SOCIAL AND CULTURAL POLITICS OF LISTENING TO *BLACK* CANADA(S)

OLA MOHAMMED

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation, *Social and Cultural Politics of Listening to Black Canada(s)* develops the concept, *Black Nowheres*, and its two registers—*now here* and *know here*—to understand how the pervasive conditions of anti-Blackness structure the world and can be registered in everyday sound and sonic practices. I employ a range of unsettled listening practices to sonically think and grapple with the dynamics of Black being and Blackness in Canada—particularly how Black people are treated by the Canadian Nation State—given the Nation's complex relationship to Blackness and Black people. This dissertation also registers how, in spite of the violence that establishes *Black nowheres*, Black people assert generative sonic practices that insist on knowing Black life on different terms. This dissertation is thematically organized by key tropes that are persistent in both Black Studies and Sound Studies: Noise, Voice, and Soundscape. While these tropes thematically organize the chapters/tracks of the dissertation, I engage in practices of thinking about—as well as thinking with and through—Black sonic practices to register the nuances of Black sociality in Canada. As such, each chapter registers the nuanced dynamics of what I name *Black nowheres* to understand how Black life "is constituted through vulnerability to the overwhelming force of anti-blackness and white supremacy, and yet not capitulating to *only* [sic] be known by these same forces […]" (Campt, 2017, p. 23). In shifting the focus from fixed readings of sounds and sonic practices of Black people and Blackness in Canada to listening to what sounds, and sonic practices of Black people and Blackness in Canada, do, this dissertation shifts our relation from one of total mastery and legibility of Black Canada(s) to insisting we unfold and reveal the intricacies of Black being and Blackness in Canada without limit.

DEDICATION

Salahadein Mohammed, who said by hook or by crook it will be done, and it is,

Fatuma Abdurahman, whose dream was to stand in front of a room and have people listen to her speak. Your voice resonates throughout this work,

Jida Fatma Bahta, Allah Yarhama, who taught me the importance of listening in different ways

and

Father Mel Stevens, whose love of music, operatic voice, and boisterous laugh endlessly loop in my mind. I miss you.

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كل تأخيرة فيها خيرة
Kul ta'kheer feehu khair—Every delay has a blessing.

መልክዕ ገረብ ቆጽሊ፣መልክዕ ሰብ ዓቕሊ

melk'A gereb qoxli, melk'A seb Aqli- the beauty of a tree is its leaves and the beauty of a person is patience.

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PRELUDE

"Yuh Not Nice, Yuh Rude"[1]

Cheupse. Choops. Steups. Stchoops. Chups. Le tchip. Tjoerie. Hiss Teeth. Suck Teeth. Kiss Teeth. In "The Meaning of Kiss Teeth," Esther Figueroa and Peter L. Patrick (2001) examine what they call the everyday Caribbean oral gesture *kiss-teeth*, which they define as,

> […] much more than a mere snort or tic: it is a sign both verbal and embodied, unwritten of course, known throughout the Atlantic world, shared and passed on like a dance riddim. A fundamental expression, it remains outside the grammar, unremarked yet indispensable – we cannot resist using it even among the uninitiated, while outsiders to Diaspora culture who learn it, find that it instantly fills an expressive gap. (p. 3)

In a course I developed called *Black Toronto Sounds*, we considered how Black peoples and Black artists shape and encounter the city of Toronto through sonic practices. In a week titled "Dialects and Slang in the 6," we discussed how oral practices, gestures, and slang negotiate meaning and allow us to glean information about a vocalizer's identity through the sounds they make. Many students referred to the practice of kiss-teeth, or suck-teeth, as one that sonically registers many meanings—annoyance, disapproval, frustration—depending on the context in which it is performed. Following a viewing of Michèle Pearson Clarke's three channel HD video installation *Suck Teeth Compositions (After Rashaad Newsome)* (2018), students identified not only how the act of kiss-teeth is performed but also the impact this oral gesture has on those who receive the gesture. Students named the experience of receiving the act of kiss-teeth as unsettling the dynamics of relation between the person performing the gesture and the person receiving the

[1] This prelude refers to a song by Mississauga artist PARTYNEXTDOOR titled, "Not Nice" (2016).

gesture. Kiss-teeth sonically signals to the listener acts of transgression that the person performing the gesture disapproves of, refuses to accept, and insists the listener grapples with.

Aija-Simone White, a student from the *Black Toronto Sounds* seminar, noted in her listening journal that,

> As [Michèle Pearson Clarke's] video progressed, another thing that really began to stick out to me about these sounds was the intricate breathwork that happens when someone was kissing their teeth. In each instance, a workup happens—filling the lungs with air as a preparatory act to prepare the body to exhale such complex and intricate emotions. This breath sounds typically deep and belaboured in a sense, communicating already so much expression in one breath. This was fascinating for me to witness, as I came to realize that beside the sound itself, this gesture of kissing teeth is rooted in breath—almost as if it has been knitted into the fabric of Black being. (White, 2022, n.p.)

The unsettling register of the kiss-teeth, as rooted in what Aija-Simone articulates as the breath and fabric of Black being, is the modus operandi of this dissertation. I begin this dissertation with the *rude* sounds of kiss-teeth and a variety of its spelling iterations[2] to draw our attention to Black utterances of disapproval and refusal that "[…] articulate vexed relationships to power and the social world outside of what is typically imagined to be the centre. This articulation is urgent work. The black, the queer, the femme, the young, the marginalized seize power here, and invite their listeners to either do the same or to relinquish it" (Moriah, 2020, p. 50). I open with what my colleague Sam Tecle (2021) names *rude acts*, such as kiss-teeth, to tune into the sonic

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[2] The spelling variants of the kiss-teeth gesture that repeat throughout this prelude derive from the work of Esther Figueroa and Peter L. Patrick's (2001) lists of variant spelling forms they include in their article "The Meaning of Kiss Teeth," which traces how kiss-teeth is spelled across the Americas (including in the North, the South, and the Caribbean) as well as on the Continent of Africa (particularly across Western Africa).

registers of Blackness in Canada as disruptions and refusals to accept the State's relation to Blackness as absented presence.

Just Say It: The Difficulty of Articulating Blackness in Canada

In Peter James Hudson and Aaron Kamugisha's (2014) article "On Black Canadian Thought," the opening piece to their special edition on Black Canada in *The CLR James Journal*, Hudson and Kamugisha open with a meditation on the difficulty of Black Canada in Black Studies despite a rich body of work by Black writers and academics alike that "[…] have fought to prove, Black Canada exists. More to the point, Black Canada matters." (p. 3). While Black Canada is often registered as the "static, one-dimensional geography as the last stop on the Underground Railroad, as the promised land under the North Star […]" (Hudson & Kamugisha, 2014, p. 3), which is repeated everywhere from childhood education to popular entertainment, Canada is widely perceived as solving *the problem of Blackness*.[3] I think of most recently viewing an episode of *Canada's Drag Race*,[4] season 2, episode 6 titled "The Sinner's Ball," wherein competitors participated in a Ball challenge, dressed according to the three categories of the ball—first, sex, drugs and Rock and Roll, second, ugly as sin and third, the seven deadly sins. In the second ball category, *ugly as sin*, Kimora Amour, a contestant of the second season, walked the runway in what she described as traditional slave garb from the Caribbean, with shackles on her wrists, as depicted in Figure 1.

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[3] Here, I allude to the work of W.E.B. DuBois in *The Souls of Black Folk* (2007), wherein DuBois asks the question, "*How does it feel to be a problem* [emphasis added]*?*" (p. 3). Lewis Gordon (2005) reminds us that for both DuBois and Fanon, "Blacks themselves are not the problem. The problem is the tendency to construct blacks as the problem, and that construction often emerged from white communities" (p. 2). When Fanon then asks, "*what do Blacks want?*," Fanon, as Gordon (2005) reminds us, "[…] raises the question of the subjective life of blacks, of black consciousness […]" (p. 2).

[4] *Canada's Drag Race* is the Canadian iteration of the hit reality competition television series *Rupaul's Drag Race*, wherein drag queens compete for a cash prize and title of "the next Drag Superstar."

Figure 1: Kimora Amour, Canada's Drag Race Season 2 Episode 6 "The Sinner's Ball," Ugliest Sin look (2021).

In the show's typical voiceover fashion, Amour states,

> On this runway I am wearing a traditional slave garb that would often be seen in the Caribbean, and I want the judges to see…*pain*. Because one thing that is ugly as sin has been slavery. At the end of this runway, I break my chains. I *am set free, and I'm running to the one place I know I can find home, and that's Canada.* It is difficult, but it is a story I needed to tell on this runway [emphasis added]. ("Sinner's Ball," 2021)

Witnessing the performance of the narrative of Canada as the land of freedom for the formerly enslaved, the judges' emotionally charged reactions, the sound effects that production overlayed to emphasize the emotional effect of what Amour described as the visceral pain, suffering, and hurt of slavery, and then the thanks for "bringing [her] humanity" ("Sinner's Ball," 2021) to the runway was troubling. Amour's performance of what Saidiya Hartman calls "the terrible spectacle [of slavery]" (1997, p. 3) reinforces the brutalization of Black suffering as happening *over there*, in the US, in the Caribbean, *not here* in Canada.[5] In doing so, Amour's performance

[5] Afua Cooper (2005) states, "Slavery is Canada's best-kept secret, locked within the national closet. And because it is a secret it is written out of official history. But slavery was an institutionalized practice for over two hundred years […] Canada might not have been a slave society—that is, a society whose economy was based on slavery—but it was a society with slaves. It shared this feature with virtually all other New World societies. Contrary to popular belief, slavery was common in Canada." (p. 68).

invited the judges and invites viewers of the show to reflect on the terror of what she describes as the visceral pain, suffering and hurt of slavery as specifically happening *over there*, in the US and Caribbean wherein the relations of power, domination and dehumanization of Black people is legible through an understanding of transatlantic slavery. Amour's performance allows for the judges and viewers to take pleasure and comfort in knowing that *here*, in Canada, violence is not central to the formation of a Black subject, but rather, that Canada insists on the Black subject's humanity through the act of breaking her chains, which signals a break in the relations of power that the Black subject experiences in the US, thus allowing the Black subject to achieve their freedom, which is only possible *now here,* in Canada. In viewing the perpetuation of the narrative that Canada has solved the problem of Blackness, I, *Cheupse. Choops. Steups. Stchoops. Chups. Le tchip. Tjoerie. Hiss Teeth. Suck Teeth. Kiss Teeth.*

An understanding of Canada as the place where humanity is afforded to Black people is not what I know to be true. Hudson and Kamugisha's (2014) words about Black people and Blackness in Canada repeat on a loop in my mind:

> […]as a minority population in a white settler colony, as a marginal population within the African Diaspora, and as a racialized population under a regime of neoliberal multiculturalism that affirms culture while it denies race and that fêtes diversity while it despises Blackness [sic]. (p. 3)

Canada has *not* afforded Black people freedom, let alone humanity. I think of Amour's performance alongside Yusra Khogali's insistence in 2016 that former Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne articulate the pervasiveness of anti-Black racism. During this interaction, Wynne paused, stumbled, and struggled to *just say it: anti-Black racism.* Or in 2018, when the former director of a university program had difficulty articulating Blackness when presenting a new stream of the

program and did not do so until students in the program asked why in the span of a two-hour meeting discussing the name of the new stream the director did not once say the word *Black*.[6] This former graduate program director, too, stuttered, struggled, paused to *just say it: Black Studies.*

Cheupse. Choops. Steups. Stchoops. Chups. Le tchip. Tjoerie. Hiss Teeth. Suck Teeth. Kiss Teeth.

I bring these moments together to think about how the struggle to name Blackness and anti-Blackness in Canada persists in the contemporary moment. Whether it be in the academy, politics, entertainment, or in everyday social interactions, Canada has a problem articulating Blackness—its presence, let alone the violence of anti-Blackness. It is as if Blackness in Canada is what NourbeSe Philip describes as being "[…] in the shadow of empire and on the frontier of Silence […]" (2017, p. 13), due to how the State presents itself as having resolved the problem of Blackness as the last stops on the underground railroad, the land of freedom. My dissertation grapples with this tension by tuning into sound and sonic practices to register and *Know Here* as a counterintuitive place I call *Black nowheres.* But this is not all that the concept *Black nowheres* registers. This work also tunes into how Black cultural production, sound and sonic practices made and engaged by Black people, *Now Here* in *Black nowheres*, create a generative, audible Black presence that registers the otherwise of our being beyond negation.

***Black nowheres*: A Concept**

> *The West is not in the West. It is a project, not a place.* (Glissant, 1991, p. 2)
>
> *I am stateless anyways.* (Brand, 1984, p. 70)

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[6] Beyond the former GPD's difficulty in articulating the term *Black*, the former GPD also proposed changing the name of the stream from Black Studies to Black Studies, Postcolonial Studies, Anticolonial Studies and Indigenous studies, to which many in attendance strongly disagreed and called out as a ghettoization of anything to do with race.

> *Nowhere: In or at no place; not anywhere; to no place; to fail to make progress; to be an insignificant, unsatisfactory, or worthless person, thing, state, etc.* (Nowhere, n.d.)

This dissertation develops *Black nowheres* as a concept building on work in the Black radical tradition to insist, we reframe our thinking and understanding of Black diasporas. In reading, reflecting, writing, and re-writing this dissertation, the language and idea of the concept came from re-reading Katherine McKittrick's germinal text *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle* (2006) and her article "Commentary: Worn Out" (2017). In the chapter "The Last Place They Thought of: Black Women's Geographies" from *Demonic Grounds* (2006), McKittrick's close reading of Harriet Jacobs (Linda Brent's[7]) slave narrative, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, insists we contend with not only the brutal violence of slavery's spatial/geographic logics "[…] of Black dispossession and white supremacy, which assumed racial inferiority and justified enslavement" (McKittrick, 2006, p. 44) but also how those who were enslaved, such as Harriet Jacobs (Linda Brent), subverted/undermined those logics "[…] particularly when [their] oppositional geographies are caught up in violent geographic arrangements" (McKittrick, 2006, p. 44).

Partway through the slave narrative, Jacobs reflects on her experiences in what she calls her "loophole of retreat" (2001, p. 95), which was a 9'x7'x3' garret in her grandmother's house, where she hid herself for seven years to save herself and her children from her slave owner, Dr. Flint. McKittrick (2006) reads Brent's act of hiding in her grandmother's garret as transforming the garret "[…] into a paradoxical space because Brent creates its meaning and geographic work through her memories, experiences, and observations […]" (p. 41). Brent describes the material

[7] Harriet Jacobs was an African American writer who originally wrote and published *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, an account of her enslavement and escape, in 1861 under the pseudonym Linda Brent to preserve her anonymity and the anonymity of her loved ones. In the section above when referring to Jacobs or Brent, I am referring to the same person.

living conditions in the garret as extremely tight and unliveable, as "the air was stifing, the darkness total. A bed had been spread on the floor. [She] could sleep quite comfortably on one side; but the slop was so sudden that [she] could not turn on the otherside without hitting the roof" (2001, p. 96). Yet, it was also initially a place that had allowed her to connect to the outside world, primarily through sound and sonic practices. Brent describes that early in her occupation of the garret, she knew when it was morning "[…] only by the noises [she] heard; for in [her] small den day and night were all the same" (2001, p. 96), that "[she] heard the voices of [her] children. There was joy and there was sadness in the sound" (2001, p. 96), and even that "[she] had heard many conversations not intended to meet [her] ears" (2001, p. 98), such as slave-hunters discussing how to catch fugitives. Prior to the holes she was able to make in the garret to *see* outside, it was through sound and sonic practices that Jacobs was able to occupy the paradoxical positions "[…] amongst the irrational workings of slavery as a witness, participant, and fugitive" (McKittrick, 2006, p. 42) in the nowhere of the garret. Ultimately, McKittrick (2006) describes Brent's respatialization of the garret, *the loophole of retreat*, as "Brent [being] everywhere and nowhere, north and south, unvisibly present across the landscape, in the last place they thought of" (p. 42). While this quote makes specific reference to Brent having letters sent to Dr. Flint from New York and Boston to continue to throw off his pinning down of her geographic location, McKittrick's reading of Brent's actions having allowed her to be *everywhere and nowhere* voices a multilayered, paradoxical occupation of space as Brent's "[…] position in and outlook from the garret [that] evidence[s] several material, experiential, and representational spaces 'that would be mutually exclusive if charted on a two dimensional map… [but are] occupied simultaneously.'" (McKittrick, 2006, p. 41). McKittrick's (2006) reading of how "the garret makes available a place for Brent to articulate her lived experiences and

emancipatory desires, without losing sight of the dehumanizing forces of slavery" (McKittrick, 2006, p. 41) is exactly the twinned paradoxical dynamic that influences my ideas about *Black nowheres*. What McKittrick makes clear for me in her reading of Brent's *loophole of retreat* is that Black people do not passively accept the terms of violence and brutalization that articulate White supremacist logics of place. Rather, as already dispossessed from White supremacist logics of place, Black people imagine and create new ways of being from *nowhere*.

In "Commentary: Worn Out" (2017), McKittrick returns us again to the paradoxical question of "the nowhere of black life" (p. 98) and makes clearer for me what I gather from her reading of Brent's *loophole of retreat* when she suggests,

> What I want to propose is that the nowhere of black life is one of many useful analytics through which to orient our political vision of black geographies […] the profoundly disturbing nowhere of black life, in fact, provides a template to imagine the production of space not through patriarchal and colonial project trappings. (e.g. we want our own space, and to own space, on your (anti-black colonial) terms, give us a place in your system) but instead as a project that, to borrow from Glissant (1997), engenders relations of uncertainty […] the nowhere of blackness is not rendered non-existent, rather [it] fosters an *outlook* that is structured by, but not necessarily behold to , crass positivist cartographies […] I want to remember this, and to remember the radical geographic work of black studies, where the fantastic nowhere of black life allows us to puzzle out new and unexpected—and undisciplined and unacceptable—modes of being human. (2017, p. 98–99)

While this is an extensive quote from "Commentary: Worn Out," McKittrick's idea that the nowhere of blackness is "*[…] an outlook that is structured by, but not necessarily behold to, crass positivist cartographies […]* [emphasis added]" (McKittrick, 2017, p. 99) deeply

influences my articulation of the dynamics of *Black nowheres*. For me, *Black nowheres* insist we understand that "Black people's entire lives are shaped through an implicit understanding that we are not truly a part of the society we're born into" (Anderson, 2021, p. 3), but also, in not being beholden to the societies, or States—as Dionne Brand notes, "*I am stateless anyways* [emphasis added]" (1984, p. 70)—that we are born into, Black people navigate, maneuver and organize in ways to exist despite this neglect. Here I think of my own birth story and parts of my family history. I was born in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, to Eritrean parents and was given Ethiopian citizenship, since Saudi Arabia does not recognize the citizenship of people who are born to non-Saudis. I was born during The War of Eritrean Independence (1st September 1961 to 24th May 1991), a conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia for Eritrean independence from Ethiopian rule, and I have never been to Eritrea due to my parents' political practices that have prevented their own return to a "free" independent Eritrea. I was born in a paradoxical situation of violence, *a Black nowhere*, and became a refugee in Canada, *a Black nowhere*. Growing up in Canada, we were always reminded how lucky we were to be *here*, to be Canadian citizens by family close and far, and that the conditions of our lives *must be better* because of being in the West. Little did they know or recognize that the conditions we live in are also grounded in struggle and violence. As Glissant writes, "The West is not in the West. It is a project, not a place." (1991, p. 2). The intimacies of violence we experience *here* and what they experience *there* are far more connected than any of us were willing to admit; we all exist in *Black nowheres*. Tuning into the particularities of how Black Nowheres are created, maintained, impose on and refused by Black people is what this concept allows us to register. Parents, Aunts and Uncles working two full time jobs as PSWs, cleaners, taxi drivers, brothers, sisters, cousins facing discrimination in school, medical systems, criminal justice systems, family crossing borders, bodies of water,

languages, dying, both metaphorically and literally, to make life somewhere else. *We are stateless anyways*. Even with the struggle, the overheard whispers of disappointment, cries of heartbreak, and angry screams of frustration, *here* and *there*, we are held together and exist beyond "the conditions that the state has placed on us to inform our most radical incursions, rather than asking the state to change […] [we recognize] the state is not for us" (Anderson, 2021, p. 35) and create our own ways of living in *Black nowheres*. In reflecting on McKittrick's (2006, 2017) and Anderson's (2021) offerings on racial-spatial logics and the State, citizenship, and being, I realize that I, my family, Black people and Blackness have always already existed in *Black nowheres*, "[…] which embraces a variety of diasporas; that is, not only those of the descendants of the enslaved, but also migrants from the Continent whose roots and routes differently encounter and blacken Canada" (Sanders, 2018, p. 66).

At the beginning of my graduate studies, I was wholly consumed with the question of belonging. But the more I read, the more I realized this question was a problem, as it holds Black people and Blackness to the State's understanding and order of being. Much like how J. Kameron Carter (2021) describes Ashon Crawley's "otherwise worlds" (2021) and Fred Moten and Stefano Harney's "the undercommons" (2013), for me, *Black nowheres* "functions less as a zone of address, and thus less as somewhere […] in racial capitalism's creases and folds, nowhere is the alternative, an open set of practices carried out agnostically by those *no-bodies* who augment and thereby are a turbulence within the terms of order" (pp. 158–159). Through *Black nowheres*, there is potential for release from the logics of an anti-Black world through relations that occur most clearly for me in sound and sonic practices.

I think of *Black nowheres* as a concept "[…] that requires us to think contrapuntally within and against the nation" (Walcott, 2003, p. 22), because Black people "[…] more than any

others, are written out and written into our nations conditionally […]" (Walcott, 2003, p. 23). Similar to how Figueroa and Patrick (2001) describe the suck-teeth gesture, and how Aija-Simone notes breathing and breathe control in her journal entry, *Black nowheres* reveal the State's conditional dynamic with Blackness as "unremarked yet indispensable" (Figueroa & Patrick, 2001, p. 3), in that when Black people and Blackness are not of use, they are unremarked, yet when they serve a purpose for the State, they are indispensable. This dynamic of being *unremarked yet indispensable* is what the concept identifies as functioning in multiple registers simultaneously—as *Black nowheres*, *the Black now here* and *the Black know here*. These multiple registers highlight how we are always negotiating different possible meanings of relation and, as such, it is pliable to the reader's positionality. I aim to disrupt essentialist historical and social narratives of Canada as a place wherein Black people and Blackness are *free* and instead name multiple registers—*the now here* and *know here*—as a set of deciphering practices to highlight how, "[…] even as we experienc[e], recogniz[e], and liv[e] subjection, we d[o] not *simply* or *only* live *in* subjection and *as* the subjected" (Sharpe, 2016, p. 4) in *Black nowheres*. The *now here* insists we register current social and cultural phenomena to unsettle and disquiet systemic violences that normalize and sustain brutal structures of *Black nowheres*. The *know here* registers the homophone *No Here* that is potentially understood as the negative meaning of *Black nowheres.* To *know* in a *nowhere* exploits the irony of the pronunciation of the two terms sounding the same but having two different meanings—*nowhere* as negation and *know here* as the ability to perceive, be aware of, or understand differently. The opacity that the *know here* register affords Black people is an insistence on understanding Black life differently than what folks may assume *Black nowheres* suggests. I think of *Black nowheres* akin to Saidiya

Hartman's (2019) discussion of "The Beauty of the Slum" in *Wayward Lives*. Hartman (2019) states,

> The outsiders and the uplifters fail to capture it, to get it right. All they see is a typical Negro alley, blind to the relay of looks and the pangs of desire that unsettle their captions and hint at the possibility of a life bigger than poverty, at the tumult and upheaval that can't be arrested by the camera. They fail to discern the beauty and they see only the disorder, missing all the ways black folk create life and make bear need into an arena of elaboration […] Intimate life unfolds in the streets (pp. 5–6)

Ultimately, tuning into sound and sonic practices of Black people and Blackness *now here*, this dissertation explores how we can *know here*, the experiences of Black Canada(s) differently.

While this dissertation names Black Canada(s) its focus, two areas within the country are central to this project's contemplation—first, Toronto and its greater surrounding areas in Ontario, and second, Halifax and Africville in Nova Scotia. Toronto, Ontario, and Halifax, Nova Scotia, were chosen as the focus sites of this work specifically because of how they have the largest concentration of Black peoples (Ontario[8]) and a longstanding historical Black community (Nova Scotia[9]). By all means, this scope does not mean to further disappear or belittle places such as Montréal, which has "the second largest Black population, with 26.6% of Canada's total Black population" ("Diversity of the Black Population in Canada: An Overview," 2019, p. 16), or The Prairies, which has the fastest-growing Black population in Canada ("Diversity of the

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[8] "Diversity of the Black Population in Canada: An Overview" (2019), p. 17.

[9] "Diversity of the Black Population in Canada: An Overview" (2019), p. 15. Also, Pachai and Bishop (2006) make note of Nova Scotia's significance as "[…] the main home of the first arrivals between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries in four identifiable groups: slaves, Black Loyalists, Maroons, and Black Refugees" (p. 1), amongst other important figures such as Mathieu Da Costa (a seaman and interpreter for the French and Dutch in the 17th century) and Barbara Cuffy (land owner and midwife in the mid-18th century) "[…] who cannot be slotted into any group" (Pachai and Bishop, 2006, p. 1) due to their respective statuses.

Black Population in Canada: An Overview," 2019, p. 18); rather, it focuses on Toronto and its surrounding areas in Ontario and Halifax and Africville in Nova Scotia to articulate the counterintuitive dynamics of these sites as Black Nowheres in Canada and establish the grounds of the concept to better explore other intersectional factors and socio-historical and political undercurrents that differently shape the experiences and perceptions of Black people and Blackness across Canada. As such, I consider this dissertation a beginning to my life project of paying critical attention to the many registers of Black Canada(s).

INTRODUCTION

Tuning into Black Canada(s)

[O]verlooking and measuring blackness in fact begins to reveal that there are other ways race makes itself known in the landscape. But first we have to enter the material landscape from a different location, perhaps using varied conceptual tools, and trust not only that all knowledges are partial, but that all knowledges are geographic. (McKittrick, 2006, pp. 14–15)

To the Liberty Bell at the Elgin Settlement:
I hear your voice
across the fields
across the miles
through the forests
and the tears
I hear it still
And still
Bong. Bong. Bong
(Shadd-Evelyn, 1993, pp. 61–62)

Figure 2: St. Andrews United Church, South Buxton, Ontario (2018).

Figure 3: Archival Image of The Buxton Liberty Bell. Inscription reads: "Cast by A.Fulton, Pittsburgh, Penn.1850. Presented to the Rev. William King by the coloured inhabitants of Pittsburgh for the Academy at Raleigh C. West." (n.d).

The Question of Black Freedom in Canada

August 28, 1833, marks the date wherein the Act for the Abolition of Slavery in the British Colonies received royal assent. Just shy of one year later, August 1, 1834, marks the date of the enactment of the British Emancipation Act, when, "not only did the Canadian slave receive his long-awaited freedom but also Canada then became a land of hope and freedom to millions of enslaved people in the United States" (Robbins, 2013, p. 21). August 1, 1834, "the old spirituals which promised freedom to the soul now became the means by which messages could be sent to those who promised freedom to the body" (Robbins, 2013, p. 22). August 1, 1834, the date that *allegedly* marked a shift in the state of being for Black people in Canada.

The Buxton, or Elgin Settlement, located in Western Ontario "was the last of the four organized [black] settlements to have come into existence" (Robbins, 2013, p. 50) in the mid-1800s. Its organizer was William King, a White Presbyterian minister who emigrated from Ireland to first to Ohio then later to Louisiana. King, who "had been greatly influenced by the slavery debates in Britain and considered himself to be opposed to the institution of slavery […] found himself intimately entangled in the very system of slavery that he believed to be so repulsive" (Kheraj, 2003, p. 1), first when purchasing an enslaved person to work at his school in Louisiana and later through marriage by inheriting enslaved Black people. King's morals and commitment to the church made being a slave owner difficult for him. After confessing to the Presbyterian Synod in Louisiana to owning slaves, King decided to bring his enslaved people to Canada where they could be free (Robbins, 2013). The language used to explain King's desire to bring the enslaved away from the "slavery of ignorance" (Kheraj, 2003, p. 2) to Canada and provide them with "the opportunity to become temperate, modest, hardworking individuals" (Kheraj, 2003, p. 2) suggests a possibility for the enslaved to transcend their status as *enslaved* to *human* in Canada through discipline, compliance and performance of values of civility that the Western world ascribes to being human. While these values seem achievable, they are not afforded to all; more specifically, they are withheld from Black people, because what is central to supposed civility is in fact Whiteness.[10] This is affirmed through the fear of some White settlers in Buxton, who took up concerted efforts to block Black settlement of the area. Led by Edwin Larwill, a politician of Chatham, a petition was circulated and sent to legislative assembly

[10] Daniel Coleman's (2006) book *White Civility: The Literary project of English Canada* takes up this very argument and traces how it is present in different early forms of Canadian writing (fiction, poetry, drama, journalism and political writing) and suggests that even in the contemporary moment where Multiculturalism is said to represent Canada's progressiveness, "[…] whiteness still occupies the positions of normalcy and privilege in Canada, and anti-racist activity remains hamstrung until we begin to carry out the work that traces its genealogy, or 'the ideological lineage of this belief system,' in an effort to combat the national injunction to forget the brutal elements of our racial history" (2006, pp. 7–8).

with the expressed intention of blocking, by any means possible, the formation of a Black colony within the area (Robbins, 2013). According to Kheraj (2003), many white people from Chatham did not believe that the government should "sell large portions of the public domain, in settled parts of this province, to foreigners, the more so when such persons belong to a different branch of the human family and are black" (p. 9).

Given Canada's role in the Underground Railroad, as well as the assumed shift of the condition of Black being in Canada through the abolition of slavery, this act by Ewin Larwill and the White settlers of Chatham is more than just an early example of anti-Black racism. When the White settlers of Chatham make known in their petition that they disagree with selling parts of the land to make way for persons who "belong to a different branch of the human family and are black" (Kheraj, 2003, p. 9), they demonstrate that "[…] the foundational liberal understanding of human life place Black people outside the category of the human" (Walcott, 2021, pp. 15–16). Even while the letter from the settlement ascribes the potential Black colony as belong to *a different branch of the human family*, what they reinscribe through this idea of "a different branch" is the how this colony's Blackness renders them Other, discrete from the White branch of the human and its assumed superiority. In "No Humans Involved: An Open Letter to my Colleagues" (1994), Sylvia Wynter recounts the jury's acquittal of the policemen who beat Rodney King and their use of the term "N.H.I." (No Humans Involved)—which the L.A.P.D. "[…] routinely used […] to refer to any case involving a breach of the rights of young Black males who belong to the jobless category of the inner city ghettoes" (1994, p. 42)—as a way to demonstrate how "language works to 'narratively condemn' the Black" (Walcott, 2021, p. 16). Through the narratively condemned status of Black people as being outside the category of

human,[11] Wynter argues, the conditions of the narratively condemned Black are perhaps "[…] not *overtly* genocidal, [but] are clearly having genocidal effects with the incarceration and elimination of [Black people] by ostensibly normal, and *everyday* means" (Wynter, 1994, p. 45). What Wynter elucidates for us is the nuances of everyday actions embedded in our society that validate the dehumanization of Black people. For example, what is clear in reading the twinning of "Black" and "another branch of the human family" in the petition by the White settlers of Chatham is the epistemological order of the human that, "from the very origin of the modern world, of the Western World system there was […] man as invented in the 16th C by Europe and then on the other Man's Human others" (Scott, 2000, p. 175)—wherein the formerly enslaved are registered as "Other." While the Western World may have seen this schematic overview as one wherein "the ideal self" has been "settler European/White" and their human others since the late 15th–16th century have been "Indians, Negros/Natives and Niggers," importantly, "these categories did not exist before the West's global expansion and its forcible incorporation of the peoples and cultures it met up with" (Scott, 2000, p. 174) during Trans-Atlantic Slavery and have been upheld. What I read in this petition by the White settlers of Chatham led by Ewin Larwill is that despite the belief that August 1, 1834, marked a shift in the state of being of Black people in Canada as "free," this is in fact not freedom, but is rather indicative of what Rinaldo Walcott names *the long emancipation*.

Walcott (2021) argues that the conditions of Black life, both past and present, demonstrate that Black people have yet to experience freedom. Walcott (2021) describes freedom

[11] Rinaldo Walcott notes, "In another essay, '1492: A New World View,' Wynter demonstrates how the category of the human evolved from one of a superstitious human to a religious human to a kind of religious/secular human. In each of these changes in what it meant to be human, we can take from Wynter a pedagogical imperative to continue to revise and reinvent what the human might be. In her call, then, that we must now undo the 'narratively condemned stats' of those marked as not human—that is, the Black—Wynter calls us to act in a fashion that is already available in post-Enlightenment modernist thought" (p. 17).

> […] as ways of being human in the world that exist beyond the realm of the juridical and that allow for bodily sovereignty. I argue that freedom marks an individual and a collective desire to be *in common* and *in difference* in a world that is nonhierarchical and nonviolent. It marks, as well, the social, political, and imaginative conditions that make possible multiple ways of being in the world. (p. 2)

Since Black people are already written outside of what it means to be human, as indicated in the petition by the White settlers of Chatham, I read August 1, 1834, as marking not Black freedom, but rather the long emancipation. Walcott (2021) argues that "emancipation is commonly understood as the "freeing of the slaves" in the post-Columbus world, but emancipation is a legal process and term that I will argue marks continued unfreedom, *not* the freedom it supposedly ushered in" (p. 1). The long emancipation continues to shape the conditions of Black unfreedom by continuing to perpetuate the same logics that existed under slavery. Since the formerly enslaved Black people were still considered part of a different branch of the human family, the dysselected, the legislation of The British Emancipation Act,

> […] did not allow those newly unowned peoples fully to become part of the polities where they live. Instead, emancipation legislation held the formerly enslaved in captive relationship to their very recent past. By so doing, emancipation legislation sets up a structure in which the newly emancipated are tutored, in often degrading fashion, into a new reorientating political and social polity. (Walcott, 2021, pp. 3–4)

We see these logics of controlling the formerly enslaved, who are said to be "free," in the actions of Reverend King to ensure the "success" of the Elgin Settlement. Reverend King had established strict regulations for those seeking to live in Buxton to ensure that "the new settlers become self-supporting and self-reliant" (Robbins, 2013, p. 55). Rogers, via Kheraj (2003),

suggests that King held a "[…] paternalistic view of relationship with his slaves. He believed that blacks could not achieve moral improvement outside of the institution of slavery, unless they could settle on the land for a long period of time [and learn] particular values […] throughout religion, school, and hard work" (p. 13). Some of the restrictions employed to ensure the Black settlement was a segregated and morally intact included residents having to live on the land for ten years or sell the land back to the association; size restrictions on the houses that were built, which had to be no less than 33 feet from the road; having white picket fences with a flower garden; and abstaining from or maintaining self-control with regard to alcohol consumption (Kheraj, 2003).

Reverend King's paternalistic management of the newly emancipated Black peoples of the Elgin Settlement is contrary to what I referenced as Walcott's (2021) definition of freedom. Reverend King's authoritarian management style of the Elgin Settlement alongside the White settlers of Chatham's turn to legislative assembly with complaints and petitions of having "free" Black people settle close by is indicative of the social, political, and cultural subordinated status of the "free" Black Elgin Settlement. Black freedom is not afforded through the logics of emancipation; however, as Walcott (2021) argues, "Black people do experience moments of freedom that are unscripted, imaginative, and beyond our current modes of intelligibility" (p. 4) that work towards freedom that exists outside the logics of the plantation toward Black being.

The Buxton Liberty Bell

Thinking with the Elgin Settlement, I consider the gift of The Liberty Bell (Fig. 3) from the "colored" inhabitants of Pittsburgh to the Elgin Settlement as both a symbolic and material expression of Black peoples' struggle for freedom through sound. Despite initially contesting the

acceptance of The Liberty Bell, sent as a lasting symbol of freedom "[…] commemorating their achievement in founding the Buxton Settlement" (Kheraj, 2003, p. 5), Reverend King consulted with the community and decided to accept the gift. It "was erected immediately and the very next Sunday rang out its first call to worship" (Robbins, 2013, p. 59) and subsequently every arrival of a formerly enslaved person who made it to "freedom" at the settlement. In the original letter sent to the Elgin Settlement, the 'coloured' folks of Pittsburgh state:

> […] You are now in a land of liberty [sic], where the rights and privileges are freemen are secured to you by law […] We feel a deep interest both in your temporal and spiritual welfare. As a lasting memorial of our kindness, we send to the Rev. W. King […] and when the bell, with its solemn tones, calls you to the House of God, remember your brethren who are in bonds; and let your prayer ascent to God, that he may, in his own good time, break every yoke and let the oppressed go free. ("Letters between Brotherhood and Buxton," n.d., p. 50)

The ringing of the Liberty Bell is narrativized to mark the sonic register of Black freedom, secured to the people of the Elgin Settlement and affirmed by the people of the Elgin Settlement's response to the coloured inhabitants of Pittsburgh, which was written on their behalf by Isaac Riley and William A. Jackson:

> Dear Brethren, […] We are delighted at all times to hear from the friends that we have left in a land of pretended freedom, and although separated in body, we are present with you in spirit […] we will endeavor to observe and practice the advice which you have kindly given us […] we will not cease to implore the Divine Blessing on that Government which has given us liberty not only in name but in reality. The bell has been raised to the place erected for it, and for the first time the silence of our forest was broken on last Sabbath

> morn, by its joyful peals inviting us to the house of God […] we trust that while its cheerful peel invites us to the house of prayer, we will then remember our brethren who are in less favourable circumstances […] [and] that the power of the oppressor may be broken, and that those who have long been held in bondage may be set free. (“Letters between Brotherhood and Buxton,” n.d., p. 51)

Walcott’s (2021) reminder that “Black freedom has been denied despite juridical emancipation” (p. 5) makes way for a more nuanced analysis of what is audible every time the solemn tones of the Liberty Bell is rung. I read the narrativization of the ringing of the Liberty Bell as a way Black people “[…] narrate their lives to themselves—*from within and against* the proscribed conditions set by white supremacy” (Walcott, 2021, p. 6). Walcott (2021) notes, “the zone of the Americas is a zone of and for the production of Black death […] By this I mean that the constant urgency of living with death for Black people conditions how they understand their lives” (p. 9). The letter by the coloured inhabitants of Pittsburgh to the Elgin Settlement insist on interpreting the Liberty Bell’s sound as audibly manifesting this condition that death is the means towards Black life. While listening to the ringing of the Liberty Bell, the people of the Elgin Settlement hear their “freedom” while also hearing the conditions of their brethren’s unfreedom, thus sonically reminding us of the work that needs to be done. The Liberty Bell signals that the conditions of Black freedom have not been fully realized. This animates the understanding that “Black freedom, then, is not one kind of freedom that sits alongside other kinds of freedom; it is a global reorienting and radical reordering phenomenon” (Walcott, 2021, p. 5).

In the present moment, the Liberty Bell now hangs in the St. Andrews Baptist Church in South Buxton (Fig. 2), with commemorative plaques citing the historic importance of the Liberty Bell to Canada. Kheraj (2003) reminds us that,

> every national historic site in the parks Canada system has certain qualities that have been deemed historically significant to the nation [….] For Buxton, the stated commemorative intent is split into two parts. Firstly, Buxton and its cultural landscape, 'speaks to the successful realization of the block or planned refugee settlement in Canada.' Secondly, Buxton continues to be a memorial to the 'courage of every Underground Railroad refugee who took their life in their own hands and chose Canada as their home.' The memory of Buxton is used to emphasize two Canadian themes in Canadian collective identity—the settlement of immigrants and to pamphlet for the commemoration of the Underground Railroad in Canada, 'ultimately the experience of the Underground Railroad helped to forge Canadian's sense of themselves as a democratic country.' Both of these themes can be contested and the use of the Buxton Settlement as an example of these values should be called into question. (Kheraj, 2003, p. 8)

The work of the State, through marking Buxton as a national historic site that "[…] received great international attention from various abolition groups in both the US and Britain [and] was considered a successful as a model of black settlement […]" (Kheraj, 2003, p. 6), narrativized the solemn tones of the Bell that the coloured inhabitants of Pittsburgh and the people of the Elgin Settlement have made possible: As long the Liberty Bell is rung, it is a reminder that we are not free, thus animating a call to continue to refuse the logics of unfreedom and work toward something other than the conditions of the present. In ringing the Bell, we hear and are confronted with the paradox of Canada as a Black nowhere.

My reading of The Elgin Settlement/Buxton is an effort to arrive at the question Rinaldo Walcott (2003) poses: "What might black studies not bear to hear? Or, what might black cultural studies allow us to hear [emphasis added]?" (p. 38). Although Walcott's question is not directly

connected to ideas of Sound Studies and sonic practices, Walcott's query of what Black Studies make possible when thinking through and with Black Canada(s) is the aim of my dissertation. In bringing together Black Studies and Sound and Sonic Studies approaches, my project aims to add to the body of literature in Black Canadian Studies that avoids the essentialisms Canadian multicultural policy thrives on by examining "the multiplicities of blackness in Canada [that] collide in ways that are instructive for diasporic theorizing" (Walcott, 2003, p. 40). Twenty years later, I riff off Walcott's questions to ask, *What might Canada not bear to hear? What does Canada allow us to hear? What do we allow ourselves to hear when tuning into in Black nowheres?*

Theoretical Framework: Black Studies and Sound Studies

Groundings in Black Studies

To ground this project, I turn to conversations in Black Studies, Sound Studies, and Popular Music Studies regarding the conditions of Black being, the sociality of Black life, and aesthetics to generate new ways of thinking about what Black sonic practices allow us to register of our social and political worlds.

I understand Black Studies as an interdisciplinary field concerned with the structural subjugation and disenfranchisement of Black peoples, as well as practices of refusal and fugitivity that challenge and generate new possibilities of Black being that work against and beyond the structural violence of anti-Blackness. Central to this inter-discipline are the works of Sylvia Wynter and Frantz Fanon, who unveil the logic of Western civilization, colonial and humanist practices to "[…] provide the ground for a different imagining of the human […] think outside of the terms in which we are […] the processes by which we institute ourselves as what

we are, [and] make these processes transparent to ourselves" (Scott, 2000, p. 207). They each provide maps for thinking the structuring violence of anti-Blackness as well as considering praxis for living that resists and responds to its social political and economic violences. And so, I am interested in participating in this tradition of thinking the relation between violence and resistance, but particularly through the prism of Black Canada(s).

As such, my work turns to conversations in Black Canadian Studies to consider the particularities of how race and space are thought of here, because, as Rinaldo Walcott (2003) argues, "settler colonies can be characterized by their struggles over race and space [and that] Canada is no exception" (p. 43), despite the limited attention Canada receives in the larger field of Black Studies. While Peter James Hudson and Aaron Kamugisha (2014) name two traditions of Black Canadian Thought in their special edition of *The CLR James Journal*, the first being a Black Liberal Tradition with thinkers such as George Elliot Clarke and Cecil Foster who proclaim a more "national focus and have faith in the redemptory energies of the Canadian state" (p. 8), the second tradition they connect to a "Black Radical Tradition" consisting of thinkers such as Rinaldo Walcott, Katherine McKittrick, and David Austin, whose works are concerned with "the modes of violence, discursive and otherwise, that have shaped the possibilities of black freedom" (Hudson & Kamugisha, 2014, p. 10)—this is where I position my own work.

Although both traditions are invested in different approaches to the work of Black Canada, all agree that, as Walcott explicitly states, "the necessity for studying black life in Canada remains urgent" (2014, p. 279). Through diasporic logics, Black Canadian Studies attends to the "grammars of black in Canada [that] help us avoid the painful and disappointing moments of an essentialized blackness" (Walcott, 2003, p. 149) and prohibit the possibility of dominance or assimilation (Campbell, 2014, p. 103) by "forcing the recognition of different

kinds of Canadianness" (Walcott, 2003, p. 144). These modes of recognition are not for, as Christina Sharpe (2019) notes, nation, but are rather for "writing Black diaspora connection and reminding readers to recognize them, to 'critically reflect upon' and 'not to romanticize' them" (p. 10).

When it comes to Blackness in Canada, national historical narratives tend to "render these racial geographies invisible, and many people continue to believe that any black presence in Canada is a recent and urban one spawned by Black Caribbean, and now continental African, migration" (Walcott, 2003, p. 43), which I identify as part of the work that insists Canada is a literal Black Nowhere. Katherine McKittrick poses in *Demonic Grounds* (2006) that,

> […] there are other ways race makes itself known in the landscape. But first we have to enter the material landscape from a different location, perhaps using varied conceptual tools, and trust not only that all knowledges are partial, but that all knowledges are geographic. (pp. 14–15)

McKittrick's (2016) offering in "Rebellion/Invention/Groove," that "Black musical aesthetics not only emerge within and against long standing anti-black practices, they are heard and listened to across and in excess of positivist workings of antiblack logics […]" makes way for seriously considering how "[…] black music, what we hold on to and what we hear, moves between and across and outside ungraspable waveforms, the anticolonial politics underpinning black cultural production, and the racial economy of white supremacy that denies black personhood" (p. 80). McKittrick's turn to Black musical aesthetics makes way for thinking through the inventiveness of Black musical aesthetics in the creative realm of Black popular culture through the "[…] waveforms—the beats, rhythms, acoustics, notational moods, frequencies that undergird black music—affirm, through cognitive schemas, modes of being

human that refuse antiblackness just as they restructure our existing knowledge system" (McKittrick, 2016, p. 81).

Stuart Hall (2019) makes the claim in his work on Black popular culture that "by definition, black popular culture is a contradictory space. It is a sight of strategic contestation [...]" (p. 88). What Hall points to in this claim is the necessity to transform our thinking of Black popular culture from essentialist terms that overdetermine the signifier "Black" in Black popular culture. Hall warns us of essentialism precisely because it "[...] naturalizes and dehistoricizes difference, mistaking what is historical and cultural for what is natural, biological and genetic" (2019, p. 91). Hall suggests we must do this work is because "[t]he moment the signifier 'black' is torn from is historical, cultural, and political embedding and lodged in a biologically constituted racial category, we valorize, by inversion, the very ground of the racism we are trying to deconstruct" (2019, p. 91). What Hall proposes instead is that we view and engage Black popular culture as a space that is dialogic, encouraging us to understand how Black popular culture in our contemporary moment is a realm for us to understand how "[...] what is socially peripheral is so frequently *symbolically* [sic] central" (2019, p. 94). What Hall implies through his contention that what is socially peripheral is symbolically central is how within the global shift to the United States as a centre of global cultural production, there must be a rupture in historical conceptualizations of low and high culture. While historically, bourgeois European cultural values dominated the significance with which scholars and critics attributed to cultural objects and artifacts, Hall's attention to the centrality of peripherality undermines such a pattern. For Hall, it is only through close attention to that which is rendered peripheral that we can begin to apprehend the structure *and center* of the symbolic order. This attention demands an engagement with Black cultural production, often rendered marginal or low brow (until it has

been appropriated by the White masses), so that we might better interrogate how the United States' disavowal of Blackness affirms the hierarchical position and valuation of Whiteness, and so how peripherality and marginality is, in turn, structurally central to the maintenance of the symbolic order. What happens because of this dynamic is a fixed reading of Black popular culture as solely resistant to the forces of structural violence and anti-Blackness—making it "good Black popular culture"—or, alternately, a reading that Black popular culture is commodified and invested in capitalism in ways that make it "unauthentic." In referencing the work of Stallybrass and White, Hall insists we destabilize this dynamic to understand that "we are always in negotiation, not with a single set of oppositions that place us always in the same relation to others, but with a series of different positionality" (2019, p. 92). For Hall, this is evident in Black popular culture's,

> […] expressivity, its musicality, its orality, in its rich, deep, and varied attention to speech, in its inflections toward the vernacular and the local, in its rich production of counternarratives, and above all, in its metaphorical use of the musical vocabulary, black popular culture has enabled the surfacing, inside the mixed and contradictory modes even of some mainstream popular culture, of elements of a discourse that is different—other forms of life, other traditions of representation. (p. 89)

Through the work and questions of scholars in Black Studies on Black musical aesthetics, such as Stuart Hall (2019), Rinaldo Walcott (2003), Katherine McKittrick (2006), and Mark V. Campbell (2014), I turn to Sound, Sonic and Popular Music Studies to consider what Tia DeNora asserts we should "shift from what music means to a concern with what it does a dynamic material of social existence" (2000, p. 49). As dynamic materials of social existence—music and, I add, sound—offer temporal structure, regulation, and reformulation of space and are physical

experiences that allow us the opportunity to work and rethink moments of engagement outside of the confines of traditional disciplines that discipline and limit how we think. How can sound and sonic theory tune into and resound the generative possibilities of sound-thinking to conventional ways of engaging philosophical, historical, social, and political studies of Blackness and anti-Black racism in Canada? In what ways might an attunement to sound and the sonic expand the analytic registers of Black Canadian Studies and Black (Diaspora) Studies more broadly?

This work aims to "open the possibilities of exploring the complexities of the social and cultural grounds of sonic experiences" (Sterne, 2003, p. 13) by listening intentionally and deeply to consider how sound, sonic practices, and music unsettle whitewashing logics of the sonic environment to transform the way we think about spatiality and power and so allow us to tune into "Black absented presences" (McKittrick, 2006, p. 22). As such, I turn to conversations in Sound, Sonic and Popular Music Studies that consider questions such as, what constitutes sound, music, and noise? For whom? How does one listen? And what are the generative possibilities of Black sonic practices for understanding the dynamics of Black life?

The Unthought of Sound (Studies)

Sound Studies can be and has been critiqued for its overwhelming Whiteness as a field. Gustavus Stadler (2015) calls out how between 2012 and 2015, three major sound studies readers were published[12] that included a range of disciplinary perspectives that offer important contributions to the field; however, each collection had minimal work concerning race.[13]

[12] *The Oxford Handbook of Sound Studies* (2012), edited by Karen Bijsterveld and Trevor Pinch, *The Sound Studies Reader* (2013), edited by Jonathan Sterne, and *Keywords in Sound*, edited by David Novak and Matt Sakakeeny.
[13] Stadler notes *The Sound Studies Reader* referenced Fred Moten's work in an essay not about race as a well as an excerpt from Fanon's *A Dying Colonialism*, and *The Oxford Handbook* had a piece on Racial Authenticity and Hip Hop.

Ultimately, Stadler (2015) suggests that the field prioritize making work that disrupts the Whiteness of the field as well as its key terms that assume neutral positions such as "[…] 'the listener,' 'the body,' 'the ear,' and so on" (2015)—the work does exist, it just needs to be registered as such. Here I think of the work of artist and writer jamilah malika abubakare, who makes note of how "sound art does not circulate. At best it is considered niche, at worst, obnoxious […] [and that when it is received] in the popular/ social imagination, sound art is the arena of white men" (2021, p. 61). In abubakare's practice, her work considers the questions, "how does it feel to listen? And does it feel to be listened to? (p. 59) because, as a Black woman, she considers "[…] sound [her] loophole of retreat" (p. 59). For abubakare, sound does what visuality "[…] cannot, and to undo what it does" (p. 59). By doing so, abubakare's works such as *listen to Black women* (2021) allow us to refuse the "present-absence" (Thompson, 2017) of White aurality and animate the "haptic and intimate" (abubakare, 2021, p. 59) that sound makes possible.

Christoph Cox (2011, 2018), on the other hand, argues that a materialist approach to sound is necessary in order to understand that,

> sound is not a world apart, a unique domain of non-signification and non-representation. Rather, sound and the sonic arts are firmly rooted in the material world and the powers, forces, intensities, and becomings of which it is composed. If we proceed from sound, we will be less inclined to think in terms of representation and signification, and to draw distinctions between culture and nature, human and nonhuman, mind and matter, the symbolic and the real, the textual and the physical, the meaningful and the meaningless. Instead, we might begin to treat artistic productions not as complexes of signs or

representations but complexes of forces materially inflected by other forces and force-complexes. (Cox, 2011, p. 157)

What Cox (2011) claims is that we need a theoretical framework that works to understand the nature of sound, in order to "[…] avoi[d] the pitfalls encountered in theories of representation and signification" (Cox, 2011, p. 146). Even though Cox (2011) believes contemporary cultural approaches to aesthetics[14] are rich and valid in their rejection of essentialism, he is critical of what he claims is contemporary cultural theory's "[…] provincial and chauvinistic anthropocentrism, as well as for [how] it treats the human symbolic interaction as a unique and privileged endowment from which the rest of nature is excluded" (2011, p. 147). Cox charges contemporary cultural theory with problematically diving nature and culture as dualistic ways of knowing.

Marie Thompson's (2017) article "Whiteness and the Ontological Turn in Sound Studies" and Annie Goh's (2017) "Sounding Situated Knowledges: Echo in Archaeoacoustics" take up Cox's (2011) work to grapple with the divide identified by Cox and to critique materialist approaches in Sound Studies. Thompson (2017) identifies the return to ontology, realism and materialism in philosophy as creating a tension in Sound Studies that Brian Kane identifies as "[…] the disjuncture between 'sound studies' and 'auditory culture'" (2017, p. 270). Thompson references Kane, who states,

> 'sound studies', conceptualized as a particular body of scholarship interested in addressing the ontology of sound via Delezuian metaphysics, can be understood to position itself as autonomous from the priorities and methodologies of 'auditory culture'. Where the latter disciplinary label typically pertains to 'cultural' research, such as the development of

[14] Cox (2011) specifically names the areas of semiotics, psychoanalysis, poststructuralism and deconstruction, and thinkers such as De Saussure (1983), Lacan (1998), Derrida (1976) and Stuart Hall (2002) (p. 146).

> auditory techniques, histories of media technologies and the emergence and maintenance of sonic communities, the former joins the broader ontological turn in seeking to break away from culturally oriented questions of representation, signification and subjective experience. (Thompson, 2017, p. 270)

Thompson summarizes this separation of auditory culture and sound studies as distinct "narrowband and broadband interests: where the former prioritizes situated knowledges, practices and histories, [and] the latter is interested in the foundational, the abstract and the general" (2017, p. 270). This split reinforces the idea that that the "narrowband of auditory culture is concerned with issues of sociality whereas the broadband" is concerned with materiality. So, when sound artists like Christoph Cox make arguments that sound art is undertheorized and "[…] proposes an alternative theoretical framework, a materialist account able to grasp the nature of sound and to enable analysis of the sonic arts (Cox, 2011, p. 146) outside of culture and representation, it "[…] risks uncritically naturalizing what is ultimately a specific onto-epistemology of sound that is entangled with, amongst other things, histories of whiteness and coloniality" (Thompson, 2017, p. 270). Thompson (2017) suggests Cox's binary—thinking of music as sociality and culture and sound art as materiality, which is influenced by John Cage's work—naturalizes Eurocentric masculinist perspectives "[…] to become the auditory observer of sound's nature" (Thompson, 2017, p. 270), without recognizing that the perspective, too, is racialized as White aurality. Thompson (2017) makes clear,

> White aurality is not an ahistorical, unchanging, perceptual schema, insofar as whiteness and aurality are both material-discursive composites that shape and are shaped by one another and in relation to a particular environment, nor is it simply the product of individual bias […] white aurality can be understood as co-constitutive with, amongst other

things, Eurological histories, practices, ontologies, epistemologies and technologies of sound, music and audition. (p. 274)

Ultimately, Thompson is questioning the racialized dynamics of the ontological turn in Sound Studies, not to suggest that sound can only exist with a subject, or deny questions about sound and materiality, or even disregard questions about ontology. Rather, Thompson (2017) argues that "situating, rather than simply dismissing sonic ontologies enables us to ask how 'the nature of the sonic' is determined […] while remaining open to how it might be heard otherwise" (p. 278).

Annie Goh (2017) extends Thompson's (2017) critiques of new materialism's interest in sonic naturalism by calling out its "[…] neglect to address the traditional subject-object relation in how they produce knowledge through sound and listening" (p. 287) through her use of feminist epistemologies that critique the assumed neutrality of science and philosophy. In fact, Goh's (2017) critique calls to question the belief that sonic naturalism avoids the "[…] provincial and chauvinistic anthropocentrism […]" (Cox, 2011, p. 147) that Cox claims consumes contemporary cultural theoretical approaches to aesthetics and points out that new "not only retains an implicit subject-object division, against its own intentions, but in so doing perpetuates the fiction of the non-situated observer that has been the object of extensive critique within feminist science studies" (Lavender, 2017, p. 248). What Goh (2017) argues for is the practice of *sounding situated knowledges*. Leaning on the work of Donna Haraway, Goh (2017) suggests that "a move from debates on the so-called nature of sound towards those around the *natureculture of sound* can counter the tendency towards sonic naturalism in sonic knowledge production" (p. 288) and instead make way for "Future interventions of feminist epistemologies of thinking through sounding where a critical re-negotiation of the subject-object relationship in

sonic knowledge production is centered" (Goh, 2017, p. 297) in a manner that "[…] foregrounds both embodiedness and situatedness to avoid the risks of universalizing notions of subjectivity and objectivity which have limited traditional knowledge production" (Goh, 2017, p. 297).

The work of Mitchell Akiyama (2015) and Randolph Jordan (2014)—which discuss the decolonial concept of "unsettled listening" as well as Dylan Robinson's (2020) "hungry listening"[15]—are particularly helpful with the question of hearing otherwise. Akiyama argues that despite the important methodologies The World Soundscape Project developed and its intention "to open the ears of Canadian listeners to the importance of sonic experience[s] and to alert them to what they warned was the degradation of the soundscape thanks to the mounting din of industrial modernity" (Akiyama, 2015, para. 2), the Project inadvertently "points to the problem of how do we represent an increasingly diverse nation by way of sound while calling for new ways to think about what such a project should sound like in the 21st century" (2015). Akiyama observes what the broadcasts excluded or naively perceived as soundmarks (the sonic equivalent of landmarks); for example, protestant churches for whom "generations of Indigenous Canadians would likely not have connoted community or belonging but would rather have reverberated with echoes of re-education in a settler religion and language that many were forced to endure" (Akiyama, 2015). Randolph Jordan (2014) defines unsettled listening as an "invit[ation] [for] us to hear through these physical properties of mediatic space to the resonating stories revealed by the overlapping and contradictory histories and patterns of use to which these spaces are put, all too often unacknowledged in the wake of settler colonialism" (2014). More recently, Dylan Robinson's (2020) has emphasized that *hungry listening* "conceptualizes the space of sonic encounter as a space of subject-subject relation [and insists] moving away from a

[15] I engage with Dylan Robinson's *hungry listening* in more depth in Chapter 3.

conceptualization of the listener as the sole subject in the act of listening. *Hungry listening* reorients this act toward the life, agency, and subjectivity of sound within Indigenous frameworks of perception" (p. 15), supporting the reciprocal dynamic of sound and sonic practices this dissertation works to register.

Thinking the emergence of a particular mode of aurality, in *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction* (2003), Jonathan Sterne makes way to think about *ensoniment*. This, he states, occurred simultaneously with the enlightenment as a "series of conjectures among ideas, institutions, and practices [that] rendered the world audible in new ways and valorized new constructs of hearing and listening" (Sterne, 2003, p. 2). For Sterne, it is important to understand that "the transformation of sound and hearing took well over a century; changes happened bit by bit, place by place, practice by practice over a long period of time" (2003, pp. 2–3). Sterne not only traces the cultural origins of technologies of sound reproduction, but he also "move[s] beyond recovering experience to interrogating conditions under which that experience became possible in the first place [as] experiences themselves are variables shaped by contexts through which then help their subjects navigate" (Sterne, 2003, p. 28) and insists that we understand modernity as being shaped by sound in addition to the privileged category of the visual. Sterne's (2001) article "A Machine to Hear for Them: On the Very Possibility of Sound's Reproduction" discusses the ear phonautograph, "a direct ancestor of the telephone and phonograph, it consisted of an excised human ear attached by thumbscrews to a wooden chassis, which produced tracings of sound on a sheet of smoked glass when sound entered the mouthpiece" (2011, p. 260) and was created "[…] with the intent of making sound visible" (Sterne, 2011, p. 260). Sterne (2011) outlines how during the 19th century, anatomy acts were enacted in England and the US as medical schools needed bodies for dissection and anatomy in

order to prevent grave robbing, which negatively impacted public perception of the medical field. Medical acts such as the British Anatomy Act of 1832 “[…] offered to medicine any corpse that would otherwise have to be buried by the British state” (Sterne, 2011, p. 274). The US modeled their anatomy acts, state by state, after the British, which “[…] simply meant that unclaimed corpses or the bodies of people whose families could not otherwise afford a funeral were now offered up to medical science” (Sterne, 2011, p. 274). This mainly consisted of the bodies of poor and Black people. Scholars point out, “[…] one key similarity between the British and American acts: both made the bodies of the poor the raw material for medical knowledge […] prior to the acts, people from all classes could fear grave robbers […]” (Sterne, 2011, p. 275). Clarence J. Blake, who co-created the ear phonautograph alongside Alexander Graham Bell, “[…] acquired his bodies for study from Harvard medical school, he was likely a beneficiary of Massachusetts Anatomical Act […] thus the construction of the ear phonautograph—as an event—is most likely made possibly by a very particular set of class relationships” (Sterne, 2011, p. 275).

Gustavus Stadler (2010) reminds us of how early technologies of sound reproduction, such as the phonograph, demonstrate how practices of listening and hearing are racialized, and so too attunes us to how listening and sonic practices are shaped by their politico-material contexts. Stadler notes during the late 1800s, the phonograph gained traction as a form of commercial entertainment not just as a wonderous modern technology, “[…] but also the subject matter reproduced” (p. 87). Stadler argues the importance of the historical specificity of the phonograph as it overlaps […] with the collapse of Reconstruction and the consolidation of Jim Crow laws” (2015). Across these seemingly disparate historical moments, “[…] the production and consumption of phonographic recordings of the lynching of African Americans (Stadler, 2010, p.

87) as well as minstrel songs allow us to aurally register how "[…] a preeminent form of technological modernity converges with a pre-eminently modern form of racial violence" (Stadler, 2010, p. 89). Stadler states that early encounters with the marvel of the disembodied voice through the phonograph "[…] was an implicitly white experience" (2015), reaffirming Black listeners status as the condemned of modernity. While Stadler's work importantly affords us access to a different register of the violence that is directed at Black life through sonic reproduction, but as Sharpe (2019) states,

> […] Black artists, writers, scholars, activists, and Black people just trying to live in the world all over the Black diaspora, insist Black being into the present and the future—they say, yes, we are still here. They think and make and work and live and imagine from Black. (p. 13)

This is where the work of Tricia Rose (1994), Alexander Weheliye[16] (2003) and Julian Henriques[17] (2011) productively think through technology and reproduction in Black sonic practices in ways that honour Black cultural production's inventiveness with sound technologies. Simultaneously, they refuse the suggestion that Black people and Black cultures are pre- or anti-thetical to technological innovation, and rather insist that Black cultural production's engagement and inventiveness "[…] amplifies [their] centrality to modernity" (Weheliye, 2005, p. 3). Their readings of Black sonic practices and technological innovations echoes Stuart Hall's

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[16] For example, in *Phonographies: Grooves of Afrosonic Modernity* (2005), Weheliye considers how "spatialities resulting from the juxtaposition of *consuming* [sic] sonic technologies and *being consumed* [sic] by them suggest specifically modern ways of be(com)ing in the world" (p. 107). Here Weheliye examines how Black subjects use recorded music and modern sonic technologies to reconfigure both private and public spaces.

[17] Henriques explores how Jamaican Dancehall sound systems theorize how "sounding," "[..] by thinking though sound, as distinct from thinking about sound as an idea or object" (p. xxxii), allows us to understand through a triangulated sonic logos (audio engineer and material waveband, selector and corporeal waveband, and the MC and sociocultural waveband) reveals relationality "[…] in terms of ratio rather than just representation" (p. xxxvi) at the occularcentric level to develop complex analysis of Caribbean culture.

prompt that "[…] what is socially peripheral is so frequently *symbolically* [sic] central" (2019, p. 94). Of particular interest here is Tricia Rose's work *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America* (1994), wherein Rose explicates the failure in recognizing the value and ingenuity of Rap's sonic practices that "[…] are often contested on the grounds that they are not creative, constitute theft, and are non-musical" (p. 96). Rose (1994) explicates how in the founding of Rap, its earliest practitioners were poor Black and Latinx youth who, as a result of post-industrialization and the rise of technology, were streamed in their education to repair and maintain new technologies; as a result, they used their newfound skills to develop new cultural forms to express their own stories. Beyond the focus on the voice and oral techniques that Rose (1994) also argue are forms of technology, Black and Latinx peoples' innovative approaches to sampling technologies, looping rhythms, use of repetition, and breaks made way for "[…] not so much deliberately working against the cultural logic of Western classical musics they are working within and among distinctly black practices, articulating stylistic and compositional priorities found in black cultures in the diaspora" (pp. 95–96). Rose's reading of Rap insists we shift our thinking about the genre from the essentialized reading of it being a response to Whiteness to one that insists it is a collection of contemporary Black sonic aesthetic practices that "[…] are not merely stylistic effects, they are aural manifestations of philosophical approaches to social environments" (1994, p. 67). For example, Rose reads Rap producers' use of sampling as,

> […] a musical time machine, a machine that keeps time for the body in motion and a machine that recalls other times, a technological process whereby old sounds and resonances can be embedded and recontextualized in the present. Rap technicians employ digital technology as instruments, revising black musical styles and priorities through the

> manipulation of technology. In this process of techno-black cultural syncretism, technological instruments *and* [sic] black cultural priorities are revised and expanded. In a simultaneous exchange, rap music has made its mark on advanced technology, and technology has profoundly changed the sound of black music. (1994, p. 96)

In sum, these conversations in Black Studies, Sound Studies and Popular Music Studies inform the focus and key point of investigation for this dissertation: How do Black sound, sonic and musical practices make audible of the conditions of *Black nowheres*? This interdisciplinary approach affords "thinking with sound rather than thinking about sound [and] obliges us to invent categories and new dynamics to regenerate social theory" (Weheliye, 2005, p. 203) that refuses to conform to existing traditional paradigms and open our perceptions to the expansive possibilities that Black musical aesthetics have in mediating our knowledge. To conduct qualitative analyses of case studies that assert a grammar of the utterances and soundings of Black Canada(s), I follow with a discussion of the methods and methodology of this project.

Methodology and Methods

Just as the theoretical framework of my project operates outside of "disciplinary distinctions [that] often funct[ion] as a mechanism of containment" (Okoth, 2018, p. 1), methodologically, this dissertation employs a multi-method, multi-sited investigation strategy. I employ this strategy because "one site or one method or one discipline cannot encapsulate the complexities, complicities, and traces of the working of the settler state" (Upadahay, 2016, p. 36). The dissertation presents a departure from conventional modes of studying Blackness as well as sound in academia to examine anti-Blackness within the nation. I draw on my research in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Buxton, Ontario, and across the Greater Toronto Area in Ontario not only

to recognize the ways in which “anti-Black racism is deeply entrenched in Canadian institutions, policies, and practices, such that anti-Black racism is either functionally normalized or rendered invisible to the larger white society” (The Black Experience Project, 2017, p. 22), but also to examine how listen differently, since, “often [being] deemed [as] an unmediated physical act, listening is an interpretive socially constructed practice conditioned by historically contingent and culturally specific value systems riven with power relations” (Stoever, 2016, p. 14).

I employ diverse qualitative research methods, including archival research, soundscape field recordings, mapping, audile techniques, discursive, and cultural and film analyses in this work. Pursuing this project methodologically in an interdisciplinary manner is intentional for many reasons; essentially, it derives from the deceptively simple question: how do I ethically and responsibly engage in this work? Christina Sharpe (2016) notes that “for Black academics to produce legible work in the academy often means adhering to research methods that are ‘drafted into the service of a larger destructive force’ (Sanders, 2008a, p. 67), thereby doing violence to our own capacities to read, think, and imagine otherwise” (p. 13). During research trips consulting with The Toronto Archives, Halifax Archives, North Halifax Public Library Archive, Central Halifax Library Archive, Archives of Ontario, and The Buxton Archive, I experienced a lot of frustration and disappointment. Spending hours in very sterile spaces, wearing white cotton gloves to ensure I “did not damage” the material, I found myself overwhelmed with the “official” archives and what is accessible, what is redacted, and whose interests are being served. While official archives are and continue to be important sites for inquiry, recognizing the inseparability of violence and complicities that inform such archives as well as the limits “official” archives offer in terms of “our knowledge of the past” (Hartman, 2008, p. 5)—again, the question of whose interests are being served—archival practices by Black Feminist scholars and filmmakers

such as Saidiya Hartman, Christina Sharpe, Katherine McKittrick, Sylvia Hamilton, and Dana Inkster heavily inform my undisciplined methodological practice of archival work.

During a research trip to Halifax, Nova Scotia, in the Winter of 2019, I spent a lot of time in community spaces on the North end of Halifax[18] as well as in academic spaces, and I was able to make strong contacts who, through informal conversations, provided me with recommendations of sites to visit and people to contact for resources. Their information deeply affected the ways in which I have theoretically and methodologically approached this project. Through informal conversations with academics, filmmakers, librarians, community activists, and community members, I came to the decision not to pursue formal interview-based work for the dissertation. What became clear to me while in Halifax is that folks in these communities have been speaking, screaming, shouting forever, but they have been unheard in relation to the State. Reading Saidiya Hartman's *Venus in Two Acts*, attending a talk by Dr. Harvey Amani Whitfield entitled "Slave Lives Matter" at University of King's College, and visiting The Whitney Plantation in New Orleans alongside the informal conversations I had in Halifax influenced my methodological approach in terms of what Hartman refers to as "ventur[ing] toward another mode of writing" (2008, p. 7) that does "more than recount the violence that deposited these traces in the archive" (Hartman, 2008, p. 2). Rather, these works, and conversations encouraged me to *listen* to the silences in the archive as generative sites and write

[18] As Jim Silver notes, "the historic North End was home to the working class that laboured in the area's naval dockyards and railway and associated industries." As Erickson (2004, p. xiii) has observed: "While most industrial capitalists lived in the South End, the vast majority of industrial workers lived in the North End" in relatively modest housing. Gottingen Street became the heart of the North End, the "People's Street," bustling with shops and activity of a wide variety of kinds. The 1917 Halifax Explosion leveled much of the northerly portion of the North End, and out of its destruction Thomas Adams, inspired by the "garden city" approach to town planning, built the Hydrostone district with its modest and attractive row houses and boulevards, located to the west of Needham Hill which is where the monument to the Explosion now stands. The southerly part of the North End, and Africville at the northern tip of the peninsula overlooking the Bedford Basin, were largely spared" (p. 10).

about them in ways that Christina Sharpe articulates as "a method of encountering a past that is not past" (2016, p. 13). For me, that means honouring the histories and narratives of Black Scotians and Buxtonites and putting them in conversation with Caribbean Black folk and continental Black folk in the GTA to amplify understandings of the conditions of Black life in Canada.

Another aspect of the undisciplined approach I employ is honouring from where and from whom I have experienced and learned about Black life—my family. My father and mother, Salahadein Mohammed and Fatuma Abdurahman, siblings, Amer Mohammed, Abeer Mohammed, and Alaa Mohammed, and sister-in-law Nafisah Abdalla have impacted and shifted this project every step of the way, based on the encounters, conversations, and deciphering practices of Black life they live. Throughout the dissertation writing process, I found myself compelled to write the stories of my family onto the page, despite what I had been taught my entire life—what happens in the home, stays in the home. bell hooks notes the fear "[…] to be publicly private in writing because there was lurking in me the fear of punishment—the fear of saying something about loved ones that they would feel should not be said. The fear that the punishment will be loss, that I will be cut off from meaningful contacts" (1989, p. 2). The entanglement of my personal life and academic life is one that I initially struggled to keep compartmentalized, but in writing these stories that weave throughout this dissertation, I am practicing the Black feminist epistemological practice of what Sarojini Nadar names "narrative knowing" (2014, p. 18). In writing narratives throughout the dissertation, I witnessed my project,

> mov[e] from silence into speech is for the oppressed, the colonized, the exploited, and those who stand and struggle side by side a gesture of defiance that heals, that makes new life and new growth possible. It is that act of speech, of 'talking back,' that is no mere gesture of

> empty words, that is the expression of our movement from object to subject—the liberated voice. (hooks, 1989, p. 9)

This method opened ways of knowing and understanding the nuances of Black life in ways that offered what Walcott (2021) calls glimpses of freedom, not only for myself, but also for my family. I end this chapter with a conversation that developed with my parents in Buxton learning about the Liberty Bell, Black settlers in Buxton, and the parallels and questions they had in relation to their own "journey to freedom." That experience also taught me the importance of how we disrupt the violence of the archive by "making it live and work both with and against it" (Okoth, 2017, p. 12). As a result, I explore how listening allows us to perceive how artists, performers, and everyday folk utilize their aural imaginary "in order to listen [as] a form of agency, a technique of survival, an ethics of community building, a practice of self-care, a guide through racialized space, a site of racialization, and [as] a mode of decolonizing" (Stoever, 2016, p. 17) in order to provide an understanding of how sound "at particular historical junctures to produce, enable, circumscribe and challenge dominant notions of 'blackness'" (Stoever, 2016, p. 21).

Lastly, an important method that I was very intentional with in this work is what Sara Ahmed (2013) names the *politics of citation*. Ahmed describes the politics of citation "[…] as a rather successful reproductive technology, a way of reproducing the world around certain [White Male] bodies" (2013). Ahmed (2013) insists we question standard citational practices, as they neutralize what she names "techniques of selection" that allow for "[…] certain bodies [to] take up spaces by screening out the existence of others. If you are screened out (by virtue of the body you have) then you simply do not even appear or register to others […] and then of course how you appear (as being insistent) means you still tend not to be heard" (2013). As a project that is

invested in grappling with the dynamics of absented presences of Black people and Blackness in a nation that is rarely imagined having a deeper contribution to Black diasporas and Black Studies beyond being the last stops on the Underground Railroad, I take seriously the politics of citational practices. This shows up as citing everyday people in this work, family in this work, undergraduate students in this work, and peers who are junior colleagues and who have struggled alongside me in doing this work. I see this citational practice as employing what McKittrick (2021) notes as how "[…] citations are tasked to resist racial and gendered violence through the sharing of ideas […] this does not mean names do not matter; it means, instead, that naming is enveloped in the practice of sharing how we live this world and live this world differently" (p. 30). The politics of this dissertation's citational practice embraces knowing differently by listening to those who struggle in Black nowheres.

Ultimately, my project utilizes fewer traditional forms of social science methodological approaches and instead applies strategies that derive from cultural studies, literary studies, and sound studies, such as "integrat[ing] hearing, sensing, experiencing, and conceptualization as basic forms of methodology" (Sound Studies Lab, 2012). In order to conduct these sensory forms of analysis, I combine sound studies strategies that "mobilize sound […] as much more than an object: as event, experience, affect, archive" (Stoever, 2016, p. 17) alongside conventional cultural studies approaches, such as discursive analysis, in order to talk about listening, power and race as "indicators of what else happened [thus] rest[ing]on encountering, thinking about and articulat[ing] black absented presences: the unspeakable, the unwritten, the unbearable, and unutterable, the unseeable, and the invisible, the uncountable, and unindexed, outside the courage, that which cannot be seen or heard or read but is always there" (McKittrick, 2014, p. 22).

Noise, Voice, Silence: Chapter Break Down

This dissertation develops a practice of sonically thinking about and grappling with the dynamics of how Black being and Blackness exist within—and how they are treated by—the State. As a result, I thematically organize the chapters of this dissertation through key tropes that are persistent in Black Studies: Noise, Voice, and Silence. While these tropes thematically organize the dissertation, I engage in practices of thinking about and thinking with and through Black sonic practices to register "[…] the complex positionality that is blackness […]" (Campt, 2021, p. 7) and Black sociality in Canada. As such, each chapter registers the nuanced dynamics of Black nowheres to understand how Black life

> is constituted through vulnerability to the overwhelming force of anti-blackness and white supremacy, and yet not capitulating to *only* [emphasis added] be known by these same forces is a tall order. It necessitates that we refuse to be overwhelmed by historical and contemporary forces of negotiation that have shaped the lives of Black people since the advent of modernity. (Campt, 2021, p. 23)

By shifting the focus from developing fixed readings of sounds and sonic practices of Black people and Blackness in Canada to listening with what sounds and sonic practices of Black people and Blackness in Canada *do*, this dissertation shifts our relation from one of total mastery and legibility of Black Canada(s) to insisting that Black Canada(s) requires constant effort and exertion to unfold and reveal the intricacies of Black being and Blackness in Canada without limit. As such, each chapter engages in a series of approaches to sonically think beyond the limits of how the tropes of noise, voice, and silence fix reading Black being as wholly resistant to structures of domination and brutality by also working with counterintuition. Tina Campt states that "counterintuition requires us to work beyond our comfort zone, to think oppositions in

tandem, and to think them in a different grammar—not the grammar of the declarative ('this is'), but in the grammar of my favourite tense: the subjunctive tense of the future real conditional […] it is the tense of 'as if.' It is an intentional deployment of aspiration that strives toward a multitude of possibilities" (2021, p. 24).

Chapter One NOISE: Coding Blackness and Black Being in the GTA

Chapter One theorizes how racial anxiety—specifically of Blackness—in the Canadian collective unconscious reinforces the myth of Canada as a literal Black Nowhere, which, in turn, develops a feedback loop of what Katherine McKittrick names the *surprise* of Blackness in Canada. I argue that this surprise cements Blackness as problem, rendering Black people and Blackness what I call a *Black Excess* that must be managed and excised to preserve the social environment of Canada. An approach that is commonly used to manage *Black Excess* is the codification of Blackness as noise. As a result, the chapter thinks sonically with municipal by-laws to consider how Blackness is perceived at the level of sound as noise that must be silenced.

I examine a series of cases where, particularly during collective gatherings and times of celebration, Black people and Black sonic practices in public spaces across the Greater Toronto area are coded as noise and are unevenly policed to maintain "neutral" White sonic aesthetics of space.

Chapter Two VOICE: Tuning into the Emergence of Canadian Cultural Policy, The Fungibility of "Urban Music," and The "New Toronto Sound"

Chapter Two explores how the historical and ongoing elisions of Black musical production from national mythologies of Canadian musical production symptomatically reveals how Blackness is rendered placeless within Canada at the level of cultural political economy. In

a country that invests significant resources into the promotion and proliferation of CanCon (Canadian Content) to establish a distinctive 'Canadian voice,' the consistent absenting of Black musics from CanCon and its structures of supports is both theoretically and political significant. In addition, over the past decade, Toronto has been credited as experiencing a musical "renaissance period." Artists from the city and its surrounding suburbs are at the forefront of the global urban music industry. Still, hip-hop and R&B maintain a precarious position in the industry. While artists like Drake, The Weeknd, and PARTYNEXTDOOR are publicly celebrated as representatives of Canadian talent, none of these artists attained the success they currently experience with the support of state resources that are available to artists who fit the historically established image of Canadian popular music—Folk and Rock based musics. As such, this chapter examines the dialectics of fungibility of the New Toronto Sound, which indicates a local specificity of Toronto and its antiblack cultural political economy that simultaneously spectacularizes Blackness in the realm of performance by embracing artists and sonic practices of "The New Toronto Sound" as a vehicle to validate the State's claim to multiculturalism. The chapter also explores how artists negotiate their fungibility to make audible the gratuitous everyday violences of anti-Blackness in Canada on an international scale, both as a mode of critique of the State and as a practice of undercommonsing (Moten & Harney, 2013), and provide a different field of valuation upon which the artists may refuse their subjugated status through sonic innovation.

Chapter Three SILENCE: Africville Soundscapes as Chorus

Chapter Three explores the trope of silence through soundscapes and the question of how do *Black nowheres* sound care. While the trope of silence is often operationalized in Black Studies

to deal with the ways in which Black people and Blackness are often refused relationality and engagement with the brutal forces of anti-Black racism, this chapter tunes into the intimacies and dynamics of Black life and Blackness that are generative and sustain Black social life despite the racial violence that underpins its existence.

More specifically, this chapter examines soundscapes in Africville and Black Halifax, places on the edge of the Atlantic Ocean, not only to intervene in the geographic material violences that Black people have historically and continue to experience there, but also to centre how sonic practices have refused to solely register brutal violence. In the soundscapes in these places on the edge of the Atlantic Ocean, I argue, we can hear practices of care that affirm Black being, which I suggest are indicative of the love ethic that afford us textures of "how we are known to ourselves and to each other, the ways we invent to know ourselves and each other, all while surviving methods and disciplines that absent us" (Macharia, 2018, para. 31), as knowledge otherwise that Black soundscape practices make possible.

Together, the three chapters of this dissertation on Noise, Voice, and Silence aim to sharpen our practices of listening to Black being and Blackness in Canada in ways that allow us to reconsider our approach in studying Black sounds and sonic practices as valuable not only in what they are, but also what they do.

"The True North Strong and Free?": Resonances of Black Canada(s)

I began by tuning in to Black Sonic Canada(s) via a discussion of the Buxton Liberty Bell to present the ways questions of humanity, Blackness, freedom and the nation intersect and how a nuanced inquiry into this problematic through sound methodologies has the potential to make audible the issues of the classificatory systems of our current social world. I want to revisit the

discussion of Buxton to articulate a moment I experienced on a research trip that made the possibilities intelligible—what a sonic grammar could articulate about the nuances of Blackness in Canada.

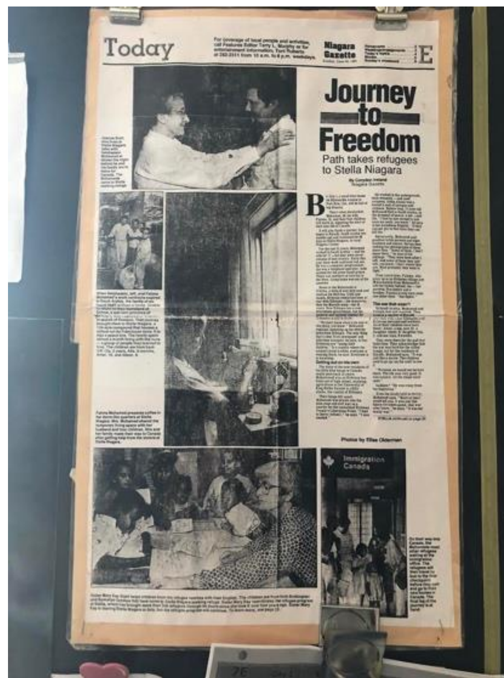
In early Winter 2018, along with my older sister, Abeer Mohammed, and parents, Fatuma Abdurahman and Salahadein Mohammed, I went to Buxton to go on a tour of the Buxton Museum and learn more about the history of the former settlement and the Liberty Bell. While on the tour, I heard my parents articulate stories that I had never heard them express but that, from the space and time of the that trip, they felt compelled to share. They spoke of their own experiences of exile from Eritrea, their involvement in activist groups, and finally their understanding of the pain, anger, and frustration of Black people in Canada.[19] Below is an image (Fig. 4) of my parents, Fatuma Abdurahman and Salahadein Mohammed, in front of the Buxton National Historic Site and Museum, posing with the replica Liberty Bell. Thirty years ago, my family landed in Fort Erie, Ontario, Canada, and were featured in a local newspaper, the *Niagara Gazette*. Our story was presented as "Journey to Freedom: Path takes refugees to Stella Niagara" (Fig. 5); Canada was constantly reinforced as "a peace site," and my family and other refugees were positioned as "on their way into Canada […] by bus to the final checkpoint before they part and go to their new homes in Canada. *The final leg of the journey is at hand*" (Ireland, 1991). This was positioned as their *journey to freedom*, as none could be found in Saudi Arabia, and they were "without home [as well as] unable to return to their homeland of Eritrea, a war-torn province of Ethiopia" (Ireland, 1991). It was during this first trip that I felt the weight/the

[19] As Christina Sharpe notes, "there are other stories to be told here; they are not mine to tell" (2016, p. 6) of her sister Anette, brother-in-law James, and their adopted and estranged son Caleb. Similarly, the details of the stories I heard between my parents and the Buxtonite are not mine to share. However, what those stories mobilize in this dissertation is "[…] trying to look at historical and social process and one's own formation as a window onto social and historical processes, as an example of them (Saunders, 20008b, p. 7)" (Sharpe, 2016, p. 8).

power/the vibration of when Black (refugee) meets Black (Buxtonite) meets Black (national narratives) and what this means for journeys to "freedom" and sounds of "liberty." The conversation that took place in Buxton amongst my parents, sister, a descendant of the settlers of Buxton and myself affirmed the failure of a fully realized freedom for Black folk in Canada. What happens when we are confronted with the violence of the fact that this "freedom" promised to each of us has yet to be realized? What happens when we *tune into our multiplicities of Blackness, listen, and resonate as a collective*? This conversation embodied for me what Rinaldo Walcott proposes when he claims: "For what is Black life if not constant, unceasing invention in the time of the long emancipation?" (2021, p. 109).

This experience in Buxton continues to resonate with me as I write this qualitative study that engages Black studies, Sound Studies and Popular Music Studies to theorize the ways in which the resonances of Blackness in Canada are multiple despite constant efforts to silence and police them via anti-Black racism at the everyday, municipal, and state levels and examine the ways in which tuning into Black sonic Canada informs us not only of the cultural politics of listening, the social production, regulation and surveillance of Blackness within the Nation State but also of the tremblings of possibility that Black cultural producers and audiences create to resist and exist despite these muted violences.

Figure 4: Image of my parents, Fatuma Abdurahman and Salahadein Mohammed in front of the replica Liberty Bell in Buxton, Ontario (2018).



Today

Niagara Gazette

E

Journey to Freedom

Path takes refugees to Stella Niagara

Figure 5: Image of Mohammed Family cover story of my family in the Niagara Gazette (1991).

CHAPTER / TRACK ONE

NOISE: Coding Blackness and Black Being in the GTA

[…] bind my black vibration to the very navel of the world. (Cesairé, 2001, p. 51)

You cannot be Black, Frantz Fanon reminds us, with impunity. (Wilderson, 2020, p. 79)

"So lit I got a noise complaint." (Just John, "Noise")

Feedback Loops; Alternatively, Anxiety, Shock & Management

Katherine McKittrick's often-quoted passage from her chapter "Nothing's Shocking" in *Demonic Grounds* states:

> [B]lackness is surprising because it should not be here, was not here before, was always here, is only momentarily here, was always over there (beyond Canada, for example). This means, then, that black people in Canada are also presumed surprises because they are 'not here' and 'here' simultaneously: they are, like blackness, unexpected, shocking, concealed in a landscape of systemic blacklessness; and, they exist in a landscape of blacklessness and have 'astonishingly' rich lives, which contradict the essential black subject. In Canada, blackness and black people are altogether deniable *and* evidence of prior codes of representation that have identified blackness/difference as irrelevant. (2006, p. 93)

McKittrick's concept of surprise facilitates the feedback loop/process of what I call *Black nowheres* because Blackness and Black being are rendered historically, socially and culturally unacceptable in Canada. The constant shock of Blackness enables a repetitious loop of "first time encounters" with Blackness that permits the denial of the schema of Blackness in Canada. This denial deems Blackness out of place, time, and order in Canada; yet, we have been and are still here. The constant shock and surprise maintain an anxiety of Blackness and Black being in the

Canadian unconscious, to which the State and public responds with the regulation of what I call *Black Excess*. I theorize Black Excess as the Black object that is too much—more than what is necessary, more than what is permitted, and most importantly, more than what is desired. As such, it must be managed.

Anxiety and Negrophobia

I propose that anxiety of Blackness in the Canadian collective unconscious catalyzes understanding Blackness as Excess in Canada, as Canada is imagined as a Black nowhere. I turn to Frantz Fanon's articulation of negrophobia in *Black Skin, White Masks* (2008) and Frank B. Wilderson III's meditations on Blackness as object and stimulus of anxiety in *Afropessimism* (2020) to frame how the Canadian collective unconscious substantiates practices of managing Black Excess. In this way, I theorize the sonic as a space where, as my colleague Evelyn Amponsah would say, "the contradictions immanent to modernity are displaced onto the Black subject, who becomes the vessel intended to hold its attendant semantic and violence excess" (Amponsah, 2022, p. 24).

In the chapter "The Black Man and Pyschopathology" in *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon (2008) makes the claim that "the black man is a phobogenic object, provoking anxiety" (p. 129). Fanon employs Hesnard's definition of phobia as "[…] a neurosis characterized by the anxious fear of an object (in the broadest sense of anything outside the individual) or, by extension of a situation" (p. 132) wherein "the phobic is a person governed by the laws of prelogical rationality and affectivity" (p. 133). Lewis R. Gordon (2005) notes, "[…] Europe sought to become ontological; it sought to become what dialecticians call 'Absolute Being.' […] thus present[ing] itself as a theodicy" (p. 1) that held complete power in defining Western civilization "[…] on

levels of description (what is) and prescription (what ought to be), of being and value […]" (Gordon, 2005, p. 1). Failure to meet the elusive standards of European "reason" and "rationality" creates the conditions of not having humanity recognized, which disproportionately affects Black people. For Fanon (2008), Wynter (1994), and Hall (2019), amongst other theorists, it's not science or biology that provides our understanding of Humanity or Blackness, but rather discursive practices and narratives that primarily produce knowledge that inform our social worlds. Hall (2019) warns us that "[…] even if they [discursive practices and narratives] appear false to us, can be *made* 'true' because people act on them believing that they are true, and so their actions have real consequences" (p. 17). For Fanon, this is evident through epidermalization "[…] literally, the inscription of race on the skin […]" (Hall, 2021, p. 342) and the historico-racial schema, which "[…] is cultural and discursive, not genetic or physiological"[20] (Hall, 2021, p. 342), thus reinforcing that race is not biologically determined but is rather "[…] woven […] out of a thousand details, anecdotes, stories" (Fanon, 2008, p. 111).

Even while recognizing that language is a construction, Fanon, and later thinkers such as Sylvia Wynter (1994) and Stuart Hall (2019), highlight how discursive practices and narratives are projected onto the epidermalization of Black people to signify and bear the weight of meaning that European rationalization ascribes to Blackness. And so, when Western thought ascribes itself, Whiteness, as "Absolute Being" and constructs Blackness as its Other—what Fanon coins the *zone of non-being* (2008)—Whiteness's anxiety of Blackness can then be understood as a reaction to the insecurity of White subjectivity, which is supported by the discursive belief that "such an object [Blackness] is endowed with all the attributes a malefic power" (Fanon, 2008, p. 133) and must be managed and kept in its place of non-being. These

[20] I think of Fanon's writing on the historico-racial schema as connected to Wynter's idea of narratively condemned status, and Stuart Hall's discussion of race as a discursive regime.

anxieties of Blackness's *malefic powers* are often affirmed in the collective unconscious through cultural practices such as children's literature, Nationalist narratives, and everyday discursive practices that reinforce the myth of Blackness's inferiority and status as object in which Humanity and Whiteness's subjectivity is the normative against which all others are defined. Fanon continues, "[…] the object, naturally, need not be there, it is enough that somewhere the object exists" (2008, p. 133), ultimately perpetuating an irrational fear of the threat of Blackness. Fanon's observation that anxieties of Blackness in the collective unconscious derive from cultural practices is important, as it makes way for understanding the global condition of anti-Blackness as a structure that maintains Wilderson's (2020) claim that "violence without sanctuary is the sine qua non of Blackness" (p. 161). Fanon names this irrational and exaggerated sense of danger that Whiteness has of Blackness negrophobia, which is underscored by the "*flesh* ([…] the bio-facticity of Blackness)" (Wilderson, 2020, p. 161).

To be clear, negrophobia is neither a necessary nor unchangeable psychic response to Blackness, nor is the bio-facticity of Blackness (as it is made violently manifest through the flesh) something that exists prior to its symbolic codification. Rather, the phobogenic response is constituted by (and in turn *recursively* constitutes) the political economy of anti-Blackness and its ideological apparatus, reinforced through its psycho-analytic infrastructure. And so, while the phobic response appears to be the result of some perhaps transhistorical psychic structure, this apparent fixity is, in the words of Hartman, an "attest[ation] to the power of the performative to produce the very subject which it appears to express" (Hartman, 1997, p. 57). Or rather, as Fanon states, it is a *sociogenically* introduced psychic infrastructure. And so, through Fanon's idea of negrophobia and Wilderson's ideas of Blackness and object and stimulus of anxiety, I term Canada's constant surprise of Blackness as *Black Excess*: a condition that understands Blackness

as a problem that spills, that needs to be managed, and excess that needs to be excised to preserve the social environment of Canada.

Black Excess

The idea of Black Excess builds on interdisciplinary studies on the regulation of Blackness, which is often determined by, and understood through, hyper-surveillance, regulation, and confinement in private spaces, workspaces, and public spaces (Browne, 2015; Shabazz, 2015; Haley, 2016). The act of looking, the White gaze, is one way of producing the judgement of excess: scholars like Frantz Fanon (2008), bell hooks (2015), and more recently Simone Browne (2015) demonstrate how such acts of looking have constructed, oppressed, and exploited Black people as the racialized "other" under Western White Supremacist–Capitalist knowledge regimes.

Black Canadian studies reveals the State's involvement in anti-Black surveillance, regulation, and management through techniques including advertisements of escaped slaves, which Sylvia Hamilton names *freedom runners*, the 1911 campaign against Black people's movement into the Prairies, the destruction of Black neighbourhoods such as Africville, racial profiling, over-policing via carding, deportations, and the gentrification of predominately Black neighbourhoods from Vancouver to Toronto to Halifax. All these phenomena comprise attempts to regulate physical Black nowheres, regarded as *Black Excess*. While each of the examples of regulation and containment listed above have been amply discussed and explain the State's investment in producing, regulating, and spatializing Blackness (Shabazz, 2015) through procedures of carceral containment and forced placelessness, each example points to the racialized production of space wherein the logics of everyday mundane life are not afforded to

Black people. This is because we live "in a society that exists under the heel of white dominance [wherein] the neutral and unmarked will always signify as white" (Blue V, 2017, p. 90). While the act of looking is one way of defining the surprise, the excess, and the disavowal of being Black in Canada, the field of Black Studies requires us to be just as concerned with nuancing other mediums that render the conditions of anti-Blackness intelligible to understand and dismantle violence enacted on Black people.

In revisiting *Black Skin, White Masks* (2008), it was interesting to note how Fanon also makes way to register how the sound of Blackness aurally provokes negrophobia due to the cultural imposition of Whiteness in the collective unconscious. In discussing the Antilliean, Fanon states,

> I am a black man—but naturally I don't know it, because I am one. At home my mother sings me, in French, French love songs where there is never a mention of black people. Whenever I am naughty or when I make too much noise, I am told to 'stop acting like a nigger'. (2008, p. 168)

In this passage, Fanon demonstrates how being Antillean/French does not only foreground Blackness in the visual. For Fanon, here, it is the voice that articulates his Blackness as repulsive, excessive and as the problem to be managed. The fear of being perceived "like a nigger" (2008, p. 168) incites anxiety, as this has the potential to disrupt the Antillieans' collective unconscious belief that "he who is immoral is black. If I behave like a man with morals, I am not black" (Fanon, 2008, p. 169). Even if the Antillean does not identify as Black in their unconscious, their Blackness—which in this case is identified through complaints of their sonic practices being *naughty* and *noisy*—renders them as object that needs to be obliterated and "[…] eviscerates the capacity for relationality […]" (Wilderson, 2019, p. 163) as "the black is needed to mark the

border of Human subjectivity" (Wilderson, 2019, p. 164). What Fanon makes legible in this passage is how Blackness as excess is not solely relegated to the body, but also how the particularities of culturally imposed myths about Blackness universalize the global schema of anti-Blackness as the condition of our society.

While it is unclear who disciplines Fanon's sonic practices in the passage above, it is precisely this abstraction that refuses to "reduc[e] antiblackness to this or that phenomenon in the world, this or that empirical example […]" (Teed, forthcoming). The remainder of this chapter works through how Black people "are policed all the time, and everywhere" (Wilderson, 2019, p. 5) as excess, and by paying attention to how this policing is operationalized through registering Blackness as noise is not an effort to "ratchet-down the scale of abstraction […] to give the world some kind of discourse, some kind of analysis in bite-size pieces that they are ready to accept, so that they can have some kind of empathy for us, some kind of political or legal adjudication" (Wilderson, 2019, p. 5). Rather, my aim is to elucidate the insidious ways in which anti-Blackness labours in Canada by examining how listening practices operate as "an aural complement to and interlocutor of the gaze" (Stoever, 2016, p. 13).

Blackness as Noise

In part, I examine the overdetermination of Blackness as excess through its coding as "Noise." Thinking with Marina Peterson's (2017) suggestion that "noise composes atmospheric sensibilities" and that "it amplifies ways of thinking and sensing the atmospheric" (p. 69), and the etymology of the term *noise*, which derives from Anglo-Norman *noice* meaning "din, brawl, disturbance, sound" (Noise, n.d.) Middle French *noyse* meaning "tumult, dispute, discontentment, unrest" (Noise, n.d), and Latin *nausea* meaning "quarrel, disturbance, bother or

hinderance" (Noise, n.d.), we can begin to interpret how sensory experiences of noise make sense of place. In English, French and Latin, the term conveys a sense of undesirability, objectionability, an interference, insufferableness, damage as well as a sense of being out of order. Tony Schwartz's sense that "Noise is an editorial word […] when you talk about noise, you are talking about sound that is bothering you" (Stoever, 2016, p. 13) read alongside Jennifer Lynn Stoever's belief that "noise and loudness frequently function as aural substitutes for and markers of race and form key contours of the sonic color line […]" (p. 13) makes way to address how sensory experiences of noise are deeply invested in and perpetuate anti-Black racial scripts. Schwartz's claim, quoted by Stoever, that "noise [is] a shifting analytic that renders certain sounds—and the bodies that produce and consume them—as Other, what Cornel West describes as 'incomprehensible and unintelligible' under white supremacist epistemologies" (Stoever, 2016, pp. 12–13) is important particularly if we consider the range of ways in which sounds are marked as "Black." Whether they be genres of music such as Jazz, R&B, or Hip Hop or tones of speech such as the use of AAVE, the socio-political intention of marking sounds as Black in whatever form often is negative—which Fanon echoes when he recalls, "Whenever I am naughty or when I make too much noise, I am told to 'stop acting like a nigger'" (2008, p. 168).

Consequentially, these "Black sounds" are read as unwanted, unnecessary, and as excess that should be dismissed, mocked or contained. While Black sounds are not always understood as negative by all non-Black members of society—and certainly Black musics as cultural forms are often prized and privileged by non-Black people for a variety of reasons—I argue that, despite this supposed positive valuation by some people, Black sound is, paradoxically, always-already registered as noise at the level of ontology. For Black sound to be positively valuated, it must be attuned through discourses of commercialization that transform the cultural reception of

the music through an imagined universality (where universality signals White emotional and financial investments).

In this sense, Black sound is fungible material—*must be* fungible material—because this fungibility allows White psychic anxieties to 'get ahead of Black fugitivity,' as King would argue. In constructing Black sound as noise, Blackness itself becomes overdetermined, which in turn *enables* the projection of meaning onto it. The point then is that the meaning of Black sound is, as Fanon would say, 'over-determined from without' as noise and is repeatedly and violently transformed into whatever aural materials serve the needs, desires, wants, compulsions, obsessions, fixations, and fetishizations of Whiteness.

The point I am making is not that all Black music or sound is framed as noise. Rather, I am intervening at the level of sonic ontology—the constitution of sound itself as it exists within a symbolic order. Unlike the ontological turn in Sound Studies, where the structure of sound is examined as kind of transhistorical, value-neutral phenomena, I am engaging how a particular *political* ontology shapes how sound is received and then recursively constituted. The point is then not to investigate sound as it exists prior to the symbolic, but rather to investigate that sound is, itself, constituted through the symbolic, and so that its ontological structure is shaped by political ontologies of race. This relationship is interrogated by Moten (2003) in his insightful meditation on Aunt Hester's scream in *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, when he asserts "Where shriek turns speech turns song… lies the trace of our descent" (p. 12). Moten marks the movement of Black sound that begins as illegible to excessive noise. In other words, Black sound is always-already noise, unbreakable from the shriek. This is possible because of the brutal matrix of anti-Black violence, which enables Black sound to be understood as noise within White cultural imaginaries. In the negative space where Black sound is registered as Black noise,

it is criminalized, received as Black Excess that must be disappeared or destroyed because within the context of brutality and aural domination, the very capacity to have sonic rationality demands the 'commodity's scream' (Moten, 2003, p. 12). Black noise makes White sound possible. The surveillance and silencing of Black noise in public spaces through noise complaints maintains White "neutral" spaces, thus the impetus for the use of noise complaints to manage and remove Black people and what is sonically registered as Blackness from public spaces.

Listening as Surveillance & Noise Complaints

I frame this chapter's engagement with noise complaints as excess through theories of surveillance that draw from Simone Browne's *Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness* (2015) and Jennifer Lynn Stoever's *The Sonic Color Line: Race and the Politics of Listening* (2016). Although Browne's work is more in line with what I referred to earlier as a rich body of work in Black Studies that focuses on the epidermal schema of race and its disciplining through acts of looking, the crux of Browne's project emphasises that, "surveillance is nothing new to black folks. It is the fact of anti-blackness" (2015, p. 10). Browne's intervention thus insists "that the history and techniques of surveillance cannot be understood from their racializing work" (Burton, 2018, para. 3). Jennifer Lynn Stoever's work couples well with Browne as she reveals how listening practices are intimately bound to surveillance practices; they "nam[e] what is and what is not bounded within the category of the human [to] fi[x] and fram[e] blackness as an object of surveillance" (Browne, 2015, p. 7), through what Stoever (2016) names *the sonic color line*.[21] Stoever explains that the sonic color line "describes the process of racializing sound—how and why certain bodies are expected to produce, desire, and live amongst particular

[21] Reference to W.E.B. DuBois' germinal work on the problem of The Color Line. In *Souls of Black Folk*, DuBois is famously known for stating that "This meaning is not without interest to you Gentle Reader, for the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color-line." (DuBois, 2007, p. 3).

sounds—and its product, the hierarchical division sounded between 'Whiteness' and 'Blackness'" (2016, p. 7). For Blackness to 'stand out,' what Judith Butler calls a *racially saturated field of visibility* must first be established and maintained, training apperceptive faculties to force Blackness to figure as outside the norm. As Butler argues, the "visual field is not neutral to the question of race; it is, itself, a racial formation, an episteme, hegemonic and forceful" (Butler, 2005, p. 17). Stoever makes the claim that the conditions that make Blackness 'stand out' audibly—what the rest of this chapter examines as *Black noise*—are,

> dominant listening practices [that] discipline us to process white male ways of sounding as default, natural, normal, and desirable […] they deem alternative ways of listening and sounding aberrant and—depending upon the historical context—as excessively sensitive, strikingly deficient, or impossibly both. (2016, p. 12)

What Stoever highlights here is that the inaudibility of Whiteness is not due to a lack of sonic markers, but rather that "Whiteness […] is notorious for representing itself as "invisible—or in this case, inaudible at least to white people" (Stoever, 2016, p. 12). What this observation allows is a tracing of how sound becomes associated with the abjection of Blackness through White listening practices. Stoever's work specifically traces these practices in the mid-nineteenth century[22] and their formation as what she names the *sonic color line*. For Stoever, the sonic color line elucidates how dominant—White—cultural practices define human subjectivity and norms through objectifying Blackness as transgressive and in need of discipline, not just by the gaze but also through acoustic measures. Stoever's discussion of sonic listening practices, such as *the listening ear* (Stoever, 2016), which she claims "drives

[22] Kristin Moriah (2018) makes note specifically of Stoever's interdisciplinary approach that studies and engages the use of the sonic colour line and listening ear in runaway slavery ads, African American texts and music to enact racial violence during the antebellum period.

the sonic color line" (p. 7), should be of concern for us to take up as White supremacist aural forms of surveillance that "as an interlocutor to the gaze"[23] (Stoever, 2016, p. 13) generate "dire consequences" (Burton, 2018) of "life or death" (Stoever, 2016) for Black people and Blackness when deemed excess by the listening ear.[24]

Sociolegal studies scholar Mariana Valverde's (2014) work on Municipal by-laws and aesthetics supports applying Stoever's work on the sonic color line to the weaponization of noise complaints as a contemporary practice of sonic surveillance against what is perceived to be Black Excess in Canada. Just as the sonic color line is marked by White socio-cultural values that are marked as neutral, Valverde discusses how "municipal jurisprudence, in the United States as well as in Canada, is still heavily imbued with this historical legacy of city-father paternalism" (Valverde, 2014, p. 49). By this, Valverde is referencing how, historically, city authorities determined what the cultural values and standards were for proper citizen behaviour that would maintain municipalities' "tranquility of life" (2014, p. 49). To ensure this standard is upheld, much of municipal law maintains "the cultural preferences of middle aged, middle-class, married folks who own and lovingly tend a piece of urban property are constantly reinscribed" (Valverde, 2014, p. 49), particularly in municipal

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[23] Stoever builds on Foucault's theory of discipline through visual surveillance by complementing it with sonic surveillance. Stoever reminds us by referencing the work of Les Bull and Michael Back, who remind us that Foucault's discussion of discipline through the gaze as operated through Jeremy Bentham's work on the Panopticon also employed auditory surveillance through a series of hidden connected tubes that allowed the wardens to listen to the imprisoned (Stoever, 2016, p. 14).

[24] The introductory chapter of Stoever's (2016) book *The Sonic Color Line: The Cultural Politics of Listening* begins with three epigraphs that make clear how Blackness, when deemed as excessive noise/as object, must be managed through violence. The first epigraph references Michael Dunn's murder of Jordan Davis at a gas station in Jacksonville, Florida, in 2012 for playing rap music that he called "thug music," "rap crap" that was "ridiculously loud" (p. 1). The second epigraph references Brian Encinia's violent interaction with Sandra Bland during a traffic stop, and here she was found hanged to death in Waller Country Jail in 2015. The last epigraph references officer Ben Fields' violent assault of a young Black girl at Spring Valley High School in 2015 when he perceived her unresponsiveness and silence as refusal to engage him. Too loud, too defensive, too silent. A variety of ways in which Black people and soundings perceived as Black are rendered as excess needing to be managed through violence.

aesthetics—visuals such as billboards, messy yards, smells of food and disposal and, of interest for this chapter, sounds—the maintenance of quietude and tranquility through regulating noise. What Valverde highlights in her work is that "urban aesthetic regulation does not only empower certain groups of persons. It also ranks activities and spaces along a kind of moral 'chain of being'" (Valverde, 2014, pp. 49–50). Having morality as the central basis of municipal laws quietly reinforces specific cultural values that are presented as neutral, which is impossible on its own but even more so as what is determined a problem or nuisance is fundamentally what Valverde calls a "relational notion" (2014, p. 57). As I will explore in the case studies that follow, "the question of complaint is intimately bound up with the question of hearing" (Ahmed, 2021, p. 4). If we rely on the logics of the sonic color line—which detail how racializing sound produces a division between Whiteness, as the subject to which societal cultural values are derived from, and Blackness, as the object upon which those values are used to define themselves against—we can begin to unpack the complexities of how Black sonic practices are defined as excess, noise and disorder that must be managed for the sake of the "tranquility of life" (Valverde, 2014, p. 49). The codification of Whiteness as entitled to space through national mythologies (Razack, 2002) as well as the law emboldens Whiteness's understanding of self as in the position of power. The anxiety of having that power be undermined by racialized Others and more specifically Blackness is the impetus for employing an array of violent practices and tactics to ensure this relation is maintained. Jacques Attali (2014) claims, "with noise is born disorder and its opposite: the world" (p. 6), and "eavesdropping, censorship, recording, and surveillance are weapons of power. The technology of listening in on, ordering, transmitting, and recording noise is at the heart of this apparatus" (Attali, 2014, p. 7). Applying Attali's reading of noise to my reading of Blackness as noise and excess that must be contained, managed and

excised supports my assertion at the beginning of this chapter, that there is an anxiety of Blackness in Canada that invigorates feedback loops of anti-Black violence to “eviscerate the capacity for relationality” (Wilderson, 2019, p. 163) with Black people and Blackness to maintain the State as *a Black nowhere*. By tuning into the sounding practices and sonic surveillance of Black people and Blackness in the TTC, Afrofest, and Caribana, I work to register the efforts of White supremacy’s efforts to maintain the brutal feedback loops of violence that mark Black people and Blackness as surprise and excess in Canada, as well as what excess, spillage and leakage of Blackness in Canada cannot be contained despite many efforts and practices that aim to do so.

Case One: TTC

Western classical music is often touted as “a pinnacle of human achievement” (Thompson, 2017). It is a sophisticated genre celebrated for its capacity to stimulate cognitive and emotional intelligence, creativity and even to alleviate listener’s stress. This framing of Western classical music is not devoid of a class or racial politics in that, in the popular imaginings of the genre, its audience is imagined within our contemporary moment in Canada and the United States as a niche, upper class, predominantly White audience with refined taste and intellectual capacity to enjoy it. In our contemporary moment, an anxiety-ridden narrative continues to circulate about the diminishing relevance of Western classical music as the result of a growing disinterest of younger generations in the genre and a preference for contemporary popular music and urban music genres. While this conversation has been challenged by numerous examples of youth engaging in classical music as performers or audiences as well as by the social and cultural value placed in Western classical music, my work explores how the

genre is utilized as a sonic weapon to deter undesirable ‘loiterers’—more specifically youth—in public and privately owned spaces across Canada, the US and the UK. Thus, the point I seek to make is not about the racial structure of valuation and imagined spectatorship for classical music. Rather, I seek to demonstrate how, precisely because of this racialized sonic system, classical music is deployed in these contexts as a mechanism to secure Whiteness as a cultural and spatial practice.

The practice of broadcasting classical music in public spaces as a deterrent is believed to have begun in 1985, when a branch manager of a 7-Eleven convenience store in British Columbia began broadcasting ‘classical’ and ‘easy listening’ music into the store’s parking lot to prevent teenagers from congregating there (Thompson, 2017). Since this initial practice, classical music has been used as a deterrent in public transportation systems across North America and the UK to reduce loitering, based on the belief that loitering leads to undesirable behaviours—especially criminal.

A community safety audit report was conducted in Toronto in 1998 after a fatal stabbing at Kennedy station, located on the East end of the city. The audit report suggested playing classical music, in addition to the addition of new lights, CCTV, and increased security patrols, to repel Kennedy station’s problem of what it called “nefarious youths” (Bateman, 2014). The Wellesley Institute’s 2019 report “Inclusive Cities and the Experiences of Racialized Youth” helps to contextualize the importance of the safety audit reports implications. First, youth in the GTA disproportionately experience spatial inequality due to lack of accessibility and affordability. As a result, the leisure spaces most accessible to them are those that are public—malls, bus terminals, train stations, parks, and similar spaces—where they can socialize and enjoy themselves.

The 1998 community audit that specifically criminalizes youth at Kennedy station is important because the youth that live in the vicinity and occupy the space are predominantly Black. While youth have insisted in many reports that they already feel socially excluded and isolated because they are often treated with suspicion or are perceived as a threat, the audit's suggestion specifically to use classical music because it is "music the listener finds repellant, suppresses dopamine production in the brain, souring their mood and making them avoid the music" (Bateman, 2014) operates as a "tool [that sonically] profile[s] as a form of violence and infringe[s] on youth's ability to move freely and without fear in public space" (Maynard, 2017, p. 88). This hostility toward youth through the use of sonic deterrents is reminiscent to what Mitchell Akiyama (2010) suggests of cities in the UK's use of *the mosquito*[25]deterrent device in terms of weaponizing "segments of the acoustic environment, thereby making certain spaces inhospitable—even uninhabitable—for young people [and how] this raises interesting questions about sound and its ability to create, shape, and, in some cases, control space" (p. 457).

Thus, Black youth, as the imagined listener whose dopamine production is 'suppressed' by the presence of classical music, are sonically prohibited from these stations in the imagined race science of these reports. Although surface conversations concerning the use of music often highlight the need to reduce loitering in these stations, and thus the music might functionally be argued as simply ensuring that Black youth (and all youth) using the transit system merely use it for its 'intended purpose,' transportation, recourse to the strange neuro-endocrinological conversation on dopamine, reveals even more disturbing implications. Attempting to intervene at the level of neurocognitive pleasure receptors, literally 'suppressing dopamine,' these policies explicitly intend to create a space that is neurocognitively hostile to Black people, something

[25] An ultrasonic antiloitering deterrent device that emits sounds at high frequency that is tuned to be registered by primarily younger people to "discourage criminal behaviour" (Akiyama, 2010, p. 456).

similar to what Zakkiyah Jackson (2020) would call the “somaticization of politics,” where for Jackson *politics* is merely another word for *war* (Jackson, 2020, p. 165). Thus, not only are possible desires to use these stations as places to ‘hang out’ recast as outside the ‘intended purposes’ of the stations themselves (and here, we might pause to ask, intended for whom), but they more insidiously lend themselves to a greater desire to spatialize dopamine suppression through the use of classical music, which lends itself to a greater desire to re-assert the core logics of Whiteness sonically to assert the color line.

Nearly 19 years later, the practice of playing classical music has expanded to other stations—all serving neighbourhoods with large Black populations, including Warden, Victoria Park, Finch, Runnymede and Dundas West stations (Bateman, 2014). Although the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) discontinued playing classical music as a deterrent project in 2018 (Reynolds, 2018), it seems as if it were more so related to the cost of using the classical music—$15,000 a year (Reynolds, 2018)—and being unsure if it was the classical music or additional security officers that were deterring youth from loitering.

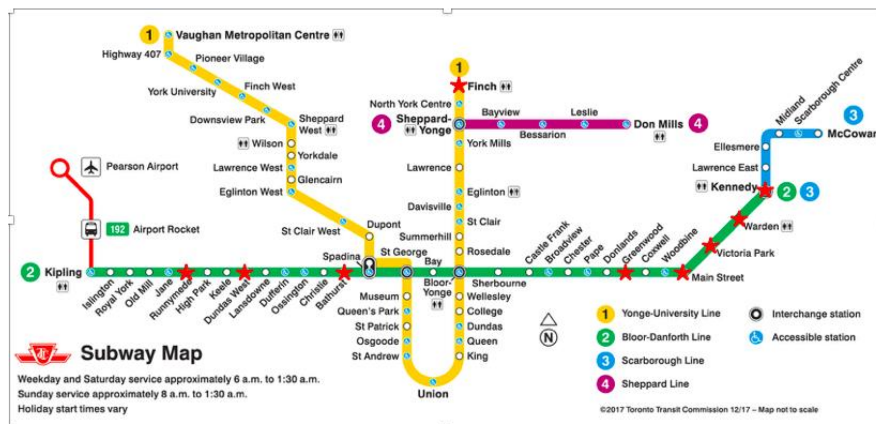

Figure 4: Map of Toronto TTC with Stations that played Classical Music Marked (2018).

However, mapping these stations in these communities in Toronto and Scarborough reaffirms how the city enacts violence against Black youth by assuming that they are a disruption

to the perceived safety and function of the physical space that connects people to other parts of the city, rather than considering them as citizens of the city who, too, should be considered patrons of the space. However, if, as Frank Wilderson has argued, “the imaginary of civil society is parasitic on the Middle Passage [which is to say Blackness]” (Wilderson, 2019, p. 11), then the foreclosure of Black youth from the category of citizen of the city is more understandable. What is at stake in the proliferation of this sonic geography is the maintenance of “civil society’s cartographic integrity” (Wilderson, 2010, p. 259), which is only maintained through these violent dispossessions and containments of Blackness. The point then is not that the presence of this music unilaterally prevents Black youth from using transit, but that in the implementation of these sonic tools, Black youth are doubly dispossessed: first, at the theoretical level of political membership within civil society, given that their own imagined and desired uses of the space are already ejected from the regulation of these spaces; and, second, at the level of individual psychic movement through the spaces where there is both an imagined process of ‘dopamine suppression’ (the validity of which is certainly questionable) in their travels as well as a continuous reminder through the deployment of the music that these youth are out-of-place, surveilled, and regarded with suspicion.

These kinds of mechanisms of containment and control have significant impacts on the mobility of Black youth within the city, which, in turn, contributes to significant political-economic and cultural-affective effects. As reported by the Wellesley Institute study, deterring Black youth from being in the space of transit systems, which are necessary for them to connect to better resources at the core of the city, perpetuates Black youth’s inability to connect to their city. The disproportionate exclusion and Black nowhere that racialized youth continue to face is troubling, especially because in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), 48.8% of the population

identifies as visible minority, and because in the category of youth, the numbers are much higher (77.8% in Brampton, 62.6% in Mississauga and 61.2% in Toronto) (Aery, 2019). The racializing and criminalizing of youth from young ages when they are simply just trying to be reinforces that Black youth have no place in the city.

Case Two: Afrofest

The second case study of Black Excess I explore concerns the 2015 mistreatment of Afrofest in Toronto. Afrofest, one of the largest annual gatherings of African communities in North America, held in Toronto since 1989, is a free annual music festival that celebrates the richness and diversity of African cultures by bringing together many African communities in Canada. The festival took place in Queen's Park, in the core of the city, from 1990 until 2011, when it was moved to Woodbine Park, as the city did not provide the festival with a permit to continue at Queen's Park, claiming the festival outgrew the space. While it may be true that Afrofest was growing beyond the capacity of Queen's Park, rather than working with organizers to ensure a downtown venue was possible, the size was used as a reason to push the festival outside of the downtown core.[26] I read the movement of the festival as both a symbolic excision of Blackness from Toronto's downtown core and a foreclosure of Black people from its civic community. The move to Woodbine Park symbolically highlights almost absurdly the dispossession from the political epicentre of Ontario provincial politics. The move itself was made possible by White supremacist values that all too quickly assume Black presence as excess. Rather than working with the festival to maintain a downtown geography safely, the city instead

[26] Contrast this treatment with, for example, the collaboration the City of Toronto engages in with Pride Toronto to ensure that Canada's largest Pride celebration can maintain itself within the downtown core. This differential treatment speaks profoundly to the racial-sexual structure of what Jasbir Puar terms *homonationalism*.

unilaterally moved Afrofest, eradicating its geographic placeness. This is the first instance of *a Black nowhere* with respect to Afrofest.

Toronto, like many other major cities, continues to excise Black, racialized and working-class communities from the core to the outskirts in the name of gentrification, urban development, and White supremacist racial enclosure. Forced migrations throughout cities are continuous with logics of racial hygiene and segregationist urban planning that ensures the coherence and stability of white civic society through the forced displacement and dispossession of Black people, a violently absented presence Saidiya Hartman has referred to as "the open-air prison" (Hartman, 2019, p. 227). While Afrofest was historically located in downtown Toronto—at the heart of its provincial legislature—the subsequent move demonstrates the lack of municipal cultural investment in the gathering, given that no options were provided, such as street closures, to expand the downtown scope of the festival.

Figure 5: Map of Afrofest's Original Location and its Relocation (2018).

Moving this festival, which has a predominantly Black audience, from an accessible location to one that is not only difficult to reach on public transportation but is also located in a residential community that is not racially diverse, put the festival in a precarious position. While

the logic that Woodbine Park is home to other busy events such as Canada Day celebrations and the Beaches Jazz Festival, in 2016 the city ordered Afrofest to cut the festival's schedule from two days to one, claiming that "permissible sound levels and permitted time frames were exceeded in previous festivals" (Toh, 2016, para.2). I read this action from the city to reduce Afrofest from two days to one as unsettling, as it is indicative of a racist script.

Peter Toh, president of Music Africa, denied the city's claim and pointed out that "The sound company [Afrofest] employs does most of the events at Woodbine Park, including Canada Day and Beaches Jazz Festival concerts, and use the same sound equipment, crew and sound levels. The volume at Afrofest is no different than at those events but in our case, they are being called violations" (Toh, 2016). The city's first move of Afrofest from Queen's Park to Woodbine Park already rendered Black being as excess—Blackness was too much for the downtown core. Rather than working to accommodate the growing size of the festival, the city used the festival's popularity and success as justification to push it to the margins. Framing the festival as having "outgrown the space," citing damage to the areas of grass as trampled too much and damage to oak trees,[27] already expresses *a Black nowhere*. However, when, in 2015, despite using the same sound company, engineers, and so on, the festival was rendered as excess through the "noise" it makes—the noise being continental African musics played in the Beaches, a predominantly White neighbourhood, which is itself in a period of intensive gentrification—underscores the issue. In an interview, Festival organizer Peter Toh reports that in 2015, bylaw officers at the festival said they had received noise complaints at 11:30am,[28] before the festival even began,

[27] And here it is worth noting that the emphasis is on the protection 'property' and not people attending.
[28] Which *News Staff* (2016) reports the city received only 8 complaints about Afrofest and had received a noise exemption from the city for the 2015 festival.

calling attention again to how it is not about Black music, or noise, but about Black Excess and the space as *a Black nowhere* needing to be maintained as such.

"Black Lives they Matter HERE!": **BLMTO Tent City**

On March 21, 2016, Black Lives Matter Toronto activists occupied what Yusra Khogali has called "the belly of the beast," Toronto Police headquarters, with a "combination of art and protest" (Khogali, 2022) through their two-week action BLMTO Tent City. BLMTO Tent City was in part a response to the decision by the Ontario Special Investigations Unit (SIU)[29] to not charge the officer who shot and killed Andrew Loku, a refugee from South Sudan who suffered from PTSD, on July 5, 2015, of which the SIU "called the shooting 'legally justified'" (Reddekopp, 2017). As part of the action of the Tent City, BLMTO released a list of demands addressed to Mayor John Tory, former Toronto Police Chief Mark Saunders, the Province of Ontario, and its SIU (Black Lives Matter Toronto, 2016), including,

- The immediate release of the name(s) of the officer(s) who killed Andrew Loku & Jermaine Carby.
- Charges to be laid against the officers who killed Mr. Loku.
- The immediate and public release of any video footage from the apartment complex where Andrew Loku was murdered.
- Apology to the family of Andrew Loku and monetary compensation.
- A review of the Special Investigations Unit, with adequate consultation from families victimized by police violence.

[29] In Ontario, the Special Investigations Unit (SIU) is a civilian law enforcement agency with jurisdiction over municipal, regional, and provincial officers and was created in 1990 "with a mission to nurture public confidence in policing by ensuring that the conduct of police officers" (SIU, 2022). The SIU is specifically called in to investigate the serious injury, sexual assault, or death of a civilian with police. BLMTO were very publicly critical of the SIU investigation process as it "happens largely I secret with subject officers' names not made public" (CBC News, 2016) of which BLMTO made public that many of the folks who sit on the SIU are former police officers making what is supposed to be an impartial agency incredibly biased in its decision-making processes.

- A reversal to all city-mandated changes imposed on Afrofest, including its restoration to a 2-day festival. (Black Lives Matter Toronto, 2016)

In a guest lecture for my course, Black Toronto Sounds, former co-founder and organizer of BLMTO Yusra Khogali elucidated how in organizing BLM-TO Tent City it was incredibly important that the then-grassroots organization make clear the cross-lateral violence's Black people and Black communities face in the city. Khogali explained how July 5, 2015, was the second day of Afrofest, which Andrew Loku had attended. When Loku returned home, he knocked on his neighbour's door to ask them to be less noisy,[30] as the sounds he heard disturbed his ability to rest, which, in turn, triggered his ongoing PTSD related to the torture and abuse he experienced in Sudan. The neighbour called the police on Loku, and within 20 seconds of the police's arrival, Constable Andrew Doyle shot twice and killed Andrew Loku. *20 seconds*. Doyle states in his testimony that he feared for his life when Loku, hammer raised, started walking towards him and his partner in a hallway (Gillis, 2017). Doyle makes clear in his statement, that to him, Andrew Loku was "a phobogenic object (something that is induced or caused by fear; an embodied stimulus to anxiety" (Wilderson, 2019, p. 162).

The first witness to testify in the Inquisition on Loku's murder was his mental health support from the organization Across Boundaries, who noted Loku's struggle with the excessive noise from his neighbours, and other neighbours even noted at times they saw Loku sleeping in the laundry room due to being disturbed by his upstairs neighbour's noise (Reddekopp, 2017). In "Rest Notes: On Black Sleep Aesthetics*," Josie Rosalind Hodson (2021) notes the racial sleep gap, wherein,

> Blacks have the highest risk and prevalence of poor sleep patterns across various dimensions of sleep health than any other racial/ethnic group—meaning Black people spend shorter periods asleep, spend less time in deep sleep, have a harder time staying asleep and report more incidents of insomnia. When we sleep, easing our bodies and minds into a relaxed state of semiconsciousness, we move through REM and slow-wave cycles in which our brains consolidate memories from waking life and regenerative physiological functions kick in. Poor sleep health, or the chronic disruption of these restorative capacities, is associated with myriad physiological and psychic conditions […] Taken together, poor sleep exposes Black people to what Saidiya Hartman has called 'the vulnerability to premature death' that follows transatlantic chattel slavery and the subsequent constraints on fully lived Black life. (p. 9)

The noise from the apartment above constantly disturbed Loku's ability to rest. Robin Hicks, Loku's neighbour and witness to the shooting, recalls how Loku would complain about the noise from the apartment above, and even in helping deescalate Loku that evening, he stated, "Please, please. What did I do wrong to you people? I need sleep" (Gallant, 2016). The inability of Loku's upstairs neighbours and of Constable Doyle to register Loku as a relational human being is clear in the inability to hear his desire for the noise to be silenced for him to sleep. Despite all of Andrew Loku's efforts to survive, "the constrictions of the present regime of anti-Blackness, White supremacy, and capitalism" (Hodson, 2021, p. 17) for which he deeply desired sleep to maintain his efforts against brutal domination, as a Black refugee man with mental health issues, he was "structurally barred from the dynamic of reciprocity" (Wilderson, 2019, p. 180). Instead, the only time Loku is legible is when he is affirmed as Black Excess, the stimulus to negrophobic anxiety that must be managed. *20 seconds, 2 shots, silence.*

Loku was rendered a nonhuman object, for which being read as in crisis and in need of support was impossible, and he was therefore read as threat needing to be silenced. *20 seconds, 2 shots, silenced.* Afrofest was illegible as an event for community and joy, as it was not for the community who lives in The Beaches. *11:30am, noise complaints, must silence.* I read BLM-TO's demands and actions in the Tent City as a refusal to accept the Canadian modus operandi that "silence is understood as social harmony [that] any person or group or form of sound that breaks this social contract […] is categorized as noise or noisey" (Jimenez, 2017, para. 10) and therefore, must be dealt with. BLM-TO's Tent City transformed the space in front of the Toronto Police Headquarters into a *Black Now Here* that embraced "creat[ing] a tension that paralleled the social pressures wrought by a Canadian silence that takes the form of anti-black racism" (Jimenez, 2017, para.13). Over the course of fourteen days, BLM-TO and their supporters engaged in what Janaya Khan (2016) described, while speaking to the protestors after confronting and securing a meeting with Premier Kathleen Wynne, as follows:

> [JK] We have a victory today. *[Crowd] whooo*. [JK] but the victory is not in Premier Wynne. We created an entire community that was anti-police. *[Crowd] Yes!* [JK] We created an entire community that was not punitive to each other, that knew de-escalation, and if we didn't know it we learn it in the time *[Crowd] Yes!* [JK] We had healing justice *[Crowd] Yes!* [JK] Every hour upon the hour there was an Indigenous presence that held the space down *[Crowd] yes!* [JK] The one thing we have over the state, is our numbers, is each other. If I had to bet on that, or this, it's this every time [Crowd] Black Lives Matter! Black Lives Matter! Black Lives Matter! Black Lives Matter! (Toledano, "BLMTO Meets Wynne," 2016)

Over the course of the two-week BLM-TO Tent City occupation of police headquarters, protestors were able to "embody the world we wanted in tent city to get food, medical care,

political education" (Khogali, 2022). The actions and sounds the protestors engaged in over those two weeks that were rendered as Black excess and as noise challenged White supremacist logics of space and brutal enforcement of the law on Black people and Blackness in Toronto. While in the contemporary moment, key organizers have stepped down from BLM-TO and its current iteration is questioned for its neoliberal logics, what its early actions made possible for organizing against anti-Black racism in the 2010s carried the legacy of the importance of collective organizing in the city. Following the actions and sonic practices of noisy protests, chants and taking up of public space to ensure Black communities were heard, Afrofest was restored to a 2-day festival and an inquest of the murder of Andrew Loku was undertaken. Yet the issue remains that *now here* Blackness is regulated, surveilled, and treated as noise that needs to be silenced to produce *Black nowheres*.

Figure 6: #BLMTO Tent City Image from nowtoronto.com by Now Staff (2016).

Case Three: Caribana & Carnival Kingdom

In *Black Life: Post BLM and the Struggle for Freedom*, Rinaldo Walcott and Idil Abdillahi (2019) refer to Caribana as a gift[31] that "require[s] that we think in sustained ways about Black events that refashion this nation" (p. 57). Jenny Burman's (2001) work supports this framing of Caribana as gift through her findings that,

> One of the main sources of pleasure expressed repeatedly in the literature, results from the ephemeral transformation of Toronto into something quite un-Toronto. Caribana changes the sound, taste, color, look, and feel of Toronto the Good. Of course, this constructs the city during the other 50 weeks of the year as grey, cold, 'staid and prism' (Foster, 1995, p. 16), 'dark like hell' (Philip, 1998, p. 132), and lacking in multisensory pleasures. (Burman, 2001, p. 280)

Burman's (2001) findings note the wonder that Black people and Blackness contribute, which constitute the space of the city with life—the *sounds, tastes* and *feel* make this place pleasurable and livable in ways that are instrumental to its meaning despite Blackness not being perceived as such through the way it is perceived as a problem that needs to be surveilled and managed. While the converse may be argued through the logic that through its longstanding presence, Caribana festival allows Blackness to arrive on the street in full socio-spatial presence wherein Black peoples' "presence purposefully takes up space, takes up public space, takes up public space *en masse* with Black bodies, takes up public space *en masse* with Black bodies adorned in bright, hot colours, moving, grooving, bumping, grinding, whining and gyrating to rhythms and syncopated beats of soca and calypso" (Anderson, 2021, p. 13), we must consider the "tug-of-war" (Trotman, 2005, p. 190) between Caribana and city authorities regarding the multiple changes in the festival's routes and increased policing. David Trotman (2005) notes that

[31] Walcott and Abdillahi (2019) name three events as gifts to the State by Black people, including the Sir George Williams Affair, Africville, and, what I take up in this section, Caribana.

historically in Caribbean contexts, “Carnival is not a spectator sport” (2005, p. 190). Traditionally, Caribbean Carnival

> […] participants and participant-observers assume the right to total control of the city space in which moving bands of costumed masqueraders interact with family and friends along the route. Although they may not be costumed, they nevertheless feel it is their right to join the band and chip along to the music as they acknowledge friends and family and renew acquaintances while performing rituals of bonding. (2005, p. 190)

There is a richly documented history of city authorities’ contentions with Caribana, which have been expressed as concerns of order and containment. These concerns have led to route changes, increased policing, and crowd control measures that the city and organizers have agreed to despite public critiques that these efforts are counterintuitive to the socio-political power and intention of Caribana. As a form of Carnival, Caribana is an extension of a legacy of Caribbean festivals that are meant to transform public spaces to allow participants to free up themselves. Caribana is the primary example of the generative aspects *Black nowheres* in Canada, as the festival draws in Black people from around the world to celebrate Blackness *now here* “[…] in all its melanated glory when Black expressive culture arrives hearty and whole on the streets of Toronto, displayed in flexile dance choreography, stunningly colourful sartorial designs, mobile architectural achievements, and titillating soundscape engineering” (Anderson, 2021, p. 13). As a result, “the policing of Caribana, the biggest annual gathering of black people on the streets of Toronto, has therefore become an increasingly significant issue” (Jackson, 1992, p. 132) that continues to extend and show itself in inventive ways as the festival continues to prove itself as one of the most public-facing and financially positive Black gifts the nation has received from its Black communities.

While Caribana is the centerpiece attraction for visitors during the first weekend of August, another factor that brings visitors are the fêtes that occur the entire long weekend. Soca fêtes are parties that often occur in public, outdoors, wherein soca music is performed, danced to and enjoyed (Persadie, 2019). Ryan Persadie (2019) reads soca fêtes as sites that "dra[w] upon Carnival histories and legacies of sonic and embodied archives of non-conformity toward (neo)colonial powers [that are] generative of distinct sites of diasporic Caribbean cathartic release or transgressive modalities of 'free up' that unsettle and critique regimes of racial, classed, sexual, and gender normativity upheld by Canadian and Caribbean nations" (p. 53). Meanwhile, Philip (2017) writes,

> Sweat and jostle and jostle and push jostle and jostle push and jostle and shove and move to the pulse riddim pan riddim and beat the beat sweat like a ram goat sweat for so and push and shove and jostle and shove and move hip sway hip wine in your wine and look how we enjoying we self—move hip sway hip slap hip big hip fat hip flat bottom big bottom sweet bottom wine your- waist bottom. Look we nuh, look how we enjoying we self right here in Canada self and Toronto sweet sweet. (pp. 216–217)

NourbeSe Philip (2017) affectively illustrates in the passage above that Caribana and fêtes are "nothing if not an energetic emergence" (Henriques & Ferrera, 2016, p. 134) wherein Black people's "presence purposefully takes up space, takes up public space, takes up public space *en masse* with Black bodies, takes up public space *en masse* with Black bodies adorned in bright, hot colours, moving, grooving, bumping, grinding, whining and gyrating to rhythms and syncopated beats of soca and calypso" (Anderson, 2021, p. 13), what Henriques and Ferrera name the *sounding* of Carnival (2016). Henriques and Ferreras' (2016) idea of sounding Carnival,

> unsettle[s] the assumption that 'sound' is a thing in itself. Sounding is the corporeal and sociocultural as well as the auditory dynamics of sound. It refers to the activities carried out by, through and for, the making of a sound. Sounding is a kinetic activity, requiring agency, making and becoming; In short, a social and cultural practices. (Henriques & Ferrera, 2016, p. 134)

The State's concerns, practices of surveillance, and attempts to contain the excess of Blackness that Caribana draws to the streets of the city is mirrored by practices of citizens through the use of noise complaints that register Caribana and its affiliated events sounding practices as noise and excess that must be dealt with. As such, I turn to discuss how White anxieties of Black excess are made legible through a reading of the noise complaints used to shut down Carnival Kingdom.

Carnival Kingdom

Perseverance: Persistence in doing something despite difficulty or delay in achieving success.[32] This line prefaced the Summer of Sounds Festival Incorporated—better known as SOS FEST Inc.—advertising that promoted the return of their much-anticipated Caribana weekend events Carnival Kingdom and Big People Fete. The year before, in August 2018, both events had been cancelled by the City of Vaughan's chief licensing officer, who revoked SOS Fest Inc.'s permit two hours before Carnival Kingdom was to begin and the day before Big People Fete, citing residential complaints of excessive noise.

In 2018, SOS Fest Inc., which had run its events for seven years, planned on hosting its Caribana events, Re-jouvernate, Carnival Kingdom, and Big People Fete, in the city of Vaughan, a suburb located north of Toronto, at the Improve Canada outdoor entertainment complex, an

[32] SOSFestTO [@sosfestto] May 21, 2019.

industrial area on Keele Street located beside the 407 highway, because the venue could accommodate a larger audience. The first event, Re-Jouvernate, was held Friday August 3, 2018; however, the permits for Carnival Kingdom (Saturday) and Big People Fete (Sunday) were cancelled two hours before the start of Carnival Kingdom on Saturday August 4 and the day before Big People Fete, saying that the festival did not comply with the terms of the permit. Specifically, the city insisted that SOS Fest Inc. had violated the permit by being over capacity and producing excessive noise the night of the first event.[33] SOS Fest Inc. insisted that the reason the city of Vaughan used to cancel the permit was unfounded. In early October 2019, SOS Fest Inc. filed a lawsuit against the city of Vaughan, specifically naming Mayor Maurizio Bevilacqua and Ward 4 Councillor Sandra Yeung-Racco[34] for cancelling the fetes, citing "an abuse of power" (Lancaster, 2019). Through a Freedom of Information request, SOS Fest Inc. obtained emails exchanged between Councillor Yeung-Racco and city staff in which Yeung-Racco insisted the events be shut down "to ensure that this DOES NOT happen tonight or ever!!!" (Lancaster, 2019). Although information earlier released on behalf of the city reported that around 80 noise complaints had come in the night of the first event, the lawsuit contended, and in fact eventually accurately revealed, that Yeung-Racco had received only *three* noise complaints, all from constituents in the Dufferin Street and Rutherford Road area.

Not only is the reported area of complaints 7-9 kilometres away from the site of the fete, but there are two highways, Highway 407 and Highway 7, that cut across the industrial area to one residential between the site of the fete and the complainants. Further, Gus Michaels, Director

[33] Rayment, Banares and Floody (2018), *Toronto Star*.
[34] Although Sandra Yeung-Racco is East Asian, I will be reading her as representative of white civil society, a 'junior partner' as Wilderson would call her. Thus, her willful anti-Blackness not only marks a kind of model-minority racecraft, where power is strategically gained by select East Asian people through what Rey Chow calls ascendancy of whiteness (Chow, 2002), but rather further the consolidation of what Jared Sexton calls the Black/non-Black binary.

of Bylaw and Compliance Licensing and Permit Services for the city of Vaughan, raised doubts about the fete being the location from which the noise came. Michaels wrote another city staff member that he "suspect[s] that's not from the [fete], that's from the laugh party that happened apparently in the north end of Ward 3" (Lancaster, 2019).

There is much to unpack from these facts and the short statements that have been made public in the lawsuit that validates the concept of Black Excess and a sonic respectability politic in the suburbs. Regina Bradley (2014), in referencing the work of Macek (2006), makes the connection between the suburbs and "sonic blackness as the sound that [is] perceived as black that enter spaces where physical blackness could be readily refused" (2014). Suburbs rely on the aspirational vision of "perfect peace," one possible by acceding to "a physically and sonically constructed white ambivalence to racial and class anxieties associated with cities" (Bradley, 2014).

Thinking with the concept of a sonic respectability of the suburbs, Yeung-Racco's response to receiving three noise complaints and automatically connecting them to the fete can be read as an attempt to protect her suburb from spatial problems she connects to the "noise" of the fete. Yeung-Racco's insistence that "this DOES NOT happen tonight or ever!!!" Despite internal communications from city staff expressing concern about shutting down the event on short notice as well as a lack of concern on the part of a by-law officer and a regional police officer who were on duty at the previous night's event—the bylaw officer even asked if the event was still in progress because they did not hear much noise—frames the sounds of the fete as an aural pollutant that must be controlled, suppressed and exterminated, a kind of aural racial hygiene. SOS Fest Inc. emphasized that, on their part, everything was done to ensure the

conditions of the permit were followed, particularly the hiring of a sound engineer specifically to ensure the decibels of the music followed the conditions of the permit.

The lack of concern with other events happening closer in range and other noise in the city (e.g., fireworks) while insisting fetes never happen again, not now or ever, clearly indicates an attitude that perceives, or hears, Black sounds affiliated with freedom and joy as sounds that are illegible and excess in the space of the suburb, *a Black nowhere*. The gratuity of the demand—not now *or ever*—reveals how, for Yeung-Racco, the civic stability of her ward could only be secured through a foreclosure of Black cultural celebration *in perpetuity*. The gratuity of this demand, its claim to ongoing and never-ending eviction of Black joy from the legible stability of Ward 4, highlights the ontological claim I made at the beginning of this chapter, that Blackness is always-already figured as 'noise' within White psychic imaginaries.

"So Lit I Got a Noise Complaint": Conclusion (Of Sorts)

I'd like to close with a brief engagement with Torontonian hip-hop artist Just John's song NOISE from the ep *Black Beret,* which was released in late 2017. Produced by Fevra, Just John describes their song "Noise" as, "a bouncy party anthem and middle finger flipped at all the killjoys" (Sussman, 2017). The 'killjoys' Just John is referring to include the upstairs tenant of the art gallery he co-owned, Blank Canvas, as well as city officials who he cites as perpetrators of a struggling cultural industry infrastructure. The song "Noise" itself comprises of telling the story of the cultural industry crisis John mentions, specifically noting the use of "zoning laws, noise regulations and hikes in rent [that] promote condo development in DIY areas, muffling many other voices and creating a very homogenized culture" (Whitmer, 2017). Just John's commentary invokes what Brandi Thompson Summers names "Black Aesthetic Emplacement"

(2019) which she defines as “a mode of representing blackness in urban capitalist simulacra, which exposes how blackness accrues a value that is not necessarily extended to Black bodies” (p. 3). In Toronto, we can think of the employment of Black Aesthetic Emplacement as connected to the excising of Black people from Eglington West (Little Jamaica), Regent Park, Bathurst, and Bloor (also known as Blackhurst), the TTC, Afrofest, Caribana and what Just John explains as what happens with Blank Canvas Gallery. In each of these instances, I read their fraught relation with authorities as engaging in the practices Summers lays out. The festivals, cultural spaces, and music of Black people from the city are used as commodity’s that authenticate the State’s multicultural narrative of self while simultaneously divesting in the Black people and communities who shape “*the sound, taste, colour and feel*” (Burman, 2001, p. 280) of Toronto. The violence enacted against Black people and Blackness is hidden in passive acts such as noise complaints, which operate under the guise of maintaining law and order and which Frank Wilderson reminds us is not available to Black people or Blackness as phobic objects. Black people and Blackness “[…] experienc[e] civil society *not* as a system of laws, codes, and mores that dispense violence against those who transgress its laws and codes of behavior [for Black people] civil society is a juggernaut of murderous vengeance void of contingency, trial, or debate […] civil society has *always* been a juggernaut of violence” (Wilderson, 2019, pp. 160–161) that disarticulates the aesthetics of Black life from its politics.

Just John’s song “Noise” repeats the phrase, “so lit I got a noise complaint” (Samuels, 2017, track 4) throughout the chorus, “mak[ing] a very musical record and still call it ‘Noise’! as a subtle middle finger to the fun wreckers that try to eradicate culture by using policies to stop cultural events from happening” (Sussman, 2017) and sonically translating the artist’s frustrations into the piece by implementing a faster Beats Per Minute in the instrumental of the

song. Just John's artistic response *now here* in the song lyrically, instrumentally, and visually in the video allows you to *know here* differently. What emerges is an assertion of Black being outside of the logics of anti-Black racism that produces generative spaces for Black Joy, this is the fugitive function Black nowheres. As Katherine McKittrick maintains,

> Black musical aesthetics not only emerge within and against long-standing antiblack practices, they are heard and listened to across and in excess of the positivist workings of antiblack logics […] black music, what we hold on to and what we hear, moves between and across and outside ungraspable waveforms, the anticolonial politics underpinning black cultural production, and the racial economy of white supremacy that denies black personhood. (McKittrick, 2016, p. 80)

Black musical practices, Black cultural production, Black celebrations in public spaces, Black life itself, articulates the importance of alternative ways of being in a world where Blackness is coded as noise—that which is unwanted, loud, a disturbance. In applying a sonic sensibility, this chapter reveals how White anxieties render Blackness as excess and noise that needs to be silenced to maintain Canada as a literal Black nowhere through weaponizing presumed "neutrality" of the law. However, through listening and critically engaging Black sonic practices of Black people now here, this chapter also reveals how creative expression—whether it be music, protest chants, sounding embodied in dancing—allows us to *know* Black life *here,* in Canada, beyond the negation that White supremacy attempts to frame and manage Black people and Blackness as, and instead *know* these practices as forms of what Simone Browne calls *dark*

sousveillance (2015).[35] The excess, spillage and leaking of Blackness in Canada cannot be contained, despite many efforts and practices that aim to do so.

[35] Simone Browne (2005) suggests dark sousveillance "as an imaginative place from which to mobilize a critique of racializing surveillance, a critique that takes form in antisurveillance, countersurveillance, and other freedom practices […] that are oppositional and that are hopeful for another way of being" (p. 21).

CHAPTER / TRACK TWO

VOICE: Tuning into the Emergence of Canadian Cultural Policy, The Fungibility of "Urban Music," and The *"New Toronto Sound"*

> **Playlist as Interlude:** *Interlude n. An intervening episode, period, space; An instrumental passage or a piece of music rendered between the parts of a song, church service, drama.* (Interlude, n.d.)

In 2013, I attended a music festival in Montreal with an eclectic line up and multi-racial audience. A well-known rapper who was crossing over to mainstream performed on one of the main stages. As he rhymed his popular song that deals with the perils of alcoholism and peer pressure on stage, there was dissonance in the audience; many in attendance had started to drink heavily. This moment has stuck with me, as it made me question: How do audiences listen? What are the ethics of listening? McKittrick (2016) notes that in Dionne Brand's essay "Jazz," Brand writes, "black music leaves you open and up in the air and that this is the space some of us need, an opening to another life tangled up in this one but opening" (p. 79). Thinking about my festival experience, Brand's comment, and this chapter titled "VOICE: Tuning into the Emergence of Canadian Cultural Policy, The Fungibility of 'Urban Music', and The '*New Toronto Sound*'," I am compelled to consider to how Black voices, sounds and sonic practices attune us to different dynamics of Black sociality, all of which insist that we transform how we understand Black being in the metaphysics of the World (Palmer, 2020)—transformations that are made possible depending on how we listen. I insert a playlist as an interlude between the NOISE and VOICE chapters to interrupt reading as the primary mode of this VOICE, because, as Tiffany Lethabo King notes, "Black thought and theory break with normative modes of narrativity and intelligibility" (2019, p. 22). The list centres the voices and sonic practices of Black Canadian cultural producers of Hip-hop and R&B—otherwise called "Urban"—from the

1980s to the contemporary moment as theoreticians whose sonic practices illuminate the fungibility of Canadian cultural industries. All of these songs may not articulate "The New Toronto Sound" that I explore in this chapter; however, they enunciate longstanding practices of Black Toronto sonic practices that attune us to the dynamics of everyday Black being in Canadian life—they allow us to *know* Black life *here* beyond being an assumed *Black nowhere*. These songs (a sample of many) inform contemporary Black Toronto sonic practices and make The New Toronto sound possible. Listen to:[36]

Michie Mee, "Jamaican Funk"*
Dream Warriors, "My Definition"
Maestro Fresh Wes, "Stick to Your Vision"
Ghetto Concept, "E-Z on the Motion"
Rascalz, "Northern Touch"
Kardinal Offishall, "Ol' Time Killin"
Choclair, "Let's Ride"
Glen Lewis, "Back for More"
Jelleestone, "Money Pt. 1"
Tamia, "Imagination"
Dru, "Stay with Me"
Jully Black, "Seven Day Fool"
Melanie Fiona "4AM"
K-os, "Superstarr, Pt. Zero"
K'naan, "The Dusty Foot Philosopher"
Shad, "Rose Garden"
Drake, "Practice"
Drake, "Marvin's Room"
Shi Wisdom, "LoveSpeak"
Deborah Cox, "Nobody's Supposed to be Here"
Ian Kamau, "Love it Here"*
Ian Kamau, "Sleeping Giant"
The Weeknd, "Wicked Games"
The Weeknd, "The Hills"
PARTYNEXTDOOR, "Come and See Me"
PARTYNEXTDOOR, "Break from Toronto"
Rochelle Jordan, "Follow Me"
Clairmont the Second, "Gheeze"
Daniel Caesar, "We Find Love/Blessed"
Amaal Nuux, "Honey"*
DVSN, "Nuh Time/Tek Time"
Haviah Mighty, "Blame"
Layla Hendryx, "B.T.W."
SAFE, "Feel"
Smoke Dawg ft. Mo G, "Still"
'Mustafa, "Stay Alive"

[36] The playlist is hyperlinked and contains the songs named above that are available on Spotify. Songs with an asterisks are not available on streaming platforms, so I have also included a YouTube playlist here with all of the songs.

Situating the New Toronto Sound

Over the past ten years, Toronto has been credited with a musical "renaissance period" in terms of its sonic achievement and has been at the forefront of the global urban music industry. At the end of 2019, numerous popular magazines and multimedia services produced think pieces and lists of the most impactful musicians, songs, albums and sounds of the decade to commemorate the end of the 2010s. In these publications, two artists were consistently heralded for their signature sounds, their redefinition of genre boundaries, and their Canadian-ness: Aubrey Graham and Abel Tesfaye, better known as Drake and The Weeknd, respectively. In fact, Spotify declared Drake its most played artist of the decade, both in Canada and globally, with more than 28 billion streams, and The Weeknd as its third-most streamed Canadian artist, following Drake and Justin Bieber,[37] who were first and second, respectively. Drake's 2010 album "Thank Me Later" solidified Drake's then-unconventional practice of "rapping and singing […] in constant, graceful dialogue" (Carmainica, 2019), which followed the sonic format of his mixtape "So Far Gone," released in 2009. Drake "was able to be tough and tender, write chest-puffing boasts that felt shocking and also the catchy hooks that made them go down easily. And he also knew how to render bravado using soothing coos, and intimacy using stern barks. Even though they were overtly radical, his musical choices seemed self-evident and effortless" (Carmainica, 2019). In 2011, The Weeknd released his first solo mixtape, "House of Balloons," later repackaged with "Thursday," "Echoes of Silence" and other unreleased songs as an album,

[37] Bieber has his own complex relationship with "Urban Music" and Blackness, even arguing in a social media post that his 2020 album "Changes" was wrongly nominated by the Grammys in the category of Pop as he is "very meticulous and intentional about [his] music [and that he] set out to make an R&B album. *Changes* was and is an R&B album [as he] wished to make a project that would embody [the R&B] sound […] considering from the chords to the melodies to the vocal style all the way down to the hip hop drums that were chosen it is undeniably, unmistakably an R&B album!" (Bieber, 2020).

"Trilogy," in 2012. It is credited with pushing the boundaries of R&B with "thematic and sonic pieces [that] fit together—these weird, morning-after tales of lust, hurt, and over-indulgence […] are matched by this incredibly lush, downcast music" (Colly, 2011). In the contemporary moment, both Drake's and The Weeknd's early projects, along with Drake's sophomore album "Take Care," released in 2011, both of which feature The Weeknd and have songs co-written with him, are credited as projects that have shaped the landscape of hip-hop globally and as marking the "beginnings" of a *New Toronto Sound*.

Murray Foreman (2000) posits that the space of the city is foundational to Hip Hop's production sonically and lyrically as "an audible presence, explicitly cited and digitally sampled in the reproduction of the aural textures of the urban environment" (pp. 67–68). Several cities in the United States are defined by their "audible presence" sound: LA's Gangsta Funk, New York's Boom-Bap, Atlanta's Crunk and Trap music, Houston's Chopped and Screwed, Chicago's Drill, just to name a few. Artists from each of these cities produce sounds that audibly detail their hyperlocal experiences of social life in ways "that both anchor [their] rap acts to their immediate environments and set them apart from other environments and other 'hoods […]" (Foreman, 2000, p. 234) constructing a sonic "hip hop cartography" (Foreman, 2000) of Black being that articulates the nuances of these places beyond prevailing narratives often grounded in Black negation. This chapter traces the socio-historical struggle and formation of the "urban" music scene in Toronto and how it foregrounds the "*New Toronto Sound*." By examining how Black sonic practices are inextricability linked to and articulate Black living practices in Black nowheres, I aim to elucidate what contemporary musical practices of the "New Toronto Sound" articulate about Black experiences *now here*, in the contemporary moment. Thus, if as Foreman claims, the locality of urban music grounds its performance, then what the *New Toronto Sound*

indexes is not only an emergent sonic practice, but a distinctly Black Canadian Hip Hop cartography.

In "Making the Scene: Yorkville and Hip Toronto in the 1960s,"[38] Historian Stuart Henderson (2011) notes *the Toronto sound* was a term used in the 1960s to describe the music scene in Yorkville, which was a characteristic R&B sound heavily influenced by US American R&B musicians from labels such as Stax and Motown. However, in the 2010s, the moniker the "New Toronto Sound" began to widely circulate and name an emerging innovative urban sound. Newness here indexes a kind of breakage or rupture with Toronto as a metonymical symbol for Canada more broadly, as Blackness is figured as 'surprise' (McKittrick, 2006). Thus, this New Toronto Sound was exciting precisely because globally it is *still* unimaginable/unintelligible to White capital's global civil society that Black people are in Canada and that Black people *have something to say*[39] about their experiences in Canada. More surprising yet that Black Canadians would enrich Hip Hop cartographies (Foreman, 2000) and sonic registers of Black being, particularly in ways that travel beyond Black Canada as a geographically discrete formation.

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[38] This history allows us to consider how Black sonic practices/Black cultural producers have reverberated and shaped the arts scene in Toronto in crucial ways long before the arrival of artists in the contemporary moment, thus attesting to an already complex relation with Black Cultural production and Canada.

[39] In 1995 at the second annual Source Awards ceremony, during the height of The East Coast vs. West Coast rap rivalry about who was running the Rap/Hip-Hop industry, a duo named Outkast from Atlanta won the award for "Best New Rap Group Award" for their now classic album *Southernplayalisticcadillacmusik* and were immediately booed by the audience as it was assumed an East Coast/New York act would win as no one from the West Coast was nominated. During their acceptance speech, group member Andre 3000 proceeded to speak while the audience booed and said, "[…] But it's like this, the South got somethin' to say. That's all I got to say". Hip Hop scholar Regina Bradley (2021) claims that this Statement from Andre 3000 at the time was "a battle cry" since Southern hip-hop music was not intelligible in the genre that had been founded and dominated by East and West coast artists predominantly from New York and Los Angeles. Bradley (2021) argues that "the South's hip-hop generation used their music to respond, remix and reinterpret their parents' and their grandparents' civil rights struggles, as well as the whole of Southern history. And in addition to the unique sound created by sampling Southern blues, soul, and funk, this was a unique perspective for hip hop at that moment." Bradley's discussion of this moment's importance for the genre, particularly in its articulation of the South as a region with its own narratives, experiences and sound deeply resonates with how I frame "The New Toronto Sound" and articulates my concept that Canada, a Black nowhere, is similarly a place that is unthinkable/unimaginable and yet still exists and has *something to say*.

Indeed, that these sonic registers would resonate with a Blackness without (rather than within) national borders.

The New Toronto Sound is often described as moody "icy, detached sensuality […] through a set of distinct elements, the modern definition of the Toronto Sound communicates a sense of cool but also intense emotion that other regional scenes can't imitate" (Witmer, 2017), or as Eric Andrew Gee (2016) describes, "It's a sound. A distinctive style of music that echoes its hometown. Broadly speaking—down-tempo, ambient R&B. But more specifically—the sonic equivalent of driving down the 427[40] at night. Dark and neon-lit; spacious and intimate; melancholy and sleekly modern." Gee's (2016) emotional/affective descriptions of the New Toronto Sound bring to focus how music of The New Toronto Sound mediates this "relationship between the desire for an ever-present intimate or personal connectivity and the impoverishment of the social and geographical environment within which it occurs" (Bull, 2007, p. 9).

Phil Witmer (2017) explains the "slowness, spaciousness and coldness" of The New Toronto sound structurally:

> Most 'trap' styled rap beats move at a steady clip of 120 to 150 beats per minute. This seems pretty fast, but remember that thanks to that prevalent half-time measure (the snares hit on the 3 instead of the 2 and the 4), these end up feeling like 60 to 75 BPM instead […] For an easy example, Drake's 'Days in the East' is at an already molasses-like 95 BPM, which can be further halved into a truly glacial tempo of 47.5 BPM. The song loses all sense of momentum and just hangs there, hi-hats spinning off into the abyss with only spare kick drums and a whip-crack snare to anchor them. It's into this amorphous void that

[40] Highway 427 is primarily a route that connects the City of Toronto from the North end/Pearson Airport to the South end via a connection to the Queen Elizabeth Way (QEW), The Gardiner Expressway, Highway 401 and Highway 407.

> Drake chooses to pour his heart out, rather than onto a surface one can at least groove to. It pulls in the listener like quicksand, and that bottomless pit can be terrifying or sexy, depending on the particular approach the artist chooses to take. Aside from this admittedly trendy slowness, Toronto's audio trademark is its unimpeachable low end [...] Toronto 808s are often run through blocky digital distortion, hitting with a savage crunch rather than a lively 'boom.' […] Combined with their low tempos, Toronto rap beats can feel oppressive and mechanical, and some artists choose to double down on that [which] only amplifies that chilliness. It's only thanks to one more element that the Toronto sound has a place commercially […] there's a natural emphasis on languid melody in Toronto, which means even the hardest songs can have mournful, even lovelorn vocal expressions […] It's through this amalgam that the Toronto Sound is more than just a series of 'dark, slow, moody' boxes for American producers to check off. There is raw feeling here, as well as laptop wizardry that few can touch.

Arguing with Witmer and Gee, the sonic articulation of a melancholic desire for intimacy in a city that increasingly absents spaces and Black people with roads and condominiums through the slowness and spaciousness of the sound affectively and technologically invites a unique sort of interrogation of the isolation and chilliness that The New Toronto Sound's sonic practices render audible. In other words, the unique mechanics of municipal anti-Blackness within the geography of Toronto informs and inflects the aural ambience of The New Toronto Sound in ways that are, as Moten would say, "not reducible to" it, but "irreducible in it" (Moten, 2013, p. 744). Thus, as a kind of scalar intertext, the New Toronto Sound indexes both a local specificity (Toronto and its anti-Black municipal geographies) and a paradigmatic universality (anti-Blackness as a constitutive mechanism for the production of White civil society's notions

of place both within and without Canada). Within this chapter, I therefore examine the New Toronto Sound for what it reveals about both levels of scale, treating the New Toronto Sound as an entryway into theorizing Black Toronto, Black Canada, and Blackness beyond discrete national boundaries.

A Note on the Canadian Music Industry

In discussing the state of Canadian content regulations of radio and the Canadian music scene, Scott Henderson (2008) notes,

> popular music remains a big business in Canada, with the total retail value of the Canadian market being just under $950 million in 2003 (Department of Canadian Heritage 2005) […] the industry is very much a significant part of the Canadian social fabric, and even a cursory examination of that fabric reveals that Canadian artists continue to play a significant role, suggesting that content regulations have had an ongoing cultural influence. (p. 309)

More specifically, Ontario, where the city of Toronto is located and where much of the music industry of Canada resides, generates a significant amount of the nation's music industry revenue (82% as reported by the OMDC in 2014). Henderson's noting of the significance of the Canadian music industry to the nation's economic and social valuation is of interest because of his assuredness of the industry's success through recourse to its profitability. Canadian music as a resource for the extraction and circulation of surplus value is therefore foregrounded as the metric upon which Canadian cultural production is measured. CRTC content percentages are therefore justified through a capitalist rhetorical project that posits a content percentage as a mechanism to ensure commercial viability.

However, while already disturbing as a mechanism by which to assess the value of art, this framework is thrown into crisis when positioned alongside the outstanding commercial success of the New Toronto Sound when compared with the lack of state support for its emergence and circulation. My analysis, therefore, questions the underlying dynamics of the industry's social success. Henderson connects the social success of the industry to the nation's regulating body, the CRTC, which mandates how much Canadian content must be broadcasted. This regulation does provide a gauge regarding the impact of the CRTC on Canada's music industry, but it does not provide measures of value. For example, what genres and which artists are considered valuable in the Canadian music industry, either economically, socially, or both? Are all Canadian artists and artistic productions equally valuable? What determines "value"? And what might the assumptive logics of this state infrastructure reveal about the (non)place of Blackness within (White) Canada's cultural imaginary of sonic production? In a piece for *Now Toronto* (2016), Ian Kamau notes:

> [T]here's nothing rustic about this new Toronto sound. It's city music. It's electronically produced. And by and large it's black music [...] There's a perceptual barrier to the value of certain types of music over other types of music. Canada is essentially a Rock 'n' Roll country. A lot of our infrastructure – including our weekly magazines, manufacturing companies, distribution companies, the record labels themselves and the tour circuits – is based largely on Rock music. Other types of music are typically marginalized. It's not just because of the population that consumes Rock music, but the reality that the music industry puts effort, time, money, infrastructure and staff into developing audiences for that type of music. Certain types of music viewed as more valuable get more money and infrastructure put into them. Hip-hop is generally marginalized in Canada. There are plenty of hip-hop

fans and listeners throughout the country [...] What I experienced when I was touring across Canada is that people just didn't understand the music I was doing. It wasn't the people coming to the shows, but the people setting them up. There was always a fight to figure out how to create the environment for the audience. The people tasked to do that along with me didn't necessarily understand or value what it was I was trying to bring to the table. I think it's important to understand it on that level, even though that seems like a relatively subtle thing. Hip-hop, reggae, calypso and R&B are mixed differently than rock 'n' roll […] I look at everything as relationships of power and access. If I look at the people making decisions domestically in our industry in Canada, I still don't see a diversity that represents the artists here or the diversity of the people in this country.

As Kamau notes, New Toronto Sound is electronically produced, largely by Black Hip Hop and R&B artists like Drake, The Weeknd, and PARTYNEXTDOOR, all of whom are publicly celebrated as representatives of Canadian talent despite the fact that none of these artists attained their success with the support of State resources available to artists who fit the historically established image of Canadian popular music. Indeed, as Kamau notes, there is a technical mitigation to its sonic circulation as "the people setting up the concerts did not understand how to create the environment for the audience" (2016). Naming a distinction between the receptivity of the audiences and the technical understanding of people working in musical production, Kamau notes how a Rock 'n' Roll infrastructure negatively inflects the concert siting of Hip Hop and R&B in the Canadian context.[41] Easily drawing from the (White) cultural imaginary of Canadiana, Kamau notes, "Think Neil Young, Joni Mitchell, Gordon Lightfoot. Acoustic guitars, Campfires. A Town in north Ontario" (Kamau, 2016). This is the

[41] Ironically, Rock 'and' Roll is, itself, a Black musical formation, which, after a long history of appropriation, has become resignified as white.

sound and sonic culture that is supported by state and (White) civil infrastructure (which is to say not only grant funding, but also, as Kamau notes, even venue's production skillsets). That the New Toronto Sound garners success without State and civil support signals the need for further inquiry regarding the fungibility of Black Cultural producers in Canada.

In naming Black Cultural Producers—more specifically artists in the Hip Hop/R&B/Urban music industry—in Canada fungible, I am thinking about the gratuitous open-ness to extraction and circulation of Black Canadian Hip Hop/R&B/Urban musicians and sonic practices in the Canadian music industry. In her groundbreaking text *Scenes of Subjection* (1997), Saidiya Hartman contends:

> [T]he fungibility of the commodity makes the captive body an abstract and empty vessel vulnerable to the projection of others' feelings, ideas, desires and values; and, as property, the dispossessed body of the enslaved is the surrogate for the master's body since it guarantees his disembodied universality and acts as the sign of his power and dominion. (p. 21)

In this analysis, Hartman is contending with function of Blackness within material-symbolic economies of value. The captive body is an "abstract and empty vessel" that is, in turn, semantically filled by the "projection" of White psychic desires. Building on and extending this line of thinking, Tiffany Lethabo-King (2019) offers her own theorization of fungibility. Lethabo-King states:

> Black fungibility is an expression of the gratuitous violence of conquest and slavery whose repertoire has no limits or bounds. It operates both materially on the body and produces Blackness (as idea and symbol) as a discursive space of open possibility. Similar to Hartman, I argue that Black fungibility—rather than labor— defines and organizes Black

> value within relations of conquest […] Just as Black fungibility is a form of gratuitous violence that is unending and unpredictable, Black struggle's resistance to and maneuvering within fungibility is as unpredictable and uncontainable. As a Black mode of critique, it elaborates and gives texture to various forms of violence while also revealing unexpected and ever emerging modes of freedom—or a 'loophole of retreat.' (2019, pp. 23–24).

Thus, both Hartman (1996) and Lethabo-King's (2019) articulations of Black fungibility offer ways to wrestle with the complexities of Black cultural production in the Canadian music industry. Whereas Hartman demonstrates the violence subtending the structure of fungibility, King gestures toward the fugitivity potentiality always-already immanent within it. This dual political valence of fungibility that King offers provides this chapter with a method for reading the apposition of violation and voice, subjection and speech.

Applying Hartman's (1997) reading of the fungibility of the commodity to the public claiming and celebration of Black Hip Hop artists in Canada by the industry and political figures in the contemporary moment demands we consider why the cultural industry and politicians have now adopted Black artists and their sonic practices. Accepting Ian Kamau's (2016) provocation that the cultural industry in Canada lacks a structure invested in supporting and growing Black talent here because Canada is perceived as a "Rock/Country/Alternative" market, how do we account for the success of The New Toronto Sound over the past decade (Gee, 2016; Whitmer, 2017; Carmainica, 2019), the emergence and contestation of "Toronto Slang" (Elder, 2016; Taylor, 2019), and public claims of Black Toronto artists as central to the city[42] by industry and

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[42] For example, in 2016, Mayor John Tory presented Drake with a Key to the City and proclaimed that, "Drake is Toronto's biggest champion: in his music, his mentorship of local talent and his presence on the world stage. He makes people feel good about themselves and their city, and he has drawn the eyes of the world to Toronto. He

political figures? Is the spectacularization of Blackness in the realm of performance—in this case popular music—simply a vehicle to validate the State's claim to multiculturalism and accepting that city's excellence comprises Black Hip-Hop and R&B artists? And if The New Toronto Sound is not supported by the State's cultural infrastructure, then what does it mean for Toronto specifically and Canada more broadly to bear the cultural and economic value that the production and circulation of the Toronto Sound makes possible? Might such an extraction direct attention to the "extensive capacities of property" (Hartman, 1997, p. 21), the afterlife of slavery? In provisional response to these questions, I suggest that it is neither the artists nor their cultural production that is being celebrated; rather, it is the celebration of the State's "[…] feelings, ideas, desires, and values" (Hartman, 1997, p. 21) of diversity and "solving the problem of Blackness" in the North that alleviates the fear and terror of possibly making anti-Blackness legible in Canada. The circulation of Black music—which, as demonstrated by my prior chapter, always-already bears the antiblack opacity of noise—provides a capacious site for the "projection of others' feelings, ideas, desires, and values" (Hartman, 1997, p. 21). The fact that this music technically succeeds at the metric for cultural success (economic viability), while never being recognized as integral to the formation of Canadian sonic culture—"Think Neil Young, Joni Mitchell, Gordon Lightfoot. Acoustic guitars, Campfires. A Town in north Ontario" (Kamau, 2016) —symptomatically reveals the varying modes of differentiation that manifest in systems of Canadian cultural valuation.

Thinking with Hartman discloses the textures of violence that make Blackness fungible in Canada. Thinking with Lethabo-King extends the generative function of fungibility *now here* by asserting that fungibility is not reducible to violent forms of extraction that are destructive, as

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deserves our city's recognition and our pride and I'm honoured to give him the Key to the City" (Kamalavasan, 2016).

“fungibility [also] evades capture” (Lethabo-King, 2019, p. 25). Since Black bodies are understood as objects outside of the category of human, the violences they experience are illegible, thus opening up possibilities for Black fungibility “[…] as a resource […] rather than impediment to Black practices of—or, as Snorton argues ‘for’—freedom stretches Blackness’s terrain” (Lethabo-King, 2019, pp. 25–26). This reading of fungibility allows for the same Black bodies not only to be constrained “in a precarious and unstable State” (Lethabo-King, 2016, p. 1029) such as being understood as victims of an anti-Black music industry, but also “the same Black bodies can be viewed as ever-changing and unruly forms that are impossible to contain” (Lethabo-King, 2016, p.1029).[43] It is with this reading of fungibility that I explore how Black Canadian cultural producers maneuver their fungibility in the formation of The New Toronto Sound to make audible the gratuitous everyday violences of anti-Blackness in Canada on an international scale both as a mode of critique of the State and as a practice of undercommonsing (Harney & Moten, 2013), which provides a different field of valuation upon which the artists may refuse their subjugated status through sonic innovation and try to “make a small path through the wake” (Sharpe, 2016, p. 4).

Leaning on McKittrick’s claim in “Mathematics Black Life” that “there is a careful effort to show that if we are to name the violent displacement of black cultures, this must be done by both noticing and undoing the compulsion to inhabit safe and comfortable places within the very system that cannot survive without anti-blackness” (2014, p. 19), this chapter examines the ways in which Black Canadian sonic practices make audible the tenuous relations the nation has with Blackness. This chapter explores how “private media, public media and business entities that

[43] To be clear, while Lethabo-King rightly marks this interpretation as a departure from a more orthodox reading of Hartmanian fungibility (as it relates specifically to the fungibility of the commodity), she also registers it as an extension more broadly of the kind of intervention fungibility makes possible. Lethabo-King articulates this departure/extension as a kind of exposition of the unstated premises of Hartmanian fungibility.

curate and profit from Toronto's local music economy" (Kamau, 2015) benefit from Black cultural production but also render it a fungible object of extraction, as shown by their lack of investment in the genres and its producers. Not only do I look at racial-spatial inequalities produced in the geographic sense of Black nowheres, but I also look to inequities of structural support of genres and artists who have put Toronto on the global map as a premier musical city. I discuss the fungibility of The New Toronto Sound to understand power relations, not only in the particularities of the music industries infrastructure, but also as an aural approach to understanding Black life in Canada. I argue that Black Cultural production's precariousness renders anti-Blackness audible and thereby exposes the failures of the State's commitment to Black people as performance, that the lack of infrastructure *is* an infrastructure—it is the fungible space of Black nowheres, a kind of captive maternality, that stabilizes Black intramural life under conditions that "continuously refashions confinement and exploitation" (James, 2021, p. 14) in order to make the violence of fungibility more livable.

As such, this chapter begins with an exploration of the development of Canadian Content policies to trace how they shape the cultural industry's anti-Black use of the category "Urban" to categorize and mistreat Black Hip Hop and R&B artists, and how those same Black Hip Hop and R&B artists sonically attune us to registers that exist beyond the cruel anti-Black ways institutional structures want us to know "Urban" music. Ultimately, I read this dynamic as a dialectic of fungibility that registers both the violence enacted upon, and the creative/generative pulse Hip Hop and R&B artists create in Toronto. Thus, I mobilize the cultural regulation of Hip Hop and R&B to theorize more broadly the relation between the dual valences of fungibility as both violence and as the potential for fugitive creation. To support this theoretical argument, I trace the lyrical and sonic development of Hip Hop and R&B music in Canada in the waves that

Mark V. Campbell (2014) identifies in "The Politics of Making Home: Opening up the work of Richard Iton in Canadian Hip Hop Context": the 1980s and early 1990s; post-1993 to the early 2000s; and what I identify as the more contemporary period of urban music in Canada, 2009 to 2019. My reading of the lyrical and sonic development in each of these eras is not as heroic narratives of resistance, which is often the subject of Hip Hop analysis, but rather as articulations that amplify the dialectics of fungibility in Black nowheres. I then wrestle with Drake's global success as an example of how listening to The New Toronto Sound offers us insight on how Black people and Blackness develop different ways to understand value and relations in an anti-Black world.

The Emergence of Canadian Cultural Industries & CRTC Regulations

In the late 1960s, Canada began "to alter its relationship to its cultural production—to one that considered Canadian films, programs and artistic works not simply as important artifacts of 'Canadian identity,' but as something produced by the 'cultural industries'" (Wagman, 2001, p. 58), signalling a growing interest in the economic possibilities of Canadian cultural production. This interest led to the development and implementation of the Canadian Radio Television Commission in 1971 (focused on the AM band)—later renamed in 1976 to the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC)—expanding its regulation to the FM band. Eric Spalding (2016) suggests:

> A key reason for implementing Canadian content regulations for radio was thus the need to make room for Canadian music amidst the cultural imports from other countries. Motivating this desire was a rise in nationalistic sentiments […] convergence of interrelated circumstances caused this new nationalism, including the coming of age of the

baby boom generation; concerns about foreign ownership of Canadian resources and the Americanization of Canadian culture; Centennial celebrations across the country and Expo 67 in Montreal; and the influence of nationalistic movements around the world. (p. 673)

When Canadian content regulations were introduced in 1971, the percentage of Canadian songs played on commercial radio was set at 25%; in 1986 it increased to 30% and rose to 35% following a 1998 review, pushing stations to cast a wider net for Canadian talent to bring to air (Henderson, 2008, p. 309). For regulation purposes, songs were deemed Canadian if they matched at least two of the MAPL criteria: music written by a Canadian, performed by an artist who is Canadian, production having taken place in Canada, or lyrics written by a Canadian (Henderson, 2008, p. 309) "to encourage increased exposure of Canadian musical performers, lyricists and composers to Canadian audiences" (Henderson, 2008, p. 310), as well as to "to strengthen the Canadian music industry, including both the creative and production components" (Henderson, 2008, p. 310).

In addition to the development of Canadian radiobroadcasting regulations that were proving successful in constructing an emerging Canadian music industry, applications were submitted to the regulator of the cultural industry in the late 1970s and early 1980s to begin a new national media form: a music video channel. It was "with the 1982 release of the report of the federal cultural policy review committee [that] government policy toward the cultural realm began to emphasize the marketing and distribution of Canadian cultural products both domestically and in the international marketplace" (Wagman, 2001, p. 49). In 1983, the CRTC called for applications for new a specialty television licence; in 1984, the license was granted to MuchMusic, a 24-hour music channel, that was to be Canada's answer to MTV (Ward, 2016, p. 5), due to "its assertion of superior marketing savvy and commitment to Canadian music"

(Wagman, 2001, p. 55) in relation to other applications. The CRTC maintained that establishing a Canadian specialty music network should increase Canadian-cultivated productions, increase the exposure of Canadian talent, and fulfill the growing demand for music video programming by Canadian audiences. The station was required to ensure that a minimum of 10% of all daily video clips be Canadian; this would later change to a 20% minimum in 1987. As a way to support an increasing number of Canadian content-oriented videos on MuchMusic, the CRTC "attached as a condition of the broadcast license a requirement whereby the broadcaster would have to contribute 2.4% of its gross revenues to a maximum of $100 0000 per year toward a video-production fund administered by an independent advisory board composed of representatives from MuchMusic, CIRPA, and other members of the Canadian music industry to called VideoFact which was established in 1984" (Wagman, 2001, p. 57).

The emergence of the CRTC as a regulating agency with the ability to protect the State's cultural autonomy over national media is notable for many reasons. The State's formal establishment of this regulating body to ensure "[t]he Canadian broadcasting system should be effectively owned and controlled by Canadians so as to safeguard, enrich and strengthen the cultural, political, social and economic fabric of Canada [with] programming provided by each broadcaster should be of high standard, using predominantly Canadian creative and other resources" (Spalding, 2016, p. 675) is an apparently neutral policy; however, it raises the question of what and who will be considered viable producers of Canadian cultural production. In a country built upon conquest (Lethabo-King, 2019), who are the imagined citizens for whom the nation's cultural fabric should be safeguarded?

The question of viability and value is especially of interest during the period when these policies were being implemented, because their uneven application to Black organizing groups

that were interested in furthering Black Canadians in the media/communications industry was apparent. The uneven application of these policies and treatment of Black Canadians in this regulated industry emerges as the lack of infrastructure itself comprising an infrastructure. This is most evident with regard to Black Canadian Hip Hop/R&B from its emergence in the 1980s and still in the contemporary moment, but for now I pause and return back to the period of the 1980s when these policies and the apparent growth of a healthy Canadian media was developing at the same time as the Canadian Hip Hop scene, specifically in Toronto in order to address the abjection of Black cultural production from CRTC regulation and capacitation.

The Emergence of a Canadian Hip Hop Scene and the problem of "Blackness"

The proximity and influence of the United States of America to Canada has generally silenced critical examination of Black popular culture within Canada. Specifically, since Hip Hop music originated in the US during the 1970s and 1980s, "Canadian hip hop artists have found themselves branded outsiders to or imitators of American hip hop culture" (Boutros, 2020, p. 103) due to "the insistence on reading rap and hip-hop only within nation-State parameters and an American context, has impeded and limited what kinds of histories of hip-hop are possible" (Walcott, 2003, p. 41). This prohibition to critical enquiry is unique to Hip Hop and R&B. Indeed, even though both Rock 'n' Roll and Folk music also possess origin stories outside of Canada, they both receive significant critical attention as constitutive of a Canadian cultural identity. However, Hip Hop, as a musical form, has particular linkages to the question authenticity and beneath the questions of authenticity that dominate Hip Hop scholarship is the problem with "Blackness" (Judy, 1994). In an article titled "The Impossibility of being Drake;

Or, what it means to be a successful (Black) Canadian Rapper," Alexandra Boutros (2020) grapples with conditions of Drake as a leader of the genre. Boutros makes clear that,

> since Canada is not imagined as a place congruent with the impoverished, urban Black violence that is considered foundational to hip hop, other sites of Black violence must be evoked in order to confer hip hop authority. When critics—often removed genealogically and geographically from the places of Black marginalization and disenfranchisement—rush to insist that only Black men from places of risk and volatility are entitled to inhabit authentic (or 'real') positions within hip hop, they (re)produce discourse that suggests that for Blackness to be publicly performed, commodified and consumed as part of authentic hip hop, real Black citizens have to have incurred significant risk of violence or death. (p. 104)

Since Canada is publicly imagined/narrated as a place that is "safe, White and good," it is imagined as antithetical to the types of violence that make Blackness broadly and Hip Hop specifically intelligible. Therefore, "Canada's difficulty in locating a Black presence within" (Walcott, 2003, p. 42) also makes it difficult to register both the past and present of Black Canadian Hip Hop that articulates conditions affirming anti-Black violence as fundamental to the creation and maintenance of the Canadian State. By naming the problem not with the authenticity of the art, but rather as a problem with Blackness, these occlusions impede the naming that Black cultural producers have always had with the Canadian cultural industries. This not only misunderstands the art form, but also, and more importantly, refuses to deal with the immanent critiques being leveraged by the artists and their creative labour to throw into crisis the "problem of Blackness."

The sounding of the conditions of Black life in Canada has always been part and parcel of the types of cultural production artists create; understanding this concern explains the State's anxiety over engaging the conditions of Black life that are made audible in the music, because the music troubles the way the nation makes sense of itself, its insistence that Blackness is a problem that does not exist here, is always-already elsewhere. Naming the conditions that make the problem of Blackness here as well as the value and success of Black music/cultural production in Canada as unintelligible renders the phenomenon inexplicable. The impossibility of value and success of Black music/cultural production preceded the emergence of Hip Hop in the 1980s in Canada. Carol Tator, Winston Mattis and Frances Henry (1998) note: "African-Canadian music professionals have complained since the 1960s that mainstream radio [in Canada] is neglecting Black/dance music, particularly the music of local musicians" (p. 111).

These incidents from the 1960s parallel those of the late 1980s and early 1990s of Black cultural producers with the CRTC and allow us to delineate the State's larger "problem with Blackness" and how it makes itself known through the uneven regulation of its cultural industries. Two key examples demonstrate this difficulty: first, multiple denials of approval by the CRTC for a Black FM radio channel; and second, MuchMusic's failure to recognize that their first Black Video Jockey (VJ), Michael Williams, who hosted the channels two urban shows—*Soul in the City* and *Rap City*— struggled to connect with Black Canadian audiences, in spite of meeting CRTC "diversity requirements." Reading these two examples in relation to the State's emphasis on developing a strong Canadian Cultural industry via the implementation of CRTC regulations offers insight into how the cultural industry has framed the problem of Blackness in Canada.

The Problem of Blackness in Canadian TV and Radiobroadcasting

In “Is This Live? In the Wild Early Years of MuchMusic the Nation’s Music Station” (2016), Christopher Ward, one of the MuchMusic network’s first VJs, interviews various key players in the network’s early years of development, including the network’s first Black VJ, Michael Williams. Williams is a trained musicologist, knowledgeable about the Quebec music scene, and the conceptualiser and first host of both *Soul in the City* and *Rap City*, two original programs on MuchMusic that focused on Urban music programming on the network. In the memoir, Ward (2016) recalls, “there were a lot of expectations for Mike from Day One [as the first Black VJ]. Fans of Black music in Canada and the artists who created it looked to Michael to be the national voice they’d been missing. A reluctant spokesperson, Mike was proud of Much’s support of Black Music” (p. 51). Williams mentions in his discussion with Ward that he “[thought] Canadian radio always saw Black music and musicians as less-thans [and that] representing the [Black] community was a difficult thing for [him because he] wasn’t their man because [he] wasn’t from the West Indies, and that was a big thing. Master T was West Indian, so they gravitated more to him than they did to me” (p. 51).

Williams’ reflection on his personal reluctance to be the “go-to” figure of the Urban music scene of Anglo-Black Canada alludes to how “black popular culture is a contradictory space. It is a site of strategic contestation” (Hall, 2019, p. 88). Rinaldo Walcott extends Hall’s observation to read the strategic contestations of Black popular in Canada as due to “the contradiction that Caribbean equals black in Canada; the fact that Black popular culture in Canada is mainly a copy or version of African-American popular culture; and finally, the fact that Canada does not have a native popular culture” (Walcott, 2003, p. 132). Artists of the late 1980s and early 1990s being the first and second generation of the Caribbean diaspora in Canada

“engaged in creolizing their locales, importing and prominently presenting their Caribbean diasporic roots” (Campbell, 2014, p. 273) in their music and everyday life, a process which was not lost on Williams. Although to the station and industry, Williams was the perfect choice to be the voice of Black Canada on MuchMusic due to his expertise as a trained ethnomusicologist, his African American ethnicity, which in the popular culture realm is perceived as hegemonic/ “authentic” Blackness, and because he was well versed in the Quebecois music scene. I read Williams’ experience as an early example of how fungibility operates on multiple registers. First, because Williams was fungible to the station in that he recognized early on that Blackness was figured as “[…] an abject and degraded condition […]” (Hartman, 1997, p. 22), it did not matter if the representation fit the Black community in Canada, but rather that the person who occupied the position (on radio or TV) was there as a “[…] vehicles for white enjoyment […]” (Hartman, 1997, p. 22), because he was a figure on whom the station, industry and Canadian audiences could project their limited understanding of Blackness and enjoy. Second, I read Williams’ departure as an example of the agentive function of fungibility. Williams’ refusal to further debase the complexities of Blackness in Canada as a Black man is important. Williams already understands the violence Blackness is subjected to in the cultural industries in Canada. By choosing to depart from MuchMusic and make space for the rise of Master T as the key figure of Black Canada and the Urban music industry at MuchMusic, until his departure in the early 2000s, is suggestive concerning the generative nature of the nowhere of Black Canada. Williams’s refusal of the imposed expectation for him to speak ‘authentic Blackness’ marks his own internal recognition of Black Canadian cultural specificity against MuchMusic’s fungible flattening of that specificity. The Williams history does not redefine Blackness, but what it provides is an example of how Black creative industry workers move in ways that demonstrate

their complex maneuvers under conditions of constraint that are not reducible to, although irreducible from, the structures of national anti-Blackness that build Canadian cultural infrastructures and within which Black creatives work and act.

While these struggles with Blackness occurred in the formation of a national television broadcasting station, they were also rife in the radio broadcasting industry. In 1990, the CRTC's Decision 90-693 made clear the problem of Blackness in Canadian radio broadcasting. This decision denied the approval of a Black or dance radio station in favour of a Country radio station that the CRTC claimed was in the public's interest "given the complete absence [of country music] from Toronto FM spectrum. The decision continued that a Country station, Country music, and a Country format contributed most to programming diversity, to the development of Canadian talent and to the Canadian broadcasting system as a whole" (Tator, Mattis, & Henry, 1998, p. 113). Journalist Greg Quill of the *Toronto Star* wrote: "This is the third time a dance music format has been proposed for Toronto listeners and denied. The first time the CRTC licensed an easy listening station. The second time it licensed classical. And the third time ignoring the desire of a large number of Torontonians, it licensed a country station. Is this logical?" (cited in Tator, Mattis, & Henry, 1998, p. 113).

Ideally the answer to Quill's question regarding the logic of the development of another country radio station—but this time on the FM frequency—could be met with a resounding no. What is clear from the failure to approve an urban radio station three times in favour of easy listening, classical and country is the devaluing of the category of Urban music and reluctance to situate it on Canadian radio broadcasting, which had been invested in nation State identity building projects long before the establishment of the CRTC. Blackness does not figure as part of

that national identity building project and is therefore deemed an illogical choice for a prime radio channel[44] in one of the nation's most competitive markets—Toronto.

The friction between the emergence and implementation of CRTC regulations and the formation of a Black local Hip Hop scene in Toronto clarifies aspects of the history of the formation of a national sound, signaling who audibly registers as viable producers of Canadian cultural production as well as Black sonic articulations of Black being in a Black nowhere. I am interested in what then is audible when we bring together the logic that "for Canadian music the notion of national identity, and the efforts to protect that identity, have been crucial to the industry since its inception" (Henderson, 2008, p. 307) and the assertion that "black popular music, and hip-hop in particular serve as a global forum through which different black diasporic subjects negotiate shifting meanings of blackness, as well as other forms of social and political identification" (Weheliye, 2005, p. 146). The protectionist attitude of what sonically registers as Canadianness continues to be an issue with public and private radio in Canada.

This anti-Black protectionism can be symptomatically read in another instance of Canadian broadcast culture through the program *Q*, a popular arts, music, and entertainment show on CBC Radio One. Following the 2014 firing of Jian Ghomeshi from the program due to multiple allegations of sexual assault, the CBC tested a series of guest hosts for the show.[45] Shadrach Kabango, more widely known as rapper Shad, was hired as the permanent replacement for

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[45] The CBC website describes Q as "the leading arts, music and entertainment program in Canada. The program is heard in Canada on the CBC, and across the United States through PRX and Sirius XM. Q has a terrestrial audience of 1,250,000 across North America and is heard on over 70 U.S. public radio stations including the top markets of New York City, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Tampa, Phoenix and Seattle. The show has a terrestrial average minute audience in Canada of 275,000 and a growing audience of people aged 35-49 (in the past year this demo has grown 76%). *q* reaches a weekly Canadian audience through the terrestrial plays on radio and television of 2,371,000. Additionally, we have a weekly podcast that is downloaded more than 250,000 times a week, as well as a highly engaged presence on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram" (CBC, 2017).

Ghomeshi in April of 2015. The hiring of Shad was celebrated by Black folk in Canada. Duncan (2015) writes for the Toronto Star,

> I'm not into ownership, and he's not 'mine,' but Shad feels like he belongs to me in so many ways. He represents the dream many of our parents had, of bringing a child to a new country and hoping for the best for them […] I am also proud because of the new dimension this illuminates for hip hop […] [it] is a reminder that success happens. That a rapper's microphone always has a larger reach than you think.

At the surface, Duncan's (2015) liberal integrationist sentiment frames Shad's joining the CBC as a moment of multicultural/multiracial State acceptance. A Black, immigrant, Hip Hop artist became the voice of a leading program on the national radio platform that is also distributed internationally. Duncan's projection of his own feelings onto the body and position of Shad, while well intended, also point to the fungibility of Shad in a complicated way. It is a narrative of Black immigrant "pain [as] the conduit of identification" (Hartman, 1997, p.20) that allows Duncan to spectacularize and participate in this moment of Black joy, not just for Shad but as a moment of true multiculturalism/post-raciality wherein the State integrates Blackness into its cultural milieu, and in so doing, actualizes on its promise for liberal inclusion and multi-racial flourishing. It performs the imaginative labour of "attempt[ing] to make the narrative of defeat into an opportunity for celebration" (Hartman & Wilderson, 2003, p. 185). This moment is not just relief for Duncan and Black people here who may feel the same, but also for the industry that counters the violence inflicted by Ghomeshi, a person of colour, by hiring another racialized man as a corrective. But in that hiring, in the wake of gendered violence, a toxic workplace, and no structure to support Shad in this new role, how does replacement without structural change function as a mechanism to secure failure?

Beyond the critiques of Shad's abilities to take on the role, which veil a kind of bad faith and arbitrary deployment of the measurement of expertise within the cultural-discursive field (if the discussion of Master T, who had no formal training and is one of the most beloved VJs in MuchMusic's history, suggests, formal training has little to do with success), I want to consider the audience reception to Shad's short-lived time on *Q*. Particularly, the audience expressed outrage when Shad used the word "dope" and included more Hip-Hop on the program. Comments by listeners such as, "I understand why [Jian] is gone but Shad just said 'Dope' that's real intelligent (sarcasm)" and, "I appreciate that some people like this 'music' but inappropriate here-this is not your audience, never will be" (Weekes, 2015). On its surface, the deployment of scare quotes around music—and as Spillers would intimate, the scare quotes *indeed* matter—and the transference of the usage of "dope" to represent intellectual inferiority stitch together a Canadian cultural imaginary with the afterlives of race science to position Shad in (implicit and explicit) contradistinction to Ghomeshi as a subject devoid of meaningful intellectual capacity. If, as Fanon states, it is precisely "the ease with which [white people] classify him [the Black man], imprison him at an uncivilized level" (Fanon, 2008, p. 15) that reveals the given-ness of the inferiorization Black people are positioned within, then comments left by *Q* listeners index a kind of negrophobogenic response that is, in turn, constitutive of this intellectual imprisonment. The ways that pseudo-intellectualism serves for rape apologia in the former comment aside (and it is already *very* difficult to put that aside), the joint dynamics beneath the surface of these anti-Black dismissals is therefore a kind of symptomatic anxiety, if we read them in terms of Hartman's projections of feelings in abolitionist writing. Both comments comprise objections to Black voice and Black sonic practices, a phobogenic response to Blackness as a kind of aural stimulus, marked both by Shad as host and the 'music' that he shares.

Shad's use of the colloquial term "dope" here can be read through Henry Louis Gates Jr.'s (1983) ideas of signifying. Gates Jr. States, "[i]n black discourse 'signifying' means modes of figuration itself. When one signifies, as Kimberly W. Benston puns, one 'tropes-a-dope.' The 'marking,' 'loud-talking,' 'specifying,' 'testifying,' 'calling out' (of one's name), 'sounding,' 'rapping,' and 'playing the dozens'." (1983, p. 687) that "signifying is a *technique* of indirect argument or persuasion, 'a language of implication,' 'to imply, goad, beg, boast, by *indirect* verbal or gestural means.' […] one does not signify something; rather, one signifies in *some way"* (1983, p. 689). Shad's use of the term "dope" derives from African American vernacular practices that connote speech values of Black communities. It is his way of signifying affirmation, validation, acceptance of the speakers' points. This is not lost on the complaint by the listener but is rather used to question Shad's intelligence. This questioning of intelligence, even when using a very dated colloquial term, signals a disapproval with not only Shad as an individual but also, more specifically, a condemnation of his vocalization of Blackness/Black practices on *Q*, a national radio program that should be reflective of the "intellect" and "value" of the nation. That the term "dope," a piece of slang so pervasive it was often registered as culturally passé even at the time of the controversy, makes clear such a swift and intense blowback reveals the intense prohibition to Black signifying practices at work in the formation of (White) Canadian cultural imaginaries. Here, the comment "this is not your audience, never will be" is horrifying not because it ejects Shad and Blackness from the Canadian cultural imaginary, but because it avows the disavowed structure of necessary exclusion already concealed within that imaginary. CBC is in the business of White-settler mythmaking.

By staging the antagonism at the level of the music and the level of phonics, the listener makes clear their frustration that Shad's Blackness is a problem in that it does not provide

pleasure to the listener as a universal moniker for nationhood. Shad's Blackness that is audibly heard through his use of AAVE and his choice of music disturbs the "[…] nexus of terror and enjoyment" (Hartman, 1997, p. 21) as it disturbs the universality of the figure (Shad) that is necessary for the listener to make sense of their own positionality as a member of the State. There may be a time and a place for the consumption and extraction of Black cultural production, but that time and place is certainly not on *Q*, one of the foremost sites of Canadian musical cultural critique.

After 16 months, Shad left the show and was replaced by Tom Power. Considering Ian Kamau's comments on the music industry in Canada as a Rock/Country/Alternative soundscape and considering the protectionist attitude of radio broadcasting in Canada, which is deeply invested in establishing its own heritage, national voice and sound, the hiring of Tom Power functions as a corrective for both Jian Ghomeshi and Shad. Power is a White cisgender man from Newfoundland who previously hosted *Deep Roots* and *Radio 2 Morning* on CBC Radio 2, as well being a member of a Folk music band. Thus, Power's hiring returns *Q*'s listeners to the "Canadian Sound," easing of the racial anxieties and negrophobic aversions of listeners. Not only is he someone whom listeners may be able to identify with, but his presence is also unquestionable; a White man from the East Coast of Canada, he affirms Canadian nationalism and stabilizes the notion of nation.

This is the violence of fungibility within the Canadian cultural scene—its circulation within a field of dispossession and terror, the complicated relation of the cultural industries with Blackness in Canada. How then do we read Black artists and songs from each Canadian Hip Hop era as evidence of a Black nowhere and fungibility?

EMERGENCE OF A TORONTO SOUND

“My Definition is This”: The Dream Warriors and the First Wave

The Dream Warriors, a duo consisting of King Lou and Capital Q from the Jane and Finch area of Toronto, invoke in their group name and title of their first album, released in 1991, *And Now the Legacy Begins*, their intentions to rethink, reclaim and resituate the problematic ways in which Black diasporic peoples are essentialized. In identifying themselves as *Dream Warriors*, the duo position themselves as artists who actively engage the “images, ideas, emotions and sensations that occur involuntarily in the mind” (“Dream,” n.d.) about Blackness in Canada and Black cultural production through Hip Hop music. In an interview with the Toronto Star in 2011, King Lou asserts that living in Toronto, specifically the Jane and Finch area, The Dream Warriors’ distinctive Black diasporic sound in the early 1990s articulated something *different* from the sounds of the birthplace of the genre in New York. From break-dancing to graffiti, the Dream Warriors were immersed in the traditions of hip-hop culture, but “at the same time [they] didn’t want to deny whatever stories [they] had” (Pearce, 2011) based on their own experiences in Canada. Two notable tracks from the Dream Warriors first album—“My Definition of a Boombastic Jazz Style” and “Ludi”—enunciate the inescapability of racial structures of modernity while simultaneously leading the listener “[…] to an enquiry into the sonic as a central modality through which black people have communicated themselves to the world in the context of visual and racial over-determination” (James, 2021, p. 8). Their work offers an early expression of the fungibility of Blackness and Black cultural production in Canadian Hip Hop.

In the first full-length track of the album, “My Definition of a Boombastic Jazz Style,” the duo immediately engages their audience in their desire to unsettle and exceed essentialized

understandings of Blackness. Before any musical sound is heard, we are challenged by King Lou, who responds to the question, “what the fuck is this?” (Dream Warriors, 1991, track 2). The Dream Warriors use this titular track to enunciate and position themselves as creators of a new sound. Their repetition of the phrase “my definition/my definition of this” in every chorus reiterates the Dream Warriors’ desire to generate new meaning to Hip Hop music, and of Black experiences in Canada. What the Dream Warriors make audible in this first song are the diasporic conditions of a Black Nowhere. It is often said that Black Canadian Hip Hop confronts the violence of the State by using the genre to formulate “a narrative of belonging to the Canadian State using […] counter-narratives intended to question notions of Canadian citizenship, multiculturalism, and the normalized narrative of a ‘White’ Canada” (D’Amico, 2015, pp. 257–258). While this interpretation seems to build from Lethabo-King’s sense of the fungible as that which allows for fugitivity, unlike Lethabo-King, this interpretation still seems to hold out hope for the promise of liberal reconciliatory gestures. The inference in liberal reconciliatory readings that Hip Hop music demands the State accept Blackness and Black cultural production fails to acknowledge that the underlying conditions of belonging to the State are built on the State’s anti-Black violence, what Saidiya Hartman names as the position of unthought, wherein “the slave is the foundation of the national order, and, on the other, the slave occupies the position of unthought. What does it mean to try to bring that position into view without making it a locus of positive value, or without trying to fill in the void?” (2003, pp. 184–185).[46] In a discussion with Frank Wilderson, Hartman (2003) continues:

> so much of our political vocabulary/imaginary/desires have been implicitly integrationist even when we imagine our claims are more radical […] that ultimately the metanarrative

[46] And as King (2019) argues, this position is co-constitutive with Indigenous genocide in the Americas, both of which operationalize white settler conquest and racial capitalism.

thrust is always towards an integration into the national project, and particularly when that project is in crisis, black people are called up to affirm it. So certainly, it's about more than the desire for inclusion within the limited set of possibilities that the national project provides. (p. 185)

However, the language of belonging to the State implies that once the nation accepts Blackness, Black Cultural production and Black Cultural producers, acceptance increases their value, and accords a measure of freedom. Hartman reminds us that the limits of the language of freedom are its "[…] investment in certain notions of the subject and subjection, then that language of freedom no longer becomes that which rescues the slave from his or her former condition, but the site of the re-elaboration of that condition, rather than its transformation" (2003 p. 185). Hartman's work on the position of unthought calls for a different engagement with The Dream Warrior's first single, and thus a different reading of what the first wave of Canadian Hip Hop enunciates. I suggest that The Dream Warriors' first single interrogates the State's violent relation to Blackness by asking "what the fuck is this?" and by sampling the African American legendary composer, producer, conductor Quincy Jones' "Soul Bossa Nova," the theme song of the fifteen year-long Canadian game television series *Definition*. It also unsettles the listener's understanding of the Blackness in Canada through their diasporic sonic practices.

The Dream Warriors draw attention to the *multiplicities* of Blackness in Canada and the differences among them that are often conflated in the West in the song "Ludi," named after the popular boardgame that is played across the Caribbean. King Lou dedicates the song to his mother, and better yet:

> Jamaica, Africa, Dominica, Trinidad and Tobago, St.Kitts, Bermuda, Antigua, St. Lucia, St.Maarten, and do not forget Montserrat, Aruba, Grenada, Guyana and Cuba, St. Vincent, Anguilla, Bahamas, Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, and Rio, Martinique, Guadalupe, and Virgin Islands. (Dream Warriors, 1991, track 4)

By dedicating a verse of the song to naming islands across the Caribbean and the continent of Africa, Dream Warriors trouble any static understanding of Blackness. Not only does King Lou establish relationships with each of the islands by calling upon them, after saying this song is dedicated to his family and thus extending that familial relationship to each island, as Multiculturalism in Canada would encourage, but also, in naming them each individually, King Lou calls attention to the importance of differentiating Caribbean geographic locations and histories in a way that forces us to go beyond any singular notion of Black being. The Caribbean is not a fetishistic imaginary but a material, geopolitical space, marked by heterogeneity. In addition to naming these geographic locations and declaring their autonomous importance, King Lou also connects them to the image of each playing the game—literally playing Ludi, whose rules vary in each location. Nor is Ludi played only within the Caribbean and Africa. King Lou responds to Capital Q's question of "hey Lou are there other places than islands that play ludi? Why don't you run it down for me" (Dream Warriors, 1991, track 4) thus: "Alright / In Canada they playin' ludi / In the UK they playin' ludi / even up in New York they playin' ludi / I say in the USA they playin ludi […]" (Dream Warriors, 1991, track 4). In naming the often-assumed "centres" last, as though they were on the periphery and Caribbean and Africa were the centres, the Dream Warriors not only locate patterns that Black diasporic peoples have historically followed and continue to do so, but also, by using patois, King Lou articulates the impact these diasporas

have on the Western locations. In locating Caribbeanness both outside and inside of the Canadian nation, this song suggests the importance of diasporic networks and how they generate a nuanced understanding of Black being, thus critiquing dominant discourses and practices that attempt to essentialize Blackness. This practice sets the foundations for more contemporary Black Canadian Popular music as a sonic sampling of Black nowheres. From audiences listening to Ron Nelson's *The Fantastic Voyage*, to transporting Hip Hop from New York to Toronto on cassette tapes, vinyl and videotapes to show other family and community members, to holding MuchMusic accountable to better represent Black Canada, to the first wave of local Hip Hop artists explicitly identifying and expressing the importance of a Black diasporic presence in Canada, artists and consumers alike demonstrate the paradox that Black nowheres as inventive sonic geographies disrespect borders and sound out the global conditions of Black being that are predicated on what Christina Sharpe names the weather of anti-Blackness.

"Everybody Knows it's the T.DOT!": Kardinal Offishall and the Second Wave

The post-1993 era in Hip Hop marked the genre's emergence as a mainstream global popular culture success, both socially and economically. In Canada, second wave Hip Hop artists demonstrated the genre's staying power with their articulation of the distinct experiences of Black Canada. In addition to Black Canadian artists, College radio stations, including York University's CHRY, University of Toronto's CIUT and Ryerson University's CKLN solidified themselves as deeply invested in the local scene, and MuchMusic maintained its status as the premier national television broadcast system with programs such as *DaMix* and *RapCity*, hosted by Master T, whom Dalton Higgins names a Canadian urban music icon as a result of his commitment to the growth and support of Canadian Hip Hop, R&B and Reggae. The recognition

of the impact of Hip Hop in Canada was even noted in academic studies such as Karen Pegley's "'Much' Media: Towards an Understanding of the Impact of Videos on Canadian Pre-Adolescent Identities" (1992) on the effect of music videos on Canadian pre-adolescent youth from Oakville; in this research, she notes that 50% of girls and 70% of boys in the case study identified "rap" as their favourite style (p. 36).

Mark V. Campbell argues the post-1993 second wave of Hip-hop in Canada emphasized the development of a local sound that "ethnographically and lyrically render[s] Toronto a hybridized space that where home could be imagined and invoked" (p. 273). This emphasis on hybridized space in the second wave of Canadian Hip Hop offers "a sustained and in-depth examination and analysis of the spatial partitioning of race and the diverse experiences of being young and black […]" (Foreman, 2000, p. 66), particularly through linguistic and discursive practices that audibly disrupt dominant racial logics that overdetermine Canada as White. However, during this second wave, in which Hip Hop artists such as Rascalz, Choclair, and Kardinal Offishall indisputably sonically mark the uniqueness of Black cultural practices that "texturize how Black people communicate with one another" (Taylor, 2019) in Toronto, they deploy the same linguistic and discursive practices that are often weaponized against Black communities to mark them as less-than/unintelligible, but due to the social and economic rise in valuation of Hip Hop/Urban genres during this era, these same linguistic and discursive practices are used as tools by the city and State to mark it as *interesting*, *desirable* and *cool* in ways that are removed their source in Black communities and become sanitized multicultural celebratory articulations of diversity. For example, a song which is understood as Black Canadian Hip Hop anthem, is evidence of the fungibility of Black Canadian Hip Hop: "BaKardi Slang" by Kardinal Offishall.

In 2001, Kardinal Offishall, through his major record deal with MCA, released his sophomore album, *Quest for Fire: Firestarter Vol. 1*, to international acclaim for the album's distinct Black Canadian Caribbean sound; it also recently won the 2021 inaugural CBC *Canada Listens*[47] competition, cementing the album as a Canadian Hip Hop classic. The first single from the album was "BaKardi Slang," and in a 2016 interview with Anupa Mistry, Offishall stated:

> When I made 'BaKardi Slang,' every single thing about the intent of that record was to change the way that people thought about the city that I came from, and ultimately my country. That's literally why in the hood, 'Everybody knows it's the T dot,' 'cause I wanted everybody to know who we were […] as a person of West Indian heritage, and that has Caribbean lineage, when we went on tour I didn't realize how powerful the song was, until we went into every city across America. All of the Caribbean people would come out of the woodwork saying, Yo, I used to get chased and beat up after school for having an accent, and now because of this song people finally know who I am. (Redbull Music Academy, 2016)

This song is an important intervention because, as Kristin Moriah (2020) notes, "Blackness resounds across the Canadian landscape, but Toronto's Black population sounds differently than Black communities in Halifax, Montreal, Edmonton, or Vancouver" (p. 49). As the home to Canada's greatest number of Black people,[48] Moriah (2020) continues,

[47] The official website defines the competition as "the musical cousin to CBC Canada Reads," wherein five panelists support five albums in a voting competition that they believe the entire nation should hear.

[48] According to Statistics Canada, close to 1.2 million Black people live in Canada as of 2016, where the majority (94.3%) of Black people live in large urban areas, Toronto being home to 36.9% of Canada's Black population. Statistics Canada also reports that there is a shift in the growth and diversity of the Black population of Canada, wherein more than half of the Black population in Canada pre-1981 who immigrated were born in Jamaica and Haiti; however, in the contemporary moment, many Black newcomers are predominantly immigrating from Africa (Stats Can, 2019).

> The conceit of the song is that Toronto's Black community is home to a distinct set of words, sounds, and cultural practices. 'BaKardi Slang' became an international hit. Its success supports the notion that listening to Black Canadian sounds rooted in Toronto prompts an awareness of diasporic particularities that are unavailable in other contexts both nationally and internationally. Black Canada can give rise to the sound of a nuanced Black diasporic protest which emanates from both the periphery of empire and a symbolic centre of white liberalism. (p. 49)

Offishall also notes in a more recent interview with the CBC reflecting on the album released 20 years ago that "[p]art of what made *Quest for Fire* such an influential album was the way it wove the rapper's Jamaican and Canadian identities into his rap style. But 20 years ago, music executives were uncertain about how to market artists like him or where they even fit in." (Power, 2021).

Offishall's position as an artist 20 years later still registers how the Black fungibility of the artist operates in paradoxical ways. It is invoked by the city when mayoral candidates use the moniker "T.O." to market their "coolness" to express a desire to connect with "urban and young people" for their own political purposes; the city uses the initials "T.O." and Blackness to promote travel tourism in brochures; more widely the name/language is appropriated by the public as a way to define the city as a culturally rich and accepting place while simultaneously not supporting in viable ways the artists or the communities these discursive and linguistic practices come from. These practices invoke Hartman's reminder of the danger of "celebratory narratives of the oppressed […] as if there was a space you could carve out of the terrorizing State apparatus in order to exist outside its clutches and forge some autonomy" (1997, pp. 185–186) as they demonstrate, once more, the extensive capacities of property, the fungibility of the

commodity. Even sound is not immune to dispossession. Thus, thinking with Hartman's warnings, I interpret her reminder to resist over-romanticizing the voice as resisting a system full-stop, and rather think through "the ways in which black fungibility renders every space precarious yet mines the various ways that black subjects carve out imaginaries of black intimacy and […] freedom otherwise" (Roach, 2019, p. 128) as a looped dynamic under our current social and political world order. Rather than ascribing a fixed meaning to the sonic practices from Black nowheres, we must listen to the conditions and flights of invention of Black fungibility they make audible.

"From Somalia to the West Indies": K'naan and the Third Wave

In the mid- to late-2000s, Black Canadian artists who ethnically identified as from the Horn of Africa, such as K'naan and Shad, continued to nuance the nation's relationship with anti-Blackness by considering its relationship to different waves of Black communities. For example, K'naan, a Somali Canadian artist, discussed the dynamics of anti-Black experiences of immigrating to Canada in an interview with the CBC:

> Coming to Toronto it was great you know, the textbook things you know. Here was a place where you weren't in a war, great quality of life, a picturesque city, good culture, opportunities, schools...this is like textbook Toronto and it's great but you have to understand that that's relative. Those check boxes and dreams are relative in Canada; they don't belong to everybody equally all the time. And so when you are an immigrant, and a black immigrant with no means [...] you are at the mercy of society and those checkboxes no longer really apply to you. (CBC, 2010)

What K'naan makes apparent in this interview is the failure of the State to ameliorate the suffering of the Black immigrant because doing so would, in effect, rid the power dynamic of the

State over the Black immigrant. Instead, the State's fantasy—that Multiculturalism will save us all—encourages this exploitative dynamic to continue, wherein the Black immigrant must continue to reduce their experience to their suffering in order that the State feel empathy and respond "since the veracity of black testimony is in doubt, the crimes of slavery must not only be confirmed by the unquestionable authorities and other white observers but also must be made visible, whether by revealing the scarred back of the slave—in sort, making the body speak—or through authenticating devices […]" (Hartman, 1997, p. 22). What Hartman's provocation makes decipherable of the State's dynamic in relation to the Black immigrant is that it is only the State's response of witnessing the crisis of the Black immigrant that renders the violence legible on the State's terms. What K'naan offers in this interview, while compelling, is not heard on the register of the experience of the Black immigrant but rather is the State's interpretation of what K'naan is saying. Since K'naan is a successful musician, the conditions he speaks of are taken as emotional sonic articulations that "[…] were dissipated by song and violence was transformed into a display of agency and good cheer" (Hartman, 1997, p. 22). If we listen to songs such as "America" and "Somalia" by K'naan, we can hear the strategic contestations of Black popular culture.

In the song "America," K'naan declares: "I got my own sound / I don't sound like the rest, / and even my attire and my choice of dress, / and not long ago / I don't spoke English" (America, 2009, track 9). K'naan's unique sound, tone, and linguistic practices, including sampling Ethiopian musician with Tlahun Gessesse's song "Lanchi Biye" for the beat and rapping in Somali work, together call out the failures of Western exceptionalism and refuse to engage in the exclusionary anti-Black notions of the assimilated happy Black immigrant. The opening 15 seconds of the song make space for the sample of Tlahun Gessesse's Ethiopian-Jazz

song “Lanchi Biye,” which is originally sung in Amharic and tells a story about tirelessly travelling through the jungles, valleys, States, and so on, seeking his love that he has given up everything for and asks not to give up on him as he continues journey to her. I read K’naan’s choice to sample this song in terms of the Black diasporic condition, particularly of those of the Horn of Africa who, since the 1990s, have made their way to the West in higher numbers due to violence and civil unrest. K’naan flips the context of the song in his version to voice the Black immigrant experience in America. Rapping in Somali, K’naan rhymes “Remember us fleeing? / Searching for Peace? / In America, none was found” (America, 2009, track 9). Like the Dream Warriors, K’naan voices the disappointment and melancholy of how Black dreams of freedom in the West are deferred because of anti-Blackness. Titling the song “America” is also important, not to disassociate this anti-Black violence as happening outside of Canada, but as a way of understanding the Americas as part of the same project. K’naan’s choice to rap in Somali also demonstrates the insurgency of Black fungibility, as this song was released on K’naan’s 2009 major record label-backed album *Troubadour*. The music industry would profit from a majority non-Black audience enjoying the album and feeling the pleasure and pain of K’naan’s articulations of Black immigrant suffering and “misinterpret[t] these songs as evidence of satisfaction” (Hartman, 1997, p. 48) of having transcended these experiences due to his rise in fame and wealth as a global Hip Hop star. However, what I suggest rapping in Somali offers is a barrier against a too-close intimacy with folks who cannot register the lyrics as melancholy. It is the “opacity of these sorrowful and half-articulate songs [that] perplexes and baffles those within and without” (Hartman, 1997, p. 48) the Black immigrant experience. This refusal to silence Black experiences in Canada that artists like K’naan present in the early- to mid-2000s reminds listeners of the creativity and ingenuity of Black cultural production where artists find new ways

to sound experiences of racial-spatial and structural inequalities. This creativity and ingenuity continue to develop and enrich the work of Black Hip Hop artists from Toronto.

"Thank Me Later": The Toronto Sound as Diasporic Invention

"I care about you fam" –*Stay Alive,* Mustafa

This chapter thus far has examined the ways in which Black Canadian sonic practices voice the dynamics of the complicated relations the nation has with Blackness through the clash of "the Canadian music scene sound" and "The Toronto Sound" in policy, the cultural industries, audience reception, and a close analysis of artist's songs from each era of Canadian Hip Hop. Here I return to analyze where this chapter began: "The New Toronto Sound."

While on a writing break from this chapter, needing space to clear my head from being in a blessed and frustrating position working and living from home during COVID-19, I went on a drive and listened to a playlist of songs that are examples of "The New Toronto Sound." As expected, a few Drake songs were on the list, and admittedly I listened to "Marvin's Room" on a repeat, a few times thinking of Bull's (2007) claim that "the uses of [sound communication] technologies in automobiles enable users to transform the site of their experience into a technologized 'sanctuary'" (p. 107). While driving and listening to "Marvin's Room," the combination of the emotional vulnerability and messiness of the song, the enveloping slow 164bpm, halved to 84bpm, and clarity of hearing one of the lines in the song where Drake States "I'm lucky that you picked up / I'm lucky that you stayed on / I need someone to put this weight on" (Marvin's Room, 2011, track 6), I could not help but think about the weight of Black experiences in Canada as a result of the strategic contestation of articulating Blackness *here*. In listening to "Marvin's Room," and the affective weight of the song, I began thinking about how

an artist like Drake, who has experienced mass success and is credited with popularizing The New Toronto Sound, is only possible in the now here present-day space of Toronto. As a half-African American half-Ashkenazi Jewish man from Toronto, who grew up primarily with his White mother, he does not come from the communities that predominantly comprise Black Canadians (African Canadians, Caribbeans, Continental Africans), and his voice and early sonic style interrupted common perceptions of who and what "authentic" Hip Hop artistry was. Like many of his Canadian Hip Hop predecessors, Drake found success by going to the US first and returning to Canada and building a brand around being a Black Canadian. While he may not have created The New Toronto Sound, his use of this melancholic, slow, chilly, weighted music has caught international attention and shifted not only global perceptions of Blackness in Canada, but also made it audible. I say this not to romanticize the inventiveness of The New Toronto Sound but rather to attend to how Black sonic practices open up regimes of knowledge "and [how] their intimacies [have a] close relationship to the alternative forms of being and knowledge practices, produced, and projected by peoples marginalized by the textual, visual and racial regimes of Eurocentric capitalism modernity" (James, 2021, p. 3). I assert that the popularity of the melancholic, slow, chilly, weight of The New Toronto Sound not only enunciates the conditions of Black fungibility of *the now here,* it also resonates internationally as it renders the weather of anti-Blackness as the condition of the world audible.

It has been a decade since the release of *Take Care*, an album that made way for the signature The New Toronto Sound. It has dominated the global popular music industry, and inevitably has become mainstream leading many to attempt to duplicate it, but as Phil Whitmer notes, "the Toronto Sound is more than just a series of 'dark, slow, moody' boxes for American producers to check off. There is raw feeling here, as well as laptop wizardry that few can touch"

(2017). Despite not being able to fully duplicate this sound, it inevitably has been further exploited, and as part of the popular culture realm, new sounds will continue to be invented. Mustafa, an artist from Regent Park in Toronto released his debut album *When Smoke Rises* at the top of 2021, a further layer to this reading of how "The Canadian Sound" and "The New Toronto Sound" are perceived as antithetical to each other. In an interview with cultural critic and scholar Huda Hassan (2021), Mustafa discusses his choice of creating a Folk album dedicated to his childhood friend, rapper Jahvante Sheldon Smart, otherwise known as the up-and-coming Hip Hop artist Smoke Dawg, who was murdered in the summer of 2018. Mustafa States, "I always kind of delegated folk music to white communities. Oh, like that's what they do. But I appreciate it so much. And I knew that it had something in it that I thought was so rich and powerful: the narrative ability, the song writing, the poetry of it, you know what I mean?" (2021).

What I find so interesting about this album is how Mustafa maintains the affect of The New Toronto Sound in his Folk album endeavour to explore "the social and political conditions that he's responding to in his music" (Hassan, 2021). Mustafa has witnessed the major changes in Toronto as "gentrification increased, the city's affordability plummeted, poor neighbourhoods became sought after by developers, and inner-city violence rose exponentially" (Hassan, 2021), factors which shaped the concepts of the album: death and grief in Toronto. Mustafa states in the interview, "The government systems dictate how some people are gonna live and some are gonna die […] it's so difficult to come to grips with. All the deaths that are happening…there is a greater system at play that leads us to the decisions that we're making" (Hassan, 2021). In Mustafa's interview with Hassan, lyrics such as the chorus, "All of these tribes / and all of this street signs / none of them will be yours or mine / But I'll be your empire / Just stay alive, stay

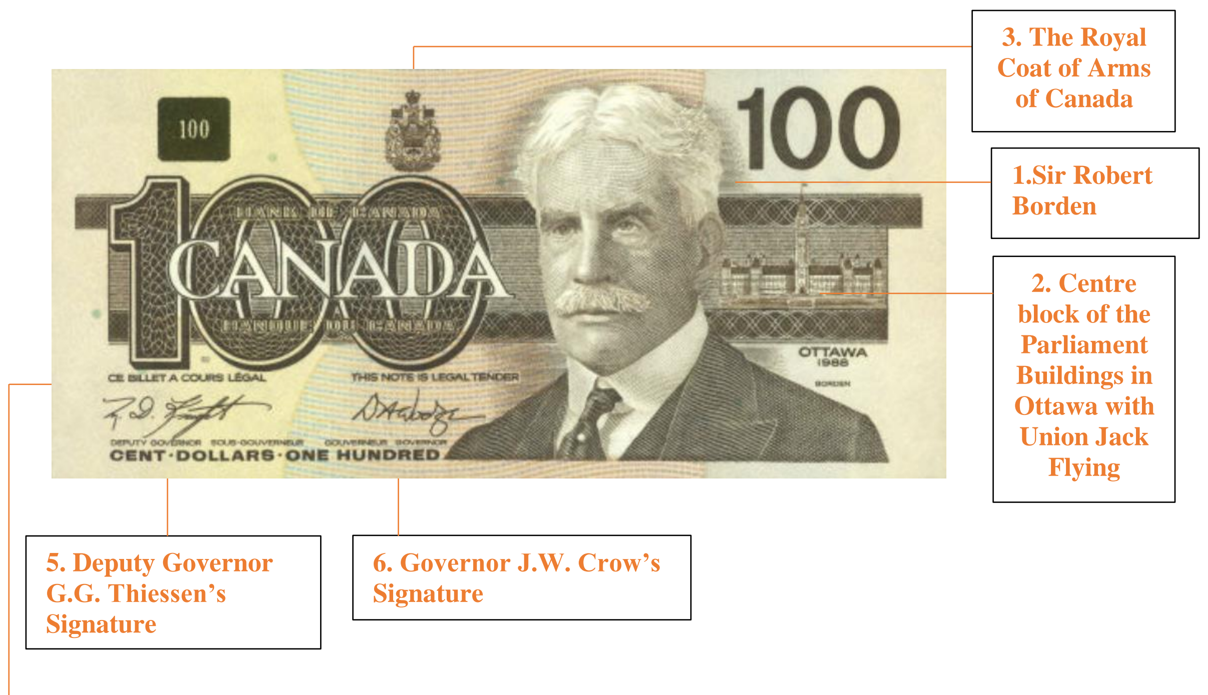
alive, stay alive" ("Stay Alive," 2021, track one) voice the extreme suffering and violence of anti-Blackness in Canada. Mustafa's articulation of how this space does not belong to us clarifies how anti-Black violence is rooted in a prohibition to civic belonging. Blackness is refused entry into the system of civic legibility—"all of these street signs." Whether at the hands of the State, or by the gang violence that emerges in the wake of the organized abandonment of the State (and so too is a form of state violence), Black life is precarious here. Rather than investing in these social and political systems that are based in our death let us care for one and another so we can "stay alive /stay alive / stay alive" ("Stay Alive," 2021, track one).

Mustafa's three-fold call to stay alive as the lyrical structure of the chorus indexes a need to continue to stay with the ask to stay alive. Sustaining life in the wake of slavery, *the now here* of Black nowheres, is never simple, easy, or given. We must, as Mustafa calls, continuously work and return to the care and work to stay alive/stay alive/stay alive. Perhaps the choice of voicing the conditions of Black life in Canada to Folk sounds, which are legible to the State as "Canadian," might gain the ear of the State and public to register the problems of anti-Blackness in this place, not for the sake of integration, because as Dionne Brand states, "[b]elonging does not interest me. I had once thought that it did. Until I examined the underpinnings" (2001, p. 85); rather than belonging, transformation, but rather instead to highlight and *know* the violence *here* that has been disavowed, the structure of suffering central to the formation of the nation-state, the sonic practices it has fungibly exploited in service of racial capital, and then to gesture to its inevitable demise. If Mustafa will "be your empire," then "Stay Alive" sounds like what Fred Moten calls the refusal of what has been refused: care under conditions of White empire.

"Nice for What?": The Toronto Sound Remixing Capital Flows

Figure 7: 0-100 Amer Mohammed Art Piece (2019).

In Figure 9, visual/graphic artist Amer Mohammed's piece "0 to 100" (2019) tunes into much of what this chapter works to register. Amer's remixing of the Canadian one hundred dollar bill of the 1986 *Birds of Canada Series* of Canadian banknotes (Fig. 10) visually centres questions of power, access, space, and the value of Black Canadian cultural production.



4.Ce Billet a Cours Legal/This note is Legal Tender

1. Canadian Goose flying over generic landscape

Figure 8: 1986 Birds of Canada Series 100.00 Banknote (front and back)

On its front, the viewer is met with the direct gaze of Drake rather than that of Sir Robert Borden, a former Prime Minister of Canada. Placing Drake as the central figure on the largest Canadian currency note in place of the former Prime Minister acknowledges the key role Drake has played as the face and early innovator of The New Toronto Sound and globalizing Black Canadian Urban music in the realm of popular culture. In addition to making Drake the central figure of Black cultural production flows on the bill, Mohammed replaces the image of the centre block of Parliament buildings from Ottawa with a Union Jack to that of the skyline of Toronto, again respatializing the centre of power from its the official space of Parliament in Ottawa to the city of Toronto, which not only is the main city in the country in terms of the revenue it generates for the Canadian music industry but is also the home of the largest number of Black folks in Canada and is the hub of innovative Black Cultural producers. In so doing, Mohammed's piece exacts an imaginative labour that destabilizes the State as the central power and determiner of value (culturally and economically) and attends to the fact that Black cultural

production, more specifically music, *now here*, is of the highest value and should be recognized as such. Toronto is backgrounded behind Drake, and so Blackness precedes Toronto's visualization. This is not the Toronto of Bay Street, a center of global finance. This is the Toronto of Afrofest, Caribana, the Toronto made possible by a Black presence that is always-already indexed by the Toronto Sound, metonymically figured through Drake. Additionally, Mohammed decentres the State in his piece by replacing the coat of arms with Drake's OVO (October's Very Own) label logo, the owl, tying back into this *Birds of Canada* series.

The choice of the bill itself provokes questions too about the multiple valences of fungibility. In placing Drake on the bill, Mohammed visualizes Drake's function within the material-symbolic economy of racial capitalism that extracts cultural and financial value from Drake while under-resourcing Black artists. Drake's circulation as currency draws attention to the circulation of his music, and of Black music more broadly, under the contexts of anti-Black fungibility. Drake is literally made to consolidate value for the State. But just as King notes that fungibility also produces the conditions for fugitivity, so too does Mohammed's piece express this dual valence. Interesting to note in this context are the many visual mechanisms by which Mohammed displaces the State (and thus racial capital) as the central organizing metric of value. One such primary mechanism is the replacement of the Deputy Governor and Governor signatures that validate the currency as legal tender with those of the artists, Amer Mohammed and Drake, displacing sovereign authority from the legal tender of the bill. Although this piece can be read as counterfeit currency in relation to the State's valuation of money, Amer, one Black Canadian cultural producer, recognizes and validates another Black Canadian cultural producer as valuable beyond the logics of the State, a kind of currency of the undercommons. In this sense, this piece offers a statement of the value *of the Black now here.*

Even though Black cultural production is illegible/undervalued/misunderstood/violently used by the State, Black cultural producers determine their own value, legitimize their own work as rude insurgent practices of Black fungibility that insists Black Canadians form generative spaces to express the nuances of Black being.

CHAPTER / TRACK THREE

SILENCE: Africville Soundscapes as Chorus

> *[…] community is not just geography. Rather, community is about families and friendships; it is about shared stories of joy and hardships; about struggle and loss; but most importantly, community is about love.* (Bonner, 2021, p. 7)

Community, Relation, Love

AFRICVILLE

THE SPIRIT LIVES

Photo: Earl Conrad

Some say that if you stand at

once 800 strong, was "bulldozed

they once shared.

Figure 9: Clipping of Magazine article from Halifax Public Library Archives.

Some say that if you stand at the entrance of Halifax's Seaview Memorial Park, and you listen very carefully, you can still hear the muted shouts of children at play, feel the rhythm of the train that slashed through the backyards and lives of families with names the likes of Carvery, Mantley, Dixon and Brown, and see the life that reverberates from the Seaview

> African United Baptist Church for which the park was named. ("Africville the Spirit Lives," Feb.March 1991, p. 10)

Going through newspaper and magazine clipping archives on a research trip to Halifax in 2019, I found a loose page that contained both the image and quotation above. While reading the story that accompanied the image, I was disappointed by the distortion of the photocopy but pleasantly surprised by the opening paragraph of the article that made Africville and its residents audible in multiple registers. *Children at play, rhythm of the train, names like Carvery, Mantley, Dixon and Brown, the Seaview Baptist Church, the ocean.* Reading the image without the accompanying words was extremely difficult. Due to prior knowledge, I could make sense of the focal point of the image as the Seaview Memorial Park sundial base but could not make sense of the inscription or the setting. Without prior knowledge or the writing, the image appears to be a generic space with an aesthetically designed marker. However, through the accompanying written piece, specifically its attention to sound, this generic space is transformed into a specific place imbued with different registers of value that were beyond whatever the sundial's inscription offer:

> [T]he muted shouts of children at play, the rhythm of the train that slashed through the backyards and lives of families with names the likes of Carvery, Mantley, Dixon and Brown, and see the life that reverberates from the Seaview African United Baptist Church for which the park was name. ("Africville the Spirit Lives," Feb.March 1991, p. 10).

This affective sonic encounter signals the intimacy of soundscapes. By closely listening to them, soundscapes can nuance our experience, knowledge, and inquiries into relations with landscapes and values. Already in this encounter, at least imaginatively, we can tune into the sounds of an intergenerational community, the richness of its relationships, its spirituality, as

well as the State interdictions that always-already circumscribe the contours of "possibility in the space of enclosure" (Hartman, 2019, p. 33). Concentrating our listening, we can hear that the community, it is implied, has been removed; nonetheless, the community's sonic practices of everyday life persist in the soundscape and can be witnessed through 'hermeneutic refraction' (Fuentes, 2016, p. 128). We can hear the intense forms of intimacy, who made them, how they were made, where they were made and bring along our own knowledge of intimate relations that *feel* what this place sounds like. *A different way of knowing here*.

Ghallager et. al inquire: "a fundamental organizing principle within geography, 'landscape' has been most thoroughly conceived of and attended to along visual lines of inquiry, to the point where geographers have been forced to ask: are the visual surface qualities of landscape, as perceived by a physically distant observer, all landscape is?" (2017, p. 623). My reading of the preceding image and quotation responds to Ghallager et. al's (2017) question by proposing a deeper engagement, one that reveals "how we imagine ways of knowing that past […] not yet past, in the present" (Sharpe, 2016, p. 13). Applying a Black Studies theoretical framing to Soundscape Studies' methodological approaches reveals the palimpsestic quality of place. Employing this approach insists that "[…] sitting with, a gathering, and a tracking of phenomena that disproportionately and devastatingly affect Black peoples any and everywhere we are tracking the ways we resist, rupture, and disrupt that immanence and imminence aesthetically and materially" (Sharpe, 2016, p. 13).

While Michael Southworth first coined the term *soundscape* in 1968 in his work, "[…] using characterizations of blind, Deaf, and wheelchair-based experiences to build his theory of sonic space" (Sterne, 2021, p. 13), Canadian composer and academic R. Murray Schafer is widely known for popularizing soundscape studies in founding The World Soundscape Project in

Vancouver at Simon Fraser University in 1969. Schafer defines *soundscapes* as: "[…] any acoustic field of study, we may speak of a musical composition as a soundscape, or a radio program as a soundscape or an acoustic environment as a soundscape […] a soundscape consists of events *heard* not objects *seen*" (1994, pp. 7–8). Schafer's proposal of soundscape studies as "[…] the middle ground between science, society and the arts" (1994, p. 4) offers a fruitful intervention in the methodological limits of visual/"geographic studies of enclosure" (McKittrick, 2019) by enabling a textured approach of studying sonic environments. However, soundscape studies, like all fields, are impacted by the social, cultural, and political values of its practitioners. Schafer points out that much of the work done in his book *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World* (1994) is a result of his work with The World Soundscape Project.[49] Mitchell Akiyama's (2015) quarrels with TWSP's "Soundscapes of Canada" project because of "[…] what [sounds] it leaves out, [what] voices [are] silent and silenced" (2015); his intervention encourages my reading of Black Studies theoretical approaches to soundscape studies. Akiyama's (2015) poignant observation that TWSP's focus on preserving and promoting the nation's sonic heritage as "synechdochal with the land, with the nation's vast, largely uninhabited expanses that stretched all the way to the North Pole. Canadians were (or ought to be) a rugged, self-reliant people—stoic pioneers who shunned cosmopolitan (read ethnic) urban centers, opting for a quiet life in harmony with the country's settler heritage" (2015) offers a limited, settler-colonial perspective on what the nation sounds like through positively highlighting, paradoxically, settlers *quiet harmonious lives* on the land, discounting the absolute violence and genocide of Indigenous peoples to create Canada as a State. Dylan Robinson's *Hungry Listening: Resonant Theory for Indigenous Sound Studies*

[49] I will refer to The World Soundscape Project (TWSP) with its shorthand from this point on.

(2020) offers language—Robinson coins the term *hungry listening* (2020)—to help think through encounters between Indigenous and Western art music, which I apply to think about projects such as TWSP and settler listening practices more widely. Robinson (2020) defines *hungry listening*:

> As a form of perception, 'hungry listening' is derived from two Halq'emèylem words: shxwelítemelh (the adjective for settler or white person's methods/things) and xwélalà:m (the word for listening). shxwelítemelh comes from the word xwelítem (white settler) and more precisely means 'starving person'. The word emerges from the historical encounter between xwélmexw (Stó:lō people) and the largest influx of settlers to the territory during the gold rush. In 1858, thousands of xwelítem (largely men) arrived in a bodily state of starvation, and also brought with them a hunger for gold […] I use shxwelítemelh and xwélalà:m individually and together throughout the book in order to address positionalities of the listening encounter (how we listen as Indigenous, settler, and variously positioned subjects), but also to guide this book's larger questions around the ontological and epistemological stakes of what listening is. I place them in an admittedly uncomfortable pairing between Indigenous and settler orientations toward the world. (p. 2)

Daniel Coleman (2006) reminds us "[…] that White Canadian culture is obsessed, and organized by its obsession, with the problem of its own civility […] and that the central organizing problematic of this endeavour has been the formation and elaboration of a specific form of whiteness based on a British model of civility. By means of this conflation of whiteness with civility, whiteness has been naturalized as the norm for English Canadian cultural identity" (p. 5). While Coleman (2006) turns to literature, cultural history and popular texts to understand how this norm became naturalized as acceptable in Canada, Akiyama's (2015) and Robinson's

(2020) turn to sound, sonic practices and listening as modes to reveal the Canadian State's use of listening strategies to "civilize" Indigenous peoples to fit Western standards—for example, through forcibly separating Indigenous youth from their families, sending them to residential schools, cutting off cultural ties such as linguistic and musical practices such as singing traditional songs[50]—adds texture to how we can understand the nuances of violence of Western ontologies. In addition to our understanding and knowledge of settler colonial logics of encounter that violent, Akiyama (2015) and Robinson (2020) also afford provide us with Indigenous listening practices that are anticolonial, unsettling and *slow down hungry listening.* Robinson (2020) notes, Moving beyond hungry listening toward anticolonial listening practices requires that the "fevered" pace of consumption for knowledge resources be placed aside in favor of new temporalities of wonder disoriented from antirelational and nonsituated settler colonial positions of certainty" (p. 53), thus insisting that we not only critique settled and hungry forms of listening; but also to "[…] find ways to give over such power that moves beyond forms of inclusion" (Robinson, 2020, p. 232) and insists on relationality.

Thinking with Akiyama's (2015) and Robinson's (2020) propositions about unsettled listening and slowing down hungry listening, I consider how registering soundscapes through these analytics has the potential to nuance our understanding of resonances of relations across the multiple registers of Black life in Canada—how they are heard, felt, registered as dynamic processes. Employing the methodological approaches of soundscape studies with the theoretical approaches of opacity, love and care from Black Studies (which will be explored later in the chapter) frame this chapter's exploration of the intimacies of "calculated master narratives at the

[50] Robinson (2020) begins *Hungry Listening* with an epigraph quoting R. Murray Schafer's disdain of Inuit throat singing practices and claiming that "The Eskimos are such an unmusical race that the composer really has to wring his material to make it musically presentable" (p. 1).

surface of the record, [and rather tune into] the sounds that erupt from the depths" of place (Skeehan, 2013, para. 6). In this chapter, place is on the edge of the Atlantic Ocean—Africville. The soundscape practices I tune into in this chapter amplify the complex relations of Black being that refuse to fix our understanding of Black life in ways that are antithetical to Black being. They rather are interested in the dynamics of relation where "creative negotiation and imagination" (McKittrick, 2019) are central to producing Black social life, despite the racial violence that underpins its existence. It is, in this sense, an enquiry into the ways Black people "work at joy" and make "livable moments, spaces, and places in the midst of all that was unlivable" (Sharpe, 2016, p. 4), an insistence to *know here* differently.

On Opacity

How can you communicate with what you don't understand? (Glissant, 2010*,* p. 189)

As I write and think with an historic Black Nova Scotian community's history and present relations with the State, I wonder what it means to step outside of the practice of thinking about Black being and relations to place through Western knowledge systems that demand we continuously loop the cycle of racial violence on Black people (McKittrick, 2016). Rather, I suggest we register practices of relation through what Edouard Glissant insists as "the right to opacity" (2010, p. 194). For Glissant, the demand for the right to opacity refuses the ways in which theories of difference in Western thought "[…] still contrive to reduce things to the transparent" (2010, p. 189). What Glissant points to here is "[…] transparency as a problem rather than the unmitigated social or political good the term has come to evoke in an array of contemporary discourses" (Simek, 2015, p. 363), transparency is violent in its reduction of difference to the knowable/legible. In Western thought, since at least the 18th century—which

Simek (2015) notes from Mehrpouya and Djeli's observations—transparency has functioned as a process of understanding that is grounded in a false universality that the project of Enlightenment utilizes to understand difference through a hierarchical imposition that reduces the Other to reinforce the West's perception of its superiority, power, and domination over Others (Simek, 2015). Thus, transparency enables a kind of brutal economics of Western thought wherein everything has a crude and calculable value. Glissant makes this dynamic clear in his reading of the requirements of "understanding" from Western thought as a process where "[…] in order to understand and thus accept you, I have to measure your solidity with the ideal scale providing me with grounds to make comparisons and, perhaps, judgements, I have to reduce" (2010, p. 190).

What Glissant offers is an approach that counters the brutality of Western thought's emphasis on violent "[…] projects of transmutation" (2010, p. 193) that reduce and enclose Otherness as an oppressive knowability of transparency. Instead, Glissant suggests we open ourselves to "opacities [that] coexist and converge, weaving fabrics. [We] must focus on the texture of the weave and not on the nature of its components" (2010, p. 190). Glissant's emphasis on texture and convergence refuses the limitation of the oppressive knowability of transparency and insists a different figuration of value by insisting an understanding of the poetics of relationality. Doing so demands we "[...] think about transparency and secrecy not as fixed entities locked in opposition to one another, but as modes of relating that can be either productive of repressive" (Simek, 2015, p. 365).

Opacity asserts the right,

> […] to refuse to be known solely on the terms of the colonizer and for the colonizer's benefit […] opacity appears not as an anti-rational mode of thought *tout court*, but rather

> ‘as a medium that resists the light of (Western) understanding in order to preserve diversity and advance exchanges based not upon hierarchy but upon networks that abolish the primacy of any one centre of understanding’. (Simek, 2015, p. 366)

Glissant’s concept of opacity opens a way of reading Black soundscapes in Halifax not only as aesthetic illustrations of Black nowheres that are limited responses and critiques of the State, which would insist on rationality/a type of legibility, but also as a love ethic (hooks, 2001) that, I suggest, is a form of poetics substantiated by practices of care that affirm Black being and knowing here differently. Thus, opacity provides a capacious space to pre-empt the brutal empiricism (Teed, forthcoming) of anti-Black knowledge systems, “the list, the breathless numbers, the absolutely economic” (McKittrick, 2014), and offers a site for living and thinking anew. I take seriously what Chamoiseau and Glissant suggest (Simek, 2015), when Chamoiseau states:

> We’re facing a rationality that has forgotten about the poetic […] if you speak of conviviality, fraternity, love, touch, flavour—everything that adds spice to life and to creativity—in political discourse it makes you seem frivolous. People prefer to stay within very prosaic parameters. What Glissant and I have tried to do in most of our work is to reinstate the forgotten, poetic dimension of the political—that which organizes the city of men and allows people to come into their own. (Simek, 2015, pp. 367–368)

What Glissant makes possible is shifting how we position our reading and understanding of relation to the perspective of how communities survive and invent themselves, “[to] the thing that would bring us together forever and make us permanently distinctive” (Glissant, 2010, p. 194). This perspective insists “[…] the poetic [opacity]—that which in its thickness and creative mutability cannot be reduced to calculable transactions—serves as a resource, as a guarantor of

vitality and creativity and as a barrier against the homogenizing forces of economic rationality" (Simek, 2015, p. 368). Thus, through opacity's refusal to submit to brutal calculability, a relation of ongoing mean-making, attention, and care is called for.

As I will argue, the love ethic and practices of care operate as opacity in the soundscapes as *felt sound*. They both are generative for relations in Black nowheres, and irreducible to calculable knowable transactions. They provide a space of shelter and refuge, respite and renewal under a context of brutal enclosure. In the words of Glissant, the love ethic and practices of care *thicken* these relations that refuse the violence of transparency.

On Love and Care

Glissant's concept of opacity is mobilized in Black feminist scholars' work on love politics. Here the work of Jennifer C. Nash's "Practicing Love: Black Feminism, Love-Politics, and Post-Intersectionality" (2013) and Keguro Macharia's "Black (Beyond) Negation" (2018) are fruitful for revealing the overlooked legacy of way-making Black feminist writing on love politics and care afford us in understanding the textures of "how we are known to ourselves and to each other, the ways we invent to know ourselves and each other, all while surviving methods and disciplines that absent us" (Macharia, 2018), which I register as the knowledge otherwise that Black soundscape practices in Halifax make possible.

Macharia's (2018) observation that "[t]here might be something *theoretically uninteresting* about care [as] it is feminized work [and is] so devalued," coupled with Nash's (2013) reading of "[…] black feminism's affective love politics as a departure from the kind of political work that black feminism is often associated with: *identity politics*" (Nash, 2018, p. 3), point to the violence of legibility that Western thought demands of disciplinary work. Black Studies at its

foundation is an inter- or even anti-disciplinary endeavour, and, as Glissant warned us of the danger of fixing difference, Nash warns us of the danger of reducing Black feminisms to the singular contribution of intersectionality as a form of liberalist identity work. Nash does so not to accuse intersectionality of failure, but rather points us to Jasbir Puar's (2005) critique of how,

> Intersectionality—at least as it is currently practiced—is too easily adapted into liberal regimes of inclusivity, too easily works as a strategy of "difference management," and too often gets taken up as 'a tool of diversity management, and a mantra of liberal multiculturalism….[which] colludes with the disciplinary apparatus of the state—census, demography, racial profiling, surveillance—in that 'difference' is encased within a structural container that simply wishes the messiness of identity into a formulaic grid'. (Puar 2005, p. 128, cited in Nash, 2013, p. 13)

Nash reads Black feminist love politics as "frictional" (Puar, 2005) to intersectionality to disrupt how White Feminist studies limits Black feminist thought's contribution to identity work in ways that "[…] remai[n] fixed, legible, and knowable, even as scholars attend to how context shifts our experiences of ourselves and the structures of domination that constrain us" (2013, p. 7), a view later echoed in Macharia's call for *black (beyond negation)*.

Macharia's critique of identity politics emphasizes the exhaustion of producing Black Studies work in the legible dynamic of negation or resistance; Macharia goes as far to suggest "how impoverished we are when we think representation *must* be either positive or negative and how dangerous it is to think of many unhumaning representations as *merely* negative" (2018). What Glissant (2010), Nash (2013) and Macharia (2018) implore us to do is think within the dynamic of relations that are opaque and inventive. Nash's (2013) reading of Black feminist love-politics post-intersectionality and Macharia's (2018) reading of possibility in Christina

Sharpe's notions of care transcend the limits of representation that the academy desires of Black Studies. Love-politics and care attend to "a gap between the values [Western thought] claim[s] to hold and their willingness to do the work of connecting thought and action, theory and practice to realize these values and thus create a more just society" (hooks, 2001, p. 90). Nash (2013) turns to bell hooks, who argues that "commitment to a love ethic transforms our lives by offering a different set of values to live by" (2001, p. 88). For hooks (2001), commitment to a love ethic is to think of love—not just in the romantic sense, which hooks and Nash both offer as one of the reasons why there is so much confusion and difficulty around thinking about love "as an action rather than a feeling [as] one way in which anyone using the word in this manner automatically assumes accountability and responsibility" (p. 13). To practice a love ethic responsibly hooks insists "we utilize all the dimensions of love—"care, commitment, trust, responsibility, respect, and knowledge" (hooks, 2001, p. 227)—in our everyday lives. hooks (2001) also reminds us "we can successfully do this only by cultivating awareness. Being aware enables us to critically examine our actions to see what is needed so that we can give care, be responsible, show respect, and indicate a willingness to learn" (p. 94).

While hooks' definition of the dimensions of love might be understood in liberalist reductionist ways, like Glissant's reading of transparency, hooks' explanation that "when love is present the desire to dominate and exercise power cannot rule the day" (2001, p. 98) counters the values of Western Thought. I suggest we think of hooks' dimensions of love in a similar fashion to how Simek (2015) reads opacity's open-endedness—that the dimensions of love are "[…] incalculable, that is, as irreducible to a formulaic analysis and resolution" (Simek, 2015, p. 369). Love and care are not transparent, even given the particularities of hooks' dimensions of love, nor are love and care so abstract that they are universalized actions. I suggest that love and care,

as forms of opacity, are "[…] a stubborn density, of something layered, something partially penetrable but with a mind of its own [they have the] ability to shift assumptions and feelings so that new modes of relating, new criteria of evaluation can be developed" (Simek, 2015, p. 372). Thinking this centrality of opacity, and particularly of love and care as forms of opacity, I am interested in how Black sound and sonic practices, which are at their core about relation, operate in and of Africville's soundscapes.

Through Glissant (2010), Nash (2013), Macharia (2018), Sharpe (2016), and hooks (2001), I ask what it means to know Black community representations and practices not as resistance, which grounds relations of Black life in negation, but rather as examples of how love and care are central actions that inform and invent otherwise ways of being through an analysis of Dana Inkster's film *Welcome to Africville*, the *Walking Gottingen* soundwalk, and Eddie Carvery's longstanding protest for Africville. In closely examining these texts and practices through their use of sound, I explore how they each do not discount violence, but rather are invested in how "we come to know ourselves, especially when many—if not most—of the methods designed to generate knowledge are indifferent, if not actively inimical, to us" (Macharia, 2018).

"Donut: Time of the Heart"

In a program that brought together Black scholars to think/work through the possibilities of Black Studies in Canada, we were asked to offer a song that connects to our research to consider how sound offers us a different relation with which to work. Participant Nataleah Hunter-Young (2021) played J. Dilla's "donut: time of the heart," from the album "Donuts"; in her subsequent discussion, Hunter-Young (2021) spoke of the circulation of images of Black

death online, the violence they perpetuate in time through non-stop loops, and how in this particular song she hears and thinks through what it would mean to consider how Black sounds/sonic life offer us loops of love/care and more. This way of reading how the sonic loops love and care has stuck with me. I am reminded of Simek's (2015) interpretion of Glissant's discussion of the entanglement of opacity and interpretation, where "opacity's dizzying effect impels us to *engage*. It confronts us with an 'insistent presence that we are incapable of not experiencing'." (2015, p. 369); every time attempts are made to make Black being intelligible, inevitably the attempts are used as violence against it; however, the opacity of Black life counters absolute knowability. As I work through this chapter, I dwell on the many ways "black people have always used interdisciplinary methodologies to explain, explore, and story the world, because thinking and writing and imagining across a range of texts, disciplines, histories, and genres unsettles suffocating and dismal and insular racial logics" (McKittrick, 2021, p. 4). If we were to tune into the loops/repetitions/multilayered registers of Black Scotian sounds that continue to be dizzying loops of love/care/relation/community and livingness, how would listening to these intimate and open sounds allow us to know and engage Black being differently?

> Some say that if you stand at the entrance of Halifax's Seaview Memorial Park, and you listen very carefully, you can still hear the muted shouts of children at play, feel the rhythm of the train that slashed through the backyards and lives of families with names the likes of Carvery, Mantley, Dixon and Brown, and see the life that reverberates from the Seaview African United Baptist Church for which the park was named. ("Africville the Spirit Lives," Feb.March 1991, p. 10)

Revisiting the quotation above reminds us that everything that happened is right here for us to hear, if we tune into the opaque practices in this place, tune-in in a way that is "not about making a site knowable [but rather to encourage] processes that move in and out of clarity [that] promp[ts]/encourage us to share learn and teach. A lens to navigate and notice twists shifts [that *are not] a badge of obscurity [but are] a care from having experienced everything*" ("Dear April," 2021). To register listening to Black and Africvillean sonic practices of love and care beyond Black negation, the space of violently absented presence, I consider what the work of widely accepted narratives of Africville and official archives make of Black experiences in Halifax.

Narratives of Africville: Registering The Chorus of Otherwise

Africville was a self-sufficient Black community, located on the shore of the Bedford Basin in Halifax, Nova Scotia. It was first recorded in 1761 and grew to be inhabited by approximately 400 people, comprising eighty families in the early-20th century. Originally, the community was composed of Black Loyalists who fought for the British in the American War of Independence in exchange for their freedom and a promise of land. Upon Britain's loss, the Loyalists were mostly shipped to Nova Scotia to begin their newly freed lives. However, upon arrival, they were quickly refused the land grants promised, as well as access to gainful employment. Thus, Africville formed on the 'periphery' of Halifax as a response to the anti-Black violence Black Loyalists experienced in Canada, while fleeing the anti-Black violence they experienced in the United States.

This history of violence has, however, often been erased, and the infrastructural development of Africville (particularly historically) was voraciously critiqued by White settler

Haligonians, who considered Africville to be a slum. The social perception of Africville as "tucked away in a corner of the city, relatively invisible, and thought of as a 'shack town'" (Clairmont, 1999, p. 11) or "slum" failed to perceive how "intimate life unfolds in the streets" (Hartman, 2019, p. 6) of Africville. Former residents often refer to the Seaview African United Baptist Church, which first opened to the community in 1849, as "the beating heart of Africville" (Cooper et. al, 2021). Many of the key life social events that offer insight into communal relations are tied to the Seaview Baptist Church and are detailed through their sonic characteristics. Events such as weddings, funerals, Sunday services and baptisms that were led by singing processions to the Bedford Basin are referenced throughout archival collections on Africville.

While the rich dynamics of social life occurred within Africville, the city of Halifax continued to render Africville an undesirable place. The "problem" of Africville was initially dealt with by the city through, on the surface, a paradoxical combination of organized abandonment and financial extraction, such as collecting taxes from Africville's residences without providing services such as paved roads, running water or sewers. In addition, the city located undesirable and even toxic infrastructure in Africville, such as a prison, an infectious disease hospital, and waste management services, as well as the approval of a route for the Canadian National Railway cutting through Africville (Cooper et. al, 2021).

By the 1960s, many White Haligonians, as well as city planners and politicians, referred to Africville as a slum. Seeing Africville as a "slum" facilitated public acceptance of Africville's destruction, part of a "broader slum-clearance program between 1964 and 1969 despite clear and vocal resistance of Africville residence themselves" (Rutland, 2018, p. 9). The city maintained it was improving the lives of the residents of Africville and refused to listen to their vehement

opposition to their relocation and insistence that they would prefer to stay in their own community on their own land. The fact that the poverty and poor infrastructural development of Africville were the deliberate product of organized neglect and extraction was, of course, unthought and disavowed in this process of critical public enquiry. The city proceeded with the razing of Africville, reported in an article for *The Star Weekly Toronto* as "The Slow and Welcome death of Africville" (Fraser, n.d.), with a byline stating, "for years this Negro ghetto in Halifax has been an 'ugly blotch' on the city's fair face. A Star Weekly Staff writer reports on its gradual, planned demise" (n.d.). The racial grammar of Africville's ugly blotchiness when contradistinguished to Halifax's *fair face* makes only to clear the structure of an anti-Black aesthetic value giving form to the (White) public pressure to demolish the community.

This widely known and accepted narrative of what happened to Africville is supported by Records developed by "white city officials and professionals [who] observed, analyzed, policed, and wrestled with the existence of [Africville]" (Nelson, 2008, p. 54). While in Halifax, working in the archives on Africville felt overwhelming. The sheer number of reports by politicians, urban planners, social workers, police, journalists, academics and others made clear the dynamic of violence. I found myself seeking something that stood against the enclosed narrative of violence that was supported by decades of empirical data—logs, journals, reports through "the calculated master narrative at the surface of the record […]" (Skeehan, 2013), as I feared "[…] committing further violence in my own act of narration" (Hartman, 2008, p. 2). The archive and public narratives of the time condemned Africville as "a place outside society […] when it grew too visibly polluted […]" (Nelson, 2008, p. 54), thus supporting the legal and moral justification of State intervention in the destruction of Africville as an act of care; yet hooks (2001) reminds us that White-Supremacist-Capitalist-Patriarchal society's values and ethics grounded in power,

domination and accumulation can never work in tandem with the ethics of love and care. Thus, Hartman's (2008) question, "[…] how does one recuperate lives entangled with and impossible to differentiate from the terrible utterances that condemned them to death, the account books that identified them as units of value, the invoices that claimed them as property, and the banal chronicles that stripped them of human features […]?" (p. 3) guided me in working with the archive.

Rather than centre archival documents that developed a deceptive master narrative, I "strip[ped] down through layers of attenuated meanings, made an excess in time, over time, assigned by a particular historical order" (Spillers, 1987, p. 65) and tuned into the multiple registers of Black soundscapes in Halifax that destabilize/unsettle/resound Black Scotian relations in new intimate ways. Central to my engagement is what the archive is unable to produce on its own: analyzing the sonic cultural production and everyday practices of resistance that Africvilleans, their descendants, and Black Canadians produce as excess of what the State's archives make legible; how they "more than recount the violence that deposited these traces in the archive" (Hartman, 2008, p. 2). I *listen* to Black Scotian soundscapes as generative sites, as another way of entering Black nowheres that "insist[s] on reading, on interpretation as an inescapable and desirable feature of social life" (Simek, 2015, p. 370).

I listen to these Black soundscape practices as a chorus that calls for deep listening to the queering of municipal and State archives in Dana Inkster's film *Welcome to Africville*, to the entanglement of children laughing in the North Halifax Public Library and the music youth make in the Centre Line Studio in Uniacke Square alongside the sounds of gentrification across the street on the north end of Halifax in the *Walking Gottingen* soundwalk, to recordings that echo in the Africville museum, the Museum's images and Eddie Carvery's ongoing protest of the razing

of Africville, the whistle of the CN railway, the rush of traffic on the Mackay Bridge, and the sounds of the ocean meeting the land where Africville once stood. I am interested in how each of these multi-layered soundscapes amplify the conditions of relation of Black life in Canada. I am interested in how these registers "challenge the primacy of text and invit[e] us to think about—or listen for—how sound has shaped the history of human experience" (Skeehan, 2013) and are integral to spatial relations and community for Black Scotians in Halifax. They tune into the ocean, land, photography, music, and soundwalks to reorient how we understand the relations of the State and Black being, to register otherwise. I organize these close listenings as three suites, modeled after the J.Dilla album *Donuts* (2006). Dilla structures the album to begin with an outro and ends with an intro, a structure that Conner Towne O'Neill (2016) states comprises "the whole album [as] …itself a moment sustained: the intro is its outro; the outro is its intro. Donuts begins and begins again—the album's verb tense is the present progressive. Listening is being there." This infinite loop of sounds in the album is how I listen to the registers of soundscapes of Black Scotians in Halifax.

Suite I: (Outro) Welcome *to Africville:* Centering Sonic Pleasure

> *Living Conditions—that was one of the things that they used against us. The city saying that our living conditions were substandard and even today in some of the articles that you might read you'll see living conditions come up quite often. Maybe they weren't up to standard to the people who set the standards, but to us that was home.* (Terry Dixon, "Remember Africville")

> *Or, I want to know black life differently.* (McKittrick, 2017, p. 99)

Yes, they're makin' us move…but I don't think I want to talk about that, history will tell the story. Are you here to learn? Well then sit down, I'll talk to you for a bit. (Anna Dixon, "Welcome to Africville")

I begin this section with three epigraphs that I position in conversation with each other. The first is from a scene in Shelagh MacKenzie's documentary *Remember Africville* (1991), in which former Africvillean resident Terry Dixon, sitting in what appears to be a witness stand, contends that the master narrative of concern around living conditions is what the State used to justify the destruction of Africville. How Dixon and other Africvilleans appear in what seems to be a witness box signifies the importance of testimony and emphasizes the profound importance of voice to articulate the importance of Africville as their home and their condemnation of the State's violence in razing their homes, as well as their sense of community. This framing renders Africvillean resistance transparent. Dixon articulates how the living conditions of Africville were considered substandard by the State, which is unaccountable for enabling the substandard of living for Africvilleans, having failed to develop or maintain infrastructure in the first place. Dixon's provocation of "Maybe they weren't up to standard to the people who set the standards, but to us that was home" (Mackenzie, 1991, 18:18), is not only a response to whomever was listening to his testimony but is also an invitation to consider the dynamics of relation that made this place home. Thus, Dixon narrates what Hartman describes as "the wealth of *just us*" within the terrible beauty of the ghetto (Hartman, 2019, p. 24), a wealth that makes livingness possible under conditions of extreme enclosure. Thus, Dixon anticipates McKittrick's call to "[…] want to know black life differently" (2017, p. 99) in his narrativization of Africville. Dixon insists that living conditions are not only references to the quality of water, paved roads, or infrastructure that Africville lacked and advocated to receive, but also that they went beyond the materiality of

the space and were about Black being and relations of love and care in the community that made it home.

Dana Inkster's film *Welcome to Africville* (1999) opens with this desire to "know black life differently" (McKittrick, 2017, p. 99). The fictional character Anna Dixon refuses to be overdetermined as flesh, opening the film with the lines, "Yes, they're makin' us move…but I don't think I want to talk about that, history will tell the story. Are you here to learn? Well then sit down, I'll talk to you for a bit" (1999, 00:08). Fictive kin relationships are common in Black communities, as they are "networks [and] sources of informal social support" (Chatters et. al., 1997, p. 297) that "[…] bind unrelated individuals to each other through reciprocal fictive kinship relations" (Chatters et. al, 1997, p. 298). They are sustained by what hooks offers as values of a love ethic: "[…] care, commitment, knowledge, responsibility, respect and trust" (2001, p. 227). While *Welcome to Africville* is a fictive mockumentary, it extends the practice of the fictive kin relationships connecting Terry Dixon from the documentary *Remember Africville* to Anna Dixon in *Welcome to Africville.* The films encourage a generative reading, not only in the fictive kin relation of Terry and Anna Dixon but also in the shift from *Remembering Africville* to being *Welcome[d] to Africville*. I read Inkster's invitation in *Welcome to Africville* as an extension to the audience to meditate on the possible untold stories of Africville. Terry Dixon's commentary on the State's refusal to recognize how Africville was home makes possible and is supported by Anna Dixon's refusal to repeat the story of violence and displacement. Anna Dixon, too, would like us "to know black life differently" (McKittrick, 2017, p. 99).

Dana Inkster's 15-minute film takes place inside the home of Anna Dixon, inside the bar with Dusty Dixon and Julius Johnson, and inside the bedroom of Mary Dixon. These fictional

characters "do not tell the why of the destruction [of Africville]—they refuse to do so—but rather they tell the why of their sexual practices, desires, disappointments, pleasures, and adventures as well as their loss" (Walcott, 2005, p. 101), which Walcott reads as the erotics of pedagogy that queers the history of Africville. Yvon Bonenvant (2014) suggests,

> […] sound is not necessary in order to develop and transmit linguistically carried ideas, information, and impulses […] yet if we have a voice, we almost always use sound to carry our language […] sound is much like touch. Like, yet unalike. It reaches and vibrates bodies, but at a distance. It voyages through space in other ways, but it evokes haptic responses […] this vibratory field leaves us but is of us, and it voyages through space. Other people hear it. Other people feel it […] and once emanated, it is out of our control. (paras. 5-8)

Walcott (2005) and Bonenvant (2014) encourage a listening to the sonic dynamics of the erotic and pleasure in Inkster's film, how they register different intimate relations that reverberate in Africville.

The film stages interviews with three generations of Dixon women—Anna Dixon, who recounts a numb love, Dusty Dixon, who recounts sexual encounters and fantasies, and Mary Dixon and Julius Johnson, who share their meditations on the search for love. In tending to the tone, timbre, pauses, stutters, and squeals in the film, we can hear how each character communicates queer sounds of pleasure and relation that escape the limits of language and engages the audience to *feel* the dynamics of relationships that the archives fail to communicate. In sonically queering the audiences to encounter with Africville, the film makes possible being outside the fixed dynamics we already know. For example, when introduced to Dusty Dixon at the bar, she details:

> I had a one-night stand with this woman that turned into four nights [pause] maaaan her *p*ussy was so addictive *hmmm.* When a woman has a scent, I just close my eyes and [inhales] inhale and touch, *ohhhh*, ***her touching you*** [stutters, gasps]… **don't** let a woman touch you if you are afraid of falling in love with her *hmmmmm*. (Inkster, 1999, 01:17)

The textures of Dusty's sonic meditations on pleasure in the transcription above—italics, parenthesis with pauses, underlines to note emphasis on certain syllabus, and bolding where Dusty's inflections grew lounder—cannot on paper evoke the weight of Dusty's sonic expression. As Bonenfant (2014) suggests, "language does not need sound to express information"; however, the sound of Dusty's voice transforms how the audience engage with what Dusty expresses. Dusty's sonic articulations operate in multiple registers. In Dusty's introduction to the film, her narrative of queer sexual encounters of queer Africvilleans experiences add texture to the public's understanding of Black life. Dusty's "wet, open, loud, loudmouth, just ready to mouth off, just ready to make trouble with its irritating, masty, andabove all bothersome noise—bothersome because it makes us *have* to react—to have to consider the existence, the needs, the demands of those we might otherwise ignore—that moist orifice can be a source of great pleasure" (Bonenfant, 2014). Dusty's sonic evocation of pleasure disrupts the "now-sacred story of Africville through the eyes of Black lesbians […] for reflecting differently on historical context and memory and not only what is remembered but who is allowed to remember and how" (Walcott, 2005, p. 102). Through her refusal to silence her narratives of pleasure, Dusty also reflects on the complex ways we should think about love. In discussing her sexual pleasure, Dusty demonstrates the difference between romantic love and love-politics. Recounting her sexual pleasures and fantasies through different sonic techniques,

Dusty explores understandings of love and relations that queers the assumed heteronormativity of Africville.

Toward the end of the film, Dusty's mother Anna joins her at the bar; only in this moment does Dusty acknowledge what is to happen to Africville: "you know mama, we should be together when the machines come to tear down the house tonight" (Inkster, 1999, 12:27). It is in this provocation and Anna's nod in agreement that we witness a love ethic being practiced. This is only possible at the end of the film, because, as hooks suggests, "to truly love we must learn to mix various ingredients—care, affection, recognition, respect, commitment, and trust, as well as honest and open communication" (2001, p. 5). Through each character's unabashed articulations of love, we are able to understand that Dusty and Anna articulate a different way of being together that is also love. Their care is political. They recognize each other beyond what the State deems valuable. It is not fully explained or explored, but it is felt as deep in the quiet gestures of care and compassion they have for each other, echoing what their imagined kin Terry Dixon notes in the film *Remember Africville*, in that "Maybe they [Africvillean living standards] weren't up to standard to the people who set the standards, but to us that was home" (Mackenzie, 1991, 18:18). The film closes with images of Anna Dixon, Rusty Dixon, Mary Dixon, and Julius Johnson over archival images of the destruction of Africville, reminding the viewer of the possible different relations that happened *here* and *still* reverberate when listening beneath the destruction.

Suite II: Walk Good Here: *Walking Gottingen* Soundwalk

Following the razing of Africville in the 60s, the former residents were moved off their land, some in the backs of garbage trucks, to various public housing areas across Halifax. Two of

the better-known public housing areas where some families were relocated were Mulgrave Park and Uniacke Square, both located in the North End of Halifax. As Wendie Poitras notes, the North End's "gradual transformation from a historic Black community to a trendy place to live and be entertained [and] has rendered unfamiliar, uncomfortable and unaffordable spaces for many of the Black people in the community to occupy" (April 2018) was abundantly clear. Poitras states:

> […] Uniacke Square, the Cornwallis Street Baptist Church and the Community Y are, respectively, places every Black person who grew up in the inner city over the last 50 years were more than familiar with. At one time, this was a vibrant community of homesteads occupied by the Golars, Pattersons, Skeirs, Downeys, Browns, Dayes, Adams, Smiths, Parkers—the list goes on. Many of these Black families resided in homes on Maynard, Maitland, Creighton, and Gerrish Streets […] Now all this history is disappearing […] Now many of the neighbourhood properties are owned by those who are not familiar with its history. In most cases, the children of these new residents do not attend the community's elementary school, recreation centres or public library's after-school programs. It is essentially two communities coinciding and one is on course to swallow the other up. There is still a Black presence in the community, although it is shrinking and for the most part limited to the confines of Uniacke Square and its immediate surroundings. Only a handful of homes are still owned by Black families. (April 2018)

As Black Scotian communities continue to face displacement due to urban renewal/gentrification, the community turns to sound to ensure their presence is not forgotten. *Walking Gottingen* is an immersive soundwalk developed by Jayde Tynes—a descendant of Africville, Francella Fiallos, and Sarah Poko. They describe it as "a portal of lived experiences,

an array of voices and textures, a story of a street and of a neighbourhood that uses storytelling and natural sound to provide a complete experience for listeners as they walk down Gottingen Street in North End Halifax" (Tynes & Fiallos, 2020). *Walking Gottingen* actively engages its participants "to listen discriminately and moreover, to make a critical judgement about the sounds heard and their contribution to the balance or imbalance of the sonic environment" (Westerkamp, 2020) as the neighbourhood shifts from predominantly the home to Black Nova Scotians, immigrants, and members of the Mi'kmaq First Nation to a gentrified neighbourhood.

The *Walking Gottingen* soundwalk was made public May 30th, 2020. What follows is a working through of the social relations it negotiates as well as what it allows to resonate in the North end despite gentrification. The soundwalk begins by bringing Gottingen Street to life with a voice that states,

> Hi. I'm Gottingen Street—I was once only a road, a way to transport people from A to B. And then…a distinct group of people decided to just stay with me. Or rather, on me. Who were these people? People looking to ground their displaced roots, raise their families, a place where they would belong, a place to make their own, a place for resilient people. Welcome to that place, which so happens to be my "back". Now it may just look like some tarmac, cement and a bunch of buildings to you but trust me it's a community, and what makes my back so strong isn't filled in potholes, shiny new high-rises or trendy businesses, it's my people. Those who called me home when no one wanted to. We have developed a form of harmony over the decades, a connection between two living things. Yes I am alive. To you they are my people but for us… [VOICE A] "Gottingen Street is a family. (hfxpublib, 2020)

The introduction to the soundwalk brings attention to the significance of streets as public space where Black life is heard and understood. The street literally speaks in the soundwalk. What might be read as a quirky or entertaining choice is a specific and particular commentary on the aliveness of Black space. So much of Black life happens in the streets. Despite mechanisms that try to contain, regulate, and metamorphosize the streets, streets are a central component of Black nowheres. The streets are public spaces that are accessible, free, and gathering spaces for Black folk to speak what my colleague Jan Anderson calls "politics of the pavement." Beyond streets as a space where politics, joy, and movement occur, this soundwalk's choice to give Gottingen Street a voice offers listeners insight into how this space became a Black place of value because of the relations Black people formed here. Voice C states early in the soundwalk, "Community meant that when you walk down the street everybody waved to you and spoke to you. Community meant that if somebody's children threw rocks at your car, you could go to their door and tell their mothers that their kids were being bad. That's what community mean to them, because community meant—much like the word 'treaties' understood by Cree—meant family and relations […] whether by blood or by acceptance" (Soundwalk, 2020). The dynamics as uttered by Voice C articulate the ways in which The North End's love ethic transcends the self and comprises communal everyday ordinary practices that built a sense of relation amongst folks who live on Gottingen. To walk down a street and be acknowledged with and return greetings, to recognize children's growth is only a result of commitment, care, and honest communication of an extended community. Voice C tunes into how small everyday acts affirm community members in relationships that are interested in how people on the North End know each other.

The soundwalk tunes into the "community soundscape, one that includes the sounds of community activities, people's voices regularly heard on the streets, children playing, the sounds

of productive practices, a regular rhythmic sonic pattern" (O'Keefe, 2017, p. 154) that refuses to be limited by the larger public articulations of this space as "dangerous" and instead registers the rhythms of everyday being and life affirming practices that make the North End a community "[…] as part of a wider sphere of critical practice and visionary politics" (Nash, 2013, p. 14). The walk is comprised of seven voices of community members of different gender and ages recounting the uniqueness of key sites that make this community possible. Some of the sites still exist, and others continue to reverberate in this space. They include Metro Garden Chinese Restaurant, The Derby and Misty Moon, YMCA, North End Freedom Monument/North Memorial Public Library, Buddy Daye Street, Uniacke Square, and George Dixon Centre.

Each site is important for the relations they make possible for this community. At each stop on the soundwalk, the listener is invited to engage in an environmental scan, where "you take in the sounds, smells and sights in the area around you" (Soundwalk, 2020). The walk reveals an affective sensorial experience; the story is told through a polyvocal chorus of its community members who do not focus on making their community fully transparent but rather offer an entry point to the rhythm of being in the community. It is presented as a community that nourishes its members emotionally and literally with egg rolls from Metro Garden Chinese restaurant or through collective making of Stone Soup,[51] moves them through embodied experiences at former clubs The Derby and Misty Moon, educates and provides access to spaces

[51] Voice F on the walk discusses how the community in the North End really hold each other and uses the making of Stone Soup to offer us insight. Voice F states that "[…] there's an old book from years and years ago called Stone Soup and buddy had. A rock and some water and then he started getting people to get a carrot, and then something, that's what this community is to me, you know? You've got a carrot, you've got a potato, you've got an onion, and at the end of the day, we all had soup" (hfxpublib, 2020). The making of stone soup in the community embodies the practice of what bell hooks calls rituals of regard in communities of care (2009). hooks (2009) explains how eating together is a key practice of regard and care in that it the preparing and sharing of meals not only sustains Black folk through the ritual of eating, but the practice of sharing "accounts of daily life, humor, and the sheer pleasure of delicious home cooked food" (p. 229). Perhaps these are some the uninteresting frequently aspects of care that Macharia (2018) suggests often are glanced over, but these ordinary practices of care are how we know each other beyond negation.

that offer “crucial opportunities for community growth and development” (Soundwalk, 2020), such as the North Memorial library, YMCA and George Dixon Centre, and even transnational movements through remembering a speakeasy where community would congregate in the 60s and 70s to organize as a chapter of The Black Panther Party. These spaces all sound and ground Black life in this street in Halifax. A dynamic entity, the multiple registers of this soundwalk on Gottingen invite us to think differently how these sounds permanently resonate in this space despite external forces that are reshaping it.

The soundwalk makes way for what Nash (2013) argues Black Feminist love politics insist as new relationships to temporality that “[…] offers a sharp departure from the identarian labor of intersectionality revealing the existence—indeed, vibrancy—of multiple black feminist political traditions” (pp. 12–13). The love-politics that happen in this sound walk are not to be read as “[…] simply a call to love *others*” (Nash, 2013, p. 12) that would reinforce the need to explain the subjectivity of “the other” but rather to be considered as an investment in the formation of a political community “[…] constituted by heterogeneity and variety, rather than homogeneity and fixity” (Nash, 2013, p. 13). Thus, the soundwalk spatializes the ethic of love precisely through its sounding–grounding practices that operate contrary to the empirical–material geographies of present-day Halifax. The continuities between Africville then and now are sutured through a sonic practice of care, grounded by the soundwalk installation.

The soundwalk also registers changes to the North End that impact the soundscape of the area. Interspersed with narratives and sounds, the walk offers glimpses into the history and to the present of community on Gottingen, with its concerns about the gentrification of the area. Participants in the recorded soundwalk make mention of how “the community is a far cry from what it used to be” (hfxpublib, 2020). The North End is shifting from a neighbourhood where,

since the 1980s, “people who did not have a lot of money found a place to live and that included queer community and the art community as well as the African Nova Scotian community who have roots there going back a long ways” (hfxpublib, 2020). Ted Rutland notes that Halifax Region Municipality planners’ transformation of Gottingen Street in 2008 “began somewhat later than other parts of the North End but also occurred more rapidly” (2018, p. 250). Gottingen, as mentioned throughout the soundwalk, was often described as “Halifax’s most feared” area, but during the late 2000s early 2010s, “the street quickly became a favoured location for new cafes, green businesses, and professional services firms” (Rutland, 2018, p. 250). In conjunction with the rise of these typical markers of gentrification were the development of condominiums that increased the market value of the area in ways that made the area unaffordable for the community who had long been on Gottingen.

While in Halifax in 2019, I spent much of my time in The North End learning about the community and the development of the soundwalk, but also noticing the changing landscape of the community with its boarded-up storefronts that clashed with the new condominium and businesses. One side of the street had Uniacke Square and the library, and right across the street were the new additions. I decided to keep written and audio recorded journals to later reflect on what my walks revealed. The sensory soundscape I experienced while in The North End included many of the sounds that made up the soundwalk—the children playing and reading in the library, Centerline Studio, which is located in Uniacke Square and gives youth a place to express themselves creatively, a café that appeared to be much more integrated in the community as a hub, folks offering greetings and more detailed exchanges where they would ask for my family name and realize I was not a local and then chat to me about my work and offer connections of people who could be of help. I also heard pockets of silence from the boarded-up

store fronts as well as loud construction in gated areas, signaling the gentrification of the area. It was the dissonance of the community's rhythm that signalled the changes. O'Keefe (2017) notes,

> in examining urban regeneration projects, one must also look at ways in which regeneration policies impact on the lives of socially excluded groups. These groups, such as teenagers and the elderly, arguably use local spaces the most, being often limited in their ability to access other spaces for reasons of finance and age [...] one must include the voices of these groups. The rationale for this, as it connects to the study of sound and the soundscape, lies in the familiarity both groups will have with the local soundscape as a result of their frequent use of public spaces. (2017, p. 150)

The *Walking Gottingen* soundwalk, along with my written and audio recorded journal from my trip to Halifax, reveal similar observations as those of O'Keeffe (2017). Many sounds of The North End that were audible were of elders and youth in the community engaging one another. The concerns around gentrification expressed by the elders are important to note, as some of these elders who shared their concerns were the youth of Africville when they were relocated to the North end following its destruction. The voice of Gottingen Street in the soundwalk at one point states, "Isn't it interesting how history repeats itself?" (Soundwalk, 2020). The very meanings that are possible to render as result of the different registers of voices/sounds in the community-based soundwalk insist we hear the multilayered relations happening not only in The North End, or to Black Scotians in Halifax, but of Black experiences in Black nowheres. In the voice of Gottingen Street, it parallels the gentrification of the North End to the destruction of Africville through the sounds of construction in these spaces.

What is the difference of the sound of the bulldozer in the middle of the night tearing down The Seaview Baptist Church in comparison to the excavator digging out the land across

the street from The North Memorial Public Library to build a condominium? Does the (sonic) interminability of infrastructural obliteration mark one of the many vectors of "an undynamic human state, fixed in time and space" (Spillers, 1987, p. 78)? They both are operationalized under the guise of innocent improvement strategies to what official records—by politicians, police, social workers, planners, the media—categorize as problem areas that need saving and better opportunities elsewhere, all the while ignoring the calls of these communities saying they are undesirable. Africville's destruction and the gentrification of Gottingen repeat the violence of displacement and tuning into the soundscape we hear not only in our ears, but also in our bodies and from the pavement multifaceted sounds that questions "reorients, redirects, and repositions" (Walcott, 2005, p. 151) Black life and Black being in Halifax. These sounds offer us a tuning into the nuances of anti-Blackness but also of community relations grounded in a love ethic that lies deep within the grounds of these places. These sounds allow us to register "[i]ntimate publics [that] tie us to one another through social belonging, located from our shared experiences of oppression while also opening the possibility to orient ourselves outside of spaces where we face oppression" (François-Kermode, 2022). Even with the uncertainty of what the North End will be in the future, this soundwalk employs love-politics to "reformulate[e] public culture and organiz[e] it around affect and new conceptions of redress… [and] also orients public culture toward a different sense of temporality" (Nash, 2013, p. 16) of what was always here, and always will be here, in the soundscape of The North End.

Suite III: (Intro) Africville Protest

Figure 10: Photo of Eddie Carvery's Trailers to the right of the Seaview Baptist Church Museum (2015).

In 2015, after presenting at the Black Canadian Studies Association conference held at Dalhousie University, a group of graduate students went to the Africville Museum. The cab dropped us directly in front of the rebuild of the Seaview Baptist Church. The replica church was built in 2012 following the 2010 apology[52] delivered by the Mayor of Halifax Regional Municipality Peter Kelly regarding the destruction of Africville. In addition to the apology, 4.75 million dollars from three levels of government—$3 million from the city, $1.5 million from the province, and $250,000 from the federal government, and one hectare of land, were allocated; Seaview Park was renamed Africville Park, and the Seaview Baptist Church Museum was developed. To our left, as shown in Figure 12, were three trailers, one of which had the phrase "Africville Protest" painted across the side that faced the route visitors took to enter and leave the museum. I do not recall taking this photo but still carry the resonance of the impact of

[52] Kelly notes in the apology, "I'm here today on behalf of Halifax regional council to deliver a formal apology to all those whose lives have been altered by the loss of Africville in the 1960s […] We realize words cannot undo what has been done. But we are profoundly sorry and apologize to each and every one of you. The repercussions of what happened to Africville linger to this day. They haunt us in the form of lost opportunities for the young people who never were nurtured in the rich traditions, culture and heritage of Africville." (CBC, 2010).

listening to the protest call on the trailer, how it shifted my experience of the museum prior to entering it, and how it still unsettles me years later. Lawrence English (2020) notes, "protest has, by default, always been aligned with sound. It is an action concerned with the amplification of a message—wanting to make sure it is heard." When we first entered the museum, we were met with the voices of a choir, which we later found out was part of a recording of the last Easter Sunday service held at the Seaview Baptist Church prior to the razing of Africville, and as we continued to walk through the museum, sound and voice were integral to our experience as the sonic culture of Africville is central to the museums design in relaying aural memories of the Black community that once inhabited the land.

Throughout the museum are about six jukebox-like machines that visitors to the museum can play to hear various narratives told by former residents, songs played by former residents and/or descendants of Africville, archived sounds of Africville, such as the razing of the Seaview Baptist Church, and sounds that come from studio effects as they are vividly recounted in narratives of former residents as a part of the soundscape of Africville, such as the CN train whistle. The richness of the auditory archives of Africville inform the complexity of Africvilleans' lived experiences. While the museum is part of the State's apology and project to ensure the anti-Black violence that this community experienced is not erased, there is something about the relation between the museum and Carvery's trailer that deeply unsettles the acceptance of the museum as restorative. If this museum is intended to provide a reconciliatory gesture to an historical grievance (the demolition of Africville), then the ongoing presence of Carvey's trailer troubles the clean temporal narrative presupposing the museum's emergence, the so-called *historical*-ness of the grievance. Therefore, although the museum exists to commemorate the

historical event of demolition, Carvey's trailer materially evidences what the museum necessarily and institutionally disavows, that this past is, in no ways, past.

Africvilleans were and continue to be involved in the work of the museum; however, in speaking about the museum in an interview, Carvery notes, "It doesn't seem to belong to us. It looks like our church, but it's not our church" (King, 2019). Carvery's commentary illuminates the complexity of architectural reproduction. To the eye, the museum is a replica of the Seaview Baptist Church; the interior creates a sensory immersive experience using auditory sounds, archival footage as well as material remains of Africville to facilitate the visitors experience and perception of Africville, and yet it fails to be "our church" (King, 2019). The unsettling experience Carvery's trailers offer to visitors entering and exiting the museum, along with his suspicion of the replica of the church as not belonging to the community, invites further study of what happens when we listen beyond what is presented to us. How do Carvery's trailers interrupt the narrative that makes the story of Africville transparent/knowable/reducible to that of a community that experienced incredible violence and a state that is sorry for enacting that harm in retrospect? I frame Carvery's protest as an act of care that refuses the State's performative attempts at care, which are, in turn, only a refiguration of violence. bell hooks notes that "domination cannot exist in any situation where a love ethic prevails" (2001, p. 98), and so, what the State offers can never be considered reconciliation or care. The apology, museum and limited funds do not counteract the razing of Africville, nor do they counteract that the land is now a "neutral public space" as a city park and tourist destination to remember the horrors of anti-Black violence in a way that is spectacularized to ease the conscience of the visitor. If the museum memorializes a State apology, then it does so by highlighting the emptiness of State reconciliatory gestures—one hectare of land and 3.5 million dollars brokered decades after the

demolition of an entire community. In contrast, Carvery's trailers continue to sound the longstanding message of his 50-year protest, what he signals as missing in the museum—the relations of communal love and communal care.

In re-reading the image of the trailers, I aim to demonstrate the acts of care that resonate in Africville because of Eddie Carvery's ongoing protest. In addition to how Carvery's protest unsettles the attendee of the museum as "intimately problematic" (Nelson, 2008, p. 228) in its formulation of a curated sonic experience of the intimacies of Africvillean life and community—while simultaneously displacing the descendants of those people from being on their land in the present—I interrogate why there are three trailers on the land for a protest being held by one person. Eddie was not always alone in the protest; his cousin had joined him, and folks had brought Eddie new trailers as his original trailer weathered and became uninhabitable, particularly through Halifax's winters. On the land from which he was displaced by the State through organized abandonment and violent intervention, Carvery was the recipient of care and regard by community who embrace a love ethic; they provided the additional shelter as an act of regard that would sustain Carvery and his protest physically, mentally, and emotionally. The three trailers in this photograph allow us to register what Tina Campt (2017) refers to as a quiet modality when listening to images. Campt argues that,

> […] 'listening to images' is at once a description and a method […] it designates a method of recalibrating vernacular photographs as quiet, quotidian practices that give us access to the affective registers through which these images enunciate alternate accounts of their subjects […] quiet registers sonically as a level of intensity that requires focused attention […] the choice to 'listen to' rather than simply 'look at' images is a conscious decision to

> challenge the equation of vision with knowledge by engaging photography through a sensory register that is critical to Black Atlantic formations: sound. (2017, pp. 5–6).

Unlike the first image in this chapter, which was difficult to register visually but was heard through a powerful description that accompanied it in the archive, this image of three trailers on the edge of the Bedford Basin quietly registers and resounds the effect of identifying a place that supposedly is no longer there physically. Carvery's trailers refuse the brutalism of the State supported museum that mark this as the space of a community that is of the past. Carvery's trailers enunciate that the Africvillean community's presence continues to resonate in this space through care—care by way of multiple trailers as well as care of the voices, artefacts and sounds of the Africville community that are put together as pieces to voice a sensatory narrative of the community. The contact a visitor may experience, as I recall of my own early in the chapter, while visiting the museum as well as the viewing of the image of the three trailers register what Campt (2017) refers to as "felt sound"—sound that, like a hum, resonates in and as vibration […] an inherently embodied modality constituted by vibration and contact" (p. 7).

Eddie also makes clear the struggles he faced throughout the years of his protest, particularly police surveillance, being forced to move his protest out the park and into different areas; in conversation with Juanita Peters, I asked how Carvery's trailers were able to remain on the land even as the city had continuously attempted to have them removed as the land still belongs to Halifax Regional Municipality, and she replied that the museum had made it clear they had no issue with Eddie's protest and trailers being on the edge of the land as he did not cause any harm. This acceptance, which she presented as a minor action, resonates deeply as an act of care. The presence of Eddie Carvery's protest facilitates a relation with the museum and vice versa. What the museum holds as a narrative that is past can only be told as narrative if it is

taken out of past and made present in its relation to Carvery's protest. What his trailers make audible is a past that is not past. The State's reckoning with this past violence, and historic vibrant community that now exists elsewhere in Halifax, continues to resonate in the land and soundscape on the edge of the Bedford Basin, far beyond the aural registers of state recognition and redress.

I suggest we listen to Carvery's protest and presence as a practice of caring for the voices, stories and material that are presented in a state-sponsored museum in a way that is antithetical to the community presenting those voices, stories, and material. I say this not to critique the work of Africvilleans and Black Scotians who partook in the shaping of this project, but to comment that the museum itself, as a state-sponsored mechanism for liberal redress, was and remains possible only due to the historical and ongoing violence the State enacted and enacts on this community in the historical and present instance. When Carvery states that the museum looks like the original church but does not *feel* like it, I read this in relation to the epigraph with which I begin the chapter and Claudine Bonner's insistence that community is not just geography but is rather about a series of relation that are love. How can a State that enacted this violence in the first place ever care or love the community it violently displaced, and continues to displace, in actions that counteract the meaning of the words such as their "apology"? Apologies mean nothing without action and accountability. If Carvery's trailers continue to sit on the edge of the Bedford Basin, his protest will continue to unsettle the State-sponsored narrative of the museum while simultaneously resounding a relation of care of Black Africvillean presence in this Black nowhere. Carvery is sounding care in a context of brutal aural and material dispossession.

Figure 11: Eddie Carvery's New Trailer (Friends of Eddie Carvery, 2021).

In September 2019, while Eddie Carvery was admitted to an extended stay in hospital due to his ailing health, his trailers were destroyed by the city. In the spring of 2020, in the wake of the murder of George Floyd by police in Minneapolis, a crowd-funding campaign to support Carvery gained momentum and raised close to thirty thousand dollars. While there is much to unpack here, what I want to bring attention to is the purchase of a new trailer for Eddie Carvery (Fig. 13) that sits on the edge of the Bedford Basin, with Carvery's face and the continued call of the Africville Protest. In the article "And to Survive," Christina Sharpe discusses how,

> in *In the Wake* […] I tried to name and to perform 'the still living desires for more than what we presently have' by attending to what I called an ordinary note of care, […] because it takes as weather, as atmosphere, the conditions of black life and death […] I wanted to think about 'ordinary notes' of care and about how one makes present a life—with text, image, sound. (2018, pp. 173–174)

Thinking with Sharpe's notion of how ordinary notes of care operate in ways that are life-sustaining, full of possibility and are counterintuitive to how "the State or the university or the private contractor working in our financialized present calls care is often continued violence, continued limits placed on black life, possibility, education, movement, sustenance, and joy. The same instruments used to ill us are imagined as the ones that will save us" (Sharpe, 2018, p. 175), I read and re-read how the ethics of love and care that are central to the Africville community can be registered in the quiet sonic relation amongst Eddie Carvery's trailers and the Africville Museum. Africville sounds care.

> Some say that if you stand at the entrance of Halifax's Seaview Memorial Park, and you listen very carefully, you can still hear the muted shouts of children at play, feel the rhythm of the train that slashed through the backyards and lives of families with names the likes of Carvery, Mantley, Dixon and Brown, and see the life that reverberates from the Seaview African United Baptist Church for which the park was named. ("Africville the Spirit Lives," Feb.March 1991, p. 10)

Prelude: Respatializing Sounds/New Knowledges

While "there might be something *theoretically uninteresting* about care" (Macharia, 2018) due to it being considered feminized, tedious, repetitive, unglamorous work, there is something freeing in knowing that "by insistently looking away from the State, love-politics practitioners […] revea[l] their understandings of the limitations of a regime that is not committed to redressing their harms" (Nash, 2013, p. 15). By focusing on love-politics and care, the work escapes being trapped by Black negation in ways that are debilitating. Focusing on love-politics and care also challenge the limitations of liberalist ideas of positive representation

and identity politics that are an essentializing trap. Thus, love-politics mediate and make possible what I have been referring to as the Black know here. Within the context of totalizing anti-Black brutality, these forms of care do the work of insisting Black life into being (Sharpe, 2016). What this work aims to do is think deeply with what and how Blackness and Black being survive the position of unthought through relational practices and processes; how we know, affirm, and value each other beyond, outside of, and against Western conceptions of value. The method and approach of tuning into loops and repetition in this chapter took time and care and does not afford a total knowability. Rather, it offers insight into the generative possibilities that new knowledges, or alternatively the chorus Black nowheres register through sonic practices. Paying close care and attention to these utterances, vibrations and soundings can aid us in "studying the ways in which blackness works against the violence that defines it" (McKittrick, 2014, p. 19).

What I offer here is a disruption of the metanarrative of Africville and Black Halifax through its soundscapes. Through films, images, soundwalks, museums, the land, and ocean, I want to consider what is revealed when these separate readings come together as a chorus. Out of this chorus made of different tones, registers, and timbres from different time periods "emerge sounds that combine in a polyphonic chorus" (Skeehan, 2013). This way-making practice of registering Black soundscapes that are grounded in love politics and care afford us to not only know Black life differently but also continue to develop endless loops of sonic care. This is the generative power of Black nowheres. Ending with this chapter on soundscapes located in the Maritimes feels fitting, as it brings us to The Atlantic Ocean, the first Black Nowhere. The moment of rupture. The coast of entry points. Whether folks choose to tune in or not, Black soundscapes will always reverberate here.

OUTRO

Heartbreaks & Heartbeats

I'll help you carry on… ("Lean on Me," Bill Withers)

I want to sustain wonder (McKittrick, 2021, p. 187)

4178

4178. A place you may know, a place you may not. It is one I know quite well. 4178 is where I hear the call of the Azan 5 times a day calling to prayer, television playing what seemed to be endless streams of Tigrinya music and dramas, the bass of Hip Hop wobbling from three floors below, long-distance phone calls with loud, indistinguishable voices on the receiver, the rumbling of a washer, laughter, yelling, advice, and care. These sounds shape my world. They are sounds that ground me, centre my family's home life, how we relate to each other and create a world "that provide[s] a different and unexpected methodology for Black life and joyousness" (McKittrick, 2018).

4178 is also where I first heard my brother Alaa and sister-in-law Nafisah's child's heartbeat (Fig. 14). During the COVID-19 pandemic, heightened brutal violence against Black people globally, experiencing surmounting despair and heartbreak, hearing Zakariya's heartbeat shifted everything. *Eleven seconds*. *Eleven seconds* is all it took to hear and register the possibility of a new world. Hearing baby Zakariya's heartbeat, one of the few stories my mother repeated to us growing up, looped in my mind. *My greatest joy when my children were born was having them sleep on my chest, feeling and hearing their heart beat next to mine, they were my favourite songs.* Zakariya's heartbeat is the song that makes it "[…] clear that life is at stake" (Hartman, 2019, p. 345).

Hearing heartbeats, stories, songs, and various sonic practices in 4178 have been integral to how my family has generated the ability to continue despite what my mother used to say, that *nothing is free in this whole White world*. As a child, I always perceived my mother's take on the common phrase, nothing is free in this world, as a slip in translation, and when I asked her if this was the case, she said *absolutely not.* Coming into Black Studies, first through music and novels, then through formal theory, this common phrase my mother stated began to make sense—*nothing is free in this whole White world*. My mother's play with language affirms Barbara Christian's (1987) argument that,

> […] people of color have always theorized—but in forms quite different from the Western form of abstract logic. And I am inclided to say that our theorizing (and I intentionally use the verb rather than the noun) is often in narrative forms, in the stories we create, in riddles and proverbs, in the play with language, since dynamic rather than fixed ideas seem more to our liking. How else have we managed to survive with such spiritedness the assault on our bodies, social institutions, countries, our very humanity? (p. 52)

Nothing is free in this whole White world. This offering from my mother grounds my pursuit to articulate Black nowheres. In this *White* world that is predicated on the brutalization of Black people and Blackness, seeking inclusion will never suffice, as inclusion into this *White* world relies upon the reproduction of racial hierarchies. *We need release*. It is this place, 4178—*a Black nowhere*, and the sonic practices that happen here that speak me and my family into being. 4178, *a Black nowhere* "[…] spoke to me from place but not into nation" (Sharpe, 2019, p. 12). It is the sounds and listening practices of my family in 4178, "[…] the ways we listen, what we listen for, what we can hear" (Reed, 2019, p. 194), that mark sound thinking as the formative way I understand Black worlding practices. My understanding that "knowledge exists

among members of communities, and communities organize themselves around particular aesthetic practices, including ways of listening (Reed, 2019, p. 194) drives my desire to think and register a new way of understanding the dynamics of Black being across Black diasporas.

Replaying the Tracks: *Noise, Voice, and Silence*

I opened this dissertation with a conversation regarding the failure of freedom for Black people and Blackness to register the condition of *Black nowheres* as uniquely evident in both symbolic and material sonic practices in Canada.

I sound think through my parents' discussion with a Black descendant of initial settlers of Buxton and what we can hear through the ringing of the Liberty Bell as rude and disruptive of narratives of Canada as the place that solved the problem of Blackness as the last stops on Black peoples' journeys to freedom. Whether it be from the Underground Railroad or Black refugees' entrance to this place, Canada has not afforded Black people freedom. I hear my parents' conversation with the Black descendant of Buxton, Yusra Khogali's intervention with Kathleen Wynne, the graduate students' call-out of the director of a graduate program who could not say *Black*, and the everyday acts of kiss-teeth as rude sound acts that insist, we aurally register the multiplicity of ways that Black people refuse to accept the conditions of Black life, Black being and Blackness in Canada as freedom. Instead, each of these interventions alongside the many examples that are thought with throughout this dissertation "[…] remake the ground on which decades of enclosure were built" (Shabazz, 2015, p. 118) through sound and sonic practices. This twinned refusal and desire for more is what I understand as animations of what Katherine McKittrick's calls Black livingness. For McKittrick, "[…] black livingness is unmeasurable; our despair and heartbreak and friendships and ways of loving and moving, are tethered to a

dehumanizing system of knowledge, a monumental story, that is measured (unfaltering) and precise (quantifiable) […] in it mnemonics that repeat and restore not dehumanization but unfurled and hidden ideas about collaboration and liberation […]" (2021, p. 186). In this outro, I return to the sound and sonic acts of my family, and think with 4178, a place that, in looking back on this work in its entirety, is the site that made *Black nowheres* knowable to consider "How else do **we**, **here** [emphasis added], usher into being something other than the current deathly order?" (Sharpe, 2019, p. 7). In *Liner Notes for the Revolution: The Intellectual Life of Black Feminist Sound*, Daphne Brooks argues that, from a place that is both symbolic and material,

> Sound performances—that formalistic elixir of what Black radical tradition philosopher Sylvia Wynter refers to as 'bios and mythoi'—are the means through which these artists forge a different epistemic relationship with the world, one that allows them 'to climb out of our present order of consciousness'…to know/think/ feel/behave and subjectively experience ourselves […] [on] *quite different terms* [emphasis added]. (2021, p. 29)

Black sound and sonic practices are the modes in which we can register Black livingness on *different terms*. This dissertation turns to the absented presence of sound, both symbolically and materially, to disclose power relations wherein racial-spatial inequalities are reproduced and contested. Doing so insists that the work we do in Black Studies, Sound Studies, and Popular Music studies refuse to reduce Black sonic aesthetics "[…] to its particularity, [because] then any analysis of it will only affirm the already known" (Weheliye, 2005, p. 206). *Black Nowheres* as a concept falls in line with the work of its predecessors of The Black Radical Tradition, such as Edouard Glissant's *opacity*, Sylvia Wynter's *humanism*, Saidiya Hartman's *afterlife of slavery*, Rinaldo Walcott's *absented presence*, Katherine McKittrick's *Black livingness*, Alexander

Weheliye's *sonic afro-modernity*, Jennifer Lynn Stoever's *the sonic color line*, and Christina Sharpe's *wake work* to understand the radical possibility of the otherwise available for us to register in Black sound and sonic practices in this place called Canada.

Through Black sound and sonic practices, this dissertation grapples with the ethics of engaging Black subjectivity, sociality and being by asking the following questions: What does Black Canada sound like? What does it mean to listen to Black Canada? What possibilities and challenges do Black sounds and sonic practices bring to understanding the conditions of Black life and Black being? The chapters in this dissertation come together to think with and through Blackness and Black being by experimenting with different modes of analysis from Black Studies, Sound Studies, and Popular Music studies, across a range of Black sound and sonic practices, media, historical and contemporary events to produce new ways of understanding Black being and Blackness in different registers that are not antithetical to us. Chapter/Track One on Noise disrupts the ways in which the order of the human as understood in modernity is situated through the category of the visual by sound—thinking about how Blackness is registered as noise and is upheld through disciplining practices through municipal by-laws. Using a sonic sensibility, I argue that municipal by-laws are weaponized to validate White anxieties that render Blackness as excess and noise that must be silenced to maintain Canada as a literal Black nowhere. Despite these behaviours, Black people and Black sonic practices in Canada reveal how creative expression continue to sound Black life and Blackness beyond their negation. Chapter/Track Two on the Voice contends with the fungibility of Black Canadian Hip Hop and R&B in the Canadian music industry. Over the past decade, Toronto has been particularly noted as a leading innovator in the global music industry through its creation of a New Black Toronto Sound. Despite being undervalued and violently used by the State to legitimize this place as one

that is in support of Black people and Black artistry as a multicultural place, Black artists from the city and its surrounding areas invent sonic practices that gestures to the fugitive potential of their voices and alternative practices that legitimize themselves on their own terms. Lastly, Chapter/Track Three on Silence picks up on sonic practices of care that Chapter/Track Two ends on to consider how, through a range of sonic practices—film, music, soundwalks, museums, and the land and ocean—Black Scotians create a polyphonic chorus of Black soundscapes in The Maritimes, on the edge of The Atlantic Ocean, grounded in a politics of love and care that reverberate across *Black nowheres*, and which insists on different forms of relationality and opacity.

Essentially, the entirety of this project aims to develop the grounds to understand *Black nowheres* as a concept that asserts, we think and listen differently about Black diasporas. It's hard for me to find the words to explain what Black sound and sonic practices *do*, but with the ideas explored in this dissertation, I like to think we are freed from the seductive trappings of legibility that are often in service to reinscribe the repetitious loops of violence enacted on Black people and Blackness. This work calls us to think differently about what sound and sonic practices *do as a verb, as actions, as otherwise* through deciphering the different registers- *Black nowheres, now here and know here.* I begin this outro with two epigraphs to register what I understand as the otherwise possibility of this work—it sonically allows us *to carry on* and *sustain wonder* through sonic grooves and vibrations. As such, I turn to the bonus track of the dissertation, 03.13.22, to consider what we now know about the counterintuitive possibilities of *Black nowheres*.

Bonus Track: 03.13.22

On March 13, 2022, at 4:49am, my brother and sister-in-law's son, Zakariya Alaa Salahadein Mohammed, was born. The conditions of his birth were complicated due to his umbilical cord being wrapped around his neck, making it difficult for him to breathe. NourbeSe Philip reminds us that "the first ga(s)p of the newborn who has, until then, been breathed for, signals a beginning; it is the same act—that of forcefully attempting to draw air into the lungs that will mark the final moments of a life […]" (2018, p. 34). As such, my sister-in-law Nafisah underwent an emergency C-section. When recounting her experience in the delivery room, Nafisah told Alaa, her husband, my brother, and myself that while on the table, it was difficult for her to breathe. Knowing that her son had been delivered, all Nafisah could say was *Zaki, Zaki, Zaki*, as she had not heard him cry. In that moment, where she was experiencing tightness in her chest and feeling no control over her body, she had accepted that if, God willing, this was her time, she just needed to affirm that her mission was complete, she needed to hear Zaki's cry. A newborn's first cry is what affirms their ability to live "[…] life outside the womb where the baby must use its own lungs to sustain life" ("Baby's First Cry," 2015). Zaki's delayed cry and Nafisah's paused breath remind us that "[b]reathing, in everyday Black life, is a spectacular event" (Cox & Jean-François, 2022, p. 99). When hearing Zakariya's cry, Nafisah was relieved, he had affirmed both his and her being in the world, his cry affirmed they could breathe together. It was Zakariya's cry, "[…] in the face of quotidian and spectacular violence" (Nash, 2018, p. 703), that Nafisah, as a Black woman and mother, was able to hear the possibility of a different world.

Shortly after Zakariya's birth, my brother, Alaa, recited the Azan—call to prayer, to Zakariya as tradition follows in Islam wherein the Azan is recited in the right ear of the newborn. Witnessing the video and hearing my brother recite this prayer in Zakariya's ear made clear to

me in the moment of how in Islam and "[…] in the Qur'an, the sense of hearing is linked to ideas of cognition and comprehension. Understanding of the discursive content or meaning of a message is obtained through hearing" (Osborne, 2019, p. 73). It also illustrates how the sonic and listening practices are central to sociality and relationality. As Alaa performed the Azan to Zakariya, his cries, coos and murmurs affirmed their relation, and Zakariya's being in this world.

In Zakariya's heartbeat, In Zakariya's cries, in Zakriya's breath, I hear what I work through in this dissertation—the ways we be together despite the repetitious loops of violence that mark part of how we exist in this world. My mother's voice echoes in my mind, "*nothing is free in this whole White world*" and am reminded of what Saidiya Hartman says in *Wayward Lives*: "[…] Inside the circle it is clear that every song is really the same song, but crooned in infinite variety, every story altered and unchanging: How can I live? I want to be free. Hold on." (2019, p. 349). Zakariya's first cry, Nafisah's sigh of relief, Alaa's recitation of the Azan, Zakariya's responding cries, these are sonic articulations that register Black livingness, desires to be free, the sounds of holding on.

In "Hues and Grooves" McKittrick (2018) maintains,

> How we relate to each other *matters* and how we tell each other stories *matters* because the stories are often embedded with codes and clues about how to live this world ethically. And so for me part of that storytelling is through music and music-making. The wonderful thing about music is the groove; it is always the groove […] (para.2)

Throughout Zakariya's three-week stay in the NICU, FaceTime calls became our main way of communicating with Alaa, Nafisah and Zakariya due to COVID-19 protocols limiting visitors. In these calls, stories, songs, prayers, and cultural sayings became the ways we attempted to ease holding our breath waiting for Zakariya to come home. One night, I asked if there were any

particular songs that Zakariya responded particularly well to, and Alaa and Nafisah specifically noted that they sing Bill Withers' "Lean on Me" to soothe Zakariya. On one of the final FaceTime calls we had while Alaa and Nafisah were preparing to bring Zakariya home, Zakariya was a bit fussy and so Alaa put down the phone, picked up and rocked Zakariya, and I quietly sang "Lean on Me" through the phone. The lyrics and groove of "Lean on Me" affirm relationality, community, care and the ethos of what I believe this dissertation insists we must do—that we "[…] describe and apprehend the multiple ways that Black people make life" (Sharpe, 2019, p. 12) as otherwise. We sing to Zakariya here in a *Black nowhere*, what we have always said to each other, "*I'll help you carry on […] we all need somebody to lean on. I just might have a problem that you'll understand, we all need somebody to lean on. If, there is a load, you have to bear, that you can't carry, I'm right up the road, I'll share your load, if you just call me […] Call me, call me, call me…*" (Withers, 1972, track 5).

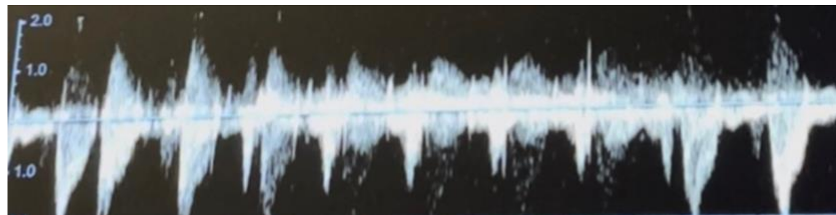


Figure 12: "Zaki's Heartbeat (N. Abdalla, personal communication, November 11, 2021).

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