The Social Life of Sound: Urban Indigenous Youth, Hip Hop and Hardcore

by

Deirdre Zasorin-White

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Department of Anthropology
University of Alberta

Abstract

This thesis is an examination of how musical participation and sociality intersect in the lives of nine urban Aboriginal youth and their allies living in western North America. Through the lens of modern Hardcore and Hip Hop, I explore how participation in these two musical scenes may engender a sense of belonging, provide networks of support and develop an ideological grounding that shapes social interactions within a musical setting. Although modern Hardcore and Hip Hop are separate musical scenes, they do share a system of beliefs that play a significant role in the formation of musically based relationships. These beliefs include an emphasis on maintaining one's local scene, self-education, and taking part in causes relating to social justice. I explore how participation in the musical communities of Hip Hop and modern Hardcore impact the behaviors of the research participants involved in this thesis. Worth noting is that although Hip Hop and modern Hardcore are global movements that can transcend geographic borders, I focus exclusively on experiences within the framework of the local.

Drawing upon the work of scholars such as Paul Gilroy (1993), Christopher Small (1998), Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012[1999]), Josh Kun (2005), and Samy Alim (2006), I argue that while belief systems are not doctrine and cannot be applied universally, they provide a way of approaching the study of music and sociality among urban Aboriginal youth within the confines of my specific research community. Methods of investigation included participant observation, communities of practice, musical and

linguistic analysis, interviews, and methodologies outlined by Dell Hymes (1974) and Richard Bauman (1977). Both modern Hardcore and Hip Hop appear to encourage a strong sense of locality and place, encouraging a deeply felt sense of belonging that is driven by both geographic location and musical engagement. Additionally, both genres of music seem to be driven by participants involved with a number of social justice issues, including combating racism and homelessness through music, art and acts of peaceful protest. Finally, participants involved in modern Hardcore and Hip Hop appear to develop profound and musically driven relationships with peers in their communities of practice.

Preface

This thesis is the original work of Deirdre Zasorin-White. The research project, of which this thesis is part, received research ethics approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board, Project Name “Thesis Research for Master of Arts”, No. Pro00025094, September 23, 2011.

Acknowledgements

My sincere gratitude to Andie Palmer for her patience, insight and guidance, as well as for being a source of inspiration.

My deep appreciation to Carl Urion for his wisdom and introduction to the wonderful world of linguistic anthropology.

Many thanks to Joseph Hill for his guidance.

All my love to my mom.

Dad, this is for you.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

A Note on Transcription

All transcriptions are unedited, except for grammatical features to aid in the ease of reading. All participants were provided the opportunity to review transcriptions to ensure accuracy. I have adapted the transcription model of Julie Cruikshank (1990).

[ ] Used to include editorial comments for clarity or as an explanation when wording may be unclear.

, Used to designate a pause of three seconds or less

… Used to designate a pause of four seconds or more

-¶ Used to designate an interjection or abrupt change in subject matter

A Note on Terminology

The terms ‘Hip Hop’ and ‘rap’ are used throughout this thesis. Following the guidelines of Murray Forman (2002) and KRS-One (2009), I employ ‘rap’ to refer to a style of music, and ‘Hip Hop’ as a term for an entire cultural movement, as described in Chapter Three. However, research participants did not always differentiate between these two terms. When using direct quotes from participants, ‘Hip Hop’ and ‘rap’ are frequently used interchangeably. Readers should note that there is no precedent for utilizing a capital ‘R’ when using the word ‘rap,’ but ‘Hip Hop’ should be capitalized, as outlined in Chapter One.

Following the guidelines of Steven Blush and George Petros (2001), ‘modern Hardcore’ is used to demarcate the ‘post-Hardcore’ era of the mid-1980’s and beyond, while ‘Hardcore’ references the entire musical culture as a whole, 1980s - present. Participants did not use the term ‘modern Hardcore,’ so when I use direct quotes, I reflect their usage of the word. Additionally, it should be noted that Punk Rock is sometimes used interchangeably with Hardcore by two participants.

Chapter One: Introduction: Studying Youth and Music

"Teach me to help others, even as I am helped."
(KRS-One 2009:427)

"It saved my life. The combination of music and community saved me."

Sheldon Runs Like Deer, a life long resident of Calgary, Alberta, is telling me about the impact that modern Hardcore has had on his life. Modern Hardcore, an offshoot of the Punk Rock movement and music of the 1970's and 1980's, is a loud, proud and an in-your-face blend of angst, anger and pride. Having received little attention from mainstream record labels, modern Hardcore has retained its roots as a musical movement largely driven by its fans, rather than by record labels and other corporate entities. Following the philosophy of "Do It Yourself", the belief in doing, thinking and making things your self (Blush and Petros 2001:271), many dedicated modern Hardcore fans often develop their own bands and then promote them through self-made publicity materials and merchandise, including recordings made in local, small-scale studios or private residences, zines, and hand-drawn flyers. For the uninitiated, modern Hardcore is a wild ride, full of amplified guitar, heavy drums and a unique vocal style that incorporates singing and, typically, scream-like vocalizations.

In speaking of a type of music noted for gritty lyrics and live shows that encourage active and often violent audience participation, Sheldon is adamant that Calgary's Hardcore scene provides him with a network of social and emotional support. Sheldon explains, "I've met some of my best friends through this

[music]…Through them, the culture, what they taught me – it's helped me grow and realize what my true values are and what they should be." Like many young people I have spoken with, Sheldon views Hardcore as more than 'just' music. I contend that in Calgary, modern Hardcore is a subculture, held together by a tight-knit group of like-minded individuals. Although inherently musical in nature, Calgary's modern Hardcore scene is ultimately a social activity, driven by an active group of musicians, promoters and fans.

Live modern Hardcore shows are often deeply physical, relying on a pogo-like dance called 'moshing,' in which dancers intentionally slam in to one another, as described in Chapter Three. It's not unusual for audience members to develop bruises, concussions or worse at some of the more active shows. While the general public may view Hardcore as radical and violent, Sheldon argues that involvement with Calgary's modern Hardcore has had a positive impact on his life. As a former homeless alcoholic, Sheldon explains that "Without Hardcore, I would have been dead or a junkie or living on the streets right now. It truly saved my life." He goes on to add that "One hundred percent. Hardcore helps me stay sober." In particular, Sheldon credits his friends within Calgary's modern Hardcore scene with helping him stay clean and free from alcohol. By hanging out with his friends, planning shows and drinking "a lot" of coffee, Sheldon has found an outlet for his addiction to alcohol.

When asked to elaborate on how his friends within Hardcore help him stay on the straight and narrow, Sheldon replies,

> A few of us, … a couple of us have issues with alcohol, and now we're all working together to stay clean … Quit the drugs. Quit the alcohol. Fucking do that. All we do now is hang out constantly, drink some coffee and plan events. It definitely helps me stay sober. It gives me a reason to get sober. I can plan shows without getting drunk all the time.

After years of struggling with sobriety and dead-end jobs, Sheldon is now a promoter. It's a job that meshes well with Sheldon's love for his hometown's scene. Although the pay is low to non-existent, Sheldon is passionate about promoting the music of friends. He speaks of a "peace of mind" that comes along with doing something he loves and cares about.

A former homeless youth, Sheldon is now a proud homeowner, largely in part to his discipline and ability to work hard and save up cash. His residence operates as a home base for friends in need. As of one conversation in March of 2015, Sheldon had five people living with him. His housemates were linked through their involvement with local modern Hardcore, and by their mutual desire to live a sober lifestyle. All were working towards managing their substance abuse issues, whether with alcohol or drugs. Noting that the arrangement was an effective one, Sheldon credited his decision to house friends in need with the social values he learned from Hardcore and Punk Rock. He explained, "It's really interesting how it works. Punk Rock helped me to get a house and use it to help people in any capacity. The only reason I bought a house is so people like these people have a place to go."

Sheldon worked for fifteen years to achieve his goal of owning a home, despite being kicked out of high school due to behavioral issues and recurrent bouts of alcohol

abuse. Many would consider Sheldon's decision to open his home to others a generous act, although he doesn't see it that way. It's just the "Hardcore thing to do." Sheldon notes that his friends are his source of strength. Within the Calgary Hardcore scene, Sheldon believes that "A lot of us don't get strength from ourselves, we get it from the strength we see in our friends."

The insights of Sheldon Runs Like Deer touch upon something profound and all too easily overlooked – the social power of music. The central focus of my research is to examine the ways in which music and sociality intersect, as evidenced in the stories and music of the research participants involved with this project. I focus on two musical genres, rap and modern Hardcore. As I will describe in Chapter Three, rap, which is a part of the larger Hip Hop cultural movement, first gained traction in the Bronx during the 1970's, the cultural offspring of mostly urban Afro-Caribbean youth. Rap, or emceeing, is one of the dynamic musical forms associated with Hip Hop, and is often referred to by the same name. My findings suggest that the bridge between musical participation and social engagement occurs through developing a peer group, providing networks of support, and lastly, self-education and improvement.

As I elaborate upon throughout this thesis, the intense social connections that Sheldon describes are not unique to the Calgary Hardcore scene. Almost 300 kilometers (186 miles) to the north lies Alberta's provincial capital of Edmonton. It is here that I first meet Arnold. At our first meeting in 2010, Arnold was a twenty-eight year old member of Edmonton's Hardcore scene. Like Sheldon, Arnold expressed a deep

commitment to his friends within Hardcore, and credited them with aiding him in becoming a "better" human being. Arnold described how the music itself helped heal and strengthen him as a young man. Recounting a particularly rough patch in his life, Arnold described the spiritual, emotional and even physical changes that Hardcore brought about.

> In a time when I felt negative, and those bands came through, it was a release. It started meaning something more to me; the lyrics represented something that was in my soul. Over time when I look back and what these songs and bands were meaning, of redefining yourself; it definitely made me aware of being strong minded, pushing myself physically emotionally, mentally, and spiritually.

Like Sheldon, Arnold is well known in his local musical community. Although his involvement with Edmonton's Hardcore scene is dwindling after a decade of intense engagement, he is still respected and generally well liked by long-standing members of Alberta's various Hardcore communities. Despite being one of the few self-described "Natives" involved in Edmonton's scene, Arnold is fiercely loyal to his hometown's Hardcore community. Arnold refers to Edmonton's Hardcore scene as "a good group of people," some of whom he refers to as his "brothers" and "family."

Despite their differences, Arnold and Sheldon share a profound respect for modern Hardcore. In particular, these men express similar feelings about the power of positive social engagement with the Hardcore scene. Arnold reflects on his experiences with the genre, noting that "It's both the band, the movement, the people … Hardcore is something that will stay with you for a long time, because you're able to connect to them, to the music, to the people within that movement." He speaks at length about his

friends in the scene, giving credit to the many people who have helped along the way. It is clearly more than just the music that attracts Arnold to Hardcore; it is also the community that comes with it. The same is true for Sheldon, who speaks as much about his friends within Hardcore as he does about the music itself.

Drawing upon the experiences of young men and women like Sheldon and Arnold, I explore the connection between sociality and musical participation. I begin with the working assumption that first, musical participation may help to facilitate in the creation of a peer group. For some young people, fitting in and finding a like-minded cohort may be challenging, especially when faced with personal difficulties. Urban Aboriginal youth may have the additional burden of struggling with societal racism. Kathleen Buddle has noted that, in a Canadian context, "… Native youth who populate cities in western Canada are marked out not only by overt signs of difference but by less obvious birthmarks, such as dress, customs, speech patterns, and dialects" (Buddle 2011:179). These marks of difference also manifest through economic marginalization (181) and disenfranchisement from civic life usually granted those in racial and ethnic majorities (179). These points are largely true for both the Canadian and American participants involved with my research.

Second, taking part in a musical scene may aid in the creation and maintenance of networks of support. These supports may be social, emotional or even financial. When Sheldon describes providing a home for his friends in recovery as a safe space for sobriety, he is providing a kind of social support system that may not otherwise be

available to his peers. Lastly, the systems of belief embedded within modern Hardcore and Hip Hop may encourage personal growth and positive change on an individual level. In turn, these beliefs help shape the lives of the young people involved with this project.

I deliberately focus on the positive aspects of music and social engagement. Time and time again, I have been asked by the participants involved in this project to provide a fair representation of Hip Hop and modern Hardcore. Several participants have expressed frustration with the misrepresentation and vilification of their respective musical communities. The majority of participants are also fed up with negative depictions of young Aboriginal people – and of youth in general. By focusing on positive stories about the ways in which musical participation and social engagement converge within modern Hardcore and Hip Hop, I hope to counter some of the negativity surrounding these musical scenes. Additionally, I hope to provide a counterbalance to some of the stereotypes associated with urban Aboriginal youth in both Canada and the United States.

I am not denying the negative messages that are rampant in commercial rap and Hardcore. In particular, Hip Hop culture has a long and messy relationship with race, masculinity, misogyny, and homophobia (Rose 1994, Cheney 2005), as outlined in Chapter Three. The link between the culture of Hip Hop and the religious group the Nation of Islam (NOI) has also incited controversy (Alim 2006), particularly as various leaders of the NOI have made anti-Semitic and racially charged remarks over

the years. While less scholarly attention has been given to Hardcore, the genre has variously been linked to sexism, misogyny, fascist ideologies and white supremacy (Blush and Petros 2001). The presence of Skinheads within modern Hardcore culture has caused confusion among the general public due to the common assumption that all Skinheads are white supremacists (2001), although I'll demonstrate in Chapter Three why this may be a misconception.

These critiques are justified. However, the participants involved with this project distance themselves from these issues. Although the participants do not deny that they exist, they are unanimous in their disgust with sexism and racism. The participants seem to have a sense that these issues are present, but that they don't reflect their own lived reality within Hip Hop and modern Hardcore. The general feeling seems to be that these musical communities are beneficial, especially from the perspective of social involvement and personal growth.

The underlying assumption of my thesis is that music is an inherently social activity. This is not a new concept, and has been explored in depth by a number of scholars. For example, Thomas Turino argues that music "is at the heart of our most profound social occasions and experiences" (2008:1), and helps to "sustain friendships and communities" (1). Les Back and Michael Bull agree, noting that "Sound makes us re-think the meaning, nature and significance of our social experience" (2003:6). It has also been argued that music also helps us "rethink our connection to community" (6). Similarly, Josh Kun suggests that music is best understood as "a mode of relation,

a point of contact" (2005:14). There is little scholarly doubt that music is a social activity, even when it takes place in the confines of a practice room or on the grooves of a record (Small 1995).

Participants

While following in the general footsteps of the scholars who have gone before me, I have limited my research to young adults who share a passion for Hardcore and Hip Hop. The nine men and women who have contributed to my research are First Nations, Metis and allied youth living in urban areas of western North America. Each participant has lived in or is currently living in large population centers within the United States and Canada. These cities have included Edmonton and Calgary, Alberta; Vancouver, British Columbia; Modesto, California; and Houston, Texas. Participants are both men and women, although the majority are males. Five participants self-identify as Aboriginal, and are affiliated with the Cree, Cowessess, Lakota, Saulteaux and Hidatsa-Arikara Nations. One participant self-identifies as Metis. The remaining three participants are of Caucasian descent and consider themselves indigenous allies. A term that is increasingly common in North America, I use 'ally' here to refer to peoples who do not identify as indigenous, but are committed to "seriously and actively engage" in relationships with indigenous peoples while "making visible when and how" certain practices may "reinforce colonial legacies" (Wallace 2011:155). This includes "alliance-building that creates 'power with'" (155) Indigenous peoples.

Eight of the participants are currently or have recently been involved with local Hip Hop or Hardcore scenes, while one participant is a professional singer-songwriter. Although an outlier in terms of musical interest, I opt to include her in these pages due to her status as a professional musician. The stories, music and lyrics of participants are included throughout the following pages. Although the individuals involved with this thesis come from a variety of backgrounds, all are linked by a joint effort – a musical endeavor of some kind, whether it is connected to modern Hardcore or Hip Hop. As I demonstrate later in this chapter, based on their shared repertoire of linguistic practices and social norms, as well as a shared musical endeavor, I have adopted the community of practice model as proposed by Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992) to define my research community.

Due to the length and geographical breadth of my work, some participants have been able to take a more active role in my research than others. Family tragedy unexpectedly impacted several participants, which affected their ability to contribute to the project. Thus, while nine young people shaped this thesis, the majority of my data comes from three main participants who were able to work with me over an extended period time. They are Mash Yellowbird, Sheldon Runs Like Deer and Arnold, and their words appear most frequently.

I chose to work with these nine participants in my attempt to fill in some of the current gaps present in the academic literature. Hip Hop culture has been well documented within the social sciences by scholars. Of particular relevance to my work is the work

of Samy Alim (2006) and Murray Forman (2002). Forman has studied the link between "space, place and identity" within rap (xvii), and has noted that the urban landscape has played a central role in the "emergence and production of spatial categories and identities in rap music and the hip-hop culture of which it is a central component" (3). The ways in which "the dynamics of space, place, race and cultural differences are articulated among youths of the 'hip-hop generation'" are central to Forman's study. The connection to my thesis is clear, as I work with youth situated in urban contexts. Additionally, as I demonstrate later in this chapter, urban spaces are not equally accessible to all municipal citizens, particularly for indigenous youth. In the case of Samy Alim, his work on Hip Hop language provides a nuanced study on the discursive practices of rap, including linguistic features such as alliteration, flow, metaphor, poetics, and tonal semantics (2006).

While Hip Hop remains eternally popular, Hardcore has largely been neglected by the scholarly community. Few scholarly studies have been done on the subject, although recent decades have seen an increase in attention paid to modern Hardcore, as demonstrated in the work of Ingo Rohrer (2014). Rohrer's work is particularly applicable to my own, as he has studied the "social practices of the punk culture, the practices to achieve a sense of collectivity" and "the role that friendship plays in these processes" (13). Rohrer's work is one of the few scholarly works specifically on the topic of social participation and Hardcore.

Writers coming from a non-scholarly orientation have documented the original Hardcore movement of the 1980's, particularly Steven Blush and George Petros (2001), who provide a general history on the movement. The Blush and Petros book remains one of the few works that cover Hardcore. Modern Hardcore has remained on the margins of popular and academic culture. As I describe in the following chapters, there is a good reason for this, as Hardcore is notoriously resistant to outsiders. However, the lack of literature does make it more challenging to study and write about.

Studying Popular Music among Indigenous Youth

Although a rapidly expanding field of study, the topic of indigenous peoples and popular musical communities has received little attention until recent years. Scholarship by David W. Samuels (2006), Steven Feld (1996), Cora Bender (2003) and Beverley Diamond (2012) have all been helpful in assisting me with broaching this topic. Samuels, Feld and the others approach the study of indigenous peoples and musical participation in different ways. For example, Diamond has provided a bird's eye view of then-recent scholarship on First Nations, Inuit and Metis music in Canada (2012), contextualizing the kinds of research Canadian scholars have emphasized in recent years. Bender (2012) has explored the link between performativity, American patriotism and powwow culture among the Ojibwa (2003). This work has not been theoretically applicable for me, although I found it useful to see how another author handled the challenging topic of community and belonging. Feld's (1996) approach to

indigenous peoples has been oriented away from North America, although his work has been enormously helpful due to his nuanced exploration of how music and culture shape human interactions with the environment. Feld's writing has provided an example of how to approach the study of music from a non-Western perspective by exploring conceptions of sound and space that lie outside of Western paradigms. I particularly find his work useful when joined with that of of Murray Forman (2002), described above. Samuels (2006) examines community and musical participation within the confines of the San Carlos Apache Reservation. Again, while he does not adopt a theoretical approach that I utilize, his work has provided inspiration and insight into my research, particularly in the ways he has documented his personal relationships with research participants.

Scholarly neglect aside, I'm passionate about the social nature of music for another reason. As several of my participants have wryly noted, Aboriginal peoples are often presented as a kind of social problem or as a historical relic from the past. According to their own personal experiences, many Indigenous youth are viewed by some outsiders as 'exotic' or inherently dangerous – or sometimes, both. Recounting his struggles with racism, Arnold explains his frustration with constantly being singled out as different from his non-Aboriginal peers. Speaking from the position of being a minority person in an academic setting, Arnold says "You have to be aware that we are people. I still want to go to school without being called 'Native.'"

Taking these kinds of experiences to heart, I make a point of trying to write about my participants in a way that is sensitive to the labels that have been slapped on them their entire lives. The young people involved with this project aren't dangerous, strange or living relics of a lost world. They are urban youth who come from a variety of backgrounds. Each has their own musical story to tell. These young people have faced hardships and struggled with personal demons, but they are by no means intrinsically broken or different. In writing about indigenous youth and their allies, I hope to demonstrate the unique qualities of each person involved with this project, while also showcasing the amazing things that are being accomplished with the help of music and community. While my work is ostensibly focused on the theme of First Nations youth, I do not want this to define who they are. By utilizing the community of practice model provided by Eckert and McConnell-Gint (1992), I hope to acknowledge that my research participants may belong to a number of communities of practice over a lifespan, and that they are multi-faceted beings that fulfill a number of social roles. This allows research participants to belong to more than a single, static and bounded category, such as 'Native rapper.'

While the complexities involved with racialized discourse is fairly apparent, the concept of 'youth' is also problematic. However, it is a concept that presents its own challenges, including the fact that it is culturally mandated, historically informed, and not a universal experience (Tilton 2010). What follows is a brief discussion on how race and socioeconomics intersect with the ways in which the category of youth may be applied to young people. The idea of youth carries racial undercurrents, with the

result that it is a category that is not applied equally to all young people in North America (Tilton 2010).

As Jennifer Tilton observes, youth is both a "slippery concept" and a "flexible identity" with a multitude of meanings, depending on context (2010:8). For example, teenagers of the 1950's were often painted as exuberant, "rebellious," and prone to "raging hormones," rendering them irrational in ways that were not like adults (8). On the other hand, modern era teens may be seen as "unpredictably dangerous," and in the case of young people incarcerated in the criminal system, they may even be viewed as "thugs" and punishable as adults (9). While history and a number of other factors play a role into the changing face of youth in North America, race contributes to the ways in which young people are perceived (2010). As Tilton observes, this is not new -- during the Jim Crow era of the American south, young African-Americans were not viewed as young innocents in the ways that Caucasians were, as the case of fourteen-year old Emmett Till demonstrates (2010:9). After speaking with a white woman, it was assumed Emmett was trying to flirt with her, resulting in the boy's subsequent kidnapping and brutal murder by a band of angry Caucasian men. Tilton writes,

Race intersects with the politics of youth in important ways in twenty-first century America. Not all children today have equal access to the symbolic power of childhood innocence and dependency. Youth of color, particularly black boys and girls, have long been linked with other symbolic associations – criminality or sexuality … (10)

Tilton's words are aimed at American society, but I argue that they work within a Canadian context as well. Tilton's observations resonate with the experiences of my participants as young people in North America. Sheldon's struggles with racism are an on-going battle, not only in the actual workplace, but when trying to apply for jobs. His frustrations bubble to the surface when he says, "It pisses me off. How could it not? You'd think humanity has grown past these feelings, but no, we're exactly the same as one hundred years ago."

Aside from the racism that factors into the ways in which Sheldon's youth is perceived, his physical appearance also complicates things. Sheldon is a wiry, tough-looking guy, skinny but not scrawny. He has the lean look of someone who knows his way around the streets and can handle himself in a fight. Sheldon's clothing demonstrates his loyalty to various Hardcore bands, with shirts that often depict images or messages that might be considered offensive by some. He also has a small tattoo of an old crew he ran with, and is considering getting more ink once he has the money. In short, he looks 'dangerous.' As an identifiably Aboriginal man, Sheldon's appearance and race mark him in very public ways, which results in unfortunate judgments about his character. Sheldon's choice in apparel further adds to the misperception. It doesn't matter that Sheldon is affable, generous and kind hearted. His appearance has the ability to cause alarm among certain social circles, with the result that he is sometimes branded as a threat.

On a personal level, I have heard a number of western Canadians refer to young indigenous people as "thugs," "criminals," "drunks," and "baby makers." I have frequently been warned to stay away from young Native men, lest they try to rob me – or worse. As I learned from personal experience, in many parts of rural Alberta and Saskatchewan, forming interracial relationship with an Aboriginal man, whether platonic or not, is seen as disgusting – and some locals will freely pass judgment.

Personally, I have heard the term 'youth' most commonly applied to a specific age range among Caucasians, although the ages in question tend to vary. These 'youth' may engage in behaviors that are risky or borderline illegal, such as getting drunk and rowdy at a tap room (a common experience for many college-age students.) However, Aboriginal youth who engage in similar behaviors are rarely seen as young people having fun – instead, they are slapped with labels such as "thugs" and "drunks," no longer given the benefit of the doubt of being a youth engaged in socially accepted, albeit frowned upon, behavior. One participant told me about a time he went drinking with friends at a local bar, and of his subsequent embarrassment when patrons of the establishment apparently assumed he was "just another drunk thug." The obvious racism is telling, and demonstrates Tilton's point – youth is not equally applied to everyone. This is only one example drawn from my own life, but the point illustrates one of the ways in which race may impact the way young people are perceived. Some are youth, engaged in innocent fun, while others are criminals worthy of social censure.

This difficulty is important to acknowledge, but does not negate the usefulness of the term 'youth' when properly contextualized. While my participants may not have the privilege of being viewed as youth in everyday life, they have all experienced moments where they have been regarded as such due to their age and social position, whether it has been at school, through social programs, work training, or this project. On a personal level, I like the term 'youth', as it's an apt descriptor of the twilight between adulthood and adolescence, a stage of life that most of my participants can relate to. As a general descriptor of age range and life style, youth is a logical choice of terminology, and consistent with the work of musicologist Andy Bennett, who has studied young people and music extensively (2000), and is a source I have drawn on repeatedly in my work.

Contextualizing the term 'urban' is a tricky task, as outlined in Louis Wirth's seminal essay 'Urbanism As A Way of Life' (2010[1938]). As Wirth observed almost seventy years ago, "no definition of urbanism can hope to be completely satisfying as long as numbers are regarded as the sole criterion" (2010[1938]:103) Although Wirth can be criticized for his insistence that urbanism is tantamount to cultural decay, he does make a number of prescient points, including the fact that one cannot define an urban space by population alone. While census figures and maps draw upon statistics and geographic borders to demarcate urban spaces, these rarely mesh with personal conceptions of a city's limits. There are a number of approaches to tackling the definition and characteristics of urban space, ranging from the sociological to the anthropological.

For the purposes of my thesis, I use urban as a fairly loose concept. Taking in to consideration the work of Setha Low (2000), I do not attempt to define what makes a place urban. Rather, I focus on common traits that Krims (2007), Wirth (2010[1938]), and Low (2000) have observed in a variety of so-called urban areas. These include a high population density, the existence of districts and neighborhoods shaped by a variety of social factors, the idea of an 'inner city,' the on-going debate over the privatization of public space and land use, the symbolic association of city spaces with youth culture, and a historical connection with urban life and the Hip Hop and Hardcore communities. I do not want to imply that all urban zones share these features, or even that all of these parameters need to be met in order to qualify as a city. I simply use these as a guideline, and as a way to structure and place limits on where to focus my research.

It's worth noting that concepts like city 'space' and public 'places' have a wide variety of meanings, especially from an anthropological point of view (*c.f.* Basso 1990, Feld 1996, Casey 1996, Rodman 2008). I do not enter into a discussion on the critique of traditional, Eurocentric understandings of these concepts, but academic work conducted on this particular topic has informed my understanding of the varied approaches and cultural constructions of environment, space and the city.

For the purposes of my project, I have chosen to work with young people who are currently or have previously lived in what I loosely define as an urban space. The participants in my project have lived all over North America, particularly in the mid-

West and Western portions of the United States and Canada. This includes cities like Vancouver, Calgary and Edmonton. I have also opted to include locations such as Modesto, California and Lawrence, Kansas in the list because of their increasingly urbanized nature, cultural output, and proximity to large population centers.

Complex Social Positions: Researcher and Participants

In the interest of transparency, it's worthwhile to touch upon why I have chosen to work with urban indigenous youth and their allies, particularly as the subject is fraught with difficulties. Part of my interest stems from my childhood, where I grew up in a home that was proud of -- but also quiet about -- our mixed descent. In the southeastern United States during the pre-Civil Rights era, it was not easy to talk about being mixed, and such was the experience of my mother and my grandmother. The daughter of a migrant cook and farmworker who moved to a new town almost every year, my mother grew up with the knowledge her family was not only poor, but also different. In the south of the 1940's and 1950's, where one's ancestral roots carried cultural capital, being marked as not completely white, as an 'other,' was rarely a good thing, and it certainly impacted my mother's early years. Moving past the silence of her youth, my mother became an outspoken proponent of indigenous academics during her career, and worked closely with a number of First Nations scholars and tribal colleges around the United States and, to a lesser extent, parts of Canada. Perhaps for this reason, indigenous issues were a fundamental part of my

upbringing. Although I identify as Caucasian, I have always known that the truth has been a bit more complicated in my family.

As the product of parents from two different countries, religions and ethnicities, I've grown up trying to bridge disparate cultures. There have been many times in my life where I felt frustrated with the cultural norms of my foreign-born father, who came from a deeply religious and traditionally closed minority community. I have felt that sickening feeling of being stuck between worlds, never quite fitting in anywhere. While I am not comparing my experiences with those of my participants, I have the utmost respect and compassion for young people facing cultural struggles of their own. I am drawn – perhaps selfishly -- to people who are caught between two or more cultures. Working with urban indigenous youth who are navigating their indigenous identity while maintaining a place in mainstream North American society has helped me to better understand my own struggles of being caught between cultures.

When I began my field work in Alberta, Canada, my status of 'other' became a fundamental, if inadvertent, part of the research process. I was – and, in many ways still am – a stranger. I was an unknown entity who lacked the necessary social credentials to enter Edmonton's urban Cree community. I didn't know anyone in the city, let alone in the province. My American nationality complicated the issue, as I was not only an alien to Alberta, but also to Canada. Although I was surprised at how my country of birth could incite immediate antipathy in people, I quickly learned to expect a negative reaction once people heard where I grew up. While I was born into a

family deeply involved with Native American activism and spent significant portions of my childhood interacting with various Elders and indigenous scholars from the United States and southern Manitoba, I lacked experience working in a western Canadian context. Not being familiar with Cree culture, I didn't understand the importance of relationships within research. As Winona Wheeler notes, conventional academics have displayed "little responsibility" towards their sources, "other than to treat them with integrity and critically engage them with methods appropriate to their nature" (2005:199). Non-indigenous scholars often don't realize that, "In the Cree world, our sources are our teachers, and the student-teacher relationship proscribes life-long obligations, responsibilities, respect and trust" (199). Many non-Indigenous scholars lack relationships with their participants, and don't have the necessary personal investment within the communities they study (Wheeler 2005:196). Western scholars have been accused of undervaluing the "nature, quality, and role" of what they study (196), thereby 'de-spiritualizing,' 'sanitizing' and even 'amputating' the stories granted to them (196).

Equally challenging was my outward appearance. I look and identity myself as Caucasian, which caused some understandable suspicion among a community of people who have long been abused by white Canadians. While I was trying to bridge the cultural divide between members of the Cree community in Edmonton and my own background as an American, I didn't yet understand that I hadn't followed protocol with Elders or spent enough time with community members to earn the privilege of working with urban Cree youth. In the first year of field work, I was a bull

in a china shop with no conception of the complicated history between academic institutions and Indigenous communities, and how historical context impacted my work.

Linda Tuhiwai Smith points out that anthropology is one of the academic disciplines "most closely associated with the study of the Other and with the defining of primitivism" (2012:70). She adds that "The ethnographic 'gaze' of anthropology has collected, classified and represented other cultures to the extent that anthropologists are … popularly perceived by the indigenous world as the epitome of all that is bad with academics" (70). After hearing horror stories from several individuals within Edmonton's Aboriginal community, it was clear to me that some anthropologists – and more generally, academics from a variety of disciplines -- have developed a reputation for 'taking and using' the good will and wisdom of indigenous peoples (70).

The few participants willing to talk to me during the early stages in my research were suspicious of my credentials as a white anthropologist. They were also concerned that I would present a negative view of their engagement with modern Hardcore and Hip Hop. On the other hand, they did not want to be written about in condescending terms, held up as examples of Native youth 'saved' by musical engagement. They were right to fear this -- aside from the difficult history shared between anthropology and indigenous peoples, there is often a narrative of shame and negativity surrounding Aboriginal peoples and issues (Niezen 2003). An idea that is commonly circulated by both scholars and the media is that North American indigenous peoples are universally damaged, socially disaffected

and culturally disfigured by colonialism and its aftermath (Tuhiwai Smith 2012). This belief is based on limited understandings of colonialism, in which there is a strict binary: the colonizer and the colonized. As some indigenous scholars point out, this model is oversimplified. Elisabeth Mudimbe-Boyi describes how this binary obliterates "the ambiguities, the ambivalence and contradictions" that are caught up with systems of colonization and even globalization (2002:xiv). Linda Tuhiwai Smith notes that the relationship between colonizers and the colonized is not one that exists "in simple opposition" (2012:28), but rather consists of complex "relations, some more clearly oppositional than others" (2012:28). Although the horrors of colonialism cannot be overstated, it is a mistake to ignore the fact that Aboriginal "experiences under imperialism have been vastly different" (Smith 2012:6).

Unfortunately, the approach suggested by Tuhiwai Smith and Mudimbe-Boyi is sometimes swept to the side. One needs only to refer to any high school history textbook to see an example of this, or to watch almost any mainstream history documentary. In an effort to draw political awareness to issues plaguing Aboriginal communities, many activists, politicians and media personalities rely on drawing the public's attention to the effects of genocide, institutionalized racism and general human rights abuses directed towards indigenous peoples. In particular, the work of Ronald Niezen has explored how sobering statistics are cited by politicians and policy makers, often for political gain (2003). There is no question that this kind of reporting is important, especially given the traumas that have been heaped on many indigenous peoples. However, Smith (2012) has argued that this discourse of shame and despair may also encourage the public perception that indigenous peoples are universal

victims, or even worse, that they are the perpetrators of their own demise. According to Heather Howard and Craig Proulx, "Ongoing colonial-based stereotypes of Aboriginal peoples as dysfunctional, addicted, incapable, and violent promoted in the media and in the popular imagination … structure how Aboriginal individuals, families and cultures are perceived" (2011:3).

Part of the problem is that indigenous peoples have rarely been given the opportunity to publicly represent their histories, points of view and individual selves. Linda Tuhiwai Smith observes that representation is a vital issue, as it "gives the impression of 'the truth'" (2012:37). In a similar argument, Ute Lischke and David McNab write that "Representations of others are usually social and political acts. These acts are problematic and need to be contested" (2005:3). Furthermore, historical representations of Native peoples written by non-Natives affect how Aboriginal people see themselves and how they continue to be seen by others" (3). By denying indigenous peoples the opportunity to represent themselves, mainstream North American society loses out on alternative histories and systems of knowledge, in addition to reinforcing harmful stereotypes. The result is a legacy of silence, in which Aboriginal peoples frequently find themselves shut out of the very academic, political and social discussions that concern us all as individuals and global citizens (Smith 2012).

Adding to the issue is the fact that Canadian universities have a poor track record of including indigenous histories and viewpoints (Mihesuah and Wilson 2004). Marie

Battiste points out that "Significant numbers of Euro-Canadian scholars have become remarkably good at critiquing the pretensions and practices of modernity and defending marginalized groups, but they do so within institutions whose faculties Aboriginal people are minimally represented" (2000:x).

Keeping these critiques in mind, I have found it helpful to have my participants contribute their perspectives and stories. The importance of sharing cannot be underestimated. Joy Hendry touches upon why the act of sharing can be so revolutionary in an academic setting, particularly as the act of sharing – rather than coercion – is an attempt at a balance of power. When writing about her research community, Hendry notes that she was "lucky that the people … were willing to share their ideas with me" and believes that this willingness to share was a kind of gift bestowed upon her (2005:201). "Sharing has an optional quality … The people I've been working with had nothing compelling them to share things with me, rather they had every right to keep their ideas to themselves, and put me through the same kind of exclusion that they have experienced" (201). Like Hendry, I am deeply appreciative of the choice that my participants made to contribute their stories and music.

In a parallel to the scholarly work of Tuhiwai Smith (2012), Marie Battiste (2000) and Winona Wheeler (2005), Mash Yellowbird, a rapper in his early thirties of Hidatsa-Arikara descent, explains some of the frustration he feels over the lack of indigenous voices in the media. Well-spoken and deeply committed to music, Mash has familial ties to his ancestral home of White Shield, North Dakota. Growing up, Mash was

fortunate enough to have take an active part in his culture, and maintains ties to his community to this day. Noting that the handful of Native artists in the public eye are often characterized by their status as indigenous peoples, Mash says this approach doesn't always resonate with him or his friends. Referencing Lakota rapper Frank Waln, Mash explains that some of the material on Waln's records isn't necessarily something that reflects Mash's views. Mash describes Waln's work as "super political," and while he lauds this viewpoint, Mash also wants to see more diverse points of view from Native artists. For example, Frank Waln's track 'White War' off the album *Born on the Rez* (2014)[1] contains the lyrics "I bet their hearts drop when they hear these drums and our songs now / Tired of being oppressed, standing strong now / You can't white wash me in this white war" (2014). Powerful words, but not necessarily the point of view that represents all Native rappers. Mash explains that as a musician,

> I have a responsibility, and these are the things I needed to rep [represent] for my people, because my people didn't have that. They had to play someone else's record and they were like … they're not feeling it. They're just not feeling it. Frank Waln is dope but it's not what they're feeling. It's super political. You want to fight everyday of your life? Nope. They need something for them. For us. For us to rise to. Yes, we struggle, yes we have hard lives, but we have a vibrant life, a vibrant culture and there's much more to talk about than life on the rez. My end is to bring all of it. I'm hella peaceful and I don't want war, but I'll protect my people and I will fight. Using my brain and making these moves -- … and as an artist, we have to bring that realism to the canvas. I'm not going to make records anymore that people expect as far as from Native people, as far as like 'Native records.'

---

[1] Frank Waln. 2014. "White War." *Frank Waln Bandcamp*. Accessed [December 27, 2016.] https://frankwaln47.bandcamp.com/track/white-war.

Mash elaborates further by explaining why he feels self-representation is so important. Referencing a historic concert by blues legend BB King, Mash notes that when King once performed at a particular musical festival, he was booed offstage. According to Mash, the audience "didn't want to hear any blues, they were blue. Someone once said that playing the blues is like being black twice." Using this as an analogy for the current state of Native made music, common tropes within Native Hip Hop such as the 'rez life' and urban ghettoization, take an almost celebratory approach to economic disparity and alcoholism. These have been identified as 'Native problems,' assumed to be familiar to most indigenous audiences.

As seen in videos of Winnipeg's Most, such as 'All That I Know' (2011)[2], poverty is a central theme in some popular forms of indigenous Hip Hop. Within the video, there are no depictions of flashy cars or expensive bottles of champagne. Instead, viewers shown one of Winnipeg's infamous inner-city neighborhoods, complete with train tracks and a Laundromat. While the rappers toss around twenty dollar bills and sport gold jewelry, the desolate setting and depiction of decay, including a house on fire, suggests that the underlying message is not one of hope, but rather acceptance of one's economic and social position.

[2] Winnipeg's Most. 2011. "All That I Know." *Youtube,* March 2. Accessed [December 24, 2016.] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5VAF3ypMS84.

The video, which has over two million views, clearly has resonated with audiences. Statistically, there is good reason for the popularity of these kinds of tropes. According to one report, Aboriginal women suffer from unemployment rates that much higher than the national Canadian average (O'Donnell and Wallace 2011:27). Aboriginal men in Canada have even higher rates of unemployment. Compounded by lower levels of education, higher than average rates of violence and shorter life expectancies than their Caucasian counterparts (2011), it's understandable why themes of poverty have become so closely linked to Native Hip Hop.

Instead of focusing on the negative, Mash wants to represent his own viewpoint, which is steeped in positivity and a love for his people. He explains,

> When I reach out to my people and they're doing bad, the last thing I want to tell them is how bad they are living. I want to tell our people we're intelligent, we can make ourselves successful without relying on the BIA [Bureau of Indian Affairs, USA] or the federal government or oil money or alcohol. Carrie Dann [a Shoshone Elder] said it, "Teach people your songs, help your people, protect your people." As an artist one way I can help people is tell our story, and it doesn't have to be about injustice. It can be positive. I'm focused on making really good music and those things that make me want to rip my hair out, the alcohol, the issues on the reserve … the time will come when I can say those things, but I don't want to be on record talking about money is evil and all these things. We've done that. We've talked about what it's like to be an urban Indian. We also have to talk about the joys, love, freedom, we've got to talk about thinking critically and using our minds as a weapon and becoming educated, and we can share this knowledge with each other and improve our way of life. I'm committed to talking about victories and not just defeat. There aren't people saying that. How many other cultures have role models that teach their people to be proud of themselves? I feel like Native people are so far from that, how to support each other and love each other, and bring each other up instead of fighting and bickering.

Hand in hand with representation is the idea of the anthropological 'Other.' As previously noted when discussing the work of Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012), there are

many theoretical frameworks for the 'Other,' notably that of Edward Said (1978). Writing on Western academic approaches to the East (Orientalism), Said notes the academic dichotomy of 'us' – European scholars – and 'them,' or non-Europeans under study (1978:15). This traditionally has allowed European academics a "positional superiority, which puts the Westerner in a whole series of possible relationships with the Orient without ever losing the relative upper hand" (7). In other words, Western academics have long controlled discourse surrounding the East, at least within the context of Europe and North America. This falls in line with Linda Tuhiwai Smith's argument that the idea of the 'Other' invites "a comparison with 'something/someone else' which exists *on the outside*" (Tuhiwai Smith 2012:33). When indigenous peoples are denied self-representation, they are frequently fetishized and exoticized as living on the fringes of society, removed from the norms of Euro-American society (Tuhiwai Smith 70). This point of view operates on the assumption that there is an "'us' of the West and the 'them' of the Other" (33). The 'Other' is often presented as existing in opposition to 'civilized' Western society (2012). Modern mainstream society in North America is guilty of utilizing the trope of the 'Other' when writing and speaking about Aboriginal peoples, an issue that the participants of this project are aware of and sensitive to, especially when it comes to issues of self-representation. Mash alludes to this point when he notes that Native Hip Hop is often relegated to a set of musical themes, usually relating to reservation life and historical trauma.

Thanks to the efforts of my participants, I've become increasingly sensitive to examples of 'Other' in the media. In a Canadian context, a current political topic is the extraordinarily high rates of sexual violence and murder perpetrated against Aboriginal women. According to one report examining the years 2000 – 2008, 10% of all homicides perpetrated against females in Canada were committed against indigenous women (Native Women's Association of Canada 2015:1). However, only 3% of the Canadian population during that time were Native peoples, which suggests that a disproportionate number of Native women were victims of violent deaths during that time period (1).

While acknowledging the statistics (Native Women's Association 2015), a few participants express frustration that these numbers are almost always racialized and turned into a specifically 'Native' problem, rather than a nation-wide issue impacting all citizens. This isn't to say that there isn't a racial component to violence towards indigenous women. According to several of my participants, the Canadian government's refusal to seriously investigate missing and murdered Aboriginal women is most certainly a racial issue. However, the problem arises when these kinds of problems are presented solely as an issue that happens to 'them' instead of 'all of us'. In a sense, it could be argued that indigenous females who have been victims of violence are dehumanized and presented as 'less than' other Canadians. They are the social and political 'Other' stripped of their individuality and personal agency.

With the change from Stephen Harper's conservative government to Justin Trudeau's Liberal one, it remains to be seen how the perception of the Aboriginal 'Other' changes in future years. Notably, my research took place during the majority of Harper's reign as Prime Minister (2006 – 2015). With Harper as the head of the Canadian parliament, indigenous issues were often treated with contempt. This might best be illustrated with the Idle No More movement, which began in 2012. Idle No More brought Harper's government to task for its treatment of indigenous peoples, particularly with respect to treaty rights. Harper's Bill C-45 was one of his more controversial pieces of legislation, and removed federal protections of navigable waterways. In the process, access to safe drinking water and indigenous land rights were threatened. With the arrival of Trudeau in 2015, there has been some progress, but whether this is a genuine move towards change or merely political lip service remains to be seen.

As a researcher, it is important to acknowledge these kinds of issues when working with Aboriginal youth and their allies. Documenting positive stories about music and sociality is my small attempt at creating an alternative narrative, one in which young Indigenous people are creating positive changes in society. By including the words and music of participants, I attempt to provide a platform for young people to share their experiences, artistic output and wisdom. It is admittedly a long way from self-representation, but I hope it provides a start.

Situating Terminology: Aboriginal, Native, and Indigenous

When working with my research participants, I had a difficult time knowing what kind of terminology to use when speaking and writing. Terms such 'Aboriginal,' 'indigenous,' and 'Native,' are historically, politically and socially loaded. These words index North American attitudes about race, culture and difference, and can be empowering or harmful, depending on the context of their use. Arnold, in particular, was very careful about the kinds of language he used when speaking of his Native status. Although participants did not question me explicitly on my use of a particular term during interviews or open-ended conversation, I realized that there was a subtext to their speech if I listened carefully. Each participant utilized terminology that indexed their specific attitudes and experiences with being an indigenous person. For example, Mash Yellowbird frequently uses the term 'Native,' but never 'Aboriginal.' However, some of the Canadian participants freely used 'Aboriginal' while shying away from terms such as 'Native.' I found myself reformulating interview questions constantly, in an attempt to demonstrate that I was listening to and reflecting their preferred language choice. My use of certain politicized terms such as 'Native' was not done without thought, but in fact reflected the knowledge continually imparted to me during field work. As Julie Cruikshank describes, "I always brought questions to our sessions, but as I began to take increasing direction from the narrators, the kinds of questions changed" (1990:14). Thus, by using these terms throughout my work, I have had to question my own positioning in relationship to attitudes about race. What I also

discovered is that some of the inherent difficulties in navigating deeply politicized terms spoke to a much larger question, one that underscored my entire thesis.

When I began my field work, I came from a background that had involved a childhood enriched by interactions with various tribal Elders and academics based in the United States, and to a lesser extent, Canada. These adults were very kind to me as a child, and I never once felt unwelcomed or different, a feeling as I had internalized so many other times in my life. As I gained exposure to various indigenous cultures of the U.S. and Canada, I was influenced by what I heard, saw, tasted and, much more rarely, touched. My respect for my mother's colleagues left a lasting impression on me. When I entered graduate school, I was determined to work with indigenous peoples, and in particular, youth. I had spent several years teaching music to minority and low-income students in Brooklyn and Baltimore, and had a passion for young people. As a classically trained musician, I also believed – and still do -- that music was one of the most spiritual, life-changing activities that a person could take part in. Linking my love for music with the respect I had developed for indigenous cultures seemed a logical choice. I was combining two of my great loves. What I didn't realize at the time was that working with indigenous peoples is an incredibly complex, nuanced undertaking built on mutual respect, reciprocity and spiritual openness. When I decided to study sociality, music and indigenous youth, I quickly found out that my research question was problematic on many levels. I had made a number of assumptions about indigenous identities and cultures, which were blatantly demonstrated in my lack of a nuanced research topic. It was only after speaking with

participants and several years of study and self-reflection that I realized why my research got off to such a rocky start. Part of the process was unpacking terminology that I had previously used without question.

The first issue comes down to a matter of definition. Defining indigeneity is a tricky topic, and centers on a host of political and historical issues that are largely at odds with indigenous world views (Tuhiwai Smith 2012). As one author succinctly puts it, "The first problem … is the definition of 'indigenous.' The term 'indigenous' has emerged in practice over the years and (like the term 'peoples') has no accepted definition" (Hirtz 2003:892). Aside from the fact that there is no universally agreed upon definition, it's been argued that the need to categorize someone as indigenous or not is largely due to "larger political units within which differences were to be accommodated" (890), or more specifically, Western colonialism and its aftermath. More succinctly, before colonists arrived in North America, "There were many different and distinct cultures – but no category of 'Indians'" (Lischke and McNab 2005:2). A number of activists and academics assert that accepting the label of indigenous establishes "the legitimacy of the jurisdiction of the state, the colonizing agent" (Tuhiwai Smith 2012:894), a point that is contested by many Aboriginal peoples (*e.g.* Igoe 2006, Tuhiwai Smith 2012). Writing from an African perspective, Jim Igoe writes that 'indigenous' can also be linked to the "putative dichotomy between African indigenous minorities and national mainstream populations" (2006:404), a point which can be made in a North American context as well.

Furthermore, a term like 'indigenous' may "collectivize many different populations whose experiences under imperialism have been vastly different" (Tuhiwai Smith 2012:6). Mash Yellowbird explains the dangers of assuming that Aboriginal peoples share cultural, social and historical experiences. Citing his own experiences in the music industry, Mash laments the fact that Native artists are often encouraged to promote a stereotypical and idealized imagery of the Plains Warrior, complete with feathers and buckskin. In fact, some African American rappers have latched on to such imagery as a kind of emblem of pan-indigenous affiliation, as demonstrated in Chapter Three. Never mind the fact that the Plains warrior is representative of just a tiny portion of the rich and varied traditions of indigenous peoples. It's what the general North American public associate with Native cultures, at least according to some of the promoters that Mash has encountered. Mash explains,

When you look at a Native artist who does a painting, you see a landscape. There's nothing in your face Native about that. Just because it's a Native person, it doesn't make it Native art. When I think of 'Native art', I think of the whole Indian painted buffalo skulls. I'm not knocking it -- it's important -- but when it comes to us contemporary Native artists, it's really hard … the whole social view on us …in the record industry -- if you're a Native artist, you gotta *be* a Native, wearing buckskin or leather. Y'know, if you have a fast car, you can still be a Native.

Mash is not arguing that indigenous peoples should wear "buckskin or leather" in order to assert their ethnicity. Rather, he is pointing out that it is a common

misperception that Native artists should reflect societal stereotypes about indigenous peoples. Equally disturbing is that these stereotypes rely on a homogenized notion of what a North American indigenous person should look like, ignoring the fact that not all Aboriginal groups have traditionally been Plains peoples.

Terms like ‘Aboriginal’ can be employed in ways that are reductive. As I mentioned earlier, many of the participants involved with this project are opposed to being categorized. Being labeled as a ‘Native’ or ‘Aboriginal’ doesn’t always leave room for other facets of a participant’s personality to shine through. It may also render someone a novelty or fetishized entity. Citing his frustration with being labeled as an Aboriginal musician, Mash Yellowbird says, “When I look at what I create, it doesn't have to be just considered 'Native Hip Hop'; consider it as a Native doing Hip Hop. I don't want to be boxed in." Referring to the famous African American rapper Jay-Z, Mash wryly notes that “No one looks at Jay-Z like he's a black rapper.”

Mash embraces his heritage, but only on his terms. He released an album entitled ‘Native Made’ in 2015. The title is a definite nod to his heritage. He is not shy about publicly acknowledging his family's culture. Mash frequently posts on social media about topics relating to Aboriginal peoples and race in general. His frustration is not with being Sahnish-Hidatsa, but rather with the automatic assumption that these affiliations require him to be professionally pigeonholed as a Native rapper.

Mash’s frustrations bring to mind an encounter I had with Dubb Hardaway, another rapper. A father and blue collar worker in his late twenties, Dubb is half Mexican and

half Lakota. A former student at Haskell Indian Nations University located in Lawrence, Kansas, Dubb has experience with the western academic world, although it his mother's Lakota culture that resonates with him the most. Dubb also spent part of his early years living in urban California, providing Dubb with a unique insight into three very different ways of life.

When I first spoke with Dubb, I asked him to describe himself. I purposely left the question open-ended, without reference to race, although he knew that the subtext of our conversation was about his participation in Hip Hop as a Native male. He chose to emphasize his ethnic affiliation, telling me he was "Half Mexican, Half Native and reppin' two cultures." Knowing the nature of my research project, perhaps Dubb was trying to help me out by revealing his ethnicity. On the other hand, Dubb frequently refers to his Mexican and Native heritage via his Facebook account online. He has posted photos of his powwow regalia, his son's foray into the powow circuit, images from his mother's reserve in South Dakota, and frequently references aspects of his Mexican ancestry, including a love for Mexican food.

What struck me about our first conversation was not that Dubb first chose to describe himself as half Mexican and half Lakota. It was the fact that later, in the same conversation, he told me that he was "neither Mexican or Native American." He didn't elaborate on this statement, although the context of this comment is revealing. I had just asked him if he considered himself a specifically Native rapper, which in hindsight is probably not a question I would now ask. Dubb seemed rightfully

irritated by the query. His brusque reply was to shrug off any kind of ethnic affiliation. I wasn't able to get Dubb to comment further on his statement, but I believe the context of his assertion is important. When pressed to classify himself as a specifically Native rapper, Dubb refused to box himself in to any particular racial category. The fact that he didn't want to discuss it further when pressed was perhaps a sign of his frustration with the topic.

For a long time, I struggled with the seeming paradox of Dubb's words. But then I realized I was doing exactly the very thing that my participants had warned me about. I had fallen into the old anthropological trap of imposing labels that had little to no relevance to the participant in question. Racial classifications with their associated history of misinformation and assumptions don't work very well with human beings. Affiliation is both fluid and dynamic, and it constantly shifts, something that static classification systems ignore (Gilmore 1993, Harrison 2009). When taken from that perspective, Dubb's two statements are logical. Dubb cannot be reduced, easily defined, or categorized. In certain contexts, Dubb embraces his Mexican heritage, while in others, he's Lakota. Sometimes he's neither, and sometimes he is both. He's also a father, son, brother, poet, rapper, producer and construction worker, and in the case of this project, interlocutor.

To better understand the sentiments behind Dubb Hardaway's statement, it's important to recognize a number of factors. The first is anthropology's historical role in positioning First Nations, Metis and Inuit as 'Others,' while also playing into "systems

of classification and representation" (Tuhiwai Smith 2012:46) that are "intricately embedded in racialized discourses" (47). On a broader level, it means understanding the historical treatment of academics towards their research communities, and a general failure to respect indigenous cultures and their respective systems of knowledge (Tuhiwai-Smith 2012). It means recognizing that universities "are founded and function on premises that are different from those that underlie Indigenous cultures" (Alfred 2004: 88) and that institutions of higher learning have been "adamantly and aggressively opposed to Indigenous ways" (88). Furthermore, it demands recognizing that the social construction of race is a lived reality. Circe Sturm observes that "Despite our complicated racial histories and ancestries, we still make snap judgments about who others are and act accordingly" (2010:13). To 'look, act, or 'talk like a Native' is, in many ways, to be marked by mainstream society (Buddle 2011:179). Without understanding these points, the words of Dubb and Mash cannot be truly appreciated.

When considering terminology and its applications, it's also important to consider how indigenous affiliation is legislated within North American society (Palmater 2011). Given the debate over Status and non-Status persons, discourse surrounding terms like 'Aboriginal' carries serious political implications. In this case, a label is more than 'just' a means of classification; it is also an attempt at legislating identity, whether it's by academics, politicians or fellow Natives (Palmater 2011).

Due to the nature of my thesis question, one of the inevitable questions that arises is, 'How do you define someone as Aboriginal?' This particular query points to the problem of racial categories – where do they begin, end, and perhaps most importantly, who gets the social control to mandate these labels in the first place? It's a "crude and reductive" question (Gilmore 1993:7), and leaves little room for flexibility or change. Such a question is an attempt at classification based largely on a system of colonial domination (Tuhiwai-Smith 2012). Given this background, it's probably not surprising that Dubb found a way to subvert my attempt at racial classification. He claimed his Lakota heritage on his terms, while denying any such connection when pressed to do so by a researcher. It's understandably insulting to have a researcher try to force you into a box, no matter how well meaning that academic may be.

Quoting James Baldwin, Josh Kun strikes at the heart of what many of many of my participants have expressed, that racialized labels run the risk of "overlooking, denying" and "evading" their "complexity" (89[1955 15]). At the same time, the participants involved with this work have actively chosen to identify themselves as Aboriginal within certain contexts. I cannot overlook or deny the positive connotations that words like 'Aboriginal' or 'Native' carry, even as I cannot ignore the ways that these words are abused.

As someone who could be labeled a *môniyâw* (a term that my participants and their families were kind enough to never actually use to describe me, although I certainly

heard it disparagingly used towards white male authority figures), I have an obligation to recognize the histories, emotions and politics behind words like 'Aboriginal.' Although I use these words frequently in my work, I try to use these terms in a conscious manner. When I use a term like 'Native,' is not an attempt to pigeonhole or box anyone into a particular affiliation. Rather, the word is used in a way that recognizes that people have multiple and shifting affiliations. Someone can choose to embrace being 'Aboriginal', 'Native' and 'Indigenous,' but not necessarily all the time. (Society's perceptions are a different matter, and one that they may not be able to control.) Due to political and historical reasons, I have opted to work with youth who self-identify as Aboriginal or as an Aboriginal ally, forgoing any questions about one's band and/or federal status as a means of inclusion in this project.

I have consulted at length with several participants about terminology and word choice, and how they are employed in my work. After much discussion, I have opted to use the words that they have chosen to describe themselves. The words most commonly chosen by my participants are 'Native,' 'Aboriginal,' and 'Indigenous.' As 'Indian' and 'First Nations' were rarely used, I have generally tried to shy away from these terms, particularly as 'Indian' may be perceived as highly offensive. One of my participants outright rejected the word, and implored me to do the same. Despite the fact that the term is commonly used on the reserves I visited in both the United States and Canada, I agreed to comply with my participant's wishes. The terminology used in my thesis is both a reflection of my participants and their linguistic choices, and also the result of discussion and hours of reflection on my part.

Outline of the Thesis

The majority of this introduction has been given over to situating racialized terminology, and contextualizing my position as a researcher. These two discussions intentionally make clear some of the inherent issues in my work. By emphasizing these difficulties at the start, I hope to share the kinds of challenges that I grappled with throughout my research. After discussion with participants, Elders, and my advisors, I believe it would be a mistake to avoid discussing these difficulties, which is why I have put these issues at the start of my thesis.

While I make clear the challenges, I firmly believe that the study of how musical participation and sociality intersect is a worthy endeavor. My research participants have all found something in their musical communities that sustain them, despite the frequently overwhelming forces working against them in their lives. I have been asked to document the significance of music in their lives, and to emphasize the good that can come from involvement with modern Hardcore and Hip Hop. A goal of this thesis is to serve as a bridge between the academic and musical communities, and to bring these positive stories to light.

Chapter One explores the concept of 'musicking,' the notion that music can be thought of as an engaged and relational activity (Small 1998). I then explore how musicking works within the framework of Hip Hop and modern Hardcore, particularly from the viewpoint of building local community. I culminate the chapter by observing some of the ways in which Hip Hop and modern Hardcore encourage followers to embrace

their own musical communities by creating and maintaining safe spaces of interaction based around a shared belief in the value of musical expression. Chapter Two explores the themes of community and solidarity. Examples of community and networks of support in action are then provided. Chapter Three presents the concept of audiotopia (Kun 2005), and examines the concepts of social justice and social awareness within the context of Hip Hop and modern Hardcore. I also use this section to explore the aurality of race. As always, I include examples from the field to demonstrate how participants view social justice and action. Chapter Four explores indigenous methodologies incorporated into my research, and the notion of musicking knowledge. A concluding chapter re-caps the material previously presented.

My hope is that this thesis will encourage further research in the area of music and sociality, particularly as it relates to marginalized communities. The topic of music and sociality has been covered by a number of scholars, notably that of Christopher Small (1998) and Josh Kun (2005). However, few works are in existence that concentrate specifically on the modern Hardcore scene. While Hip Hop has become a popular topic in the academic sphere, non-commercial Hip Hop culture has been less studied. The role of North American indigenous youth and their allies within Hip Hop and modern Hardcore has been sorely neglected by academics, despite the fact that the experiences of indigenous youth within these musical scenes is fertile ground for discussion.

On an immediate level, this thesis is a place to be heard, where participants may choose to include their stories, lyrics, music and videos. For some of the youth involved with this project, this is one of the few times in their life where they have actually been listened to and taken seriously by someone outside of their local musical community. When I first began communicating with Sheldon Runs Like Deer, he sent me a note via Facebook, which read in part: "… thank you for doing this project and for makin me a part of it. bein a part of a thesis and someone actually givin a shit bout what i have to say is something i never thought possible and means quite a bit to me" (pers. comm. July 10, 2012). I hope that this thesis does Sheldon and others proud, and stands as a testament to the social power of musical participation.

Chapter One: The Social Life of Sound: Musicking in Hip Hop and Hardcore

Musicking

Writing about music is a challenge, no matter one's theoretical grounding. I have been studying and performing classical music for about twenty-five years, which can make it challenging to avoid thinking of music as a series of texts immortalized onto pieces of paper. From this perspective, music is something that is reproducible and typically understood through the lens of western musical theory. On the other hand, I'm also a trained social scientist, which means I'm less interested in the theoretical grounding of a specific musical work, and more interested in studying the musical experience itself, in the vein of Steven Feld's study of the Bosavi people of Papua New Guinea (1996) and Karl Hagstrom Miller's work with musical constructs of race in the southern United States (2010).

It goes without saying that both perspectives have their pros and cons. The transcription of musical works into texts allows scholars to capture musical works permanently (Small 1998). This approach is useful for a number reasons, not the least of which is the ability to parse music manuscripts for data not always readily apparent to the ear. On the other hand, placing primacy on musical texts may devalue the wider musical experience, particularly in performance settings (1998). Music may become relevant not through "the action of art" or "the act of creating," but instead through the

"created art object itself" (1998:4). By focusing on music as a reproducible object, the "act of musical performance" and its meanings may be neglected (4). As another scholar explains in less polite terms, "Musicological analysis can reduce vibrant musics to lifeless corpses fit for autopsy" (Chan 1998:93).

When music is understood as a text or thing, the "musical and sonic subtleties" of a performance may be neglected, particularly in the case of recordings and popular music (Warner 2009:139). Adam Krims has taken musicologists to task for "not only for eliding institutional facts and often avoiding questions of social relevance, but also for sidestepping the possibility that audiences might shape their own responses to music" (2000:17). Textual analysis may also overlook the visual aspects of performance (Auslander 2009), or undervalue the role of technology and production in musical recordings (Warner 2009).

Alternatively, studying musical experience allows for a broad number of research projects and theoretical points of view. Within the social sciences, scholars have explored the cultural and social contexts in which musical events take place (Bull and Black 2004, Krims 2007), social practices within musical participation (Small 1998, Turino 2008), the impact of geo-politics and globalization on musical experience (Feld 1996, Guattari 2000) and the intersection of music and race (Hagstrom Miller 2010, Kun 2015), among numerous other topics. This provides a rich and varied take on various aspects of musical participation. On the other hand, the subjective nature of qualitative research "inevitably raises issues of interpretation and description" (Warner

2009:138). There is simply no way to accurately describe a piece of music with written words, as "one writer's 'dark and oppressive' … might be 'warm and comforting' to another" (138). Furthermore, various critiques have been lobbed at the ways in which some authors have interpreted their findings. A prime example of this difficulty is highlighted in the work of Karl Hagstrom Miller (2010). In his work, Hagstrom Miller critiques the use of inaccurate racial schemas that have been slapped onto so-called 'southern music' from the 1880s to the 1920s (2010). He argues that "a variety of people – scholars and artists, industrialists and consumers – came to compartmentalize southern music according to race" (2). Ignoring the "fluid complex of sounds and styles in practice," music from the southeastern U.S. was "reduced to a series of of distinct genres associated with particular racial and ethnic identities … Music developed a color line" (2). This 'color line' ignored the reality of southern music making, which was much more diverse and complicated (2). Although Hagstrom Miller writes about southern music, his critique could apply to the ways in which other forms of music are written about and discussed, particularly Hip Hop, which has always been a multi-ethnic and multi-racial cultural phenomenon (Chang 2005). In a similar vein, Paul Gilroy lobbed a critique against the field of cultural studies when he took the field to task for "crude and reductive notions of culture that form the substance of racial politics today" (1993:7) and an "overintegrated sense of cultural and ethnic particularity" (31). Writing about black Atlantic culture, Gilroy is scathing in his take-down of the idea that the black diaspora all belongs to a "national or proto-national group with its own hermetically enclosed culture" (33). Gilroy's

nuanced exploration of the black Atlantic diaspora is one that resonates with my own work on a number of levels, particularly the assertion that Hip Hop blossomed out of one cultural/ethnic context (Rose 1994). Gilroy's attack on reductive and essentialist ideas towards cultural interplay and cross-cultural exchange is salient, even today (1993).

A useful concept for navigating writing about music is that of 'musicking.' Introduced by Christopher Small (1998), musicking is a term that emphasizes the active, participatory nature of musical experience. The present participle of 'to music' (9), musicking signifies that an action is taking place (9), and is based on the premise that music is an activity, or "something that people do" (2). Small suggests replacing 'music' with 'musicking' in order to emphasize the ways in which people take part in the musical experience, whether it is through composition, performing, listening or rehearsing (9). Thus, musicking is defined as "to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing or practicing, by … composing, or by dancing" (9).

Musicking is not only concerned with what takes place on stage, but also provides space for those who take part in a musical performance as box office employees, ushers, roadies and janitors (Small 1998:9). Together, all of these people contribute to a musical experience. This approach recognizes that more than performers are involved in creating a musical experience, and that a number of "different activities add up to a single event, whose nature is affected by the ways in which all of them are

carried out" (10). To be clear, this does not discount the importance of musicians. Small argues that "performance is the primary process of musicking" (113). Within the framework of musicking, the primary focus is usually on the performers themselves (1998), although Small acknowledges that many roles need to be filled when considering Western musical practice in public settings.

Musicking is inclusive. Small writes, "the verb to music is not concerned with valuation. It is descriptive, not prescriptive. It covers all participation in a musical performance, whether it takes place actively or passively" (1998:9). Although Small uses the term 'performance,' it appears he is not using the word to refer only to public concerts. Acts of musicking may include listening "to a recorded performance" (9), singing while doing housework (2), and mopping up a stage after a performance is over (10). What links all of these actions is that these events all contribute to the overall musical experience (1998).

Small's concept of 'musicking' makes room for all those present in a musical event, whether visible or not (1998). In the context of my work, I favor this approach because it acknowledges the ways in which every single person contributes to a musical experience. While musical literature tends to focus on musicians, the role of others is often left out (Small 1998). By taking a more inclusive approach, one can begin to see all of the ways in which people work together to create music. The hard work of promoters like Sheldon Runs Like Deer are recognized as much as the performing skills of Mash Yellowbird. Sound engineers contribute to a musical event, as do

audience members like Arnold. Together, everyone involved has a purpose and is significant to the outcome of a musical experience.

Musicking is also inherently social. Small makes his case early in the book when he writes, "If we widen the circle of our attention to take in the entire set of relationships that constitute a performance, we shall see that music's primary meanings are not individual at all but social" (1998:8). A few pages later, he states "The act of musicking establishes in the place where it is happening a set of relationships" (13). Small uses the example of an orchestral concert at a concert hall to illustrate the kinds of relationships that may take place during a performance. He explores social dynamics between musicians, musicians and their instruments, audience members, concert hall employees and even the relationship people may have to a particular space (1998).

By connecting musical participation with social relationships, Small provides a theoretical backdrop that encourages scholars to study the interplay between sociality and music. Significantly, Small also notes that the relationships inherent to musicking are not only of an interpersonal nature, but can also be interspatial. Small writes,

> … the way people relate to one another as they music is linked not only with … relationships created by the performers, not only with the participants' relation to one another, but also with the participants' relationship to the world outside the performance space, in a complex spiral of relationships, and it is those relationships, and the relationships between relationships, that are the meaning of the performance. (48)

While I do not directly grapple with Small's assertion that musicking has a spatial component in this thesis, it is important to recognize that his concept of musicking moves beyond human-to-human interaction. This premise provides a foundation for my own research on the topic. By not limiting his focus to a particular set of relationships, such as that between performers, Small acknowledges the complex social web that is spun during any given concert or rehearsal. This also provides an implicit acknowledgement of the fact that these relationships have the power to impact musicians and audience members alike, which can also be mediated by factors such as space.

Although I incorporate elements from both musicology and the social sciences for this project, I have found Small's model of musicking to be particularly valuable. In keeping with an academic grounding in anthropology, I have placed far more emphasis on the overall musical experience rather than textual analysis. It's worth quickly noting the work of Kyle Adams (2015), who believes that Hip Hop "resists traditional modes of analysis more than almost any other genre" (118). Adams notes that traditional textual analysis in which "the identification of sonorities, and the descriptions of their interactions" (118) is challenging for Hip Hop, as the harmonies in the genre rarely "participate in harmonic progressions" (119). Even if progressions, as they are commonly understood, are found in a track, they are built on a cycle of repetition in which they will typically repeat every one, two or four bars (119), rendering them "incapable of creating the long-range teleologies for which musical analysists typically search" (119). Thus, classical analytical techniques "are therefore

unable to do the job they were designed for: to reveal the inner-workings of a large-scale pitch structure as it develops over the course of an entire work" (119). This is certainly true for Hardcore as well, which also tend to utilize cyclical song structures that rely on repetition, particularly in relation to harmonic structure.

I do touch upon western musical theory practices in my discussion on genre, found in this chapter. Musical theory is useful when noting the ways in which certain practices frame the genres of rap and modern Hardcore. Overall, however, I draw upon the musicking model proposed by Christopher Small (1998) to explore the themes of my research.

During one of our conversations, participant Mash Yellowbird provided me with an analogy that perfectly sums up the challenges in writing about and studying music. While educating me about the cultural birth of rap in the Bronx during the 1970's, Mash described the burgeoning movement as a pastiche of musical genres that ran together like watercolors, ultimately creating something entirely new. He explained, "Working class people took all the music around them to create a community, and created it with all these musical genres that ran together like watercolors." Ultimately, I argue that writing about music is like trying to describe a painting made of watercolors. The beauty of watercolor is that it allows the paints to run together, creating a wash of hues that blend into one another. Very few people look at a watercolor and try to pick out exactly where one shade stops and another begins. I tend to think of music as acting the same way, in that it is fluid and frequently

seamless. Music has a tendency to blend together sounds and cultural influences, creating a dynamic and ever-changing aural landscape. Trying to pick apart each component often defeats the purpose of the musical act itself. After all, the interest of a watercolor painting lies not in each individual brush stroke, but how all the parts combine into a blended whole. For the purposes of this study, this is certainly true about music as well, and the musicking model is one way to acknowledge the nuances and subtleties of the musical experience.

The Musical Life of Genres

As Richard Bauman and Charles Briggs note, genre may be perceived as "too global and fuzzy a concept" for analytical purposes (132:1992). Bauman and Briggs point out that, when taken as "generic frameworks" (149), genre is insufficient as a methodological tool. The authors note that "all genres leak" (149), a statement that Adam Krims echoes when he writes that "genres are constantly shifting entities" and serve as referential "guidelines at best" (2000:89).

However, when writing about linguistic practices – or, in this case, music – genre may serve as a valuable methodological tool. When more broadly approached to consider factors such as situational context and sociocultural processes (Bauman and Briggs 1992:148), the concept of genre is insightful. Bauman and Briggs remind their readers that "the process by which" genre "is produced and received is mediated through its relationship with prior discourse" (147), and that this is where the real power of genre as a methodological tool lies. Rather than thinking of genre as static entities that are

neatly bounded, Bauman and Briggs suggest that genre is dynamic, "quintessentially intertextual" (147), and mediated "through its relationship to prior discourse" (147). Similarly to Bauman and Briggs (1992), Adam Krims suggests that scholars pay careful attention to how "genres are outlined as much in social discourse around the music as in the 'music itself'" (2000:90).

For the purposes of my research, it is the ways in which genre utilizes framing devices that is particularly useful. Bauman and Briggs write,

> As soon as we hear a generic framing device, such as "once upon a time," we unleash a set of expectations regarding narrative form and content … The invocation of genre thus provides a textual model for creating cohesion and coherence, for producing and interpreting particular sorts of features and their formal and functional relations all the way from poetic lines to global structure of the narrative (1992:147).

Dell Hymes and Richard Bauman

Fleshing out the work of Bauman and Briggs (1992) is that of Richard Bauman (1977) and Dell Hymes (1974). In his 'ethnography of speaking,' Dell Hymes makes the case for a method of studying speech that is "concerned with the situations and uses, the patterns and functions, of speaking in its own right" (1974a:191). This includes consideration of factors such as "behavior … organized and defined in terms of speaking" (197), context of use, and how social factors mediate speech and action, including "behavioral situations" (193). In short, Hymes recognizes that there is a social element to speech, and that there is much to be gained from a "descriptive focus" that examines "the speech economy of a community" (196). Central to this notion is that of a speech community, a "social group" that can be studied in order to better understand "the entire organization of linguistic means within it" (1974b:46).

Hymes's framework of a speech community is in opposition to more traditional approaches to the study of language use, which historically focused on a "partial, named organization of linguistic means, called a 'language'" (46). In other words, the traditional focus of study was on a language, rather than the interplay between language, community and social context.

What is particularly useful about Hymes's work is that he recognizes that language and speech community should not be conflated. Speaking the same language does not automatically make one a part of a given speech community. For example, while two people may both be fluent in English, it does not necessarily make them part of the speech community. As Hymes notes, "There may be persons whose English I could grammatically identify, but whose message escapes me" (49). This could certainly be argued in the case of Hip Hop and modern Hardcore, where slang particular to the two scenes is constantly evolving.

Another element of the ethnography of speaking (1974a) is that of a 'speech event,' the "activities, or aspects of activities, that are directly governed by rules or norms for the use of speech" (1974b:51). Hymes suggests that ethnographers consider who is sending the speech act, who is receiving it, the message form it comes in, the channel it is sent through, as well as code, topic and setting (1974a:199). Also useful to consider is what function(s) the speech event may serve (203). What types of "expressive functions," if any, are "intended or perceived;" which are explicit, and which aren't (206)? Closely linked to the speech event is the 'speech act,' which

focuses on the specific particulars of a speech event. This may include intonation, "position in a conversational exchange," and the social relationship(s) between the parties speaking (1974b:52). Again, Hymes is not focused on the study of a particular language, but rather "a social unit which includes or is based upon speech" (Duranti 1997:289). Due to their important role in social interactions, speech events and speech acts are one way to explore how people belong to a community. Indeed, studying speech events and speech acts may also reveal how linguistic practices affirm, contest or otherwise shape social interactions, while illuminating an individual's position in a given speech community (290). In my own research, I was able to better grasp the social connections between members of various musical scenes by paying careful attention to speech acts, and more generally, speech events. For example, a member of Calgary's modern Hardcore scene can quite easily mark themselves as an 'insider' or an 'outsider' by utilizing specific word choices that indicate knowledge of Hardcore culture, relating stories about particular bands, and even in the ways that conversations are carried out.

Although Hymes's work is largely focused on linguistic practices, he is careful to note that his area of study involves more than spoken words and text. He writes, "not all communication is linguistic; and linguistic means include more than speech" (1974a:197). There are times when speech and words fail, and other communicative practices take precedence. For example, Hymes notes that certain situations may require "derivative codes of singing, whistling, drumming, non-linguistic uses of voice or instruments, or gesture." This is certainly true in the case of musical performances,

where speech does take place, but the primary means of communication is through sound, and, to a lesser extent, gesture.

Hymes then goes on to wonder, "Are certain messages specialized to each means?" (198). This line of query opens up a realm of possibilities, as demonstrated later in this chapter. As I reveal, musical cues may serve to signal subgenre and lyrical content within a Hip Hop track. Instrumental and vocal cues frequently hint at the lyrical content contained in a rap, largely based on widely accepted norms that dictate the aesthetics of a particular subgenre. At Hardcore shows, verbal and musical cues may indicate when the audience is expected to engage in specific behaviors, such as moshing.

Complementing the work of Dell Hymes is Richard Bauman's work on 'Verbal Art as Performance' (1977). Bauman begins with the premise that verbal art "calls for an approach through performance itself … the formal manipulation of linguistic features is secondary to the nature of performance" (1977:8-9). According to Bauman,

> Fundamentally, performance as a mode of spoken verbal communication consists in the assumption of responsibility to an audience for a display of communicative competence. This competence rests on the knowledge and ability to speak in socially appropriate ways. Performance involves in the part of the performer as assumption of accountability to an audience for the way in which the communication is carried out, above and beyond its referential content. From the point of view of the audience, the act of expression on the part of the performer is thus marked as subject to evaluation for the way its done, for the relative skill and effectives of the performer's display of competence … Performance thus calls forth special attention to and heightened awareness of the act of expression and the performer with special intensity. (Bauman 1977:11)

During a performance, “there is something going on in the communicative interchange which says to the auditor, ‘interpret what I say in some special sense; do not take it to mean what the words alone, taken literally, would convey’.” (Bauman 1977:9) Performance “sets up” an “interpretive frame within which the messages being communicated are to be understood” (9). The techniques used to frame a performance are “accomplished through the employment of culturally conventionalized metacommunication” (16). More simply put, a particular speech community – or, in my case, a community of practice – “will make use of a structured set of distinctive communicative means from among its resources in culturally conventionalized and culture-specific ways” (16).

Referred to as the ‘Keys of Performance,’ Bauman outlines the following framing techniques: special codes (1977:17), figurative language (18), parallelism (18), special paralinguistic features (19-20), special formulae (21), appeal to tradition (21) and disclaimer of performance (21-22). Although Bauman specifically refers to verbal art, his work has important implications for those studying Hip Hop and Hardcore. These genres, although musical, are largely driven by lyrics. They also employ many of the same keys of performance that Bauman lists, as described above. When studying Hip Hop and modern Hardcore with Bauman’s ‘Keys of Performance’ (1977) in mind, a whole new set of linguistic and social features becomes foregrounded that might otherwise be overlooked. I have paid special attention to these Keys of Performance throughout this chapter. Although I do not make explicit reference to Bauman (1977) in the following pages, it should be understood that the kinds of questions I examine

are, in large part, prompted by his Keys of Performance (1977). As I describe in the following pages, there are a number of features that specifically mark genre within Hip Hop and Hardcore, including paralinguistic features, appeal to tradition, figurative language, parallelism and disclaimers of performance.

Taken together, the work of Dell Hymes (1974a)(1974b) and Richard Bauman (1977) provide a useful point of entry when writing about music. Utilizing the work Hymes and Bauman allows me to position myself as a scholar interested in the connection between sociality and musical participation, and provides a framework in which relationships and social context are of particular scholarly interest.

I am not alone in utilizing the work of Bauman (1977) and Hymes (1974a) (1974b) in a musical context. Samy Alim (2006) has built off the work of Bauman to identify common components found in Hip Hop Language, including tonal semantics, simile, metaphor, rhythm and slang (2006). Alim's findings suggest that there is a tradition that is generally followed within the world of Hip Hop, including disclaimers of performance (frequently the "yo, yo, yo!" many performers use before launching into a rap), appeals to tradition (such as the use of standard sixteen or twenty-four bar verses in raps and referencing Hip Hop cultural knowledge in lyrics, clothing and musical samples), parallelism and special formulae (best illustrated through genre-driven raps such as gangster rap and mack rap, which tend to draw on standard source material and stylistic features associated with a particular genre of rap). While Alim does not focus on it, Bauman's findings are equally applicable to modern Hardcore.

Common Keys of Performance found in Hardcore includes disclaimers of performance (a lead singer asking his audience "How is everyone doing tonight?!" before launching into a song is one example, as it often signals that the band is about to perform), appeals to tradition (the D.I.Y. philosophy, acceptance of alternative lifestyles/skinheads, the use of friends and audience members as stage crew and merchandise handlers), and parallelism (particularly through the use of tonal semantics including screams, shouts and guttural vocalizations that are used at key musical points in a song).

Putting it all together

From a musical perspective, there are commonly used framing techniques that signal genre – rap or Hardcore – and, to a lesser extent, subgenre (Krims 2000). Based on personal experience, rap, as a genre, tends to follow a standard set of structural guidelines, which signal that the piece of music in question is, indeed, rap. These typically include rapped verses of sixteen bars to thirty-two bars (measures), hooks of eight bars repeated several times throughout the duration of a song, and a brief instrumental introduction and closing. Bars, or measures, are commonly in 4/4 time. The bass and rhythm section of a typical rap song will underscore the song's structure by emphasizing downbeats (an emphasized beat) at the start of a bar. An emcee may also draw upon another common framing technique, the use of verbal interjections at the start of a song, often used before a rap begins. The use of these verbal cues are varied, but is a common feature in rapping, as demonstrated in a clip of Eminem

freestyling on a radio show[3]. He is clearly heard interjecting "Alright, yeah, yeah, alright, yeah, thank you, alright" before he launches into his rap.

Hardcore has traditionally relied on a similar set of structural guidelines, although these can vary. Song structure tends to be short and to the point, sometimes lasting for only two or three minutes. Songs may begin in 4/4 time, although a meter change (or multiple meter changes) may occur part-way through a song. The use of so-called 'power chords' (the root of a chord plus a doubled fifth) is commonplace, and harmonic complexity is generally limited in scope. Instrumental palette is usually kept to a minimum as well. Songs usually begin with a brief instrumental introduction.

Adam Krims outlines several subgenres of rap following this method, drawing upon features such as linguistic practices and lyrical content, song construction and production values (2000). Some of the subgenres that Kim identities include 'party rap,' typified by a strong hook, dominant bass line, continuous groove and lyrical content that tends to playful froth (listen to Will Smith's 1997 hit 'Gettin' Jiggy Wit' It'[4] for an example). Another example of subgenre is found in 'reality rap,' which utilizes 'conscious' lyrical content (2000:68) that embody Hip Hop's traditional cultural values. These lyrics "map the realities of (usually black) inner-city life" (Krims 2000:70). Emcees may also take a more intellectual approach to crafting their

---

[3] Eminem. 2008. "Eminem stops by the Wake Up Show!" *Youtube,* May 27. Accessed [December 27, 2016.] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G8Qpf4kUyy8.
[4] Will Smith. 2011. "Gettin' Jiggy Wit' It." *Youtube*, March 23. Accessed [December 29, 2016.] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3JcmQONgXJM.

lyrics by citing historical events and name dropping well known public intellectuals and scholars (66). Immortal Technique, born in Peru, raps about life in the "third world" in his track 'The 3rd World,'[5] an example of reality rap. Although I don't outline the entirety of Krims's work on subgenre in rap here, I do loosely follow Krims's model to delineate varieties of rap, largely relying on musical and lyrical cues to signal subgenre. Identifying subgenre within Hardcore is a trickier task, as there isn't much scholarly writing on subgenre within the scene. I worked with participants to try and identify particular subgenres within Hardcore, but participants were often in disagreement with one another, which suggests that the parameters of subgenre within Hardcore is highly subjective.

Why study rap and modern Hardcore together?

Rap and modern Hardcore are unquestionably very different types of music. The two scenes diverge aesthetically, musically and linguistically. These differences manifest in their respective approaches to performance etiquette and proxemics, fashion, and instrumentation. Rap, as part of Hip Hop, and modern Hardcore are distinct communities, with little overlap between the two. While some Hardcore fans will attend rap performances, none of the Hip Hop fans involved with this project have attended or plan to attend a Hardcore show. This may be due to the fact that the global community of Hip Hoppas is far larger than that of modern Hardcore. Rap has

---

[5] Immortal Technique. 2009. "The 3rd World." *Youtube*, January 22. Accessed [December 29, 2016.] https://youtu.be/kOINSUWOqyo.

unquestionably impacted North American culture (Rose 1994), while Hardcore has remained on the fringes of society (Blush and Petros 2001).

Despite the disparity between the two genres, the division between modern Hardcore and Hip Hop/rap is not absolute. Commercially successful bands such as 'Limp Bizkit,' 'Kottonmouth Kings' and 'Crack Rock Steady 7' have crossed the genre divide to fuse together an aural palette comprised of elements from rap, Hardcore and rock n' roll.

The creation of hybrid genres aside, studying rap and Hardcore in tandem is a logical choice in the context of my research. On a purely pragmatic level, the majority of my participants are involved with the Hardcore scene. Although I originally intended to solely focus my research on Hip Hop, I ultimately found it easier to tap into the modern Hardcore community. The reason for this is largely due to the two participants most involved with this project, Arnold and Sheldon Runs Like Deer. Both men are rooted in their local modern Hardcore scenes. Because these two individuals gave me more of their time and energy than anyone else, it made sense to expand my scope to include Hardcore.

More critically, there generally appear to be some shared ideologies and values between modern Hardcore and Rap. This chapter will broadly lay out some of the key similarities of engagement with social justice, building and maintaining one's local community, and the importance of self-improvement. While I do not claim that members of the communities of Hip Hop and modern Hardcore share *all* ideologies or

values, I argue that the beliefs and norms generated by involvement within these two musical scenes have had a similar impact on the social formation and social lives of my participants. The many parallel experiences and beliefs shared between participants is indeed striking, as subsequent chapters will reveal.

Hip Hop as a Social Movement

Hip Hop's origins began with block parties in an Afro-Caribbean section of the Bronx during the 1970's (Chang 2005). These parties served multiple roles by allowing young people to come together and have fun while carving out neutral spaces in which rival gang members and neighborhood enemies could interact without resorting to physical violence (Chang 2005). People could vent their frustrations through dance battles and other creative means (2005). Additionally, these block parties generated a small amount of income among a generally impoverished and oppressed population, and allowed performers to promote their work and garner an audience without the backing of radio stations and professional venues in Manhattan, which were often hostile to young African Americans (2005). These parties centered around deejays who spun and mixed musical records and sermons from a variety of genres and contexts, creating a novel soundscape. Later, the four pillars of Hip Hop – detailed below – would largely draw upon this burgeoning musical tradition. In this sense, Hip Hop became a prime example of a social movement oriented largely (but not entirely) around music.

The etymological origins of 'Hip Hop' are unclear, although numerous stories abound about the origins of the term (KRS-One 2009:58). Variously termed as 'HipHop,' 'hip hop,' and 'hip-hop,' emcee and cultural icon KRS-One has argued that the preferred word is 'Hip Hop' when speaking about the entire cultural movement, or 'Hiphop' when referring spiritual practices and "collective consciousness" of the culture (63). Using lower case letters to refer to Hip Hop may be seen as a mark of disrespect, as it is usually associated with the corporatization and mass marketing of Hip Hop (63). As I outline below, Hip Hop is grounded in several religious traditions, and some of its adherents treat it is a spiritual practice. Thus, 'Hip Hop' is far preferable to 'hip hop,' as it bestows a level of gravity upon the movement. Although the mandates of KRS-One are not universally followed, I employ his suggestion throughout my work.

Hip Hop is largely understood to be centered around four central artistic cornerstones, sometimes referred to as the four pillars or the 'four core' (KRS 2009:67). Most Hip Hop fans will recognize these as b-boying or break dancing, emceeing/MC-ing or rapping, deejaying or DJ-ing and graffiti art, which I describe in the following section. Some adherents argue that Hip Hop is built on nine elements, the previously mentioned four pillars, beat boxing, street fashion ("specific and unique urban clothing styles") (2009:59, 67), street language ("language styles")(59, 67) and street knowledge (a "collective body of knowledge derived from its internal experiences with itself and the World")(59, 67). 'Street Entrepreneurialism', commonly understood as the "business and trade techniques" of the urban world, is also sometimes considered a key component of Hip Hop (KRS-One 2009:67).

Hip Hop has been described as "a metaphysical principal, a shared urban idea, an alternative human behavior, a way to view the World" (KRS-One 2009:66). It has also been described as "an international culture of consciousness that provides all races, tribes, religions and styles of people a foundation for the communication of their best ideas and works" (Hip Hop Declaration of Peace 2001). As KRS-One rather poetically notes, "Hip Hop today is like the seed of a great fruit tree given to a poor and desperate people in an effort to save them from the effects of the terrorism their parents faced (2009:37)." He adds that "Hop is like a seed, if planted in your heart and watered by your faith, will spring up in you like a mighty fruit tree that feeds you and everyone you *all year round*" (37) (emphasis original to text).

The concepts of education, social justice and self-improvement are of great ideological importance within Hip Hop. The textual and oral tradition of Hip Hop are focused on empowering the dispossessed as a way to better one's self, community and the world. Hip Hop is seen as a means of peaceful communication between all, "without discrimination or prejudice" (Hip Hop Declaration of Peace 2001). It "encourages womanhood, manhood, sisterhood, brotherhood and family" (2001), and the right to education is paramount (2001). Unwarranted acts of violence are discouraged (2001), and followers of Hip Hop are encouraged to "contribute to our survival and salvation as a human race on planet Earth. Native American kulture teaches us to respect Mother Earth as our mother" (2001).

Unsurprisingly, Hip Hop's position as music for the oppressed has resulted in a premium being placed upon the concept of community. Through the act of coming together, marginalized communities are able to agitate for change and to upset the status quo. According to Murray Forman, "The rhetoric of black unity linking artists and members of the wider hip-hop audience … is invariably constructed in the form of an urgent appeal for greater political and cultural awareness" (2002:185). Forman's words are applicable to a variety of demographic groups within the wider world of Hip Hop, including North American indigenous peoples. The call for unity among Aboriginal peoples and the desire to create political and cultural awareness about indigenous cultures is practiced within Hip Hop, as evidenced in the work of Frank Waln (Sicangu Lakota) and Supaman (Crow). Both Waln and Supaman have addressed racism towards indigenous peoples, while also demonstrating a commitment to their respective communities. In his track 'AbOriginal',[6] Waln addresses racism and his alienation from mainstream American culture. The song is also a celebration of Waln's Lakota ancestry, and the video prominently features people from the Rosebud Reserve in South Dakota. Waln appears throughout the video with a long braid, and at one point appears in partial regalia, including a headdress and face paint. Utilizing powerful cultural and spiritual symbolism from his Lakota culture, Waln

[6] Frank Waln. 2013. "AbOriginal." *Youtube,* October 24. Accessed [December 28, 2016.] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5_1fmbKCMmY.

demonstrates his connection to his people. On a visual level, the music video's message is much about unity and belonging to a community as it is about racism.

Related to Hip Hop's emphasis on political and cultural awareness is an under-explored element of the culture, the connection between African-American and First Nations cultures in the United States and, possibly, Canada. As noted above, one of Hip Hop's foundational texts, The Hip Hop Declaration of Peace, directly references "Native American kulture" (2001). The Universal Zulu Nation notes that, due to white supremacy, "many of the history books which are used to teach around the World" present Native Americans, among other groups, as savages (Zulu Beliefs 2016). The same website notes that God may be referred to as 'Creator,' echoing a common term used in many indigenous belief systems (Zulu Prayers 2016). There are also many images and online memes depicting the connection between black and First Nations peoples, examples of which are shown below.

Fig. 1.1.

Native American Roots (History, mystery our story, collection of Universal Zulu Nation, no date)

Fig. 1.2.

Black Indians (History, mystery our story, collection of Universal Zulu Nation, no date)

Fig. 1.3.

Afrika Bambaataa and crew (The Musical World of Afrika Bambaata, collection of Universal Zulu Nation, no date)

It's worth noting that the goals of The Universal Zulu Nation mirror some of the current work being conducted in indigenous scholarship. This is most obvious in The Universal Zulu Nation's emphasis on the importance of alternative histories which seek to change the dominant Eurocentric narrative (Zulu Beliefs 2016). Some of Hip Hop's scholars and artists have also entered into discussion about the silencing of minority voices and cultures (Chuck-D and Jah 1997, KRS-One 2009). In a general sense, this is somewhat reminiscent of the work conducted by Linda Tuhiwai Smith, who has written extensively on the role of colonialism in Eurocentric systems of knowledge as it relates to indigenous peoples (2012).

The connection between African-American and indigenous communities within Hip Hop is worthy of further study, although one that is well outside the scope of this thesis. Although pure conjecture, perhaps one reason for the link between these two communities is found in the writing of RZA, an iconic rapper and producer. In his work 'The Tao of Wu,' RZA and Chris Norris write, "If you live through defeat, you're not defeated. If you are beaten and acquire wisdom, you have won. Learn yourself to improve yourself" (2009:140). In a different section of his book, RZA and Norris observe that "Forces in the world will tell you you're a victim – of your family, your race, your past, your past, your history. Don't believe them. They don't know you. Look inside and find your true self" (96).

According to many Hip Hoppers, it is only when internal change has occurred that oppressed people can band together to bring about positive social development (Chang 2005). A number of Hip Hop charities exist, usually created by members of the Hip Hop community who have found success and fortune. Although not all of these charities have proven to be honest, many are legitimately trying to help their communities. An example is the Tupac Amur Shakur Foundation, which offers summer camps to inner city youth, as well as educational support. Rap itself is also seen as a way to bring about positive changes to the world, as long as rappers promote a message of positivity, self-improvement and social enlightenment (Chuck-D and Jah 1997).

Fundamentally, Hip Hop can be understood as a cultural and social movement in which a primary objective is personal and communal "spiritual growth" (KRS-One 2009:228). This is developed through a “relationship with divinity” (25). Judaism, Christianity and Islam play a significant ideological and linguistic role within Hip Hop. To a lesser extent, Eastern philosophies such as Buddhism, as well as the Caribbean Rastafarian religion, have also influenced the religious underpinnings of Hip Hop (Chang 2005, RZA and Norris 2009).

The idea of a monotheistic God is found throughout Hip Hop culture, presented in a way that is familiar to followers of Abrahamic religions. For example, KRS-One writes that Hip Hop reflects one’s “relationship with divinity,” and is best understood in conjunction with “GOD” (2009:25). (Emphasis original to source). Drawing upon Biblical references, KRS-One writes that the driving goal of Hip Hop is "… for GOD’s people to stand up! Evil and suffering occurs in the World when divine people ignore their divinity – their responsibilities” (289). In a similar fashion, famed rapper RZA has referenced Jesus, God and Allah in his writings, mixing Islamic and Christian ideas (2009). The Universal Zulu Nation, an influential organization within Hip Hop, suggests that there is a “Supreme One Force” that goes by many names, including “Allah, Jehovah, Yahweh, Jah” and “God” (Zulu Prayers, 2016). Notably, the religious language and ideology found within Hip Hop cultural texts does not stop with monotheism. The Universal Zulu Nation borrows elements from various North American indigenous groups by referencing a ‘Creator,’ and has utilized images of tipis and eagle feathers, as well as other iconic images of indigenous Plains cultures

and religious life on their website at various points in time (History, mystery our story). Mixed in with these references are a syncretic blend of ancient Egyptian, Canaanite and pan-African beliefs, often drawing upon source material of dubious origins.

Of particular spiritual relevance to Hip Hop is Islam, and, in particular, The Nation of Islam (Alim 2006:36). Although other forms of Islam have impacted Hip Hop, particularly The Five Percent Nation (RZA and Norris 2009, Alim 2006), it is the NOI that has perhaps sparked the most debate and controversy. Since the organization's founding in 1930, the NOI has agitated for African-American support of black owned business and communities. The Nation of Islam has also worked to fight racism and repression, and to develop the spiritual lives of African-Americans (What the Muslims Want, Nation of Islam Online 2015). One of the major goals of the group is to protect and serve the "downtrodden and defenseless Black people thorough Knowledge of God and of themselves, and to put them on the road to Self-Independence" (Muhummad 2015[1996]). As Samy Alim argues, during the 1960's and 70's, the presence of the Nation of Islam in African-American communities helped spark involvement with the Civil Rights movement (2006:25-27). The revolutionary figure Malcom X, cited as a hero by many within the Hip Hop community, was once affiliated with the Nation of Islam; the Nation's current leader Louis Farrakhan is originally from the Bronx, the birthplace of Hip Hop. Farrakhan's presence in the Bronx meant that he was able to create a powerful base of support within the borough, later influencing the burgeoning Hip Hop movement (Alim 2006:25-27). Afrika

Bambaata, a key figure in Hip Hop's early days, fought to "help spread socially politically conscious ideas and ideals, to build a community … who would resist social, political and economic subordination" (25). Babaata has stated that "Having the Honorable Elijah Muhammad's teachings made me realize that I should go and use those teachings and place it on a world basis. Take other teachings and add on to it" (2006:26). Bambaataa encouraged members of his Zulu Nation to "rap in your own language, speak to your own social awareness and address your own problems happening in your own country" (26).

Unquestionably, The Nation of Islam has had a profound influence on the development of Hip Hop. The organization has a tradition of encouraging followers to practice self-improvement, develop one's local community education and to live a disciplined lifestyle. Significantly, many followers of Hip Hop have credited The Nation of Islam with assisting them in "reclaiming their Black identity and of regaining a 'knowledge of self' that was stripped from their ancestors by European slavemasters" (Alim 2006:38). Furthermore, "Once that identity is reclaimed, an ideology of nation-consciousness and nation-building shapes the actions of those involved" (38). Community development, or this nation-consciousness and building, is then accomplished through verbal, physical and spiritual means (38).

Samy Alim observes, "Hip Hop music … has been an active vehicle for social protest in the US and around the world … its targets have been racism, discrimination, police brutality, miseducation, and other social ills" (2006:25). The Nation of Islam targets

similar issues by encouraging African-Americans to fight back against systems of oppression (25). Crucially, the rhetoric behind the NOI and similar ethno-religious movements has helped to demonstrate the power of words, which can be used to either uplift a people for good, or for the "manipulation and control of discourse" for negative ends (27). Hip Hop culture has frequently utilized both methods, understanding the "connection between discourse, power, and knowledge," and that language can be utilized as a form of "discursive combat" (27). Indeed, the emcee RZA notes that "Wisdom is words, and words are used to trap ideas" (2009:130). It is not surprising that many Hip Hoppas have embraced a "discursive struggle against oppression," often adopting terms and ideas present in the speeches and writing of the Nation of Islam (Alim 2006:22). Alim refers to more violent rhetoric as "verbal jihad," designed to threaten "the powers that be" (22).

However, it's important to note that the connection the Nation of Islam and Hip Hop is not without its critics. Some of the more radical aspects of the NOI seem to conflict with Hip Hop's teachings of unity and acceptance. In a document entitled 'The Muslim Program,' the Nation of Islam suggests that white Americans should provide a separate "state or territory" which "former slave masters are obligated to maintain and supply" (2015). African-Americans are also asked to be granted "exemption from ALL taxation as long as we are deprived of equal justice under the laws of the United States" (2015). "Race mixing" is prohibited (2015), and all "Believers of Islam" should be given freedom from federal prison sentences and death row (2015). The document suggests a racial divide that is at odds with Hip Hop's overall vision of

racial harmony. Perhaps more inflammatory are the statements made by various leaders of the NOI, including Elijah Muhummad and Louis Farrakhan, which have drawn upon the trope of "white man as the devil" (Chang 2005:100). However, it should be noted that supporters of Farrakhan and Muhummad have argued that these comments must be understood within the context of racial discrimination and the historical oppression of African Americans. Samy Alim chides scholars for presenting The NOI as "a static, non-evolving community" (2006:36), and points to recent re-interpretations of canonical literature within the NOI that re-frames some of the anti-white rhetoric (37).

What Alim has failed to adequately addresses is the treatment of Jews within the Nation of Islam, and arguably, as a whole within Hip Hop. Despite drawing upon many ideologies and beliefs from Judaism, the Nation of Islam published a series of books on the relationship between blacks and Jews, which alleges that Jews were largely responsible for the Atlantic slave trade and that Jews control the African-American economy (1991, 2010). Easily attainable online and highly thought of in many Hip Hop circles, these volumes claim to use original source material to prove that Jews have abused their economic position and that they have relentlessly promoted the idea that African Americans are racially inferior. The books, which are examples of abysmal 'scholarship,' are filled with hateful rhetoric, inaccurate depictions of history and misquoted material. The negativity directed towards Jews by the Nation of Islam has remained entrenched within certain branches of Hip Hop culture. The topic has become such a serious one that rapper Chuck-D of 'Public

Enemy' devoted an entire chapter of his book 'Fight the Power: Rap, Race and Reality' (1997) to the topic of 'Blacks and Jewish Relationships'. Distrust towards Jews within Hip Hop has been further compounded in recent years by the conflict between Israel and the Palestinian Territories, which is often framed within Hip Hop as a struggle against good (Palestine/Muslims) and evil (Israel/Jews), a parallel to the struggle between Native Americans (Palestine) and white settlers invading indigenous lands (Israel).

Despite – and perhaps because of – these issues, Hip Hop's cultural texts and leaders generally emphasize positive relationships between all "races, tribes" and "religions" (Hip Hop Declaration of Peace 2001). Many members of Hip Hop culture have largely distanced themselves from the attitudes that have made the Nation of Islam so controversial, while retaining more positive elements of the religion. For example, while Chuck-D argues that Jewish businessmen work to undermine and profit from urban African-American culture, he also points out that his attack is not on Jews themselves. Rather, the blame is on specific Jewish men within the entertainment industry (1997). Chuck-D and Yusuf Jah write, "It's not who or what you say you are, it's how you act. If a person is foul, it's not that the person is Jewish or Black and acting foul – the person is just fucking foul" (1998:208). He continues, "'A person may say, 'I'm Mr. Tannenbaum.' We don't attack him for being Jewish, we attack him for being foul. Then we tell the rest of the Jewish people that he's making a bad example for them" (209).

Afrika Bambaataa, the founder of The Universal Zulu Nation, has publicly stated that the incendiary comments made by Nation of Islam leaders are meant to "clear off Black people's thinking that they was inferior and whites are superior" (Chang 2005:100). Rather than take the words of the Nation of Islam leadership literally, Bambaataa suggests that inflammatory language is one of the ways that African-Americans have to fight back again systemic oppression. Controversial language is used to wake up the masses and help them realize "You're not a 'nigga.' You're not colored. Wake up … and love yourself. Respect your own" (100). There are certainly are anti-Semitic and racist figures within Hip Hop, although the majority of Hip Hoppas don't appear to prescribe to the more militant teachings of the The Nation of Islam. KRS-One writes extensively on inclusivity in his work (2009), and the Hip Hop Declaration of Peace makes a point of welcoming people from all races and religions (2001). A number Jewish artists have gained various levels of acceptance within the Hip Hop world, including Aesop Rock, members of the Beastie Boys, Drake, Ill Bill and the legendary producer Rick Rubin.

While Hip Hop has religious roots, it is more than a spiritual practice. It has been described as "a metaphysical principal, a shared urban idea, an alternative human behavior, a way to view the World" (KRS-One 2009:66). It has also been described as "an international culture of consciousness that provides all races, tribes, religions and styles of people a foundation for the communication of their best ideas and works" (Hip Hop Declaration of Peace 2001). As KRS-One poetically notes, "Hip Hop today is like the seed of a great fruit tree given to a poor and desperate people in an effort to

save them from the effects of the terrorism their parents faced." He adds that "Hop is like a seed, if planted in your heart and watered by your faith, will spring up in you like a mighty fruit tree that feeds you and everyone you *all year round*" (2009:37) (emphasis original to text).

The concepts of education, social justice and self-improvement are of great ideological importance within Hip Hop. The textual and oral tradition of Hip Hop are focused on empowering the dispossessed as a way to better one's self, community and the world. Hip Hop is seen as a means of peaceful communication between all, "without discrimination or prejudice" (Hip Hop Declaration of Peace 2001). It "encourages womanhood, manhood, sisterhood, brotherhood and family" (2001), and the right to education is be encouraged and and promoted (2001). Unwarranted acts of violence are discouraged (2001), and Hip Hoppas are encouraged to "contribute to our survival and salvation as a human race on planet Earth. Native American kulture teaches us to respect Mother Earth as our mother" (2001).

While I have spent the past pages outlining what Hip Hop is, it is worth examining what it actually *does*. By switching gears and looking at Hip Hop in action, I hope to clarify some of the more esoteric definitions of Hip Hop in addition to illuminating why so many scholars have argued that Hip Hop operates as a movement of resistance. As I also like to point out, studying Hip Hop in action actually pokes holes in this dominant discourse, allowing for alternative approaches that seek to understand Hip Hop as more than an expression of defiance. Recent work supports this assertion by

examining issues associated with traditional racial discourse in Hip Hop scholarship, which tends to treat race as a binary on the spectrum of black or white (Harrison 2009). In fact, Hip Hop is much more than a fight back against oppression – it's also an expression of love, artistry, unity, community and the potential for social change. In the following section, I provide detail on the four pillars of Hip Hop, and their commonly accepted origin stories. In the process, I demonstrate how Hip Hop is a lived, embodied culture. I pay careful attention to rap, before wrapping up my discussion with a section on indigenous Hip Hop in the United States and Canada.

The Four Pillars of Hip Hop: Hip Hop in Action

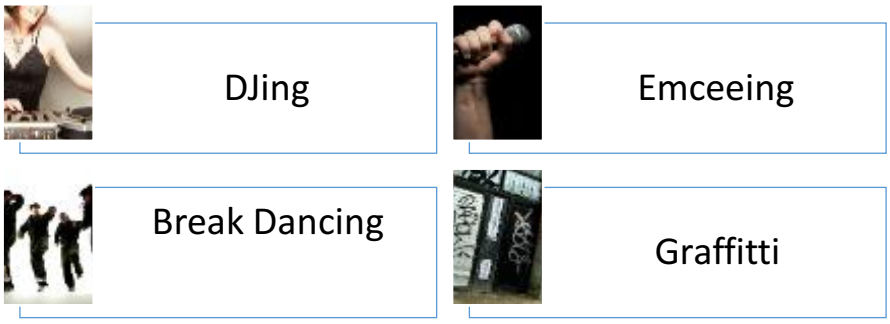

Fig. 1.4. Four Traditional Pillars of Hip Hop (Deirdre White, 2016)

The four pillars of Hip Hop are a fundamental cornerstone of the culture. These pillars are traditionally understood to be centered around break dancing, graffiti, deejaying. The first pillar, break dancing, was an integral part of the early block parties that gave rise to Hip Hop culture. As creative minded youth pumped out a new kind of music indigenous to the Bronx, dancers known as b-boys and b-girls began to engage with the sounds in novel ways. Due to the restrictions on violence at these communal

events, many people began taking part in dance battles, where two or more performers would try to outmaneuver each other in contests of athleticism and artistic skill (2005). Although these battles began casually, they eventually evolved into stand-alone events governed by codes of etiquette, technique and artistic style (2005).

Deejaying was closely linked to break dancing. The deejays of early Hip Hop, such as Afrika Bambaata, would mix an electic blend of James Brown, The Monkees, salsa, rock n' roll, and soul (Chang 2005:97). Snippets of speeches from Malcom X and other revolutionary black leaders would also make their way into Bambaataa's set list, adding a political undertone to the musical soundtrack that underscored these communal gatherings (97). these communal gatherings (97).

The origins of graffiti within the context of Hip Hop culture have been traced to the 1960's, when young people began to 'tag' or mark public property. The majority of early taggers were black and Hispanic youth who were discouraged from 'loitering' in public by city officials and the wealthy elite (Rose 1994). By marking municipal property, marginalized youth were able to physically contest the ways in which city spaces were regulated (1994). Graffiti artists tagged highly visible landmarks, buildings and subway cars, creating a kind of "public performance" that celebrated "guerilla outlaws" (1994:43). Rooted in urban culture and political resistance, graffiti became closely linked with Hip Hop in the 1970's.

Along with deejaying, break dancing and graffiti art, emceeing is the fourth traditional pillar of Hip Hop. Otherwise known as 'MCing,' 'spitting,' 'rhyming' and 'rapping,'

emceeing is perhaps the most widely recognized aspect of Hip Hop culture. Described as "the aesthetic placement of verbal rhymes over musical beats" (Alim 2006:4), rap has roots in a host of cultural traditions, including Afro-Caribbean 'toasting' (a kind of chanting), urban African-American verbal art forms including 'signifyin' (back-handed compliments or self-praise disguised as self-abasement), as well as African-American musical traditions including rhythm and blues, spirituals, and the soul music of James Brown (Rose 1994, Chang 2005, Alim 2006).

Rap is a lyrically and rhythmically driven musical form that plays off of spoken or half-sung words over a beat. A great rapper will be known for the ability to 'flow' or deliver lyrics in a musical manner, skillful management of rhyme schemes, a strong rhythmic and vocal delivery, and an ability to create meaningful lyrical content (Alim 2006). The link between flow and rhythm is significant, as it "marks several dimensions of rap at once," including "history, geography and genre" as well as "personal and commercial quests for uniqueness" (Krims 2000:48). Particular styles of flow are associated with various regions of the United States and Canada, and are often linked with particular rappers or groups. Dr. Octagon (alternatively known as 'Kool Keith,') provides one example of unique flow in his track 'No Awareness,' in which he employs a variety of stylistic techniques[7]. For readers interested in other examples of well-known rappers and groups known for their unique delivery, the

[7] Dr. Octagon. 2008. "No Awareness." *Youtube*, April 2. Accessed [December 29, 2016.] https://youtu.be/gOFV0dD9ksg.

works of Tupac Shakur, Jadakiss, Eminem, Tech N9ne and Bone Thugs n' Harmony are easily accessible and demonstrate just how varied and individualized flow can be. As evidenced by listening to masters of flow, broad vocabulary, an ability to engage in wordplay and puns, and a musical ear with an understanding of basic rhythmic structures are necessary traits for an emcee (Krims 2000, Alim 2006).

Historically, rappers have been recognized for delivering socially and politically charged messages which have frequently been at odds with mainstream American values. Rap songs that take aim at social injustices may be viewed as unnecessarily provocative or even threatening by some, as was the case with the now iconic track 'Fuck tha Police.'[8] Released in 1988 by the group N.W.A. ('Niggaz Wit Attitudes'), the song took aim at cops, suggesting they unfairly targeted African-American youth. With lyrics that include the lines 'A young nigga got it bad cause I'm brown / And not the other color so police think they have the authority to kill a minority' and 'Beat the police out of shape / And when I'm finished, bring the yellow tape' (1988), the song caused an uproar. Likewise, Public Enemy's single 'Fight the Power'[9] caused controversy when it was released in 1989, as the lyrics called for African-Americans to fight racism and take control of racial imbalances in the United States. In a more

---

[8] N.W.A. 2006. "Fuck tha Police." *Youtube*, August 16. Accessed [December 29, 2016.] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WiX7GTelTPM.
[9] Public Enemy. 2008. "Fight the Power." *Youtube*, September 9. Accessed [December 29, 2016.] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8PaoLy7PHwk.

recent example, Angel Haze's track 'Cleaning Out My Closet,'[10] came under fire for explicitly detailing her sexual abuse as a child. In one particularly graphic portion of the song, Haze recounts bleeding after being sodomized. Haze's narrative of the physical and psychological effects of rape generated controversy and a flurry of discussion in the media.

As an art form that evolved since the 1970's, rap has branched out to embrace a variety of styles, often with highly regionalized sounds, slang, and production styles (Krims 2000). As noted earlier, Adam Krims breaks down emceeing into several different subgenres, broadly generalized for the purposes of scholarly analysis (2000). Krims's model allows scholars to interpret "particular sorts of features and their formal and functional relations" (Bauman and Briggs 1992:147).

Of particular relevance to my own work is the category Krims identifies as knowledge rap (2000). This particular variety of rap focuses on political, historical, religious and other "didactic modes of information" (2000:79), and is a major component of reality rap. Reality rap is deeply driven by the philosophical underpinnings of Hip Hop, as reflected in the Hip Hop Declaration of Peace (2001) and the work of Chuck-D with Yusuf Jah (1997), RZA with Chris Norris (2009) and KRS-One (2009). Knowledge rap is also frequently referred to as 'conscious rap,' as it is designed to impart

---

[10] Angel Haze. 2013. "Cleaning Out My Closet." *Youtube*, June 30. Accessed [December 29, 2016.] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=olBOFLqEREI.

awareness and knowledge about social and personal issues. Talib Kweli, Dead Prez and Immortal Technique are all well known for addressing issues such as police brutality, institutional racism and corporate greed through their raps. Reflection Eternal's 'Ballad of the Black Gold'[11] is an excellent example of knowledge/conscious rap. The song is a scathing indictment on U.S. oil policies, and links oil consumption to war and environmental destruction. 'Ballad of the Black Gold' also notes the human cost of oil in Africa by lamenting the abuses heaped on the indigenous Ogani peoples of Nigeria.

Krims also briefly mentions 'freestyling,' a type of rap that is traditionally improvised and unrehearsed (Krims 2000). Samy Alim describes freestyling as "witty and clever improvisational rhymes for extended periods of time" (2006:92). Freestyling may be completely improvised, or it may utilize pre-written rhymes that are then expanded upon (2006). For many emcees, the ability to freestyle is often a mark of one's skill, and there is a certain cache associated with being able to create rhymes off the top of one's head (2006). A number of emcees have cut their teeth in rap battles, public events in which rappers utilize freestyled rhymes, puns, metaphors and other forms of word play to dole out insults and try to dominate the verbal battlefield.

---

[11] Reflection Eternal. 2010. "Ballad of the Black Gold." *Youtube*, July 6. Accessed [December 29, 2016.] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ED3-DOxvq_o.

Another useful approach to the study of rap is one based in both linguistic anthropology and sociolinguistics. Alim focuses his attention on what he terms 'Hip Hop Language' otherwise known as 'HHLx' (2006). Samy Alim argues that "Language scholars of the Hip Hop generation … are needed to uncover the linguistic inventiveness and innovativeness of HHNL [Hip Hop Nation Language]" (2006:6). Alim notes that rap, a highly verbal art form, "has dominated Hip Hop cultural activity in recent years" (4), and suggests that "language is perhaps the most useful means with which to read the various activities of the HHN [Hip Hop Nation]" (4). Of particular interest to Alim are the ways in which HHLx and rap intersect. Examples of how rap and Hip Hop language intersect can be seen in any of the examples provided throughout this chapter, demonstrating the wide variety of linguistic possibility in the field of rap.

Within HHLx, "a number of communicative practices play a significant role in rap, including slang, tonal semantics, narrative sequencing and poetics" (Alim 2006:viii). Samy Alim also identifies call and response (80), signifying, which is also referred to as 'dissing,' or insulting/joking/providing back handed compliments (81), repetition (85), alliteration (86), rhyming (86), metaphor (89), and verbal flow (90) as important aspects of HHLx (2006). Alim's observations are applicable to the work of Mash Yellowbird and Dubb Hardaway, the two rappers involved with my project. In

particular, Yellowbird's track 'In The Box'[12] has some fantastic examples of metaphor, including lines such as "I'm hella glad / cause they ain't tearin' me down like I was Leningrad" and "Watch me blow like the World Trade" (in reference to the attacks of September 11, 2001). Yellowbird makes use of what Alim and others call tonal semantics, or "talk-singing, repetition and alliterative word play, intonational countouring and rhyme" (Alim 2006:84). Tonal semantics are audible throughout the track, as Mash utilizes the elongation of particular syllables to emphasize words, especially to mark the ends of bars.

Code mixing is another linguistic practice utilized in rap, especially in songs which utilize more than one language or dialect. In the case of Dubb Hardaway, examples of code switching between English and Lakota are present in some of his raps. For example, in the track 'Ready to Jam,' Dubb shares his experiences of attending powwows as a child. He references the Lakota words 'uncis' (grandmothers), 'lalas' (grandfathers), and 'takoja' (grandchild). While Dubb's lyrics are almost entirely in English, terms used to denote familial and communal relationships are in Lakota. A stanza from Dubb's rap is provided below.

> For the *Uncis* and *Lalas* reminiscing and sitting front row
> I dance to honor you; I shake their hands and watch their face glow
> Since a tiny tot it was said, "Dance hard *takoja*
> You never know when you might lose the use of your legs"
> So on these weekend summer nights, I'm not out tappin' kegs

[12] Mash Yellowbird. 2014. "In The Box." *Mash Yellowbird SoundCloud*. Accessed [December 29, 2016.] https://soundcloud.com/mash-yellow-bird/in-the-box.

> I'm tappin' my feet slidin' and glidin' swaying with the beat
> Marvelously mimicking the movements of the prairie.
> (Dubb Hardaway, 'Ready to Jam,' March 24, 2011)

Most relevant to my work is Adam Krim's study of Cree rappers in and around Edmonton (2000). Krims suggests that many Cree youth "find themselves largely trapped between … traditional identities that may have been persuasive in past generations, and on the other hand, the often more pervasive and persuasive 'youth culture'" (183). Although one could interpret this as an internal struggle between competing cultures, it can also manifest as social and political pressures from external forces. This is the case for Arnold, who only truly began to realize the political implications of his Aboriginal status once he was enrolled in university. Growing up in a predominantly non-Aboriginal neighborhood, Arnold didn't understand how his Cree ancestry could impact the ways in which others treated him until his Aboriginal status become a political issue at school. Reflecting on his time as a student, Arnold says, "I dunno, going through school, I did feel that there were categories that had to … that I was being pushed into, forced into."

These external pressures may also come from within the Aboriginal community. For young people of mixed descent, sometimes the challenge lies in navigating the social boundaries between being viewed as Caucasian or Aboriginal. Jake, a nineteen-year old self-identified Metis man living in Calgary, struggled throughout high school due to his 'white' appearance. Although Jake had a large group of Aboriginal friends in school, he felt like his peers viewed him as "pretty much a joke" because he wasn't "fully Aboriginal." Jake explains,

> I have a status card, and the only racism I've felt is from Aboriginal people. My mum looks Native. I don't look Native. I have all the status, I just don't look it. I got my dad's genes. That kind of causes identity issues. I don't know whether to tell people if I'm white or what … I usually just say white. It's that much easier.

Another salient issue that Krims brings up is the fact that many Cree youth living in and around Edmonton struggle with "negative stereotypes" about Aboriginal peoples that circulate throughout western Canadian culture (2000:183). My participants from Alberta corroborate this statement, recounting numerous experiences with racism. While they were willing to share these experiences with me on a one-on-one basis, most participants requested that I not print what they shared.

Adam Krims suggests that experiences with racism are one of the reasons why rap is so popular among Native youth in and around Edmonton (2000). Since Hip Hop has historically been the domain of oppressed peoples, Krims argues that interest in rap among a large segment of Canada's young Aboriginal population is logical (2000). Although I didn't work with any rappers from Canada for this project, the relative abundance of Aboriginal emcees in Western Canada does suggest that Krims's assertion may be correct. Rappers Shawn Bernard (Cree), Drezus (Cree and Salteaux) and Joey Stylez (Cree) have all been outspoken about Aboriginal issues, including struggles over sovereignty and land rights.

The popularity of Hip Hop among groups of urban Canadian indigenous youth has also been noted by Craig Proulx (2010). My own observations in the field support these findings. While working as a teaching assistant at the University of Alberta, I had the opportunity to work with a handful of Aboriginal students. Hailing from towns

around Alberta and the Northwest Territories, these young people – with the exception of one – all expressed an interest in rap music. Although they were never formal research participants, they often expressed interest in my project and took the time to speak with me about my findings. (All were over the age of eighteen, duly informed about my research and the context of our conversations relating to Hip Hop, and were asked to provide oral consent before being spoken to on this particular topic.)

Aboriginal interest in rap may also stem from Hip Hop culture's emphasis on place, a point that I made earlier in this thesis. Affiliation with a particular reserve or urban area may have political implications, and may serve as a legitimizing force for emcees hoping to portray themselves as 'authentically' urban or 'real' Natives. This struggle has been documented by both Craig Proulx (2010) and Adam Krims (2007). An example of this I previously described is found in a music video by Winnipeg's Most entitled 'All That I Know,'[13] which features prominent shots of Winnipeg's downtown skyline and a section of Selkirk Avenue, an economically repressed area located in the North End of Winnipeg. As evidenced from their name, Winnipeg's Most hail from Manitoba's capital city. Further cementing their connection to the North End of Winnipeg, Winnipeg's Most released a mixtape in 2010 entitled 'Northside Connection.'

---

[13] Winnipeg's Most. 2011. "All That I Know." *Youtube*, March 2. Accessed [December 29, 2016.] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5VAF3ypMS84.

In summary, Hip Hop is a movement driven by ideological beliefs, centered on battling social injustice, the unification of oppressed peoples, self-education, spiritual development and commitment to one's community. Founded by African-American and Caribbean-Americans in the Bronx during the 1970's, Hip Hop has developed into a global phenomenon that continues to attract marginalized youth. It is also a movement that has become a part of mainstream American culture, for better or worse. Hip Hop is ubiquitous in most American and Canadian urban areas, and is frequently heard on reserves as well.

Excerpts from Universal Zulu Nation

The following texts come from the 'Zulu Nation Infinity Lessons,' an evolving text that details many of the philosophical and spiritual underpinnings of Hip Hop (Green Book: Infinity Lessons Archive 1973 – 2000 FOR THE MASSES). The passages included below focus on the topics of community building, self-improvement, and social justice.

For context, The Universal Zulu Nation is an organization founded by Afrika Bambaata that promotes "wisdom, understanding, freedom, justice, equality, peace, unity, love, respect" and "overcoming the negative to the positive" (What is The Universal Zulu Nation??????? 2014). The Universal Zulu Nation professes an ideology based on a mix of Afrocentric beliefs and liberal interpretations of various aspects of the The Nation of Islam, particularly with its emphasis on self-reliance in black communities. The goal of the organization is to promote community building,

awareness of social issues, and to encourage members to attain knowledge. Bambaataa and his followers preach that revolution comes from within, through personal transformation and the ability to "comprehend and confront the injustice of the world by manifesting one's power" (106). The Universal Zulu Nation requires members to follow a moral code centered around unity, justice, non-violence (unless provoked) and education (Chang 2005). The beliefs of Zulu Nation have been loosely codified into a collection of books and pamphlets, which are now warehoused on the internet. This online presence helped to further the organization's reach. The two following excerpts come from Universal Zulu Nation's writings that are available online.

Infinity Lesson 1, "About Zulu Nation"

1. You must seek knowledge: Knowledge is to know and the foundation of all things in existence … Knowledge is to know thyself and others. Knowledge is to know your surroundings, environment, the nature of life and death, animals, the solar system, the universe, the past, the present, and the future.

2. You must have wisdom: Wisdom is the manifestation of one's knowledge, the ways and actions one uses to make his or her knowledge known. To be wise, you must choose the right path, know right from wrong and teach others to be wise and set them in the right direction

3. Understanding: You must have and get understanding … we must build a better world, teach the young and old, use natural resources to uplift the people, not to make individuals rich but to put the Human mind back on the right path and get rid of sick racist mentalities.

(Universal Zulu Nation, Green Book: Infinity Lessons Archive 1973 – 2000 FOR THE MASSES:14)

Infinity Lesson 4, "Love One Another"

We are all like stars in the constellations above; we exist in relationship to each other. In the galaxy of human consciousness no one is alone. We all live together.

> Be as one Spirit, one Soul, leaves of one tree, flowers of one garden, waves of one ocean.
>
> (Universal Zulu Nation, Green Book: Infinity Lessons Archive 1973 – 2000 FOR THE MASSES:20)

'That is the Mission of Universal Zulu Nation?'

> As we are dedicated to improving and uplifting ourselves and our communities, all Zulu Nation members should be involved in some activity that is positive and gives back to the community … Some of the projects we plan to organize and become involved with are:
>
> Canned food drives
>
> Tutoring sessions
>
> Home and building clean-ups
>
> Mentoring Programs
>
> Neighborhood Protection
>
> Seminars … [and] Programs that close the gaps between generations and the sexes"
>
> (Universal Zulu Nation Green Book: Infinity Lessons Archive 1973 – 2000 FOR THE MASSES:33-34)

Modern Hardcore: Punk Rock, Hardcore, and Hybridization

Like Hip Hop, modern Hardcore is a community driven musical scene with a deeply entrenched system of beliefs. A focus on Do It Yourself, social justice, and community building are all integral to the modern Hardcore communities I studied in Alberta. Despite these key similarities, there are significant overall differences between Hip Hop and Hardcore culture.

The term 'Hardcore' is commonly understood to refer to Hardcore Punk, a musical offshoot of the Punk Rock (Punk) movement of the mid 1970's and early 1980's. The Punk Rock movement reveled in challenging social norms and lauded "non-conformist behavior" (Rohrer 2014:13). This was largely in reaction to "those who had to suffer from a repressive society," largely young people at odds with mainstream society's norms (24). Punk Rock's rejection of widely accepted social values manifested in a number of ways. Body modifications, such as tattoos and piercings, became associated with early Punk Rock culture, as did shaved heads, mohawks, and other visible hair styles (2014). Although these antifashion trends were usually looked down upon or even feared by the North American and British public, they were embraced by followers of Punk Rock as a symbol of defiance, difference and non-conformity (Blush and Petros 2001). In an era that placed a premium on designer labels, Punk Rockers demonstrated their disdain for corporate fashion by creating homemade t-shirts emblazoned with political messages and adopting clothing associated with working class laborers, including heavy boots and denim (2001). The philosophy of 'Do It Yourself' was deeply ingrained within the scene, encouraging young people to make their own albums, put together their own shows, and creating their own art (LaHickey 1997).

While the concept of D.I.Y. had many positive qualities, a large segment of the Punk Rock population held nihilistic views that "there would be personally and socially no future" for young people (Rohrer 2014:24). This contributed to a "negative worldview" fueled by feelings of "powerlessness to change … social conditions" (24).

While much of Punk Rock was filled with "positive political ideas and social values" that promoted an outlet for feelings of anger and despair (24), the scene was still marked by a number of young people who focused their negative energy inwards. The result was a community notorious for alcohol and drug abuse, self-injury, fights and other forms of destructive behavior (2014). Just as with the principal of D.I.Y., Punk Rock's nihilistic edge would play a role in the development of Hardcore Punk and modern Hardcore.

By the late 1970's, Punk Rock had been taken over by record labels interested in monetizing the scene. In order to make Punk Rock more digestible for the general public, crucial elements of the scene were stripped away, turning Punk Rock into an impotent ghost of its former self. By the early 1980s, Hardcore Punk began to develop in the void left by Punk Rock. Originating in the sunny suburbs of southern California, Hardcore Punk became Punk Rock's more aggressive musical cousin (Blush and Petros 2001). Disenfranchised youth began taking the aesthetics of Hardcore Punk to a new extreme, with music that was played "as fast as possible" and at ear piercing volumes (42). Vocalists embraced an "abrasive, aggressive" style frequently marked by yelling, guttural growls and other non-traditional modes of musical communication (42). Drummers stripped down to basic rhythms, usually consisting of patterns of 1-2. A guitarist might add some rhythmic complexity, although the overall structure of songs was straight forward and intentionally simplistic (2001). Musical solos, the bread and butter of many rock bands, were viewed as "traditional Rock bullshit," and were therefore discouraged from being performed (42). The emphasis was on the

collective unit of the band, rather than on individual performers. Embracing Punk Rock's spirit of D.I.Y., Hardcore Punk bands did not need to cultivate years of technique in order to jump on a stage. Musical inexperience was viewed positively, as it played into the anarchistic, free-for-all underpinnings of Punk Rock and Hardcore Punk (2001). A band's energy was often considered more important than their skill as musicians (2001). As Steven Blush and George Petros bluntly describe Hardcore Punk's early bands, "Removed from their social contexts, many sucked. Fans were more into the vibe than the quality of the music" (42). Hardcore Punk "extended, mimicked or reacted to Punk," selectively appropriating aspects of Punk Rock culture while discarding others (13). It was, quite literally, the most hardcore version of Punk to have ever been heard, at least up until the early1980's.

The scene began to attract "Street Punks and runaways" (Blush and Petros 2001:39), as well as "Fucked-up but smart white kids" who "suffered varying degrees of alienation, depression and frustration" (32). Despite having an "overwhelmingly White demographic," early Hardcore did attract some minorities, as evidenced in the success of bands such as Bad Brains (35). This burgeoning musical scene of alienated youth embraced the values of D.I.Y. while adopting the anarchistic, anti-capitalist beliefs of earlier the Punk Rock movement. Since Punk Rock had been taken over by commercial enterprises, Hardcore Punk was notoriously resistant to outsiders (Blush and Petros 2001). The scene was founded, shaped, recorded and shared by people from within the Hardcore Punk community. While Punk Rock laid the foundation for D.I.Y., Hardcore Punk truly embodied these values. Young people

"put on their own shows, released their own records, and set up their own tours" (Blush and Petros 2001:275). The D.I.Y. philosophy allowed young people to take part in creating music, generating promotional materials, producing merchandise and organizing shows with little or no formal training (2001). Many of Hardcore's early recordings were taped live at shows, bypassing the need for expensive studio time (2001). The resulting low sound quality of these recordings was embraced as being part of the aesthetic governing the D.I.Y. approach (2001). By circumventing the use of professional artists, sound engineers, and promoters, members of the Hardcore Punk scene eradicated the need for big budgets and the support of major record labels. Not only did this create a zone free of corporate interests, it was also an economically intelligent move, as it allowed young people to take part in a musical community that did not demand large amounts of cash (2001). In fact, it was recognized within the community that one did not become involved with Hardcore Punk to make money or garner fame (2001). The insular nature of Hardcore Punk contributed to this stance, as did the scene's decidedly anti-establishment beliefs. The community was resistant to outside media and any potential incursions by major record labels, largely due to the corporate nature of the commercial music industry (2001). For this reason, D.I.Y. was integral to the survival of Hardcore Punk, and later, the evolution into modern Hardcore.

Like Punk Rock, Hardcore Punk was driven by anti-capitalist and non-conformist politics that were critical of Western mainstream culture. Participants in the Hardcore Punk scene ridiculed the government, politicians and social trends through music, art,

fashion and other artistic outlets (Blush and Petros 2001). Song lyrics dealt with a number of topics, notably the oppression of youth by various social institutions (2001). Cops were especially hated, serving as the "most identifiable enemy" of Hardcore Punk rockers (2001:39). Police were depicted as unnecessarily violent and repressive towards young people and minorities. Another enduring belief was that the police wanted to eradicate Hardcore Punk. As Steven Blush and George Petros note, many Hardcore Punk fans believed that "Cops didn't want a new movement, so they tried to kill it before it grew" (39). The lore of early Hardcore backs up this assertion, as there are a number of documented cases of police harassment and brutality towards individuals associated with Hardcore Punk (2001). These incidents happened across the nation, suggesting that many police officers viewed the anarchistic chaos of Hardcore Punk with suspicion. Steven Blush and George Petros write that the police "busted shows" and "accumulated dossiers" on individuals attending Hardcore Punk shows (39). Since many of Hardcore Punk's fans were young people with little in the way of money or parental support, the police could easily get away with these actions (2001).

Aside from police brutality, the lyrics of many Hardcore Punk songs contained political themes that were critical of the American government. Other topics addressed in Hardcore Punk songs ran the gamut, from personal to social issues such racism. Lyrics were intentionally confrontational and designed to incite a reaction in listeners (Blush and Petros 2001). Hardcore Punk's in-your-face attitude was

exemplified by the controversial song 'Guilty of Being White[14]', performed by 'Minor Threat' in the early 1980's. A tongue-in-cheek examination of racial dynamics in the United States, the song was written from the perspective of a young Caucasian boy who had grown up bullied by his predominantly African-American peers at school (2001). The song's lyrics included the lines "I'm sorry for something I didn't do / Lynched somebody / But I don't know who" and "You blame me for slavery / A hundred years before I was born / Guilty of Being White." The lyrics were deeply divisive, and a small contingent of Hardcore Punk fans embraced the song as an anthem for white supremacy (2001). Ian Mackaye, the lyricist behind 'Guilty of Being White,' later explained that the song was not meant to be anti-black. He insisted that the song was autobiographical, a retelling of what he had gone through as a young boy living in Washington, D.C. He has been quoted as saying "I got beat up … People were judging me on the color of my skin, so I wrote what I thought was a really direct anti-racist song – I wanted to say something radical" (Blush and Petros 2001:30).

Today, Hardcore is a nebulous term that holds different meanings, depending on whom you ask. As Sheldon Runs Like Deer sagely observes, "Everybody's definition is different." Further complicating the issue is that little academic work has been conducted on Hardcore, as noted by Ingo Rohrer (2014). For this reason, a significant portion of the information covered in this section comes firsthand from participants

---

[14] Minor Threat. 2013. "Guilty of Being White." *Youtube*, March 21. Accessed [December 28, 2016.] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9MQOwFdnhXA.

rather than academic literature. While I reference existing literature when possible, the ways in which I 'define' Hardcore are mostly built upon the opinions and stories of my research participants.

Two common viewpoints have emerged from the small corpus of Hardcore studies. One scholarly view is that Hardcore is a musical relic of the 1980's, and that the "'initial' and 'original' scene … found its end in a certain moment" (Rohrer 2014:26). The work of Steven Blush and George Petros (2001) exemplifies this point of view. These two authors frame Hardcore within a particular geo-spatial and temporal context that ended in the mid to late 1980's, largely due to cultural changes that fundamentally altered the scene. According to this school of thought, anything after the late 1980s is 'post-Hardcore'.

While Blush and Petros are careful to demarcate a beginning and end point for Hardcore, the participants of this project argue otherwise, noting that the movement has simply evolved over the years. Indeed, there is at least one scholar who agrees with this point of view -- Ingo Rohrer argues that "punk and hardcore still exist" (Rohrer 2014:26). While my observations align with those of my participants and Rohrer, I agree with Blush and Petros that Hardcore culture was fundamentally altered by the end of the 1980's (2001). For this reason, I delineate between 'modern Hardcore' (which is specifically the culture and music after the mid/late 1980's) and that of 'Hardcore' (the entirety of the movement itself, including its historical roots).

According to Arnold, 'Hardcore' is generally used as an umbrella term that covers a variety of musical subgenres. This assertion is backed up in academic literature, as Ingo Rohrer notes that Hardcore culture is "segmented into various sub-groups and genres" (2014:22). There is no aesthetic point at which a piece of music may be classified as a particular subgenre of Hardcore, as "strict boundaries" are impossible when one considers the ways in which Hardcore "overlaps to other musical genres" (22). While 'Hardcore' may actually refer to an array of musical types, it is generally understood to mean music that has roots in Punk Rock, featuring songs with simple rhythms, straightforward harmonic structures, a fast tempo, aggressive vocals and a stripped down instrumental palette (Blush and Petros 2001). Sheldon Runs Like Deer describes the musical aesthetic as "fast, angry music. It's just fast, angry and that's it. That's generally what it is. Simple music. To the point." Like Arnold, Sheldon isn't overly concerned with trying to label the various musical varieties that may be classified as Hardcore. He clarifies, "Subgenres are subgenres. What some people think of Metalcore I may think of as Hardcore." However, Sheldon also suggests that it would be a mistake to conflate Punk Rock and Hardcore, despite their shared aesthetic and historical roots. Thus, while Sheldon does not appear overly concerned with matters of genre, he does make a point of noting that there is a difference between Hardcore and its close musical relative, Punk Rock.

What remains true from the early days of Hardcore Punk is the scene's willingness to accept social outcasts and individuals alienated from main stream society. Sheldon explains that "That's what Hardcore teaches. We're all equal. Everyone is fucking

equal. It doesn't matter if you're white, black, rich or poor, three years old or ninety … we're all human, we're all the same." Although historically the domain of Caucasian males (Blush and Petros 2001), Hardcore has rejected "oppressive and exclusive aspects of mainstream society, often including oppressive assumptions with relation to gender" (Griffin 2012:67).

For young indigenous men like Arnold and Sheldon, the anti-racist beliefs of Hardcore are an especially attractive quality. Despite the controversy over songs like 'Guilty of Being White' in the early days of Hardcore Punk, modern Hardcore is generally thought to be an open and welcoming movement by my research participants. An increasing number of bands have musicians from a wide array of ethnic backgrounds, most notably Latino and African-American. The success of multi-racial bands such as 'Xibalba' and 'Killswitch Engage' have helped to integrate the modern Hardcore scene. Most modern Hardcore bands espouse an anti-racist philosophy in which all members of the Hardcore community are part of a brotherhood, no matter their background, gender, age or racial affiliation.

Arnold considers the modern Hardcore scene to be extremely welcoming, and notes that people within the brotherhood "don't look at me as 'that Native guy' or 'Indian.' They just see me as Arnold, as this positive dude." He adds,

> It went back to people accepting me for who I was … it was never, it was never once negative or bad that I was Aboriginal. And that, in my mind frame, this was when I was starting to learn about Aboriginal-ness, and the culture, good and bad, and the perception, and I would literally ask myself "What perceptions?" Because I hung out

> with whoever. And they took me as whoever. It was never political in any which way. The bottom line they took you for who you were.

Alongside modern Hardcore's acceptance of difference is the scene's dedication to issues of social justice. Steven Blush and George Petros (2001), as well as Naomi Griffin (2012), have all commented on the importance of social justice within the Hardcore scene, noting the culture's "progressive politics" (Griffin 2012:67). These ideas are intimately linked with the lyrical content of many Hardcore bands, which often question authority and the established order of mainstream Western society. This attitude is very much in keeping with Hardcore's early Punk influence, a movement which strived to embody a way of life that scorned societal institutions and laws. Like Punk, modern Hardcore has a political undertone to its dismissal of societal convention. Hardcore is deeply critical of people who fail to challenge the established social order, which in turn may spur its listeners to apply these messages to their everyday lives.

As an example, the San Francisco based band 'First Blood'[15] sings about social institutions that try to mold citizens while ostracizing free thinkers. The lyrics go on to state "Born in this world with innocent eyes / The more I see it becomes more clear to me I cannot trust powers that be / Taught to embrace with open arms a society that does not have a place for me / I didn't ask for this social divide and all the racists and

---

[15] First Blood. 2008. "First Blood." *Youtube*, November 4. Accessed [December 28, 2016.] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g7PbS6sdiZo.

the scum of mankind." Similarly, Death By Stereo's song 'Sing Along with the Patriotic Punks'[16] contains lyrics that attack the government's authority and the "meathead mentality" of those who don't question "Uncle Sam." The examples from First Blood and Death By Stereo are both critical of social norms and institutions, and express discomfort with the acceptance of mainstream values.

When asked if social justice plays a role in modern Hardcore culture, every participant I asked responded in the affirmative. Many felt that their involvement with their local music community has helped them become more aware of social issues plaguing society. Sheldon Runs Like Deer describes how a Hardcore song helped to educate him about the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, among other issues. He says,

> One buddy wrote a song about the genocide about over in Rwanda. People writing things like that, the genocide in Rwanda, the 911 attacks, heavy drugs -- it opened my eyes to all of that stuff. It made me realize like, wow, this world is a messed up place. It taught me to see all this shit in the world that no one else sees.

Similarly, Arnold describes how Edmonton's Hardcore community has helped raise his awareness of social issues. By taking part in events within Edmonton's Hardcore scene, Arnold sees the importance of social engagement. As an Aboriginal man, Arnold is interested in taking his experiences from Hardcore and applying them to indigenous communities, both on and off the reserve. He suggests that local community-building and social action go hand-in-hand. According to Arnold, taking

---

[16] Death By Stereo. 2015. "Sing Along with the Patriotic Punks." *Youtube*, February 21. Accessed [December 28, 2016.] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VbeNNsYwlp8.

part in community building practices is an important way to bring together Native peoples. These include fundraising benefits such as round dances and taking part in sacred ceremonies such as smudging. Arnold elaborates,

> It's taught me to engage, which would be stemming from the Aboriginal social issues. That's what it definitely did. With a sense of [the Hardcore] community, you could build that with the Aboriginal community, build that community. From a smudge to large-scale issues such as Aboriginal poverty, to benefits such as round dances. Being a part of that in order to showcase who you are as a person and as an Aboriginal person. It has definitely taught me that. That's what I liked about Hardcore as well. I could definitely utilize it working with the Aboriginal community, on the reserve or urban.

While raising awareness about social issues is important, Sheldon points out that working towards change is integral to many young people involved in Calgary's Hardcore scene. As with building a musical scene, social justice requires action, and Sheldon has plenty of examples of youth working to create positive changes in their local communities. Sheldon references members of his Hardcore scene creating a local community garden, encouraging youth to vote and providing food to the homeless. He adds that there's one group affiliated with the Calgary Hardcore scene that is "going around and organizing rallies for women's rights and Aboriginal rights and things like that. That's a huge thing Hardcore is good for … Making a change in a local community or city."

Alongside its penchant for social activism and acceptance of difference, modern Hardcore is driven by an emphasis on community and brotherhood (Blush and Petros 2001). Even in its earliest days, Hardcore shows were described as safe spaces to let out aggression, to develop bonds with like-minded individuals, and to engage in

artistic, social and political outlets (Rohrer 2014, Griffin 2012, Blush and Petros 2001). As an insular community resistant to outsiders, members of the early Hardcore Punk scene were often protective of one another (Blush and Petros 2001).

An example of community building and brotherhood is the practice of developing crews with Alberta's Hardcore scene. Crews are an extension of localized modern Hardcore communities or scenes, with a caveat: they take the concept of community and friendship to a deep, almost familial level. One participant likens crews to "a brotherhood a sisterhood; we look out for each other." According to the same participant, "Members of a crew are essentially members of a family." Crews may provide food, housing and shelter to its members, as well as physical backup during physical altercations. The importance of crews within Hardcore culture cannot be underestimated, and has been covered in some depth in the work of Steven Blush and George Petros (2001). While a universal and common bond connects Hardcore fans, crews are small groups of men and women that have committed to helping and protecting one another. Crews accomplish these tasks in a number of ways, including the provision of food, shelter and physical backup during altercations. They serve as a social support system, particularly for young people who may not have stable home lives. For young people who have been discriminated against, abused or otherwise mistreated, finding a crew can be one way of developing meaningful social connections that extend beyond the boundaries of typical friendships. Crews may live together under one roof, for example. Although not everyone joins a crew, those who do appear to express a deep appreciation and love for their fellow crew members.

To be clear, crews are not gangs. Because crew members may congregate together in public spaces, wear clothing that marks their affiliation to a particular crew and/or sport crew-related tattoos, people from outside the modern Hardcore scene tend to view crews as no different than gangs. The fact that crews are generally made up of young people also adds to the suspicion directed towards them. In particular, crews with members who are ethnic minorities may be viewed with an added layer of suspicion due to racism. The misperception surrounding crews is so great that one of my participants was nervous even discussing the topic because he didn't want to be mistakenly linked with gang activity. Sheldon Runs Like Deer, who has been a member of several crews and is willing to publicly discuss his involvement, is dismissive of the perception that crews are similar to gangs. He asserts that gangs hurt people, while crews do the opposite. Sheldon notes that crews "don't go out and sell drugs," are usually anti-drug ('hard' substances other than weed), and oriented towards positive social engagement with the surrounding community. On a personal note, I have never heard of crews involved in human trafficking, gambling or other illegal activities. Crews aren't out to make a profit or gain control of a particular piece of territory. Instead, they are focused on loyalty, friendship and maintaining a local scene based on a mutual love of modern Hardcore.

Alongside the attitude of acceptance, emphasis on community, and strains of social activism, the philosophy of Do It Yourself still reigns supreme in Alberta's modern Hardcore scene. Although this is most frequently understood to relate to the creation and consumption of music, D.I.Y. applies to almost every facet of the scene. Despite

the increasing popularity of digital modes of communication, hand-lettered flyers are still sometimes used to advertise shows in cities like Calgary. Young people with little to no artistic training create these advertisements, sometimes manipulating and repurposing copyrighted materials, corrupting "words and images lifted from books and magazines" or utilizing "outrageous, offensive pictures" (Blush and Petros 2001:288). The artistic qualities of these flyers tends to reflect the general aesthetic of the Hardcore Punk scene – provocative, confrontational and decidedly rough around the edges. Images and text are frequently inked in black and white to aid in low cost reproduction.

Aside from the D.I.Y. philosophy and a free-wheeling attitude toward aesthetics, another defining feature of modern Hardcore is the way in which bands and audiences interact at shows. The word 'aggressive' is frequently used as a descriptor (Blush and Petros 2001, Rohrer 2014). Speaking from personal experience, Sheldon notes the kinds of behaviors that make modern Hardcore shows notorious. (As a veteran of modern Hardcore shows, Sheldon and Arnold have crossed paths at numerous concerts over the years, as evidenced in the quote below.)

> It's positive aggression. Controlled chaos. We're all there, we're all there for the same reasons to have some fun, get rowdy and hit each other. One year I got concussed by Arnold. I got knocked out. And then he picked me up afterwards and asked me if I wanted him to buy me a t-shirt. I've been knocked out by my best friends. Afterwards it's like, let's get drinks, get a smoke. It's our therapy. We've all tried therapists. We've all tried the drugs they give you, the ADD stuff, the Ritalin. None of that works for us. The only thing that works is going to a show and being an animal. Giving into our baser instincts for 20 minutes. Violence and the basic instincts of humanity aren't bad things. Personally I think we need to embrace those to control ourselves. All humans are inherently violent and shitty people. Being able to find a positive place

> where violent kids can go and punch someone and stage dive and flail their arms and be an idiot … I probably shouldn't say this, but … I'd rather see some 14 year old punching someone in the face at a show than getting drunk on the street. It's a way better place.

Sarah, a thirty-year old promoter and modern Hardcore fan, describes similar experiences at modern Hardcore shows. She notes the 'aggressive' aspect of modern Hardcore, as well as the 'violence' associated with live shows. However, Sarah does not frame these traits as negative. Rather, they are seen as an outlet, a release. The intensely physical experience of Hardcore shows is something that Sarah "could relate to" and allows her to "live" and "feel" her way through her own anger and tendencies towards violence.

> It helps me let out my anger. When I am feeling grumpy or aggressive I can throw some music on and get it out. Going crazy in the mosh pit can also relieve some aggression. A part of Hardcore really focused on violence and anger. So of course a part of me was drawn to it. I have an anger issue. I have been violent. So Hardcore comes naturally to me. I could relate to it. I could live it and feel it.

Unlike many other musical genres, the crowds at Hardcore Punk shows traditionally engaged in a chaotic free-for-all in which the boundaries between performers and audience were blurred. Video footage of a Cro-Mags[17] show filmed the mid 1980's is one example of how Hardcore Punk audiences and musicians interacted. The crowd is seen jumping on stage with the band, with some audience members running around the stage. A few people flip and dive into the seething crowd below, while others are

---

[17] Cro-Mags (Iron Skulls). 2006. "It's the Limit + Hard Times." *Youtube*, July 31. Accessed [December 30, 2016.] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h9YLydmCML4.

pulled from the crowd and up on to stage. At several points in the video, band members physically and verbally interact with the audience. Throughout the clip, people push into each other, kick, punch and jump into one another.

As evidenced from the words of Sheldon and Sarah, this is still a common sight in today's modern Hardcore scene. Audiences may jump on stage, grab the microphone from the musicians, stage dive and dance. Sheldon Runs Like Deer explains that "It's a very common thing to have someone run up and grab the vocalist and take the mic out of his hand and do some of the singing themselves. Sometimes people are jumping off the speakers … A fist or foot to the face is a perfectly normal thing." At one show I attended, a participant warned me not to get mad if someone accidentally kicked or punched me.

A key component of modern Hardcore are various forms of dance and movement, variously known as as 'slam dancing,' a type of movement that generally involved the swinging of arms and "hitting everyone within … reach" (Blush and Petros 2001:24), 'Hardcore dancing' (kicking legs and swinging arms, ramming into one another), and moshing (jumping up and down and moving freely within the confines of a circle or 'pit'). Physical and frequently confrontational, these types of dances can result in fairly serious injuries. Sheldon Runs Like Deer claims he's been "punched, kicked," had "over 30 broken bones" including "a nose broken a dozen times" and witnessed a variety of knock-outs, largely due to moshing and dancing at Hardcore shows. Arnold provides a similar list of injuries he's received at shows. At one show I attended in

Edmonton, a girl in the mosh pit was accidentally punched in the face, although she didn't appear upset about the injury.

Despite the physical aggression associated with Hardcore Punk shows, the intention has never been "to harm others," but instead to "release negative emotions and to perpetuate an understanding between performers and listeners" (Abbey 2014:xv). From a modern perspective, Sheldon Runs like Deer agrees that "It's okay to hit people, as long as it's not a personal attack." Sheldon is also quick to point out that "It's not all violence at the shows either. There's kids there, that dance, that don't hit anyone, they don't go near anyone." Having been that person that doesn't hit or go near anyone at a show, my personal experience aligns with Sheldon's assessment.

According to participants, codes of etiquette are usually followed at modern Hardcore shows in order to ensure a level of safety. However, what constitutes acceptable behavior may vary from one city to the next. According to several participants, some communities are known for being "rougher" and "more violent" than others. In Alberta, participants report that most people follow a set of guidelines: don't mess with people in the back of a venue where dancing rarely takes place, don't intentionally start a fight or go after someone, and if someone falls or is seriously hurt, help them out. If you're at the front of the venue and/or 'in the pit' where most dancing occurs, then expect to get hit, kicked and punched, but don't take it personally when it happens. Physical altercations are discouraged in order to minimize the

chance of fights breaking out. It is also viewed as disrespectful to intentionally target someone in the pit.

Several scholars have commented on the cathartic nature of dancing in Hardcore Punk and modern Hardcore (e.g. Blush and Petros 2001, Abbey 2014, Rohrer 2014). Young people are able to let go of their anger, frustration and despair in a frenzy of movement among an understanding group of peers. The aggressive physicality of Hardcore Punk serves not only as "a way to release emotion," but also the "coming together of people in unity to express a disdain for society" (Abbey 2014:xiv). By mutual understanding, young people come together and create a safe space in which to engage with each other in ways prohibited by mainstream Western social norms. Sheldon explains that "Dancing ties into where I don't know where I'd be without Hardcore … the ability to not experience racism and feel safe, and do anything I want and be completely free is amazing." Sheldon's words parallel those of Eric Abby, who argues "The people who listen to aggressive music all begin with the basic premise that they need to release some form of negative thought or that there is something that they cling to that they feel is missing in their lives. This is the reason … to release aggression in a nonviolent way" (Abbey 2014:xv). One would assume that by 'nonviolent' the author is referring to consensual physical contact.

Fig. 1.5. Sheldon in the pit (collection of Keely Gibb/Sheldon Runs Like Deer, 2012)

The sheer physicality of Hardcore remains one of the most daunting aspects of the scene for many outsiders. When one hears stories of broken bones and blood, it can be a frightening or confusing thing. I've had a number of people from outside the scene ask me why anyone would subject themselves to a Hardcore show – what's the point of getting punched in the face? After attending several shows and observing how those inside the scene use the term 'aggressive,' I've come to the conclusion that aggression may actually be conceptualized differently among those involved with Alberta's Hardcore scene. Outside of Hardcore, aggression is often classed as "a negative response to stimuli of some sort," suggesting anti-social behavior (Abby 2014:xiv). Furthermore, aggression and violence are often conflated (Abbey 2014). From the perspective of modern Hardcore in Alberta, aggression is not necessarily bad. For one thing, aggression may be viewed as a logical response to a corrupt and broken society. Both Sheldon and Arnold have extensively discussed social issues

that made them feel "alienated," "angry" and "aggressive," especially in their teenage years. These feelings can be channeled through music and movement to "expel anger, vent frustration or come to a sense of internal peace" (Abbey 2014:xiii). According to this viewpoint, aggression is not something to be feared. It is emotional fuel that can be burned up, sweated out and used in a positive manner. Aggression is the emotional currency of Hardcore, and what allows the music to exist in the first place. Sheldon tries to explain this by saying "It's very hard to describe what I feel at shows, it's a lot of emotions all rolled into one: hatred and violence towards each other, yet it's in a positive light." He adds, "I feel happy because I see all the kids like me, just as fucked up as me, all they want to do is just go off and be as violent as they can be towards each other and hang out and have fun. It's truly amazing, to see the joy on people's faces."

Ultimately, modern Hardcore appears to be entrenched in a strong ideological foundation that focuses on building a local musical community. Ingo Rohrer notes that "communitarian feeling is the interpersonal basis for the punk and hardcore cultures" (2014:26) and that "Friendship and a generalized form of trust can be seen as fundamental aspects which holds the culture of … hardcore together" (26). Acceptance of difference is paramount to this practice of community building. Skye, a female Hardcore fan from Edmonton and indigenous ally in her early twenties, states that "Hardcore is a place where outcasts can find brotherhood and a community for whoever you are, no matter race, creed, [or] religion." Social activism is also a key

component of the modern Hardcore scene in Alberta, as Sheldon's recollections of a community garden and advocating for homeless citizens of Calgary reveal.

Methodologies of Studying Hip Hop and Hardcore Communities

Several methodological techniques were utilized during this study. Primarily, Laura Ahearn's open-ended dialogue (2012) and Julie Cruikshank's life history model (1990) were used. Although I discuss indigenous methodologies more in depth in Chapter Four, I loosely applied the work of Winona Wheeler, who suggests that researchers should make known their respect, trust and acknowledge any obligations to research participants in the field (2005:199). My approach to collecting participant narratives was also deeply influenced by the work of Walter Lightning (1992).

While I wasn't able to engage in the kinds of obligations that Wheeler suggests are critical to engagement with Cree Elders, such as cleaning and preparing food and hunting (2005:199), I did try to acknowledge that my relationships with participants were "based on interactive and reciprocal relations" and that "all knowledge comes with some degree of personal sacrifice" (199), however minor those so-called sacrifices may have seemed at the time. When possible, these included buying meals and providing gas money, going shopping together, going on more than a few road trips, providing moral support during particularly difficult personal issues, and promoting the music of participants through social media, class and conference presentations, and word of mouth.

As Laura Ahearn notes, there are four commonly used formats for interviewing interlocutors, structured (2012:35), semi-structured (35), open-ended (35) and naturally occurring conversation (37). An open-Ended interview is informal, conversational, and "designed to elicit topics of importance to the research subject themselves" (Ahearn 2012:35), and proved to be the most useful in the context of my work. I relied very little on structured interviews, except in during the earliest stages of my field work. Structured interviews made it difficult to develop rapport, and I often felt like I was taking information while imparting little in return. Structured interviews also only work if the interviewer knows the right kinds of questions to ask. When I switched to a more open format, participants entered into a dialogue which was more of a give-and-take; for example, the tables might turn mid-conversation, and I would find myself on the receiving end of a question. When I candidly replied to these questions, I often found that participants felt more comfortable opening up to me. This format also uncovered all kinds of information and stories that I would never have thought to ask about. It gave more control to participants, allowing them to guide the conversation and steer me towards vital information.

In tandem with open-ended dialogue, I found the "life history investigation" model proposed by Julie Cruikshank (1990) to be useful. Cruikshank's life history model is based on the premise that "Instead of working from the conventional formula in which an outside investigator initiates and controls the research, this model depends on ongoing collaboration between interviewer and interviewee" (1). She argues that this process is one that is inherently social, in that it is a "collaborative product of an

encounter between two people, often from different cultural backgrounds, and incorporates the consciousness of an investigator as well as that of a subject" (x). Thus, it is a collaborative approach that allows for participants to take an active role in shaping the research process. It establishes rapport, allows for a respectful exchange between two or more people, and acknowledges cultural sensitivities that may not be readily apparent to a non-indigenous researcher working with indigenous populations. Cruikshank proposed the model as a means of gathering life narratives and traditional stories from indigenous Elders living in the Yukon of Canada.

Cruikshank is quick to point out that a researcher "needs a sense of the speaker's cultural background" in order to "provide context for hearing what is said" (1990:4). For this reason, I made an effort to learn about the backgrounds and life stories of those participants willing to share this information with me. In many instances, this helped me to understand some of the cultural differences between myself and my participants. This, in turn, helped me to better appreciate the significance of certain comments, behaviors and aesthetic choices made by participants, such as the wearing of a braid, a particular piercing or the meaning behind a specific tattoo. It also helped me to behave in a more culturally appropriate way, especially in social settings where Elders were present. This included learning to speak less and listen more, as well as not trying to fill extended silences with meaningless utterances.

Cruikshank also explores the difficulties surrounding the conversion of oral material into written text. Although the author is more concerned with placing oral tradition

and stories into text, she notes that there are challenges involved with relaying lived events into written form (1990). She writes that "Converting spoken conversations to written text … raises questions" (18). These questions include methodological considerations, such as finding ways to retain the essence of oral speech while converting it to text (1990). Cruikshank documents some of the challenges associated with trying to reproduce the topography of speech, particularly as it relates to replicating the "emphasis and cadence of the spoken word" (18). I was confronted with similar issues, particularly when documenting musical lyrics. Both rap and modern Hardcore are replete with tonal semantics and physical gestures which are incredibly difficult to capture in a printed format. Inspired by the work of Dennis Tedlock (1983), Cruikshank follows a model of transcription that I have adopted throughout the following pages. These include ellipses to indicate "a longer pause or an incomplete thought" (19) and a dash "to punctuate a phrase when a period seems too abrupt" (19). In addition, Cruikshank does not include her questions in the body of her text (19).

When conducting interviews or taking part in conversation, I tried to remain aware of how I consciously (and unconsciously) impacted "what is said, how it is said, and why it said" (Ahearn 2012:36). Additionally, I took to heart Cruikshank's observation that "A contemporary narrator working in collaboration with an anthropologist usually has an agenda every bit as clear as the ethnographer" (1990:16). This was unquestionably the case, as participants took great pains to present the positive aspects of rap and Hardcore. Negative incidents were often glossed over or downright ignored, despite

my repeated promptings. In particular, I was frequently discouraged by participants from discussing the more controversial aspects of rap and Hardcore culture, including misogyny, anti-Semitism and the predominance of violent imagery. The few participants willing to speak on these topics rarely wanted me to quote them, fearing backlash from within their respective communities. As Cruikshank notes, "narrators use stories to explain a particular point" (17), and certainly, those involved with this project – including myself – were not, and are not, impartial.

Perhaps most critical to the collecting of the stories below was acknowledging that "Listening is a kind of active participation" (Lightning 1992:229). Lightning wrote about the education imparted to him by Cree Elders, particularly Elder Louis Sunchild, and the process of putting these into text. Lightning wrote that "active attention, humility of the hearer, and respect for the Elder will put one in the frame where minds can meet" (230). While I have not had the privilege of working with Elders, and have not earned the right to do so, Lightning's observations on listening and learning touched me deeply. Lightning's words remind me that, when working with participants, I should remain humble and respectful, and open to what I hear. Lightning also noted that, in sharing teachings with another person, an Elder "makes him/herself open" and "vulnerable" (230). There are many layers to the relationship between listener and Elder that Lightning outlines, none of which I have the right or authority to convey here. However, Lightning's work reminded me to be cognizant of the vulnerable space in which my participants inhabited throughout the duration of my research, opening themselves up to me in a way that, if abused, could cause great

harm. As readers will see in the sections below, many of the narratives I have included come from a deeply personal place, and I am grateful to those participants who so willingly took the time to let me listen and learn from them.

Chapter Two: Community and Solidarity in Hip Hop and Hardcore

"Music can be the most powerful and positive force in the world if used properly."

-Sheldon Runs Like Deer

Communities of Practice

One of the first hurdles I had to overcome in the initial stages of field work was figuring out how to define my research community. The participants involved in this project are spread across western Canada and parts of the United States. One participant moved between three different states in the time it took me to finish my field work. The age spread of my participants is also quite large, ranging from nineteen years of age to the early thirties. Some are involved with Hardcore as promoters, while others are Hip Hop emcees with their own records. In addition, the participants of this project come from diverse backgrounds, including a mix of Aboriginal, Caucasian, Metis and Mexican. My participants run the gamut from college students to seasoned musical performers. While most grew up in urban settings, more than half have ties to a rural reserve. Clearly, community models based solely on factors such as location, age or ethnicity are not applicable to my research population.

The concept of 'communities of practice,' first proposed by Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger (1991), resolved my dilemma. A community of practice "takes us away from

the community defined by a location or a population" (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1998:490) and instead "focuses on a community defined by social engagement" (490). Elaborating further, Eckert and McConnell-Ginet note that "A community of practice is an aggregate of people who come together around mutual engagement in an endeavor. Ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, values, power relations – in short, practices – emerge in the course of this mutual endeavor" (1992:464). Citing Wenger, Laura Ahearn suggests that a community of practice can be identified according to three main criteria, which are "(1) mutual engagement; (2) a joint enterprise; and (3) a shared repertoire" (2012:115).

In this particular case, my participants are joined together in the mutual endeavor of music. As performers, promoters, producers and fans, the people involved in my project are connected by their commitment to their respective musical scenes. The joint enterprise that takes place is the maintenance of these local musical communities. This often requires networking and communication between various scenes. For example, Mash Yellowbird and Dubb Hardaway live in different parts of the United States, but will occasionally express support of each other's careers via social media. Likewise, Arnold sometimes attends shows in cities like Calgary and Seattle, and has formed friendships with Hardcore fans in these locations. Lastly, Eckert and McConnell-Gint note that a shared repertoire can include language, social norms and systems of belief (1992). As outlined in Chapter Two, the Hardcore and Hip Hop communities are rich sources of shared ideologies, behaviors, aesthetics and language.

Some of these practices even cross over between scenes, such as an interest in social justice and politics.

What is also helpful about the community of practice model is that it recognizes that "Individuals can be members of multiple communities of practice simultaneously or sequentially over a lifespan" (Ahearn 2012:116). As I discuss in Chapter One, a number of my participants have expressed trepidation over being forced into a particular label. They do not wish to be presented as one-dimensional beings. The community of practice model allows for the kind of flexibility needed to respect the individuality and unique qualities of the people involved with this project. It also allows space for participants to have their work in non-musical areas acknowledged, including their roles as parents, siblings, students, powwow dancers and Aboriginal rights activists. By acknowledging that people may belong to "multiple communities of practice" at once (Ahearn 2012:116), participants are not locked into one particular affiliation. The fact that an individual may belong to any number of communities of practice over a lifespan allows for personal involvement with a community to change or even diminish over time.

A Powerful and Positive Force

The main purpose of this thesis is to explore the ways in which nine urban indigenous youth and their allies utilize music into their social lives. Specifically, I examine some of the ways in which friendships are built and maintained within the musical communities of modern Hardcore and Hip Hop. I explore how these groups provide

participants with a sense of belonging, create networks of support, and inspire personal change and growth. In short, I attempt to demonstrate the ways in which music and sociality intersect, and how this positively influences the participants involved with this project. In this particular section, I focus on what is perhaps the most critical aspect of social engagement with music, providing disenfranchised youth a community to belong to, and systems of support that are developed as a result.

In order to understand the importance of being a part of a musical scene, it is worth considering the hardships my participants have faced when trying to find a social niche. In the case of many of my participants, developing a peer group has been a significant challenge for a variety of reasons. For some of my indigenous participants, it has been difficult to find a group of peers because of rampant racism directed towards indigenous peoples. Growing up, coping with racism was an alienating experience for Sheldon. He recounts being a young teenager and dealing with racist attitudes "around school, on the street … [and] in Calgary." Once he began working, Sheldon encountered racism on the job. His frustration is palpable when he tells me one story in particular.

> I've dealt with [racism] in society, through jobs, trying to get jobs and within my job. A couple years ago, I worked as an aid for mentally handicapped people, and on numerous occasions, when the guardians of the patients saw that I wasn't white, they called the office because I wasn't white.

These encounters with racism left Sheldon feeling angry and segregated from mainstream Canadian society. Hardcore has been Sheldon's saving grace, at least in terms of his social life. His hometown's music scene has been instrumental in

providing Sheldon with a non-judgmental group of friends who don't care about his ethnicity or appearance. Hardcore has been Sheldon's social lifeline, particularly during his younger years. Recounting his early involvement with the Hardcore scene, Sheldon describes a tight-knit scene that is almost familial in nature.

> I'd look forward to every Friday night and going to that room, that community hall, that garage that we rigged up, and for those twenty minutes, that one hour, sweet, … We're all equal, there's no bullshit, there's no racism, I don't have to worry.

According to one of my participants who wished to remain anonymous, there is "something wrong with mainstream society," in that "society is cruel to red, brown and black folks." Compounded by substance abuse issues, difficult home lives and poverty, finding friends has been a difficult task.

Personal demons and difficult home lives also complicate potential friendships. Skye, an indigenous ally in her twenties, recalls a lonely childhood. She recounts, "I had a harder childhood, with no father or mother around. I took care of my sister a lot, a lot of the burden was on me to take care of everything." Unlike her schoolmates, Skye rarely had time for after-school activities and social events, making her something of a pariah among her peers. She wore hand-me-down clothes, which added to her 'uncool' status at school. Although she's Caucasian and did not have to struggle with racism, Skye keenly felt the impact of being poor and looked down upon by her wealthier classmates.

It was only after discovering Hardcore as a teenager that Skye felt a connection with other people. "Meeting all the people in the scene, they're life changing. They're so nice. They're a brotherhood, a family. They've had my back." She adds,

> It was nice to have people willing to stand up for me, and take care of me. Nothing bad could ever happen when I hang out with these guys, because they will try to make everything okay. That's something that I don't find anywhere else. It's really unifying.

Sheldon Runs Like Deer also struggled with fitting in. He recalls being angry as a child, troubled by the values of the society around him. Growing up in a religious home, Sheldon found some solace in his church, although his youth pastor eventually ostracized Sheldon for his love of so-called "Satanic" music. Eventually, Sheldon was forced out from his childhood church, an event which was deeply traumatic. When asked to elaborate upon his anger as a child and teenager, Sheldon explains,

> My anger started out at a very young age. Even at that young age I didn't understand the world. I didn't see why I had to go to school for the next twelve, fifteen years to go to college and buy a house and go in to debt your whole life**.** I remember being in grade three and telling my parents I didn't want to be in school with people anymore. They pulled me out in grade three and homeschooled until grade nine. In grade nine I discovered Punk Rock and Hardcore … Growing up in a conservative Christian home and stuff, going to high school and stuff with the literature I was reading at the time, it really made me think … the reason I'm angry -- I hated the fact I didn't feel comfortable anywhere. At church. At school. I didn't feel comfortable anywhere.

Part of this anger may have stemmed from Sheldon's adoption as an infant. Sheldon is biracial, of Cowessess and Caucasian ancestry. Although he identifies with being Aboriginal, Sheldon was raised by white parents. He's never met his biological parents, and currently doesn't have interest in finding them. Sheldon credits his adopted family with being supportive and loving, but admits that confusion

surrounding his origins haunted him as a child. “I struggled with that for a lot of years when I was younger. I think that’s one of the reasons why I acted up. That’s probably one of the reasons looking back on it,” he notes. At the very least, it certainly marked him as different from his peers, many of whom were neither Aboriginal or adopted.

As the stories of both Skye and Sheldon demonstrate, fitting in with a group of peers can be an arduous process. Experiences with racism, poverty and familial neglect can all contribute to a young person’s difficulty in finding friends. Thanks to the Hardcore communities in Calgary and Edmonton, Sheldon and Skye were finally able to connect with a group of people. Not only that, these friendships are deeply meaningful, cemented by an almost familial bond.

While finding a peer group is important, it is what these friendships offer that is truly powerful. These range from emotional encouragement to more tangible help, including offers of financial assistance and housing. This can also include a kind of ‘buddy system’ in which a seasoned musical veteran takes on a young amateur in order to mentor a fledgling musical career. Mash Yellowbird credits well-known Kansas City rapper ‘Rushin Roolet’ with teaching him some of the tricks of the music industry. The kind of help he received from Rushin Roolet was not only invaluable, but also served as a mark of Mash’s acceptance within the local Hip Hop scene. Mash learned everything from marketing strategies to advice on performing. Referencing his experience with Rushin Roolet, Mash explains,

> When I started having convos with him, he said there ain't no ego in this thing, that kills it. We gotta bring the best product we can. He was trying to show me how to get this money in rap. He taught me a lot. He really wanted me to get on the level of how you 'hand to hand combat' this CD, the promotion, flyers … he taught me a lot. One big advice he gave, there's no ego, check it at the door. It's really about making music. It was a humbling experience but I also got a lot of respect, and he gives it back. It was a big thing for me. I learned how to soak game. I became a sponge. I absorbed all I could professionally in order to excel and get my foot in the door and play my position.

For readers unfamiliar with Hip Hop and the language of the music industry, Mash touches on a number of ways in which Rooshin' Roolet assisted his career. In short, ego has no room in the industry. A performer is obligated to create and perform a product which is marketable and artistically viable. Mash compares the hustle of the music industry to 'hand to hand combat,' likening the experience to a kind of battle, a metaphor that almost any musician can relate to. Mash also touches upon soaking up 'game,' which in this context refers to the music business. Thanks in part to the wisdom imparted by Roolet, Mash was able to get a foot in the door and leverage his knowledge into an active career.

While mentoring is important, another component of musical relationships may involve financial benefits. Within Alberta's Hardcore scene, members will often receive monetary help when needed. Local non-profit organizations and charities are also on the receiving end of this goodwill. Relating an example of how the Calgary Hardcore scene banded together to offer financial assistance to a fan in need, Sheldon recalls the story of Joe "Hardcore" McKay, a popular American promoter. After spending some time in Canada, McKay unexpectedly found himself broke and stranded in Alberta. In an effort to help out, the Calgary Hardcore scene banded

together, put on a fundraising show, and collected one thousand dollars to help McKay with expenses. In true Hardcore fashion, McKay ended up using the money to help out someone else that needed the money even more. Fortunately, the story had a happy ending for McKay, who not only earned himself some goodwill in Calgary, but was also able to eventually make it back to his home in Philadelphia.

The story of John McKay not only highlights the tangible benefits of musically based friendships, but also points to the ways in which ideology and sociality interact within modern Hardcore and Hip Hop. Hip Hop and modern Hardcore are modeled a strongly held system of beliefs. These ideologies impact the lives of participants and their friends. Without the structure, values and principles that such beliefs bring, the essential core of Hip Hop and Hardcore would irrevocably change. This, in turn, would alter the ways in which sociality is treated within these two communities.

The music of Mash Yellowbird provides an excellent example of ideology in action. Currently living in Arcata, California, Mash is a connoisseur of rap, having spent more than a decade educating himself in the philosophies, rhymes, and stories of various emcees. This education has gifted Mash with a perspective that is grounded in the cultural movement known as Hip Hop. As I noted in Chapter One, Hip Hop is known for its emphasis on community, self-improvement and spiritual introspection. Hip Hop icon KRS-One reminds his public to "NEVER FORGET THE LOVE that has saved us from self-destruction" (2009:9) (emphasis original in text), referring to the idea that love is inherent in the message of Hip Hop (2009). KRS-One also encourages

his followers to develop "KNOWLEDGE OF OURSELVES!" (60), and to take responsibility for their communities and raise the "collective quality of life" for all (61). Echoing these sentiments, Mash explains that "Music is like love," and that positive music "contributes to the whole collective." As a performer, Mash believes it his responsibility to take ownership "for the words I use and the messages I send." The goal is "to elevate" the mind, to educate and "broaden the world's horizons."

Mash touches upon something that is central to the world of Hip Hop, at least within the context of my research. Eschewing the "violent criminality, unbridled sexual potency, and conspicuous consumption" (Harrison 2009:29) so often associated with what Anthony Kwame Harrison refers to as the stereotypical 'Music Industry rap' (2009:29), Mash follows a different code, one that is socially aware, critical of the corporate music world, and less driven by a "one-dimensional presentation of black authenticity" in which performers are expected to adhere to formulaic standards of black and urban masculinity (29). Following in the footsteps of a more 'conscious' style of rap, Mash holds firm in his conviction that creating music is about being positive, educating audiences and avoiding the common tropes of "conspicuous consumption" that are so often linked with commercial rap (29).

Sheldon, Skye and Mash's stories provide just a few examples of music and sociality in action. They shed light on the positive aspects of musical involvement, and suggest that being a part of a musical scene has many benefits, including the development of friendships, finding a place to belong and systems of social support. Involvement with

modern Hardcore and Rap may also have a strong ideological component, which in turn shapes the thoughts and actions of those involved within these two musical scenes.

Community and Locality

I reach for you in troubled times
You spoke to me and made everything alright
I live through you, I'm by your side
It's safe to say you have truly saved my life
Keepers of the faith
I will defend your name
('Keepers of the Faith,' Terror, 2010)

We need unity in the community …
We one community
I'm talkin' about unity, in other words you and me
I'm with this
('Hip Hop,' KRS-One, 2008)

Previously in this chapter, I outlined how a community of practice model is used to broadly define my research community. However, when discussing specific local musical scenes rooted in a particular city, 'locality' or 'territory' is perhaps a more apt descriptor, as it relates specifically to the emotional and physical connection to the "material boundaries" of a given neighborhood or city (Buddle 2011:189). A 'scene' could also be understood to reflect territory or locality. Thus, a community of practice encompasses all of my research participants spread across North America, while local community and scene can be used in contexts relating to a specific place.

Community and locality are central to the growth and sustainability to both modern Hardcore and Hip Hop. Steven Blush and George Petros (2001) has written

extensively on the role of local scenes in the popularization of Hardcore, while Murray Forman (2002) has dedicated an entire book to the topic of locality and place within Hip Hop. Based on personal experience, musicians and their fans tend to publicly affiliate themselves with a particular region, city or neighborhood. In turn, these affiliations signal belonging.

Bands and rappers frequently draw upon the stories, sounds and images of their hometowns, aligning themselves with a particular location, usually a hometown, specific neighborhood or housing project. Emplacement is employed in potent ways, with visual and lyrical references to local landmarks, businesses, streets and localized slang. Hip hoppas and rappers are especially fond of emplacing themselves within physical contexts by musically and visually referencing their hometowns, neighborhoods and zip codes within their music, album artwork and music videos. Murray Foreman notes that "Rap's lyrical constructions commonly display a pronounced emphasis on place and locality" (2002:xvii). He adds that rap lyrics are deeply localized, with "explicit references to particular streets, boulevards and neighborhoods, telephone area codes, postal service zip codes, or other sociospatial information" (xvii). This is sometimes referred to as "geographic representin" (Krims 2000:123). Regional affiliation is paramount in Hip Hop, and artists make a point of linking themselves to a particular region, state, province, reserve and/or neighborhood. Elements of locality spill over in to every facet of Hip Hop. Song lyrics, album art, fashion choices, visuals in music videos, and publicity materials frequently draw on imagery from an artist's home community (Krims 2000). Examples are so numerous

that it is an almost universal practice, at least within North America (Rose 1994). The rapper Eminem has famously aligned himself with the city of Detroit, going so far as to feature the city in his autobiographical film '8 Mile' (2002). In the 1990's, super group Cypress Hill allegedly named themselves after a particular street associated with their youth. In yet another example, one popular magazine attempted to track the number of times the emcee Jay-Z lyrically referenced his hometown of Brooklyn, and came up with a rather impressive figure of 67 times as of the date of the article's publication (Millard 2012).

For indigenous rappers, this emphasis on belonging to a specific locality can include elements of traditional regalia and the wearing of braids, as seen in the work of Supaman and Frank Waln, who are both affiliated with reserves in the western United States. Participant and rapper Dubb Hardaway has also performed in a braid as a symbolic and spiritual gesture acknowledging his Aboriginal roots. He proudly poses in powwow regalia on his social media page, further cementing his links to his home reserve.

Conversely, indigenous rappers may utilize common urban tropes, including baggy clothing, fashionable sneakers, heavy jewelry and chains, tattoos, and graffiti style lettering on publicity materials. Mash Yellowbird embraces an urban style for the cover of his album, 'Chips and Guac,'[18] which features him standing in profile against

[18] Mash Yellowbird. 2016. "Mash Yellowbird SoundCloud." *Mash Yellowbird SoundCloud Page*. Accessed [December 27, 2016.] https://soundcloud.com/mash-yellow-bird.

a wall covered in graffiti, wearing street apparel such as a hoodie and cap. The lettering on the album cover is rendered in a style that mirrors the graffiti in the background of the image.

Great importance is placed on the urban landscape within Hip Hop. From the creation of rap in the Bronx during the 1970s, Hip Hop has been closely linked to the concept of the 'ghetto' or the 'hood'. While these terms may arguably be considered derogatory, there can be no doubt that these labels have taken on an almost mythical status in the rap cannon. For North Americans who have never listened to rap or experienced city life, the concept of the 'ghetto' seems nebulous. However, within Hip Hop, the 'hood' or 'ghetto' is an important signifier of one's place and position in society. Hip Hop acknowledges that "the hood is not a generic description" (Rose 1997:10). Instead, urban neighborhoods are rapped about and depicted in a way that recognizes their "regional specificity," and acknowledges their "spatial, ethnic, temperate and psychological facets" (11). In this way, rap has directly "brought the ghetto back in the public consciousness" (11). On some level, it might be argued that by rapping about marginalized spaces, Hip Hop has claimed part of the cityscape. As demonstrated in Chapter One, 'Winnipeg's Most' prominently features Winnipeg's Northside in their video 'All That I Know,' an economically oppressed part of Manitoba's capital, demonstrating the importance of the 'hood within Canadian rap.

This process of emplacement also takes place on an aural level. Several scholars have noted the connection between geographic space and musical sound within Hip Hop

and Hardcore. For example, Adam Krims conducted an in-depth study on the connection between locality, musical aesthetic and rapping (2000). This generally relates to production quality and vocal styles associated with particular geographic regions. For example, Hip Hop from the southeastern United States is markedly different from its cousin in the northeast, with generally slower beats and a drawling style adopted by emcees. Vocabulary employed by rappers is often unique to the southeast. Similarly, west coast Hardcore tends to have a more relaxed and sometime even ska-influenced sound, while northeastern Hardcore bands tend to have a harder, more aggressive sound.

While conducting field work, I noticed numerous examples of what Krims (2000) and Blush and Petros (2001) have observed with respect to locality in music, particularly within the modern Hardcore scene. One prime example comes from the Edmonton-based modern Hardcore band, 'Etown Beatdown' (also variously referred to in print as E-town Beatdown). Proud Edmontonians, the band members feature Edmonton's area code, 780, on some of their older merchandise. In 2014, the band released stickers that featured the colors of Edmonton's famous hockey team, The Oilers. The band's name is a reference to Alberta's provincial capital, which is often lovingly referred to as 'E-town'. Aside from their name, Etown Beatdown has a number of videos online that showcase performances in and around Edmonton, as is evidenced in a live recording

of their track 'Win the War[19],' which was filmed at the venue New City. While watching one Etown Beatdown video with Arnold in 2014, he proudly pointed himself out in the video and fondly recalled the antics that took place when the video was recorded.

Clearly, the idea of locality is a reoccurring theme within Hip Hop and modern Hardcore. It is sung and spoken about, depicted in music videos and referenced through album imagery. However, locality is not community, although there is certainly a connection between the two, as noted at the start of this chapter. Community – interchangeable with 'scene' at the local level -- is not easily defined, but can be described within a musical context as a value, both embodied and practiced. It is a value, both embodied and practiced. Community/scene, is reflected in the speech of participants, who use terms like "family" and "brotherhood" when referring to their local scenes. Community/scene, is also reflected in the behavior of participants, who have contributed their passion, time and money to their local Hip Hop and modern Hardcore scenes. The importance of community/scene is evident in the textual cannon of Hip Hop, which has a rich tradition of philosophical writings. In his seminal work 'The Gospel of Hip Hop,' legendary emcee KRS-One (Lawrence Parker) refers to Hip Hop as a "shared urban culture" and "a collective consciousness"

---

[19] Etown Beatdown. 2005. "Win the War." *Etown Beatdown Bandcamp,* October 1. Accessed [December 27, 2016.] https://e-townbeatdown.bandcamp.com/track/win-the-war.

(2009:66). Hip Hoppas (followers of Hip Hop) have an obligation to "dedicate their time and talent to self-development and for service to their communities" (Ninth Principle, Hip Hop Declaration of Peace, 2001). The Universal Zulu Nation, an international organization dedicated to Hip Hop culture, teaches that all members should be "dedicated to improving and uplifting ourselves and our communities" (Green Book: Infinity Lessons Archive 1973 – 2000 FOR THE MASSES:33) and that Hip Hoppas should become with activities that promote community building. Likewise, it has been observed that Hardcore bands frequently encourage a "communitarian feeling" (Rohrer 2014:185) from their audiences, encouraging listeners to "fight" and "die" for their Hardcore families (Death Before Dishonor, 6.6.6. (Friends Family Forever), 2005). When the band 'Terror' sings the lyrics "I'll defend you until the day I fucking die" and "I live through you, I'm by your side," (Keepers of the Faith, 2010) they aren't kidding around. While these bands are not literally calling for death, they are spreading a powerful message about the importance of friendship that is taken quite seriously by some fans, including young people such as Arnold and Sheldon.

In Hip Hop and modern Hardcore, 'community' or 'scene' is not a passive concept. More than a kindred feeling between people with shared musical tastes, modern Hardcore and underground Hip Hop rely on their fans to help keep local scenes going. As both Arnold and Sheldon point out, listening to music is not enough. When one truly becomes part of a local musical scene, one is expected to take part in myriad activities. These may include supporting local bands, working at shows, carrying out

promotional work, and purchasing merchandise. All of these actions serve to foster community in the sense that they are essential to the existence of local Hardcore scenes. Arnold explains how contributing one's time, energy and money is linked to the idea of community.

> [There's] Community involvement with putting together a show. Although I never was a promoter, I definitely helped out. It brought -- you'd go to shows, you'd support the band, you would take it upon yourself, 'I'm gonna go tonight, I'm not just gonna support the band by paying the $8 or $10 at the door. I'm gonna dance, I wanted to dance anyway, and enjoy the music, and buy their CDs.' … It was community involvement, it sort of has been like that. It's not been like, a big massive production. At the heart of it, it was just a group of people who'd want to put on a show, and if they wanted to be in a band, they'd be in a band, and people would come to the local community hall. That would happen every Friday night or every 2nd Friday night. It was really cool to see that. You would have people set up a table to sell CDs … to get the word out that it was happening all over the world [with Hardcore].

Participants describe seeking out fellow fans in order to listen to music, encourage attendance at shows, and drumming up support for local performers. Arnold describes the experience as being "so involved and it's very, very awesome -- and you can partake in being in the bands or going to shows or touring or promoting shows or this and that … I think everybody has a journey in there." Sarah, a thirty-year old indigenous ally from Calgary, recalls a "major part" of her experiences with modern Hardcore taking place outside of musical venues. She describes "summer road trips, shows, late night Perkins or Denny's hangs." After shows, she'd gather with friends from the Hardcore community at late-night diners to "continue our night from there." In essence, Sarah was developing a "family," albeit one that "may not always be my blood family." She adds, "But what I've learned from Hardcore [is] that family can

come in all shapes and sizes. And whoever is there for you in the long run, then that's your family!" As if to underscore her point, Sarah reflects,

> Without the Hardcore community, I really don't know where I would be today…Hard core focuses a lot on family and community. Hardcore was a community of misfits and the forgotten. The kids who don't fit in with society. As long as there is Hardcore there will always be community. Music is community and it's so important. It changes lives.

While participants involved in Hip Hop don't specifically use language such as 'family' to describe the dynamic of their local communities, they do share similar stories of scenes rallying around hometown artists. Mash Yellowbird has lived across the United States and Canada, including Vancouver, British Columbia and Houston, Texas. In each location, Mash has noticed that Hip Hop "is community based. Each city has its own community. It's been community based everywhere I've gone." He provides an example from his recent experience living in Northern California. Noting the prominence of Bay Area rap, Mash observes that the region has given rise to a distinct culture, sound, and slang. Anthony Kwame Harrison noticed this same Bay Area aesthetic while conducting field work with rappers in San Francisco and surrounding areas (2009). According to Mash, the general attitude of Bay Area Hip Hop fans seems to be that locals "don't need no one else" to come and entertain them. While mainstream and commercially successful rappers will always attract large crowds, the community of 'Heads' (Hip Hop fans) in the Bay Area are particularly faithful to local artists. Bay Area rappers are frequently featured on local radio stations, often billed as 'representing' a particular city such as Oakland. Websites, local media and social networking are used to advertise the work of local rappers. In

turn, emcees may support fans by releasing free mix tapes or collaborating with other artists from the area (Harrison 2009). What is particularly significant about this type of social engagement is that it is active, undertaken on a frequent basis, and integral to the survival of Bay Area Hip Hop. Like Hardcore in Calgary and Edmonton, Hip Hop in northern California relies on a community of engaged participants to keep the culture alive. They are also arguably following a common tenet of Hip Hop, which is referenced in the 'Gospel of Hip Hop' (KRS-One 2009). As a Hip Hoppa, one has an obligation to "promote health, love, awareness and wealth to your people" (289).

To truly appreciate how there is an ideology centered around local, communal participation, one needs to turn to the experiences of the participants themselves. Although they do not use scholarly language, the notion of a localized scene is ever-present in their speech and actions. For example, when asked "Are there any specific sets of beliefs present in Hardcore?" Sheldon Runs Like Deer touches upon aspects of local community. According to him, the "most common" beliefs are "loyalty, trust, respect, love your neighbor, things like that." Sheldon notes that not everyone follows this credo, but that "The main ones people abide to are trust, loyalty, respect." When asked the same question, Sarah uses similar language as Sheldon. "Loyalty is very important to me. I consider myself to be a very loyal person." She adds that one of Hardcore's "beliefs" is "respect." In agreement, Arnold says that Edmonton's Hardcore scene is deeply communal, operating on the principle of "loyalty."

Within Hip Hop, there is a large body of literature devoted to the culture's principles. These works are penned by figureheads of Hip Hop, and usually reference each other's work and ideas. Chuck-D of Public Enemy (1997), RZA of the Wu-Tang Clan (2008) and KRS-One (2009) have all written extensively on the belief system of Hip Hop. The concept of a localized community, or scene, is one of these guiding principles. KRS-One refers to the Hip Hop "family" (12:2009), and extols Hip Hoppas to view themselves as "janitors," responsible for "cleansing and restoring Hip Hop for the next generation of Hip Hoppas" (12). The onus is on the Hip Hop family to "take up your broom and mop and begin the clean up of YOUR CULTURE!" (12-13). He suggests that Hip Hop is a "faith" (22), and that "All those who join in on this faith" are to take part in "a covenant that provides peace and prosperity to all who claim Hip Hop as their culture and lifestyle" (22).

The rappers Dubb Hardaway and Mash Yellowbird express similar sentiments and describe an obligation to their listeners and respective musical scenes. Just as KRS-One demands that Hip Hoppas take responsibility for their role in shaping the Hip Hop community, Dubb and Mash appear to take this charge seriously. For example, Dubb explains that rapping is an opportunity for "Sharing what you have to say" and to "Express what you're going through" while giving audiences "something to learn." Dubb says, "I feel like I'm connected with other people 'cause they are going through what I went through … We can share those experiences together." Dubb is aware that he "should use talent for something positive," and is careful to craft music of "substance and meaning what I say."

Elaborating on the active role he takes in maintaining a local Hip Hop community, Dubb describes the joy of meeting like-minded individuals and taking the time to connect with them. He then briefly delves into the social process of collaborating in the studio.

> What brought us together is our shared musical interest. We all have the same direction with music. First, you meet someone, you talk about music, it reveals how they think, how they are …[it] lets me know how people are, the psychology/mentality of people. It creates some fun energy. Collaborating in the studio, people click together. It's a magic feeling. You feel the magic when you work with someone else; it's a beautiful thing a lot of people don't get to experience. It can uplift self-esteem.

Mash Yellowbird outlines his own experiences with local musical scenes. As an independent artist, he's spent years attending shows, selling his own merchandise, promoting his work and cultivating contacts with local musicians. As described in Chapter One, developing a relationship with an established act like Kansas City rapper 'Rushin Roolet' allowed Mash access to the kinds of knowledge usually gained after years in the game. This relationship also bolstered Mash's own credibility as a legitimate artist, providing a much needed boost to a fledgling career. Mash is also quick to give credit to other artists he knows about or works with, a habit he shares with Dubb. A frequent poster on social media, Mash sometimes posts clips of other artists he likes or has worked with. He announces record releases and upcoming shows featuring his friends and/or his own work. This is a time-consuming process that frequently involves uploading music files and images to his social media accounts. When all of these actions are taken together, they demonstrate just how

much work goes into developing and maintaining a presence within the Hip Hop scene. Mash not only focuses the spotlight on himself, but on his fellow Hip Hoppers.

Community and Networks of Support in Action

In the excerpts below, I provide material collected during my field work to further illuminate the connection between community and solidarity in Hip Hop and modern Hardcore. I draw upon the words of and experiences of participants to demonstrate how ideas about community are felt, experienced and applied to real life situations. Oral narratives that have been transcribed have been edited for grammatical clarity but are otherwise left intact.

"I believe the passion stems from people" (Arnold, Edmonton, Alberta)

In a conversation from 2015, Arnold described Edmonton's modern Hardcore scene as a close knit community that was driven by the mutual passion and support of young people. It is clear from Arnold's words that the scene is able to thrive due to the dedication of those involved. Arnold also notes that this community opened up a "new world of people" and provided him a "community" which accepted him.

> I believe the passion stems from people … like they really took care of the music, they understood the music because these Hardcore kids were into it because … they liked what the music scene had to offer to them. It wasn't like conforming, going straight into metal, or I dunno, gothic industrial stuff, it was in between, so I think the passion for them … it was something inside of them they pursued. They enjoyed … I know I enjoyed, the intensity of some of the bands … I was like whoa, this is something fresh, something new, that's not like, run of the mill. I say that I guess contributing to my social life, it definitely brought me a whole new world of people and a group and a community which, you know, accepted me.

The Hardcore Halloween Fundraiser: Sheldon Runs Like Deer, Calgary, Alberta

The following narrative is from a conversation I had with Sheldon in February of 2015. We were discussing the role of community within Calgary's Hardcore scene, and Sheldon alerted me to his involvement with several fund raisers designed to aid local Hardcore community members in need. The conversation expanded to include Sheldon's efforts in helping Calgarians outside of the Hardcore scene as well. At the end of his story, Sheldon makes a wonderful point on the "morals and ideals" of Hardcore, which he claims include a responsibility to one's "family" (in this case, a reference to his friends in the scene.)

> I always make sure to do a specifically Halloween show every year. The Hardcore Halloweens are always fundraisers and always set around Halloween. I usually do those in community centers because they're bigger. They're usually big … the first year I had almost 250 people at it, the second year about 150. It was amazing. Both of them. Utterly amazing.
>
> We've had two fundraisers so far … and we're in the midst of planning one right now … trying to do bigger things with it when I can. We help people in the community. Actually, all of my show now are going to be for families, abused women, women's shelters, group homes … adopted kids, kids in foster care … things like that. It started off I was living with an old girlfriend of a crew member of mine, and I was helping raise her kid. When the flood hit [the 2013 Calgary flood], it affected a lot of people in the Hardcore scene. That fundraiser was for that, her and the kid. It was in a garage in the house we lived in. We had a flood fundraiser through a garage show and moved on from that.
>
> It's word of mouth, flyers, posters … I put a Facebook page that it's a fundraiser and explain who it's for, where's it going [the money]. (long pause) Like … all, all of this actually comes back to the morals and ideals and values or whatever you call it of Hardcore. Hardcore taught me loyalty, respect and like doing everything to help your family. That's why I do this, most of us were foster kids or street kids, so like, you know, we grew up with abusive parents, and, so like, you know, we have nothing else, we got to help each other with what we know.

Hardcore Crew: S.F.L. (Skinheads for Life): Sheldon Runs Like Deer, Calgary, AB

The following excerpt comes from a longer discussion on skinheads and crews within Calgary's modern Hardcore scene. Sheldon elaborates upon the roles of crews, and describes what his particular crew does to instill a sense of localized community within Calgary. Despite the controversial nature of the skinhead movement, Sheldon wanted to go on record with this particular story. At Sheldon's request, I have also included clarification on the difference between crews and gangs.

> I run a skinhead crew. Our letters are 'SFL', Skinhead For Life. We're non-racist, we're completely against racism. We're pro-gay rights and pro-LGBT … yeah. The crew I currently run with, we got some stuff, we have morals we have to abide to. We get really heavy. We don't sell drugs, we don't want to see anyone doing drugs, we don't want to see people being stupid. We basically started to get a solid group together so we can help kids get clean. Hardcore runs even deeper than that. It touches on loyalty -- helping people and stuff. Calgary is really, really good for that. Myself and my crew, we're a lot about helping the community as a whole, not just in Hardcore, but people in the community, our neighborhoods, people on the streets, our families.
>
> We look out for each other. We wear letters on hats or clothes. Some people get letters tattooed on them. Its people united under one name. Just a big family. Just like in Hardcore, it's a big family, but it runs deeper. Members of a crew are essentially members of a family. We protect each other. [City redacted] is dangerous. You get on the wrong street and … and bad things can happen. It's always good to have one or two people with you if bad things happen.
>
> A gang sells drugs. A gang kills people and gets people hurt. A crew … all we fucking do is go out and drink. We may get in fights, but we don't go out and sell drugs, we don't get people hurt, and we've been known to beat up drug dealers. All we want to do is hang out, party, and have fun and stay safe. We're against what gangs stand for.

"You Gotta Live It.": Mosh, Edmonton, AB

In July of 2012, I met Mosh through Arnold, who knew him from various Hardcore shows around Edmonton and Calgary. An indigenous ally, Mosh was twenty-seven at the time of this particular conversation. Born and raised in Edmonton, Mosh expressed

a great respect and love for his hometown's Hardcore scene. In particular, he was adamant that one needs to live Hardcore, and that it's "a lifestyle … not a musical genre." Like Sheldon, Mosh referenced supporting his local scene physically, emotionally and financially.

> Hardcore is a lifestyle. It's not a musical genre. It's a way of finding yourself, of finding a community. The mainstay is that Hardcore is a place where outcasts can find brotherhood and a community for whoever you are, no matter your race, creed or lifestyle. It's a brotherhood. Everyone has each other's backs. The people who truly live Hardcore and have that mentality are people that are always there for you, physically, financially, emotionally. You gotta live it.

"What Are You Doing For Your People?": Mash Yellowbird, Arcata, CA

The following conversation comes from a much longer telephone call that took place in 2015. Mash was sharing some background on his newest album release, 'Native Made.' While discussing the politics of the music business, Mash brought up his feelings about the importance of committing to one's local scene. In this particular conversation, Mash referred to the 'Native' community, likely referencing his friends and fellow musicians, but also indigenous people across North America. He rhetorically asked, "What are you doing for your people?" to drive home the point that artists have an obligation to help out their communities. Mash's opinion on the matter echoes the sentiments of the Universal Zulu Nation, which asks followers to dedicate themselves to their local communities.

> What are you doing for your people? You might pray every day but are your people alcoholics down the street and do you go over there and help them out? Nope. I'm not saying one person can go and clean up a community, but we can all do that. I think the way as an artist, we have to tell the story as real as it is, and sometimes it's going to offend and sometimes it's going to

empower. Every opportunity I have, I will speak up, this is what I'm doing for my people.

Chapter Three: Social Justice and Social Awareness in Hip Hop and Hardcore

Audiotopia

The following chapter takes a closer look at the role of social justice in the Hip Hop and modern Hardcore scenes that I studied. As I demonstrate, music helps to position its listeners within the wider social world. One may go so far as to argue that music can provide a kind of utopic ideal, built on the foundations of a more just society. In fact, there is a scholar who has argued just this point – that music offers spaces in which a person can enter into from their minds, "small, momentary, lived utopias" which are "built, imagined and sustained through sound, noise and music" (Kun 2005:21). This space may not be "material or tangible," but is as real as anything physical or concrete (3). Although it cannot be pinned down on a map, it exists in an "auditory somewhere" (2). Musically created space(s) may evoke, transcend, and organize the emotional, cultural, and spiritual spaces held within ourselves (21) and our social frameworks.

In his work 'Audiotopia: Music, Race and America' (2005), author Josh Kun argues that

> music functions like a possible utopia for the listener, that music is experienced not only as sound that goes into our ears and vibrates through our bones but as a space that we can enter into, encounter, move around in, inhabit, be safe in, learn from … The *Oxford English Dictionary* says that what defines a utopia is that it has 'no known location,' that it exists nowhere. Which is precisely why music songs are different.

> They are almost-places of cultural encounter that may not be physical places but nevertheless exist in their own auditory somewhere" (2005:2).

For Kun, music involves the "production of social space" (2005: 23), in that it helps to socially position (3) those who are involved in the musicking process (Small 1998). Music provides the "the listener and/or the musician new maps for re-imagining the present social world" (23). No matter how simple or straightforward a tune is, "A song is never just a song, but a connection, a ticket, a pass, an invitation, a node in a complex network" (3). As Kun explains,

> Listening to a song's whole was always listening to its parts, to the crossings and exchanges and collaborations that went into its making. Music can offer maps in this way, and when I was younger the maps I heard were not just the maps of the song's cultural and historical genesis, but the map of my own life, a musical 'You Are Here' that positioned me within the larger social world (3).

Kun points to the ways in which musical and cultural traditions meld together, 'frustrating fixity' (2005:12) and impossible to pin down. The ways in which music is interpreted and felt are deeply personal, the result of one's relationship with particular historical, political and social factors. Kun notes that "Music can always sound different from one listening moment to another, and mean radically different things to all who hear it. There is no one, single, all-encompassing way of listening" (17). Musicking is contextual, where even "a different room, a different volume, a different time of day" may impact the reception or creation of a musical work (12).

Kun's assertion aligns with the experiences of my research participants. Recounting his childhood growing up in places like California and Texas, rapper Mash Yellowbird remembers developing an interest in rap during his early teenage years. Lyrically,

Tupac Shakur (otherwise known as Tupac or 2pac), was a major influence on Mash's life, providing a "blueprint," or "foundation" of principles to emulate. According to Mash, much of Tupac's lyrical content dealt with the subject matter of being a "young, inner city black who is poor and has to fight to survive." Mash recalls, "I identified with that in a way, especially the youth part … every message was they [society] was tryin' to trap my body, but they can't trap my mind." He adds that Tupac "was using words to illustrate the life he was living but also a way to escape it."

Similarly, emcee Dubb Hardaway developed an interest in rap at a young age. Also a fan of Tupac, Dubb began rapping at the age of twelve, going public with his rhymes at the age of fifteen. Although now in his twenties, Dubb frequently utilizes messages from rappers like Tupac in his own life. As a rapper, Dubb utilizes social media as a tool for reaching out to his fans. On one post to a social media account, Dubb paraphrased from Tupac's well-loved song 'Keep Ya Head Up'[20], which is a pro-black, pro-female track that lauds the dedication of single mothers. In part, Dubb's post read:

> you gotta keep ya head up, even when da world is hard neva let up"-Tupac [quoting Tupac's lyrics to 'Keep Ya Head Up']. 2 all those women out there putting forth their best effort and trying 4 those bebekids [babies and children]. Stayin in motion. I heard an elder say "the reason our society is out of balance is that the men stopped praying 4 the women." often the women pray 4 man, but do we pray 4 their strength and overall well being? Just a thought. "and i give a holla 2 da women on welfare, cuz pac cares if nobody else cares" [referencing Tupac's lyrics to 'Keep Ya Head Up.'] just make sure

[20] Tupac Shakur. 2008. "Keep Ya Head Up." *Youtube*, July 30. Accessed [December 28, 2016.] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XW--IGAfeas.

> u feed them good [feed the children well]. don't slang that ebt 4 materialistic items or drugs jk [joking]. (Facebook Status, April 21, 2014)

Although written with elements of tongue-in-cheek humor (teasing women about not wasting their welfare benefits on drugs), Dubb is actually expressing support of single mothers in his post. He wonders why men have stopped praying for women ("do we pray 4 their strength and over all well-being?"), citing a Lakota Elder. Dubb notes the hard work that goes into raising a child as a single parent ("putting forth their best effort … stayin' in motion"). The fact that Dubb utilizes Tupac's lyrics is significant, as it socially positions Dubb, signifying his affiliation with Hip Hop. Dubb readily applies the words of Tupac to his own lived experience, demonstrating the applicability of rap lyrics to real life. Dubb's particular choice in quoting from 'Keep Ya Head Up' also demonstrates his interest in music with a positive message, a point that he continually made throughout our interviews. It also speaks to the power that Tupac's lyrics have had over the years within Dubb's life. Dubb has clearly internalized the wisdom he has gained from Tupac's lyrics, and is now passing it along to his friends and fans. It's worth noting that Dubb rarely puts lyrical content on his social media account from other artists, making this particular post noteworthy.

Another useful aspect of Kun's concept of audiotopia is that it recognizes musicking is an embodied experience, fully lived and sensed. One can actually enter into the music; as Kun explains, "I can put on a song and live it, hear it, get inside its notes and chords, get inside its narratives and follow its journeys and paths" (2005:3). Kun compares listening to a record to the "equivalent of walking into a building, entering

into an architecture of sound, a space that can be seen and experienced only if it is heard" (3). Music is more than simple listening; it is fully felt and experienced. Far from being a passive experience, Kun views musicking (Small 1998) as deeply engaging and meaningful. In point of fact, Kun is explicitly inspired by the idea of musicking, noting "I am inspired by Christopher Small's suggestion that instead of thinking about music as a single, isolated performance, we think of 'musicking' … -- the entire process and context of a performance" (2005:25).

This embodied, deeply felt connection to music is powerful. For example, when Sheldon Runs Like Deer attends a Hardcore show, he is both literally and figuratively entering a space that is built, imagined and sustained through sound, music and sociality. As he explains, "It's very hard to describe what I feel at shows, it's a lot of different emotions rolled up into one … I feel at peace and happy because I see all the kids like me, just as fucked up as me … it's truly amazing." Sheldon goes on to describe his musical experiences at Hardcore shows as "positive" and filled with "joy." His experience with Hardcore is not just limited to performances and the venues they take place in. His engagement with his local scene is a part of his everyday life, enacted in his daily commitment to his crew, his ongoing work in the realms of social justice, and even expressed in his desire to permanently ink more Hardcore-inspired tattoos onto his body.

According to Kun, there is "utopian potential" in music's ability to "show us how to move toward something better and transform the world we find ourselves in"

(2005:17). Performers and artists have the ability to "work through music's differential power," using it to face "oppressive state systems and ethno-racial hierarchies that seek to erase difference" (17). The utopic potential of music is that it allows a sustainable way of living in a hostile world. It provides a way of confronting social challenges in ways that are non-violent, while offering alternative points of view from the mainstream. Kun's utopic potential is also seen in the ways in which engagement with music may incite positive changes at an individual and communal level. Kun observes, "The emotion and sensibility that music offers is what leads to a change in who we are, who we want to be, and how we want the world to be" (17). Music provides "infinite possibilities," to its listeners (17). That is the true source of its power. As I provide more context on the musical scenes of modern Hardcore and Hip Hop, it's helpful to keep in mind how powerful musical encounters within these genres are internalized, felt and practiced on a daily basis.

The Problem of Racial Labels and the Aurality of Race

Before moving forward, there are two points that should be clarified. Firstly, for the majority of the participants taking part in this project, self-identifying as Aboriginal or Native is a source of pride. Out of the nine individuals involved with this project, half are engaged with Native issues. This includes studying the legacy of residential schools in Canada, raising awareness about treaty rights, and taking part in public rallies on behalf of murdered and missing Aboriginal women. Four of my participants are also actively engaged in learning about their indigenous heritage. One participant

is a dancer on the American powwow circuit; another meets with an Elder living in his hometown to learn more about his particular band's culture.

Secondly, while my participants identify with their Aboriginal heritage, they have also made it clear that they reject being labeled by the outside world. Words like 'Aboriginal' and 'Native' should be used on their terms, and not forced onto them. For Sheldon and others involved with my work, the point is not so much that they are indigenous peoples, but rather that they are talented individuals who wish to be recognized as musicians, producers, promoters and research collaborators. They do not deny their Aboriginal heritage, but they do not want to solely be defined by it. These are multi-faceted individuals that cannot be generalized or boxed into any single category. The same is true for the indigenous allies featured in this work.

While my work is ostensibly about Aboriginal and allied youth, it is really about musicians, poets, parents, children, political activists and university students. In the words of African-American author James Baldwin, racial labels are like "airless … cells" which "smother to death" and "isolate us from each other and separate us from ourselves" (as quoted in Kun 2005:90[1955:21-22]). A term like 'Aboriginal' can be empowering, but it can also be used in a way that is intended to promote racist ideologies that have the ability to stifle and harm. By recognizing the many facets of a person's identity, and understanding that social and ethnic affiliations can shift around, I hope to avoid locking anyone in an "airless, labeled cell" (2005:90[1955:21).

As an anthropologist, I would be remiss if I didn't point out that race is a socially constructed category, albeit one that is a lived reality for many of my participants. In the words of Anthony Kwame Harrison, "the idea that race should not matter and the false consciousness (for some) that race does not matter gets consistently confronted by the fact that it does" (2009:34). The fact that race factors so deeply in the lives of my participants is telling. While it may not be rooted in biological science, race is a concept that exerts a powerful social pull.

In his work, Josh Kun notes that conceptions of race are often framed in visual terms. Features that are easily "indexed by the eyes" (2005:116) are the standard markers of difference, including physical features such as skin color, eye shape, and hair texture. Despite the lack of scientific evidence to back up systems of racial classification, it is still a fundamental feature of North American society.

What is less commonly understood is that race is also constructed around musical lines. As Kun observes, music has been central to contributing to "meanings about ideas about race, racial identity, and racialization" (2005:26). There is an "aurality of race," a "sound of race and racial identity" that helps to define the "role of race and ethnicity" in the United States (133) and, I argue, Canada. The ways in which sounds are linked to ideas about race and ethnicity are intertwined with historical, political, economic, and cultural processes, all of which contribute to the ways in which people use music to "state their claims, build their cases, and make their arguments" about racial identification (41). Kun notes that sound is central to both "racial formation"

and "racial struggle" (137). Music can be used to reinforce racial stereotypes, or to break them.

Parallel to this point, Kun notes that race and ethnicity are inextricably linked to ideas about musical performance, genre, and general aesthetics. Kun explores musical and literary representations of African-American, Jewish-American and Mexican-Americans to elaborate upon this point. As Kun observes, artists like James Baldwin (African American), Mickey Katz (Jewish) and Los Tigres del Norte (Mexican) have all struggled with "racial univocality," the idea that a race has a single voice and is easy segregated and compartmentalized (2005:19). This links back to the frustrations that Kun has with the historical treatment of race and ethnicity in the United States.

Kun's discussion on race centers on the reductive nature of classificatory systems in North America. Artistic and cultural representations of minority groups are often constrictive, prone to censure, and influenced by historical, political and social views on race. The result is "fixed racial categories" that often serve to suffocate those caught within society's limitations (2005:89). These imposed labels serve to "strangle and limit the multiple passions of human existence" by failing to neglect the multiplicity of ways in which race and ethnicity are experienced and understood (90).

North America's emphasis on racial categories have long ignored the ways in which racial and ethnic memberships overlap, parallel, run together, and sometimes even contest each other. In the case of my research, not one participant identifies solely as

Aboriginal. As Arnold notes, Aboriginal musical artists are forced into or even abuse these stereotypes. Speaking from his own perspective, he rhetorically asks,

> Unless you, yourself, like to self-proclaim that you are Aboriginal and from the 'So and So Nation' and representing them, then I don't have much of a problem with that. But if it's outside sources marketing you, do you really have to say you're Native? Why? Why am I Native to you? Why can't I just be Canadian?

Racial labels may ignore the complexities of real life, in which a person may identify in dozens of ways, depending on time, place and any other number of contexts. As a wonderful example of how varied self-identification can be, Farra Palmer, one of my participants from British Columbia, refers to herself as Cree, Salteaux and European. She also identifies as "an indigenous woman," "a mother," a performer, "a singer-songwriter," "an independent artist," and "not a musician." Farra stresses the importance of her role as a daughter and family member as well. She is multi-faceted, with each aspect serving an important place in her life and in the lives of others. To try and simply label Farra as an 'Aboriginal' woman misses the point. Yes, she is indigenous, and proudly so. Farra is also many other things. One cannot ignore her settler heritage, her position as a mother or daughter, her struggles as a professional artist in a difficult field, or even her role as a performer. To box her in to a single category based on the surface features of race is a miscarriage of justice, and diminishes her complexity as a human being.

As a researcher working on a music-based project with indigenous and allied youth, the racialization of sound is a necessary topic to consider. Ideology and discourse surrounding Hip Hop, Hardcore and Aboriginal involvement do have an impact on the

young people involved with this project. As an example, I turn to the city of Edmonton, Alberta. There are a number of community-based programs geared towards inner city and indigenous youth that utilize Hip Hop dancing, emceeing, and audio production. Festivals and local organizations are also readily accessible throughout the city. These programs include iHuman Youth Society, Hip Hop Knowledge Cipher and the Hip Hop In The Park Foundation. A number of these programs and festivals specifically target Aboriginal youth by including indigenous rappers, discussions on racism, poverty and violence, and utilizing facilitators trained to work with urban populations.

On the other hand, Native involvement in Hardcore is much different. While Hip Hop has the backing of community programs and many young indigenous people, the modern Hardcore scene has no such support. In Calgary, a contingency of white supremacists have sometimes made it difficult for Aboriginal Hardcore fans to show up at certain venues and shows. In Edmonton, Native involvement in the Hardcore scene is low. While many young Native people I spoke with were supportive of Hip Hop as a way to bring about positive change for Aboriginal youth, very few felt similarly about modern Hardcore. Many simply did not know about Hardcore as a musical movement, and those that did were not particularly interested in the genre. Aboriginal youth who do listen to modern Hardcore are likely to face scrutiny and even teasing that Hip Hop fans may not deal with. The ways in which Aboriginal youth navigate the cultural complexities of the Hip Hop and Hardcore worlds are partially fueled by the musical dictates of race. While Hip Hop is largely seen as an

accepted genre for Aboriginal youth to join in, Hardcore is more difficult to break into.

These are important points to consider when reading the section below, which takes a closer look at the role of social justice in Hip Hop and modern Hardcore. As much as local musical scenes fight for social awareness and take part in activism, it's important to problematize the ways in which music is inextricably linked to mainstream ideas about race and belonging.

Social Justice in Local Communities

"The institutions that try to decide how I should live my life
With their traditions they expect me to fall in line
But their will, their way is not for me"
('First Blood,' First Blood, 2006)

"You know what makes me unhappy
When brothers make babies, and leave a young mother to be a pappy
And since we all came from a woman, Got our name from a woman and our game from a woman
I wonder why we take from our women
Why we rape our women, do we hate our women
I think it's time to kill for our women
Time to heal our women, be real to our women"
('Keep Ya Head Up,' Tupac Shakur, 1993)

Both Hip Hop and modern Hardcore have traditionally eschewed Western popular culture, and have historically been linked to disenfranchised populations in North America. Not coincidentally, both Hip Hop and modern Hardcore also have a long history of raising awareness about issues relating to social justice and activism. Particularly in the case of Hip Hop, educating fans about social issues such as racism,

colonialism and consumerism has been of paramount importance, central to the purpose of the movement.

Historically, Hip Hop has been an Afro-centric movement, meant to counter racism at both individual and institutional levels (Rose 1994). Many urban African-Americans claim Hip Hop as a way to celebrate black American cultures, stating that it reflects the "specificity of spatial, ethnic, temperate and psychological facets of black marginality" (Rose 1994:11). This is clearly demonstrated in several texts penned by members of The Universal Zulu Nation, which take a hardline stance against white supremacy, the whitewashing of historical figures such as Jesus, and the exclusion of minorities from historical records (Green Book Infinity Lessons Archive 1973 – 2000 FOR THE MASSES). A number of Hip Hop tracks are also devoted to black supremacy, cultures and racial injustices perpetrated against black communities, as demonstrated in the now iconic Dead Prez track 'Police State', which includes lyrics such as "The average black male / lives a third of his life in a jail cell / 'cause the world is controlled by the white male / and the people don't never get justice/ and the women don't never get respected."[21]

The movers and shakers of Hip Hop have largely been African-American or from similarly oppressed minority groups, usually from poor and urban backgrounds

[21] Dead Prez. 2007. "Police State." *Youtube*, May 22. Accessed [December 24, 2016.] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8c_UdWo4Zek.

(Chang 2005). These have historically included youth from Afro-Caribbean and Latino cultures (2005). As Hip Hop expands on a global level, elements of the culture have been taken up by young people facing oppression in their own countries. For example, Paradise Sorouri, a female rapper from Afghanistan, pens lyrics about the mistreatment of women in her country. In her song 'Nalestan,'[22] Sorouri discusses the horrors that many Afghani women face, including domestic violence, acid attacks and religious repression.

Hip Hop culture is especially devoted to the topic of racial injustice. Hip Hoppers claim that a number of social issues, including poverty, drug addiction and violence are often linked to racism (Chang 2005). Chuck-D of 'Public Enemy' notes that African-Americans are "not represented enough in law, either in the creation or enforcement" and argues "If black leaders can't dictate economic, educational, law-enforcement and law-making decisions nationwide, then that's not black leadership, it's an illusion of black leadership" (1997:10). Many Hip Hoppas have expanded this view, applying it to other marginalized communities. In his rap 'Presidents[23],' Mash Yellowbird observes the lack of Aboriginal people depicted on the currency of the United States. He then wonders why "Native killers, devils and rapists" are celebrated

---

[22] 143 Band. 2013. "Nalestan." *Youtube,* July 7. Accessed [December 28, 2016.] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RB_llKTAIJs#t=51use.
[23] Mash Yellowbird. 2013. "Presidents." *Mash Yellowbird SoundCloud*. Accessed [December 27, 2016.] https://soundcloud.com/mash-yellow-bird/presidents.

instead, hinting at the kinds of frustrations similarly expressed by members of African-American communities.

Dubb Hardaway believes rappers need to raise awareness of social issues through their music. He explains, "That's what makes a real artist. Substance. The artistic parts, the poetic parts." Dubb is highly critical of mainstream emcees who have made careers off of lyrics about wealth, sex and fame. "I don't like Lil' Wayne, Drake, Rick Ross. Anything commercial, or mainstream." According to Dubb, commercial rap "doesn't mean nothing" and is "dumbing down everybody." As a rapper, Dubb believes he has an obligation to share his views on "values and morals."

Both Mash Yellowbird and Dubb Hardaway express awareness of social issues, particular relating to poverty and racism. While neither artist focuses explicitly on Native issues, both rappers have created music that deals with the struggles of Aboriginal peoples. Notably, the two rappers believe the onus is on them to educate their listeners and to incite change through music. Both rappers have publicly aligned themselves with various political causes on social media, including the fight for treaty rights and environmental issues impacting reserves.

It is within the framework of oppression and resistance that Hip Hop is most commonly studied and understood (Rose 1994, Chang 2005). This is largely due to the fact that Hip Hop has traditionally been under the stewardship of marginalized peoples (Chang 2005). From its inception, Hip Hop has worked to elevate the socially alienated and economically oppressed (2005). Beginning with its roots among the

African-American, Caribbean-American and Hispanic youth of the south Bronx, Hip Hop has traditionally been considered the voice of those alienated from the opportunities and privileges afforded those in positions of social power (Rose 1994). Hip Hop's role as the voice of the oppressed has extended across the globe, as seen in the work of young performers from Aboriginal reserves in the US and Canada[24], the war zone of the Israel – Palestine border[25], and youth caught in the cross-fire of Syrian politics[26].

The academic treatment of Hip Hop as a source of resistance emphasizes the frequently subversive nature of Hip Hop culture, and casts a spotlight on how even the most basic elements of Hip Hop culture can be understood as forms of confrontation with mainstream Western culture (Rose 1994). Authors often utilize battle-like imagery when writing about Hip Hop. Samy Alim has referred to rappers as "verbal *mujahidin*" (2006:20), employing an Arabic term often associated with guerilla and spiritual warfare. The rapper RZA has referred to the "battles" he engaged in as a young emcee (2009:74), and makes reference to verbal acts of "war" (74). Although the war-like imagery and resistant nature of Hip Hop are frequently commented upon, other scholars have noted the more peaceful nature of Hip Hop, especially among

---

[24] Supaman. 2014. "Prayer Loop Song." *Youtube*, February 20. Accessed [December 28, 2016.] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_0jq7jIa34Y#t=101.
[25] DAM. 2006. "Born Here." *Youtube*, August 22. Accessed [December 28, 2016.] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zIo6lyP9tTE.
[26] Refugees of Rap ft. Nadin. 2013. "Haram." *Youtube*, December 16. Accessed [December 28, 2016.] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aeLth9qxX4U.

rappers that operate independently from record labels and corporate management (Harrison 2009). When not presented as actively confrontational, Hip Hop is often depicted as a celebration of difference (Rose 1994), or as a kind of 'push back' against mainstream cultural forces. These alternative narratives of Hip Hop often promote the ideals of brotherhood, unity and peaceful action in the face of racism, poverty and exploitation of at-risk communities.

Hardcore has a similar history of rejecting mainstream American values while raising awareness of social ills. Trapped Under Ice, a Hardcore band from Baltimore, critiques people who blindly follow as unbiased sources of news on their track 'Pleased to Meet You,' off of their second album 'Big Kiss Goodnight'[27]. The lyrics read, in part,

I don't want to be followed by sheep
Don't need the respect of the mentally weak
I have no interest in leading the blind …

I can't believe how stupid you must be
To follow everything that you read, hear, and see
You could never walk the path that I walk …

TUI [Trapped Under Ice], as long as I'm still alive
I live to spite you
Realize that I'm not one of your kind
I'm nothing like you

You shake my hand
Say, "Pleased to meet you"
Look me in the eye
I don't believe you

[27] Trapped Under Ice. 2011. "Pleased To Meet You." *Youtube*, December 19. Accessed [December 28, 2016.] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3l-utL_cY2Y.

(Trapped Under Ice, 'Pleased to Meet You,' 2011)

The lines "I can't believe how stupid you must be / To follow everything that you read, hear, and see" is a blatant dismissal of accepting what the media tells the public. When the band sings "I don't want to be followed by sheep / Don't need the respect of the mentally weak," they again show their disdain for a society that is unable to think or drawn their own conclusions separate from what the media tells them. The lyrics also suggest that social niceties such the shaking of hands have become meaningless transactions, devoid of thought or emotion ("Look me in the eye / I don't believe you").

On another level, Trapped Under Ice suggests that they walk a different social path by belonging to the Hardcore community, one that encourages a different worldview and mindset ("Realize that I'm not one of your kind / I'm nothing like you"). By shaking up the status quo and mocking mainstream society, Trapped Under Ice "spite" those who they call the "blind" and "sheep." They also question how accepting others are of their affiliation to Hardcore (again with the lyrics "Shake my hand / Say pleased to meet you / Look me in the eye / I don't believe you").

Social Justice and Social Awareness in Action

The following passages are all excerpts from conversations with participants that demonstrate some of the ways in which social justice plays a role in Hip Hop and modern Hardcore. All quotes are unedited, except for clarity.

"It made me really think." (Sheldon Runs Like Deer, Calgary, Alberta)

The following conversation comes from a longer discussion I had with Sheldon in 2014. Our dialogue touched upon a number of topics, including Sheldon's affiliation with the Calgary Hardcore community. I asked Sheldon if Hardcore had taught him anything about social justice and/or increased his awareness of social issues, and the following was his response. I particularly like this excerpt because it provides musical examples that have impacted Sheldon, and demonstrates how listening to music has raised his interest in social justice.

> Let's talk about specific issues it brought up when I was younger. One of the bands that really did it for me, learning about issues and society, was the band 'First Blood.' They really talked about lots of societal issues and stuff in their music, like …. Hold on let me find it, there's this lyric. [Looks for lyrics to the song 'First Blood'] (Long pause) [Quotes lyrics] "Born in this world with innocent eyes, the more I see it becomes more clear to me I cannot trust the powers that be. Hard to embrace with open arms a society without a place for me. I didn't ask for social divide and all the racists and scum of mankind."
>
> That really opened up my eyes, growing up a Native kid in Calgary and I grew up with a lot of racist shit and stuff… growing up with songs like that, it opened my eyes more to people that actually fight this and care. Bands like that, words like that, at my young age, made me really think about the social impacts about other people in Calgary that were homeless, on the street … It really drove me to want to help other people.
>
> Also, there's this other band … hold on … gotta find it … 'Death by Stereo' (pause) [looks for lyrics] [song is 'Sing Along with the Patriotic Punks] [Quotes lyrics] "Buy into lies the government feeds your meathead mentality. Go, go to work don't do it for you, do it for state, country, national church. It's the way. Today your paycheck will wash your sins away. Its ok, don't be afraid until Uncle Sam robs you blind."
>
> That's one of the songs that really opened my eyes to why I was always so mad at the world and why I hated the idea that you need a job or a career or money to be happy. You don't. The way I see it is, you know, in Christian and Hardcore beliefs … Christianity taught me that happiness comes from within, not only that … happiness comes from helping others and stuff, being a decent person, not from money.

> Hardcore is the same type of thing. It's really anti-establishment. We don't care about money at all. Just given that … I'd rather honestly live poor with nothing more than $3 in my pocket every day. I'd rather wander around the streets of Calgary talking to homeless people or helping out my friends and stuff than get a job or a career or any of that stuff.

"It's a weapon to get in the door." (Mash Yellowbird, Arcata, California)

When I posed a similar question to Mash ("Has Hip Hop increased your awareness of social issues?"), his response was "Absolutely." Mash takes a deeply political stance in his response to my question, citing the author Ward Churchill. Despite the "hard hitting points" that Churchill has made throughout his career on topics including comparing the genocide of American Natives to the German Holocaust (1997), Mash finds it frustrating that the public was more worried about Churchill's racial pedigree. For background, Churchill published a controversial article in 2001 on the events of 9/11 and what he felt prompted the attack. This article eventually incited a backlash, which led to a public debate about the authenticity of Churchill's Native American ancestry (Kelly 2011). Similarly, Mash finds it upsetting that the media focused on sensationalist stories that takes the public's attention off of political issues, such as the controversial imprisonment of Leonard Peltier. What Mash's answer reveals is a belief that the media actively tries to push an agenda, one that is not friendly to revolutionaries and social change. This is very much in keeping with Hip Hop's emphasis on social justice, particularly as the mainstream media is often vilified as promoting a particular agenda that is at odds with Hip Hop's belief system based around combatting racism and poverty.

Mash describes how "great music" may serve as a "blueprint" for change. Here, Mash touches upon an earlier discussion in which he talked about the power of rap to educate and raise awareness in listeners. While he acknowledged that his music does not have the far-reaching impact of work by a scholar such as Ward Churchill, Mash believes his music may encourage change. If enough musicians follow his lead and raise the level of social awareness among the public, social growth may come about, albeit slowly.

It should be noted that Mash's response is also an indictment against the corporate music industry. As an independent artist, Mash has strong feelings about 'selling out'. Record labels and corporate interests are notorious for signing musicians into long-term contracts that stifle their artistic output by laying claim to original musical material and then dictating how this material may be used. Labels control an artist's image, what they can and can't say, and what kinds of music they may release. In a round-about way, Mash links corporate labels with the same kinds of destructive behaviours that have impacted the career of pro-Native activists such as Ward Churchill.

> Everything gets screened media wise, and then it gets pushed really hard. I believe that these kind of things, social media, the news, it really gets hyped up and gets people to pick a side, and gets people to forget their values, their families, their traditions. Meanwhile, off the social media and mainstream news, there's real struggles going on that they're not covering, like, what about our Carrie Dann [Shoshone Elder and land rights activist]? Or Leonard Peltier who's still in jail?
>
> The people that are doing stuff in social justice, they get clowned on the daily. Look at Ward Churchill. He has so many hard hitting points and so much game that's he dropping, and the only thing they want to know is 'Are you really Native'? Yes, he is

> on point. I don't feel like my music will do that [have the impact of Ward Churchill's writings], but it will get me to those avenues, to those lanes to get that taken care of. In that sense it [music] is a tool, it is a weapon to get in the door. They had to shut him [Ward] down. They had to villainize him and send a message that this is what happened when you indoctrinate your students. [Referring to self] Bring great music to the table, this is a blueprint for people out there. You don't have to sell your soul, you can keep your own masters [original copies of recordings] and keep your own stuff. I'd be ready to help anyone who is really down for it. They [media/record labels] don't want you to be independent. Once we all further down the line when we keep doing our thing, making records, it's going to take time.

"Hardcore does something about it." (Arnold, Edmonton, Alberta)

This comment dates from 2012, when I first approached Arnold about participating in my research project. When I asked Arnold what Hardcore meant to him, he provided a short but meaningful response.

> It's a very strong influence on me; it's like the music I keep going back to or that I haven't really left. Like one person stated it, "Where punk sort of talks about the issues but does nothing else, Hardcore does something about it." It's a movement; you feel it with the heart and soul and mind and body; it all connects with it.

"Always stand up for what you believe in." (Sheldon Runs Like Deer, Calgary, Alberta)

In this excerpt from 2015, Sheldon provides further context on the link between social justice and action within Hardcore. Up until this point, our discussion – a mix of pre-planned interview questions and open-ended dialogue – had centered on Sheldon's life within Hardcore, which included a familiarity with and/or involvement with a number of social issues impacting his local Calgary modern Hardcore scene. Sheldon described his scene's engagement with political rallies, organizing community gardens, and throwing fundraisers to help out community members in need. Further afield, Sheldon described a Hardcore scene member who is currently working on behalf of a dock workers union in Seattle. Sheldon also described the link between some Hardcore fans and animal activism, including young people with ties to the

controversial organization known as the Animal Liberation Front. In the 1990's, a group of Hardcore fans became infamous for their involvement in freeing American mink from fur farms. More recently, Sheldon notes that Hardcore fans in Alberta have been involved with animal rights, albeit in less dramatic ways. He says, "A lot of people within current Hardcore, a lot of us we actively promote adopt a dog, adopt a cat, that kind of thing. One of my buddies, whenever he plays, he wears an 'Adopt a Pit Bull' shirt, he makes a point to wear that shirt to shows."

> It definitely drove me … still drives me to do literally do whatever I have to fix things in the world. Whatever, if it's something I see on the street corner or something in the bigger picture. Hardcore really taught me to take a stand for things. That's one of the other morals it teaches you. Always stand up for what you believe in. Never back down. No matter the situation, just do it. That's a mentality that can be applied … that I feel personally everyone should have and should apply to every aspect of their life.
>
> [several minutes later in the same conversation]
>
> With Hardcore, it's derived from anger, hatred, from being mad at society, at people and the world, and so that means it's a never ending thing … there's always something to get angry about. There's always something we see wrong, that needs to be changed. This world will never be perfect, you know? The topics we talk about in our songs … from [the band] 'Rotting Out' talking about watching his mom getting beat [by the singer's father] and stabbing his dad because of it … to some guy broke up with his girlfriend to every topic in between. I've heard songs about … my buddy wrote a song about the genocide in Rwanda. You look at the band 'Ramallah' …. Even the name is a political statement. We want to push buttons, we want to make people angry and think. That's the only way you can grow and change is if you challenge yourself. We like to push buttons and make people think.

Chapter Four: Musicking Knowledge

In this section, I explore what I term 'musicking knowledge' – the belief that knowledge gained in a musical context is something actively engaged with, grappled with and questioned. Musicking knowledge acknowledges that learning is a participatory and relational activity, and that wisdom is gained not only from books, but from taking part in music, personal relationships and the wider social world. Knowledge can be embodied and lived in, a way of moving through the world and interacting with the people around us.

Connected to this concept is that of several indigenous methodologies, chiefly those laid out by Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012) and Walter Lightning (1992). I have been profoundly impacted by Lightning's work with the Cree Elder Louis Sunchild, in which Lightning documents the holistic process of learning imparted to him during his studies with Elder Sunchild. Lightning demonstrates how learning is an embodied process, one that is physical, emotional, spiritual and social. In turn, Linda Smith's writing provides concrete steps that researchers can take in order to more appropriately engage with indigenous worldviews and systems of knowledge.

Indigenous Methodologies and Knowledge

Linda Tuhiwai Smith writes that "it is surely difficult to discuss research methodology and indigenous peoples together … without having an analysis of imperialism, without understanding the complex ways in which the pursuit of knowledge is deeply

embedded in the multiple layers of imperial and colonial practices" (2012:2). As previously mentioned, working among indigenous peoples within the social sciences brings together a long and troubled history of colonialism, politics, and academic practices rooted in European cultural values. Deconstructing the ways in which these ideas intersect is at the heart of Tuhiwai Smith's work (2012). Tuhiwai Smith challenges the ways in which academic research has "regulated and realized" this "underlying code of imperialism and colonialism" (2012:8) before offering alternatives that are more sensitive to the cultural and historical legacy of indigenous peoples.

Tuhiwai Smith's suggestions include incorporating the use of storytelling (2012:145), connecting ("making connections and affirming connectedness") (149), critical engagement with the presentation of Western history (150), and "sharing knowledge between indigenous peoples" in order to provide a "collective benefit" and as a means of "demystifying knowledge and information" for indigenous communities (162). In this way, knowledge can be used as "a form of resistance" against Western imperialism (162). Tuhiwai Smith also encourages researchers to make themselves accountable to the communities they work with, providing space for indigenous peoples to shape the research process and the "education of the wider research community" on indigenous perspectives and methodologies (194-195).

I have done my best to carefully consider and implement Tuhiwai Smith's suggestions when possible. Because of the arts-based and collaborative nature of my research, I

have found three of Tuhiwai Smith's methodological techniques to be particularly useful. These are 'representing' (recognizing and listening to the voices of indigenous peoples) (2012:151-152), 'reframing' (the resistance of "being boxed and labelled according to categories which do not fit")(154) and 'creating' ("channeling collective creativity in order to produce solutions to indigenous problems")(159-160). While I consciously chose to focus on these three methodological techniques, it should be noted that my research participants intuitively grasped these concepts and were actively incorporating them into their musical lives. I would have been hard pressed to able to bring these techniques into my research if my participants weren't already utilizing them in dynamic and inventive ways.

Representing

As Tuhiwai Smith points out, "Indigenous communities have struggled since colonization to be able to exercise what is viewed as a fundamental right, that is to represent ourselves" (2012:151). Noting that the European and North American processes of colonization have "specifically excluded indigenous peoples from any form of decision making" (151), indigenous perspectives have been routinely silenced in the histories, politics and arts of the Western world. The result is that indigenous peoples and experiences have been ignored or misrepresented by generations of scholars, politicians and the general public (2012).

Tuhiwai Smith suggests that indigenous representation is sorely lacking in academics, the media and beyond. It is important for indigenous peoples to be able to counter "the dominant society's image of indigenous peoples, their lifestyles and belief

systems" if so desired (152). This does not mean that everyone has to make this choice, only that it be open to those who wish to confront prevailing social attitudes about indigenous peoples. From a political standpoint, Tuhiwai Smith considers self representation to be integral to "proposing solutions to the real-life dilemmas that indigenous communities confront" (152), particularly in the realm of land rights and sovereignty (2012). This helps to stop the rampant "paternalism" that is "still present in many forms of government" who have a habit of making political and social decisions for indigenous communities (152). Artistically, representation allows indigenous peoples to share their "spirit, experiences or world view" with the wider world, benefitting indigenous and non-indigenous peoples alike (152). The point is that no has to engage in representation if they don't want to, but that the choice is there and that indigenous peoples have the same opportunities to disseminate their views as non-minorities (2012).

Examples of representation are found throughout this thesis. Musically, lyrically, and through spoken word, participants have shared their experiences throughout these pages. Whenever possible, I avoid editing their words in order to preserve the spirit and tone of their speech. If editing takes place, I make a note of this. I have also offered participants the opportunity to review my transcripts of their conversations in order to ensure that what is reflected in this thesis is accurate and true to their voices. All lyrical and visual material is un-edited and presented as it was originally given to me. This is all basic anthropological practice, but it is an important one, especially

when considering the ways in which academics have mediated and marginalized indigenous voices for so long.

Reframing

Historically, indigenous peoples have not been given the space to represent their points of view, with the result that indigenous peoples have been continuously misrepresented and abused by governments, Western social institutions and cultural practices. Reframing allows indigenous peoples to take "much greater control over the ways in which indigenous issues and social problems are discussed and handled" by addressing the historical, social and political roots of Western attitudes towards indigenous peoples (Tuhiwai Smith 2012:154). As Tuhiwai Smith points out, "the framing of an issue is about making decisions about its parameters, about what is in the foreground, what is in the background, and what shadings or complexities exist within the frame" (154). For example, instead of referring to alcoholism on Canadian reserves as a distinctly 'Aboriginal issue,' reframing the discussion allows people to better understand how historical trauma, the economic plight of remote reserves and the lack of mental and physical health care among rural indigenous populations contributes to high rates of alcohol consumption among certain segments of Canadian Aboriginal populations. In this way, viable solutions proposed by indigenous peoples may come to the forefront of the discussion, while avoiding "cynical" and "paternalistic" attitudes which assume "psychological and individual failure" (154).

While Tuhiwai Smith writes about reframing from a mostly political perspective, I believe it also takes place through artistic expression. In the following piece, entitled

'Your Monument Not Mine,' Lakota emcee Dubb Hardaway reframes Mount Rushmore as an affront to his people, rather than a national monument beloved to all American people. The blame for Mount Rushmore is squarely placed on those Americans who ignored the Fort Laramie treaty that "specifies that the Black Hills" belongs to the Lakota; Dubb Hardaway decries this "stolen property," noting that it's a venture centered around earning profit for some "shallow schmucks." Rather than a lament, Dubb's rap is one based in anger and action. He argues that "It's time to create a new plan," and that he is "Ready to explode, attitude volcanic."

Fourteen summers since I last been here
There's no need for a fake smile like porcelain veneers
I have a problem and my opinion is straight, linear,
Here's my equation
Your American heroes carved in my hills equals' frustration
I feel like telling all the tourists to go back to the bus station
Get back in your r.v.!
Get back in your sedan!
You're not going to enjoy Mt. Rushmore
It's time to create a new plan.

The Ft. Laramie treaty specifies that the Black Hills is ours
It's stolen property with your founding fathers faces' carved
I don't appreciate it and it disgusts me
My mood is blue when I see those grey faces
Lit up at night but at the same time it ignites
My temper, blood boils, face turnin' red
Ready to explode, attitude is volcanic
I wish Gutzon Borglum left alone the granite
My words may have a patriot feeling mortified
But so do I, at the fact you glorify
Those four deadly snakes
I hope you catch my flow, get deep like when the levee breaks
You shallow shmucks just want your bucks
I understand your Mt. Rushmore.

(Dubb Hardaway, 2011)

In this way, an alternative viewpoint is presented which takes into account the on-going mistreatment of Lakota peoples by the United States government. As Dubb Hardaway's example demonstrates, the participants in this project reframe many commonly held beliefs within mainstream North American society through musical engagement.

Creating

The act of creating is something that Tuhiwai Smith describes as " … not just about the artistic endeavors of individuals, but about the spirit of creating that indigenous communities have exercised over thousands of years" (2012:159). Artistic creations allow people to "rise above their own circumstances, to dream new visions and to hold on to old ones" (159). Creation is also what "fosters inventions and discoveries, facilities simple improvements … and uplifts our spirits" (159). From an indigenous perspective, Tuhiwai Smith believes that the creative force is integral to "producing solutions to indigenous problems" (160).

In the context of my research, artistic creation serves all of these purposes, if not more. When Sheldon Runs Like Deer was homeless and living off the generosity of his friends, it was his ability to imagine a better life for himself that encouraged him to work hard and buy a house. When Arnold linked his passion for Hardcore to his interest in the urban Cree experience, he began to create develop potential solutions to helping young indigenous men and women living in Edmonton. The creative energies

of the participants involved with this project are staggering, and are a testament to the power of innovative thinking.

Without creativity, this project would never exist. Music and imagination are intimately tied together, and artistic expression is what has allowed me to carry out my research. What I particularly appreciate about Tuhiwai Smith's description of creativity is that it encompasses an array of indigenous perspectives without placing limits on what it means to take part in an artistic endeavor. Creativity can be found in speech, personal appearance, music, dance or any other form of human expression. This allows me to focus on music while also factoring in speech, dance and the visual aspects of musical experience. Representing and reframing are part of the creative process. In this way, Tuhiwai Smith's methodological techniques complement one another.

While I have done my best to incorporate Tuhiwai Smith's methodologies and to provide a safe space for my participants to engage in representing, reframing and creating, I acknowledge that my work is problematic and can be criticized on any number of levels. Linda Tuhiwai Smith has pointed out many of the issues involved in writing about and collaborating with indigenous peoples (2012), which I address throughout this chapter and beyond. Furthermore, as previously noted, Winona Wheeler has demonstrated how the academy has stripped Indigenous stories and histories of their meaning and context over the years (2005). Lastly, within the university setting, Native peoples have had a collective history of being

disenfranchised and forced to adhere to Eurocentric western practices. Western scholars have frequently "ignored Indigenous voices … offer little to tribes" and devalue "Indigenous programs and concerns on campus" (Mihesuah 2004:31). I am aware of my own shortcomings as both a researcher and human being embedded within an academic culture that has historically been unwelcoming to scholars from outside the West. I also acknowledge that I am relying on a discourse based on a Western academic style of presentation, the thesis, which could be considered at odds with indigenous worldviews (Tuhiwai Smith 2012, Alfred 2004). On a personal level, I do not self-identify as an Aboriginal person, and thus it could also be argued that the voices of my participants are being mediated by a non-indigenous scholar. I hope that by addressing these critiques and working through them, I am able to begin the process of understanding how these issues impact my research and the relationships I have developed in the field.

"Listening is a kind of active participation."

In 1992, Walter Lightning wrote about the education imparted to him by Cree Elders, particularly Elder Louis Sunchild, and the process of putting these into text. Lightning wrote that "Listening is a kind of active participation" (229), and noted how"active attention, humility of the hearer, and respect for the Elder will put one in the frame where minds can meet" (230).

Lightning's observations on listening and learning resonated with me, and have remained a constant presence during my field work. Lightning's words remind me that, when working with participants, I should remain humble and respectful, and open

to what I hear. Lightning also noted that, in sharing teachings with another person, an Elder "makes him/herself open" and "vulnerable" (230). There are many layers to the relationship between listener and Elder that Lightning outlines. While I do not work with Elders, Lightning's words serve as a gentle reminder of the vulnerable space in which my participants inhabited throughout the duration of my research. They frequently opened themselves up to me in a way that, if abused, could cause great harm.

According to Lightning, the process of learning is not confined to the mental domain, but rather is something that must be felt, emotionally and physically. Below, Lightning describes the process of unpacking a text by Elder Louis Sunchild.

> It is a product of creation and re-creation, in a mutual relationship of personal interaction, of information. It is not just a cognitive (mental) act, but an emotional – and thus physical – act. Learning is felt. It is a sensation. It is something that involves emotions. And, as the Elder here points out, learning is ideally a spiritual thing, because the compassionate mind is one that is spiritually centered. (1992:232).

What I have learned from both Walter Lightning and my participants is that acquiring knowledge can take place anywhere, at least within the context of musical participation. The act of personal growth and acquiring wisdom is not just a cerebral exercise, but one that has ramifications for everyday life. It changes the way in which young people view the world around them, providing the fuel to stoke emotional, physical and spiritual fires.

Raising Consciousness

"They say wisdom is the wise words spoken

By a brother attempting to open
The graves of these mentally dead slaves"
('The Birth (Broken Hearts),' RZA, 2003)

Modern Hardcore and Hip Hop primarily exist in opposition to mainstream North American values. Followers of these scenes are bombarded with music, images and language that challenge the status-quo, often by pointing out social injustices (Rose 1994, Blush and Petros 2001). Ultimately, Hip Hoppas and fans of Hardcore are taking part in an educational process designed to counteract the racial, economic and political imbalances of North American life (Rose 1994, Blush and Petros 2001). Although the word 'education' may not always be used to describe this evolution, participants discuss their experiences with Hip Hop and modern Hardcore in a way that suggests a learning process is taking place. This includes developing awareness about differing points of view, finding ways to challenge the system, and imparting wisdom to others in their day-to-day lives. These lessons may not have been learned in school, but none the less, they are a form of learning and self-development.

Famously, Hip Hop group Public Enemy's track 'Prophets of Rage,'[28] includes the lines "They tell lies in the books that you're readin', It's knowledge of yourself that you're needin'" (1997:32), an obvious attack on the American educational system's habit of erasing minorities from history. Elaborating on this theme, Chuck-D of Public Enemy notes that the American educational system fails minorities by not teaching

[28] Public Enemy. 2006. "Prophets of Rage." *Youtube,* September 6. Accessed [December 26, 2016.] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0_PyqMVyyVo.

them how to "function or survive" in a repressive society (34). Chuck-D argues that young people need to be made aware of their cultural and ethnic histories, to be fairly represented in school curricula, and to be given positive reinforcement through books, music, and role models (32-35).

Additionally, Hip Hop leaders have cautioned against distractions meant to keep people mentally and economically enslaved, particularly in relation to rampant materialism and greed. In his work 'The Tao of Wu,' the influential rapper RZA warns against rappers who drape themselves in jewels and brag about their wealth, writing "You hear rap artists now talk about how their wrist is 'frosty' … how their bling-bling will blind you" (2008:145). He continues, "Rocking too much bling can reveal a hole in a man, an emptiness he's trying to fill with diamonds … When a man recognizes himself, he recognizes his true jewel, and his body expresses that wisdom. He becomes a jewel himself … Attain wisdom and you'll have all the bling you ever need" (145-146). This attitude is reflected in other major Hip Hop cultural texts, including KRS-One's 'The Gospel of Hip Hop' (2009).

In an effort to correct injustice and counter-act negative messages about materialism and greed, a number of major figures within Hip Hop culture have emphasized the need for education among marginalized and oppressed youth. The 'Hip Hop Declaration of Peace' provides a set of principles that followers of Hip Hop are encouraged to follow. The Fifth Principle in the document reads, in part, "The ability to … educate ourselves is encouraged" and "Through knowledge of purpose and the

development of our natural and learned skills, Hiphoppas [Hip Hoppas] are always encouraged to present their best works and ideas" (Hip Hop Declaration of Peace, 2001). This reflects the teachings of The Universal Zulu Nation, which mandates that "You must seek knowledge" (Green Book: Infinity Lessons Archive 1973 – 2000 FOR THE MASSES:14) and encourages followers "To always put learning in the forefront of life" (2015:41).

The power of words is particularly important within Hip Hop, as it is through rap's lyrical power that many of these pro-education messages are spread. Hip Hop has deep ties with ethno-religious movements such as the The Nation of Islam, although the more radical views of the Nation of Islam have been toned down to accommodate a diverse fan base (Alim 2006). Crucially, the rhetoric behind the NOI and similar movements has helped to demonstrate the power of words, which can be used to either uplift a people for good, or for the "manipulation and control of discourse" for negative ends (27). Hip Hop culture has frequently utilized both methods of discourse, understanding the "connection between discourse, power, and knowledge," and that language can be utilized as a form of "discursive combat" (27). It is not surprising that many Hip Hoppas have embraced this "discursive struggle against oppression," often adopting terms and ideas present in the speeches and writing of the NOI (22).

Craig Proulx, who has worked with indigenous rappers in Alberta, notes that a number of emcees "attempt to reach, educate and empower" Aboriginal peoples living on and

off reserves (2010:54). Some rappers may address common stereotypes about indigenous peoples, often breaking them down and then dismantling them entirely (2010). Proulx cites the work of the 'Tru Rez Crew,' an Ontario based rap group comprised of members from the Six Nations of the Grand River Reserve. Proulx asserts that the Tru Rez Crew challenges the perception that "Aboriginal reserves are completely and hopelessly dysfunctional" by demonstrating that it is possible to refrain from "crime and alcoholism" in these places (52). Significantly, the Tru Rez Crew acknowledge their community within their raps, and provide an alternative depiction of reservation life. According to Proulx, the connection between social awareness and education runs seamlessly together in the music of the Tru Rez Crew. Similarly, Mash Yellowbird empowers his audiences through positive raps that emphasize empowerment and self-education, encouraging his listeners to "raise up your voice and discover something that's buried inside" and to remember "one color / one love my young brothers / stay strong / stay hustlin'."[29] Mash does not pigeonhole himself as a specifically Native rapper. Most of his work available online does not reference being Native or relate to Native issues, although he certainly does address these kinds of topics on occasion. Instead of sticking with stereotypical themes relating to rez life, Mash's raps and production work range on a number of topics,

[29] Mash Yellowbird. 2014. "Wise Words." *Mash Yellowbird SoundCloud*. Accessed [December 25, 2016.] https://soundcloud.com/mash-yellow-bird/wise-words-mp3.

from surviving the music industry to critiques on mainstream media[30]. What is so powerful about Mash's body of work is that he is promoting an alternative point of view on what it means to be an independent artist who also happens to be Native. His ethnicity is only a facet of his public persona, not the determining factor, which is fairly unusual when speaking about so-called Aboriginal and Native rappers.

The role of education in modern Hardcore is less explicit. While Hip Hop has a strong cultural connection to specific texts, members of the Hardcore community are notoriously fickle about committing ideas to paper, particularly given the movement's origins in the anarchistic free-for-all of Punk Rock (Blush and Petros 2001). Additionally, less scholarly work has been conducted on Hardcore, resulting in an absence of academic literature. Thus, I largely rely on sources in the field and on the music itself to better understand how education works within the context of Hardcore.

While Hip Hop encourages gaining wisdom and knowledge in order to improve one's self (KRS-One 2009), modern Hardcore tends to encourage its listeners to reflect on their experiences with oppression, racism and social injustice. As the stories of Sheldon Runs Like Deer and others reveal, participants do take these messages to heart. From political rallies to community gardens, followers of Hardcore take part in developing their local scenes and raising awareness about the kinds of social issues

---

[30] Mash Yellowbird. 2015. "Wake Up." *Mash Yellowbird SoundCloud*. Accessed [December 25, 2016.] https://soundcloud.com/mash-yellow-bird/wake-up.

they learn about in songs. This is a form of education too, even if it is not commonly codified into cultural texts in the same way as Hip Hop. By listening to alternative points of view and adopting changes into their own lives, fans of Hardcore are taking part in self-education and engagement with social issues in their hometowns and further afield. This is not the kind of learning that takes place in the classroom, but rather on the streets, in concert venues, and at community events. In this sense, Hardcore fans develop a holistic understanding, one that takes into account their intellectual and emotional development. It also underscores how education may manifest as active participation and the mutual development between individuals or a community.

Musicking Knowledge in Action

The following section provides several examples of how musicking knowledge takes place within the context of Hip Hop and modern Hardcore. Participants provide their points of view. All quotes are unedited, except for clarity.

"I have a responsibility with the words I use and the messages I send." (Mash Yellowbird, Arcata, California)

As Marianne Ignace notes, "Contemporary anthropology celebrates cultural hybridity as its subject and multivocality as the subject's way of speaking" (2011:204). However, when it comes to indigenous peoples in Canada, they are often forced to "deny their own hybridity, multivocality, and globally connected destinies" (204). Ignace's words parallel an observation made by Mash Yellowbird during a conversation we had via telephone in 2015.

As a rapper who also identifies as a Native man, Mash is concerned with the representations of Aboriginal peoples in the mainstream media. Mash is clear that he wants to smash stereotypes, start a dialogue with his audience, and change the way people think, even if they "don't like it." The goal is to get people to "feel" what he raps about, in the hopes that they will relate and perhaps gain some wisdom in the process. In particular, Mash notes that indigenous peoples are often denied a voice in the media. He indicates that the general public is limited in its knowledge of Native peoples, expecting them to be 'uncivilized.' Based on his previous statements found earlier in this thesis –that indigenous artists are often forced into a particular stereotype or expected to grapple with specifically 'Native' issues – Mash touches upon the lack of options afforded to indigenous peoples in the public eye. In the process, Mash also observes mainstream society's obsession with material wealth. Mash makes clear how educating his audiences on these kinds of issues is an important part of his musical career.

> I live that, breathe it, speak it, dream it, sleep it, drive myself crazy with it. To think about what you have to say before you say it … my mom always say 'Mean what you say, say what you mean'. I get that from my moms. Use your voice, use your words, you use your conversation to get a point across, to send a message. Especially with rap, Hip Hop, the words I choose and the things I say are very important and honestly, when I put this record together, the content I put together, I wanted to lift up certain things and discard certain things. A lot of things people have nowadays … money isn't everything, people are starting to realize you don't need a million dollar studio to make a million dollar record. Hip Hop is returning to what it was, -- street, folk, underground, people's music. Instead of this impossible idea of Lear jets and Bentleys and fur coats … ok no one lives like that, y'know? [laughs]. They're getting stunted on. That's what I wanted to say. I want to be uncompromising in that respect and make great music and then the message … you need to be a great musician to get a message across. I want it to say something.

> Especially with Native people, we don't have the voice. I know a lot of Native people don't want to beef with that. If we're disrespected and need to be protected then … when we use our voice and words we have to deliberate in what we say … People don't relate to Native people being civilized. Yes, the words that I use are very important and the stuff I want to say is very important. We're using this as a medium to express ourselves and it's not all negative and it's not all positive either. The thing I stress most about in my records is to make people think. I want people to get mad, to get happy, to feel everything. My job is to get people going and feeling it, even if they're not liking it.

Journeys: Arnold, Edmonton, AB

The topic of education and Hardcore was brought up many times in conversation with Arnold. This line of thought was usually prompted by Arnold, who spent much of our time together debating the ins and outs of getting a Western education as an Aboriginal man. In our last follow-up in 2015, I asked Arnold to reflect upon what his involvement with Hardcore had taught him. Although generally stoic, this particular line of questioning brought up deep emotions in Arnold. He took many long pauses to collect his feelings, sometimes speaking with a voice shaking with feeling. Arnold's response illuminated some of the lessons he learned from Hardcore, and how the knowledge granted to him through musical participation could be applied to his future plan of working with Aboriginal community in Edmonton. Arnold's deeply felt emotional connection to Hardcore and its lessons was quite a moving and profound experience for me, and I deeply appreciated both his candor and vulnerability.

> At the heart of it, it did teach me independence. To be strong, respectful, honest, be true to people, any community, with friends … ultimately, to love and be true to myself. And that is something which I have learned from it and take with me on my journeys anywhere I go. (long pause) I think back to, it was just me being me. (long pause) It was not me trying to imitate or impersonate. It was just me for the sake of loving me and loving a scene that I committed to, and committed to me. I learned from that. It helps me with my career, with wanting to work with Aboriginal people,

> with wanting to work within their own narratives, within my own schooling, my own life, with people. It has shown me what it … what I can do to work to better others, including not just with the Aboriginal community as a whole, but with my family. [long silence]

"We are the freelance reporters." (Mash Yellowbird, Arcata, California)

In the following passage, Mash describes underground rappers – those outside of the commercial mainstream -- as "freelance reporters" who aren't beholden to any particular corporate entity. Because they can typically avoid contractual stipulations, underground rappers may speak freely on topics that may otherwise be neglected by the mainstream media or rappers caught in the corporate musical cycle. As musical journalists, underground rappers have the ability to spread news, social messages and generally educate their listening public.

Mash begins by referencing the Sugar Hill Gang and Grandmaster Flash, emcees who are well known for the social messages within their raps. Mash suggests that the reason for the public's fondness for these rappers is that they were so talented and inventive that their audiences had no choice but to listen to their work. Mash then goes on to suggest that today's rappers can carry on the tradition of the Sugar Hill Gang and Grandmaster Flash by creating great music with an educational twist.

> Hip Hop is the message. Sugar Hill Gang is the message. That's the thing they're saying. Grand Master Flash that was the message. Even way back then they were talking about political and social commentary. They did it in such a fly way that people had to listen to the message. Even if people didn't want to hear how things were going, they had to hear it because they dug it. It's our story. We have to share. We are the freelance reporters not bound by a TV station or a newspaper that says you can only put out these stories and go through editing and get pinched or this … We talk straight to the audience. We don't need a newspaper telling us nothing. We tell them everything. It's a story. Everything we have to say, we have to say it, there's someone else is gonna tell it and distort it or tell a half-truth. There's a moral from it.

Someone can grab something from it. These stories we tell … I could tell a story about a corrupt tribal chairman who had under the table deals while he was trying to gain his political power and it only ended up to backfire. That's a real story but I'm not going to tell it because it's not my place and I don't think anyone will gain any kind of progress if I were to air someone else's dirty laundry. Control the power the knowledge and the story. When we have equalizers like us who are lyricists who can bring another perspective to that story, we're not bound by any organization or any law, or any secret group, nah, we've got big mouths, we're gonna tell everyone.

Conclusions

At the beginning of this thesis, I referenced a quote from Sheldon Runs Like Deer, one of the participants in this project and a long-time member of the Calgary modern Hardcore scene. His words -- "It saved my life. The combination of music and community saved me" – are a powerful reminder of just how important the act of musical participation, or musicking (Small 1998), has been for the nine men and women involved with this project. Self-identified as indigenous, Metis and indigenous allies, they range in age from their late teens to their early thirties. Spread out across the Canadian and American urban landscape, most of the participants are strangers to one another, having never met. What has unified them is their willingness to share their stories, songs and lyrics, and most importantly, to speak to the powerful ways in which musical participation and sociality intersect.

I have carried out my research under the premise that music is a social activity, an idea that is not new to the social sciences (*e.g.* Kun 2005, Samuels 2006, Turino 2008). I have utilized the concept of musicking, as defined by Christopher Small (1998). His definition suggests "To music is to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance" (9). Alternatively referred to as 'musical participation' in this thesis, Small's theory of musicking allows a scholar to examine the many roles that human beings undertake in musical activity. These include performing, rehearsing/practicing, dancing, composing, or listening (9). Particularly helpful to my own work is Small's suggestion that musicking can be taken a step further by acknowledging the ticket-taker at the concert hall door, the roadies at rock concerts who do sound checks before a band steps on stage, and even the janitors who clean up

after a musical event (1998:9). By utilizing Small's framework, I have been able to incorporate research participants who fulfill a number of roles, ranging from composer, to producer, promoter and to fan, and beyond.

Equally important to my research has been the notion that musicking is an inherently social activity. In fact, Christopher Small asserts that the "fundamental nature and meaning of music" lies in "action, what people do" (1998:8). As Small notes, "The act of musicking establishes in the place where it is happening a set of relationships, and it is in those relationships that the meaning of the act lies" (13). Of particular relevance to my own research are the relationships created, maintained, and mediated by the act of musicking (13).

Although anthropology teaches that race is social construct with no basis in biology, it is also a lived reality that is an unavoidable aspect of North American society. Working with indigenous youth and their allies has demonstrated to me that race is not a topic that can be brushed off or pushed aside, as it forced upon young people on a daily basis. Although race is often represented as a visual idea, it is also commonly indexed by sound and music (Kun 2005:133). Musical and racial categories are often linked together, muddied by the interplay of North America's many histories, politics, and cultures. Particular genres of music may become affiliated with a specific racial group and society's stereotypes about that group, as evidenced in the debate surrounding rap and popular depictions of black masculinity as hyper sexualized and dominant (Rose 1994). Musical representations of minorities often curb the aural complexity of difference, an act that Josh Kun refers to as 'racial univocality' (2005:

19). As Kun writes, “the unitary categorization of the individual as anything but a crossroads” denies and evades a person’s “complexity” (89). Perhaps this partially explains Mash Yellowbird’s resistance to being labeled as a Native rapper, or Dubb Hardaway’s assertion that he is half-Mexican, half-Lakota while refusing to be classified by either label.

Working with indigenous youth as a Caucasian anthropologist has caused me to confront the ways in which academic practice is rooted in Eurocentric ideals, values and histories that have not been amenable to indigenous cultures and systems of knowledge. To be more accurate, my research has helped me to begin the life-long process of unpacking the troubled relationship between North American indigenous peoples and their non-indigenous counterparts, particularly in academic settings. Chapter One documents some of the struggles I have had in relation to racial terminology that is used throughout this work, and I try and situate my use of problematic terms such as ‘indigenous,’ ‘Aboriginal’ and ‘Native.’ I do not use the words blindly or without questioning them, and I share some of the wisdom imparted to me by research participants who helped to shape and guide my use of these terms. In the same chapter, I explore the anthropological practice of ‘Othering’ as informed by Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012) and Edward Said (1978). I also attempt to acknowledge how traditional Western scholarly practices and indigenous methods of imparting knowledge have clashed, particularly as non-indigenous academics rarely recognize that many Aboriginal ways of teaching are relational, based on reciprocal

responsibility, mutual respect and relationships developed over many years (Wheeler 2005).

I have been profoundly influenced by Linda Tuhiwai Smith and her work on 'Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples' (2012). In particular, I draw upon her suggestions to provide space for participants to represent (providing space for indigenous peoples to represent themselves) (151 – 152), reframe (acknowledging that indigenous peoples "resist being boxed and labelled according to categories which do not fit") (154) and create (celebrating the ability to "dream new visions and hold on to old ones" as well as recognizing that indigenous peoples "are the ones who know the answers to their own problems, although their ideas tend to be dismissed when suggested to various agencies and governments") (159 – 160). I have acknowledged some potential areas of criticism in my research with indigenous peoples, particularly as I could be accused of mediating their voices through my position as anthropologist.

The ways in musical engagement and sociality are woven together are numerous, and it is outside the scope of this thesis to examine them all. Due to the breadth of such a question, I have focused my energy on examining the social nature of Hip Hop and modern Hardcore in three ways. The first is to look at how musical participation may create and maintain in a peer group. The second is to study how engagement with a musical scene may aid in developing networks of support. The third and final way is to look at how systems of belief embedded in Hip Hop and modern Hardcore may encourage personal growth. It should be noted that any one of these

questions is a massive topic, and worthy of further study. This thesis serves as only one possible point of entry to the much larger question of sociality and musical engagement.

For many of the young people involved with this project, finding a social niche can be difficult, particularly due to issues relating to racism against indigenous youth and challenging home lives. As evidenced in previous chapters, there are participants in this project who have felt the burden of substance abuse issues and grappled with their mental health, resulting in further stigmatization by their peers. A local musical community could be one of the few opportunities a disenfranchised young person has to connect with a social group. In the case of Jake, nineteen years old at the time he was involved with this project, a stay in a psychiatric ward made it particularly hard for him to make friends in high school. Stigmatized by his mental health status, it wasn't until Jake discovered his local Hardcore scene that he found a group of people open and willing to receive him. Likewise, Sheldon Runs Like Deer has shared how his status as a half-Aboriginal man has forced him to deal with racism. He has faced discrimination in both professional and casual settings. Sheldon's local modern Hardcore scene is one of the few places were he isn't punished by society for his racial affiliations.

The willingness of modern Hardcore and Hip Hop scenes to accept young people who are marked as 'different' by mainstream society – whether it be due to their race/ethnic affiliation, income bracket, state of their mental health or difficult domestic lives -- is fueled, in large part, by a set of beliefs that challenges the notion that one needs to conform to mainstream society's social norms in order to belong. Many lyrics in songs and raps from both genres reflect a general attitude that it is acceptable, and in fact necessary, to question the status quo on issues ranging

from race relations to blindly held patriotism. Examples in Chapters Two and Three are plentiful, and I will draw the reader's attention again to works such as Death By Stereo's 'Sing Along With The Patriotic Punks,'[31] which questions blind obedience to the American government, and N.W.A.'s 'Fuck tha Police'[32], an incendiary comment on police brutality and racism in the United States. As noted in both chapters, Hip Hop has a textual tradition that outlines the fundamental philosophies of the culture. This includes The Universal Zulu Nation's Green Book, a repository of teachings for followers of Universal Zulu Nation, an organization previously discussed in earlier chapters. The teachings of this book contain an emphasis on racial diversity and understanding. In a section of the Green Book entitled, in part, 'Message to the People Black, Brown, Yellow, Red, White People' (Green Book: Infinity Lessons Archive 1973 – 2000 FOR THE MASSES:16-17), Universal Zulu Nation extols its readers to

> study and talk to each other and try to understand each other's ways of life and not use each other for another's advantage. We must know Black, Brown, Yellow, Red, and White history, true history and not falsehood history. Good or bad, heal the wounds and let's move on to a glorious future, not a future of death and destruction (17).

The same text encourages members to recognize that "The illusion of separateness is the dam that blocks the stream of consciousness. Overcome the illusion; expand your circle of

---

[31] Death By Stereo. 2015. "Sing Along With The Patriotic Punks." *Youtube*, February 21. Accessed [December 28, 2016.] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VbeNNsYwlp8.
[32] N.W.A. 2006. "Fuck tha Police." *Youtube*, August 16. Accessed [December 29, 2016.] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WiX7GTelTPM.

compassion" (29). This belief is taken up time and time again in various Hip Hop texts, including the work of Chuck-D and Yusuf Jah (1997) and RZA and Chris Norris (2009).

The histories of Hip Hop and Hardcore are also inherently linked to the celebration of difference, as noted in Chapter Three. Hip Hop developed in the economically deprived Bronx of the 1970s, among racially oppressed and marginalized youth (Chang 2005). Hardcore came into being after the collapse of the Punk Rock movement in the early 1980s, attracting disenfranchised young people from the suburbs of Southern California (Blush 2001). Both communities welcomed those on the fringes of society, whether they were racial and/or economic minorities, gang members, skinheads or runaways. Based on the experiences of the participants involved with this project, it would appear that modern Hardcore and Hip Hop still uphold this tradition of embracing diversity.

Both Hip Hop and modern Hardcore have provided participants with networks of support. Numerous examples of these support networks fill the pages of this thesis. One example is the Halloween Fundraiser that Sheldon Runs Like Deer and his Calgary Hardcore friends organize. These annual fundraisers bring together live music, financial and material assistance, and Calgary's local Hardcore scene. As of 2015, Sheldon and his friends had successfully held two Halloween Fundraisers, with the first show attracting over two hundred people. In the case of Mash Yellowbird, his friendship with Kansas City based rapper Rushin Roolet provided Mash with important knowledge about the music industry. Rushin Roolet encouraged Mash's development as an artist by imparting invaluable wisdom gleaned from years of musical experience. In turn, Mash now supports the musical work of his fellow Hip Hoppas, assisting

with production and promoting their tracks on social media. As evidenced by the experiences of my research participants, both Hip Hop and Hardcore celebrate the idea of local community, or scenes, and loyalty. In turn, these beliefs encourage the creation and maintenance of networks of support.

For the purposes of my work, I have had to be careful about terms such as 'community' and 'scene.' Additionally, I try to delineate the difference between 'community' and 'local community.' In the context of this thesis, 'scene' or 'local community' refers to musical participation that takes place within the physical boundaries of a neighborhood or city. For example, I refer to Calgary's Hardcore scene repeatedly throughout this work. As noted in Chapter One, the use of 'scene' could somewhat loosely be compared with that of 'territory' as outlined by Kathleen Buddle in her work on Aboriginal gangs in Winnipeg (2011). However, the term 'territory' may suggest a level of violence used to protect the boundaries of a given location, which is not usually the case with 'scene.' Additionally, there is an emotional and communal element of belonging to 'scene' which moves beyond the limitations of physical space, in that members of a 'scene' have a sense of being connected to one another. The term 'territory' does not necessarily impart this level of social connectedness. My use of the terms 'scene' and 'local community' are imperfect and flawed, but they are an attempt to recognize the importance of musical participation at a local level.

My use of the term 'community' is informed largely by the work of Eckert and McConnell-Gint (1992), and to a lesser extent, the work of Dell Hymes (1974b). Dell Hymes proposed the model of 'speech community,' which is defined, in part, "as a

community sharing knowledge of rules for the conduct and interpretation of speech" (51). Hymes notes that the ability to engage with a speech community relies on "knowledge of at least one form of speech" as well as "knowledge also of its patterns of use" (51). The usefulness of Hymes's approach is readily apparent, in that Hip Hop and modern Hardcore both utilize respective norms and rules surrounding speech. This is demonstrated in the linguistic work of Samy Alim, who has extensively studied what he terms 'Hip Hop language' (2006).

However, Hymes's model of speech community is incomplete. Hymes notes that the knowledge necessary to engage with a speech community "may be shared apart from common membership in a community" (1974b:51), and that "additional notions, such as language field, speech field, and speech network" are needed (51). Additionally, Hymes suggests that "the contribution of the social sciences in characterizing the notions of community, and of membership in a community" (51) would further strengthen his conceptual framework of speech community. Of course, membership in a community may not be driven by linguistic practices at all, as Hymes notes that "membership in a community … may not even saliently involve language and speaking" (50).

The community of practice model, as defined by Eckert and McConnell-Gint (1992), helps to resolve some of the issues relating to defining communal membership that Hymes brings up (1974b). A community of practice can be understood as "an aggregate of people who come together around mutual engagement in an endeavor"

(Eckert and McConnell-Gint1992:464). Laura Ahearn notes that a community of practice is identified by three criteria, which are "(1) mutual engagement; (2) a joint enterprise; and (3) a shared repertoire" (2012:115).

I argue that my research participants all belong to one community of practice, based on their mutual engagement in Hip Hop and modern Hardcore, a joint enterprise in maintaining their local musical scenes, and a shared repertoire of norms and social beliefs. Chapter Two outlines key features of these shared beliefs, including an emphasis on social justice and supporting one's local scene. Stories are drawn from the participants themselves, in conjunction with lyrical and text-based examples.

As I have tried to make clear throughout this thesis, systems of belief are embedded within the Hip Hop and modern Hardcore scenes in which my research participants are involved. These beliefs, in turn, shape their attitudes and experiences. In the 'Tao of Wu', RZA and Chris Norris write,

> The world is filled with lies and illusions. Billions of people are living in illusion – they are mentally blind, deaf, and dumb. Yet each possess the qualifications to build or destroy. Our thoughts are the governing, dominating power on this planet. Each thought is like a bomb. It could either save you or kill you. It has been said that words kill faster than bullets. Yet both words and bullets are created by thoughts. In fact, all you see around you comes from the thoughts of people. So who can man blame for the condition that the world is in besides man? Who can change the world besides man? (2009:205).

This belief in the importance of thought, this emphasis upon raising one's social and emotional condition, is mirrored by Dubb Hardaway. Dubb believes that artists "should use talent for something positive" and that music should hold "substance."

Rather than trying to "dumb down" his audiences by extolling the virtues of bling and partying, Dubb shares his "values and morals." With his raps about the affront to Lakota history that is Mount Rushmore, and the joy of attending pow-wows, Dubb is using rap as a vehicle to express his lived reality, his truth. In the process, Dubb reveals that there is far more to life than accumulating riches and drinking; there's more important things to discuss, such as his ancestral connection to the land, the beauty of Lakota culture, and what it means to be a young man struggling to support a family.

When the band Death Before Dishonor sings "I'll fight for my brothers / I'll die for my family" and "My friends / My family / would die for me" in their track 6.6.6. (Friends, Family, Forever)[33], they are echoing a commonly held belief about the importance of loyalty and belonging within the wider modern Hardcore community, as described in the experiences of participants such as Arnold, Sheldon, and Sarah. The sense of belonging and loyalty that modern Hardcore has bestowed upon Arnold has encouraged him to engage with the wider Aboriginal community surrounding Edmonton. As Arnold notes, "It's taught me to engage, which would be stemming from the Aboriginal social issues. That's what it definitely did. With a sense of [the Hardcore] community, you could build that with the Aboriginal community, build that

[33] Death Before Dishonor. 2012. "666 Friends, Family, Forever." *Youtube*, January 16. Accessed [December 30, 2016.] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ceb5SUbFDas.

community." Arnold hopes to bring the wisdom and strength imparted from Hardcore to Aboriginal peoples who may benefit from them, particularly youth.

As outlined in the past four chapters, engagement in modern Hardcore and Hip Hop has had positive benefits for the nine research participants who gave their time and insight to this work. I hope that by highlighting these findings, I can make a contribution to the field of anthropology, however small and seemingly insignificant. For one, I hope that this thesis has helped to push for a wider understanding of musical participation as framed by Christopher Small's theory of musicking (1998), particularly when applied to the discipline of cultural anthropology. Another goal of my work is to emphasize that the participants in this project should be recognized as multifaceted, dynamic people who fulfill a number of social roles. 'Racial univocality' (Kun 2005:89) is an unfair burden to place on anyone, let alone young people who are trying to be heard and understood on their own terms. Lastly, it is my sincerest wish that readers of this thesis to recognize the importance of music in the social lives of indigenous youth and their allies.

Working in the field is a life changing process, one that challenges the scholar and participants alike. Every time I return to my notes and transcriptions, my books and recordings, I learn something new. I am humbled by the fact that, in years to come, I will continue to learn more about this topic, and if my work is worthy, hopefully others will learn something from it too. It is a journey that has changed me intellectually, emotionally, spiritually and yes, physically. As Walter Lightning writes,

"It is though every time I enter a doorway of information and knowledge, I discover that there are other doors that have to be entered" (1992:217). I have entered one doorway, and have many more to open. This thesis is only a first step, but one that was taken with the help, wisdom and insight granted to me by the nine participants who took part in this journey with me.

Works Cited

Abbey, Eric James. 2014. "Introduction." In *Hardcore, Punk and Other Junk*, edited By Eric James Abbey and Colin Helb, xiii – xvi. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.

Adams, Kyle. 2015. "The musical analysis of hip-hop." In *The Cambridge Companion to Hip Hop*, edited by Justin A. Williams, 118 - 134. Cambridge: Cambridge UniversityPress.

Ahearn, Laura. 2012. *Living Language: An Introduction to Linguistic Anthropology*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Alfred, Taiaiake. 2004. "Warrior Scholarship: Seeing the University as a Ground of Contention." In Indigenizing the Academy: Transforming Scholarship and Empowering Communities, edited by Devon A. Mihesuah and Angela Cavender, 88 – 99. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press.

Alim, Samy. 2006. *Roc The Mic Right: The Language of Hip Hop Culture*. New York, NY: Routledge Press.

Auslander, Philip. 2009. "Musical Persona: The Physical Performance of Popular Music." In *The Ashgate Companion to Popular Musicology*, edited by Derek B. Scott, 303 – 316. Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing.

Basso, Keith. 1990. *Western Apache Language and Culture: Essays in Linguistic Anthropology*. Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press.

Battiste, Marie. 2000. "Introduction: Unfolding the Lessons of Colinzation." In *Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision,* edited by Marie Battiste, xvi - xxx. Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia Press.

Bauman, Richard. 1977. *Verbal Art as Performance*. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.

Bender, Cora. 2003. "Performing Patriotism in Native North America: Ojibwa Powwow - Sounds and the Paradoxes of Identity." In *The Auditory Culture Reader*, edited by Michael Bull and Les Back, 241 – 263. New York, NY: Berg Publishing.
Bennett, Andy. 2000. *Popular Music and Youth Culture: Music, Identity and Place*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press.

Blush, Steven and George Petros. 2001. *American Hardcore: A Tribal History*. 2nd ed. Port Townsend, WA: Feral House Books.

Briggs, Charles L. and Richard Bauman. 1992. "Genre, Intertextuality and Social Power." Journal of Linguistic Anthropology 2, no. 2: 131 – 172. doi:10.1525/jlin.1992.2.2.131.

Buddle, Kathleen. 2011. "Urban Aboriginal Gangs and Street Sociality in the Canadian West: Places, Performances, and Predicaments of Transition." In *Aboriginal Peoples in Canadian Cities: Transformations and Continuitie*s, edited by Heather A. Howard and Craig Proulx, 171 – 201. Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press.

Bull, Michael and Les Back. 2003. "Introduction: Into Sound." In *The Auditory Culture Reade*r, edited by Michael Bull and Les Back, 1 - 18. New York, NY: Berg Publishing.

Casey, Edward S. 1996. "How to Get from Space to Place in a Fairly Short Stretch of Time: Phenomenological Prolegomena." In *Senses of Place*, edited by Steven Feld and Keith H. Basso, 13 – 52. Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press.

Chan, Sebastian. 1998. "Music(ology) Needs Context – Reinterpreting Goa Trance." *Perfect Beat* 3 (4): 93-97.

Chang, Jeff. 2005. *Can't Stop, Won't Stop: A History of the Hip-Hop Generation*. New York, NY: Picador USA.

Cheney, Charise. 2005. *Brothers Gonna Work It Out: Sexual Politics in the Golden Age of Rap Nationalism*. New York, NY: New York University Press.

Chuck-D and Yusuf Jah. 1997. *Fight the Power: Rap, Race and Reality*. New York, NY: Delta Books.

Churchill, Ward. 1997. *A Little Matter of Genocide: Holocaust and Denial in the Americas 1492 to the Present*. City Lights Publishers: San Francisco, CA.

Cruikshank, Julie. 1990. *Life Lived Like A Story: Life Stories of Three Yukon Elder*s. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press.

Diamond, Beverley. 2012. "Recent Studies of First Nations, Inuit, and Metis Music in Canada." In *Aboriginal Music in Contemporary Canada: Echoes and Exchanges*, edited by Anna Hoefnagels and Beverley Diamond, 10 – 26. Montreal, QC: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Duranti, Alessandro. 1997. *Linguistic Anthropology*. 15th ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Eckert, Sally and Sally McConnell-Ginet. 1992. "Think Practically and Look Locally: Language and Gender as Community-Based Practice." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 21:461-90. *JSTOR Journals*, EBSCO*host (*accessed January 1, 2017.)

Feld, Steven. 1996. "Waterfalls of Song: An Acoustemology of Place Resounding in Bosavi, Papua New Guinea." In *Senses of Place*, edited by Steven Feld and Keith H. Basso, 91 – 135. Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press.

Forman, Murray. 2002. *The 'Hood Comes First: Race, Space and Place in Rap and Hip-Hop.* Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.

Gilroy, Paul. 1993. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Guattari, Felix. 2000. *The Three Ecologies*. Translated by Ian Pindar and Paul Sutton. New York, NY: Continuum. First published 1989.

Griffin, Naomi. 2012. "Gendered Performance and Performing Gender in the DIY Punk and Hardcore Music Scene." *Journal of International Women's Studies* 13 (2):66-81. *Gender Studies Database*, EBSCO*host* (accessed January 1, 2017).

Hagstrom, Miller Karl. 2010. *Segregating Sound: Inventing Folk and Pop Music in the Age of Jim Crow*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Harrison, Anthony Kwame. 2009. *Hip Hop Underground: The Integrity and Ethics of Racial Identification*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Hendry, Joy. 2005. *Reclaiming Culture: Indigenous People and Self-Representation*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Hirtz, Frank. 2003. "It Takes Modern Means to be Traditional: On Recognizing Indigenous Cultural Communities in the Philippines." *Development and Change 34* (5): 888 – 914.

Howard, Heather A. and Craig Proulx. 2011. "Transformations and Continuities: An Introduction." In *Aboriginal Peoples in Canadian Cities: Transformations and Continuities*, edited by Heather A. Howard and Craig Proulx, 1 – 22. Waterloo, ON: Alfred Laurier University Press.

Hymes, Dell.1974a "The Ethnography of Speaking." In *Language, Culture and Society: A Book of Readings*, edited by Ben G. Blount, 180 – 223. Cambridge, MA: Winthrop Publishers Inc.

Hymes, Dell. 1974b. *Foundations in Sociolinguistics*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Ignace, Marianne. 2011. "'Why Is My People Sleeping?': First Nations Hip Hop between the Rez and the City." In *Aboriginal Peoples in Canadian Cities: Transformations and Continuities*, edited by Heather A. Howard and Craig Proulx, 203 - 226. Waterloo, ON: Alfred Laurier University Press.

Igoe, Jim. "Becoming Indigenous Peoples: Difference, Inequality, and the Globalization of East African Identity Politics." *African Affairs 105 (420): 399 – 420. JSTOR Journals,* EBSCO*host* (accessed January 1, 2017).

Kelly, Casey Ryan. "Blood-Speak: Ward Churchill and the Racialization of American Indian Identity." Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies 8 (3): 240 – 265. Accessed [December 28, 2016.] http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/14791420.2011.594070/

Kun, Josh. 2005. *Audiotopia: Music, Race and America*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Krims, Adam. 2000. *Rap Music and the Poetics of Identity*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Krims, Adam. 2007. *Music and Urban Geography*. New York, NY: Routledge.

KRS-One. 2009. *The Gospel of Hip Hop: The First Instrument*. Brooklyn, NY: powerHouse Books.

Lahickey, Beth. 1997. *All Ages: Reflections on Straight Edge*. Huntington Beach, CA: Revelation Books.

Lave, Jean and Etienne Wenger. 1991. *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lightning, Walter. 1992. "Compassionate Mind: Implications of a Text Written by Elder Louis Sunchild." *Canadian Journal of Native Education* 19 (2): 215 – 253.

Lischke, Ute and David McNab. 2005. "Introduction." In *Walking A Tightrope: Aboriginal People and Their Representations*, edited by Ute Lischke and David McNab, 1 – 18. Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press.

Low, Setha. 2000. *On the Plaza: The Politics of Public Space and Culture*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.

Mihesuah, Devon A. and Angela C. Wilson, eds. 2004. Indigenizing the Academy: Transforming Scholarship and Empowering Communities. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press.

Mihesuah, Devon A. 2004. "Academic Gatekeepers." In Indigenizing the Academy: Transforming Scholarship and Empowering Communities, edited by Devon A. Mihesuah and Angela C. Wilson, 31 – 47. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press.

Millard, Drew. 2012. "All 67 References to Brooklyn in Jay-Z's Catalogue of Songs." *Complex Magazine Online,* October 1. Accessed [June 22, 2015.] http://www.complex.com/music/2012/10/all-67-references-to-brooklyn-in-jay-z-songs/

Mudimbe-Boyi, Elisabeth. 2002. "Preface." In *Beyond Dichotomies: Histories, Identities, Cultures and the Challenge of Globalization*, edited by Elisabeth Mudimbe-boyi, xi – xxv. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Muhummad, Tynetta. 1996[2015]. "Nation of Islam in America: A Nation of Beauty and Peace." *Nation of Islam History website*. Accessed [April 7, 2015.] http://www.noi.org/noi-history/

Nation of Islam Online. 2015. "What the Muslims Want." *The Muslim Program website.* Accessed [April 7, 2015.] http://www.noi.org/muslim-program/

Nation of Islam Historical Research Department. 1991. *The Secret Relationship Between Blacks and Jews*. Boston, MA: The Nation of Islam.

Nation of Islam Historical Research Department. 2010. *The Secret Relationship Between Blacks and Jews Volume 2: How Jews Gained Control of the Black American Economy.* Boston, MA: The Nation of Islam.

Native Women's Association. 2015. "Fact Sheet: Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women and Girls." *Native Women's Association website*. Accessed [January 1, 2017.] https://nwac.ca/wpcontent/uploads/2015/05/Fact_Sheet_Missing_and_Murdered_Aboriginal_Women_and_Girls/

Niezen, Ronald. 2006 “The New Politics of Resistance.” In *The Indigenous Experience: Global Perspectives*, edited by Roger Maaka and Chris Anderson, 286-306. Toronto: Canadian Scholars’ Press.

O’Donnell, Vivian and Susan Wallace. 2011. “Women in Canada: A Gender-based statistical report, Component of Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 89-503-X.” *Statistics Canada website*, July. Accessed [December 16, 2016.] http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-503-x/2010001/article/11442-eng.pdf/

Palmater, Pamela D. 2011. *Beyond Blood: Rethinking Indigenous Identity*. Saskatoon, SK: Purich Publishing Ltd.

Proulx, Craig. 2010. “Aboriginal Hip Hoppers: Representin’ Aboriginality in Cosmopolitan Worlds.” In *Indigenous Cosmopolitans: Transnational and Transcultural Indigeneity in the Twenty-First Century*, edited by Maximilian C. Forte, 39 – 61. New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing.

Rodman, Margaret. 2008[2003] “Empowering Place: Multilocality and Multivocality.” In *The Anthropology of Space and Place,* edited by Setha M. Low and Denise Lawrence-Zuniga, 204 – 223. 2nd ed. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

Rohrer, Ingo. 2014. *Cohesion and Dissolution: Friendships in the Globalized Punk and Hardcore Scenes of Buenos Aires*. Freiburg, Germany: Springer VS.

Rose, Tricia. 1994. *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture In Contemporary America*. Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press.

RZA, The and Chris Norris. 2009. *The Tao of Wu*. New York, NY: Riverhead Books.

Said, Edward. 1978[1980]. *Orientalism*. 1st paperback ed. Trowbridge and Esher: Redwood Burn Limited.

Samuels, David W. 2006. *Putting a Song on Top of It: Expression and Identity on the San Carlos Apache Reservation*. Tuscon, AZ: University of Arizona Press.

Small, Christopher. 1998. *Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.

Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. 2012[1999]. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. 2nd ed. New York, NY: Zed Books.

Sturm, Circe. 2010. *The Struggle Over Cherokee Identity in the Twenty-First Century*. Santa Fe, NM: School for American Research Press.

Tedlock, Dennis. 1983. *The Spoken Word and the Work of Interpretation*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Tilton, Jennifer. 2010. *Dangerous or Endangered? Race and the Politics of Youth in Urban America*. New York, NY: New York University Press.

Turino, Thomas. 2008. *Music as Social Life: The Politics of Participation*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Universal Zulu Nation. 2014. "What is the Universal Zulu Nation???????" *Universal Zulu Nation website.* Accessed [April 7, 2015.] http://www.zulunation.com/about-zulunation/

Universal Zulu Nation. No date. "History, mystery our story." *Universal Zulu Nation website*. Accessed [May 16, 2016.] http://www.zulunation.com/historymystery-our-story/

Universal Zulu Nation. 2016. "Zulu Prayers." *Universal Zulu Nation website.* Accessed [January 1, 2017.] http://www.zulunation.com/zulu-prayer/

Universal Zulu Nation. 2016. "Zulu Beliefs." *Universal Zulu Nation website.* Accessed [January 1, 2017.] http://new.zulunation.com/zulu-beliefs/

Universal Zulu Nation. No date. "Green Book: Infinity Lessons Archive 1973 – 2000 FOR THE MASSES." *Noble 9 Zuluz Wordpress website*. Accessed [January 1, 2017.] https://uznnoble9.files.wordpress.com/2015/01/green_book.pdf/

Universal Zulu Nation. No date. "The Musical World of Afrika Bambaataa." *Universal Zulu Nation website.* Accessed [May 16, 2016.] http://zulunation.com/oldsitebak/afrika.html/

Universal Zulu Nation Netherlands. No date. "Knowledge." *Universal Zulu Nation website.* Accessed [June 22, 2015.] http://www.zulunation.nl/index.php/knowledgde/zulu-nation/

Wallace, Rick. 2011. "Power, Practice, and a Critical Pedagogy for Non-Indigenous Allies." *Canadian Journal of Native Education* 31 (2): 155 – 172, 189.

Warner, Timothy. 2009. "Approaches to Analysing Recordings of Popular Music." In *The Ashgate Companion to Popular Musicology*, edited by Derek Scott, 131 – 146. Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company.

Wheeler, Winona. 2005. "Reflections on the Social Relations of Indigenous Oral Histories." In *Walking A Tightrope: Aboriginal People and Their Representations*, edited by Ute Lischke and David McNab, 189 - 214. Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press.

Wirth, Louis. 2010[1932]. "Urbanism As A Way of Life." In *Urban Life: Readings in the Anthropology of the City*, edited by George Gmelch, Robert V. Kemper and Walter P. Zenner, 101 – 118. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.

Media Cited

143 Band. 2013. “Nalestan.” *Youtube,* July 7. Accessed [December 28, 2016.] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RB_IlKTAIJs#t=51use/

Angel Haze. 2013. “Cleaning Out My Closet.” *Youtube*, June 30. Accessed [December 29, 2016.] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=olBOFLqEREI/

Cro-Mags (Iron Skulls). 2006. “It’s the Limit + Hard Times.” *Youtube*, July 31. Accessed [December 30, 2016.] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h9YLydmCML4/

DAM. 2006. “Born Here.” *Youtube*, August 22. Accessed [December 28, 2016.] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zIo6lyP9tTE/

Death Before Dishonor. 2012. “6.6.6. Friends, Family, Forever.” *Youtube*, January 16. Accessed [December 30, 2016.] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ceb5SUbFDas/

Dead Prez. 2007. “Police State.” *Youtube*, May 22. Accessed [December 24, 2016.] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8c_UdWo4Zek/

Death By Stereo. 2015. “Sing Along with the Patriotic Punks.” *Youtube*, February 21. Accessed [December 28, 2016.] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VbeNNsYwlp8/

Dr. Octagon. 2008. “No Awareness.” *Youtube*, April 2. Accessed [December 292016.] https://youtu.be/gOFV0dD9ksg/

Eminem. 2008. “Eminem stops by the Wake Up Show!” *Youtube.* May 27. Accessed [December 27, 2016.] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G8Qpf4kUyy8/

Etown Beatdown. 2005. “Win the War.” *ETown Beatdown Bandcamp,* October 1. Accessed [December 27, 2016.] https://e-townbeatdown.bandcamp.com/track/win-the-war/

First Blood. 2008. “First Blood.” *Youtube*, November 4. Accessed [December 28, 2016.] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g7PbS6sdiZo/

Frank Waln. 2013. “AbOriginal.” *Youtube,* October 24. Accessed [December 28, 2016.] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5_1fmbKCMmY/

Frank Waln. 2014. “Born on the Rez.” *Frank Waln Bandcamp*. Accessed [December 27, 2016.] https://frankwaln47.bandcamp.com/track/born-on-the-rez/

Frank Waln. 2014. “White War.” *Frank Waln Bandcamp*. Accessed [December 27, 2016.] https://frankwaln47.bandcamp.com/track/white-war/

Immortal Technique. 2009. “The 3rd World.” *Youtube*, January 22. Accessed [December 29, 2016.] https://youtu.be/kOINSUWOqyo/

Mash Yellowbird. 2013. “Presidents.” *Mash Yellowbird SoundCloud*. Accessed [December 27, 2016.] https://soundcloud.com/mash-yellow-bird/presidents/

Mash Yellowbird. 2014. “Wise Words.” *Mash Yellowbird SoundCloud*. Accessed [December 25, 2016.] https://soundcloud.com/mash-yellow-bird/wise-words-mp3/

Mash Yellowbird. 2014. “In The Box.” *Mash Yellowbird SoundCloud*. Accessed [December 29, 2016.] https://soundcloud.com/mash-yellow-bird/in-the-box/

Mash Yellowbird. 2015. “Wake Up.” *Mash Yellowbird SoundCloud*. Accessed [December 25, 2016.] https://soundcloud.com/mash-yellow-bird/wake-up/

Minor Threat. 2013. “Guilty of Being White.” *Youtube*, March 21. Accessed [December 28, 2016.] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9MQOwFdnhXA/

N.W.A. 2006. “Fuck tha Police.” *Youtube*, August 16. Accessed [December 29, 2016.] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WiX7GTelTPM/

Public Enemy. 2006. “Prophets of Rage.” *Youtube,* September 6. Accessed [December 26, 2016.] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0_PyqMVyyVo/

Public Enemy. 2008. “Fight the Power.” *Youtube*, September 9. Accessed [December 29, 2016.] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8PaoLy7PHwk/

Reflection Eternal. 2010. “Ballad of the Black Gold.” *Youtube*, July 6. Accessed [December 29, 2016.] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ED3-DOxvq_o/

Refugees of Rap ft. Nadin. 2013. “Haram.” *Youtube*, December 16. Accessed [December 28, 2016.] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aeLth9qxX4U/

RZA feat. Daddy-O. 2010. “The Birth.” *Youtube*, September 3. Accessed [December 27, 2016.] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uPVMenAeli0/

Supaman. 2014. “Prayer Loop Song.” *Youtube*, February 20. Accessed [December 28, 2016.] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_0jq7jIa34Y#t=101/

Terror. 2011. “Keepers of the Faith.” *Youtube*, January 13. Accessed [December 30, 2016.] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UonmopFossY/

Trapped Under Ice. 2011. “Pleased To Meet You.” *Youtube*, December 19. Accessed [December 28, 2016.] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3l-utL_cY2Y/

Tupac Shakur. 2008. “Keep Ya Head Up.” *Youtube*, July 30. Accessed [December 28, 2016.] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XW--IGAfeas/

Will Smith. 2011. “Gettin’ Jiggy Wit’ It.” *Youtube*, March 23. Accessed [December 29, 2016.] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3JcmQONgXJM/

Winnipeg’s Most. 2011. “All That I Know.” *Youtube,* March 2. Accessed [December 24, 2016.] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5VAF3ypMS84/

Selected Discography

Death Before Dishonor. *Friends Family Forever.* Bridge Nine B9R061. 2005, compact disc.

Death By Stereo. *If Looks Could Kill, I'd Watch You Die*. Indecision Records, IND19. 1999, vinyl.

Firstblood. *Firstblood*. Trustkill Records TK76. 2006, compact disc.

Frank Waln. *Frank Waln Bandcamp* page. Accessed [January 1, 2017.] https://frankwaln47.bandcamp.com/

Dubb Hardaway. *Dubb Hardaway SoundCloud page*. Accessed [January 1, 2017.] https://soundcloud.com/dubbhardaway/

KRS-One and Marley Marl. *Hip Hop Lives.* Koch Records, KOC-CD-4243. 1997, compact disc.

Mash Yellowbird. *Mash Yellowbird SoundCloud page*. Accessed [January 1, 2017.] https://soundcloud.com/mash-yellow-bird/

Public Enemy. *It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back*. Columbia Records, 01-462415-30. 1988, compact disc.

RZA. *Birth of a Prince*. Wu/Sanctuary/BMG Records 06076-84652. 2003, compact disc.

Shakur, Tupac. *Strictly 4 My N.I.G.G.A.Z*. Interscope Records 0518402. 1993, compact disc.

Sugarhill Gang. *Sugarhill Gang.* Sugarhill Records, 508.588. 1980, vinyl.

Terror. *Keepers of the Faith.* Century Media Records, 18686. 2010, compact disc.