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## **Heralding the Other: Sousa, Simulacra, and Settler Colonialism**

Matthew C. Graham

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## Heralding the Other: Sousa, Simulacra, and Settler Colonialism

Matthew C. Graham  
University of Oregon

*This paper addresses the role of music and music education in the perpetuation of settler colonialism (a particular colonial configuration predicated on the expulsion of indigenous people and occupation of indigenous land) within the United States. Using Baudrillard's notion of simulacra, or "false truths," to look at racialized depictions in John Philip Sousa's 1910 suite, Dwellers of the Western World, this article identifies both the historic and ongoing discursive functions of such representations in the maintenance of a specific set of social relations. Through such examination, we can engender conversations regarding music education's roll within settler colonial society and work towards redressing the resulting inequities of this societal structure. It is only through a resultant praxis that we can affect material change.*

Keywords: *Settler Colonialism, John Philip Sousa, (Anti)colonialism*

Much theorizing has been done regarding the hegemonic role curriculum can (and often does) play in public instruction (e.g. Freire 1972; hooks 1994; Apple 1996). More specifically, there exists a dedicated and growing body of literature that discusses how schooling has served as a tool for the perpetuation of settler colonialism — a particular colonial configuration predicated on the expulsion of indigenous people and occupation of indigenous land (e.g. Sleeter 2010; Tuck and Gaztambide-Fernández 2013). Though scholars have begun attending to music and music education's role within colonial discourses (e.g. Westerlund 1999; Herbst 2005; Rosabal-Coto 2014), the existing literature has focused mainly on manifestations of colonialism better corresponding to modes of external control in which foreign powers expropriate resources and labor (i.e., exploitation colonialism, see Hixson 2013). As the social configurations and mechanisms of control differ between these divergent forms of colonization, there exists a need for research that examines the role of music and music education

specifically within the context of settler colonialism in order to theorize how educators might respond.

The analysis below addresses this gap in the music education literature and provides an entry-point into considering the interconnectedness of music, music education, and settler colonialism. Through such examination, we can engender conversations regarding music education's roll within settler colonial society and work towards redressing the resulting inequities of this social configuration. It is only through a resultant praxis that we can affect material change.

The first section of this paper provides a brief prologue introducing the site, framework, and philosophic concept utilized in this investigation. The second section describes how music — as parts of a larger body of ontologies, epistemologies, and praxes — serve to perpetuate settler colonialism. Specifically, this section provides a discursive analysis of John Phillip Sousa's *Dwellers of the Western World*, using Baudrillard's concept of the simulacrum (a false truth that "bears no relation to any reality whatsoever" [Baudrillard 1994, 6]). The last section discusses how these insights can be leveraged within music education to push against the oppressive forces of settler colonialism and theorize curriculum that simultaneously utilizes this knowledge to affect change, while acknowledging the limitations and dangers of this curricular project itself.

## Prologue

The first section of this prologue introduces the site of this examination, John Philip Sousa's 1910 suite, *Dwellers of the Western World*, providing the historical background of both the composer and the suite and explaining why this less well-known composition is a particularly useful site for our analysis. The second section presents a specific theoretical framework for settler colonialism as articulated by Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang (2014). The final section defines Baudrillard's concept of simulacra and articulates the utility of this philosophic concept in analyzing music's role in perpetuating settler colonial discourses.



canon. A suite in three movements, the piece was composed in anticipation of the Sousa Band's 1910-1911 international tour (Bierley 1973). The ensemble was met by enthusiastic audiences in concerts across Europe, Africa, and Oceania before returning to the western United States and performing numerous engagements as they traveled back to New York City. *Dwellers of the Western World*, one of the most notable works performed on the tour (Bierley 1973), was particularly well received by both critics and the general public (Pisani 2006). The three movements of the work, titled *The Red Man*, *The White Man*, and *The Black Man*, were intended as caricature portraits (in the traditional sense), written "to introduce American diversity to the world" (Brion 2011). Given the theatrical stylization of the work, its racial content, and the general acceptance an audience of "sympathetic listeners" (Pisani 2006, 75), *Dwellers of the Western World* is a particularly useful setting for introducing and examining issues in settler colonial discourses.

### **Settler Colonialism as a Structure**

Settler colonialism is a specific colonial configuration in which a substantial population immigrates into a foreign territory. This invasion (Wolfe 2006) is not intended as a finite, temporary occupation, but rather a permanent settlement. Although colonizing forces often leverage the political and military might of an imperial state or homeland (and, for a time, might retain allegiances to that authority), the legitimacy of the occupation is ultimately justified from within the settler colony. Whereas external modes of colonialization maintain a strong distinction between homeland and colony, settler colonialism operates through the reconfiguration of the latter into the former (Veracini 2013). This metamorphosis is never totalizing or complete; it must be continually maintained and enforced. Thus, settler colonialism is not an event but an omnipresent, oppressive social structure (Wolfe 1999, 2006; Glenn 2015). Tuck and Yang (2012) offer a framework for understanding settler colonialism in the United States as a process entangling three groups; (1) the settler colonialists of Western European descent, (2) the indigenous people whose presence on the land precedes the settler colonialist, and (3) the African "chattel slave" forced laborers (6). In this framework, the ongoing processes

of disenfranchising indigenous people and exploiting black labor are necessary for the realization of the settler colonist's capitalist interests.

Settler colonialism can be seen in specific events (such as the massacre at Wounded Knee and the Dred Scott case) and legal institutions (like slavery and the reservation system). Examining only discrete and overt manifestations, however, obfuscates the presuppositions through which the above atrocities could be justified. Therefore, we must examine the unspoken assumptions that allowed for the perpetration of these historic events as well as perpetuates current expressions of settler colonialism. The generic depictions of indigenous people, settlers of European descent, and African slaves and their descendants are prime examples of such presuppositions. Traditionally, these discursively assumed norms have been termed "stereotypes" (e.g. Stedman 1982; Mindiola, Niemann, and Rodriguez 2009); however, it has been argued that stereotypes are exaggerations of extant features and, thus, are grounded in reality and experience (Judd and Park 1993). Within settler colonialism, this is not true; these depictions emerge not from experience but out of a need for mechanisms to maintain a specific societal configuration. Baudrillard's notion of simulacra offers a way to think about these depictions within settler colonialism, independent of the groups to whom the representations purport to correspond.

### **Stereotypes and Simulacra**

The simulacrum is never that which conceals the truth—it is the truth which conceals that there is none. The simulacrum is true. (Ecclesiastes<sup>1</sup>, in Baudrillard 1994, 1)

The eminent French philosopher Jean Baudrillard offers the simulacrum (and its plural, simulacra) as that which purports to serve as a representation of the real (or at least that-which-is-real in abstraction) but in fact precedes it, functioning without relationship to reality. It is the evocation of an ideal type, a caricatured generalization whose authenticity is derived solely from the discursive regimes inside of which it is embedded. It is the ascription of a category that does not exist, hailed into existence by and as the simulacrum (Baudrillard 1994).

The philosophic conception of "simulacra" can be traced to Plato's dialogues (Childers and Hentzi 1995). In *Sophist*, Plato cites the practice of exaggerating

certain features within an artistic composition in order for the overall work to appear correct to the viewer. In order for the mammoth statues of antiquity (such as the Statue of Zeus at Olympia) to seem proportionate to an observer at its base, features such as the upper torso and head had to be shaped disproportionately large in comparison to the overall structure. The veracity of this representation corresponds to artist's conception of the intended audience's engagement with the work rather than to reality. Plato differentiates this corrupt representation from the authentic image: the simulacrum from an accurate reproduction of the real. Plato likened this artistic practice to the philosophic tendency to distorting the truth in order to substantiate the validity of an example (Plato 2001). Thus, it is the Platonic task to adjudicate representations as either "good" or "bad" (Deleuze 1983).

The key distinction between Baudrillard's application of the term *simulacrum* and its Platonic heritage stems from the relation of the image to reality. In the Platonic sense, a simulacrum is a distortion or perversion of reality but retains connections to the real. The question of authenticity is connected to considerations of intentionality and positionality; the distorted truth of the simulacrum is a result of the artist relating the object to its intended viewer rather than authentically reproducing the object. Conversely, Baudrillard contends that the simulacrum itself becomes true through the societal function it fulfills. A simulacrum is not a perversion of reality but rather a "truth" in its own right: not real, but true.

The use of Baudrillard's notion of the simulacrum to examine how indigenous peoples, settlers of European descent, and African slaves and their descendants are portrayed in *Dwellers of the Western World* has two key benefits. First, considering these portrayals as simulacra decenters the representation from reality; the simulacrum of each group can be considered as independent from individuals within the group. Second, untethering representation from reality and examining these portrayals as simulacra invites consideration of not what the depiction *means*, but rather, how the representation *works*; it stimulates a consideration of the discursive function of the representation. Thus, the use of the Baudrillard's concept of simulacra in the following analysis is not an interrogation of John Philip Sousa's intention nor an examination of the intrinsic meaning of *Dwellers of the Western World*. Instead, this analysis examines how the portrayal of indigenous people,

settlers of European descent, and African slaves and their descendants discursively function to perpetuate the structure of settler colonialism, both historical and present.

### **Settler Colonialism in *Dwellers of the Western World***

Before analyzing the racial discourses that can be read through *Dwellers of the Western World*, it is imperative that we attend to the gendered nature of these representations.

The evocation of simulacra as masculine in each of the three movements (*The Red Man*, *The White Man*, and *The Black Man*) “promotes male privilege by being male dominated, male identified, and male centered” (Johnson 1997, 5). This is not surprising as “colonization has always been a gendered process” (Lawrence 2003, 5); however, it highlights the intersectionality of the concurrent processes of racialization and gendering. One key way in which settler colonialism operates is through the establishment of normative gender roles. The heteropatriarchal organization of the “traditional family,” the policing of heteronormative sexuality, and the imposition of male-centric inheritance laws all operate to fracture indigenous identity through a denial of indigenous ontologies (Arvin, Tuck, and Morrill 2013). Thus, the evocation of each group within the composition in masculine terms is a key and core aspect of how *Dwellers of the Western World* preserves and perpetuates settler colonialism.

In the following discursive analysis of *Dwellers of the Western World*, the examination of each movement begins with a brief exposition regarding the societal function the simulacrum plays within settler colonialism. Following the general description, this study then reviews how each simulacrum is generally evoked through and by music. Finally, each section concludes with examine how the simulacrum is specifically heralded in *Dwellers of the Western World*.

### **“The Red Man”<sup>2</sup> and Simulacrum of Absence**

The simulacrum of ‘The Red Man’ may be contrarily depicted as either an emotionally explosive brute or a stoic barbarian. He is almost always portrayed as primitive and backwards, juxtaposed against the supposed technological (and



intellectual) advancement of the simulacrum of ‘The White Man’ (Bird 1996). He is portrayed as a historicized “other,” a relic of the past. Stereotypical depictions in “traditional” regalia serve to temporally distance him from the here and now (Ross and Lester 1996).

The simulacrum of ‘The Red Man,’ as he is often portrayed in American culture, serves many purposes. First, the simulacrum of ‘The Red Man’ provides justification for the policy “Kill the Indian, save the man” (Pratt 1973, 260). This trope of the “ignorant savage” allows for Western thinkers to view themselves as great liberators, freeing ‘The Red Man’ from himself. It is this Western notion of unrestrained freedom that has allowed the settler colonial state to occupy indigenous lands and commit the genocide of indigenous peoples (Alfred 2005). Secondly, the simulacrum serves as a mechanism for the erasure of indigenous people; those in search of the signified ‘Red Man’ will be unable to find him. Current manifestations of indigeneity, in failing to correspond to the simulacrum of ‘The Red Man,’ are denied. Settler colonial occupation of land, predicated on the assumed absence of the original inhabitants, is substantiated by this repudiation. Thus, the immutable “authentic” ethnographic representation has destroyed ‘The Red Man’; the indigenous person “dying for having been ‘discovered’” (Baudrillard and Foss 1983, 13).

Musically, the simulacrum of ‘The Red Man’ is heralded through the (mis)appropriation of indigenous music through a Western metaphysics of aesthetics. “That which is now described as dance, song and ceremony was (simplistically put) much more a way of passing on information including history, lore and law, than the recreational pursuits that are presently ascribed” (Immiboagurramilbun 2005 cited in Somerville 2012, 13). This conceptualization of music is beyond a Western epistemology that considers music as a cultural byproduct rather than an ontologically inseparable part of the people and place from which it comes. As a result, within a Western framework the “song” can be disentangled from its purpose and place and becomes knowable only as what the song is, not what it does, for whom, where. Furthermore, additional violation occurs through the generation of an idealized form of generic pan-indigenous music through a process of aggregation. These generalized musical representations bear resemblance neither to the sonorities of any indigenous group, nor attend to the relationship of “song” to culture and,

more importantly, place. Despite the fact that indigenous epistemologies, ontologies, and cosmologies are inexorably tied to land, musical generalizations serve as broad brush strokes painting all indigenous people the same shade of red. This generic, pan-indigenous framework undermines the fundamental relation of people to country and instead offers a sonically abstracted sense of placeless commonality amongst disparate indigenous groups. Detached from land and lumped together through this process of abstraction, the heralded “Red Man” becomes both homogenous and moveable. Thus, atrocities such as the reservation system seem to be justifiable; indigenous peoples are assumed to possess neither uniqueness nor an attachment to place. Furthermore, expressions of indigeneity that fail to correspond to abstracted pan-indigenous sonorities are denied their authenticity. The heralded simulacrum of ‘The Red Man’ erases the indigenous person, and settler colonial occupation of land is tenable.

The following quote from *The Song of Hiawatha*, an epic poem built upon misappropriated Anishinaabe narratives<sup>3</sup>, is offered in the opening of the first movement of *Dwellers of the Western World*:

And they stood there on the meadow,  
With their weapons and their war-gear,  
Painted like the leaves of Autumn,  
Painted like the sky of morning,  
(Longfellow 1855, in Sousa 1910b, 2)

“The Red Man” is a short work; a scant 182 bar *moderato misterioso* (2/2) “war dance” (Pisani 2006, 82). A performance at tempo lasts a mere 3 minutes and 20 seconds. The work opens with a tonally ambiguous repetitive figure, first built around an ascending and descending perfect fourth (D, A, D) then around an ascending and descending tritone (E-flat, A, E-flat). This brief introduction culminates with a pair of dissonant sforzando outbursts (see ex. 1).

**Example 1. Introduction to “The Red Man,” mm. 7-10**

*Moderato misterioso*

The resultant tonal ambiguity, followed by sudden violent eruptions, fosters an atmosphere of uneasiness and tension. This mood is perpetuated in the first section of the work as a G-minor melodic figure, accompanied by quick dynamic expansion and contraction, continues to be interrupted by quick crescendos and sforzando impacts. In the second strain, beginning in bar 26, an ostinato of sharp, grace-noted quarter notes is introduced in the upper woodwinds (see ex. 2), evoking imagery of shouting voices or weird cries and howls (ibid., 83).

**Example 2. Second Strain of “The Red Man,” mm. 26-31**

*leggiero*

A wandering oboe and flute duet in G-minor dominates the third strand of “The Red Man,” offset by guttural downbeats every other bar in the lower winds, perpetuating the atmosphere of uneasiness and wildness established in the introduction and first two strains.

The piece then modulates to a tonally deceptive trio section. While the accompaniment initially seems to be grounding in E-flat-major, the melody and accompaniment ultimately settle into the relative key of c-minor. The melodic motif introduced in this section consists of two long notes followed by a series of three quick descending notes (see ex. 3).

**Example 3: Recapitulation of Trio Theme in “The Red Man,” mm. 154–61**

The musical score consists of two systems of piano accompaniment. The first system is marked 'loco' and 'ff'. The bass line features a steady quarter-note ostinato, while the treble line has a melody with some rests and a long note. The second system continues the same pattern, ending with a double bar line.

The accompaniment in this section, as throughout the piece, consists of a steady quarter note ostinato with heavy emphasis on the first of every group of four notes, a common motif used to represent the war drums of the simulacrum of ‘The Red Man.’

The first movement of *Dwellers of the Western World* is a prime example of how the simulacrum of ‘The Red Man’ is heralded through musical representations. “The Red Man” is composed rhythmically and melodically inferior to “The White Man.” At half the length, “The Red Man” serves the role as but a brief introduction to the main section of the suite; the simulacrum of ‘The Red Man’ marginalized and subordinated to the vastly superior simulacrum of ‘The White Man.’ The utilization of musical techniques that evoke imagery of war whoops, war drums, and wild outburst (Pisani 2006) perpetuate the stereotypical depiction of the violent barbarian. These misrepresentations are present in many other musical portrayals of indigeneity, from the infamous “Tomahawk Chop” deployed by Atlanta Braves fans (Cornel 1992) to the representation of Tiger Lily and Neverland Indians in the song “Ugg-a-Wugg” in the 1954 musical *Peter Pan* (Styne, Charlap, and Rittmann 1954). The utilization of stereotypical Western mischaracterizations of indigenous music and introducing them to new audiences further entrenches the authenticity of these representations. The presumed legitimacy of rhythmic and melodic tropes utilized in “The Red Man” reinforce their ascription as accurate portrayals of indigenous music and allow for the dismissal of indigenous expressions that fail to conform to these Western expectations. This act of heralding the simulacrum of ‘The Red Man’ serves as a mechanism of erasure for indigenous people.















The use of ragtime perpetuates the discursive construction of the simulacrum of ‘The Black Man’ as the savage. Ragtime music, a popular late 19th, early 20th musical form, met strong opposition for its association with violence and sexuality. As a musical form, it was perceived by some as the foil to traditional European music, “a music that represented to them [America’s cultural leaders] not the civilization and spiritual nobility of European art but its very antithesis - the sensual depravity of African savagery, embodied in the despised American Negro” (Berlin 2002, 32). Thus, the use of ragtime music to herald the simulacrum of ‘The Black Man’ can be read as evoking him concurrent with the “questionable resorts” (Johnson 1995, 102) and “saloons” (Harney 1924) from which the form supposedly originates.

The assumption of the ragtime style also exemplifies the process of cultural appropriation as ragtime music transitions from an expression of “blackness” towards its assumption by settler colonial culture. As settler colonialism subsumes and commodifies ragtime music into popular (white) culture, the simulacrum of ‘The Black Man’ transitions to being heralded through other musical mediums: the form may change, but the discursive attributes of the simulacrum of ‘The Black Man’ remains the same.

## Discussion

The use of Baudrillard’s concept of the simulacrum in order to read racial discourses through *Dwellers of the Western World* opens up new learning opportunities for music educators and the students they serve. The misrepresentations presented in *Dwellers of the Western World* provides a unique site for examining how music has been actively and tacitly complicit in the advancement of settler colonialism. The work utilities styles and techniques that subjugate “The Red Man” and “The Black Man” to “The White Man”; however, these sonic representations are only effective in collaboration with accepted musical practices (e.g. the presumed validity and veracity of the representations) and when consumed by a receptive audience. Thus, the issue is imbedded neither in the intrinsic meaning of the piece nor in the intentions of the composer, but rather in how *Dwellers of the Western World* taps into and maintains extant discourses. The above analysis can be used to sensitize teachers and students to the normalizing function of music within settler colonial



simulacrum of ‘The Red Man’, ‘The White Man’ and ‘The Black Man’ continue to be heralded and it is this ongoing violence, maintained by (mis)representation, which must be confronted. Rather than an artifact of a lamentable past, *Dwellers of the Western World* can be used as a window into our racist present. By attending to the manner in which these portrayals serve as part of the foundation of settler colonialism, we can work with educators and students to promote the formation of a different subjectivity, one in tune with the intrinsic violence of such representations.

Fostering a sensitivity and awareness of music and music education’s role in settler colonialism is an important and necessary step in decolonization; however, it is only a beginning. This work cannot simply be epistemic in nature; changes in subjectivity must be accompanied by changes in being and praxis. The following sections address both the potential and limitations of developing curriculum predicated on redressing systemic modes of oppression.

### **(Anti)colonial Curriculum**

Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang (2012) underscore the limitations of anti-oppressive curriculum predicated solely on elucidating the ongoing violence of settler colonialism:

We agree that curricula, literature, and pedagogy can be crafted to aid people in learning to see settler colonialism, to articulate critiques of settler epistemology, and set aside settler histories and values in search of ethics that reject domination and exploitation; this is not unimportant work. However, the front-loading of critical consciousness building can waylay decolonization, even though the experience of teaching and learning to be critical of settler colonialism can be so powerful it can feel like it is indeed making change. Until stolen land is relinquished, critical consciousness does not translate into action that disrupts settler colonialism. (Tuck and Yang 2012, 19)

As Tuck and Yang articulate, key to any discussion of an anti-colonial curriculum is the insistence that creating the possibility for the formation of a different subjectivity is only a small step towards upsetting settler colonialism. Knowledge must not be seen as an end in and of itself but rather as one necessary part of decolonization; it must be intertwined with transformative praxes. In the United States, public education has been deployed as a knowledge-production project built around Herbert Spencer’s (1860) famous question: “what knowledge is of most worth?” (quoted in Broudy 1982)<sup>4</sup>. Through this disaggregation of knowing from

being, an artifact of Western metaphysics, education can simultaneously espouse critical philosophy while dogmatically adhering to Western ways of being. Thus, an omnipresent danger exists as long as ontology remains estranged from epistemology (Watts 2013); settler futurity is maintained as an ontological state through epistemic “moves to innocence” (Tuck and Gaztambide-Fernández 2013). Any curriculum that fails to acknowledge that settler colonialism is, at its core, about the occupation of land is doomed to perpetuating the very systems it wishes to disrupt.

Anti-colonialism is a project to “dismantle the colonial project *in all of its current manifestations*” (Simpson 2004, 381, emphasis added). To posit an anti-colonial curriculum from within the settler colonial institution of public instruction is to begin with an unresolvable paradox; settler colonialism cannot dismantle itself (Lorde 2003). Those of us embedded in such a system are in an untenable position, as neither action nor inaction is entirely morally defensible. When faced with the atrocities of settler colonialism, situated individuals must decide how to act. One possible move is to push against oppression from within the system, even if the tools wielded towards this end reify aspects of the oppressive regime. It is a move of (anti)colonialism; a push against settler colonialism while acknowledging that these actions may reinforce aspects of the very system they purport to disrupt. The parens are an acknowledgement of limitation, a caution from under-considered action, and a disruption of the totalizing authority of (anti)colonialism as a praxis intertwined with new ways of knowing and being. Knowledge may be the means of this endeavor, but its material change that is the ultimate aim; public education is not only an epistemic project but also an ontological one (Packer and Goicoechea 2000).

### **(Anti)colonial Music Education**

Core in theorizing an (anti)colonial music curriculum is attending to the limitations and dangers of this project. Two such concerns are that (1) ameliorative efforts may be subsumed by the oppressive systems they aim to disrupt and (2) attempts to redress inequity may inadvertently support unforeseen modes of oppression. Consider the tandem example of Irving Berlin’s “God Bless America” and Woody Guthrie’s “This Land is Your Land,” two pieces commonly used in elementary

classrooms (both are included as part of the National Association for Music Education's [NAfME] *Get America Singing ... Again!* Campaign [Seeger 1993]).

The exact genesis of "God Bless America" is something of a myth (Kanskowiz 2013); however, it is generally accepted that composer Irving Berlin wrote the work as part of a musical revue<sup>6</sup> while stationed at Camp Upton during the First World War (Colins 2003). The work was ultimately cut from that show and relegated to Berlin's archives until 1938. At the precipice of the Second World War, Berlin rediscovered the work and offered it Kate Smith, a popular vocalist and radio personality. The song was included in her show, *The Kate Smith Hour*, on the eve of Armistice Day, 10 November 1938. The performance was a resounding success and led to calls for additional presentations, copies of the sheet music, and recordings (Kanskowiz 2013). The song broached the Billboard music chart's in both spring 1939 and again summer 1940 (Hayes 1995). The lyrics of the song can read as a plea for religious support and guidance ("God bless America, land that I love/Stand beside her and guide her/through the night with a light from above" [Berlin 1939]), a song of unity and peace in the face of rising fascist sentiments abroad.

Although "God Bless America" was intended as a peace song and has been used in both civil rights movements and labor rallies (Kanskowiz 2013), the song also has a troubled history. The work can be read as eliciting notions of religious authority and blind nationalistic allegiance, the mettle of Manifest Destiny. In hearing the song on the radio, the popular folk singer Woody Guthrie felt a strong sense of disconnect from this celebratory anthem and the gross iniquity and rampant suffering he experienced in his life and travels (Klein 1999). Guthrie's renown work, "This Land is Your Land," was composed in 1940 as a response to "God Bless America" (Jackson 2002).

In its original iteration, "This Land is Your Land" included several "protest verses" and celebrations of collectivism (Spivey 1996). Over time, however, the intention and meaning (as well as the lyrics themselves) were softened. "This Land is Your Land" is now often used to promote the very same blind allegiance Guthrie was criticizing in "God Bless America" (Jackson 2002). In addition to the subsumption of "This Land is Your Land" by the blind patriotism it aimed to upset, the piece also can be read as advancing an equitable ideology in a manner that simultaneously

reifies other modes of oppression. Consider the first phrase of the song: “This land is your land. This land is my land” (Guthrie 1958). These ten words overflow with meaning: the differentiation of “you/your” from “me/my,” the propertization of land, and land’s subordination to the “you/your” and “me/my.”<sup>5</sup> Thus, even this ameliorative effort reifies unanticipated and unforeseen modes of oppression.

The brief analyses of “This Land is Your Land” and “God Bless America” in this section and *Dwellers of the Western World* earlier are not intended as examinations of intrinsic meaning of each work nor interrogations of their respective composer’s intentions. Instead, these analyses highlight how music and music education has been engaged in the advancement of settler colonialism, or — perhaps more simply — emphasizes that music and music education matters. Like curriculum in general (Phillips and Hawthorne 1978), music curriculum is always political. At times, aspects of these politics are overt. In “This Land is Your Land” and “God Bless America,” the political aim can be read in the lyrics. In *Dwellers of the Western World*, the politics can be read in the evocation of the simulacrum of ‘The Red Man,’ ‘The White Man,’ and ‘The Black Man’.

Politics in music and music education run deeper than these overt presentations, however. There is a politics to instrumentation, a politics to harmonic, melodic, and rhythmic structures, and a politics to music’s purpose. Through music curriculum, each of these are discursively established as norms; they come to define what is “True,” “Absolute,” and “Natural” rather than be understood as cultural productions. (Anti)colonialism is a call to recognize and acknowledge that, at its core, what we teach is one of a multitude of possibilities (all equally “True,” “Absolute,” and “Natural” or not), and that the mode of being normalized through curriculum is, at the expense of others, ways of being in the world. This pluralistic notion is fundamentally different from a naive “multiculturalism” in which the “other” remains the deviant, different from the norm. Rather, it is a call for decentering the normalizing function of music curriculum, to question that which is considered “good” or “classical,” and acknowledge that our own positionality limits our purview for what music is and can be. There exists the potentiality for other conceptions of music in other cultures and contexts.



(Anti)colonialism cannot only be about identifying the mechanisms for perpetuating certain social and material relations, however. Fundamentally, it is our complacency within these systems of oppression that has allowed for their continuance. An examination of these processes merely affords us a distraction from our culpability, allowing for the preservation of settler colonial privilege and occupation (“settler moves to innocence” [Tuck and Yang 2012, 1]).

(Anti)colonialism is a call to examine how we are actively engaged in the political process of maintaining this systemic oppression. It is not an absolution of our complacency within that system; there is no freedom from that guilt to be found. Rather, the hope is that through the creation of a space for the formation of a different subjectivity, there exists the possibility of affecting material changes. Until this ontological shift, however, we, as music educators, music consumers, and participants in settler colonialism, remain culpable. The simulacrum is heralded by and through us; we are the instruments of settler colonialism.

### **Conclusions: Limitations and Concerns**

It is of great concern that by tacitly supporting the superstructures that allow for the perpetuation of the settler colonial state, (anti)colonialism may be antithetical to decolonization. This concern must be weighed against the consequences of all other actions, as the possibility to affect change exists only in action. The adoption of an (anti)colonial curriculum does not absolve an individual of his or her responsibility for the continuance of settler colonialism. Instead, (anti)colonialism must be seen as one possible avenue of redressing inequity from within the inherently oppressive system we are all culpable for perpetuating.

The analysis and discussion provide above identifies how settler colonialism has been perpetuated by music and music education in order to leverage this knowledge in order to reconceive an anti-oppressive music curriculum. If the end goal of decolonization is reparation of indigenous land and recognition of native sovereignty, then this curricular project can only be one part of that larger project. Through the adoption of an (anti)colonial curriculum, music education can become a site of disruption within settler colonialism and become a space for decolonization to begin.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Baudrillard offers this quote in *Simulacra and Simulations* but later articulates it as an intentional and purposeful fabrication (Smith 2005).

<sup>2</sup> Drawing from the language of Sousa's (1910) *Dwellers of the Western World*, this paper uses the term "The Red Man, 'The White Man' and 'The Black Man' in quotations reference to the discursively constructed simulacra and the italized *The Red Man, The White Man, and The Black Man* to refer specifically to the three movements of Sousa's *Dwellers of the Western World*.

<sup>3</sup> The anonymous and heavily critical review of Longfellow's poem in the 28 December 1855 New York Times concedes that the poem "embalming pleasantly enough the monstrous traditions of an uninteresting, and, one may almost say, a justly exterminated race."

<sup>4</sup> Interestingly, Spencer's article talks at length regarding the relationship between "knowledge of most worth" and the ontological question "how to live." Only the former question has driven curriculum theory and education policy for the past 150 years.

<sup>5</sup> Singer and organizer Jimmy Collier was confronted regarding the meaning of the lyrics at a 1968 performance of *This Land is Your Land* by Henry Crowdog, a member of the Sioux Indian delegation. This incident led to the composition of a new verse by Cappy Israel

This land is your land, but it once was my land  
Before we sold you Manhattan Island  
You pushed my nation to the reservation,  
This land was stole by you from me.  
(Seeger 1993, 145)



<sup>6</sup> It is also important to note that the revue in which *God Bless America* was intended to be included, *Yip, Yip Yaphank*, as well as the 1943 film based on that review, *This is the Army*, also included a performance of Berlin's classic song *Mandy*. In this number, white male soldiers perform a chorus line in blackface, drag, and "demeaning costumes associated with servitude" (Culbert 2000, 47–8). One can read gendered racial discourses in this evocation of this particular simulacrum.

### **About the Author**

Matthew C. Graham is Ph.D. student studying education research in the Critical and Sociocultural Studies in Education program at the University of Oregon. Prior to attending the University of Oregon, Matthew served as a non-profit administrator, overseeing after-school programming with the Boys and Girls Club of Corvallis, Oregon. Previously, he worked as a music educator and director of performing arts in southern Indiana. He is a graduate of Valparaiso University and holds a bachelor's degree in K-12 Instrumental, Vocal, and General Music Education. His research interests lie at the intersection of equity, education, assessment, and community with particularly focus on research methodology. Address: Department of Education Studies, College of Education, 5277 University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403. [mgraham@uoregon.edu](mailto:mgraham@uoregon.edu)