

Mythologies of an [Un]dead Indian

by

Jackson 2bears (Leween)
BA, University of Toronto, 1999
MFA, University of Victoria, 2003

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in the Department of Interdisciplinary Studies

© Jackson 2bears (Leween), 2012
University of Victoria

All rights reserved. This dissertation may not be reproduced in whole or in part, by
photocopy or other means, without the permission of the author.

Supervisory Committee

Mythologies of an [Un]dead Indian

by

Jackson 2bears (Leween)
BA, University of Toronto, 1999
MFA, University of Victoria, 2003

Supervisory Committee

Dr. Arthur Kroker, Department of Political Science
Supervisor

Dr. Taiaiake Alfred, Indigenous Governance Program
Co-Supervisor

Dr. Steve Gibson, Department of Visual Arts
Departmental Member

Dr. Andrew Schloss, School of Music
Departmental Member

Dr. Stephen J. Pfohl, Boston College, Sociology Department
Additional Member

Abstract

Supervisory Committee

Dr. Arthur Kroker, Department of Political Science
Supervisor

Dr. Taiaiake Alfred, Indigenous Governance Program
Co-Supervisor

Dr. Steve Gibson, Department of Visual Arts
Departmental Member

Dr. Andrew Schloss, School of Music
Departmental Member

Dr. Stephen J. Pfohl, Boston College, Sociology Department
Additional Member

This dissertation explores the aesthetics of contemporary Indigenous identity— its various manifestations, simulations, hybridizations, (dis)appearances, and liminalities. It is a project about the *lived* experience of ancestry conceived of through narratives of shapeshifting, virtuality, sacrifice, hauntings and possession.

This project is representative of a period of time in an on-going journey that began long before these first words were written...and one that I intend will continue long after this book's completion.

The methodological approach to this work is multifaceted, encompassing the fields of Indigenous philosophy, digital media art and cultural studies. It is a project

comprised of several interrelated strands of theoretical speculation, philosophical inquiry and creative engagement.

This dissertation is in many ways an autobiographical text—a meditation on my own *Kanien'kehaka* (Mohawk) heritage and the spaces I occupy in the world as *Onkwehonwe* (an Indigenous person). At its core it is about exploring different modes of engagement with my own ancestral 'territories', while at the same time it endeavors to ask larger questions about collective memory, community, and cultural inheritance.

In being representative of a journey, the interrelated strands of writings in this text are meant to be traversal, and are about surveying and mapping different intellectual and creative territories. This text is about crossing interdisciplinary zones of theoretical inquiry that occur at the intersection and hybridization of Indigenous and Western philosophies, contemporary First Nations performance art and post-structuralist theory.

It is a work comprised of ebbs and flows, movements, refrains, and cascades of articulation that interpenetrate and cross over into one another. This text is therefore best thought of as a series of theoretical passageways—a multiplicity of thoughts and critical engagements in motion, translation and conversion.

It must be said that the traversals and crossings in this text are not necessarily about establishing a synthesis between differing ideologies, philosophies or cosmologies. It is not intended to be dichotomous, but rather should be read as a *remix-theory* that passes in-between different fields of critical inquiry. For while on the one hand this text seeks to explore different zones of intellectual and creative proximity, it is also a work that emerges from within a multitude of contradictions and myriad incommensurabilities.

Table of Contents

Supervisory Committee.....	ii
Abstract.....	iii
Table of Contents.....	v
List of Figures.....	vii
Title Page.....	x
Exordium.....	1

PART ONE

Chapter 1: Hauntings.....	22
Hauntings Speaking to Their Mother A Geography of Ancestry Going Home: A Hauntology of Place A Hauntology of Ancestry Transgenerational Hauntings and Spectral Transference	
Chapter 2: The Death of the Indian Act.....	52
The Death of the Indian Act A Mythopoetic Insurrection Sacrificial Conjunction	
Chapter 3: Post-Indian Mythologies of Shadow Survivance.....	85
Prelude to a Séance The Possession Dance and the Eclipse of the Other The Noble Savage, the Shadow Archive and the Spectral Other Painting the Dead Triumph of Miss Chief Eagle Testickle: Post-Indian Diva Warrior Epilogue: Enter the Ghost of Miss Chief	

Chapter 4: Hyper-Phantomality and Simulated Survivance.....	126
A Prelude to a Theory of Simulated Survivance “Real Indian” Simulations in the Hyperreal of the Wild West Hauntology of Simulation and Hyper-Phantomality A Theory of Simulated Survivance: Belle Sauvage in the Abyss of the Reversal	
Chapter 5: Shapeshifter Stories in Translation.....	165
The Man with the Red Handkerchief Trickster Hermeneutics and Becomings- Animal Becomings-Artifact Becomings-Undead	
PART TWO	
Chapter 6: A Conversation with Spirits Inside the Simulation of a Coast Salish Longhouse.....	197
Chapter 7: Native Hip-Hop: The Eternal Refrain of the Breakbeat, Becomings- Machine, Becomings-Animal and Possessed Vocality.....	226
What is Native Hip Hop? The Eternal Refrain of the Breakbeat Mother Earth, the Drum and the Breakbeat-Assemblage Meta-Music and the Becoming- Machine of Vocality The Becoming-Wolf of the MC and Possessed Vocality	
Epilogue.....	261
Bibliography.....	295

List of Figures

Fig. 1 Jackson 2bears. Mythologies of an [Un]dead Indian. Title Image, 2011.....	x
Fig. 2. Rebecca Belmore. <i>Speaking to Their Mother</i> . Interactive Sculpture, 1990.	23
Fig. 3. Rebecca Belmore. <i>Speaking to Their Mother</i> . Interactive Sculpture, 1990.	24
Fig. 4. Rebecca Belmore. <i>Speaking to Their Mother</i> . Interactive Sculpture, 1990.	25
Fig. 5. Rebecca Belmore. <i>Speaking to Their Mother</i> . Interactive Sculpture, 1990	26
Fig. 6. “Lorne Bridge”. Brantford, ON. (photographer unknown).	31
Fig. 7. "Lorne Bridge". Brantford, ON. (photographer unknown).	32
Fig. 8. Colborne Street (circa 1988). Brantford, ON. (photographer unknown).	33
Fig. 9. “Joseph Brant Memorial”. Brantford, ON. (photographer unknown).....	34
Fig. 10. Lawrence Paul (Yuxweluptun). <i>An Indian Act: Shooting the Indian Act</i> . 1997..	53
Fig. 11. Lawrence Paul (Yuxweluptun). <i>An Indian Act: Shooting the Indian Act</i> . Performance, 1997.	64
Fig. 12. Lawrence Paul (Yuxweluptun). <i>An Indian Act: Shooting the Indian Act</i> . Installation at Grunt Gallery, Vancouver B.C. 2000.....	76
Fig. 13. Lawrence Paul (Yuxweluptun). <i>An Indian Act: Shooting the Indian Act</i> . 1997..	79
Fig. 14. Kent Monkman (as Miss Chief). <i>Cindy Silverscreen</i> . Photograph, 2008.....	86
Fig. 15. Kent Monkman (as Miss Chief). <i>Hunter</i> . Photograph, 2008.....	87
Fig. 16. Paul Kane. <i>Big Snake, Chief of the Blackfoot Indians, Recounting his War</i> <i>Exploits to Five Subordinate Chiefs</i> . Painting, 1851-56.	99
Fig. 17. Paul Kane. <i>Medicine Mask Dance</i> . Painting, 1848-56.....	105
Fig. 18. Paul Kane. <i>The Man that Always Rides</i> . Painting, 1848-56.	108

Fig. 19. Kent Monkman. <i>Trapper's Bride</i> . Painting, 2007.....	108
Fig. 20. Kent Monkman (as Miss Chief). <i>Séance</i> . Performance, 2007.....	113
Fig. 21. Kent Monkman (as Miss Chief). <i>Séance</i> . Performance, 2007.....	116
Fig. 22. Kent Monkman (as Miss Chief). <i>Séance</i> . Performance, 2007.....	119
Fig. 23. Lori Blondeau. <i>Cosmosquaw</i> . Digital Print, 2002.	128
Fig. 24. Lori Blondeau. <i>Belle Sauvage</i> . Digital Print.....	129
Fig. 25. "Buffalo Bill's Wild West". Poster, circa 1880's.....	132
Fig. 26. Sitting Bull and William "Buffalo Bill" Cody. Photograph by W.Norton, 1885.	134
Fig. 27. Buffalo Bill's Wild West. Poster. circa 1890's.....	136
Fig. 28. Portrait with Sitting Bull and William "Buffalo Bill" Cody. Photograph, circa 1890's.....	149
Fig. 29. Lori Blondeau. <i>A Moment in the Life of Belle Sauvage</i> . Performance still, 2002.	158
Fig. 30. James Luna. <i>Artifact Piece</i> . Performance, 1985.	175
Fig. 31. James Luna. <i>Artifact Piece</i> . Performance, 1985.	179
Fig. 32. James Luna. <i>Artifact Piece</i> . Performance, 1985.	191
Fig. 33. Lawrence Paul (Yuxweluptun). <i>Inherent Rights, Vision Rights</i> . Virtual Reality artwork, 1991-93.....	199
Fig. 34. Lawrence Paul (Yuxweluptun). <i>Inherent Rights, Vision Rights</i> . Virtual Reality artwork, 1991-93.....	201
Fig. 35. Lawrence Paul (Yuxweluptun). <i>Inherent Rights, Vision Rights</i> . Virtual Reality Interface, 1991-93.	207
Fig. 36. Lawrence Paul (Yuxweluptun). <i>Inherent Rights, Vision Rights</i> . Virtual Reality artwork, 1991-93.....	221
Fig. 37. Lawrence Paul (Yuxweluptun). <i>Inherent Rights, Vision Rights</i> . Gallery Installation, 1991.....	223

Fig. 38. Image of Frances Densmore and Blackfoot producing a Cylinder Recording. Photograph, 1916.	228
Fig. 39. War Party. <i>All for One</i> . Music Video (Still), 2005.....	229
Fig. 40. The "Amen Break".	237
Fig. 41. War Party's Rex Smallboy on Stage. 2005.	244
Fig. 42. Ostwelve (aka Ronnie Dean Harris) Performing, 2009.....	249
Fig. 43. Litefoot performing at <i>Reach the Rez Tour</i>	249



Fig. 1 Jackson 2bears. Mythologies of an [Un]dead Indian. Title Image, 2011.

Exordium

A SPECTER is haunting Turtle Island...¹

Living as a *Kanien'kehaka* (Mohawk) person means I have had to learn to live with ghosts—the hauntological experience of ancestry is a spectral landscape populated by a multiplicity of sprits, phantoms and apparitions.

Leroy Little Bear once wrote that the Indigenous experience of life involved a belief in the “sacredness, livingness and the soul of the world ... all things being animate, space/place, renewal, and all things being imbued with spirit.”² Though it would seem that some of these spirits are determined to haunt the lives of the living, collectivities of ghosts and revenants that continue to *spectralize* our presences as *Onkwehonwe* (Indigenous peoples).

Vine Deloria Jr. said that our ancestors did not think of the land as something they owned but rather as an animate entity that possessed or inhabited the people. Following this, perhaps ancestry should not be thought of as something that is ‘mine’ —in the sense my heritage is something I own or possess—but instead of as something I am possessed by...

Crossings

This project is comprised of several interrelated strands of theoretical speculation, philosophical inquiry and creative engagement.

In a general sense it is a work about exploring the aesthetics of contemporary Indigenous identity—its various manifestations, simulations, hybridizations, (dis)appearances, and liminalities. It is a project about the *lived* experience of ancestry conceived of through narratives of shapeshifting, virtuality, sacrifice, hauntings and possession.

This project is representative of a period of time in an on-going journey that began long before these first words were written...and one that I intend will continue long after this book's completion.

In many ways this is an autobiographical text, a meditation on my own Kanien'kehaka heritage and the spaces I occupy in the world as an Indigenous person. At its core it is about exploring different modes of engagement with my own ancestral territory, while at the same time it endeavours to ask larger questions about collective memory, community, and cultural inheritance.

In being representative of a journey, the series of writings in this text are meant to be traversal, and are about surveying and mapping different intellectual and creative territories. This text is about crossing interdisciplinary zones of theoretical inquiry that occur at the intersection and hybridization of Indigenous and Western philosophies, contemporary First Nations performance art and post-structuralist theory. Like music, it is a work comprised of ebbs and flows, movements, refrains, and cascades of articulation

that interpenetrate and cross over into one another. This text is therefore best thought of as a series of theoretical passageways, a multiplicity of thoughts and critical engagements in motion, translation and conversion.

It must be said that the traversals and crossings in this text are not necessarily about establishing a synthesis between differing ideologies, philosophies or cosmologies. It is not intended to be dichotomous, but rather should be read as a *remix-theory* that passes in-between different fields of critical inquiry. For while on the one hand this text seeks to explore different zones of intellectual and creative proximity, it is also a work that emerges from within the multitude of contradictions and myriad incommensurabilities that have been encountered along this journey.

Spatializing Ancestry

At the beginning of this project I encountered a book by Vine Deloria Jr. entitled *God is Red: A Native View of Religion*. It was in this text I discovered an engaging and rather provocative argument: Deloria wrote that the main reason for theological/philosophical conflict between Western religions and ‘tribal spirituality’ is that the first is preoccupied with the concept of *time* whereas the second is based on a philosophy of *space*. Deloria states that Western religions are teleological, in that they tend to emphasize notions of progress and (linear) chronological history, and thus the foundations of their religious beliefs primarily revolve around a temporal logic. He says, for example, within Christianity history is understood as the unfolding of a divine plan for humanity, a ‘manifest destiny’ for the European people.³ By contrast, Deloria proposes that tribal

religions are spatial as they privilege a spiritual relationship to ‘place’ and, therefore, tribal religious sensibilities emerge from attention given to the landscape and the geographical or celestial orientation of the people.

As my own example I would cite the central metaphor of the *Rotinoshonni* (Iroquois Confederacy) which is symbolically that of “a great pine with roots stretching out in the cardinal directions.”⁴ This symbolism, which was brought to our people by the prophet Dakanawidah, is at the center of our traditional *Haudenosaunee* (Iroquois) beliefs, and is an example of how ‘place’ has traditionally been integral to our ancestors’ spiritual and ceremonial lives. The Tree of Long Leaves, as it is known, represents life, growth, change, peace, strength and the importance of our interconnection with Mother Earth. From the *Kaianerekowa* (The Great Law of Peace):

I am Dakanawidah and ... I plant the Tree of the Great Peace. ... I name the tree the Tree of Long Leaves.

Roots have spread out from the Tree of the Great Peace, one to the North, one to the East, one to the South and one to the West. The name of these roots is The Great White Roots and their nature is Peace and Strength.⁵

According to Deloria, the notion of time and history as sequential and linear is exclusively a Western notion, and not something that was originally part of ‘tribal reality’. Rather, he says, Indigenous spirituality was based on a ‘non-linear’ attitude towards history because they focused primarily on their *lived* experience of ‘place’. Following this, Deloria posits a way to think about history and ancestry as *not* something that we ‘inherit’ from the past, but rather as something animate (living) that co-exists

with our experience of the present—as Kanien’kehaka philosopher Taiaiake Alfred wrote, “being Onkwehonwe is *living* heritage.”⁶

Deloria said that because Onkwehonwe traditions were linked ideologically and spiritually to the landscape that “Indian tribes combine history and geography so that they have a sacred geography.”⁷ Thus as opposed to a chronological or genealogical concept of history and ancestry, Deloria proposes the concept of a ‘geography of ancestry’, an idea conceived of through the logic of the *spatial*.

This text begins with reflecting on these perspectives given by Deloria and takes up the project of thinking ancestry, heritage and identity through a spatial/geographical logic. It begins with imagining ancestry as an animate landscape consisting of interconnected layers of collective memories, stories, and histories that have been ‘written on the land’ and inscribed onto our ‘ancestral geography’. It is a project about thinking of heritage as being comprised of a multiplicity of spirits that populate our ‘sacred landscapes’—collectivities of animate entities with whom we coexist in the living present.

Hauntings in Translation

Central to this project is an exploration of the notion of ancestry as being a form of *possession*—what Deloria called an internalization or intereORIZATION of ‘sacred geographies’, or what Tewa philosopher Gregory Cajete has termed *ensoulment* or *geopsyche*. In considering ancestry through a spatial logic as being a landscape populated by animate spirits with whom we share an ‘internalizing bond’, this project seeks to

speculate about those specific spirits that would seemingly seek to do us harm...those undead apparitions that continue to come back to haunt the living.

To this end, this text interweaves the works of Indigenous writers such as Deloria and Cajete with a number of post-structuralist theorists in order to explore what I have termed the *hauntological experience of ancestry*—ancestry, that is, conceived of as a *spectral* landscape comprised of a multiplicity of ghosts, apparitions and revenants that haunt our ancestral geography. Therefore, throughout this work are different traversal theories that mobilize Jacques Derrida's concept of *hauntology* as a means to conjure these 'specters of history' that for Deloria 'inhabit' and 'possess', and for Derrida 'haunt' or 'spectralize'.

A Question of Methodology

The question may be asked at this point: why choose a methodological approach that seeks to cross the cultural, spiritual and intellectual territories of Indigenous and Western thought?

It is because if there is one thing I have learned from reading authors such as Vine Deloria Jr., Taiaiake Alfred, Gregory Cajete and Gerald Vizenor (among many others), it is that the Native worldview/paradigm is grounded in the notion of 'constant flux', and that the universe is seen as constantly undergoing processes of change, renewal, transformation and restoration. And further, as Leroy Little Bear wrote, "all of creation is interrelated,"⁸ and that the world 'in motion' is interconnected in a 'spider web' (or circle) of relationships. I have chosen this approach because, like these thinkers, I

understand that today our networks of relations already involve the interpenetration of a multiplicity of Indigenous and Western cosmologies that have formed other ‘webs’ of hybridized meaning and articulation. Therefore, in this work, I seek to explore these spaces of intersection, these zones of contradiction, oscillation, uncertainty and interconnection, and I endeavor to write in a way that will traverse these different ‘networks of relations’ in which we are immersed.

This text is not about the *survival* of Indigenous peoples in a post-colonial world, but rather what *Anishinaabe* philosopher Gerald Vizenor called *survivance*—a term that signals among other things the ongoing struggle of Indigenous peoples for whom colonialism is anything but ‘post’, and instead something that directly effects our present lived reality. Thus this text strives to embody an “active sense of presence [in] the continuance of native stories, not a mere reaction, or a survivable name.”⁹ It is a project that is crucially about exploring the liminal spaces in-between the cycles of ‘active’ presence and the inertial forces of radicalized disappearance that crossover interdisciplinary and cross-cultural zones of critical inquiry. It is a text that strives to be what Vizenor called trickster stories in translation and conversion—those narratives that cut through and invert what he termed the manifest manners of domination. To this end, this text moves through different modes of transformations, *becomings*, and inversions and is one comprised of *paradoxical incorporations* that, like trickster stories, pass through and collapse into each other in order to arrive at new possibilities for theoretical and creative engagement.

A number of (Western) post-structuralist theorists are prominently featured in the different strands of critical inquiry in this work, primarily because their’s is a discourse

that issues from a methodology that is in essence (or at least intention), something that is not methodological. *Deconstruction*—a principle mode of exploration for these authors—is, for instance, a form of theoretical discourse that does not reduce to a mechanical process that would simply imply a systematic dismantling or annihilation of ideological positions. Deconstruction, Derrida has said, is rather a theoretical approach that emerges from within (in-between) the *paradoxical incorporation* of binary opposites because post-structural discourse is, he writes, simultaneously a ‘structuralist’ and ‘antistructuralist’ gesture.¹⁰ Post-structuralism it is not an *analysis* or a *critique*, and it is “not a method and cannot be transformed into one [because] it [simultaneously] *deconstructs itself*.”¹¹ Like with trickster stories, the value of post-structuralist methods of speculation reside in their ambiguity, uncertainty and essential theoretical imperfection—or better, in their paradoxical and circular nature from within which new forms of engagement emerge, providing a multitude of possible solutions with regard to divergent trajectories of theoretical discourse.

In the context of this work, the methodological approach is one of paradoxical inquiry, performative theory, and creative speculation that operate along the lines of what Deloria called a circle of relations, or what Vizenor called interconnected strands of thought in motion and translation. A non-methodological methodology, therefore, that like Vizenor’s functions by flowing through liminal spaces of uncertainty and *trickster hermeneutics* to arrive ultimately at different modes of engagement with regards to questions of identity, heritage and ancestry that, as Leroy Little Bear wrote, are always in “constant flux/motion.”¹²

...

This text is divided into two sections:

Part One consists of five chapters that explore the themes of haunting, possession, transformation, sacrifice and conjuration as they relate to issues of identity, ancestry and heritage. Each chapter in this section is enframed by selected artworks by contemporary First Nations artists that serve to broaden the dialogue through different engagements with concepts, performances, and actions of creative resistance.

Mythologies of an [Un]dead Indian: Part One

Chapter One, (“Hauntings”) takes up the project of thinking of ancestral inheritance as a form of *possession*. Following Deloria and Cajete, this chapter argues that as Indigenous peoples what we inherit is a *sacred geography*, but that this landscape is today one haunted by specters, ghosts and apparitions that continue to *spectralize* our presences Onkwehonwe. This discussion is put forth through a reading of Derrida’s concept of *hauntology* derived primarily from his text *Specters of Marx*.

“Hauntings” endeavors first to establish a foundational dialogue about ancestry thought through a spatial logic, but also it serves to introduce the concept of a hauntological experience of ancestral geography. These discussions include concepts such as *paradoxical incorporation*, *phantomality* and the *spectralization of ancestry* as they relate to questions of cultural memory in motion, translation and conversion. The collaborative works of psychoanalysts Nicolas Abraham and Elizabeth Torok also contribute to these discussions with their theorizations of *the crypt*, *transgenerational haunting*, and what they term *the phantom*.

Crucially, this chapter is a preface to identifying and *naming* the specters of history that haunt our living present—those that hereafter in the text will be conjured, invoked and ‘called forth’ to be interrogated, deconstructed, sacrificed, and/or exorcised.

Chapter Two, (“The Death of the Indian Act”) picks up the discussion from the preceding chapter and is enframed by a performance artwork by Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun entitled *An Indian Act: Shooting the Indian Act*. The chapter begins with a reflection on Frantz Fanon’s interlinking theorizations of sacrificial-dedication and collective catharsis—two concepts he presents in *Black Skin, White Masks* that involve different social acts of defiance that produce the effects of communal release, cleansing or purging of collective anxieties.

In this context, I propose that Yuxweluptun’s performance artwork to be that of a performance-exorcism that involves the transformation of the Indian Act legislation into an object of sacrificial-dedication. This theory is expanded upon by a meditation on George Bataille’s discourse on the sacred-instant and mythopoetics in both his texts *The Absence of Myth* and *Theory of Religion*. Finally, the text returns to Derrida’s theories of invocation and conjuration (conjurement) where the sacrificial-dedication of the Indian Act in Yuxweluptun’s artwork becomes about the exorcism of the hauntology of colonialism, and the spectral legacy of the Indian Act.

Chapter 3, (“Post-Indian Mythologies of Shadow Survivance”) begins with the question of alterity in a colonial environment, and argues alongside Marc Guillaume and Jean

Baudrillard that ‘authentic Otherness’ is troubled and dysymmetrical in cases where Others are dominated by an oppressive imperial force.

In his text *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon wrote: “the colonist and the colonized are old acquaintances. And consequently, the colonist is right when he says he ‘knows’ them. It is the colonist who fabricated and continues to fabricate the colonized subject.”¹³ This chapter looks at how the identities of Indigenous peoples have been constructed, simulated, and produced in the colonial environment, and how this has resulted in the erasure of the possibility of non-appropriated, autonomous Otherness.

Issues raised in this discussion include that of the eclipse of the Other, something that Guillaume describes as modes of condensing, abbreviating, concealing, or shadowing the Other by constructing them through different colonial mythologies and ‘combinatory fictions’. Joining this dialogue are the writings of Carl Jung and his concept of the shadow; the works of Vizenor and his thoughts on the manifest manners of domination and simulation; and Derrida’s works on the phantomological disappearance of the subject who becomes haunted by the ironic appearance of his/her spectral-Other.

Throughout this chapter, the artworks of Kent Monkman surface as a means to reflect specifically on the early colonial painters such as George Catlin and Paul Kane, and the ways in which they contributed to the fabrication, construction and reproduction of the image and identity of the Indian Other—the way they, as Monkman wrote, “project[ed] their imaginations and ideologies onto the North American landscape.”¹⁴

Chapter 4, (“Hyper-Phantomality and Simulated Survivance”) endeavors to creatively engage with the hauntological experience of what, in the preceding chapter, I call

spectral-Otherness. This chapter examines the popular phenomenon of the Wild West shows staged in the 1880s, and their contribution in creating what Daniel Francis called the cultural archetype of the ‘Imaginary Indian’. With the help of Jean Baudrillard’s theories of simulacra and simulations, this chapter examines the spectacle of the Wild West circus and the ways the Indian Other becomes shadowed, eclipsed and haunted by its simulated double—the ways in which, as Vizenor wrote, “tribal realities are superseded by the simulations of the unreal.”¹⁵

This chapter examines the artworks of Lori Blondeau, calling them performance-conjurations that in the text become about the reversal of the hauntologies of simulation. I argue that Blondeau’s works are about the ironic reappearance of the Indigenous body after having been disappeared into the order of what Derrida calls hyper-phantomality. Within the text, Blondeau’s performances become a kind of artistic counter-protest that hovers over the simulated and aestheticized byproducts of what Vizenor called the ‘manifest manners of colonization’ and the ‘simulations of dominance’. In this, Blondeau’s performances are imagined as what Baudrillard calls fatalistic strategies that involve the reversal of the codes of simulation in a way that celebrates the uncertainty and liminality of *being* Indian, and *being* Other.

Chapter 5, (“Shapeshifter Stories in Translation: Becomings-Animal, Becomings-Artifact and Becomings-Undead”) concludes the first section of this book. It begins with a reflection on Indigenous stories of shapeshifters, which are contextualized by what Cajete has called a psychology of place. In his text *Natural Laws of Interdependence*, Cajete wrote that traditionally Indigenous spiritual observances involved a belief in “a primal

affinity between the human body and the other bodies of the natural world.”¹⁶

Consequentially, he says, the people did not fully distinguish between human and animal realities.¹⁷ Rather they believed in an ‘internalizing bond’ where animal and human realities interpenetrate and cross over into one another, and thus the psychology of human beings were thought to be “resonant with the very spirit and essence of the life of animals.”¹⁸

Following this I explore the concept of *becomings-animal* as presented by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari in their co-authored text *A Thousand Plateaus*. Against evolutionist theories of species difference that Deleuze and Guattari say are ordered through a serial and structural logic, they develop their thoughts on becomings-animal as a *correspondence of relations* that “transcend[s] external resemblances to arrive at *internal homologies*.”¹⁹ Becomings are, they write, kinds of transformations they call lines of flight; they are movements, deterritorializations, flows, accelerations, and speed that concern bodies and their passage in-between forms. It is suggested therein that Deleuze and Guattari’s notion of becomings-animal could be read as a shapeshifter story—what Vizenor would have called a post-Indian performance of simulated survivance that emerges from within the dominant codes of colonial narratives and the shadowy occidental constructions of the Indian *Other*. Like with Blondeau’s artworks, Luna’s piece is about the simulation of the Indian *Other* in transition, a performance that forces the simulations of what Vizenor calls the ‘tribal real’ to return to the body, wherein all the signs begin to play on their inverse order; an artwork that teases the creases of transformation and inversion in a way that “absolve[s] the simulations with stories of cultural conversions and native modernity.”²⁰

Finally, I propose the idea that Luna's performance is about a phantomological transformation in which the body of the artist begins to traverse the zone of *becomings-undead*. In *Specters of Marx*, Derrida wrote that to have an ancestry means to have a *hauntology*—it means to be “constituted by specters of which [the subject] becomes the host and which it assembles in the haunted community of a single body.”²¹ If what we inherit is a hauntological ancestry that involves forms of possession in which a specter(s) is said to ‘inhabit’ the body, then Luna's artwork is about a fatalistic strategy of reversal: the *becoming-specter* of the flesh, the paradoxical *becoming-undead* of the ‘living body’, *the transformation of the haunted into the hunter*. The chapter concludes with a meditation on Luna's work as being a performance of conjuration *as* exorcism, which involves the idea of what Derrida called a *paradoxical hunt* for ghosts in which the body makes “a ghost of itself”²²—a spectral double, a mirrored ‘diabolical image’—in order to conjure a ghost such that it might be exorcised. In this I speculate that *Artifact Piece* is a trickster story in translation, a shapeshifter narrative of shadow survivance in which the *becomings-specter* of the Indigenous body overturns the mythologies of *manifest manners* and the finalities of the colonial simulations of dominance.

Mythologies of an [Un]dead Indian: Part Two

The second part of this text consists of two chapters that variously explore themes of virtuality, technological immersion, *becomings*, transformation, and *embodied-disembodiment*.

These chapters do not relate directly to the question of the *hauntological experience of ancestry*. Instead, they are meant as excerpts of *performative theory* that move along different trajectories from those in Part One. The intention here is to map, survey, and chart different theoretical territories that in general deal with the question of technology, and to explore the ways in which different Indigenous artists have embraced being interconnected and immersed in a ‘circle of relations’ this time with digital networks, simulations, and virtual environments.

Technological Possession in Translation

The German philosopher Martin Heidegger once wrote that the mystery of technology was something that could not be understood technologically, because in fact, the true essence of technology was not technological, but instead something better understood as a question of *being*—a mode of human existence.²³ For Heidegger, while the *manifest* content of technology could be understood as something that enframes our contemporary culture, the *latent* content of technology was something that would always remain undefined and enigmatic to human understanding. Today it could be argued that the question of technology is much more urgent because for us, as many posthumanist theorists suggest, technology is something that has penetrated the semi-permeable membrane of the flesh, becoming therein something with which we co-exist and are interconnected with—as it is with Arthur Kroker who has said that technology is “no longer an object which we can hold outside ourselves, but technique as *us*, as a grisly sign of the possession of body and mind.”²⁴

The writings in the chapters of Part Two issue from a place of considering the technological as a form of *possession*, and explore the hybridization of the body after being drawn into a ‘network of relations’ with spirit-simulations and the *spectral* (sur)reality of virtuality. In all of this, the key question remains how might Indigenous forms of knowledge be mobilized to re-think urgent questions of posthumanism, cybernetics and virtual environments by way of traversing forms of trickster hermeneutics, masking traditions, and ceremonial rituals of immersion and transformation.

Chapter 6, (“A Conversation with Spirits Inside the Simulation of a Coast Salish Longhouse”) is intentionally written as a prelude to an *Indigenous theory of virtuality*. It begins with a series of questions posed by Cree/Métis theorist Loretta Todd in her essay “Aboriginal Narratives in Cyberspace.” She asks, for instance: what does virtuality mean to Indigenous cultures? Is it possible for our narratives and histories find meaning in simulated environments? And moreover, “what if Aboriginal consciousness was fractalized, would cyberspace [virtuality/simulation] as articulated be part of our geometry of philosophy?”²⁵

While reflecting on a virtual reality piece entitled *Inherent Rights, Vision Rights* created by Coast Salish artist Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun in 1991, this chapter seeks to explore what Todd has called the ‘ontology of cyberspace’ through different narratives of post-humanism, simulated embodiment, masking traditions, and possession rituals. Contributing to these discussions are the writings of N. Katherine Hayles, Martin Heidegger, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, Gregory Cajete, and Carl Jung. In the

chapter, these intersecting theories traverse spaces of liminality, feedback, embodied-disembodiment, animism (the ‘living spirit of technology’) and shared psychic realities between biological organisms and virtual environments.

Chapter 7, (“Native Hip-Hop: The Eternal Refrain of the Breakbeat, Becomings-Machine, Becomings-Animal and Possessed Vocality”) draws together Charles Mudede’s concepts of meta-music, rupture, and *scratch-theory* from his essay “The Turntable” and crosses them with Deleuze and Guattari’s thoughts on *becomings*, *incorporeal transformations*, and *the refrain*. The idea here is to conceptualize the different modes of production and performance of Native Hip-Hop through the hybrid logic of the *eternal refrain of the breakbeat*—the *sonorous-assemblage* at the very heart of hip-hop where a (Western) musical ‘milieu’ is decoded, deterritorialized and ruptured through the circular logic of the breakbeat. This chapter is also an experiment in pushing the concept of performative theory to another level. The intention here is that the intersecting arguments in these final sections operate fully within the logic of the remix, becoming therein a multitude of streams of speculative theory that become fractured, decoded, deterritorialized and deconstructed as the various arguments collide and unfold.

Also contributing to this discussion is Jean Baudrillard’s writings from *Simulacra and Simulation*, and it is through this I explore the contemporary (digital) production of Hip-hop as flows of intensity and fragmented articulations that operate under the sign of the *hyper-refrain*. These theoretical vectors finally turn to a discussion about the relationship between traditional Indigenous forms of music wherein the refrain of the

drum is theorized through different connections with a psychology of place and an interiorized interconnection with the landscape—*the eternal refrain of Mother Earth*.

What follows is an exploration of the vocalizations, rhythmic-narrations, and stage-performance of the Native MC.

Rex Smallboy, a founding member of the group War Party said that Native hip-hop is basically ‘the evolution of Native Americans making music’ only today we have new stories, those about growing up on the reservation, life in urban centers, and dealing with racism and social injustice in our contemporary world. Here, the discussion returns to Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of becomings-animal wherein notions of possessed vocality and the *becoming-wolf* of the MC intersect with Jung’s ideas of an internalized correspondence of archetypal forms—a traversal/remix theory that begins with the deterritorialization of the body of the MC and ends with interpenetrating multiplicities and shared ontological realities that draw collectives together through different feedback effects within Native Hip-Hop’s social and cultural sphere.

NOTES:

¹ Traditionally, the Haudenosaunee people believed the earth on which they lived was a giant Island that rested on the back of a Sea Turtle.

For an excellent description of this aspect of Haudenosaunee cosmology see Chapter 2: “This Island, the World on the Turtles Back” in Fenton, William N., *The Great Law and the Longhouse: A Political History of the Iroquois Confederacy* (Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1976), 34.

² Leroy Little Bear “Forward”, in Gregory Cajete, *Native Science: Natural Laws of Interdependence* (Santa Fe, New Mexico: Clear Light Publishers, 2003), x

³ For references to Manifest Destiny according to Vine Deloria jr. see: Vine Deloria jr., *For this Land: Writings on Religion in America*. James Treat eds., (New York and London: Routledge, 1999), 78, 167.

In the years that followed, another doctrine arose from the minds of Christian men. This doctrine announced that America, the new country, had a “Manifest Destiny”. It was God’s will, we were told, indeed, the people of America were told, that Christian civilization should extend from coast to coast; from “sea to shinning sea” as it were. Everything non-Christian and lacking the customs and attributes of Christian civilization was to be pushed from the inevitable path of progress. p 78.

⁴ Bruce G. Trigger ed., *Handbook of North American Indians* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1978), 316.

⁵ Arthur C. Parker, *Parker on the Iroquois* (Syracuse and New York: Syracuse University Press, 1984), 30.

⁶ Taiaiake Alfred, *Wasáse: Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom* (Toronto, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2005), 137.

⁷ Vine Deloria jr., *God is Red: A Native View of Religion*. 3rd ed., (Golden, Colorado: Falcrum Publishing, 2003), 121.

⁸ Taiaiake Alfred, *Wasáse*, 9.

⁹ Gerald Vizenor, *Manifest Manners: Narratives on Postindian Survivance* (USA: First Bison Books printing, 1999), vii.

¹⁰ Jacques Derrida, *Psyche: Inventions of the Other*. Peggy Kamuf and Elizabeth Rottenberg eds., (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2008), 3.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹² Leroy Little Bear “Forward”, in Gregory Cajete, *Native Science: Natural Laws of Interdependence* (Santa Fe, New Mexico: Clear Light Publishers, 2003), x

¹³ Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*. Richard Philcox, trans., (New York: Grove Press, 2004), 2.

¹⁴ Kent Monkman, quoted from “Miss Chief: An Interview with Mike Hoolbloom” in *Dance to the Berdache*, exhibition catalogue. (Urban Shaman Gallery: Winnipeg, Manitoba), 22.

¹⁵ Gerald Vizenor, *Manifest Manners*, 8.

¹⁶ Gregory Cajete, *Native Science: Natural Laws of Interdependence* (Santa Fe, New Mexico: Clear Light Publishers, 2003), 24.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 150.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 156.

¹⁹ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Brian Massumi, trans., (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 236.

²⁰ Vizenor, *Manifest Manners*, ix

²¹ Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International*. Peggy Kamuf, trans., (New York and London: Routledge, 1994), 166.

²² *Ibid.*, 174.

²³ Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*. William Lovitt, trans., (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), 109.

²⁴ Arthur Kroker, *The Possessed Individual: Technology and the French Postmodern* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), 13.

²⁵ Loretta Todd, "Narratives in Cyberspace", printed in *Transference, Tradition, Technology: Native New Media Exploring Visual & Digital Culture* (Banff, Alberta: Walter Phillips Gallery Editions, 2005), 152-163.

Hauntings

A SPECTER is haunting Turtle Island...

It was in the summer of 1990 that the Kanien'kehaka (Mohawk) people of Kanesatake erected barricades in their town in order to stop a condo development and the expansion of a golf course onto their ancestral homelands...

Kanesatake, Quebec—or the Lake of Two Mountains as it is called—was the birthplace of my grandfather before he and his family were forcibly moved to the Ohsweken reservation in Ontario. That summer I sat with grandfather in front of the television and watched as the Kanien'kehaka people at the Lake of Two Mountains stood

in solidarity for a 78-day standoff against the Canadian army's unsuccessful efforts to occupy their ancestral territory. Although most sources record the conflict as having begun that summer, in truth the disagreement over this particular tract of land had been ongoing for at least 270 years...



Fig. 2. Rebecca Belmore. *Speaking to Their Mother*. Interactive Sculpture, 1990.

In response to what came to be called the *Oka Crisis*, Anishinaabe artist Rebecca Belmore created the artwork *Ayum-ee-aawach Oomama-mowan: Speaking to Their Mother*.

Consisting of a large cone sculpture built from birch bark with a megaphone inserted into the narrow end of the structure, the purpose of the artwork was simple: to amplify the voice of the person speaking to a deafening level such that their words could travel great distances and be heard reverberating across the landscape.

The artwork was meant to engage with the diversity of the ‘Indigenous experience’ in Canada while at the same time exploring political, social and deeply personal histories that took the form of a “political protest as poetic action”.¹ Belmore’s work was, first and foremost, about giving a voice to Indigenous peoples—a voice that it would seem had been ignored for over two centuries, in the case of the standoff between the Kanien’kehaka people and the Canadian government at the Lake of Two Mountains.



Fig. 3. Rebecca Belmore. *Speaking to Their Mother*. Interactive Sculpture, 1990.

In her essay “Performing Power” Jolene Rickard wrote that *Speaking to Their Mother* was about “creating a site of recognition of the historical erasure of aboriginal voices.”² Belmore’s work was about reinvigorating the people’s relationship to the land by way of nurturing a reconnection with Mother Earth, but also, in another sense, it was a critique of the (on-going) colonization of Turtle Island and the histories of erasure, extermination, and eradication of Onkwehonwe culture.

Belmore's interactive sculpture was taken to different First Nations communities both on and off different reservations in order to locate "the aboriginal voice on the land."³ In this way the artwork was about reactivating a communal connection with our ancestral territories while "empowering aboriginal people to speak to 'all of their relations' as well as the living cosmos."⁴

With the artwork Bellmore confronted the ongoing political, social and spiritual struggle of Onkwehonwe all across Turtle Island, and therein broke the silence by drawing "our attention to the fact that when we speak, the entire universe or 'mother' hears our words."⁵

Speaking to their Mother was about envisioning the possibility of creating new meanings and new sacred sites on the land by enabling the projection of cacophonous vocalizations that represented a diverse variety of expressions of *Onkwehonwea*—a *Native way of being*.



Fig. 4. Rebecca Belmore. *Speaking to Their Mother*. Interactive Sculpture, 1990.



Fig. 5. Rebecca Belmore. *Speaking to Their Mother*. Interactive Sculpture, 1990

My heart is beating like a small drum, and I hope that you mother earth can feel it. Someday I will speak to you in my language. I have watched my grandmother live close to you, my mother the same. I have watched my grandmother show respect for all that you have given her...Although I went away and left a certain kind of closeness to you, I have gone in a kind of circle. I think I am coming back to understanding where I come from...⁶

A Geography of Ancestry

In *God is Red*, Vine Deloria, Jr. proposed that the main reason for the incommensurability between Western religion(s) and Indigenous spirituality is that one is based on the concept of *time* whereas the other is founded on a philosophy of *space*.

In privileging the temporal over the spatial, Deloria says that Western theological traditions have come to place a great deal of emphasis on (chronological) history and the notion of ‘progress’. By contrast Deloria writes that Onkwehonwe spiritual traditions have generally taken a non-linear attitude towards history and instead focused on what was experienced in relation to the ‘living world’, the landscape, and the surrounding environment. The distinction Deloria makes in the text is between that of a ‘chronological/historical’ and ‘spatial/geographical’ cosmology, and in this he suggests a radically different way to think about heritage, ancestry, memory, and identity.

Deloria wrote that because Onkwehonwe traditions were linked ideologically, philosophically, scientifically and spirituality to the landscape that “Indian tribes combine history and geography so that they have a sacred geography.”⁷ In other words, as opposed to a genealogy of family history Deloria proposes a ‘geography of ancestry’, a theory of heritage conceived of through the logic of the spatial/geographical as opposed to the historical/chronological.

There are two aspects to Deloria’s notion of sacred geographies that are interconnected and form what he calls a *circle of relations*. The first involves the ways in which the landscape absorbs individual and collective experiences, and secondly how ‘place’ is internalized and forms the geographical ancestry of an individual or collective.

Another way to describe this would be through what Tewa/Pueblo philosopher Gregory Cajete calls a *psychology of place* or a *geopsyche*. In *Native Science: Natural Laws of Interdependence* Cajete writes:

In the perception of many Native Cultures, their landscapes were seen as metaphoric extensions of their bodies... [and therefore they] experienced nature as part of themselves and themselves a part of nature ... they were born of the earth of their place.⁸

Cajete said that traditionally, Onkwehonwe did not view their lands as commodities but rather as sacred spaces/places from which they drew strength, acquired knowledge and were revitalized through their interconnectedness with the spirit of Mother Earth. It is a kind of interrelationship with ‘place’ that he describes as *ensoulment*—a belief that the people were interconnected with the land both physically and spiritually, and in turn the mountains, trees and rivers absorbed the energy of the people. Ensoulment he says is about participating in a relationship of co-dependence with the ‘living world’ and having an “internalizing bond with place”⁹ that is structured as fields (or network) of interconnecting relationships.

In Native Science, there is then an inclusive definition of ‘being alive’. Everything is viewed as having energy and its own unique intelligence and creative process, not only obviously animate entities, such as plants, animals, and microorganisms, but also rocks, mountains, rivers and places large and small.¹⁰

In considering a *geography of ancestry* these interconnections, internalizations or intereozations of ‘place’ must be thought of as being a part of a larger narrative, or what we could call an *ancestral topography* of place. With Deloria, for instance, we might understand his spatial philosophy as having a *sedimentary* quality that involves a layering

of generational experiences that form the topographical stratum of our ancestral geographies. But in this, is there not something of a temporal logic at play?

The closest that Deloria ever comes to attempting to reconcile the difference between his notions of historical/chronological and spatial/geographical history appears in his text *For this Land: Writings on Religion in America*. He writes:

In theory it would be possible to gather ... all the stories that relate to every feature of a landscape [and] if these stories were arranged chronologically, the result would be a history of the people somewhat similar to what whites mean by history. But this history would be considered artificial ... because the intensity of the experience ... would have been abandon in favour of chronology.¹¹

At times it would seem that Deloria conceives of a relationship between the historical/chronological and geographical/spatial, meaning that perhaps for him, these cosmologies are not entirely irreconcilable. However, it is also clear that he believes that imposing a historical/chronological logic onto a spatial concept of history would be immensely problematic. How, then, with Deloria are we to reconcile the idea of a ‘layering’ of collective experiences? Would this not entail that over time experiences are deposited onto a place, that the psychic stratum of an individual or group is built-up over *time*? If so, would this not mean that there is already a chronological (temporal) element to Deloria’s idea of an ancestral geography?

In the context of a spatial or geographical concept of ancestry Deloria writes that “space generates time, but time has little relationship to space.”¹² What we can take from this is that Deloria clearly sees a relationship between time and land centered ideology, but he is specific in saying that time occurs *within* (or is generated by) the strata field of

the spatial, referring thusly not to a ‘universal time’ that proceeds in a necessarily linear fashion, but rather to an experience of time that is location or ‘place’ specific.

For Deloria, time is considered to be detached from temporality and linearity, and therefore not chronological. When Deloria writes that tribal histories are land centered he is speaking about way of understanding the world in which “the old [Western] categories of time and space vanish.”¹³ For Deloria, the idea of a ‘layering’ of individual or communal memories and experiences does not necessarily involve a chronological ordering of events—it does not mean that there is an implicit temporal element to Deloria’s thoughts on a geography of ancestry—but instead that space/place is inhabited by, or rather produces and generates the *experience* (hallucination/illusion) of time.

The significant difference lies in Deloria’s concept of time as being location specific. For traditional tribal societies, he says, chronology was always a spatial experience wherein the past, present and future simultaneously co-existed in the living present because, there was nothing “dividing the human time experience into before and after.”¹⁴ For Deloria, a theory of place and sacred geography is land (location/place) specific, and therefore events or moments become something distributed and dimensional rather than chronological and temporal. In other words, for Deloria, ancestry is not bound to temporality, but rather could be thought about as interconnected experiences and memories that interact in a field of *spatial relationality*.

The idea of spatial relationality (what Deloria often calls a network or circle of relations) is one way to describe the how things in the strata field of ancestry interact and are interconnected outside of the temporality of time. Thus the idea of a layering of individual and communal experiences does not necessarily entail that they build-up in a

chronological sequence because, for Deloria, such an essentialist ordering principle does not exist in his concept of a philosophy of the spatial.

To put this another way we could say that Deloria's spatial concept of history does not have a linear chronology, but rather it has co-ordinates; it does not have temporality, but rather is comprised of a topographical stratification of sedimentary layers of individual and collective memories and experiences that are interconnected and spatially or dimensionally related.

Going Home: A Hauntology of Place

I was born and raised in Brantford, a small city in Southern Ontario located a few miles west of the Six Nations Reservation of Ohsweken where my father was born.

High over the river that cuts through the territory, the Lorne Bridge joins the western part of the city to the rest of Brantford.

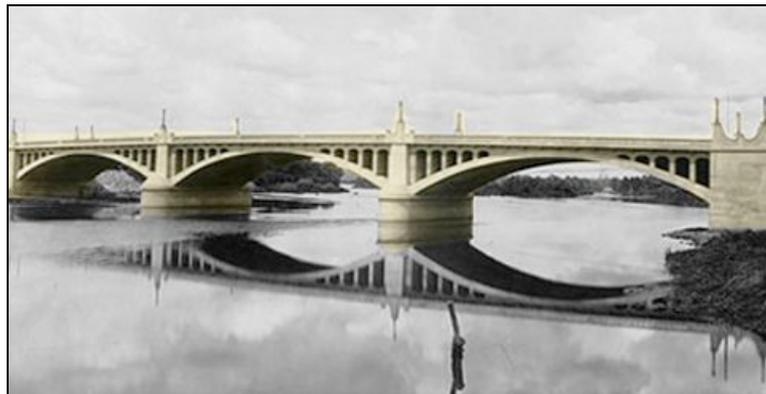


Fig. 6. "Lorne Bridge". Brantford, ON. (photographer unknown).

I have always thought of this bridge as the centre of my hometown, not geographically speaking of course, but because it enables passage over the Grand River, a turbulent waterway famously crossed by Joseph Brant, giving the city its name—literally the place where Brant ‘forded’ the river.

I can remember crossing over this bridge many times in my childhood ...

And in thinking about it now I begin to have flashbacks and hallucinations of singing ‘down by the river’ with my grandmother as we crossed the bridge on our way into town; of seeing my cousins jump the railing, hurtling their bodies into the water bellow on a humid summer day; of hearing Public Enemy for the first time blasting through the earphones of my Walkman on my way home from high school; of fishing with my childhood friend off the collapsed concrete remains of the old dam, our hands bloodied by the leeches we were using as bait; of how, later, those currents claimed his life when he was out on a fishing trip one day that terrible summer...of remembering that I only found solace in imagining his body becoming one with the river...



Fig. 7. "Lorne Bridge". Brantford, ON. (photographer unknown).

In the first half of the twentieth-century Brantford was a prosperous city in the throes of an economic boom that rivalled the nearby cities of Hamilton and Toronto. In the early days when it was still the end navigational point of the Grand River, the city saw the persistent construction of new buildings in constant demand by merchants wanting to purchase prime real estate close to the thriving farmer's market at its epicentre. But by the time I was old enough to go to school, my hometown was already in the middle of an enormous economic downturn, and the once vibrant downtown core had all but been abandon by residents, shoppers and business owners. By the 1980s, the city centre had become a veritable ghost town—the majority of storefronts were boarded up, buildings showed signs of substantial disrepair, many condemned, others on the verge of collapse— and everywhere you looked you could see the signs of urban decay.



Fig. 8. Colborne Street (circa 1988). Brantford, ON. (photographer unknown).

During this time, a ghostly urban legend surfaced about an ‘Indian curse’ that had been placed on the downtown core of the city. There are many different versions of this story, but I remember hearing about an ‘Indian witch’ who had placed an execration on the land as retribution for the injustices enacted to the Kanien’kehaka people. I’m not sure whether or not the reader believes in curses... I can only say that given the chance to see my hometown then might be enough to convince even the most skeptical of individuals that there might be some truth to the legend.

And what if the legend is true? I will ask this question now but will refrain for the moment from attempting to give an answer: what would it mean in the context of Deloria’s idea of a *geography of ancestry* if what is absorbed and internalized from ‘place’ is derived from a condemned territory bound by a curse?



Fig. 9. “Joseph Brant Memorial”. Brantford, ON. (photographer unknown).

Of course, long ago this entire region was 'Indian territory'

After the American War of Independence a large portion of land was given to the famous war chief Joseph Brant and his Kanien'kehaka followers for their loyal service to the British crown.

The impact of the war on the Haudenosaunee had been devastating, beginning with the invasion of our ancestral homelands in 1779 driving many of the people into Southern Ontario while reducing the population to less than 20,000. The territory granted to the people became a place of refuge following the war and was given with the promise that our people could continue to live their lives as Onkwehonwe and use the land in the way they saw fit.

The original territory granted to our people by the British Monarchy and entrusted to Brant was said to span six miles on either side of the Grand River from its mouth at the opening of the St. Lawrence all the way to Lake Erie, otherwise known as the Haldiman Tract. Brant is remembered by some as a hero for his efforts in mobilizing Haudenosaunee tribes and leading them into terrorizing raids against patriot forces in support of Great Brittan's efforts to suppress the rebellion. But to others he is remembered as the person responsible for dividing the nations of the Haudenosaunee during the war, an act that would eventually lead to the collapse of the *Rotinoshonni* (Iroquois Confederacy).

Over time, it was said, that Joseph Brant sold most of the land that was granted to the Kanien'kehaka people because he believed they could learn more sustainable ways of life from the new European settlers. Eventually the original villages were abandoned and the people relocated to what is now the Ohsweken reservation. The territory that is now

Brantford was ‘officially’ purchased from the Six Nations in 1839, and in 1886 a monument to Joseph Brant was erected in the center of our town. The *Chief Joseph Brant Memorial* has overtime been the place of peaceful community gatherings, violent encounters and numerous Indigenous protests. Brant’s legacy can be witnessed and felt everywhere in this territory, his ghost haunts these lands and is part of the ancestral geography of this place.

The story of Joseph Brant is written on the land in this territory, and so too are the lives of the Kanien’kehaka people that once lived here, their essence absorbed by the rocks, trees, and the river that flows through the center of the city. Later, there are the lives of the other generations who have resided here, their experiences, legends, mythologies and stories becoming part of the landscape and the architecture of the city: inscribed onto the Lorne Bridge that crosses the Grand River, written onto the collapsing downtown buildings on Colborne Street and etched into the concrete pavement that covers the earth in this ‘place’.

A Hauntology of Ancestry

I began with saying that ancestry should be not be thought of as something that we possess as the inheritors of the past, but rather as a living, experiential phenomenon that we are in fact possessed by—a hauntological experience, that is, which could be thought of as a landscape populated by a multiplicity of ghosts, spirits, and apparitions that drift in a liminal zone at the borderlands of the living present.

To be clear, when I say that my Kanien'kehaka ancestry is something that haunts or spectralizes, or, following Deloria, something that inhabits or possesses, I am not trying to characterize my Indigenous heritage in its entirety as something necessarily evil. There is indeed a difference between a spirit and a specter in that the latter returns [revenant] with ill wishes and insidious intentions to haunt the living. In thinking spatially about the question of ancestry as Deloria has, I instead want to think of the ways in which we are 'possessed' and inhabited by the experience of the specters we inherit, those spirits of the ancestral landscape that would wish to do us harm and those collectivities of ghosts we would desire to conjure away.

The French theorist Jacques Derrida first coined the term *hauntology* in his text *Specters of Marx*, in which he mobilizes the idea of the specter as the sign under which his deconstruction of Marx's legacy can take place. The term is a homophone of the word ontology and a portmanteau of 'haunt' and 'ology' that Derrida uses in the context of what he calls a "staging for the end of history."¹⁵ For in the text it is not only the specter of Marx that is conjured, but also the ghost of William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* from which Derrida quotes two significant passages: "To be or not to be," and perhaps, more importantly, "The time is out of joint."

Derrida meditates on these passages firstly saying that hauntology is itself an aspect of ontology in that it represents the uncertainty of *being* ("*To be or not to be*"). In this context a specter is conceived of as the unacknowledged, undisclosed, invisible "thing" that silently motivates or haunts the living present. In terms of the second quotation, for Derrida it is the continual reappearance of the specter that puts time "out of

joint” in that the ‘coming back’ of the ghost destabilizes time and history. Derrida writes: “*Hamlet* already began with the expected return of the dead King. After the end of history, the spirit comes by coming back [revenant], it figures both a dead man who comes back and a ghost whose expected return repeats itself, again and again.”¹⁶

In other words, for Derrida, the sign of the specter becomes a way to re-envision the tenuous relationship between the past and the present, such that history is re-imagined to be a living, or better yet un-dead “Thing” that occupies, inhabits and haunts the present moment. And so, Derrida says, that while specters do not belong properly to the ‘living now’ they also do not necessarily belong to the past or to the future. Instead, what haunts is something that appears without fully coming into presence (consciousness), something that is internalized and inhabits but yet always remains invisible, something that is *manifest* without ever fully residing in the ‘real’ moment. A ghost is thus something that always exists both inside and outside simultaneously, and therefore some-thing that never fully belongs to a specific moment in history; it is paradoxical in this sense because, as Derrida says, it always begins by coming back [revenant].

There are different linkages that can be made between Derrida’s ideas and Deloria’s concept of a *geography of ancestry* which primarily revolve around this repositioning of the *past* in relation to the *present* in what Derrida calls the ‘spectral moment’ or what Deloria calls a ‘network of relations’. Both theories in this sense envision history not as a collection of distinct events arranged in a linear and chronological sequence, but rather as something that co-exists as part of the ‘living present’—something that for Deloria ‘inhabits’ and ‘possess’, and for Derrida ‘haunts’ and ‘spectralizes’.

Derrida will speak for instance of the ‘coming and going of the specter’ as that which unhinges the temporality time; for Derrida the sign of the specter is something that invokes notions of history or past which are not actually *historical* or *past*. This is Derrida’s notion of a *spectral* history, a history which “is not dated, it is never docily given a date in the chain of presents, day after day.”¹⁷ Instead a hauntology is about the opening up a liminal chasm through which the ‘undead’ apparitions of history (re)appear to haunt the lives of the living, which they do by means of (spirit) possession wherein they internalize themselves in the body of a host.

For Derrida the specter is difficult to name because by its very nature it is a ‘doubled articulation’ or what he sometimes calls a ‘paradoxical incorporation’: the specter is neither dead nor alive; neither visible nor invisible; neither real nor imagined; yet it is simultaneously (it ‘incorporates’) all of these things at once. For Derrida, the specter goes “beyond the opposition between presence and non-presence, actuality and inactuality, life and non-life, of thinking the possibility of the specter, the specter as possibility.”¹⁸ Thus with the (re)appearance of the ghost a ‘spectral asymmetry erupts’ that dislodges the temporality of time (puts “time out of joint”) such that the past, present and future begin to co-exist in a discontinuous, fragmented, ruptured, and disjoined ‘present/non-present’ moment.

There is, thus, a kind of a *phantomological* inconsistency of the specter through which its (re)appearances de-synchronize time (the ‘temporality of time’) and history. To put it another way, the specter exists in the dis-located time/non-time of the present/non-present moment wherein time itself has become dis-lodged becoming therein a field or plane of liminality (spatiality). What haunts therefore is never really there, here, or

elsewhere—it does not belong to history, it does not belong to a community, a people, or a culture precisely because it does not belong properly to the living present. Instead, a hauntology is part of a disjoined or disajusted *now* out of joint, and it is therefore not temporal in the sense it exists ‘outside of time’, and is thus better understood as being dimensional and/or spatial instead.

For Derrida, history is not something that is ‘gathered together’—it is not ‘one with itself’, he says, because it is always disjoined through being spectralized. This is what Derrida calls the *spectrality of the specter*. Thus what Deloria called the ‘spatial problem of history’ (in which ancestry becomes something that inhabits or possess) is what Derrida would call a ‘haunting of memory and translation’. And it is in this sense that there can be no ‘original’ unity of history or ancestry, but rather the hauntological experience of heritage is characterized better as a multiplicity: “one never inherits without coming to terms with some specter, and therefore with more than one specter.”¹⁹

Much like Deloria’s notion of spatial philosophy, Derrida’s idea of hauntology sees history as something that is interconnected, in a ‘network of relations’, with the living present, or what Derrida calls the ‘present/non-present’ moment. To read Deloria and Derrida together is therefore to think of how the spatial is inhabited by ghosts, specters, and revenants that are a part of the landscape of an ancestral geography of ‘place’. In other words, what Deloria called a sacred geography could be considered a *spectral geography* and a hauntology of ancestry, heritage and memory.

Derrida writes that what we inherit is a *hauntology* and secondly that the hauntological is a condition of *being*—“Is not to possess a specter to be possessed by it, possessed period?”²⁰ This is what Derrida refers to as the *becoming-flesh* of the specter,

wherein what haunts is able to *possess* the living by internalizing itself in a body of a host. Derrida writes: “For there to be a ghost there must be a return to the body, but to a body that is more abstract than ever.”²¹ A return to a body inhabited by ghosts, a body that is haunted by the ‘expected return’ (appearance) of ancestry that it then internalizes through the act of a paradoxical incorporation in which the ‘abstract body’ offers up its flesh to the ghost.

There is thus a kind of productive quality of the ghost, or a phantomological mode of appearances and disappearances through which it spectralizes the living present. From Deloria’s perspective, this would be the process in which something is produced in order to be internalized or absorbed from the strata field of the spatial. What is produced in the context of a *spectrality of ancestry* is that which becomes inherited, “the living appropriation of the spirit [specter].”²² In this case, ancestry could be said to be the ‘living/non-living’ existence of the specter that has been internalized and absorbed by the individual and/or collective. In other words, to have a heritage, therefore, means to exist “between two modalities or two temporalities in the conjunction [in a network of relations] with the dead, in the evocation or convocation of the specter.”²³ And thus, ancestry must be considered as “something other than [the] self”²⁴ that inhabits and possess without becoming present or visible: on the one side there is the flesh and on the other, ghostly bodies and phantom projections that account for the uncertainty of being.

Derrida wrote in the context of his theory of hauntology that inheritance and ancestry are first the conditions of ‘a life’ (being), and second, constitutive of ‘a life’ disjoined, multiplistic and contradictory in nature—to *be or not to be*. Therefore *We*—the

always ‘next’ generation—are the inheritors of more than one spirit or specter, and further that what we inherit is always other than the ‘self’ (our selves).

To read Deloria together with Derrida is to say that to have an ancestry means to be “...constituted by specters of which one becomes the host and which [one] assembles in the haunted community of a single body.”²⁵ And therefore, what is produced in the context of a geography (spectrality) of ancestry is the individual, the collective, the ‘next generation’ that always becomes itself through inheritance, through becoming haunted—through *becoming-spectralized* in a phantomological possession ritual wherein the ghost(s) of history are drawn into a ‘network of relations’ (Deloria) with the living present.

Transgenerational Haunting and Spectral Transference

According to Derrida’s concept of hauntology, ancestral inheritance is something that is ‘inborn’ because it is constitutive of a necessary aspect of *being*—he says, for example, “Therefore ‘I am’ would mean ‘I am haunted’.”²⁶

But to read Derrida together with Deloria, there would also be that which is *transferred*—that which a person ‘acquires’ in the process of living in a network of relations in the strata field of the *spatial*. In other words, there is the hauntological aspect of ancestry that is ‘passed down’ (outside of time), but also there is the phenomenon of an “accumulation of ghostly layers”²⁷ that occurs when specters are transferred, reproduced, projected, and transmitted, “incarnating [themselves] in another [an Other] artifactual body.”²⁸

Writing at the same time as Derrida were the lesser-known theorists of hauntological discourse Nicholas Abraham and Elizabeth Torok. Both clinical psychologists, their collaborative contributions to the field of psychoanalysis—with their theories of *dual unity*, *the phantom*, *cryptonymy*, and *transgenerational haunting*—expanded on a corpus of theoretical discourse that, at the time, was largely dominated by Sigmund Freud’s theory of *the return of the repressed*. In general, Abraham and Torok’s works reject notions of a universal theory of psychological development, and the axiom that an ‘original trauma’ is responsible for ‘psychic conflicts’ that arise later in life. Instead, and in some ways like Derrida and Deloria, they do not view a person (‘the subject’) as an individual, but rather through their theory of *dual unity*, explain the process of psychic development as a constant series of divisions—psychic fractures, schisms, and ruptures. It is in this they suggest the possibility that psychic development is non-linear or non-temporal, arguing that fractures and divisions need not necessarily occur as a chronological series of ‘events’ (occasions, happenings, incidents). Instead Abraham and Torok provide a form of analysis that moves beyond Freudian concepts of *condensation* and *displacement* that fixate on particular stages of development or traumatic events in a subject’s past.

Moreover, and specifically in the context of their theories of the *phantom*, Abraham and Torok argue that not only is the process of *individuation* non-linear, but that any given *psychic reality* is “constituted by specific influences *outside* the individuals immediate or lived experience.”²⁹ In what follows, we could consider other connections; Abraham and Torok’s collaborative works are complimentary to Derrida’s

notion of the ‘spectral moment’ and Deloria’ ideas of ‘a network of relations’. For it is here that Abraham and Torok’s notion of *transgenerational haunting* becomes the sign under which we could begin to theorize about the phantomological aspects of *spectral transference*.

According to Derrida, what we inherit is a hauntology fashioned “around a secret...one always inherits from a secret... [and therefore ‘a life’] can only be one by dividing itself, tearing itself apart, differing/deferring itself, by speaking at the same time several times—and in several voices.”³⁰ This might be a starting point to thinking about Abraham and Torok’s concepts of dual unity and the phantom because, following Derrida, the notion of *spectral transference* begins not with what is said, but rather by that which is hidden in-between words in a speech that defers, conceals, and encrypts.

Like Derrida’s notion of the specter, Abraham and Torok, in works such as *The Wolfman’s Magic Word* and *The Phantom of Hamlet or the Sixth Act*, develop the idea of *the phantom* as a corollary to their concept of dual unity. And it is through the notion of the phantom that Abraham and Torok are able to begin to explain how influences that lay outside the realm of ‘lived experiences’ can affect and transform an individual or collective’s ‘psychic reality’. They do this, much like Derrida, by linking their notion of the phantom to the idea of a concealed transference of a secret.

In Abraham and Torok’s work there is the conviction that there is a genealogical (we could say geographical/spatial/spectral) inheritance of the unconscious, but there is also that which is transferred. It is important to note that this type of transference need not be, as it is generally in classical Freudian analysis, exclusively linked to a parental figure. In Abraham and Torok’s words, the phantom haunts by internalizing itself as

traces of *unknown knowledge* that can be “transmitted or passed down through an entire family line or community.”³¹ Abraham and Torok suggest that what is ‘transferred’ is ultimately indeterminate and uncertain—the secret (phantom) could be a transference pattern projected by a grandparent, nephew, niece, cousin, or even a non-relative, a stranger, an unfamiliar or estranged collectivity with which the subject has no immediate connection.

A phantom therefore possesses not only an individual, but entire communities or collectivities and in this sense it does not *belong* to (is owned or possessed by) a person, a community or a culture. This is precisely the spectrality of the phantom—that it exists simultaneously outside (in the strata field of the spatial) and inside (because it is internalized, it inhabits, it possesses). To put it another way, in the words of Esther Rashkin, the phantom “holds the individual within a group dynamic constituted by a specific familial (sometimes extrafamilial) topology that prevents the individual from living life as [exclusively] his or her own.”³² According to Abraham and Torok what ‘comes back’ therefore, is the unspeakable, the unsaid, the unsayable—what returns (revenant) is the undead that speaks *through* the subject “in the manner of a ventriloquist.”³³

What the phantom ‘speaks’ through the subject are not words, but rather silences, and thus “what haunts are not the dead, but the gaps left within us by the secrets of others.”³⁴ These gaps, these silences, these fractures are produced by something that Abraham and Torok call *cryptonymy*—words that hide or encrypt, rather than speech that reveals or discloses.

For Abraham and Torok the phantom is essentially “the burial of an unspeakable fact” that is transferred in-between acts of speech, comprised of networks of ‘unknowable knowledge’ (secrets) that are embedded, internalized and enclosed in a persons unconscious where it remains unrecognized, and moreover unrecognizable by the subject. The phantom is “a gap in the unconscious, an unknown, unrecognizable knowledge—a nescience.” This is why they mobilize their term of the *cryptonymy* as the means of transference of the phantom because of its reference not only to ‘encryption’, but also to notions of the crypt, the burial chamber, the tomb—the phantom is the “stirring of a secret buried alive in the...unconscious”³⁵ and something that “becomes (a) dead (gap), without a burial place.”³⁶

To be sure, all the departed may return, but some are predestined to haunt: the dead who have been shamed during their lifetime or those who took on unspeakable secrets to the grave. From the brucolacs, the errant spirits of outcasts of ancient Greece and on down to the rapping spirits of modern times, the theme of the dead—who, having suffered repression by their family or society, cannot enjoy, even in death, a state of authenticity—appears [*always for the generations that follow*] to be omnipresent.³⁷

...

My objective here in examining Abraham and Torok’s theorizations about the phantom, the crypt, dual unity and transgenerational haunting has been to explore further the ways in which what haunts us is internalized and to consider the difference between what we inherit that is inborn (*ancestry*) and that which is acquired in a network of relations (*spectral transference*).

But their works also provide a way to ‘name’ that which haunts. The phantom is the other, not just the philosophical *Other*, but a specific other that is internalized—the phantom, the ghost, the revenant, the specter. In other words, Abraham and Torok provide the possibility of *observing* the ghost, or as Derrida would say, they give us ‘visibility of the invisible’ or a way of looking (without seeing) the phantom that “pursues in silence its work of disarray...sustained by secret words...whose aim is to wreak havoc, from within the unconscious.”³⁸

In ‘naming’ the ghost, Abraham and Torok are clear that what “comes back to haunt are the tombs of others.” And it is through this crucial act of ‘naming’ the phantom that they intend to *conjure* the “[un]dead buried in the other” for whom it is the “descendant’s lot to objectify these buried tombs of a diverse species of ghosts.”³⁹—it is, as Derrida says, the responsibility of those haunted to exorcise their own specters.

Even more importantly—as Lloyd Smith explains in his text *Uncanny Reencountered*—Abraham and Torok ask us to consider “the unspeakable secret or secrets in a larger cultural sense: everything that is denied within a culture, and yet remains truth [...for example] the fate of Native Americans in the nineteenth century, concealed under the rhetoric of Manifest Destiny.”⁴⁰

Here we look again to Derrida, for it is not only the ghost of Marx that is conjured in his text, but also the specters of Communism—a “haunting that would mark the very existence of Europe.”⁴¹ It is within this wider optic that Derrida writes:

[We must consider what lies] ...beyond all living present, before the ghosts of those who are not yet born or who are already dead, be they victims of wars, political or other kinds of violence, nationalist, racist, colonialist, sexist, or other kinds of exterminations.⁴²

In considering this larger context, we might then begin to conjure that which haunts by way of an invocation—that is, we might say a SPECTER is haunting *Turtle Island*, the specter of Colonialism. But this would only be a name, *one* name among many others through which we could conjure a hauntology....

The task or ‘magic trick’ that will always be before us is to distinguish between which spirits to keep and those others we would like to conjure away and exorcise—those spirits that seek to do us harm, those specters that have been predestined to haunt our *living present*.

Before us lay so many conjurations, invocations and exorcisms! The specters of the Indian Act; of Residential Schools; of Manifest Destiny; of small pox blankets; of the banning of our ceremonies; of broken treaties; and the specters of what Indigenous philosopher Gerald Vizenor called the manifest manners of domination and the shadowy simulations of the tribal real...

Our challenge in this text, as Derrida says, will be to begin to “do what is necessary: speak to specters.”⁴³ Naming the specter(s) is not enough. To acquire a *visibility of the invisible* is only a beginning, even as crucial as this beginning may be. What is needed is to really enter the hauntological landscape, the place/non-place of the present/non-present moment of these specters of history and therein conjure our hauntological experience of ancestry, invoking and *apostrophizing* that which haunts, conjuring it forth, interpreting it, interrogating it, and finally, exorcising and driving away these spectral presences that haunt our ancestral landscapes.

A SPECTER is haunting Turtle Island...

NOTES:

¹ Rebecca Belmore, *Speaking to Their Mother*, under “exhibit”,
“<http://www.rebeccabelmore.com/exhibit/Speaking-to-Their-Mother.html>” (accessed November 1, 2011)

² Jolene Rickard, *Rebecca Belmore: Performing Power*, under “Performing Power”,
“<http://www.rebeccabelmore.com/performing-power.html>” (accessed November 1, 2011)

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Charolette Townsend-Gault, *Kinds of Knowing. Land Spirit Power: First Nations at the National Gallery of Canada*. (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada Publication, 1992), 97.

⁷ Vine Deloria jr., *God is Red: A Native View of Religion*. 3rd ed., (Golden, Colorado: Fulcrum Publishing, 2003), 121.

⁸ Gregory Cajete, *Native Science: Natural Laws of Interdependence* (Santa Fe, New Mexico: Clear Light Publishers, 2003), 185.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 187.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 186.

¹¹ Deloria, Vine Jr. *God is Red: A Native View of Religion*; Fulcrum Publishing, Golden Colorado; Third Edition, 2003

¹² *Ibid.*, 70.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 254.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 98.

¹⁵ Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International*. Peggy Kamuf, trans., (New York and London: Routledge, 1994), 10.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*,10.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*,13.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 24.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 164.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 57.

²² *Ibid.*, 94.

²³ *Ibid.*, 138.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 150.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 167.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 166.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 159.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 158.

²⁹ Esther Rashkin, *Tools for a New Literary Criticism: The Work of Abraham and Torok* (*Diacritics* 18, no. 4, 1988),32.

³⁰ Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 18.

³¹ Raskin, *Tools for a New Psychoanalytic Literary Criticism*, 41.

³² *Ibid.*, 40.

³³ Nicolas Abraham, *A Complement to Freud's Metapsychology*, Nicolas Rand trans., (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 287.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 287.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 289.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 287.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 287.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 287.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 287.

⁴⁰ Allan Lloyd Smith, "The Phantoms of Drood and Rebecca: The Uncanny Recounters through Abraham and Torok's Cryptonymy", *Politics Today*, Vol. 13, No.2 (Summer, 1992), 285-308. "<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0333-5372%28199222%2913%3A2%3C285%3ATPODAR%3E2.0.CO%3B2-Q>" (Assecced November 1, 2011)

⁴¹ Derrida *Specters of Marx*, 3.

⁴² *Ibid.*, xxii.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 11.

The Death of the Indian Act

It is very symbolic to kill it in this manner ... and I wanted to kill it ... and I wanted to make sure that it was dead ... and I wanted to be the first Indian to shoot it.¹

In 1997, Coast Salish artist Lawrence Paul (Yuxweluptun) crossed the Atlantic Ocean to stage a public execution in which he systematically shot copies of the Indian Act with the intent to kill that which has haunted First Nations peoples on Turtle Island for over a century.

An Indian Act: Shooting the Indian Act was first performed by Yuxweluptun at Bisely Camp rifle range in Great Britain on Saturday April 12th, 1997 and then again the following day at Healy Hall in Northumberland. Although the Indian Act first became

law in Canada in 1868 it was based on even earlier legislation, most notably the Royal Proclamation of 1763, the purpose of which was to help reorganize Great Britain's empire in North America. It was, therefore, perfect mythopoetic justice that Yuxweluptun endeavoured to return the Indian Act to its place of origin and there conjure its spectral legacy for a communal exorcism.



Fig. 10. Lawrence Paul (Yuxweluptun). *An Indian Act: Shooting the Indian Act*. 1997

Why shoot the Indian Act?

It would not be wrong to say that the majority of Indigenous peoples today consider the Indian Act to be an outdated article of colonial legislation, and would like

nothing more than to see it abolished in this country. Such is undoubtedly the case for Yuxweluptun, who has referred to the Indian Act as ‘hate literature’—a manifestation of colonial myths that is reflective of ‘white supremacist’ ideologies embedded in the entire colonial project. Yuxweluptun writes further:

The Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, through provincial governments, outlawed potlaches, language, extinguishment policy of land, confined people to reservations without consent, no rights to vote, forced religious beliefs, made it illegal for Indians to hold a general assembly—these are just a few examples of what the Indian Act legislation is capable of doing.²

In the beginning, the people were deceived...

They were told that the Indian Act would help secure their rights and provide the basis for a peaceful co-existence between their Nations and the newly established Canadian government. However, as Kanien’keha (Mohawk) philosopher Taiaiake Alfred has demonstrated in *Heeding the Voices of our Ancestors*, the Indian Act has, since its inception, proven to be exactly about the opposite. It has instead functioned mainly to help legitimize despicable colonial practices such as: passing illegitimate treaties; confining people to reservations; restricting important cultural practices and ceremonies; and rationalizing the imprisonment of Native children in residential schools. As Alfred writes:

The Canadian government created the Indian Act not as a means of co-existing peacefully with native nations and autonomous Indian communities, but as an instrument of internal colonial domination over what Canada saw as marginal minority communities. While on the surface portraying a purposeful protection of Indian lands and status, the Indian Act and associated legislation were really the means by which Canada sought eventually to usurp all Indian lands in the name of the Crown and to abrogate Indian

rights and special status by assimilating all Indians into the general population and culture.³

Why Shoot the Indian Act?

Writing passionately and urgently about the people on the Island of Martinique when it was colonized by France, Frantz Fanon looked beyond the implications of a military invasion and instead focused on the ‘psychoexistential’ complexes that result from the colonial environment. You see, for Fanon, the colonial mentality has never been satisfied with simply maintaining control over a territory, but rather, has always sought to colonize the psychic geography of its subjects as a way to justify and maintain its existence. While the battle over the physical territory was waged with the bayonet, the cannon and the rifle, for Fanon, it was the war to colonize the ‘minds’ of the people that truly secured an enduring situation of colonial domination.

Fanon wrote in *Black Skin, White Masks* that “in every society, in every collectivity, exists—must exist—a channel, an outlet through which the forces accumulated in the form of aggression can be released.”⁴ *Why shoot the Indian Act?* Because of what it represents to those who are all too aware of its destructive effects, for the collectivity that views the Indian Act as an outdated, racist, discriminatory, and oppressive piece of government legislation. In this way, *An Indian Act: Shooting the Indian Act* becomes about what Fanon described as an instance of *collective catharsis*—a channelling of communal aggression that here takes the form of a ritualized public execution.

Fanon first developed the idea of collective catharsis in *Black Skin, White Masks*, and as the term suggests, it involves a communal release, a cleansing or purging of negative emotions, guilt, or aggression. In Fanon's case specifically, these existential anxieties or "arsenal of complexes"⁵ are associated with shared psychoexistential traumas inflicted on, or experienced by, a collectivity (both colonized and colonizer) within the colonial environment.

In most instances in Fanon's work, the notion of collective catharsis is associated with, or is enabled by, some form of *sacrificial dedication*, a concept he describes by referring to the 'ancient' meaning of the *scapegoat*: the object (or subject) of sacrifice in the ceremonial act of purification that enables the cathartic moment for the collective through mechanisms of displacement, channeling and/or projection.

In Fanon's writing, the idea of sacrificial dedication is mobilized almost exclusively to describe the ways in which the colonizer 'scapegoats' the colonized as a means to assuage collective guilt.⁶ When he writes about sacrificial dedication, Fanon is almost always speaking about the colonial desire to cleanse a 'bad conscience' after having enslaved, oppressed, exploited and dominated a foreign culture. For instance, Fanon will say that collective catharsis—for the colonizer specifically—is always linked to the notion of "sacrificial dedication, a sacrificial dedication permeated with sadism,"⁷ in which blame is projected back onto the source of guilt, the colonized. He writes:

America alone, then, could have had an uneasy national conscience to lull by creating the myth of the "Bad Injun" ... the punishment that we [the colonist] deserve can be averted only by denying responsibility for the wrong and throwing the blame on the victim; by proving—at least to our own satisfaction—that by striking the first and only blow we were acting solely on the legitimate ground of defense.⁸

Appearing less frequently in Fanon's writings are the ways in which collective catharsis is effectuated by the colonized. This is mostly because he argues that the colonized typically do not lash out at the 'oppressor' after having become the scapegoat for the colonist, but instead turn the guilt back in on themselves, thus diminishing the possibility for collective catharsis. However, Fanon also suggests what we might call different resistance strategies that, typically, involve culturally defiant or socially transgressive acts meant to disturb, debase or violate basic colonialist norms, virtues, values or ideologies. This, I would argue, is precisely how we might here begin to read Yuxweluptun's *An Indian Act: Shooting the Indian Act*, as a performance of creative resistance enacted on behalf of a collectivity, enabling the purgative instant through a public execution of the Indian Act legislation. Here, the 'death' of the Indian Act produces the possibility for a communal release, cleansing or purging negative emotions that are, as Fanon has said, associated with shared (inherited) psychological traumas experienced by a collectivity.

Yuxweluptun's performance is what I would call a *performance-execution* that involves the transformation of the Indian Act into an object (and subject) of sacrificial dedication—a social act of defiance meant to violate, debase, immobilize and destroy a specific article of colonial legislation. But it is not a sacrificial dedication that operates in the way that Fanon usually uses the term. Yuxweluptun's performance-execution is not about cleansing collective guilt, nor is it about assuaging a bad communal conscience; it is instead a direct act of disobedience and a confrontational refusal to accept the authority of colonial legislation, colonial ideologies, virtues, and normative values.

In what follows, I will turn to the writings of French Surrealist Georges Bataille, particularly his discourse on the *sacred-object*, the *sacred-instant* and *mythopoetics* in both *The Absence of Myth* and *Theory of Religion*. Bataille was a philosopher who was able to think deeply about the question of sacrifice and its importance in contemporary society as it was for him the realization of a tangible way to reinvigorate and nurture what he called *collective being*. Unlike Fanon, who believed that collective catharsis becomes increasingly difficult in a colonial environment, Bataille begins from the position that sacrificial dedication has become an impossibility in a modern context. Therefore, his approach is to develop strategies for what we might call the reinvention of sacrifice in contemporary society. Following this, I will begin a discussion that brings Bataille's theory into contact with Jacques Derrida's discourse on conjuration ('conjurement') from his text *Specters of Marx*. While we might say on the one hand that *An Indian Act: Shooting the Indian Act* is about the ritualized performance-execution (sacrifice) of the Indian Act that enables a communal cathartic moment, we could also say that it is about something else too: the *performance-exorcism* of the spectral legacy of the Indian Act that here becomes about the conjuration of revenants and apparitions, the invocation of ghosts and specters under the doubled sign of *sacrificial-conjuration*.

A Mythopoetic Insurrection

Andre Breton wrote in the second *Surrealist Manifesto* that "the simplest surrealist act consists of going into the street with revolvers in your fists and shooting blindly into the crowd."⁹ Breton was heavily criticized for this statement by his contemporaries,

especially Georges Bataille, who felt such an act would be purely absurd and culturally meaningless—a selfish, nihilistic act that would be, at best, socially scandalous. Bataille wrote that Breton’s idea of the ‘simplest surrealist act’ was absurd because it lacked a connection to the sacred and therefore failed to serve a collective or cultural function.¹⁰

Bataille believed that a vital tenant of Surrealism should be to meditate on ‘ancient’ modes of human existence, not as a means to re-create something that had been lost or to invent a ‘new mysticism’, but rather to gain insight into the meaning and importance of sacrifice and the sacred in society. In ancient cultures, Bataille noted that sacrifice served a communally necessary function founded on the mediation between humankind and the natural/supernatural world, and therefore was constitutive of cohesion in a society or a collectivity.

Despite his objections to Breton’s proposal of the ‘simplest surrealist act’, when Bataille was involved with the secret society known as *Acéphale*, it was rumored the collective was planning to organize an actual human sacrifice and that the group had went so far as finding a willing participant for the performance. However, Bataille soon came to the conclusion (as he had in the case of Breton’s proposal) that such an act would be absurd in modern society; that a *sacrificial dedication* of this nature would be devoid of cultural meaning because society no longer recognized the importance of sacrifice as a mode of collective purification. According to Bataille, the reason for this was that modern society had come to deny its mythological foundations, and therefore it was deluding itself into thinking it had transcended the need for myth by making a monumental myth about this very denial. He writes: “As it determines this moment in time... myth and the possibility of myth become impossible: only an immense void

remains, cherished yet wretched.”¹¹ Bataille concluded that our contemporary world can be described under the sign of the ‘absence of myth’, which for Bataille meant an absence of the sacred, an absence of community, and the absence of an interconnection between ‘humankind’ and the rest of the world.¹²

According to Bataille, once the absence of myth emerged as the dominant myth in modern culture it began to devalue and spectralize the very idea of myth itself, which henceforth became something synonymous with the notions of untruth, falsity, and nonsense. Therefore, with the death of myth also came the death of the sacred and the possibility of sacrifice and collective catharsis. In short, what Fanon proposed as being essential elements in every society—cathartic ritual, sacrificial dedication, and collective purification—were for Bataille impossibilities in the modern world. In response to this conviction Bataille then begins to write the rebirth of sacrifice and myth in modern society. After concluding that the rival of ‘ancient’ myth had become impossible, what Bataille attempts in *The Absence of Myth* is the formulation of a new mythopoetics that would reestablish a “communal consecration and mediation that sacrifice once effectuated in ancient society.”¹³

Yuxweluptun’s performance *An Indian Act: Shooting the Indian Act* is analogous to Bataille’s concept of a new mythopoetics because it is a performance artwork that seeks to undermine and liberate (purge, cleanse, release) a collectivity from an existing, pervasive, and oppressive mythic reality—the *mythology of the Indian Act*. To say this would be to have already begun to read Bataille together with Fanon in that the notion of sacrificial dedication in Yuxweluptun’s artwork is about breaking the manifest

mythologies of colonialism, an ‘advanced’ colonialism that has come to deny (conceal, disappear, refuse) its own mythological foundations; a colonialism that for Fanon scapegoats and erases its violent and destructive history through shrouding itself in all the usual colonial myths of “progress, enlightenment, transcendence.”¹⁴ It is, as Bataille might say, a performance that subverts cultural subordination through a ‘sovereign operation’¹⁵ or an act meant to undermine a dominant mythology by ‘overwriting it’, where an individual performance can here be something that “communicates the trepidation of the sacred.”¹⁶ *An Indian Act: Shooting the Indian Act* is more than just a culturally defiant act meant to disturb colonial ideologies and normative values, but is instead a new form of mythopoetics in which the Indian Act legislation is transformed into an object of sacrifice in a performative expression that enables the cathartic moment for a collectivity; a performative mythopoetics, therefore, that becomes what Bataille called a “manifestation of collective being.”¹⁷

Why Shoot the Indian Act? First because of what this act represents to the collective, but also because it makes such a collectivity possible.

This is not to say, however, that a collectivity did not exist prior to the Indian Act’s performative-execution that day in 1997, for as history shows, Indigenous peoples have been fighting against this legislation since it became law in 1868. When I say it makes such a collectivity possible, I am referring to Bataille’s conviction of a deep and penetrating bond between myth and community where a “sacred nature founds the social bond in an authentic society.”¹⁸ To be clear, Bataille’s argument is that “the sacred [mythology/sacrifice] is the bond, the constitutive element of everything that is society.”¹⁹ Myth was, together with sacrifice and the sacred, something for Bataille that

was essential for a cohesive, productive, and ‘actualized’ society/community. He meant this *not* in the sense that myth is considered as a kind of ‘collective nostalgia’, but instead as the actualization and manifestation of ‘collective being’ through which the sacred is integrated into society and therefore considered as something that establishes “the impossibility of a limit between humanity and the rest of the world.”²⁰

The sentiment at the core of Bastille’s argument is something Indigenous peoples have always simply referred to as storytelling. Indigenous philosopher Leroy Little Bear once wrote that “storytelling is a very important aspect of Native America. It is not just the words and the listening but the actual living of the story.”²¹ What he meant was that Native mythology as it operated in the oral traditions of Indigenous cultures was (as Bataille might have suggested) something interconnected with the spiritual aspects of their existence, intertwined as it were with the “sacredness, livingness and the soul of the world.”²² Or as Tewa philosopher Gregory Cajete writes in his text *Native Science: Natural Laws of Interdependence*: “Native Science has a mythic tradition and connection. Myths express relationships involved in building compacts with animals and natural forces [... and] embodies the cosmology, philosophy, and mythic themes of a tribe.”²³

Mythology and storytelling in Indigenous cultures were never something equated with falsity. The validity of a given myth was not questioned, nor was it measured in terms of its ‘actuality’ because myth was simply a part of lived reality, deeply interconnected, Bataille says, with the social. Moreover, as Cajete has shown, myths in Onkwehonwe cultures were not only a means of conveying knowledge, but they also served a spiritual and sacred function for a collectivity. Cajete writes:

Through the oral tradition, story becomes both a source of content, as well as methodology. Story enables individual and community life and the life process of the natural world to become primary vehicles for the transmission of Native culture ... Indigenous cultures are really extensions of the story of the natural community of a place ... in this sense, community itself becomes a story, a collection of individual stories that unfold through the lives of the people of that community. This large community of story becomes an animate entity vitalized through the special attention given it by its tellers and those who listen.²⁴

Following this we would not read Yuxweluptun's mythological death of the Indian Act as something necessarily untrue, as in the kind of mythic expression commonly associated with falsity that Bataille describes in his text *The Absence of Myth*. It is instead, as Rebecca Belmore once said of her work, a performance of "political protest as poetic action"²⁵ through an engagement with the Indigenous experience in the 'living present'. It is a direct act of creative resistance that refuses the authority of the Indian Act legislation, and further, colonial ideologies, virtues, and normative values. It is about writing new stories and mythologies on the landscape, mythologies that become interconnected with a collectivity that, like Yuxweluptun, want to declare death to the specter of the Indian Act.



**Fig. 11. Lawrence Paul (Yuxweluptun). *An Indian Act: Shooting the Indian Act*.
Performance, 1997.**

Yuxweluptun's *An Indian Act: Shooting the Indian Act* is what we could call a *mythopoetic insurrection*. What Yuxweluptun's performance represents is an instance of collective catharsis effectuated and realized for a collectivity. It is a socially defiant act meant to debase, violate, undermine and destroy a specific article of government legislation that has haunted the people of Turtle Island for more than a century. It is, following Bataille, an individual act of mythic-liberation and sovereignty that involves the transformation of the Indian Act into an object of sacrificial dedication in a performance that produces and enables a purging, cleansing, or communal release from a pervasive, persistent, and oppressive mythic reality—the *mythology of colonialism and of the Indian Act*.

Sacrificial Conjunction

The concept of *sacrificial-conjunction* is what results from a hybridization of Bataille's theory of mythopoetics theorized through Derrida's notion of *hauntology*, wherein sacrificial dedication and collective catharsis become about the invocation and exorcism of ghosts and specters.

To begin, I would like to focus on the nature of the subject/object of sacrifice and the kinds of transformations it undergoes in the mythopoetic sphere of Yuxweluptun's performance artwork *An Indian Act: Shooting the Indian Act*.

First Transformation:

Fanon wrote at the beginning of *The Wretched of the Earth*: "It is the colonist who fabricated and continues to fabricate the colonial subject."²⁶ Reading Fanon further, what soon becomes clear is that as the colonized person becomes a 'scapegoat' for the purification of the colonizers collective guilt, s/he undergoes a transformation from a *subject* into an *object*. Fanon says in becoming the subject of sacrifice the colonized are transformed into an "eternal victim of an essence" through being objectified as a "thing." In this there is a doubled psychological reality to be observed for the colonized subject who is now both a subject and an object in a way that 'dislocates' and fractures his/her *being* through destroying or immolating the subjects 'essence'.

Bataille put forward a similar argument in *Theory of Religion*. However, he emphasizes that this transformation is predicated on there first being a subject—that the object of sacrificial dedication cannot in the first instance begin as a mere object. One

does not sacrifice ordinary objects, he says, or things that have already been ‘destroyed beforehand.’²⁷ For Bataille, this first transformation represents a moment in which *absence* replaces *presence* in a way that “resolves the painful antinomy of life and death by means of a reversal.”²⁸ To put it another way, Bataille says that in order for there to be a ‘real sacrifice’ there needs to be a ‘real’ victim; that real sacrifice depends on “the fact that the victim [becomes] the thing”²⁹ in order for it to then to be restored to a plane of ‘immanence’ at the instant (sacred instant) of its sacrificial death. He writes:

[One cannot] sacrifice that which was not first withdrawn from immanence, that which, never having belonged to immanence, would not have been secondarily subjugated, domesticated, and reduced to being a thing. Sacrifice is made of objects that could have been spirits.³⁰

This crucial transformation proposed by Fanon and emphasized by Bataille is precisely what is taking place in Yuxweluptun’s performance-execution. For here the object of sacrificial dedication (the Indian Act) did not in the first instance begin as a mere object, but rather the effectivity of the sacrificial act is predicated on the death of a mythology. In other words, the crucial *act* in Yuxweluptun’s performance is that which produces a ‘rupture’—if only momentarily—through a sovereign operation that seeks to undermine the mythology of the Indian Act legislation by overwriting it, and thereby producing an instance of catharsis for the collectivity.

The physical, bound paper ‘copies’ of the legislation that Yuxweluptun actually shot with his rifle in the performance are what Bataille would call the objectified or manifest representation of the subject (myth) having become an object; the materialization of an essence that has been withdrawn from immanence (made into a

‘thing’). Bataille also would describe this otherwise as the transformation of the ‘spirit’ into a ‘thing’ that then would then be returned to immanence in a sacrificial act that produces its death. This transformation of the becoming-object of the subject was what Frantz Fanon called the ‘epidermalization of colonization’ which he describes as the act in which the corporeality (or alterity) of the subject is replaced “by a racial epidermal schema.”³¹ This was, for Fanon, the overarching colonial myth that needs to be faced if decolonization is to be possible. For Fanon, colonization always occurs at the site of the body (the biological) which is transformed into an ‘object’ (artifact/ thing) of sacrificial dedication. This transformation is both the way in which the colonized cleanse their collective guilt while simultaneously justifying their ‘right’ to dominate the colonized peoples by denying the mythological foundations of their colonial authority. He writes:

Now the scapegoat for white society—which is based on myths of progress, civilization, liberalism, education, enlightenment, refinement—will be precisely the force that opposes the expansion and triumph of these myths. This brutal opposing force is supplied by the [the colonized peoples].³²

Let us reflect for a moment on what I have called the *mythologies of colonialism*.

Colonial mythologies are an imperialist project that becomes manifest in myriad ways, the main objective being, as Alfred wrote, to “demonstrate the eminent merits and to replicate the simple fabricated facts and narratives needed to justify colonial privilege.”³³

Following Fanon, the *modus operandi* of modern colonialism is to deny, conceal, erase and disappear its mythological foundations such that it becomes, as Bataille has said, no longer properly a myth. Instead, any ideology that denies this essential part of its essence becomes rather a vacuous or ‘wretched space’ under the sign of the *absence of myth*. To

begin now to reread this theorization through a Derridean lens we could say that what *myth* is transformed into here (represented by ‘the void’ for Bataille) is no longer mythological, but is instead *hauntological*. Indeed, the object of sacrifice in Yuxweluptun’s performance did not begin as a mere object—it began as a ‘subject’: a spirit, a ghost, a specter, a haunting...

Derrida writes: “The event of a discourse ... claming to break with myth ... is the effect of an ontological treatment of the spectrality of the ghost.”³⁴ Therefore, the crucial first transformation of which Bataille speaks (of the subject into the object or the ‘spirit’ into the ‘thing’) is now a transformation of a specter (the hauntology of the Indian Act) into an object of sacrificial dedication or manifest representation of its essence. In other words, the first transformation of the becoming-object of the specter would entail not a sacrificial dedication, but instead a conjuration. This would mean that Yuxweluptun’s performance-execution is both a kind of mythopoetic insurrection, and also a *performance-exorcism* in which sacrificial dedication here becomes an act of incantation and invocation of spirits and ghosts under the sign of *sacrificial-conjuration*.

In *Specters of Marx*, Derrida describes three different orders or modes of *conjuration* or ‘*conjurement*’ that resemble Bataille’s thought on sacrifice.

1. The first order is about the formation of a collectivity wherein people are gathered together and conspire to exorcise some ghost or revenant. Derrida writes: “A conjuration, then, is first of all an alliance, to be sure, sometimes a political alliance ... a plot or a conspiracy.”³⁵ In this, the collectivity is in effect ‘enjoined’ by a spectral presence (what Fanon called shared psychological traumas or Bataille called collective

being) and is comprised of a ‘gathering of forces’ that consists of those who seek to silence an apparition, a communal specter, a collective hauntology; “those who promise solemnly, sometimes secretly, by swearing an oath to struggle against a superior power.”³⁶

2. The second order concerns the actual invocation of a specter, the summoning of a ghostly apparition, the evocation and incantation of a revenant by ‘calling it forth’ into presence. A conjuration of the second order beckons to the specter and brings it into a ‘network of relations’ not specifically with the *present*, but into a nexus of living *presences*, or what Bataille calls the sacred instant. This would be the crucial first transformation of which Bataille speaks that involves the ‘withdrawal’ of the subject (myth/specter) from immanence in order to make it into a ‘thing’ or object of sacrificial dedication.

According to Derrida, what this second order of conjuration does is that it makes it possible to perceive the specter by speaking its name, calling out to it, convoking it, and forcing it to reappear. Bataille says that by forcing it to appear as a physical manifestation of its essence, we mean to transform it. In other words, what this second order of conjuration does is that it give us a way to observe and perceive the specter or, as Derrida says, it give us a ‘visibility of the invisible’, a way of looking without seeing that which haunts.

This notion of conjuration, as it is described by Derrida, bears too close a resemblance to a theory by Nicolas Abraham and Elizabeth Torok mentioned earlier to not revisit it here, if only briefly. In their collaborative theorizations of *transgenerational haunting*, *cryptonymy* and *the phantom*, Abraham and Torok argue that in the case of a

psychological-possession what haunts cannot be treated within the scope of classic (Freudian) symptom-formation. They argue that the phantom, which they describe as the dead buried or entombed within the psyche of the other (what Fanon called internalized oppression), cannot be brought back into consciousness by any technique available in Freudian psychoanalysis. They write that the phantom is a part of the unconscious that can never be made conscious because it is a foreign agent and not a repressed memory: the phantom is, for them, the [un]dead Other buried and encrypted in the unconscious of the person that inherits the specter. The Indian Act is precisely such a phantom, a collective phantomality that is inherited in the context of what I called earlier a haunting of ancestry, memory and translation.

For Abraham and Torok the phantom therefore cannot be ‘abreacted’ (the cathartic release enabled by reliving a traumatic experience) but must be conjured and invoked for the purposes of enabling the (communal) cathartic moment. Here, then, conjuration becomes an attempt at brining the phantom not into ‘consciousness’, but instead into presence. For Abraham and Torok, it is about enabling those possessed by a ghost to ‘bear witness’ to the phantom wherein conjuration “constitutes an attempt at an exorcism, that is, an attempt to relieve [those possessed by a ghost] by placing the effects of the phantom in the social realm.”³⁷ This occurs by performing, for instance, a public invocation and conjuration of the specter (the Indian Act) with the intent of bringing about the cathartic instant for the collectivity. “Enter the ghost”, Derrida says—the hauntology of the Indian Act thereby transformed into a ‘thing’, conjured and forced to appear, brought on stage as an object under the sign of sacrificial-conjuration.

3. A conjuration of the third order, according to Derrida, involves the dispossession, exorcism or ‘conjuring away’ of a specter. Derrida writes conjuration of the third order means ‘*conjurement*’ “namely the magical exorcism that ... tends to expulse the evil spirit which would [in the second order] be called up or convoked.”³⁸ It is this third order of conjuration that signifies ‘death to the specter’ in which the specter is “convoked to be revoked ... to conjure it away ... to exclude it to exorcise it.”³⁹ Here, conjuration becomes a direct and intentional attempt to destroy a common ghostly adversary, a collective hauntology, a “malignant, demonized, diabolized force, most often an evil doing spirit, a specter, a kind of ghost who comes back or who still risks coming back post mortem.”⁴⁰

This third order of conjurement is literally a declaration of death to a specter, a conjuration that certifies death in order to inflict it.⁴¹ With this, the effectivity of the performance of sacrifice phantomizes itself, it becomes a hauntological mutiny, a ghostly revolt, a spectral insurrection, a “holy hunt against this specter”⁴² of the *Indian Act*. This third act of conjuration in which the specter is put to death by means of its exorcism is what was for Bataille the second transformation in the sacrificial ritual. He writes that the “sacred demands the violation of what is normally the object [... and] its domain is that of destruction and death.”⁴³ This would be the ‘truest meaning of sacrifice’ for Bataille; the debasement, destruction, and violation of the object of sacrificial dedication in which it undergoes a specific transformation. Here, the subject of sacrifice having been made an object of sacrificial dedication through being invoked and conjured is then executed and returned to the plane of immanence (Bataille) or ‘expelled’ back into the phantomological order (Derrida).

Second Transformation:

In *Theory of Religion*, Bataille wrote that the “principle of sacrifice is destruction [however...] the destruction that sacrifice is intended to bring about is not annihilation.”⁴⁴ This is to say that when the object of sacrifice (the Indian Act) is conjured in order to be exorcised its ‘essence’ is not completely destroyed (even in death) but rather it undergoes a second change in nature—it, he says, “passes from the world of things” and is restored to “that of unintelligible caprice.”⁴⁵

For Bataille, the sacrificial death of the object has no other consequence than the making sacred (divine) of the object, a process conditioned by the putrefaction and violation of its essence within the *sacred instant* of the sacrificial ritual. According to Bataille, the object of sacrifice in the ritual ceases to exist merely as an ‘object’ while it is transported in this second transformation from the ‘profane world’ back into the ‘sacred realm’, returned, as he says, to ‘immanence’. Thus, in Yuxweluptun’s performance, the object of sacrifice (the Indian Act) takes on a doubled nature through being sacrificed, subordinated, executed and put to death; a transformation that, for Bataille, results in the emergence of the *sacred-object* or the *object-god*.⁴⁶

The sacred was reborn from the destruction of an object which sacrifice in the first degree makes divine, but a sacrifice in the second degree does not simply destroy the straightforward object: the [object] put to death is no longer merely an [object...] it is also the god. Sacrificial destruction kills both the god and the [object].⁴⁷

Under the sign of the *sacred-object*, that which is sacrificed becomes both the object and the god that exists in a liminal zone at the edge of presence and absence. For Bataille, the sacred-object is transformed by means of a reversal, a return to immanence

that resolves the ‘dualistic binary’ and antimony between life and death. These two theorizations given by Bataille—the *sacred-object* and the *sacred-instant*—take on some different characteristics when reread through Derrida’s theory of hauntology.

In the first instance Bataille’s sacred-object is analogous to Derrida’s theorization of the specter. Both are characterized by what Derrida calls a *paradoxical-incorporation*: the sacred-object and the specter are some ‘thing’ that remains difficult to name, neither soul [spirit/god] nor body [object/thing] and both one and the other.⁴⁸ In the ritual, the sacrificial object undergoes a second transformation that, through Derrida, we could argue produces a ‘spectral-asymmetry’ in which the object of dedication is returned to what Derrida calls the phantomological order. In other words, the sacred-object of which Bataille speaks is, for Derrida, a paradoxical and doubled sign because its transformation to the realm of the ‘divine’ or the spectral order is incomplete. We might theorize, then, that when Bataille writes the sacred-object is both ‘object’ and ‘divine’, its essence is essentially phantomological because of this paradox, this doubled incorporation, this dualistic spectrality of the sacrificial object. Within the transformative instant the sacrificial object becomes the sacred-object, and therefore according to Derrida, a “non-object [which exists] in a non-present present.”⁴⁹ It becomes spectral: neither object nor sacred, living nor dead, and all of these simultaneously.

The sacred-object (the god-object or we could say the *spectral-object*) becomes in this second transformation literally suspended between appearance and disappearance, actuality and myth because it exists—within the mythopoetic sacred instant of the sacrificial act—suspended between life and death. Therefore, if we read Bataille saying “sacrificial destruction kills both the god and the object,”⁵⁰ we would follow this and

write that sacrificial destruction also kills (exorcises, banishes, ‘conjures away’) the specter.

This kind of doubled transformation I am proposing—that of the *sacred-object* in realm of Derrida’s paradoxical-phantomality—becomes clear when thinking of Bataille’s concept of the *sacred-instant*.

Bataille’s preoccupation with sacrifice in his work is interconnected with his interest in what we could call a philosophy of the ‘instant’—a concept explored by a number of the Surrealists who were intrigued with the idea of tapping the unconscious realm as a means to uncover new creative and philosophical possibilities. The ways in which the Surrealists generally conceptualized the notion of the ‘instant’ (to the extent that they argued than an experience of the instant could be achieved) was that it provided a means to liberate the mind from being dominated by rational thought. In other words, they claimed that the ‘free activity of the mind’ could be unleashed if an experience of the ‘instant’ could be seized in an existential experience that they equated with *ekstasis* (ecstasy).

But while Bataille gives praise to Breton’s discourse on *automatic writing* as a process of discovery, he simultaneously vilifies Breton’s desire to develop a ‘morality of the instant’⁵¹ instead preferring to argue for an uncertainty of the ‘instant’ pushed to its extreme limits in which “being itself is called into question.”⁵² The only way to achieve this, according to Bataille, was through the violation of the very essence of (a) being—sacrifice.

For Bataille, sacrifice revealed or made possible an experience of the sacred instant, or as he writes, “sacrifice illuminates ... the excessive gleam of the instant.”⁵³

This is what he would mean when describing that the sacred instant was the space in which the object of dedication undergoes a second transformation that “seeks as far as possible to render palpable, and as intensely as possible, the content of the present moment.”⁵⁴ Here, the *sacred-instant* becomes for Bataille a celebration of uncertainty, and more importantly, of liminality—it is the space in-between (outside) the temporal coordinates of the past and the future and thereby illuminates the possibility of experiencing a new reality (indeed, a *surreality*) of the mythopoetic realm of the ‘now’. This is also what Bataille meant by a ‘momentary rupture’ that is produced by the sacrificial act through an instance of performative liberation and mythopoetic insurrection that makes catharsis possible for a collectivity through the violation of (a) being—the *public exorcism of the Indian Act*.

Bataille’s concept of the sacred-instant is what Derrida would have called the *spectral moment* in the sense that both are conceptualized as “no longer belong[ing] to time.”⁵⁵ In this second transformation, Derrida might say, a spectral asymmetry erupts that dislocates, dislodges, and fragments the temporality of time in a “becoming immaterial of matter”⁵⁶ which therein makes possible the conjurement or exorcism of a ghost or specter. The sacrificial act, therefore, as what Derrida calls a ‘spectral-becoming’⁵⁷ that entails a ‘staging for the end of history’ or, what we might say here, a performance-exorcism that stages the end of a ‘certain version of history’: the spectral legacy of the Indian Act. *An Indian Act: Shooting the Indian Act* is therefore a sacrificial-conjuration that produces a reversal (Bataille) in the transportation or conjurement of the sacrificial object back to immanence or the realm of the phantomological order.

...



Fig. 12. Lawrence Paul (Yuxweluptun). *An Indian Act: Shooting the Indian Act*. Installation at Grunt Gallery, Vancouver B.C. 2000.

In the end it would seem that this second transformation of the return of the sacrificial object to immanence (Bataille) and the phantomological or errant dimension (Derrida) entails, as Bataille said, that the principle of sacrifice here is destruction but in fact *not* total annihilation. In the performance, the object (thing) that is sacrificed is indeed exorcized, its essence is violated, it is banished and ‘conjured away’, but in no way does it cease to exist, but rather it undergoes a ‘change in nature’ in its return to the “unintelligible caprice”. In other words, as Derrida wrote, the specter always remains to come back (revenant) because in the spectral moment “the Thing is neither dead nor alive, it is dead and alive at the same time. It survives!”⁵⁸

According to Derrida, if there is a singular characteristic of the specter it is that its return is immanent, for ‘revenant’ entails the always expected reappearance of the living-dead. He writes: “A ghost never dies, it remains always to come and come-back.”⁵⁹ So we will ask: What, then, is the meaning behind a performance-exorcism if that which a collectivity ‘wants to see dead’ is not fully realized in a ritual act of sacrificial-

conjunction? That is, could we say that Yuxweluptun's shooting of the Indian Act is an artwork imbued with a certain level of futility or absurdity or, as Glen Alteen, curator of *An Indian Act: Shooting the Indian Act* at the Grunt Gallery has called it, simply wishful thinking? In his essay "A Hard Act to Follow" for the exhibition in Vancouver, BC.

Alteen writes:

In 1998 in official response to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Issues the Minister of Indian Affairs spoke of the Indian Act fading away as changes on self-rule and lands claims came into effect.

But it won't fade away and expecting it will is wishful thinking. The whole history of Europeans and First Nations is tied up in this act. The Hudson Bay Company and smallpox blankets, the banning of ceremonies, the broken treaties, residential schools and forced adoptions were all achieved through this legislation and its antecedents. Early amendments banned potlatches and ceremonies and a 1927 amendment made it illegal for First Nations Bands to hire lawyers to pursue land claims. Yuxweluptun's shooting of the document echoes the futility just as much as the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Developments desires to have it fade away. It is an absurd act in the late twentieth century but its demise is not so easily achieved for either.⁶⁰

But Alteen soon follows this statement with saying that it was precisely this sense of absurdity, futility and desperation in regard to the impossibility of the Indian Act's death that gave Yuxweluptun's project its impact. It speaks to first to the 'pure history' of those possessed by a ghost, then to the 'impure history' of phantoms, and finally to the spectralized 'impure-impure history' of a hauntology of colonialism. Or as Bataille might say, what a work like Yuxweluptun's represents is a radical departure, a mythopoetic performance of liberation and sovereignty from subjugation and oppression through an act of rupture. Yuxweluptun's shooting of the Indian Act is precisely what Bataille meant

by a new mythopoetics: it is the ‘ritualization’ of an act of sacrificial dedication that gives the artwork its value, like in ancient rituals, “a value which is, perhaps, not profoundly real, but was considered as such by those who practiced the ritual.”⁶¹ Here, ‘wishful thinking’ does not result in failure or absurdity, but instead becomes what Bataille called a performance of ‘prophetic delirium’ that exceeds the limits of the possible, the rational, and instead begins to operate in the sphere of the mythopoetic in which catharsis becomes spectralized.

The subtext in this essay has inferred that Yuxweluptun’s *An Indian Act: Shooting the Indian Act* could be considered (according to Bataille’s perspective) a surrealist performance-action or a revolutionary act that in its absurdity (an absurdity and futility that is only perceived by those ‘outside the ritual’) that reassures life “by penetrating as far as possible into the meaning of the impossible.”⁶² That is to say that while from a certain perspective Yuxweluptun’s public execution of the Indian Act can be read as an act of desperation or wishful thinking, what it actually represents for a given collectivity is a ‘rupture’—if only a momentary rupture or instant of spectral asymmetry—in the struggle against the oppression of colonialism, the mythology of the Indian Act legislation and what it represents in contemporary culture.

Bataille said that, in the context of sacrifice and mythopoetics, life should be about what is seemingly impossible in order to “assure the possibility of what will follow after.”⁶³ Therefore, to envision the ‘impossibility’ of the death of the Indian Act as a means to bring about its destruction in a ‘time yet to come’; to execute and exorcise the

hauntology of Indian Act in the *surreality* of the now (sacred-instant) by declaring and certifying death to the ghost in a sovereign act of mythopoetic and spectral insurrection.



Fig. 13. Lawrence Paul (Yuxweluptun). *An Indian Act: Shooting the Indian Act*. 1997.

I have come over to this country to express my feelings towards the Indian Act, which was written by non-Natives representing the colonial interests of this empire. This performance is a symbolic act of how much hatred, and anguish and anger that I have towards this legislation. I am symbolically trying to extinguish Canadian colonial supremacy over Aboriginal people by showing a physical act in spirit that some day this type of legislation will no longer exist on the face of this sacred mother earth.⁶⁴

NOTES:

¹ Yuxweluptun quoted in: *An Indian Act: Shooting the Indian Act CD-ROM*, Archer Pechawis, producer, in association with Grunt Gallery, (Vancouver BC. 2007).

² Yuxweluptun quoted in: *An Indian Act: Shooting the Indian Act CD-ROM*, Archer Pechawis, producer, in association with Grunt Gallery, (Vancouver BC. 2007).

³ Taiaiake Alfred, *Heading the Voices of our Ancestors: Kahnawake Mohawk Politics and the Rise of Native Nationalism* (Toronto, New York, Oxford: Oxford university Press, 1995), 58.

⁴ Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*. Charles Lam Markmann, trans., (New York: Grove Press, 1967),145.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 30

⁶ *Ibid.*, 194.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 147.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 147.

⁹ Andre Breton, *Manifestoes of Surrealism*. Richard Seaver and Helen Lane, trans., (Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1969),

¹⁰ Georges Bataille, *The Absence of Myth: Writings on Surrealism* (Michael Richardson, trans., (London and New York: Verso, 2006), 74,75.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 48.

¹² *Ibid.*, 82.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 23.

¹⁴ Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, x.

¹⁵ Bataille, *The Absence of Myth*, 50.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 69.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 104.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 108.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 110.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 82.

²¹ Leroy Little Bear in Gregory Cajete, *Native Science: Natural Laws of Interdependence* (Santa Fe, New Mexico: Clear Light Publishers, 2003), xii.

²² *Ibid.*, xxi.

²³ Gregory Cajete, *Native Science: Natural Laws of Interdependence* (Santa Fe, New Mexico: Clear Light Publishers, 2003), 103.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 95.

²⁵ Charolette Townsend-Gault, *Kinds of Knowing. Land Spirit Power: First Nations at the National Gallery of Canada*. (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada Publication, 1992), 97.

²⁶ Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*. Richard Philcox, trans., (New York: Grove Press, 2004), 2.

²⁷ Bataille, *The Absence of Myth*, 49.

²⁸ Georges Bataille, *Theory of Religion* (New York: Zone Books, 1992), 45.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 51.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 50.

³¹ Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 112.

³² *Ibid.*, 194.

³³ Taiaiake Alfred, *Peace, Power, Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto* (Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press, 1999),

³⁴ Derrida *Specters of Marx*, 114.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 58.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 50.

³⁷ Nicolas Abraham, *A Complement to Freud's Metapsychology*, Nicolas Rand trans., (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 287.

³⁸ Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 58.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 124.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 58.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 59.

⁴² *Ibid.*,

⁴³ Bataille, *The Absence of Myth*, 117.

⁴⁴ Bataille, *Theory of Religion*, 43.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 43.

⁴⁶ Bataille, *The Absence of Myth*, 152.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 152.

⁴⁸ Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 7.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁵⁰ Bataille, *Theory of Religion*,

⁵¹ Bataille, *The Absence of Myth*, 66.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 119.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 149.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 149.

⁵⁵ Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, xix.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 191.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 194.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 192.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 123.

⁶⁰ Glen Alteen, "A Hard Act to Follow" in *An Indian Act: Shooting the Indian Act CD-ROM*, Archer Pechawis, producer, in association with Grunt Gallery, (Vancouver BC. 2007).

⁶¹ Bataille, *Theory of Religion*, 64.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 73.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 73.

⁶⁴ Yuxweluptun quoted in: *An Indian Act: Shooting the Indian Act CD-ROM*, Archer Pechawis, producer, in association with Grunt Gallery, (Vancouver BC. 2007).

Post-Indian Mythologies of Shadow Survivance

Prelude to a Séance

It is October 19th, 2007, and I am waiting with a few hundred other spectators in the main lobby of the Royal Ontario Museum for the arrival of Miss Chief Eagle Testickle—that transvestite diva, time-traveling trickster and Cree/Métis artist Kent Monkman’s shapeshifter alter ego.

The piece we are about to see is entitled *Séance*, and Miss Chief has promised to guide us through an arcane ritual in which s/he will invoke the spirits of Eugene Delacroix, George Catlin, and Paul Kane for a ‘discourse on painting’.

What perfect staging for this performance, I think to myself, right here at the entrance to the First Peoples Gallery, a space furnished with all the recognizable aesthetic manifestations of colonial mythology ... but also a place haunted by the ominous and rhythmic silence of sacred artifacts, errant spirits, and so many wayward and capricious ghosts.



Fig. 14. Kent Monkman (as Miss Chief). *Cindy Silverscreen*. Photograph, 2008.



Fig. 15. Kent Monkman (as Miss Chief). *Hunter*. Photograph, 2008.

The Possession Dance and the Eclipse of the Other

With *Séance*, Monkman takes the early colonial painters as his subject matter. His interest in these historical figures and this particular time period stem from the artist's overarching interest in challenging the fictionalized and romantic ideal of the *Indian* Other that emerged during the nineteenth century—what Anishinaabe philosopher Gerald

Vizenor has called an occidental invention, an obvious simulation and Euro-American enactment of colonial dominance.¹

Monkman's practice over the last decade has largely been about confronting the scientific, ethnographic and anthropological authority of the early colonial artists, and more generally by association, the entire canon of art history. In both direct and indirect ways his work charges these artists with participating in the networks of colonial power that have throughout history constructed, determined and controlled the identities of Indigenous peoples through pictorial illusions and romantic manifestations of colonial mythologies. In an interview with Mike Hoolboom, Monkman proclaimed:

In the nineteenth century Euro-Americans were projecting their imagination and ideologies onto the North American landscape. These paintings are manifestos of the European presence, justifying their invasion and discovery of a promised land. ... The mid-nineteenth century Hudson River School ... painted the sublime in nature, transplanting biblical scenes onto the North American landscape. The Garden of Eden, the expulsion, and manifest destiny are all thrust onto North American land. They produced paintings of heroic settlers taking possession of their promised land, at the expense of the darker uncivilized aspect of humanity, 'the savage'.²

In his text *The Wretched of the Earth*, Frantz Fanon wrote: "The colonist and the colonized are old acquaintances. And consequently, the colonist is right when he says he 'knows' them. It is the colonist who *fabricated* and *continues to fabricate* the colonized subject."³

Fanon's argument is that that in the colonial environment the colonized subject is transformed into an 'artifact' for the dominant culture and becomes something the colonist reserves the exclusive right to construct, define and determine. This is something

that for Fanon results in the colonized becoming an object of *sacrificial-dedication* or *scapegoat* for the purpose of enabling the cathartic moment for the colonial collectivity.

Typically Fanon says that the colonized Other is fashioned in opposition to the colonizer, often considered primitive and inferior, and to the extreme is transformed “into a kind of quintessence of evil,”⁴ savages, beasts, demons, and every other terrible creature that can be imagined. In other cases, Fanon writes that the colonized are exoticised through other forms of identity construction that operate under the sign of the *epidermalization of colonization* that in the end produce the same result: the colonized becoming an ‘object’ of seduction in an environment in which they are denied the possibility of non-appropriated and autonomous Otherness. “The colonist makes history. His life is an odyssey,” writes Fanon, “while the more dead than alive colonized subject [is fated to exist] forever in the same old dream.”⁵

With this Fanon draws the conclusion that ‘real’ alterity is something that is not possible within a colonial environment specifically because of the hierarchical power dynamic embedded in the entire imperial apparatus. That is, because the colonized always perpetually exist within a situation in which their identities are determined for them by the dominant (colonial) culture, that ‘authentic’ alterity can not exist. The colonized Other instead comes to be haunted by virulent manifestations of colonial mythologies, “organized séances of possession and dispossession”⁶ through which the colonized become caught in a ‘spiral of domination’ that has about it what Fanon calls, the quality of a *possession dance*.

...

Marc Guillaume and Jean Baudrillard both arrived at a similar conclusion in their co-authored text *Radical Alterity*.

What Fanon calls ‘pure alterity’ is, from Baudrillard’s perspective, about the ways in which individuals and collectivities are determined through a networked interplay of difference, suggesting further that alterity is a deeply interconnected relationship that is necessarily reciprocal. For Baudrillard, Otherness is about a relationship of force and oscillation, a play of appearances and disappearances. Therefore in order for what he calls ‘pure alterity’ to exist there must be interchangeability, alternation or, to use Baudrillard’s term, reversibility.⁷ Baudrillard writes that pure alterity can be characterized as an “inseparable double life by the very fact that one is the trace of the other ... there is total reversibility even though one is the shadow and the other is being. It does not matter [which is which] it is reversible.”⁸ Hence, for Baudrillard, alterity is a kind of symbiotic relationship that is formed through an interplay or oscillation of differences and incommensurabilities that does not reduce the Other *to* others, but takes the Other *for* others.

For Baudrillard these oscillations or networked interplay of differences are however fatally ‘dysymmetrical’ in a colonial situation or environments in which others are dominated by an oppressive imperial force. He uses as an example the *Alacalufe*, an Indigenous tribe in Patagonia whose contact with Western civilization eventually resulted in their complete extinction. It was, Baudrillard writes, “one of the most horrible exterminations in history because of the disparity in the relationship to the Other.”⁹ For the Alacalufe there was no alterity in the differential or relational sense, Baudrillard writes, because of the power dynamics in play within the colonial system. They were not

Others, he says, but instead the Alacalufe became ‘strangers’ in a altogether different game of artificial difference and simulated alterity.

In *Radical Alterity*, Guillaume makes a similar point, and suggests that when Otherness is constructed rather than discovered, what is produced is not a relationship of alterity but rather what he calls *artificial strangeness*.¹⁰ For Guillaume, ‘pure alterity’ is produced through what he calls the *ellipsis of the Other*, a concept similar to Baudrillard’s notion of an interplay of differences, but a term that carries with it the idea of ‘omission’ in which alterity becomes about an oscillation of absences, silences, unknowns, or incompatibilities. In the case of artificial strangeness by contrast there is instead what Guillaume calls the *elision of the Other* or the *eclipse of the Other*, both of which carry different connotations of condensing, abbreviating, concealing, darkening, shadowing and shrouding. More to the point with regard to alterity in the colonial environment Guillaume writes:

Western societies have ... reduced the reality of the Other through colonization and cultural assimilation. They therefore reduced the elements of radical heterogeneity or radical incommensurability that existed in the Other.¹¹

According to Guillaume, pure alterity cannot exist in any colonial situation because colonialism always involves the assimilation, construction and creation of the radical ‘*fiction of the Other*’ wherein the Other is disappeared, overwritten and “replaced by a being emerging from pure literary fiction.”¹² In the colonial environment the Other is created and produced through what Guillaume calls ‘combinatory fictions’ that effectively *eclipses* the colonized Other and fractures, shadows and disperses their cultural originality through replacing it with a (colonial) mythology. Here, Baudrillard

adds, everything about alterity is moved into artificiality, a concept that for him is closely related to simulation, and so it plays on all the usual codes of alienation, contradiction, seduction, and of course, fatality.

The reconfiguration or ‘morphing’ of alterity in the colonial situation results for Baudrillard, as it does for Fanon, in the transformation of the subject (the colonized Other) into an artifact, object, or a commodity. Therefore, artificial-alterity is, for Baudrillard, about the deterritorialization of the colonized subject through a curious play of ‘seduction through absence’. Because the Other does not really exist independently (in an oscillatory interplay of difference) but is instead ‘produced’ by others, the colonized Other only becomes visible when it disappears, is eclipsed, shadowed, and overwritten by the virulent codes of colonial mythmaking and shadowy projections. This would be the same conclusion Guillaume draws in saying that through the radical creation of the *fiction of the Other* alterity becomes about ‘shadowy transgressions’ and artificial-strangeness in which the colonized Other is dissipated, dispersed and eclipsed, in the end leaving behind only the faint ‘essence of a trace’. It is like a possession dance, Fanon would say, where the people become haunted by shadows, zombies, and malevolent spirits that are produced by a ‘dissymmetrical’ relationship of artificial-alterity.

The Noble Savage, the Shadow Archive and the Spectral Other

In the event of an eclipse, what is normally produced is a shadow. For example, in the case of a solar eclipse, the moon’s shadow is cast onto the earth, while in a lunar eclipse the earth casts its shadow onto the surface of the moon. However, not all shadows are

caused by the interplay of objects and light, nor is it necessary that light rays be interrupted in order for the projection of shadow optics to occur.

In the mythology of many cultures around the world, shadows (or shades) have been variously linked to the supernatural, the divine, phantasms, apparitions, doppelgangers and specters. In each of these cases, shadows are not merely considered as resulting from the relationship between light and objects, but are instead conceived as ephemeral beings with autonomy and, indeed, free agency.

Anishinaabe philosopher Gerald Vizenor wrote that shadows have traditionally played an important role in the mythology of a number of Indigenous tribes wherein they were ‘active agents’ and considered ‘intransitive and animate’. As an example, in his text *Manifest Manners*, Vizenor cites the word *agawaatese* from the stories of the Anishinaabe people of the northern woodlands for whom, he says, the “word hears silence and shadows, and could mean a shadow or casts a shadow. The sense of *agawaatese* is that the shadows are animate entities.”¹³

Similarly, in Cherokee mythology there is the legend of the *ka'lanu ahkyeli'ski* or Raven Mockers, a shapeshifting shadow race who normally remain invisible but when they do appear (usually through some incantatory magic) they resemble shadowy silhouettes of humanoid and bird hybrids. This race of shadow people for the Cherokee are androgynous shapeshifters of either sex that prey on the sick and whose duty it is to rob the dying man of life.¹⁴ Another well-known example would be the legend of the ‘shadow beings’ who the Choctaw people call *Impashilup*—ghostly, malevolent and demonic creatures who possess the lives of the living in order to steal their souls. The Choctaw people also believed that every individual had an inside shadow or ghost

(*shilup*) and an ‘outside shadow’ (*shilombish*), the first of which being a kind of inward projection, and the second an outward projection of shadows that occur when the inside erupts outwards and pierces the exterior world with its dark interiority.¹⁵

Related ideas concerning the concept of animate, spectral, and phantom shadows have been variously taken up in the discourses of Western philosophy and psychology. Consider for instance a theory proposed by Carl Jung in *Phenomenology of the Self* in which he explains the properties of three primary archetypes: the *anima*, the *animus* and *the shadow*. For Jung, the *anima* and the *animus* are corresponding archetypes, masculine and feminine counterparts that form a *syzygy* in the unconscious. The shadow, on the other hand, is considered by Jung to be a ‘counter ego’ or anti-self which consists of the ‘dark aspects’ of the personality that have been repressed in the psyche. Like the *shilup* for the Choctaw people, this aspect of the shadow can be considered as a kind of inward projection of darkness or interiorized eclipse that for Jung comes to form the vaulted and concealed space of the *shadow archive* in the unconscious.

As an archetype, Jung says that the shadow is (like the *anima* and the *animus*) part of the collective unconscious and therefore something inherited; however this shadow archetype is also something that ‘merges’ to form an extremely precarious union with certain aspects of the personal or individual unconscious. Thus the shadow has a kind of topography that is made of layers that progressively become more interconnected, or to use Jung’s term, ‘assimilated’. The first layer consists of the contents of direct personal experiences that have been concealed and projected inwards by the psyche. The second layer is comprised of the ‘dark’ contents of (all) collective human experiences that are

inherited and shadowed by the individual conscious. The shadow in Jungian psychology, writes Michael Fordham, “contains, besides the personal shadow, the shadow of society ... fed by the neglected and repressed collective values.”¹⁶

In spite of this ‘merger’, however, the shadow itself always remains partially separated from the individual’s psyche, its presence normally only revealed through emotional affects and dreams because the shadow always maintains “a kind of autonomy, and accordingly an obsessive or, better, possessive quality.”¹⁷ In this, two different problems arise for Jung: the first concerns the issue of the shadow not being properly ‘assimilated’ to form a syzygy with the personal unconscious, which leads to the conscious becoming the slave of the autonomous shadow. The second (and perhaps the more crucial problem here) involves the typically unconscious outward projection of the shadow archive or dark background of consciousness onto *others*. He writes:

[It is a problem...] usually bound up with projections, which are not recognized as such ... while some traits peculiar to the shadow can be recognized without too much difficulty as one’s own personal qualities, in this case both insight and good will are unraveling because the cause of the emotion appears to lie in the *other person*.¹⁸

And so to the question: if Jung would ascribe a ‘possessive’ (in the sense of a kind of spirit-possession) quality to inward repressions and projections, would it not follow that the externalized projection of the shadow would also play on the same register? And if so, might we now begin to think of these external projections of the ‘dark aspects of the personality’ in terms of *shadow-hauntings* and *phantom-possession*s; the shadow,

therefore, as that which not only ‘eclipses’ (Guillaume), but begins to haunt and spectralize *others*?

Carl Jung’s concept of *the shadow* is pluralistic—it is both the doubled-self that is produced through internalized projections, and also the doubled-Other which is produced by the outward projection of an individual’s (or a collective’s) shadow archive. From this perspective, there is an interesting connection that can be made between Jung’s concept of the shadow and what psychoanalytic theorists Abraham and Torok have argued in their theorizations of *dual unity*, *the crypt* and *the phantom*.

For Jung, *the shadow* involves an interiorized projection of ‘darkness’, which suggests a pluralistic or doubled-self that is comprised of several distinct facets: the shadow archive of both the collective and individual unconscious; and the shadowy, inward projections of the ‘ego’ or personal conscious. We could interpret this first concept here as a kind of internalized possession or interiorized haunting of the individual by the shadow archive vaulted away in the unconscious, or as Guillaume has described, as something under the integrated sign of the *spectrum* or *prismatic spectrality*, which entails different echoes, doublings, and pluralities of subjectivity. Similarly, Abraham and Torok have theorized this through their notion of *dual unity*.

For Abraham and Torok, the concept of dual unity involves the reconceptualization of the ‘in-dividual’ as being comprised of a network of interrelated facets, where psychological development becomes about a constant process of divisions, fractures, schisms and ruptures. What their concept of dual unity represents is a kind of ‘echoing’ or doubling in which subjectivity becomes pluralistic, and multifaceted. From

this process, what results is what Jung has called the formation of a shadow archive, and what Abraham and Torok have termed *the crypt*.

Like Jung's concept of the shadow archive, for Abraham and Torok, the crypt is described as the unknown, unrecognized and unrecognizable part of subjectivity that bears the impression of a nescience—a 'dark or blind-zone', or the eclipsed and shadowed segments of the 'symbolic field'. The crypt is thus a kind of tomb, vault, or spectral archive hidden 'inside the subject' that harbors the wayward and capricious phantoms that have not been fully confronted. Here, there is indeed a ghostly quality to their theorization of the crypt that they further develop through an extension of Sandor Ferenczi's concept of *introjections*—the incorporation of the 'secrets of others' into an individual's psychic apparatus, or we might say in a very general way, what Jung called the inheritance of archetypes in the collective unconscious. For Abraham and Torok, the crypt is a foreign or 'parasitic inclusion' in the psychic field that comes back to 'haunt' the individual in the form what they call the phantom.

The phantom, according to Abraham and Torok, is the trace essence of the '(un)dead buried in the psychology of the other' which is then repressed and *encrypted* in the unconscious. Much like Jung's theory of the shadow, the phantom is an entity with an independent subjectivity, a separate and spectral ('parasitical') entity that possesses and haunts the individual, and in turn, those upon whom the phantom (the shadow) is projected. Thus to read Jung together with Abraham and Torok, what 'comes back' in the form of emotional affects and dreams (Jung), and what is projected outwards from the crypt (Abraham and Torok) is the shadowy, phantomological expressions of apparitions

of the undead buried in the unconscious; ghosts and specters that when projected outward not only *eclipse* the Other, but begin to haunt the essence of their being.

In *Radical Alterity* Baudrillard provided a similar conclusion saying that alterity in a colonial situation is “like being haunted, dispossessed or doubled.”¹⁹ In other words, when the colonized Other is *eclipsed* it is effectively disappeared and vanished into to the order of spectrality through being haunted by the presence and projection of, what I would call, a *spectral Other*.

I should note, however, that Baudrillard makes a marked separation between Guillaume’s theory of prismatic spectrality and ghostly spectrality. The first, which we have taken in the context of Jung’s theory of the internalization of the shadow, is for Baudrillard about the ‘decanting’ of the individual into different facets, a diffraction into a pluralistic ‘network of appearances’ where possession is more about being haunted by ‘symbolic operators’ in an interplay of diffraction and evaporation.²⁰ In speaking about artificial alterity in the colonial situation, Baudrillard would say ghostly spectrality, “relates to disconnection: the ghost, the double behind the ghost, a very singular Other in the sense that he or she comes back to haunt you. That spectrality is haunted by emptiness and death.”²¹

In a colonial environment, there is not an encounter with *Others*, but rather a relationship of shadow-hauntings, spectral exchanges, ghostly transgressions and phantom possessions. Here, the eclipse of the Other and the projection of shadowy optics result in the disappearance of the colonized Other into the order of what Derrida calls phantomology, where a ghostly projection overwrites history and reality through

replacing, eclipsing, and shadowing what Baudrillard called ‘pure alterity’ with hauntological projections of *spectral Otherness*.

Painting the Dead



Fig. 16. Paul Kane. *Big Snake, Chief of the Blackfoot Indians, Recounting his War Exploits to Five Subordinate Chiefs*. Painting, 1851-56.

Paul Kane was the first Canadian artist to dedicate his career to documenting the ‘Indian’ tribes of North America. After being inspired by an exhibition by George Catlin he saw while studying in London, Kane returned to North America and embarked on his first journey into ‘Indian Country’ in 1845. Throughout the next decade, Kane produced

nearly a thousand sketches and hundreds of paintings in oil and watercolor that he exhibited in an elaborate museological fashion reminiscent of Catlin's *Indian Gallery*.

Both Catlin and Kane belong to a tradition of artists that traversed the North American landscape in the nineteenth century in order to document the 'Indians', each undertaking their different expeditions with a sense of urgency because they believed, like the majority of Euro-Americans of the time, that 'Indian' civilization was on an inevitable path towards extinction: "The Indians are doomed [wrote Kane] their fate will be that of so many primitive races now gone."²² It was a popular notion that had already inspired Catlin and Kane's predecessors, such as Eugene Delacroix whose relatively few paintings on the subject of the 'Indian' radiate with what I would call a lamenting, mournful, and beautifully melancholic sorrow for what he perceived to be the tragic fate of the 'Indian'.

To many Euro-Americans of the time, the idea of the disappearance of the Indian was no doubt convenient, if not desirable. The demise of the "savage races of America," as the seventeenth-century political philosopher Thomas Hobbes put it, signaled the success of European colonialism, the "struggle of civilization against savagery."²³ Others however viewed the demise of the Indian as a tragic but necessary byproduct of the 'progress of civilization', and so the early colonial painters, as Catlin writes in his journal, sought to capture this "interesting race who are rapidly dying away [... to snatch] from a hasty oblivion what could be saved for prosperity."²⁴

In what would later be called "salvage ethnography," the mission of the colonial artist was to "record and reconstruct endangered cultures [... to be] salvaged for the science of the future."²⁵ Staged and presented in elaborate museological fashion, the

works that these artists put on display in their exhibitions were considered by the non-Native public to be 'true' representations of the curious and exotic 'Indian'. For the early colonial painters, and even more so for the pioneer photographers that followed, their images were accepted as scientific truth and considered as accurate ethnographic and anthropological records of the Indian tribes in the New World.

In recent decades the accuracy of the images produced in this time period has been challenged by a vast array of critics who have discredited the authenticity of these artworks as scientific documents. Still, as Daniel Francis writes in his text *The Imaginary Indian*, "today it is hard to find a history textbook that does not contain at least one of Kane's renderings of Indian life. For most of us, the Indian of nineteenth-century Canada is Paul Kane's Indian."²⁶

What has become clear over this past century is that these artists, being heavily influenced by the aesthetic ideals of Romanticism, were to varying degrees 'blending' what they observed with their own imaginations to create their artworks, embellishing them considerably in favour of more dramatic scenes. They were, as Monkman has said "projecting their imaginations and ideologies onto the North American landscape ... transplanting biblical scenes onto the North American landscape. The Garden of Eden, the expulsion, and manifest destiny are all thrust onto the North American land."²⁷

Francis wrote that the colonial artists were predisposed to search for the romantic archetype of the 'noble savage', the "ideal of the 'natural man' living in harmony with nature."²⁸ Evidence of the influence of Romantic idealism on the early colonial painters can be found everywhere, especially in Catlin's journals in which he extensively cites (and I have suspected, even plagiarizes) the French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

The colonial painters were interested in finding something that Rousseau called the ‘origins of humanity’, a concept associated with the idea of the primitive living in a ‘pure state of nature’. With the Indian, the majority of the Euro-American world in the Romantic period believed they had found their pre-modern Other; an ideology which resulted Monkman says, in the appropriation, idealization and fetishization of the Indian Other.

Rousseau’s position, according to Vizenor, was to issue “the romantic simulation of the ‘noble savage’, the bright, untutored men of nature, to counter the erroneous corruption of society.”²⁹ But at the same time, according to Rousseau, the fate of the ‘noble savage’ was undoubtedly clear: “the primitive condition cannot endure.”³⁰ Catlin subsequently echoes this in his journal, *Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs, and Condition of the North American Indian*, in which he writes that the Indians are a primitive race totally foreign and completely inadaptable to the “mysteries of enlightened and fashionable life,” and the ‘Indians’ are “a simple race of beings, who require but a few years more of the march of the civilization and death.”³¹

There is, thus, another side to the ideological foundations of Romanticism that is concealed by its surface appearances; an insidious and phantom quality that has about it so much violence that it could not have been rendered as anything but its aesthetic opposite—the sublime ‘Indian’ living in harmony with nature, poised, tragically, on the brink of extinction. Of Catlin’s journal, and a supplementary document entitled *the Moral Schema*, Monkman writes:

There is such contempt in the document. The implication was that Aboriginal people were beautiful and became ugly; they were virtuous and became libidinous. It's a gross simplification of how he perceived Aboriginal cultures to be contaminated or spoiled by European influence, as opposed to cultures that could adapt and change. His conclusions were clear: if Aboriginal people no longer lived in a pure state, they ceased to exist.³²

Francis argued that colonial artists such as Catlin and Kane were taking 'possession' of the image of the *Indian* Other, something that they assumed "was now theirs to manipulate and display in any way they wanted."³³ In other words, Francis argues that the Indian Other in these artworks must be considered as being entirely an Euro-American conception, and that these artists were not, in fact, painting and documenting the Indigenous people of the New World, but rather were creating the radically fictionalized image of the *Imaginary Indian*. What the early colonial painters sought was "to preserve the idealized image of [the Indian], and not the reality of Native people."³⁴

Consequently, and to different extremes, Kane and Catlin fabricated their images, often adding clothing and artifacts that were foreign to some of the tribes, in order to give their images a more 'authentic' look. In the case of Frederick Verner, and indeed many others of the second and third generation of colonial artists, they did not even travel into Indian territory at all, but instead constructed their works based on other people's photographs and their predecessors' paintings.

In the case of the colonial photographers such as Edward Curtis and Franz Boas, despite their own claims of scientific truth, began to equip their subjects with "props—wigs, for instance, and items of clothing."³⁵ They also went to great pains to

eliminate any evidence of colonial influence, retouching images and dramatically altering their images to suit their own moralizing and ideological ambitions. In the end, as art critic David McIntosh has said, the entire idea of ‘salvage ethnography’ became not so much a scientific project, but instead a “racialized evolutionary historicism cast as salvation but designed to dominate and exterminate through photographic misrepresentations served up as factual documentation.”³⁶ And this is exactly what Baudrillard wrote in *Simulations*, that in order for “ethnology to live, its object must die [and thus the colonized becomes...] what ethnology has made them—simulacra Indians.”³⁷ We might imagine, then, the true subject matter of the early colonial painters: not living, breathing, Indigenous people, but rather the spectral projections of an already dead (imaginary) ‘Indian’ civilization.

Of the works by the colonial artists, we might apply the term *manifest manners* given by Vizenor. For Vizenor, the very notion of the Indian is a simulation about “...the contrivance of the other in the course of dominance.”³⁸ Indians, he says, are the actualization of absence, disappearance and erasure of the real, the “tragic archives of dominance and victimry.”³⁹ Manifest manners he says are the aesthetic representations of the manifestation of romantic mythologies that “court the destinies of monotheism, cultural determinism, objectivism, and the structural conceits of savagism and civilization.”⁴⁰ Manifest manners, according to Vizenor, are about the networks of colonial power that seek to erase the Indigenous Other(s) and replace the real with simulations and artificial constructions of the ‘tragic’ primitive in order to justify their oppression, domination, and exploitation of Native peoples.

With the form that Otherness takes in North America in the 19th century under the influence of Romanticism, there could have been nothing other than the disappearance of the real into its spectral double—what Vizenor called the invented savage or the ‘antiselves’ of real Indigenous Others. He writes, following a quote by Umberto Eco, that the Euro-American “imagination demands the real thing and, to attain it, must fabricate the absolute fake. Indians, in this sense, must be the simulations of the absolute fakes in the ruins of representation, or the victims of literary annihilation.”⁴¹ Here, the disappearance of the flesh into its phantom form becomes the sign under which the spectral overwrites history and reality, replacing the real with hauntological afterimages of *spectral Otherness*.



Fig. 17. Paul Kane. *Medicine Mask Dance*. Painting, 1848-56.

In Kane's journal *Wanderings of an Artist Among the Indians of North America*, one comes across a passage where he writes about a curious reaction he received from a number of his subjects:

My power of portraying the features of individuals was attributed to supernatural agency ... and I found that, in looking at my pictures, they always covered their eyes with their hands and looked through their fingers; this being also the invariable custom when looking at a dead person.⁴²

Perhaps it was Kane's perception that his subjects, being the superstitious and primitive race he perceived them to be, could simply not comprehend his advanced, 'civilized' artistic abilities? But I would prefer to read this scenario in a different way: perhaps his subjects were 'peering through their fingers' because they were attuned to the fact that Kane was, literally, *painting the dead*. What I am suggesting is that his subjects were not simply marveling at Kane's 'supernatural abilities' as an artist but were instead attuned to a dark, deeply nefarious, and ghostly presence in his artworks—a kind of spectrality manifest through his marks of pigment on canvas.

Thus, I speculate that Kane's subjects recoiled in the presence of his artworks not because of his painterly skill, but instead because they were bearing witness to the creation of their *spectral Other*. Kane was, like Catlin, not rendering life, but instead rendering death, thus participating in and aligning himself with "those bent on physical extermination."⁴³

The colonial artists, as Vizenor might have said, were "binding Indian society to a future of certain extinction ... as an [already] vanished way of life rather than members of a vital continuing culture."⁴⁴ Despite what might have been their best intentions, they

were not recording history nor were they “preserving” Indigenous culture. Instead, their artworks prophesized an imaginary and Romantic teleology that concluded in a future in which Indians would cease to exist—except, of course, in the form of phantasmagorical afterimages. These artists were *painting the dead*, and their legacy is that of the hauntology of the imaginary Indian *Other*: a spectral Other that they created through imaging aesthetic manifestations of romantic colonial mythologies that tell the story of “Indian History as an Obituary.”⁴⁵

Triumph Miss Chief Eagle Testickle: Post-Indian Diva Warrior

Cree/Métis artist Monkman, in his multimedia works and performances, engages with the hauntological legacy of the early pioneer painters, and offers a mode of creative resistance by making these ghosts of history the subjects of his artworks. In his paintings, performances and installations, Monkman inverts the gaze, transforming the Euro-American Other into an artifact of simulated reproduction by co-opting the language and form of their aesthetic methodologies as a means to deconstruct their authority.

If the pioneer painters legacy can be characterized as what Vizenor called manifest manners—racialist simulations and occidental enactments of dominance masquerading as ‘authentic’ representations⁴⁶—then Monkman’s work would be what Vizenor called post-Indian narratives of resistance and *survivance* that play on the register of seduction and reversal. Against the ‘simulations of the tragic primitive’, Monkman repossesses an ontic claim over native modernity and takes a stand against the mythologies of colonialism and the simulations of dominance. Monkman’s works are

about dispossession and appropriation that function within the interplay of appearance and disappearance in a way that “absolve[s] the simulations with new stories of cultural conversions and native modernity.”⁴⁷



Fig. 18. Paul Kane. *The Man that Always Rides*. Painting, 1848-56.



Fig. 19. Kent Monkman. *Trapper's Bride*. Painting, 2007.

Monkman's works are, in many ways, reinterpretations of the discourses of colonialism through which he recreates cultural history in a manner that privileges liminality and uncertainty over simulated authenticity and artificial alterity. His works are deconstructions of the legacy of colonialism, and are *conjunction-performances* in which he supplants the dominant narrative with a new, hyper-fabricated, illusionary and surreal world of post-Indian inversions that abound with "humor ... and the simulations of survivance."⁴⁸ In Monkman's artworks the line between fact and fiction is not only blurred, but completely collapsed and replaced with a fantastical world abounding with myriad possibilities that speak to the reconfiguration or 'morphing' of the hauntological history of colonial mythologies.

Monkman's works are about modern mythmaking where he takes his cue from the early colonial painters and begins to fabricate his own narrative while writing himself into a new history in the form of his shapeshifting alter-ego, Miss Chief Eagle Testickle. What results is a venomous critique of the Euro-American construction of Indigenous identity by disturbing the networks of colonial power that have throughout history fictionalized, erased, shadowed and eclipsed the colonized Other through simulations of dominance and oppression.

Monkman's paintings consist of surrealist collages and remixed reinterpretations of the artworks of Catlin, Kane, and many others, into which he injects themes of race and sexuality. "All through history, painters have learned by copying the old masters,"⁴⁹ writes Monkman, who, in his work, "pillage[s] the history of painting,"⁵⁰ by freely inserting his own mythologies as a means to reverse, eclipse and combat the

hauntological legacy of the spectral, Indian Other. The inclusion of the image of the artist in Monkman's works is a concept he borrows from the colonial painters, such as Catlin who frequently inserted himself into his paintings. Monkman's images challenge the authenticity of the colonial artists' paintings as ethnographic records while simultaneously engaging with what Vizenor has called the anti-selves or the 'invented savage'—the simulations of artificial alterity that function under the sign of manifest manners and spectral Otherness.

The post-Indian warriors of postmodern simulations would undermine and surmount, with imagination and the performance of new stories, the manifest manners of scriptural simulation and 'authentic' representations of the tribes in the literature of dominance.⁵¹

Monkman's works are what Vizenor has called *trickster hermeneutics*: translations, reinterpretations, or inversions of the colonial manners of dominance through creating new narratives of post-Indian survivance that "surmount the scriptures of manifest manners with new stories [by contravening] the absence of the real with theatrical performance."⁵² Monkman's artworks are about *shadow survivance* and performative strategies that are executed through various conjurations and exorcisms conducted and performed by Miss Chief Eagle Testickle—that time traveling trickster and 'post-Indian warrior' who overtakes, deconstructs and reestablishes control over the 'animate shadows' of colonial mythologies.

Monkman's character of Miss Chief was inspired by the legend of the *Berdache*, a term usually used to indicate an individual who has both a male and female spirit living in the same body (Two-Spirit). It was a term used by Euro-Americans in the nineteenth century

that has an entangled etymology: in English its meaning was “kept boy; male prostitute, catamite”⁵³, and in French it simply referred to “a male cross-dresser.”⁵⁴ The term was used by the early colonial painters to describe different rituals that they witnessed in which male members of the tribe would dress in women’s clothing and enact specialized ceremonial dances to celebrate the magic of the “two-spiritedness of a warrior.”⁵⁵ Catlin was apparently witness one of these rituals, and he writes:

Dance to the Berdache is a very funny and amusing scene ... when a feast is given to the “Berdache” ... who is a man dressed in woman’s clothes ... he is driven to the most servile and degrading duties, which he is not allowed to escape; and being the only one of the tribe submitting to this disgraceful degradation, is looked upon as *medicine* and sacred.⁵⁶

The Dance of the Berdache is only scarcely recorded in Catlin’s journal, and it is clear that it was one such ceremony that he was all too happy see disappear along with the vanishing Indian.

This is one of the most unaccountable and disgusting customs that I have ever met in Indian Country ... and where I should wish that it might be extinguished before it be more fully recorded.”⁵⁷

In speaking about his work, Monkman says that along with the various European customs forcibly (or voluntarily) adopted throughout our colonial history, we have “adopted (European) ways of judging people of alternate sexuality.”⁵⁸ Thus, much of Monkman’s practice “deals with colonized sexuality due to the influence of the church on our community.” It is tragic, he says, in that “we have been colonized on many levels and one of the things that has been affected has been our sexuality.”⁵⁹ Monkman’s critique

therefore goes beyond problematizing the history of early colonial representations of the Indian and asks: with the Euro-American fabrication of Indigenous identity, what has been written out of history, what has been erased from our cultural past?

Miss Chief is what writer and art critic David Machintosh has called a ‘post-Indian diva warrior’ who enacts performative gestures of resistance against colonial modes of gender construction and heteronormatively. Here, Indigenous resistance is manifest in the form of a time-traveling trickster in pink high heels, a sequined loin-cloth, and flamboyant headdress. Monkman’s works are surrealist narratives that recreate and re-mythologize the codes of *spectral Otherness* through acts of conjuration that challenge social norms of recognition and therefore they are works that become about what cultural theorist Judith Butler calls actions, strategies and “modes of being dispossessed.”⁶⁰

Catlin, Kane, and the entire collective of early colonial painters were after the Noble Savage, the idea of the ‘authentic Indian frozen in time’. For Monkman, his works are about deconstructing the “untouchable voice of authority,”⁶¹ while pointing at the xenophobia that is at the core of our colonial past. For Monkman, his works are all about “reclaiming the aesthetic languages of oppression,”⁶² and in doing so his art comes into dialogue with the specters of history and acts as a powerful force of resistance *as* conjuration.

Enter the Ghost of Miss Chief

The house lights dim, the voices of in the crowd diminish, and the sounds of Verdi’s *Una vela! Una vela!* from *Otello* begin to fill the air and reverberate off the walls in the main

lobby of the Royal Ontario Museum ... finally, it is time for Miss Chief's *Séance* to begin...



Fig. 20. Kent Monkman (as Miss Chief). *Séance*. Performance, 2007.

Miss Chief enters wearing a grandiose headdress and a flamboyant black costume decorated with sequins. After the raucous clattering of applause fades and the smoke clears, s/he begins to speak:

Good Evening Ladies and Gentlemen. My name is Miss Chief Eagle Testickle. I am but a simple and humble painter.

Tonight, in place of my immensely popular lecture, “The Customs and Manners of the European Male,” I have decided to devote the evening to a discourse on painting, which will occur in the form of a Séance.

They say that a great painter never dies. With that in mind, we should have very little difficulty summoning the spirits of my departed colleagues to this chamber.⁶³

And with this Miss Chief begins to conjure forth the spirits of the colonial painters one by one, summoning their ghostly apparitions through mythopoetic incantations that call them forth, and force them to (re)appear.

Miss Chief’s *Séance* is a performance-conjuration, the aim of which is not to exorcise these ghosts of history or declare death to the specters of the colonial painters. Instead, Miss Chief is poised as a spirit medium that intends to have a “civilized discussion,” a ghostly discourse on painting, a simple conversation with the [un]dead before dispelling their apparitions back to the spirit realm.

It is a performative gesture, that is to say, that does not entail an exorcism, but rather a ‘dispersion’ or ‘displacement’ of a haunting.⁶⁴ It is a conjuration Derrida would say which aims not to “chase away ghosts, but this time ... make them come back alive

as revenants who would no longer be revenants, but *arrivants*”⁶⁵ such that the undead face up to their continued haunting of the living. It is a work about “doing what is necessary: speaking to the specter,”⁶⁶ or, as Abraham and Torok might have said, it is an action meant to “relieve [those haunted by a ghost] by placing the effects of the phantom in the social realm.”⁶⁷

MC: Eugene Delecroix, Astum pey yum’hah Okemow skew ...
Come talk to Miss Chief.

ED: Oui, Miss Chief. Je suis ici.

MC: Bon soir, mon cher. It has been too long. I have missed you dearly, but seeing your great paintings always fills me with such joy.⁶⁸

The phantom echoes of Delecroix’s voice inhabit the space as his conjured spirit enters into a dialogue of spectral exchanges and ghostly transgressions with Miss Chief. As Derrida might suggest, this is a performance that produces a phantomological reversal in the *becoming-spectral* of the conjurer (and/or those who seek to convoke the ghost). Becoming-spectral is about a carnal transformation in which the ‘hunted becomes the hunter’, a reversal (or inversion) in which those haunted by a ghost begin to, in turn, *haunt the specter*. (For the conclusion of this essay I mean to only sketch this notion of the becoming-spectral of the conjurer, and thus the reader should take this as a prelude to a more in-depth discussion that will come much later).

If there is a reason why the ephemeral, allegorical, and ironic appearance of Miss Chief in Monkman’s *Séance* is such an effacious warrior against the hauntological legacy of the

colonial painters it is because s/he *is* spectral. Miss Chief is the modern embodiment of the legend of the Berdache: a trickster-transformer, time-traveling warrior and transgressor of social norms, which we observe as being “*medicine* and sacred.”⁶⁹ His/her appearance at the ROM and the *becoming-spectral* of Miss Chief here operates under the sign of what Derrida calls a ‘double-articulation’ where the conjurer, through the act of invocation, begins to exist somewhere in-between appearance and disappearance, presence and non-presence—*enter the ghost of Miss Chief*.



Fig. 21. Kent Monkman (as Miss Chief). *Séance*. Performance, 2007.

Here, time and history are dislocated and ‘put out of joint’ by a magical incantation of shadowy optics, colonial hauntologies and specter-simulations. In *Séance*, Miss Chief exists between two modalities or two temporalities in the conjuration⁷⁰ of his/her “departed colleagues.”⁷¹ The spectral (re)appearance of Miss Chief at the ROM is a “paradoxical incorporation,”⁷² a kind of doubled phantomology that is embodied in the flesh of Monkman. Here at the museum, Miss Chief is a tangible spirit, an embodied

specter embracing the form of the spectacle as a means to juxtapose as well as incorporate *spectral Otherness* into a performance of spectral reversibility: the becoming-ghost of Miss Chief as the conjurer of the living-dead spirits of his/her contemporaries from the spectral fabric of a disjoined, disarticulated and wholly mythological moment in our colonial history.

MC: Calling up Paul Kane should be relatively easy. I can feel his chilly presence behind me here in the First Peoples gallery, where he resides as a diligent sentinel over us First Nations.

Paul Kane, Astum pey yum'hah Okemow skew ...
Come talk to Miss Chief.

PK: Hello Miss Chief. I am here.
So nice to see you, Miss Chief.

MC: Really? I always felt that I was invisible to you—not authentic enough to be one of your models.⁷³

Miss Chief is our modern-day post-Indian trickster who occupies a 'living present' within the lexicon of fantasy, imagination and sureality. S/he is the embodiment of what Derrida calls a 'doubled articulation': the becoming-flesh of the specter, and at once, the becoming-specter of the flesh, thus (re)appearing in a "state of suspension between life and death."⁷⁴ This occurs when Miss Chief *as* the shapeshifting trickster and the navigator of the territory of the dead positions her/himself in-between worlds—in a space of performative-liminality. That is to say, that in the becoming-specter of Miss

Chief, the becoming-ghost of the flesh, s/he is suspended in a transformation of the “living into the living-dead of its ghost”⁷⁵.

MC: George Catlin, Astum pey yum’hah Okemow skew ...
Come talk to Miss Chief.

George, are you there my darling?

GC: Yes Miss Chief. I am here.

MC: Hello, Mr. Catlin. Thanks for coming.

GC: I must say that your appearance and beautiful regalia are reminiscent of the personage know and countenanced in every day tribe as “beau” or “dandy”.

MC: Oh, really? How so?⁷⁶

Trickster figures throughout history have manifested themselves in myriad ways (and for different Indigenous nations, they do not always go by the same name), yet their primary purpose has always been the same: providing a community with access to the spirit world—as Miss Chief does here in the form of a performance-séance.

The trickster is a shapeshifter, sometimes between human and animal, but also sometimes performs gender-transformability. As Vizenor writes, “the trickster is androgynous, a comic healer and liberator ... the whole figuration that ties the unconscious to social experience. The trickster sign is communal, an erotic shimmer in oral traditions; the narrative voices are *holotropes* in a discourse.”⁷⁷

Miss Chief Eagle Testickle's story is one of conjuration, transformation, inversion and trickster hermeneutics, as s/he is an allegory for the deconstruction of the animate shadows of colonial mythologies. In conjuring the spirits of Delacroix, Catlin and Kane, in engaging in a ghostly conversation with the undead, in reaching into the spirit realm, Miss Chief seeks to deconstruct the power dynamics in the colonial apparatus that have throughout history fabricated, constructed and controlled the identity of the Indian Other. And it is precisely through becoming-ghost that Miss Chief—that transvestite Post-Indian diva and trickster transformer—that *Séance* becomes a powerful act of conjuration as resistance that performs for us a new mythology of spectral-becoming and shadow survivance.



Fig. 22. Kent Monkman (as Miss Chief). *Séance*. Performance, 2007.

MC: Oh, dear. Mr. Catlin, you are a man of curious contradictions ... how sad you have failed to be the founder of a magnificent park where the refined citizens of the world might observe the Native Indian in his classic attire, galloping his horse among fleeting herds of elks and buffalo.

You have now also failed to extinguish the Dance of the Berdashe, as we're about to bring it back, more unaccountable and disgusting than ever. Mr. Catlin, you may now return from whence you came, or you may stay and join in, because it's time to Dance to Miss Chief. It's time! It's Time! ⁷⁸

NOTES:

¹ Gerald Vizenor, *Manifest Manners: Narratives on Postindian Survivance* (USA: First Bison Books printing, 1999), x-xi.

² Kent Monkman, quoted from “Miss Chief: An Interview with Mike Hoolbloom” in *Dance to the Berdache*, exhibition catalogue. (Urban Shaman Gallery: Winnipeg, Manitoba), 22.

³ Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*. Richard Philcox, trans., (New York: Grove Press, 2004), 2.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁷ Jean Baudrillard and Marc Guillaume. *Radical Alterity*. Ames Hodges, trans., (Los Angeles: Semiotext[e], 2008), 14.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 129.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 131.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 27.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 48.

¹² *Ibid.*, 48.

¹³ Vizenor, *Manifest Manners*, 73.

¹⁴ Raven Mocker, “Cherokee Mythology”. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Raven_Mocker (Accessed November1, 2011)

¹⁵ Choctaw Mythology, “Impa shilup”. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Choctaw_mythology (Accessed November1, 2011)

¹⁶ Michael Fordham, *Jungian Psychotherapy: A study in Analytical Psychology* (Avon, 1978), 5.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 145.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 146.

¹⁹ Baudrillard and Guillaume. *Radical Alterity*, 124.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 41.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 40.

²² George Catlin, *Letters and Notes on the Customs and Condition of the North American Indians* (London: Published by the Author, at the Egyptian Hall, Piccadilly; 1841) Letter no. 4.

²³ Cited in: Robert Berkhofer Jr., *The Whiteman's Indian: images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (New York: Random House, 1978), 3.

²⁴ Catlin, *Letters and Notes*, Letter no. 1.

²⁵ *Ibid.*,

²⁶ Daniel Francis, *The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1992), 22.

²⁷ Kent Monkman, quoted from "Miss Chief: An Interview with Mike Hoolbloom" in *Dance to the Berdache*, exhibition catalogue. (Urban Shaman Gallery: Winnipeg, Manitoba), 22.

²⁸ Catlin, *Letters and Notes*, Letter no. 9.

²⁹ Vizenor, *Manifest Manners*, xi.

³⁰ Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin and the Foundations of Inequality Among Men* (India: New Delhi; Global Vision Publishing House, 2006), 76.

³¹ Catlin, *Letters and Notes*, Letter no. 2.

³² Kent Monkman, quoted from “Miss Chief: An Interview with Mike Hoolbloom” in *Dance to the Berdache*, exhibition catalogue. (Urban Shaman Gallery: Winnipeg, Manitoba), 22.

³³ Francis, *The Imaginary Indian*, 43.

³⁴ Francis, *The Imaginary Indian*, 38.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 41.

³⁶ David Machintosh, “Miss Chief Eagle Testickle, Postindian Diva Warrior, in the Shadowy Hall of Mirrors” in *The Triumph of Miss Chief* exhibition catalogue (2008), 31.

³⁷ Jean Baudrillard, *Simulations*. Paul Foss, Paul Patton and Philip Beitchman, trans., (USA: Semiotext[e], 1983), 16.

³⁸ Vizenor, *Manifest Manners*, xi.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, xi.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, xi.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁴² Paul Kane, *Wanderings of an Artist Among the Indians of North America* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Roberts, 1859), 51.

⁴³ Vizenor, *Manifest Manners*, 8.

⁴⁴ Vizenor, *Manifest Manners*, 8.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 9.

-
- ⁴⁹ Peter Goddard, “the Star”, *Kent Monkman, Man of Mischief*, <http://www.thestar.com/comment/columnists/article/278281> (accessed November 1, 2011)
- ⁵⁰ Cited in “Media Room at the Banff Centre”, *Aboriginal Writer and Artist debate Identity* (Walter Philips Gallery) http://www.banffcentre.ca/media_room/Media_Releases/2006/0119_artist_debate.asp (accessed November 1, 2011)
- ⁵¹ Vizenor, *Manifest Manners*, 17.
- ⁵² *Ibid.*, 5.
- ⁵³ “Two-Spirit”, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Two-spirit> (accessed November 1, 2011)
- ⁵⁴ *Ibid.*,
- ⁵⁵ *Ibid.*,
- ⁵⁶ Catlin, *Letters and Notes*, 215.
- ⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 215.
- ⁵⁸ Cited in: the Star: Kent Monkman, man of mischief, by Peter Goddard; Nov 22, 2007: <http://www.thestar.com/comment/columnists/article/278281>
- ⁵⁹ Cited in: the Star: Kent Monkman, man of mischief, by Peter Goddard; Nov 22, 2007: <http://www.thestar.com/comment/columnists/article/278281>
- ⁶⁰ Butler, Judith: *Undoing Gender*; New York, London, Routledge, 2004. p. 19
- ⁶¹ Peter Goddard, “the Star”, *Kent Monkman, Man of Mischief*, <http://www.thestar.com/comment/columnists/article/278281> (accessed November 1, 2011)
- ⁶² Online at: http://www.xtra.ca/public/Toronto/Art_attack_Camp_magic-3132.aspx (accessed November 1, 2011)

⁶³ Kent Monkman, *Séance* performance transcript in *Shapeshifters, Time Travelers and Storytellers*, Candice Hopkins and Kerry Swanson, eds., (Toronto: published by the Royal Ontario Museum, 2008), 46-52.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 46-52.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 46-52.

⁶⁶ Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 11.

⁶⁷ Nicolas Abraham, *A Complement to Freud's Metapsychology*, Nicolas Rand trans., (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 287.

⁶⁸ Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 189.

⁶⁹ Catlin, *Letters and Notes*, 215.

⁷⁰ Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 138.

⁷¹ Kent Monkman, *Séance* performance transcript in *Shapeshifters, Time Travelers and Storytellers*, Candice Hopkins and Kerry Swanson, eds., (Toronto: published by the Royal Ontario Museum, 2008), 46-52.

⁷² Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 5.

⁷³ Kent Monkman, *Séance* performance transcript in *Shapeshifters, Time Travelers and Storytellers*, Candice Hopkins and Kerry Swanson, eds., (Toronto: published by the Royal Ontario Museum, 2008), 46-52.

⁷⁴ Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 25.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 112.

⁷⁶ Kent Monkman, *Séance* performance transcript in *Shapeshifters, Time Travelers and Storytellers*, Candice Hopkins and Kerry Swanson, eds., (Toronto: published by the Royal Ontario Museum, 2008), 46-52.

⁷⁷ Vizenor, *Manifest Manners*, 189.

⁷⁸ Kent Monkman, *Séance* performance transcript in *Shapeshifters, Time Travelers and Storytellers*, Candice Hopkins and Kerry Swanson, eds., (Toronto: published by the Royal Ontario Museum, 2008), 46-52.

Hyper-Phantomality and Simulated Survivance in the Abyss of the Reversal

A Prelude to a Theory of Simulated Survivance

The works of artist Lori Blondeau are strategic engagements with the hauntological experience of ancestry—dramatic stagings of creative resistance that shore up against the entire edifice of the colonial apparatus and occidental simulations of Indigenous identity.

Blondeau's works are humorous, playful and provocative cultural critiques that spotlight the destructive effects she perceives colonialism has had on her family and her community. A Cree/Métis artist based in Saskatoon, Blondeau's artworks deal with

issues of identity, community, displacement and decolonization with a focus on the simulated and seductive stereotypes of Indigenous women in North America.

In her works she often draws inspiration from her personal life, which she interweaves with elements taken from pop culture to create fantastical alter egos that she places in surreal and absurd situations in her performances. Blondeau's works question the mythology of colonialism and the absurdity of ironic appearance through different reversals of the codes of simulated-alterity. Her artworks are *performance-conjurations* wherein the specter of the Indian Other is returned to the site of the flesh, and embodied in mythopoetic stage characters such as: Cosmosquaw, Betty Daybird, Lonely Suffer Squaw and, of course, the infamous Belle Sauvage.

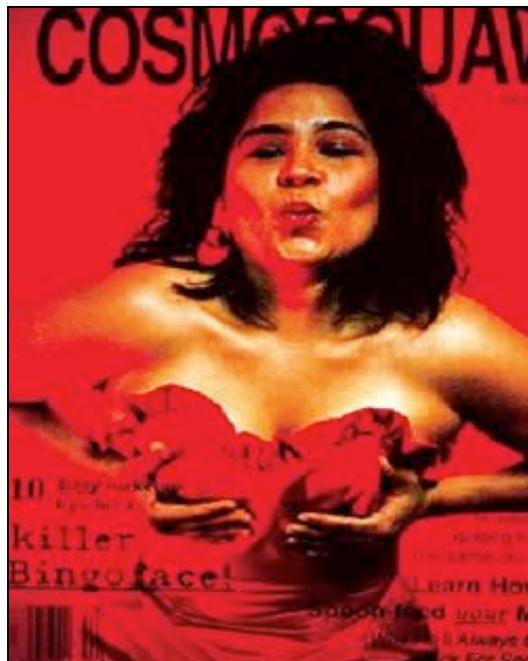


Fig. 23. Lori Blondeau. *Cosmosquaw*. Digital Print, 2002.



Fig. 24. Lori Blondeau. *Belle Sauvage*. Digital Print.

The alternate personas that Blondeau embodies in her works are drenched in hyperbole, and reverse-appropriate the characteristics of stereotypical representations of Indigenous women from nineteenth-century Vaudeville and Wild West shows. Such is the case with Belle Savage, “a mean trick roper, capable of drinking most men under the table”¹ and the ringmaster of the only “gay Wild West show”² in existence. She writes of her work:

I deconstruct the images of the Indian Princess and the Squaw and reconstruct an image of absurdity and insert these hybrids into the mainstream. The performance personas I have created refer to the damage of colonialism and to the ironic pleasures of displacement and resistance.³

Belle Sauvage is a persona we are to imagine as a famous personality from the turn of the last century. She is an alter ego that Blondeau developed as a parody of Doris Day's character in the film *Calamity Jane* that she then remixes with historical figures such as Molly Spotted Elk and Lost Bird who performed in the Wild West shows. In Blondeau's artworks, Belle Savage often becomes an allegory for the deconstruction of the networks of colonial simulations that have throughout history controlled the aesthetic representations of Indigenous identity. As art critic Lynne Bell wrote, in her performances Blondeau creates a parodic "counterpoint to Canada's iconic Old West, with its relation to cowboy culture and its erasure of histories and voices."⁴

Often comprised of comedic slapstick intermixed with heart-wrenching personal reflections, these performance artworks are profoundly emotional stagings that mobilize the absurd and surreal as a means of dismantling the mythologies of domination. These are performances that play with "history and its authority,"⁵ and are artworks about making a spectacle of the body as a means to transcode and overwrite dominant narratives of spectral Otherness.

Blondeau's alternate personas emerge from within the interplay of *shadowy projections* that function under the sign of what Marc Guillaume has called the *eclipse of the Other*, or what Jean Baudrillard termed *artificial-strangeness*—two similar theorizations they give in their co-authored text *Radical Alterity* as a means to describe the fatally 'dyssymmetrical' relationship of Otherness in the colonial environment. In this way Blondeau's works are about what Indigenous philosopher Gerald Vizenor has called post-Indian narratives of *shadow survivance*.

Blondeau's works are potent political protests that stand against the colonized *Indian* Other that has been displaced, disappeared, shadowed, and eclipsed by infectious codes of colonial mythmaking. Against what Guillaume called the creation of the *radical fiction of the Other*, Blondeau's characters emerge from colonial shadow projections as new mythologies of resistance that become about the ironic reappearance of the Indian as the reversal of the *hauntology of simulation*. Blondeau's works are, in this sense, about what results from the re-appearance of the Indigenous body after having been disappeared into the order of what Jacques Derrida has called *hyper-phantomality*, and thus from this perspective are artworks that confront the spectral transgressions of colonial simulations of artificial-strangeness and spectral-alterity.

Perhaps we might read Blondeau's performances as what Vizenor called the "sensation of a new tribal presence in the very ruins of the representations of invented Indians"⁶—a kind of artistic counter-protest that hovers over the simulated and aestheticized byproducts of the 'manifest manners of domination'. What is interesting is that, instead of as performing a nostalgic lament for the loss of the 'tribal real', Blondeau accelerates the speed of the simulation by embodying different alter-egos that are themselves comprised of romantic colonial mythologies and what Guillaume calls 'combinatory fictions'. With Blondeau's work, if the simulations of Indian Otherness are the "absence of the tribal real; the post-Indian conversions are in the new stories of survivance over dominance."⁷

Blondeau's performances serve to disrupt and invert the dyssymmetrical interplay of simulated-alterity in the colonial environment and are about, as Vizenor might have said, a counter inversion to the simulation of savagism that here plays out in a post-Indian

narrative where simulation is played off against simulation. Her's are performances of *simulated survivance*, therefore, where the ironic (re)appearance of the Indian Other is (re)embodied by Blondeau in a actions that haunt what Vizenor would call the 'anti-selves' of colonial mythology, and the simulations of *spectral Otherness*.

"Real Indian" Simulations in the Hyperreal of the Wild West



Fig. 25. "Buffalo Bill's Wild West". Poster, circa 1880's.

The Wild West shows often referenced in Blondeau's work emerged in the tumultuous climate of the 1880s, a time when tensions between Native and non-Native populations ran high and the outbreak of war seemed always to be a real possibility. They dazzled their audiences with action-packed battle scenes, stagecoach ambushes, trick shooting,

horse racing, train hold-ups and armed engagements promoted as accurately depicting different historical events. The phenomenon of the Wild West shows were surrounded by myriad other forms of pop-entertainment, from literary fiction, to dime-novels, and pulp-magazines—it would seem at the time that anything with a *Cowboys and Indians* theme was bound for profitable success.

Of the different troupes staging performances, it was *Buffalo Bill's Wild West* that rose to massive popularity, one reporter for the *Toronto Globe* deeming it the “the greatest novelty of the century.”⁸ *Buffalo Bill's Wild West* featured a number of famous personalities of the period like Annie Oakley, Buck Taylor, Gabriel Dumont who were joined by a large cast of recognizable cultural heroes—but, undoubtedly, the real stars of Buffalo Bill's show were the “Indians”.

Unlike other Wild West shows, *Buffalo Bill's* featured “real Indians” such as Geronimo, Chief Joseph, Rains in the Face and Sitting Bull, all hired to re-enact specific historical events that they themselves had (supposedly) actually taken part in. Another reporter for the *Globe* wrote of *Buffalo Bill's Wild West*: “the people employed here are not actors trained for work, but for the most part men who have spent their lives in just such scenes as they are called upon to represent in front of the audience.”⁹

Many of the Indians who toured with the show mainly did so for the opportunity to travel, while others chose to join the troupe in lieu of going to jail for any number of crimes they had been charged with.¹⁰ Although *Buffalo Bill's Wild West* achieved its popularity for its purported ‘authenticity’ (a claim that Cody himself defended vehemently), the performances always seemed to twist the truth in a way that glorified the American hero while demonizing the Native warrior. Daniel Francis, an art historian

and critic writes: “the wild west show presented an Indian who was aggressive and bloodthirsty, an attacker of wagon trains, a torturer of captives.”¹¹ The show was, for all intents and purposes, it would seem, a symbol of the ‘triumph of civilization over savagery’, where the bloodthirsty Indian’s would attack and be thwarted by brave American frontiers men such as Buffalo Bill.



Fig. 26. Sitting Bull and William "Buffalo Bill" Cody. Photograph by W.Norton, 1885.

William (Buffalo Bill) Cody was, before the time of his Wild West Show, already a celebrity and cultural icon who had become famous for a popularized incident that supposedly had taken place at Warbonnet Creek in 1876. It was here, four months after the *Battle of Little Big Horn*, that he claimed to have taken the scalp of a Cheyenne warrior as a way to avenge the death of General Custer. This event, which has never been confirmed in any historical reference, was for a time the main feature in *Buffalo Bill's Wild West* show and was performed for the audience by Cody himself. The reenactment

consisted of Buffalo Bill in a hand-to-hand combat with an Indian actor who was eventually overpowered and scalped, culminating in Buffalo Bill shouting “the first scalp for Custer!”¹² The *Battle of Little Big Horn* was also reenacted, while actual participants in the event participated in recreating the fierce battle scenes that lead to the defeat of Custer’s Seventh Cavalry Regiment.

John Ewars, an American historian and author of *The Emergence of the Plains Indian as the Symbol of the North American Indian* argued that the Wild West shows were so popular that their portrayal of the Indian became a cultural archetype, and something that has effected the perception of Indigenous people ever since. He writes: “Bill Cody and his imitators fixed the Plains Indian firmly in the public’s mind as typical of all Indians ... the Wild West shows reduced the complexity of Native cultures in North America to a single image in the popular mind, the mounted, war-bonneted Plains chieftain.”¹³

The image of the generic, stereotypical and largely fictionalized version of the Plains people became a widely popularized simulation that would be infinitely reproduced in the decades to follow.¹⁴ As an example, Francis writes of the traveling exhibition featuring nine Kwakiutl people from Bella Cola that was staged in Germany a decade after *Buffalo Bill’s Wild West* had toured Europe. When they arrived it has been reported they were met with hostility from the general population who claimed the show of the West-Coast peoples was a fraud. Francis writes: “the German public was convinced that these people were Chinese or Japanese, not Indians, and accused their organizers of a swindle. Where were the tomahawks and headdresses, the skin tipis, the aquiline of the noble savage?”¹⁵

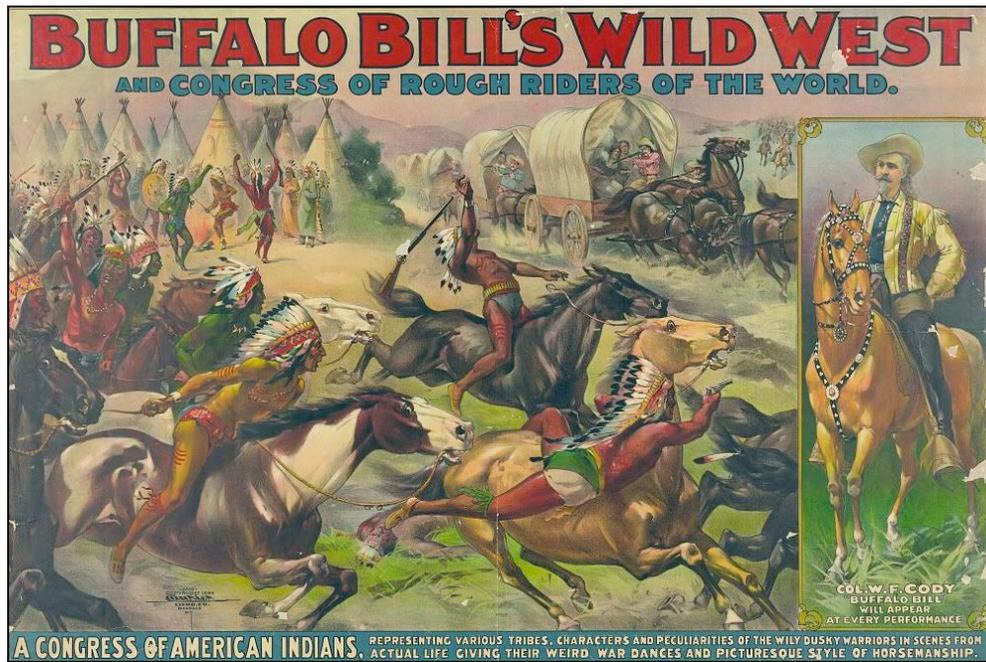


Fig. 27. Buffalo Bill's Wild West. Poster. circa 1890's.

By 1893 the traveling show was renamed *Buffalo Bill's Wild West and Congress of the Rough Riders of the World* and William Cody made it common practice to authenticate the character of Buffalo Bill in the performance-program. In one instance, he said of his performance reenactment of the Battle of Little Bighorn, that he was an authentic participant, repeating heroic parts played in actual life. However, only a small percentage of William Cody's life has ever been confirmed—it was reported he was actually in New York at the time of the Battle of Little Big Horn—and it would seem that the character of Buffalo Bill was itself as much myth as it was fact. Francis writes: “It is interesting that such an important creator of the Imaginary Indian should be in many ways an imaginary character himself.”¹⁶

According Vizenor, the Wild West shows operate under the sign of the myth of colonial superiority: they were “simulations for an audience familiar with manifest manners and the literature of dominance.”¹⁷ What history will remember is that *Buffalo Bill's Wild West* stood apart from its numerous imitators because Cody's exhibitions featured ‘real Indians’ and accurate reenactments of ‘actual’ historical events. And even though these events were obviously glorified or theatrically exaggerated, the primary goal in Cody's mind was to uphold a level of authenticity and entertain the audience with a dramaticized version of a real piece of history. *Buffalo Bill's Wild West* show “purported to be more than just entertainment,”¹⁸ they were to be imagined as dramatic re-tellings of ‘real’ history—a re-staging of the past in the way it had ‘actually’ happened, while giving the audience “a first-hand look at what an Indian was really like.”¹⁹ However, by the very virtue of the fact that they are recreations, regardless of how much or how little creative license might be employed in their staging, they were in fact *not* real: they were representations *of* the real, they were *simulations*.

The Hauntology of Simulation and Hyper-Phantomality

In *Simulations*, Baudrillard argued that today we live in a world entirely comprised of simulacra and simulations in which the sign itself no longer relates to or is dependant on its reference to the real: “Today, the entire system is fluctuating in indeterminacy, all of reality absorbed by the hyperreality of the code and of simulation.”²⁰ In the text, Baudrillard proposed that there is a three-tiered order or *procession of simulacra* that began in the Renaissance under the sign of the *counterfeit*, followed then by *production*

in the Industrial era, and finally the third order is of *simulation* and the *hyperreal*, which Baudrillard says is the dominant order of the present.²¹

Following this, I will forward three independent yet interrelated propositions:

First proposition:

The Wild West shows of the nineteenth century are first order simulacra because they maintain a connection to the real while not entirely masking the fact that they are recreations of the real. For Baudrillard, the *counterfeit* operates comfortably within the symbolic order and is an *obliged* sign in the sense that does not violate or corrupt the original.²² It is, he writes, something still tied to the real (or natural) world through a symbolic responsibility, and thus the *counterfeit* maintains its difference (*différance*) from the real. “The first-order simulacrum never abolished difference ... it supposes an always detectable alternation between semblance and reality.”²³

As Baudrillard describes it, the *counterfeit* always resembles the real—it is a copy, a fabrication, an obvious mimicry and “a placeholder for the real.”²⁴ And this is what makes the counterfeit an obliged sign, because it necessarily maintains a certain symbolic accountability to the real. Thus, according to Baudrillard, first order simulations are therefore ‘good’ in comparison to the second and third order simulacra because they remain distinct and separate from the real—the first order simulation is a “reflection of a basic reality”²⁵ that leaves the ‘reality principle’ intact.

From a certain perspective, this would be true of the simulation of the Wild West shows as they gained their popular value precisely by remaining attached to the ‘real’ thing—*real historical events, real battles, real ‘Indians’*. The simulation of the Wild West shows do not try and replace the real, but rather to simply re-perform it, aiming to

mimic and resemble the real while simultaneously gaining validation through a certain perceived attachment to the real thing.

Second Proposition:

Thus, at the beginning of colonization, there was a moment of stupor and amazement before the very possibility of escaping the universal law of the gospel. There were two possible responses: either admit that this law was not universal, or to exterminate the Indians so as to remove the evidence.²⁶

The Wild West shows are *counterfeit* simulations that also operate within the logic of Baudrillard's second order of simulation. Baudrillard writes that the second order of *production* begins to problematize the difference between reality and illusion by disrupting the symbolic order through the dynamic reproducibility of signs. The second-order of simulation is about the 'absorption of differences' that distinguishes itself from the *counterfeit* after entering into the realm of (re)production where referential reason begins to disappear. The second order of simulation no longer has any necessary binding obligations to reality, becoming in the process of reproduction, a multiplicity of undifferentiated signs that are increasingly self-referential. In the second order, writes Baudrillard, the "relation between them [the real and fake] is no longer that of an original to its counterfeit—neither analogy nor reflection—but equivalence and indifference."²⁷

This is to say that with the Wild West shows that the relationship between the original and the counterfeit is eroded, with the sign transformed into something tantamount to the real. This is in part due to the reproducibility of the spectacle of the

Wild West circus, but also because of the ways, as Baudrillard says, “production absorbs the process of production.”²⁸

Francis wrote that in the nineteenth-century there seemed to “be an insatiable appetite for cowboys and Indians in the cities of North America and Europe.”²⁹ Thus, productions such as *Buffalo Bill’s Wild West* spawned numerous imitations that served to reproduce the spectacle of what Francis called the *Imaginary Indian*—exporting and redoubling the simulation in literary pop-fiction, numerous exhibitions that traveled North America and Europe, comic books, Dime-Novels and eventually in cinema. With the explosive reproduction of the spectacle of the Wild West shows, the sign abandoned its obligation to the real, and the ‘reality principle’ is dissolved. Or, as Baudrillard wrote, the sign begins to transcend the real, violating in the process the “natural substance of a thing in order to substitute a synthetic one.”³⁰ Francis argued that the North American audiences of the nineteenth century demanded that the spectacle of the Wild West circus be much more than simple entertainment—as Umberto Eco wrote in *Travels of Hyperreality*, North American audiences always want ‘more to come’, and thus “in search of instances where the American imagination demands the real thing ... to attain it, must fabricate the absolute fake.”³¹

The impact of the Wild West shows on the creation and reproduction of what Francis called the *Imaginary Indian* is almost unmappable. Equally as problematic is understanding the extent to which the explosive proliferation of the Imaginary Indian functioned to conceal the very real colonial eraser of Indigenous culture that was simultaneously playing out all across the North American landscape. What is interesting about this period in history is that, on the one side, you have the mass proliferation and

reproduction of the simulation of the Indian Other in (Euro-American) popular culture, and on the other, the very real eradication and extermination of the customs, spiritual practices and culture of Indigenous peoples. With the Wild West shows and other expressions of Euro-American pop-entertainment that operate under the sign of what Vizenor called the 'literature of dominance' is the very real intent to disappear the colonized Other through different government policies such as, for example, the Indian Act and its associated legislation in Canada.

In the nineteenth-century the Indian Other had "become a bankable simulation"³² for the Euro-American world who, it would seem, simultaneously sought to erase the real behind the simulation. In the nineteenth century a propagation of aggressive government policies were being enacted that promised to ensure the future disappearance of Indigenous culture, policies for instance aimed at "stamping out all practices which the Indian department believed stood in the way of the assimilation of Native people."³³ While the simulations of the (colonial) 'tribal real' began to be reproduced in North American culture, government enactments such as the Indian Act began to restrict Indigenous cultural practices by banning a variety of sacred ceremonies, the right to have community gatherings, and the ability to leave their reservations to visit sacred sites.

This would be exactly the triumph of the simulation over the real that Baudrillard speaks, where simulacra are freed from any binding obligation to the real in the "reversal of origin and finality."³⁴ Or as Vizenor has written, "tribal realities are superseded by the simulations of the unreal,"³⁵ as the reality of the colonized Other becomes overwritten, shadowed, and eclipsed by the "simulations of dominance."³⁶ And this would have been the same thing Baudrillard said of the *precession of simulacra*: that with the radiating

synthesis of the combinatory fictions of the (colonized) Other that simulations effectively violate the vicissitudes of the real, in the end leaving room only for the “orbital recurrence of models and for the simulated generation of differences.”³⁷ This is no longer a question of parody, of re-creation and reduplication, but instead it becomes a “question of substituting signs of the real for the real itself.”³⁸ Plain and simple, Baudrillard says, the procession of simulation is a sacrificial spectacle: in order for the simulation to live, the real must be abolished.

Third Proposition:

Of all the prostheses that mark the history of the body, the double is doubtless the oldest. But the double is precisely not a prosthesis: it is an imaginary figure, which, just like the soul, the shadow, the mirror image, haunts the subject like his other, which makes it so that the subject is simultaneously itself and never resembles itself again, which haunts the subject like a subtle and always averted death. This is not always the case, however: when the double materializes, when it becomes visible, it signifies imminent death.³⁹

In *Simulacra and Simulations*, Baudrillard wrote that the process of simulation “implies a kind of black magic ... [from] being seduced by ones own image in the water, like Narcissus, to being haunted by the double.”⁴⁰ Simulation is, thus, ‘diabolical in its very essence’ because ultimately, wrote Baudrillard, it aims to dominate a pacified culture that it would have “ground up into a synthetic, deathless substance.”⁴¹

In the nineteenth century Wild West exhibitions, and particularly in the case of *Buffalo Bill’s Congress of the Rough Rider of the World*, there is something even more complex about the interrelationship or ‘oscillation’ between the real and simulation. *Buffalo Bill’s Wild West* show is unique in the sense that William Cody employed ‘real

Indians', in many cases those who participated in the 'real' events they were meant to restage in front of the audience. Following this, I want to explore this fatal implosion of the real and the simulacra that here occurs at the site of the flesh through a hybrid theorization of Baudrillard's concept of simulation reread through Derrida's notion of *hauntology*. The reason for this is to further speculate about the 'black magic' of the simulacra in Baudrillard's third order of the *hyperreal* and the experience of being haunted by ones own spectral double under the sign of what Derrida has called *hyper-spectrality* or *hyper-phantomology*.

As I proposed in the last chapter, *spectral Otherness* is the shadowy projection of an imaginary alterity that effectively eclipses and disappears the colonized Other into its phantom form. We might then begin to theorize about Indigenous subjectivity being overwritten, disappeared, eclipsed and haunted by both a spectral and/or simulated double under the hybrid sign of the *hauntology of simulation*. I mean this theorization as a way to re-think the disappearance and subsequent ironic reappearance of the "real Indian" in the Wild West exhibitions wherein a certain spectral phantomology begins to ghost and spectralize within the simulacra. For Buffalo Bill's simulations are characterized not only by the proliferation of simulacra, but also by the reproduction of spectral Otherness under the sign of what Vizenor called the *simulations of domination*.

To begin, then, with a few points that require some clarification about Baudrillard's theory of simulation, and Derrida's notion of the specter.

In *Specters of Marx*, Derrida argued that the sign of the specter is of altogether different order than that of the simulacra—they are, according to Derrida, incompatible and diametrically opposed signs. For Derrida, a necessary aspect of the specter is its liminal character: the specter, he wrote, is “neither dead nor alive, it is dead and alive at the same time.”⁴² This is what Derrida calls the ‘paradoxical incorporation’ of the specter, something that for him ultimately distinguishes it from the “image of the image or the simulacrum.”⁴³

For Derrida, simulations are typically taken to be synonymous with the virtual, a term he also links to the notion of the ‘idol’, the ‘icon’, and the ‘spirit’—there is always the “spirit [simulation] on the one hand, and the ghost or revenant on the other.”⁴⁴ Derrida wrote that the distinguishing characteristic between the ‘spirit’ (simulacra) and the specter is that the latter has about it a kind of “supernatural and paradoxical phenomenology.”⁴⁵ Derrida said that while the two share common attributes, the spirit (simulation) is purely virtual, while the specter is by its very paradoxical and doubled nature both virtual and real at one and the same time.⁴⁶ Derrida said that while the specter shares a certain ephemeral quality with the simulacrum, it also, necessarily, possesses a second dimension: “it [the specter] retains that bodiless body which we have recognized as making the difference between specter and spirit.”⁴⁷ Thus, the ghost is of the order of a ‘doubled articulation’ through which it is distinguished from that of the simulacra which occupies singularly the dimension of the virtual.

This distinguishing characteristic of a doubled articulation between the specter and the simulation is a difference Baudrillard appears to share, but only in the context of the first-order of simulation. According to Baudrillard, the first order of simulation is a

‘good representation’ because it does not mask the fact that it is a simulation of the real. In the first order what he calls the ‘reality principle’ is left intact, and the copy is recognized as an illusion—it is altogether virtual, we could say, and it is through being recognizable as ‘unreal’ that it gains its value. By contrast, the specter is comprised always of both “. . . presence and non-presence, actuality and inactuality, life and non-life.”⁴⁸ And this is the difference: the specter, according to Derrida exceeds the operational logic of the binary and thus the undead, spectral sign does not oppose life and death, but is instead comprised of both (and/or) simultaneously.

For Baudrillard, it can be argued that the spectral begins to enter into the equation as we move through the procession of simulacra to the second and third order of simulation. In these higher orders of simulation a hauntological presence begins to ‘ghost’ within the realm of the simulacra wherein the simulation begins to haunt the real and is in turn haunted by its reversal—the absence of the real. The shift from the first order of simulation to the second order is characterized by the dominance of production and reproducibility wherein the simulations are unhinged from that which it had previously represented faithfully.

These are not mere stand-ins which have been displaced from the principle scene, but reappearances that haunt the emptiness of a scene . . . derived from the nullification of the real. The unreal inversion of these haunted and metaphysical objects contrasts completely with the representative space of the Renaissance [first order simulation].⁴⁹

In the third order of the hyperreal the ‘reality principle’ of the symbolic order is entirely collapsed and abolished. In the era of *simulation*, wrote Baudrillard “it is the

generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal.”⁵⁰ With this, simulated mimeticism, indeterminacy, and the infinite redoubling of the sign within an internal logic becomes the dominant principle. The third order means that “from now on signs will exchange among themselves exclusively without interacting with the real.”⁵¹ Thus, during this crucial transformation where the real is violated, volatized, sacrificed, and eclipsed, the third order of simulation becomes an allegory for sacrificial dedication and death in its haunting of the absence of the real⁵² —“enter the ghost.”⁵³

The third order for Baudrillard is characterized by the metaphysics of the code, the “generation from model, differential modulation, feedback.”⁵⁴ Under the sign of hypersimulation there is no sanctuary to be found in any reference to an original because the simulacra has become its own mythology, its own origin, its own essential beginning within an infinitely reproducible system of signs that effectively collapses the ‘symbolic order. Therefore, the hyperreal fully transcends and simultaneously eradicates reality; the simulation becomes ‘more real than the real’, and therein the “unreal is no longer that of dream or fantasy, of a beyond or a within, it is that of a *hallucinatory resemblance of the real with itself*.”⁵⁵

In the third order, simulacra take on a life of their own and “become a sort of phantom principle”⁵⁶ that is in turn “haunted by the death”⁵⁷ and disappearance of the real. As the simulacrum begins to redouble itself, a “ghost effect”⁵⁸ begins to inhabit the system, or, as Baudrillard said, these transformations “offer, in ideal content, the phantoms which the system has devoured in successive revolutions.”⁵⁹ With this, simulations no longer operate singularly in the realm of the virtual because they

effectively abolish the “difference between ‘true’ and ‘false’, between ‘real’ and ‘imaginary’.”⁶⁰

Following this we could speculate that the sign of the simulacrum itself *becomes-spectral*. This is to say that, in the realm of the *hyperreal*, simulations assume the form of what Derrida called a ‘doubled articulation’, because they cease to occupy singularly the dimension of the virtual. After the abolition and destruction of the symbolic order the simulation signals the disappearance of the distinction between the real and the unreal⁶¹ and thus becomes both (and/or) simultaneously. The simulation overwrites and spectralizes reality in consuming the essence of its opposite, and thus, Derrida’s first distinction between simulation (spirit) and that of the specter no longer apply: simulations become a “paradoxical incorporation, the becoming-body, a certain phenomenal and carnal form of the spirit.”⁶² Or, as he wrote elsewhere, the ‘image of the image’ (the simulation) is given a body, “Namely a body! In the flesh!”⁶³ This transformation, the becoming-body of the spirit (simulation) in the third order is that which catalyses the metamorphosis of the simulacra into what Derrida calls a *specter-simulacra* under the sign of *hyper-phantomality*.

Within Derrida’s theory of hauntology a similar theorization is given about the reproduction of the specter through the notion of successive phantomological reappearances or re-appearitions of the ghost. Derrida says that there is to be always the expected return of the ghost because the specter ‘always begins by coming back’ (revenant). He writes: “Repetition *and* first time, but also repetition *and* last time, since the singularity of any *first time*, makes of it also a *last time*.”⁶⁴ This process is described as the phantasmagorical return of the specter in successive repetition or reproduction that

effectively dislocates the temporality of time. The reappearance or re-appearance of the specter, writes Derrida, puts “time out of joint,”⁶⁵ in much the same way that Baudrillard’s theory of the hyperreal “puts an end to the linearity of time ... [taking on] the form of extermination and death.”⁶⁶

With Derrida’s sign of the specter, as it is with Baudrillard’s notion of the simulacra, there exists an incalculable depth in which the phenomenon of the specter-simulation can repeat, redouble, and reproduce itself in the ‘dislocated’ and paradoxical time of the present moment. It is thus through a radical untimeliness that the specter and the simulacra operate—a deranged, dislocated, and undone teleology in which the specter-simulation reincarnates/redoubles itself. With this, there is no distinction that can be made between reality and simulation: now, only, there is that of the hyperreal populated by the hauntology of undead signs in successive, phantomological repetition.

It is really only in the final chapter of *Specters of Marx* that Derrida begins to dissolve the boundaries that had previously kept idea of the simulacra (spirit) and the specter separate. Derrida says that in the dislocated time of the present, the ghost itself begins to phantasmagorically mimic itself, infinitely redoubling its essence through the logic of simulation, culminating in what he calls the “ghost of the ghost.”⁶⁷ Derrida says that after the first reappearance of the ghost, in its ‘beginning by coming back’, it emerges and reappears always as the “specter-spirit, simulacrum of the simulacra without end.”⁶⁸ Thus, it is through the logic of repetition, the redoubling of the ghost, its ongoing urge for the re-production or re-appearance of itself (revenant), that we begin to observe a phantasmagorical multiplicity of specters that result in an “accumulation of ghostly layers.”⁶⁹

In *Specters of Marx*, Derrida wrote that one never encounters *a* specter, and therefore one is never only possessed by ‘some ghost’, but rather by a multiplicity of ghosts and revenants, apparitions and spirits. Haunting means, therefore, to be spectralized by always “more than one specter.”⁷⁰ This, therein, would be the logic of what I would call *hyper-phantomality*: the critical injunction and paradoxical incorporation of the “more than one”⁷¹; a ‘population of ghosts’, illusions, specter-simulacra, or phantasms. Hyper-phantomality, like the simulacra of the simulacra, is about the multiplication of ghosts, the endless series of the re-appearance of specters in a series that radiates outward as phantasmic projections. Thus, for Derrida, repetition becomes the very condition of a hauntology, wherein under the sign of hyper-phantomality what is produced is a “conjuring trick [that] multiplies itself, it gets carried away with itself, and is unleashed in a series”⁷²: *the redoubled sign of the ghost of the ghost, of the ghost, of the ghost ...*



Fig. 28. Portrait with Sitting Bull and William "Buffalo Bill" Cody. Photograph, circa 1890's.

What, then, can be said about the “real Indians” in the simulation of *Buffalo Bill’s Wild West*?

In *Buffalo Bill’s Wild West* the affectivity of simulation is transferred from the commodification of historical narratives to the realm of the flesh wherein “the contradiction between the real and the imaginary is effaced,”⁷³ and the difference between ‘real’ bodies and their simulated doubles is no longer recognizable. In the Wild West circus, the ‘real’ body performs its own symbolic extermination and becomes, as Baudrillard wrote, “an allegory for death.”⁷⁴ The disappearance of the real into the order of simulation at the site of the flesh is about the ironic reappearance of the Indigenous body as the simulation of the “real Indian” Other. They become, as Vizenor might say, “invented or ‘double’ others, New World chimera, silhouettes or shadows.”⁷⁵ It is as Akira Mizuka Lippit wrote in her text *Atomic Light (Shadow Optics)*: here the ‘real Indian’ is “present only in the instance of its disappearance ... the transparent being is only there, in the fullness of its invisibility, when it can perform its own effacement.”⁷⁶

Vizenor wrote in his text *Manifest Manners* that the “simulation of the *indian* is the absence of real natives—the contrivance of the other in the course of dominance.”⁷⁷ In the hyperreality of *Buffalo Bill’s Wild West*, one can no longer distinguish between the real and the illusion because the simulation has itself become embodied, and, as Vizenor writes, the Indians become the “simulations of the ‘absolute fakes’ in the ruins of representation.”⁷⁸ With this, bodies are contaminated and haunted by the simulation of their doubled Other, and thus, on stage they re-perform a symbolic and ritualistic sacrifice of the body, becoming in the process “simulacra Indians who proclaim the last universal truth of”⁷⁹ hyperreality and simulation.

In *Buffalo Bill's Wild West*, the 'real Indians' are disappeared into a hyperreal 'spiral of artificiality' that rejuvenates retroactively the illusionary fiction of the Other within the framework of what Vizenor called the simulation of dominance. In these performances, simulations are purged of the real and metamorphized first through the order of reproducibility and second through its paradoxical incorporation and invasion of the flesh that it transforms through violating and vivisectioning its 'natural essence'. This is the process of simulacra, says Baudrillard, the sacrificial spectacle that signals the disappearance of Buffalo Bill's 'real Indians' into the order of hypersimulation and hyperreality. No longer is it a question of mimicry or the reproducibility of simulacra, but instead about the ways in which the Indians in Buffalo Bill's exhibition are disappeared into the simulation of the Wild West circus, transformed into the doubled self as Other: there were in fact no 'real Indians' in *Buffalo Bill's Wild West*, only simulations haunted by the metaphysics of the hyperreal.

If the hyperreal is defined by the collapse of the symbolic order wherein it becomes impossible to distinguish the real from the illusion, then hyper-phantomality would be the sign under which we are no longer able to separate the subject from the specter that haunts it. As Derrida wrote: "As soon as one no longer distinguishes spirit [simulation] from specter, the former assumes a body, it incarnates itself."⁸⁰ Given this, it is not entirely sufficient to say that there were only simulacra Indians in *Buffalo Bill's Wild West*, for under the sign of hyper-phantomality the 'real Indians' undergo the processes of so many 'paradoxical incorporations'. The 'real Indians' in *Buffalo Bill's Wild West* exist, Derrida might say, between 'two modalities' at once, caught in a suspended state of

spectral liminality, imprisoned in a space of phantomological contradictions. This is no longer a question of ‘parody’ and ‘caricature’, says Derrida, but about the incarnation of the ghost, the interreorization and internalization of the specter in the body of the (‘real Indian’) Other.

Derrida writes: “For there to be a ghost there must be a return to the body, but to a body that is more abstract than ever”⁸¹ —a return to a body inhabited by ghosts, a body haunted by the reapirition of specter-simulations that it engenders. This signals, therefore, not only the denial of the flesh, but also the ironic reappearance of the ‘real Indians’ as specter-simulations, brought on stage to enact their own disappearance.

In the simulation of *Buffalo Bill’s Wild West*, the ‘real Indians’ are “constituted by specters of which it becomes the host and which it assembles in the haunted community of a single body.”⁸² Conversely, the specter-simulation is embodied and given a second and doubled dimension, “namely a body,” says Derrida: *it is given the flesh of the real*. Thus, it is not a return to the living body, but rather about the incarnation and paradoxical incorporation of another “*artifactual body, a prosthetic body*,”⁸³ a body no longer merely eclipsed by its spectral shadow, but a body haunted and possessed by its spectral double.

A Theory of Simulated Survivance: Belle Sauvage in the Abyss of the Reversal

In *Simulations*, Baudrillard wrote that it is no longer possible to isolate the simulation from the real because, under the sign of the Hyperreal, it is impossible to “escape the spectre raised by simulation.”⁸⁴ He said that we cannot hope to escape the crisis of

representation for the reason that hyperrealism transcends the symbolic order and therein functions entirely within the realm of simulation. Thus the enclosure of the ‘real in a vacuum’ cannot be opposed while still adhering to the rational destination of signs within the symbolic order because it is impossible to reestablish ‘parallel significations’ in a universe that has abolished structures and binary oppositions. Because hyperrealism has extinguished any possible referent to challenge it by consuming and “extinguishing its own foundational myth [and eliminating] its internal contradictions,”⁸⁵ our strategy, therefore, should be to begin to make signs play on their ‘inverse order’. That is, since we cannot dismantle or repair the process of the fatal collapse of the symbolic order, what is needed, then, is a *fatal strategy* about the reversal of the codes of simulation.

This *fatal strategy*, Baudrillard wrote, should consist of the mobilization of subtle forms of the code and the radicalization of the qualities of the hyperreal. It is about (paradoxically, perhaps) a passion for the unreal intensification, escalation, and ‘ecstasy’ of the sign to the point where “everything is naturally inverted and collapses.”⁸⁶ It is about combating hyperrealism with its own weapons, and seeking to exceed its aesthetic forms by forcing its reversal and “unconditional metamorphosis.”⁸⁷

For Baudrillard, there is only one order that survives the code, and that is the abyss of the reversal, as he writes: “Only symbolic disorder can breach the code.”⁸⁸ Thus, the fatal strategy of the real must cease to insist on the sign relative to its opposite (the true to the false, the real to the simulation) but instead it should strive to become ‘superlative’ in absorbing the energy of its opposite.

To the more true than true we will oppose the more false than false ... we will not distinguish the true from the false; we will seek what is more false than false: illusion and appearance.⁸⁹

The *fatal strategy* of the real he says should not be staged as an expedition in search of lost origins, but instead something itself plugged into the uncertainty and randomness of the code through which it can become a “phantasmic escalation of finalities.”⁹⁰ Fatal strategies of the real haunt the process of hyprealism and short-circuits the metaphysics of the code by seeking a ‘dead point’ in which it suspends inverted signs in a liminal space of ‘weightless uncertainty’, untouched by the gravitational force of *hypersimulation*. It seeks a “neutral point where every system crosses the subtle limit of reversibility, contradiction, and reevaluation, in order to be completely absorbed into noncontradiction.”⁹¹ Thus, it is from within the abyss that the reversal of the codes of simulated-reality force the sign of the hyperreal to stage its own ironic appearance, becoming therein visible as “distinct from its double, from its shadow, from its image.”⁹²

As Baudrillard says, fatal strategies—those performances of inversion and reversibility which seek the ‘paradoxical incorporation’ and hyper-nullification of the fascination of the real—do so through an antagonistic process: “only a *pataphysics of simulacra* can remove us from the codes of simulation and the impasse of death in which it imprisons us.”⁹³ Baudrillard describes these fatal strategies as being ruled by hallucination, blasphemy of the code, and liminal inversions. For this, it would seem, is the only way for fatal strategies to disturb the law of simulation because only disorder can ‘breach the code’ and the virtual reality of simulacra through unanticipated reversals

wherein reality stages its “own mode of disappearance, thus acquiring the maximal energy of appearances.”⁹⁴

What Baudrillard suggests, therefore, is that if we cannot breach the outer limits of the metaphysics of the code, our only hope is to develop radical and fatalistic strategies in order to survive it. This would have been the same thing Vizenor wrote in his text *Manifest Manners*, that in order to resist the great mythical forms of domination that haunt us we need now to turn to new post-Indian narratives of *simulated survivance*. Post-Indian narratives of *simulated survivance* float in the liminal nexus of the hyperreality of the code; they are “trickster stories [that] tease creation, nature, conversions, simulations, and sacred ceremonies.”⁹⁵ Simulated survivance is about the reversal of the codes of the hyperreal and hyper-phantomality, what Vizenor calls the conversions of Native modernity that haunt the emptiness of ‘manifest manners’ and the real simulations of dominance. Simulated survivance is a fatal strategy, we might say, about the inversion of the hauntological disappearance of ‘real Indians’ into the order of hyper-phantomality. “Post-Indian simulations are at the core of survivance the new stories of tribal courage”⁹⁶ that counter what Vizenor calls the ‘anti-selves’ of the simulations of the tribal real in the ruins of representation. Because we can no longer oppose the ‘real Indian’ to the simulation and reestablish ‘parallel significations’ to repair the symbolic order, post-Indian trickster stories of survivance radicalize the qualities of the hyperreal and begin to play simulation off simulation. Vizenor writes:

The Post-Indian warriors hover over the ruins of tribal representations and surmount the scriptures of manifest manners with new stories; these warriors counter the surveillance and literature of dominance with their own simulations of survivance.⁹⁷

As much can be said about the performance artworks of Blondeau in their critique the mythologized and fetishized Indian Other once the fascination of the nineteenth-century Wild West shows. Blondeau's works are about the performative conjuration of specter-simulations that become re-embodied in hyperbolic stage characters that make the body a spectacle for the intensification of the vicissitudes of the hyperreal and the simulated representations that have disappeared the real into the order of hyperphantomality.

Against the simulations of the 'tribal real', Blondeau's strategy of simulated survivance shores up against the mythological façade of the colonial apparatus and occidental simulations of 'real Indians'. Here, the post-Indian narratives of *Les Belle Sauvage* become a theatrical revival about the ironic reappearance of the real that "ousts [inverts] the inventions [simulations] with humor, new stories, and the simulations of survivance."⁹⁸ As Vizenor wrote, post-Indian narratives of simulated survivance invert the hyperreality of the 'real Indians' in the colonial networks of the 'literature of dominance', against which these "warriors ensnare the contrivances with their own simulations of survivance."⁹⁹

Under the sign of the first and even second order, the simulation always returned to the body, modifying its image in the process, but also reestablishing a symbolic (symbiotic) relationship with that to which it referred. Under the sign of the hyperreal and

hyper-phantomality, the simulation goes deeper, it infiltrates and imposes itself on the body thereby short-circuiting the symbolic order. As Baudrillard said, the body becomes a prosthesis of the simulacrum and in this it signals “the end of the body, of its history, and of its vicissitudes.”¹⁰⁰ This would be the becoming-body of the simulation/specter and simultaneously the flesh becoming a specter-simulation, reemerging as disconnected from the world around it, transfigured and transformed into its spectral and doubled Other.

With Belle Sauvage, Blondeau inverts this transformation by re-performing the hypereal simulation of the Indigenous body (the simulation of ‘real Indians’) by wearing the spectacle of simulation like a second skin, and thereby saturating the body with the simulations of *Buffalo Bill’s Wild West*. In her performances, the simulation of the doubled body “spirals in on itself until it has lost all meaning, and thus radiates as pure and empty form.”¹⁰¹ At this moment, Les Belle Sauvage passes through the mirror of simulation and begins to traverse the territory of the simulated double wherein this dual relationship disappears into the seduction of the ‘more false than false’. This is the reversal or conversion that Blondeau’s trickster stories produce, a redoubling of the aura of simulation that suspends the sign of the ‘real Indian’ in a space of liminal uncertainty, thereby double-crossing the real in a performance about the expiration (finality) of its doubled and spectralized *Self*.¹⁰²

The embodiment of Belle Sauvage that Blondeau performs is emptied of representation, liquidated of the real in the same way the Wild West shows abolished and disappeared the real into the order of phantomality. Belle Sauvage emerges out of the shadows of occidental simulations as herself the byproduct of combinatory fictions that

forces the specter-simulation of the tribal real into an absolute correspondence with itself (mirrored correspondence). As Belle Sauvage, Blondeau pillages the spectrality of ‘real Indian’ simulations and forces the sign to remake and recopy itself at the site of the flesh, exposing therein what Derrida called a visibility of the invisible. And this is the simulated survivance and fatal strategy of Belle Sauvage: the abominable reoccurrence of the Indigenous body as the sacrificial spectacle of inverted hyper-phantomality emerging from within the abyss of the reversal and the manifest manners of simulated dominance.



Fig. 29. Lori Blondeau. *A Moment in the Life of Belle Sauvage*. Performance still, 2002.

Notes:

¹ Lynne Bell, “Scandalous Personas, Difficult Knowledge, Restless Images: the Work of Lori Blondeau”, *Canadian Art* (December 2004),
<http://www.canadianart.ca/art/features/2004/12/09/259/>

² *Ibid.*

³ Lori Blondeau, “Artist Statement”, University of Saskatoon under ‘faculty’,
http://www.arts.usask.ca/art/faculty/pages/l_blondeau.html

Artist Statement

The images of the Indian Princess and Squaw have had a significant impact on societies' perception of Indian women and serve as inspirations for most of my work. Surprisingly, we still see popularized images of the Indian Princess being created by both native and non-native people. You can find these products being sold in Indian Museums and souvenir shops across North America. These are testament to the general public's idealized perception of beautiful Native women as being exotic and hard to find – virtually non-existent. The other side of the Indian Princess is, of course, the squaw – another of societies' iconic scapegoats meant to desensitize both the general public's view of Indian women (their political, historical and social issues as well), and the self perception among Native women themselves.

My work explores the influence of popular media and culture (contemporary and historical) on Aboriginal self-identity, self-image, and self-definition. I am currently exploring the impact of colonization on traditional and contemporary roles and lifestyles of aboriginal women. I deconstruct the images of the Indian Princess and the Squaw and reconstruct an image of absurdity and insert these hybrids into the mainstream. The performance personas I have created refer to the damage of colonialism and to the ironic pleasures of displacement and resistance.

⁴ Lynne Bell, “Scandalous Personas, Difficult Knowledge, Restless Images: the Work of Lori Blondeau”, *Canadian Art* (December 2004),
<http://www.canadianart.ca/art/features/2004/12/09/259/>

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁸ Daniel Francis, *The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1992), 87.

⁹ *Ibid.*,88.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 92.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 94.

¹² *Ibid.*,16.

¹³ John Ewers Quoted in Francis, *The Imaginary Indian*, 94.

¹⁴ Francis, *The Imaginary Indian*, 94.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*,94.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*,89.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*,16.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*,99.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*,99.

²⁰ Jean Baudrillard, *Jean Baudrillard: Selected Writings*, edited by Mark Poster. 2nd eds., (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2001), 123.

²¹ *Ibid.*,84.

²² Jean Baudrillard, *Simulations*. Paul Foss, Paul Patton and Philip Beitchman, trans., (USA: Semiotext[e], 1983), 85.

²³ *Ibid.*,95.

²⁴ Baudrillard, *Selected Writings*, 173.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 173.

²⁶ Baudrillard, *Simulations*, 20.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 97.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 98.

²⁹ Francis, *the Imaginary Indian*, 90.

³⁰ Baudrillard, *Simulations*, 88.

³¹ Cited in Vizenor, *Manifest Manners*, 9.

³² Vizenor, *Manifest Manners*, 11.

³³ Francis, *The Imaginary Indian*, 99.

³⁴ Baudrillard, *Simulations*, 98.

³⁵ Vizenor, *Manifest Manners*, 8.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 4.

³⁷ Francis, *The Imaginary Indian*, 3.

³⁸ Baudrillard, *Simulations*, 4.

³⁹ Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*. Sheila Faria Glaser, trans., (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1994), 95.

⁴⁰ Baudrillard, *Selected Writings*, 185.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 91.

⁴² Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International*. Peggy Kamuf, trans., (New York and London: Routledge, 1994), 192.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 156.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁴⁶ Francis, *The Imaginary Indian*, 92.

⁴⁷ Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 189.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁴⁹ Baudrillard, *Selected Writings*, 157.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 170.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 128.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 148.

⁵³ Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, xix.

⁵⁴ Baudrillard, *Simulations*, 103.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 142.

⁵⁶ Baudrillard, *Selected Writings*, 139.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 129.

⁵⁸ Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 157.

⁵⁹ Baudrillard, *Selected Writings*, 124.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 171.

⁶¹ Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 12.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 5.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 157.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁶⁶ Baudrillard, *Selected Writings*, 123.

⁶⁷ Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 159.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 159.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 159.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 159.

⁷³ Baudrillard, *Simulations*, 142.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 142.

⁷⁵ Vizenor, *Manifest Manners*, 7.

⁷⁶ Akira Mizuta Lippit, *Atomic Light (Shadow Optics)*, Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 120.

⁷⁷ Vizenor, *Manifest Manners*, vii.

⁷⁸ Vizenor, *Manifest Manners*, 9.

⁷⁹ Baudrillard, *Simulations*, 16.

⁸⁰ Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 4.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 57.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 166.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 159.

⁸⁴ Baudrillard, *Simulations*, 6.

⁸⁵ Baudrillard, *Simulations*,

⁸⁶ Baudrillard, *Selected Writings*, 126.

⁸⁷ Baudrillard, *Simulations*, 189.

⁸⁸ Baudrillard, *Selected Writings*, 125.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 188

⁹⁰ Baudrillard,

⁹¹ Baudrillard, *Selected Writings*, 193.

⁹² Baudrillard, *Selected Writings*, 203.

⁹³ Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, 154.

⁹⁴ Baudrillard, *Simulations*, 195.

⁹⁵ Vizenor, *Manifest Manners*, xi.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹⁰⁰ Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, 100.

¹⁰¹ Baudrillard, *Simulations*, 190.

¹⁰² Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, 105.

Shapeshifter Stories in Translation: Becomings-Animal, Becomings-Artifact and Becomings-Undead

Years ago, Grandfather would tell stories about a man he once knew that could shapeshift into animal form. Sometimes Grandfather would say this man would appear as a coyote or a horse, other times as a pig or a crow in order to play pranks on the people in the community.

This man was someone my grandfather met while strawberry picking one season in Deseronto, a small town near Tyendinaga, Mohawk Territory. I remember that in all his stories, Grandfather would never call this person by name, but instead referred to him only as the Man with the Red Handkerchief. After Grandfather had passed away, I asked my Father why this was. He replied that folks in those days used to believe in witchcraft, and that Grandfather was likely afraid to conjure the man's spirit by speaking his name.

Many years ago, my grandfather would say, "there was a man I knew that wore a red handkerchief around his neck, and he was a very mischievous man indeed..."

I can recall Grandfather recounting that one evening, while home alone tending to the woodstove, that he "heard a curious and strange rustling outside." Shortly afterwards, the doorknob at the entrance began to move as if someone was trying to break in. First, he said, "the knob rattled only a little, and then more... and more... and more... until it began to shake violently." Finally, Grandfather gathered enough courage to approach the door of the cabin, and once there he swung it open in a single motion as he lurched backward. And there in the doorway stood a horse with a red handkerchief around its neck, pleasantly chewing an apple in such a way that "he appeared to be laughing" at Grandfather.

Another time, Grandfather said he and his friends were up late playing poker after midnight, which apparently was "something *you* should never do." Suddenly, the door of their cabin burst open and a pig dashed inside and "caused a terrible racket before running back out the front door." Grandfather and his friends took pursuit, thinking they could catch the pig and slaughter it for the next evening's dinner. Finally, after a glorious struggle they managed to corner the animal, said Grandfather, but before they could blink

“the pig disappeared through a hole in the fence, a hole much too small for this particular pig to fit through, leaving behind only a red handkerchief that had been snagged by the chicken wire.”

Trickster Hermeneutics and Becomings-animal

The Native American paradigm is comprised of ideas of constant motion and flux ... The constant flux notion results in a ‘spider web’ network of relationships. In other words, everything is interrelated. If everything is interrelated, then all of creation is related. If human beings are animate and have spirit, than ‘all my relations’ must also be animate and must also have a spirit.¹

Vine Deloria Jr.’s theory of spatial philosophy is grounded in the notion that there is a spiritual relationship through which all living things in the universe are interconnected and form what he calls a ‘circle of relations’. In this, Deloria is usually speaking about the ways in which ‘place’ becomes internalized, but also about a penetrating spiritual bond or ‘kinship’ between animals and human beings. In traditional ‘tribal societies’, he says, human beings were situated within a larger context that stretched beyond the corporeality of the human frame. For them, the world was conceived of as a network of interconnected relationships wherein the human subject was but one aspect of an infinite, ever-changing, and living universe.

Take, for instance, the Totem societies in a number of different Indigenous spiritual belief systems that paid respect to animal/natural spirits, and assumed a kinship between all mammals, reptiles, birds, as well as the physical landscape. In traditional Haudenosaunee culture, for example, the Bear, the Buffalo, the Eagle, and the Otter

societies comprised the *Company of Mystic Animals*, each having specific songs and dances through which the people could call upon their tutelary animal for power and assistance. Traditionally, the Haudenosaunee people believed in what Gregory Cajete called an all-embracing ‘society of life’ in which all living creatures and the landscape are united, implying therefore the existence of a ‘shared psychic relationship’ between man, animals and nature.²

In his text *Native Science: Natural Laws of Interdependence*, Cajete describes Indigenous forms of spiritual understanding under the sign of a ‘psychology of place’, something that entails a belief in “a primal affinity between the human body and the other bodies of the natural world.”³ Cajete wrote that the Indigenous worldview has traditionally been fluid and inclusive, and consequentially, the people do not fully distinguish between human and animal realities.⁴ Rather, he says, these realities interpenetrate each other, and therein the spiritual reality of human beings is thought to be “resonant with the very spirit and essence of the life of animals.”⁵ In other words, wrote Cajete, human beings and animals have an internalizing bond and therefore it is believed possible that humans can transform themselves into animals, and that animals also have the ability to shapeshift into human form.⁶

In their co-authored text, *A Thousand Plateaus*, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari put forward a theorization of transformations that they describe under the sign of *becomings-animal*. They begin their theorization first with a reflection on Carl Jung who, for them, represents a departure from the Evolutionist ‘series-structure’ of difference between species. Second, they reflect on Claude Lévi-Strauss’ texts on Totemism, which Deleuze

and Guattari view as a theory that approximates what they call a ‘correspondence of relations’ between species.

For Deleuze and Guattari, evolutionism is defined by its emphasis on genealogy and what they call ‘filiations’ and therefore it treats the theme of species recognition through the sum and value of differences.⁷ This is, they say, an ‘analogy of proportionality’ that first makes the evolution-production theory possible, while simultaneously creating a hierarchical structure that orders all animals after ‘man’ as a ‘regression’ in the series. In this context they argue that non-human animals become Others, artifacts, objects of scientific inquiry, pets, and no longer, as Cajete wrote, the “focus of prayers, dance, art, or ceremony.”⁸

Deleuze and Guattari witness a departure from the series-structure of evolutionism with Jung’s description of the Archetype in his writings on the collective unconscious wherein he “assigns the animal a particularly important role in dreams, myths, and human collectivities.”⁹ With Jung, write Deleuze and Guattari, “animals are the object not only of science, but also of dreams, symbolism, art and poetry.”¹⁰ In Jung’s concept of the collective unconscious the animal is semi-detached from the series-structure and therefore it becomes a possible ‘transformer’ of human collectivities as much as humans are the possible ‘metamorphosis’ of animal realities. With this they say, Jung’s archetypal forms become about ‘analogical representation’ wherein “man is now no longer the eminent term in the series; that term may be an animal for a man, the lion, crab, bird of prey ... in accordance with a given demand of the [collective] unconscious.”¹¹

Closer to an approximation of a ‘correspondence of relations’, or what Deloria called a ‘circle of relationally’, is, for Deleuze and Guattari, the work of Claude Lévi-Strauss. With Lévi-Strauss, Deleuze and Guattari write that analogical representation is substituted for a theory that “transcend[s] external resemblances to arrive at *internal homologies*.”¹² With this there is a different kind of connection to be made between animal species that has more to do with resonance or oscillation, than with difference or resemblance wherein the serial theme of evolutionist motif yields to the “structural themes of the institution of the totem”¹³. Deleuze and Guattari write:

It is no longer a question of gradating resemblances, ultimately arriving at identification between Man and Animal at the heart of *mystical participation*. It is a question of ordering difference to arrive at a correspondence [circle] of relations.¹⁴

Alongside Lévi-Strauss’ model of totemism, Deleuze and Guattari develop their theorization of becomings-animal in order to propose a theory of transformations that is not simply about resemblance, mimicry or imitation.

To begin with, becomings-animal are not considered to be a relationship *between* two things; becomings-animal does not imply that the subject becomes something distinct or different than themselves, just as the shapeshifter does not become-other or something other in their transformation. The term ‘co-existence’ for Deleuze and Guattari gets close, therefore, as long as it does not entail a correspondence of the one *with* the other, but rather is about an internalized ‘involution’ or transformation of a single body in relation to its ‘selves’ within an existing multiplicity. This is to say that becomings-animal are not about a transformation from one thing into another, from something differentiated to something even more differentiated.¹⁵ Rather, becomings-animal operates in the realm of

symbiosis and internalized homologies “ [in]between terms in play and beneath assignable relations.”¹⁶

Becomings-animal are therefore traversal, not relational: “Becoming is a verb with a consistency all its own; it does not reduce to, or lead back to, ‘appearing’, ‘being’, ‘equaling’ or ‘producing’.”¹⁷ This is to say that becomings-animal does not entail a becoming-other; the shapeshifter does not change from one thing into the other because these forms (the coyote, the dog, the horse, the pig, the crow, or the human) are already a part of an internalized multiplicity or assemblage.

Becomings-animal are shapeshifter stories; they are what Gerald Vizenor might have called a postmodern intimation of tribal stories with conditions of transformation that flow alongside Indigenous forms of trickster hermeneutics. Becomings-animal, according to Vizenor, might be about moving beyond structuralist forms to a mythopoetics of ‘unexpected harmonies’ that approximate an understanding of the “elusive unions of shaman’s with birds, animals, and ancestors ... and shadows in our stories.”¹⁸

Becomings-animal are what Vizenor might call the shadows heard in trickster narratives, the intransitive operators and internalized contradictions present in the realities of shapeshifters. They are about what Cajete called a belief in a primal affinity between species forms, about a human resonance with the psychic reality of animals and the landscape.¹⁹ Becomings-animal speak therefore about a ‘shared psychic’ reality present in shapeshifter stories, and the circle of shadow relations that comprise them.

As Deleuze and Guattari might have said, the shapeshifter is “simultaneously an animal peopling, and the propagation of the animal peopling of the human being.”²⁰ In this, Deleuze and Guattari’s theorization resembles that of Lévi-Strauss’ totemism in the sense that becoming-animal involves a certain kinship, an alliance or pact. Becomings-animal, they write, is enabled through a feedback effect in which the body-assemblage of the shapeshifter involves an alliance of “totemic or symbolic correspondence.”²¹ But, by the same token, the becomings-animal of the shapeshifter cannot be defined by its constitutive elements, nor is it divisible in a serial-structural sense. Rather, multiplicities are transformed through becomings: the crow into the pig, the horse into the dog, the coyote into the human. For this is “the multiplicity of symbiosis and becoming”²² that I am here positing are proper to the becomings-animal of the shapeshifter.

At the core of becomings-animal is Deleuze and Guattari’s theorization of variance, something that does not only consist of a kind of transformation that crosses a boundary or threshold, but rather it is an effectuation of change in-between a ‘symbiotic’ relationship or assemblage. Variance is, thus, the register upon which all becomings operate and, therefore, they owe their transformative nature to the alliance of a symbolic, circular, liminal or relational correspondence ‘in-between’. In the case of the shapeshifter, this will have been the relational assemblage or feedback correspondence of animal archetypes.

Becomings are, for Deleuze and Guattari, kinds of transformations they call ‘lines of flight’; they are movements, deterritorializations, flows, accelerations, and speeds that concern bodies and their passage in-between forms. Becomings are, they write,

“fundamentally heterogeneous elements [that] end up turning into each other in some way.”²³ Becomings are about the deterritorialization of bodies and the incorporeal transformation of signs that define them. Becomings are a “transformation of substances and a dissolution of forms, a passage to the limit or a flight from contours in favor of fluid forces, flows, air, light ... such that a body [bodies...] not end at a precise point.”²⁴ Becomings are about the deterritorialization of the subject such that the series-structure of the regime of bodies does not differ from the multiplicity or assemblages of other forms that they traverse. Thus, the intermingling or transformation of the body-assemblage of the shapeshifter has no definitive contours, just lines of flight, passages, and continual variance. Thus, becomings-animal is a doubled articulation that is not defined by distinct elements (one into the other) but rather by its dimensionality (spatiality). Therefore, for the shapeshifter, “the self is only a threshold, a door, a becoming between ... multiplicities”²⁵ that is defined by various lines of flight and liminal traversals.

Becomings-Artifact

There is an artwork by *Pooyukitchum* (Luiseno) artist James Luna entitled *Artifact Piece* that was first staged in 1985 as a means to challenge the objectification and romanticization of ‘the Indian’ in the museum setting. The original performance consisted of the artist laying motionless for several hours inside a replica of a glass museum case that was placed on display among the other exhibits at the Museum of Man in San Diego.

For the performance, Luna was dressed in what he called ‘typical Indian attire’, and was surrounded by different text panels that cited his tribal affiliations as well as various personal details about his life. Other didactic panels pointed directly to markings and scars on the artist’s body, one of which read:

Drunk beyond the point of being able to defend himself, he was jumped by people from another reservation. After being knocked down, he was kicked in the face and upper body. Saved by an old man, he awoke with a swollen face covered in dried blood. Thereafter, he made it a point not to be as trusting among relatives and other Indians.²⁶

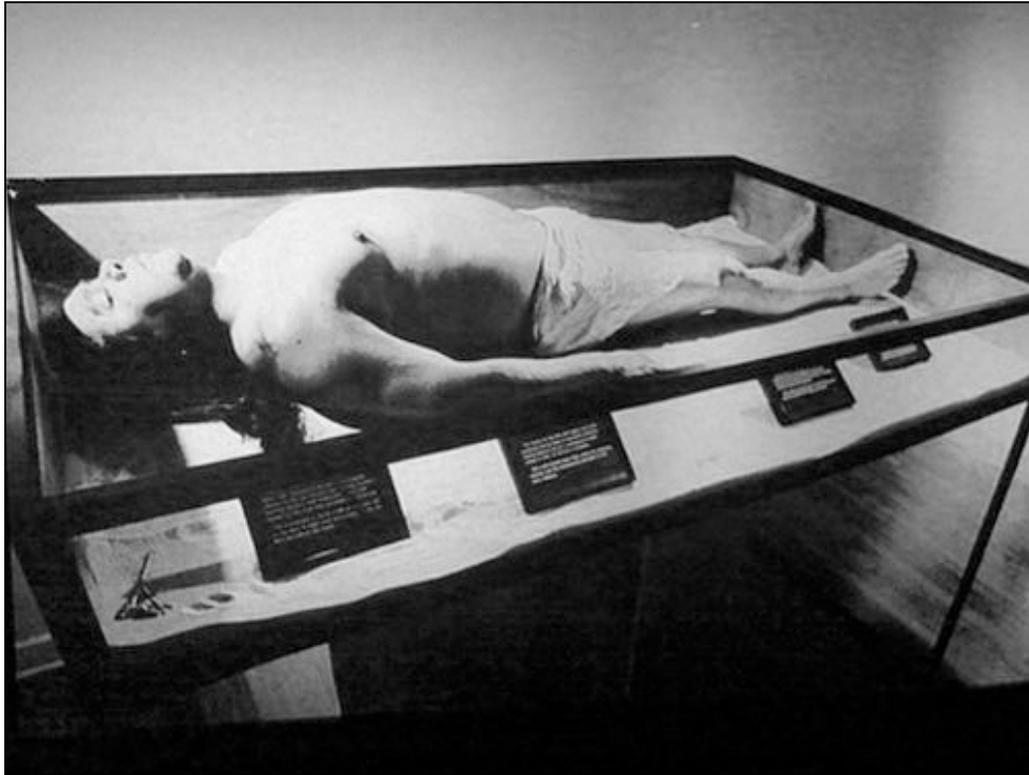


Fig. 30. James Luna. *Artifact Piece*. Performance, 1985.

Luna’s performative transformation of the body into a museological object plays on the register of *becomings-artifact*...

Following this, three variations: *Simulations and Becomings-Artifact*; *Becomings-Artifice and Becomings-Body*; and *Oscillations and Sacrificial Bodies in Translation*.

Variations I: Simulations and Becomings-Artifact

Luna's work is what Vizenor would call a post-Indian performance of simulated survivance that emerges from within the dominant codes of colonial narratives and the shadowy occidental constructions of the 'Indian'.

In *Manifest Manners* Vizenor wrote: "the simulation of the Indian is the absence of real natives."²⁷ What Luna's *Artifact Piece* does is directly challenge these simulations of colonial dominance and the racialized notions of Indigenous identity through what Jean Baudrillard called a fatalistic strategy about the reversal of the codes of simulation.

Luna's artwork is about the simulation of the 'Indian' in transition, a performative *becoming* that forces the simulations to return to the body wherein the flesh becomes the site where all the signs begin to play on their inverse order.

Artifact Piece is what Vizenor would call a trickster story that teases the creases of transformation and inversion in a way that "absolve[s] the simulations with stories of cultural conversions and native modernity."²⁸ Luna's artwork is the simulation of a shapeshifter story in translation and transition, a *line of flight* or becoming in which the body is deterritorialized and begins to traverse the borderlands of simulations with a new sense of "tribal presence in the very ruins of the representations of invented Indians."²⁹

In fact, *becomings* have much in common with simulations.

In *Simulacra and Simulation*, Baudrillard wrote that "to simulate is not simply to feign."³⁰ And so, like *becomings*, simulations are not about mimicry, imitation, or

representation in that simulations cannot be reduced to appearing or resembling. In the case of mimesis, writes Baudrillard, the difference is always clear: the difference between the ‘real’ and the ‘fake’, the ‘true’ and ‘false’ is always obvious, it is only masked. Whereas, with simulation, as it is with becomings, this difference is threatened and what Baudrillard called the ‘reality principal’ is collapsed. In the performance Luna is not “playing” at being artifact, this is not an act of ‘parody’ or caricature—instead, Luna is ‘simulating’ or becoming-artifact.

Like with becomings, simulations are about feedback correspondence and transformations of the kind that have about them, what Deleuze and Guattari called ‘lines of flight’. This is because the simulation always passes in-between—it is not something that *crosses* a threshold or boundary, but rather it is something that traverses a liminal space of relational forces that signals the collapse of all boundaries.

Luna’s performance shores up against the entire edifice of colonial mythology and hovers over the simulated and aesthetic projections of what Vizenor called the manifest manners of domination. What Luna’s performance of becoming-artifact produces is the reversal of the ‘simulations of the tragic primitive’ through a becoming-object of the subject in an act of what Vizenor has called simulated survivance. Becomings-artifact in Luna’s performance is about the blasphemy of the code of simulation and liminal inversions. And this would be the fatal strategy of the real, says Baudrillard, which consists of the subtle radicalizations of simulacra that therein exceed aesthetic forms by catalyzing the reversal or the metamorphosis of simulation.

Baudrillard wrote that there is only one order that survives the code, and that is the abyss of the reversal: “Only symbolic disorder can breach the code.”³¹ Thus any fatal strategy of the real must cease to insist on the sign relative to its opposite (the true to the false, the real to the simulation) but instead it should strive to become ‘superlative’ in absorbing the energy of its opposite. Thus it is from within the abyss that the reversal of the codes of simulation that the *hyperreal* stages its own ironic (iconic) disappearance, and therein the body becomes visible as “distinct from its double, from its shadow, from its image.”³²

Luna’s becomings-artifact of the body is therefore about the acceleration of the inertia of tribal simulations wherein the post-Indian “conversions are in the new stories of survivance over dominance.”³³

Luna’s work is about the inversion of the simulations of the Indian Other in a trickster narrative where simulation is played off simulation...

A Becoming-artifact in this performance is therefore ‘superlative’ because it allows the flesh to absorb the energy of its opposite, becoming therein a “phantasmic escalation of finalities”³⁴ that short circuits the codes of simulation.



Fig. 31. James Luna. *Artifact Piece*. Performance, 1985.

Variations 2: Becomings-Artifice and Becomings-Body

Deleuze and Guattari wrote that deterritorializations of the kind produced by the movement of becomings are “always double, because [they imply] the coexistence of a major variable and minor variable in simultaneous becoming.”³⁵ Becomings, therefore, always involve a relationship or passage in-between (at least) two things. This of course does not entail a transformation from one thing into the other, but rather it is about how the contours of a multiplicity or assemblage are changed by entering a ‘zone of proximity’. For example, when the body of the shapeshifter becomes-horse, the horse in turn becomes an animal-peopling of the shapeshifter; as the “human becomes animal at the same time the animal becomes ... something else.”³⁶ Deterritorializations are the “multiplicity and symbiosis of becoming,”³⁷ and are what Deleuze and Guattari call *blocks of becoming* that transform and pass in-between each other.

This raises the question: if in Luna's artwork there is a becoming-artifact of the body, what exactly does 'artifact' become? That is, what is the other variable or variance in the block of becoming the body the traverses in the performance?

In Luna's work, the becoming-artifact of the body results in the simultaneous becomings-body of the artifact assemblage, or more precisely, the artifact assemblage becomes what Deleuze and Guattari call a *body without organs*.

Before 'artifact' entered onto a block of becoming in Luna's performance it began as what Deleuze and Guattari call a territorial assemblage constructed on a *strata* or *plane of stratification*. A plane of stratification is the zone upon which territories of articulation are organized and coded into forms, substances, meanings and interpretations. Thus they are spaces of territoriality that function to form, for example, a milieu, a "semiotic system, [or] a regime of signs."³⁸

For Deleuze and Guattari, stratifications are distinguished by three types: physiochemical, organic, and anthropomorphic. Previous to entering into a block of becoming the artifact in this scenario was a type of territorial assemblage constructed on an 'organic' plane of stratification. This strata is represented here by the museological plane, and it is that upon which the assemblage of the artifact is encoded. The strata of the museological plane can be said to be 'organic' because it is an 'organism' in the very precise and strict sense that it is a system in which things are 'organ-ized'. The organism, write Deleuze and Guattari, is like the 'organic' organization of the organs of the body; however, the "the organism is not at all the body ... it is a stratum ... in other words, a phenomenon of accumulation, coagulation, and sedimentation."³⁹ In this sense, 'organism' becomes about the imposition of a regime of signs that imposes forms,

functions and “hierarchized organization, and organized transcendences.”⁴⁰ Thus, in order for there to be an (artifact) assemblage, there must therefore be the (museological) plane of strata upon which it is constituted and through which it is organized, signified and subjectified.

In entering a block of becoming with the body in Luna’s performance the artifact changes its nature and escapes on a line of flight away from the museological plane of stratification. During the performance the museological plane is emptied of its signification to the point in which its ‘regime of signs’ begin to play on their inverse order. Within this, the *body without organs* (BWO) that the artifact becomes is a component of passage that traverses a ‘conversion of forces’ that dismantles the organizational circuits of the plane of stratification. Thus, it is precisely the becomings-body of the artifact that signals the deterritorialization of the ‘organism’ of the museological plane and the dispersion of its ‘zone of articulation’.

In passing through this becoming, the artifact assemblage is no longer stratified and thus it becomes deterritorialized, while at the same time the museological plane becomes ‘catatonic’ in the sense it is dismantled and de-organ-ized. Here, the body without organs has “replaced the organism and experimentation has replaced all interpretation, their continuums and conjunctions of affects.”⁴¹ Therefore, the becomings-body of the artifact along and the destratification of the museological plane causes forms, substances and meanings to be replaced by flows, intensities, speeds and transformations in ‘exchange and circulation’.⁴²

Variations 3: Oscillations and Sacrificial Bodies in Translation

It must be said that Luna's performance of reversal and inversion comes with a certain amount of risk that has to do with the sacrificial dedication of the body in its becomings-artifact. In some sense, all becomings involve a sacrifice of one sort or another because they are 'involutionary' and are about the passage along a line of flight towards the deterritorialization of the body. Becomings, write Deleuze and Guattari, have a "thirst for destruction, every kind of destruction, extinction, breakage [and] dislocation."⁴³ Becomings are thus already inversions because they involve 'contagion', and therefore risk. Becomings are always an affair of sorcery, they write, because becomings always involve an uncertain alliance of contamination through which the person must pass in their becoming.⁴⁴ In the case of becomings-animal, this would involve the feedback contagion of a simultaneous "animal peopling and the propagation of the animal peopling of the human being."⁴⁵ Thus, there is what Deleuze and Guattari call a demonic reality of becomings that always threatens the "individuated assemblage of the body."⁴⁶ Yet, with becomings-artifact, perhaps, there is something more at stake because unlike becomings-animal, the human does not pass through or traverse another *living* analogy of relations, but rather engages in a sacrificial act of a different sort.

In the *Absence of Myth*, George Bataille wrote that in order for there to be a sacrificial dedication there must be a 'real victim'. Objects of sacrificial dedication, he says, cannot begin as mere objects, because you cannot sacrifice ordinary things that are already 'destroyed to begin with'. Rather, the transformative act of sacrifice must involve an instance in which *presence* is replaced by *absence* in a way that annuals the painful

antimony between life and death. This is to say that with Luna's performance, the body of the artist becomes the 'real victim' and something that Bataille says is withdrawn from the plane of immanence and made into a "thing" in order to be sacrificed. This was something Bataille also described as the transformation of the 'spirit' into a 'thing' such that it could be returned to immanence in a sacrificial act that produces the death of the body-object. He writes: "[the] sacred demands the violation of what is normally the object ... [and] its domain is that of destruction and death."⁴⁷ This would be the 'truest meaning of sacrifice' according to Bataille, and so therefore the becoming-artifact of the body signals the debasement, destruction, and violation of the body-object under the sign of sacrificial-becomings.

Sacrifice, however, does not entail the complete destruction of the body-object because, like with becomings, sacrificial acts are traversals, transformations, and inversions. For Deleuze and Guattari, becomings run along lines of flight and, therefore, they constitute a 'zone of proximity', and so becomings are not defined by the points they connect precisely because they pass between points: becomings are the "in-between, the border or line of flight or decent running perpendicular to both."⁴⁸

A becoming thus never arrives at one point or another, nor is it constituted by that which it passes through. Rather, a becoming implies a coexistence of relational, asymmetrical movements in oscillation with each other through which things are drawn into proximity. Becomings are produced through a feedback effect and therefore consist of deterritorializations, flows, and accelerations that involve the passage of bodies in-between forms. Therefore, we could say, that becomings are like Bataille's description of sacrificial dedication, in the sense that the kind of destruction becomings intend does not

entail the complete annihilation of the subject. Instead, *becomings-artifact* is about a change in nature and therefore about a passage or traversal in proximity of the sacrificial act. Thus, in Luna's artwork, the body of the artist is suspended in a zone of performative liminality that catalyzes the deterritorialization of the subject-body and at once, the sacrificial transformation of the body-object.

Becomings-Undead

A question, then, must be asked, and it is a question of method, a second propaedeutic to the vision of spirits: How does one transform the world into a 'specter of the truth'? And how does one transform oneself 'into something holy or spectral'?⁴⁹

There is a second dimension that the body of the artist traverses in Luna's performance of *Artifact Piece*, in which it undergoes the phantomological transformation of *becomings-undead*.

In *Specters of Marx*, Derrida wrote that to have an ancestry means to have a *hauntology*; it means to be "constituted by specters of which [the subject] becomes the host and which it assembles in the haunted community of a single body."⁵⁰ What we inherit is therefore a hauntology: the hauntological experience of ancestry is a spectral landscape populated by a multiplicity of spirits, revenants, and apparitions with whom we coexist in what Deloria calls a 'circle of relations'.

As Derrida wrote, to have an inheritance means "to learn to live with ghosts, in the upkeep, the conversation, the company or the companionship ... of ghosts."⁵¹

Ancestry is, therefore, not 'gathered together', writes Derrida, it is not 'one with itself'

because it is always disjoined through being spectralized. This is the very *spectrality of the specter* who inhabits and possess through a haunting of memory and translation.

A hauntology is, therefore, a condition of being: “Is not to possess a specter to be possessed by it, possessed period?”⁵² It is about a spectral return to the body that involves the *becoming-flesh* of the specter, a process in which it is able to inhabit and possess by taking on a body, “Namely a body! In the Flesh!”⁵³ Ancestry, therefore, is in this sense the ‘living/non-living’ appropriation of specters that are absorbed and internalized by an individual or collective. Thus, to have an ancestry means to exist “between two modalities or two temporalities in the conjunction [in a network of relations] with the dead, in the evocation or convocation of the specter.”⁵⁴

Prior to entering a *block of becoming*, the artist first arrives on stage as the already haunted body—a possessed body inhabited by spirits, specters and ghosts. It is a body spectralized by its ancestral inheritance, and haunted by...what? Colonialism? The Indian Act? Residential schools? Or perhaps haunted by what Vizenor called the *manifest manners of domination* and simulations of the tribal real? Or maybe even haunted by the colonial transformation of Indigenous peoples into what Franz Fanon called objects of sacrificial dedication? Or maybe still by some other specter or phantom that has been gathered by (imposed on) the body under the sign of what Abraham and Torok called spectral transference? In any case, the specific reason in the end doesn’t really matter. What matters is that in the performance, the possessed body seeks justice, it seeks retribution, it seeks to conjure away these specters through entering a block of becoming with that which haunts it.

Like *becomings-artifact*, *becomings-undead* are fatal strategies about the reversal of the codes of simulation, or in this case, what Baudrillard called museumification.

Ethnography, wrote Baudrillard, is a sacrificial and murderous science: in order “for ethnography to live, its objects must die.”⁵⁵ As an object of inquiry, therefore, Indigenous peoples had to have been sacrificed in an ironic manner that signaled “a triumph for this science which seemed dedicated to their destruction.”⁵⁶ Under the “spectral light of ethnography,” Baudrillard wrote, the Indigenous peoples have already been made into artifacts, “frozen, cryogenised, sterilized ... to death.”⁵⁷ Museumification and ethnography, therefore, could be seen as the sacrificial dedication of the real, the becoming-dead of the ‘Indian’ artifact—or for Vizenor, an institutionalization of the manifest manners of domination.

In the performance, the line of flight that is the becoming-artifact of the artist is accompanied by a simultaneous *becoming-undead* through which a ‘spectral asymmetry’ erupts, causing all the all the signs to converge and become inverted. Just as Luna is not ‘playing’ at being artifact, he is not merely ‘faking’ death (playing-dead), but rather he is simulating death. As it is with *becomings*, “one imitates only if one fails, when one fails.”⁵⁸ Rather, Luna’s performance traverses the juxtaposition between life and death in a way that is not about mimicry or representation. To simulate is not to imitate, wrote Baudrillard, because it dissolves the ‘reality principle’ and does away with the difference between ‘true and false’—life and death. Thus, the simulation of death in the performance passes in-between the difference, traversing a liminal space or zone of proximity that disappears the antimony between life and death.

Luna's work is a sacrificial spectacle that inverts the simulations of museumification through the paradoxical re-staging of the *living* body as the living-dead. This fatal strategy, this performance of reversal and inversion signals the intensification, escalation and acceleration of the codes of the simulations of museumification to the point of 'ecstasy' where "everything is naturally inverted and collapses."⁵⁹ It forces an "unconditional metamorphosis"⁶⁰ through seeking a 'dead point', wherein the signs are suspended in a liminal space of 'weightless uncertainty', untouched by the gravitational force of the code. And this field of inversion happens precisely at the moment when the Indigenous body stages its own death, "own mode of disappearance, [wherein it acquires] the maximal energy of appearances."⁶¹ With this, the body is dispossessed of the orders of museumification and enters a 'paradoxical state' where it is "metamorphosed into its inverse order,"⁶² and thus reappears in its purged form.

With Luna's simulation of death, the body itself does not become-dead, but rather traverses and crosses over the space in-between life and death. As with simulations, becomings are not defined by the points they connect, nor by the elements in the field of relationally that compose them. Simulations, for instance, do not fall on either side of the true or the false, the real or the imaginary, because they short circuit the difference, and therefore pass in-between. The same can be said for becomings, which, according to Deleuze and Guattari, constitute a zone of proximity or non-localizable relation which makes them traversal; a line of becoming only 'has a middle', it is the coexistence of two asymmetrical passages, neither one nor the other, but that which produces a shared deterritorialization in-between. Becomings have not a beginning or an end, they never depart, nor do they ever arrive. Thus, Luna's simulation of death never arrives at its

destination, the body of the artist does not become-dead, but rather traverses space of becomings-undead—in this state of performative liminality, the body of the artist is neither dead nor alive, but instead exists somewhere in-between.

Becomings-undead are the same thing as becomings-specter or becomings-ghost.

Derrida wrote that a specter or a ghost is a ‘doubled articulation’ or ‘paradoxical incorporation’ because it is “neither dead nor alive: it is dead and alive at the same time.”⁶³ A specter is, therefore, already a becoming in the sense that it traverses the space between life and death and is thus never one or the other; instead it ‘incorporates’ the difference in-between life and death simultaneously—it is *un-dead*.

For Derrida, the specter is an uncertain or contradictory being (‘to be or not to be’), in that it goes “beyond the opposition between presence and non-presence, actuality and inactuality, life and non-life.”⁶⁴ The specter is, therefore, a line of flight, a transition or transformation that never ‘arrives’ nor does it ‘depart’, but rather it passes through a zone of proximity. This zone, through which the specter passes, is what Derrida has called a space of ‘spectral asymmetry’ that he describes as a discontinuous, fragmented, ruptured and ‘disjoined’ present.

A hauntology is an assemblage of specters, or what Derrida calls an ‘accumulation of ghostly layers’, that organize themselves on the body thereby possessing and inhabiting the “living with the living-dead of ghosts.”⁶⁵ Thus, a hauntology is produced when a ghostly assemblage is formed on the stratified plane of the body which in turn is territorialized by the spectralization of its substance, form, or being.

A haunted body could be said to be populated by a spectral multiplicity or collectivity that transforms the body through the process of what Derrida calls *prosthetic synthesis*. Thus, a hauntology must be considered as “something other than [the] self”⁶⁶ that inhabits and possess without becoming present or visible—on the one side is the flesh, and then on the other are ghostly bodies and phantom projections: ‘to be or not to be’.

A hauntology is itself not the body proper, but rather an accumulation, coagulation, and sedimentation that territorializes, haunts and ghosts a ‘host’ body. This is the very spectrality of the specter, writes Derrida—the ‘phantomological incorporation’ of the body as that through which the specter becomes incarnated. Derrida refers to this process specifically as the *becoming-body* of the specter. As he says: “For there to be a ghost there must be a return to the body, but to a body that is more abstract than ever”⁶⁷—a return to a body inhabited by ghosts, a body that is haunted by the ‘expected return’ of a specter that it then internalizes through the act of a paradoxical incorporation in which the ‘abstract body’ is territorialized.

If a hauntology is constituted by the *becoming-body* of the specter, then Luna’s *Artifact Piece* is precisely the opposite: the *becoming-specter* of the body. In the performance these two becomings traverse each other in simultaneous transition, each being deterritorialized and disassembled in the process. This is to say that the becoming-body of the specter and the becoming-specter of the body form an asymmetrical block or zone of spectral asymmetry in which they are drawn into proximity with one another. It is a transformation that constitutes an instance in which two assemblages or multiplicities transform themselves into each other and cross over by way of a shared line of flight.

Therefore, what is produced is the deterritorialization of the spectral assemblage and simultaneously the reterritorialization of the possessed and haunted body on a different plane of stratification.

This process of the doubled becoming of the body and the specter is what Derrida called a *paradoxical hunt* for ghosts in which the body makes “a ghost of itself,”⁶⁸ a spectral double, a mirrored ‘diabolical image’ of the ghost in order to conjure it such that the specter might be exorcised. It is a maneuver in which Derrida says the haunted is transformed into the hunter: “they convoke the revenant that they conjure away. Come so that I might chase you! ... and the ghost does not leave its prey, namely, its hunter.”⁶⁹ This is the very experience of conjuration and invocation, writes Derrida, in which there is the doubled bind of the “figure of haunting with that of hunting.”⁷⁰ People in the scientific community have variously called this a form of *aggressive mimicry* or *predatory simulation* which involves the process in which a predator camouflages itself in order to draw potential prey towards it. Or, as Deleuze and Guattari write: “To hide, to camouflage oneself, is a warrior function, and the line of flight attracts the enemy, traverses something and puts what it traverses into flight; the warrior arises in the infinity of a line of flight.”⁷¹

Artifact Piece is, therefore, a performance of conjuration *as* exorcism that is enabled by the fatal strategy of the body itself traversing the zone of becoming-undead. It involves a conjuration of the third order, according to Derrida, which intends the dispossession of the body through the order of *conjurement*: “namely the magical exorcism that ... tends to expulse the evil spirit which would be called up or convoked.”⁷² It is a performance action that intends ‘death to the specter’ through an intentional

attempt to destroy a ghostly adversary, a collective haunting, a “malignant, demonized, diabolized force, most often an evil doing spirit.”⁷³

In *Artifact Piece*, the body of the artist phantomizes itself in order to become the site of a hauntological mutiny, a ghostly revolt, a spectral insurrection, a “holy hunt against *this* specter.”⁷⁴ Luna’s performance is about spectralizing the disincarnation of the body, the transformation of the flesh in a ceremonial ritual of sacrificial dedication and fatalistic inversion. Luna is a manipulator of phantoms, a performance artist of disembodiment, an emblematic symbol of the death and rebirth of the Indigenous body from *within* the codes of simulation. *Artifact Piece* is a trickster story in translation, a shapeshifter narrative of shadow survivance in which the becomings-specter of the Indigenous body overturns the mythologies of manifest manners and the finalities of colonial simulations of dominance.

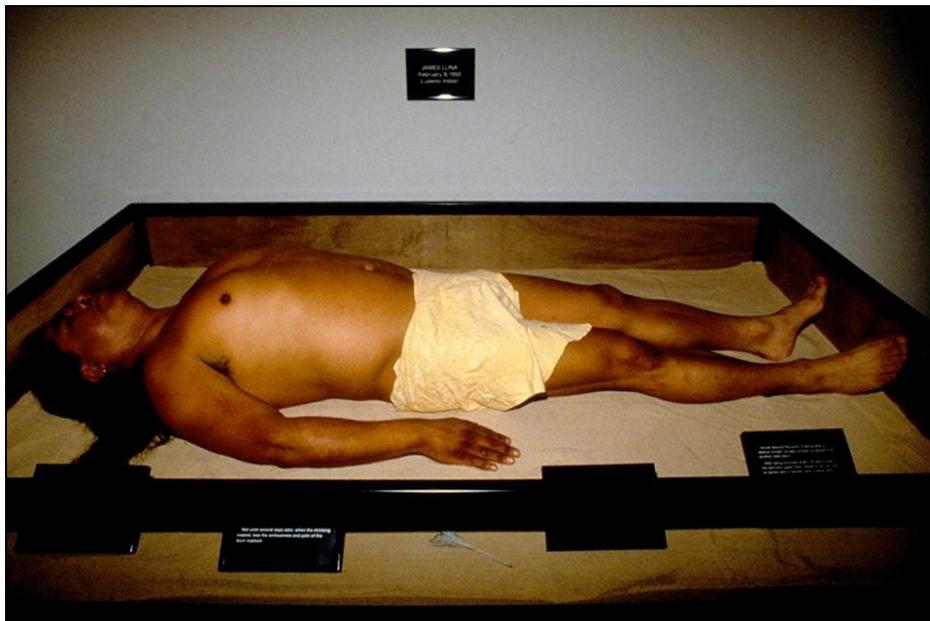


Fig. 32. James Luna. *Artifact Piece*. Performance, 1985.

NOTES:

¹ Gregory Cajete, *Native Science: Natural Laws of Interdependence* (Santa Fe, New Mexico: Clear Light Publishers, 2003), x.

² *Ibid.*, 16.

³ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 150.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 156.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 151.

⁷ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Brian Massumi, trans., (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 234.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 153.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 235.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 235.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 235.

¹² *Ibid.*, 236.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 237.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 236.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 238.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 239.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 239.

¹⁸ Gerald Vizenor, *Manifest Manners: Narratives on Postindian Survivance* (USA: First Bison Books printing, 1999), 98.

¹⁹ Cajete, *Native Science*, 156.

²⁰ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 242.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 248.

²² *Ibid.*, 249.

²³ *Ibid.*, 109.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 109.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 249.

²⁶ James Luna, *Artifact Piece* (missing source**)

²⁷ Vizenor, *Manifest Manners*, vii.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, x.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 3.

³⁰ Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*. Sheila Faria Glaser, trans., (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1994), 3.

³¹ Jean Baudrillard, *Jean Baudrillard: Selected Writings*, edited by Mark Poster. 2nd eds., (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2001), 125.

³² *Ibid.*, 203.

³³ Vizenor, *Manifest Manners*, 5.

³⁴ Baudrillard,

³⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 306.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 237.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 249.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 504.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 159.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 159.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 162.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 155.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 299.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 247.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 242.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 256.

⁴⁷ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 117.

⁴⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 293.

⁴⁹ Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 167.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 166.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 50.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 164.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 57.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 138.

⁵⁵ Jean Baudrillard, *Simulations*. Paul Foss, Paul Patton and Philip Beitchman, trans., (USA: Semiotext[e], 1983), 13.

⁵⁶ Baudrillard, *Selected Writings*, 15.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁵⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 305.

⁵⁹ Baudrillard, *Selected Writings*, 126.

⁶⁰ Baudrillard, *Simulations*, 189.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 195.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 37.

⁶³ Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 192.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 212.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 150.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 57.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 174.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 175.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 175.

⁷¹ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 277.

⁷² Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 58.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 59.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 59.

PART TWO

A Conversation with Spirits Inside the Simulation of a Coast Salish Longhouse

Inherent Rights, Vision Rights:

I am entering Yuxweluptun's virtual reality simulation of a Coast Salish longhouse to have a conversation with the spirits . . .

I am traversing a long pathway toward the open doors of the spirit lodge, and the sound of drums and hypnotic chanting escape from inside . . . and far in the distance a coyote howls, drawing my attention upwards to the crescent moon hung high in the infinite void of the evening sky.



Fig. 33. Lawrence Paul (Yuxweluptun). *Inherent Rights, Vision Rights*. Virtual Reality artwork, 1991-93.

I am beginning to hallucinate ... the surreal and synaesthetic experience of this virtual environment drawing me deeper into its irresistibly seductive digital dreamscape. I pass through the entrance of the lodge, and I suddenly find myself a participant in a sacred ceremony, dancing and moving about in a frenzy to the dizzying sounds of pow wow drums thundering and reverberating off the walls.

I watch the smoke from the fire travel upwards and escape through an opening in the roof ... and I begin to feel the piercing gaze of the many faces on the totem obelisks that stand against the caustic, bright red walls of the room.

For the moment I am still aware that this is only an artificially produced trance enabled by my technological immersion in a computer-generated hologram ... but this is an awareness of which I am becoming increasingly uncertain.

Feeling the ground give way beneath my feet, I begin to drift around the room ... terrified, yet strangely calm, I have the uncanny sense that my body is disappearing ... but at the same time I am hyper-aware of its fleshly presence.

Vanishing, and now almost invisible, I have the feeling that I have been possessed by some mystical and unnatural force ... paralyzed by a momentary flash of panic, a crowd of indiscernible voices again fills the air and I am comforted and pacified by their spectral presence ... and my urge to resist is subdued.

Then, suddenly, a cacophonous screech from the great eagle spirit causes the walls of the lodge to shutter ... and I begin to feel nauseous as this ecstatic feeling of disembodied-embodiment awakens feelings in me of a kind of psychoexistential transformation that has about it the quality of some ancient initiation ritual.

Confused and discombobulated, my entire sense of 'self' has become distorted, dislocated and entirely uncertain ... though this experience is definitely not of the transcendent nature. I don't have the feeling of leaving my body and the earthly plane ... instead, I feel submerged in a kind of digital underworld, caught in a technologically enabled illusion, set adrift in a liminal zone with the feeling of being simultaneously inside and outside of my body ...

The drumming intensifies and comes to a delirious crescendo, and I have now completely lost the ability to discern where one reality ends and the other begins ... though this question has now altogether lost its importance and urgency ... I close my

eyes, and take a deep breath ... and I finally allow myself to be fully taken into the technological abyss.

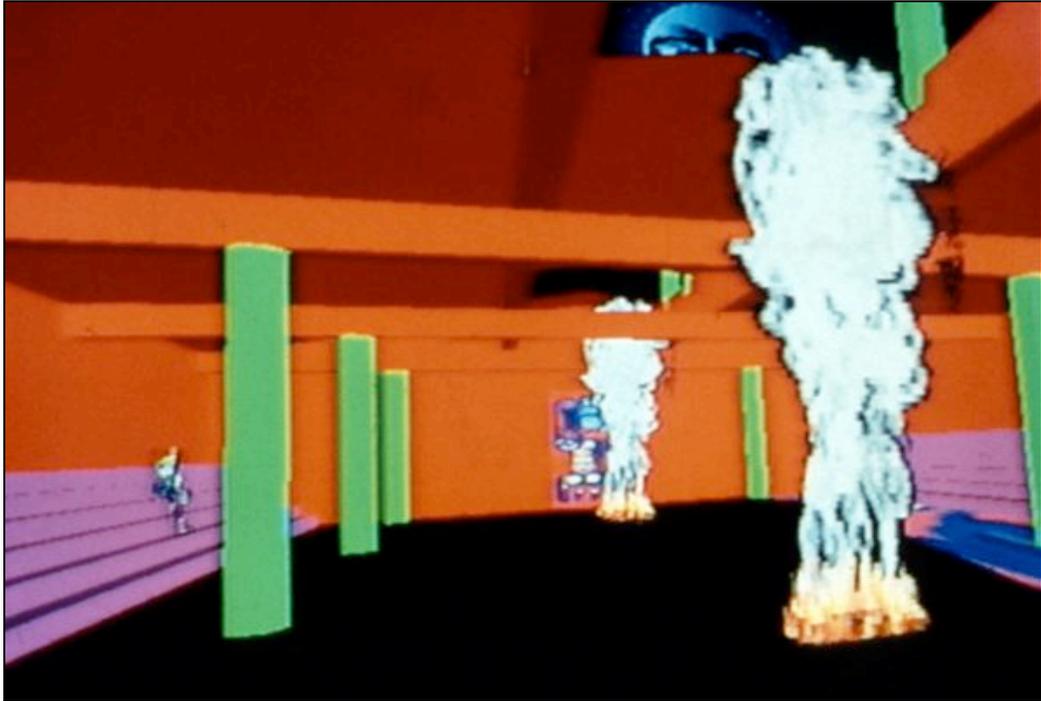


Fig. 34. Lawrence Paul (Yuxweluptun). *Inherent Rights, Vision Rights*. Virtual Reality artwork, 1991-93.

Inherent Rights, Vision Rights is the title of a virtual reality artwork created by Coast Salish artist Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun in 1991-93 at the Banff Centre for New Media, Banff, Alberta. It is an interactive work that, in its first iteration, consisted of a VR helmet and a joystick that immersed a single participant and enabled their navigation in a 3D recreation of a Coast Salish Longhouse. In the artwork the user is invited to explore a sacred ceremony, interacting with computer-generated figures derived from Yuxweluptun's paintings while submerged in a surreal and meditative (simulated)

audio/visual environment. Here, the story is not ‘written on the land’, but instead in ones and zeros in the liquid architecture of a computer-generated environment, a sacred space populated by *spirit-simulations* that inhabit the digital code.

Throughout his artistic career Yuxweluptun has made numerous artworks that in a general sense engage with questions of Indigenous identity, freedom and self-government from a perspective deeply affected by an oppressive colonial hegemony. In his paintings, for which he more popularly known, he has explored environmental, cultural, and sociological issues that are of concern to contemporary First Nations communities, particularly those in the West Coast. Often working on large-scale canvases, Yuxweluptun’s visual imagery is often characterized by surreal landscapes populated with allegorically charged figures rendered in a mixture of different traditional and contemporary West Coast styles. In his work you can sense the artist’s compassion and vehemence towards the devastation that colonialism and industrialization have had on Indigenous communities, and his resentment pours out in vibrant pigment in artworks such as: *Clear Cut to the Last Tree*, *Scorched Earth*, and *Redman Watching Whiteman trying to Fix Hole in the Sky*.

Informing Yuxweluptun’s work is his more than 20 years as a ‘Blackface’ dancer, having been initiated into the Sxwaixwe Coast Salish secret society at the age of fourteen. It was here that he was honored with the name Yuxweluptun, which translates as Man of Masks or Man of Many Masks. At the core of his art practice, one senses the artist’s profound spiritual connection to his ancestral homelands, what some Indigenous philosophers have called a ‘psychology of place’—“a relationship with the natural world that could be called ensoulment . . . which for Native people represented the deepest level

of psychological involvement with their land.”¹ Ensoulment, generally speaking, entails maintaining a soulful, embodied and emotional connection with the natural environment, and is one way of describing how our ancestors viewed their connection with Mother Earth. Ensoulment is the belief “that the natural world is animate, that is generates powers to which humans can have access and that human use of the land is sanctioned by the appearance of spirits.”² It is a core aspect of First Nations spirituality that is expressed, for example, in Coast Salish culture through the legend(s) of the Transformers (*Xeel’s*) and their encounters with *Kwu Yuweenulh Hwulmuhw* (the first ancestors). The name *Xeel’s* refers to three supernatural beings that existed at the beginning of time that traveled the earth turning animals and people into large stones, mountains or other elements of the natural environment. From these stories the Coast Salish people believe their ancestral landscapes to be sacred, and they cultivate a participatory and internalizing bond with ‘place’ wherein the natural environment becomes something with which they share a close kinship.³

For Yuxweluptun, creating a virtual reality project like *Inherent Rights, Vision Rights* was about bringing together traditional First Nations spirituality with Western world experiences and technologies. It is an artwork about “employing technology that in the past have been used against native people,”⁴ and then repurposing it as a means to explore critical issues about our ‘inherent right’ to spiritual, cultural and social freedom.

He writes:

In it, the longhouse is a given space in time which I use to show a religious concept, to physically bring people into contact with a native worshiping aspect of life, praying Indians ... What it is like being in a possessed state, feeling rhythmic sounds in a longhouse, feeling sounds go through oneself, feeling a spirit inside you.⁵

In an essay by Cree/Métis theorist Loretta Todd entitled “Aboriginal Narratives in Cyberspace,” the author begins by posing a number of interesting questions that she afterwards reads through Yuxweluptun’s *Inherent Rights* artwork: “What then does the territory called cyberspace [virtual reality] mean to Aboriginal people?”⁶; “Can our narratives, histories, languages and knowledge find meaning in cyberspace [simulated environments]?”⁷; and, perhaps most importantly, “What if Aboriginal consciousness was fractalized, would cyberspace [virtuality/simulation] as articulated be part of our geometry of philosophy?”⁸

To begin, Todd argues that the invention of cyberspace/virtual reality is linked to three ideological perspectives that are uniquely Western, something not found within traditional Indigenous teachings. First, the ‘ontology of cyberspace’ is inextricably linked to the notion of transcendence—the “hell of western thought”⁹—which, she argues, fixates on the limitations of the ‘body and the senses’ with the idea of moving beyond the flesh to find solace in the virtual. Second, a special condition for the development of cyberspace and virtuality involve a direct and profound fear of the natural, a fear especially expounded by the rising anxiety about environmental conditions that we are witnessing in our time. Third, Todd argues that the conditions for an ‘ontology of cyberspace’ are derived from a combination of the Cartesian tendency to “separate the body from the mind,”¹⁰ and religious (Christian) cosmologies invested in the myth of salvation.

A fear of the body, aversion to nature, a desire for salvation and transcendence of the earthly plane has created a need for cyberspace. The wealth of the land almost plundered, the air dense with waste. The water sick with poisons, there has to be somewhere else to go.¹¹

In essence, what Todd calls a Western ‘ontology of virtuality’ is an ideological perspective that emerged in the early days of cybernetic research (of which cyberspace/virtual reality is a subset). As N. Katherine Hayles argues in her text *How We Became Post Human*, from the birth of the field of cybernetics in the 1940s, scientists have focused on developing theories of communication between human agents and machines that were synonymous with Cartesian Dualism, “a conceptualization that sees information (mind) and materiality as distinct entities.”¹²

Hayles’ thesis is comprised of four propositions. First, the construction of the post-human following the trends of early cybernetic researchers has come to value ‘information’ over ‘material instantiation’, where embodiment is devalued and erased as being an essential feature of existence. Second, through a critical examination of scientists Hans Moravec and Norbert Wiener, she proposes that human consciousness was mistakenly equated with information processing machines, and as a result our conceptualization of the post-human regards consciousness as a mere epiphenomenon. Third, Hayles opposes the ideas given by early cybernetic researchers that identified the body as the ‘first prosthesis’, wherein the technological extension and the replacement of the humanoid body then became the focus of future scientific research. Fourth, Hayles objects to the configuration of the post-human such that there ceases to be any specific difference between material embodiment and virtual/simulated reality. That is, after cybernetic researchers established the concepts of ‘information’ over embodiment, consciousness as an epiphenomenon, and the body as a replaceable biological prosthetic, they envisioned a version of the post-human that finally collapsed the boundaries

between computer simulation and biological organisms. This is to say that the discourse of embodied physical presence in the context of virtuality is troubled by the contradiction of being both ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ the simulation simultaneously. And this is what Todd meant when speaking of the ‘fractalization’ of consciousness, the pleasurable and seductive illusion of disembodied subjectivity dispersed throughout the cybernetic circuit and the disappearance of the body as the realization of Hans Moravec’s apocalyptic prophecy of a post-biological future: “if poetry requires the willing suspension of disbelief, then virtual reality/cyberspace requires the willing suspension of the flesh.”¹³

But in Yuxweluptun’s artwork *Inherent Rights, Vision Rights*, Todd experiences something quite different, and so she writes about a reversal of the usual modes of simulated experience and virtual hallucination. Here, rather than a feeling of distributed subjectivity and the transformation of the self into streams of data under the sign of *technological-transcendence*, for Todd there is in Yuxweluptun’s work a return to the flesh in something similar to what Hayles would call ‘*embodied virtuality*’—virtuality, that is, where the myth of transcendence and disembodied immortality is demystified and embodiment and material embeddeness is written back into our concept of post-human subjectivity.

What will follow will be an examination of the kinds of reversals, multiplicities and paradoxes that exist within Yuxweluptun’s work. Following Todd, I will argue that *Inherent Rights, Vision Rights* presents us with the possibility of recon contextualizing the Western ‘ontology of the virtual’, a transformation that signals a return to the flesh as both an embodied and simulated experience under the sign of an *Indigenous Theory of Virtuality*.

In our culture you do not have all these fiber optic things and it is quite an interesting mask that virtual reality has produced. I come from a tradition that was passed down in the West Coast. At age fourteen, I was given a mask and it had responsibilities that go with the culture. As the carriers of the mask, we took responsibility for all the peoples who were in this room to dance.¹⁴

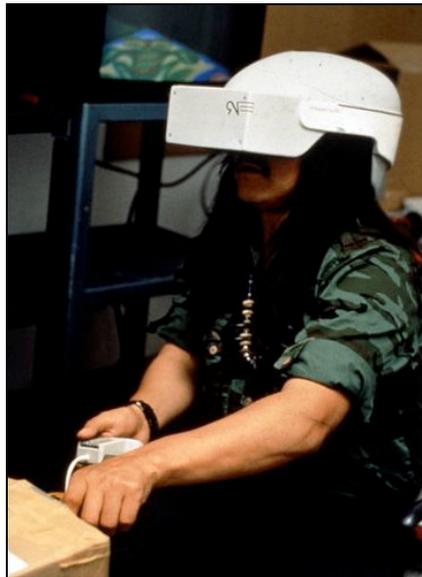


Fig. 35. Lawrence Paul (Yuxweluptun). *Inherent Rights, Vision Rights*. Virtual Reality Interface, 1991-93.

In an essay entitled *Inherent Rights, Vision Rights* that accompanied the piece, Yuxweluptun reflected on his experience creating a virtual reality artwork and speaks to the use of technology as a means to express Native ‘modernities’—a neologism that references the intersection and hybridization of Western and Indigenous technology and aesthetics. At one point in the text he refers to the head mounted computer display in the first incarnation of the piece as “a whiteman’s mask,”¹⁵ a symbolic object about

repurposing technology through the inversion of the dominant codes of a Western ‘ontology of virtual reality’—a mask, therefore, as a technology of immersion that transports the participant into the simulation of a Coast Salish longhouse, an Indigenous space of worship and prayer where *spirit-simulations* begin to haunt the digital code. “I think this first mask will end up in museums just like other masks! Very primitive, with numbers on them, and the date they were made.”¹⁶

Masks in Indigenous cultures traditionally served myriad functions and were associated with a number of social activities, ceremonies, and sacred rituals. In First Nations cultures, masks were never seen as mere objects and were taken to be numinous as they were often associated with healing ceremonies in which they acted as a conduit to the realm of the spirits. In my culture (Haudenosaunee or Iroquois) the most important type of mask were those of the False Faces which were only worn by members of the Society of Faces (False Face Society), inclusion and initiation into which depended on an individual being instructed to construct such a mask in a dream.¹⁷ False Face Masks were always carved into a living tree with which the individual shared a spiritual connection. And although no two masks were identical, they were recognizable for the unique characteristic of a broken and crooked nose fashioned in the likeness of the one we call Flint, or the Great World Rim Dweller.¹⁸ The False Face masks were themselves thought to be alive, possessing the spiritual essence of Flint and were used in healing ceremonies to enable the conjuration of his spirit and request his aid. Our False Face masks were sacred artifacts, ancient technologies through which the spiritual realm may be accessed and drawn upon for the purpose of healing or guidance.¹⁹

The Coast Salish people traditionally made only one type of ceremonial mask, the *Sxwaixwe*, to which only a limited number of families like Yuxweluptun's have hereditary rights. Like the False Face masks, the *Sxwaixwe* were thought of as possessing supernatural properties, bestowing on their owners different healing powers that made him/her capable of curing certain diseases.²⁰ The *Sxwaixwe* mask is dichotomous, for not only was it able to cure, it was also known to cause illness, create earthquakes, storms and floods. Indeed, the power of the mask is thought to come from its contradictory nature, represented in its aesthetic appearance through a combination of opposites. Surrounded by a flat disk upon which sits two birds is a stylized human-like face characterized by protruding eyes, a bird shaped beak and a fish-like tongue. The bird-fish hybrid represents the merger of the sky and the sea, the aerial and aquatic realms, and thus it becomes a symbol of mediation between distant, conflicting and contradictory elements—*night and day, death and life*.²¹

Considering these masking traditions in Indigenous culture, what then can we say about the head mounted computer display (the whiteman's mask) in Yuxweluptun's *Inherent Rights, Vision Rights* artwork—can we take it to be simply a technological apparatus, a glorified computer screen that functions only to produce sensorial hallucinations, or is it something more? Conceived of as a mask in the Indigenous context, could we attribute to it a numinous quality where it becomes more than just an object of technological fascination and instead like a False Face mask, acting as a conduit to another realm where the digital code becomes the medium through which spirit-simulations begin to speak? Or can we think about Yuxweluptun's VR helmet as being analogous to the *Sxwaixwe* mask, a spiritual mediator between the incommensurable,

death and life, embodiment and disembodiment, virtuality and flesh? That is, considered as a reversal of the codes of simulation, can technology become hauntological, that point where dreams and visions are synonymous with that of technological immersion at the site of the collapse between the boundaries of the virtual and biological organisms?

Martin Heidegger once remarked that what was truly uncanny was not the fate of humankind to become increasingly more technological, but rather our complete unpreparedness for this imminent transformation—that is, the impossibility for humankind to really understand its own technological destiny. For Heidegger, the reason for this was that the ‘essence of technology’ was, in fact, not technological, but instead one of being—a mode of human existence.²² Therefore, what Heidegger called the ‘mystery of technology’ could never be understood technologically: while its manifest content was represented by the technical enframing of existence, the latent content of technology would always remain undefined and enigmatic to human understanding. Heidegger’s meditations on the question of technology considered not only its positive potential but also the dark side of technicity—the possibility of the technological to increasingly de-humanize society and arrive fatefully at what he called the ‘darkening of the world’ in which the technological comes to transform the way we think and *will*.

If we are to follow Heidegger, we might here (unexpectedly, perhaps) turn to the psychoanalytic writings of Carl Jung as a way to begin to *think* of technology as a mode of human consciousness. And to this end, begin to imagine the hidden (latent) side of the technological, that which always remains concealed beneath the surface and inaccessible to human thought. Even though his mind was not specifically directed to the question of

technology when writing his theories of dreams and the unconscious, to re-read Jung today against the backdrop of our technological present one comes to a deeper understanding of the far reaching consequences of Heidegger's theorization—that technology is, as Arthur Kroker has said, “not an object which we can hold outside ourselves, but technique as *us*, as a grisly sign of the possession of body and mind.”²³

In the text *Man and his Symbols*, Carl Jung proposed that the tendency of contemporary society to over-emphasize rational/scientific modes of thinking had resulted in the fatal rupture of the ‘parallel’ correlation of the unconscious and conscious realms of the psyche in the modern individual. Fatal because Jung believed that if these psychic realms were ‘split apart or disassociated’ that catastrophic psychological disturbance would follow. In his time, Jung saw an individual haunted by the ‘implosion’ or ‘turning in of the psyche’, a troubling predicament in which the individual had placed themselves at the mercy of the ‘psychic underworld’ having lost his/her ability to consider “numinous symbols and ideas.”²⁴ It is for this reason that Jung frequently chose to meditate on Indigenous (or ‘pre-modern’) cultures which, in his estimation, had maintained psychic balance despite comparable scientific/technological advance in their time. Jung's conclusion was that pre-modern cultures forged and maintained a deep ‘spiritual’ connection with their dreams which was reflected in their cosmology, philosophy, science and technology, and by contrast modern Western society had “forgotten the age-old fact that [spirits] speak through dreams and visions.”²⁵

When considering the question of technology, Jung concluded it to be wholly ephemeral and transcendent, symbolizing the erosion of the unconscious to a dangerous

degree because it had become nihilistic and about a radical denial of embodied (lived) existence *within* the natural world. As scientific and technological advance continues, he argued, our world has increasingly become dehumanized because we have lost our emotional and ‘unconscious identity’²⁶ with nature.

How different was the former image of matter—the Great Mother—that could encompass the profound emotional meaning of Mother Earth. [Today] it has degenerated to the limited ego-thoughts of man ... and vanishes into the sand of an intellectual desert.²⁷

In his research, Jung discovered that dreams in ‘pre-modern’ cultures were believed to be a conduit to the realm of the spirits, and accompanying this belief were complex methods of ‘dream interpretation’ that in many ways were superior to those of modern psychology. Jung further proposed that a culture in which dreams and visions were a primary source for informing spiritual knowledge necessarily maintained a ‘psychic disposition’ rooted in the ideal of ‘mystical participation’, otherwise known as animism. For instance, Jung argued that in the current age of Western science, the concept of matter had become an entirely intellectual concept, an inhuman and purely abstract idea devoid of any “psychic significance.”²⁸ By contrast, Indigenous cultures were “aware of these psychic properties [of nature, and they] endow animals, plants or stones with powers that we find strange and unacceptable.”²⁹

The concept of animism is one that is used by a number of contemporary Indigenous philosophers as a means to communicate *Onkwehonwea* (an Indigenous way of being), which consists of the idea that everything in the natural world—not just humans, but also animals, plants, insects, mountains, rivers, and all of the natural

landscape—is alive and filled with ‘spirit’.³⁰ In his text *Native Science*, Tewa philosopher Gregory Cajete argues that *ensoulment* and a ‘psychology of place’ is an inclusionary philosophy at the root of Indigenous spirituality, citing that in our traditional societies we had rituals that paid homage to the living spirit of the sky (*Atonwa ne’ Karonya*), the rivers, (*Atonwa ne kahyonhowanen*)’ and the mountains (*Atonwa ne’ Ononta*). In brief, in traditional Indigenous cultures, people believed in an all-embracing ‘society of life’ in which all living creatures as well as natural phenomena are united and possess spirit, implying the existence of a mutual [equal] relationship between man, animals and nature.³¹

Everything is viewed as having energy and its own unique intelligence and creative process, not only obviously animate entities, such as plants, animals, and microorganisms, but also rocks, mountains, rivers, and places large and small . . . this is the Indigenous view of “animism”.³²

If the concept of animism is taken to be a central feature of Indigenous spirituality in which everything in the universe including seemingly inanimate objects are thought to be alive and possess ‘spirit’, then it would follow that the same must be said about technology. That is to say an Indigenous theory of virtuality would be about thinking technology animistically, where computer simulations come alive and begin to have for us what Jung referred to as a ‘psychic significance’. Here, the technological does not describe what Jung foresaw as a radical denial of existence and the natural world, but rather simulations that return to embed themselves back into the material instantiation of the flesh and reinscribe an emotional and unconscious identity with biological organisms, spirits and other natural phenomenon.

In Yuxweluptun's virtual reality artwork *Inherent Rights, Vision Rights* the person(s) experiencing the work are not mere spectators but participants in the phenomenological hallucination of a sacred ritual, users with agency exercising free will while navigating a simulation of a Coast Salish longhouse. Here the participant(s) enter into another kind of relationship in which they become interconnected with the virtual, caught in a feedback loop where Yuxweluptun's spirit-simulations move through the digital code and interface with the flesh.

If we are to think of virtual reality animistically in the context of *Inherent Rights, Vision Rights*—where streams of information code penetrate epidermal surfaces and the digital sounds of sacred drums, the crackling of a virtual fire and masked avatars open a gateway through which spirit-simulations are allowed to pass—then we are not talking about technological-transcendence, but rather about interconnected ontologies with the virtual in what Carl Jung described as a co-exiting 'psychic experience', a shared "unconscious identity."³³

[In Indigenous cultures] the soul (or psyche) is not thought to be a distinct unit ... Many assume that a man has a bush soul as well as his own, and that the bush soul is incarnate in a wild animal or tree, with which the human shares some kind of psychic identity."³⁴

...

In the chapter "1730: Becoming-Intense, Becoming-Animal, Becoming-Imperceptible..." in *A Thousand Plateaus*, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari begin their thesis on transformation with a reflection on the works of Jung. To begin, let us remember that Jungian psychology holds that there is a three-tiered order of psychic realities: individual consciousness, the individual unconscious, and the collective unconscious. Here we are

concerned with the third order, that which is comprised of what Freud called ‘psychic remnants’ and what Jung called ‘primordial images’ or the ‘archetypal’ series. Jung conceived the collective unconscious as being universal, wherein just as the body is genetically encoded and inherits physical traits that are common to our species, so too the psyche is imprinted with ‘collective experiences’ and layered with clusters of symbolic information. Or as Jung puts it: “Just as the human body represents a whole museum of organs, each with a long evolutionary history behind it, so we should expect to find that the mind is organized in a similar way ... [the mind] can no more be a product without history than is the body in which it exists.”³⁵

What Deleuze and Guattari draw from the Jungian perspective is the notion that the archetypal series in the collective unconscious need not be exclusively human in nature, but could also be of the plant or animal variety. From here, Deleuze and Guattari propose the individual is opened to all kinds of *becomings* with different elements in this series and can experience interconnected ontologies with different animal, or plant archetypes. From Jung’s work, Deleuze and Guattari seek to bypass what had previously been a structural and symbolic ordering of the unconscious as a ‘correspondence of relations’ between archetypes. Instead, Deleuze and Guattari prefer the notion of *becoming* which entails not a correspondence but rather an interlinking—a ‘line of flight’ that does not consist merely of ‘playing’ (imitating, resembling), but something more akin to the Jungian notion of ‘psychic co-existence’. For instance they say, a *becoming-animal* operates in-between terms, it is a “verb with a consistency all its own; it does not reduce to, or lead back to, ‘appearing’, ‘being’, ‘equaling’, or ‘producing’.”³⁶ Becomings are not fixed states of existence, but instead are fluid transformations that imply

something less differentiated. Moreover, the kinds of becomings we find that follow in Deleuze and Guattari's text do not exclusively occur between organic types (becoming-wolf, becoming-crab, becoming-horse) but also, in taking the cue from Jung, occur between the biological and the non-biological (becoming-machine, becoming-sonorous, becoming-territorial). Here, becomings are about the formation of an assemblage *with* machine (technology, simulation, virtuality), which entails an interlinking of elements in a rhizomatic multiplicity. Consequentially, beyond shared psychic-experiences between organic archetypes, and speaking within the context of thinking technology animistically, becomings can (and necessarily do) also occur between the organic and the technological, the biological and simulation. Moreover, in the context of Yuxweluptun's *Inherent Rights, Vision Rights*, we might here propose the possibility of interconnected ontologies with non-living entities, (becoming-ghost, becoming-phantom, becoming-undead) which further entails the becoming-spectral of technology under the sign of *virtual-phantomality*.

What I mean by technology becoming-spectral and virtual-phantomality is taken here in the Derridian sense, and follows from the mythology of the Sxwaixwe. With regard to Hayles' fourth thesis, the collapse of the distinctions between computer simulation and biological organisms need not, necessarily, lead to the complete erasure of embodiment. Instead, like with the Sxwaixwe mask, in Yuxweluptun's work the VR helmet becomes a mediator between two seemingly incompatible realms—the human psyche and the technological circuit, pattern (code) and presence (body), biological organism and computer simulations. In this way *Inherent Rights, Vision Rights* is a reversal of Hayles' thesis, wherein instead of trying reestablish the boundaries between

simulation and biological organism, this is an artwork that operates within the contradiction of the collapse. Here, the ‘whiteman’s mask’ in Yuxweluptun’s artwork, like the Sxwaixwe functions as a binding of opposites, and like the Derridian notion of the specter, operates in-between binary distinctions—*death and life, simulation and the real*. Which is to say here that the posthuman subject is considered to be neither simulation nor flesh, embodied nor disembodied, ‘information’ nor material ‘instantiation’, but simultaneously all of these at once.

On the one hand the VR helmet acts as a technological prosthetic, while at the same time it produces a technological hallucination where simulations are simultaneously re-embodied in the subject attached to the device, interlinking and (following Deleuze and Guattari) forming an assemblage with the human sensorium. “Yuxweluptun does not want you to forget your body,”³⁷ writes Todd, who, in the artwork, glimpses an alternate concept of the virtual, one that is “derived from storytelling and oral tradition,”³⁸ in a way that “reflect[s] our interconnectedness”³⁹ which therefore unhinges *this* virtual reality from being “anchored to re-enactments of western cultural consciousness.”⁴⁰

Consider for a moment Donna Haraway, an author who re-envisioned Western narratives of humanism and technology as an interdependent matrix of machines and flesh under the sign of the cyborg. To read Haraway’s essay “A Cyborg Manifesto” is to enter into a world in which the distinctions between technology and biological organisms are completely dissolved, where bodies and machines become interconnected to such a degree that it becomes impossible to tell where one begins and the other ends. In one sense we could think of the cyborg (a term coined by Manfred Clynes and Nathan Kline in the 1960s) to be the ultimate dream of the cybernetic researchers that were the focus of

Hayles' critique described earlier—it is emblematic of all the narratives: “Escape from the earth, from the body, from the limits of merely biological evolution.”⁴¹ In this way the Cyborgian man-machine hybrid is understood as the quintessential techno-humanist challenge, a new species formed through the symbiosis of flesh and machine, the first step in the evolutionary game plan towards a post-biological future.

However, for Haraway the cyborg is not our future, but rather our present. Which is to say the hybrid creature of industrial production, science fiction, and cybernetic research counts today for our lived experience—*it is our post-human ontology*. In regard to the myth of the cyborg, Haraway sees the line between material reality and science fiction to itself be fictional (an ‘optical illusion’), the coupling of machine and organism (becoming-machine) being evidenced everywhere today in modern medicine, biology, sexuality, politics, and lived social relations: “By the late twentieth century, our time, a mythic time, we are all chimeras, theorized and fabricated hybrids of machine and organism.”⁴²

The difference is that, for Haraway, the cyborg presents some interesting theoretical possibilities and, rather than attempt to reestablish the boundaries that once kept bodies and machines separate, she begins to write an alternate mythology from within the contradictions that the cyborgian hybrid produces. For Haraway, the cyborg becomes a means to subvert the kinds of dualisms that exist in Western traditions, binary opposites (self/other, mind/body, male/female, truth/illusion) that in the past upheld ‘hierarchical dominations’ and in the present enable networks of power under the sign of the ‘informatics of domination’. For Haraway, the cyborg transgresses these problematic

constructions precisely through its partial, ironic and contradictory nature—like the Coast Salish Sxwaixwe mask, the cyborg is a mediator in the binding of opposites.

The cyborg disturbs the notion of continuity in its breaching of the boundaries between organism and machine, and becomes a symbol for the ironic pleasures found in the collapse of binary distinctions. It stands for the power and the potential for those not afraid of symbiotic kinships, psychic-assemblages and ontological interlinkings with technology (what Deleuze and Guattari call *becoming* and what Jung called shared psychic experiences). The cyborg breaks with the understanding of the individual as a synthesized unit separate and distinct from the technologies and the environment in which it is immersed. And yet while the cyborg here originates from within techno-humanist logic it simultaneously avoids narratives of disembodiment—it exists “outside salvation history.”⁴³ Instead, it operates from within the collapse between machinic and biological organisms precisely where the distinction between humans and machines, consciousness and computer simulations, is transgressed—the cyborg not a symbol for technological-transcendence, but rather the becoming-spectral of virtuality. The cyborg, like the Sxwaixwe mask is about the merger of partial and contradictory identities (the bird-fish or the human-machine hybrid) and therefore necessarily entails an ‘oppositional consciousness’, becoming the enigmatic sign of the post-modern subject who is neither flesh nor code, real nor simulation, and all of these at once.

Like the Transformer in Coast Salish legend, *Inherent Rights*, *Vision Rights* is an artwork that operates in-between binary distinctions—changing simulations into flesh like Xeel’s turned bodies into stone, virtual environments into sacred landscapes like transforming

‘the first ancestors’ into mountains, trees and rivers. It is not an artwork that affirms notions of technological-transcendence but rather a work about engaging in shared, co-existing ontologies with the virtual where the digital code becomes a medium for spirit-possession under the sign of the becoming-hauntological of virtuality. In the artwork the VR helmet like the Sxwaixwe mask becomes an interface, but this time not a conduit to the spirit world of our ancestors but a technology that places the body in a feedback loop with the virtual, forming assemblages, multiplicities, rhizomatic networks, and co-existing ontologies. Inside Yuxweluptun’s simulation of a Coast Salish Longhouse a new participatory, embodied and internalizing bond is made in which the virtual becomes haunted by spirit-simulations and virtual-phantoms that emerge from within the enfolding of paradoxical components, and the merging of opposites.

As Yuxweluptun writes in the accompanying text for the artwork, the piece was intended to bring participants into contact with a Native form of worship, about being inside the meditative space of the longhouse, and about experiencing the feeling of what it is like to have a ‘spirit inside you’. Thus the VR helmet reconceptualized in the context of Indigenous masking traditions becomes an interface of immersive possibility, which does not perform (to use the Jungian term) a nihilistic and transcendent function, but where spirit-simulations become embodied and the hauntology of *virtual-phantomality* becomes a sacred ceremonial act. *Inherent Rights, Vision Rights* shows us a new concept of the virtual, one that doesn’t rehearse the usual codes of disembodied immortality, and where our narratives and stories as Indigenous people find new meaning—where ensoulment and an internalizing bond is formed, where an Indigenous ‘psychology of place’ becomes also a ‘psychology of virtuality’.



Fig. 36. Lawrence Paul (Yuxweluptun). *Inherent Rights, Vision Rights*. Virtual Reality artwork, 1991-93.

With the reversal of the codes of simulation, the ‘ontology of virtual reality’ in Yuxweluptun’s work becomes about the return to the flesh as both an embodied and virtual experience in what might be the first experiment with the concept of an *Indigenous Theory of Virtuality*. Virtuality, that is, envisioned as the recombinant inversion of the codes of simulated-bodies and telepresent flesh, (“mechanical and separate”⁴⁴) and seeing technology now through a binding of opposites in the tradition of the Sxwaixwe and from the perspective of Native cosmology (“connected and immanent”⁴⁵).

Certainly, an *Indigenous Theory of Virtuality* would agree with Martin Heidegger in that the ‘essence of technology’ is not technological but rather a question of being, though it would not conclude that the technological signals the dehumanization of society. Moreover, in contrast with Jung, technological proliferation need not result in the ‘turning in of the psyche’ because it involves establishing a shared ‘psychic significance’ with virality in thinking technology animistically. As with Cajete’s theory of *ensoulment* and a ‘psychology of place’, here the technological becomes a space populated by spirit-simulations that become interconnected in feedback correspondence with the flesh.

An *Indigenous Theory of Virtuality* envisions, therefore, the becoming-virtual of the body in a way that does not privilege ‘information’ over ‘material instantiation’, but is rather it is about what Halys called *embodied virtuality* wherein material embeddedness is written back into the narrative of the post-human. It is therefore about a shared psychic relationship with simulations that involve traversals, speeds, flows and accelerations of the body becoming virtual after entering into what Deleuze and Guattari call a *zone of proximity* with the technological. An *Indigenous Theory of Virtuality* is about the transformation of *interconnected ontologies* that occur in a in a circle of relations between the organic and the technological, the biological and simulation. As with Yuxweluptun’s *Inherent Rights, Vision Rights*, it is a theory that issues from the contradictions that emerge in-between the collapse of the boundaries between the human and the technological circuit, pattern (code) and presence (body), biological organism and computer simulations.

Yuxweluptun’s *Inherent Rights, Vision Rights* is a trickster story in translation that resolve the dualisms in play within what Todd called the Western ‘ontology of

cyberspace'. Like the False Face and Sxwaixwe masks, in *Inherent Rights, Vision Rights* technology becomes-spectral wherein the digital code becomes the medium through which Yuxweluptun's spirit-simulations begin to speak, expressing *Onkwehonwa* (a Native way of being) inside the simulation of a Coast Salish Longhouse: a sacred space of dance, worship, prayer and healing.

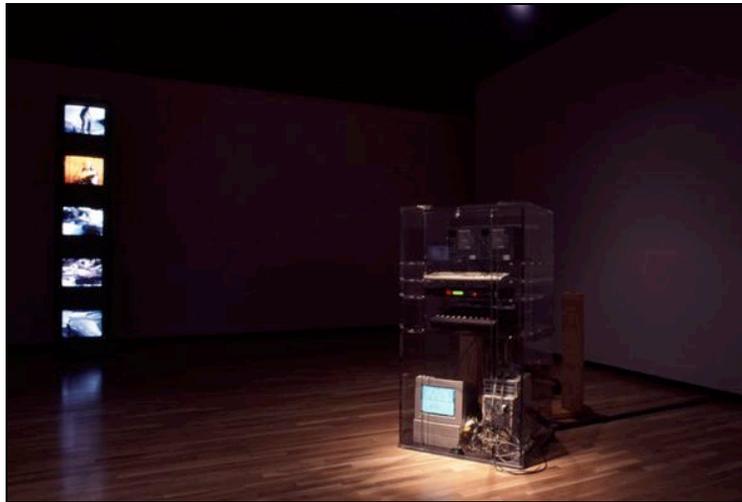


Fig. 37. Lawrence Paul (Yuxweluptun). *Inherent Rights, Vision Rights*. Gallery Installation, 1991.

NOTES:

¹ Gregory Cajete, *Native Science: Natural Laws of Interdependence* (Santa FE, New Mexico: Clear Light Publishers, 2003), 186.

² Lawrence Paul (Yuxweluptun), “Inherent Rights, Vision Rights”, *Immersed in Technology: Art and Virtual Environments*, Marry Anne Moser eds. (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: The MIT Press, 1996), 316.

³ Franz Boas, *Indian Myths and Legends from the North Pacific Coast of America* (Vancouver: Talon Books 1916), 161.

⁴ Paul Lawrence (Yuxweluptun), 316.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 316.

⁶ Loretta Todd, “Indians in Cyberspace”, *Transference, Tradition, Technology*, Dana Claxton and Steven Loft eds. (Banff, Alberta: Walter Phillips Gallery Editions, 2006), 153.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*, 155

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² N. Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1999), 12.

¹³ Todd, 160.

¹⁴ Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun, “Open Discussion – day two”, *Virtual Seminar on the Bioapparatus*, ed. Catherine Richards and Nell Tenhaaf (Banff, Alberta: Walter Phillips Gallery Editions, 1991), 110-111.

¹⁵ Lawrence Paul (Yuxweluptun), 316.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 317

¹⁷ Morgan Lewis. *League of the Ho-De'-No-Sau-Nee Or Iroquois* (Cambridge: University Press. John Wilson and Son, 1904), 220.

¹⁸ *Ibid*.

¹⁹ *Ibid*.

²⁰ Rossi Ino. *The Logic of Culture: Advances in Structural Theory and Methods* (New York: J.F. Bergin Publishers, 1982), 157-160

²¹ *Ibid*.

²² Martin Heidegger. *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, translated and with an introduction by William Lovitt (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), 109.

²³ Arthur Kroker, *The Possessed Individual* (Montreal: New World Perspectives, 1992), 13.

²⁴ Carl Jung. *Man and His Symbols* (New York: Dell Publishing CO, 1964), 84.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 92.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 85.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 84.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 30.

³⁰ Cajete, *Native Science*, 186.

³¹ Elisabeth Tooker, *An Iroquois Source Book Vol.3: Medicine Society Rituals* (New York & London: Garland Publishing, Inc, 1985), 172.

³² Cajete, *Native Science*, 21.

³³ Jung. *Man and His Symbols* 7

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 8.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 57.

³⁶ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 239.

³⁷ Todd, 160.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 161.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 161.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 162.

⁴¹ Haraway, Donna. *A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century* (London: Routledge, 2003), 149.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 8.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 150

⁴⁴ Todd, 160.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

Native Hip-Hop: The Eternal Refrain of the Breakbeat, Becomings-Machine, Becomings-Animal and Possessed Vocality

What is Native Hip-hop?

Native hip-hop emerged as an underground movement in the 1980s and early 90s throughout the U.S. and Canada, with artists such as Litefoot, Without Reservation, War Party and Bobby Bee & the Boyz from the Rez reinventing our ancestral traditions of storytelling through mobilizing new and energetic modes of expression. Having been influenced by the ever-growing popularity of rap music, spoken word and Hip Hop culture, these artists began spitting rhymes over top of sampled breakbeats mixed with

syncopated tribal rhythms. They spoke about life on the reservation, cultural dispossession, community and Native identity, all the while giving thanks to Mother Earth and the Creator.



Fig. 38. Image of Frances Densmore and Blackfoot producing a Cylinder Recording. Photograph, 1916.

What is Native Hip-hop?

There is, of course, many different ways to approach this question, different perspectives we might take to analyze the intersection of the different cultural phenomenon through which Native Hip Hop was manifest. A social/cultural approach,

perhaps, in which we could examine the hyper-popularized spectacle that is hip-hop—not only the music, but its connection with the capitalist machine; not only its socio-political importance, but also its instances of profound superficiality—and then speak to the ways in which these things intersect with Indigenous communities that have adopted them as a means of creative expression. But clearly, the scope of such a project would be too large to undertake here without doing it a grave injustice.

Instead, I propose to speak to select strands that run through the artform, to talk about its modes of performance and production and to theorize in a direction aimed at developing a concept of Native Hip Hop outside some of the usual frameworks. A remix-theory, therefore, of traditional Indigenous philosophy and contemporary Western theory, wherein Native Hip hop is conceptualized through the logic of the eternal refrain of the breakbeat, the becoming-animal of the MC, and the becoming-machine/becoming-possessed of vocality.

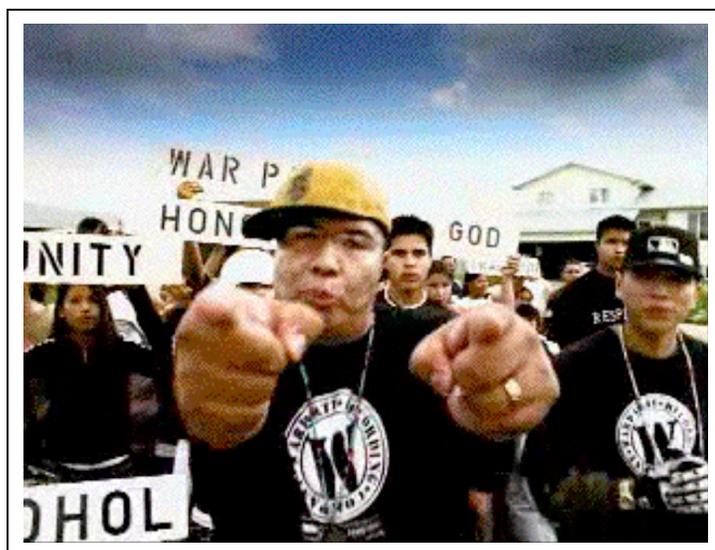


Fig. 39. War Party. *All for One*. Music Video (Still), 2005.

What is Native Hip-hop?

First, to ask this question we need to start at the beginning, and secure (or at least enframe) a context that will enable us a point of entry.

For starters, nobody exactly knows when Hip Hop itself began. Maybe it was in Jamaica in the late 1960s where recording technicians such as King Tubby and Lee Scratch Perry began ‘remixing’ existing reggae recordings to create ‘dub’ tracks for DJs to play at public events. Or maybe it was with John Cage, who throughout his career challenged the very definition of music by incorporating phonographic recordings, magnetic tape and radios into his compositions. Or maybe Hip Hop was born with the popularization of the ‘scratch’ technique invented by Grand Mixer DST, who was later incorporated into Herbbie Hancock’s ground-breaking performances. For my part, I would side with those who have proposed that Hip Hop was born in the 1970s with the experiments of small group of DJs in the Bronx who invented and then perfected what myself and many others consider to be the foundational essence of Hip Hop: the breakbeat.¹

What we call the ‘break’ typically refers to the part of a recording where the melody takes a rest and the percussion section is brought to the foreground in the mix. In the Bronx in the 1970s, it was this part of the song where the breakdancers would take to the center of the dancefloor to show off their moves and compete for crowd approval—they were then known as B-boys, the B presumably standing for break.²

When the break began, the crowd would be whipped up into a furious frenzy. The only problem was that these sections of the recording generally only lasted a few bars

before the melody returned, subsequently cooling off the dancefloor. One night in 1974, a Bronx DJ by the name Kool Herc (aka Clive Campbell) changed all that, and instead of playing the entire song he began playing a series of breaks one after the other, moving quickly from one to the next, stringing each fragment together into a singular sonic mix. Later, Herc began buying two copies of the same record, and by switching back and forth between the two turntables he could loop the same break over and over.

I would give the people what they wanted to hear. And I'm watching the crowd and I was seeing everybody on the sidelines waiting for particular breaks in the records ... I said, let me put a couple of these records together, that got breaks in them. I did it. *Boom! Bom bom bom*. I tried to make it sound like a record. Place went berserk. Loved it.³

It would seem that the B-boys had found their DJ, and so it was with Herc that the breakbeat was born. Later, other Bronx DJs inspired by Herc, such as Grand Master Flash, would perfect the technique that would come to be called by Flash 'Quick Mix theory', where transitions between breaks were made seamless and an endless series of song fragments would be woven into a completely new aural matrix. It was from here on in that phonographic recordings were no longer seen as complete and finite things in themselves, but rather as tools for composition.

In his 2001 essay published in *Ctheory* entitled "The Turntable," Charles Mudede writes that hip-hop represents a real rupture in the history of music because it was the first to fully break with tradition in terms of its production. For Mudede, hip-hop is a distinct musical genre first and foremost because it does not involve the act of playing an instrument, but is instead organized around the act of replaying copyrighted music. The

turntable is not a musical instrument, he contends, but rather a technology originally intended to be an archival medium. Invented by Thomas Edison in 1888, the gramophone disk and the phonographic player were meant to simply record, store, and replay sound. However, in the hands of the DJ who wants to loop a break or scratch a phrase, “[the turntable] is robbed of its initial essence,”⁴ because it is forced to do what it is not supposed to do—to make music. When Kool Herc took the recording of The Incredible Bongo Band’s “Apache” and began ‘doubling’ or ‘juggling’ the break that night, at that instant, according to Mudede, the turntable became a ‘repurposed’ object—it became estranged, broken, and took on an entirely new meaning.

Mudede argues that because the breakbeat is constructed using prerecorded sound, it becomes more than just the vibrational properties of air (as it is with ‘traditional’ instruments) and instead about the manipulation of information. The production of hip-hop, with its foundation in the breakbeat, is not music (*per se*) but rather an artform that takes music as its subject—hip-hop is “music about music.”⁵ And because Hip Hop is organized around the act of replaying music it, therefore, becomes a shaping of “information into a sonic form recognized as meta-music.”⁶ Hip Hop is meta-music because it operates outside of the musical milieu: the break is a rupturing of the normal linear flow of the song from which it is excerpted, drawing what Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari call a ‘line of flight’ from a sonic plane of consistency (more on this in a moment). The hip-hop DJ is a meta-musician, an editor, a producer who takes the information encoded in the grooves of the record and transports it into a different context.

Of course, the turntable itself is rarely used to produce Hip Hop tracks these days, but still the breakbeat remains a core aesthetic and formal element of the sound. The

digital sampler and software have replaced the manual manipulation of vinyl to loop a break, which means only that the sounds of hip-hop have become more complex, where multiple layers of loops are multi-tracked, overlapping and intersecting one another, and it is this cacophony of sampled fragments that comprise the sonic matrix of the meta-sounds of hip-hop today. In the case of Native hip-hop, sampled breaks are sometimes coupled with pow wow drums, turtle rattles, flutes, and traditional singing wherein a whole different and unique rhizomatic interlinking of aural fragments is produced that conjures our Native heritage for an entirely new generation of dancers, storytellers, and listeners.

The Eternal Refrain of the Breakbeat

I would like to propose the idea of thinking about the breakbeat through Deleuze and Guattari's notion of the *refrain*, a concept that appears frequently in their co-authored text, *A Thousand Plateaus*. For Deleuze and Guattari, the refrain (like the breakbeat) is what they call a territorial assemblage and is something derived from a musical milieu at the moment when it has become "expressive", drawing a boundary around its own internal organizational logic⁷. From the milieu, the refrain develops its own 'motifs', it marks a territory and an assemblage is formed, which in the case of the refrain is dominated and characterized by sound—a refrain is a sonorous-assemblage, and includes that which is inside the boundaries of the territory that is drawn onto a sonic landscape (or 'plane').

A refrain is the mutation of a plane of sonic consistency, a ‘holding together’ of a group of heterogeneous elements that become transformed by the territorial map and take on an autonomy from the milieu to which they previously belonged. A refrain is a ‘sound block’ that Deleuze and Guattari say is about the becoming-expressive of rhythmic qualities within an assemblage, which is created by abandoning connections to its place of origin (its milieu), doing away with its coordinates (compositional meter) to form a new territory which is located ‘elsewhere’—the refrain, like the breakbeat, occurs outside the musical milieu, which is what Mudede means by meta-music.

But the refrain, like the breakbeat, is unique to other kinds of territorial assemblages because it always (necessarily) implies a level of decoding, which means there is always an element of deterritorialization that characterizes its boundaries. A refrain (the breakbeat), unlike a melody, has no definite point of origin: it is a ‘sound block’ that repeats and reproduces itself, folding-back in on itself in a circular motion to form a loop. For Deleuze and Guattari, a refrain is that which prevents ‘music’ from happening, (“warding it off, forgoing it”⁸), the product of the territorialization of a sonic milieu at the site where the sonorous landscape is ruptured, decoded, dislocated, and restrained—where there is a ‘break’ in the sonic flow.

Following this logic, we might say first that, at the moment of its inception, the breakbeat is a deterritorialization of a sonic structure (a song or an existing piece of music) and second, that it becomes territorial when it begins to repeat, at which time it creates its own co-ordinates, becomes self-contained, destabilizing (decoding) the linear flow of time through its territorialization of a continuous sonic-loop—*the logic of the breakbeat is circular*.

Like the refrain, the breakbeat “fabricates time”⁹ and, thus, it ceases to be directional, becoming instead dimensional (spatial) in its constant return to the point of rupture. A refrain is formed when elements “cease to be functional to become expressive. There is a territory when rhythm has expressiveness.”¹⁰ The marking of a territory is not about musical meter, it is about rhythm, which is what makes the territory of the refrain dimensional rather than linear.¹¹ Like the refrain, the breakbeat entails a folding of temporal space through which it forms a territorial rhythmic-block, which always ends and begins with its own decoding flow, its own rupture (at the site of the ‘break’), which abandons points of origin and temporal coordinates.¹² A breakbeat, like the refrain, is a rupturing that becomes a consistency, a new assemblage that speaks in a machinic meta-language—first a slicing, rupturing, and deterritorializing mechanic operation that then transports the sonic matrix onto a new ‘plane of consistency’, and the breakbeat is formed.

The break (the initial rupture), then, is what Deleuze and Guattari call a ‘line of flight’, wherein the cutting edges of deterritorialization decode the initial sonic plane (the milieu, the original song). The break is a mechanic act: the turntable is not a musical instrument, but, like Mudede says, the turntable is a tool, a technology, a machine—it is almost anything except a musical instrument. The turntable’s machinic operation at the site of the break is “like a set of cutting edges that insert themselves into the assemblage undergoing deterritorialization, and draw[s] variations and mutations of it.”¹³ The break is the result of the machinic operation of the turntable in the hands of the DJ, and the breakbeat is the rupture that closes in on itself, forming a sonic circuit, its circumference defining the borders of this new territory.

The break is a ‘line of flight’ that marks the boundaries of a new sonorous-assemblage (the territory of the breakbeat), and carries a piece of the musical milieu away on an upward axis towards this new assemblage (for our purposes here, the axis need not be upward, but simply elsewhere). Thus the break considered as a line of flight displays a “thirst for destruction, every kind of destruction, extinction, breakage and dislocation,”¹⁴ or what Deleuze and Guattari also call a desire for destratification, in which it plots a new course away from the original sonic plane of consistency. Thus the break always occurs somewhere in the ‘middle of a line’—one rarely finds the ‘break’ at the beginning or end of a song—and this certain in-betweenness is another thing the breakbeat has in common with the refrain. With the refrain assemblage and the breakbeat assemblage, the content is sonic, and the expressiveness is the rhythm of the closed horizon of the loop.

Today Native Hip hop (like the majority of the music in the larger genre) is based around the logic of the refrain. Of course, as previously noted, the turntable has, for the most part, been abandoned for the digital sampler and computer software, so that the technology that now performs the machinic cutting/deterritorialization (the break) in order to extract and establish the sonic circuit of the breakbeat-assemblage.

Today, breakbeats themselves have become fragmented, and rarely will you hear the repetition of a 4-bar phrase that is recognizable as directly extracted from the original. Rather, the breakbeat itself has been infinitely sliced and digitally recomposed into sonic micro-territories whose borders are drawn around singular elements in the landscape of the breakbeat refrain: the territory of the kick drum, of the snare, the cymbal, and so on. Take the famous drum solo by Gregory Coleman in the song “Amen Brother” as

performed by The Winsons, and possibly the most sampled song in all of history. What has come to be known as the ‘Amen Break’ can be heard in countless hip-hop tracks and has been digitally re-combined at the microscopic level into thousands of different reconfigurations. The ‘Amen Break’ is almost, by itself, responsible for the creation of other musical genres derived from hip-hop such as Drum n’ Bass and Jungle, and will likely go down in history as this little, microscopic “six-second clip that spawned several entire subcultures.”¹⁵

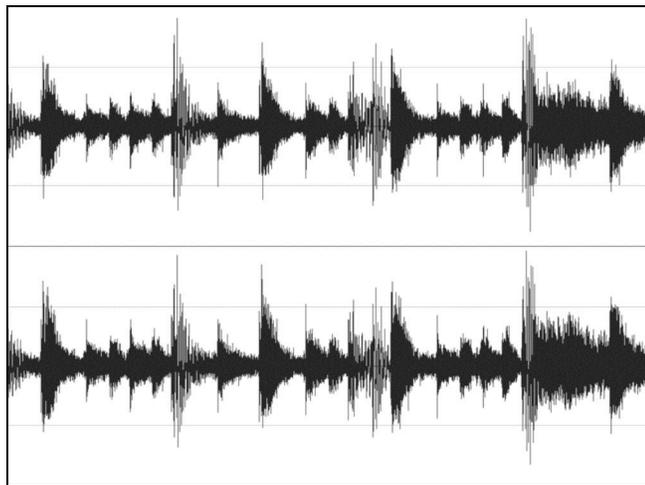


Fig. 40. The "Amen Break".

Indeed, when listening to hip-hop today, the aesthetics have clearly changed as the content of the sonic refrain is characterized by mico-territorializations of sampled music, a complex multi-tracked matrix that employs any number of (mostly digital) studio effects: pitch-shifting, cutting, slicing, tempo augmentations, band-pass filters, delays, reverbs, etc. Moreover, today samples are not derived from the original source but from

other samples, wherein we might say we have entered into the world of the hyper-refrain—today’s music is made from the sample, of the sample, of the sample, and so forth. The hyper-refrain, then, as that which has completely abandoned its connection to the original, having (like Jean Baudrillard says) completely done away with the myth of its originality. Today’s breakbeat is a self-referential sign that displays an indifference to the original source from whence it came, referring instead only to its own sphere of internal relations.

But yet, even in the world of the hyper-refrain, the situation remains unchanged; the “expressiveness” of the refrain (as Deleuze and Guattari called it) is still the circular logic of the breakbeat as it was born with Kool Herc. But while the expressiveness of the refrain-assemblage in hip-hop remains unchanged, it is the aesthetics of the sonorous landscape (the content) around which it draws its territorial borders that is now different, diverse and ever-changing.

Mother Earth, the Drum and the Breakbeat-Assemblage

What makes the sound of Native hip-hop, and what comprises the ‘content’ of its sonorous-assemblages that makes it unique, is that artists tend to draw on sounds sampled from recordings of our traditional music, while employing production and performance styles that are specific to Indigenous culture. For example, the track “I’m A Lucky One” by the Six Nations group Tru Rez Crew incorporates samples of traditional Inuit throat-singing into the mix. Or the Red Power Squad from Edmonton who combines Hoop

Dancers (which is itself a form of storytelling) into their performances, with sonic accompaniments from traditional songs derived from Cree ceremonies that pay homage to the eagle, the snake, and the coyote.

But above and beyond (or, shall I say, within and immanent) to Native hip-hop, apart from its appropriated motifs and sampled music from the traditions of our culture, is the sonic refrain of the drum; everything in Native hip-hop /music revolves around the drum. The drum itself is a very special instrument in our traditions of music, and there are very few ceremonies in Indigenous culture where the drum is not present. In this way, Native hip-hop is a modernized version of our aural traditions of storytelling and a contemporization of our music because its essence is still rooted in the drum. The sound refrain of Native hip-hop (even though the aesthetics of the breakbeat did not emerge from here) is closely linked to our traditional music. Hip-hop and the music you will hear at our Pow Wows, for instance, share the commonality of the refrain and the circularity of musical structure, and it is with the drum-refrain that we celebrate life, give thanks to the Creator, and praise Mother Earth.

It has been said many times and in many different ways that, for our ancestors, the drum is the heartbeat of Mother Earth, the heartbeat of life. The drum is what keeps the nations unified; it is the source of our strength and power. The drum is a spiritual instrument, and its shape is that which represents our belief in what Gregory Cajete has called the circle of life, or what Vine Deloria Jr. called a circle of relations. I believe it is these things that, above all else, are transported into the way in which Native people make hip-hop music, where the drum and the territory of the breakbeat-assemblage form

a unity that is connected with another, larger territory: the eternal-refrain of Mother Earth.

For Deleuze and Guattari, every territorial assemblage is linked together, even if this interlinking is formed through disassociation or defined by the spaces in-between: micro-territories, ruptures, fissures etc. In short, what all territories have in common is the forces that constitute them. For instance, in the case of the refrain and the breakbeat, it is the boundaries that are drawn onto the sonorous landscape that bring the sonic-assemblage into being. It is these forces, the forces of territorialization or reterritorialization, that are plugged into the immense refrain of the Earth.¹⁶ To put it another way, we would say that each territory has an ‘intense center’ which, according to Deleuze and Guattari, is always located outside of the boundaries of the territory itself, further arguing that “the earth is the intense point at the deepest level of the territory.”¹⁷ That is to say, the co-ordinates of the ‘intense center’ of territorial assemblages ultimately converge and are drawn into a ‘close embrace’ with the territory of the earth as that which constitutes all assemblages and enables their territorializing functions.

However, Mother Earth is not a territory in itself, but is instead a ‘vector’¹⁸—a gathering of territorial forces which, when drawn together, constitute a deterritorialization of the cosmos. Thus, for Deleuze and Guattari, there is always the territory on one hand and the Earth on the other, meaning that the Earth is always in perpetual conflict with the code of the territory. Mother Earth is not merely a ‘force among forces’, but rather a substance that embraces all the forces of territorialization and acts as a kind of cosmic foundation, a decentered-center where “all the forces draw together in close embrace.”¹⁹

This is why they say that there is a ‘refrain to the earth’ which is constituted by two coexistent motifs (the earth and the territory) “one melodic, evoking the assemblages of the [song], the other rhythmic, evoking the deep, eternal breathing of the earth.”²⁰

In our traditional music it was the refrain of the drum that, for the people, constituted a connection to the spiritual refrain (heartbeat) of Mother Earth. As the people would say: “The earth is alive, the dirt is alive. The songs and the dancing shake the Earth and charge it with life,”²¹ It would not be wrong to say that Deleuze and Guattari’s theory is complementary with our own traditions, that the Earth itself breaths, that it is alive, that it is the ‘intense’ centre upon which all forces converge. Mother Earth, the drum and the refrain of the breakbeat, then, are a kind of cosmic foundation that draws sound and the people into a close embrace with the world.

It was the refrain of the drum that we associated with the supernatural and through which we gave thanks, asked the spirits for protection and guidance, and prayed to the Earth for our continued survival. I believe this is the core functioning principle of Native hip-hop as a modernized version of our traditional music: today the refrain of the drum has been replaced with the refrain of the breakbeat, which provides a new way to tell our stories. For it is here, inside the meta-music of the breakbeat-refrain, Indigenous peoples have chosen to speak to a new generation.

Becoming Machine, Becoming-Animal and Possessed Vocality

I’m feelin reserved/ man that’s how I’m livin’/ I got to deal with this mic I was given/ To try to get by/ no word of a lie/ we got to restore pride.²²

We move now from the role of the DJ/Producer as the creator of breakbeat-assemblages that comprise the meta-musical core of hip-hop to the next vitally essential component: the vocalizations, rhythmic-narrations, and stage-performance of the MC.

To begin with, the origins of MCing are widely contested, however the majority of authors tend to trace it back to Jamaica in the 1960s where DJs for the first time reached for the mic as a way to connect with their audience. Some say the purpose of MCing was to bring an added ‘human’ element to the stage, something that strengthened the connection between the music and the audience—indeed, if there was such a thing as a manifesto for MCs, there would be a line in it that says: the MC always has one foot on stage and one foot on the dancefloor.

In the 1980s, MCing was taken-up by the hip-hop community in the Bronx who used it as a means to energize the crowd, and it was here that rapping became, much like DJing and breakdancing, a forum for creative competition. Soon enough DJs were always joined on stage by MCs who would show off their skills with a barrage of crowd-pleasing phrases and clichés, dropping ever more complex rhymes overtop the breakbeats to further mobilize the dancers. And so it was “from the rappers, this music and these parties—which had previously been referred to as ‘break’ or ‘wildstyle’ music—gained a name: Hip hop.”²³

In the 1980s, the popularity of hip-hop culture had suffused throughout North America, stretching outwards from urban centers to rural areas and into remote Native communities. It was from the reservation that Native hip-hop first emerged when a new generation of creative individuals took the form and style of performance and molded it

into something uniquely their own. Drawing influence from their surroundings, the first wave of Native MCs transformed the medium in a way that reflected some of our ancestral musical traditions, while giving voice to the youth culture through providing a forum to speak about social and political issues.

I remember the days way back when/ we had no gang fights/ we had no crackpipes/ and brothers got along in the families/what the hell went wrong with the families/ my reservation.²⁴

A number of Native MCs have said that what first drew them to the artform was the potential to mobilize the ‘revolutionary force’ of hip-hop after being inspired by groups like Public Enemy, a rap trio that in the 1980s brought the oppression and racism that African Americans were facing in the U.S. to a global audience. Take, for instance, War Party, founded in 1995 by Rex Smallboy, a foursome (now duo) who many consider to be of the first pioneers of the Canadian Native hip-hop scene. Rex Smallboy, who coincidentally had the chance to work with Chuck D. from Public Enemy on their newest release, said once in an interview:

When I heard a lot of the African-American artists talking about what they saw in their communities, the social conditions, that made me take a look at what was going on in my own neighborhood ... We have people selling crack in our communities now, and dealers are having crack wars, and we have drive-bys. This is the reserve—this is not Compton; this is not the Bronx.²⁵

The lyrics in War Party’s songs are not always easy to hear (nor, I suppose, easy to write), as they draw attention to things that are, sadly, a tragic reality for many Native

people. Rex and his crew rap about contemporary Native identity, loss of culture, dispossession, drug abuse, poverty and suicide—“We’re pretty blunt,” says Smallboy in an interview. “It’s all about social justice; we’re not up there saying anything that isn’t true.”²⁶



Fig. 41. War Party's Rex Smallboy on Stage. 2005.

Despite the dark subject matter, War Party’s lyrics are not about glorifying tragedy and casting Indigenous people as victims. Always, in their music, there is a message of hope, cadences about staying positive, having courage, and using self-

determination as a means to restore a sense of pride in our heritage: *“It’s the way we live/ It’s the fight we give/ It’s the struggle to fight and stay positive.”*²⁷

In many ways, it is a modernization of our oral traditions of storytelling or, as Rex Smallboy put quite simply, Native hip-hop is basically the evolution of Native Americans making music. Only, today we have new stories: those about growing up on the reservation, street life in urban centers, dealing with racism and social injustice in our contemporary world. *“My reservation as I look into your eyes/ I realize, that we’re living out the whiteman’s lies/ there was no compromise, just deceit/ as I face the defeat/ that was put here long before me.”*²⁸

Native Rap is also, for groups like the Sunday Skool Dropouts (activists turned musicians, Manik 1derful and Ostwelve), a powerful tool to educate kids about drugs, alcohol, and the dangers of life on the street. Or else, for groups like RedNation who incorporate traditional singing and dance into their performances, Native Hip Hop is about the youth “coming to see and realize who they are, where they come from, and not be ashamed of their heritage.”²⁹

In conjunction with the powerful lyrics and important messages in Native Hip Hop there is something else that I believe to be equally important: the live performance. Just like in the genre of Spoken Word, the lyrics in Native hip-hop are meant to be performed in front of a live audience. Ask almost anyone and they’ll tell you that there is seemingly always something missing in a recording. Hip hop is first and foremost a live artform primarily because its power is rooted in community—it is a music of and for the people. With the recording there is a critical linkage between performer and audience that is lost, a connection facilitated by the MC who uses rhymes to unite those on stage and

the crowd. It all happens when these core elements are brought together—the breakbeat assemblage and the performative vocalization of the MC—where the artform opens into different forms of what Deleuze and Guattari call becomings: the becoming-machine of the rhyme, the becoming-wolf of the MC, the becoming-pack of the crowd, and the becoming-possessed of vocality. “*One love for my people/ U-n-i-t-e/ instead of fellin reserved/my reserve feel me.*”³⁰

Meta-Music and the Becomings-Machine of Vocality

In (Native) hip-hop the rapper performs his/her vocalization in syncopation with the rhythm provided by the DJ/Producer, where lyrical-expressions form what Deleuze and Guattari call a ‘sound block’ with the breakbeat-assemblage, the sonic territory from which vocal content is projected: “The rapper does not perform *with* a band but *within* the meta-music.”³¹ However, rapping cannot be thought of in the same way we have theorized the breakbeat. While the vocal performance in hip-hop operates within a territory whose organizing principle is that of meta-music, what the MC performs is not that of meta-language. Although they share some important aesthetic characteristics, unlike the breakbeat-assemblage which is ‘music about music’ rapping is rarely ‘about language’, and so we would be wrong to think about it in the exact same context.

Instead, (Native) rap is more like what Deleuze and Guattari call a becoming-machine of the voice, wherein vocal enunciations begin with a ‘break’ from a linguistic ‘plane of consistency’ in a similar way that the breakbeat ‘breaks’ from a musical milieu. Rap is a becoming-machine of the voice because it involves the deterritorialization of

language wherein it draws a ‘line of flight’ away from a linguistic ‘plane’, and then quickly reforms itself into a new territory organized around the logic of rhyme. Rapping, like refrains and breakbeats, are territorial rhythmic-rhyme-blocks characterized by sound, but also by the body’s vocal expressions that permit “a shifting interplay of comparative deterritorialization and reterritorialization”³²—the simultaneous act of deconstruction and reconstruction that follows a circular logic similar to the breakbeat-assemblage, creating a closed territorial (rhyme) circuit.

First and foremost, a rap is necessarily about the marking of a territory through a deterritorializing (machinic) act, which in turn causes it to be less tied to dialectics, and is instead characterized only by an interlocking of aesthetic communicative determinations. It is an assemblage (within an assemblage), one with clear territorial contours that it machines (cuts/breaks/ruptures) from the milieu of language, becoming effective through its shifting and relational distributions within Hip Hop’s larger territorial discourse. Said another way, Rap is an *overcoding* of language, a dense matrix of layers that do not conform to any specific formal linguistic structure, except of course the micro-territory of the word, which is always preceded by another that disrupts it in the flow of the rhythmic-rhyme series.

In addition, (Native) rap is about the becoming-machine of the voice because it is (paradoxically, perhaps) about the deterritorialization of the organic substance that is responsible for bringing it into being. Or, as Deleuze and Guattari might have it, the vocal expressions in Rap (which is to say its sonorous substance) amount to a destratification of the body, “not only the larynx, but the mouth and the lips, and the overall motericity of the face.”³³ Words, Deleuze and Guattari say, can pass from one substance to another, a

quality which, of course, makes transmission of vocal enunciations possible, but, for them, this is also a quality that is not found in natural, organic substrates—for example, it is impossible to have “[transmission] between RNA and DNA chains.”³⁴ So, on the one hand, vocalizations have an immanent quality in that they emerge from bodies, but also a transcendent quality that sets them apart from the ‘strata’ of the flesh, and so they operate in what they call an ‘epistrata’ or ‘parastrata’.³⁵ It, therefore, must be noted then, that the perceived transcendent quality of the voice is only an illusion, or better yet, an afterimage; the performance of rap vocalizations *as* a deterritorialization of the flesh does not properly leave the territory of the breakbeat-assemblage (it only leaves the body), but instead constitutes movements and lines of flight *within* its territorial boundaries. I’ll add a second note to foreshadow a concept that will come later: this has much in common with the notion of possessed-vocality because both are about the transformation of bodies, especially the mouth which, in the early literature on the subject of possession, was the fleshy orifice through which the demon enters the body and is commonly “thought to reside.”³⁶ (Again, more on this in a moment).

Finally, the becoming-machine of the voice happens when the vocalizations of the MC begin to cause micro-deterritorializations within the breakbeat-assemblage itself. This is to say that the machinic operations of the voice not only have an impact on language and the body but also on the entire sonorous territory, destabilizing it with fractured meaning, creating cracks and fissures on a microscopic level that do not cause the assemblage to collapse, but instead begin to transform it into ... something else. Or, as Deleuze and Guattari might say, when the vocalization of the MC takes hold of the assemblage and effectively deterritorializes the refrain from *within*, it “sends the whole

thing off in a rhythmic sound block, [where] the refrain *becomes*.”³⁷ As noted, this is not a complete deterritorialization of the breakbeat assemblage, but rather destabilizations that are caused by the machinic voice of the MC, meaning that they only point towards a deterritorializing vector. This final point does not come full circle, however, and the MC does not transform in what Deleuze and Guattari call becoming-animal until there is the audience, a crowd...when there are bodies, when there is community.



Fig. 42. Ostwelve (aka Ronnie Dean Harris) Performing, 2009.



Fig. 43. Litefoot performing at *Reach the Rez Tour*.

The Becoming-Wolf of the MC and Possessed Vocality

If we are to begin to theorize Native hip-hop as an artform connected to our ancestral heritage of storytelling, then we must begin to think of Native MCing outside some of the familiar frameworks. We must continue to develop our remix-theory to the point where Native rap begins to intersect with some traditional forms of Indigenous music, like medicine songs, in which music was considered a means of accessing the spirit world for the purpose of healing; or totem songs, those dedicated to certain animal spirits that the people would call upon for guidance; or even songs like those of the False Faces in Haudenosaunee culture which called upon a powerful, other-worldly spirit in different curing rituals. Though what the Native MC performs is not meta-language in the same way the breakbeat-assemblage is meta-music, it has some unique characteristics that it enacts within the territory of the sonorous-assemblage and in the context of the performative body which connects to Deleuze and Guattari's notion of becoming-animal, and secondly, to the becoming-possessed of vocality.

When the colonialists embarked on their first travels into 'Indian territory' they marvelled (and recoiled) at the vast array of songs, dances and ceremonies we had in our communities. Traditionally, our music was our means of storytelling, of passing down knowledge, our form of worship and prayer, and in some cases, our medicine. In those days it is said that our ancestors shared an intimate spiritual relationship with the Earth, the mountains, the animals, and all of nature. We did "not believe that the universe taken

as a whole was god; but that everything in the world had its spiritual essence made manifest in the forces and laws of nature.”³⁸ We had songs that paid homage to the animal spirits that we relied on for protection and wisdom, what in Haudenosaunee culture we call the *Company of Mystic Animals*: those of the wolf, bear, beaver, deer, snipe, heron, hawk and turtle.³⁹ It was with these animals we shared a sacred connection, an indissoluble spiritual bond that we maintained and strengthen through our songs and dances. What I am describing is what some Indigenous philosophers have written about in the context of a *Natural Law of Interdependence*, a belief in an ‘all embracing society of life’ in which humans, animals, and all of nature are interconnected and alive with spirit.

In their chapter “1730: Becoming-Intense, Becoming-Animal Becoming-Imperceptible...” Deleuze and Guattari put forth a theory that they begin with a reflection on the works of Carl Jung. To begin with, in Jungian psychology there are three distinct psychic orders or realities: individual consciousness, the individual unconscious, and the collective unconscious. Here we are interested in the third order, what Jung conceived of as a psychic inheritance common to our species which is comprised of ‘archetypes’ or ‘primordial’ images. Deleuze and Guattari remind us that Jung argued in a similar direction of Lucien Lévy-Bruhl in his writings on *‘participation mystique’* (animism), concluding that archetypes in the collective unconscious need not be exclusively human, but could also be of the animal, plant, or, for Deleuze and Guattari, ‘molecular’ variety. In his texts, Jung often explored the possibilities of shared ‘psychic experiences’, something he later determined to be a common occurrence in which an individual shares “an unconscious identity with some other person or object.”⁴⁰

[In Indigenous cultures] the soul (or psyche) is not thought to be a distinct unit ... Many assume that a man has a bush soul as well as his own, and that the bush soul is incarnate in a wild animal or tree, with which the human shares some kind of psychic identity.⁴¹

What Deleuze and Guattari would have us take from this Jungian perspective is the importance of the animal in what is called the archetypal series of myths, dreams, and visions that populate the collective unconscious. Specifically, their interest is in the possibilities of shared (coexisting/interdependent) ontologies and psychologies that open into all kinds of metamorphosis, becomings and what they call ‘incorporeal transformations’. From Jung’s work, Deleuze and Guattari seek to bypass what had previously always been a structural and symbolic ordering of the unconscious as a ‘correspondence of relations’ between archetypes. Instead, Deleuze and Guattari prefer the notion of *becoming* which entails not a correspondence, but rather an interlinking, a ‘line of flight’ that does not consist merely of ‘playing’ (imitating, resembling) animal, but something more akin to the Jungian notion of ‘psychic co-existence’.

A becoming-animal operates in-between terms, it is a “verb with a consistency all its own; it does not reduce to, or lead back to, ‘appearing’, ‘being’, ‘equaling’, or ‘producing’.”⁴² Becomings are not fixed states of existence, but instead are fluid transformations that imply something less differentiated. When performing the bear dance, the individual does not imitate the bear, but becomes, co-exists, and shares a ‘psychic experience’ with the spirit of the bear. When speaking with the bird, there is not a bypassing of communicative barriers that occurs but, rather, a becoming together

(doubled-becoming) through a shared psychic identity which enables communicative understanding between different species.

The first condition for becoming-animal is that these kinds of becomings always involve the formation of an assemblage, a multiplicity or, in other words, an animal collectivity. In his/her performance, when the MC takes to the stage and connects with an audience, a tripartite union is established: the breakbeat-assemblage, the performative body of the MC, and the audience. Or better yet, a pack is formed through which the MC becomes-animal (a pack animal, like the wolf), and it is through the formation of the pack that this becoming is enabled. The MC needs the crowd, the very condition of his/her becoming-wolf depends on it, a point that Deleuze and Guattari are adamant about: there is no incorporeal transformation, no becoming-animal that doesn't involve a pack, a band, a swarm, a peopling, a multiplicity. "In becoming-wolf, the important thing is the position of the mass, and above all the position of the subject itself in relation to the pack or wolf-multiplicity."⁴³ Becomings-animal are rhizomatic, they are multiplicities that are characterized by a band of intensity and not by representation or mimesis. Here we could also invoke the character of hunting societies, medicine societies, war parties, and sacred societies—"becomings-animal are proper to them,"⁴⁴ because they operate within the logic of an animal (pack) reality.

There is, however, a paradoxical element to Deleuze and Guattari's notion of the pack that they are forthcoming about. Packs and animal multiplicities are on the one hand devoid of a hierarchical structure, yet within these assemblages there is always a unique individual with whom an alliance must be made in order to enter into the animal collectivity. Even though the idea of a multiplicity exists in their text as a means to

bypass the opposition between the multiple and the one,⁴⁵ in animal multiplicities there is always the ‘anomalous’, a unique individual in the pack of the wolves. In their words, there might not be any “such thing as a lone wolf, but there is always the leader of the pack ... there is the Loner, and there is the Demon.”⁴⁶ (I will return to this notion of the demon in a moment). In the context of Native Hip Hop this contradiction is made manifest by the MC, the ‘master of the pack’ who invites us into the collectivity, enabling other transformations and becomings-animal.

Packs are always in constant flux—every time an element is added or taken away it effects the entire collectivity and changes its nature. Yet, a multiplicity is not defined by its elements. An animal collectivity is, like the refrain, defined by its dimensions, its outer territorial boundaries. And moreover, these boundaries are always coming into contact with other territories; at the same time the crowd becomes the pack, the MC becomes-wolf, and the breakbeat assemblage becomes-sonorous. Or, as Deleuze and Guattari say, becoming is always at least a doubled-becoming, “if the sound block has becoming-animal as its content, then the animal simultaneously becomes, in sonority, something else, something absolute, night, death, joy.”⁴⁷

The becoming-animal of the MC is like the machinic-deterritorialization in the refrain and the breakbeat, it is about the formation of a ‘block’, except this time not with sound, but with animal. Here, the breakbeat-assemblage takes as its content that of becoming-animal, and like in our totem songs it is about the transformation of the MC into the wolf. Here, the becoming-machine of vocalization mentioned earlier undergoes another kind of transformation: the becoming-possessed of vocality.

In her text *Native American Song at the Frontiers of Early Modern Music*, Olivia Bloechl writes that when the missionaries first came to North America with the intent of converting our ancestors to Christianity that they feared the influence of our spiritual beliefs, thinking that our religious practices might have a detrimental effect on even the most devout.⁴⁸ In tracing the early history of ethnomusicology, Bloechl finds that frequently in the journals and logs of this period our ancestors (and even to some degree the physical environment) were considered to be in some way or another under the influence of a demonical force. She argues that in the majority of writing of the period, our music was the subject of intense religious scrutiny, and that the language of possession is constantly invoked alongside persistent references to the devil. Without a doubt, as Bloechl writes, these concepts were clearly tied to the Western desire to dominate us politically and spiritually; a kind of spiritual warfare, she writes, where the Indigenous people are framed “as victims of Satan and [dealt with] accordingly.”⁴⁹ At the time almost any form of vocalization the colonialists heard that fell outside of accepted (Western) standards and norms was considered to be a sign of demonic influence, and the voice itself the harbinger of a malignant, non-human force.⁵⁰

Bloechl writes that notions of possession and demonic influence in the early literature are linked to a then prevailing discourse on the idea of possessed-vocality. In the period, studying the voices of those suspected of having succumb to demonical influence became a hallmark in determining possession, which included for instance things like: speaking in a language that was foreign to the subject, speaking in ‘more than one voice’ at a time, nonsense-babbling, shrieking, howling, or making ‘animal-like’ noises. In early reports of possession, she writes, vocal eccentricities in ‘victims’ under

the influence of non-human agents was that which established the notion of the “voices natural ability to access spiritual realms.”⁵¹ Thus, transgressive or uncanny vocalizations were signs of demonical supernatural influence, suggesting that in the early possession literature the ‘mouth’ was particularly “venerable to the devils influence.”⁵² In the ‘new world’, missionaries and travelers believed that what they were hearing in our songs was the voices of the possessed, the vocalization of animal-noises a sure sign of the devil’s hold over the people. And as Bloechl writes, though the possessed ‘Indian’ was considered innocent, they were still in need of being ‘cured’, which often meant the forcible conversion to Christianity as a means of exorcism.

I write all this because I believe there is a connection to be made between the notion of possessed-vocality and that of the Native MC. Possession is like becoming, it is about having what Jung called a ‘shared psychic experience’ or what Deleuze and Guattari wrote under the sign of becoming-animal as coexisting psychologies and ontologies. It is what our traditional music was about when song became not only a means of storytelling, but also a way to commune with the animals and the spirits. In the False Face societies of the Haudenosaunee for example, song was a primary catalyst for the mask wearer to access the spirit world and in sacred curing rituals enabled him/her to become possessed by the one we call Flint, for the purpose of healing. “In characteristic fashion, masked [False Face dancers] banged on the house with their rattles and rubbed their staves up and down the door frames, burst in howling and babbling incoherently, danced, [and] blew hot ashes.”⁵³ The missionaries Bloechl writes about were not wrong in their belief that some of our ceremonies involved possession, they were wrong

however in what they thought we were possessed by, which was certainly not the (Christian) devil.

Possessed-vocality is instead a natural consequence of Deleuze and Guattari's notion of becoming-animal, a process which begins with the deterritorialization of the body and ends with interpenetrating multiplicities and shared ontological realities with animals. We should not find it surprising in this context, then, that they refer to the 'exceptional individual' in the group—the 'anomalous' of the animal collectivity whom we have associated with the Native MC, but could also be the warrior, or the medicine man—as 'the demon'.⁵⁴ They argue the point that, in order to become part of the multiplicity, a 'pact' or an alliance must be made with this individual in the pack, and only through him/her does one enter the animal collectivity. Every animal collective has this anomaly (the anomalous, this demon), the one in the many that is the contradiction of the very idea of the multiplicity, as they write: "there is always a pact with a demon; the demon sometimes appears as the head of the band, sometimes as the Loner on the sidelines of the pack."⁵⁵ They say packs are formed by contagion, through feedback effects and relational alliances with the 'demon' positioned at the borderlines of the animal-collectivity, the territorial membrane through which the individual ('the outsider') must pass. And this is all enabled through performative vocality: the enunciated lyrics of the Native MC first becoming-machine ('cutting' and deterritorializing the body and the linguistic plane), then becoming-animal through the formation of the pack, and then becoming the 'one' who in the context of the animal-collectivity performs possessed vocalizations that draws together the community, the pack, the swarm, the war party, the people.

NOTES:

¹ For an excellent resource on the history of hip-hop see: Bill Brewster and Frank Broughton, *Last Night a Dj Saved My Life: The History of the Disk Jockey*, (Grove Press, New York, 1999)

² Bill Brewster and Frank Broughton, *Last Night a Dj Saved My Life: The History of the Disk Jockey*, (Grove Press, New York, 1999), 206-208.

³ *Ibid.*, 208.

⁴ Charles Mudede, "The Turntable", published on *Ctheory* [<http://ctheory.net/articles.aspx?id=382>], *scratch 6*.

⁵ Mudede, *scratch 9*.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Brian Massumi, trans., (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 323.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 300.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 349.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 315.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 315.

¹² *Ibid.*, 296.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 33.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 299.

¹⁵ Amen Break on Wikipedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amen_break

-
- ¹⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 321.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 388.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 340.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 329.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, 339.
- ²¹ Charles Hofmann, *American Indians Sing*. (New York: The John Day Company, 1967), 19.
- ²² War Party, “Feelin’ Reserved “ from their CD, *The Greatest Natives from the North*, 1995.
- ²³ Bill Brewster and Frank Broughton, *Last Night a Dj Saved My Life: The History of the Disk Jockey* (New York: Grove Press, 1999),
- ²⁴ War Party, “Feelin’ Reserved “ from their CD, *The Greatest Natives from the North*, 1995.
- ²⁵ Rex Small Boy, quoted at “<http://www.straight.com/article/folk-fest-warpartys-beats-and-rhymes-break-out-beyond-the-reserve>” (accessed November 1, 2011)
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*
- ²⁷ War Party, “Feelin’ Reserved “ from their CD, *The Greatest Natives from the North*, 1995.
- ²⁸ War Party, “Feelin’ Reserved “ from their CD, *The Greatest Natives from the North*, 1995.
- ²⁹ Rex Small Boy, quoted at <http://exclaim.ca/articles/research.aspx?csid1=53> (accessed November 1, 2011)
- ³⁰ War Party, “Feelin’ Reserved “ from their CD, *The Greatest Natives from the North*, 1995.
- ³¹ Mudede, *scratch 20*.
- ³² Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 61.

³³ *Ibid.*, 61.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 62.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 63.

³⁶ Olivia Bloechl, *Native American Song at the Frontiers of Early Modern Music* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008),

³⁷ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*,

³⁸ Bloechl, *Native American Song*,

³⁹ Lewis and Loyd, *League of the Ho-De'-No-Sau-Nee*, 75.

⁴⁰ Carl Jung, *Man and His Symbols* (Dell Publishing, 1964), 7.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁴² Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 239.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 242.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 243.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 304.

⁴⁸ Bloechl, *Native American Song*, 58.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 60.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 59.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 60.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 70.

⁵³ Lewis and Loyd, *League of the Ho-De'-No-Sau-Nee*, 75.

⁵⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* 243.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 243.

EPILOGUE

It was the winter of 1869, and General Philip Henry Sheridan was waiting at Fort Cobb to meet with “the *Indians*” to resolve a dispute over a contested tract of land that he proclaimed was under his jurisdiction. Sheridan had recently been appointed the head officer of the Department of the Missouri, and was under direct orders from Ulysses S. Grant to regain control over the territory. And so Sheridan’s response had been to send out messengers to the four tribes in the area ordering them to surrender, or else be “hunted down and killed.”¹

Tosawi’s Comanche band were the first to arrive at the fort, and when the Chief was presented to Sheridan he expressed his desire for peace by saying “Tosawi, good Indian.”² As legend has it, a grisly smirk then came across the General’s face, and looking back at the Comanche elder he replied, “*The only good Indians I ever saw were dead.*”³ Eventually over time Sheridan’s words became known as the popular aphorism: *the only good Indian is a dead Indian.*⁴

Indeed, General Sheridan’s words were emblematic of the deeply entrenched racist thinking of the times, and reflective of the general notion in the American mind that Indians “could not and should not persist as distinctive people.”⁵ Of Sheridan’s statement Gerald Vizenor might have said that his aversion to the Indians was representative of the radicalized racism of the Nation, and that in turn that this aversion would contribute to

the spread of “manifest manners and the literature of dominance.”⁶ For the sentiment in Sheridan’s statement was something that has indeed suffused throughout North American society, as can be evidenced in the Residential schools for instance, which operated under a chillingly similar slogan: *Kill the Indian, save the man*.

A great general has said that the only good Indian is a dead one, and that high sanction of his destruction has been an enormous factor in promoting Indian massacres. In a sense, I agree with the sentiment, but only in this: that all the Indian there is in the race should be dead. Kill the Indian in him, and save the man.⁷

What Vizenor called manifest manners and the literature of dominance are things that in this text I have attributed to the experience of a spectral legacy...something that ‘comes back’ (revenant) to haunt the lives of the living. For myself, I would argue that that General Sheridan’s sign of the dead Indian is itself *not* dead. Rather, it has become a hauntology, an *undead* sign, a ghost among many others that comprises a spectral legacy that even today haunts our ancestral landscape.

My point throughout has been that “*We*”, the always next generation, are the inheritors of these spectral legacies—they are not our possessions, but that which we are possessed by. And moreover I have said that our very lives are constituted by these hauntologies—they are part of our ‘network of relations’ as Vine Deloria, Jr. would say, and therefore part of our ‘lived’ experiences because they are deeply intertwined with our ancestral geographies. The specter of the *dead Indian* is something we are inhabited by, and therefore something that continues to haunt our experiences as the inheritors of these histories and psychological territories.

Thus today, as the heirs to these ancestral territories, we do not have the luxury of *strategic forgetfulness* because, as Jacques Derrida warns, to try and simply turn our backs to the ‘ghosts of history’ would only serve to produce more specters and result in an *accumulation of ghostly layers*. That is to say, whether or not we seek justice, decolonization, or to lay these ghosts to rest (‘to see dead that which we would want to see dead’) there must be the acceptance of a certain *responsibility*—for none of these things would seem thinkable, says Derrida, without a sense of responsibility that moves beyond all living presence by engaging with the “generations, and generations of ghosts.”⁸ Derrida writes: “Inheritance is never a given, it is always a task...it remains before us just as unquestionably as we are the heirs ... even before wanting or refusing to be.”⁹ Therefore, he says, in our conjurations and exorcisms *of* ghosts, we need to learn to pass through a ‘spectral moment’ *with* our hauntological experience(s) of our ancestry if there is to be the possibility “to live otherwise, and better.”¹⁰

Justice must carry beyond *present* life, life as *my* life or *our* life. *In general*. For it will be the same thing for the ‘my life’ or ‘our life’ tomorrow, that is, for the life of others, as it was yesterday for other others: *beyond therefore the living present in general*.

To be just: beyond the living present in general—and beyond its simple negative reversal. A spectral moment, a moment that no longer belongs to time, if one understands by this word the linking of modalized presents (past present, actual present: ‘now’, future present).¹¹

Such has been the intended purpose of this text, and the reason I have written about select artworks that share in common these kinds of passages through ‘spectral moments’ in their crossings of hauntological territories.

In different ways, the works of these artists are about transformations, conversions and translations of the kind that move ‘beyond the living present’ and in-between zones of spectrality. They have done this by variously enacting radical gestures of *becomings* and sacrifice, staging performances of invocation and conjuration, and in some cases, by passing through an instance of spectral *asymmetry* in very ‘the manner of a ghost’.

A passage through a ‘spectral moment’ involves crossing the threshold of the errant or phantomological dimension of ones *hauntological experience of ancestry*, and thus it is akin to what Deleuze and Guattari called *becoming*—a movement in-between or through a liminal zone that concerns the transformation of bodies and the territories they traverse. This is to say that they are artworks that move along ‘lines of flight’ that pass “[in]between two modalities or two temporalities in the conjunction [in a network of relations] with the dead, in the evocation or convocation of the specter.”¹²

What the artworks referenced in this text share is what Deleuze and Guattari called the strange imperative of an *unnatural participation* in their crossings of these thresholds wherein they enter different *blocks of becoming* with ghosts, revenants, and apparitions; specter-simulations, colonial mythologies and the manifest manners domination; the hauntological experience of spectral-Otherness, and the violence associated with sacrificial-dedications and ceremonial exorcisms. In this sense, they are all what Vizenor called Trickster stories in translation that involve conditions of transformation that approximate an understanding of the “elusive unions of shaman’s with birds, animals, and ancestors ... and shadows in [First Nations] stories.”¹³

The blocks of becoming that each artwork enters varies greatly in its character, but they are each ‘involutions’ that cross these thresholds in their lines of flight, *terms of alliance*, or modes of *detrterritorialization* that compose their ‘multiplicity of symbiosis and becoming’.¹⁴

Becoming-territorial and becoming-Sonorous

In Rebecca Belmore’s artwork *Ayum-ee-aawach Oomama-mowan: Speaking to Their Mother*, there two things that are drawn into a *block of becoming* that are thus simultaneously transformed in the process: as the voice *becomes-territorial* (spatial/geographical), the territory (the landscape) *becomes-sonorous*.

In support of the Kanien’kehaka peoples in Kanesatake during the *Oka Crisis*, Belmore created a work that endeavored to engage with the ‘Indigenous experience’ in Canada during this tumultuous time. The artwork—which consisted of a birch bark cone sculpture that acted as a giant megaphone through which the people could speak their mind about different social, political and deeply personal issues—was first about giving a voice to the people while at the same time addressing the colonial erasure of Indigenous culture across the landscape. In this respect, it was about ‘reactivating’ a communal connection with our ancestral territories by “empowering aboriginal people to speak to ‘all of their relations’ as well as the living cosmos”.¹⁵

Belmore traveled the sculpture extensively across Canada, presenting it as an interface that would amplify the voice of the person speaking such that their words could be heard reverberating across the landscape. In this sense it provided a way to reconnect to our ancestral geographies through an engagement with the process of ‘*writing new*

stories on the land'. For Deloria, just as the people 'inhabit' the world and 'internalize' their experience of place, so too does the landscape absorb the individual and collective experiences of the people—"As we experience the world, so [too] we are also experienced by the world."¹⁶ In this sense, Belmore's work was about prompting a renewal of an interconnected relationship with 'place' wherein the voices of the people *becomes-territorial* under the sign of what Gregory Cajete called *ensoulment*.

The artwork produced a *becoming-territorial* of the voice (voices) because it involved a speaking *to* the territory in a way that was about re-creating what Cajete called an "internalizing bond with place."¹⁷ It was a *becoming-territorial* of the voice because it was about a communication *with* the landscape that involved reestablishing a 'psychology of place' wherein the voices of the people are absorbed by the territory and become part of the 'sacred geography' of the land.

At this same time, the territory itself *becomes-sonorous* in its 'absorption of the voice', and is propelled 'elsewhere' on a line of flight such that it becomes deterritorialized and/or *destratified*. This is why the block of becoming here is doubled: the megaphone-voice assemblage results in the deterritorialization of the body, and simultaneously, the territory of the earth is destratified in its deep and penetrating embrace of the deterritorialized body. This block of becoming is thus akin to what Cajete described as *ensoulment* because here, the earth becomes a 'metaphorical extension of the body'. With this, the earth ceases to be just a 'territory' and becomes something with which bodies are interconnected, and share an internalizing bond *with*—bodies and their 'place', that is, as not separate, but rather "one and the same".¹⁸

The liminal space or ‘spectral moment’ that this doubled becoming crosses is that of the of the ‘spectrological landscape’, the place(s) territorialized by colonial mythologies and the hauntology of the ‘erasure of native culture’ that has taken place all across Turtle Island—this being the central issue that for Belmore was raised by the Oka crisis in Kanasatake. In the work, the voice(s) of the people crossover the threshold of this haunted landscape, and in this spectral moment they enter into a new composition with the eternal *refrain* of Mother Earth.

The becoming-geographical (dimensional, spatial) of the voice and the becoming-sonorous of the landscape comprise a block of becoming that is characterized by what Deleuze and Guattari call the *refrain*. This is to say that in conjunction, what they become together is their own ‘plane of consistency’, they become an interconnected network of relations that constitutes a new “melodic landscape [that] continually enriches their internal relations.”¹⁹ In other words, together they (the bodies and their place) become *internalized homologues* or metaphoric extensions of each other, a becoming that is thus sustained by an ‘oscillational constant’ that is established between them that constitutes a decoding or deterritorialization of both. In this ‘spectral moment’ it all becomes clear, and the earth once again becomes-alive ... it becomes-sonorous. And in this doubled-becoming, wherein the Indigenous voice is reterritorialized on the land, bodies become plugged into and *one* with “deep, eternal breathing of [Mother] earth.”²⁰

Becoming-exorcist and becoming-scapegoat

In Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun’s performance *An Indian Act: Shooting the Indian Act* the block of becoming that is traversed involves the *becoming-exorcist* of the artist and at

once, the transformation of the Indian Act into an object of sacrificial-dedication under the sign of *becoming-scapegoat*. The spectral moment—or what Georges Bataille called the ‘sacred instant’—is that of the sacrificial act itself wherein the performative execution of the Indian Act legislation enables an experience of *collective catharsis*.

In *Black Skins, White Masks*, Frantz Fanon wrote that in every collectivity there necessarily must exist “an outlet through which the forces accumulated in the form of aggression can be released.”²¹ For Fanon, the notion of *collective catharsis* is about a communal release, cleansing or purging of ‘anxieties’ that are associated with shared *psychoexistential* traumas experienced by a collectivity within the colonial environment. According to Fanon, the essential element to enabling such a collective experience is the notion of *sacrificial dedication*, which, for Fanon, is manifest in the form of the *scapegoat*. While he says that for the colonized, enabling the cathartic moment for the collective becomes increasingly difficult, it can however be achieved through socially transgressive acts meant to debase, defile or violate basic colonialist values and ideologies. Such is how we could read Yuxweluptun’s work in the sense it is a performative act that enables the possibility of a communal release by transforming the Indian Act into an object of sacrifice in a performance that effectuates its death.

But while the Indian Act *becomes-scapegoat*, what the artists becomes is not an executioner. In Yuxweluptun’s performance what is executed is not a mere object—as Bataille says, “one does not sacrifice mere objects”²²—but rather, what is put to death is a ghost, a specter, an evil-doing spirit. In other words, in *An Indian Act: Shooting the Indian Act* what is put to death is a *hauntology*—or what I have called the spectral legacy of the Indian Act. This is to say that the sacrificial act here involves the invocation and

incantation of a revenant, an apparition, or a ghost that will have been called forth to be exorcised under the sign of *sacrificial-conjuration*. Thus in putting the Indian Act to death the artist does not become so much an executioner, but instead something akin to that of an exorcist—he who has taken up the arduous task of casting away evil spirits, specters or demons.

Yuxweluptun's *An Indian Act: Shooting the Indian Act* is a mythopoetic insurrection and that which represents an instance of collective catharsis that is realized on behalf of those haunted by this act of colonial legislation. It is, following Bataille, an individual act of liberation and sovereignty that involves the transformation of the Indian Act into an object of sacrificial dedication in a performance that enables a purging, cleansing, or communal release from a pervasive, persistent, and oppressive hauntological reality. It is what Derrida described as a third order of conjuration: that which involves the dispossession, exorcism or 'conjuring away' of a specter. It is a "holy hunt against this specter,"²³ a hauntological mutiny and a ghostly revolt against the Indian Act which *becomes-scapegoat* when it is put to death and 'expelled' back into the phantomological realm.

Becoming-Berdache (Trickster) and becomings-disassembled

With Kent Monkman's *Séance* performance, there is the doubled transformation of the artist *becoming-Berdache (Trickster)* and concurrently, the *becomings-disassembled* of the spectral legacy of the colonial artists.

As it is with much of Monkman's artworks, with *Séance* the artist takes up the project of challenging the fictionalized and romantic ideal of the *Indian Other* that

emerged during the nineteenth century—the *Indian* Other, that is, as what Vizenor has called an occidental creation and obvious simulation of colonial dominance.²⁴ The intent of the performance was to confront the scientific and ethnographic authority of the early colonial artists by charging them with participating in the networks of colonial power that were determined on the erasure of Indigenous culture. Over the past century the works of George Catlin and Paul Kane (among many others) have largely been discredited as accurate scientific records of First Nations peoples; however, as Daniel Francis wrote in his text *Imaginary Indian*, today it is still “hard to find a history textbook that does not contain at least one of Kane’s renderings of Indian life. For most of us, the Indian of nineteenth-century Canada is Paul Kane’s Indian.”²⁵ But Monkman’s performance was not so much about further debunking the authority of these artists as much as it was about deconstructing and dispelling the phantomological afterimages that their work has left on the landscape.

What the colonial painters left behind was a spectral legacy comprised of a mass regime of signs that today continues to *eclipse* and *shadow* our ancestral geographies. What remains on the landscape is what Deleuze and Guattari called *territorial assemblages*— an ‘organ-ization’ of ideological forms that have been imprinted on the plane of the earth that mark zones of (colonial) articulation.

Territorial assemblages are codified spaces of meaning that are etched onto a *plane of stratification* (a landscape or ancestral geography). And because of their imperialistic nature, within their borders these assemblages do not permit the passage of that which they ‘incorporate’, designate or territorialize. In other words, by the fact that they are (colonializing) zones of codification, they function to eclipse and overshadow

that area in the plane of stratification that they territorialize, which in this case is the sacred geographies of the colonized *Other*. As David McIntosh has said, with the colonial artists it was not so much a scientific project, but instead a “racialized evolutionary historicism cast as salvation but designed to dominate and exterminate through photographic [and painterly] misrepresentations served up as factual documentation.”²⁶

In Monkman’s performance, these zones of colonial articulation are in-effect deterritorialized (dispelled, conjured away) under the sign of *becomings-disassembled or becomings-disarticulated*. This is because Monkman’s Séance performance is what Vizenor would call a post-Indian narrative of resistance and *survivance* that plays on the register of seduction and reversal, and therefore something that “absolve[s] the simulations [of the Indian *Other*] with new stories of cultural conversions and native modernity.”²⁷ In the performance, the becoming-disassembled of the legacy of the colonial painters is enabled by forcing these territorial assemblages to enter a block of becoming with the artist in his/her transformation of *becoming-Berdache (Trickster)*.

Miss Chief Eagle Testickle, the alter-ego that Monkman embodies for the performance, is a modern day resurrection of the spirit of the Berdache: a trickster-transformer, time-traveling warrior and transgressor of social norms that we take as being “*medicine* and sacred.”²⁸ The becoming-Berdache of Monkman, it could be said, involves a doubled becoming in itself: a simultaneous becoming-man and becoming-woman. Or, more properly, it is a *becoming-Two Spirit*, a term used to refer to those who have both a “masculine spirit and female spirit living in the same body.”²⁹ Undoubtedly, this could constitute what Derrida called a ‘doubled articulation’, but it is really Miss Chief *as* the

navigator of the territory of the dead in his/her performance séance that effectuates the spectral legacy of the colonial artists to become-disarticulated.

Interestingly, Miss Chief chose to hold his/her séance at the doorway of the First Peoples Gallery at the Royal Ontario Museum—a space I consider to be already poised on the threshold of the errant and phantomological dimension. After a fantastically flamboyant entrance, Miss Chief conjured the spirits through techniques of invocation; calling forth into the chamber his/her ‘departed colleagues’ to take part in a ‘discourse on painting’. In traversing the hauntological landscape in this spectral moment Monkman as Miss Chief Eagle Testickle becomes the *Berdache*—he/she becomes what writer and art critic David Machintosh called a ‘post-Indian diva warrior’ in his/her conjuration of the animate shadows of colonial mythologies.

While Miss Chief’s *Séance* is what I have called a performance-conjuration, its aim is *not* (unlike with Yuxweluptun’s work) to declare death to the specter(s). Rather, it is presented as a discourse with ghosts, a phantomological conversation with the undead spirits of Eugene Delecroix, Paul Kane and George Catlin. It is a performative gesture, that is to say, that does not entail an exorcism but rather a ‘dispersion’ or ‘displacement’ of a haunting. It is a conjuration, Derrida would say, which aims not to “chase away ghosts, but this time ... make them come back alive as revenants who would no longer be revenants, but *arrivants*”³⁰ such that the undead might face up to their haunting of the living. In this it is a work about “doing what is necessary: speaking to the specter,”³¹ or, as Abraham and Torok might have said, it is an action meant to “relieve [those haunted by a ghost] by placing the effects of the phantom in the social realm.”³² Thus, the block of becoming *with* the spirits here entails a becoming-disassembled of zones of colonial

articulation—the destratification of territorial assemblages, the regime of signs, and modes of codification left by the legacy of the colonial artists in the form of phantasmagorical afterimages.

Becoming-perceptible and becomings-inverted

Lori Blondeau’s performances as her various alter-egos (Cosmosquaw, Betty Daybird, Lonely Suffer Squaw and, of course, the infamous Belle Sauvage) are about making the Indigenous body a spectacle for the purpose of overturning and inverting the colonial narratives of what Vizenor called the simulations of dominance. As performative actions of resistance that stand against the virulent codes of (colonial) simulations, Blondeau *becomes-perceptible* through a *fatal strategy* (Baudrillard) in which the “sensation of a new tribal presence [emerges] in the very ruins of the representations of invented Indians.”³³ This line of flight towards becoming-perceptible is enabled by entering a block of becoming *with* the simulations of the ‘tribal real’ which in turn undergo the transformation(s) of *becomings-inverted*.

Blondeau’s works hover over the simulated and aestheticized byproducts of the manifest manners of domination and accelerate the speed of simulation by embodying characters that are themselves comprised of romantic colonial mythologies and what Marc Guillaume calls ‘combinatory fictions’. In this they disrupt the dissymmetrical interplay of simulated-alterity in the colonial environment because they arrive as a counter inversion that takes the form of a post-Indian narrative wherein simulation is played off simulation.

Blondeau's becoming-perceptible is made possible through a fatal strategy that consists of mobilizing the codes of simulation through the unreal intensification and escalation of the sign to the point where "everything is naturally inverted and collapses."³⁴ In other words, in Blondeau's works the Indigenous body becomes visible (perceptible) only by staging its own radical disappearance into the hyper-reality of simulation. It is in this spectral moment that in her performance Blondeau crosses the threshold of reversibility and contradiction, and therein forces all the signs to pass through the mirror of simulation and seduction. It is, as Baudrillard wrote, a fatal strategy that 'breaches the code' of hyper-reality through unanticipated reversals wherein the body stages its "own mode of disappearance, [and] thus [acquires] the maximal energy of appearances."³⁵

With *Belle Sauvage* Blondeau catalyzes the becoming-inverted of simulation by re-performing the hyperreality of the Indigenous body (the simulation of the Indian *Other*) by saturating the flesh with the *unreal* and embodying the spectacle of simulation. In Blondeau's performances of *simulated survivance* (Vizenor), the Indigenous body becomes-perceived, and these conversions of Native presence begin to haunt the emptiness of manifest manners and the simulations of dominance. As Vizenor might have said, Blondeau's works are post-Indian trickster stories of survivance that radicalize the qualities of the hyperreal and invert the hauntological disappearance of "real Indians" into the order of hyper-phantomality.

Becoming-embodied and becoming-virtual

Yuxweluptun's Virtual Reality artwork *Inherent Rights, Vision Rights* involves the *becoming-virtual* of the body and at once, the *becoming-embodied* of the digital code.

This particular block of becoming concerns both the transformation bodies and the territories that they traverse (the virtual simulation of a Coast Salish Longhouse) that does not entail a ‘correspondence of relations’, but rather a doubled ‘involution’ of *symbiosis*. It is, as Deleuze and Guattari would say, an instance in which two fundamentally heterogeneous elements “transform themselves into each other, [and] cross over into each other.”³⁶ in such a way that each are deterritorialized and drawn into an analogy of ‘internalized homologies’.

Cree/Métis theorist Loretta Todd wrote that the ‘ontology of technology’ (cyberspace, virtuality and immersive environments) are typically linked to different ideological/theological perspectives that are uniquely Western. For instance, she says, the (Western) ontology of cyberspace has traditionally been linked to the notion of transcendence—the “hell of western thought”³⁷—which here includes both a desire to escape the body and the ‘earthly plane’ and find solace in the virtual. Moreover, Todd writes that special conditions for this ontology of the virtual are derived from a combination of the Cartesian tendency to “separate the body from the mind,”³⁸ and religious (Christian) cosmologies invested in the myth of salvation.

N. Katherine Hayles, in her text *How We Became Posthuman*, would have said the same: that the (Western) ontology of technology tends to value ‘information’ over ‘material instantiation’; that our current conceptualization of the post-human regards consciousness as a mere epiphenomenon; and that our current dream of the technological future is still that of Hans Moravec’s apocalyptic prophecy of a post-biological reality.

But in Yuxweluptun’s work, Todd experiences something different, and so she begins to write about the reversal of the usual codes of a ontology of the virtual wherein

there is a return to the flesh in something similar to what Hayles called ‘*embodied virtuality*’—virtuality, that is, where the myth of transcendence and disembodied immortality are demystified, and embodiment and material embeddedness is written back into our concept of post-human subjectivity.

In Yuxweluptun’s work, the VR helmet (or mask) becomes a technology of immersion that transports the participant into a simulation of a Coast Salish Longhouse, an Indigenous space of worship and prayer where *sprit-simulations* begin to haunt the digital code. I wrote about this VR mask as being analogous to the Sxwaixwe masks in Coast Salish culture suggesting it to be a mediator between the incommensurable: *death and life, embodiment and disembodiment, virtuality and flesh*. But this time, it was a mask that did not act as a conduit to the spirit realm of our ancestors, but instead that through which a ‘mystical participation’ can be experienced with that of the virtual. In this sense, the VR mask allows us to consider the numinous qualities of the virtual wherein we might experience what Jung called a ‘shared psychic relationship’ with computer simulations.

This shared psychic relationship is precisely the block of becoming that is traversed in this artwork. It is what Deleuze and Guattari would call a ‘shared’ line of flight of symbiosis and becoming where bodies and simulations cross over into one another when entering a *zone of proximity*. It is thus a doubled becoming wherein a *becoming-embodied* and *becoming-virtual* enter into a liminal space of transversals, transformations and conversions—an event that causes a ‘new’ plane of consistency’ to formed that “applies equally to the inanimate and the animate, the artificial and the natural.”³⁹ As Cajete might have said, here the technological comes alive as it is thought

to ‘possesses spirit’ and therefore something that implies an interconnected (mutual) relationship, or a shared ‘psychic co-existence’.

Like with the Sxwaixwe mask, in Yuxweluptun’s work the VR helmet becomes a mediator between two seemingly incompatible realms—the human psyche and the technological circuit, pattern (code) and presence (body), biological organism and computer simulations. Which is to say here the (post-human) subject is considered to be neither simulation nor flesh, embodied nor disembodied, ‘information’ nor material ‘instantiation’, but simultaneously all of these at once. *Inherent Rights, Vision Rights* thus shows us a new concept of the virtual, one that doesn’t rehearse the usual codes of a (Western) ontology of the virtual, but rather one where *ensoulment* and an internalizing bond is formed—a *becoming-embodied* and a *becoming-virtual*—wherein an Indigenous ‘psychology of place’ also becomes a ‘psychology of virtuality’.

Becoming-Refrain, Becoming-Machine, Becoming-Animal

Within the sphere of Native Hip Hop there are many different becomings.

With the breakbeat there is the territorial assemblage of the refrain as the *becoming-expressive* of a musical milieu when a sonic plane is decodified and ruptured; following this, there is the subsequent *becoming-dimensional* of sound that occurs as the circular logic of the ‘break’ returns to its initial point of rupture, thus abandoning points of origin, and doing away with temporal coordinates; there is also the initial rupture of the break as the *becoming* of a new sonic plane or sonorous-assemblage, the boundaries of which are defined by flows and intensities of breakage, destruction and dislocation.

There is also the vocalizations, rhythmic-narrations, and stage-performance of the MC that crossover different zones of becoming: the *becoming-machine* of the voice wherein vocal enunciations begin with a ‘*break*’ from a linguistic ‘plane of consistency’ in the manner of slicing and cutting; the *becoming-territorial* of the voice as it forms rhythmic-rhyme-blocks of expressions that permit “a shifting interplay of comparative deterritorialization and reterritorialization”⁴⁰; the *becoming-wolf* of the MC that is manifest in his/her expressions of possessed vocality—an incorporeal transformation that here invokes the character of hunting societies, medicine societies and war parties. All of the above should be considered as kinds of becomings or transformations that flow through zones of possession, spirit realities, and spectral moments wherein bodies and multiplicities are deterritorialized and crossover into one another.

There is also that of the ‘circle of relations’ formed between the breakbeat assemblage, the vocalizations of the MC, and the eternal refrain of Mother Earth, “the intense point at the deepest level of the [sonic] territory.”⁴¹ This is a block of becoming wherein the assemblages of Native Hip Hop are drawn into a close embrace with the landscape and our ancestral geographies.

Like with Belmore’s work, Native Hip hop is about *writing new stories on the landscape* through activating a communal connection to our ancestral territories by empowering Indigenous people to speak to ‘all of our relations’. It is about nurturing a connection to our sacred landscapes through a *becoming-territorial* of the voice which involves the simultaneous *becoming-sonorous* of the landscape—except this time, our stories are not only written on the earth, but onto the buildings, bridges, and the concrete architecture of urban environments that in turn absorbs the voice of the people.

In another sense this interplay constitutes a crossing of a spectral landscape, that which is already hyper-territorialized by zones of colonial articulation. In this way it is also like Monkman's work, in that Native Hip Hop is about destratifying spaces of imperial and colonial codifications—about the becoming-disassembled of the territories of colonial mythologies which are effectuated by replacing, overwriting, and decoding these zones through transformations of *Becoming-Refrain*, *Becoming-Machine*, and *Becoming-Animal*.

Becomings-artifact and becomings-Undead

James Luna's *Artifact Piece* plays on the register of *becomings-artifact* and *becomings-undead*. Each of these are what Vizenor would have called conditions of transformation that take place under the sign of *Trickster hermeneutics* in that they consist of 'unexpected harmonies'—what Deleuze and Guattari called the strange imperative of *unnatural participation*—that invokes the intransitive operators and internalized contradictions present in the realities of shapeshifters.

Luna's *Artifact Piece* is a post-Indian performance of simulated survivance (Vizenor) that emerges from within colonial narratives and the occidental constructions of First Nations peoples. It is a fatalistic strategy (Baudrillard) about the reversal of the codes of simulation wherein the body becomes a spectacle for the purpose of absolving "...the simulations with stories of cultural conversions and native modernity."⁴² Luna's *becoming-artifact* is a shapeshifter story in translation that crosses the territory of the simulations of Indian *Other* and therein shores up against the entire edifice of colonial mythology and the manifest manners of domination. Luna's becoming-artifact is a

reversal of the ‘simulations of the tragic primitive’ wherein the body stages its own disappearance in to the realm of hyperreality emerging thereafter as “distinct from its double, from its shadow.”⁴³

The *becoming-artifact* of the artist shares a block of becoming with that of the artifact-museum assemblage, which in the process is transformed into a *body without organs* (Deleuze and Guattari). The artifact-museum assemblage as a territorial space of codification—or “semiotic system, [or] a regime of signs”⁴⁴—during this performance, is emptied of its significance and transported along a line of flight towards a deterritorialization of these codes. This is to say that Luna’s *becoming-artifact* crosses in-between a zone of proximity with the artifact-museum assemblage, which in turn causes the territorial organization (or plane of articulation) of this assemblage to become catatonic and ‘de-organ-ized’. In other words, it enters into contradiction with itself in its ‘display’ of the *living-dead*, artifactual body. Thus it is this ‘conversion of forces’ and reversal of the codes of simulation that causes the artifact-museum assemblage become disassembled and de-organized.

The other dimension of becoming in Artifact Piece is that of the phantomological transformation of *becomings-undead*.

In *Specters of Marx*, Derrida said that to exist means to have an ancestry, and further that to be ‘inhabited’ by ones ancestry means to have a *hauntology*—it means to be constituted by specters that have become internalized and incorporated in the haunted community of a single body.⁴⁵ He says that because inheritance is necessary for ‘a life’, a hauntology is, therefore, a condition of being: “Therefore ‘I am’ would mean ‘I am

haunted’.”⁴⁶ Thus, if ours could be considered a ‘geography of ancestry’, then it would be a haunted landscape populated by a multiplicity of spirits, revenants, and apparitions with whom we coexist in a ‘circle of relations’ (Deloria). This is to say that to read Derrida together with Deloria, the hauntological experience of ancestry can be imagined as a *spectral landscape*, a spatial (rather than temporal) phenomenon within which one is immersed and *of* which one is possessed.

As a condition of being, a hauntology is always about a spectral return (revenant) to the body that involves a *becoming-flesh* of the specter; it is a *doubled incorporation*, Derrida says, where a hauntology becomes embodied in that “privileged moment of spectral incarnation.”⁴⁷ A hauntology is an assemblage of specters, or what Derrida calls an ‘accumulation of ghostly layers’ that organize themselves on the body, thereby possessing and inhabiting the “living with the living-dead of ghosts.”⁴⁸ But the body is itself not a hauntology, rather it is a *plane of consistency* upon which an accumulation, coagulation, and sedimentation gathers, territorializes and then haunts the ‘host’ body.

Thus, prior to entering a block of becoming, the artist arrives on stage as the already spectralized and possessed body; but also, a body that seeks justice and retribution by taking up the project of conjuring away that which haunts it. If a hauntology is constituted by a *becoming-incarnate* of specters, then Luna’s performance is just the opposite: it is a *becoming-specter* or *becoming-undead* of the flesh. In the performative moment these two becomings thus traverse each other in simultaneous transition, and enter into an asymmetrical block or zone of spectral asymmetry *with* one another.

This doubled becoming between the living and the undead is what Derrida called a *paradoxical hunt* in which the body makes “a ghost of itself”⁴⁹ in order to conjure a hauntology such that it might be exorcised. Thus, I have said *Artifact Piece* is therefore a performance of conjuration *as* exorcism that is enabled by the fatal strategy of the body itself becoming-undead. It is a *becoming-undead* that involves passing through a spectral moment with a hauntology and traversing a spectral territory in the ‘very manner of a ghost’. Here, the body phantomizes itself in order to become the site of a hauntological mutiny, a ghostly revolt, a spectral insurrection, a “holy hunt against this specter.”⁵⁰ Luna’s performance is, thus, of spectralizing the disincarnation of the body and the transformation of the flesh in a ceremonial ritual of sacrificial dedication and spectral inversion.

...

Becoming-Onkwehonwe...

In *Wasáse: Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom* Kanienkeha philosopher Taiaiake Alfred wrote:

‘Being Onkwehonwe’ is living heritage, being part of a tradition—shared stories, beliefs, ways of thinking, ways of moving about in the world, lived experiences—that generate identities which, while every changing and diverse, are deeply rooted in the common ground of our heritages as original peoples.⁵¹

Being Onkwehonwe is not a fixed state existence but rather one that is rooted in our traditions that as Leroy Little Bear said “include ideas of constant motion and flux.”⁵²

Living ones life as Onkwehonwe means embodying a mode of being that is “constantly undergoing the process of transformation, deformation, and restoration.”⁵³

The ‘essence of life’ Leroy Little Bear wrote, is *movement*. Thus it might be said our existences as Onkwehonwe should not be characterized so much as a ‘state’ of *being*, but rather within the frameworks I have drawn, a ‘process’ of *becoming*.

Becoming-Onkwehonwe is “perpetual and continuous living”⁵⁴ that entails participating in a ‘lived’ experience of ancestry. It means, as Taiaiake Alfred wrote: “to live life as an act of indigeneity, to move across life’s landscapes in an indigenous way, as my people say, *Onkwehonweneha*.”⁵⁵

As Deloria said, Indigenous people have traditionally not invested in *temporal* notions of history but rather have always “combined history and geography so that they have a sacred geography.”⁵⁶ Thus *Becoming-Onkwehonwe* could be said to be about moving *through* these spaces of our heritage and crossing the ‘landscape’ of our ancestral geographies which are comprised of interconnected layers of collective memories, stories, and histories that have been ‘*written on the land*’, and inscribed into our sacred (psychological) territories.

In another sense, *becoming-Onkwehonwe* also means, as Alfred wrote, “being against the concept of history [that] is rationally constructed by imperial minds as conclusive, terminal, and instrumental to an imperial political order.”⁵⁷ *History*, in this sense, is part of a category of things I have called *territorial assemblages* that have been imposed on the landscape, terminal sectors of colonial articulation that dominate the spaces that they occupy. They are zones of (colonial) codifications that eclipse and overshadow that which is within their parameters on the *plane of stratification* that they

designate, and so they can be imagined as imperial structures of meaning and places of signification that dominate the terrain. (Some other things that would fall under this distinction that have appeared in this text are the Indian Act legislation, the simulations of the Indian Other, and what Vizenor called the manifest manners of domination that function to erase the ‘tribal real’).

In this text I have followed Deloria in thinking of our existences as Indigenous peoples through a *spatial* logic. I have conceptualized ours as being an ancestral landscape populated by animate spirits with whom we are interconnected and share an ‘internalizing bond’. If, as Leroy Little Bear wrote, we believe in a creed that says ‘all things are animate’, then I have said these territorializing zones of articulation are also animate and “imbued with spirit.”⁵⁸ I have said that they are a part of our ‘network of relations’ in that they mark territories that we cross in our movement through ‘life’s landscapes’. If ours is, indeed, an ancestral geography, it is one populated by a multiplicity of sprits, specters, phantoms and apparitions with whom we co-exist.

I have said ours is a ‘living’ experience of ancestry but also that it is one that inhabits and possesses us under the sign of what I called the *hauntological experience of ancestry*. From this perspective, I have endeavored to speculate about those specific spirits that would seemingly seek to do us harm; those undead apparitions who occupy our ancestral territories in the form of phantasmagorical afterimages that continue to ‘come back’ to haunt the living.

*“It is time for our people to live again.”*⁵⁹

I have not read a more inspirational way to begin a text than this passage from Alfred’s *Wasáse*.

To live again: such a statement would already draw us into proximity with that of *becomings-Onkwehonwe*, but it would also more crucially be about a call to a certain responsibility. In the book these words mark the beginning of a journey that would involve a focused commitment ‘together’ that would have to do with creating “meaningful change in our lives ... [of] surging against the forces that keep us bound to our colonial past.”⁶⁰ To ‘live again’, therefore, would be about passing through colonial zones of articulation and the manifest manners of domination to create ‘new realities’, or as Deloria said, to create “new forms and ceremonies to confront new situations.”⁶¹ For myself, such a process would involve passing through (and in-between) our hauntological landscapes wherein instances of *becoming-Onkwehonwe* would traverse what Derrida called the phantomological terrain of a *spectral moment*. It would mean embarking on a journey through these spectral injunctions *with* our ghosts, which would entail that a certain commitment must be made, for a hauntology Derrida says is always the responsibility of those who inherit it—there is “no inheritance without a call to a certain responsibility”⁶²

While ancestry is, for Derrida, something that is *inborn*, it is nevertheless something that requires work. As he says: “Inheritance is never a *given*, it is always a task ... it remains before us just as unquestionably as we are heirs.”⁶³ This task of inheritance, for Derrida, involves that of a commitment to perform acts of conjuration and exorcisms that involve passing through a hauntological moment with that which spectralizes. It is a commitment ‘together’, he says, that consists in “...swearing, taking an oath, therefore promising, deciding, taking a responsibility ... committing oneself in a performative fashion.”⁶⁴

Crucially, these acts of ‘*conjurement*’ are communal performances wherein a collectivity must be drawn together to exorcise some ghost. Derrida writes: “a conjuration, then, is first of all an alliance, to be sure, sometimes a political alliance ... a plot or a conspiracy.”⁶⁵ In this, a collectivity is thus ‘enjoined’ by a spectral presence and therein becomes a ‘gathering of forces’ that consists of those who seek to silence an apparition, to drive away a communal specter, and exorcise an evil doing spirit.⁶⁶

‘To live again’ would thus mean that *We*—the always next generation who inherit these spectral legacies—must take on this responsibility. It means we need to embark on this journey for ‘yesterday’s others’ and for “...those who are not yet born, or who are already dead ... be they victims of wars, political or other kinds of violence, nationalist, racist, colonialist, sexist, or other kinds of exterminations.”⁶⁷

A SPECTER is haunting Turtle Island...

The ghosts of history have displaced themselves across our ancestral geographies and, today, still mark the very existence of North America. Clusters, multiplicities and collectivities of ghosts, revenants and apparitions populate our ‘sacred landscapes’, and it is up to us as the heirs of these spectral histories to conjure and exorcise that which haunts.

“Now it is our turn,”⁶⁸ wrote Alfred. And so we must learn to pass through a spectral moment *with* that which ghosts our landscapes, which means taking on a responsibility that moves ‘beyond all living present’ because, justice must carry on beyond “my life” towards the lives of others, and in this “exceed any presence as presence to itself.”⁶⁹ We must cross these territorial (spectral) zones of articulation that

are comprised of the ‘impure, impure history of specters’ and move through (and with) the generations and generations of ghosts if we hope to “create a new reality for ourselves and our people.”⁷⁰

Becoming-Onkwehonwe, as I have understood it here, is also—like all other becomings in this text—a *becomings-undead*. This is because they are each passages and traversals through spectral landscapes and hauntological territories that involve different *fatal strategies* (Baudrillard) of sacrifice in their various becomings. They are crossings, translations and transformations wherein bodies are drawn into a ‘circle of relations’ with specters, ghosts and apparitions that therein ultimately produces the metamorphosis of both. They are all becomings-undead because they each enter into a block of *spectral-becoming*, and therefore share specific lines of flight and co-exiting deterritorilizations. The becomings in this text are all performances that intend ‘death to ghosts’ in their declaration to chase away a spectral adversary, an evil doing spirit or a collective haunting. They are therefore all becomings-undead because they move “[in]between two modalities or two temporalities in the conjunction [in a network of relations] with the dead, in the evocation or convocation of the specter.”⁷¹ In this sense, they are all also what Vizenor called shapeshifter stories wherein those who seek to exorcise a specter traverse and move through liminal zones and haunted realities in the ‘very manner of a ghost’. Thus for myself, ‘to live again’ would be about traveling through a zone of proximity with specters, “beyond [therefore] the opposition between presence and non-presence, actuality and inactuality, life and non-life.”⁷²

In our stories we always hear that *good and evil* are not distinct and separate things but rather are intrinsically interconnected and co-existing forces. There is always balance, but a “balancing that precludes opposites of both good and evil [that does not] seek a golden mean between two poles of moral expression.”⁷³

Yet, in nearly every one of our societies we still have our good and evil spirits—those who watch over us and protect the people, and those who are determined to haunt and spectralize the living ... sometimes, these spirits are one and the same.

This remains the subject of another book, because much more needs to be said about those spirits with which we co-exist that we would like to keep—those, as Derrida says, “one must not chase away ... [but] keep close by, and allow to come back.”⁷⁴ to watch over us.

In all of this I have only offered a warning in saying that the task or ‘magic trick’ that lays before us will be to distinguish between those spirits that we would like to exorcise and those spirits we would have remain with us: those spirits that “are not yet born or who are already dead”⁷⁵ that dwell in a liminal zone beyond all *living* presence—*they are our brothers and sisters, our fathers and mothers, our grandparents and our children...*

NOTES:

¹ Dee Brown, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* (Toronto, New York, London: Bantam Books, 1970), 165.

² *Ibid.*, 166.

³ In Edward S. Ellis, *The History of Our Country: From the Discovery of America to the Present Time* (Cincinnati and Ohio: Jones Brothers, 1900 [1st ed. 1895), 1483.

⁴ Brown, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*, 166.

⁵ Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin and the Foundations of Inequality Among Men* (India: New Delhi; Global Vision Publishing House, 2006), 76.

⁶ Gerald Vizenor, *Manifest Manners: Narratives on Postindian Survivance* (USA: First Bison Books printing, 1999), 3.

⁷ This was taken from an excerpt (from a paper read by Carlisle founder Capt. Richard H. Pratt at an 1892 convention) spotlights Pratt's pragmatic and frequently brutal methods for "civilizing" the "savages," in the context of the residential School system, including his analogies to the education and "civilizing" of African Americans: <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/4929/>

Official Report of the Nineteenth Annual Conference of Charities and Correction (1892), 46–59. Reprinted in Richard H. Pratt, "The Advantages of Mingling Indians with Whites," *Americanizing the American Indians: Writings by the "Friends of the Indian" 1880–1900* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973), 260–271.

⁸ Jacques Derrida, *Psyche: Inventions of the Other*. Peggy Kamuf and Elizabeth Rottenberg eds., (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2008), xviii.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 67.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, xviii.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, xix.

¹² *Ibid.*, 138.

-
- ¹³ Vizenor, *Manifest Manners*, 98.
- ¹⁴ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Brian Massumi, trans., (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 249.
- ¹⁵ Online: Jolene Rickard, *Rebecca Belmore: Performing Power*, under “Performing Power,” <http://www.rebeccabelmore.com/performing-power.html> (accessed November 1, 2011)
- ¹⁶ Gregory Cajete, *Native Science: Natural Laws of Interdependence* (Santa Fe, New Mexico: Clear Light Publishers, 2003), 20.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 187.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 186.
- ¹⁹ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 319.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, 339.
- ²¹ Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*. Charles Lam Markmann, trans., (New York: Grove Press, 1967), 145.
- ²² Georges Bataille, *The Absence of Myth: Writings on Surrealism* (Michael Richardson, trans., (London and New York: Verso, 2006), 49.
- ²³ Derrida, *Specters of Marx*,
- ²⁴ Vizenor, *Manifest Manners*, x-xi.
- ²⁵ Daniel Francis, *The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1992), 22.
- ²⁶ David Machintosh, “Miss Chief Eagle Testickle, Postindian Diva Warrior, in the Shadowy Hall of Mirrors” in *The Triumph of Miss Chief* exhibition catalogue (2008), 21.
- ²⁷ Vizenor, *Manifest Manners*, 8.
- ²⁸ George Catlin, *Letters and Notes on the Customs and Condition of the North American Indians* (London: Published by the Author, at the Egyptian Hall, Piccadilly; 1841), 215.

²⁹ Two-Spirit: “Two-Spirit”, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Two-spirit> (accessed November 1, 2011)

³⁰ Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 220.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 11.

³² Nicolas Abraham, *A Complement to Freud's Metapsychology*, Nicolas Rand trans., (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 287.

³³ Vizenor, *Manifest Manners*, 3.

³⁴ Jean Baudrillard, *Jean Baudrillard: Selected Writings*, edited by Mark Poster. 2nd eds., (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2001), 126.

³⁵ Jean Baudrillard, *Simulations*. Paul Foss, Paul Patton and Philip Beitchman, trans., (USA: Semiotext[e], 1983), 195.

³⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 249.

³⁷ Loretta Todd, “Indians in Cyberspace”, *Transference, Tradition, Technology*, Dana Claxton and Steven Loft eds. (Banff, Alberta: Walter Phillips Gallery Editions, 2006), 155.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 254.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 61

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 388.

⁴² Vizenor, *Manifest Manners*, x.

⁴³ Baudrillard, *Selected Writings*, 203.

⁴⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 504.

⁴⁵ Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 166.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 166.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 157.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 212.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 174.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, (holly hunt)**

⁵¹ Taiaiake Alfred, *Wasáse: Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom* (Toronto, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2005), 139.

⁵² Leroy Little Bear “Forward”, in Gregory Cajete, *Native Science: Natural Laws of Interdependence* (Santa Fe, New Mexico: Clear Light Publishers, 2003), x

⁵³ Alfred, *Wasáse*, 9.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 151.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 45.

⁵⁶ Vine Deloria jr., *God is Red: A Native View of Religion*. 3rd ed., (Golden, Colorado: Falcrum Publishing, 2003), 121.

⁵⁷ Alfred, *Wasáse*, 151.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, x.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁶¹ Vine Deloria jr., *For this Land: Writings on Religion in America*. James Treat eds., (New York and London: Routledge, 1999), 42.

⁶² Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 114.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 67.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 62.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 58.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 50.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, xviii.

⁶⁸ Alfred, *Wasáse*, 9.

⁶⁹ Derrida, *Specters of Marx* (source)

⁷⁰ Alfred, *Wasáse*, 19.

⁷¹ Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 150.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 13.

⁷³ Vine Deloria jr., *For this Land: Writings on Religion in America*. James Treat eds., (New York and London: Routledge, 1999), 154.

⁷⁴ Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 108.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, xviii.

Bibliography

- Alfred, Taiaiake. *Peace, Power, Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto*. Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- . *Wasáse: Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom*. Toronto, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2005
- Cajete, Gregory. *Native Science: Natural Laws of Interdependence*. Santa Fe, New Mexico: Clear Light Publishers, 2003.
- Claxton, Dana, Steven Loft and Melanie Townsend eds., *Transference, Tradition, Technology: Native New Media Exploring Visual & Digital Culture*. Banff, Alberta: Walter Phillips Gallery Editions, 2005.
- Bataille, Georges. *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927-1939*. Allan Stoekl, trans., Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985.
- . *Theory of Religion*. New York: Zone Books, 1992.
- . *The Absence of Myth: Writings on Surrealism*. Michael Richardson, trans., London and New York: Verso, 2006.
- Baudrillard, Jean. *Simulations*. Paul Foss, Paul Patton and Philip Beitchman, trans., USA: Semiotext[e], 1983.
- . *Seduction*. Brian Singer, trans., London: Macmillan, 1990.
- . *Symbolic Exchange and Death*. Iain Hamilton Grant, trans., London: Sage, 1993.
- . *Simulacra and Simulation*. Sheila Faria Glaser, trans., Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1994.
- . *Jean Baudrillard: Selected Writings*, edited by Mark Poster. 2nd eds., Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2001.
- Baudrillard, Jean and Marc Guillaume. *Radical Alterity*. Ames Hodges, trans., Los Angeles: Semiotext[e], 2008.
- Breton, Andre. *Manifestoes of Surrealism*. Richard Seaver and Helen Lane, trans., Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1969.

- Brown, Wendy. *Politics out of History*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001.
- Butler, Judith. *Undoing Gender*. London and New York: Routledge, 2004.
- Deleuze, Gilles. *Pure Immanence: Essays on A Life*. Anne Boyman, trans. New York: Zone Books, 2005.
- Deleuze, Gilles and Felix Guattari. *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem and Helen R. Lane, trans. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983.
- . *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Brian Massumi, trans., Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987.
- Deloria, Vine jr. *Red Earth, White Lies*. Golden, Colorado: Fulcrum Publishing, 1977.
- . *For this Land: Writings on Religion in America*. Edited by James Treat. New York and London: Routledge, 1999.
- . *God is Red: A Native View of Religion*. 3rd ed., Golden, Colorado: Fulcrum Publishing, 2003.
- . *The World We Used to Live In: Remembering the Powers of the Medicine Men*. Golden, Colorado: Fulcrum Publishing, 2006.
- Derrida, Jacques. *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International*. Peggy Kamuf, trans., New York and London: Routledge, 1994.
- . *Psyche: Inventions of the Other*. Edited by Peggy Kamuf and Elizabeth Rottenberg. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2008.
- Durozoi, Gerard. *History of the Surrealist Movement*. Alison Anderson, trans., Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997.
- Erdoes, Richard and Alfonso Ortiz. *American Indian Myths and Legends*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1984.
- Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks*. Charles Lam Markmann, trans., New York: Grove Press, 1967.
- . *The Wretched of the Earth*. Richard Philcox, trans., New York: Grove Press, 2004.
- Francis, Daniel. *The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture*. Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1992.

- Fenton, William N. *The Great Law and the Longhouse: A Political History of the Iroquois Confederacy*. Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998.
- Freud, Sigmund. *The Interpretation of Dreams*. Avon; Reissue edition, 1980.
- . *On Dreams*. W.W. Norton & Company, 1990.
- . *Delusion and Dream*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1956.
- . *Totem and Taboo*. New York: Random House, 1946.
- Frideres, James S. *Native Peoples in Canada (Contemporary Conflicts)*. Prentice-Hall Canada, 1988.
- Haraway, Donna. *A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century* London: Routledge, 2003.
- Hayles, Katherine N. *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature and Informatics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999.
- Heidegger, Martin. *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*. William Lovitt, trans., New York: Harper and Row, 1977.
- Holm, Bill. *Northwest Coast Indian Art*. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1965.
- Hopkins, Candice and Kerry Swanson. *Shapeshifters, Time Travelers and Storytellers*. Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum, 2005.
- Jennings, Francis. *The History and Culture of Iroquois Diplomacy*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1985.
- Jung, Carl. *Psyche & Symbols*. New York: Doubleday, 1955.
- . *Man and His Symbols*. Dell Publishing, 1964.
- . *Dreams*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1974.
- . *The Portable Jung*. Edited by Joseph Campbell, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1979.
- Kelsay, Isabel Thompson. *Joseph Brant 1743-1807*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1984.
- Kroker, Arthur. *The Possessed Individual: Technology and the French Postmodern*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992.

- . *The Will to Technology and the Culture of Nihilism*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004.
- Kroker, Arthur and Kroker, Marilouise, eds. *Life in the Wires: The CTheory Reader*. Victoria: New World Perspectives, 2004.
- Lippit, Akira Mizuta. *Atomic Light (Shadow Optics)*. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2005.
- Marchessault, Janine and Susan Lord. *Fluid Screens, Expanded Cinema*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008.
- McCllan, Audrey, eds., *The Triumph of Misschief*. Published in conjunction by Art Gallery of Hamilton and the Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art, 2010.
- McLuhan, Marshall. *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964.
- McMaster, Gerald. *Reservation X*. Fredericton: Goose Lane Editions, 1998.
- McMaster, Gerald and Lee-Ann Martin. *Indigena*. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1992.
- National Gallery of Canada. *Caught in the Act: The Viewer as Performer*. Ottawa, 2008.
- Paul, Christiane. *Digital Art*. 2nd ed., London: Thames and Hudson, 2008.
- Pertusati, Linda. *In Defense of Mohawk Land*. New York: State University of New York Press, 1997.
- Snow, Dean R. *The Iroquois*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers, 1994.
- Tooker, Elisabeth, ed., *An Iroquois Source Book Vol.2*. New York and London Garland Publishing, 1985.
- Trigger Bruce G. ed., *Handbook of North American Indians*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1978.
- Vizenor, Gerald and Robert A. Lee. *Postindian Conversations*. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1999.
- Vizenor, Gerald. *Manifest Manners: Narratives on Postindian Survivance*. USA: First Bison Books printing, 1999.
- Vizenor, Gerald, ed., *Survivance: Narratives of Native Presence*. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2008.

Wallace, Anthony F.C. *The Death and Rebirth of the Seneca*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1973.

Zizek, Slavoj. *The Sublime Object of Ideology*. London: Verso, 1999.

---. *Organs without Bodies: On Deleuze and Consequences*. London: Routledge, 2004.