

# Unsettling Sounds of Indigeneity: Reckoning with the White Possessive and Building Anti-/De-colonial Solidarity in Popular Music Research

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A Tribe Called Red recently announced they were changing their name to The Halluci Nation, which also served as the concept for their 2016 album, *We Are the Halluci Nation*. The concept of the Halluci Nation derives from Santee Dakota poet John Trudell. In anticipation of their forthcoming album, *One More Saturday Night*, The Halluci Nation released a video for the song “Remember,” in which they include previously unreleased footage of Trudell. The Facebook post for the video explains how “John Trudell gave us the Halluci Nation. He saw a vision of us that would take us years to realize. ... He gave us the Halluci Nation but we made it real” (The Halluci Nation 2021)

I decided this was a good opportunity to reflect on my journey with The Halluci Nation because they were the first Indigenous musicians about whom I published (Woloshyn 2015). My thinking and process behind researching Indigenous musicians have changed greatly, and I want to address that here: I call myself out as bad kin in popular music research and also discuss how popular music research might contribute to a decolonial elsewhere. I can speak only to my own positionalities and experiences, but I trust that my questions will prompt your own questions, and my self-critiques might inspire your own. I am not, really, speaking about Indigenous popular music. Rather, I’m speaking about how settler colonialism and whiteness frame encounters between the settler listening ear and Indigenous musics, with a goal of asking

for accountability and change within our discipline. Our annual gathering gives us opportunity to reflect on accountability, to discuss how popular music research is complicit in settler colonialism, and to brainstorm how to make substantive change.

In this text, which derives from my keynote at the conference, I want to engage with the notion of “encounter.” The word centres relationality, as one encounters something or someone else. I use this word, acknowledging the limitations Dylan Robinson has ascribed to the word (2020: 117), himself building on Geoff Baker’s critique in the Latin American context. Baker’s concern is that the word obscures “great imbalances of power between colonizers, colonized, and imported slaves, and by extremes of domination, suffering, deprivation and violence” (2008: 442). But just as Robinson mobilizes the word to analyze power dynamics, I will also demonstrate how my “encounter” with *The Halluci Nation* is not neutral.

Listening has been a central theme in my work on *The Halluci Nation*, and so I will be approaching encounter primarily through the idea of “listening-in-relation,” a phrasing that I borrow from Dylan Robinson. The word “relation” does not denote an equitable or respectful relationship. I will discuss how my own “listening-in-relation” (2020: 51) has maintained the power imbalances of settler colonialism in North America, specifically through hungry listening and white possessiveness.

## Invisibility and Encounter

*The Halluci Nation* is a DJ-producer collective that began as *A Tribe Called Red* in the late 2000s in Ottawa. They hosted a monthly club night at Babylon called *Electric Pow Wow*, playing sets of various dance club styles like dubstep, moombahton, and reggae mixed with samples of powwow drum music. The group’s early tracks were accompanied by videos by member Bear Witness, who remixed films with stereotyped depictions of Indigenous Peoples, now glitched, looped, and hyper-stylized with fluorescent colour filtering. One popular early track, “Red Skin Girl,” samples a round dance by Northern Cree Singers, recontextualized within a dubstep style and form.

My early work is particularly problematic for its unmarking of my subject position. I identify myself as “non-Aboriginal” in a footnote in my first article (2015), but do little else to examine how my positionality as a white, cis, straight woman settler shaped my experiences at live shows, my analytical approaches, and writing style. When I discuss listening experiences, in particular, my

language suggests a universality that is a hallmark of settler listening: to assume a singular, correct listening approach.

The notion of “encounter” is revealing when I reflect on my ethnographic experiences at Electric Pow Wow and the way they show up in my writing. Or to be more to the point: what doesn’t show up. While Electric Pow Wow night was an event of pride for Ottawa’s local Indigenous club goers, it was open to non-Indigenous attendees, reminding me of the welcome I have also received at powwows. Both Electric Pow Wow night and powwows are Indigenous-managed spaces that challenge the power dynamics of the broader settler colonial society by positioning settler attendees like myself as guests. In my earlier research, though, I avoided the necessary work of considering my own positionality as experienced at Electric Pow Wow night. I theorized that Indigenous attendees express embodied sovereignty through kinesthetic listening, which I described as “a listening *through* the body as the pounding beat resonates, and a listening *to* the body as participants celebrate their physicality” (2015: 2). What I failed to address is my own experience of kinesthetic listening. This kinesthetic listening made sense to me as an embodied practice because it reflected my own experience. But where is my body in this early writing? What did the kinesthetic listening feel like to me? How did it bring me into a fuller awareness of my own physical presence in relation to the bodies around me? How was I listening-in-relation during those Electric Pow Wow nights, and how was I confronted with my own whiteness in this Indigenous-centric space? Instead, I adopted what Métis scholar David Garneau calls “objectivist discourse” (2016: 25), which I thought best fitting to my musicological inquiry.

Another important encounter in my work is with others’ scholarly work. Citations are relationships. They are listening-in-relation. These relationships can be uneven, exploitative, and hungry. For example, while settler colonial studies has been an important part of my own transformation, I take Tiffany Lethabo King’s criticism that “White colonial and settler colonial discourse structure the ways that people think about and simultaneously forget the ways that Black and Native death are intimately connected in the Western Hemisphere” (2019: xiii).

What might a non-hungry listening citational practice look like? Métis scholar Zoe Todd posted something on Twitter a few months ago that both resonated with me and challenged me. I want to share it now: “I struggle to read, but know that if I cite you, I read your work over several days & it sat with me & it came with me on walks in the woods or by the water & I might have nodded off carrying it to other realms & it had chats with other thinkers & I held that space with gratitude” (2021). This is reciprocal listening-in-relation. By contrast, when I read a text, eager to find just the right quotation to include

in my next article: this is hungry listening. This is an unequal relationship characterized by my desire to extract intellectual resources.

I consider this kind of intellectual extraction an academic application of a settler move to innocence: settler adoption fantasies. In Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang's article "Decolonization is not a metaphor" (2012), they summarize a collection of "settler moves to innocence," which are ways in which settlers (and settler-adjacent positionalities) evade the real and difficult work of decolonization. The move to innocence of settler adoption fantasies can manifest in various contexts. I apply it here to academic research. Settler scholars adopt Indigenous practices and knowledge, especially with the idea that they have been entrusted with these keys to Indigeneity to "safe-keep" them. One particular manifestation is one who hybridizes Indigenous and Western thought, emerging as superior for incorporating the best of both worlds. In this case, decolonization becomes irrelevant because "decolonization is already completed in the indigenized consciousness of the settler" (Tuck and Yang 2012: 17). So, while listening-in-relation to Indigenous scholars and artists is important, I can be enacting epistemological violence on Indigenous worldviews and practices if I uncritically place the content I've extracted from these sources into Western structures of analysis and dissemination.

### Sounds of Indigeneity?

Since my earliest work on *The Halluci Nation*, I have spoken of sounding, sonifying, and hearing Indigeneity. To say anything about the sounds of Indigeneity is to be working from some kind of understanding of what Indigeneity sounds *like*. That understanding may be conscious or unconscious. What we have witnessed with grants, commissions, and events supported by non-Indigenous organizations is a preference for legible forms of Indigeneity: Indigeneity that can be heard by settler ears and in forms that affirm pre-existing ideas of inclusion and reconciliation. In her 2007 essay "The Music of Modern Indigeneity: From Identity to Alliance Studies," Beverley Diamond explained that Indigenous cultural practices, such as Inuit vocal games, are fetishized by non-Indigenous audiences for their exotic and strange sounds. Diamond acknowledged her own experience being mesmerized by Inuit vocal games. Indigenous musicians who engage with Indigenous sound practices that are legible — audible — to settler audiences gain more interest than those Indigenous musicians who do not. I cannot critique audiences only for this. I see similar patterns in how non-Indigenous scholars, like myself, select and discuss Indigenous musicians.

Even the word “Indigeneity” can be problematic as a homogenizing term. While it can have socio-political power, especially in terms of global solidarity and efforts like UNDRIP (United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples), it can erase important specificities of nations, communities, and experiences. How are settler listeners “hearing” Indigeneity? In a recent talk by Nadia Chana, she asked, “what do dominant settler publics think ‘authentic’ Indigeneity is?” (2021).

What Indigeneity sounds like also questions how genre boundaries function as settler logics within popular music research. As a discipline, we need to confront the tensions of genre boundaries delimited by the notion of “popular music” when considering Indigenous musicians. Even this organization’s broad conception of “popular music” draws upon a history of categorization: art, popular, and traditional/folk. How do we account for incommensurability of musical practices in ways that remain coherent for our organizations but do not distort and dismiss Indigenous musicians?

In her 2019 essay on tradition and modernity, Diamond remarks on the abundance of research on the Indigenous adoption of hymnody. She wonders about the trends of research that fall along genre lines, with “genres such as country music, fiddle, and band ignored by most academics prior to the 1980s and 1990s.” She asks: “Did we think populist genres were more capable of articulating a politics of Indigeneity?” (252). Indigenous hip hop is a frequent topic of discussion and analysis, including in my own work on *The Halluci Nation*. While I’m not calling for less work on hip hop, we need to wrestle with why we are so interested in the genre: how does its sonic and political legibility fit into settler visions of Indigeneity?

Two examples. When I spoke at International Association for the Study of Popular Music in the United States (IASPM US) about Melody McKiver’s album *Reckoning*, an attendee confessed to thinking that this music could not be classified “popular music.” While the album exhibits more overtly Melody’s influences from European classical and experimental music, can it be divorced from their broader musical practice, which features everything from Bach partitas to collaborative pop songs? What about Wolastoqi musician Jeremy Dutcher? He sings arrangements of Wolastoqey songs. His arrangements call upon European classical and pop song codes, which is unsurprising given his musical training. He often performs in spaces associated with European classical music. He toured in 2019 to cities and their orchestras across the country but also performed on NPR’s *Tiny Desk Concerts*, a series that hosts mostly popular music, specifically what one writer described as “hipster-infused indie rock” (Crockett 2016 - *Vox*). Both McKiver and Dutcher participated in the first Indigenous Classical Music Gathering in Banff in 2019. Where do

these Indigenous musicians fit? How do we distort their musical practices and positionalities through our disciplinary boundaries?

### A Drive to Possess

When I research these Indigenous musicians, I am entangled in another common settler attitude: possessiveness. Robinson declares: “Put most simply, writing *about* rather than *by* Indigenous people both actively dispossesses knowledge from Indigenous knowledge holders in our communities, and naturalizes Indigenous knowledge resource extraction as simply ‘knowledge mobilization’ and dissemination” (2020: 104). Much of my research could and should be critiqued as such. “The colonial attitude, including its academic branch,” according to Garneau, “is characterized by a drive to see, to traverse, to know, to translate (to make equivalent), to own, and to exploit. It is based on the belief that everything should be accessible, is ultimately comprehensible, and a potential commodity or resource, or at least something that can be recorded or otherwise saved” (2012: 32).

The title of this essay uses the phrase “white possessive.” I borrowed the phrase “the white possessive” from Aileen Moreton-Robinson’s 2015 book *The White Possessive: Property, Power, and Indigenous Sovereignty*. Her focus is on Australia, but because of her analysis of British colonialism, many of her arguments apply also to Canada and the United States.<sup>1</sup> Moreton-Robinson explains that “white possessive logics are operationalized within discourses to circulate sets of meanings about ownership of the nation, as part of commonsense knowledge, decision-making, and socially produced conventions” (xii). Here, she is addressing the nation-state. However, we can see white possessive logics at play in academia more broadly and in specific disciplines. I think about the ways in which I consume the existing literature, especially when I only skim to locate the perfect quotation to extract for my writing. Interview subjects are resources that I mine for content. Even I lay claim to a subject area, claiming to be the first to “explore” a particular topic, like it is “terra nullius,” and I erase Indigenous thought that may not be legible within musicology. In my case, I proudly staked my claim as the first to write a published musicology article on The Halluci Nation. How have I presented myself as a keeper of Indigenous knowledge and claimed certain disciplinary regions as terra nullius for my intellectual occupation?

The idea of whiteness and possession is not Moreton-Robinson’s invention. One of the most notable pieces linking racial identity and property is Cheryl I. Harris’s essay “Whiteness as Property” (1993) published in the

*Harvard Law Review* in 1993. Harris's primary concern is Black lives, though she notes that "the origins of whiteness as property lie in the parallel systems of domination of Black and Native American peoples" (1714). More recently, Tiffany Lethabo King has sought to "create an alternative site of engagement to discuss Indigenous genocide, anti-Black racism, and the politics of Black and Native studies" (2019: 35).

King examines how "specific forms of Black abolition and Native decolonization [can] interrupt normative processes of white human self-actualization" (2019: xv) and decentre "White academic and political discourse" (35). King describes Black Canadian studies as having "a long and established record of theorizing racial violence and through a triadic European-Native-Black frame" (2019: 13). She contrasts Black Canadian studies with the "U.S. racial discourse [that] tends to be organized by a White-Black paradigmatic frame that often erases Indigenous Peoples" (13). I have noticed that this racial discourse in popular music studies in the United States: the focus on the Black-White binary erases Indigenous presence and undermines Indigenous sovereignty. Here in Canada, with so much rhetoric about "nation to nation" relationships — by which is too often assumed to mean settler-Indigenous relationships — we often ignore the pervasive anti-Blackness and erase important histories of Black-Indigenous solidarities in Canada.

The Halluci Nation also invoked the "nation to nation" discourse with their second full-length album. The group stated that the album title, *Nation II Nation*, referred to relationships between Indigenous nations as well as between Indigenous Peoples and the Canadian settler state. My discussion of the political significance of the title remained superficial (Woloshyn 2015), particularly the way in which I mentioned sovereignty but did not critique settler colonialism. I did not reckon with the deep political stakes of Idle No More, even as I discussed the song "The Road," which the group dedicated to the Idle No More movement. My encounter with the song remained focused on aesthetic qualities, such as outlining textural layers and identifying production effects.

Shortly before the release of their third full-length album, *We Are the Halluci Nation*, The Halluci Nation released the EP "Stadium Pow Wow" (2016). I have previously written about this song, focusing on the video's depiction of diverse experiences of Indigenous communities in North America today, urban and rural contexts (Woloshyn 2016). Again, I'm struck by the absence of my own positionality as a settler in my writing. Without taking up more space than I should, it's clear that I could have provided a strong critique of settler colonialism if I had addressed my own perceptions of land and Indigenous presence and the encounter between the images presented and my experiences in rural and urban spaces in Saskatchewan and Ontario that

erase and segregate Indigenous Peoples. I think now about how the Indigenous reclamation of space in the video creates a crisis for a settler viewer like me: where do I belong if that is no longer my space? It points to how settler futurity relies on the foreclosure of Indigenous futurity (Tuck and Yang 2012: 14).

### Solidarity, Resistance, and Claiming Bad Kin

The Halluci Nation fostered global solidarities with multiple artists with their 2016 album, *We Are the Halluci Nation*. On the title track, Trudell declares: “We are the Halluci Nation. . . . Our DNA is of the earth and sky. Our DNA is of past and future.” Trudell’s Halluci Nation consists of people who “See the spiritual in the natural / Through sense and feeling / Everything is related / All the things of earth and in the sky have spirit / Everything is sacred,” as he described on the track “Alie Nation.” The Halluci Nation has its origins as a poetic image that transforms the word “hallucination,” or an apparition, into a state-less nation, a collective of liked-minded folks. As I explain, “‘Hallucination’ refers to the inability of others to see Indigenous Peoples as human beings. Through the actions of sonic solidarity, though, the Halluci Nation has become a real, vibrant nation. Its citizens are first those who participated on the album, but the invitation of citizenry extends to those who share the vision and labor of a broader decolonial project.” (Woloshyn 2019: 152). The group’s recent renaming to The Halluci Nation underlines the importance of Trudell’s concept and the group’s emphasis on solidarity. The Halluci Nation is specifically a critique of settler colonialism, which is an ongoing structure implemented throughout North America by which settlers occupy land as a means of asserting ownership (as opposed to non-settler colonialism, which asserts ownership but without dispossession) (Wolfe 1999: 1; Williams 2012: 223).

*We Are the Halluci Nation* offers hope through the Halluci Nation. It resists the settler state, here called the Alie Nation, by creating an elsewhere for Indigenous, Black, and ally citizens to thrive in community and solidarity. Despite the Alie Nation’s best efforts at subjugation and division, Saul Williams declares, in “The Virus,” about the Halluci Nation: “We are not a conquered people.” The musicians on this album engaged in the work of solidarity; they invite others to join the political work of decolonization (Woloshyn 2019). Settlers can join this Halluci Nation. However, “becoming an ally will require a long-term commitment to structural change” (Arvin, Tuck, and Merrill 2013: 19).

But before I can become an ally, I need to deal with my bad kin, which includes addressing my own bad kinship. Kim TallBear has previously discussed

kinship with settlers like myself through the binary of good kin and bad kin. She welcomes us as kin, but characterizes us as bad kin, for reasons I shouldn't need to list. In a 2018 twitter thread, she asked the following question: "how do we call settlers & other non-Indigenous ppl into good relation here both with Indigenous ppl & our nonhuman relatives WITHOUT them appropriating Indigeneity? so far settlers have been bad kin." TallBear's "bad kin" label is generous because she is welcoming us as kin. But as bad kin, it's on us to live in good relation with each other — to become good kin with "Indigenous ppl & our nonhuman relatives," as she says. I have found myself tempted to focus on TallBear's framing: yes, I'm bad kin to Indigenous Peoples but I'm working on it. I'm on the path. Maybe I even have moments of being good kin. But before accepting this generous relationality of kinship with Indigenous Peoples, we first need to reckon with a different conception of kinship: settler sociologist Alexis Shotwell's bad kin.

Shotwell remarks on the desire to distance oneself from the "bad guys" (2019). Those overt white supremacists. Our racist uncles. The pro-settler state, anti-Indigenous sovereignty oil companies. Government officials and policies. We are not as bad as them. Sometimes we can even convince ourselves that seeing the harm means that we are countering the harm. In a 2018 talk, Shotwell declared: "People who benefit from social relations of harm frequently try to claim kin relations with the people who are targeted by racism or to reject kin connections with wrongdoers." And she asks: "If we are complicit in the pain of this suffering world, how might we take responsibility for our bad kin?" Instead of distancing ourselves from those most obviously enacting harm (whom we might label as the true "bad guys"), we need to acknowledge them for what they are: our kin. We are citizens of their Alie Nation. Shotwell wonders: "White nationalists claim me, as a white person, as kin. Though they may not know me personally and though they would likely despair of my politics, they are working for a world in which I and white people like me hold citizenship, reproduce 'the white race', and are safe and flourishing. ... what would happen if I claimed them back" (2018).

Within popular music research, who are my bad kin? They may be specific scholars or published works. They may be colleagues at my own or other institutions. They may be peers at organizations like IASPM, in the general membership or in positions of leadership. Also, how have I been the bad kin to my settler colleagues, including in my published work? I've spent some time here naming the ways in which settler logics pervade my work as unmarked norms of white supremacy and settler colonial hierarchies.

So, what do I do with my bad kin? Shotwell outlines three relational framings to guide interventions with bad kin: friendship, comradeship, and

direct opposition. Friendship means “calling in” fellow white people and settlers to address their bad kinship. It may require cutting ties if the people aren’t open to change. Comradeship speaks to solidarity work that occurs beyond personal relationships. It requires actively supporting efforts and initiatives based on Indigenous and Black visioning. The third frame, direct opposition, could include a number of interventions: “policy work, documenting systemic racism, legal defense, copwatching” (2019), physically positioning ourselves at protests and blocking access to targeted communities. “Any solidarity relation we can take up,” Shotwell explains, “will have to start from our understanding of who is claiming us as kin, and from a commitment to pulling back on the ties that bind us to kinship relations of expropriation and violence. Perhaps we can make better kin out of what we inherit, and be of some benefit to this good world. Perhaps we can transform our relations. I hope so” (2019). I share Shotwell’s hope.

Shotwell calls on settlers like me to join her in this important work. However, I want to be clear about the limitations of such work. Tuck and Yang declare decolonization as “the repatriation of Indigenous land and life” (2012: 21). If “land or power or privilege” is not being given up, then anything you are calling “decolonization” has been weakened through metaphor. It is a diversion from the much harder work of disrupting and overthrowing settler colonial structures. Thus, much of the work I do in my research and teaching that critiques settler colonialism, names how its practices shape listening and sounding practices, and explores alternative modes is not decolonial. It’s anti-colonial. It’s work that critiques settler colonial structures and impacts, but does not actualize the dismantling of settler colonialism. Tuck and Yang affirm that efforts in critical consciousness are valuable. However, “The front-loading of critical consciousness building can waylay decolonization, even though the experience of teaching and learning to be critical of settler colonialism can be so powerful it can feel like it is indeed making change” (2012: 19). Nonetheless, I am committed to anti-colonial work because it is necessary to name what has been unnamed, to label past and ongoing harms, to provide material and tangible supports to those harmed by settler colonialism. I believe in social justice, harm reduction, and reparations. However, this is not decolonization.<sup>2</sup>

## Decolonization

Unsettling sounds of Indigeneity cannot be depoliticized from the larger work of unsettling Canada. I recommend the book *Unsettling Canada: A National Wake-Up Call* (2015) by Arthur Manuel and Grand Chief Ronald M. Derrickson to

provide some history on Indigenous resistance to the Canadian settler state and to offer paths of intervention and disruption moving forward.

Unsettling within popular music research, and specifically research about or with Indigenous musicians, means rejecting settling behaviour: avoiding claims to Indigenous knowledge, methodologies, and relationalities. In order to evade my own complicity, it can be tempting to try to take up Indigenous practices of relationality, as Shotwell explains: “Instead we must craft new practices of being in relation that can destroy settler colonialism and its articulation with anti-Black racism and border militarism” (2018). This crafting includes not appropriating Indigenous listening relationalities into my own listening practice. Robinson reflects on his own position as a guest on Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee lands with the following: “how might I listen as a respectful guest, and in ways that do not seek to extract and apply a particular Haudenosaunee or Anishinaabe listening practice, but nonetheless listen in relation with their knowledge systems?” (2020: 51).

Decolonization cannot happen without Indigenous Peoples leading it. If popular music research wishes to provide any decolonial solidarity, then it similarly must have Indigenous Peoples actively involved and in leadership. Collaboration, though, is not inherently decolonial. In his discussion of collaboration music projects, Robinson explains that “inclusion can just as easily participate in an elision of reciprocal relationships between collaborating partners” (2020: 5). In the Conclusion of *Hungry Listening*, Ellen Waterman and Deborah Wong offer the following reflection on collaboration:

Ellen wonders: What would an artistic collaboration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists founded in Deep Listening be like? ... I suspect a truly ethical collaboration would have to start with an invitation from Indigenous artists and not the other way around. Deborah, excited: “Exactly: it’s all about listening. I don’t yet know how to do it, but I know I aspire to a radical willingness to claim nothing. To claim no knowledge, no authority, and maybe not even request collaboration. I wonder whether elevating collaboration as the ideal terms for encounter isn’t another kind of hunger. (246)

To claim nothing. That is my own goal, however counter to the project of academia it may be.

Decolonization also requires giving the land back. Yes, this means land in the way that Tuck and Yang discuss it: the physical land and waterways. That remains necessary. Nonetheless, Robinson asks us to think about other

territories that all need to be given back, such as core curriculum. Can we think of popular music studies as a territory? This organization as a territory? I think so. And in that case, those are territories that can be given back.

As Garneau writes: “Settlers who become unsettled — who are aware of their inheritance and implication in the colonial matrix, who comprehend their unearned privileges and seek ways past racism — are settlers no longer ... they have become respectful guests, which in turn allows Indigenous peoples to be graceful hosts” (2012: 32). To be guests means that someone else has the autonomy and sovereignty over the space. “Giving back” is not the same as making room. The former is based on Indigenous sovereignty. The latter is based on inclusion with existing settler structures. Not only content but also structure needs to be changed. Think about the structures of conferences or other professional gatherings, our curriculum, our performance spaces, our classroom spaces.

In a recent letter, published in *Intersections* (2019),<sup>3</sup> Robinson offers clear instructions for schools and departments of music to achieve structural change that would result in the dismantling of our anti-Indigenous and anti-Black music education systems. Popular music studies exist both within and outside of formalized music programs in secondary educational institutions. So as a field, we need to assess our overlaps with that music education and also identify legacies of Western dominance that are specific to our work.

The Halluci Nation has generously invited us all to join its collective. However, first, I must reckon with my colonial drives. After all, I am a “produced colonialist” (la paperson 2017: xxiii), to quote K. Wayne Yang, writing under the name “la paperson.” Alongside these colonial drives, though, exist decolonial desires. And so I answer Yang’s call to take a wrench to the colonial technologies in academia. This is collective work. Within and across institutions, organizations, and communities. Let’s be creative in visioning how we might disrupt the colonial technologies at work in academia and in popular music studies.

While I approach the work with a sense of urgency, I am also learning to recognize my hungry urges: I need to know the plan precisely before taking steps; I need to secure collaborators; I need to comb through sources that will illuminate my thinking. Planning, collaborating, reading. Listening. These do not have to serve my hunger. Slow down my listening. Stop. Claim nothing. “[Find] processes for oscillating between layers of listening positionality” (Robinson 2020: 61). Embrace unfixed, non-teleological listening and experiment with other listening practices. And maybe someday the Halluci Nation will be my home.

## Postscript

During the Q&A that followed this talk, I was asked for actions to take. I, in turn, asked for ideas from our IASPM Canada community. In the months since, I have reflected on what actions I could recommend. Here are some that come to mind.

1. Review Dylan Robinson's letter (2019). Note which aspects apply to your department and the IASPM Canada organization. Act on those steps. For aspects that do not apply, brainstorm how they would apply in a popular music studies context. Then act on those steps.

2. Take a close look at your course bibliographies. Pay particular attention to work written by white scholars: does this work qualify as "bad kin"? If yes, consider either only assigning the work if there is opportunity to critique it or not assigning that work (i.e., as a form of cutting ties).

3. Form accountability groups within and across institutions.<sup>4</sup> These accountability groups are for non-BIPOC individuals to tackle the work of confronting white supremacy and white privilege without burdening your BIPOC friends and colleagues.<sup>5</sup> In these groups: a) deal with emotions that come up when doing this work and confronting one's own complicity; b) receive feedback or advice about situations we face in this work, including challenging patterns of thinking and acting based in white supremacy and white privilege; c) articulate commitments to claiming bad kin and dismantling white supremacy; and d) hold each other accountable for completing commitments.

4. Form experimental groups for trying out "new practices of being in relation" (Shotwell 2018) as white listeners, researchers, teachers.

5. Provide agency and resources for BIPOC scholars to create their own content *and* structures within the organization, such as at the annual meeting. This means more than holding space for them in existing structures, such as conference presentations and panels, which require abstracts with particular structures (e.g., time limits, formats, etc.).

6. Specifically provide opportunities for BIPOC students to build community, work with mentors, and share their work (sharing the work could be both within existing structures, such as a conference presentation, or through other formats they desire and create). Provide tangible resources to make this happen, such as physical or digital space, a budget, and so on.

7. Provide safe mechanisms for students in particular (but all faculty, staff, and affiliates) to report harmful behaviour. Remove bad kin from situations of power imbalances that may be enacting harm on these individuals and groups.

8. If you inspect peer reviews (e.g., journal editor, chair), omit harmful passages, specifically those including anti-Black and racist language or those

imposing a Western, settler frame. Organizations should set up procedures for handling such situations, such as “calling in” the reviewers to address these harms. 🍂

## Notes

1. The book includes a chapter on the United States. We must avoid applying too liberally the analysis of one settler colonial context to another: each context has specific peoples, treaties, laws, and resistances.
2. In a forthcoming chapter in the Bloomsbury Handbook of Music and Art, entitled “Anti-Colonial Activism and the Canadian Opera Company, 2017–2022,” friend and colleague Rena Roussin similarly employs Tuck and Yang’s work to caution against equating social justice and consciousness-raising efforts with decolonization when anti-coloniality is more accurate.
3. The letter itself was written in 2020 and officially published in early 2021. It is dated as a 2019 publication because the publisher fell behind on its production schedule.
4. This suggestion is modelled on the accountability groups formed in the Academics for Black Lives training.
5. I recognize that BIPOC is a clumsy acronym but hope it remains a helpful qualifier here.

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