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Editorial Preface

NASIM AHMADIAN, BRANDI S. GODDARD, and THEA PATTERSON

On behalf of the Editorial team, welcome to the inaugural issue of *Intonations*, a journal of interdisciplinary arts. Previously affiliated solely with the Department of Music, in 2019 *Intonations* expanded to include the Departments of Art and Design, and Drama. It was at that time that three new Editors-in-Chief, one from each department, were appointed. The first year was a time for redefinition as we came together from across academic silos to forge a new identity for the journal. Our mandate is to promote multidisciplinary/transdisciplinary collaboration and to encourage dialogue between different modes of scholarly, artistic, disciplinary, and professional engagement. *Intonations* focuses on the convergences of theory and artistic practice in various domains of the fine arts, as well as intersections with the humanities, sciences, and beyond. Our goal is to support the work of current scholars and creative practitioners by generating dialogue and innovative thinking, both locally and internationally.

Our first Call for Papers was released in early-January 2020, and now just over a year later, we are very excited to share our first full issue which includes three articles in response to our call, "We Other Fairies", "Saskatoon Berries", and "Having Walked Alongside", which have been bundled with two previously published articles submitted prior to the merge: "Blipvert Method" and "Sinfonia de Babel". With this evolutionary process in mind, we are now proud to share this body of work. Written by graduate students and practicing artists, the articles in this issue are wide ranging in scope and style while still tethered through several points of intersection.

2020 was not an easy year. However, the difficulties of living through a global pandemic have also led to new and exciting forms of research and reassessment. Authors Xavia Publius in "We Other Fairies" and Tyler Stewart and Miguelzinta Solís in "Having Walked Alongside" both address the global pandemic by drawing attention to the challenges of not being able to gather together. In Publius's case, this has necessitated a turn to diary-writing and greater self-reflection. For Stewart and Solís, social distancing from close friends gave way to scholarly collaboration and an experimental audio project that engaged with distance communication, landscape, and decolonial theories.

For many, greater engagement with space and place has been a necessary outcome of the pandemic. In both the audio project of Stewart and Solís and the writing

of Kufre Usanga "Saskatoon Berries", we follow the footsteps of the authors as they traverse their lived experience through land. Between two valleys and spanning two Alberta rivers, the North Saskatchewan and the Oldman, these articles perform "place-thinking" (Usanga, 49) through the intersection of embodied knowledge, Indigenous teachings, and personal reflection. Similarly, in "We Other Fairies", Publius seeks to decentre patriarchal and heteronormative spaces through her exploration of theatre and film as a site for the proliferation and celebration of queer voices: the "Others" that have so frequently been elided from theatre and other forms of cultural production. For Publius, theatre represents a space for the carnivalesque – where norms and mores are suspended, and queer characters are free to assert themselves, for however temporary a time, "oscillating between liminal and liminoid spaces" (Publius, 70).

An important aspect of this issue is the inclusion of extra-textual and multimedia elements. Stewart and Solís's contribution takes the form of an hour-long recorded dialogue, mediated by an engaging walk through the weirs, gullies, and coulees of Lethbridge's Old Man River Valley. Using both textual and multimedia platforms, William Northlich and Nicolas Arnáez each lead the reader through multiple levels of unity and/or integration between musical, sonic, visual, and textual elements. Their textual components are accompanied by audio and visual elements which enrich the reading experience and, in fact, are necessary for understanding the text. Arnáez's "La Sinfonia de Babel" demonstrates how musical citation and an imaginary sound archive add parameters to the experience of a sonic library based on a creative approach toward citation from musical and literary perspectives. Northlich's "Blipvert Method" provides a structural and performative analysis of his electronic music composition through which the virtual sound, improvisatory character, and body movements sit in a musical collage.

At the same time that Western and Settler hegemony are being questioned within the pages of this issue, so too is the attendant dominance of the visual. These articles open space for oral, aural, tactile, imaginative, and emotional forms of knowledge and experience. Shared amongst the disciplines of the Fine Arts is this emphasis on praxis and embodied experiences which are qualities that cannot be universalised, and which must be specified and expressed at a personal level. Therefore, whether through the form of diary, personal essay, artist's statement, multimodal analysis/description, or mediated dialogue, the articles that make up Volume 1, Issue 1 of *Intonations* are profoundly reflective and meditative. They invite us to slow down, engage with ourselves, our communities, and the natural world around us. In a year that has become increasingly difficult as time goes on, the authors, researchers, and practitioners published here offer not only new perspectives *on* the world, but alternative ways of being and existing *in* the world.

The Blipvert Method: Consonance at the Intersection of Composition and Performance

WILLIAM NORTHLICH[1]

The confluence of composition and performance is a compelling phenomenon which confronts many 21st century electronic music artists, brought about primarily through an independent "DiY" ethos to creativity and the ubiquity of advanced musical, and non-musical, technology. Techniques of software programming, improvisation, reconstitution of electric and acoustic instruments, sampling, and manipulation of audio in a live setting (to name a few) may all find a place in an artist's methodology regardless of style. It may be even be said that the techniques employed by an artist delineate the style itself, e.g. "controllerism," "turntablism," "live PA," etc. The following paper offers an in-depth structural analysis of the composition and performance fundamentals of BlipVert, a pseudonym under which I have been presenting electronic music to the general public for almost two decades. The BlipVert composition "New Choomish," from BlipVert's 2010 release "Quantumbuster Now" (Eat Concrete Records, NL), is examined as a construct which manifests an expressive faculty in both live and studio environments, consequently demonstrating a profoundly synthesized framework of sonic and gestural principles.

Keywords: composition, performance, improvisation, movement, building-blocks, Northlich, BlipVert, New Choomish

"BlipVert," a pseudonym under which I have been producing and performing electronic music since 2001, represents a personalized musical aesthetic which synthesizes composition and performance by means of spontaneity, i.e. improvisation. Spontaneity in fact exemplifies the purpose of my "instrumental" choices in live performance and their subsequent relation to my compositional procedures. Bruno Nettl determines degrees of musical decision-making in improvisation as dependent on the "size of the building blocks" available to the musician, and "the larger the blocks, the greater the internal variability" (1974, 15).

[1] This article is a revised excerpt from chapter 4 of William Northlich's Master's thesis from Wesleyan University, "The DiY Dynamic: Experimental Electronic Music and the Underground in the San Francisco Bay Area."

According to Nettl, "building blocks" refer to the component units of an established musical system, and can consist of

> ...the tones selected from a tone system; they are melodic motifs; they are harmonic intervals and interval sequences in improvised polyphony; they are types of sections (e.g., the exposition of sonata) (ibid., 13).

Nettl's mention of "greater internal variability" due to larger building blocks—as well as the idea that improvisation and composition share similar aesthetic traditions—insinuates that an artist's repertoire consists of elements from both spontaneous inspiration and pre-planned creative ideas. Moreover, the *efficacy* of an artist's repertoire relies on the varied combinations of building blocks which are developed and implemented throughout the creative process.

BLIPVERT COMPOSITIONAL ANALYSIS

At its core, BlipVert relies on a solid foundation of meticulously composed digital audio tracks which contain a great deal of tangible input, i.e. interaction with hardware components as opposed to software. To this end, my home studio environment is primarily oriented towards devices that allow maximum "hands-on" involvement. I prefer to use studio components that I can treat like instruments, i.e. "playing" the studio devices with my hands as opposed to manipulating a virtual environment. I work with hardware components such as drum machines, samplers, and mixing devices that are independent from the internal software of my computer.[2] The more I physically interact with my studio components, the more visceral my compositions become. The electronic music studio itself effectively becomes an instrument (Dudas 2010, 29). Hence, the idea of a "studio improviser" (ibid., 30) is an ever-present element in my work; I am able to intimately create, edit, and reconfigure ideas at a moment's notice. The incorporation of randomness as a controlling factor in my compositions is a direct result of the "hands on" nature of my studio environment.

One of the sole software programs I use is ProTools, a reliable recording and digital editing workstation that acts as the "central nervous system" for recording and editing music. For my purposes, ProTools presents a user-friendly and versatile environment for digital manipulation and editing of sound files "in a variety of ways down to the smallest details" (Katz 2010, 148). The ability to manipulate sound in

[2] Some of the more notable "hands-on" components in my studio include a MacBook Pro, an Elektron Digitakt Drum Machine/Sampler, a Korg Electribe EMX-1, and a Boss SP-404.

this manner provides the bedrock of the controlled chaos that marks any BlipVert performance.

Taking the lead from Nettl's above pronouncements, the BlipVert compositional repertory may therefore be described as a system of distinctly individual hyper-developed musical units, or "building blocks of many different orders" (Nettl 1974, 15). Musical units, i.e. building blocks, in BlipVert compositions consist of one of two concepts:

- A fully realized musical passage, occupying any length of time, which is used as the focal point for further development. Some examples of these musical ideas can include multi-layered polyphonic vocal melodies, complex percussion patterns, extended melodic motifs, and genre specific musical sections utilizing specific instrumentation.
- A mood or overall sonic temperament that is desired to be expressed through a process of "collage" composition. That is, the combination of multiple sonic textures to create moods of intensity, manic happiness, disorientation, anger, and terror.

Each musical unit is essentially treated separately as its own composition, which results in a "condensed blur of electronics that borrows from everything: jazz, glitch, metal, IDM, funk, and probably at least a few genres that haven't even been named yet" (Breakcore 2009). Consequently, musical units in BlipVert compositions are often multitudinous in their conception, and furthermore contain intimate and interrelated connections with each other, such as a continuation of a motif, revisiting distinct structural fragments, or elaboration of a previously stated theme (see Fig. 1). However, the most salient characteristic of any BlipVert composition, and subsequent performance, is its "unpredictable and frenetic" (ibid) nature, i.e. the presence of rapid, randomly shifting musical ideas that seem to provide a "real-time window" (ibid) into my compositional thought process. Nicolas Slonimsky provides an apt description of compositional development that is perfectly representative of BlipVert compositions and, despite their unpredictability, their underlying coherency:

> When a musical seed grows, each cell divides into several cells, forming new musical organisms. A good composer manages to maintain unity among all these microscopic—or shall we say musicoscopic—particles [...]. (1966, 63)

The resulting unity of such musicoscopic particles results in a highly flexible compositional process where: "Songs become liquid. They become vehicles for improvisation, or source materials, field recordings almost, that could be reconfigured or remixed to suit the future" (Toop 1995, 44).

The BlipVert composition "New Choomish"—released 2010, Eat Concrete Records, Den Bosch, Netherlands—provides a good example of separately distinguishable musical units that maintain both underlying connections and random shifts of mood and texture.[3] New Choomish consists of five separate musical ideas, or sections, each of which displays different building blocks as well as different dimensions of my musical abilities (see Fig. 1). The composition opens with a multi-layered vocal sequence (Musical Unit #1) that establishes the initial tempo, later joined by a compliment of percussion, electric piano, and synthesizer that further outlines the tempo. The vocal sequence and instrumentation combine with each other and dramatically interact until 1:23, where a sudden shift to aggressive, edited percussion occurs. The second musical unit comes into play here, which consists of a frantic sonic temperament characterized by a collage of synthesizer textures, percussion fragments, incomprehensible vocals, samples, white noise, and effected elements from the previous section to create an almost disorienting effect. The second musical unit culminates with an explosive climax at 2:46, featuring an accelerated sequence of percussion and synthesizer that gradually slows to stop at a descending glissando vocal line at 2:58. From here, the third musical unit takes shape, with a whispered vocal chorus accompanied by a subdued frenetic drum pattern. Occasional, brief interruptions of sung, choral, and yelled vocal textures add depth and playfulness to the whispering chorus and drums. After another dramatic climax ending at 3:26, the fourth musical unit occurs with faster aggressive edited percussion, similar to the second idea. The fourth unit continues to 4:37, where a sustained synthesizer line seems to put the composition in a holding pattern before moving forward. The fifth and final musical unit enters with a surprising ensemble of South Indian percussion, handclaps, synthesizer, two independent choral melodies, and a whispered spoken vocal line, ushering the listener into a completely new sonic realm as compared with the previous sections.

At first listen, the musical units in New Choomish seem haphazardly thrown together. Yet, by observing the composition closely, some sensible connections can be made between each musical unit. The first unit prominently introduces complex, creative vocal layering as one of the main components of the entire composition. This kind of vocal layering is prominently heard in the third and fifth musical unit, as are "whispered" vocal textures. The first unit also introduces a primary "pulse" to the composition through the vocal layering and added complement of electric piano and percussion, a concept to be reiterated later on.

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[3] Please refer to the accompanying audio file of "New Choomish" in its entirety for reference to the compositional analysis.

The use of complex, disjointed, aggressive percussion formulates another primary component of the composition; instead of "keeping a beat," percussion is used to make "more interesting broken beats and rhythms" (Mori in Rodgers 2010, 75). Units two and four take on the concept of aggressive percussion as the focal point, with occasional bursts of synthesizer samples and ancillary textures. The aggressive percussion textures in unit two also give way to an explosive climax at the end of the unit, which eventually subsides to accentuate the subdued feel in unit three (also emphasized in units one and five). Unit three retains an element of aggressive percussion and multi-layered vocals, maintaining connections with the previous two musical units introduced thus far. Another explosive climax occurs at the end of unit three, which not only repeats a significant element of unit two, but also leads the listener to a revisiting of unit three within a completely new preparatory context. This is to say that both moments of climax are given different treatments as to their resolve, one leading to a subdued feel and the other leading to an aggressive feel.

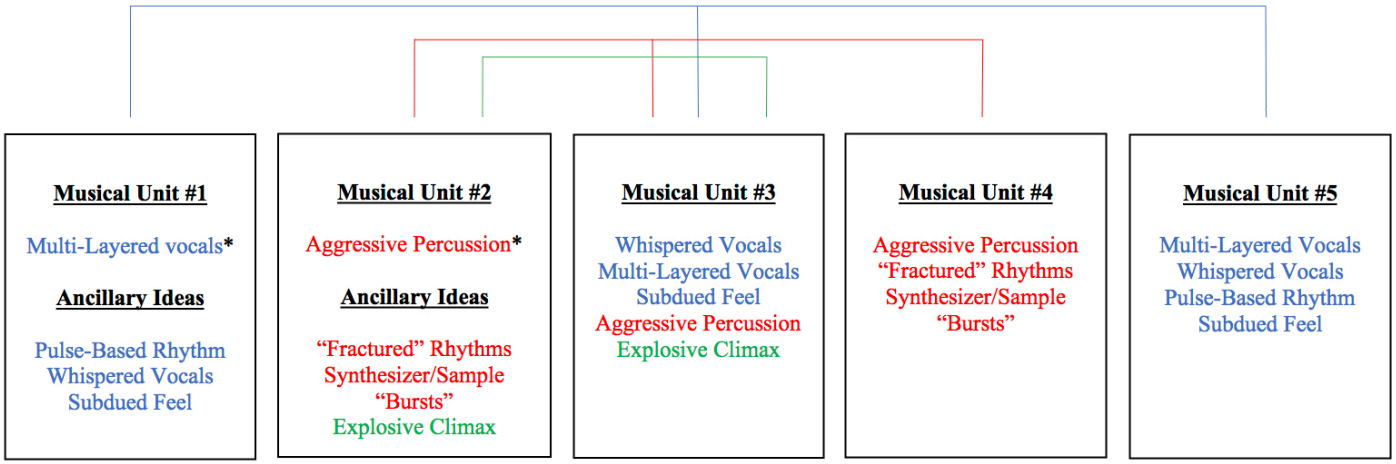
While unit five may seem random, the relationship to units one and three—whispered vocals, multi-layered vocals, subdued feel—emphasizes the desire to use vocals as the transmogrifying foundation of the musical unit. Furthermore, unit five's return to a steady pulse-based percussive texture is reminiscent of unit one. Based on this rationale, units one and five provide coherent structures of rhythm centered musical units that effectively bookend the frenetic nature of the additional units.

From a more abstract perspective, the most sensible way to interpret any BlipVert composition is that of a "rich collage" of sounds, afforded by the "manipulability of recording technology" (Katz 2010, 163). As indicated earlier, the flexible and versatile nature of ProTools helps to achieve the kind of hyper-development within units that ultimately contributes to the chaotic nature of BlipVert compositions. The milieu of editing, idea-shifting, aesthetic combinations, and collage-oriented sound construction in BlipVert compositions indicates, "it is not the quality of the final product that is most important, but the quality of the manipulation" (Wordsayer in Schloss 2004, 165). Viewed in this way, BlipVert compositions maintain an intimate connection with their application to live performance. BlipVert performances are as unpredictable as the music itself; compositions are further manipulated with a variety of live performance hardware that focuses on sound manipulation rather than the successful execution of a composition from beginning to end. Thus, the "hands-on" nature of sound manipulation in my home studio translates directly to the performance venue; compositions that have already had a significant amount of tangible input are essentially given a newer, yet familiar, field in which to roam.

FIG. 1

BLIPVERT COMPOSITIONAL SCHEMATIC

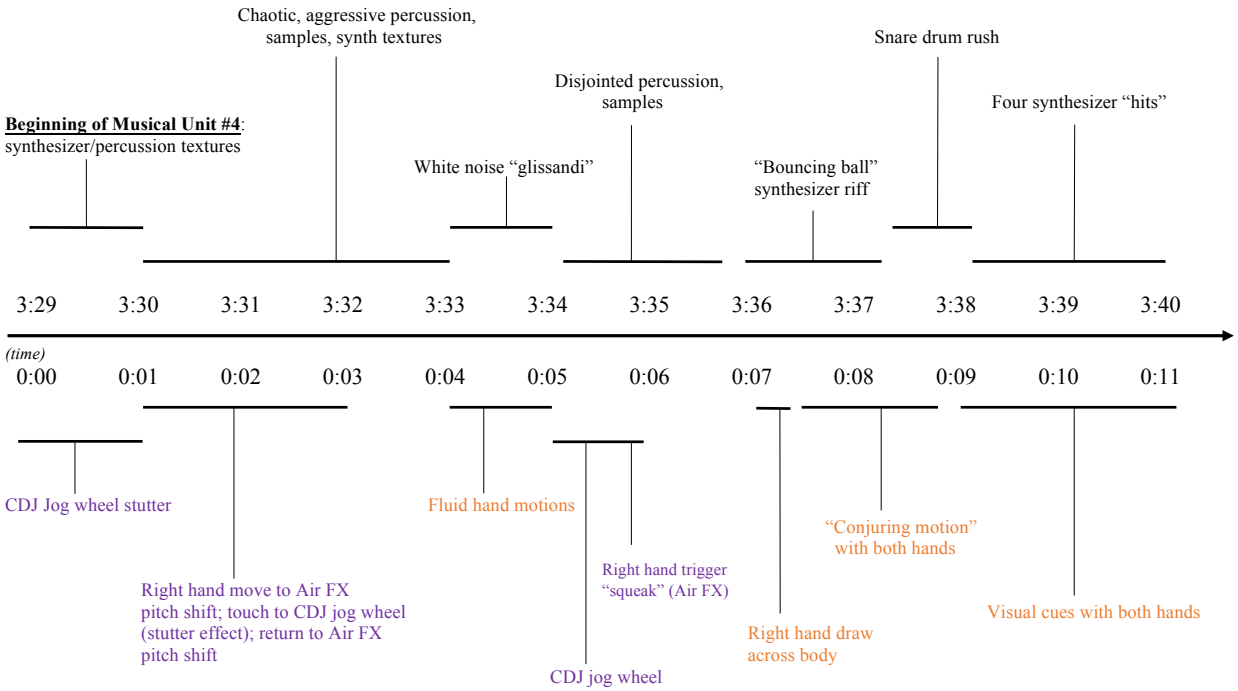
"NEW CHOOMISH" – RELEASED 2010 EAT CONCRETE RECORDS, QUANTUMBUSTER NOW EP



- * = Fundamental design of entire idea. Subsequent (ancillary) development occurs as a result of fundamental design.
- Colors indicate connecting elements from idea to idea.
- If there is no fundamental design (*) indicated, idea components are a result of previous fundamental and ancillary developments.

FIG. 2 **BLIPVERT PERFORMANCE STRUCTURE**

ORIGINAL COMPOSITION (**OC**)



LIVE PERFORMANCE DECISIONS/ACTIONS (**LP**)

Key: "Instrumental Usage," Body Movements

BLIPVERT LIVE PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

In live performance, I employ the use of a small and mobile apparatus of electronic components which is capable of a maximum amount of freedom and power. The activity of sound manipulation, as evidenced in the compositional framework, takes on a more central role due to the dynamic nature of my live performance components.[4] In addition to sound manipulation, ancillary body movements are incorporated to heighten the visual aspect of the performance. Ultimately, I use my composed material as vehicles for improvisation. The resulting sonic experience is full of energy and erratic. When this experience is combined with ancillary improvised vocal accompaniment, microphone feedback delay loops, and an occasional woodwind solo, the live show becomes a mixture of intensity, drama, kineticism, and placidness.

The visual result of my live performances is that of rapid arm, hand, and body movements. Often times, determination as to *how* sound is manipulated and produced can become clouded, as some of my movements involve small gestures that do not indicate a specific effect or alteration. However, due to the relatively streamlined nature of my live performance setup, gestural movements are concentrated enough as to be sensible without being indecipherable. An audience member, with some inspection, can *eventually* determine the purposes of my gestures and the subsequent connection to the types of sounds that are produced.

Many of my body movements can sometimes represent a bizarre, frenetic kind of "Brownian motion," which has been defined by some audience members as loosely choreographed dancing (see "The 2010 Annual Transbay Skronkathon"). I equate this kind of motion to "body tricks" used in DJ battles (Katz 2010, 135). These kinds

[4] The hardware and software configurations in my live performances have undergone many changes over the last sixteen years. For a significant period of time (and when this paper was first written), one of the most expressive pieces of equipment I employed in my live performances was a Pioneer CDJ deck, a CD playback unit which featured effect and sound-file manipulation via the use of a centralized "jog wheel" on the unit itself, thus providing a significant amount of "tangible" interaction with the sonic material (similar to my above-mentioned studio methodology). Hence, the Pioneer CDJ deck will be referenced as the primary "instrumental" component with which I interact in the live performance analysis. Currently, I use a MacBook Air computer which runs a highly dynamic sound-file playback program, i.e. a "DJ" software program, called Traktor, produced by the Native Instruments company. Traktor offers a wide range of options for sample manipulation and sound effect alteration. Along with Traktor, I use an MPC MPK Mini MIDI controller and a TC Electronic "Vocalive" vocal effects processor, both of which, I have found, equal the Pioneer CDJ in terms of tangible interaction and expressivity.

of moves, such as spinning in place, jumping up and down, random twitching, and aimless meandering about "do not affect…the sound of the routine," but rather add to the visual appeal of the performance (ibid). Thus, gesture is not only a vital aspect of performing BlipVert in a live setting, it acts as visual accompaniment to the overall chaotic sonic experience, allowing me to step away from pure "instrumental" focus and incorporate drama, humour, anger, and silliness. It could be reasoned that my ancillary body movements at their core maintain strong improvisatory character as well, i.e. "interpretive" movement. By observing that "spontaneity of execution is the essence of music vitally connected to the human body" (Partch 1974, 44), the improvisatory inclination of my BlipVert project can be witnessed visually from both instrumental gestures and interpretive movement.

A performance of New Choomish in Eindhoven, Netherlands during a 2009 European tour is an ideal opportunity to witness the concomitant elements of sound manipulation and body movement working together ("BlipVert Live @ Gaslab: Eat Concrete 'Bassfudge Powerscones' Tour 2009").[5] Due to the multitude of activities occurring within this one excerpt, the first eleven seconds of the live performance (LP) will be compared and contrasted along with the original composition (OC) (see Fig. 2). The beginning of the live performance starts at the beginning of musical idea four (OC 3:29). From 0:00 to 0:01 (LP) the original material is "stuttered" by use of the Pioneer CDJ jog wheel, creating a brief, dramatic foreshadowing (or sustaining) of what is to come. Over the next two and a half seconds a multitude of actions occur (LP 0:01–0:03.5). A right-hand move to the Alesis Air FX pitch shift is followed by a brief touch of the CDJ jog wheel (still on a stutter effect), with a return back to the Air FX pitch shift culminating in a "pausing-hands-to-chest" motion at 0:03. The altering of the original composition's percussion and samples (OC 3:30–3:33)—in addition to the rapid arm movements required to alter the sounds—add an elevated dramatic effect to the already chaotic material. The original composition next introduces rapidly falling and ascending "white noise glissandi" (OC 3:33–3:34). The live performance choice made in this case is to visually interpret the glissandi by use of fluid hand motions (LP 0:04–0:05), which seem to logically extend from the pausing motion at LP 0:03. The original composition then introduces a disjointed two-second collection of percussion and samples (OC 3:34–3:35). The sonic recreation ability of the CDJ comes into play during this part of the performance, as multiple right and left-hand touches on the jog wheel turn this of the original composition into a pitch-shifted drum break (LP 0:05–0:06). The drum break

[5] Please refer to the web link https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z4j-bWLN2XU&t=94s in its entirety for reference to the live performance analysis.

culminates with a quick right hand wave over the Air FX (LP 0:06), providing a small "squeak" before moving forward.

At this point, body movements take over the rest of the performance. The original composition's "bouncing ball" synthesizer riff (OC 3:36–3:37) is visually interpreted with an extended right hand draw across the body (LP 0:07). A sped-up snare drum "rush" (OC 3:38) is interpreted with a kind of "conjuring" motion with both hands (LP 0:07 to 0:09). Finally, four prominent synthesizer hits, each at different pitches (OC 3:38–3:39[40]) are emphatically stated with four defined visual cues with both hands (LP 0:10–0:12). The visual cues are also delivered in different directions to highlight the changes in pitch.

The strength and purpose of any BlipVert performance relies on an overriding sense of experimentation and spontaneous interaction with sonic material. The overall aim of the above analysis is to provide an example of the *types* of improvisatory choices that are made, as well as the *frequency* of improvisatory decision-making. A BlipVert performance contains a multitude of actions occurring within an extremely short period of time, resulting in an entirely new composition from both aural and visual standpoints. A colourful analogy that could characterize my performances would be that I become an "action painter" (Veal 2001, 100) of sound and visual motion. Each BlipVert performance is an "episodic coloration in which 'explosive sonic events' take place" (ibid) coupled with equally explosive visual events.

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La Sinfonía de Babel [Babel's Symphony]

NICOLÁS ARNÁEZ

At its core, the practice of creating sound installations as sonic art involves presenting and manipulating audio in a gallery-like setting. In the case of "La Sinfonía de Babel" the usage of pre-existing musical and literary phrases, or "quoting," formulates the substantive basis for a non-interactive quadraphonic piece that challenges preconceptions of appropriation, citation, and plagiarism where it concerns composition. Inspired by the works "Sinfonia" by Italian composer Luiciano Berio, and "La Biblioteca de Babel" by Argentinian writer Jorge Luis Borges, "La Sinfonía de Babel" recontextualizes conventional ideas of musical narratives by combining and indeterminately presenting excerpts of six hundred and forty looped musical works from different time periods, thus generating a thick and immersive cluster of audio. Within this milieu, auditors are invited to sit and read Borges' text whilst simultaneously identifying musical familiarities within the cluster, hence experiencing quoting on a multi-dimensional level. This paper offers a methodological and aesthetic overview of Berio and Borges' works, focusing specifically on how citation is approached from musical and literary perspectives. Furthermore, structural and technical methodologies are analyzed as a means of better understanding the overarching creative process.

Keywords: sound installation, sound art, Borges, Berio, sonorous texture, Max MSP, library, symphony, reading

In this article, I will discuss the creative process behind my original multimedia sound installation *La Sinfonía de Babel* (2014). This work finds its inspiration in two distinct creative works. The first is *Sinfonia* for eight voices and orchestra, written in 1968 by Italian composer Luciano Berio. The second work is the short story "La Biblioteca de Babel" (The Library of Babel), written in 1941 by Argentinian novelist Jorge Luis Borges. These works have garnered the interest of musicologists, composers, and mathematical researchers alike, and their commentaries have served as a springboard for some of my own ideas.[1] Both pieces are based upon the idea of

[1] The research on these works by scholars Michael Hicks (musicologist, Brigham Young University), Miguel Bellusci (composer and professor, Universidad Nacional de Cuyo), Eduardo Plaza (PhD. Music, Universidad Simón Bolivar), Javier Fresán (writer and mathematician, Paris University), Antonio Toca Fernández (researcher and professor,

a structuring of musical passages or elements by recontextualizing and giving new significance to preexisting artistic creations. In Berio's *Sinfonia*, diverse passages of music from well-known composers are juxtaposed against each other, resulting in what author Peter Burkholder defines as music, or sound, collage (Burkholder 2001). As he explains, such a collage consists of diverse preexisting pieces or sections of music which are brought together, yet they retain their original characteristics of tonality, timbre, texture, meter and tempo. This results in an absence of the traditional relationships amongst parameters of tonal music, which highlight the individuality of each piece.

In "La Biblioteca de Babel," Borges creates a fictional short story of an imaginary library which holds within it all the books ever written in the history of the world. This massive collection, stored in an endless labyrinth-like structure, is inhabited by diverse characters (librarians, decipherers, pilgrims, etc.), who relate their lives inside the structure, and talk about what they have seen and discovered about the mysterious place during their stay.

The first step towards the realization of my own work was to try to understand how these two works are related, and what makes them similar. In particular, I was interested in how both authors use the idea of quotation and citation, and how the experience of listening to, and reading these works can form the basis for the conception of a new piece.

LUCIANO BERIO – *SINFONIA*

Luciano Berio (1925–2003) composed the *Sinfonia* in 1968. Part III, the movement upon which my sound installation of *La Sinfonía de Babel* is primarily based, is constructed from a sonic and poetic collage of musical and literary quotations (Bellusci, 2008). Berio writes about its text: "The main text for the third section consists of fragments from Samuel Beckett's *The Unnamable*, which, in turn, generate a large number of 'daily life' references and quotations" (Berio 2014). Berio's collection of musical quotations for this movement can be described, ultimately, as representing fragments of a historical musical past. In addition to the primary musical quotation — the Scherzo of Mahler's Second Symphony, which functions as a kind of ground bass throughout the movement — one can find layers of musical excerpts

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Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana), and myself are presented first, thus contextualizing my new installation by demonstrating the creative methodologies employed by Berio and Borges. Secondly, I describe how specific findings in this research inspired the creation of *La Sinfonía de Babel*. Lastly, I explain in detail its particulars, such as content, structure, technical ideations, and performance requirements.

of composers such as Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, Mahler, Debussy, Ravel, Strauss, Stravinsky, Schoenberg, Berg, Stockhausen, Boulez and also from Berio himself, amongst others (Plaza 2013, 6). Thus, in the words of Eduardo Plaza: "Berio uses the superimposition of anachronistic musical styles which co-exist in the same work and create a hybrid language" (Plaza 2013, 9). Michael Hicks's analysis of this movement shows the remarkable collage of quotations that structure this work (Ex. 1a and b).

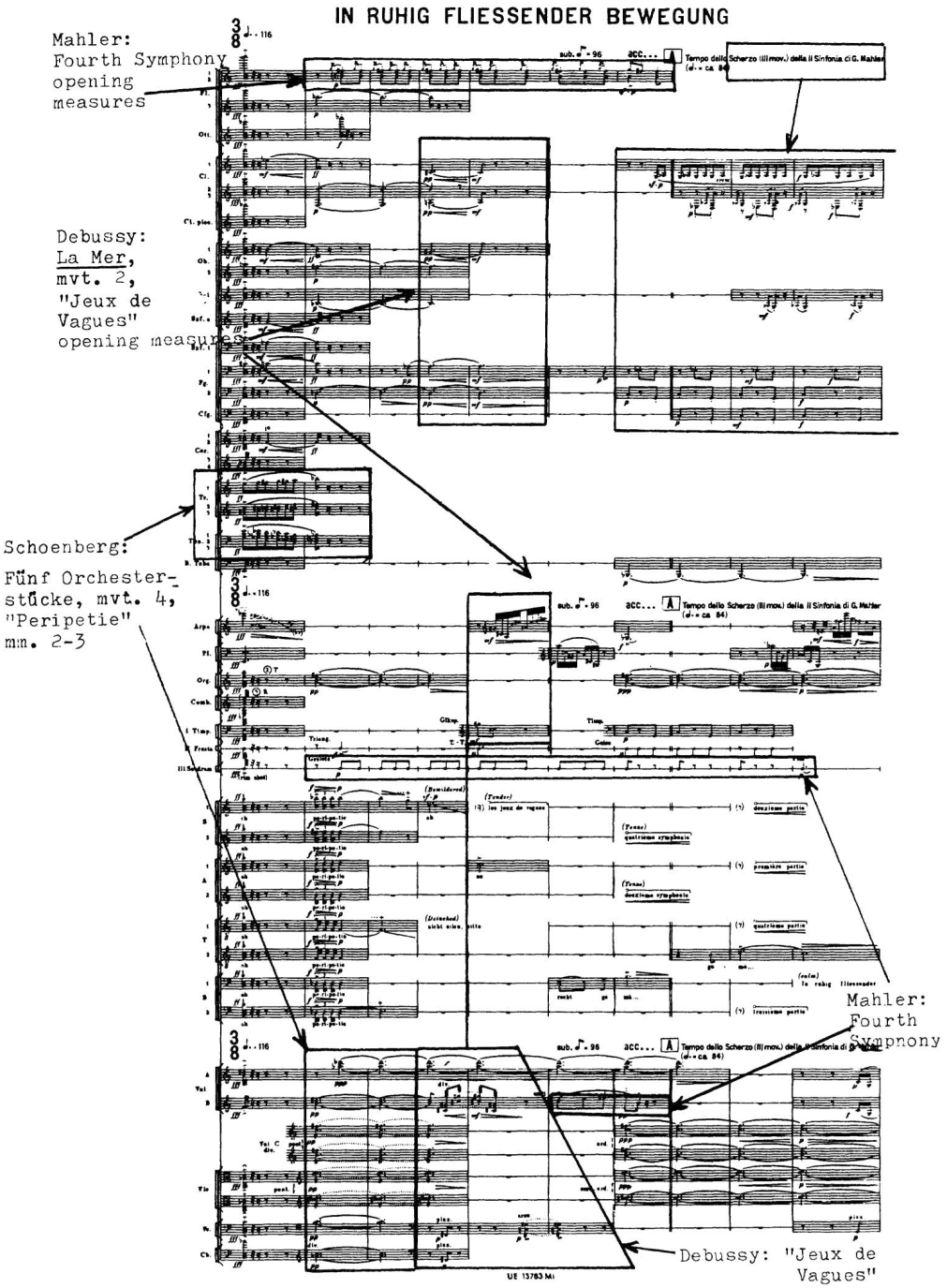
As Hicks demonstrates, the vertical axis of the score assembles different fragments, or quotations of music of many composers. Furthermore, the number of quotations which are heard simultaneously changes over time. This idea of musical quotation creates two distinct parameters: 1) the creation of a new significance for the individual excerpts themselves by the use of sonic intertextuality, and 2) an entirely new work based on a musical texture in permanent mutation of familiar sonorities. Hence, the piece moves forward in a kind of compositional coalition between Berio and historical musical works.

JORGE LUIS BORGES—"LA BIBLIOTECA DE BABEL"

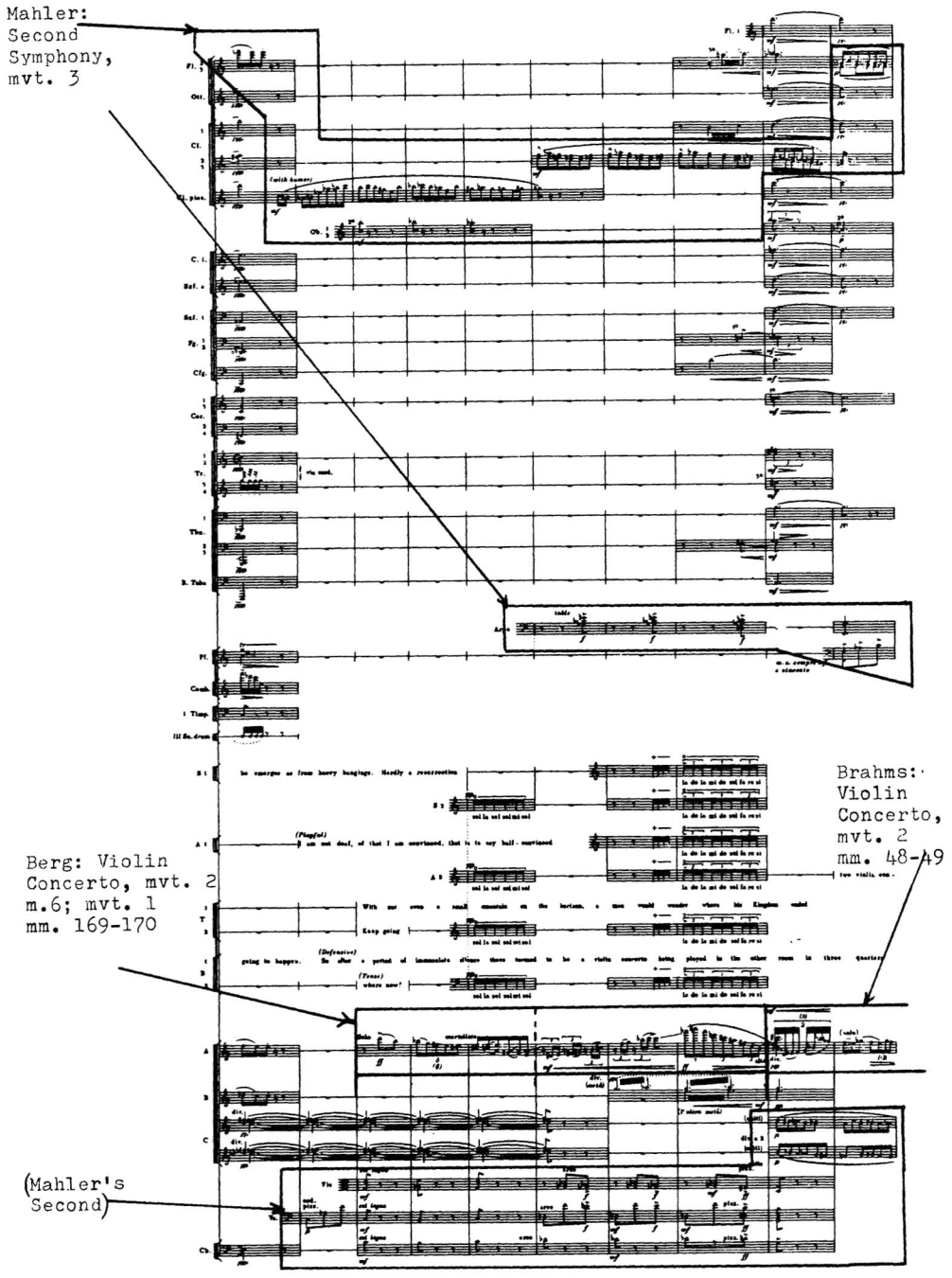
Jorge Luis Borges (1899–1986) wrote "La Biblioteca de Babel" ("The Library of Babel") in 1941 as part of a collection of short stories under the title *Ficciones*. In "La Biblioteca de Babel," Borges describes an enormous imaginary library whose books contain every possible arbitrary combination of twenty five symbols: the period, the comma, the space, and the twenty two letters of the alphabet (Hendricks 2009, 5).[2] The result is a library which contains every book that can be written in any language, and in any of the possible combinations of the twenty five characters (Fresán 2007, 134).

Architecturally speaking, Borges describes the layout of the library as methodically arranged in a series of hexagonal rooms, each of which stores a fixed number of books on a fixed number of shelves. The exact number of hexagonal rooms that make up the library is a mystery, as Borges states in the very first sentence: "The universe (which others call the Library) is composed of an indefinite, perhaps infinite, number of hexagonal galleries…" However, Borges describes in detail how the layout of each room is arranged: "Twenty bookshelves, five to each side, line four of the hexagon's six sides; the height of the bookshelves, floor to ceiling, is hardly greater than the height of a normal librarian." Later, he specifies how many books are placed on these shelves: "Each wall of each hexagon is furnished with five

[2] Borges does not specify which twenty-two-letter alphabet he refers to, nor have any of the scholars so far encountered offered an explanation for this anomaly.



Ex. 1a. Berio, *Sinfonia,* 3rd movement, measures 1 to 10 (Hicks 1982, 200–201)



Ex. 1b. Berio, *Sinfonia,* 3rd movement, measures 59 to 69, (Hicks 1982, 200–201)

bookshelves; each bookshelf holds thirty two books identical in format [...]" (Borges 1962, 112–113). Finding the exact number of books that are placed in the shelves of each of the library rooms is a matter of logical and mathematical operations:

1. The galleries are hexagonal.
2. Borges states that the shelves cover all the walls except two, which means that just four out of the six sides of the hexagonal room hold books; the other two are passages that leads to other equally distributed rooms (see Fig. 1).
3. On each one of these four walls there are twenty shelves (five shelves per each of the four walls).
4. Each one of these shelves contains thirty two books.
5. By multiplying thirty two (books) by five (shelves), we arrive at the number of books placed in one wall: one hundred and sixty.
6. By multiplying a hundred and sixty (books) by four (walls with books per hexagonal room) we can ascertain exactly how many books are stored in each hexagonal room: six hundred and forty.

Architect Antonio Toca Fernández has proposed a graphic layout that, despite the fact that the drawing is not completely accurate (note the northern walls where six shelves can be counted from bottom to top, instead of five), the general layout is illuminating as it helps one imagine how the library might look. (See Fig. 1.)

LA SINFONIA DE BABEL (BABEL'S SYMPHONY), A MULTIMEDIA INSTALLATION

Inspirational flow

The first connection I found between *Sinfonía* and "La Biblioteca de Babel" was the use of the principle of collection and collage, in different but related manners: while Berio composes a musical piece by accumulating fragments of existing music (in addition to a layer of his own writing), Borges describes a place made out of all the literary pieces which have ever existed or will exist. If Borges' library were filled with music instead of books, the sonic result would likely Berio's *Sinfonia*, Part III, but escalated to an unimaginable level. This is the central premise I used as a creative support for my own undertaking.

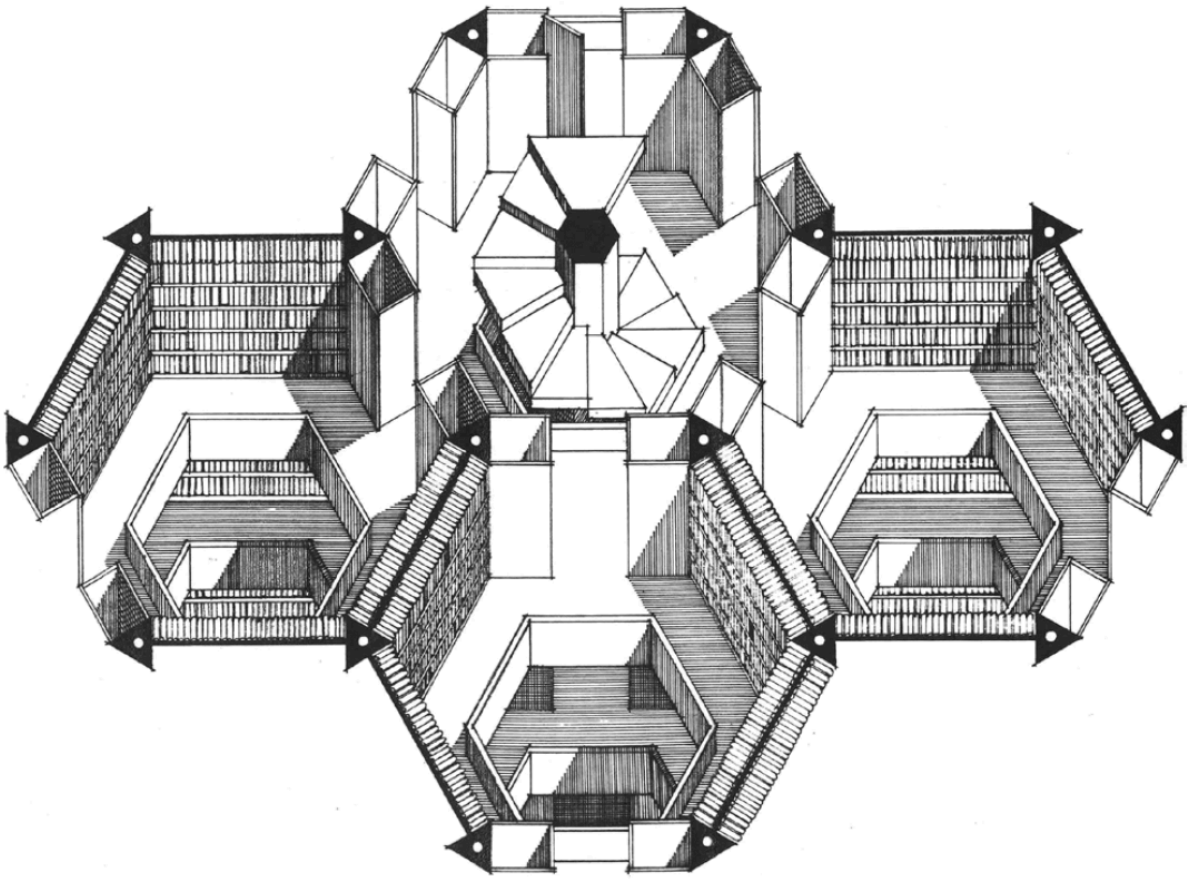


Fig.1. Three connected hexagonal rooms of Babel's library (Toca 2009, 78)

The first challenge was to export ideas from literature to aural expression, and to represent in a sound installation, an imaginary library where combinations of sounds replaced the library of books. The sound installation represents one imaginary hexagonal room of an imaginary sound archive. Each of four speakers inside the room (representing Borges's four walls) reproduce 160 works, thus bringing together in a different configuration the idea of coexisting layers of music, conceived as a simultaneous mass.

Content

In *La Sinfonía de Babel*, four speakers are placed in a room, and each speaker plays one hundred and sixty musical pieces (controlled by a computer that runs a Max 7 patch). All one hundred and sixty pieces are collated in terms of specifics such as

historical period, instrumental type, and composer type: one speaker plays only romantic piano music; a second one plays orchestral music from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; in a third the complete collection of the Latin jazz player Michel Camilo can be heard; and in the fourth only Renaissance vocal music is represented. However, none of this information is given to the visitor. Each speaker represents one of the four walls of Borges' hexagonal rooms, and each piece represents a book placed on the shelves. The main idea of this archive is to store sound (not scores, nor recordings as such, but *sounding* music). Since music depends on time to exist, the solution is to create a sound archive capable of storing the acoustic energy produced over time by each piece. Thus, this acoustic energy created by all six hundred and forty musical pieces are presented in a perpetual loop.

A permanent and almost infinite vertical relationship is generated between the pieces represented in each speaker, which results in a constantly changing sonic texture. This textural phenomenon of perpetual aural evolution also occurs as a whole, in the interaction between the four speakers. Thinking further along these lines, the sound installation represents one room out of a quasi-infinity of interconnected hexagons, which extend the sonorous and textural phenomena to an unimaginable scale.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

The sound installation *La Sinfonía de Babel* is conceived for a four-walled room around which four speakers are placed. (A fifth speaker is recommended: a subwoofer that plays the low frequencies of all four speakers. This technical detail is not mandatory). The speakers should be sounding all the time, without any interruption. Ideally, the room should have two entrances. The space should be modified to form a hexagon by using drywall, cardboard, curtains, or similar materials. Each of the four walls has a speaker, leaving the entrances free, as shown in Figure 2.

In the centre of the room, which should be equipped with a table, chairs, couches, or similar pieces of furniture, at least five copies of Borges short story should be available for the visitors. The inscription shown in Figure 3, which functions as a sort of program note, must be added at the end of the Borges short story.

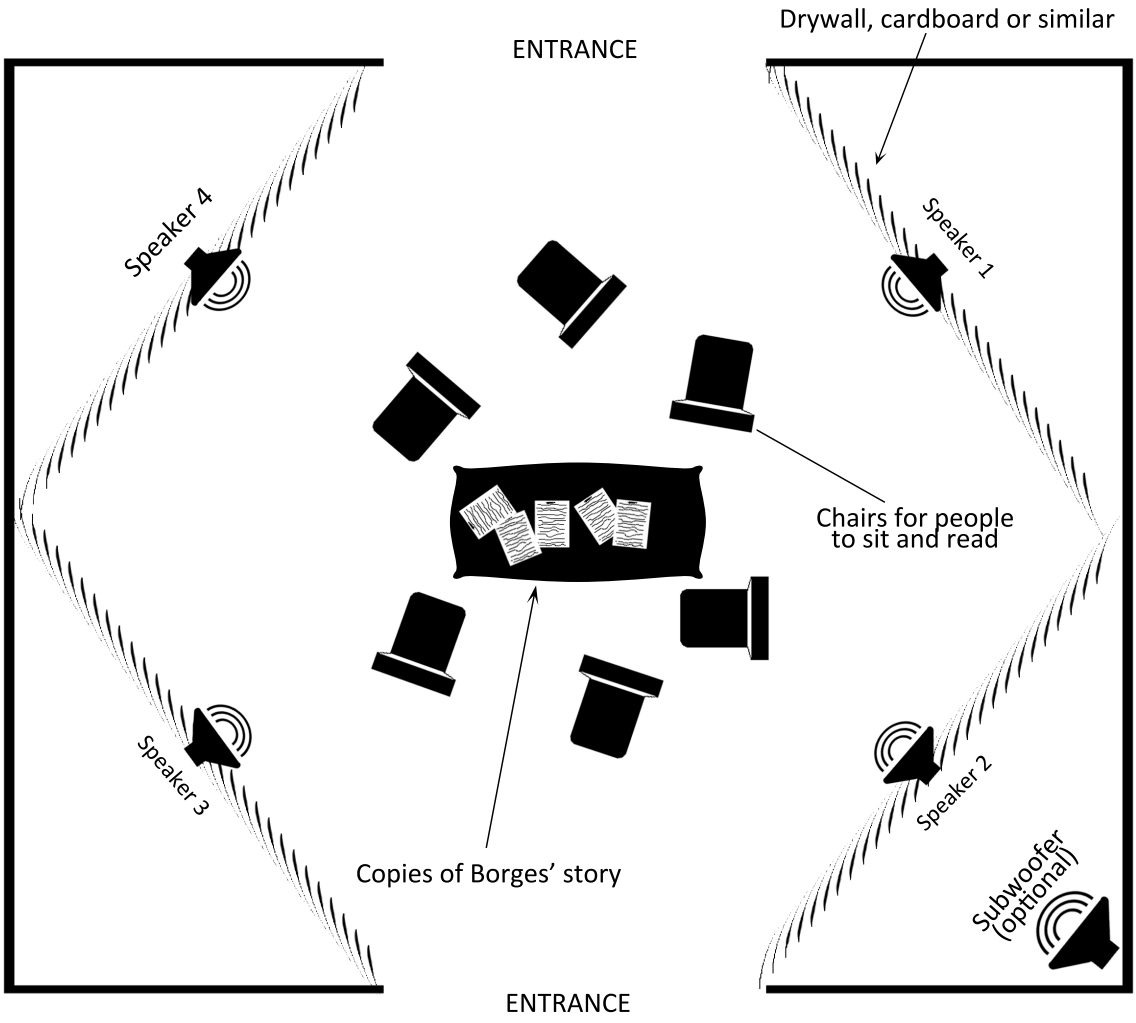
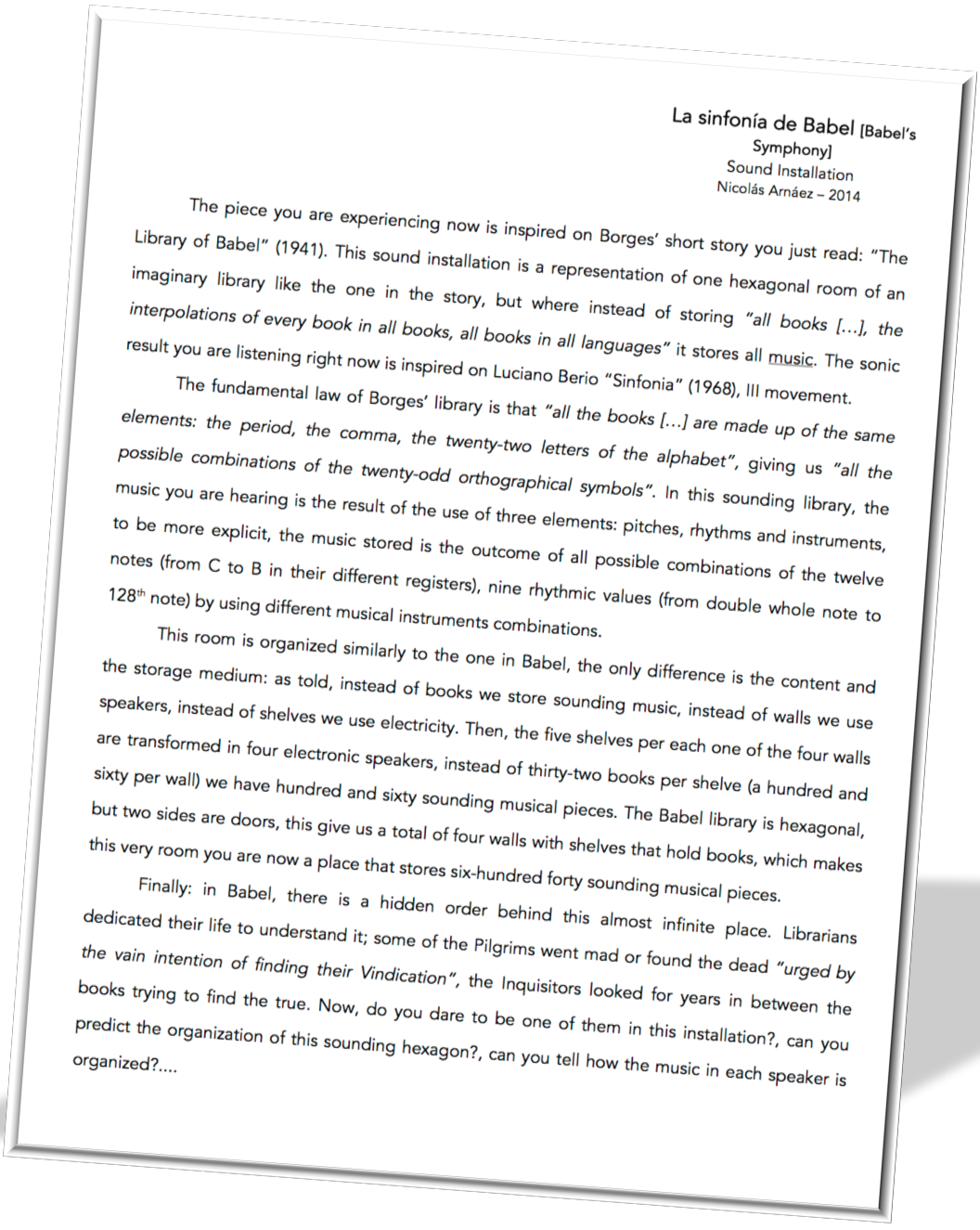


Fig. 2. *La Sinfonía de Babel*, room layout



La sinfonía de Babel [Babel's Symphony]
Sound Installation
Nicolás Arnáez – 2014

The piece you are experiencing now is inspired on Borges' short story you just read: "The Library of Babel" (1941). This sound installation is a representation of one hexagonal room of an imaginary library like the one in the story, but where instead of storing *"all books […], the interpolations of every book in all books, all books in all languages"* it stores all music. The sonic result you are listening right now is inspired on Luciano Berio "Sinfonia" (1968), III movement.

The fundamental law of Borges' library is that *"all the books […] are made up of the same elements: the period, the comma, the twenty-two letters of the alphabet"*, giving us *"all the possible combinations of the twenty-odd orthographical symbols"*. In this sounding library, the music you are hearing is the result of the use of three elements: pitches, rhythms and instruments, to be more explicit, the music stored is the outcome of all possible combinations of the twelve notes (from C to B in their different registers), nine rhythmic values (from double whole note to 128th note) by using different musical instruments combinations.

This room is organized similarly to the one in Babel, the only difference is the content and the storage medium: as told, instead of books we store sounding music, instead of walls we use speakers, instead of shelves we use electricity. Then, the five shelves per each one of the four walls are transformed in four electronic speakers, instead of thirty-two books per shelve (a hundred and sixty per wall) we have hundred and sixty sounding musical pieces. The Babel library is hexagonal, but two sides are doors, this give us a total of four walls with shelves that hold books, which makes this very room you are now a place that stores six-hundred forty sounding musical pieces.

Finally: in Babel, there is a hidden order behind this almost infinite place. Librarians dedicated their life to understand it; some of the Pilgrims went mad or found the dead *"urged by the vain intention of finding their Vindication"*, the Inquisitors looked for years in between the books trying to find the true. Now, do you dare to be one of them in this installation?, can you predict the organization of this sounding hexagon?, can you tell how the music in each speaker is organized?....

Fig.3. *La Sinfonía de Babel*, contextualization program

Typically, sound installations primarily deal with two principles: sonic energy and spatial conception. The sonic energy delivered in sound installations differs from performed music: there is no distinctive performer, hence the installation allows for continuous sonic reproduction. However, the use of the space in sound installations allows for a complete reconceptualization of performativity within a different field of expression: visitors can observe and appreciate colours, shapes, materials, objects; furthermore, they can "move" through the sonic and visual structure and experience the installation from a multitude of spatial perspectives.

La Sinfonía de Babel responds to the Berio and Borges works by recontextualizing the traditional concepts of sound collage and music quotation to stretch the principle of quotation found in *Sinfonia*. Furthermore, it absorbs the architectonic structure depicted in Borges' library as a model for a specific spatial setting of aural reproduction. The underlying principles in *La Sinfonía de Babel* are formulated from both sonic and spatial perspectives, inviting the visitor to experience reading, listening and feeling in an innovative, playful, and challenging manner. Future projects inspired by *La Sinfonía de Babel* might include: making "interactive" sonic material (for example, offering physical books which once opened, emit sound); adding a visual layer to the installation by reconstructing one of Fernández Toca rooms; creating a performative work based on the principles of the installation. These are endeavours that may take shape in future lives of this work.

A final point of consideration worth mentioning: according to Borges' story, Berio's *Sinfonia* is already being played in some room of *La Sinfonía de Babel* and likewise this paper already exists somewhere in "La Biblioteca de Babel."

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“Having Walked Alongside You”: A Conversational Exchange on Territory and Sound in Motion

MIGUELTZINTA SOLÍS and TYLER STEWART

As two artist-scholars engaged in research-creation, our goal with this project was to enact a performance/discussion regarding settler-colonialism, sound, performance, and our relationships to land, body and time. During the initial “lockdown phase” of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, we carried out a mediated conversation via WhatsApp voice memos, hiking towards each other along and across the Oldman River, then retracing the other’s path back to our respective points of origin.

This collaborative project aims to decolonize the academic paper through a process which combines textual analysis, experiential learning, improvisational performance, and activated writing to ask questions of the relationships between sound, land, and colonial institutions. How does movement through space, and hearing the land, affect our experience of discussing texts? How is discussion informed by, say, the participants being separated (or connected) by a river? What richness exists in oral/aural exchanges that are lost in the textualizing process? What does it mean to move through occupied Blackfoot territory while discussing decolonialism?

The structure of this conversational exchange unfolds in loops rather than in the linear standard of academic writing. This “essay” was originally devised as an audiovisual text, but during further revisions, we continued our experimentations with form. The result has taken shape in dual outputs of both sound and text, each form containing affective and sensorial elements not found in the other, creating parallel yet distinct “texts.” While this is an imperfect strategy for those who experience sight/hearing related disabilities, we also recognize that some sensorial experiences are untranslatable into the language of the other senses. We hope that we have encoded each experience of sound and text with enough richness for them to be enjoyed individually, and we invite those who can, to experience how the two forms play off of each other.

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To this effect, the form of this text focuses on the relationship between the content of our conversation and how it is presented, and between our conversation and the writers, artists and movements we have referenced. We also hope to emphasize our relationality with the land we walked through, the creators of the sounds we listened to, between us, the co-creators of this "text," as well as the relationship we create with you, the listener/reader experiencing it. As artists/writers/curators, it is a challenge to find alternative textual formats that appropriately reflect artistic research-creation methodologies while also satisfying the demands of academic knowledge dissemination. This collaboration explores the possibility for academic conversations to escape the confines of learning institutions into a space of praxis and embodied experience in motion.

Keywords: colonialism, landscape, performance, power, sound, space, time, experimentation with form

ENTER SCENE.

The date is Sunday, April 5, 2020 – approximately one month into the ongoing Covid-19 social gathering restrictions mandated across Canada. Migueltzinta Solís is on the west side of the Oldman River, at the University of Lethbridge campus, walking eastward. Tyler J Stewart is on the east side of the Oldman River, walking westward from his home in the London Road neighborhood. As they walk towards each other, voice messages, video clips, and photographs are sent back and forth in a conversation mediated through the WhatsApp platform on their mobile phones. This is a transcript of that conversation, with additional footnotes and citations added in-text as mentioned within their dialogue.

{4:59} [Birds chirping]

[Feet walking]

[Water sounds]

[Canadian geese honk faintly in the background as they migrate northward]

[Vehicles pass by loudly as the pedestrian signal beeps. Vehicle sounds fade away]

{6:00} TYLER: Hey Migueltzinta, it's Tyler. I am at the corner of Scenic Drive and 4th Street South. Aaaaaand I hear a lot of car noise. Which has now dissipated.

I can see the university and I'm gonna wait until I see you in the little UHall slot, or breezeway, as I suppose it's more appropriately called.

MIGUEL: Hey Tyler, I am [laughter], I jumped the gun and went down to where the storm drain, where the university storm drain dumps out into the river. I saw some interesting things on the way down here. It's really, really quiet. I don't really know, like, if I was here on a Sunday at school, pre-pandemic, would it be the same quiet? Is the quiet I feel emanating from the university just my own, like, is it a quiet I'm hearing with my ears, or is it a quiet that I just know because of what's going on?

{7:40} TYLER: I appreciate that you already brought in the idea of the affective listening experience, and on the way over here I was thinking about how we can listen with our feet, just in the difference between walking on concrete or gravel and now what you can hear me walking on a grass/mud path.

[Footsteps walking on grass/mud path] [1]

MIGUEL: There's a lot of birds out.

[Footsteps on a hard surface]

MIGUEL: It's not as icy as I thought it would be.

[Footsteps move to a softer surface][2]

[1] "Hearing is basically a specialized form of touch. Sound is simply vibrating air which the ear picks up and converts to electrical signals, which are then interpreted by the brain. The sense of hearing is not the only sense that can do this, touch can do this too. If you are standing by the road and a large truck goes by, do you hear or feel the vibration? The answer is both." (Glennie 2015, n.p.).

[2] "Deafness does not mean that you can't hear, only that there is something wrong with the ears. Even someone who is totally deaf can still hear/feel sounds" (Glennie 2015, n.p.).

MIGUEL: I think I'm noticing a lot of new nests too. … okay. I'm coming up onto the breezeway.

{8:58} TYLER: (shouting) CAN YOU SEE ME NOW? CAN YOU HEEEEEEEAR ME?

MIGUEL: [laughter] I totally heard you. It was very faint.

[whistling]

TYLER: I don't think I heard you whistling, but some other people on this side of the river definitely responded to my … hails. Now that I'm down in the valley, in this gully, away from traffic, you can notice the difference, but still hear this background flat texture of road noise behind me. It's interesting to think of the directionality of how we hear and how it's mostly coming from below me right now, from my feet, and behind me from the distant road noise. Which direction do we normally listen to? Is there a general direction that occupies most of our waking listening moments?[3]

{10:18} MIGUEL: I'm gonna start walking down and see if you can … I don't trust my shouts to actually be that loud. With my 'tran' voice and all that. [laughter] But I do have a trick up my sleeve, but I think I gotta get a little closer first. So I'm walking down from the breezeway on the trail towards the river. Whoa, I almost fell! [laughter] It's very … it's definitely slippery here.

[Walking and wind sounds]

TYLER: As we've previously discussed, it's likely that the white male ear is the least likely to hear a trans person's voice, but I'd like to think that my listening is a little more attuned than the average white man's ear.[4]

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[3] "There are fewer distant sounds in the city, just as there is less distant viewing. The loss of distant hearing is one of the most significant changes in aural perception in history. The urban environment has compressed acoustic spaces and confused directionality, making it often difficult or impossible to locate sources" (Augoyard 1995, xv).

[4] "Liana Silva argues that loudness remains a male privilege in American culture, so women who wield loud voices are dubbed lower class and 'noisy, rude, unapologetic, unbridled.' … In a society bound by

MIGUEL: Yeah definitely. I'm feel like, I'm curious to see if you will hear my prosthesis that I brought today. [chuckles] My voice, my sound, yeah I guess - my voice prosthesis? But yeah, I feel like, I think the question of direction … I've been thinking a lot about that, especially now as the pandemic is kinda like, it's just kinda re- - I dunno – re-constructing our relationships to time and production, and productivity, and how that is the stuff we've been talking about in class, in terms of the decolonization of very basic ways of being in the world that we completely take for granted. And so I think that the direction we are often walking towards is the future, to the next thing, or the place you need to be. And so it's like you walk … the present is something you walk through, so the direction we're walking through in the present is into the *future beyond*, like out of it, basically.

{12:55} [Water splashing sound. Intermittent. Like water being poured out of a bucket in splashes.]

TYLER: I'm down in this really narrow section of the gully, and as I descended about a three or four meter little pitch, you could feel the difference in sound, like, feel it drop away. This also reminds me of Sara Ahmed and how we're oriented and how we're aligned in certain ways. How something can pull us in a certain direction of being and orient our listening in a particular way.[5]

[Walking sounds, sounds mushy]

MIGUEL: I'm also now down … no, I'm not quite in a gully, I'm in the bottom of one of the coulees that leads down from the breezeway down to the river. I just got to the part where the sides are steep, and yeah, the acoustics are also really different. I also thought it was interesting how I have this memory of trying to explain playing blindman's bluff with my siblings, or my cousins or something, and trying to explain to them that I could hear an open door.

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sonic color lines and glass ceilings, 'loudness,' Silva contends, 'is something racialized people cannot afford'" (Stoever 2016, 23).

[5] The ways in which our social structures are aligned determines which voices are amplified and which voices are silenced, and how we orient ourselves individually can determine our understanding of the world. Sara Ahmed argues that compulsory heterosexuality acts as a form of repetitive strain injury, in that through the repetition of enforced actions which constrain the body, "our body takes the shape of these repetitions; we get stuck in certain alignments as an effect of this work" (2006, 28). In what ways have our ears been shaped by heteropatriarchy and settler-colonialism?

TYLER: That brings up an interesting point around the language of listening,[6] like, that you might not be able to listen attentively without a language to understand it, like a psychological language I suppose it would be? In order to translate, or comprehend, or make meaning, most importantly, of what you're actually listening to,[7] and how that also relates to the difference between hearing and listening, which I'm always on about,[8] in terms of how we're always hearing tons of stuff, but we haven't had the skills or been equipped with the skills to actually listen to what we're hearing.

{15:36} [Water sounds, like someone playing in a puddle or an oar in a lake.]

MIGUEL: I just stopped to pee, which I did not take the audio of, that seemed a little personal. [laughter] That's a different performance. [laughter] But it made me think of - this is very related - it made me think about how when I was first coming out as trans and trying to figure out how to pass as male, I remember - this would have been in 2009 or so, 2010 - and I remember going on this one thread where there was this trans guy saying - it was really intense, he was really intense - he was going into all these insane details of what you should and should not do in order to pass as a man, as a cis man, and one of the things he said is that you should never piss in a public washroom because men … because the sound of, like, a female body peeing is different than a male body peeing, and that men would be able to tell, and so they would 'out' you. They would out you as trans, because they could hear that your pee was different. And I was like no one … men don't pay attention to that. You wouldn't pay attention to that unless you were like, actively trying to out F2Ms or something like that, so I thought … I just thought that was really fascinating, and you know, but you know, maybe. . . I mean, clearly, that trans man had that ear. That ear for passing as a man.

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[6] "On the one hand, we can simply hear an echo as an additional sound (sonic perception) in the same way that we hear the original hand clap (sonic event). On the other hand, we can interpret the echo as a wall (passive acoustic object). The echo is the aural means by which we become aware of the wall and its properties, such as size, location, and surface materials, The wall becomes audible, or rather, the wall has an audible manifestation, even though it is not itself the original source of sound energy. We can 'see' with our ears" (Blesser 2006, 2).

[7] For an excellent reference guide to the sonic lexicon: Augoyard, J.F. (1995). *Sonic Experience: A Guide to Everyday Sounds.* McGill-Queen's University Press.

[8] Roland Barthes described this difference in that "hearing is a physiological phenomenon; listening is a psychological act," (1985, 245), while Lisbeth Lipari further advances this notion and uses a phenomenological lens to consider "listening as a way of being, which moves us toward an ethics of attunement—an awareness of an attention to the harmonic interconnectivity of all beings and objects" (2014, 2).

{17:39} TYLER: [shouting] HELLO!

MIGUEL: [whistling, long and loud, then in short melodic bursts]

TYLER: Jennifer Stoever has this book called *The Sonic Color Line*, which is also a theory of how sound is an embodied experience that also creates racialized experiences of sound,[9] which I think applies in the same way to gender, or gendered listening as well. This connects directly to this idea of the 'whiteness of hearing' concept that I'm trying to elaborate, that kinda posits that hearing through a whitened ear is kind of constructed as the natural or neutral way of hearing things.

Holy shit, that's a big hawk!

{18:55} MIGUEL: [calling out] I can hear you! … THIS IS AS LOUD AS I CAN SHOUT!

[harmonica plays melodically in a high register]

TYLER: I knew your prosthesis was going to be the harmonica!

MIGUEL: Ah, you guessed right. [laughter] I can actually hear you speaking into WhatsApp from here. Can you hear me speaking into WhatsApp from here?

TYLER: [laughter] Definitely.

TYLER: My phone is already down to 35% battery, so I'm gonna keep walking towards the bridge now.

MIGUEL: Okay that sounds good, yeah, we can think about theory as we walk and be quiet, and then we can check in.

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[9] "The sonic color line is both a hermeneutics of race and a marker of its im/material presence. It enables listeners to construct and discern racial identities based on voices, sounds, and particular soundscapes—the clang and rumble of urban life versus suburban "peace and quiet," for instance—and, in turn, to mobilize racially coded batteries of sounds as discrimination by assigning them differential cultural, social, and political value. The sonic color line produces, codes, and polices racial difference through the ear, enabling us to hear race as well as see it. It is a socially constructed boundary that racially codes sonic phenomena" (Stoever 2016, 11).

[footsteps in puddles, damp grass]

TYLER: I just saw a fucking coyote run like 50 yards in front of me through the bush!

[sound of Northern Flicker calls]

{20:28} MIGUEL: So in, what's it called, *Settler Commons Sense*, the Mark Rifkin book that I was reading for this, the chapter on Walden, it's called, I believe the chapter is called "Loving Yourself Like a Nation." So this idea that nature is wrapped up with ideas of innocence and naturalness, and Eden-esque notions that are tied in together with erasure of Indigenous communities[10] and the idea of the savage, whether the blood-thirsty savage or the noble savage,[11] and how Walden presents nature as this place where we can go and in a way become ourselves without the narratives of capitalism and production and industrialization. And so Rifkin is looking at that and saying that yes, wilderness does provide a place to find oneself and learn to love yourself – this is a very basic summary of it – but also it shouldn't mean that nature should equal "without people."[12]

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[10] "While Thoreau forswears possession itself, his oppositional queer conception of personhood also takes shape around the voiding of Native geopolitics in New England, casting nature as immune from political contestation and the eruption of competing sovereignties. Furthermore, that sense of a place within the state yet distinct from its legal geography arises out of and gains momentum from the ongoing legal representation of Native presence and territoriality as an anomaly" (Rifkin 2014, 93-94).

[11] "Becoming conscious of the phenomenology of settlement, and the implicit ethics of exceptionalization and occupation that it enacts, involves a relinquishing of the notion of a sovereign selfhood existing in a place apart. Instead, the celebration of waste and of unproductive activity, of a break from the quotidian protocols of the state and its logics of property and citizenship, opens onto a recognition of enduring Native presence within contemporary political economy. Such an awareness further highlights the effaced history of imperial superintendence and displacement—the management, translation, and erasure of Indigenous sovereignties—that provides the enframing condition of possibility for the sense of settler escape into the wilderness" (Rifkin 2014, 139).

[12] "In a journal entry on September 1, 1842, Nathaniel Hawthorne observes of Henry David Thoreau that he is 'inclined to lead a sort of Indian life among civilized men,' noting in particular 'the absence of any systematic effort to livelihood.' He suggests 'Indian life' entails being outside of the capitalist economy, existing in some space other than that of 'civilized men.' Native peoples in New England in this period, however, very much were enmeshed in the political economy of indenture, debt, itinerant seasonal labor, diaspora in search of wage work, and an ongoing land loss due to nonnative agricultural and logging interests" (Rifkin 2014, 91).

It's funny how we think of nature as being quiet. I think we've talked about that before. It's really not very quiet at all. Is that you back on the bank there? Ok good, I'm glad you're not too far.

TYLER: That makes me think of the idea of nature being quiet is almost kinda connected to the idea of domesticity, or domestication of nature, and this nature-culture divide … that we exalt quiet nature, and loud nature is somehow bad, or we're unable to find beauty in the loudness of nature in the same way that a quiet construct of nature is appreciated. We want nature to be quiet, we don't want it to speak up, we don't want it to say things we don't want to hear, which makes me think about not only the way that we hear and/or listen to nature, but the way that nature speaks, and in which voices does it speak, but also then how nature itself can listen. How does nature hear us?[13] What are we saying to nature through our actions and through[14] our sounds, and how does nature hear that? Does nature listen to us, or does nature simply hear us, in that way of hearing being a physical act, and listening being more of a psychological experience or action?[15]

{24:07} [road sounds]

TYLER: I'm under the Whoop-Up bridge. There's an interesting architectural feature, or an acoustic architectural feature, which is the gap between the westbound and eastbound lanes as a bit of an acoustic crevice.

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[13] "[Tlingit and Athapaskan] oral traditions frame glaciers as intensely social spaces where human behaviour, especially casual hubris or arrogance, can trigger dramatic and unpleasant consequences in the physical world. In other words, Tlingit and Athapaskan oral traditions explore the connections between nature and culture as carefully as early exploration projects tried to disentangle them" (Cruikshank 2005, 11).

[14] Dylan Robinson asserts that we must focus on the relationships created through listening to understand "the space of sonic encounter as a space of subject-subject relation" that also considers sound itself as a living entity with a subjective agency that should be respected as well (2020, p. 15). Rather than the unidirectional exchange of settled listening, Robinson argues in favor of an affective approach to listening that might open up sovereign spaces of sonority, encouraging a "transformative politics of listening that are resurgent in their exploration of Indigenous epistemologies, foundations, languages, and sensory logics; or, ones that are decolonial in their ability to move us beyond settler listening fixations" (p. 38).

[15] "[. . .] there is a tangible physical world out there that sometimes affirms but often mocks the representations we design to constrain it" (Cruikshank 2005, 7).

MIGUEL: That makes me think about the science hoax about the water molecules, that if, you like, cussed at the water molecules they would be ugly, and if you played the water molecules Mozart they would be pretty.[16] I don't know if it was the crystals or the molecules. I can't remember exactly, but it was interesting because everyone kinda latched onto that. A lot of people really latched onto that and used it as … I don't know how many frickin' academic conferences I went to, where in a presentation it was used as some kind of metaphor. I was always like 'I don't know about this,' and the reason was because I found it insulting, because the thing was about 'oh the energy,' which is very subjective in a particularly human way, to say that 'oh you know, of course Mozart is going to produce beautiful patterns in the water molecule or whatever,' and you know. Of course, in my work, what if you were cussing at water erotically?[17] I don't know, you know, it's just a very human perspective, and a particular kind … you know, you could say … what canon is Mozart coming out of? But I also feel like it says something about our desire for nature to hear us, right?

TYLER: I think what you were talking about there, maybe we're not talking about the same thing, but what's called "cymatics,"[18] I believe is the name, where you play a frequency of sound underneath some kind of surface … a drum skin membrane, or a piece of glass, or a panel with sand on top, and different frequencies arrange the sand, or whatever the material is … usually it's sand on top, into different, you know, auralized patterns. So the sound is what creates the visual patterns.

MIGUEL: Standing under the Whoop-Up bridge now, too. I was just thinking it's interesting how the landscape here is really shaped by the sound of Whoop-Up Drive … like, one locates oneself according to that sound, but we don't really talk about it, say,

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[16] His ideas popularized by the 2004 film *What the Bleep Do We Know?*, Masaru Emoto posited that speaking to water "positively" made its crystals aesthetically pleasing and symmetrical while speaking to water "negatively" made them "ugly." His book *The Hidden Messages in Water* has since been dismissed as pseudoscience.

[17] Migueltzinta's MFA thesis work *Landscape is My Sir* (2018-2019) revolved around a leather daddy seeking an S/M relationship to land, and included performances where the leather daddy persona, Chico California, spoke erotic profanities and perversities to "natural" sites and objects within the site, as well as physically beating, flogging and talking smut to colonially charged ephemera such as colonial travelogues and historical Albertan textbooks from the 1970s.

[18] Hans Jenny first developed the term cymatics his 1967 book *Cymatics: The Study of Wave Phenomena*, but this technique of manipulating sand on metal dates back to Ernst Chaldni's experiments in 1787. While sound artists often use this approach simply on a surface level, Lisbeth Lipari notes that "for Jenny, cymatics demonstrated that sonic vibration was the primordial organizing principle of all life" and that "cymatics illustrates how synchrony is not a stillness but movement, and that holistic perspective offered by cymatics can provide deep insights into the interconnectivity that not merely surrounds, but, in fact, is us" (2014, 156).

as much as how we talk about how the university, visually, is a landmark, or shapes the landscape.[19] I always felt that the train is really interesting in that sense, because during the day I can't really hear it much, but at night when it's quiet, or if the wind is blowing in the direction of my house, then I can definitely hear it.

{28:07} [car passing by]

[harmonica blows a mournful sound, notes in the low register sounding slowly]

[faint sounds of footsteps, and a car whipping, mingling with the harmonica mimicking a train whistle blowing past]

TYLER: What you're talking about is what Murray Schafer[20] calls the soundscape, and Barry Truax refers to more as an acoustic community. The actors in a community shape how it sounds, and to a large extent that is shaped by human sounds, and we complain about the sounds we don't like, but at the same time we're the ones that have installed those in our community.[21]

Murray Schafer also talks about how the materials of our world shape our experience of the acoustic community. How materials like wood, metal and glass used to be more

[19] "In the very long view, the shift from orality to literacy—according, most famously, to Walter Ong and Marshall McLuhan—gradually transformed people from engaged speakers and listeners into silent scanners of written words, isolated readers in the linear world of texts. The print revolution abetted this shift. Words became printed objects more than breathed speech, things to be seen rather than voices to be heard" (Schmidt 2003, 42).

[20] R. Murray Schafer popularized the term 'soundscape' in his 1977 book, *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World*. The soundscape refers to the natural acoustic environment, and its study is often referred to as acoustic ecology. It can be criticized for often retaining a notably Eurocentric, masculine perspective.

[21] "The acoustic community may be defined as any soundscape in which acoustic information plays a pervasive role in the lives of the inhabitants (no matter how the commonality of such people is understood). Therefore, the boundary of the community is arbitrary and may be as small as a room of people, a home or building, or as large as an urban community, a broadcast area, or any other system of electroacoustic communications. In short, it is any system within which acoustic info is exchanged" (Truax 1984, 57).

common, and how the acoustic community is now, to a great extent, shaped by what he calls the "dull thud" of plastic.[22]

I was thinking also earlier about the train, and also thinking back to your performance last night,[23] and the building of the railway, and in a way how that is like a soundmark. I think this is one of Schafer's terms too. A soundmark is an identifying sonic feature of a soundscape, or an acoustic community, and thinking of the train as a colonial soundmark. The blaring of the horn announcing the impending progress and expansion of the colonial imperative. If I remember correctly, I think it was the CPR, Canadian Pacific Railway, whose whistle is tuned to an E-flat minor triad.[24] So like, a minor chord is generally thought to be a darker, sad type of sound, but also interesting that it's E-flat which is, from a musical standpoint, an interesting choice of key, and I wonder if there's some kind of compositional theory behind that choice, or if it just is what it is.

Now I'm also thinking about how the harmonica is often compared to a train in musical senses, especially in the blues. Thinking of how playing the harmonica 'to' the landscape, as a musical mode of communication, could be wrapped up in a language of colonialism to a certain extent? There's something there to unpack in terms of how a harmonica could fit into your ideas around performing to the land, or performing for the land as a sentient being, as a lover, but then in another sense, thinking of how you can perform with the land, so that it's actually back to … like I was saying about how the land can speak and listen … that you can improvise, or you can have a musical conversation with the land as an active participant in a musical composition, or in a jam session, or however you want to describe that, in a melody of sorts.

{32:41} MIGUEL: This morning I was totally wondering about the history of the harmonica, because I was thinking about that too, and because, like, it's a sound that's so related to the idea of the train and the idea of the west. The way it is, you know, how we were briefly talking about Ennio Morricone as a composer. His soundtracks have a lot of harmonica layered into them. I'm forgetting which film this was in … oh god, I

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[22] Schafer notes how common materials affect the soundscape, where previously common materials such as wood or glass had more resonance in comparison to "plastic—the all-purpose modern material of peerless pudency, with a voice like a thud" (1977, 164).

[23] *Oh My Darlin' Quarentine,* a virtual live-cast performance, April 4th, 2020. A segment of the performance featured imagery from the building of the CPR, and a cowboy persona named Thirstin West who sold his lover (his boyfriend was made out of toilet paper.)

[24] Schafer notes that the CPR whistle's E-flat minor triad is a "deep and haunting whistle" that provides the unifying soundmark of the nation. More than any other sound it is uncounterfeitingly Canadian" (1977, 82). People from Indigenous nations living in the late 1800s/early 1900s when the railway was built (and today), might not agree with his unifying sentiment.

can't remember … it's one of the Italian westerns, but the narrative is like … the two men are facing off at the end of the movie, and one of them has a flashback to his father being, like, hanged, and the character's a boy, and they balance the dad on his shoulders with the noose around his neck, and the villain comes and puts a harmonica into this mouth, and then the boy collapses and the dad hangs.[25] So then of course, it flashes back to the present, and he recognizes it's the man with the harmonica, and then they have their shootout [laughter]. I'm interested in the harmonica for that reason, and then one of the readings that influenced that performance, was Margot Francis's book *Creative Subversions*,[26] and there's a chapter about western expansion and the role of the railroad in that, so I'm really interested in this thing about the E-flat sound of the train whistle. Yeah, why did they choose that? Why is that how they tuned it, and what did it mean to different people? To hear the train whistle during its construction and during its initial use, like, what did it mean to be from one of the nations whose land was disrupted during that construction? What did it mean to begin to hear the train whistle?[27]

I'm now on the east side of the river, and I'm walking towards … I just crossed the road that goes up from the fort, and I'm walking towards the railroad tracks, or the bridge, and I'm thinking about how there's just so much … it's amazing how the railroad is this center from which all these different interesting histories spread out.[28] Even the relationship between imprisonment and labour, and the railroad, and its history of chain gangs, and the different music histories that are tied up with that too. You know better than I, but there's a lot of blues roots tied up in train songs and chain gang songs,

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[25] *Once Upon a Time in the West*, Sergio Leone, 1968. Curiously, the soundtrack for the film, by Ennio Morricone was composed prior to filming so the actors could have it played while they acted, an interesting metaphor or microcosm of the ways in which Wild West mythologies are produced.

[26] "The 'philosophy' of railways was bound up with a sense of continental entitlement characteristic of both the Canadian and American national missions. For if Canada's claim to the immense north and western territories was, on its own, an audacious act of political imperialism, then it was the railway that provided the essential technology to bring the west into this emerging Dominion [. . .] Indeed, from a Foucauldian perspective, the railway symbolizes the decentered strategies of imperial rule and is an emblem of what Cole Harris calls 'the capillaries of colonial appropriation.' Thus, it was the railway that enabled both the United States and Canada to secure control over the western territories" (Francis 2011, 62).

[27] "[. . . I]t was the railway rather than the military, that tipped the balance of power with Indigenous peoples and made the outcome of the struggle for the western territories inevitable. Thus, for many, the CPR was a crucial symbol of the disciplines of white appropriation and control" (Francis 2011, 66-67).

[28] Schafer describes the sound of the train as a key "soundmark" of Western expansion, but hears this as a productively resonating sound, in that "the train's whistle was the most important sound in the frontier town, the solo announcement of contact with the outside world" (Schafer 1977, 80). His settler-centric notion of the soundscape fails to consider how First Nations peoples would have interpreted the sounds of the railway more as a destructive and oppressive tone, rather than a productive sonic signal.

right. I think that's all really, really fascinating. I think it's so interesting how … I'm so curious about what the role of trains is now, when there's all these issues around transportation, and the airline business is dying, but then also the way the railroad is appearing in the Wet'suwet'en demonstrations,[29] and the different other blockade demonstrations that have happened in solidarity with the Wet'suwet'en demonstrations.

I'd be curious if your research about power and sound looked into that or touched on that, about the train whistle and its relationship to power.

TYLER: That makes me think back to research around sound and power, but also relating to industrial sound and its economic significance,[30] like it's profitable sound, versus the silence of poverty.] That idea of sound's power in that way too, like the power of sound as an economically productive sonic force.

I seeeee yooooooouuuuu.

{38:38} […]

MIGUEL: So I am now sitting here with Tyler.

TYLER: Hi.

MIGUEL: Tyler's phone ran out of battery, so he came to the Helen Schuler Nature Centre and plugged into the wall on the outside, and now I have come and met him here, and we're going to keep talking in person, face to face, which is really strange. We are on day … I'm on day 22 of quarantine, I think? Is that about where you're at?

TYLER: Is today Saturday? Sunday. Yeah, 24 maybe? Something like that.

MIGUEL: So we're almost at about a month, and we're forgetting how to interact with people that are not our significant others. [laughter]

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[29] For more details on this see: https://www.aptnnews.ca/national-news/sit-ins-and-demonstrations-continue-in-support-of-wetsuweten-hereditary-chiefs/ and https://globalnews.ca/news/6560125/timeline-wetsuweten-pipeline-protests/

[30] "[. . . M]odern western civilization is technically oriented and founded on loud industries, [and] has come to associate noise with the positive values of productivity and growth. A working machine makes lots of sound, cash register noise means profits. Silence means suffering" (Scollon, in Foy 2010, 80).

TYLER: The thing I was thinking about was, just to insert Glen Coulthard into the conversation a bit just to have some other reference points, of writers and stuff … I was thinking earlier about how the land can speak, and the land can listen, and then I was thinking about the idea of recognition,[31] and if we think of the land as a sentient actor… I was thinking about naming because part of what colonialism does is rename things, right?[32]

MIGUEL: Yes.

TYLER: So I was saying before about how a whiteness of hearing makes it so that is the natural, purportedly natural, neutral way of hearing things through the 'colonial ear,'[33] let's call it. So is there a requirement to properly recognize the land,[34] or aspects of the land in non-colonial ways? I'm thinking generally about how we refer to the City of Lethbridge, how we refer to Oldman River, how we have erased Indigenous names and Indigenous identities, both, and if that is a strategy, to address that erasing, is to reclaim those Indigenous identities, or the way that we conceptualize "non-sentient beings,"[35] like the river, or the earth, or a piece of land, or … if … in Coulthard's paradigm,[36] he would just be like, no, you're just looking for recognition. You're just looking for the colonizer to affirm your way of believing so that it has value. If he would say we don't need to worry about renaming things, because Indigenous people are still going to

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[31] "Negatively, it strives for the dissolution of native societies. Positively, it erects a new colonial society on the expropriated land base—as I put it, settler colonizers come to stay; invasion is a structure not an event. [. . .] Settler colonialism destroys to replace" (Wolfe 2006, 388).

[32] "Indeed, depending on the historical conjuncture, assimilation can be a more effective mode of elimination than conventional forms of killing, since it does not involve such a disruptive affront to the rule of law that is ideologically central to the cohesion of settler society" (Wolfe 2006, 402).

[33] Dylan Robinson describes this as "hungry listening," a modality focused on extraction and consumption, which points to more than just a mode of hearing, but also outlines a form of settler-colonial perceptual orientation (2000, p. 2-3). Hungry listening seeks to capture information, establish ownership over 'facts,' or focus one's attention; becoming a civilizing sensory paradigm which disciplines the ear into Eurocentric perspectives on the world, and ignores Indigenous cosmologies.

[34] "The land is humiliated, and since Indigenous Peoples and our knowledge is part of the land, we all suffer" (Simpson 2014, 379).

[35] "[. . .] I offer the listening ear as the ideological filter shaped in relation to the sonic color line. The listening ear represents a historical aggregate of normative American listening practices and gives a name to listening's epistemological function as a modality of racial discernment. An aural compliment to an interlocutor of the gaze, the listening ear is what Judith Butler calls "a constitutive constraint": a socially constructed ideological system producing but also regulating cultural ideas about sound" (Stoever 2016, 13).

[36] Coulthard, Glen Sean. 2014. *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*. University of Minnesota Press.

recognize them for what they really are, that the river is Napi, and things like that. That it doesn't matter if settler people have that same recognition or not?

{42:17} MIGUEL: So Mike Bruised Head was doing a whole thing … you know Mike Bruised Head, right? Yeah, he was doing a bunch of research about the Blackfoot names.[37] He was saying there were places he couldn't find the Blackfoot names, so he had this kind of question, both on the literal level, and on the more theoretical level … wondering where did the names go? Where are they? Which I really like, because it's a question of what is the knowledge that is lost in the un-naming of places.[38] What you're saying at the end there, about settler innocence that is in Tuck and Yang, where they're talking about offering up incommensurability instead of reconciliation.[39] I think it's really interesting to think about, when I'm placing myself in these questions, I think about how I'm not white, [laughter] but I'm not Indigenous either.[40] So then I'm like okay, what colonial systems do affect my ear, and what do I have that is not that, and what are the ways in which I might give more time to the Other? I don't know. If knowledge is in the names, and in the language, right, and in the hearing of the language, then even just replicating the language alone doesn't actually guarantee the knowledge to come with it.

TYLER: Part of it is, you know, from a critical point of view, Coulthard would say something like 'oh yeah, start naming all the places Blackfoot names again, but what does that do?' That's just a small inclusionary element, that is an act of colonial hearing, where it's like, oh yeah, we hear your places now, yeah, we'll call them by those names, but we won't fundamentally change the structures that continue to perpetuate other things. Besides, like, is it more important to destroy systemic inequality, or is it more

[37] "I've found 18 [Blackfoot] names so far and they all have a meaning. They're not named after British monarchy, kings and queens or whatever. These are the true names of that geographical area" (Bruised Head 2018, "Obtaining Indigenous Knowledge: Really Knowing from Place").

[38] Mike Bruised Head calls the process of replacing Blackfoot place names with colonial names "cultural, language genocide," (Bruised Head 2018) an act of conquest which erases the Indigenous knowledge embedded into the Blackfoot place name.

[39] "Settler moves to innocence are those strategies or positionings that attempt to relieve the settler of feelings of guilt or responsibility without giving up land or power or privilege, without having to change much at all. In fact, settler scholars may gain professional kudos or a boost in their reputations for being so sensitive or self-aware. Yet settler moves to innocence are hollow, they only serve the settler" (Tuck & Yang 2012, 19).

[40] "This discussion will likely cause discomfort in our settler readers, may embarrass you/us or make us/you feel implicated. Because of the racialized flights and flows of settler colonial empire described above, settlers are diverse – there are white settlers and brown settlers, and peoples in both groups make moves to innocence that attempt to deny and deflect their own complicity in settler colonialism" (Tuck & Yang 2012, 19).

important to have people use Blackfoot names? Well, they're both important, but the colonial ear would be like,[41] oh yeah, we hear you, we'll change the names, we'll make efforts to really *hear* what you're saying, but don't *listen* to the more deep-seated issues of inequality and other concerns, besides just hearing that voice, the name of the thing.

{45:53} MIGUEL: In California, there's a significant part of the migrant population, the Latino/Latinx migrant community, that speak Mayan, contemporary Mayan. So some of the radio stations that are dedicated to Spanish-language radio stations, do have significant programming in Mayan, which I always thought was really cool and interesting. When you drive down the I-5 through the Central Valley where there's a lot of agriculture, or there used to be, it's drying up now, there would be a lot of smaller stations that would be playing programming in Mayan, so it would just be interesting to have that aural mapping, right? Where you're driving through the Central Valley, and you're listening to Mayan, you know, Mayan language, is really interesting.

TYLER: Yeah, like those sonic spheres of language that you can navigate spatially as you move about a geographic region, that you can come into proximity with.[42] This is making me think of … what part of Coulthard's arguing in his book is, you know, 'turn away from the politics of recognition and don't seek self-affirmation in the recognition of the Other, or the colonial master,' using the Hegelian slave-master dialectic, or whatever, but instead, to build our own languages, or to rebuild Indigenous languages. As Leanne Simpson says, "I'm not so worried about destroying the master's house, I'm worried about building our own houses."[43] There's this great line that he draws from Fanon too, that is like "accommodate me as I am, because I'm not accommodating anyone."[44] That there's a strength in saying 'we don't give a fuck if you hear our language or not, we're going to speak it. You're either going to understand it or you don't. And if you don't understand it, we don't really give a shit because we're going to go on speaking it.'

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[41] Arvin, Tuck, and Morrill argue that inclusion can become a deceptive method of social control that "confers a preeminent hierarchy, and inclusion is central to hierarchical power. The project of inclusion can serve to control and absorb dissent rather than allow institutions like feminism and the nation-state to be radically transformed by differing perspectives and goals" (2013, 17). In other words, 'being heard' becomes the illusion of inclusion when it is actually an attempt to pacify, rather than empower.

[42] "[. . .] the resurgent approach to recognition advocated here explicitly eschews the instrumental rationality central to the liberal politics of recognition and instead demands that we enact or practice our political commitments to Indigenous national and women's liberation in the cultural form and content of our struggle itself. Indigenous resurgence is at its core a prefigurative politics—the methods of decolonization prefigure its aims" (Coulthard 2014, 159).

[43] "I am not so concerned with how we dismantle the master's house [. . .] but how we (re) build our own house, or our own houses" (Simpson, in Coulthard 2014, 148).

[44] "Fanon was no longer willing to be recognized on terms imposed by the colonizer: 'Accommodate me as I am, I'm not accommodating anyone'" (Coulthard 2014, 141).

Whether that's actually a linguistic language, or other cultural practices, or discourses … you can think of that accommodation in various terms, not just in terms of language, but from many other perspectives too, which I really like a lot.

{48:54} [water noises, dripping, car noise in background]

[click of a phone tap]

[car accelerating rapidly and passing by, fading into the distance]

[footsteps getting louder and closer, beginning to echo as they stomp on a hard asphalt surface]

{50:05} MIGUEL: Listening to you walk and then, as I'm walking, having now walked alongside you for part of the way, makes me think of how now I have nostalgia for walking in person with you, that I can relive through listening to you walk at the same time that I'm walking. I think there's a lot to be said there for memory and sound.

TYLER: In a way that our footsteps can now echo each other in a sonic and physical sense.

[footsteps crunch on gravel and leaves]

[sound of large rocks being tossed into the river and splashing, seagulls cry out faintly in the background]

{51:58} TYLER: I feel sad now, I don't really want to talk through WhatsApp anymore. It's like having an in-person conversation for that amount of time was such a treat, a gift to be able to hang out with you in person, and now resuming a staggered conversation like this seems disappointing? I just don't feel excited about it anymore, sadly.

TYLER: [loudly] My heart is churning, like the waters spilling over this weir!

[sound of river rushing in the background]

MIGUEL: Yeah, I feel kinda the same way, like I'm groping for the same sense of personal connectedness that you get just by sitting face to face, that just doesn't exactly happen … It's funny, I was thinking about this in the context … I see you by the way, I saw you, I think, you just walked away from the weir. I'm slow, I'm just at the tubing parking lot. I think I see you heading up into the bushes.

TYLER: I am really enjoying how there's like no people on this side of the river. It's more quiet, like what I'm hearing now is based more on my own inner thoughts, hearing my inner auditory imagination, instead of seeing other people or having their sounds interrupt my own aural experience.

{54:18} MIGUEL: It makes me think of a conversation I've had, because I've been doing my therapy session by telephone the last couple sessions, and it's made me think about how when you're having a phone call[45] it's like a disembodied voice that gets kind embodied inside of you, right? And the loss there is that you don't have the other person's body. There's a whole wealth of relational physics that is happening when the other person is physically there that just can't happen, it just does not happen when the other person is not there. And yeah, that's a loss. I don't know how do we … what do we do when we don't have that?[46] I think it's a whole emotional skillset, an emotional [burps] – excuse me – and relational skill set that's hard to wrap my head around.

TYLER: I'll have to look at the references later, but you're reminding me of writing and research that talks about how digital speech or digital sound actually makes us fundamentally feel in a different way, because there's a physical disconnection from its source.[47] Also how you were saying about how sound becomes embodied in the listener

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[45] "Although there has been a vast amount of work done on philosophical problems of language, little has been done concerning the examination of concrete forms of thinking as inner speech considered as a type of auditory imagination. In part, this phenomenon as a phenomenon of a special type of auditory imaginative activity may have been overlooked because of the long tradition of interpretation that maintains a "metaphysical" and "Cartesian" stance toward thought. This tradition takes for granted that thought is disembodied" (Ihde 2007, 134).

[46] "What, then, is the form of an embodied auditory imagination? Do I, whenever I turn to 'hearing myself' speak, objectify my voice as that of a 'quasi-other'? Or does there lie so close to 'me' a most familiar and this most difficult to elucidate embodied auditory imagination that is the ongoing presence of a dimension of my own thinking, an 'inner speech'?" (Ihde 2007, 121).

[47] "[. . .]in the face-to-face speaking the other is there, embodied, while exceeding his outline-body, but the other is in my focus as there before me face to face. It is in his speaking that he fills the space between us and by it I am auditorily immersed and penetrated as sound 'physically' invades my own body" (Ihde 2007, 79)

and get's like – [a dull 'whumph'] Whoa fuck! I'm falling down a muddy hill. Is is Jean-Luc Nancy who talks about sound as a penetrating force? That sound exchange is a fundamentally affective experience, but also one that can be sensual and erotic, in Audre Lorde's sense of the term.[48]

{56:43} MIGUEL: If you look up, the light is hitting the coulees really pretty on the other side right now. I miss you, Tyler!

TYLER: I miss you tooooooo!

Yeah, this walk [breaths heavily] has been a good opportunity to slow down, which really helps you pay attention and listen to things, instead of moving quickly past them and focusing on where you're going or what else is happening in your life.

MIGUEL: Yeah exactly. I was just watching you through the trees, climbing up the coulee up to the breezeway … the same hill that's making you all out of breath. [laughter]

{57:47} TYLER: Well, I made it to the top, and I'm once again reminded of what an incredible missed opportunity this breezeway is, in terms of having some kind of wind-powered aeolian harp or anything of that nature.

MIGUEL: For real! They should just put in some more of the railings that are outside of the library, that like harmonize beautifully and unintentionally. I am walking into the little mini-canyon right now. Listening to the acoustic stillness.[49] You can just kinda hear the buzzing of the power lines overhead, which I always think is kinda trippy. I like how on windy days they just howl so loud.

Do you think of the unknown as something that is quiet, or something that is loud? Or both? Or neither?

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[48] "Another important way in which the erotic connection functions is the open and fearless underlining of my capacity for joy. In the way my body stretches to music and opens into response, hearkening to its deepest rhythms, so every level upon which I sense also opens to the erotically satisfying experience, whether it is dancing, building a bookcase, writing a poem, examining an idea" (Lorde 1978).

[49] "The relation of voice to inner speech and to the pregnant silence of the face gives way ultimately to the open horizon of silence. Here is constituted in effect an ontology of listening and voice in the sense that there is a permanent set of existential possibilities that exceed the strategies seeking to control or deny them" (Ihde 2007, 179).

TYLER: I thought about recording that sound earlier, but my phone was dying. The intense buzz of the power transmission lines. A great example of the flat nature of industrial sounds that just have no peaks and valleys inherent to their sonic signal, they're just a flat, monotonous whine.[50]

{59:33} [footsteps on wet mud, smushy ground]

TYLER: Well, I'm almost at the bus loop, so I'm gonna call Bre to give me a ride home now, but I just want to say how much I appreciate you, Migueltzinta. This has been a great conversation and I'm very thankful for your friendship.

MIGUEL: Awww, Tyler. I really, really appreciate you too. It's really nice to have these really awesome conversations and good feelings, interesting feelings, have good company. I also really appreciate your friendship, and I think we should do this again sometime.

{1:00:42} [harmonica plays an approximation of "Oh! Susanna,"[51] the wind blows in the background]

END SCENE.

[50] Schafer notes how sounds in nature typically have more 'peaks and valleys' in their linear representation, while in urban settings sound is typically more 'flat.' Mechanical noises such as factory noise, traffic, air conditioning, etc., become more common after the industrial revolution "introduces the flat line of sound into everyday human experience" (1977, 36).

[51] American songwriter Stephen Foster's song, "Oh! Susanna," was originally written as a minstrel song, released in 1848 and performed by various minstrel troupes in blackface. The original lyrics are written in a derogatory mockery of Black southern dialect often used in blackface minstrel performances. Many do not know the history of this song and hear it—and defend it—as, simply, an 'American classic.' Others *do* know this history, and uphold the song as a symbol of a proudly racist, American identity. In a similar example from a Canadian context, most Canadian citizens remain unaware that Calixa Lavallée, the composer of "O Canada," himself spent nearly a decade performing as a blackface minstrel before writing the music for the national anthem. For more information, see Harris, R. (2019). *Song of a nation: The extraordinary life and times of Calixa Lavallée, the man who wrote O Canada*. McClelland & Stewart: Toronto.

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Establishing Land Relationships Through the Saskatoon Berry

KUFRE USANGA

This paper interrogates human relationships with the natural environment using the saskatoon berry as a "habitat guide," a concept borrowed from the Indigenous perspectives of the Blackfoot, Papachase Cree and the Métis. As a settler on Treaty Six and Métis territory no. 4 – the traditional lands of various Indigenous Peoples including the Papaschase Cree, Blackfoot, Nakota Sioux, Ojibwe, Métis and others – my research engages with personal experience and specific Indigenous knowledge systems and worldview(s). This paper is divided into three sections: the first examines engagement with the natural environment and makes a case for stewardship and kinship as eco-conscious ethics. The second section, based on an oral interview with Papaschase Cree educator and scholar Dwayne Donald, builds on traditional ecological knowledge to provoke thoughts on multispecies relationality. In the final section, I offer a close reading of poems by two Métis poets to emphasize kinship and ethical relationality through the saskatoon berry.

Keywords: Indigenous knowledge, land relationship, nature, saskatoon berry

she considers blue beads as holding a piece of the sky
reflected in berries
her same fingers gather saskatoons …

Marilyn Dumont, *The Pemmican Eaters*

ENGAGEMENT WITH THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT: HABITAT GUIDE

I like to think that on some level, the saskatoon berry chose me. On another, the experience of reading the captivating poetic lines on berries and Métis beadwork in *The Pemmican Eaters* (2015) by Cree/Métis poet Marilyn Dumont, paired with an early encounter with a saskatoon patch upon my arrival in Edmonton, Alberta, may have contributed to this choice to focus on the berry. This chance meeting occurred on a beautiful windy autumn afternoon during a walk in Edmonton's North Saskatchewan River Valley. On that day, yellow and golden leaves canopied the skyline while some flitted in the air and onto the ground. I was mesmerized by the flamboyant colours (as I continue to be) and persistently looked up in wonderment. This occurred during my first few weeks outside of my native Nigeria, where green is the natural colour of trees year-round. Admiring such an abundance of colour, leaves, and beauty, my companion and I slowly followed the trail until we came upon a berry patch with deep purplish berry clusters, straining the neck of their branches and begging to be consumed. For a brief moment I had thought they were blueberries, but my companion refuted this thought, explaining "it's the saskatoon berry." "Are they edible?" I inquired. "Yes," he offered, slightly hesitant in a way that suggested uncertainty. Confused, I begrudgingly let go of the berry cluster as we continued our walk.

Such is the confusion that animates this research into the saskatoon berry. For the purposes of this project, the saskatoon berry functions as my "habitat guide," becoming a lens through which I mindfully learn about the various Indigenous peoples and the Métis of Treaty Six land. Although a habitat guide can be human, animal, or environmental, plants are especially important not only as one of the most underestimated species but also because, as Potawatomi author Robin Kimmerer notes, "plants were here first on the earth and have had a long time to figure things out" (2013, 210). As a student and a settler, this research presents a learning opportunity to think through diverse inter-relationships and forms of knowledge that are present in and on Treaty Six land. To engage with this land, it bears remembering that the Cree name for Edmonton is *amiskwaciwâskahikan* (Beaver Mountain House), a name that at once disrupts colonial permutations and underscores the layers of living relationships that inform this land. What better way to be guided than by a plant native to Edmonton, combined with select Indigenous land-based philosophies from those with the longest living relationship with *amiskwaciwâskahikan*? It is through such interactions that I can learn of the living histories that constitute the River Valley, and by extension, the University of Alberta which lies above its southern banks.

I view this research as building a relationship with the land that incorporates the University as a citadel of learning, paired with all the gifts of the land which continue to enrich us in diverse ways during our scholarly engagements and otherwise. However,

living and being in a relationship with the land and the vibrant other-than-human and human communities that are of, and on, the land also comes with many responsibilities. The responsibility of a living relationship with place can be established through stewardship and gratitude. What possibilities can emerge if we approach nature from a place of responsibility, mindfulness and gratitude? How can our choices and preferences be mediated by an ethics of care and stewardship? To think through these questions, this research moves beyond the structured paradigm of academic research in its reach towards praxis – learning and practicing good relationships with the land. This idea influences my leaning towards Indigenous perspectives, or what Opaskwayak Cree author Shawn Wilson (2007) calls an "Indigenist paradigm" in relating with the land. According to Wilson, this paradigm can be used by anyone who chooses to follow its tenets. To utilize the approach the author suggests that

> researchers and authors need to place themselves and their work firmly in a relational context. We cannot be separated from our work, nor should our writing be separated from ourselves (i.e. we must write in the first person rather than the third). Our own relationships with our environment, families, ancestors, ideas, and the cosmos around us shape who we are and how we will conduct our research. Good Indigenist research begins by describing and building on these relationships. (194)

By this analysis, the principles encoded in an Indigenist research protocol align with the mode of writing taken up by authors and researchers including Kimmerer in *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants* (2013), Daniel Coleman in *YardWork: A Biography of an Urban Place* (2017), and Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg scholar and teacher Leanne Betasamosake Simpson in *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom Through Radical Resistance* (2017). Their contributions have inspired me to contemplate a mode of place-thinking using an ethical, relational manner; or, in the words of Coleman, to have "the awareness that places are alive, have spirit and are providing us with everything we need to live" (2017,10).

Within a relational context, personal reflection offers a path to understanding the local as a microcosm of the global through interconnection. I have become aware that the farming and gathering upbringing I had in Uyo, Nigeria continues to inform and shape my choices in ways I may not fully discern, and also inspires my connection to *amiskwaciwâskahikan* and the various Indigenous nations. I know my interest in a berry shrub in the River Valley connects to the numerous times I had pointed out wild berry patches in my native Nigeria and received nods of approval or disapproval from my mother while on our way to the farm. Although I could not differentiate edible berries from poisonous ones, I looked forward to our walks through the bushes with

anticipation and delightful surprise when the berries were spotted. To a growing child, berries were timely gifts during tiresome return journeys from the farm. Wild berries are not commercialized in the Niger Delta, because they instead remain circulated through a gift economy. One of my clearest childhood memories is that of picking wild berries, eating some on the walk home, and sharing the rest with my aunties and playmates. I recall looking forward to the gift of wild berries from friends returning from the farm. But these days, few farmers remain in the villages, and berry patches are dwindling or disappearing. Maybe saskatoon berries once populated the Edmonton River Valley like wild berries once populated the bushes in the Delta, until development and progress deforested the regions. As I settle in and pay attention to the land through the guidance of berries, I uncover the richness and complexities that animate the place I now call home, aided by and through my embodied memory of my Nigerian home.

During a university seminar on Habitat Guides, a peer shared a childhood memory: "I know the saskatoon berry. Here [in Canada] we go to berry farms, pick berries, pay for them, and take the picked berries home. I know it's a white middle-class thing to do, but I remember doing this with my mom when I was a boy." As a first-time learner of this practice, I became intrigued by the bond such interactions avail, and the unique interspecies connections that occur during such encounters. I realize the bond is not dissimilar to the harvesting of vegetables or food crops from a garden or farm in the Niger Delta with which I am familiar. Encoded in an interspecies association is the mutual dependency and benefit both species offer one another. Apart from the freshness of the picked berries, my colleague recalled the affective textures of this experience as unique and quite different from shopping. I also think of the individual experience and the interaction between the berry picker and the berries. Thereafter, I web-searched berry farms in and around Edmonton, pulled up various websites, made several phone calls, and ended the day a little sadder than I began. Dizzy from listening to a series of pleasant voice messages announcing that berry farms were closed for the season, not to be opened again until the summer of the next year, my initial excitement was now replaced with raw anxiety and apprehension. I questioned the rationale of researching and writing about a plant I had never eaten or personally experienced. As inspiring as it was to live vicariously through other people's encounters with the saskatoon berry, in my ignorance I felt a lacuna, like a fraud. Grocery stores in town were of no help. The River Valley became a place I frequented in the hopes that I could once again encounter my elusive guide. During one such wandering, the land recalled to my mind Indigenous scholar Dwayne Donald and the important work he does to educate people on the connections and relationships that make up the River Valley. I reached out to him and asked for a meeting to discuss the saskatoon berry, a request the scholar quickly obliged. In preparation, I sought a better understanding of the plant.

THE ECOLOGY OF THE SASKATOON

The saskatoon berry plant is native to many regions of Canada. This deciduous shrub grows from Western Ontario to British Columbia, including Alberta and the Yukon. According to the Saskatoon Berry Institute of North America (2019), the name saskatoon is a shortened form of the Cree name for this plant, *mis-ask-quah-toomina*, which translates as "the fruit of the tree of many branches." This Cree word is also the name of a city in Saskatchewan, located on the banks of the South Saskatchewan River. The saskatoon bush is reputed to be packed with diverse medicinal properties. The leaves and fruit are used to make teas, and the bark is used by Indigenous peoples for the treatment of illness and ailments (Donald, 2019). Saskatoon shrubs typically grow in thickets and provide good wildlife habitat to mammals and birds. The berries are an important resource for wildlife, especially birds who depend on saskatoon berries in the fall and winter for sustenance while nesting (ibid). Moreover, berry patches attract birds and enrich the habitat. Berry seeds are spread in the droppings of birds, and animals such as bears, squirrels and chipmunks feed on berries thereby propagating the plant and extending multispecies interconnections.

When considering a plant that is as pivotal and nutritious as the saskatoon berry in the prairie ecosystem, one may forget that the "oldest prairie ecosystems began to evolve 16,000 years ago when the glaciers began their retreat" (Lyseng 1993, 4). According to Lyseng, the saskatoon, alongside flowers, grass and other shrub species in the prairie region, evolved under a gruelling regime of hot summers and frigid winters, fire and flood; an observation that sheds light on the plant's resilience and hardiness even in the harshest climates. It is beautiful that the reptiles, worms, mammals, bacteria and all the life forms that characterize the prairie life cycle could share this common root of resilience. The prairie is made when "forest understory grasses slowly speciated outward from eastern and northern fringes on to the new land, honing new mechanisms of survival as they spread" (Lyseng 4). We see the relationships and entanglements between the diverse plants and the animals of this space as they become native to place. The First Peoples practiced a relationship of "living-with-and-together" (Noble 2018, 315) with the more-than-human and the human. The manifold levels of interaction that occurred and continue to occur on the land animate my thoughts as I listen to Indigenous scholar Dwayne Donald, hereafter referred to as my educator and teacher.

LISTENING AND EMBEDDED KNOWING

"It is important to address the saskatoon before picking the berries off the branches."
Dwayne Donald (2019)

The above was the first of many insights my educator proffered during our meeting one afternoon in the middle of Hub Mall, a central building on the University of Alberta campus. He would later say "we need to address the saskatoon" to emphasize the significance of approaching the saskatoon in a particular way, the right way. Curious, I asked "why?", to which Donald responded: "It is because [the berries] are living beings too." Most Indigenous peoples of North America share this core belief of the beingness and agency of other species. My tribe in Nigeria, the Ibibio of the Niger Delta region, share this similar ideology. As living beings with agency, certain plants are approached with a specific attitude by our healers and herbalists to obtain the desired efficacy for healing, sustenance, and revival. I was raised within this philosophy by my herbalist grandmother. Aided by that upbringing and experience, I can relate to Donald's teachings. In *Braiding Sweetgrass*, Robin Kimmerer points to the beingness and agency of plants within the observation that "plants know how to make food and medicine from light and water" (10). It is this livingness and beingness of plant relations that elevates them beyond objects that exist on the periphery. My educator affirmed and added that the berry bush is excited to be a good relative to humans and animals when it is shown appreciation through protocols of gratitude and respect. These protocols align with the teachings of the peoples of Treaty Six: humble kindness, sharing, honesty, and determination. These protocols can be seen clearly inscribed on Scottish/Irish/Cree/Anishinaabe/Mohawk artist Stewart Steinhauer's sculpture *The Sweetgrass Bear*, domiciled in the University of Alberta's Quad.

What does it then mean to be connected to, or in harmony with, all our relations at a time when we inhabit a world facing the looming threat of species extinction? And how do we ensure we are good relatives living in an ethically responsible way with all our relations? Thinking about this, I realized that an ethical responsibility to the land, water, plants, and animals would entail the practice of land-based education to deepen our understanding of the complex relationships we share with the land. This opens the way into the practicality of kinship, ethics, and obligation where relationships of love and respect are sustained. My educator emphasizes the need to "be on the land, be outside more" as a way of connecting people with the gifts of the various relations that are around us. It is in being around our relations, in being mindful of those we are connected with, that we can adapt ways to protect them. My educator adds that being out on the land trains the mind, the eyes, and the ears to see and acknowledge the network of interconnection that is happening in the shrubs, between trees, plants and animals. Only by being on the land are we able to participate in the complex network of interconnection without interrupting the flow. I learn that forgetting or ignoring the validity and presence of multispecies intermingling is an interruption in itself. Living in the city of Edmonton, the River Valley has become a place I frequent to be reminded of my responsibility to all our relations.

Saskatoon berries are essential to the Indigenous peoples in Alberta, including the Blackfoot, the Métis and the Cree. My educator is Papachase Cree and has spent years with the Blackfoot, and therefore shares knowledge from both communities. According to him, the Blackfoot believe that all berries are connected in a network or constellation. He mentions that cranberries, chokeberries, strawberries, and blueberries (indeed all berries) are intertwined, unique, collective, singular and yet connected. For the Blackfoot, the forest performs her aliveness through all that is within her ecology, all of the vital constituent parts. And although some of those parts or duties are unrecognized by the human species, it does not nullify their importance. Catriona Sandilands refers to this as "the vegetal liveliness of the forest … the network of mycorrhizal relationships that define and sustain" (2017, 26). If as higher-order plants, trees are able to send and receive signals, who is to say that other plants are not equipped to act this way in varying degrees? The intricate and variegated levels of relationships between plants, leaves, animals, birds, lichen, mud, and fungi speak to the connections that humans are unaware of, but are invited to share. Being in the forest is an invitation to participate in the aliveness and beingness that may be beyond our grasp as we go about our daily, urban, human lives. Sandilands adds that plants "manifest a kind of swarm intelligence that enables them to behave not as an individual but as a multitude" (23). Therefore, different berries ripen at different times, exhibiting a behaviour that is both collective and individual.

During winter on the prairie, the berries hold life and survival. It is little wonder, then, that for the Blackfoot, age is conveyed by how many winters one has survived. Ageing and maturity become intricately tied to surviving winter, and by extension, the dried or fresh food that ensures such survival, like berries, is crucial. We must not forget, also, that the survival of the berries is dependent on cyclical interactions with humans, animals and birds. Kimmerer explains the cycle as "compensatory growth": a physiological change that occurs when animals interact with some grasses. Nature therefore offers a well-balanced system of reciprocal relationships established in the circle of life, and who is to say this is not replicated when humans, birds and animals relate with the saskatoon? As Kimmerer notes, "humans participate in a symbiosis in which sweetgrass provides its fragrant blades to the people and people, by harvesting, create the conditions for sweetgrass to flourish" (164). The author's assertion tells us that under-harvesting of some plants, rather than overharvesting, could prove deleterious to plant growth and production. I am stupefied to think that the decline in saskatoon shrubs could be a direct result of under-harvesting or a lack of human interest in the plant. My educator points out that the saskatoon responds favorably to sustainable harvests through increased yield and regeneration, whereas under-harvesting could mean a lack of need by the humans and a breach of interspecies relationship and

ethics. As berries are gifts of the earth, humans must show gratitude for their existence and their availability to us to aid in our health and sustenance.

Although the saskatoon berry is a keystone species to some Indigenous groups in *amiskwaciwâskahikan,* I was unable to acquire it from local stores. After recounting my inability to procure the saskatoon, my teacher smiled and cautioned that plants like the saskatoon berry and sweetgrass are mainly gifts that should not be bought. He teaches me that sacred plants like sweetgrass, sage, and the saskatoon carry within them medicinal and sacred properties that are evoked according to the approach and protocols observed before and during picking. The observation of necessary protocols in the form of expressing gratitude and gift-offering act as catalysts towards the retainment of the fruit's sacredness and vitality. This sacredness and spiritual ethos are enforced and utilized in Indigenous ceremonies. This is central to the Blackfoot Nation's cultural practices and tradition. Communicating with plants can also be viewed as the recognition of their beingness and aliveness that connects the human and the berry in an ethical relationship. By buying the saskatoon berry from the Strathcona Farmers' Market, I had skipped the crucial step of addressing and speaking to the berry before harvesting. My thoughts wandered to who had picked the frozen berries I now possessed, and what thoughts occupied their mind while on the task. What utterances were made? What mood and affect had been imparted onto the berries I was about to consume? I offered my gratitude, nonetheless.

My teacher believes, as do other Indigenous peoples, that acknowledging that which sustains life carries positive energies and enriches our relationship with the land. To foreground this position, my teacher shares an Indigenous teaching with me: "An old lady once said to me, when you approach the saskatoon berry in a sacred way and pick it, you are holding the world in your hand." Although the metaphor of the berry-as-the-world can be understood in diverse ways, I understand the berry to be a vital connection to everything, and to function as a life source for the Blackfoot. For the Cree, this ideology is anchored in the word *Iyinikaysowin*' which translates in English to "you know how to make yourself strong." This concept references the strong relationship between the health and wellbeing of people and the environment, and also calls attention to the knowledge and protocols of healthy living. This gestures towards the importance of observing protocols for self-sustenance, which hinge on participating in the network of respectful relationships and the continuance of multispecies connection without interrupting the flow. I think about how berries, in order to survive, take nutrients from the land in the form of decomposed plants, water, animals and other minerals, and then gift their fruits to humans and animals to continue the circle of life and interconnection. I recognize these connections as I think of the berry as a world, an essential ingredient in the formation of social relationships with place.

According to my teacher, the particular part of the River Valley at the centre of the place now called Edmonton has been a gathering place of social relations for many different Indigenous peoples (not just the Blackfoot and Cree, but also the Dene, Sioux, Iroquois, Ojibwe and later the Métis and probably others) for thousands of years. The peoples gathered at various times throughout the year for diverse reasons: trade, ceremonies, social interactions, and all the things that people around the world do when they come together. It is therefore not difficult to imagine the land-based activities that occurred during such socialization, and I particularly think of the gift economy that thrived within that circle. As humans, our gifts to a berry patch would be attention, time, ethical harvesting and care, while the berry rewards our stewardship with the gift of its fruits to be carefully picked (Kimmerer, 25). Berry picking becomes a vital link that sustains familial relationships and multispecies connections in varying degrees. Therefore, one can understand the value of berry patches in the River Valley, and how the movement of peoples and animals could have contributed to their spread. I think about the various gatherings and the diverse changes evoked on the landscape, changes that contribute to the different layers that exist in the place and the changes in the society. Thinking back to that day when I met my first saskatoon berry patch in the River Valley, I marvel at the history and connections this wild berry bears and continues to witness.

As our interview progresses, my educator points out that "the habitat for the berries has reduced due to various reasons, ranging from habitat loss, relentless industrialization, and the clash between Indigenous resource management and scientific resource management" (Donald 2019). An important aspect of Indigenous land and resource management is the practice of controlled burns of local vegetation. Saskatoon berry patches have historically been managed through such burns which killed the aboveground parts of the plants, while allowing the roots and underground stems to sprout with vigour and achieve an increase in shrub density, new growth, and productivity. The saskatoon is a resilient plant that survives and sprouts irrespective of the intensity of the fire. My educator mentions that berry patches have lost their productivity because of burn suppression, thereby resulting in the production of smaller fruits in overgrown berry patches on public land. On reserve lands, monitored burns still occur at set times that vary between different nations. Bush-burning reinvigorates root crops, seed production, and creates fresh foliage and new growth for animal grazing and human consumption. The interconnectedness between berries and humans spills over into the realm of cultural analysis and production, and in the next section, I offer a close reading of poems about saskatoon berries from two Métis poets: Marilyn Dumont and Gregory Scofield.

POETIC READING OF THE SASKATOON BERRY

Although there are multiple ways to consume the saskatoon berry, "today, the berries are commonly used much like blueberries in pies, pancakes, puddings, muffins, jams, jellies, sauces, syrups and wine" (Chambers et al 2012, 71). For the Métis, the most popular usage of berries, apart from ceremonial use, is in the preparation of pemmican — an Indigenous cuisine that is prepared with dried berries, dried meat and suet. To make pemmican, dried saskatoons, as the principal berries, are mixed with meat and fat (Chambers, 72). After encountering diverse pemmican recipes in the course of this research, I have found that Marilyn Dumont, in *The Pemmican Eaters* (2015), offers a most enlightening pemmican recipe/poem that does not stray from the traditional preparation. This is the case not only because it is anchored in land-based practices, but because it pays homage to the old ways that reinforce the entwined relationship of the Métis with the buffalo and the berries. Whereas other recipes indicate measurements like "4 cups saskatoons/4 cups beef jerky" (Chambers, 74), Dumont presents another perspective:

Kill one 1800 lb. buffalo
Gut it / Skin it / Butcher it / Construct drying tripods
Mix with several pounds of dried berries, picked previously
Add rendered suet (12)

The poet takes the reader to a practice prior to colonial interruption and proceeds in a way that re-claims Métis-ness and portrays a Métis worldview. In Dumont's recipe, the oven does not replace "drying tripods and racks," nor does butter replace "rendered suet." The recipe for making pemmican is not modernized with new products or modern technologies. Although both recipes are vital, Dumont offers a decolonizing praxis that demonstrates the Métis relationship with the buffalo and the berries. Pemmican prepared in the traditional method by the Métis is a cultural tie that strengthens kinship to the land from generation to generation.

The poet also relies on the flora and fauna of the prairie to describe colours. According to the poet,

the bead's colour makes no sound
but it is cranberry, moss, and fireweed
it is also wolf willow, sap, and sawdust
as well as Chickadee, Magpie, and Jackrabbit

a bead is not simply dark blue / but Saskatoon blue

it's not merely black / but beaver head black (35)

These poetic lines reflect the collective consciousness of the people through shared language, understanding, and worldview. Naming colours after plants and animals foregrounds the flora and fauna as pivotal and emphasizes the people's knowledge of the land. It is not uncommon in Métis culture to hold the saskatoon berry up in prayer during ceremony or whilst in serious thought. Perhaps this is why blue beads are considered as "holding a piece of the sky reflected in berries" (37). To hold a piece of the sky signifies the berries' sacredness and the hope they give to those who depend on them, just as seeing the prairie sky in the coldest days of winter equals survival. Apart from the physical sustenance that berries offer, Dumont poeticizes the spiritual nourishment too. The saskatoon, because it is recognized by Indigenous knowledge holders as a blood cleanser, utilized to promote healthy living, is "the fruit of feasts" that is scooped from a bowl during purification rituals of the sweat lodge (37). This form of embedded knowing was acknowledged and used years before Western science identified the saskatoon as containing antioxidants, fibre and protein. The saskatoon is "the life-liquid…thirsted for in ceremony," echoing its physical, spiritual and cultural life-sustaining properties (41). This embodied knowledge bespeaks Indigenous peoples' empirical observation and long-standing relationship with the land.

Kinship with the land includes multispecies equality which the poet captures in the following lines:

her sisters, the flowers
her brothers, the berries
emerge from her beadwork
chokecherry red, goldenrod yellow, and juniper berry brown
sky berry and water berry (39)

By ascribing sisterhood and brotherhood to the berries, the poet debunks human superiority, emphasizes relationality, and tasks the reader with an ethics of stewardship. For the Métis, the worldview that privileges multispecies relatedness is *wahkohtowin*, a concept which reinforces the web of complex relationships between the human, the spiritual world, the dead, the living, nonhumans, and other forms of life. Otipemisiw/Métis scholar Jennifer Adese notes that Métis existence is traditionally conceptualized through the understanding of oneself as a part of creation, though notably however, not the superior creation. From this stems an obligation to an ethics of kinship to all our relations (2014, 53). In her words, "the Great Spirit created living beings, plants and animals, including insects, and all other elements of Mother Earth" (ibid). It is this knowledge and consciousness that engenders relationships with the land and the nonhuman others as relatives.

In his sensual poem "I'll Teach You Cree," Gregory Scofield (2009) identifies *nêhiyawêwin* — the Cree language — with the taste of saskatoon as juicy and mouth-filling. In his presentation, the lines are blurred between language and nature, and berry-picking is established as a ceremony, as ritual:

> I'll teach you Cree, nêhiyawêwin (*the Cree language)*
> that is the taste
> of pimiy êkwa saskarômina (*fat and saskatoon berries)*
> Your mouth will be the branches
> I am picking clean,
> a summer heat ceremony
> that cannot be translated.
> hâw, pîkiskwê! (*Now, speak!)* (141)

If the Cree language is informed by the land, and the saskatoon berry derives its name from this, then there is clearly a connection between language and the berry, as both belonging to and making up diverse communities in the ecology of place. From Scofield's poetics, it is apparent that there is no division between language and plant. The plant informs and embodies language, even as the language of the land is conveyed through the plant in both nomenclature and taste. The ecology of place informs, enriches, and sustains the community and the language. The poet's interweaving of Cree and English words adds a deeper dimension to the blurring of this divide. This blurring of man-made categories continues in the use of plant systems to describe human activity. I imagine the "mouth" as the "branches" of the saskatoon, straining under/with the weight of ripened berry clusters which are to be picked clean. The description of the human with plant physiognomy is not just smooth but reminds the reader of our plant-like sensibility; a kinship and an invocation of our ability to vegetate.

CONCLUSION

As I bite into my purchased saskatoon berry, I relish the juicy sweetness as its earthy flavour lingers on my tongue. I am nostalgic as memories of my childhood in the Niger Delta come flooding back. I ponder my responsibility as a good relative to the saskatoon berry. In the course of this research, my habitat guide has taught me that the possibilities are endless when we approach nature from a place of relationship, stewardship, and gratitude. If an ethics of care and accountability mediates our choices, and preferences are mediated by an ethics of care and accountability, we can become ecologically conscious in our daily encounters. I have learned to spend time outside, to listen, and

to commune with nature. I have learned to bring the outside world inside through actions that could preserve the earth. This research offered an opportunity to quietly reflect on the circle of life. To know that it is persistently turning and unfolding around us is to participate in this flow of life seamlessly. We are called to learn and possibly adopt a different approach of living — one that practicalizes kinship. We are called to unfetter our minds from familiar perception and conditioning, to contemplate new possibilities in a time of ecological crisis. We are tasked with mindfulness, an allegiance to respect for all beings, and gratitude through traditional ecological knowledge so as to live in harmony with all our relations. The protocol of gratitude forces us to stop, take a breath, and think about our actions or inactions. In these wintering times, we are asked to emulate the saskatoon, to be resilient in our role as stewards of the earth, and to remain hardy in a time of climate crisis through accountability, stewardship, and an ethics of care.

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We Other Fairies

XAVIA PUBLIUS

The ontology of onstage characters has long been a concern of performance theory, but the stakes of this hauntological question for the characters themselves is rarely addressed. How and why do ethereal queer beings inhabit the stage, and how do they communicate with us (and each other)? As my writing wanders between critical theory and personal mourning, I diarize my journey through this question and the ways ritual and the carnivalesque function to bring forth these spirits onto our plane. These diary entries are edited, cut, and pasted into a more formal order as is the practice in academic writing, but the traces of that restructuring violence remain through use of caesurae ||CUT|| to indicate cuts and curly braces {...} to indicate redaction. I play off of Michel Foucault's musings on "other Victorians" to demonstrate how the film *Were the World Mine* and plays such as *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; *Zanna, Don't!*; *Shakespeare's R&J*; *Three Mysterious Women*; and *Lenin's Embalmers* illustrate the queer politics of trauma, memory, performance, and affect in ways that traditional Western methods of mourning and memorialization do not.

Keywords: queer theory, hauntology, Shakespeare, acting, diary, carnivalesque

26 APRIL 2020

My grandmother died ten years ago today. While personally significant, this usually wouldn't be of theoretical importance, except that I find myself at a confluence of resonances between this paper, the biographical context that occasioned it, and a pandemic. Death has, understandably, been on my mind a lot lately, and when it came time to edit this paper—which didn't start out about mourning but ended up there—I realized what, or rather who, was missing. I needed, in my own queer way, to perform rituals of memory that collapse the distance between me and my grandmother, and writing has always been one such ritual for me. Theatre, as discussed in the remaining pages, is another. My grandfather had initially arranged for a special mass at his church in my grandmother's honour for this weekend, but because of COVID-19, it had to be postponed. The standard rituals of mourning in heterosexual time such as church

services and graveyard visits were disrupted, so I've invoked her here, in a queer time of theatre criticism.

Because time is not linear, some stories cannot be told all at once or in order; the events they (fore?)tell have not yet happened, and more importantly the *storyteller* is not yet the person they need to be to tell that portion. I didn't start keeping an actual diary again until I began self-isolating due to the pandemic. I didn't know how to frame and introduce this piece of writing until I read José Muñoz's *Disidentifications* (1999) as part of another project. I didn't yet have occasion to align my personal mourning implied by the diary form with the collective queer mourning I experience in the theatre. I didn't know what I was trying to say until this was no longer an unedited diary, me talking to myself.

In a diary, there is (usually) no goal, no point to make, no through line around which it revolves, no clear distinction between relevant and tangential, noteworthy and mundane. Academic papers (usually) are not designed to accommodate such a hyper-contextual, meandering approach to a subject. On the topic of fieldwork notes and diaries for anthropologists, Michael Taussig points out how diary, as a form of storytelling, is temporally unstable upon rereading "precisely because its order is as remorseless as the rising and setting of the sun," and this in turn disrupts and blurs the colonial gaze of the institution (2011, 50). One anonymous peer reviewer described this present project as "writing in the margins of straight performance scholarship," an image that I think beautifully captures the tense negotiation between theory and experience here, as does the temporal distortion of incorporating reviewer notes in the text. After all this isn't strictly a diary, but an invocation of diary. While the form calls attention to the reality that no knowledge emerges fully formed all at once and in order, it also obscures the revision and curation enabling it to function in this setting, an obscuring I plan to resist by emphasizing sutures and incisions.

In teasing out the connections between disidentification (a survival strategy marginalized people adopt of repurposing and revaluing texts that Other them), and melancholia (variously described as chronic depression or excessive mourning), Muñoz resists an individualizing Freudian model of melancholia as a failure to "get over" the trauma one mourns, and instead focuses on collective melancholia as a positive tool of remembrance. For him, melancholia "is a mechanism that helps us (re)construct identity and take our dead with us to the various battles we must wage in their names—and in our names" (1999, 74). Performances of disidentification allow for a queer presence in excess of the bounds of the texts or scenarios being recycled. The metaphysical implications of that excess presence are what concern me in the remaining pages.

The performances I wish to call forth involve queer and queer-coded characters that cross boundaries between worlds, and through this crossing glimpse Muñoz's queer

futurity. For Muñoz, "queerness's form is utopian. Ultimately, we must insist on a queer futurity because the present is so poisonous and insolvent" (2009, 30). However, the impossibility of reaching that future creates the "melancholy and ambivalence" of disidentification (1999, 58). In order to consider the stakes of this vision for these queer-coded characters, I take Susan Greenwood's work on magical consciousness to heart:

> The imagination is not just the preserve of children, or those who refuse to grow up; it is a mytho-poetic terrain most obviously, but not exclusively, utilized by artists, poets, and musicians. Magical thinking is creative thinking that goes beyond the immediately apparent. If a wider perspective is taken, it is possible to investigate what lies beyond the horizon of the here and now by venturing into the imaginal mind. (2013, 199)

As this explicitly isn't a research article but a personal response to a set of texts[1] I believe magical consciousness is an appropriate mode of inquiry; even if it weren't, then we could say I'm playfully answering Jacques Derrida's call "to speak *to the* specter, to speak with it, therefore especially *to make or to let* a spirit *speak*" (2010, 11, emphasis in original). Derrida's notion of hauntology—the complex ontology of ghosts—comes from his meditation on communism, *Spectres of Marx*; Marx, like the embalmed body of Lenin continually on display, continues to haunt present-day capitalism through his perpetual return to the conversation (10).[2] Just as these communist spectres continually portend the death of capitalism, the queer spectres of the theatre reappear to disrupt heterosexual spacetime. To return to Greenwood "if we entertain the proposition that during an experience of magical consciousness spirits share a degree of corporeal materiality and possess mind, then the minds of entities—in whatever form—and ours can meet in a wider consciousness" (2013, 207). However, communing with spirits is notoriously indirect. I therefore ask the reader's indulgence as my writing style wanders between critical theory and personal mourning.

This particular entry was written over two days, not one. ||CUT|| I have dismembered my initial entries (by printing them and literally cutting them up, indicated by caesurae surrounding the word "cut" ||CUT|| and rearranged the

[1] This article started its life as an exam journal/paper responding to a list of 12 critical performance studies texts but has since morphed into a response to a number of performance 'texts'.

[2] Vladimir Lenin (1870-1924), first leader of the Soviet Union, was famously embalmed and put on display in Red Square in Moscow instead of buried. His mausoleum remains open to visitors to this day. The complicated process of preserving the body forms the subject of Vern Thiessen's play *Lenin's Embalmers*. I am indebted to an anonymous peer reviewer for pointing out this connection between the communist themes of *Spectres of Marx* and my reading of *Lenin's Embalmers* (see entry "15 October 2018").

fragments of the diary into a more digestible/consumable product—all the better to be in-corp-orated—a stage of contact between my body and yours, a performatic crossing of the veil simultaneously distorting and transmitting affect.[3] ||CUT|| In general, one does not go back and edit a diary unless the omission is just as important as what's included. Actually, perhaps that is also true in this case: what I've excised and replaced with ellipses {...} or paraphrased in curly braces {} is more important off the page in the realm of queer biography, the banal part of the story that theatre's ghosts and mine don't need to tell onstage/on-page because this diary isn't our body yet anymore.[4]

19 OCTOBER 2018

Who are we "other fairies"? As Shakespeare wrote in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*:

> [...] we fairies, that do run
> by the triple Hecate's team
> from the presence of the sun,
> following darkness like a dream,
> now are frolic. [...] (V.i.373-77)

In the final moments of the play, the fairy Puck cleans up their literal and figurative mess in direct address to the audience, easing the transition back out of our shared reality. Unlike the other characters, including the rest of the fairies, Puck lingers in the final moment. While there have been many dramatic interpretations of that monologue illustrating various motivations and meanings, structurally I wonder why this task specifically falls to (or is taken up by) Puck, the queerest entity in the show. In this moment he becomes distinguished from the rest of the fairies by talking to the other beings—he becomes the Other(ed)('s) fairy.

In his Introduction to *The History of Sexuality*, Michel Foucault (1990) has a chapter titled (in English translation) "We 'Other Victorians'," a reference to Steven Marcus's *The Other Victorians*. For Marcus, the "other Victorians" were members of a "sexual subculture" abjected by mainstream Victorian society and yet still possessing an "otherness [...] of a specific Victorian kind" (1966, xiii-xiv). Foucault transforms this phrase into "*nous autres, victoriens*" (lit. "we others, Victorians") which further emphasizes how this otherness is a part of Victorian subjecthood instead of separated out from it (1990, 4). The discourses of sexuality circulating in the Victorian era create these others,

[3] This cut-and-paste, collage aesthetic is common in trans autobiography (Bornstein 3).

[4] The politics of omission in diaries is patently queer, as "our" diaries are often censored both in their writing and in their later publication

who in turn performatively assume this otherness as a supposedly subversive tactic that is in fact an integral part of those discourses. And yet, through his use of "we" Foucault still counts himself among these "other Victorians"; even as he critiques this positionality, he is writing from within it. I use "we other fairies" in a similarly disidentificatory manner. While ultimately this marginalized position in relationship to other worlds is integral to their propagation, I nevertheless find it vital to undertake (puns intended) the project of locating and frolicking among the other fairies. After all, the ghosts of our (straight cis) ancestors get funerals, genealogies, canons. Our queer ancestors get theatre.[5]

Who are our queer ancestors? I believe that they are those banished from the churchyard or the cemetery, from the record books and the family trees, condemned to return only onstage. They are the cyclical re-performance of the Turnerian breach, the traumatic memory, they are the ghosts who suffered the *damnatio memoriae* of a love that could not speak its name and thus was never archived.[6] They are "fairies" in that *other* sense. They must belong to other families, imagined ones, mythical ones, not ours. Their traffic is the stage, not the cemetery. Queerness is simultaneously banished from and contained within the stage/screen. But their very inadmittance requires an explosion of discourse. Even as we other fairies are expelled from the dead city gates, we are not so easily forgotten.

(Perhaps the more basic question is, who are "we"? Such universalizing statements are painfully essentialist, and I hold no illusions of a unified audience with a standard monolithic interpretation or experience of the text. Moreover, it universalizes the abjection of queer ancestors [and the memorialization of cis straight ancestors, for that matter], which is very much a product of Western imperialism, cisheteropatriarchy, and white supremacy. Partially this is a limitation of English, which does not distinguish first-person plural inclusive and exclusive ["we" as in "you and I" vs. "we" as in "us and not you"]. For me, "we" in this instance is a linguistically-exclusive marker of solidarity with the other "other fairies", but who precisely is included in this "we" is purposefully vague to allow for varying levels of hailing and resonance with this framework. It's also imperative to point out that while "we other fairies" is explicitly inclusive of queerness,

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[5] Here I jump off from Joseph Roach's description of cities of the dead: "Cities of the dead are primarily for the living. They exist not only as artifacts, such as cemeteries and commemorative landmarks, but also as behaviors. [...] Memories torture themselves into forgetting by disguising their collaborative interdependence [which] may be carried out by a variety of performance events [...]. To perform in this sense means to bring forth, to make manifest, and to transmit. To perform also means, though often more secretly, to reinvent" (1996, xi).

[6] Victor Turner's notion of 'social drama' describes the structure of ritual as "breach, crisis, redress, and *either* reintegration *or* recognition of schism" (1982, 69, emphasis in original). The continual breach of social norms by our queer ghosts perpetually triggers crises that must be resolved, usually not in our favour.

queerness is not the only or even necessarily the organizing marker of otherness in this framework; as with Marcus's other Victorians, it is a hodgepodge of rejected ontologies.)

To be clear, these rituals of mourning are not mutually exclusive: there are plenty of entities with both gravestones and plays about them. But funerals, plays, holidays, etc., each perform memory and trauma differently. My (presumably) straight grandmother's memory is reanimated variously as a family member to be sent off on her next big journey (funeral), a source of knowledge and history (family storytelling), a physical presence to negotiate (grave), a traumatic separation to be commemorated (the rescheduled mass), and now a touchstone and guide for lost writers and readers alike in this paper/diary/performance. She is dead and I am alive (or "not yet dead", depending on how you look at it), but we are both other fairies in this moment, because we are invested in the portal of this paper stage remaining open as long as possible, so that we may stay connected a while longer.

15 OCTOBER 2018

{... I attend Alex Donovan's 2018 production of Vern Thiessen's play *Lenin's Embalmers* at the University of Alberta.}

One of the central themes of *Lenin's Embalmers* is death and the complete lack of control one has over what those who survive you do with your remains||CUT|| (incidentally a major concern for queer and trans people).||CUT|| Lenin's (played by Thiessen in this production) last line is, "I could die today. If only... If only they'd stop waiting," after which he exits through the house right door (Thiessen 2010, 118). As the curtain falls on this production the cast comes to do their bows, but Thiessen is conspicuously absent. It is only as I proceed to the lobby that I see Lenin on display, guarded by Apparat 1. As that final piece clicks into place, the missing counterexample for a half-baked thought that's been floating around in my brain for a year or so now, I know for sure that there is a paper here I need to write.

The stage directions for this moment are implied to be optional: "as the audience leave, perhaps they too pass by Lenin. Taking the story with them" (ibid). Donovan's placement of the casket in the lobby forces the audience to deal with their complicity in keeping the memory of Lenin alive. Unlike the other characters who return to the ether with the curtain call, Lenin is not allowed to die; even as his "dead" body is on display, his ghost is still animated in the theatre—suspended animation? The ritual is not complete, so he cannot pass on until the audience has dissipated. Lenin is trapped in the eternal present.

Donovan's description of this conundrum is illuminating:

> Lenin begins and ends the play from beyond the grave. He haunts the space and is the only unwavering presence in the show. [...] According to Jewish folklore, the soul becomes trapped on earth after death if they do not bury the body. From dust to dust. Lenin's embalming has prevented his soul from moving on and so he is stuck on earth as a wandering soul. There is no evidence in the text he can stop or alter the events that take place. Bound by the scripted action of the past he can do nothing but watch. Without a corporeal body, Lenin cannot alter events. He can only present the events of the past by putting on a play with whoever is available to do so. [...] Lenin is the only actor who remains in character from the beginning to the end, he is never a part of the ensemble. (2018b)

I don't think it's a coincidence that Lenin, who feels trapped by the immortality of the stage, is straight (as far as we know). So often the spirits I will consider in this vein are desperate to live, to spend as many seconds on the stage as possible before being whisked back into impossibility. It is again no accident that most of those spirits are queer. While certainly a topic of controversy, it is not farfetched to claim that characters inhabit/possess an actor's body for the duration of a piece then leave at its close (Schechner 2003, 197-202). It is also fairly standard to consider the queer chaos of the stage in the context of Mikhail Bakhtin's carnivalesque: the social order is flipped topsy-turvy only to be reinscribed by the end of the carnival's allotted time (2004, 686). The stage presents/makes present these spirits and grants them limited reign over the performers for various and sundry cultural reasons before the performance ends and our mundane lives move on. What has received less attention are the *stakes* of this practice for the spirits themselves. The stakes for the ghost of Lenin are very high as he faces an explicitly unwanted immortality. The stakes for queer spirits are also high, because performance is one of the few times they are allowed on our plane.

I started thinking about these stakes because of the 2008 film *Were the World Mine* (*WTWM*, dir. Tom Gustafson). In this adaptation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Timothy (Tanner Cohen) is cast as Puck in his boarding school's production of the play, and while trying to get his classmate Jonathon (Nathaniel David Becker) to fall in love with him, he ends up finding a recipe for the love potion and turning the town gay with that self-same love-juice. Timothy uses this as an opportunity to make the town understand just how miserable they've made him through their homophobia, but he soon realizes that he has caused more problems than he has solved, and that Jonathon's pansy-induced affections are not as satisfying as he had hoped. During the performance of the play, he must ensure that "all things shall be peace" by reversing the spell, which

condemns him once again to be the only gay kid in town (or so he thinks). The way {I remember him delivering} Puck's closing monologue is both moving and illuminating:

If we shadows have offended
Think but this, and all is mended—
That *you* have but *slumber'd* here
While these visions did appear [...] (Shakespeare [1595/6] 1977 V.i.413-16; Gustafson 2008, emphasis mine)

{I re-watch *WTWM* to verify the emphases in the above block quote and end up with a wrinkle in my argument.} Upon re-watching the movie, it turns out I was wrong about him placing emphasis on "you", but I find that misremembrance productive. "That *you* have but slumber'd here," whereas I live here. Here Puck is given free rein to determine the couples, and he uses it to create a queertopia where he is not alone. At the end, the town, having gone through the queer chaos of the carnival (literal and figurative), awakens back to their straight reality. Timothy does not get to wake up straight or remain in a queertopia, and Puck must return to the incorporeal, the reality of the stage fading as it always does. ||CUT||

Finally, the spirits themselves remind me that for them this topic {queer spirits onstage} is literally life and death, as any discussion about ontology ultimately is (Derrida 2010, 9). I hear their call as I read Gilad Padva's comparison of *WTWM* and *Zero Patience* (1993, dir. John Greyson), a Canadian film musical about Gaëtan Dugas, the alleged patient zero of the HIV/AIDS crisis (Padva 2014, 145-68). The spirits remind me of the lyrics to the only number from the movie I know well, "Just Like Scheherazade": "tell the story of my life/ from zero hour to 12am/ from the good to the bad/ tell the tale, save my life/ the life I could have had" (Greyson 1993). Greyson frames this song as Dugas's metatextual plea to the filmmaker to "clear my name" from the false accusation that he had started the crisis. Then again, the plot of *Zero Patience* revolves around precisely the same desire for *dis*appearance that Lenin has, and for similar reasons of forced immortality. Since the lives (or lack thereof) of these spirits are in my young, untested hands, I ask myself: what might my responsibility and relationship to these beings be? ||CUT|| We perform stories for many reasons—entertainment, education, argument, catharsis, etc.—and enlist these spirits to help us tell these stories. We (mortals) know what we (the audience and performers) get out of it, but why do we (other fairies) come back? Do we have to? Do we want to? Do we need to?

3 FEBRUARY 2019

While many Shakespeare comedies have a similar structure to that of *Midsummer*, the fairy forest as a location seems to be especially conducive to queer world-bending. In *WTWM*, a large tree set-piece takes literal center-stage and prominently figures in many of the dream sequences. It operates as the source and locus of magic even before Timothy becomes Puck, even before its physical construction on the gymnatorium stage. Similarly, in regard to the forest in Benjamin Britten's 1960 operatic setting of *Midsummer*, Philip Brett has argued: "as the curtain rises on Britten's opera, we cannot fail to notice a crucial difference from the play. Even without the scenery we know that we are already, in more senses than one, in the woods. [...] In Britten's scheme it is the court of Duke Theseus that seems unreal and limiting, the final entry of the fairies marking a return to normal" (1995, 268-69). Instead of firmly policing the boundaries of reality between town and forest, Britten "has moved here [...] into a completely private world, a world of possibilities rather than of limitations" (ibid). The transmersion[7] of realities in the forest both analogizes and enlivens the collapse and proliferation of identities. Performance transmerses its participants (actor, spectator, and medium) into a different plane of reality. In a theatrical performance, as the utopic (or dystopic) space of the transformed performance materializes, presences that belong to that space appear (present themselves) on this plane. Here I embrace the paradox of Derrida's hauntology: the ontology of performing ghosts relies on the infinitely receding present even as they inevitably return to restage their memory. For Derrida, hauntology is "larger and more powerful than an ontology or a thinking of Being [...]" (2010, 10). A specter both is and is not. Is it a particle or a wave? Yes.

In plays where the fourth wall is firmly enforced there is little occasion for interrogating the nature of these presences; regardless of whether or not the actor is really the character in any meaningful way, there is an ostensibly solid division between the conjured reality onstage and the reality inhabited by the audience.[8] {...} The performances I call forth here involve queer and queer-coded characters that cross boundaries between worlds and through this crossing glimpse Muñoz's utopic queer futurity {*sic déjà vu*}. I am particularly partial to Andrew Buzny's interpretation of Timothy and Ms. Tebbit (Wendy Robie) in *WTWM*: "I do not contend that the 'dream'

[7] For the purposes of this paper I consider transmersion to be the result of Fischer-Lichte's (2008) transformative reenchantment. Instead of talking about unidirectional and individualizing 'immersion', 'transmersion' implies both a colliding of worlds and a collective coming together between the beings of these disparate realities.

[8] I will focus on the theatre vein of performance, recognizing that even here ontologically stable notions of 'character' and 'world of the play' are increasingly suspect (and with good reason). I also recognize it is unlikely a performer's consciousness is ever completely surrendered to a character or a possessing presence (Schechner 2003). On the contrary, the ability of an actor to consciously inhabit multiple worlds simultaneously as multiple (id)entities is precisely what spurs my inquiries.

sequences are dreams, but moments of temporal disorientation that Timothy or Ms. Tebbit conjure when he or she steps out of the realist frame of the film" (2010, 26-27). Ms. Tebbit, being the English/Drama instructor who gives Timothy the magic script, takes Puck's structural role as liminal figure while Puck-as-Timothy moves into the liminoid position of being the subject of the movie; it is Ms. Tebbit who addresses the audience at the end, holding the flower and saying "who's next?" [9] It also should be pointed out that she too is queer-coded; at one point a student calls her a dyke.[10] When I was discussing this project with {...}, she pointed out that in terms of production history, Puck has a long, rich tradition of queer presentation. Additionally, unlike fairies such as Titania and Oberon, he is almost never doubled (Puck's actor doesn't also play other roles), again marking him as an other fairy. The queerness of *WTWM*'s version of the play therefore is not just an artifact of adaptation, but also relies on the queer renown of the character to facilitate the collapse between Puck and Timothy. Moreover, the increased spillage between the world of the play and the world of the movie affords Puck as a presence a greater ability to escape the bounds of his own world and envision other utopic presents, what Muñoz calls "queer world-making" (2009, 37). And yet, the inability to inhabit fully and permanently the border space between these worlds restages queer trauma. ||CUT|| Puck is constantly oscillating between liminal and liminoid spaces, blurring the thresholds that divide them from the mundane; indeed, lingering in the doorway and dancing queerly upon it. And the impossibility of remaining in the portal, which closes at the end of the show, is the perpetually restaged *fort-da* that drives the theatre (Phelan 1993). ||CUT||

Clearly, not every character onstage is (or even should be claimed as) queer. I'm actually making two separate points: first,[11] that the process of theatrical possession is itself inherently queer (in an expanded sense of the term), and second, that the queer (in a focused sense of the term) spirits have an extra investment in this process because

[9] The liminal is the stage in a ritual when the typical rules of social reality are suspended while the celebrants undergo some change, and when the transformation is complete there is a return to order (Schechner 2003, 188-89). The liminoid occupies a similar cultural position but instead of present-ing that change, it is *re*presented (Schechner 2003, 159-60). To use *Midsummer*, the staging of *Pyramus and Thisby* is a diegetic liminoid space. Diegetically the forest is liminal space, where the lovers enter, are transfigured, and return to Athens to be married. The play itself is extra-textually a liminoid space. That said, liminal and liminoid cannot so easily be separated; first of all, such as Schechner's articulations of the liminoid tend to ascribe it cultural superiority over the liminal (conveniently liminoid structures are more common in the West). Secondly, both liminal and liminoid performances take place in the 'liminal' transmersed plane between realms (the second 'liminal' channeling the term's popular usage as referring to enchanted spaces where 'the veil between worlds is thinner').

[10] Even more interesting for my purposes, Ms. Tebbit, consistently refers to herself and Timothy as "we", even when talking about his unilateral actions, e.g. "have we had our fun yet?"

[11] See entry "13 February 2019" below.

of their limited access to extra-theatrical invocation, remembrance, etc. Or perhaps I only mean the ones who know they're in a play. Puck addresses the audience, knowing they're there, and is consequently implied to be familiar with their world and its difference from his. He can recognize his lot onstage, and a world lived *differently*, and mourn the distance. The theatre is once again the stage mirror/mirror stage. ||CUT|| The mimetic project in theatre is often described as the stage holding a mirror to reality, though this notion is one of the main sticking points in conversations about mimesis because the stage creates the very reality it purports to describe while erasing other crucial aspects of reality (Case 1988). In Lacanian psychoanalysis, the mirror stage of development is the point at which a child (or animal or other entity) recognizes themselves in a mirror. Puck and we other fairies recognize ourselves in the mirror the stage holds up between realities, but we also recognize the distortion of that image, leading to a disidentificatory ambivalence where survival requires us to reach through the mirror into that other looking-glass reality then break the mirror to prevent the distortions from remaining or seeping through. ||CUT|| Hence Lenin, forever trapped in the performatic present; hence the eponymous *Three Mysterious Women*, with only the repertoire to tell their stories through constraining archives of text; hence the boys in *Shakespeare's R&J* and Timothy in *WTWM*, who must "give up the ghost" and return to their heterosexual milieu.[12] ||CUT||

Nana died three months before I came out as trans, but I like to think it wouldn't have mattered to her. My mom's family lives in Ohio, and most summers we would drive the eight hours to my grandparents' house to visit. Perhaps it was the presence of my lesbian aunts, the carnivalesque reversal of power (my dad was no longer the final authority), or the firm acceptance from Nana and Papa—likely all three—but I loved going out there because it gave me space to be queerer than I was able to be back home. At the risk of confirming a stereotype, they knew way before I did, so they took it in stride when I eventually came out. But, inevitably, the summer would end, and we'd have to go back home. For my parents and brother, this drive home was the end of a vacation; for me, it was the end of my freedom to exist as a fuller self. The feeling I got whenever we packed up the car to return to Pennsylvania is the same feeling I get whenever I watch *WTWM*, or *Midsummer*, or *Zanna, Don't!*, or *Night at the Museum*. It's not that the proverbial grass was greener on the other side of the state border: it's that the grass grew there at all.

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[12] See entry "10 February 2019" below for discussion of these texts.

For a long time in Western societies, the explicit presentation of content we might today call LGBTQPIA was effectively—if not expressly—banned, to say nothing of personal queerness. In the United States, for example, the Motion Picture Production Code (1930-1968), Code of Practices for Television Broadcasters (1952-1983), and Comics Code Authority (1954-2011) all prohibited depiction of "sex perversion" at one point or another. Sodomy, meanwhile, wasn't uniformly legal there until the Supreme Court's 2003 decision in *Lawrence v. Texas*. As such, queer characters, plots, settings, histories, and experiences were (and still are) often relegated to subtext or communicated through queer coding. As these restrictions have relaxed and queer voices have taken more prominent places in media, the trauma embedded in this subtextualization has become a theme to explore. *WTWM* restages the queer rage at the heart of Puck. Britten's *Midsummer* eschews the mundane world and relishes in the fairy world. Repression has not eliminated queerness but occasioned its proliferation as an unresistingly resistant discourse. ||CUT||

I have referenced shows which I have not yet described, so let me unpack them for deeper examination in this light.{...} On stage, queer world-crossings are not just narrative threshold crossings but transmersions instantiated in real time with the audience. In *Shakespeare's R&J*, playwright Joe Calarco (1999) adapts another Shakespeare play, *Romeo and Juliet*, and sets it in an all-boys school (as with *WTWM*). Four boys create a secret club where they can read and re-enact the banned play (no reason is given for its banishment), and as their "play" progresses the burgeoning queer romance between the boys playing the titular star-crossed lovers threatens to destroy them all. Nearly all of this must be read between the lines and through staging because the script is almost excruciatingly faithful to Shakespeare's original text. As an adaptation instead of a retelling, it makes sense that such fidelity is an important strategy in making strange/making queer the original text (which historically would have been performed by all men anyway). This makes it all the more perplexing that some of the lines are from a different play. *Midsummer* appears again in *R&J* at key moments, with some of the same lines that were emphasized in *WTWM*. For instance, before we even hear any lines from *Romeo and Juliet*, we hear the "we fairies" passage. Once again, the queer legacy of *Midsummer* is invoked to provide a similar queer legitimacy for this ludic space. In the script notes, Calarco is very clear that this show isn't just about homoeroticism but about ritual: "the evening should feel like a communal event. For this reason, the actors never leave the stage except during intermission. The more you can create the effect that this group of students is a community, or tribe, the more heartbreaking it will be at the end when they realize their 'dream' must end" (1999, 8). This is a pun, because the next time *Midsummer* appears is with the return to reality, as Student 1 repeats the "we fairies" passage in an attempt to hold onto the fading dream before Student 2 counters with "if we shadows have offended..." Here, as in *WTWM*,

these lines serve as ritual signposts for the queer chaos animating the lovers of the respective stories and as a shorthand indicating specifically queer iterations of the Shakespeare plays.

I saw a production (Kill Your Television 2018) of *Shakespeare's R&J* at the University of Alberta with {…} and we had very different reactions to the *mise en scène*. For her, the production lacked sufficient communication of the stakes due to all the authority figures being offstage and the script providing no additional context. This made it hard for her to buy into the world of the play. In contrast, I bought it wholeheartedly for two major, related reasons. I was raised in a fundamentalist Christian home, so the placement of the story in a Christian school and my knowledge of queer media allowed for a sort of shorthand by which I could call up my own memories to fill in the stakes of the play's world. This call to memory was primed by the pre-show soundtrack, which played Christian tunes on an organ. Perhaps my personal ghosts gave me different access to the ghosts summoned by the production; perhaps they were in fact the ghosts being summoned. {My friend's coterie of associated ghosts had no urgent need for participating in this production—mine did.}

Three Mysterious Women (Peter Eliot Weiss) also reworlds Shakespeare, disrupting the hegemony of the text by (sometimes literally) cutting up the scripts of *Hamlet* and *King Lear* and stitching them together in novel ways from the perspective of three of the dead female characters. {…} Ophelia finds herself alone and mad in a strange, nondescript place. Soon, Gertrude appears in this void and they interact. Meanwhile, Cordelia is also in this barren land, and the three women figure out how to navigate their current situation, now that they've all died and are somehow stuck with each other. As they learn more about each other, an intimacy develops between them with varying degrees of homoerotic energy. Eventually, they come to realize that their original plays delimit the expression of their now-metatheatrical existence, a fact that frustrates and saddens them, but causes them to decide that they will use the gaps between the text and the body, between what is said and what isn't said, to speak truth to their new understanding. As the play comes to an end, they shred the texts.

This final resolution dramatizes the dynamic at the heart of Diana Taylor's *The Archive and the Repertoire*:

> "Archival" memory exists as documents, maps, literary texts, letters, archaeological remains, bones, videos, films, CDs, all those items supposedly resistant to change. […] There are several myths attending the archive. One is that it is unmediated, that objects located there might mean something outside the framing of the archival impetus itself. What makes an object archival is the process whereby it is selected, classified, and presented for analysis. […] The repertoire, on the other hand, enacts embodied memory: performances,

> gestures, orality, movement, dance, singing—in short, all those acts usually thought of as ephemeral, nonreproducible knowledge. [...] Embodied memory, because it is live, exceeds the archive's ability to capture it. But that does not mean that performance—as ritualized, formalized, or reiterative behavior—disappears. (2003, 19-20)

The archive—i.e. Shakespeare's texts—limits the possibilities of expression for the three women, especially in a culture that privileges its rigidity so predominantly (22). It is in the repertoire, the actual performance and extratextual ephemera of their staging, that these women can resist its sway. Importantly, Taylor warns that "performance belongs to the strong as well as the weak" and that her notion of archive and repertoire "too readily falls into a binary, with the written and archival constituting hegemonic power and the repertoire providing the anti-hegemonic challenge" (ibid). However, in this case, by colliding and dismembering archives, the repertoire allows for the frolicking of these three spirits. This is of course reliant on Weiss's text which is its own form of archive, and since a man is writing this text there is the potential for a reinscription of the patriarchal power it critiques, but here the archive and repertoire "work in tandem," "both exceeding the limitations of the other" (Taylor 21).

Despite what my sampling implies, the queer transmersion of worlds does not necessarily only pertain to Shakespeare and his theatrical descendants. *Zanna, Don't!: A Musical Fairy Tale* (Tim Acito and Alexander Dinelaris) provides an interesting iteration of these points. Zanna has cupid-like powers in a world where the majority of the population is homosexual and it is heterosexuals that are discriminated against. When his friends Kate and Steve come out as straight, he vows to send them to a world where they can be themselves. This comes at the cost of his magic, and he ends up creating a world where heterosexuals are the norm and homosexuality is suppressed. He thus takes on the outcast role in Kate and Steve's place because, in the move between worlds, he retains his queerness (and memory, unlike everyone else). Zanna, as with *WTWM*'s Timothy, is then surprised to discover that he is not the only one to cross the hero's threshold into a heterosexual reality, but that the narrator, Tank—until this point a background character—also remembers the previous world, and they fall in love.[13] Zanna and Timothy are both masters of two worlds who had to leave their world of bliss for the sake of the larger society. It is noteworthy then that the marker of their mastery is their *memory* of the previous world, a memory that is also retained by their love interests.[14] That both Tank and Jonathon also remember their respective queer worlds,

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[13] Here I reference Joseph Campbell's monomyth, recognizing that its claims to universality are specious at best. However, in the case of these two shows, the hero's journey fits well.

[14] Buzny notes that in the case of *WTWM* this is partially due to Jonathon also being a queer destabilizing figure even before the spell, due to his shared ability with Timothy to step outside of the

or at the very least the feelings aroused there, preserves the queer hope that these works embody and rewards the heroes for their reluctant abandonment of queertopic realities. It is also implied that they are the heroes' boon; in exchange for curbing the chaos of a queer reality, the fairies may keep their men. Zanna and Timothy's heroic journeys restage the coming of age ritual that for them involves transfiguration of a liminal queer space into a safely heterosexual one, and the marker of their integration into the mundane straight world is their neoliberally-accepted union with a conventionally-masculine (by comparison) boy. ||CUT|| They are no longer *other fairies*, they're simply "fairies"—Puck, meanwhile, is removed from the closing threshold he never gets to cross, assuming he even wanted to.

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||CUT||
Consider the ontology of possession; there is something queer about another being taking up residency in your body. Deprived of their own bodies, these ghostly beings may only return to our plane in someone else's, and if there's anything cisheteropatriarchy can't stand, it's the sex which is not one. Acting has long been associated with sexual impropriety, from sex-work to promiscuity to queerness, partially because one must be not oneself, in all senses of the word (Nellhaus et al. 2016). This uncanny doubling creates a gap between the corporeal body and the body politic, between reality and imagination, between identity and performance (Kobialka 1999; Roach 1996). Whether or not these possessing spirits ever had literal bodies of their own or whether these creations we call fictional were indeed created by artists is another matter, though an interesting one. Given the inevitable citationality of performance, perhaps we end up summoning the same archaic ghosts without realizing it, just in fancier hats. Time is cyclical. In a contemporary Western understanding, humans are born, grow old(er), and die—a linear progression—whereas spirits on the stage are constantly "dead, live, re-dead, re-live" (Schneider 2011, 178). They must do it all again whenever they are summoned; sometimes the story has changed, and sometimes they have changed, but their fate is the same: to return to this plane and live here however briefly. ||CUT||

It is by no stretch of the imagination novel to claim that theatre at its core is about ritual, memory, and trauma. Marvin Carlson famously refers to theatre as a "memory machine": "[theatre] is the repository of cultural memory, but, like the memory

heterosexual time of the diegesis (2010); Tank is similarly implied throughout *Zanna, Don't!* to share Zanna's queer love magic.

of each individual, it is also subject to continual adjustment and modification as the memory is recalled in new circumstances and contexts" (2003, 2). Performance of memory is frequently used as a repertoire of counter-memory "attend[ing] to [...] the disparities between history as it is discursively transmitted and memory as it is publicly enacted by the bodies that bear its consequences" (Roach 1996, 26). ||CUT|| Far too often, when trans people die, we are misgendered in obituaries, headstones, eulogies, genealogies, and other instruments of cishet mourning. Despite this, our queer bodies, our lived experiences, and our influence on other living beings are a vehement counter-memory to these official histories, and telling these stories is a crucial act of witnessing (Cram 2012). ||CUT|| Thus, the specific ghosts generated by the memory machine that I'm interested in contain a (dis)embodied repertoire of queer counter-memory that must traverse the temporal and spatial distance between our plane of existence and theirs. ||CUT||

But the nature of these presences is not my most pressing ontological concern; whoever these spirits are, however they got here, let us assume they occupy the stage.[15] ||CUT|| That said, in a performance we other fairies are not coterminous with characters, nor is there necessarily a one-to-one correlation between fairies and characterizations. Yet, since characters are what manifest on stage, that is the easiest way to interact with and conceptualize them. ||CUT|| Nor is it my concern how spirits manifest logistically, though possession seems to imply a Cartesian soul/body split that I want to avoid. If I had to tangentially hazard a guess, I'd opine that with each instantiation of a performance (including rehearsal), the body-soul of the performer intra-acts with the (id)entity in such a way that it emerges as part of them only to become separate through the termination of the performance (Barad 2006). Nor am I able to comment on how the realities beyond our current mundane one are structured outside of their contiguity with ours.[16] My concern is these contiguous points between realities and their perception by their respective inhabitants. In other words, I can only talk about these places and beings by talking about the points of contact between these other worlds and ours, the moments of our intra-action.

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[15] I am not oblivious to the fact that from an empirical standpoint this is unfalsifiable speculation at best. To that I say, not only am I not a scientist, but I use this argument to turn the traditional conversation about the ontology of the actor on its head. From a mortal perspective, the actor takes on a character, is transmersed into the world of the play, and returns relatively unchanged to the mundane. From an astral perspective, how might this process work?

[16] Does this reality cease to exist when we're not observing it, a proverbial tree falling in a forest? Or do these places and characters have offstage lives and politics etc.? Are all performances happening simultaneously for these spirits? Are they fractured reflections of one nebulous spirit world or infinite discrete worlds? Are we spirits to them?

It is only in the comparison of realities that one can determine which reality is which, although which reality is "really" real reveals itself to be a matter of perspective. In the *Ya Dead, Ya Dead* arc of the Achievement Hunter series *Let's Play Minecraft*, the players enact alternative versions of themselves, such as a world where Gavin[17] (Gavin Free) and Michael (Michael Jones) were previously married. When another player semi-accidentally shoots Gavin, they discuss the ethics involved, and Michael says: "If I go, if I right now say 'I bet you can't shoot me,' and you shoot me, in real life? It's still your fault, just so you know." When it is pointed out that they're simply playing a game, Michael responds: "He's dead and he's not coming back! It's pretty real to me!" (Achievement Hunter 2018, 16:59-17:13). Regardless of whether or not Gavin/Free is dead in our reality, the fact remains that in the game/series, *Gavin is dead*. Whether or not our reality is real is frankly irrelevant because in the moment we experience it *as real*.

There is a theory, the simulation hypothesis, in which the universe is just a simulation run by beings beyond our reality, in the same way that in video games we maneuver beings.[18] I don't know if that's true, but I do believe, for however brief a moment, however framed and rehearsed, what happens on the stage is real for the ghosts who are summoned upon it. If I don't know I'm in a simulation, then the ontology of the person(s) controlling me, who by definition does not exist on this plane except through their manipulations, has no bearing on the fact that the laws of this reality, such as they are, apply to me in this moment in time and space. The rules may be different depending on the reality, and I may not know all the rules, but they still apply. It doesn't matter if I'm dreaming, because the answer is not going to stop a person chasing me in my dream from chasing me. It doesn't matter if it's "just a game", because diegetically Michael cannot interact with Gavin as a living being.

Johann Huizinga gets at this in his analysis of play:

> The consciousness of play being "only a pretend" does not by any means prevent it from proceeding with the utmost seriousness, with an absorption, a devotion that passes into rapture and, temporarily at least, completely abolishes that troublesome "only" feeling. Any game can at any time completely run away with the players. The contrast between play and seriousness is always fluid. (2002, 8)

[17] Here I use first names to refer to the in-game persona and last names to refer to the performer.

[18] E.g. Chalmers 2005. Descartes returns unbidden to the discussion; basically, this is a reformulation of the question of how one knows whether or not we are in a dream. {...}

Even if we have knowledge that the transmersed reality is different from our mundane reality, that we operate in both simultaneously,[19] and that we will almost certainly return to the mundane reality—from our perspective the so-called real reality— whether our invocation of other realities is playful or serious, we must still navigate them according to the laws of each reality as it manifests to us.[20]

So, it doesn't matter if Lenin is "really" in the casket, because at that intersection between his world and our world, he is trapped—temporarily perhaps, but still trapped. Thiessen still has to lay in the casket because Lenin has still not bowed out. Meanwhile, for two glorious hours, Puck and Zanna can make anyone fall in love; Romeo and Juliet can be two boys kissing; Cordelia, Gertrude, and Ophelia can write their own damn story—for a brief, shining moment, the transmersed worlds are queer. In *WTWM* Timothy says "I don't want to go back to real life," to which Jonathon responds: "this is real" (Gustafson 2008). They are talking about different registers of reality, but both end up being correct when it is revealed that even after the return to normalcy Jonathon still wants to be with him. ||CUT|| Transmersion is simultaneously a cause for queer hope and queer mourning, precisely because it is a bridge between ultimately incompatible realities. However, the faint possibility of fully crossing over into the queer world, of the portal closing with us on the other side, animates and emboldens our desire for a world lived differently. Admittedly, such a complete crossing would constitute madness, a denizen of a reality no longer shared by anyone else or material fact, but to be fair, some of us were mad to begin with, and we still have to navigate our realities simultaneously. ||CUT||

Even as this vision of other worlds is decidedly utopian, I want to avoid exoticizing these other worlds or using them to further an Orientalizing project. Britten's *Midsummer*, for example, relies on Orientalist tropes to exoticize his forest (Brett 1995). Similarly, I worry that such a queer reclaiming of the memory machine might become a form of homonationalism, an attempt to (re)claim a specifically queer time and place. {...} This discomfort also attends the fact that not all ghosts that haunt the stage are queer, or benevolent. While, like Padva (2014), I find *WTWM* more transgressive than regressive, I take to heart his warning about the conservative bent of nostalgia, even the queer nostalgia that animates musicals. I do not have answers to

[19] In performance theory, this concept of perceiving multiple realities simultaneously is variously referred to as "binocular vision", "not me...not not me", and being "haunted" (Carlson 2018, 50-51).

[20] Greenwood takes a similar approach to belief, concluding that "questions of belief or the reality or non-reality of spirits, while interesting in principle, can be a straitjacket for an alternative perception afforded by communication with non-material entities. The issue is one of a different perception afforded by magical consciousness" (2013, 204).

these concerns, they remain beyond the veil blanketing this performance (of scholarship).

SOME OTHER FUTURE DATE

In conclusion, theatre is gay, but we knew this. Less glibly, theatre affords both queer audiences and queer spirits (as well as our cishet counterparts) the opportunity to communicate across the veil between worlds and to simultaneously restage, mourn, and overcome the trauma of death and lost memory. By creating space for this transmersion of realities, theatre provides opportunity for honouring of queer spirits and of ancestors of forgotten, refused, and fictive families. It also allows us to glimpse other worlds, sometimes better than our own, sometimes worse, sometimes altogether strange, but more often than not steeped in queer futurity.

We other fairies, simultaneously swept to the margins and summoned ad infinitum, are given space to haunt to our hearts' content, provided we "run [...] from the presence of the sun" at the end. I have sloughed off a piece of myself to embed in this diary, and this part of me contacts Nana every time someone performs an act of reading it. When you stop reading this paper, you go back to your life, and Nana and I go back to a world without each other. For now. But until then, we other fairies are frolic.

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