Radical Traversals

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Abstract

In Radical Traversals, Sierra Edd combines work on Indigenous art practice and production, politics of aesthetics, and temporal sovereignty, to highlight the potentialities of decolonial imagining and interpretative methods of listening in an analysis of the digital music collection called the Indigenous Futurisms Mixtape. Edd examines how sonic affect and the remix form create spatial and temporal multidimensionality or hyper-presence, to disrupt Western orders of objecthood and colonial logics in music. Drawing on epistemological provocations in Native and Indigenous studies, Black diaspora studies, and Sound studies, this paper uses a theoretical framework of traveling Indigeneity to center collaboration and theorizations on decolonial imagination which describes emergent radical envisioning and world-making as a conceptual tool of troubleshooting. To foreground the engagement with Indigenous and Afro-Indigenous sound and aesthetics in music, Edd uses a method of close-listening, a heterogeneous intimacy or a whole-body encounter with sonic (meta)physics and acoustics. This paper illustrates how listening and engaging with the Mixtape’s political aesthetic form encourages decolonial imagining and employs micro-scale resurgence enacted in quotidian intellectual and emotional knowledge building.

Keywords: close-listening, hyper-presence, traveling Indigeneity, temporal sovereignty, decolonial
Introduction

*Radical Traversals* describes how Indigenous peoples confront and unsettle colonial logic through sonic expression. Using a method of close listening, this article presents a sonic analysis of Indigenous music in the re-mixed form asking how the remix generates a coded reply to colonial domination, a reply which refuses to be decipherable under normative rules of Western modernity (Simpson, 2017, p. 198). Radical is a key term reflexively used to resist tendencies of pragmatism and to encourage thinking outside formal (disciplined) knowledges as well as to understand the root causes of problems rather than seek solutions. My focus will be on sonic temporality and the role of one’s imagination in listening following Johnathan Sterne’s writing on plural sonic imaginations (2012, p. 15). Engagement with such sonic properties allows us envisioning beyond our oppression. In the current moment, diasporic Indigenous artists, poets, musicians, and singers, exist and catalyze Indigenous worlds into being throughout North America. This article examines a digital music collection called the *Indigenous Futurisms Mixtape* (2014) highlighting the ways in which sound generates an auditory spatiality for decolonial imagination through the affective work of interpretive engagement with music. Auditory spatiality relates to the dimensional contours of sound properties of listening and occupying or producing a space, especially in cases where one takes up space with sound. It also challenges the idea that sound is an event restricted to a particular time and space. Here, I make a theoretical move of employing an understanding of traveling Indigeneity inspired by Edward Said’s traveling theory (1983). By invoking Indigeneity as a conceptual referent, there may seem to be a point of origin at which the idea of Indigeneity is inscribed...
within discourse and a particular set of conditions are marked as one idea of Indigeneity is accepted. And importantly, in a process of traversal or movement from that apparent point in the different uses of Indigeneity, it and its conditions of possibility, are inevitably transformed under the different contextual deployments made through shifts of time and space, which invites reexamination at every stage. I offer a multi-disciplinary interpretation of the sonic form using a Sound Studies framing in conversation with current discourses on decolonial imagination, Indigenous futurity, relational Black and Indigenous thought, and the role of active listening in creative production of temporal sovereignty.

The Indigenous Futurisms Mixtape is a collaborative music project first made available in 2014 on an online blog called ‘Indigenous Music Culture: Revolutions Per Minute’ (RPM). The purpose of the project was to extend Indigenous creation storytelling into song, while ostensibly making a move against profit-driven music circulation by posting the collection on Soundcloud as well as providing a decolonial framing that centered an audience of listeners with a “futurist ear” (RPM, 2014). A futurist ear, I suggest, can be held by both settler and Indigenous identities using a critical listening positionality (Robinson, 2019). Jarrett Martineau is the co-founder and creative producer for RPM records and a key creator of the Indigenous Futurisms Mixtape along with the Indigenous art collective Kimiwan Zine. The project includes voices and work from 2oolman (A Tribe Called Red) and Flying Lotus, King Britt and John Mohawk, Sun Ra and Savage Family, Princess Nokia and DJ Shub, Boogey the Beat, Erykah Badu, Shabazz Palaces, Silver Jackson, Autechre to A Tribe Called Red, Darkstar and Ryan Dennison (2014). The creators describe their project as “a journey through the intertwined Afro-Indigenist histories of colonized life on our current planet, that reaches for decolonial worlds beyond the beyond” (RPM, 2014). Being created by Indigenous artists, the Mixtape’s aesthetics are politicized.

In the Indigenous Futurisms Mixtape, Indigenous peoples refuse settler worlds through disruption. Settler worlds is used here to describe the unmarked ontological questions of the human world that come primarily from European objectivist traditions that often reinforce a separation between object and subject. The sonic landscape produced by Indigenous artists marks a
collaborative performance that speaks to Indigenous futures through what the creators have termed, ‘the hyperpresent now’. The hyperpresent now is utilized analytically to understand Indigenous metaphysics and cosmologies. This allows a productive epistemological stance wherein meaning is constructed by the interplay between listening subject and music, especially with ideas of presents and presence. This article introduces the sound studies method of close-listening for engaging in Indigenous sound projects and seeks to understand the aesthetic contributions of the Indigenous Futurisms Mixtape toward decolonial thought production for its broad audience. This article asks three questions: 1) How does the notion of Indigenous and Black pluralistic futures destabilize the hegemonic settler futurity? 2) How does sound represent Indigenous temporalities and spatiality? And, 3) How does listening to the Mixtape invite listeners to confront the limitations in the process of making oneself legible to the nation-state and radically envision new worlds?

Similar to Mishuana Goeman’s (2013, p. 2) approach to literary genres, I suggest that the sonic also ‘tenders an avenue for the ‘imaginative’ creation of new possibilities, which must happen through imaginative modes precisely because the ‘real’ of settler colonial society is built on the violent erasures of alternative modes of mapping and geographic understandings’ (p. 2). The larger cost of not knowing and feeling positive affects has tangible impacts in our Indigenous communities. Simply by existing in a world never meant for us, Indigenous lives have always been a target for elimination (Wolfe, 2006, p. 388). Stimulating decolonial imagining is a form of healing after colonial violence which allows the processing of inter-generational and ongoing physical, emotional, and spiritual trauma. It allows us to feel and be loved despite living in a world that seeks to destroy us. We have always known how to restore balance; this is an act of remembering or re-visiting. Here, (re)mapping converges with decolonial imagining as a means of envisioning and actively challenging colonial relations. Listening and engaging with the Mixtape’s political aesthetic form encourages decolonial imagining and feeling positive affects which, I suggest come through fulfilling fugitive desires and belonging in practices of art-making and Indigenous re-presencing. Specifically, a fugitive desire is the impulse from an unsatisfied condition where the ‘fugitive’ qualifies an elusive movement of flight, fleeing, or wandering.
I also employ the term ‘decolonial’ after much meditation on the frustrations of its overuse leading to incapacitation and reduction of radical calls for material action through performative animation.\(^2\) I intentionally use decolonial as a descriptor where anti-colonial fails. For me de-colonial alludes to a deconstructive position that thinks with the limitation of linguistic analytics as well as the relational work of examining compartmentalized knowledge formations according to the normativising university (Chuh, 2014, p. 128). Decolonial envisioning radically hopes for a liberated future and emerges from collective desires. Importantly for me, as a term it also invites collaborative theorizing with decolonial Black diasporic knowledge production. While some might interpret rhetoric that employs language of decolonial and decolonization as harmful or troublesome, using a reparative reading which Eve Sedgwick (1997, pp. 127-130) imagines as privileging our unknowing, I seek to nuance assumptions about potential outcomes through intimate speculation in acts of decolonial troubleshooting and imagining.\(^3\) Reparative readings work in tandem with desire-based practices and urge for qualitative engagement of the same caliber (Tuck, 2009).

Decolonial troubleshooting conceptually means practicing acts of translation and sharing of knowledge/discourse to figure out what leads to contextualized root problems within colonialism in efforts of creating social change. This stance assumes the coloniality of realities and formal knowledge within the United States and Canadian settings in order to link ‘epistemology, politics, and ethics’ (Tiostanova, Mignolo 2012, p. 19). Decolonial troubleshooting therefore refuses to study and affirm objects by studying instead a set of problems to affirm subjectivity. Driven by desire and curiosity, my analysis responds to pathologizing analytics and suspicious assumptions about materials of study. Although the sonic is nested by social forces, it has the capacities to transcend and create spaces, and nurture imaginations, feelings, and different ways of being through decolonial troubleshooting. This kind of transcendence describes the break from settler colonial technologies which reify, control, and mark the position of Indigenous dispossession in the United States. Situating settler-colonialism as an assemblage of technologies, I consider how sound might reassemble multi-scalar disciplining technologies (la paperson, 2017, p. 9).
The Mixtape offers potentiality for Indigenous futurities, decolonial imaginings, and spatial and temporal multidimensionality on two distinct levels: in sonic affect and in the remix form. To contextualize my analysis, I will introduce the key methods and theoretical literature on Indigenous art fugitivity, current scholarship working at the intersection of critical Indigenous studies, Black diaspora studies, and sound studies to give an overview of the theoretical and methodological approaches. Many Indigenous and Native American scholars point out the importance of creativity and art production for actualizing decolonial knowledge that is always already present (Robinson, 2019; Recollet, 2016; Amsterdam, 2013). Just as challenging colonial power and troubleshooting social problems does not belong to any one discipline, Indigenous theorizations and critiques are not localized to one configuration. Indigenous thinking and decolonial imagination(s) are multiplicitous and contextualized within different epistemological upbringings.

In As We Have Always Done, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (2017) expresses an urgency for asserting Nishnaabeg presence and Nishnaabeg present as a tradition of nation-building. She describes how Indigenous practitioners of radical resurgence work together to create an alternative present built through refusal of colonial recognition and reciprocity, as we (Indigenous peoples) have always done. Rather than concentrating on responding to the politics of the state, Indigenous (re)presencing generates the potential for creating Indigenous futures that ‘categorically refuse and reject dispossession and settler colonialism and the violence of capitalism, heteropatriarchy, white supremacy, and anti-Blackness that maintains them’ (Simpson, 2017, p. 192). Much in conversation with Simpson, are Jarrett Martineau and Eric Ritskes (2014, p. II) who write in Fugitive indigeneity that Indigenous art, thought, and practice, must be grounded with land and place. Indigenous lifeworlds are thus inextricably tied to place, community, and land while simultaneously invoking a fugitive aesthetic, wherein Indigenous art abandons efforts for inclusion or recognition and ‘chooses refusal and flight as modes of freedom’ (Martineau and Ritskes, 2014, p. IV).

Similarly, Karyn Recollet (2016) offers an insightful analysis on digital music and video through the remix at the intersections of sound and Indigenous studies. Specifically, she examines the ways remixing movement and gesture in
video ‘jump scale’ beyond colonial mappings to create ‘an intriguing conduit to house future imaginary relationships to space/time and territory’ (p. 91). In regard to the remix, she argues its form allows for a space of futurity, an in-between time to refuse colonial dispossession and erasure by gesturing toward ‘creative, desirous futures’ (Recollet, 2016, pp. 92-93). She describes the process as a project of decolonial (re)mapping of settler cartographies. Recollet’s work extends our understandings of fugitive gestures in relation to Simpson (2017) and Martineau and Ritskes (2014) similar explorations of resurgent art-making that shifts colonial scales of time/space toward nation-building and futurity. Together these scholarly works produce and constitute what Simpson calls constellations of coresistance. In a tradition of the Indigenous intellectual community (existing in and beyond the neoliberal academy), my work invites others into conversation on the potentialities of decolonial artmaking.

Local as the global through Indigenous and Black traditions

Scholars in Sound studies describe a sonic imagination which ‘occupies an ambiguous position between sound culture and a space of contemplation outside it’ (Schulze, 2012, p. 5). Similarly, in the context of active listening and analysis of sound, ‘decolonial imagination’ means radically imagining, envisioning, and world-making. Decolonial imagination is an intersectional practice within a lineage of radical thinking in Ethnic studies, queer, feminist, and Indigenous and Black diasporic traditions. Sound studies expands our operatives for fugitive acts for listening against the grain. We might then understand different ways to upend the logics, structures, and imaginaries of colonial power. As many of the authors point out, to seek state-recognition is to limit possibilities of otherwise worlds. This move of refusal asks how notions of desire and radical Indigeneity can exist and travel in the everyday—in the hyper present now.

From a Diné position this understanding creates a path ‘inward’ from the enclosed scope of a settler colonial framework (Simpson, 2017, p. 214). This inward flight illustrates the generative refusal which emphasizes acts of constructing, locating, and bringing forth Indigenous presents/presence. Additionally, authors Jarrett Martineau and Eric Ritskes (2014, p. I) describe
the structural impediments of working in the colonial order, ‘which always threatens to reappropriate, assimilate, subsume/consume and repress Indigenous voicings and visuality, their forms and aesthetics, within its hegemonic logic of domination’. Fugitive acts resists as well, the capitalist market value system, which renders decolonial sound aesthetics as political or only for consumption. Therefore, we are called upon to work to bring out untapped areas for decolonizing work outside of colonial realities or whiteness. Relationality not only resists colonial paradigms but also interacts with the non-human world (Recollet, 2016, pp. 94-102). Ultimately, sonic disruption engages in thinking beyond the nation-state order which also dismantles the pattern of referencing the dominant hegemony for inspiration.

In the same stroke, foregrounded is a traveling theory of Indigeneity that considers the various emergent formations, the guest visitations, and unpredictable shifts at the analytical and methodological location of the shoals (King, 2019, p. 3). The liminal shoal that is both land and sea asks to step back from the dialectical antagonism between Black and Indigenous peoples to critically reckon with ‘the ways that Black presence in the Americas casts a shadow on and informs the projects of genocide, settlement, and the remaking of “the human” under ongoing relations of conquest?’ (King, 2019, p. 10). Thinking through the meeting places of Black and Indigenous theorizations, the presence of discontinuous shadows and ghostly hauntings signals a venue for collaborative work within a shared fragmented language. To think with Black ‘diasporic decolonial poetics’ is to analytically engage with differential lived experiences under settler colonialism and address racialized Blackness and Afro-Indigeneity, allowing for artistic collaboration across ‘linguistic borders, points of origin, or distant homelands’ (Figueroa-Vásquez, 2020, p. 2). While this work attends to these questions by addressing the remix form and multigenre engagements from the various artist collaborators of the Indigenous Futurisms Mixtape, my positioned analysis and listening practice emerges from a Diné perspective and focused critique of U.S. settler colonialism.

**Methodology**

This article uses close listening in order to ask critical questions and engage with Indigenous sound and aesthetics in song, media, art, and a multitude of cultural
practices. Close listening, not reducible to hearing, is an act performed by the whole body in a situated listening to account for perceptions of heterogeneity and relational intimacy with sound (Novak and Sakakeeny 2015, pp. 35-36). Dylan Robinson (2019) makes a crucial departure from settler-centered approaches in sound studies with a framework of ‘hungry listening’ that locates and examines extractive listening practices within a broader discussion of sovereignty and refusal at the sensory levels. As an alternative, Robinson describes a critical listening positionality or a practice of guest listening where one enters a given sound territory through listening in relation to land (p. 15). This also unsettles the sense of mastery and ownership over musical content in listening through layers. I demonstrate a practice of close listening as a method where listening comes to represent a type of heterogeneous intimacy while engaging sound through processual meaning making. Close listening is an embodied active presence, it is an unsettling performance, it is an engaged encounter with sonic (meta)physics and acoustics which dislocates the fixity of ‘goal-oriented teleology of listening’ (Robinson, 2016, p. 58). Listening to the Mixtape was a visceral experience of feeling affirmed. With the assumption of ubiquitous colonial logic this discussion proceeds using an ‘interpretive move’ of affirming a listening subjectivity with an understanding that temporal sovereignty and decolonial imaginings are yielded through perception anchored in lived experiences and in relation to listening positionality (Feld, 1984, p. 8; Sonevysky, 2019, pp. 142-143).

In practice, this took shape by listening to the tracks multiple times which included sessions where I just listened without annotating or trying to analyze. Other times, I focused only on the voices and lyrics, or just the musical elements. I replayed the tracks out of order and listened while closing my eyes to see how tracks worked in conversation. Some of these times I listened to the Mixtape at my computer desk letting the music fill the space, and others I plugged in my headphones into my cellphone as I commuted throughout the city. I found that different elements and contexts changed my perceptions and interpretations. For example, when I listened to this tape in the urban Berkeley area, I found myself thinking about the wide Shiprock landscape from my youth and wondered what Berkeley would look like without any houses, roads, and buildings and what I would hear without the city noise. I wondered what the
Ohlone xučyun (Huichin) homelands of the Bay Area, where I myself was a guest, sounded and felt like before displacement. I also evaluated the compatible analytics of mobile technologies with Indigenous traveling theorizing. The technological medias of the digital Mixtape and the listening devices of my cellphone and laptop provided calls for imperative engagement with the practice of embodied space where devices work on an intercorporeal way with bodies and meeting points to constitute social and spatial meaning making practices (Farman, 2007, p. 1). This locative listening with media produces social spaces ‘both materially and across digital networks’ where movement is not only applicable to flow/movement but also in dwelling/stillness (p. 141).

This crucial moment breaks from normative linkages of movement with the ideas of progress and singular directionality (Farman, 2007)—my positioned listening was simultaneously inscribed and inscribing meaning with these various spatial technologies. The Mixtape’s social and political context performs at this juncture, a confluence of North American Indigenous and Afro-Indigenous cultural questions and commitments that strongly contrast settler colonial mappings of spatial and temporal displacement. When the Mixtape was released in 2014, it underlined several international movements and events such as Idle No More (2012), the police shooting of Eric Garner and protests in Ferguson, Missouri and Black Lives Matter movement (2013), Indigenous activism and pressure on climate action, Canadian pipeline politics (eg. Keystone XL pipeline), and Indigenous anti-extraction activism in Latin America. The relevant issues of environmental and climate justice, anti-Black state violence, and Indigenous action of this moment indicate structural interrogation and resonances with historical intimacies of ongoing conquest. My listening was thus shaped through engagement with the histories and struggles of the lives enduring settler colonial conditions at the time it was produced and in the present moment. If we untether ideas of movement and technology from forward progress and hierarchies that privileges the new over older devices, we might find moments of ‘embodied connection through asynchronous means’ through memory and stories in music (Farman, 2007, p. 99).

My listening was guided as well by the artist’s introductions written on the blog website. The creators of the mixtape describe the Indigenous future as a
I am considering Indigenous diasporic futurity in the hyperpresent now, not in response to colonialism but instead as preceding and ultimately transcending colonial comprehension and Eurocentric logics. I also consider how the sonic space in the Mixtape offers a modality of flight where Indigenous fugitive intervention and methods of coded disruption can exist (Simpson, 2017, p. 209). A modality generally describes different modes of expression and experience. It also represents sensory perception in which flight conveys a mode of sense or method for departure from Western perspectives. In an artistic practice that employs micro-scale resurgence enacted in quotidian intellectual and emotional knowledge, the Mixtape’s opacity makes decolonial worlds available to Indigenous listeners while refusing full legibility to settlers. However, this does not completely disallow settlers from engaging the music. As previously mentioned, the creators intended the Mixtape to be listened to by those with a ‘futurist ear’ where settler and Indigenous listening can coexist (RPM, 2014). Close listening in practice using a critical listening positionality is a type of reparative reading that on one hand allows access to hidden worlds and on another hand, is a generative catalyst for decolonial imagining for futurist ears.

Fugitivity in the remix

The remixed tracks of music analyzed in this project offer an engagement with the multiplicity of media, culture, and genre. Eduardo Navas (2012, p. 4) notes a ‘Remix is more like a virus that has mutated into different forms according to the needs of particular cultures’. The remix allows us to question compositional form in the shape and organization of the Mixtape, as well as ask how the remix creatively bends or challenges conventions and expectations in Indigenous music. Recollet (2016, p. 94) explains that the remix offers a medium for Indigenous traditions to materialize into futurity through its mechanics of relationality, remembering, and (re)mapping. In the remixed form, Indigenous and Afro-Indigenous voices and sounds become a multiplicity of musical elements which can be deconstructed and understood in relation to original song forms and contexts. Understanding the mixtape as an aesthetic genre formally redefines space on the level of song duration that can be
measured in how long or short a track is as well as in tempo, patterns, and beat. It also produces affective space, importantly felt vibrationally between (human and non-human) bodies. The hyperpresent now of the remix pluralizes notions of time and space through sonic affect to explore the Indigenous potentialities and expressions of temporal sovereignty (Recollet, 2016, pp. 92-94).

While I have so far attempted to move away from colonial ontologies that produce formulations of Indigeneity determined through Western conceptions of sovereignty and nationality, I want to understand the more nuanced cultural and aesthetic implications of belonging for Black and Afro-Indigenous diasporic subjects, especially for conceptualizing Afro-Indigeneity in Canada and the United States. I must mention the importance of situating practices of mixing, sampling, and the broader hip hop style and genre as emerging from mid-1970s Black culture in the United States. While I will only briefly touch on this topic, my intention is to analytically trouble colonial ontological perceptions and approaches to music that assume a stabilized object-hood which can be extractively mastered (Robinson, 2019, p. 63). Hip Hop studies scholars have also asked how hip hop operates as a system of language or linguistic representation often expressing forms of critique to from the ‘underground’ (Morgan, 2009, p.16). This underground signifies the manifold symbols of flight, fight, and freedom tracing through histories of slavery, continuing modalities of surveillance and control, self-critique and transformation, as well as challenging academia’s inclusionary analyses and misrepresentations of hip hop knowledge. Thus, hip hop as a knowledge base for which theorizing from young Black and Afro-Indigenous people might coalesce in the form of wordsmithing across grammars, and requires evaluation and revaluation (Morgan, 2009, pp. 11-12).

Instead of viewing the shared presents/presence of Blackness and Indigenous in the remix form and style as an antagonism, I argue for an understanding of the artists as practitioners of diasporic decolonial poetics whose engagement represents a constellation of coresistance. Because the hyperpresent now is neither legible, nor reducible to a linear structure of settler temporality, the Native and Afro-Indigenous crossings of linguistic borders in the mixtape refuses the colonial here and now. It also depicts a taking of technology to
invert power through contemplation of the historical emergence and influences of hip hop as anti-mainstream and relatedly incites underground distribution separately from capitalist value systems. Hip hop linguistics also function as cultural translation and linguistic combat when situating hip hop expressions within broader racial politics and of settler colonial and capitalist regimes (Morgan, 2009, p. 12). For me, linguistic combat also performs something similar to counting coup, ululation and other war gestures from North American tribes that resonate within a sound territory. Lauren Amsterdam (2016, p. 54) argues as well that Native and Indigenous hip hop cartography asserts in their musical expressions a materiality and continuity of presence on stolen lands and ‘constricted latitudes of existence’ while also remixing their Indigeneity. Tricia Rose (2008), in The Hip Hop Wars, tracks the historical trajectory of hip hop to the contemporary music industries not without troubled issues of commercialization and hyper consumption of Blackness. Therefore, to say that the remix form is always political or ascribes radical meaning to all Indigenous and Afro-Indigenous music would be to affirm colonial extractivist perceptions of music. This context of Afro-diasporic and Black art practice provides an intercorporeal listening that implodes space and time from linguistic borders, homelands, and nations in order to glimpse the local, global, and cosmic capacities of the hyper-present imagination.

**Sonic (re)mapping**

The political implications of Native and Afro-Indigenous world-making come through the track ‘PBC (Feat. Sheldon Sundon)’ (44:16) by A Tribe Called Red. Preceding ‘PBC’ is a balanced hand drum song featuring just vocals. This song effortlessly transitions from a light melody of whistles and reverb carried only by voice which then moves into a gradual addition of a hand drum pulse, into the dense electronic hip hop sound. Following this, a mixed layer of sliding chords, claps, powwow singing, and bells provide a bridge into the next sequence (44:38). The electronic base effect on the hand drum is paired with chorus lyrics, followed by a quick fade out into the next track. As I listen to bird-like whistles, heartbeat drumming, and mellifluous swishing, the drum singers’ vocals carry a hopeful call. ‘PBC’ emerged to me as an example of how the remix blends genre styles. The replication of hip hop bar sequences and
transitions through ascending notes and a double-accented beat recreating the traditional hand drum style. For me, this particular set of sounds produces an aesthetic unsettling that disrupts the normative genre notions or ‘rules’ within music. After this sequence, all conventional structure is lost as vertical and horizontal arrangements forcefully collide (45:10). For about ten seconds varied patterns and multiple instruments layer on top of the transition.

Revisiting Tricia Rose’s (1994, p. 63) work on rap and hip hop music, these sounds might register to listeners as ‘noise’ rather than song through seemingly unintelligible sounds. Sampling sounds and modifying original songs in the remix form creates something different and may also disrupt the logics of genre. These logics provide discourse borders to what defines a genre. How are these logics determined and how are they being reproduced? Tracks in the Mixtape such as ‘PBC’ demonstrate how certain aesthetics or conventional patterns are already expected of ‘Indigenous’ music. Use of technology and hip hop style give Native peoples a re-presencing while also creating a different sonic territory by reclaiming or changing a genre’s conventions and expectations. The sampling of different music or use of hip hop style however do not determine the overall sound of the track. In other words, the individual parts do not signify the whole of the track nor does the medium fully shape the meaning. We may look at the parts in relationship with other elements in the track to understand content and meaning. While mediated by governed genre borders, culturally informed and reinforced by colonial notions of gender, race, class, sexuality, the heartbeat drum of ‘PBC’ demonstrates how one might expand their sensibilities of the private and public space by listening and allowing sound to physiologically and psychically unsettle them.

Similarly, while listening to Princess Nokia sing ‘Young Girls’, (14:50) I notice the track is mixed with high-toned electronic waves, patterned clapping, and vocal echoes of Native drum singers (15:42). Lauren Amsterdam (2016, p. 60) states, ‘Powwow culture, like hip-hop, is a product of the social splintering and spatial dislocation of forced displacement during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries’. Powwow songs have also been identified as emulating the body’s heartbeat that informs social memory. Here I listen to the strong drumming and recognizable vocals of powwow singing (15:40). Princess Nokia who identifies as Afro-Indigenous (Puerto Rican and Taino) engages
diasporic linguistic remapping and provides world-envisioning that produces co-existing sounds that reflect diasporic Black aesthetics and Native American powwow drumming in the same sonic iteration. The two verses specifically: ‘Now there’s village and people, we all play our part. There’s naked children running all about. Mothers and sisters, daughters and son. Room for everyone, room for everyone. Dancing and singing, no phone is ringing. Babies is peeing while they aunties is cleaning’ and ‘Young girls, patrons of the earth. Young girls, take care of all the earth. Young girls, they need they own respect’ underscore the many ways in which Black diasporic belonging are connected to various locations which challenges belonging and traversal through the borders, homelands, or nation. It also in form recalls North American Indigenous fugitive life worlds that is both self-reflexive and oriented toward future beginnings. Nokia’s ‘Young Girls’ aesthetically and linguistically reaches across the land and sea formations to envision ‘Black, Brown and Indigenous bodies throughout time and space, thriving in every space and time’, which ‘stretches beyond a mere understanding of the history of colonization, but addresses how a system of white supremacy, superiority, and privilege has seeped into our own mindsets—from colorism to white guilt, from privilege to access’ (Enright, 2020). ‘Young Girls’ points out the relationship between consciousness, nation, and space. And we can then interrogate how nation-states and racial projects have determined the relationality between Afro-Indigenous subjects and geography.

As the song transitions to the next track we can however still identify the heartbeat transformed from a drum into a static pulse similar to the sounds of a heart monitor or static from a record player. Through the heart pulse along with an eerie whistle, the soundscape moves to a rumbling electric pounding. Although saturated with electronic dance music, the sound body retains its constant beat, allowing a changed relationship between the listener and the mixtape as its own living body. Sound thus indexes a material body and creates its own affective space for the listener to enter. In this perspective, we can attend to the present dislodgings, insertions, and transcendence of Indigeneity in the flow of time from wherever we listen. As a technology, the sonic interacts with disciplining forces by means of production and organization (Parmett, 2018). Sound as technology of power invites consideration of non-human subversion,
namely sonic subversion against capitalist and colonial technologies. The track list form in which the Mixtape is organized facilitates an ordered progression, yet the mixtape nonetheless performs as fragmenting and disorienting; each track navigating the listener across the sonic landscape, leading a different trail. The transition beats throughout the mixtape provide recognizable infrastructure, while leaving room for exploration of the space it produces through each listen. This is to say that the engagement with the sonic, our unique encounter with it, is situated in a certain time and place. Yet, our heterogeneous encounter(s) produces a unique collapse of time/duration often consisting of elements not of the same nature and originating outside of the body. Conceptualizing decolonial modes of Native and Afro-Indigenous interrelationality in the mixtape demonstrate the ways in which sovereign temporality exceeds settler mappings of the present.

**Sound vibration and the voice**

The first track on the Mixtape called ‘War, Peace, Natives’ (0:00) starts to play, and an airy static sound melts into the background with the pitched rhythm of an electronic beeping of a NASA space radio. This opening of futuristic sounds sets the tone of the soundscape with a sense of urgency paired with a voice counting up 1-2-3-4-5 and then back down 5-4-3-2-1 as if the listener is on-board their personal spaceship getting ready to take off. A far hollow whistle comes into focus and the narrator speaks, ‘for lift off, the clock has started’ (0:25). While I have no way of knowing where the music will take me, I know a journey has begun. An electronic beat starts to play with classic booming music. With an upbeat tempo in the background (00:33), I listen to the first speaker: ‘The Indians focused on the idea that wars sometimes weren’t winnable … and there were no Europeans yet, there were no states, but here was warfare, and whenever they were at war, they were always at war with a stateless enemy’. A second voice says, ‘The final frontier … space’ (01:22). The shifting movement from different narrators describe two important themes of geopolitical territories in relationship to nationhood, and the topic of Indigenous pre-colonial conflict. This short clip introduces tribal peoples as having conflict as any group of people might have, but specifically not having violent dispute over privatized lands or on behalf of state desire. Second, this
sound clip includes the idea of a space frontier having parallel connotations with westward land expansion in the United States. Within seconds we are transported from the first speaker’s implied environment of pre-colonial Iroquois land to outer space. The history of European colonization in the Americas is alluded to, but not depicted. As a narrative gap, the artists might have intentionally left out explicit detail about land dispossession and political and social disenfranchisement as a storytelling maneuver, concerned not with providing an explanation or to convince a paranoid listener. Therefore, Indigenous sounds and production of music in the Mixtape reflect everyday Indigenous existence in the music and in the space where one listens, wherein sounds may affectively communicate cultural expressions. Indigenous bodies exhaustively occupy politicized identities that demand gestures of performance around social norms. The ephemeral everyday experience often fails to come through the detached or impersonal legal or historical literatures on Native peoples. Through music however, the emotional, spiritual, and interconnected state of living in an Indigenous body are able to be felt through the song’s affect. Sound conveys racial melancholy and grief for the loss of land and colonial violence in its own qualitatively distinct way.

The first tracks of the Indigenous Futurisms Mixtape, ‘War, Peace, Natives’ and ‘Lost in America’ (0:00) by NASA x John Mohawk and 2oolman, exemplify some ways space is often heard primarily through a Eurocentric cultural lens. The NASA take off scene gives form to envisioning space as stateless which counters more objective and Western science-based depictions of space. Intently listening to sounds of space from the NASA take off in conjunction with Native produced music/storytelling, creates a new space for the listener to enter. Where the voice may be over-abstracted in its technical deconstruction in Sound studies, I suggest the voice in the Mixtape is story and crucial to interpretation. According to Joanne Barker, Indigenous stories ‘generate and regenerate’ meaning, made relevant by those who, in the retelling and representation of them, (re)make their relationships and responsibilities to one another, to nonhumans, to the sky, and to the earth’ (Barker, 2018, p. 21). Immediately the preconceptions of space, future, and alien sounds are transformed with the narration of John Mohawk, an activist and journalist from the Seneca Turtle community who questions dynamics of war and the final
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frontier (RPM 2014; Guzmán, 2015). The vocals, percussion shakers, electric beeping, and laser blasts naturally would not be heard together in our everyday life. What the introduction tracks do for the listener is allow engagement with ‘many geographies and cultural practices, often at the same time’ (Przybylski, 2017, p. 487).

On multiple scales, we can listen to the song’s musical elements of instrumentals and percussion melody, or the voice itself. By anchoring my interpretation of the Mixtape with Indigenous territory, land ‘is the ground on which—the context in which—storytelling makes meaning of the world’ (Barker, 2018, pp. 20-21). Meaning generated through sound in the Mixtape’s tracks is made through territorial Indigenous re-presencing made to be both metaphorical and material. Symbolic and political Indigenous re-presencing occurring throughout the Mixtape, is temporal (sonic affects) and spatial (sonic vibration), thus reflecting multiple scales of Indigeneity. In general, what does it mean when Indigenous voices are made lasting through digital permanence? Is there sonic memory in the voice? One example of voice as both vibration and affect are found in studies of prayer on water molecules. In the introduction to Indigenous and Decolonizing Studies in Education, Eve Tuck, and K. Wayne Yang describe Winona LaDuke sharing studies on prayer’s effect on water:

In September 2017, at an event in Toronto called Water is Life (But Many Can’t Drink It), Winona LaDuke described the deathly short-sightedness of the extractive fuel industry. In this discussion, LaDuke shared images of water crystalline structures before and after human prayer (this is also something that you can look up online, a few keywords revealing images like those LaDuke shared). The “before” images were comprised of deflated-looking mushy droplets, whereas after human prayer, droplets had been restructured with the gorgeous symmetries that we might associate with snowflakes. This is evidence that human prayer can have a healing effect with regard to the microscopic structure of water. In sharing these images, LaDuke was reminding us that humans have a relationship to water that is reciprocal, that people can heal water that heals us. (2018, p. 2)

For Indigenous music artists, the voice is not just a compositional or aesthetic device, contextualized by traditions of Indigenous storytelling it is also the substance for meaning. Sound is able to connect voice, territory, and water in
ways that can be measured but also felt in our bodies. The voice is sacred; it is also an articulation of survivance. Comprehending the ‘native’ as ‘a world to be disavowed and dismembered’, which includes human and non-human worlds, survivance encapsulates Indigenous and environmental storytelling: and active presence and storytelling as uncoupled from temporality, or as a reaction (Vizenor, 2008 p. 1; La Paperson, 2017, p. 10). Indigenous survivance necessarily encapsulates a continuance: a cross-temporal Indigeneity (Rifkin, 2017, p. 35). Lived through story, the capacities of oral traditions are transformative wherein they enunciate thoughts, worldviews, and certainly inscribe a paradigm for living. The soundscape offers a way to critically redefine Indigeneity in the context of survivance and power. The form of the remix within and across tracks allows normative rules of genre to bend and so the Indigenous voice guides my sonic interpretation because genre formations are informed by cultural values from local to national traditions, audiences and histories (Holt, 2017).

Culturally we can see how this set of sounds ruptures notions of Native peoples as subjects of the past and erased from modern time (Amsterdam, 2013). Additionally, the resonance of vocals and overlapping beats signal the metaphor of echoing as Indigenous circularity of life, and interconnectedness (Diamond, 2013). While many sounds are not traditionally characteristic of Indigeneity, the Mixtape indicates that sounds of an Indigenous future and present do not have to sound tribal, that is, replicate generic drums which have become a typical sound effect for things associated with the primitive or emulate the recognizable sounds such as the war cry often played over early Hollywood Westerns to introduce the native. Furthermore, what draws the listener in are the overall aesthetics of the soundscape. After listening to the first track, I already have varying feelings that are complex and cathartic as the sound, voice, and dynamic inversion in the remix, generates a mastered incursion into the everyday Native experience(s), specifically subjectivity under colonial oppression.

On the third track of the Indigenous Futurisms Mixtape, ‘#BQF NonLocality Zine Soundtape’ (RPM, 2014, 3:10), a voice calls out, ‘every sound is a vibration’, and proceeds to describe the metaphysical qualities of sound. This track brings up a key element in understanding how sound not only creates
space, but also interacts with ours. The sound of a percussion shaker is introduced with a series of electronic sonic waves (03:20). A woman’s voice comes to the forefront talking about the science of sound, questioning its substance and qualities to travel in space:

What is sound? Is sound matter? Is sound a quantum event? We know that it can be manipulated, or can it? And that sonic energy if concentrated high enough can manipulate matter. Sound is commonly defined as transmitted through air or other medium. But does that make sound matter by definition, a physical entity or object? (RPM, 2014, 03:20)

The voice itself emits vibration and of course, directs the listener to ponder the nature of sound. But also, in the background, a distorted grainy static comes in and out of focus like a spaceship. Coming from an unknown origin, the muffled siren grasps and loses clarity. This channeling of sound draws in the listener to notice the low-level texture and delicate background noises. Perhaps this is the uncomfortable in-between, the space between what I can recognize as song and sound. As I listen, for a moment I live in this space and I can hear things that I could not before. I can sense various scales and directions. I listen to a heartbeat, compression of electronic notes, the dynamic beeping of a lost siren, and the echo and vocal reverb of the speaker’s voice all at once. The texture is dense and crowded but tethered strongly around the voice’s contemplative tone and grounded-ness. Despite being inaudible to the human ear, through every movement, a sound and vibration are emitted from the body (Novak and Sakakeeny, 2015, p. 34). Further, if we understand sound as affect, the process of evaluation begins away from the human body by considering ‘vibrational movement of bodies of all kinds’ as a foundation for making sense of sonic feeling and knowledge (Gallagher, 2016, pp. 42-48).

Land Back!

The music transitions into the spoken word clip called ‘Speak to Me of Justice’ (6:55) from Legends & Lyrics and Elizabeth LaPensée (Anishinaabe, Métis, and Irish). The energy of the mixtape changes into a somber tone as the speaker candidly talks about the fall of industrial society and regeneration of Indigenous worlds. The narrator Elizabeth LaPensée inscribes a world outside of what the audience can see or touch performing for the audience the possibilities of what
decolonization might look like, and the listener must imagine and engage with the vision. In this respect, sound and music play an important role in developing Indigenous futurity from intangible to somewhere we’ve already been and have already felt:

Speak to me of justice when the beneficiaries of genocide feel the anguish of my ancestors and beg our forgiveness [...] when every last drain tile is pulled from the earth and crushed into rubble [...] When every gas line, oil pipeline, and electrical fiberoptic and telephone cable is pulled from earth ... When corporations are destroyed, and corporate leaders run, fleeing for their lives ... When animals are prayed back from extinction...When not a single acre of our beloved homeland is feeding industrial civilization (6:55).

Through sonic mediums, we can listen to and remember Indigenous decolonial knowledge amidst the apocalypse. These undertones of warmth build anticipation and firm indignancy toward the colonizer which remarkably captures the infuriating, exhausting, and conflicting emotional experience of being Indigenous in a colonized state. Affects arising from listening to ‘Speak to me of Justice’ encourage listeners to envision decolonization without misgiving. The reality of industrial capitalism is painstakingly clear. Wildfires scorch the land, ecosystems and habitats are being destroyed, and the fossil fuel industry continues to persist. Growing fear emerging from environmental crisis and climate change has colloquially been called climate anxiety. This dysphoria and anxiety popularly associated with notions of an approaching end of the world, however, has long been the experience of Native peoples in the United States. In an interview on ‘The Red Nation Podcast’ with Nick Estes (Lower Brule Sioux Tribe), the contradictions in U.S. history and irony in the emerging national sentiment of climate anxiety reflect the inconsistencies of Western modernity. Estes comments:

[There’s] this new anxiety. They call it [Climate anxiety] ... and it’s like, ‘Welcome to the post-apocalypse that we’ve [Indigenous peoples] been living through’. ... How many genocides have we survived? And we’re going into another apocalypse [with oil and gas development]. It’s connected to the current shifts and realignment with geopolitics in the world. (The Red Nation Podcast, 2019)

This growing fear is not new, and in fact it only makes apparent the structural pitfall of hegemonic modernity and the inevitable end of global capitalism and
industry civilization. How do we reckon with chaos when entire worlds are being uprooted and destroyed? What’s left after destruction? Joanne Barker (2018, p. 20) notes that Indigenous absence in colonialism must not be considered an act of vanishing, instead erasure is making a particular kind of presence. In the ruins there is always presence. Indigenous re-presencing thus possesses possibility for the future. Indigenous futures are plural, they are felt, and they can be now.

Crucial to resurgence, is creating a practice asserting Indigenous presents/presence. According to Simpson (2017, p. 192), the present is ‘a colliding of the past and the future’, a time of ‘ancient beginnings’. Indigenous radical traversal disrupts colonialism as ‘noise to colonialism’s signal’ (p. 192). In questioning what might be possible, the prospect of decolonial futures typically are approached with anxiety, hesitation, fear, and hopelessness. On an affective level, one might instead engage with the Mixtape’s melodic beat and steady percussion with determined hopefulness and certainty about decolonial futurity. Trajectories of Indigenous life guided by the voice in ‘Speak to Me of Justice’ cannot escape settler-colonial dispossession or the theft of bodies and land. The micro-moments in which we can see glimpses, demonstrates the structural impediments of modern democracy which can be experienced in our everyday if we can listen for it. The feelings produced from ‘Speak to Me of Justice’ also contribute to the transformation in sense of time as the spatial soundscape disrupts the temporal reality. If we know sound to be a disciplining process, unmapping spatial configurations based in the sonic remix, engages with the psychic affects of decolonial hope for one’s individual consciousness as redress guilt and shame from what Leonard Peltier has named ‘Aboriginal sin’. By examining encounters between settlers and the unassimilable Indigenous subject in the sonic form, we can interrogate a space of suspension, an in-between that marks failed affinity to nation-state order (Saldaña-Portillo, 2016, pp. 16-19). From the generative connectivity between land and Indigeneity unfixed to the nation-state, we might think outside the colonial margins in our constructions of identity and feelings of belonging, envisioning futures, and re-think geography unmapped from the border.

Traversing between pessimism and celebration within the sonic landscape felt belonging and affective space of multiplicity. Indigenous belonging is conveyed
through positive affects and through desire of wanting more from the insufficiency in notions of Western nation and the empire. In ‘My Tribe Exudes Love’, cultural and aesthetic practices embody a formative substance in constructing Indigenous belonging and radical traversal. Indigenous sonic aesthetics offers affective forms of belonging that are constantly in motion for reconfiguration. Indigenous relationships with the non-human world and engagement with hope or desire, exceed constructions of the nation-state, including harmful notions of citizenship based in blood quantum. Belonging can be achieved through practices of self-determination in one’s own subjectivity. I argue Indigenous subjectivity and belonging is felt in relationship with land, as land is the basis for decolonial thought and practice. When ‘the question shifts from “what does music mean?” to “what does music do?”’ Indigenous belonging through sonic affect and decolonial envisioning go hand in hand (Thompson, 2013, p.19).

Indigenous temporalities

At the start of the track ‘My Tribe Exudes Love’ (4:30) the rippling sound and clapping in the background simultaneously demonstrates the capacities of media to produce both auditory and material space. Steady clapping now surrounds me. Amidst a harmonious beat I visualize what a collective might look like in this space. A voice speaks: ‘We’ve always perceived the connectivity between all life and in many dimensions’ (RPM, 2014). The focus on potentialities connotes a transcendence of time and space. Liz Przybylski (2017, p. 487) suggests Indigenous North American hip hop create place-based meanings by ‘establishing a sense of connection between artist and land’. So, by exploring the sonic textures of Indigenous temporalities in the Mixtape, we can formulate different ways to engage in sound places. Native experiences which are ‘irreducible to non-native spatial and temporal formations’ help us understand the settler state as a conditioning project (Rifkin, 2017, p. ix). The remix illustrates conceptually and in method the disciplining nature of genre and Western aesthetic normative order.

Additionally, near the end of the mixtape the tracks ‘Overand’ and ‘The Future Imaginary’ (43:00) include a vocal performance that highlights anti-indigenous violence in a structure of settler colonialism. On the subject of Indigenous
sovereignty, the voice asks, ‘whose presence are you taking for granted?’ and ‘who is included in your future imaginary?’ (RPM, 2014). Nested by sonic waves and echoes of laser whistles, this moment proves to be a provocative unsettling of time with direct questioning and a loud sonic body. Where Native experiences have been denied in the colonial present, this vocalization and sonic power enunciate Indigenous sovereignty by claiming and producing spaces to belong. The grainy textures of sound ‘Overand’ and ‘The Future Imaginary’ express familiar concepts of warmth and haunting of Indigenous livelihoods, which ultimately transcends settler time. The Indigenous Futurisms Mixtape dissolves one’s situatedness in time and place—in listening we can envision decolonial worlds already here. The meshing of time and space in the remix offers a venue to ‘practice a radical relationality with each other and the non-human forces that exist around us’ (Recollet, 2016, p. 101). The decolonial imagination radically envisions and hopes for a concrete liberated Black and Indigenous future (Muñoz, 2019).

Eurocentric historical narratives have often relegated Native people to a historical past, and even some attempts to counter colonial histories, have failed to analytically engage Indigenous epistemologies. Mark Rifkin (2017, p. viii) argues most scholarship operates on the assumption Indigenous peoples both occupy and experience the same temporality as settlers, and they are ‘moving toward the future like all other populations and peoples’. Assumptions of equilateral temporality are produced by assertions of a shared present, prioritizing settler interests and imperatives (p. viii). In other words, Rifkin notes that the Western ideological goal of modernity is in fact not universally shared or that linearity is reflected within Indigenous historiographies and experiences. Besides a more expansive and inclusive interpretation of history and the present, we need a critical undertaking of the procedures of settler time as a ‘particular way of experiencing temporality’ (p. viii). For example, we may look to the Maori word takiwatanga meaning ‘his or her own time and space’ to describe autism (News from Elsewhere, 2017). Takiwatanga provides an alternative to English terms for people with disabilities that often have a negative connotation, and it also indicates various ways an individual may ‘have their own timing, spacing, pacing and life-rhythm’ (News from Elsewhere, 2017).
To assert a temporal order and pathways is to dismiss varying speeds and numerous directional routes of traversal and being. To illustrate this point, we can visualize city traffic from above; there are many different vehicles, and there may be people on bicycles, people taking trains and busses, or people walking on sidewalks. It is true some may have the same destination or similar speeds, but largely people are traveling in different directions and rhythms. This metaphor is also helpful to think of solidarity formations (eg. Black, Indigenous, Afro-Indigenous collaboration) not as frictionless but frictionfull as traversal might occur on different pathways yet will be affected by the same traffic blockages. In regard to the Mixtape’s form, Indigenous futurities require remixing to illustrate ‘multi-directionality of territories (revealing hidden scales)’ (Recollet, 2016, p.101). The remix in form challenges as well the linear progression of listening from beginning to middle to end. The remix bends the rules and format of song where the listener might enter the Mixtape (which is 46 minutes long) at any time, skip ahead, or go back and forth between tracks. As a soundscape, one can travel through the Mixtape, make visitations, or interact with sound differently and over a specified longevity of time. I have listened to the Mixtape in various places, and I have a different relationship with it each time. Sometimes I hear new sounds and traverse through different sonic paths.

**Navajo Star Wars**

The track ‘Ame’ (42:05) by Notuv includes clips from a Navajo translated Star Wars film and is one of the last songs in the Indigenous Futurisms Mixtape. Right before this clip we listen to the track ‘Resurgence’ by Shane Keepness (41:00) which opens with electronic waves, a colorful piano melody, and a hip-hop beat. The fire crackling sounds (42:00) harmoniously ignite a dynamic melody. The inclusion of the Navajo language reshapes the rather familiar scenes in the canonical storytelling in the Star Wars series. This scene, where Princess Leia and Darth Vader talk about the Imperial and rebel forces, is performed in Diné Bizaad (the Navajo language) amidst crackling ambience. The indigenization of Star Wars itself disrupts representations of Native peoples in a static past, offering a mobility of Indigenous trajectories and future possibilities. Listening to the voices of Princess Leia and Darth Vader affectively
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communicates a decolonial desire in ways that written words and other modes of articulation fall short. It allows ‘the imaginative, the otherworldly, and the ghostly into account to social-scientifically sketch Indigenous suffering and resistance’ (Belcourt 2017).

It demonstrates affirmative refusal not only for an Indigenous future but also an Indigenous here and now. This references the notion of Indigenous re-presencing and world-making that reaches back to traditions of creation storytelling that historicize Diné existence and epistemologically situates a Diné presence. What does it mean to radically imagine a Navajo Star Wars in outer Space? Navajo interdependence involves relationship to self (being and becoming) and with collectivity of family, clan, community, tribe, place, and cosmos (Cajete, 2014, p. x). The learning process is multidimensional in language, land, culture, etc. (p. x). According to Gregory Cajete in Diné Perspectives, Navajo Thought is constituted by collective and Individual wisdom. The foundation to Diné thought, Sa’ah Naagháí Bik’eh Hózhóón (SNBH) is a sacred ontological and epistemological paradigm from the Holy People or Diyin Dine’é (Cajete, 2014, pp. 3-6). ‘Ame’ (42:05) gestures toward symbolic and political Diné nation-building anchored by nature, time, and Space. By speaking in Diné Bizaad, Princess Leia projects Diné matriarchal presence in the future and occupying a masculinized Space of militarization in the Star Wars world. The Star Wars canon represents another barrier of Western normativity that limits Indigenous creativity and alternative imaginations of future worlds. We are told our stories do not have legitimate knowledge, that our traditions, languages, and songs, are backward or foreign. This has been disproven many times as our traditions hold knowledge of ecological balance and restoration. Our imagination lives within disciplining forces of Western paradigms and historicities which has marginalized and actively worked against Indigenous thought epistemologies such as Diné (SNBH). We might understand the affirmative refusal in ‘Ame’ (42:05) as emerging from a decolonial desire, a refusal that materializes from outside conditional sovereignties of tribal nations and the modern (U.S. democratic) nation state. As articulated in the Mixtape, affirmative refusal captures the divergence between settler and native desires—the ways that settler temporalities confine Indigenous possibilities and imaginaries.
Hearing my language spoken by Princess Leia and Darth Vader means more than just a language revitalization effort. It also signifies possible Afro-Indigenous futurisms coexisting with Indigenous nation-building and bringing concepts of kinship and intergenerational presence into Space. In Diné creation stories, Space represents our past and is a part of who we are; listening to ‘Ame’ I can bring ancestors into my present and can imagine my ancestors in Space. Speculative futures are not foreign to us, nor are they just speculative. In fact, the remix exemplifies patterns in our storytelling traditions. Cultivating decolonial imaginations and creating alternative universes are fugitive acts that enable us to speak to each other and (re)map Space that literally creates star ‘constellations of coreistance’ (Simpson, 2017, p. 9). And a type of kinship gravity anchors these acts of survivance. We can understand the Mixtape standing among a diverse breadth of Indigenous creative storytelling in humor, song, science-fiction, art, and film; all as strategies of transcendent survivance. The ability to laugh, create, and radically imagine in the face of state violence and control are cultural expressions of affective sovereignty and a process of remembrance. Diné Bizaad is powerful and when spoken it depicts sacred Space. We are in the past. We are still here. And we are in the future, ‘Indians never die’ (Colburn, 2018).

**Conclusion**

*Radical Traversals* illustrates the various ways sonic elements are (re)mapped by Native and Afro-Indigenous artists in collaborative re-presencing, the remix redefines relationships to temporality and space. This discussion asks for a movement away from Western senses of objecthood and legal definitions of sovereignty that tends to confine Indigenous orders to juridical systems (Robinson, 2019, p. 63). This work illustrates how the subjugation and dislocation of Indigenous sovereignty is the precondition to national traits of exceptionalism and multiculturalism in the United States and Canada. These state ideologies become articulated in the form of musical aesthetics as hearing belonging and ownership which seeks to appropriate and place Indigeneity in the past or as something to consume or use as a resource (Robinson, 2019, pp. 12-13). By listening to the in-between and hyper-present spaces in the *Indigenous Futurisms Mixtape*, multiple Indigenous scales of being and
possibilities of meaning are known. As previously mentioned, interpretation and engaging in sonic affects are guided through the voice which I argue is synoptic and crucial to Indigenous traditions of storytelling. The voice inextricably involves place and community. Indigenous sonic voice represents a tool for survivance, and it operates internally and ideologically through close-listening. Gerald Vizenor (2008, p.1) understands survivance to be an active sense of presence, the continuance of native stories, not a mere reaction, or a survivable name. It not only resists being reactionary, Indigenous voice also embodies prophetic qualities. Sonic vibration and sonic analysis therefore operate relationally to culture, land, space, and time. In outlining the significance of Indigenous temporality, acts of re-presencing and transformative decolonial thinking are in line with Indigenous epistemological frameworks.

In understanding listening as affective performance work, we can reconnect with what’s around us from our places of work, our families, and the earth upon which we live. Finally, in merging Indigenous epistemologies and Black studies with Sound studies dialectics, I hope this article provides a rough sketch that can be re-worked and refined for decolonial troubleshooting. In my approach to the Mixtape, I wanted to illustrate Indigenous relationality. What does Indigenous sovereignty have to do with sound anyway? Sound is generative of affect, and the sonic imagination can also be a decolonial one. We may understand this type of belonging as a part of envisioning resistance and refusal to the here and now. Acts of decolonial troubleshooting can also use a traveling Indigeneity framework by tracing and getting to the root of a problem instead of rushing toward reconciliation moves. This conversation importantly occurs within a relational context of music technologies of African-diasporic rap and hip-hop music, and Afro-Indigenous subjectivities that produce multilingual insurgencies that ‘push the boundaries of decolonial thought by offering radical perspectives from the underside of the Afro-diaspora’ (Figueroa-Vásquez 2020, p. 1). This framework allows future multi-spatial sonic analyses of the local as the global where we can ask what happens when Indigenous land pedagogy travels? And what happens when Indigenous politics engage the Afro-diaspora where Afro-indigenous subjects are peripheralized ‘at the far extremes of already marginalized peoples, nations, and histories’? (Figueroa-Vásquez 2020, p. 5). Creativity from Black and Indigenous cultures are shared
in collaboration from Afro-Indigenous and Native artists in this project, and there is something common between the spaces of the underground and fugitive lifeworlds that refuse recognition and control.

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Notes

1 Deborah Kapchan defines close-listening as a ‘listening act’ which transforms the body through vibrations and rhythms (Novak and Sakakeeny, 2015, p. 34).

2 My considerations on terminology come from encouragement from an anonymous reviewer to whom I express gratitude for challenging me to think critically about my use of decolonial as key term.

3 In contrast to a paranoid position, which as Eve Sedgwick writes is characterized by a framework of criticism where one anticipates problems, a reparative interpretation of the decolonial does not assume potential outcomes, nor see outcomes as necessary (Sedgwick 1997, pp. 127-130). Therefore, decolonial imagining is both descriptive of an experience and functions as a desire-based tool for asserting Indigenous presence (Tuck, 2009). Importantly, decolonial imagining highlights a felt (re)presencing: an ephemeral reconvening with ancestors or dreaming of futures, which counter colonial erasures and narratives of Indigenous disappearance.

4 Recollet (2016) draws upon Goeman (2013, p. 94) who elaborates: ‘(re)mapping is understood as the reveal of the multiple Indigenous scales that intervene in settler colonial projects that have erased Indigenous bodies and threatened our radical relationship with territories. Remapping creates a situation where settler colonialism is no longer relevant, nor determinative of Indigenous futurities’.

5 Simpson (2017, p. 9) expands on constellations as ‘working together toward a radical alternative present based on deep reciprocity and the gorgeous generative refusal of colonial recognition’.
6 Social contexts in part, define human perceptions of sound and music. Tia De Nora (2000, p. 20) describes how music is linked to ‘human agency’ through access and social control over music in contemporary society which allow curation of our relationship as listeners to music.

7 Fabian Holt’s work on genre discourse challenges uncritical understandings of hybridity by addressing musical diversity in virtual border spaces and modalities of cultural and circulation hierarchies (2007).

8 Leonard Peltier describes ‘In this life you find yourself guilty of being who you are. Being yourself, that’s Aboriginal Sin, the worst sin of all. That’s a sin you’ll never be forgiven for. We Indians are all guilty, guilty of being ourselves’ (Amsterdam, 2013, p. 64).

9 My listening and interpretation references Dylan Robinson’s listening in redress that challenge teleological listening which ‘requires some ontological reorientation of what we believe we are listening to when we listen to Indigenous music and Indigenous+Western art music’ (2019, p. 58).