

Thus far I have considered performative writing by scholars who acknowledge and affirm intersubjective relationships between listener and music. Yet there is a third subject whose presence plays a significant role in reorienting listeners and music in reception and performance: space. Andrew Eisenberg notes that “it is difficult to identify any work of sound studies that does not deal in some way with space, if only by implicitly incorporating epistemological and ontological commitments with respect to the spatiality of sound” (Eisenberg 2015, 195). Materialist analyses have also sought to engage with the influence of space upon performance (Small 1998; LaBelle 2010; Clarke 2005; Eisenberg 2015). Yet approaches to subjectivity that have been extended toward music, pictures, and film have not found similar currency in the theorization of the subjectivity of space in musical experience.⁹

In relation to this book's focus on listening from Indigenous and settler colonial perspectives, Julie Cruikshank's *Do Glaciers Listen?* (2005) is of critical importance as a text that describes the ways that land listens to human subjects. Cruikshank here describes Tlingit peoples' experiences of glaciers' sentience:

glaciers take action and respond to their surroundings. They are sensitive to smells and they listen. They make moral judgments and they punish infractions. Some elders who know them well describe them as both animate (endowed with life) and as animating (giving life to) landscapes they inhabit. (Cruikshank 2005, 3)

Perhaps because of my work in Indigenous arts and positionality as *xwél-mexw*, such understandings of the subjectivity of place (or “animacy” as it is often referred to in anthropological discourse) seem uncontroversial. *sxwôxwiyám*, or the oral history of *Stó:lō* people, includes stories of how *Xá:ls* the Transformer turned people into stone formations across *Sólh Temexw* (*Stó:lō* lands). Our ancestors are the land.

One way to understand the absence of work on spatial subjectivity in musical experience might be to note the ways in which musical performance and atmosphere seem to combine so as to lessen our perception of spatial subjectivity itself. I am here reminded of classical music performance and the darkened concert hall as being nearly synonymous. Despite this perceived integration of music performance with space, countless examples exist where spatial subjectivity imposes upon that of the music, or vice versa. As with the subjectivities we have already considered, I do not take it for granted that individuals naturally apprehend spatial subjectivity, and not all spaces assert subjectivity consistently. A space with “strong character” might still not necessarily be experienced as nonhuman subjectivity. To acknowledge spatial subjectivity means addressing the ways by which space exerts agency, affect, and character beyond the realm of striking aesthetic impact. In certain cases, it may mean experiencing it as a partner, interlocutor, or kin. For the focus of this chapter, it means rising to the occasion of full participation within interactions between other subjectivities including musical and human actors (listeners/performers). In other chapters, the music I will address, though responding to strong affective experience, will not focus on particular encounters with musical and spatial intersubjectivity. This is not because I do not have such experiences but rather because I have not had these particular experiences with the specific music I analyze. Analysis of intersubjective encounter does not proceed from imposing an intersubjective reading upon experience where subject encounter is not felt. While intersubjective encounters may not be frequent for some, they may not occur at all for others, and this may

occur for many reasons including the self-censoring listening of settler colonialism that avoids certain kinds of listening experience, and especially ones that would affirm human–nonhuman relationships.

At its core, my discussion of relationships that occur between human and nonhuman musical and spatial subjects seeks to unseat the anthropocentrism of listening. To wrest listening away from its standard conception as a largely human- and animal-centered activity allows us to understand listening as an ecology in which we are not only listening but listened to. The particular importance of this reorientation toward nonhuman vitality, as philosopher Jane Bennett asserts, lies in its potential to “enhance receptivity to the impersonal life that surrounds and infuses us, [and] generate a more subtle awareness of the complicated web of dissonant connections between bodies, and will enable wiser interventions into that ecology” (4). Bennett’s book, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*, provides multiple examples of the vitality and subjectivity of things and through these examples asks that we look again at how we recognize agency and life. For all its richly detailed examinations of the vibrancy of things, Bennett’s work falls short of considering the means by which we come to apprehend vibrancy across sensory domains, and for listening in particular. Bennett’s project, to “inspire a greater sense of the extent to which all bodies are kin in the sense of inextricably enmeshed in a dense network of relations,” understands that “to harm one section of the web may very well be to harm oneself” (13). Her aim to inspire a greater sense of kinship between human and nonhuman bodies is of course already quite unexceptional within Indigenous communities. The central fact behind much Indigenous environmental activism is premised on this sense of intersubjectivity that recognizes trees, rivers, mountains, and other places, as kin.

As with *Delgamuukw v. the Queen*, part of this activism has unfolded upon the legal stage of the courtroom. Here, Indigenous people have increasingly pushed the Western legal boundaries of nonhuman rights. The Te Urewara region of Aotearoa/New Zealand, a region understood to be an ancestor by the Māori Tūhoe people, was granted personhood status in 2014 and given “all the rights, powers, duties, and liabilities of a legal person” (Government of New Zealand 2017). On March 20, 2017, the New Zealand government enacted legislation recognizing the Whanganui River as a legal person. Māori noted that “To the Whanganui people, the River is their ancestor, and they the river’s de-

scendants” (Cheater 2018). Similarly, in 2017 the Ganges and Yamuna Rivers in India were also granted personhood, meaning that “polluting or damaging the rivers is equivalent to harming a person.” In these instances and others of what is sometimes referred to as “environmental personhood” (Gordon 2018), Indigenous people have defended the rights of their rivers as ancestors in the Western court system. This has subsequently allowed them to curtail pollution through forcing the recognition of Indigenous ontologies that understand nonhuman entities as being alive and having life.

This work of challenging Western ontologies that delimit the subjectivity of place does not need to happen exclusively within the courts. It is also important for the general public to encounter such challenges that have the potential to reorient how the public might listen to kinships of place, and through this foster a reduction of environmental harm. The event score prior to this chapter, “Event Score for Guest Listening 1,” is one such example that also exists as part of a series of site-specific banners installed in outdoor public settings as part of the *Soundings* exhibition (2019-) I have curated with Candice Hopkins (Tlingit). For the inaugural location, at the Agnes Etherington Arts Centre in Kingston, Ontario, this ten-by-fifteen-foot event score was placed on a cement wall in close proximity to many of Queen’s University’s limestone buildings:

Limestone hums

with audible-inaudible sound of quarry, cut and chisel

The subfrequency of colonial labour

resonates your body

As these walls declare their immovability,

Listen instead to the seepage of water through stone

As these walls declare their necessary structure

Listen instead to the singe and sear of their structures burn down

As these structures declare themselves walls

Hear these stones, as still the land

In each location that the exhibition travels to, this score is reworked to engage with the built environment and Indigenous territory of the location it is situated in. In Kingston, the first capital of Canada, with its colonial limestone architecture, the score asks viewers quite literally to consider their relationship to the foundations of colonization. The score

calls viewers to reassess how they listen to place, but also to the subjectivity of the nonhuman entity called limestone that is understood by Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe people as having life and existence as an ancestor. This particular instance of reconsidering spatial subjectivity is situated in the location (and ideally upon the very walls) that it addresses. Other spatializations about our experience of musical and non-human subjectivity might alternatively begin from the question of what it would mean to “write” using physical and material forms of spaces themselves. This approach bears some relation to David Levin’s theorization of dramaturgy and operatic staging as an interpretive “reading” of opera. In *Unsettling Opera*, Levin argues that operatic stagings, and operatic adaptations that are sometimes referred to as *regietheatre*, or “director’s theatre,” should more properly be understood as “readings” of opera. And yet, to characterize these as “readings” downplays the way in which such stagings might be considered “writings” or “rewritings” in themselves. To call stagings writings would be anathema within the white supremacy of operatic production and classical music programming that sacralize the authorial intent of the composer-genius’s “masterwork” and consequently foreclose against critical interpretation through performance. This is indeed one, if not *the* central challenge in defining decolonial approaches to Western art music performance—to move beyond simply allowing space for Indigenous presence alongside the usual program of classical and operatic work, and toward new stagings of such work that make visible structures of settler colonialism and white supremacy that underpin art music’s presentation and composition. To do so moves the work of classical music decolonization off the page and into other spaces for public engagement.

Material and Spatial Forms of Writing

Apposite methodology, as a methodology for writing and conveying intersubjective experience (as one among many forms of decolonizing the ontology of classical music experience), seeks to reflect the time and terms of intersubjectivity. How might this methodology spatialize a writing practice beyond the page, and within other artistic forms? One answer to this question would be to expand music scholarship toward applied forms of research-creation and dramaturgy. There is no reason

why music scholars should not work with musicians to consider how the wide range of research that we do might be applied to twenty-first-century performance practices, that include staging ideas about the music and musical experience we write about. There is no reason why music scholars should not work collaboratively with scenographers, installation artists, architects, with collaborators from other disciplines in the humanities and sciences, and with Indigenous and other racialized communities to think about spatializing and materializing our questions about, and readings of, music as part of the musical event itself. There is no reason why music scholars should not consider the possibilities for transposing our analyses from the page to the concert hall, the gallery, the cinema, and site-specific contexts.

I can hear the voices of music colleagues asking: at what point does this stretch music scholarship too far from what is recognizable as the disciplines of musicology, music theory, and ethnomusicology? This question is often leveled against disciplinary change that is seen as diluting “disciplinary rigor” and standards. Yet, as I have been arguing, performative forms of scholarship do not necessarily eschew standards of disciplinary rigor; instead, they unsettle the normative scholarly formats whose ideological underpinnings we typically ignore. Here in particular, research-creation forms for conveying knowledge about music extend music subdisciplines into the Indigenous forms of conveying knowledge mentioned earlier in this chapter; song, oration, story, and dance and integrations of these are not simply primary forms for conveying knowledge; their forms allow us to uphold Indigenous epistemic values (and refuse epistemic violence of other forms). Additionally, we might remember that the choice of form our work takes is always a choice, whether we think of it this way or not. The formal and structural elements that we often imagine to merely frame the conveyance of our writing (language, cadence, sentence structure) are far from neutral aesthetically or politically. The choices we make for framing our scholarship and writing are more than signs that *contribute* to our perception of the ideas, histories, and knowledge we share; they are signs that *constitute* it. By recognizing this fact we might also recognize that there is a responsibility to aesthetically shape the signification of those signs that we would normally consider nonsignifying elements. When translating our experience of music in writing, we do not often allow the language

of that music we encounter to transform the way we write about that music. Put more eloquently by Walter Benjamin: “The basic error of the translator is that he preserves the state in which his own language happens to be instead of allowing his language to be powerfully affected by the foreign tongue” (Benjamin 1996, 262). Apposite methodology demands that we understand writing as a methodology for understanding the subjects and intersubjectivities we study. As one form of apposite methodology, arts practice-based “writing” prompts us to further consider before beginning any scholarly project: what space, form, or media is apposite to the information I want to convey about the work? What language should I use? How should I spatialize this experience of intersubjectivity?

Yet there are formidable challenges in adopting apposite reorientation of scholarship. Primary among these is the learning of new languages and syntax—the craft—of whatever forms this writing is to take. This holds both for the readers of those languages and for the writer. In learning to read practice-based musicologies that emerge from apposite methodology, the reader must not only “read” for meaning but for sonic, material, and kinaesthetic import, and the “carnal stereophany” (Barthes 1975) of knowledge. Such reading challenges the assumption that the exclusive intention of text is to explicate meaning (Rancière 1991). As with most forms of performative writing and research-creation, the reader is not simply served up knowledge on a plate, but is put to work in preparing the meal. This work refuses hungry modes of perception and demands relationship of co-constituting meaning. Readers must equally be open to parsing a variety of aesthetic strategies that may frustrate the impulse for clear explanation. Those using apposite methodology to engage in performative writing or research-creation will most likely entertain some level of deliberate opacity in their aesthetics; they will ask readers to entertain the element of play, and they will take as a given that readers do not presume these choices to be *merely* stylistic.

It is equally challenging to learn to use apposite methodologies in ways that result in compelling performative writing and research-creation. It is not simply a matter of deciding to write a poem, orate, or develop an immersive installation. As with any form of writing, one needs to develop the skills and technique of such forms. The same could be said for entering into another disciplinary discourse or new language. Performative writing and research-creation practices that

strike readers/spectators as precious, self-indulgent, “trendy,” or “clever” (Pollock 1998, 65)—rather than provoking that disturbance of the ineffable encountered in the performance experience itself—might be understood as the result of insufficient time spent immersed in learning the craft of that artistic medium. It would come as no surprise that a poem written by a musicologist (or scholar in any other discipline) who has not written poetry before might convey a facile or naïve quality. In recognition of this fact, this book incorporates relatively few poetic interludes, event scores, and performative writing throughout, rather than relying on these for its overall form. To do so would be presumptuous for my current stage of expertise and craft that I continue to refine.

Conclusion

This chapter has emphasized the work of non-Indigenous writers who seek forms of writing otherwise to convey sensory experience about the intersubjective relations between sound, song, listener, and space. An Indigenous reader and reviewer of this book before publication noted, “I came away from this chapter feeling like I had been returned to graduate school seminars where we discussed someone else’s way of understanding the world.” It is likely bad form to conclude a chapter with a less-than-positive review of one’s work, but I do so here in order to situate this chapter within the context of citational practice and epistemic power relations that have not only continued to be a central debate in critical Indigenous studies and Indigenous resurgence theory, but also in black, feminist, queer, Latinx, and in other disciplines where Indigenous scholars and scholars of color have to justify their very presence. In 2020 there remains a continuing pedagogical prevalence across disciplines for historical, theoretical, and methodological surveys to avoid even raising questions around racist, settler colonial, and heteropatriarchal foundations of disciplinary values and histories. Even worse, the experience of being in a class ostensibly focused on Indigenous perspectives where there is little if any actual writing or work by Indigenous people has been a common experience for many Indigenous scholars, myself included. Upon first reading the statement above I was returned to my own memories of being in such seminars, and moreover, of leaving a music composition program at the university I was enrolled in as an undergraduate student in the 1990s. In that instance, the

context of education was one wherein musical exoticism was discussed as positive intercultural influence without any sense of the appropriative and racist underpinning of this exoticism. These educational experiences for Indigenous people are ones in which Western theory and history have been wielded against us as part of a descriptive stultification and “explicative order” (Rancière 1991) that maintains a Western epistemological hierarchy and perpetuates epistemic injustice (Fricker 2009).¹⁰ It is an understatement, in the intergenerational legacy of the Indian residential schools and Indian boarding schools, to say that Indigenous people remain triggered by “education,” given that such systems of supposed education have been used as forms of violence intended to eradicate Indigenous epistemologies, languages, and forms of perception. Put most simply, writing *about* rather than *by* Indigenous people both actively dispossesses knowledge from Indigenous knowledge holders in our communities, and naturalizes Indigenous knowledge resource extraction as simply “knowledge mobilization” and dissemination. To combat this continued knowledge extraction, Indigenous scholars have adopted practices of citational politics that center our knowledge by privileging Indigenous writers and knowledge keepers in our work.

This critique of *Hungry Listening* by an Indigenous reader was a call to reexamine the intersectional aim of the chapter—to understand how performative, feminist, and queer writing in particular might provide models for conveying sensory experiences of music in ways that do not blunt such experience through language and form that unintentionally quiets and flattens musical life. In considering this critique, I asked myself why this chapter did not feel, as I wrote it, like a form of perpetuating Western theoretical privilege (or worse, epistemic violence). Foundational debates in Indigenous studies have focused on the imperative for Indigenous writing and theorization to focus on nation- and community-specific knowledge systems rather than drawing relationships between Western and Indigenous knowledge. These debates have continued to have relevance in the more recent work of Indigenous resurgence.¹¹ But to see Indigenous and Western theoretical discourses as mutually exclusive and to refuse all that is not essentially Indigenous is to impoverish our work as Indigenous writers and scholars, not to mention to assume that we do not make critical choices and repurposings of non-Indigenous theory in ways similar to how we have always re-

purposed non-Indigenous tools to advance our work. In the case of the chapter you are currently reading, I propose that intersectional relationships between nonnormative forms of writing (performative, feminist, and queer) provide other tools that we as Indigenous scholars can use in privileging musical life and subjectivity.

It is far from unique for Indigenous writers to draw extensively upon non-Indigenous theoretical perspectives, engage directly with the canon of Western theory (Coulthard 2014b; Byrd 2011; Byrd and Rothberg 2011), and cogently articulate how transnational (Warrior 2009) and theoretically promiscuous approaches (A. Simpson and Smith 2014) might benefit Indigenous people. Far less work, however, has been done on the ways in which *structural* choices made in writing and creative practice by Indigenous people express Indigenous logics regardless of the degree to which they are made explicit as such. I am guided here by the artistic and writing practices of artist Tanya Lukin Linklater (Alutiiq) and scholar Eve Tuck (Unangax) in particular, who, in my reading of their work, bring Indigenous and non-Indigenous language, theories, and gestures into new relationships through structural logics that are often not easily legible or even explicitly recognizable as Indigenous. The structures and aesthetic choices that Tuck and Lukin Linklater use in their writing and artistic practices do not participate in the Western imperative to explicate their Indigeneity. While each brings Indigenous and non-Indigenous voices and discourses into relationship through forms (the glossary, epistolary, contemporary dance) and aesthetic structural choices that are centrally grounded within their own Indigenous experience (whether made explicit or not), these exist outside of the legibly Indigenous, an “Indigenous essentialism,” or what we might otherwise call Indigenous narratocracy (Panagia 2009). This chapter has followed a similar path of intersectional relationship that is not mutually exclusive of resurgence but rather seeks to walk alongside it. As with my understanding of Linklater and Tuck’s work, my work is guided by Indigenous structural logics that are purely my own as a xwélmexw thinker and writer and that are irreducible to essentially Stó:lō values while being guided by these at the same time. To Indigenous readers who continue to read, my hope is that you might find some use in the intersections between these perspectives, or repurpose something presented here as a tool again for your own use.



Figure 8. Still from the video *Report*. Copyright 2015 by Raven Chacon.

XWÉLALÀ:M, RAVEN CHACON'S *REPORT*

I.

let's clear the air:
listening to land is not a pristine act
that finds the quiet wild
not the breeze stirring leaves,
not the falling snow as your heart beats
not the clairaudience¹
that filters out all but buzzing insect and rustling reed
that filters sound, that is, from land

hear the word sound scape
built upon the word landscape—
its colonial gaze, its hungry designs
—separating heartbeat from heart
hear the word sound scape
collect the resonance of lands, waterways, skies,
collect whispered breath and life that dwells therein

hear
síwéltset te tèmèxw
síwéltset te shxwelí
the sounds of this land are not resources
nor messages to be deciphered for danger and delight,
for xwelítem mining sound from site
to listen without extraction, selchí:meleqel
what does this sound like?

not as affective collection, selchí:meleqel
 what does this sound like?
 what does this report do
 to clear the air,
 to let us hear
 what does this do
 as each gunshot disquiets segregate sense
 now, again, again
 what does this do—
 this orchestration of weapons,
 of varying calibers
 scored for precision
 —to the settled ear

what else does gunshot reverberate
 leave behind
 through muzzle blast
 as the crack, sound-shock
 of bullet from barrel
 breaks upon this place
 sound-marks the listening land
 while here inside this room
 the firing line
 together charges the body
 again to hear

II.

xwlálám, to witness
 xwlálám, to listen
 shxwelméxwelh attention, xwélalà:m listening+witnessing
 refuses listening without limit
 ravenous gathering of murmur and hum
 to line the shelves with sense content
 xwélalà:m remembers our history
 xwélalà:m, éy kws hákw'elestset te s'í:wes te siyolexwálh
 xwélalà:m, siwél
 pricking ears with sense

finds ways to listen not driven by use,
 not by accumulative desire
 xwélalà:m, listening beyond insular sense,
 toward téméxw shxwelí,
 the mountains, the plants, the water,
 to practice this sense connects us
 to everything
 around us
 our ancestors
 as well as ancestors transformed
 into those mountains.²
 xwélalà:m, a practiced attention
 sets a crisis for listening's settled state
 to become uncertain of what listening is
 xwélalà:m, the willful act
 to kick colonial listening habits,
 to shift structures of feeling
 xwlálámethò:m
 to remember relationality
 you are listened to by the land

A

♩ = 80
□ = reload

x6

Figure 9. Page 1, from the score *Report* (for firearm ensemble), copyright 2001 by Raven Chacon, Dineyazhe Music (ASCAP).

III.

me stáléqep
eháléqep
tlesu thátsem kwel q'ò:l

a distant sound comes
faint and carried by the air,
then rings in my ear



Figure 10. Still from the video *Report*, copyright 2015 by Raven Chacon.

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