Broadcasting Live from Unceded Coast Salish Territory: Aboriginal Community Radio, Unsettling Vancouver

Thesis

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Abstract

This thesis examines moments of spatial, historical, and identity transformation through the performance of aboriginal community radio production in contemporary Vancouver, BC. It highlights points at which space is marked as indigenous and colonial through physical movement and through discourse.

Beginning with a trip to record a public demonstration for later broadcast, this thesis follows the event in a public performance to question and unpack spatial, sonic, and historical references made by participants. The protest calls for present action while drawing upon past experiences of indigenous peoples locally and nationwide that affect the lived present and foreseeable future.

This thesis also moves to position aboriginal community radio practice in a particular place and time, locating the discussion in unceded indigenous territory within the governmental forces of Canadian regulation at a single radio station. Vancouver Co-op Radio, to provide a more coherent microcosm of Vancouver's indigenous community radio scene. CFRO is located in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside and its shows, mostly aired live from the studio, broadcast a marginalized voices. The content of its overtly indigenous shows includes aboriginal language learning and revival, aboriginal political issues or “talk radio,” “NDN” (pronounced “Indian”) pop culture/music, and aboriginal music more broadly writ. It examines ways in which “aboriginal” and “community” are
negotiated by practitioners and how those conversations inform the broadcast
“aboriginal” “community” radio programs.

The thesis returns to the studio with recordings from the initial public
demonstration to experience a live performance of a single radio show. This analysis
examines choices of internal and external media as an emergent performance, probing
how choices of documentary recordings and live interviews, for instance, affect the
aboriginal community radio subjectivity which is broadcast live out to local Vancouver
audiences. Through close listening and attention to moments of shift rather than stasis,
this thesis demonstrates the fluid assemblage of peoples, choices, media, spaces, and
times emerges to take up the form of aboriginal community radio.
Dedication

This document is dedicated to my grandmother, Beverly F. Beuck.
Acknowledgments

I thank the Musqueam, Tsleil-Waututh, and Squamish Nations for allowing me to live and work in their shared territory over the course of this investigation.

I am grateful to the many producers and community radio participants who accepted me into the studio and into all kinds of wonderful, challenging conversations. Among them, I would like to thank Gunargie O’Sullivan in particular for her help connecting me with musicians and community members in person and online. Her guidance and support in the field were instrumental in shaping this project.

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Vita

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Introduction

A small red light glows on the soundboard and jittery needles jump in their analog meters. A deep voice spills through my headphones, rising and falling in a pentatonic Salish melody intertwined with a pulsing hand drum. The CD player’s countdown nears zero and a producer taps a button at the base the soundboard, illuminating a second red soundboard light and a large beacon high on the wall. She drags the sliding controls in opposite directions, fading the CD track while bringing up her co-host’s microphone for first live talk of the program:

*Sán uu dàng Gíidang?* What is the state of your spirit? *Dii ’láagang.* Mine’s fine. You know, sometimes I feel like asking the question my cousin used to ask me all the time. He’d say, “What do you know for damn sure today?” I never had an answer for him ‘cause I never knew anything for certain. But anyway, welcome to Sne’waylh, a program of language, culture, history, art, a little bit of everything. Our culture though, you can’t sum it up in one word, it’s all the composition of all those different things...

He continues to speak, sharing the plan to aim today’s show towards thinking about time aboriginally, inspired by an invitation he received from a Hopi friend in Arizona, which he holds up for the other two of us in the studio to see. As on any other Tuesday, co-hosts Gunargie and Woody sit in the community radio studio with newsletters, newspaper clippings, flyers, and other assorted texts in neat stacks on the table between them for

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reference later in the show and Facebook open on the computer to catch trends or take requests. I sit in the corner jotting notes and wearing headphones, with a microphone aimed at my mouth “just in case,” as Gunargie had claimed earlier from her position at the controlling soundboard.

My microphone is off for the moment, so I am not in a position to address multiple and mostly unknown publics about a concept as unwieldy as “time.” The show is broadcast live as an emergent performance, so there’s no editing out “ums” or awkwardly worded statements before they are heard by any audience members “tuning in.” As the show continues, though, I happily participate in the language learning segments, repeating back Haida numbers to the best of my ability, stumbling through unfamiliar phonemes on air. I do, however, struggle to navigate the complicated social interactions of “small talk” style discussion of performances I had attended, discussions made more difficult with the knowledge that any misstep would be simultaneously broadcast throughout the city. I look to Woody’s words for guidance on my project. In participating in this show and others like it, attempting to document and analyze the radio programming on community radio in Vancouver, I certainly don’t know anything “for damn sure,” nor would I even try to “sum up [any culture] in one word.” No claim that I could make of this research is or even could be certain, but it will be honest and as accurate a portrayal as possible of the situations I experienced.

From our location in the studio, we’re broadcasting “Sne’waylh” or “teachings,” in the Squamish language. No one in the studio identifies as Squamish, one of the three nations within whose shared territory Vancouver sits. Gunargie identifies as Kwakiutl,
Woody introduces himself as Haida, and I, an observer and occasional participant, am a white settler from two thousand miles away from Squamish Nation territory. Keeping the title from a former iteration of the show that did emphasize Squamish language and identity, today’s performance gains an additional locality, a relation to the territory. Under the label of “aboriginal program,” the opening of the show and the following conversation broadcasts aboriginality as complex, multivocal, linguistically diverse, and relational.

This thesis explores the social work of aboriginal community radio and its producers in the Vancouver, BC area. Analyzing a single day’s recording and broadcast, it investigates how aboriginal community radio practice engages in identity and territory negotiation in a way that is uniquely meaningful given the lack of land treaty, histories of oppression, and current discourse surrounding reconciliation between settlers and indigenous communities. The text traces aboriginal community radio practice through space and real time examining the issues of aboriginality, performance, broadcast, and territory together in the construction of indigenous radio subjectivities for live broadcast.

Work in this area includes an ethnomusicological attention to careful listening in recording and broadcasting and media anthropology’s “ethnographically informed, historically grounded, and context-sensitive analyses of the ways in which people use and make sense of media technologies.” By addressing questions of practice in specific

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times, places, and communities, ethnographic studies of media can attend to conflicting, parallel, or even overlapping ways in which media are strategically used. Communication practices mediate between people within and across communities, which the community focus of community radio amplifies. Ethnographically informed indigenous media studies examine ways in which social action and discourse surrounding settler-colonialism are made to intersect through mediation. In an early work describing a new international “Fourth World” or indigenous media studies, Faye Ginsburg offers,

The very creation of media work that reflects and revisions their lives and histories is a kind of self-conscious and direct social action that establishes and reinforces the visible cultural presence of indigenous lives in a form that can circulate in and among many communities.

These mediated works extend beyond mere representations to include specific and self-conscious constructions of indigenous realities rich in aesthetic practices, curatorial moves, and embedded spatial materiality. The works and the realities they constitute circulate not by their own agency, but because of people and their practices. Media


3. Settler-Colonialism has been theorized by many scholars in vastly different ways, but here I take up a specifically definitional reading from Chadwick Allen’s description that “aboriginal inhabitants of what are now First World nations have been forced to compete for indigenous status with European settlers and their descendants eager to construct new identities that separate them from European antecedants.” In Chadwick Allen, Blood Narrative: Indigenous Identity in American Indian and Maori Literary and Activist Texts, New Americanists (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002).

producers comment on and create realities as they collect recordings, make the “cut” or
are excluded from broadcast, and as they are received by other people, highlighting the
“community” element of aboriginal community radio examined in this thesis.

I conducted ethnographic fieldwork for this project over the course of two months
(June-August 2013) while living in Vancouver. For the most part, I sat in on several
aboriginal and a few non-aboriginal shows broadcast every week at two main campus and
community radio stations, CFRO and CJSF. This practice involved sitting in the studio
and watching as discussions would unfold and having conversations or semi-structured
(depending upon a variety of variables) with the others in the studio when pre-recorded
materials were set to play.

On several occasions, my presence in the studio was acknowledged on air. Most
of the time this would be said to fill the time while selecting the next track to play or
waiting for an online audio example to load. When acknowledged, I would occasionally
be called upon to speak on air, generally to talk about an event I had attended or the
project I was undertaking. As in the opening example, my role in the studio as observing
researcher was often preemptively shifted to “potential guest” by proximity to a
microphone while someone else sat at the controls. I always kept an eye on the
soundboard to verify that the red light by my channel was not lit and I was off air.

My efforts included recording events for producer interlocutors to use on air,
following along as the producer recorded. This practice was strongly informed by my
experience as a student both video and audio documentary forms at Ohio State University
and Duke University. I did repeatedly ask what types of recordings to procure and
attempted to follow broad guidelines, hoping for insight into in-the-field practices contributing to the aesthetics of the programs I observed. These suggestions generally meant capturing speeches, an interview, and singing. This relationship created a “studying sideways,” in researching those who engage similarly ethnographic work for and from different ends.  

I struggled to negotiate the twin roles of recordist and ethnomusicologist. Through the back of my mind, I always had the warning “the social and geographic positioning of anthropologists working on media places them in complex relations to their objects of study: usually engaged, sometimes complicit, rarely neutral.” My anxieties remained despite reassurance from my primary interlocutors that community radio depends on interaction with/in the community to be broadcast to the community. As long as I was living in and working with the amorphous “community,” my recordings were welcome and helpful. To ease my anxieties about positioning myself as a community media representative and scholar, I avoided public interviews as best as I could manage. I also recorded for broadcast only in public spaces at events open to the public and under direction of an experienced aboriginal community radio producer.

The original goal of this project was to investigate the music of a contemporary, Canadian-centered international protest movement’s local practice, use of music and dance, and communications with grassroots organizers situated geographically elsewhere but under the same banner of “Idle No More.” Although I was able to attend a

demonstration labeled by its organizers as “Idle No More,” I did so as a recorder, bringing the speeches and recorded sounds back to a radio producer at Vancouver Co-Op Radio (CFRO) to be aired the following day for a national event, “Decolonization of the Air Waves,” hosted by the National Campus and Community Radio Association.

The demonstration I attended was probably quite similar to the one discussed in this thesis, but my anxieties as a newly arrived fieldworker doubled when I witnessed a tragic accident that ended my recording efforts for the day. I was aware of just enough to know how little I actually knew. I recognized certain songs being sung, especially the “Women’s Warrior Song,” which I had first heard the prior week and had buzzing through my head ever since in its entirety. I also recognized that I was present with big monitor headphones, a handheld microphone, and a Zoom H4N complete with furry “dead kitten” windscreen and that my participation in the event, being without a recording ally in the field, was already marked as different and potentially invasive.

I recognized that the songs were not being introduced verbally, something I had observed at National Aboriginal Day celebrations and would later learn to be proper cultural protocol. If I participate and sing when protocol is not followed, I also demonstrate my lack of awareness of protocol. Knowing I am marked as an outsider by my equipment and white-reading appearance, participation when protocol was not followed would also reinforce my “outsider” status. I was invited to sing by an elder, but I used my microphone as an excuse, sincerely torn between honoring an elder and distancing myself from the community of protesters. I wanted to avoid being seen by others who would be unaware of the invitation but potential aware of the breech of
appropriate protocol. There was opportunity also for those participating and observing to be unaware of protocol, to not take my participation as a sign of naïveté or appropriation, but as someone new to the community, I didn’t want to invite risk of ostracism.

Although the social movement I sought to engage in was elusive, I found my community in aboriginal community radio. The idea of a radio station being “community” struck me as particularly interesting given the near solitude I was used to in editing audio and video documentary. People broadcast their shows live working not for money but for any number of other reasons (examples I heard included: something to do after retirement; desire to gain experience for a career; and just a general love of the show). This was a community I could identify with due to a love of radio, but also a regimented structure and organization I could grasp and plan. Rather than struggling to connect with people via emails, tweets, or calls, I could rely on very specific starting and stopping points in the radio schedule.

Intentionally focusing specifically on one day’s production work, this thesis points to a practice of movement within the community and through the city before returning to the studio to broadcast back out to the listening community, fueling further discussion of topics and future radio airtime. The recursive quality of this practice provides an interface in an otherwise unidirectional broadcast pattern. The emergent quality of these performances as well as their patterning in the form of marked radio programs are evoked here through narrative. The form of this thesis also mirrors the
practice of gathering recordings in chapter one and returning to broadcast them in chapter three.\(^7\)

Chapter one traverses spaces, participating in the recording of a protest march through city streets. Moving through a socially contested space with the demonstrators, in chapter one we listen carefully while considering multiple relationalities at play in the performance. This chapter introduces specific places and experiences of colonial history as they are invoked in the unfolding demonstration. It investigates ways in which futures and pasts are presented in public demonstration marked specifically as indigenous.

Chapter two presents conversations with radio producers about aboriginality, community, and radio at play in their work. The aboriginal community radio hosts involved in this study mostly live far from their home territories. This distanced or outsider indigeneity complicates the positions of aboriginality and community within the sprawling urban formation of Vancouver, discussed in chapter two.

Chapter three picks up where chapter one left off, observing in the studio as a show is constructed in real time. The show unfolds as the producer makes decisions of what pre-recorded materials to air and what time is allotted for an emergent in-studio discussion. As the media and social roles are negotiated, the show is broadcast out across the geographically local area in chapter three.

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Chapter 1

A Record of Indigenous Protest

The goal of this thesis is to examine a snapshot of the social work of aboriginal community radio and its producers do in the Vancouver area, focused primarily on a single day’s broadcasting work.

This chapter aims to present a brief introduction to indigeneity and indigenous voice in Vancouver, BC, a brief historical account of colonial relations, geographic and ethnographic contextualization, and the "why" of this thesis project. This chapter calls attention to the ongoing settler-indigenous relationships (vis-à-vis voice, space, and the project of reconciliation) from and into which indigenous community media is broadcast. The social situation is complex and difficult, and the stakeholders are many and far from monolithic. Many are involved in vastly varying aspects of life in Vancouver. To introduce the people, the mediascape, and space, I turn to a public demonstration held in July of 2013.

The day is sunny and warm and a diverse crowd, clad in red headbands, gathers in front of the Gassy Jack statue in Gastown, a Vancouver district tucked between the

8. For the sake of this paper, “indigenous” and “aboriginal” will be used more or less interchangeably to 1) follow the example of the interviews and presentations observed in the course of research and 2) to underline the shifting nature of identity and its unfixable terms.
economically booming Downtown and the destitute Downtown Eastside. Victorian buildings and brick roads mark the space to tourists, as do the many shops peddling maple leaf-emblazoned postcards and Canucks/White Caps fan wear, not to mention the sonic quarter-hourly interjections of the steam clock for which the district is known in guidebooks.

Assembling Bodies in Gastown

Initial speeches and songs are presented by organizers and representatives of the Tsleil-Waututh, Musqueam, and Squamish nations. They boom and distort through an old guitar amplifier as they speak and drum. An arc of open space separates the three speaking men and their audience, while two women and a young boy go about writing “honour the apology” and “respect my elders” in chalk in the otherwise open area on the brick walkway, alternately handing out headbands to attendees who did not bring their own. Representatives of the media hover towards the inner ring of spectators for shots and sounds of the presenters and reactions from the assembled mass of protesters. The growing, headbanded crowd is populated by youth and elderly, settler and indigenous, diverse racially and ethnically-identified and -identifying members of Canada’s mosaic of multiculturalism. A local aboriginal rap artist carries a bullhorn and alternates between

9. This chapter will trace the unfolding of the demonstration, so information will emerge as it is brought forth in performance. “Honour the apology” refers to the 2008 apology to Indian Residential School survivors, issued by Prime Minister Stephen Harper. The event today responds to newly published findings of specific abuses in residential schools, necessitating the reexamination of the apology. Discussion of the political situation will be discussed later in this chapter.

10. Where the metaphor for cultural and ethnic expression in the United States was historically a “melting pot,” Canada has utilized a “mosaic” image of multiple languages and cultures coming together to form one nation.
speaking to the crowd and encouraging her young son to help; a young activist coated with fake blood carries a sign inked in the same sanguine liquid; a white law student makes conversation with a visiting Anishinaabe musician; and I, a settler graduate student, join with media personnel endeavoring to record the event for broadcast on television, CBC radio, and community radio (in which I participate nearly daily).

Degrees of participation vary among these media personnel—an aboriginal community radio producer wears a red headband and receives and dons a button identifying herself as a residential school survivor. I receive a red headband when I arrive and am encouraged to wear it as a settler ally (so I do). By contrast, a television news cameraman quickly shakes his head when offered a headband in solidarity, as does the CBC radio producer who is shadowing the community radio producer for a story. The professional and community media (a CBC radio producer, the community radio producer, and the cameraman) find opportunities to pull people aside for vox populi interviews in between speeches amplified on a large but fuzzy amp. There is no big ado about of journalistic objectivity; rather the aboriginal radio producer visibly marks herself as both aboriginal and a member of the local community with her button and headband. Participation in the demonstration is as valid a technique as any given that the community station broadcasts to the local aboriginal and non-aboriginal community by community members. Involvement in community action serves to further legitimize “community” membership in a way that is productive for the community radio producer and not the CBC radio producer, for instance.

11. “Vox Populi” refers to on-the-spot, on-location interviews generally performed to get a snapshot of what the people/populi are thinking/feeling about a specific issue.
As the crowd grows and headbands are distributed, a speaker explains the headbands:

“I want to explain a bit of the teachings behind we invited people here and why we're asking people to wear these headbands. So in our culture, we come from the stolmorcur hulmuq people or Coast Salish and in our culture we wear these headbands to strength[en] our minds. We are putting these headbands on our heads so that our thoughts can be intact and strengthened inside our heads and that bad thoughts and bad feelings that might be directed towards us won't be able to enter our minds. We wear these headbands so that we can strengthen our minds, what we call our sxwalulth or stxwauln, our thoughts and feelings. So we wanted to ask everybody to wear these headbands symbolically and join us in this ceremony, to wear these headbands to strengthen our minds as we do this work to honour the apology so that we can stand united together inchulmulq natsulmat.”

Weaving in and out of English and Squamish, he collectivizes the minds of the group in order to do meaningful social work. Indigenous and settler demonstrators are bound in purpose and appearance through headbands, protecting sxwalulth and thoughts, engaging in indigenous rights protest while in the heart of an overtly “settled” Vancouver. To unpack the location of this endeavor, one speaker (just prior to the beginning of the “march” segment of the protest) points to the symbolic and historic implications for the march’s origin.

Dustin Khelsilem Rivers, a young man in his 20s with long dark hair tied back in a ponytail underneath a woven wool headband with a red blazon across it, takes the microphone from the previous Tsleil-Waututh speaker and begins addressing the crowd and performing protocol in his Squamish language. Once he has completed the Squamish language element of his introduction, he continues on in English, (re)introducing himself,

12. He’s also wearing a woven sash over a red “Warrior Up” t-shirt, a quote from elder and community organizer Ta’a. Although not a vital element of this particular story, it does connect this speaker and this event with a broader Coast Salish activism in BC involving environmental protection, gendered responsibility, and indigenous sovereignty.
his family, and his community to the growing assembly of participants. He explains the significance of the current location to the day’s march and protest.

“So we thank you all. We’re going to be marching down Water Street through Gastown. And I just wanted to also before we leave explain one more thing. So this is the Gassy Jack statue if any people didn’t know that. This is Gastown, if any people didn’t know that either (just kidding). I just want to share a quick story, I’ve shared it before but Gastown was the start of Vancouver in a lot of ways. In the late 1800s, the settlers in this area tried to take down a lot of the trees to build Vancouver. And there was people living on the Burrard Inlet, on the north side of the Burrard Inlet. And when they were burning the trees, the town caught on fire. And the people from the Burrard Inlet, my great-great-grandmother, came over on their canoes and saved a lot of the early settlers that were living here in Gastown and brought them back to North Van to protect them from the fire because their exit to New Westminster was cut off. So that’s another piece of history, of colonial history of Vancouver and Canada, specifically Vancouver that’s also not recognized very well, how it was the native people that provided and protected the early Vancouver settlers. And so we thought today it would be a symbolic area to start this walk in, this area where people came together and where the indigenous people really helped out the early Vancouver settlers and I just wanted to explain that piece as well. So thank you all and we’re going to start walking this way.”

The story, history, or colonial anecdote frames the present action in a deep yet ongoing settler-colonial relationship in the shared territory of the Squamish, Musqueam, and Tsleil-Waututh nations today also known as the Vancouver area. The story, based in an historical example, demonstrates trust and reciprocity and hope for an improved future relationship within the territory when faced with grief and pain, societal indifference and community ambivalence, the growing weight of intergenerational trauma narratives, and oftentimes tense and always unequal power relationships between settler and indigenous, Canadian state and aboriginal nations.

13. New Westminster is currently a city in the Greater Vancouver area, located about 20 km southeast of the day’s march, along the Fraser River.
Through this speech act, the space of Gastown becomes a site of colonial knowledge, a known colonized zone. Although the colonial realities are not commonly unknown or unstated in indigenous rights events or practice, it is still noteworthy that the acknowledgement of colonization comes in the form of a friendship anecdote. This anecdote finds its place in a speech not in the "angry Indian" stereotype or a violent colonialism narrative often associated with indigenous activism by the settler media. The anecdote instead acknowledges the necessary dialogue and mutual cooperation necessary for all parties to benefit in spaces of shared residence and responsibility. Historical geographer Cole Harris sums up the ongoing colonial conflict within British Columbia as a destabilizing specter haunting all British Columbians, not just the indigenous ones, one not likely to evaporate on its own due to the complex entanglements associated with settler-colonialism.

Breaking from his historically focused analysis, Harris spends the last section of his book Making Native Space looking towards the possibilities of the future given the implications of the past on the current cultural geographic landscape. The difficulties of colonialism in a pluralistic society are amplified for BC by the inconceivability of change, of an otherwise. Harris suggests that

Unlike the African colonies from which colonial administrators and armies could leave, a highly successful colonial settler society like British Columbia is here to stay. The colonizers and the colonized have no choice but to live with each other. In these circumstances, there is no getting away from the challenge of thinking from within structures and mentalities associated with colonialism towards ways of surpassing them.14

Putting a finer edge on the difficulties of imagining a different relationship between indigenous peoples in a pluralistic society and the settler ideal of citizenship in the space known as British Columbia, he points again to the history he has laid out in the previous chapters, that “if the last 150 years of Native-non-Native relations in British Columbia have any lessons to teach, one of the most important must be that, overall, the politics of assimilation are unrealizable.” Comments like Harris’s underline the precarity of the current situation, but also the potential changes actions such as today’s march might inspire if the current state is openly acknowledged within the society to be unsustainable.

_Raising Voices in Space_

The arc dissipates as the march beings, led by a small blue car, flanked by a police escort. Water Street's usual sounds of car and bus traffic, arriving and departing seabusses, and the occasional Muzak seeping through a momentarily open door as a customer enters or exits a store is overwhelmed by resonating lines of "Ho he lo," the Coast Salish anthem, shared with the world by the late Chief Dan George as the drummers follow close behind the car. Salish parallel homophony radiates throughout the streets as one or two of the lead singers march backwards to project towards the other marchers, some of whom sing as they march forwards, creating a multidirectional, moving Salish anthemic song. The intermittent police alert beeps punctuate the Salish singing and bring Vancouver's ordinary soundscape into stark sovereign contrast to an otherwise indigenous sound-space. Marching behind the singers is a crowd of red

15. Harris, _Making Native Space_, 300-301.
headbanded demonstrators, some participating in singing near the front, but more voicing cheers as the marchers progress.

Deeper into the procession walks Jerrilynn Webster, known in the hip-hop scene as JB the First Lady, a local rap artist, community radio personality, and co-organizer of the day's local event. Wearing a cedar headband in addition to the day’s red one, she projects through a bullhorn: "I say 'honour the' you say apology. Honour the..." eliciting the crowd’s answer of "apology." After a few repetitions, she switches to lead with "what do we want? Justice. When do we want it? Now." and "Hey hey ho ho, release the documents now." The cheers she leads collide against strains of the "Women's Warrior Song," a gift to the people from Martina Pierre of the Lil'wat Nation, sung by marchers at closer to the front of the line as well as the sounds of the city's crosswalk signals, police sirens, activist side conversations, and general traffic noises. The “hey hey” of JB’s cheer bounces “heys” between the verbally chanting demonstrators and the singers’ melodic “yey hey hey” in the Women’s Warrior song. The repeated “heys” bind the two vocalized demonstrations together diverging and repeatedly colliding with “yahee ho ho” and “ho ho release the documents now.” The strains of vocally identified indigeneity and state actions desired by the protesting crowd of indigenous and non-indigenous bodies as one sounding polyphonic group.

Caught in overlapping Lil’wat and English, the drum beat gains momentary allies in the horn of the lead blue car, the claps of singing and non-singing demonstrators, the ringing of hand bells, and even the silent vertical pulsing of the marching women’s

16. The opening text of the “Women’s Warrior Song” is “yey hey hey, yahee ho ho, yahee ho ho-o...”
forearms. The drum is heard and felt throughout the entire marching line, as well as the surrounding area, uniting the participants and non-participating publics in a sonic and embodied pulsing experience. Before the message of the day can be heard, even, the drum’s presence is known and, more importantly for the crowd marching today, it is known as indigenous.

JB repeatedly breaks the call-and-response chanting to state the purpose of the demonstration:

"We're asking all levels of government to honour the apology. We're marching in the street for our elders and our grandparents and some of our parents who went to residential school. We're asking for all documents pertaining to residential schools to be released. We're calling upon the government to honour the apology."\(^\text{17}\)

Today’s assembly in protest and demonstration, hashtagged #honourtheapology #vancouver, is sparked by recent revelations of specific and formerly unknown abuses within the Canadian Indian Residential School system. From the 1870s until the last school closed in 1996, aboriginal children were forcibly sent to “government-funded, church-run schools [which] were set up to eliminate parental involvement in the intellectual, cultural, and spiritual development of Aboriginal children."\(^\text{18}\) What was unknown until recently, however, was that biomedical and nutritional experiments were conducted without consent or even subject awareness on aboriginal residential school

\(^{17}\) Jerrilynn Webster, Public Speech (presented at the Honour the Apology March, Vancouver, BC, July 25, 2013).

children between 1942 and 1952. A paper by Ian Mosby detailing these experiments caught the media’s attention in mid-July and this march is merely one of many demonstrations calling attention to the lack of openness on the part of the government and former schools in revealing their roles in the traumas associated with the residential school system. The Vancouver demonstration is positioned in speeches and online as being one site of many “national day of prayer” events to “honour the apology” for the colonial residential school system.

In an opinion for Huffington Post Canada, Wab Kinew, Director of Indigenous Inclusion at the University of Winnipeg and popular aboriginal rap and media figure said, “we are calling our gatherings (to be held today at noon) ”Honour The Apology,” in reference to Prime Minister Harper's 2008 apology to Residential School survivors. The idea is that we can each honour the apology on an individual level by commemorating or praying for the survivors.” Events in every major Canadian city are organized following Kinew’s lead through existing grassroots networks. In Kinew’s call, the responsibility for the apology for the residential school system rests on each individual Canadian, but also the government. Today’s march and its sister events across the country demand the government honor the apology by increasing transparency surrounding these abuses

during the scheduled auspices of the soon-to-expire Truth and Reconciliation Commission designed to address the claims and experiences of residential school survivors.

In 2008, Prime Minister Stephen Harper issued a formal apology to the survivors of the residential school system, beginning his address with the words, “the treatment of children in Indian Residential Schools is a sad chapter in our history.” For the estimated 80,000 living survivors of the residential school system as well as intergenerational survivors, however, that chapter is not a closed one. The situational difficulties are compounded by “the ideological underpinnings to Indian education, which categorized students in these schools as something less than civilized, as fundamentally flawed beings in need of correction,” assumptions that are difficult to reconfigure. To understand the mismatch of the apology with the day’s call for it to be honored, it’s important to look at the apology as a text that takes a position on accountability and colonial experience.

Harper’s apology, about which many have written, lacks the individual accountability Kinew calls for. “The government,” a socio-political construct, “now recognizes that the consequences of the Indian Residential Schools policy were profoundly negative and that this policy has had a lasting and damaging impact on Aboriginal culture, heritage and

language.” Each Canadian is not held responsible for the healing process of the amassed trauma, but the government acknowledges past harm. Harper continues, “While some former students have spoken positively about their experiences at residential schools, these stories are far overshadowed by tragic accounts of the emotional, physical and sexual abuse and neglect of helpless children, and their separation from powerless families and communities.” The “tragic accounts” are separated from the agents who enacted and enforced the Indian Residential School system in a way that depersonalizes the colonial violence of such a system.

As the march traverses Vancouver’s streets, it becomes clear that this type of performance, of raising voices and processing through territory, requires a different commitment from its participants. The demonstrators physically assemble and mark themselves with headbands, they move through the streets singing and cheering to draw attention and awareness to what is otherwise unseen, unheard, and more or less forgotten: the violences of the Indian Residential School System and the lasting trauma it inflicted. Harper continues to explain:

Two primary objectives of the Residential Schools system were to remove and isolate children from the influence of their homes, families, traditions and cultures, and to assimilate them into the dominant culture. These objectives were based on the assumption Aboriginal cultures and spiritual beliefs were inferior and unequal. Indeed, some sought, as it was infamously said, "to kill the Indian in the child". Today, we recognize that this policy of assimilation was wrong, has caused great harm, and has no place in our country.

This apology and the perceived failure to honor it points to a large and troubling schism in general Canadian discourse surrounding aboriginal life. Many aboriginal and non-

aboriginal Canadians engage in bearing witness and receiving testimony of Indian Residential School survivors, aware of the personal and intergenerational traumas associated with such experiences, a large segment of mostly non-aboriginal Canadians take a “get over it” stance. Within the latter group, justifications include reasoning by linear-timeline: if we could rewind time and change the policy, we certainly would do so, but the schools are closed now, so it’s time to move on. While this stance does acknowledge the immediate harm of the Indian Residential School system, it fails to account for ongoing experiences of trauma and the structures of power and privilege that normalized the systematic removal of aboriginal children from their homes for this state-sponsored, church-run education, structures that are still very much re-created today.27

Another rationale I encountered repeatedly was that aboriginal groups aren’t the only people who have suffered injustices, but they’re the only ones who have let it prevent them from making progress. In this category I heard claims that “I/my parents/my grandparents/etc. came to this country and were discriminated against, but we learned English/French and worked hard to be contributing members of society.” Assimilationist in tone, this stance conflates aboriginal identity with a failure to perform appropriate national labor. In this logic, aboriginality shifts in discourse to fall under the heading of “minority population” in a pluralistic society, rather than nations within a nation. The

27. Systems of privilege do not simply disappear because they are no longer de jure, but tend to remain at an oftentimes-unnoticed de facto level. For instance, even though the residential school system is an historical policy and practice, in 2011 about half of all Canadian foster care children under the age of fourteen were aboriginal. This statistic accounts for 3.6% of all Canadian aboriginal children in that age range. For comparison, 0.3% of non-aboriginal children in the same age group were in foster care at the time. Statistics Canada, Aboriginal Peoples in Canada: First Nations People, Métis and Inuit, Analytical document, National Household Survey, 2011, 19.
elision of indigenous sovereignty in this claim points to the naturalized logic of settler-colonialism, with its universal subject as citizen, masking indigenous claims and implying equivalence of citizens while ignoring the systems of privilege that continually undermine that equivalence in what Mark Rifkin refers to as “Settler Common Sense,” a colonial normalization of certain assumptions. Among those assumptions is the normalization of settler-colonial geography.

*Indigenizing Settled Space*

As the procession approaches an intersection, the leading blue car and its police escort slow to a stop. The drummers fan out to form the beginnings of an arc and the rest of the line files in to form a complete open circle in the middle of a major downtown intersection. The space in the middle fills with prayer song as the intersection is consumed by a circle of protesting bodies, young and old, indigenous and settler. The inner-circle space remains untraversed.

Standing in the line of demonstrators forming the circle, I am struck by the reversal, the indigenized and humanly outlined hollow space enforced within the settler ordinary. Not only does it resonate with the space's usually suppressed indigeneity, but it creates a contrary Lefebvrian conceived space, open in physical form and individual interpretation. The sacred area bounded by the bodies of the red headbanded crowd breathes with the praying singers and pulses with the heartbeat of the drum, but presents

also as open space, lacking human bodies and of the usual flows of traffic. To the uninitiated, the space is empty, devoid of human presence, though created by it. The humanlessness in this potentially "no man's land" eerily resonates with the city's own “terra nullius” precarity.

Vancouver, like most of the province of British Columbia, lacks a formal treaty between the traditional custodians of the land and the settler state regarding land rights. Within the British legal system, the treaty process creates title or legitimized claim to ownership. According to legal anthropologist Elizabeth Povinelli, this process was designed to undermine the priority of the prior peoples to their home territories in order to serve the project of imperial colonialism. The legally ambiguous status of the territory adds to the contention in the day’s demonstration. The circle, voiding a space of ordinary foot, car, and bus traffic, stands firmly on streets paved by the city of Vancouver, which, in turn, sits deep within unceded Coast Salish territory.

This lack of territorial resolution between the Canadian state and its west coast indigenous peoples does not, however, mean the spaces of indigeneity and settler society are likewise legally amorphous and undefined. The categories of indigenous/aboriginal and settler/citizen take shape in drastically different legal modes. Most notably, indigeneity itself is legally constructed and contained in settler law at a national level by the Indian Act of 1876, which is still in effect. Non-indigenous citizens, by contrast, have been legally and functionally the norm around which citizenship is constructed.

The Indian Act of 1876 is a broad piece of legislation which, for the first time, defines “status” and “non-status,” establishing rights and restrictions of reserves, establishes residential school policy, and creates the figure of the Indian Agent who had controlled the resources as well as enforcing laws and restrictions on the reserve, among numerous other things. The Indian Act, though much revised, weighs heavily on current aboriginal rights discourse, as the legislation that governs legal and many social aspects of defining aboriginality.

The Indian Act did not introduce the category of “Indian” for the first time, but it provides a nationwide rubric in the newly confederated Canada of who can and cannot be “Indian” and what that label entails, a restricting force in a settler-colonial legal system. According to historian Cole Harris, “Backed by legislative and coercive power, white prejudices pushed people into defined spaces, whether or not they wanted to be there. Had Natives been treated as people, rather than Indians, there would not have been reserves.” This substitution of “Indian” for “person” or “citizen” underlines a longstanding issue in settler-colonial Canada. Rather than nations or states, the aboriginal communities end up routinely categorized outside of the rubric of “person.” For instance the Potlatch Ban, famous for outlawing gift-giving ceremonies commonly practiced along the coast of the Pacific Northwest, states that “every Indian or other person who engages in or assists in celebrating the Indian festival known as the “Potlatch” or the Indian dance known as the “Tamanawas” is guilty of a misdemeanor,” placing Indianness in

31. In accordance with a strongly gendered and intentionally exclusive rubric.
opposition with a general, unmarked personhood.\textsuperscript{33} To be fair, it wasn’t until WWII that Canadian citizenship emerged as a category rather than British subjecthood, but it took nearly a decade thereafter to extend the label of citizen to those governed by the Indian Act.\textsuperscript{34}

A key component of the application of the Indian Act and its provincial predecessors was the creation of the reserve system, literally confining and defining aboriginal peoples, who were set aside as Others. Reserve systems, confining aboriginal communities to small and separated bounded geographic areas initially offered a greater colonial control. Keith Carlson explains that “prior to the creation of reserves the government had no effective means of monitoring the day-to-day lives of Indian people. Reserves, in other words, facilitated systems of colonial surveillance, and through surveillance, manipulation and control.”\textsuperscript{35} In the process of enclosing and sequestering aboriginal communities, the settler society also was able to fix borders and create band membership lists in order to create or reconfigure internal structures of power to legitimize and enable an Indian Agent to negotiate “land use and resource development” in the area.\textsuperscript{36}

This degree of confinement and control incorporated geographic freedom and access to resources at the same time as it reinforced identity dichotomies. Carlson offers

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\itemChristopher Bracken, \textit{The Potlatch Papers: a Colonial Case History} (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 84.
\itemCanadian Citizenship Act of 1947
\itemKeith Thor Carlson, The Power of Place the Problem of Time: Aboriginal Identity and Historical Consciousness in the Cauldron of Colonialism, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010, 18-19
\itemCarlson, \textit{Power of Place}, 18-19
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
that “to access ‘off-reserve’ land, a Stó:lō man first needed to prove that he had become ‘civilized’ and in other ways ceased to be an Indian (i.e., that he had become a brown-skinned British subject).” This process of “civilization,” carried out in Indian Residential Schools, especially, reflects the same assimilationist logic of effort put forth in ordinary Canadian conversation discussed in section two—that effort is necessary in order to participate fully in society, denying the possibility of notions or aspirations otherwise.

Carlson continues: “To the extent that becoming a Canadian citizen meant termination to Indian status, it was genuinely impossible for a Stó:lō person to acquire (i.e., receive external recognition of ownership of) land off-reserve.”

This incompatibility between indigeneity and citizenship, between indigeneity and free passage, makes the day’s march through Vancouver all the more powerful. Although the same restrictive policies that confined their ancestors to reserves or their parents to residential schools are not currently in practice, the failure to engage in a good faith healing effort by all necessitates this type of social statement, moving through space, raising voices, marking space as indigenous, and holding ceremony.

*Demonstrating Community and Bearing Witness*

As the procession approaches the dark grey skyscraper housing the Office of Aboriginal Affairs, it folds upon itself, grouping more densely as a new arc forms along a 4-foot wall supporting a planter by the front entrance of the building. We’re called closer by Khelsilem so that we might all hear better between the prayer song offered in ceremony and the upcoming speeches. He invites people to come up one by one to offer

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a prayer and place a letter or photo in an improvised altar to show the Office of Aboriginal Affairs their support for the release of documentation of the experiments conducted upon aboriginal schoolchildren in the government’s care, as well as their red headbands in an improvised shrine outlined by feathers on the short wall.

Now the media consists only of the community radio producer and myself, as the CBC radio producer and the television news producers have disappeared during the procession. I move to the interior of the group, to the front of the arc to record the acoustic prayer songs and upcoming speeches for broadcast. The songs of prayer from the Tsleil-Waututh and Stó:lō (Interior Salish group of peoples along the Fraser River) are led by a small line of singers facing the crowd’s arc, which again sings back from scattered positions within the group. The speeches are amplified again through the buzzing amp as community radio producer positions herself towards the outer edge, obtaining current vox populi interviews and arranging future appearances on her show.

At the front of the arc, Jerrilynn Webster takes the microphone and introduces herself in her Nuxalk language before thanking her grandfather, a residential school survivor for his strength and courage to be a single parent and inspiration to her despite his residential school experience. She encourages the crowd to hashtag any pictures they may take at the event to increase awareness across the internet community of the day’s event.

A woman moves throughout the tightly crowded group with a smoking medicine bundle to smudge with the participants. I've never smudged before and am so focused on getting good audio (or at least usable audio) for the shows I sit in on that when she

38. Smudging is a practice utilizing a burning smudge stick made of selected herbs to cleanse participants by washing smoke over them.
gets to me, I shrug and gesture to the recorder, afraid of jostling the cord on the headphones and garbling the already challenging audio. The woman points to my right hand, at the time supporting my left hand, which was clutching the Zoom. She nods, smiles, and wordlessly shows me one-handed to spread the smoke over myself as she holds it over my head, moving it down careful to avoid hitting the windscreen with the smoldering bundle. I look around at the crowd and see I am not the only settler-identified person. I also watch a few others awkwardly struggle to smudge and others who wave the woman over to them to cleanse themselves as if from long established habit. Struggle or not, the activity requires a willingness to engage, a desire to prepare the body to participate in an indigenous ceremony shared today by members from across Canada and its mosaic of multiculturalism.

The microphone passes between the hands of the day's co-organizers and prearranged speakers, including a Kwakwaka'wakw speaker. Later an Australian-Canadian minister couple (holding onto their two young children as they lead prayer) offer an individualized apology for colonization and partnership in grieving a shared history amid a Christian prayer. An Anishinaabe country/hip hop musician visiting the territory from the Little Saskatchewan Reserve in Manitoba speaks in solidarity with the Elders who suffered in residential school and with the Coast Salish people whose land he is visiting. A first generation Canadian Sikh woman discusses the necessity for an awareness of colonial presence before returning to Khelsilem for a closing song.

Repeated in each speech is the theme of shared responsibility for the healing of the elders who suffered in Indian Residential Schools through the respectful witness of
their experience. The respect and compassion necessary to bear honorable witness to the suffering of aboriginal residential school survivors requires an active engagement by all—young and old, settler and indigenous, Canadian and non-Canadian. The suffering in the community needs to be borne by the community rather than by disparate individual victims. Emphasis is placed on healing and not vengeance, witnessing and not restitution. This approach varies from the actions of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in its emphasis on personal responsibility. The project is not contradictory, however. In fact, the request made in several of the speeches was that the documents be released to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission so that it can include more of the experiences within the residential schools. As the speeches continue, drawing to a close, the altar grows with headbands and photos, letters and buttons, the smoldering sage bundle and a small candle.

**Conclusion: Private Ceremony and Public Broadcast**

The crowd starts to thin once the speeches come to a close. They disperse in every direction, no longer unified in a single trajectory or wearing their identifying headbands. The altar is left for a while for passers-by to see and for pictures to be taken and posted to Instagram and Facebook. Khelsilem explains the destination for the headbands as being taken offsite to a private location where “We’re going to burn them and send them to Creator.” Not a public display, but a private ceremony marks the end of the materials of the demonstration. The community radio producer and I head back to the radio station to broadcast actualities and impressions of the event on Kla How Ya, which will be discussed in chapter three.
Even though the crowd dissipates prior to the burning ceremony and the radio broadcast, the work of the day continues in both private and public spheres, with their presence evoked through material headbands and recorded voice. The recorded voice, combined with conversation and music, is broadcast back over the city, over unceded Coast Salish territory that evening, potentially informing or drawing in more participants after the fact.

This broadcast functions as a reminder of the multifaceted balancing act in this struggle. Simultaneously the call for the release of specific documentation for the sake of community healing encounters colonized yet unceded spaces. The call to action and healing needed within colonized space bears the histories of trauma and abuse, both personal and intergenerational. Each of these runs up against legal systems of which historically confine and define indigeneity as something other than citizen. This combination of forces intersects with others, many more than can be described in a project of this scale. It does allude to many of the ongoing concerns in the aboriginal community in Vancouver in July 2013 that are voiced on community radio stations. The temporary constellation of red headbanded people assembling in space to raise voices for accountability and prayer continues to have effects in the world once they have dispersed. The call for social change may be momentary and situational, but it is made materially meaningful in private ceremony as well as through broadcast to a broader public.
Chapter 2

Canadian Aboriginal Community Radio and its Ambivalences

It’s Wednesday afternoon at Vancouver Co-Op radio, CFRO, a local community radio station in the Downtown Eastside. I wander in off the 14 bus from Kitsilano, passing people informally selling single cigarettes at the corner and someone sleeping against the building near the door when I get there. I press the buzzer to get in and struggle with the finicky lock to get into the building without disturbing the sleeping person beside the stoop.

Once inside, I first meet Ken Fisher, host of Métis Matters, whom I had emailed about my interest in meeting and observing his show.39 I introduce myself as “the grad student who asked to observe Métis Matters and ask a few questions.” “What’s your research on again?” Ken asks. I reply, “I’m studying aboriginal music and media in the Vancouver area.” Ken immediately responds with “now what exactly do you mean by ‘aboriginal’”? I momentarily panic—I’m a settler from Ohio, not a lifelong participant in Canadian aboriginal identity politics. This is a test of awareness and, from Ken’s tone, there is a specific, “correct,” answer he wants to hear. Carefully and slowly, I answer, “It’s my understanding that ‘aboriginal’ is associated with a legal context and may not be

39. This exchange is presented from memory and is thus not directly quoted.
as applicable in ordinary conversation, but within that legal context refers to Canada’s First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities/community members.”  

Ken responds positively, saying “Good answer. Most people say ‘aboriginal’ when they really mean ‘First Nations.’ I wanted to make sure you knew our struggle as Métis people in a society that forgets its Inuit and Métis peoples are also aboriginal.”

Although the majority of the time I spent within aboriginal communities, especially those involved in community radio in Vancouver, was spent with First Nations-identifying people, Ken's initial and direct question acts as a reminder of the possibilities and simultaneous constraints of the term “aboriginal” at play both on and off air in community radio broadcast. Depending upon the speaker/audience, the term can take on various associations, in addition to being allotted relatively different weight in music and identity matters. Is the topic capital-A “Aboriginal,” a demographic category situated in legal and census-taking definitions? Is it lower case-a “aboriginal,” evoking a pan-aboriginal/pan-indigenous ideal of a normalize indigeneity within which more specific national and social identities are situated, such as indigenous and Nuxalk or aboriginal and Six Nations? These possible interpretations are situation-dependent, but they point to the need to examine not only the practice of aboriginal community radio, examined in chapters one and three, but also the discourse surrounding it.

This chapter intervenes in the surrounding chapters’ examination of the Honour the Apology march and its broadcast on community radio, stepping outside of that single day’s work to contextualize those efforts in a broader media and social sphere. Rather

40. The Métis are a group of people who trace their origins to aboriginal groups and French traders.
than attempt to define an aboriginal community radio practice, this chapter emphasizes areas of tension and ambivalence that producers negotiate in their shared creation of Vancouver’s aboriginal community radio. First, the space of Vancouver and the givenness of its labeling on a local level as such is denaturalized. I recast space as territory, investigating how such a shift informs the idea of aboriginal community radio broadcast. Discussion of broadcast in territory will shift towards regulatory description, placing community radio in a broader Canadian legal framework. This general definition of community radio is then narrowed to aboriginal community radio programming focusing in on a single field site in Vancouver, BC, within the context of Vancouver Co-Op Radio. Animating territory spatializing and contextualizing moves place “aboriginal community radio” in Vancouver Co-Op radio and provide a backdrop for the conversation of two aboriginal community radio producers and the modes in which they negotiate aboriginality, community, and radio in their work.

Unsettling Broadcast Territory

Nestled along a briny inlet, shielded from the open ocean by an expansive island in the distance, Vancouver embodies more than the spirit of the explorer for whom it is named.41 A mountain range to the north dwarfs the view of towering skyscrapers, challenging the current construction with an unsettled otherwise. Calm waters cast dancing reflections of a shorefront cityscape over a fluid thoroughfare, bustling with

41. The waters separating the island from the mainland, Vancouver Island from the continental coast of British Columbia, has historically been labeled as the “Strait of Georgia.” In the late 2000s, however, the strait and surrounding waterways were officially renamed “Salish Sea,” referencing the Salishan indigenous peoples whose traditional territories encompass the area.
intermittent migrations of salmon and the occasional orca as well as a continuous flow of crude oil pumped through a pipeline extending from the Alberta tar sands to the coast for sale and processing. The inlet simultaneously bears both industrial sea-busses by the quarter hour and ties of kinship to the long genealogies of the Tsleil-Waututh Nation. Paved streets crisscross the peninsula, marked at each intersection often with British surnames, interrupted by sewer access points, covered in indigenous-inspired designs, patrolled by Vancouver Police Department vehicles emblazoned with aboriginally influenced and highly stylized thunderbird logos.

Traversed every day by lifelong Vancouverites and newcomers, business moguls and homeless migrants, tourists and refugees, this space flows as it is perceived in spatial practice, conceived in mental representations, and lived directly “through its associated images and symbols,” to draw from Lefebvre’s theorization. The physical, intellectual, and representational spaces present in the geographic “place,” that is to say the longitudinal and latitudinal specificities of a geographic “Vancouver,” provide a challenging and fraught landscape within which to negotiate social realities.

The seemingly stable place aches with tense and incongruous spaces created through emergent, embodied, social practices of those who exist within it. The politics

42. The Tsleil-Waututh story goes that the first grandfather of the Tsleil-Waututh people was transformed from a wolf, but he grew lonely. After praying to Creator to help him, he dove off a cliff into the inlet all the way to the mud basin, gathering the clay in his hands before returning to the surface. He constructed a prayer circle and performed ceremony and fell asleep. The next morning a woman of the inlet lay next to him in the circle, the first grandmother of the Tsleil-Waututh people.
of place are infused with personal and interpersonal relationality, inextricable from experiences of race, gender, sexuality, class, ability, ethnicity, etc. Space, as “a practiced place,” to quote de Certeau, accrues additional complexity when considering the concept of “territory” in a settler-colonial society such as that found in Vancouver or Canada more broadly.45

Territory refers to spaces and places traditionally in the care of particular indigenous peoples.46 However, territory is not exclusive in an “either...or” manner, but is open to a multiplicity of spatial ways of being and ways of knowing space. Vancouver itself sits on the shared territory of the Squamish, Musqueam, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations, for instance. This shared territory, like the majority of physical area in the province, is “unceded,” meaning there is no agreement or treaty between the nations who inhabit it, the Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh, Musqueam, and Canadian nations. I first witnessed a reference to “unceded territory” at a National Aboriginal Day celebration by the emcee, spoken without a real emphasis, as a given fact. This lack of formal agreement, even if it would be as one-sided as an adhesion contract rather than a nation-to-nation treaty, means there is little public recognition of the status of Vancouver as illegitimate or imposed. As the Musqueam Declaration says, “Neither we nor our ancestors have ever given up, extinguished or diminished our aboriginal rights and title by treaty or agreement with any foreign government or power.”47 Yet at the same time, these territories, when presented publicly, are defined in terms of geographic maps

45. Michel de Certeau, The Practice of Everyday Life, 117.
46. “Territory” being a component of the Chadwick Allen’s “blood/land/memory complex”
marked with indigenous and settler place names, reflecting an adoption of certain settler
tactics in order to declare the places known otherwise as traditional territory.

Territory can be co-constitutive of identity, as seen in the opening stanza of the
Tsleil-Waututh First Nation’s declaration:

We are the Tsleil-Waututh First Nation, the People of the Inlet.
We have lived in and along our Inlet since time out of mind.
We have been here since the Creator transformed the Wolf into that first
Tsleil-Wautt, and made the Wolf responsible for this land.48

Territory is bound to people and people to territory in a remembered past, a lived present,
and a projected future.

Where space is “caught in the ambiguity of an actualization” and place refers to a
distinct location, territory incorporates both while also acknowledging connection of
certain people to area and its physical manifestations (land, water, etc.), which requires a
type of undifferentiated human/non-human co-presence. The Tsleil-Waututh declaration
holds that

Our people traveled far and wide on our traditional territory,
They paddled our waters and climbed our mountains.
They understood the richness that our traditional territory held,
And in understanding this, they knew our land.

In this declaration, understanding and knowing land emerges through travel, not unlike
the paths of the demonstrators and the community radio producer working to “cover” the
story. The Tsleil-Waututh declaration includes the line that “It is our obligation and
birthright to be the caretakers and protectors of our Inlet.” This calls forth a particularly
interesting assemblage of associations for radio practice in the collection of field


37
recordings, work in studio, and broadcast out across geographic place to those tuning in on their radios. Moreover, these multiple ways of knowing the geographic area where these aboriginal producers of community radio work gestures towards the complexity of how labeling and identifying any element of aboriginal community radio in Vancouver can be politically inflected.

Community Radio in a Contemporary Canada

Community radio in a Canadian context falls within three main radio broadcast categories: public, commercial and community media. Among these, there are differences in the content and breadth of broadcasting, the source of financial support, and the desired outcomes of broadcast (commercial venture, community engagement, etc.). The largest public broadcasting body in Canada as a whole is the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. CBC is the major public news and entertainment organization of the Canadian state. Its programming is based on multiple sites across the country and its broadcasts are nationally syndicated. The second largest category of radio broadcast in the Canadian context is commercial radio: that is to say, music and public affairs stations which financially support their works through the sale of advertisement rather than through grants and governmental support.\(^49\) Commercial radio is best known for its broadcast of contemporary popular music with the broadest popular appeal, creating and contributing to mass culture. The final category of Canadian broadcast media is community media, into which campus media can be assumed. Community media is

generally low-wavelength broadcast without public or private economic incentive in order to serve local and oftentimes under served communities.

Section 3 of the 1968 Broadcasting Act says that the Canadian broadcasting system "makes use of radio frequencies that are public property” and that the Canadian broadcasting system should serve "to safeguard enrich and strengthen the cultural, political, social, and economic fabric of Canada.”50 This public ownership, combined with the emphasis on national strengthening, places broadcast media in an interesting position. On the one hand, broadcasting is for the benefit of the public and owned by the public, but on the other hand it is specifically tied to a notion of “Canada” which may oftentimes be at odds with the “many nations within a nation” mode of recognizing indigenous sovereignty within the geography shared with Canada.

In order to protect the radio frequencies for the public and ensure that they are contributing to the “fabric of Canada,” safeguards are in place at a national level. Canadian broadcasting policy across all non-internet media is surveilled by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission or CRTC. The CRTC was given its current mandate to oversee and provide regulation Canadian broadcast in the Broadcasting Act of 1991 although it was formed and defined as a body decades earlier.51 The CRTC is ultimately under the control of the Canadian Parliament and informed strongly by its relationship to the department of Canadian heritage.

Canada shares a large and, in many ways, porous border with United States. In an effort to differentiate the Canadian and the American, Canada legally protects and

bolsters its public media as “Canadian.” The CRTC promotes a Canadian cultural protectionism while simultaneously marking broadcasts in its borders as “Canadian.” By the mandate of section 3 of the Broadcasting Act, Canadian broadcasting "makes maximum use, and in no case less than predominant use, of Canadian creative and other resources in the creation and presentation of programming.” In accordance with that mandate, broadcasting within the Canadian state is required to contain a certain degree of Canadian content, conversationally known as “Can Con.” This Can Con requirement varies widely from at least 60% of over the air television broadcast from 6 AM until midnight to at least 7% on “ethnic radio stations” (a designation allotted and defined by the CRTC). These requirements at a station level also apply to specific shows broadcast from those stations, so within an hour-long show, a “popular music” program must ensure it broadcasts 35% Canadian selections each week in order to fit within the station's CRTC requirements.

The definition of “Canadian” in broadcast music is broken down into the four MAPL categories: music (composer), artist (performer), production (place of recording), lyrics (lyricist). In order to be considered “Canadian,” a track must be Canadian in respect to at least two of those categories, unless it was produced prior to 1972. These designations form a Canadian/Non-Canadian binary which are perpetuated through radio practice in order to comply with national laws, even when identity issues are less than simple. Without room for a “both...and” or “neither...nor” in the rubric, there is ample room for erasure. For instance, singer-songwriter Leonard Sumner of Little Saskatchewan

Reserve in Manitoba, identifies primarily as Anishinaabe rather than Canadian. Because his work meets multiple requirements to be considered Can Con (produced in Canada, written in Canada, etc.), his work is labeled as Canadian for document-keeping purposes, muting his claim to identities other than "Canadian."

*Community Radio in Vancouver*

Community is an unwieldy concept to address, let alone to fix in written word. To engage with ways "community" is specifically invoked and negotiated, within or resistant to the CRTC definitions, we should contextualize it ethnographically and geographically. For the sake of this chapter, that means focusing in on a single community radio station, Vancouver Co-Op Radio, CFRO 100.5, and the multiple communities it engages.

Located in the Downtown Eastside, Vancouver Co-Op Radio is in the midst of marginality, which informs its unique mission. Co-Op Radio stands out due to its connections to many ethnically defined communities and its own internal diversity. With programming and languages such as English, Spanish, Serbo-Croatian, Bengali, Polish, and others, Co-Op addresses and incorporates marginalized communities in the Vancouver area to which and through which it broadcasts. It is one of multiple

53. Within a two-block radius are the VPD, Insite (the needle exchange), a women’s centre (where I met interviewees), United We Can (a recycling center in front of which a market is set up by/for people living on the streets selling visibly damaged electronics, dented food cans and thawed frozen dinners), and a low-cost eateries (pizza by the slice, Fast Food, and an old greasy spoon with worn out and cracked booths usually frequented by the area’s low-income/housing assistance demographic).
54. Broadcasting 24 hours a day by over 400 volunteer programmers.
campus/community radio stations in its broadcasting area, but it is the only one that is co-operatively run.\textsuperscript{55}

On its website, the station is described as “a voice for the voiceless that strives to provide a space for under-represented and marginalized communities.”\textsuperscript{56} This emphasis places Co-Op intentionally outside of the mainstream. Where other sectors of the Canadian broadcasting sphere actively seek to add to address the public at large, representing the fabric of Canadian culture broadly, Co-Op seeks specificity. Co-Op claims to “provide news and perspectives that are not otherwise accessible – information that is not covered by the conventional media or perspectives that challenge mainstream media coverage”\textsuperscript{57} as a way of speaking back to the generalizing cultural protectionism of the CRTC and other national mandates. Not only does Co-Op aim to “increase community participation by encouraging examination of the social and political concerns of the geographic and cultural communities of BC,” but their “first priority is to provide a media outlet for the economically, socially or politically disadvantaged” within those BC communities.\textsuperscript{58} These communities in Vancouver include many overlapping and intersecting aboriginal communities made up of the Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh, and Musqueam Nations in whose shared territory Vancouver and Vancouver Co-Op Radio

\textsuperscript{55} Other Community/Campus stations in the area include: CIVL 101.7 FM (UCFV Campus & Community Radio Society in Abbotsford, BC), CITR 101.9 FM (Student Radio Society of University of British Columbia in Vancouver, BC), CJSF 90.1 FM (Simon Fraser University Campus Radio Society in Burnaby, BC), RE Radio Emily (Emily Carr University of Art and Design in Vancouver, BC).
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid.
sit, but also indigenous peoples from across Turtle Island who have made Vancouver their home.

Aboriginal Community Radio at Vancouver Co-Op Radio

Aboriginal shows at Co-Op vary widely in content and approach. Each of the six specifically labeled aboriginal shows is broadcast live on a weekly basis. Spread across a handful of producers, the aboriginal programming at Co-Op offers a glimpse into some of the many stances taken within the local aboriginal community, presented in a variety of show styles.

The programming can be categorized in two primary ways of “talk” and “music.” While “talk” shows often do include musical tracks and “music” shows do often involve artist interviews or discussion of upcoming or recent musical events, the emphasis of the two categories is distinct. Talk programming seeks to communicate specific spoken messages while music programming is often less overtly message-driven. Where music lacks semantic specificity, it does not lack the potential to work socially and politically within radio broadcast.

Within the “talk” category of programming, there are several subdivisions. The first main subcategory is a specifically politically directed “talk” programming. “When Spirit Whispers,” a long-running show on Monday afternoons, is described online as “shar[ing] indigenous programming covering traditional/contemporary artists, musical releases, and current cultural affairs.”59 Over the course of the time I observed the show, however, its content was directed nearly exclusively towards discussing and engaging in

critiques of the “reconciliation” process. The show is led by Gunargie O’Sullivan and has a rotating cast of co-hosts from the aboriginal community advocacy workers to grief counselors to visiting radio producers from shows within and outside of Co-Op’s programming. Another politically focused community driven show is Métis Matters, which airs every Wednesday evening. The show’s content generally consists of a conversation between two Métis community leaders discussing recent events within the Métis community or analyzing news items through a specifically Métis lens. Both When Spirit Whispers and Métis Matters provide a platform constructed intentionally and publicly through a claimed and stated identity. As my first introduction to Métis Matters host Ken Fisher taught me, however, the terms at play are open to dispute and change, providing opportunities for inclusion and exclusion in everyday discourse. By centering these shows around specific identity terms, and claiming them routinely on air, these politically oriented talk shows perform an overt aboriginality on the air.

Another subcategory within the umbrella of aboriginal talk radio at Vancouver Co-Op Radio is language and culture education. Sne’waylh is a show focused on language revitalization and the sharing of cultural teachings every Tuesday afternoon. Hosted by a group of producers who are also residential school survivors, the program also offers a space for personal observation of experiences of cultural suppression in discussion of news headlines amid weekly vocabulary lessons in Haida, a language spoken by Haida communities of northwestern BC and southwestern Alaska. This programming takes a similarly overt aboriginal stance as the politically oriented talk

60. The Métis are a recognized aboriginal group tracing their origins to aboriginal and French ancestors.
shows, but in a way that aims to provide instruction rather than a critique of recent events.

The third subcategory of aboriginal community talk radio at Co-Op Radio is comedy. Late Night with Savages airs Wednesday nights at 11pm, offering comedic and aboriginal-centered parody of the week’s headlines. This show involved a small cast of recurring co-hosts, generally incorporating younger producers involved in other ways with aboriginal popular culture during the day.

Outside of the “talk” second major category is “music” oriented programming. “Think NDN” is a pop culture show Monday evenings with a rotation roster of relatively young and pop culture-engaged aboriginal hosts, though it is primarily directed by Suzette Amaya. “Kla How Ya” was a show in transition when I participated. It was shifting from an experienced producer to a novice community radio host, from a mixture of news and aboriginal music to a more generally musical show dedicated to playing aboriginal music of any genre. For the most part, these two shows spent more time playing recorded tracks of professionally produced music than providing verbal commentary.

* Negotiating “Aboriginal” “Community” Radio

Now that the aboriginal programming at Vancouver Co-Op Radio and the general Canadian media sphere are established, the strategic positions taken by aboriginal radio producers on those shows can be examined. The identity politics at play are complicated and constantly shifting, so, by offering a comparison of positions taken by two producers, my intention is to gesture towards the complexity without claiming to describe it
exhaustively. The two aboriginal community radio producers discussed in this chapter place varying emphasis of “aboriginal” in comparison to and conversation with “community” and vice versa. Gunargie O’Sullivan and Suzette Amaya, with their shows “When Spirit Whispers” and “Think NDN,” respectively, present two very different ways of prioritizing aboriginality and community in aboriginal community radio programming.

When I first meet Gunargie O’Sullivan, I am sitting in on a show at Co-Op specifically oriented towards protest music (Sound Resistance). None of the performers, content, or audience for Sound Resistance is specifically identified as aboriginal. The day's musical material focuses on songs about floods to call attention to the concurrent flooding in Alberta and gesture to a global climate change discourse without necessarily spelling it out. As a track is playing, Gunargie runs downstairs from a communal workspace and flings open the studio door and hands a CD to the DJ, saying "track two," before leaving. Her pick is introduced on air and the musical choice is attributed to her curation. During the introduction, I recognize her name as a contact recommended to me by nearly every one I met at the station. Following the show, I return the CD to her and introduce myself. We end up talking for a few hours about her career and life and how she got involved in community radio. Moving forward, we arrange for me to sit in on her upcoming shows to observe and, in some instances, participate.

61. Although I never recorded an interview with Gunargie, I did repeatedly interview her without the presence of the recorder, taking notes and returning to themes which emerged in previous interviews and conversations. In nearly daily conversations in the studio, on the bus between stations, or socializing outside of the radio context, we had lots of opportunities to discuss issues of identity and broadcast, among many other topics.
When that I was living in Vancouver, Gunargie was involved in four of the six Co-Op aboriginal programs as well as presenting at other community radio stations CiTR and CJSF. She prides herself in covering aboriginal issues on a daily basis that otherwise would not be covered by the mainstream media. As an example, she cites her recording of the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry for broadcast across NCRA stations. She tells me she attended and recorded each of the hearings, not just the press conferences like the other news media. This commitment to gathering local aboriginal news takes her across the Vancouver area to record cultural events such as canoe racing, demonstrations as discussed in the first chapter, and everything in between.

A proud full-blooded Kwakiutl and committed aboriginal community radio producer, Gunargie repeatedly informs me how central aboriginality is to her work and to her and her audience's identities. In other words, aboriginality is not only front and center in her broadcast material, but it is the identity from which all her broadcasting is done. This aboriginal center of gravity is shaped in no small part by her experience as a survivor of Indian residential school, a colonial assimilationist project designed to "beat the Indian out of the child," and her adoption by a white family as part of the so-called "sixties scoop," a disproportionate adoption initiative taking aboriginal children into non-aboriginal families from the 1960s-1980s. As someone who grew up not speaking her language, separated from her territory, raised outside of her culture and community, she

62. Her work has shifted to include public access television in recent months.
63. “Missing and Murdered Women” is the name given to the disappearance of hundreds of aboriginal women in BC, many within Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside alone. Under the jurisdiction of the Vancouver Police and the RCMP, investigations have been conducted for some of the reported missing women, although the community continues to call for more action.
is quick to offer a core of aboriginal identity from which her work as a producer and artist emanates. Not only does she host shows specifically addressing aboriginal issues, music, language revival, and culture at multiple community radio stations in the Vancouver area, but she is committed to creating spaces for aboriginal creative work across Canada, as in her work co-founding the Red Jam Slam Society.

Both Gunargie O’Sullivan and Suzette Amaya are incredibly committed to their community radio work at Co-Op, work that is not financially compensated. Gunargie draws a salary from the National Campus and Community Radio Association (NCRA) for her work as Outreach Coordinator for the Resonating Reconciliation Project, a nationwide project to support aboriginal producers in making radio documentaries about residential school experiences. Suzette also works at a national level running workshops for aboriginal artists, aboriginal artist showcases, and business instruction, in addition to participating in the reality show Big Brother Canada. While she is very attentive to aboriginal advocacy, especially as the daughter of American Indian Movement activists and as an intergenerational residential school survivor, she is concerned specifically with opening avenues from the aboriginal community into the broader popular Canadian culture community.

My first meeting with Suzette Amaya proceeds very differently from my introduction to Gunargie O’Sullivan. She quietly slips into the studio, calmly greeting the exiting producers of the previous show with a smile and a nod. I make quiet audio and written notes as she gets situated behind the controls and computer, organizing her first set. PRAs and an opening track play as she orients me to her ideal for the show as a
popular culture show with rotating hosts, each focusing on developing a broadcast personality. As soon as the track draws to a close, she fades it out and bursts into a cheery and exciting station/show ID with immeasurable enthusiasm. She tells me that big personality is the key component that she likes to foster in her co-host trainees and she certainly follows that advice herself.

Suzette Amaya wants aboriginality to be an aspect of an artist’s public presence, but not the defining and restrictive one she sees it as today. As she describes it

SA: What happens to all aboriginal artists is that when they apply for the Junos or major awards or go mainstream, they get typecast into aboriginal categories. Well, if you’re a hip-hop artist, why can’t you be in the hip-hop category? Unfortunately that doesn’t happen.

MB: So aboriginality trumps genre?

SA: I mean things haven’t changed, there’s still a lot of...you know...it happens, right? I have serious issues with that and that’s why for me I think it’s important to help native people get to that level. If you want to be a serious artist, then create beautiful, serious music, right?

She places craft at the forefront of discussion, as what ought to be the defining element of an artist’s, aboriginal or otherwise, ability to reach the broadest community audience.

“Beautiful, serious music” becomes the decisive factor in an artist’s potential to become mainstream, a potential that she sees as a harmful tokenism.

Beyond her weekly community radio broadcast, Suzette actively lives this position. When telling me about her work on the nationally broadcast CBC show, Big Brother Canada, she says

I went on that show not being an aboriginal person but being me, so my fan base like went across the country like huge. And now I'm recognized and appreciated by people everywhere. They can just go online and follow me on Twitter,
Facebook and be like "oh my god, she's native, what's native?" . . . And you can break stereotypes by just being you.

Her primary introduction is as an unmarked individual subject, Suzette as an individual person that others can connect to and identify with. Aboriginality becomes one of many attributes or signifiers to interpret for an informed fan. She doesn’t lose it if it is unrecognized because the discourse is open to a multiplicity of highly contextual identities. By adopting this stance, Suzette provides a “mosaic of multiculturalism” type of claim, positioning herself as a subtle ambassador to a pluralistic society. She connects to a broader Canadian community in a way that doesn’t immediately refer to residential school, Missing Women, or genocide. Her emphasis on a broad community does not negate her own indigeneity, but it does enable and restrict different types of social work as a result.

Gunargie, on the other hand, presents a different emphasis on aboriginality. Instead of focusing specifically on accessing the broader Canadian community, she routinely tells me being aboriginal, specifically being Kwakiutl, is the core of her identity. Placing anything in front of that identity, in her view, may indicate shame derived from that identity or even cause one to participate in the “ongoing Canadian genocide” (a phrase she uses in our conversations with some frequency). This strategic self-essentializing, literally pointing to an aboriginal essence, does not, however, point to interpersonal conflict between the two producers. Gunargie indicated to me that Suzette runs a good show and does a lot of work to help aboriginal artists. The differentiation between how “aboriginal” and “community” are figured into the production of aboriginal
community radio helps to indicate a range of sentiments within Vancouver’s aboriginal communities.

*Broadcasting Aboriginal Ambivalence in/to Territory*

With both Suzette and Gunargie’s stances broadcast from the same station each week, there’s a broader potential aboriginal community radio to do social work. Gunargie’s shows are openly political and first and foremost aboriginal. Issues of justice and decolonization receive prominent airtime. Gunargie’s work recording local events and discussing their effects and implications on the air also serves to embed her work in a specifically Vancouver space. Suzette’s claim that “I’m not a political show, I want us to be just music, and when we have special guests then they can share those kinds of concerns,” she leaves space open for political discussion without it being the driving force of her work. This refusal to engage specifically with political topics on air is itself a very political move. If she were to be specifically and openly political, she may not have the opportunities to be an aboriginal ambassador to the broader Canadian public. Likewise, if Gunargie did not do the news collection and discussion that she does each week, the topics she covers would not receive any media attention.

The two approaches in many ways balance each other, occupying spaces left available by the other’s difference in focus. If Gunargie’s show didn’t have Suzette’s show as a co-representative of aboriginal community radio at broadcasting the same day from Vancouver Co-Op Radio, the critiques she and her co-hosts and guests level towards the state and local events might be easier to tune out. An aboriginality that is uncompromising and always at the forefront of each broadcast may push away potential
listeners. Suzette’s show, with indigeneity as a buried lead, may serve to draw in listeners to aboriginal popular culture without the weight of centuries of colonial history intimidating them. Likewise, once listeners may be attracted to Suzette’s programming, they may seek to become more informed in other local aboriginal life through Gunargie’s work.

I would like to return to the idea of territory as not only a site of aboriginal knowledge, but also as a spatial and agentive player in the formulation and communication of aboriginal community radio. The Vancouver Co-Op Radio and Vancouver itself sit in unceded Coast Salish territory. Co-Op Radio broadcasts Suzette Amaya’s *Think NDN* and Gunargie O’Sullivan’s *When Spirit Whispers* from its position within that Coast Salish territory. Both of the shows are marked as aboriginal and community in their broadcasts and station-produced labeling. The ambivalences within the community of radio producers involved point to an irreducibility of community, aboriginality, and radio in the Vancouver area that is at the center of the combination to produce aboriginal community radio at Vancouver Co-Op Radio.

**Conclusion**

Examining two aboriginal community radio producers and their modes of positioning themselves and their shows in broader social spheres offers a glimpse into the complex and even contradictory work that combines to form a multifaceted and multivocal aboriginal community radio at Vancouver Co-Op Radio. This programming is situated in an activist community radio station, amongst two-dozen other broadcast languages and within a Canadian media sphere that labels their content equally as
Canadian. The area in which these practices take place, when recast as “territory,” can reveal a lot about the assumptions attached to labeling space. The openness of radio broadcast as a technology enables this type of aboriginal community radio to grapple with issues of colonialism at the same time as it broadcasts a hip-hop track in Halkomelem. Regardless of whether the two producers ever agree or disagree, both of their efforts provide aboriginal and community broadcasts from the margins out to a listening public.
Chapter 3

Broadcasting Indigeneity in Settler-Colonial Vancouver

“Radio technology requires its practitioners to reobjectify constantly the social, the senses, and themselves. That is, radio is an action potential that expands the very parameters of the being-in-the-world it presumably channels. Thus radio, despite its variability, is always already a technology that amplifies a reflexive objectification of the objectifying process itself.”

Chapter one collected recordings of many voices calling for justice, moving through city spaces, and holding ceremony in front of the offices of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada in order to understand social, spatial, and cultural issues at play in aboriginal community radio in Vancouver. Chapter two built upon those issues by placing them in a broader Canadian media sphere to examine philosophic tensions of aboriginal community radio producers within a single station. Chapter three enters the studio to listen to how a single show is performed to get an idea of how these programs are made and how their choices in practice open opportunities for social change and expression.

The goal of this chapter is to examine the process of aboriginal community radio production in a snapshot by looking at an episode of Kla How Ya broadcast the day of

the Honour the Apology march from chapter one. This examination offers a chance to
discuss making aboriginal community radio, picking up the themes from the second
chapter, by looking at the actual production rather than the philosophical groundings of
producers’ efforts. These moment-by-moment practices producing the aboriginal
community radio programming add up to a broadcast that is constantly “becoming” in a
Butlerian sense, but likewise also becoming aboriginal.65

The show brings together voices from inside and outside of the aboriginal
community, broadcasting the discourse from and across the city. The goal of this close-
reading of a show production is not to prove statements aired factual or not, but to
demonstrate how different sentiments as well as different types of broadcast materials
come together to create an aboriginal community radio subjectivity. This live
performance is simultaneously broadcast across the city and territory. The latter space
remains in a sort of legal limbo since it has never been ceded to the Crown, but currently
is clearly colonized, as seen in the comments of the day’s events. The lack of formal
treaty in the territory and thus lack of title to the land haunts the broadcast work done by
the aboriginal community radio producers involved in this study.

Into the Studio

Following the march, Gunargie and I make our ways back to the station with
audio clips and interviews in tow. Vancouver Co-Op Radio or CFRO, located within the
Downtown Eastside, is one of a few community radio stations in the Vancouver area. It
is, however, the only one that is cooperatively run as well as airing the most aboriginal

programming. There’s a woman sitting on steps outside of building, who is clearly very “out of it,” whom we try not to bother. Within a few tries, we get through the two buzzers to get into the building. We’re greeted by the usual laminated signs to put bags and coats in sealed plastic containers due to bed bugs and cockroaches, which are conversationally attributed to the slum-style hotel rooms located directly above the station. The area is open with cement floor and brick walls with huge wooden beams and columns to the left. There’s a CD library and a reminder to producers and programmers play 35% Canadian content, a national broadcast requirement from the CRTC made visible by the station managers. To the right are mailboxes allotted for each show and studios. Near the front door there’s a sign-in binder for security and stairs up to a conference table and some offices.

The studio/control room itself is a located at the end of an open hall, between a kitchen area and a separate studio. The control room has the broadcast controls in it, whereas the studios don’t have soundboards with all of the necessary buttons and switches. These spaces are either used for pre-recording or even editing shows or being patched in live by someone in the control room.

Kla How Ya is broadcast from within the control room, where an L-shaped desk supports all the technologies for live broadcast. Headphone monitors and suspended microphones float above the desk, moved to accommodate the preferences of the broadcasters. A large soundboard sits on the desk along the wall, synced with the stereo on the back wall. Remaining desk space holds a computer monitor and keyboard and two phones, which are used for call-ins and to work the door buzzers. Tucked in the back
corner is a small security camera monitor where show hosts can watch for potential
danger outside of the enclosed studio space. Reminders hang on the wall to make station
IDs (Vancouver Co-Op Radio, CFRO, 100.5 FM) and to document show materials.

Show Opening

A country-sounding and humorous song plays, followed by “Oh yes, you’re
listening to Kla How Ya on Vancouver Co-Op Radio on CFRO 100.5FM. We’ll be back
in just a moment,” a show and station ID.66 Since this show and station ID, like most, is
spoken into a microphone live on air, the statement naming the show and station provides
a very direct association of the host’s voice and the general tenor of the program. Neither
overly dramatic nor monotonous, the simple statement identifying the show and station
sets a calm and professional tone for the following broadcast.

The show ID literally greets listeners aboriginally. “Klahowya” is a greeting in
Chinook jargon, a pidgin amalgamation of several related languages in the Pacific
Northwest. As a Chinook greeting, it frames the show, even if at the periphery of
awareness, as aboriginal. The show and station ID, which are both required of programs
by the half hour, place the show in a cooperative space sonically and attune the ears of
listeners to the aboriginality of the show’s participants. Kla How Ya is a name shared
with Klahowya Village,67 a seasonal aboriginal performance space in Stanley Park, a

66. Show and Station IDs are legally required by RIC-15 and BETS-11 on a national
level, so the local community station works to meet these basic requirements while also
former reserve that was “relocated” at the turn of the 20th century. Although the term is a greeting, it bears a connection to that tense history of ongoing territorial claim issues within the Vancouver area. The likelihood that the average listener would associate this statement with anything other than a Stanley Park tourist attraction is quite low, but the potential certainly exists.

The station ID has to include the station’s “call sign” every hour at a national level and the station itself encourages producers to exceed that level to ensure the requirements are met. Between the station ID and the show ID, however, the show is placed geographically and voiced as aboriginal.

*PRA: Pre-recorded Announcement*

The show and station IDs are followed immediately by a Pre-Recorded Announcement (PRA) for the program *Think NDN*. PRAs fulfill obligations within the station’s explicit policies. Their content varies from promoting other Vancouver Co-Op Radio, CFRO shows to informing the public on upcoming community events. Ross chooses to play a *Think NDN* promotion, which provides a tie-in between the aboriginal community radio programs at the station. This selection reinforces the ties between the shows as aboriginal and the current show’s aboriginality.

*Documentary Recording*

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Immediately following the *Think NDN* PRA, the audio broadcast shifts, requiring a perceptive and patient ear to unpack the documentary aesthetic of the unfolding audio. Clearly no longer in the studio, the audio suspends the listener in an unknown and unspecified city soundscape complete with crowd noise and audible vehicular traffic. A man’s voice distorts as if through a bullhorn from a distance away as he calls upon those in attendance to offer a prayer or feeling in their hearts, while a woman sings a prayer song and drums. Sounds of the city seep in amid the address and prayer song when suddenly a woman’s voice speaks as if directly into the listener’s ear, “Creator, I pray that Canada honors the apology” (due to the proximity of the microphone and the speaker’s mouth, the sound is very intimate). The sudden intimacy of this praying speaker spatializes the documentary recording in ways that are difficult to achieve in a mono (rather than stereo) recording. The amplified male speaker is some distance away from us, the listener, as is the singing woman, whereas we’re in very close proximity to this prayer. With no visual element to contextualize this shift, the broadcast juxtaposes completely different soundscapes, leaving the listener to listen to the ongoing sonic performance for him/herself while awaiting a show host’s guidance for what to make of the sounds they’ve just heard.

The documentary recording continues with the distant and bullhorn-mediated man’s voice offering sage, but the close woman’s voice begins to comment on the space and the action. She tells us we are at Granville and Cordova and that “everybody’s

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69. The audio was recorded by Gunargie O’Sullivan during the “Honour the Apology” march July 25, 2013, discussed in chapter one. The content is left undescribed and un-contextualized for several minutes. By relegating this information to a footnote, I hope to mimic that experience of uncertainty in a sudden shift.
praying for the survivors...for their families...for the intergenerationally affected.” She falls silent again as the man begins to deliver a prayer.70 This alternation between near and far, male and female, clearly mediated and deceptively intimate seems planned or almost scripted since the speakers seem to dovetail their statements. Moments when the male speaker interrupts before the female speaker has finished her statement reveal that the recording is made in real time, where the producer is adapting her observations on the fly as she’s speaking them to perceived breaks in formal public speech from the man with a bullhorn.

The man with the bullhorn gives directions to what now sounds like a large crowd to turn onto Howell and to “make some noise.” People cheer and drum, people who were unheard previously. The noise they make as they march towards Howell is rebroadcast as noise in this program, however its effect is not the same. Without the physical view of Waterfront Station or the office buildings, the police escort or the red-headbanded group of people, the noise is not a disruption to a Lefebvrian conceived city space. Instead, it injects an audible enthusiasm and a heard community into the unfolding documentary piece. Without the visual element of the march, it is not clear that the group is taking over and inhabiting a major intersection downtown, marked as “other” by donning headbands.

70. “We offer a Prayer for all survivors. I ask the Creator to come down with healing hands and heal the hearts and minds of those suffering, those in pain because of the abuses that they felt and had done to them many years ago. I ask the Creator to call on the spirit of our ancestors to walk with us today, to walk with all our elders wherever they may be (dog cries) wherever they may be walking in their life that their ancestors be with them today and that the ancestors walk with them, help them if they need help, strengthen them if they need strength. We ask the Creator to strengthen the minds and hearts of everyone here today and all those who wish to be here and all those participating in events across the country today. Osiem.” --Khelsilem Rivers
through their physical presence on the city street space as demonstrators and not as vehicles, and through their visible racial and ethnic diversity.

At a talk at Ohio State University in March 2014, “This American Life” radio host and producer, Ira Glass, explained that narrative documentary radio can be effective in drawing listeners in and making them interested in people’s stories they might otherwise be disposed to disagree with or shrug off because radio broadcast limits the sensory information we can access at the time. There is no judging someone by the way they dress or how they sit in a chair when you’re sitting in your car or living room and listening to their story. He said we may or may not be aware of our biases, so it can be oddly easier to humanize someone, easier to empathize with someone when their voice telling us their story is the only data we have to interpret. In many ways, this is true of Kla How Ya’s broadcast.

The proximity of this woman offering comments on the scene and the gravitas of the man guiding us with a bullhorn through the streets and leading us in prayer implicates us, the listeners as participants. We are not sure what exactly is happening until we are brought into the fold by comments from these sonic characters, they are speaking to us publicly and closely and so we are along with them for the march as participants. As listeners unaware of the spectacle and disruption of the everyday city traffic patterns, we are situated more within the demonstrators’ noise as listener-participants in a large group.

The excitement and enthusiasm for this cause is clearly heard, as is the indigenous marker of the drum.  

The woman, still speaking closely into the microphone, thinks out loud: “So I’ll see who else I can talk to (police siren). Let’s see... I haven’t heard a lot from the men...” At this point, there is a dramatic shift to an acoustic guitar-driven musical track. This is significant because there is a sudden change to professionally produced music taking us immediately out of our march. The program’s location is suddenly is unclear. The connection between the comment and the song is not apparent, nor is the significance of the artist clear at this point.

**Music**

The acoustic guitar chunks along as a male voice alternates between a more melodic song style and a more straightforward rap in Leonard Sumner’s “Best of Me.” Mixing elements of hip-hop and country with an emphasis on poetic lyrics, this track discusses his battle with depression and his dedication to sharing his experience to help others struggling with similar feelings. The melody of the refrain is joined by fiddle countermelody and dobro in transitional moments, along with an added twang to the vocal ornamentation, drawing in a more country style. This country element combined with the tightly composed lyrics of the rap point to an artistic eclecticism not unlike the

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72. The hand drum is a sonic and visual marker of indigeneity in Vancouver, but it holds strong spiritual and symbolic meaning outside of its presence in protest. Although these associations are not absent in the protest setting, they are certainly not foregrounded. The broader association of the hand drum sound in the city is more generally tied to indigenous presence, here allied with a diverse group of non-indigenous marchers as well.

73. Played from http://rezpoetry.com/
show on which it’s currently broadcast. Central to the song, like the program, is that the lyrics both subtly and openly mark the singer and his music as aboriginal. He subtly mentions his medicine, potentially a metaphor to the uninitiated non-aboriginal listener, but openly declares his Anishinaabe identity in song. Played from Leonard’s artist webpage, the programmer pulls from the internet to provide broadcast material, broadening the studio’s reach for audio resources. This act of technological inclusion also brings Anishinaabe identity matters into the same broadcast space as the documentary recordings from the day’s earlier protest.

Introductory Talk

As the track draws to a close, the show’s host, Ross, reorients the show’s trajectory. After naming Leonard Sumner’s track and doing show and station IDs, he brings the audience into the studio, an act that reminds the listener that this show is a live broadcast.

Ross: “Alright, that was Leonard Sumner and that was “Best of Me.” You’re listening to Kla How Ya on Vancouver Co-op Radio CFRO 100.5FM. I’m Ross Bohn and we’ve got a full house today. We’ve got Gunargie O’Sullivan”

Gunargie: Hello hello hello

Ross: We’ve got Betsy Bruyere

Betsy: Aanii and greetings74

Ross: And Sally Harris

Sally: Good afternoon

Ross: Good afternoon. And in the background we’ve got Maggie...

74. “Aanii” is an Anishinaabe greeting.
Gunargie: Maggie Bissler, from Ohio.
Ross: She was here last week if you might remember.
Gunargie: Music-ethno-ologist. Hey I said it! Yeah, but you know what, at the top of the show we shared a recording that honoring the apology march, it was a rally that was held nationally today. I understand Sally, you saw some coverage of it on the news today...

This begins a conversation within the studio about the day’s event. This exchange, although very brief introduces the cast of characters crowded in the cramped studio. Except for the “music-ethno-ologist” in the background, everyone sounds to be on a level playing field, quite physically. Everyone has a microphone equally aimed at his/her mouth and headphones to monitor the show’s sound and for Ross, sitting at the board, to make sound level adjustments if need be to intentionally even out the volumes of the speakers. The characters of the radio broadcast are now knowable in a way that was not possible before their introduction. Without the naming process or the acknowledgement of those in attendance, the presence of the people in the studio would be unknowable. The clear voice of show host, Ross, brings the show back from professionally produced music tracks and out of the city streets amidst protest, but the rest of the studio is invisible without specific mention.

*Talk About Media*

Gunargie asks Sally what coverage she saw of the event and its manifestations across the country. This question serves to contextualize the Vancouver event and the current broadcast’s place within a much larger, Canadian day of prayer and action. That

75. Gunargie met Betsy that day, which adds to the community element of this—through community participation, collaborators and opportunities for collaboration emerge for community radio broadcast.
day’s event with many localized events in solidarity across Turtle Island points to an existing grassroots network of indigenous rights work. This network, comprising many nations and settler allies, maintains activist ties through every imaginable form of social media. The local Vancouver march alone was formally hashtagged, with postings to Facebook, Twitter, Vine, Tumblr, Instagram, linking #honourtheapology specifically with #Vancouver. The march on a national scale was called for in a blog post by Winnipeg-based aboriginal media personality, Wab Kinew. Community radio broadcast, like the activists they’re reporting on, is entirely interconnected with other media, reporting on what is posted online, posting online on what was reported, and even commenting in real time about activity on social networks. Spatializing the event and bringing online media into the discussion, Gunargie comments, “a little later on in the show we’ll look at facebook and see who did what where, but in Vancouver we started on Cordova and Powell street. And we have the lady that led the rally today in house with us and her name, as Ross said, is Betsy Bruyere.”

Live, In-Studio Interview

The show shifts at this point to an interview of Betsy, tacitly pushing the characters named earlier to the periphery. As Gunargie and Betsy talk, both as residential school survivors, Betsy’s strong and focused critiques of the TRC and those involved in it

start to dominate the show. Naming names and citing figures, Betsy is clearly well-prepared and well-versed in the subject matter. Her views shared on air in this segment, however, are ones that Gunargie, even if she agreed wholeheartedly, could not say on air without risking her livelihood given that her work at a national level is funded by the TRC.

One of Gunargie’s many concurrent projects is working as the Outreach Director for the NCRA’s “Resonating Reconciliation” project. Funded by a grant from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and from Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, the project aims to provide training and resources for Aboriginal producers to produce 30-minute radio documentaries about “the legacy of Indian Residential Schools in their community” at forty participating community radio stations across the country. Her position and the Resonating Reconciliation project she is spearheading relies on a certain degree of “playing along” with the TRC. Documentaries take work and time and energy and effort. Community radio is not, for the most part, paid labor. In order to fund the documentation of residential school survivors across the country and broadcast them for all of Canada to have the opportunity to hear, she needs to walk a fine line. Criticisms about the legitimacy or even ethical grounds of the TRC and those who participate in it are best voiced, then, by a collaborator, an intermediary.

78. ““Resonating Reconciliation” is a project that engages community radio to help reconcile all Canadians with the history of Indian Residential Schools, to help build grassroots skills among community-based broadcasters in respectful reporting on the ongoing legacy of Indian Residential Schools, and provide a lasting record of survivors’ experiences.” http://www.ncra.ca/resonating
Gunargie alternates between speaking as a fellow residential school survivor, commenting on the buttons identifying Betsy and herself as such, and as an interviewer, asking about Betsy’s work with the community. This role of “interviewer” was not limited to the in-studio session.

*Vox Populi Interviews:*

Following the initial conversation/interview between Gunargie and Betsy, another documentary recording is heard, this time in the form of a direct interview on the street. She first plays a brief interview she conducted earlier in the march with the man covered in fake blood. The interview is sonically “in the field” and not the studio. Conversations and laughter from the nearby crowd of demonstrators pervades the blood-covered man’s strongly worded statements. He mentions nutritional and medical experiments, but also physical, emotional, and sexual abuse of small children, terming it “the indigenous Holocaust of colonial Canada.”

The blood-smeared man continues in his interview to say

“I’m basically making an artistic statement about the mass murders of small children in the residential schools for over four hundred years of internment of aboriginal children by the Canadian government. The documents that the federal government holds in archives depicting these grisly events are being withheld still. We’ve been able to bring some of it a lot of it to the surface through the testimonials of survivors, but there are the children who never got to speak, the children who didn’t make it out.

Drawing from language of brutal violence to describe the centuries of colonization in Canada, he points specifically to giving voice to the voiceless. The “children who never got to speak” are physically represented in his fake blood, but also verbally included in his interview. This interview, heavy with violent imagery is spattered with the sounds of
laughter and conversation from nearby demonstrators. Ironic and jarring, the combination brings a “liveness” to the interview in a way that could only happen in a live recording in the field. This liveness emerges from a ”technological intervention in the studio” not by EQing the track but through the juxtaposition to the studio sound during broadcast. It simultaneously contrasts the sentiments of the main speaker and his surrounding and serves to legitimize the main speaker’s act of speaking in the real world. The mismatch of background and foreground voices verifies to the listener that this interview is real.

Gunargie describes the scene as the march begins to move before finding two Sisters of the Child Jesus participating in the march to interview. The quick back and forths are made by moving the H2 recorder from close to Gunargie’s mouth quickly to close to the interviewee’s mouth in a classic journalistic style. The questions are fairly common “Who are you?” and “Why are you here?”), but the exchange itself is strongly charged beyond that commonplace journalistic interview question style.

| Gunargie: | Hi, can I talk to you people about the day’s event? How did you--- I’m with Co-Op Radio, CJSF, CiTR, community and campus radio at large and my name’s Gunargie, what’s yours? |
| Denise: | I’m Denise (Surname), I’m a Sister of the Child Jesus and our women were involved in the residential schools here in BC |
| Gunargie: | How were they involved? |
| Denise: | Basically as teachers, some as cooks, some as child care workers. They were employed by the federal government. |
| Gunargie: | Oh yes? |
| Denise: | And for us it’s important to be represented because it’s important to try and right the wrong. |

Gunargie: Oh, ok.

Denise: And so I was at...I’ve been part of an ecumenical working group in planning towards the national TRC event. I was on that group with Chief Bobby Joseph and others.

Gunargie: Ah, the Brighter New Days

Denise: Yeah, and so ...I was at an advisory, I am part of the planning committee for the TRC, and we had our meeting on Tuesday...and it was Justice Sinclair who told us about the event, so I got some more information and I’ve written my letter and I’m part of the march!

Gunargie: Wow, that’s amazing. I’m sure you have some amazing stories to share with some of our listeners about your perspectives on the residential schools, could you possibly help me out with that?

Denise: To me, to me, the system... It was a systemic injustice. It was very wrong.

Gunargie: Did you know that at the time? While you were working?

Denise: No

Gunargie: Why not?

Denise: (In background, drumming and JB w/ bullhorn “What do we want?” and crowd “Justice” chant) The sisters didn’t know it because when they came, they thought they were going to be helping the First Nations people become educated so that they could take their rightful place in society.

Gunargie: So you had good intentions?

Denise: I would bet, I would say yes, we had good intentions, but all of the good intentions in the world do not right a wrong.

Gunargie: I want to talk to you more a bit later. Thank you.

The exchange reminds or informs the audience that the residential schools most commonly attached to the Canadian government in the day’s discourse were mostly
church-run. It introduces the idea of systemic injustice and the potential to cause harm even with good intentions.

Vox pop interviews are made in the field and during the action, so they include sounds of whatever else is going on in the area, which, in the case of the young filmmaker, brought a strong irony to the fore. They also offer a chance by speaking as the press and not overtly as a residential school survivor to talk to those involved (or maybe potentially involved since the woman never claimed to have worked in the schools herself) in the residential schools. The systemic injustice referenced by the nun is framed as a past event that must be presently addressed rather than the ongoing colonization and injustice shared in interviews by the filmmaker and Betsy.

These interviews, conducted on the fly, offer glimpses into how people in a specific place at a specific point in time said they were feeling about specific issues. The choices made in the moment of interviewing, then in the studio, to edit and air them amounts to a strong curatorial role for the producer in constructing the story. Radio documentarian and teacher of audio documentary construction, John Biewen warns

In this postmodern age, we’re supposed to understand that there is no absolute, objective truth ‘out there’—certainly not one that we can vacuum up through a microphone, assemble into a perfect bundle of sonic reality and transmit to the listener. Every choice the producer makes is subject to dispute, from where to point the microphone to the digital slicing of a phrase at the expense of some nuance. 80

The choices made in the field and in the studio for this show amount to a construction of an aboriginal community radio subjectivity rather than an empirical and objective report of events. Bringing together multiple vox pop interviews with live interview and

reflection, the program constructs a conversation partially controlled by the editing hand of the producer in choosing which responses to share or even which people to ask which questions, but also in the conversation group live. Not unlike the production of an African sound for the global audience in Louise Meintjes’s *Sound of Africa!*, this conversation is carefully curated but emergent performance to produce numerous relationships. Its associations are “negotiable, provisional notions that are dialogically refigured in socially and formally econstituting moments” that are “wholly aesthetic and deeply political.” This openness to multiple aboriginal and non-aboriginal voices in live and pre-recorded performance entangles “community” within every element of the production and broadcast of the show on community radio.

*Talk, Reflection and Guest Speaks*

Now live in the studio, the last of the vox pop interviews fades out and Ross asks Gunargie to remind us what we’re talking about on today’s show. In her description, she circles back to add more information, for instance that the filmmaker was an intergenerational residential school survivor. She points to a theme or feeling for the day that the apology needs to be honored by sharing information so that survivors can be compensated for their suffering. This moment of reflection comments on the day’s demonstration, the policy of residential schools, and a critique of the handling of attempts made at reconciliation following the closing of residential schools.

Betsy says that an activist, while walking across the country to raise awareness of the abuses of the residential school system in 1995, was told by people involved with the

schools that information that was allegedly missing was not missing. What would be dismissed in a legal environment as hearsay is broadcast because it is coming from a community member. The placement of this statement following a large amount of documentary recordings that include a feeling or sense of reality in their overlapping soundscapes of city noises and aboriginal drumming, protest chants and public prayers, adds a certain legitimacy to the statement. My role here isn’t to prove this statement true or false, but to show that all of these voices coming together through choices made in the studio in real time produces/enables a broadcast of aboriginal community subjectivity in a way that otherwise is silenced or ignored. Conversations are made that are otherwise prohibitive or socially difficult. For instance, Betsy’s voice saying “What happened to us wasn’t abuse. What happened to us was torture. What happened to us was genocide.” is, in this show alone, in conversation with a nun whose order was involved in residential schools.

_Music Returns with Community Associations_

A Youtube recording of “Nusasim/I am crying for my children,” written by Margaret Harris, performed at a community education workshop at the Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Center is played, recommended and introduced by the show’s guest, Betsy. Since the recording is made at the VAFC at a workshop with an audience, there is a similar “documentary” quality that seeps in at moments when the audience makes themselves heard (baby making baby sounds, for instance). In many ways the airtime given to a past local performance at the suggestion of a community guest on the show demonstrates the community aesthetics and ethics of this show. Not only did
Gunargie meet Betsy that day at the march but she valued her input as a community member to broadcast her musical choice back into the community and momentarily handing control of the airtime to a newcomer.

The show then turns to Leonard Sumner, first by playing another track from his website. This time the song is “Prairie Sky,” a song with a much more “country” aesthetic than “Best of Me.” Leonard’s song reconnects the show to a broader Canadian aboriginal musical scene with its strong country influence and “prairie” references. As the track fades out on a ringing cymbal, suddenly a male voice is heard speaking an aboriginal language before switching to English to say “this is Deer Hunting Song.” Rattles and hand drum pulse as a lower register Pacific Northwest style aboriginal song starts. As the expectation of hearing the complete Deer Hunting Song begins to build, suddenly the track fades to the background and a voice-over comes to the forefront for a Pre-Recorded Announcement. The announcement advertises Sne’waylh, an aboriginal language and culture show broadcast at Co-Op Radio and syndicated across the city’s community and campus radio stations. This PRA moves the listener from a mode of musical listening to speech, but also connects the program to other aboriginal community radio shows and the other stations around the city. The point is made in this show is broadcasting from “unceded Coast Salish territory,” acknowledging the lack of resolution in the land treaty process. The statement also involves the listener in the broadcast area in identifying the space as indigenous. Within the one short PRA, connections are made to aboriginal community radio shows at the same station, community radio stations across the city, and to the contested nature of the territory into which they all broadcast.
Pre-recorded In-Studio Interview

Immediately following the Sne’waylh PRA, we hear Gunargie’s voice: “Alright, I’m back at Co-Op Radio with Leonard Sumner who’s a musician who attended the Honour the Apology Rally today...”

The interview is clear and free of background noise. For the moment, it sounds like Leonard is in the studio with the group mentioned earlier. The location and sound quality is because Gunargie conducted her interview in the studio with Leonard Sumner earlier in the day, between the march and the broadcast.

The introduction informs the listener of the location and the people present, but does not mention the temporal difference between the interview and its broadcast. Although a cast of characters was introduced near the beginning of the show, Leonard was not one of them. Potentially creating some questions as to the size of the studio or if a musician whose work had been prominently featured on a show would not merit an introduction at the start of the show while a graduate student observing the show’s broadcast from the corner of the studio and away from a microphone would be specifically named.

Leonard identifies as Anishinaabe as his nation, and he is from the Little Saskatchewan Reserve in Manitoba. In the interview, he says that he doesn’t really see himself as Canadian. He says that his nation and others were established before contact and should not be defined only by contact. He says “it’s not enough to talk about decolonization, it’s about living your culture, not tearing down the one that came in.” His goal, then, is to live as Anishinaabe.
This stance on national identity fits neatly with the contention surrounding BC land treaty, but is also not the only claim to his identity with regard to this show’s broadcast. For each broadcast, hosts are required to record what songs they played, who spoke, etc. in order to demonstrate their compliance with national Canadian Content requirements. Although Leonard stated on air that he sees himself as Anishinaabe more than Canadian, the official document recording the show’s content acknowledged his music and his interview as “Canadian.” The interview ends with “They Say,” another track played off of Leonard’s website.

Decolonizing Conclusion

Leonard Sumner’s claim that “it’s not enough to talk about decolonization” points to a major difficulty in aboriginal politics that have implications for aboriginal community radio. Harkening back to the nun’s mention of “systems” and “systemic injustice” in her vox populi interview, the number of systems at play in this broadcast alone is enormous: the Indian Residential School system, the Canadian legal system with its Indian Act defining and restricting Aboriginality in the country, the British colonial system which has informed the relations of settlers and indigenous peoples in what is now known as Vancouver. Other systems include the community radio broadcast system, including the National Campus and Community Radio Association all the way to Vancouver Co-Op Radio, with its six aboriginal programs. These systems are not fixed entities, but are reliant on continual performance of them, and so performance practices like this radio show and the march it draws so heavily from offer moments of reinvention and remaking. While merely talking about decolonization lacks efficacy for Leonard,
continually providing interventions on the airwaves by bringing aboriginal voices into conversation with the spaces of colonization and communities of settlers and indigenous peoples alike, I see hope. The aboriginal community radio subjectivity broadcast each week in shows like this episode of Kla How Ya offers resistance to marginality while also refusing to be easily bounded and defined.
Conclusion

Like I was telling you a few times on the air, the past is in front of me. I can see it. The future’s behind me, I can’t see the future. I’m sitting in a river of time that’s flowing from behind me. As things come into view, I have to deal with them right then because they’ll never be there again. –Woody Morrison, Sne’waylh 7/30/13

Like any ethnography, this project is visible and tangible only because it is historical, particular to recollections of specific times, places, and interactions. It is a construction of those past engagements and not a direct or unmediated reliving of them.

We can see them because they have passed, but we need to acknowledge the limitations of this “revision.” From our vantage on the water, we can attempt to review, to read into those past emergent experiences when new sounds and ideas floated into the present field of vision. Informed by temporal distance, these are attempts are bounded with elements imposed that were not interior to the experienced present, though dependent upon that interiority.

Though the narrative elements of this thesis utilize a present tense in order to evoke a feeling of emergence, the conversations, movements through space, and broadcasts are no longer “live.” Recollections of that now visible past “present” inform the writing, memories sparked by fieldnotes, jottings, and photos. My field recordings linger on memory cards, hard drives, and in online storage. Recordings of the shows, divvied up in one-hour blocks, accumulate in the station’s online archives. This document
exists in digital form and printed texts as a recombination of those materials, academic readings, and many edited drafts.

Each of these, from the present act of remembering to the series of ones and zeros in data files of shows archived online, from physical written accounts to publicly circulating Facebook photos, is exterior to the actual demonstration in chapter one, the ambivalent conversations in chapter two, and performance of Kla How Ya in the studio in chapter three. Likewise, each of these is exterior to the experience of “tuning in” to a live broadcast. I draw attention to this exteriority to openly admit this text is partial and fragmentary, reflecting a curatorial selection rather than an impossible complete “whole.”

Just like other forms of expressive culture, ethnography has tropes and expectations. The form of this thesis does resist certain pitfalls. The choice to present one day’s radio production work in the body of the thesis was not made lightly. Gesturing towards the limited scope, I did not want to make claims beyond the insight two months of fieldwork could offer. The goal of this thesis is not to definitively document “a” culture or even “a cultural practice,” but to highlight moments of reinvention, of renewed performance. This strategy involved a large degree of “letting the tape play,” listening to broad scenes and invocations of space, history, and identity from the public voices of my interlocutors. The invocations of historical pasts are made in present moments, while presenting to a gathering of demonstrators or speaking out on live broadcast. Richard Handler warns that “relegated to the background, history can be presented as facts. The
existence of such facts in turn proves the existence of the ‘thing’ the facts are about.”

By allowing my interlocutors time to speak and to narrate, I hope to avoid that academic solipsism, while also acknowledging my own role in creating narrative and analysis in this text.

Chapter one begins in Gastown, as diverse bodies, marked with red headbands, converge at a statue. The choice of the location draws attention to Canada’s historical and ongoing colonization. The march begins and indigenous and non-indigenous voices converge in a complicated soundscape of overt critique. Through this entanglement of voices moving through Vancouver’s city streets, a history of residential school abuse emerges as a call to action for all Canadians and the Canadian government alike. The march pauses at a major intersection and forms a circle left untraversed, physically outlining or reclaiming a space in Vancouver as indigenous. This tension of indigenous space and settler-imposed restriction is enacted in a way that not only inverts the existing relationships, but forces other movements through the city space to change, causing an upset in the settler everyday. The march reaches the Office of Aboriginal Affairs and shifts from an overlapping unity of voices to a direct speaker-audience relationship, with the speaking role shifting to voices of intergenerational residential school survivors, settler clergy, aboriginal activists, a musician, and a community organizer. Each offers a public statement and a prayer for healing as the headbands are gathered at an improvised altar. As the crowd dissipates after the public demonstration has concluded, the day’s

work continues in private ceremony on a reserve and in the creation and performance of a radio broadcast later that day (discussed in chapter three).

Chapter two disrupts the flow between a recording gathering journey in chapter one and the in-studio experiences of chapter three, bringing to light the broader picture, where aboriginal community radio fits in a Vancouver media sphere and how producers negotiate their role in adding aboriginal community radio to that media sphere each week. It seeks to highlight ambivalence, moving between indigenous locality and governmental definitions and restriction. This move serves to denaturalize Vancouver’s or Canada’s givenness in order to acknowledge the multiple voices and restrictions that go into producing aboriginal community radio. Beginning in a Vancouver city space, I move to reconsider the space of the city within which and into which these community radio programs are broadcast in terms of “territory,” a term associated with local indigenous nations’ description of the space. From spatial conceptualization I turn to defining Canadian legal formations that situate “community radio” in a particular way in the Canadian media sphere, bringing multiple state regulations into the studio. With the space of Vancouver and the governance of the CRTC established, I narrow the scope to a single community radio station in Vancouver, CFRO. Within that radio station, there are several aboriginal programs, so I turn to two specific producers and their ways of negotiating aboriginality, community, and radio in their work.

Chapter three returns to the studio with recordings and interviewees gathered from the demonstration in chapter one. The show unfolds in this chapter as it was performed, highlighting choices made in live performance to use media in certain ways.
A show and station ID positions the show in Vancouver and in an aboriginal sphere, while abiding by station-wide and national rules and regulations for community radio broadcast. Pre-recorded announcements fill time and fulfill station obligations while tying the current live show with shows aired at other times. A documentary recording transports the broadcast elsewhere, tuned in to a different time and space outside of the studio. The ways in which the recording is made, e.g. proximity of microphone to sound source or description of the scene, inform how the recording airs, recreating the sense of certain spatial relations while avoiding the spectacle of a group of red headbanded people raising voices and walking along on a city street. Musical choices take the show back to a studio space, albeit not CFRO. Talk serves to introduce those in the studio, discuss the day’s event in a live interview, and provide reflection on the role the day’s event ought to play in reimagining indigenous-settler relationships. Interviews made in the field and one pre-recorded in-studio interview from earlier in the day provide checkpoints into ways people in the community are thinking and feeling at that moment in time, which then gets broadcast later. Each of these choices in media and tact emerges in a live performance out of choices made in the moment at the soundboard, although informed by earlier preparations and experiences.

There is a certain reflexive balance that I’ve tried to achieve in this project, positioning myself within the narrative form to acknowledge the inherent intersubjectivity in an ethnographic approach. This positioning involves not just the immediate participants of a conversation but many overlapping interrelationships of various temporal, social, ethical, and cultural scopes. I present myself as I have come to
know myself vis-à-vis my interlocutors, as a settler on native land, as a white woman working on a graduate education in an anthropologically informed ethnomusicology, as a musician and documentarian in an academic world. These identifications however were not always apparent to my interlocutors or even to myself. Denaturalizing the position of “settler” in a settler-colonial society has been the most difficult and arduous of these transformations personally and I have sought to include moments of that type of identity shift within the text of this thesis.

My role in this story is simultaneously minimal to the unfolding of most of the original events and at crux of its present construction. I attended events that were already occurring, sat in on shows that were airing anyway, but the conversations co-created with my interlocutors due to my presence or because of my position in that particular setting are largely shaped by existing associations and past experiences.

My presence follows the patterns established of scholars interested in indigenous lifeworlds and expressive culture finding their way to British Columbia. My path follows in the foundational footsteps of Franz Boas and Curt Sachs in connecting with native communities along the western coast of Turtle Island. These footsteps are not otherwise untraveled, however. Numerous anthropologists and ethnomusicologists have conducted their work with and amongst native communities in BC.\textsuperscript{83} My project differs in its urban

\textsuperscript{83} Recent ethnographic studies amongst BC indigenous communities include: Julie Cruikshank, \textit{Do Glaciers Listen? Local Knowledge, Colonial Encounters and Social Imagination} (Vancouver, B.C.: UBC Press, 2005); Richard Daly, \textit{Our Box Was Full: An Ethnography for the Delgamuukw Plaintiffs} (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005); Andie Palmer, \textit{Maps of Experience: The Anchoring of Land to Story in Secwepemc Discourse} (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005); Paula Pryce, \textit{Keeping the Lakes’ Way: Reburial and Re-Creation of a Moral World among an Invisible People} (Toronto:
focus and media performance analysis, but is similar in its focus on aboriginal community media to Kathleen Buddle’s analysis of aboriginal women’s tactics of resistance in community radio broadcast in Ontario.\textsuperscript{84} I fall into an uncomfortable pattern of scholars coming into communities to gain data and then leaving to return to the academy either temporarily or permanently once they gained the information they sought.

My presence in BC does not merely connect to these academic figures, but to the colonizing forces in the territory, historically and at present. I move freely around the map of Vancouver, North Vancouver, Coquitlam, etc., aware that such movements were until relatively recently made impossible for anyone wishing to maintain an indigenous identity. My presence on and off reserve land to conduct interviews, attend cultural events, and see exhibits reinforces patterns of white surveillance over reserve land and the boundaries imposed upon communities in the implementation of reserve systems. I offer these associations to provide a sense of some of the anxieties that informed the choices made in the field and in preparing this document.

This thesis represents one day in particular out of many. It was chosen because it represents the recursive nature of the practice, going into the field to get recordings of the community and then returning to the studio to broadcast back to the community. Like any performance practice, no two shows are exactly alike, but draw from similar community and media resources. Because these shows are produced on a volunteer basis, the

personnel often shift to accommodate individual work schedules and personal lives. This results in a much more multivocal and complex aboriginal community radio subjectivity to emerge in broadcast. I chose to reduce the scope of this thesis not because things were simple, but because they are complex and an attempt to fairly analyze a larger data set would require more than two months in the field.

In the short term, my goal is to return to Vancouver to present this project to my main interlocutors. In conversations off the air, a few of my interlocutors noted that they would be more interested in a project that didn’t end up sitting in a library in Ohio but one that could be shared within the community. I would like to use my skill set as a documentarian to provide a tangible media piece that is more accessible than a long textual document but not simplified. In addition, Gunargie has asked me to share my research on her shows, so I would like to reciprocate the access she showed me in granting me access to her work by returning the favor.

This relation of this research to radio is not a coincidence. An interest in radio and audio documentary brought me to the radio station to begin with, finding a place in the sprawling urban metropolis of Vancouver. My experience recording for documentaries gave my presence in the studio a value that would otherwise be lacking. I could contribute recordings as a way of participating and earning my keep within the radio community. Professionally, I would love to join the ranks of anthropologists and ethnomusicologists who work in radio, like Matt Sakakeeny and Nick Spitzer. The same careful listening and ethnographic interactions can apply towards both an academic

85. Both of whom are or have been involved in the production of the show American Routes for public radio.
ethnomusicology and a public radio performance. Although ethnographies have a place in the academic world, their written form and length can limit the interest of potential readers. Radio, on the other hand, can reach people as they commute to and from work, while they work on other tasks. This broadening community of potential listeners is intriguing. Beyond the wider audience, I enjoy audio editing and documentary construction as an artistic practice and would like to pursue it further.

Living in Vancouver while contributing to and observing aboriginal community radio shows, I got a sense of possibility. From the critiques voiced in the demonstration in chapter one to the broadcast of the show in chapter three, there is the opportunity to reframe and revoice aboriginality in a settler-colonial space. In broadcasting these claims to identity, space, and justice, aboriginal community radio producers work to remake the space and social construct of Vancouver in ways that challenge the assumptions of settler-colonialism.
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