

attuning flesh and bone

by

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Abstract

Can we tell story in a non-linear and non-verbal way? In a time consisting of various positionalities, points of view, practices of law, and languages, can multiple stories exist in one performance piece to share a sort of affect— a real-time story unfolding between the viewer and the performers, simultaneously touching on topics such as identity, gestural cultural lexicon, agency, memory, and the liminal spaces between cultures? There is a poetry in this, just as there is a poetry in the coexistence of many “things” at once, in this world. With so much complexity and intersection, words alone might not suffice for the felt understanding that people experience with one another. *attuning flesh and bone* is a piece that utilizes and highlights movement, voice, sound, and visuals as a means to share story, where ‘embodiment’ is the place that ‘metaphor’ and ‘tangible’ can meet in a felt way. Through the act of invitation, attendance, presence, giving, and receiving between the performers on stage and their relation to the audience, this piece hopes to evoke affective and kinesthetic responses, as a practice of empathic energetic exchange amidst sameness and difference— a moment of felt connection that, in its own way, holds valid truth in real-time.

Keywords: gesture and repetition; story; felt knowledge; communal rhythm; temporal non-linearity; cultural gestural lexicon

Dedication

To those of us who feel caught in the middle, whose hearts are tethered to where they are from, while their bodies reside elsewhere, this piece is for you. To those who have great love for their families, to those who negotiate the toggle of tradition, survival, change, and loss, this piece is for you. To the overseas Filipino workers, to those who left their homelands in hopes of a better future, and to those who had no choice but to leave their homeland, this work is for you. Migration and diaspora are complex and include various emotions and negotiations of culture and identity. I hope you find there is space for you in this work and I hope you feel seen, appreciated, and at home with those around you.

Acknowledgements

I write this paper on the unceded and ancestral homelands of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tseil-Waututh First Nations. I am an uninvited guest here, a Filipina and the first of my family to begin residing here in 2010. I am from a Southeast Asian archipelago that has been home to various Austronesian, migrant, indigenous, and urban peoples. Within this archipelago, I was born and raised in a place now commonly known as Manila, Philippines. My mother is of Ilocano and Pangasinan roots and my father is of Kapampangan roots. I write this paper as a cis-gendered woman of colour. Because of the hard work and dreams of my parents and the generations before them, I have been afforded many privileges that allow me to affiliate, learn, share, and exist within such an astute and liberal institution as Simon Fraser University.

This work and paper would not have been possible without the support of my family, friends, and colleagues:

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Defence Statement

Introduction

Each person's way of being is implicated by their place, history, and geography. Simultaneously, albeit at different propensities, each person implicates their surroundings and the larger frameworks in which they reside. As we begin, I first invite us to think of a non-linear felt equation made up of four factors: the body, recurring waves, time, and place. Let's liken a 'recurring wave' to a story, movement, habit, or lesson that comes up multiple times in one's life. Perhaps these waves recur over a span of days, perhaps years, even generations. In conjunction with time, 'place' also impacts the subject and 'wave' in question. When glass in the sand is repeatedly met by a literal ocean wave, it eventually turns into sea glass. Waves crashing into a rock formation can eventually erode the rock, changing the formation and shape. In a more metaphorical sense, what ephemeral inscriptions are left in the sand from past generations and how does the parallel context of place (i.e., location and migration) impact the current recurring waves that inform one's decisions?

Recurring waves are a metaphor that we can relate to the reciprocal exchange of individual cycles and that of larger societal frameworks. To explore this exchange further, I heed Yolanda Covington-Ward's call to begin with the body as the centre, conduit, and catalyst for self-reflection and change (Ward 232). In both my practice and this research, I aim to create space for a compassionate and courageous exploration of stories and gestural habits that reside in the body by drawing from the body's archival memory and gestural lexicon.

Within the reciprocity of individuals and societal frameworks exist various intersections between persons, cultures, and places. From birth, one's mind and inherited DNA are then influenced by their environment; upon birth, one would have found themselves objectively situated on a position within a 'map of privilege' (Keeling, personal communication, March 2-4, 2017). Corrina Keeling suggests that when one is born on the map of privilege, they inherit a set of goggles, a lens with which they walk through the world. When one has privilege, they have the freedom of choice to put their goggles down upon a change of lifestyle choice and try on someone else's goggles for

their chosen period of time, while an indication of ‘lack of privilege’ is to have their choice of lens limited to the goggles they inherited at birth.

As inherent intersections exist within the ‘map of privilege,’ we inevitably find ourselves parsing apart the multiple indications of sameness and difference between ourselves and those around us, whether within our family, our neighbourhood, a city, a country, or the globe. To sift through and acknowledge indications of sameness and difference is the act of gearing oneself up with the ability to empathize and interact with other peoples who hold different histories, geographies, and ways of being in their bodies. Thus, honing one’s locus of control in ways of interacting with and implicating larger societal frameworks (Van Der Kolk 115-116).

The seeds I’ve planted for my work thus far have been that of embodied inquiry of some *many parts* that make up the self— the self that both implicates larger society and is impacted by larger frameworks. As a Filipina artist who was born and raised in the Philippines, now residing on the unceded territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tseil-Waututh First Nations, I negotiate the distribution of weight on these lands; acknowledging the gifts that I have to offer this land and society, while also understanding my privileges. What comprises this “weight” are the places, cultures, customs, and habits that have been instilled in my body through biological and learned means. In conjunction, I am responsible for the way I enact this “weight” onto this place and society. I have made dance films that explore this and its implications and I have worked with communities and artists on both Coast Salish territories and the Philippines, processes of which have been framed with a facilitation style that merges embodiment, agency, real-time composition, viewpoints, and care.

Background

As a Filipina joining the diasporic community at the age of 18, it seemed almost a rite of passage to “seek the source” of my identity or to validate my ‘authenticity.’ Perhaps this was an act of grief and making sense of what was, what is changing, and what was lost and/or stolen— histories of which may forever remain a mystery to me. Living away from my motherland and witnessing continued shifts and reinforcements of old and new habits, gestures, and values, I’ve learned that my identity is nuanced. As I proudly share in a cultural gestural lexicon as that of Filipino peoples, I simultaneously

acknowledge the differences that exist between the many *kinds* of Filipinos, whether residing in the Philippines or in diaspora and whether born in the Philippines or in diaspora. Filipinos are peoples of an archipelago, a place that was arbitrarily carved out by its colonizers and named after King Philip II of Spain. The archipelago was colonized by Spain for 300 years, then America for 48, followed by Japan who colonized the Philippines for three years. Due to the geography, history of colonization, and intra-archipelagic migrations, an inherent comparison, almost competition, for “Filipino-ness” can exist within the Filipino peoples. Nick Joaquin famously stated, “The identity of the Filipino is of a person asking what is his identity,” and while this holds poignant truth, I add that it is impossible to singularize ‘Filipino’ into only one definition, as “Filipino” can be painted by different islands, dialects, geographical terrains, and migration patterns.

My parents and I thought my migration to Vancouver to be an organic shift from high school. While exciting and new, I now realize this migration in 2010 meant I was to be “othered,” thus often having to define my “self”, citizenship, and ethnicity, or by the simple assumption that I needed to learn individualistic and dominant western codes of conduct (i.e., humour, fashion, ways of speaking) to feel a sense of belonging. An impressionable 18-year-old at the time, I was perhaps oblivious to the power that gesture holds. I didn’t realize the way in which I was implicating myself within a larger colonial framework. While othered, I was simultaneously given an opportunity to be an expert on my own identity. I could share my views of my Filipino culture and not be questioned by those who were not Filipino themselves. Thus far, I have lived in the Philippines for over 18 years and in Vancouver for about 12 years. Now, I believe that the freedom to identify myself and inherently represent aspects of where I am from is attached to a responsibility to track my affect, gestures, position, and actions here on unceded lands. My body continues to consciously and subconsciously house, adopt, and renegotiate all sorts of gestures, habits, and stories imprinted from my homeland, Filipino relations, and DNA, and that which I experience and learn here on Coast Salish Territories.

Work leading up to MFA

Prior to starting the Master of Fine Arts Program at SFU, in the Fall of 2020, I had begun exploring questions around identity, culture, sameness, and difference. In 2018, I returned to the Philippines with the support of the British Columbia Arts Council ‘Early

Career Development Grant' to create a dance film via a movement research process called "The MariaClara Project." I worked with ten Filipina dancers and three Filipino videographers. The dancers and I engaged in movement research for a total of 20 hours, over the course of 5 days, exploring what it meant to us to be Filipina. We then travelled to a coconut plantation where we shot the film, now called *Kariskis*. This project aimed to explore the nuances of Jose Rizal's fictional character, Maria Clara, whose name has become a byword for the 'Filipino woman.' We explored her "demure" qualities to portray the strength in softness. This process also challenged preconceptions and social expectations of females in the Philippines. Through the medium of movement on film, *Kariskis*, celebrates various Filipinas and femme Filipinxs in their tenderness, beauty, laughter, and strength.



Image 1. Kariskis dancers in Bulacnin Farm; Photography by DeeJ Fabian

I returned to Vancouver and attended an "Indigenous Allyship Training" course by Pulxaneeks, a Haisla facilitator who creates space for current residents of Canada to learn about and process the realities of colonization on Turtle Island. Following this, I pursued 2 mentorships: one with Pulxaneeks and another with Rob Kitsos, with the support of a Professional Development Grant from the Canada Council. Pulxaneeks called our style of mentorship 'coyote mentorship,' a way of learning via witnessing and supporting her in her work. During our 'coyote mentorship,' I was her 'emotional support' for two Indigenous Allyship Training courses, witnessing how her practice of radical self-

care was integral in facilitating with care and compassion. Paired with Rob's mentorship on viewpoints and real-time composition, I delved into a facilitation and creation space with eight other artists, where I practiced facilitating 'making as a way of thinking' with transparency, care, and agency. Making as a way of thinking and choreography as a practice of empathy frame my arts practice and facilitation style.



Image 2. Photograph of artists who participated in my facilitation practice as a culmination of 2 mentorships with Rob Kitsos and Pulxaneeks

The mentorships were in timely preparation for a 2019-2020 experiential research phase that was supported by a Canada Council Research and Creation Grant, wherein I spent 8 months in the Philippines immersing myself in two indigenous communities: the Applai community in the Cordillera Mountains and the Kagan Tribe in Davao del Sur, as well as urban communities in Manila. In this experiential research phase, I intentionally gained 'felt knowledge' in the kinds of 'sameness and difference' that reside within the many islands of the Philippines.



Image 3. A ball made of coconut leaf as taught to me by Kaulo children;
Photographed by Tin Gamboa in Waan, Davao



Image 4. Learning to make roofing out of lumbiya leaf w/Kaulo community;
Photographed by Tin Gamboa

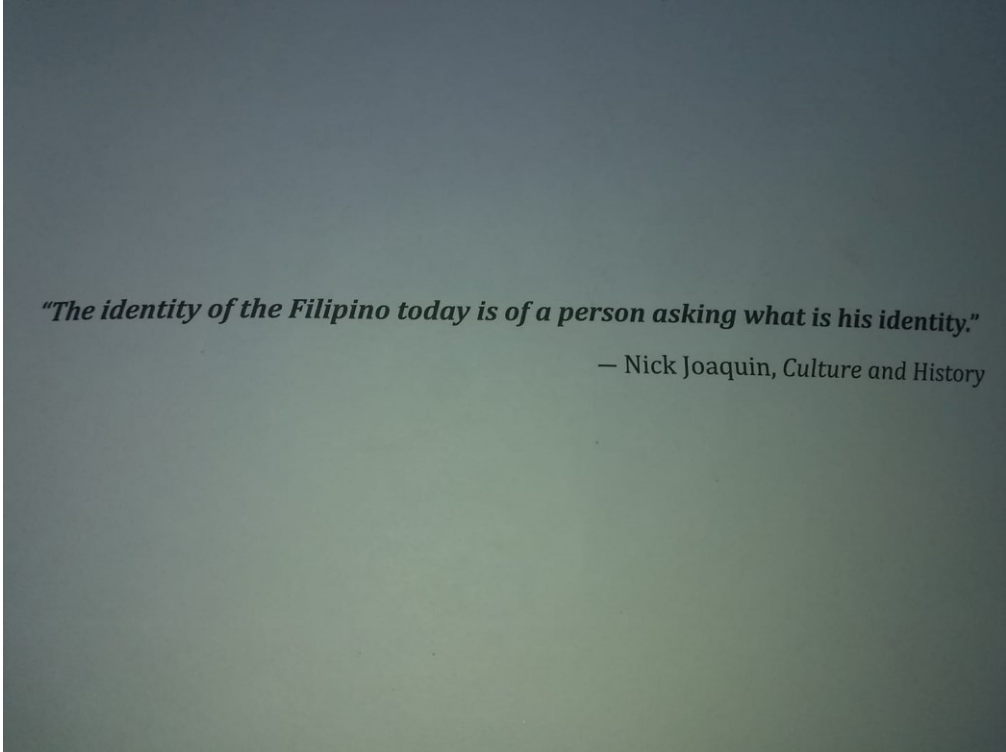


Image 5. Photographed by Tin Gamboa in Manila, Philippines



Image 6. Kadayawan Festival Parade; Photographed by Tin Gamboa in Davao, Philippines

Work during MFA

During my MFA I created works, both solo and collaborative works, that explored choreographic ethnography and sensory ecology. It was a privilege to have access to theory, technical resources, and interdisciplinary colleagues that informed my interests further. In this program I was given the opportunity to explore video, projection, and sound in a way that I had not before, contributing to the interdisciplinary, sensory, and affective aspects of my work and research.

in/organic, 2021

in/organic was a collaborative experimental performance film that used sound, movement, digital image, lighting design, and projection. It was a collaborative work between myself and Barry Despenza. *in/organic* was a tryptic video installation that 2-dimensionally portrayed 3-dimensional experimental conversations between the body, light, sound, and space. Prompted by the various kinaesthetic meeting places between the body's senses and the materials of sound, light, and video projection, this piece explored the artists' joint codes of conduct and their individual autonomy within the world of their making.



Image 7. Screenshot by Barry Despenza of video footage by Katie Kozak; *in/organic* 2021

CA887 Class and Alvin Erasga Tolentino's studio salon, 2021

I had created a solo work-in-progress as well as a short film that both touched on sensation and memory as well as an expression of various questions that might not be answered within this lifetime. The ocean was a symbol, sound, and image that came up multiple times in these projects as I found the ocean to have the capacity to hold so much range: gentle and quiet to rough and roaring. The ocean was a “place to meet,” whether as a connection between landmasses; a point of knowledge, memory, and livelihood between cultures or people; or a literal *place* to meet. It also holds its own acts of repetition, embodying ‘difference’ within the ‘similarity’ of waves crashing onto the shore, shifting between high and low tides.



Image 8. Screenshot of a film project for CA887; footage by Tin Gamboa

Context

Embodied gestures, agency, and resulting collective stories are key factors for ‘cultural survival’ that encompasses a culture’s tendencies to remain, shift, change, and misplace. Sally Ann Ness and Carrie Noland touch on one’s agency to gesture towards ‘cultural survival’ through their research on gesture and its resulting inward, outward, tangible, and intangible outcomes or inscriptions (Ness 4 & Noland 2). Some examples of these inscriptions are culture, belief system, experience, physical trait, trauma, and

history. These could be experienced by multiple individuals who then share a felt understanding that is carried through, altered, or lost through the repetition or cessation of gestures.

Gestures, and the stories that accompany them, migrate from body to body, generation to generation, and place to place. To repeat, alter, or omit gestures is a practice of agency (Noland 2) that impacts a cultural lexicon. Carrie Noland shares that repetition is a key factor that reinforces or discontinues aspects of a shared culture and shared understanding. “How does embodying socialized gestures produce an expression of movement— its texture and velocity — that end up altering the routine, the body that performs the routine, and eventually, perhaps, culture itself?” (Noland 2). To which Noland would answer: “gestures, the learned techniques of the body, are the means by which cultural conditioning [, via repetition,] is simultaneously embodied,” as well as challenged (2). Pointing to repetition and how it affords gesture great power in its mundane kinesthetic act, Noland shares how a gesture can alter, not just the individual who enacts the gesture, but also the intangible routine, culture, and society in which they live.

It could appear that a current ‘cultural gestural lexicon’ is a momentary imprint or ephemeral inscription from repeated gestures that enforce or negate this very lexicon. Sally Ann Ness explores the notion of ephemerality by considering the opposite, the tangible and permanent inscriptions of a gesture. She does this by comparing the inscriptions of ‘writing’ and ‘gesturing.’ Regarding written inscriptions, she describes the “in-” of *inscription* as the “hollowed-out consequence” left from etching something onto a surface (4-5). Ness points out that, to the naked eye, an outwardly performed gesture ephemerally carves into space or into the viewer’s gaze, leaving no tangible hollowed-out imprint (4), thus urging her readers to look at the inward tangible inscriptions and how, through generations and time, a repeated gesture can alter bone shape and posture (20). While tangible inscriptions of this kind offer individuals of the same gestural practices an embodied understanding from enacted routines that result in shared traits, a gesture need not result in ‘tangible inward inscriptions’ alone to support cultural survival and belonging.

Anne Riley stresses the importance of intangible felt understanding, as she likens this to ‘home,’ a feeling of belonging that one need not explain every experience

because there already exists an embodied baseline understanding of a shared history (par.3). Something so intangible as felt understanding can be shared through intangible outward inscriptions of body language, gestures, and stories (verbal and non-verbal). There is a great power in storytelling, and plenty of stories to tell with gesture. Thomas King urges his readers to be mindful of what story they start with, or rather, what stories they use to contextualize a way of being or approach to a community and place (sec. 1). Yuval Noah Harari would add that a person's ability to recount stories, and their ability to create fictions and myths, promote an artificial set of instincts called 'culture,' and can have great impacts on collective action (163). Just as embodied understanding can be shared through the act of telling stories, the act of learning and outwardly performing gestures can reinforce meanings, practices, and stories onto the body as well. Gesture offers story a non-verbal space to be expressed, embodied, and retold.

While I relate one's agency to the performance of a gesture, I acknowledge that individuals of cultures that have undergone migrations or even forceful erasures are forced through the labour of negotiating authenticity, reclamation, reimagination, representation, and appropriation. 'Authentic' might mean untouched and uninfluenced. However, with the implications of mundane and unforgiving events of history that greatly impact the present, such as colonization, wars, and national economic struggle, it seems unfair to ask any culture, nation, or person to hold this untouched, 'authentic' status. Does 'authentic' mean static and never changing? Can 'authentic' mean "a genuine navigation through a moment", and if so, how then can or does one's authentic reality implicate the representation of a larger culture? One would be hard-pressed to find themselves in an "untouched," "unaffected," or "pure" place. I would like to think that the self, identity, and culture are inevitably an ebbing and flowing negotiation vs. a stagnant state of being. Thus, I propose that authenticity is the real-time practice of agency and negotiation of affect to either explore, be curious, reinforce, learn, or halt through one's everyday actions and negotiations. At present, one can authentically be who they are, parts of themselves a representation of their authentic and evolving culture. Within this nuanced reality, is a negotiation of agency that requires care and empathy. Gestures and stories have the power to contextualize values and actions that can create change, so I work to explore the ways in which these stories can be shared in the rehearsal space and on stage. Concurrently, I write and discuss to contextualize the creative process and performance, as well as to mitigate misrepresentation and appropriation.

The work itself

As the facilitator of this project, I found myself working with and through the pushes and pulls of aesthetic and social dynamics in the creation space, something that I've found to be an integral aspect of my choreographic practice. Facilitation included the roles of both archivist and composer. I started the process by first engaging the dancers with the initial idea/s. We discussed expectations, roles, and boundaries, all of which held a malleability for change throughout the process. Discussing this at the beginning gave us a good springboard and foundation of trust, a key piece in creating this work. In the movement research phase, I first engaged with the dancers as the "archivist." Through improvisational tasks and composition tools such as viewpoints and real-time composition, we activated the body's archive and explored stories and gestures that exist within ourselves to procure movement vocabulary that articulates sameness and difference through specificity. The "archivist" was then paired with the "composer," as the movement vocabulary and research process were composed into a performance piece. After which, the "composer" took on a primary role in the creation process, editing the overall piece that was to be shared with the audience. While acknowledging this shift from archivist, to archivist-composer, to composer, I note the invaluable sources of movement from the dancers, including their stories and their gestures, as well as the role the facilitator takes in composing these into a piece. I acknowledge this for the sake of naming the realities, hierarchies, and roles in the creation and presentation of this piece. The relationship of trust and agency thus required careful negotiation of relating-with, moving-with, hearing-with, and creating-with (Bellacasa 1).

Trust and agency were exercised within an embodied and mathematical process of addition and subtraction, then multiplication, and at times omission. From an idea and a desire to create a performance piece, I added members to the team, artists who poured in parts of themselves, making the work whole. I started movement research by first working with dancers one-on-one. This allowed me to check in more personally with each dancer, discuss our community agreements on boundaries, agency, and expectations, as well as discuss the topics of interest for this piece (i.e., identity, gestures, language, sound, and projections). During this time, I was able to understand whom I was working with and where the dancers resonated with my interests. These one-on-one rehearsals allowed me to build a sense of trust. We later gathered in group

rehearsals, where we worked on larger sections and mathematical compositions. To aid this process, we delved into story-telling exercises, as well as voice, and improvisation scores.



Image 9. Photograph by Mikela Vuorensivu of *attuning flesh and bone* cast

One of the first movement prompts was to explore movement phrases as they related to one's ancestral mother tongue, by embodying language, its sonic intonation, pauses, texture, and weight. Gestures were added to create whole movement phrases. Each solo phrase was paired into a duet and duets were then performed alongside each other. In creating multiple duets, there was a subset process of subtracting gestures from one phrase and replacing or adding them to a section from someone else's phrase. Sometimes gestures were repeated and thus multiplied. This section is called the 'puzzle section' and was also paired with real-time video and a ghostly effect that was built by the lighting and projection designer, Alexandra Caprara. The multiplied image of dancers was meant to provide a visual repetition of motions permeating through time. Live video feed allowed this section to portray the ephemerality of gesture's outward inscriptions.

'Puzzle section' was an interesting experiment of a section comprising of cumulative individualities put together into a whole section. The repetition of certain movements allowed for agency in deciding how to perform the movement that sometimes ends up being different from the original intent, offering insight into the

inevitable shifts that take place throughout time, including a developed shared language built through repetition and exposure to dancing as a group. Interestingly enough, the nuances between each dancer's movement styles are more obvious when dancers are performing the same gestures in unison.



Image 10. Puzzle section of *attuning flesh and bone*; Photograph by Mikela Vuorensivu of *attuning flesh and bone* cast

Individuality is also presented during each dancer's solo that stems from stories they have shared in the rehearsal space. These solos are accompanied by sound and/or video projection. Multiple dancers provided sound recordings that I edited and spliced together compositionally. Rohini Soedhwa mastered all the edited sound scores. In addition, she composed a 'breathe score' consisting of found water sounds and recordings of my breath, and she composed haunting scores of my voice singing the 'ili-ili' lullaby, edited in what she and I called a sort of affective "tone" that carries a nostalgic feel. Sound was also present in body percussion where we collectively worked to find an improvised cumulative sound score, at times omitting rhythms while keeping our own perception of the group rhythm in mind—a sonic act of empathy that we could internally remember while coming to silence and bringing the rhythm back when we please. This was a practice of communal rhythm. The whole piece itself could be seen as a sound score, sound being a valuable method in activating and holding space for attuning with each other in the work.



**Image 11. First sound circle improvisation of *attuning flesh and bone*;
Photograph by Mikela Vuorensivu of *attuning flesh and bone* cast**

By way of projection, there was a mix of live video feed and pre-recorded video. Two dancers procured footage for pre-recorded video, while other pre-recorded videos were screen-recordings of dancers and recorded live feed in the performance space. The live video effects were not only built but also performed live by Alexandra Caprara. Making clear choices between pre-recorded video of gestures and live video feed were integral in the expression of past and present, as projection was either born out of real-time movement and live video feed, or seemingly informed the decisions of the dancers' real-time movement on stage. Layering movement, sound, and video created a texture and affective essence of the story being told. This interdisciplinary process of abstraction afforded us freedom of expression and responsibility in exploration, as we chose what is kept for the self, what is shared with an audience, and how it is shared.

There are sections in the piece wherein we move through the space and on the floor with "inscribing" as a prompt. At the end of the piece, a ghostly series of gestures are left in the space with the aid of top-down pre-recorded projections. While worthwhile to acknowledge the tangible inscriptions of gesture, my movement research acknowledges and explores the felt inscriptions or imprints left behind from previous generations. The dancers and I reflected on felt inscriptions that still exist in the body through the oral, musical, and gestural telling of stories, no matter how seemingly mundane and ephemeral. Allotting each dancer about 7 minutes each, this was our

practice of sharing, taking, giving, and receiving space. How then was I, as choreographer/director, to choose a specific story that can act as an access point for expression, and how can it be composed in such a way that the more intimate details are kept only for the cast in the rehearsal room and not leaked out onto the stage? The way in which stories were ultimately shared on the stage was through the different textures that movement, sound, and visuals can offer. We appealed to the audience's senses and their freedom to imagine and fill in the blanks.

To create a piece that is meant to hold space, one has to hold the container of the process in a particular way— a way that is aware of the ongoings and dynamics in the room. I found that 'the container' is malleable and ever-shifting, therefore my act of 'holding' the container must be of a touch that knows when to be firm and when to be gentle. In facilitating this space, respecting agency while also taking action to serve the work were both necessary. We would check in at the beginning of every rehearsal and do a communal clap at the end of every rehearsal. To be able to share stories and feel free to improvise, I facilitated a welcoming space for the work to take place; a balance of knowing when to let the story and emotion ring in the space and knowing when to use the container of the work as a means for each performer to move through these emotions and reflections. In the end, this piece was a container that could hold our individual and collective stories. To have a container that allowed us to move through our experience, further allowed us to be responsible for our respective agencies while doing so alongside fellow cast members within the container. To perform and work with this container required an ability to ground oneself and sense the group. It is a performance of honesty, presence, witnessing each other, as well as being witnessed.



Image 12. Learning section of *attuning flesh and bone*; Photograph by Mikela Vuorensivu of *attuning flesh and bone* cast



Image 13. Circular floor section of *attuning flesh and bone*; Still by Joseph Malbon and his footage of *attuning flesh and bone*

Reflections/ further questions

This piece explored the power of gesture as well as the power of story. Within the reciprocal exchange of individual and larger societal framework, what can sway collective decision toward positive change are one's agency to act and one's agency to choose which story they tell. The piece eventually took on a life of its own from the creation phase to presentation, as the container for 'making' eventually submitted the work to each performer, giving each one ownership of the performance. With coordinates of the piece, composition, and 'performer agency' in place, audience members were invited to attend the shows and experience the piece. It is intriguing to reflect on the interactions that took place between performers on stage and that which took place between the performers and audience members. During the opening improvisation that helped to set the tone for the work, the dancers collectively found a rhythm then decided when to omit sounds and movements. At the onset of the piece, the audience is immediately invited to improvise as they remember or imagine the omitted sounds in their minds— a moment in which their imagined and intangible fictions have complete permission to *be* reality. Each moment-to-moment experience and sensation of audience and performer, an authentic real-time navigation.

My hope is that *attuning flesh and bone* could liberate the mundane nuanced gestures of our bodies through exploring the 'stories that comprise different facets of one's identity' (the "who") instead of confining the body and its nuanced identities to the mere 'label of identity (the "what")' (McWatt 220). Within a label, much complexity resides and in this 'complexity' can reside authenticity. As a cast, we often reflected on what it meant to acknowledge the relationship between the past and the present gestures/stories that reside in the body. How do we navigate the relationship between points in time and aptly present our perceptions and remnants of culture as they are now? We aimed to explore these presentations and re-presentations in non-appropriative ways, while also remaining curious to the present shifts and self-expression taking place in real-time. In these moments, the tools of 'gesture' and 'contemporizing' allowed us freedom to explore the complexities within our bodies, identities, and stories. These gave us room to shift accordingly in moving with and alongside things that we may never fully know, things we are uncertain of, and the things we *do* know regarding intricacies that comprise the coordinates of body, place, and time.

Gesture and the freedom of contemporizing through viewpoints and real-time composition were proven to be valuable tools in these embodied reflections of the nuances in one's identity that may not be outrightly expressed in a mere label of nationality or citizenship.

Our approach in this navigation was to trust that aspects of our culture/s have inherently imprinted themselves onto our flesh and bone and can present themselves in the simplest gestures (i.e., posture, physical tensegrity, etc.). It was a matter of respectfully activating the body's archive that houses mundane pieces of information, as well as sustaining a container that simultaneously holds and propels the work of attunement, cultural complexity, loss, survival, and empathy. This activation brings an audience into a space orchestrated with stories. In the case of *attuning flesh and bone*, these were stories of bodies of colour, inviting any audience member to witness and interpret the work as they wish. I continue to learn about and work on this form (i.e., what needs to be made clear from the beginning of the process; how to make decisions that safely and curiously propel the work forward; what stories remain in the rehearsal space; what stories we portray in the theatre; and my role as archivist, composer, and performer).

With the sameness and difference that resided within the creative team, I found that embodiment played an integral role in empathy. When we worked to embody someone else's gestures, the attempt and thought process fired up mirror neurons and our ability to empathize with the other's experience and positionality as well. To practice and witness someone else's embodiment is a form of listening and informing the way that we might proceed in an interaction or relationship.

If we look at the cast and the piece as a micro-example of a "culture" developed within the group, in that our rehearsals developed protocols, social dynamics, and a performance that acted as a rough script, each dancer practiced the agency to perform each moment with an intention of their choosing. In this way, the repetition, alteration, or cessation of actions do not only signify agency of outward performance but also the ability to explore inward. As the piece was choreographed to share stories, I have found that the piece itself is an ever-evolving container in its performance. Each moment in time and each experience with an audience, informed how we might perform the next show, even in the most minute ways. Authenticity and the self are inevitably ever-

evolving and an embodied tracking of this process could perhaps *be* one of the definitions of authenticity itself, allowing for simultaneous change and survival, while also acknowledging the relationship between past, present, and future.

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Appendix A.

Gestures of Ethical Relationality

“Isaac Newton said, ‘for every action there [is] always opposed and equal reaction,’” to which Thomas King wondered “had [Newton] been a writer he might simply have said, “to every action, there is a story”” (qtd. in “The Truth About Stories: A Native Narrative” 00:45:05-00:45:37). In respect to King’s acknowledgement of the power of story, this paper asks us to acknowledge *what* stories we start with and *why*, as a means to acknowledge one’s position of privilege or lack thereof. Thus, allowing us to reflect on our position’s relationships to those around us and how we might choose to gesture-around, gesture-away, gesture-alongside, gesture-with, or gesture-towards them (Bellacasa 1). Dwayne Donald would summarize this act of relating to, alongside, and with others as an ‘ethical relationality,’ “an ecological understanding of human relationality that does not deny difference, but rather seeks to more deeply understand how our different histories and experiences position us in relation to each other” (qtd. in “From fish lives to fish law: learning to see Indigenous legal orders in Canada”). On Turtle Island, the place now commonly known as North America, ethical relationality is deeply challenged by imbalanced power dynamics and racial hierarchies brought about by capitalism and colonialism. These larger frameworks impact the identities and experiences of its residents who, in turn, perform gestures that either promote or hinder their practice of ethical relationality and that of the cultural groups and nations they identify with. This paper will argue that the gestures of collective ethical relationality are reciprocally made possible by individual reflexivity and one’s ability to oscillate between ‘affective freedom’ and ‘social determinism’ (Hemmings 548). One might describe affect as a pre-conscious form of emotion. Eve Sedgwick would suggest that ‘affective freedom’ is ‘affect’ attaching to an individual. “[A]s cultural theorists[, we] have a duty to attend to the patterns and effects of such surprise[,] rather than to the social frameworks that we already know,” thus signalling to our individual freedom and responsibility to trace affect accordingly (Hemmings 559). Social determinism, on the other hand, refers to a lack of freedom in the way it implies that our ways of being are so largely determined by the social structures in which we reside.

The stories and statements we start with have great power and we each have a responsibility to them, as shared stories impact identity and in effect, the gestures and actions of survival and social cooperation that one performs. According to Yuval Noah Harari, the author of 'Sapiens', gossip, a sort of informal form of storytelling, played an important role in the survival of sapiens' communities (24). Throughout sapiens' evolution, gossip has allowed individuals to know which relationships were worth aligning with in their community as well as where to go for food (Harari 22-25). However, the system of narrativizing and story sharing begins to shift when a community or group of people move beyond the "threshold of 150 people" (Harari 27), at which point shared common myths, beliefs, and systems are required to maintain a sense of order. These common beliefs are set in motion within systems and are "bought into" rather automatically for one to participate in society. This participation can be expressed, enforced, or stopped through daily gestures. "[F]iction has enabled us not merely to imagine things, but to do so *collectively*" (Harari 25). For example, a culture of reverence towards older age groups is a common understanding or belief that results in a set of common codes of conduct. Within the choreographies of Filipino families, the elders, aunts, and uncles are first to be greeted with a 'beso' or cheek-to-cheek greeting. These gestures are enforced with acceptance from elders and community members. Failure to enforce the teaching and repetition of this gesture results in community gossip of undesirable behaviour. These rules and codes of conduct support a choreographic order that maintains hierarchies and value systems within families in the Philippines. Other examples of common myths are a belief in nationality, dominance of cultures, the existence of human rights, and the existence of nations (Harari 28). However, not everyone is so easily welcomed into dominant common myths that shape one's narratives and implicate one's gestures, nor is everyone given equal opportunity to create or benefit from legal fictions. Legal fictions differ from common myths in the way that legal fictions are legal entities that participate within the order of common myths (29). "It can't be pointed at; it is not a physical object. But it exists as a legal entity. Just like you or me, it is bound by the laws of the countries in which it operates" (Harari 29).

If ethical relationality includes the *acknowledgement of the differences* that exist between beings, and if these differences inherently exist upon one's placement onto a 'map of privilege' (Keeling), shouldn't a key course of action in achieving ethical relationality be the act of refining one's ability to acknowledge their positionality within

community, place, and time? Thus, creating an ability to distinguish sameness and difference between various ways of being within time and place, throughout time, and from place to place, in addition to understanding what larger frameworks and stories bind us together.

During an Indigenous Allyship Training course, guest presenter, Corrina Keeling, explained that each individual is born onto a map of privilege. One's position on this map is "nothing personal" as the birth onto this map happens by a stroke of chance. When born onto one's place on this map, he/she/they inherit a "set of goggles" with which to walk through and experience the world. Keeling furthered her description of privilege by explaining that while one could take a moment to glimpse through another's lenses, the measure of one's privilege is determined by: 1. one's ability to empathize with another's position on the map of privilege, 2. one's ability to explore different sets of goggles, and most especially, 3. by one's capacity to return to their own goggles at their leisure and whim.

Additional coordinates of one's position on the map of privilege are the family and community he/she/they are born into, as this impacts an individual's ability to belong, relate to others, and *be* in community with others. Individuals develop a sense of belonging, resilience and ability to relate in their formative moments with primary caregivers whose gestures of touch greatly contribute to one's sense of attunement, attachment, equilibrium, internal locus of control, secure base, and mirror neurons (Van der Kolk 112-116). Ways of interacting with one's environment and peers filter into an individual sense of identity that could then be altered or influenced through time and place, into "new networks of expressiveness" (Ness and Noland xvi).

While it is evident thus far that each person's identity and experience are largely intertwined with their inherited social environment and climate, it is important to also understand that human beings are not simply determined by their environment. An individual also has the capacity to gesture toward changes they might like to see in the world and to share the stories they might like perpetuated in the world. This can be seen in one's ability to contribute to larger fictions through one's own practice and actions. Stories that are learned from one's social environment are not only perpetuated through gesture but also created by gestures themselves, pointing to a human being's responsibility to the gestures they made, make, or will make. "Bodies take on identities

through the performance of gestures” (qtd. in Ness and Noland xxii). A gesture can include a subtle motion of the lip, the posture and placement of the neck, the movement of an arm, and the tapping of a foot. Therefore, posture, movement, and even where one holds tension or calmness, can all be included in the definition of a gesture. A gesture can also be an ‘act’ performed or enacted by one or more persons. Likening gestures to performances, Victor Turner suggests that “performances [reveal a] culture’s deepest, truest, and most individual character [...] that populations could grow to understand each other through their performances.” (qtd. in Taylor 4). Gestures are a means of meaning-making and ‘mark-making’; however, they have their limitations in their ability to permeate through to larger society, in part due to their transience and challenge of traceability (Ness and Noland 1).

Sally Ann Ness explores permanence and transience in her essay on ‘gesture as inscription.’ In her essay, Ness delves into the permanent mark-making of a written inscription as the result of chiselling, engraving, incising, carving, shaving, etching, or cutting into. The “in” of inscription here, means the “hollowed out consequence” within the mark that is left. If we are to think of the marks made by a gesture, we might think of the gesture cutting into the gaze of the audience member or carving into space. In this transient kind of marking, it is hard to posit gesture as a literal inscription (Ness and Noland 3-4). It is at this point, that Ness suggests we look at the inward inscriptions of gestures for marks of permanence (i.e., changes in posture and bone formations and calluses on hands and feet because of a repeated gesture) (9-10). There is also the etching of knowledge, story, and memory that a gesture can leave throughout generations through term-relation semiotics, in which a term, such as a dance form, posture, movement, position, or body part (Ness and Noland 10-11), comes in contact with and in relation with other terms. Through time and repetition of this practice of term-relation semiotics, the gesture itself manages to move beyond the individual and into a larger cultural gestural lexicon— a lexicon that can also connect the individual to their ethnic identity and/or nationality (i.e., various cultural greetings such as a handshake, hug, cheek-to-cheek touch, or a double-kiss). It is the identification and acknowledgement of both inward and external gestural inscriptions or imprints that one must affectively reckon with in the contextualizing of their position, identity, and impact, as they engage within society.

Throughout time, what gestures and stories remain, change, or disappear? External factors that alter, sometimes even eradicate, a culture's identifying factors, might muddy an individual's understanding of their own identity and cause one to question how much agency they actually have to impact the common myths that greatly shape one's privilege and identity. Hemmings would explain this conundrum within the frames of: "pessimism of social determinism (including bad affect) or the optimism of affective freedom (good affect)" (551). Silvan Tomkins addresses this as he mentions the individual's capacity for a "degree of control over their future, rather than as raw material responding rather passively to cognitive or learned phenomena" (Hemmings 552). Within the context of Canada, Lowman and Barker would suggest that citizens resist a passive identification with the homogenizing term 'Canadian,' and to instead utilize one's 'degree of control' to gesture toward identification that helps Canadian citizens to see ourselves "for who we are, not just who we claim to be" (1). They ask for a collective use of "a term that shifts the frame of reference away from our nation, our claimed territory, and onto our relationship with systems of power, land, and the people one whose territory "our" country exists" (1).

Within the common myth of 'Canada' and its systems of power, Lowman and Barker divide its citizens into a trialectic of three subjectivities: indigenous others, settler-colonizers and exogenous others, the last subjectivity being "racialized groups who neither fall within settler-colonizer nor indigenous communities" (28). Lowman and Barker's advocacy specifically urges citizens who are not indigenous to these lands to identify as a 'settler'— "an identity that we claim or deny, but that we inevitably live and embody" (2). Within the abovementioned triangular relations, the dominant culture is that of the Crown whose legal order has produced multiple unjust legal fictions such as broken treaties and fishing licences that negatively impact indigenous food sovereignty for the purpose of economic development ("Refracting the State Through Human-Fish Relations" 74).

What can be noticed on Musqueam, Squamish, and Tseil-Waututh Territories, in the place now commonly known as Vancouver, Canada, is that white settlers are expressing a willingness to talk about feelings of what Silvan Tomkins might call 'negative affect' (Hemmings 560) of shock and shame around residential schools. Time and relations will tell whether this navigation of affect might lead to sustainable gestures of government-to-government relations and/or reparations. Given the difference in

indigenous legal orders, languages, and ways of being with that of the colonial-state, ethical relationality will continue to require much translation between them as:

Colonialism has worked tirelessly to erase the Indigenous laws that govern Indigenous territories across Canada. This erasure obscures Indigenous legal orders and thinking in which humans, animals, water and land are integrated into nuanced and duty-full relationships with one another^[2], replacing these legal-governance realities with ones that draw solely on anthropocentric French and English legal paradigms. (qtd. in “From fish lives to fish law: learning to see Indigenous legal orders in Canada”)

In the article “Refracting the State Through Human-Fish Relations,” the story that Zoe Todd, Metis scholar and water defender, places emphasis on are the stories of human-fish relations in Alberta as a “micro-site of engagement” (61). Todd approaches that task of translation between two different groups with something she calls ‘fishy refraction,’ “a tool through which to assert Indigenous legal-governance traditions while contending with the unavoidable realities of State imaginaries about how humans should relate to the world around them” (67). In her essay, Todd advocates for the “self-determination of humans and more-than-humans through time and space.” She delves into water as the interface where Paulutuq fishermen and fish participate in a relationship that “is more than a utilitarian one” (65). From the viewpoint of the fish, the image of the Paulutuq is refracted by the water interface while the image of the fish is refracted for the Paulutuq. The Paulutuq have spent enough time with and on the lake such that there is a mutual awareness of when, where, and how to “move and think in order to catch [fish] through ice or on the water” (64), in addition to when it is appropriate fish for the sake of species survival. The ability to understand the other well enough through fishy refraction is a tool in practicing ethical relationality and principled pragmatism— principled pragmatism, being “the practice of negotiating across simultaneous sameness and difference in order to contend with the paradoxes, twists, and turns of colonialism and colonial nation-state” (66).

In attempting to mentally untangle the enmeshment and complexity of one’s placement within larger socio-political frameworks, Rothberg aligns with Lowman and Barker’s agenda of a specific identification for the sake of justice. Rothberg approaches identification from the angle of one’s entanglement within the systems one resides in and adds to the conversation of proper identification with an in-depth contribution of the ‘implicated subject.’ The implicated subject is one who is ‘entangled in,’ ‘involved in,’ and

'connected closely to' the systems in which he/she/they reside. He points out the inaccuracy of framing injustice with only the roles of 'victims and perpetrators,' and adds in a third role of the 'implicated subject' who participates in, "contribute[s] to, inhabit[s], and benefit[s] from" (1) existing systems that are in place due to forms of violence, racial hierarchies, and temporalities of injustice (2).

In discussion of the analytics and concept of the 'implicated subject,' Rothberg begins with the story of Trayvon Martin's death and the gestures of "solidarity-as-identification" that followed, in the United States of America:

On the evening of February 26, 2012, Trayvon Martin, an African American teenager, was killed by a neighborhood watch vigilante while returning from a convenience store to the home of his father's fiancé in a gated community in Florida. A year and a half later, the killer, George Zimmerman, was acquitted on all charges in the death of the seventeen-year-old high school student on the grounds that he was acting in self-defence. Among those outraged by the killing and subsequent acquittal, a first response was to express solidarity with Martin through acts of identification. Since Martin was killed while wearing a hooded sweatshirt, the "hoodie" quickly became a symbol of the case and of the racist power dynamics that made both the killing and the acquittal possible. Thousands of people posed in hoodies and posted their images on the internet, frequently with an accompanying slogan that declared "I am Trayvon Martin" or "We are all Trayvon Martin." (2).

The gesture in this instance is the gesture of identification via putting on a hoodie as well as the posture that expresses affects of confidence, uncertainty, guilt, or shame with which the hoodie is worn. These gestures of intended solidarity resulted in criticism regarding white Americans who do not "experience the kind of profiling and "justified" violence to which black people are daily exposed, nor can they necessarily comprehend[,] easily[,] the history of racialization and unfreedom—including slavery" (Rothberg 4). This critique led some to instead make and wear hoodies with the phrase "We are all George Zimmerman" (Rothberg 4), a statement which was then critiqued for wrongfully centering the perpetrator within their attempt at solidarity-as identification. The third rendition of the phrase was "We are not Trayvon Martin" (p.4). This last phrase managed to situate individuals in solidarity with and in relation to Trayvon Martin's death *by* acknowledging the way in which their position differs from that of the victim. With the third phrase, practicing allies were neither appropriating the experience of Martin nor were they over-identifying with his perpetrator. In this, we see an example of principled pragmatism and ethical relationality in the negotiations of individuals and groups to

acknowledge sameness, difference, and systems of power, and attempt to act accordingly. Rothberg points out the pitfalls of over-identification and appropriation via the first two gestures of solidarity-as-identification, in which solidarity alongside identification and the oscillation between individual and larger framework is a challenging one.

What is considered “correct” or “just” when identifying oneself in relation to a larger whole? “Such [gestures] of solidarity-as-identification can successfully mobilize participation and attract attention, but they have limits and frequently come under criticism” (Rothberg 4). An issue that presents itself in these examples is the inaccuracy of one’s positioning within the context for solidarity-as-representation, and therefore the struggle to maintain a clear distinction with and relation to larger representation/s. Upon acknowledging the map of privilege as well as an individual’s place within that map, the critiques for those who used the phrase “We are all Trayvon Martin” were geared specifically towards white people who, as part of what Kuokkanen would call ‘the dominant,’ were called to take responsibility and situate themselves more justly. Those who took the critique seriously experienced strong enough affects that urged them to alter their gesture of solidarity and identification accordingly, in attempts for a better positioning in their relation to the larger framework of racial justice.

This essay attempts to follow in Todd’s methods of ethical relationality and exploring relations through a specific micro-site of engagement, as we continue to hone into the micro-site or interface of the body. The body, a site of affect, gesture, empathy, interaction, and experience, is a complex interface with which to negotiate across sameness and difference. However, despite its complexity, this paper sees the body as a worthwhile interface where an individual’s gestures and affects are in constant relationship to larger social frameworks, and vice versa.

Stressing the importance of the body in cultural studies, Hemmings laments a ‘turn to language’ that includes an increase in theoretical abstraction and a decrease in the value of ‘the material’ (554). Ashon T. Crawley would lament *with* Hemmings as he suggests ‘flesh’ as a vibrational, sensual, affective, and material site for a practice of “performance of resistance” within what he calls Blackpentecostal Breath (4). Gestures of dancing, whooping, tongue-talking, and singing create an “unbroken circle” and an affect of intense empathy (5). Because these gestures are not seen as intelligent or

refined within the dominant culture of North America, the mere act of performing these motions is a 'performance of resistance' (3). One could posit that Crawley separates 'whiteness' and 'blackness' from pigmentation of the individual *through* affect that can remain autonomous from the labels or common myths of social order (Hemmings 549). He opens up Pentecostalism to individuals, regardless of skin colour and aims for "interracial reconciliation and fellowship" (7), as a "movement towards and emergence of collective intellectual projects" (3). In this, reclaiming gestures is an act of rejecting affect of shame imposed upon by dominant culture. Affect is given importance as well as the gestures of communal rhythms (Van der Kolk 215) that both carry out these affects and the gestures that induce affect.

Having acknowledged that each body has its own identity and position within a map of privilege and having situated the body within the context of social issues that it navigates through, it is now time to delve deeper into the relationship between affect and gesture within the body. Gestures and affect are largely intertwined. A gesture can be a posture or action within a place or in society, while "[a]ffects are . . . the stuff that goes on beneath, beyond, even parallel to signification" (Hemmings 548). One could posit that gesture is the embodied and outward signification of affect. Affect induces gestures, postures, movements, tensions, and release in real-time, while a gesture may result in affect within the self or cause affect in someone else. Delving into the marriage of gesture and affect could allow for steps towards healing and reconciliation as "physical self-awareness is the first step in releasing the tyranny of the past" and can work to stop the stasis of "somatic reenactments of the undigested trauma" (Van der Kolk 103). Gestures and affect play both 'inward' roles of identification and reflection, and 'outward' roles of communication, identification, and action (Ness and Noland 9-10).

Brian Massumi points to the way in which affect can be a celebration of individuality or difference. While affect can allow for contagious feelings within a group, it can also be "autonomous and outside social signification" (qtd. in Hemmings 549). Tomkins echoes this as he states that affect possesses "a singularity that creates its own circuitry. Thus, affects may be "autotelic (love being its own reward), or insatiable (where jealousy or desire for revenge may last minutes or a lifetime)," and "have a complex, self-referential life that gives depth to human existence through our relations with others and with ourselves." (qtd. in Hemmings 552). Tomkins points to affect as a tool to navigate the social world from the perspective of the singular and unique

individual (p. 552). “An affect theory is all of our affective experiences to date that are remembered (or better, perhaps, registered) in the moment of responding to a new situation, such that we keep ‘a trace, within [our] constitution’ of those experiences” (Al-Saji qtd. in Hemmings, p.552).

However, while taking note of affect’s positive influence in thinking outside of oppressive structures, it is important to be mindful of affect’s autonomy such that one should not act on their affects alone. Acting based on affect alone can mean a disregard of one’s positionality and can negatively impact larger frameworks and the beings around them. Indeed, affect can be a double-edged sword, as “affective responses [can] strengthen rather than challenge dominant social order” such as the enjoyment of consumerism (Hemmings 551). Affective labour “remains unremunerated [and] gives qualitative value” to consumer goods, remaining a key tool within the agenda of racial capitalism. It is the “hidden centre of capitalist accumulation,” yet affective labour can simultaneously mobilize individuals with the affect “necessary to counter those relations” (Hemmings 550). A most worrisome impact of unchecked affective freedom is when affective autonomy disrespects lineage and tradition, with the intention to work towards reimagining new possibilities for the future. It could perhaps be that the actant in question *thinks* they are practicing allyship or solidarity or perhaps they are simply serving their own agendas. Regardless, one must reflect on their own position in relation to the larger whole and the demographic whose needs they actually hope to fight for.

In recent events, members of the Gidimt’en Clan authored an article entitled: *Opinion: We are Wet’suwet’en and the Coastal GasLink pipeline protesters do not represent us*. This article was “released by Wet’suwet’en First Nation council at their request” Members of the Gidimt’en Clan and the Wet’suwet’en Nation stated the following:

Our concerns are not about the pipeline itself. Some of us support it, some of us do not and some are neutral. Our issue is that our traditions and way of life are being misrepresented and dishonoured by a small group of protesters, many of whom are neither Gidimt’en nor Wet’suwet’en, but nonetheless claim to be acting in our name to protest natural gas development [...] We regret to say that nearly everything the so-called Wet’suwet’en land defenders and their supporters have been doing is in direct conflict with these traditional laws and protocols. Their main public spokesperson holds a minor name and is very new to our feast hall. She cannot claim expert knowledge about our culture, yintah and feast hall. She

is new to our nation and is not in any way a matriarch, as some have claimed. Nor has she, her supporters or any supporting head chief ever consulted any of us about what they are doing and saying on our behalf. (qtd. in “Opinion: We are Wet’suwet’en and the Coastal GasLink pipeline protesters do not represent us”)

In alignment with Dwayne Donald’s description of ethical relationality and Zoe Todd’s description of principled pragmatism, the Wet’suwet’en Nation describe their practice of relations with the term ‘wiggus’ as “respect for all things: respect for ourselves and for each other, respect for other people, respect for the feast system, respect for our territorial land and clan boundaries, and respect for all the resources of the land” (qtd. in “Opinion: We are Wet’suwet’en and the Coastal GasLink pipeline protesters do not represent us”). Given their specific protocols of hereditary governance, the affective freedom of the practicing allies is not sufficient in respecting the agency and governance of the peoples whose land the practicing allies are trying to support. Affect should not be a self-permitting tool to act out gestures of blind “good intention” or, even worse, gestures of selfish agenda. In this case, a gesture of solidarity, allyship, or relationality is not automatically made ethical via good intentions alone. Ethical gestures of solidarity must perhaps start with acknowledging one’s positionality, along with the affect of humility.

Trying to understand the way in which one can reimagine a better future while respecting protocols and cultural ways of being, is most definitely a worthwhile question. Affect is complex and is not, by any stretch of the word, a perfect tool for creating more positive futures. However, with deep reflection of one’s own context and identity, in relation to the different contexts of others, one can hopefully imagine attempts at a more ethical means of ‘knowing one’s place’ or ‘knowing one’s position’ and acting accordingly. Knowing one’s position can result in affects of discomfort and struggle while also better informing the gestures one takes, in regards to how loud or how large these gestures need to be, whether those gestures are placed in the forefront or in the background, or whether the gestures of stillness and listening with a respectful body language is what is required. Affect mixed with reflexivity has great potential to enrich this discourse of identity, positionality, and gesture within larger framework in the way that it can be intangible yet impact the body quite viscerally. Though affect is gray within the spectrum of black and white, it also places importance on the body in the discourse of social and cultural studies (Hemmings 550).

It has been determined thus far in this essay that both social determinism and autonomous affect play roles in one's identity and practice of ethical relationality. Affective freedom and social determinism appear to be dialectically opposed. However, it is not necessarily an 'either/or' situation. Perhaps these two seeming oppositions are in a sort of ethical relationality to each other. The individual body, including its affect and gestures, is in relationship to socio-political and cultural structures that all together provide us a lens with which to study the reciprocal exchanges between 'individual' and 'larger frameworks.' Gestures and affect are both determining factors and by-products of culture and story, while culture and story, in turn, are determining factors and by-products of gesture and affect. Gestures, affect, and identification, can shift and evolve just as one's context does. Therefore, ethical relationality is not a stagnant point of "correctness" in time and space but rather an empathic practice of reflexivity that requires one to navigate and oscillate between one's affective freedom and the social structures that impact and help to determine one's identity and position.

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Appendix B.

A 'Turn to Body': A Means to 'Reinvent the Enemy's Language'

Thomas King prompts his readers to *know what story they start with* (2003). In that vein, I would like to start this paper with a story that could be set within either past or present, with a character who identifies as neither he nor she (Simpson, 2017). This paper will begin with Leanne Simpson's (2017) sharing of the story of Binoojiinh. In this Nishnaabeg story, Binoojiinh embarks on a self-led journey in which they learn about *maple* through their curiosity and instincts to mimic the animals they were observing. Upon witnessing the squirrel's actions of nibbling and sucking the bark of the maple tree, Binoojiinh embodies their observation of the animals and "[applies this] to their own situation" by creatively inventing new technology with a cedar shunt to create a cut in the maple tree (p.150). They then patiently collect the sap and share it with their mama. Mama boils deer in sap and through this collaboration with Binoojiinh, they learn about reduction and making sugar with sap. Mama so lovingly meets Binoojiinh with support and trust as they take their elders to patiently learn about sap too. As Binoojiinh is given the freedom to be curious and share, they are consistently met with patience, love, and trust. This story provides insight on what it would be like for an individual "to be recognized, seen, and appreciated by their community" (Simpson, 2017, p.150).

Alongside Binoojiinh's story of self-determination and freedom exists national myths that attempt to uphold the facade of a multi-cultural, green, welcoming and polite Canada. Despite these national myths, the land of Turtle Island remains a "constant teacher" and continues its self-determination in holding "all knowledge of life and death," including the history that it has witnessed (Armstrong, 2017). In this way, colonial attempts at Indigenous erasure remain unsuccessful. Try as it may, colonial efforts do not stifle the *five R's*: responsibility, rights, reciprocity, relationality, and respect that fuel Indigenous stewardship of land, traditions, and relations (Wilson & Nelson-moody, 2019). However, due to the dominant heteronormative-colonial-settler-paradigm, this Indigenous resilience is non-consensually coupled with Indigenous battles for survival on an individual, communal, and national level, and has been for the last seven generations since first

contact (Riley, 2016; Pulxaneeks Grant, Haisla First Nation, lives in Vancouver, British Columbia, personal communication, May 2019).

In order “to create a nation of Binoojiinh—to survive as Nishnaabeg—we shouldn’t be just striving for land-based pedagogies. The land must once again become the pedagogy” (Simpson, 2017, p.160). Jeanette Armstrong says that language expresses the way in which humans view, approach, and experience the land; language communicates “the land’s stories to succeeding generations” (Armstrong, 2017). In acknowledging the power of land and language within pedagogy, this paper suggests the language of *embodiment* as a means to support Jeannette Armstrong’s (2017) goal in reinventing “the enemy’s language” within colonial-state legal order, through delving into topics of land, language, body, and Indigenous women’s roles within resurgence, stewardship, and redress (p.142).

Indigenous legal orders differ in worldview and values compared to that of the colonial-state (Napoleon, 2007). It is problematic when language used in policy is taken at face value and used to the advantage of the colonial-state to further attempts at dispossession, dislocation, and oppression of the Indigenous Stewards on whose lands ‘Canada’ is on. Eve Sedgwick (2003) laments a ‘turn to language’ that she describes as a prioritizing of “social policy, development theory, and practice” over the body’s lived experience in the real world (p.555). A ‘turn to language’ increases theoretical abstraction and professionalization and can in turn decrease political accountability and the importance of the ‘material’ which can be understood as the body or something experientially felt (Sedgwick, 2003). It would seem that in order to combat the ‘turn to language,’ one would need to amplify the importance of the body and real-world lived experience.

Through Anne Riley’s art piece, *that brings the other nearly as close as oneself*, they posit a non-linguistic language as they poignantly share their query on home, Indigenous identity, and queer touch. “What I have been taught to articulate may not yet have a language that I know” (Riley, 2016, para.18). They describe a somatic and embodied secret shared by individuals who share experiences of oppression and struggle— individuals “who [have] lived similarly” (para.7). “Either you understand the experience (of colonization, trauma, displacement) and are empathetic and compassionate with the person you share this with, or you are the other who wants in on

the secret, who wants to know and can only enter it through [verbal] language” (para.7). Riley described the time they felt “understood, recognized and made visible by another in an environment that does not recognize the conditions that oppress [them]” as an experience that relates very closely to *affect*; they also relate affect to a sense of home that can be found in the body (Riley, 2016, para.70). In addition to their ancestral territory, they describe home as the “unconditional generosity” of relaxing into the shared language of embodying “[one’s] sense and experience of home wherever [they] travel [...] These moments of recognition of home can offer solidarity, a sense of place, of grounding, and love to each other” (para. 7).

To add to Anne Riley’s embodied definition of affect, Clare Hemmings (2005) defines affect as a celebration of difference with “which to understand the social world and our place within it” (p.548). With this understanding, one could posit that the awareness of affect and practice of embodiment can aid in ‘ethical relationality’ that Dwayne Donald would describe as “an ecological understanding of human relationality that does not deny difference, but rather seeks to more deeply understand how our different histories and experiences position us in relation to each other” (Todd, n.d., para. 14).

Indeed, each individual falls within their respective part of a ‘map of privilege’ they are born into. This position includes the coordinates of one’s race, ethnicity, culture, social class, economic class, family history, lineage, sex, and gender (Keeling, personal communication, March 2-4, 2017). Where one falls on the map of privilege is “nothing personal” in that the family one is born into occurs by chance. However, it is valuable for one to consciously situate themselves on this map to better understand how their privilege, or lack thereof, impacts the way they walk through the world and the way in which they are in relation with other individuals who fall on different parts of this ‘map of privilege’ (Keeling, personal communication, March 2-4, 2017).

As the theoretical and disembodied ‘turn to language’ is a political weapon, Leanne Simpson would say that Indigenous “presence [in itself *is*] a weapon” against colonial forces; Simpson (2017) places weight on the mere existence of bodies being on the land as a tool for resilience (p.6). Perhaps what would balance out the political ‘turn to language’ would be an equalizing ‘turn to the body,’ in which non-linguistic language and empathy are given as much weight as verbal and written language in colonial-state legal orders. Yolanda Covington-Ward (2016) would suggest that we begin with the body as the center,

conduit, and catalyst of personal reflection and action in that the body is our primary means of engaging with time and space. It is in the body that we first experience attachment that would ideally act as a “secure base from which a child moves out into the world” (Van der Kolk, 2015). It is in the body that we first experience reciprocity and emotional attunement that “starts with the most subtle physical levels of interactions between babies and caretakers” (Van der Kolk, 2015). The body is also where trauma is held. Depending on where one falls on the map of privilege, they may or may not be more vulnerable, in many cases systemically targeted, with acts of violence and brutality. Trauma can be the “result of a specific painful event [...] a response to anything that [the body] experiences too much, too soon, too fast [...] or a response to anything unfamiliar or anything [the body] doesn’t understand” (Menakem, 2017, p.14). The body doesn’t require a reason as it is “hardwired to protect itself and react to sensation and movement” (Menakem, 2017, p.14).

When one’s peoples have undergone traumatic experiences such as genocide, the Sixties Scoop, and residential schools, their existence, tradition, and stewardship of their land remain a testament to their survival (Riley, 2016; Pulxaneeks Grant, Haisla First Nation, lives in Vancouver, British Columbia, personal communication, May 2019). As the past and the current colonial systems result in a ‘collective trauma,’ the “approaches for mending must be collective and communal as well” (Menakem, 2017, p. 13). And because “we are each other’s greatest resource,” individuals who are not Indigenous to these lands yet benefit from the colonial Racial Capitalist system that continues acts of dispossession, oppression, and colonial-gendered violence against Indigenous peoples, must work internally and outwardly to support this communal healing as well (Pulxaneeks Grant, Haisla First Nation, lives in Vancouver, British Columbia, personal communication, May 2019).

Michelle Olson’s work *Gathering Light* embodies the practice of consent and agency as it invites audience members into a space that honours the transformations that women go through. This dance performance piece creates space for the emotional labour that one may not feel welcome to share in a societal structure that reduces emotional labour and affective labour to a “hidden center of capitalist accumulation [...] [Affective labour] remains unremunerated yet is what bestows qualitative value [to capitalist products], [affective labour] also produces emotional connections that threaten to disrupt [capitalist] accumulation.” (Hemmings, 2005, p.550).

Olson uses the metaphor of a “seed that is dreaming itself into being. That idea of a little seed cracking open and digging through the dirt, and searching for the light, and finding the light, and then finding full bloom” to also express and reflect upon the “journey of becoming a woman. The journey of stepping into your power, but then also when you’re not given agency to step into your power, the little deaths all the way along trying to realize ourselves in a fuller way” (Olson, 2018). A number of the movements in this piece are contemporary expressions that mimic the growth of a flower to symbolize the transformations of women. As a dancer in this piece, I experienced the way in which the work utilizes Indigenous worldview, pedagogy, and somatic movement practice to express the work in an embodied way. This embodiment and clear invitation for interaction with the audience set the stage for a consensual and reciprocal exchange between performer and audience.

Indigenous women’s roles as mothers, “decision makers [,] holders of traditional knowledge, and their role in matriarchal governance” are invaluable in Indigenous resurgence and survival, yet their roles “in many nations have been displaced by colonization” (Martin and Walia, 2019, p.15). “Colonial State practices target women for removal from Indigenous land, tear children from their families, enforce impoverishment and manufacture the conditions for dehumanization” (Red Women Rising, 2019, para.3).

Martin and Walia wrote a report, *Red Women Rising*, that provides clear, honest, and valuable insight on the experiences of Indigenous women in the Downtown Eastside where “gendered colonialism, family trauma, child welfare, homelessness, policing, the welfare system, and the opioid crisis all contribute to targeted insecurity and violence” (Martin & Walia, 2019, p.15). It is a report that places “Indigenous women survivors at the center” (Red Women Rising, 2019, para.4) and as “experts on their own lives (Martin & Walia, 2019, p.15). “Violence against Indigenous women, girls, trans, and two-spirit people is the most pressing human rights issue in Canada today,” as they are met with manufactured and enforced violence, gendered-colonialism, colonial poverty, and patriarchy that “stigmatize Indigenous women in the Downtown Eastside as having high-risk lifestyles” and wrongfully blame them for the “violence committed against them” (Martin & Walia, 2019, p.14). Martin and Walia’s report (2019) stresses the way in which “Indigenous women’s health in the Downtown Eastside is inseparable from intergenerational trauma of colonization overlapping with the specific health challenges that are concentrated in the neighborhood” (p.22). “A critical factor in ending violence

against Indigenous women in the Downtown Eastside is the urgent need to address Indigenous women's wellness" (Martin & Walia, 2019, p.22).

Before singing the Women's Warrior Song on International Day of Awareness of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women 2019, Ta'Kaiya Blaney said that when talking about:

"[...] the resurgence of that relationship between the land and the Indigenous people who belong to it, we also need to be talking about our life-givers. Not just our original life-giver, Mother Earth, but the life-givers of our communities, our women. I'm going to be sharing the Women's Warrior Song. At the end, we raise our fists in the air as reminder for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women who are treated as disposable, like our land, when in fact they are what sustains our life[...] Our women are on the frontlines when it comes to land degradation[...] Violence against our land is warfare against our women" (2019).

As "violence against Indigenous women, girls, trans, and two-spirit people is the most pressing human rights issue in Canada today," it would serve government-to-government relations if the colonial-state placed Indigenous women at the center of their learning and considerations in policy-making that shapes the way in which structures aid or work against those most vulnerable and marginalized (Martin & Walia, 2019, p.14). Furthermore, it would benefit government-to-government relations and redress if the issue of violence and the importance of understanding privilege and trauma could be understood within the mind as well as the body, with empathy and compassion, so as to relate more ethically between governments and between cultures. In this way, the various cultures that reside on these Indigenous Lands can work to practice ethical relationality, the "ecological understanding of human relationality that does not deny difference, but rather seeks to more deeply understand how our different histories and experiences position us in relation to each other" for the sake of respecting and supporting land stewardship, redress, decolonization, and social and cultural justice (Todd, n.d., para. 14).

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Appendix C.

Video Documentation

Director and Choreographer: Tin Gamboa

Dancers and Collaborators: Tin Gamboa, Zaarah Lopez, Jullianna Oke, Roya Pishvaei, Elyza Samson, and Anna Wang-Albini

Lighting and Projection Designer: Alexandra Caprara (live video mixing)

Sound and Lighting Operators and Lighting Assistants: Flora Jiang and Jingyi (Chloe) Zhang

Sound Designer: Rohini Soedhwa

Advisory Committee: Rob Kitsos, Justine A. Chambers, and NiNi Dongnier, with a special thank you to Mauricio Pauly and Wladimiro Woyno Rodriguez for their additional consultation and support.

Technical Director: Ningxi (Lava) Xu

Stage Manager: Zhengyi (Joy) Wu

Production Faculty: Kyla Gardiner

SCA Technical Director: Ben Rogalsky

SCA Production and Events Coordinator: Gillian Hanemayer

Technical Support: GCA Production and Event Services

Videographer: Joseph Malbon

Description: *attuning flesh and bone* – full length video in HD format

Filename: attuningfleshandbone.mp4