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Introduction

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Introduction: Audibilities of Colonialism and Extractivism

Emily Hansell Clark

The deafening sound of hydroelectric dam construction drills through the multivalent silences of the Brazilian Amazon. At the 1883 Colonial Exhibition in Amsterdam, the bronze tones of a Javanese gamelan reach European listeners' ears as a testament to a layered hierarchy of colonial difference and White supremacy. Contemporary South African acts of musicking mine internationally circulating media for musical material and epistemic agency. Stimulations of the ear and the tongue surge through the sensory system of eighteenth-century European Man, stirring the emotions, enlivening the brain, and separating the civilized from the savage.

This themed issue takes as its point of departure the proposal that music, sound, and listening provide a link between, on the one hand, colonial legacies and epistemologies of thinking nature and culture, and, on the other, present-day relations between humans and the nonhuman environment. In the essays that follow, we explore themes of aurality and audibility, various emplaced colonial histories, and forms of extractivism that include the extraction of substances from the nonhuman world as well as of human knowledge, (creative) labor, and musical practice. Throughout, we attend to the multiplicity of possibilities for understanding the boundary between the domains of the human and the nonhuman, and the sensory ways in which particular, historically contingent understandings of this divide have been perceived as truth.

The present issue grew out of a conference panel on the same theme, “Audibilities of Colonialism and Extractivism,” that was proposed for the 2020 meeting of the British Forum for Ethnomusicology. What was intended to take place on the campus of Bath Spa University in the spring of 2020 was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and instead occurred online a year later. The circumstances of this postponement—a pandemic that has claimed millions of lives, and, along the way, reinscribed global inequalities, infrastructural gaps, chains of misinformation, and ideological impasses—were, to put it mildly, undesirable. With travel impossible and our abstracts shelved for a year, we found ourselves with the opportunity to think more slowly, together, about the very sorts of issues that surrounded these circumstances: the entanglement of human and nonhuman worlds; the manmade conditions of the contemporary “natural” disaster; and the persistent colonial forms of inequality, on

local and global scales, that are quantified in patterns and distributions of COVID-19 infections and deaths. Because of the urgency of these matters, we have valued the process of thinking together, over more than a year, in the form of conversations, our eventual conference panel, and the present essays. One aim of this journal issue is to explore the affordances of slow thinking: to consider the present and the local within the *longue durée* and global connectivity, and to take the time to consider what the study of music, sound, and listening has to offer to understanding and critiquing relations between different groups of humans and the nonhuman world, even (or especially) when such critiques feel so urgent.

The essays that follow each bring together the three key terms in the title of this issue: audibility, colonialism, and extractivism, each of these evoking a genealogy of scholarship with which we aim to be in conversation. *Audibility*, in contrast to music or sound, situates our focus on listening, a relation-making process through which music and sound yield meaning in emplaced and embodied instances of perception. We explore how the meanings of sounds to listeners dispersed in place, time, and positionality shape epistemologies of self and other, taking sound and sonic knowledge as “situational... relat[ional]... mutual... ecological... polyphonic, dialogical, and unfinalizable” (Feld 2015:13). We access acts of listening—particular instances of sonic meaning- and relation-making with human and nonhuman others—through conversations with informants, through the written historical archive, and through reflecting critically on our own modes of listening, hearing, and creating knowledge about sound.

Recent scholarship in music and sound studies has scrutinized the role of sound and listening in different colonial histories, exploring how the audible and inaudible have shaped and retraced relations of difference and power (Radano & Olaniyan 2016; Steingo & Sykes 2018; Novak & Sakakeeny 2015; Ochoa Gautier 2014). By focusing on *colonialism* as a key concept, we aim to understand contingent histories through which relations of power, difference, and domination developed, and the role of hearing oneself and listening to others in the formation and rearticulation of these relations. By “others,” I mean aspects of both human and nonhuman worlds that surround, frame, and are distinguished from the self from any given point of subjective agency (in other words, every self has others). Different histories of listening to human and nonhuman others and perceiving what they sound like have shaped relations of power, domination, and resistance, as well as modes of dwelling peaceably across human difference and with the nonhuman environment. By listening to these histories of listening (Feld 2012:7, 2015:15), we can both understand the sonic origins of the construct known as modernity and the forms of perception and relation it rests on, and explore other possible modes of understanding how the world and relations across difference are organized.

We think through these various histories of sounding relations using the concept of *extractivism*. This concept has developed through scholarship in the last decade particularly in the context of Latin America, where extractivist practices and infrastructures connect the contemporary management and exploitation of nature to co-

lonial histories, present-day politics, and both local and global forms of inequality (Svampa 2019; Gudynas 2015; Lang & Mokrani 2013; Ødegaard & Rivera Andía 2019). Not just substances and labor, but forms of creative practice and knowledge, too, are extracted, exchanged, and monetized, from Indigenous music, aesthetics, and medicine (Robinson 2020) to data (Riofrancos 2020; Couldry & Mejias 2020). Further, recent projects of nature conservation, such as the carbon-offset programs that constitute a new “green economy,” have also been parsed as forms of “green extractivism” that, too, retrace and perpetuate local and global colonial relations of power (Brightman 2019; Riofrancos 2019). Extractivism is, thus, a concept that can be used to think a particular type of relation in many contexts, at many scales. It is also a concept that links histories of thinking human difference with histories of thinking the nonhuman world—and not just thinking, but acting on, both of these. In this way extractivism is related to theorizations of the current global epoch as the “racial Capitalocene” or the “Plantationocene” as opposed to the Anthropocene—theorizations which highlight the embedding of human difference and human inequality into the domination and exploitation of the nonhuman environment, in both its (epistemological and material) causes and effects (see Davis et al. 2019; Vergès 2017; Moore 2016; Haraway et al. 2015).

Across such diverse usages of the term, theorizations of extractivism consistently point to the importance of understanding contemporary practice in historical context, identifying the roots of contemporary extractivist projects and processes in colonial ideologies that formed a highly unequal racial, political, and economic geography of the world. Specifically, this literature argues, particular regions of the world have historically been constructed as the excessively nature-rich, bio-diverse, underpopulated and underexploited providers of an infinite supply of raw materials to other regions, where these substances become the resources used for human making, doing, and knowing. This colonial geopolitics of subordination and extraction still shapes relations between different groups of humans and between humans and the nonhuman world today. Which landscapes of the world seem to require managing? Who is afforded the power to manage? Whose bodies, knowledge, tools, and desires shape (and whose are understood to be shaped by) the nonhuman environment? And, we ask in these essays, how have sound, listening, and other forms of sensory perception contributed to the shaping and perpetuating of this global geopolitics?

These are questions we seek to address in the essays that follow. In this introductory essay, I first explore a particular genealogy of studying music and the environment connected to two earlier themed issues of this journal: namely, a genealogy that uses the key concepts of *ecology* and *sustainability*. Using the related concept of *resource*, I both link and contrast the essays in the present issue with this earlier “ecological” approach. I explore how music has been understood in scholarship, both explicitly and implicitly, as a resource that can be extracted and used for different purposes, especially in relation to environmentalist goals. In the second part of this introduction, I explore other genealogies of listening to the nonhuman environment

in music studies, including approaches that we take up and develop in the essays that follow. Read together, the essays in this themed issue demonstrate that listening to different histories of listening makes audible the colonial and extractivist paradigms of human and nonhuman relations that often shape how we hear culture, nature, and difference in the present.

Thinking music as a resource: Ecology, sustainability, diversity

In recent decades, there has been a proliferation of explicit attention in music studies to the nonhuman environment. Two previous issues of this journal fit into this genealogy. In 2009, an issue on the theme of “Music and Sustainability,” *World of Music* 51(1) guest edited by Jeff Todd Titon, presented a collection of essays that theorize musical worlds using the key concepts of *sustainability* and *ecology*. Critiquing object-focused heritage discourses and programs, Titon and the other contributors use the idea of a musical ecology or ecosystem to argue for “sustaining” rather than “preserving” creative practices. Cultural policy, funding and infrastructure, historical recordings, and processes of knowledge transmission to new generations all constitute the robust “cultural soil” that is necessary for the continued growth of musical traditions and production of musical “masterpieces.” By analogy, attending to this soil and keeping it healthy is the task of musicians, communities, and scholars, rather than shortsightedly extracting the musical product without care for the “ecosystem” that is left behind. The essays in the 2009 issue explore these concepts by attending to ecologies of performance, recording, and transmission, through case studies in mostly U.S. contexts such as Louisiana Creole music in California, fiddle music in Franco New England, and a local radio station in New York.

In 2015, another issue titled “Sound Futures: Exploring Contexts for Music Sustainability,” *world of music (new series)* 4(1) edited by Huib Schippers and Dan Bendrups, built on Titon’s work, further investigating the concepts of sustainability and ecology with an array of case studies. Schippers and Bendrups develop these metaphors as a type of methodology, allowing a cross-cultural comparison of the “vitality” of different musical cultures and traditions in the world, from well-established industries such as Bollywood, Hindustani classical music, and European opera to more community-based practices such as Ewe dance-drumming in Ghana and Aboriginal women’s songs in Central Australia (see also Schippers & Grant 2016). Following Titon, Schippers and Bendrups’s methodological framework also attempts to “focus on the soil rather than the product” (2015:10) by attending to transmission processes, musician-community relations, social and cultural contexts, infrastructures, and dissemination to audiences to determine the relative health of each tradition. In both the 2009 and 2015 issues, concepts such as diversity, vitality, resilience, and revitalization are used as lively metaphors for thinking the futures of individual musical traditions in the world.

Though Titon was not the first to use the concept of ecology to theorize musical practice,¹ the 2009 issue is where his “ecological” thinking about music and musical sustainability was thoroughly and explicitly developed, and is still cited as foundational to certain strains of thinking about music and the environment (Allen & Dawe 2016; Allen 2018:4, 2019:48). As Aaron Allen and others have pointed out, however, Titon’s and Schippers and Bendrups’s theorizations here have little to do with the actual nonhuman environment (Allen 2017, 2019:49). Rather, throughout both of these themed issues, sustainability and ecology are applied as metaphors, useful for thinking about human practice and human products in some of the same ways that we have come to think about nonhuman nature.² In effect, the concepts of ecology and sustainability are used to scrutinize how best to manage music as a *resource* for local and global communities, namely by maintaining the health of musical ecosystems and “revitalizing” them through community-based collaborations and holistic cultural policy. As Titon writes in his introduction to the 2009 issue, “Applying sustainability to music leads us to ask if it is helpful to think of music as a resource and if so, what kind of a resource music might be” (5).

Since 2009, work by Titon and many others has used ecology, sustainability and related terms to explore musical and sounding relationships with the actual nonhuman environment, not just as a metaphor. Throughout a genealogy of “ecomusicology” (Allen & Dawe 2016) and environment-focused music studies, music has been explored as a resource that can be used towards understanding and improving human relations with the nonhuman environment using a variety of strategies. This builds on ways in which scholars have long understood music as a resource more broadly, a means of accomplishing a variety of personal and collective goals. Music and musicking are resources for individual musicians, listeners, and collectives: this has often been theorized in terms of individual and group identity, which is perpetually articulated and rearticulated through performance and other forms of participation (Nettl 2015:260–271; Scales 2012:8ff; Turino 2008). Identity is further entangled with more material forms of expediency: individual musicians can use their practice to earn a living or to gain fame; for communities, music can be used to establish recognition within national paradigms of cultural citizenship (Yúdice 2009, 2003) or to gain access to funds through government programs or cultural tourism. Music can also serve to establish (or challenge) a national identity, shaping regional and global relations of economics and power (Askew 2002; Turino 2000).

Musical and cultural diversity—the very existence of an array of different cultures and cultural expressions in the world—have also been conceptualized as a global resource or “common good” per se. In UNESCO discourses, for example, the concept of cultural diversity is utilized as a positive way to frame human difference within national, regional, and global bodies politic.³ Within such discourses, the expression of a particular culture, through music for example, is a contribution to a collective commons of difference, a unique, intangible good that communities and individuals have to offer and a resource for “human development, peace, and effective citizenship” (Yúdice 2009:112). This concept of culture and cultural difference

operates similarly to the notion of biodiversity for nature and natural difference: the world is richer, healthier, more resilient, and more interesting for the array of forms, encounters, and experiences that it contains; and a decrease in the amount of difference through disappearance or loss has negative effects not just for the bird species, musical tradition, or Indigenous language in question, but for the entire network or ecosystem (which is often conceived of and managed as a whole by bureaucratic entities at national, regional, and global levels).

These different ways of thinking about the expediency of culture and music—their array of potential uses, from accomplishing individual and community goals to contributing to diversity itself as an abstract global good—have shaped how scholars have specifically theorized music studies’ possible contributions to environmental causes in recent decades. Scholarship has suggested, for example, that music and sound can be used as resources to raise awareness of climate change and climate crisis. Musicians and artists sing songs and make performance pieces about the effects of climate crisis on their communities (Pedelty 2012, 2016a, 2016b; Rees 2016; Edwards 2018; Stévanice & Lacasse 2019; Galloway 2020); artists and environmental activists have also used the songs of birds to sensorily index the loss of species from the planet (Caballero & Ekeberg 2014; Browning 2021). Scholars in music studies can collaborate with communities to further these goals through different means, such as circulating these performances through websites and music videos (Pedelty 2016a:255ff; Pedelty et al. 2020), writing books for different types of audiences, and teaching about the loss of instrument-making materials and musical traditions due to changing climate conditions. Recorded songs, live performances, music videos, and musical scholarship itself all serve as resources to highlight the struggles of communities experiencing the direct effects of climate crisis, to point out the entanglement of the nonhuman landscape with cultural practice, and in some cases to imagine alternative ways of inhabiting the environment based on communities’ own (sonic) knowledge.

Building on the notion that cultural and musical diversity are global goods, some scholars working on music and the environment have argued that the continued existence of musical diversity itself could be a motivator for people to act more “sustainably” at a large scale. In this paradigm, musical diversity offers the omnivorous cosmopolitan listener an array of sonic encounters much like biodiversity offers a rich inventory of birds to see and hear, or fruits and seafood from different climates to taste. The idea is that these consumers of sounds, sights, and flavors could potentially be motivated to adopt more sustainable behaviors by the desire to maintain the robust world of sensory engagements that diversity offers. For these consumers, Aaron Allen writes, “[W]e want the sustainable choices to be seen as the desirable choices, because they are ecologically appropriate, ethically just, economically responsible, and aesthetically pleasing” (Allen et al. 2014:10). Acting sustainably could entail making decisions motivated by the promise of “a world that looks good, feels good, sounds good, and is good” (ibid.:9)—in other words, a world that continues to offer the diverse sensory engagements with both cultural and nonhuman elements that

make life rich and interesting for many people in the present. In a similar sentiment, Timothy Cooley writes, “How might we in the humanities turn our particular skill sets toward enabling humans to hear, feel, see, and smell the ecosystem around us and, by listening to other biological beings, curb our deleterious impact on the global ecosystem that we all share?” (Cooley et al. 2020:303). This is one way for, as Mark Pedelty writes, “music... to play some role in fostering environmental sustainability, biodiversity and human well-being,” a sentiment “shared by most” scholars working on music and the environment (2012:202).

Thus, in a genealogy that can be traced in part back to Jeff Todd Titon’s 2009 issue of this journal, we can see that music, musical knowledge, and musical diversity itself can be used as tools or resources for ecological or sustainable ends.⁴ As Pedelty says, scholars are motivated by the notion that music and music studies have something to offer to the environment, especially as we increasingly witness our informants (and our friends, families, and communities) affected by climate crisis and manmade “natural” disasters. We all seek to find the ways in which our scholarship can have an impact, sometimes even aiming to use our skills at listening, observing, thinking, writing, and musicking to become environmental activists ourselves.

As I elaborate in the section that follows, in this themed issue we take a different approach from those I outline above. Here I aim to make the concept of music’s possibilities as a resource, which often emerges as a guiding assumption for scholarship on music and the environment, explicit as a metaphor and to more critically scrutinize its implications and effects. What sort of meanings and relations does this metaphor produce? What structures of knowledge and power does it reinscribe? For example, in the diversity-focused discourse I mention two paragraphs above, how does connecting the “good” of sensorial and aesthetic difference to a humanist ethics of responsible consumption serve to consolidate the power already held by cosmopolitan consumers to shape the world and its future? The point is not that it is inherently a problem to *use* music in these various ways, or to understand it as potentially useful. The point is, rather, to examine the effects of metaphorical thinking—including, specifically, thinking music through the metaphors of ecology, sustainability, and resource—and to attend explicitly to the various specific histories and effects of understanding music in these ways.

Metaphors create worlds. What kind of world, with what kinds of possibilities for the future, do these metaphors allow us to imagine? When we listen with or through these metaphors, what worlds are we precluded from hearing?

Rethinking music as a resource: Audibilities of colonialism and extractivism

Resource is a form of relation, one based on extraction and assimilation (Simpson & Klein 2013). The meaning of a resource is its expedience, its use towards a particular goal. Resources are extracted, used, and used up; sometimes they can be replenished. In other situations, when a resource is used, it is exhausted, in which case becoming-

resource ends the other possible forms of relation and meaning that a substance (a mountain, a plant, a body...) also holds. Knowledge can be understood as a resource, but knowledge also requires the use of resources in its construction: technological, financial, and other material resources; one's mental and creative labor; and, as well, the knowledge and labor of others.

Building on the question posed by Titon—namely, whether it is “helpful to think of music as a resource and if so, what kind of a resource music might be” (2009:5)—the present issue, too, takes up the notion of a resource and the implications of understanding elements of both human and nonhuman worlds as such. Here, rather than exploring music's uses *as* a kind of resource, for our informants and for ourselves, we want to scrutinize the role of music, sound, and listening in shaping extractivist paradigms, or, in other words, in understanding worlds of human practice and non-human landscape in terms of the extractable resources they provide. Extractivism is a historically contingent paradigm that has broadly and deeply shaped the present world. In the essays that follow, we explore the kinds of meanings and relations that are constructed by sound, music, and listening within extractivist histories, including in the present. To make these histories audible is to denaturalize them, to examine both their contingent conditions of possibility and their meaning-, relation-, and world-making power.

We do this by listening: to informants, to the archive, to “histories of listening” (Feld 2012:7, 2015:15), including the histories of sonic scholarly production in which our own knowledge-making practices are embedded. First, Maria Fantinato's essay explores the role of sound and listening in the shaping of a region, the Brazilian Amazon, where the nonhuman landscape has been historically heard and constructed as an abundant excess of inexhaustible resources to be extracted infinitely. Through a deep consideration of the spoken words of Ana Laide Soares Barbosa, an Amazonian social educator, Fantinato investigates how ways of dwelling with, relating to, and listening to an important nonhuman element of the Amazonian world—namely the *encantados*, or forest and river spirits—also comprise a way of making the world and humans' relationship with it. This mode of living and listening is incompatible with the dominant extractivist paradigm in the region that takes natural resources and their inexhaustibility for granted and lies at the foundation of industrial projects that disrupt and displace human and nonhuman life, such as the building of a hydroelectric dam.

Emily Hansell Clark's essay focuses on Suriname, a former Dutch colony that borders the Amazonian region where Fantinato's fieldwork takes place. Like the Brazilian Amazon, the Caribbean coast of South America where Suriname lies has been historically constructed, imagined, and heard as a place of abundant nature to be domesticated and exploited in ways that serve shifting and place-specific forms of accumulation, from plantation colonialism to industrial mining and mechanized monoculture. Clark investigates how histories of extractivism and listening have shaped contemporary Suriname, entangling epistemologies of natural and cultural difference from the late nineteenth century through the present. In an archive of

traveling bodies, instruments, and sounds, listening to a history of European listening suggests that a perceived ability of different groups to make things out of other things—to turn sonic resources into music, and natural resources into culture—has structured a pervasive colonial geopolitics of governance and dispossession. Through this history, we can trace the formation of the very epistemologies, industries, and power relations that have led, in part, to the types of multivalently devastating development projects that Fantinato also describes.

Picking up themes from both Fantinato's and Clark's work, Barbara Titus's essay dives further into the notion of the taken for granted, exploring what it means to take things (substances, sounds, bodies, landscapes) for granted as "the given" as opposed to "the made." Titus's work complements Fantinato's and Clark's by taking a broad view of these categories and their effects in shaping particular conceptions of nature (as "the given") and culture (as "the made"). Similar to Fantinato, Titus does this by reflecting on specific moments, events, and conversations from her fieldwork, in this case with maskanda musicians in South Africa. Reading these essays together highlights both the uniqueness of particular place-bound experiences of dwelling in worlds framed by extractivism, as well as the ideological common threads in the shaping of both Amazonian/Caribbean nature and global musical cultures as types of resources to be extracted. These various contexts—Brazilian development projects, Surinamese labor migrations, South African popular music-making—can all be understood in relation to global inequalities, broader histories of epistemological and material extraction, and the continued shaping of relations of power.

Fantinato and Titus both investigate these respective histories of extraction primarily through ethnographic fieldwork, attending to conversations, events, and self-reflectively to their own reactions and perceptions. Sean Colonna's essay, like Clark's, turns to a sensory history inscribed in a European archive: namely, the philosophical and medical archives of late eighteenth-century Germany. In Colonna's essay, two "nerve stimulants," music and coffee, are perceived by eighteenth-century German scholars, explorers, and lawmakers as having differentiated effects on different types of classed, gendered, and raced bodies. Here, in a quite different context of time and place from the other essays, notions of substances and their potential uses simultaneously divide and blur ideas of the human body and its nonhuman surroundings, the cultural and the natural, the inherited and the cultivated, the given and the made. Colonna explores these categories and their assumptions and contradictions related to the ideas of nerves, sensory stimulation, and "sensibility." The consumption of both coffee and music were filtered through these concepts as they were understood to operate differently and produce different effects in different types of bodies, and thus to require management and administration along flows of political and epistemological power. Like the work of Fantinato, Clark, and Titus, Colonna's analysis points to the contingency and coloniality of some of the most fundamental categories used in the modern West to make—and to make sense of—human and nonhuman worlds.

As I mention above, the majority of these essays were presented in shorter version in a panel at the 2021 meeting of the British Forum for Ethnomusicology. During the vibrant discussion that followed, I attempted to quickly note down a number of ideas and themes that were drawn out of our papers by my co-presenters and the audience, this introductory essay already beginning to emerge out of that conversation. In my notes I scrawled, circled, and starred this particular sentence spoken by Barbara Titus: “Making something out of something else is an exertion of power.” Indeed, in each of the contexts of different times and places that the essays cover, the relations of power entailed by acts of sensory, epistemological, creative, and material making are made explicit, made audible, for scrutiny. In Clark’s and Fantinato’s essays, for example, making place into an array of extractable resources, and carrying out this extraction through industrial projects, are exertions of power over those humans who are perceived as not being able to do this kind of making; in other words, those humans who dwell in and relate to that place in different ways. Such exertions of epistemological and industrial power result in the silencing, the making inaudible, of those latter groups’ own voices, desires, forms of relation, and ability to make worlds themselves. In Titus’s essay, the notion of epistemic extractivism is used to investigate how acts of musicking exert power over existing sonic resources, making genres into other genres and sounds into other sounds—including taking music from outside of South Africa and making it maskanda. In Clark’s and Colonna’s essays, the voices and acts of listening that are inscribed in the historical archive exert the power to make worlds: worlds of extraction, consumption, domination, difference, and inequality. Written words, like those contained in these European archives, are also power-exerting forms of making something into something else: making particular instances of encounter, consumption, and perception into global history and knowledge.

Of course, we, the authors of these essays, are ourselves embedded in the particular history of listening that constitutes scholarship on music and sound. Our own projects of creating sensory knowledge connect us to, for example, the Dutch colonial musicologists whose work shaped a Caribbean world of extraction and difference (as Clark’s essay argues). We scholars are all engaged in the project of making our observations, perceptions, and conversations into knowledge, which entails its own exertions of power. Today, as we conduct fieldwork and archival research, we rely on the perceptions and words of our contemporary informants as well as the network of unequal power relations that produced the historical archive from which we extract our insights. This is something we attempt to reflect on here as well: the ways in which producing scholarship on music and sound connects us to histories of listening with their own forms of extractive relations, to “hungry” outsiders and to academic networks and institutions that use and exhaust resources and labor as well.⁵

The history of listening that frames these essays is also shaped by a particular genealogy of scholarship in music and sound studies, including centrally the work of Steven Feld and Ana María Ochoa Gautier. Feld’s “acoustemology,” developed in both Fantinato’s and Titus’s essays, posits “sound as a way of knowing” that is

“grounded in the basic assumption that life is shared with others-in-relation,” including others that are “variously human, nonhuman, living, nonliving, organic, or technological” (Feld 2015:12, 15). This focus on relationality is also fundamental to Ochoa Gautier’s theorizations of aurality, in which acts of listening produce notions not only of sounds, sound producing entities, and listeners, but also an “ontology of relationships, an idea of how to think the interaction between entities that produce [and] hear sounds” (2014:22). The ontologies of relation generated in acts of listening are entangled with notions of culture and nature, the boundary between the human and the nonhuman, and what it means to be alive, agentive, and audible. Influenced by this genealogy of sound scholarship, the essays that follow explore the types of relations generated by historical and contemporary acts of listening, which shape different ontologies of natural landscapes and human bodies, consumption and creativity. In other words, to perceive oneself as listening across categorical boundaries, such as nature, culture, and difference, is to construct those very boundaries and their implications for how to live in a world constituted by relations.

This is different from the goal of listening to, or helping others to hear, bio-/natural and human/cultural diversity, as I discuss above. Ochoa Gautier has pointed out that particular genealogies of scholarship on music and the environment have tended to “dissolve the human into the natural,” for example by extending the notion of music-making to nonhuman entities such as birds or landscapes (2016:132).⁶ We might read Titon’s ecology metaphor as doing a parallel action of dissolving the nonhuman into the cultural: that is, extending ways of understanding nature to posit the relations between different groups of humans and their practices, and to give value to human difference in terms of “ecosystem” health and resilience. But, to return to the question of the taken for granted that Titus explores in her essay, both of these actions rely on taken-for-granted notions of nature and culture that are further reinscribed by applying them metaphorically across this divide. Packed into these metaphors are ideas about consumption, creativity, sound, music, difference, value, and the extraction and use of natural and cultural resources, which travel whole and unchallenged from one domain to the other. To listen to or for difference, culture, or nature is to already assume what difference, culture, and nature are and what recognizable examples of these concepts sound like. Thus a goal of this themed issue is to make aspects of particular notions of culture and nature explicit (or audible) in order to scrutinize them, to understand them as historically contingent and constructed through acts of listening, and to investigate how and by whom they have been “made” and how they exert the epistemological or ontological power to make worlds themselves.

I close this introduction with a question that is taken up explicitly in the first essay, by Maria Fantinato, and developed through all the essays that follow: What does it mean to “listen to nature,” for our various informants and for us as scholars? What does it mean to listen to the given versus the made (Titus), to different bodies consuming different substances (Colonna), to various practices of making something out of something else (Fantinato, Titus, Clark)? Different listenings create different

natures at the same time, in the same place—different natures that sometimes clash in both epistemological and material ways, with potentially devastating results. Conceiving of music, sound, creativity, knowledge, and substances extracted from both human practice and the nonhuman environment as expedient resources, for example, shapes particular worlds of relation that are also embedded in emplaced histories of relation. The essays that follow demonstrate this through deep explorations of colonial inequalities, extractivist epistemologies, and the forms of relation that different histories of listening make audible—or, to put it another way, make possible.

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Notes

- 1 In a 1964 article in *Ethnomusicology*, William Kay Archer uses the metaphor of ecology to link “the music itself” to audio reproduction technologies, spaces for listening, societal patterns of leisure, and even the “raw materials for instruments” (28; see also Allen 2018:5). In 1984, Titon’s own *Worlds of Music* textbook employed the notion of musical ecosystems to understand different global traditions in context.
- 2 In these journal issues and related work, this is largely a unidirectional analogy: musical practice can be understood in an environmental way. Other scholars have proposed that we can understand the environment in a musical way: see Clements (2011) on Jakob von Uexküll, who used music as a metaphor for understanding the relatedness of things in the world in terms of harmony, melody, and counterpoint, comprising “nature’s score.” In the 2015 issue, Thomas Turino’s article proposes participatory music-making as a model for thinking sustainability in other contexts, another way of inverting the metaphor.
- 3 See the 2002 UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity and the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expression.
- 4 Simultaneously, some scholars, including Titon, Allen, and Pedelty, have pointed out elsewhere that making music actually uses *up* resources, from the endangered species of wood used for violin bows (Allen 2011:419), to rock bands’ world tours (Pedelty 2012), to the massive amounts of energy, resources, and pollution associated with the contemporary recording industry (Titon 2020; Brennan & Devine 2020; Devine 2019; Roy 2020; Bates 2020). Further, the use of resources in the making of music scholarship—specifically the resources that go into holding and traveling to scholarly conferences—has been a topic of recent discussion on the Society for Ethnomusicology’s member listserv.
- 5 Dylan Robinson’s recent book *Hungry Listening* (2020) also illustrates the ways in which both the making of music and the making of musical scholarship have historically involved the

extraction of aesthetics, knowledge, and labor specifically from Indigenous communities and individuals.

- 6 A related critique is outlined by Juan Fernando Velasquez in his work on avitourism in Colombia, which points out that international tourists who travel to consume the sights and sounds of rare birdlife typically do so in ways that reinscribe notions of separated worlds of culture and nature as well as a neoliberal global economy of difference, rather than engaging with local notions and systems of birds, sound, meaning, and value (Velasquez 2021).

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