All the Eagles and the Ravens in the House Say *Yeah*: (Ab)original Hip-Hop, Heritage, and Love

Lauren Jessica Amsterdam

Music is our witness, and our ally. The "beat" is the confession which recognizes, changes, and conquers time.

—James Baldwin, *Of the Sorrow Songs: The Cross of Redemption*

I think finally, and for once, Indigenous people are being original. That's what Indigenous means: we're the originals. We're the first peoples. Aboriginals. Before this, we were Native versions of other people. We had Native Cypress Hills, a Native version of Snoop Dogg, the Native version of Master P, and the Native Eminem. And for a long time we have been that. And finally, we have MCs that don't need to be pigeonholed as Native MCs, that don't need to hold onto that with their dear lives. What people are doing now is standing out to all genres and not limiting themselves to the Native market. So we have crossover appeal now, because we're finally original. We finally just sound like us. We have our own sound. And our blood is secondary and our love for hip-hop and this music is first, and people are seeing that. Before, it was Native music meant for only Natives to listen to, which is extremely selfish. You're setting yourself up for almost destruction. And when it's done by Natives and meant for the whole world, you're just setting yourself up for success and for freakin' world domination. You know, no matter where you're at, whether you're in Los Angeles or whether you're in freaking

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Saskatoon, a train will run through your town covered in graffiti and that's hip hop. . . . As long as there's youth, there will be hip-hop.

—MC Red Cloud, Revolutions Per Minute

Be careful with each other so that you can be dangerous together.

—Anarchist poster from Des Moines, Iowa

Young people across Native America and Canada's First Nations are rhyming, storytelling, and spreading love—taking action to make their voices heard, their bodies visible, and their futures manifest. Refusing to be restricted by geographies of dislocation, Native hip-hop artists are rapping, mapping cartographies of continuity over stolen lands and constricted latitudes of existence, and using beats and break-dancing to navigate new places, sacred places, and dismantled places. While artists are indeed inheriting loss, they choose to move with loss, not past it, being playful and political with real and imagined memories. Rather than mourn who they would or could have been if the past were different, artists orient themselves towards the potentiality of the future through self-love and communal care, shedding the settler nation's inculcation of shame and alienation.

This article seeks not to explain how individuals are governed by institutions and traditions, but rather focuses on why artists enact unique expressions of heritage through hip-hop sound and style, and how these expressions are directed towards securing greater power over self-representation and cultural sovereignty unavailable within the settler nation's designated Indigenous performance spaces, dominant political discourse, or promotion of multiculturalism.[1] Unsettling ideas about authenticity and access, I examine hip-hop texts in which heritage emerges as a potent and plastic space for expressing renewed indigeneity, or what I am calling (ab)originality: a style of being both first and fresh while refusing to be anything other than foremost. I investigate how artists are representing/reppin' (ab)originality, ascribing Indigenous lifeways and life values to their performances, and generating a radicalized Indigenous heritage that is everywhere, but most of all, in hip-hop.[2] When confronting the symptoms of settler colonialism—racism, rupture, police brutality, and hate—artists demonstrate that the materiality of hip-hop is a way of moving past the necessity of survival to a fuller, thriving political and cultural life and living, in spite of structural violence, upon the insistence that one is already free.

Indigenous scholars and non-Native allies assert that cultural sovereignty is essential to political sovereignty,[3] and contemporary Natives are utilizing a myriad of musical idioms to perform indigeneity and achieve the fullest possible expression of political and creative agency.[4] Native American and First Nations hip-hop artists critically intervene into settler narratives as young persons increasingly choose hip-hop texts (songs, videos, interviews) as the "proper" place to assert indigeneity, even as they are remixing what it means to be Indigenous.[5] For many of these music-makers, purity is not necessarily a relevant measure of reality; therefore, understanding Indigenous performance practices is "especially urgent, given their potential to disrupt longstanding notions of Indigenous legitimacy."[6] Discursive divisions become lived divisions for individuals who negotiate the partitions of imperial power in their daily lives, such as the youth in Winnipeg's North End where the homicide rate is 143 times higher than the national average.[7]

Unsettling Loss

> And now I'm like a major threat 'cos I remind you of the things you were made to forget.
>
> —Tupac Shakur, "Holler If Ya Hear Me"

This piece traces protractions of settler violence as young people experience them and express them in song. Contesting the notion of post-colonialism, Patrick Wolfe argues the viability of the state is contingent upon continually suppressing Indigenous existence/resistance: "When invasion is recognized as a structure rather than an event, its history does not stop—or, more to the point, become relatively trivial—when it moves on from the era of frontier homicide. Rather, narrating that history involves charting the continuities, discontinuities, adjustments, and departures whereby a logic that initially informed frontier killing transmutes into different modalities, discourses and institutional formations as it undergirds the historical development and complexification of settler society."[8] Looking at the role of culture in settlement, I examine a mechanism of elimination that synthesizes the spatial logic of invasion with the corporeal reality of erasure: shame.

The settling of North America was an intensive territorial expropriation, and a transformation of "virgin land" into "civilization." The development of settler society—"progress"—required the disappearance of prior societies, and Natives were forcibly displaced from their land and alienated from communal land practices. To settlers constructing a nation-state and a national mythology, Indigenous traditions—practices intertwined with places—were an affront to the installation of civilization, offending their Christian morals and obstructing their control over territory. In order for Indigenous persons to assimilate (i.e. disappear) into settler society, they must cease to be Indigenous, thereby relinquishing their "savage" cultural practices that reflected their connections to pre-"discovery" America. Colonial officials and missionaries attempted to breed out and beat out indigeneity—killing the Indian and saving the Man—by eliminating culture and rituals through the aggressive force of shame.

While Indigenous peoples maintain longstanding practices, my intention here is to reveal how the settler nation mobilizes "tradition" to manufacture shame and to argue that shame constitutes an essential principle of invasion by furthering settlers' access to land. Denied the opportunity to substantiate sovereignty through territoriality, Indigenous persons inherit the burden of proving their existence through tradition because it is expressive of the land. In the settler imagination, tradition is the master trope of indigeneity, trafficking in expectations of purity and desires for myth, and must be in its proper place—the primordial land of the past—in order to be authentic.[9] The nation-state's imposition of tradition as an immutable and uninterrupted set of practices, under the guise of "modernity," inspires subaltern subjects to the impossible aspiration of recovering an unrecoverable authentic self-identity. The policing of tradition as an essence expressive of *real* indigeneity, initially used to shame Indigenous peoples into forcibly abandoning their "savage" practices, now serves the oppression of multiculturalism. Indictments of assimilation shame people for their acquiescence in relinquishing their true selves and obfuscates the structural logic of genocide by blaming individuals for their failure to transmit tradition successfully, creating widespread feelings of sadness and loss.[10]

Unsettling culture from place and abandoning the thorny trope of invented traditions, I advocate a concept of heritage as a holistic approach to understanding how young artists perceive violence and manage loss in their daily lives, and how their expressions of (ab)original heritage erode a history of systemic elimination masquerading as personal failure.[11] Musician-activist Tiokasin Ghosthorse insists, "[America] is founded on getting rid of our culture."[12] Practicing hip-hop is political because it shatters the benchmark of authenticity, a standard of quantifying *real* indigeneity, in the service of territorial acquisition. Member of First Nations DJ collective A Tribe Called Red, Bear Witness (Cayugan) affirms that corporeal existence *is* cultural resistance: "When everything has been done to break down our communities and extinguish us as a people, that we're still here and doing what we're doing, that's already political."[13] Demonstrating their awareness that the preservation of settler nationalism is dependent on their absence, Native artists are mobilizing hop-hop to reveal their struggles with violence and undertake direct action against loss. Direct action is the political practice of living the change you want to see in the world. By building the future now, artists take risks, because self-love and love for your people reclaims heritage and unshackles indigeneity from settler fantasies and hegemonies of trauma. Love is the process of dislodging oneself from the mechanism of invasion. Refusing to reproduce culture in the shadows of loss, young people choose the bass and breaks of hip-hop for the sound of their thundering dawns.

Heritage Break-Beats

> In our continent, history can be divided into 3 phrases: before the arrival of the invaders; these five hundred years; and that period, beginning today, which we must define and build.
>
> —Gord Hill, *500 Years of Indigenous Resistance*

Hip-hop is a space for critically interrogating the hegemony of "remembrances." On his track "Our Home and Native Land," Wab Kinew (Anishinaabe) raps over a sample of the Canadian national anthem and addresses the nation-state directly. As he raps, "Oh Canada, the way you treated us, a damn shame," Kinew powerfully flips the script on the settler nation's legacy of cultural "progress" and history of fabricating Indigenous shame through residential schools, missionization, and legal policy. Addressing the rape of his father by a nun at a residential school, he raps:

> I really should explain I'm not one to complain
> But the way my dad had it just makes my head hang
> Nuns in the habit doing terrible things
> Priests beating kids with their rulers and their canes. . .
> They did say sorry but ain't a damn thing changed[14]

Kinew recognizes the continued reproduction of shame over time and space. He returns to the chorus—"the way you [Canada] treated us, a damn shame"—and enacts a rhetorical transference of shame from Indigenous body to geopolitical body. On the album's title track "Mide><Sun Music," Kinew references his participation in the

summer Sun Dance with his father and the pride he feels when offering his flesh as a sacrifice, in poetic contrast to his father's flesh as a site of torture. Often appearing shirtless in his music videos, Kinew confidently presents his sexuality as healthy in defiance of the Native body as a site of affliction, and his striking Sun Dance scars demonstrate to fans that he carries his heritage with him—on his own terms—in every space. Choosing corporeal existence and cultural resistance, Kinew frequently remarks, "I don't push drugs, I pull skulls."

Tlingit hip-hop artist D-Script, also known as "The Tlingit" from Angoon, Alaska, describes his music as "subsistence rap," situating hip-hop as an augmentation of Indigenous survival ways that continue to nourish and sustain him.[15] On the lyrics to his track "and my drum goez. . .," D-Script describes his process of calibrating (ab)originality through hip-hop:

> I made my way as a youth in AK / They would always say that I should be ashamed
> Cos I wasn't living to the drum that they bang / I was on my own thang singing in the rain
> Emotional strain pressing my brain / Parents recipe for not acting the same
> I'm packing my bags checking Classified ads / Need to get a job so I can get my own pad
> Free at last to live life fast / The drum of my choice no one holding me back
> Kicking these rhymes while the sockeye pass / Banging my drum wearing my mask
> Imma be me and perfect my craft / My drum beats richer than a stack of cash
> It reaches others it makes an impact / I found my drum now I'm giving it back.[16]

Describing the pull between the dominant culture ("they would always say I should be ashamed") and his own choices ("I was on my own thing"), D-Script articulates his struggle to achieve autonomy and live according to his own drum. In the song, the primary drum line is comprised of a sample from an Indigenous drum. Enhanced by a hip-hop bass line, D-Script's multifaceted musical and social heritage is sonically manifest as a syncopated rhythm. His nuanced musical reality is also alluded to in the lyrics: D-Script refers to his hip-hop practice ("kicking these rhymes") and his Tlingit musical practice ("banging my drum, wearing my mask") in the same line, and hints again at subsistence traditions by situating himself locally as he reps the sockeye salmon of his 'hood. Instead of trying to "get rich or die trying," D-Script depicts his music as service.

Heritage, unlike notions of tradition, puts the individual behind the turntables of an "untraditional" musical idiom to modulate pasts with futures, and rupture with resilience and risk. Jacques Derrida conceives of heritage as a "double injunction," the presence of conflicting tensions between choice and constraint. Examining performances of (ab)originality in terms of heritage does not presuppose the perfection of enactment, but rather accentuates the slippages that emerge as one realizes their agency within a web of larger commitments: "It is necessary first of all to know and to know how to *reaffirm* what comes 'before us,' which we therefore receive even before choosing, and to behave in this respect as a free subject. . . . What does it mean to reaffirm? It means not simply accepting this heritage but relaunching it otherwise and keeping it alive. Not choosing it (since what characterizes a heritage is first of all that one does not choose it; it is what violently elects us), but choosing to keep it alive."[17] D-Script chooses to keep his heritage alive by offering himself and his music in generosity.

Heritage implies "at every moment, in a different context, a filtering, a choice, a strategy."[18] By negotiating obligation with innovation, hip-hop artists defy the logic of elimination, relocate cultural continuity to hip-hop, and claim revolutionary possibility—making something from what they are told is nothing. It is from this idea of heritage, specifically the idea that one chooses to keep heritage alive, that we can understand (ab) original love as the synchronicity of gratitude for what came before and generosity for what follows. John Trudell (Santee Sioux), connects his commitment to service to love: "No matter what they ever do to us, we must always act for the love of our people and the earth. We must not react out of hatred against those who have no sense."[19]

The colonial archive depicts living Indigenous persons as the vanishing race, shackling them to the imagined topography of the idealized past. However, the centrality of spatiality in hip-hop's meaning and praxis empowers rappers to become cartographers of their own (ab)original heritage. The restriction of Black bodies in space, from the plantations to the projects, has generated metaphorical landscapes of African American struggle and liberation in musical expressions ranging from the Chocolate City to the Zulu Nation.[20] On the blocks of the South Bronx, hip-hop emerged as a genre both rooted in and referential to restrictions on and in space, its form and content informed by generations of social disruption and displacement.[21] Marked by themes of police repression, the criminalization of urban youth, and the pathologizing of poverty, hip-hop is a means of challenging the denial of access to public space and contesting economic marginalization. Supaman (Cree) taps into potent cultural imaginations of Black music as a mode of resistance: "Native Americans grasp that culture of hip-hop because of the struggle."[22] Other young Native North Americans are harnessing hip-hop's aura of urbanity as an increasingly efficacious site of (ab)original expression, exploiting the city's similarities and dissimilarities with reserves/reservations. Artists like Chase Manhattan (Pine Ridge Oglala/Leech Lake Anishinaabe/Muscogee Creek) and Sacramento Knoxx (Anishinabe/Bkejawanong/Walpole Island) reppin' Minneapolis and Southwest Detroit respectively, are aggressively destabilizing suppositions of far-off homelands by injecting urbanity into the grammar of Indigenous identification. DJ Creeasian mobilizes imagery of hood life to situate experiences of constraint on the rez, and positions a critique of capitalist structures of inequality at the very core of hip-hop's origins and purpose. He explains his understanding of where hip-hop originated:

> Kids in the inner city who couldn't afford the coolest clothing just created [hip-hop] on their own and I think that with the Native youths in the secluded areas it speaks to them because they don't have much and what better way than to create things to have fun... Why it really speaks to Native youth is because it's a way to really express your own voice. You don't need a lot of money and maybe down the road maybe it turns into something. . . . It's something from nothing.[23]

DJ Creeasian underscores the connection between being poor and silenced, and advances a politics of pleasure and empowerment. The creation of a living, thriving community "from nothing" is a form of direct action: organizing a liberated space, bereft of economic transactions but seething with people and potential.

Relocating cultural continuity to hip-hop, female hip-hop artist Lakota Jonez (Cherokee and Mohawk) says that hip-hop is an "ideal medium" for Indigenous expression because "as Native peoples we like to tell our stories and for us, the best way to always tell stories is verbal" and,

> because hip hop is the one genre of music where you can tell the most stories and tell them more in-depth than anything else because, you know for a rock track or an R&B track, it might be eight bars, sometimes maybe even just four bars. . . . But in hip hop, it's like the minimum is usually about twelve and the most might be like a sixteen. . . . So there's so much more to be said and so much more of a story to be told and be expressed.[24]

Jonez rejects being relegated to scarcity by choosing more—more space, more stories, more *original* expression.

Exemplifying the (ab)original practice of creating something fresh referential to being first, A Tribe Called Red performs "a never before heard sound made up of a wide variety of musical styles ranging from Hip-Hop, Dance Hall, Electronic, and their own mash-up of club and Pow Wow music, known as Pow Wow Step, that is quickly gaining respect from all kinds of communities from all around the world" with an attitude that reverberates with MC Red Cloud's affirmation that (Ab)original artists are capturing Native and non-Native ears because "we finally sound like us."[25] Bear Witness produces video collages in an analogous mash-up aesthetic, collecting and assembling imagery of "Injuns" and unsettling expectations about how Natives should represent themselves. By using this imagery, rather than avoiding it, "we're decolonizing these images . . . and we're taking that power back ourselves."[26] His practice is to, "Reclaim, repurpose and reuse. I like to look past the automatic reaction to say these images are racist or stereotypes (which they are) and flip it around. We make these images our own. Taking away the power they have to harm us and reclaim it for ourselves. It's like how we and many other young Native people like to wear things like the Cleveland Indians and Atlanta Braves logos. We have made these images our own."[27]

Allison Warden is an Iñupiaq performance artist, musician, playwright, and activist based in Anchorage with close ties to her home community in Kaktovik on Alaska's North Slope. Rapping as AKU-MATU, Warden samples field recordings by music collector Laura Boulton, as well as her own recordings of songs from Kaktovik (including her grandparents singing) to make beats.[28] She explains sampling as "when you take [a sound] out of context and put it in some place else."[29] Through the materiality of hip-hop, Warden resists colonial impositions in space that seek to designate where indigeneity belongs in the settler state (*there* and not *here*), and by inserting her ancestors into the present, pushes back on colonial impositions of time. Warden explains her decision to sample Iñupiaq songs: "Because they're part of who we are. They are sounds that are unique to us as human beings. They're something that resonates deeply, that strikes a chord within our soul. . . You know, it's 10,000 years of innovation and genius to come up with those sounds and songs. It's a way of honoring who we are as people by including what our real voices sound like."[30]

Warden chooses hip-hop—an untraditional medium—as a means of enabling "our *real* voices" to resound against histories of silencing. Warden presents a radical (ab)original ideation of what actually constitutes traditional, explaining that it takes years of innovation to develop traditional songs, defiantly challenging the notion of tradition as reversion and reenactment, rather than imagination and transformation, and without any "real" composers.[31]

Warden's self-described "Eskimo Rap" is motivated by an unequivocally pedagogical agenda, and her intention is not to corral Indigenous knowledge in a protected place, but rather to pass it on:

> I want to access the youth, and that's what a lot of them listen to, the Western rap, hip hop, and a lot of it has messages that don't relate to our experiences in the Arctic and our own people so I'm hoping to give them something that has a familiar kind of beat and enrich it a little bit more with our culture and our history. . . . I'm making a rap CD of all the different times in our history, positive things and not so positive things too like the diseases and things like that, so they have a better understanding of how far we've come as a people and how we have been so strong for so long as a people and how we can go with the changes. And just to give some feeling of a longer timeline for these young people, where we come from, from our history. I'm hoping with that knowledge then they'll have some more tools to go forward in their own identity and their journey.[32]

While acknowledging what has been lost and what remains at risk, Warden defiantly challenges an inheritance of loss as she asserts, "we have been so strong for so long," which is exactly why "we can go with the changes." Warden appropriates familiar rap beats and makes them more Iñupiaq, demonstrating how heritage allows her to source material cross-culturally and counters claims that artists are taking their recognizable traditions and making them more hip-hop.[33] She proffers the language of continuance and extension, rather than galvanizing the rhetoric of recovery and restoration to promote a return to "authentic" indigeneity.[34] Young people must to have the right "tools to go forward in their own identity" in order to harvest the past for their own unique tomorrow. Bear Witness says, "I'm a strong believer in the idea that culture and tradition are living, growing and changing things. We learn to understand our past to guide us into the future."[35]

Dancing has long been a political act.[36] Powwow culture, like hip-hop, is a product of the social splintering and spatial dislocation of forced displacement during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Against this background of rupture and resilience, it is how powwow actors interpret the role of dance, not the content of dances, which facilitates the construction of social memory.[37] Echoing Warden's description of a tradition of Iñupiaq innovation and MC Red Cloud's (ab)originality, John Troutman argues that it was precisely because of dancers' ability to improvise under oppressive conditions that dance "served as perhaps the most significant anti-assimilation weapon that the Lakotas could wield."[38] As students returned home from residential schools, dancing was a means of reincorporating themselves into Native life, ameliorating the absence of belonging and nurturing self-love. It was through dance—even though dance was

continually being transformed—that Native young people became more of themselves. Dancing sustained lifeways and worldviews even as the context and expression of these concepts shifted during the era of allotment and during the birth of hip-hop.

For contemporary Native artists charting their own courses of heritage, kinetic expressions such as b-boying and breaking point to a relationship between the body and the (re)turn to Indigenous worldviews. Conway K of the Red Power Squad plays with heritage and dance in the video for his socially conscious song "Emcee," signifying on the powwow emcee, the hip-hop MC, and the master of ceremony as a ritual expert. DJ Creeasian proffers a Native parallel, explaining "our elders that tell the oral stories about traditions, and right there, to me is an MC."[39] An emcee is also a position of power—a mike controller—and an opportunity to move the crowd physically, emotionally, and spiritually. As Conway K raps in the chorus:

> MC/master of ceremony/Be real and stop being phony
> MC/mike controller/Pay respect to what history has showed ya
> MC/make a connection/You ain't doing that then you ain't really reppin'
> MC/move a crowd/Rappers don't say nothing but they talk real loud.[40]

In the music video, Conway K and his DJ encounter a wannabe hip-hopper, accessorized in the artifices of capitalism, who claims he's got "the moves" as he emulates Black rappers like Jay-Z. Conway K initiates an intervention: a male fancy dancer appears, resplendent in feathered bling, accompanied by the percussive rattle of bells and shells and the beat of the drum to perform his heritage for an Indigenous youth assimilated to the synthetic imagery of individualism and materiality of "society." Putting his hand to his chest, Conway K raps, "hip-hop is here," locating hip-hop in the Native body and communicating the primacy of love in cultivating musical community. Taking inspiration from the fancy dancer, our wannabe is called upon to respect himself and to take on the responsibility of heritage. He rises and with sudden virtuosity begins to break-dance next to the fancy dancer, positioning dancing, albeit untraditional dancing, as an extension of Indigenous ontology. It is through his fresh moves, not the "old" moves of the fancy dancer, that the wannabe reps himself as an Indigenous man. The message here is clear: love yourself, leave shame behind, and be (ab)original. As Amy Stillman writes, "To dance is to know where you come from."[41]

Dancing is also about knowing where you're going. As direct action, dancing "lets people develop confidence in themselves and to become conscious of their individual and collective force."[42] For Conway K and our wannabe, the dance floor becomes a space of self-actualization. For A Tribe Called Red, the dance floor becomes a space for building communal power. Bear Witness describes what moved him during his first experience playing "Pow Wow Step" in a club: "It was the reaction from the aboriginal people in the crowd, where they'd take over the dance floor. This is us now. It was like, we're gonna push everybody back and take over that space, which is something you don't see come out of the aboriginal community enough."[43]

Invaders, Haters, and Risk

> Life will break you. Nobody can protect you from that, and living alone won't either, for solitude will also break you with its yearning. You have to love. You have to feel. It is the reason you are here on earth. You are here to risk your heart.
>
> —Louise Erdrich, *The Painted Drum*

An expression of heritage does not require the heir to chase after loss, hoping to recover it or ameliorate it. Taking on heritage is an act of reverent rebellion: "To accept one's past—one's history—is not the same thing as drowning in it; it is learning how to use it."[44] Heritage is an expression of agency, allowing an individual the utility and mobility of choice, strategy, and play. Heritage is empowering. As Andrea Smith writes, "When we no longer have to carry the burden of political and cultural purity, we can be more flexible and creative in engaging multiple strategies and creating a plethora of alliances that can enable us to use the logics of settler colonialism against itself."[45] Heritage is a risk because it is a challenge, a refusal to allow the past to constrict the future before it unfolds. According to Derrida, "An heir is not only someone who receives, he or she is someone who chooses, and who takes the risk of deciding. . . . The heir's affirmation consists, of course, in his interpretation; it consists in choosing."[46]

The threat of elimination courses through many hip-hop texts, and the presence of "haters"—a figure of derision and aggression common in hip-hop—aggregates greater meaning in a settler society where haters stand in for invaders. For example, on their track "Whut About," RezLoyal raps, "this one goes out to my haters" in the first verse, before a chorus that repeatedly asks, "What about the Natives that are in the ground / What about the ones that are here today."[47] The sense of risk is manifested concretely here, as artists experience the state's logic of elimination through structural, state, and inter-personal violence. After all, the most egregious example of haters is undoubtedly the United States government—past, present, and future. As Frank Waln skillfully illustrates on his 2013 release "Oil 4 Blood," battles to protect Indigenous land from ruinous resource extraction are rapidly intensifying.

Some artists are evoking Black narratives of racial discrimination and police violence to situate their own experiences of restricted mobility. First Nations rapper Lorenzo says, "People feel like there's something against them all the time, that there's racism, that the police treat us differently. It's almost like [L.A. gangster rap pioneers] NWA in the early '90s. That's Winnipeg now, and instead of black people it's native people."[48] In his song "Dead Fly," Brooklyn anxiously raps about police repression, explaining that he is "feelin' the stress and it's pressin' on my chest":

> Racist cops on the block / When you gone are they gonna miss you
> Put you in the box / And mama's picture so desperate with you
> Mothafuckers always tryin' keep me silent / They telling the public that we all are violent
> With the stars so far it don't matter where we fallin' / We gonna follow our calling.[49]

Morbid imagery pervades the song: "Mama on her bedside tired she's got red eyes/ Been up for a week she can't sleep with a dead fly." Bearing witness to the dead fly on

her wall, Brooklyn's mother mourns her son out on the street, dead while he's even still alive. In the chorus, Brooklyn references his need to allay his anxiety—"Puffing the endo/Burning the candle"—but smoking marijuana only exacerbates his exhaustion. The doleful dead fly imagery, in concert with music video images depicting Brooklyn's funeral service, imply the futility to society of young Aboriginal men, who are dropping like flies without vigilance or recompense. Considering police brutality as settler violence is crucial to understanding Derrida's notion of risk, for choosing to express oneself as (Ab)original and into hip-hop has real, corporeal consequences.

Red Eagle, also known as Jesse Robbins, is Tvshka Homma Choctaw and lives in Oklahoma City. He cites John Trudell and Tupac Shakur as two of the largest influences on his music and life, aligning himself in both Black and Native protest traditions.[50] In his song "High Above the Clouds," Red Eagle addresses the structural and shapeshifting violence of invasion:

> Yeah I read your books so I know my enemies
> Never have your founding fathers ever been a friend to me
> Removal, murder, lies, slavery / I am not American you can't erase our memories
> Rapists on your dollar murder on your cents
> Everybody asking me where did the Natives went?
> I tell 'em just like this pull your wallet out real quick
> Look up on a twenty Andrew Jackson was a bitch.
> Yeah huh that right there is funny
> Guess that's what they mean when they say blood money
> You can have it back diabetes and cirrhosis / I know you good at taking so—take that.[51]

Red Eagle resounds in the chorus: "I represent the people not treated as equal," pointing to his inheritance of deficiency and his lived experience of illegitimacy, but also his choice to take on the challenge of being an MC and voice the alter-Native histories. Proving he is no Noble Savage, Red Cloud rejects the fallacious White narratives that seek to locate Natives in the past and asserts that his people's collective memory of genocide and theft is indeed intact. In the music video, Red Cloud presents a searing critique of American capitalism and history, burning twenty-dollar bills and spurning the assumption that he is American, but imagery of Red Cloud participating in Choctaw activities such as stickball and dances confirms his commitment to his community and demonstrates that his resistance is grounded in love for his heritage and his people.

For Frank Waln (Sicangu Lakota from Rosebud Reservation), exploring heritage through hip-hop entails the challenge of confronting the past, and rendering it usable and accessible, rather than an impossible aspiration. The challenge of heritage is to be connected without being constrained. Waln is currently studying at Columbia College of Music in Chicago and makes music both as a solo artist and as a member of NAMMY-award-winning hip-hop group Nake Nale Waun. Waln translates the Lakota phrase *nake nale waun* to mean, "I am always ready at all times, for anything" invoking a traditional principle of versatility.[52] He describes himself as "a digital storyteller who uses music to communicate a message of hope. My music is an extension of

spirit, my heart, my proud Lakota values and my struggles."[53] Interposing his Lakota values into a digital idiom, Waln mobilizes his heritage as a pedagogical strategy, for political effect, and for joy. On the track, "Hear My Cry," Waln rejects racialized limitation and situates his own challenges within communal struggle:

> I was born red stained with the blood of genocide
> Now a mascot's the only way that I'm identified
> Black hawk red skin the image of our dead men
> Dressed in a headdress my people it's depressing
> Addressing the hills I want my Black Hills back
> The government wants me dead but I never will crack
> Feel that—yo I'm feeling like it's our time
> All I got to say is fuck the Keystone Pipeline
> I'm praying for the knowledge to make it through college
> With the world on my back yo the challenge is ours.[54]

Carrying the weight of the massacre of his ancestors in his skin, Waln is marred by an inheritance of loss. Demonstrating an acute awareness that being Native means his body is always on the line, Waln confirms Wolfe's argument that genocide is what makes him a member of the Indian race, and life itself is a risk. He is born stained with the past; and in the present, living, not dying, is an act of defiance. American Indian Movement leader Leonard Peltier, U.S.P. #89637-132, recognizes that shame, guilt, and "aboriginal sin" are socially reproduced: "In this life you find yourself guilty of being who you are. Being yourself, that's Aboriginal Sin, the worst sin of all. That's a sin you'll never be forgiven for. We Indians are all guilty, guilty of being ourselves. We're taught that guilt from the day we're born."[55] The past is also brought to bear on the heir by the mimesis of reductionist Indian iconography, which perpetuates racism against Indians, but arguably more importantly, the assault of images of dead Indians as the only "real" Indians is a burden. In Waln's eyes, the mimesis of tradition is weighing us down. Rapping "The government wants me dead," Waln points to a palpable awareness of structural violence and the threat of haters/invaders, and as Waln moves forward with a world on his back, he orients towards the future and the collective responsibility of heritage.

For artists, breaking with the representation of Indian as "Injun" is a risk because "untraditional" Natives risk being perceived as inadequate and insufficient. Identifying as a hip-hop artist, individuals confront another settler desire, that of hip-hop as a window into sensational Black violence. Frank Waln poetically connects the reductionist mainstream desire of these two expectations and the diminished life chances associated with both experiences: "I am not one of those rappers shooting bullets. I am the rapper trying to dodge the bullets so I can chase my dreams! Don't stereotype rappers and Hip Hop."[56] Many artists articulate instances of feeling not fully real and being judged for who they are (and what they are not) by non-Natives who feel that hip-hop is not what they should be doing. Allison Warden was recently approached by the producers of a reality show set in Alaska to contribute to the soundtrack, but her submission was ultimately declined. "We were looking for something a bit more Native sounding," they told her. Relaying her experience, Warden exclaimed, "Well I'm *super* Native, so I don't know

what they're looking for!" in a tone equally assertive and playful.[57] Jon-C (Sagkeeng) of Winnipeg's Most is also a member of a newly formed coalition of Aboriginal hip-hop artists in Winnipeg that addresses issues of racism: "I know us as Aboriginals in Canada, in Winnipeg especially, it's a fight you know what I mean. It's a fight to protect who we are, like we can't be who we are because we're being judged for being who we are without doing anything, you know what I mean, it doesn't even make sense."[58]

For these artists, it is a struggle to be who they are because their hypervisibility in an urban environment opens them up to judgment. Another member of Winnipeg's Most, Brooklyn, insists that the combination of being born Aboriginal and choosing to look like a hip-hop artist constitutes sufficient grounds for police harassment. Jon-C identifies as full-blooded, but asserts that Winnipeg's Most has "never tried to put ourselves in that box as Aboriginal/Native rappers," as he experiences the settler state's corralling and caging of indigeneity.[59] Also in Winnipeg, Wab Kinew articulates and challenges another manifestation of expected limitation: "Here we are expected to be poor, drunk criminals so the rapper persona fits quite nicely with what's expected of us. I counter that with who I am: sober, educated and positive."[60]

Last Night the DJ Saved My Life

> We're making music that people have been waiting to hear.
>
> —DJ Shub

Artists are not only putting their bodies on the line; they are also risking their hearts. Wab Kinew underscores the urgency of taking direct action against future losses in "Last Word." In the music video, Kinew retells the story of the Nagekinaa (the everlasting road that the spirit travels on its four-day journey to heaven) in a contemporary context. Once Kinew is out the door and on the street, he repeatedly endures trauma: missionaries, promiscuity, a car accident, and gang violence, yet he defiantly continues on. Footage of Kinew's spirit journey is interspersed with shots of all his relations—family, friends, fellow Winnipeg hip-hop artists—who together present a united but not unified multitude of (Ab)originals. Most are wearing T-shirts emblazoned with slogans of loss ("R.I.P. Sam" or "R.I.P R.J."). Kinew dons a T-shirt reading "We are SURVIVORS" above an iconic photo of hundreds of young Aborigines seated in front of a residential school. Expressing their immediate awareness of loss on a T-shirt is both assertive—it is highly visible—but also signifies how young people are taking on their heritage and choosing to wear loss on their sleeves, not on their skin. Kinew's relations hold babies in their arms, clutch photos of departed loved ones, and display sundry mementos of people who have transitioned on and the voids left behind. The lyrics of "Last Word" deal explicitly with loss and Kinew's personal experience navigating intergenerational rupture:

> If I never see tomorrow this my last will and testament
> First of all I say *migwetch* for the best of it
> Creator gave me song yeah my fam gave the rest of it
> Hope I did you proud and gave my boys the elements

That they need to succeed and didn't leave impediments
I hope my mother knows she helped with my development
Back when I was desolate / Dearest Mom, for you my best sentiment. . .
And if I die tomorrow I'll be alright / In case I never say goodbye cause you know how this life is
And if I never grow up than at least I was the nicest. . . / Ask me why I'm rapping
My mind is full of cancer / The relief is in the stanza
Advance the cause / For all the people that will never have a chance to pause
Take a second for the deceased / Now I'm back up on the beat. . .
It's the turmoil inside and it's gotta find release / So I put it in a prayer and the prayer gives me peace—so peace.[61]

Kinew alludes here to the importance of confronting loss with kindness—for love is perhaps the only compass that functions in a landscape marred by death and shame. Like James Baldwin, I am using love "not merely in the personal sense but as a state of being, or a state of grace—not in the infantile American sense of being made happy but in the tough and universal sense of quest and daring and growth."[62] Love enables and empowers individuals to take risks. If I never see tomorrow, Kinew raps, I will take action today to express my gratitude, choosing responsibility and accountability within a community infused with historical trauma, even as he risks failure. As the heir to intergenerational trauma, Kinew recognizes his agency and chooses a heritage that is constructive, not reductive. For him, making music is not only about palliation of pain, but is also preventative against death; music advances the cause of life. John Blacking presents love as "the basis of our existence as human beings," yet it is also our greatest responsibility: "The hard task is to love, and music is a skill that prepares man for this most difficult task."[63] Although not a panacea, music does present the opportunity to challenge loss and choose not to be consumed by it, even if the past cannot be rectified. Kinew signifies his ability to let go of loss in a way that is rewarding: packing up his loss in a prayer, Kinew proffers beauty from devastation, something out of nothing. Kinew's journey illustrates how to deal with loss by making choices sourced in love, and how the acceptance and love for difference—not merely tolerance—produces communal power, attacking alienation.[64] Valiant singularities of heritage are vitally important, but the production of community is what makes risk political: a multitude fights back against elimination.

Many hip-hop artists frequently portray the materiality of hip-hop as a way of living and not dying. Through the practice of music, young people inhabit a different space. They are not hanging around on the corner, getting drunk or getting high—they are in the studio dropping beats and busting rhymes. Rapper PLEX (Ojibwa), a former drug addict who currently mentors Native youth, and Supaman mobilize their recovery to model healthy (ab)originality for youth at risk. Litefoot, a Cherokee hip-hop artist, and his wife Carmen Davis (Makah/Yakama/Chippewa Cree) visit reservations across the country on their "Reach the Rez" tour, a project that Davis explains is "about doing what [we] believe to be best for the future of our people, not what people deem to be relevant now."[65]

Artists' desires to enroll Native youth in heritage exploration through hip-hop demonstrates that music is action with revolutionary possibilities, for making music fuels the replication of life. Frank Waln, who consistently references his sobriety as a vital component of his musical and social life, points to the possibility that practicing hip-hop is a way of enacting a different corporeal reality. On his Facebook page, Waln writes:

> Everyone on our rez has been affected by suicide one way or another. It's a dark cloud that settled on us yrs back. I've been there. I've felt the hopelessness amplified by depression and lack of support. It sucks. Everyone on our rez struggles with those feelings. I am not immune. It may seem like I have no worries but I have demons too. We all need to be there for each other. No one else in going to save us. We can and will save ourselves. There's no love like Lakota Love :) [66]

Waln's assertion that "There's no love like Lakota Love" implies that Lakota love is the strongest manifestation of love and equally that Lakota love (a love unique to us) is the only way we will save ourselves. Through music, Waln depicts the reality that he can, and must, rely on himself and his community to build the world they want. Poet/musician Joy Harjo also positions love as risk because "there is no easy love": "This love that holds us together. . . . It is a love with boxing gloves."[67] Acknowledging that building (ab)original community is a fight, Julien Jacobs (Yupik/Iñupiaq/Cherokee/Hausa of Nigeria), also known as DJ He Took, worked as an Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training trainer in suicide prevention. Serving as the Suicide Prevention Awareness and Healing Coalition president for his tribe is a service he considers his greatest achievement in life thus far.[68] MC and community organizer Sacramento Knoxx puts music first in working with youth in Southwest Detroit because "music saves lives, it's medicine. Music is my gift to share and it's an honor to pass that knowledge on so that's its replicable and accessible everywhere to creators."[69] The political practice of (ab)original heritage is inviting others to be creators of their own futures and active members of a thriving cultural community.

Onondaga and Hopi hip-hop artist and youth mentor DJ DoezIt (Landon Walls) designed an afterschool program teaching young people Tohono O'odham language and culture while making hip-hop music. Since implementing the program, the Ha:san Preparatory and Leadership School now maintains a 100 percent college acceptance rate for graduating seniors.[70] According to Walls, "this is the beginning":

> I have always wanted to do something like this for the youth. They have so much to say, so many things in their minds and hearts. . . . While working here I see the need for a two-way road of communication in the communities, meaning traditionally we are taught to listen to the elders and the adults, but I think for a healthy and strong community the elders and adults need to listen to the youth. Open communication is the key! Music is the best vehicle and I am glad I get to provide it, might be a beat up Lincoln right now with low fuel, but the hope is we can get it to a G6 with an unlimited fuel level![71]

DJ DoezIt, like MC Red Cloud, paints hip-hop as a means of mapping new places and opening new spaces. Even as a rundown ramshackle rust bucket or a graffiti-stained train, hip-hop protests and pushes past the limitations of indigeneity in a settler state. Affirming the power of (ab)original heritage, DJ DoezIt cites both hip-hop and Indigenous songs as establishing continuity across generations, and unlike the one-way linear transmission of tradition, this continuity flows without restriction. For DJ Creeasian, hip-hop motivates him to be more active in his Indigenous community: "Hip hop always inspires me to really learn more and more about my culture."[72] Sacramento Knoxx (born Christopher Yepez) explains that his Ojibwe name, *Ish Kote Nene*, "fire man," has accrued deeper meaning as he "keeps the life-giving energy going for others when they are sick and in need of strength and guidance in their life."[73] For these cultural workers, hip-hop is prefigurative: a means of contestation that asks individuals to act as though their vision of a just world was already present. James Baldwin accentuates the risk inherent in taking responsibility for the future: "One is responsible to life: It is the small beacon in that terrifying darkness from which we come and to which we shall return. One must negotiate this passage as nobly as possible, for the sake of those who are coming after us."[74] Life "is the only touchstone and [it] is dangerous, and that without the joyful acceptance of this danger, there can never be any safety for anyone, ever, anywhere."[75] Recruiting a new generation of (Ab)originals, hip-hop artists proffer radical ideations of indigeneity with limitless possibilities of being original—being first, being innovative, and being true.

By choosing to identify first and foremost by their love of hip-hop, artists are increasingly asserting themselves as (ab)original—unique, independent, Indigenous. Artists' performances of (ab)original singularities contribute to an idea of community that does not destroy history and those who carry it; rather, it integrates them into a world where none are excluded, a world where all worlds fit.[76] Refusing to forget the past while rejecting a future confined by race and place, artists cast off the shame connected to stolen land and lost traditions by relocating cultural continuity to hip-hop. For these young people, hip-hop is a space for building political power, a space that enables and empowers them to challenge loss and diminished life chances. Hip-hop is a space for taking risks. Through music, young (Ab)originals care for each other, and in doing so, they dare to enact a different future. With songs that bear witness to struggle, resilience, and the reality that Indigenous existence and resistance threatens the viability of the settler state, artists choose to express themselves, love themselves, and love all their relations in order to arrest the reproduction of structured elimination. Being careful with each other, (Ab)originals are dangerous together.

Acknowledgments

I am immensely grateful to all the artists mentioned here for sharing their music, experiences, and creative visions. Gratitude and love to my family for their steady support, to Jon Posen, Katie Aiken, and Andrew Reuland for their opinions and revisions throughout the different manifestations of this work, and to Walter Hergt for his generative insights, generous edits, and for taking risks with me. Thank you to

Audra Simpson and Patrick Wolfe for their encouragement, and to Aaron Fox for his limitless mentorship and friendship and for always making the time. I welcome email correspondence at ljamsterdam@gmail.com.

Notes

1. José Esteban Muñoz, *Disidentification: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999); Kevin Bruyneel, *The Third Space of Sovereignty: The Postcolonial Politics of U.S.-Indigenous Relations* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007).

2. I use the term *hip-hop* to denote both a musical culture and a life practice. Hip-hop culture is comprised of many elements, including rapping, DJing, breaking, beatboxing, graffiti art, and fashion, and in many cases, popular education and community-building initiatives. The artists mentioned here refer to their music as "hip-hop," not "rap music." Inspired by Lila Abu-Lughod's notion of "ethnographies of the particular," this article puts forth a concentrated examination of a handful of compelling individuals based in different regional areas to analyze recurrent themes. My intention is to demonstrate that hip-hop is happening "no matter where you're at," not that it is happening in exactly the same way. Lila Abu-Lughod, "Writing Against Culture," in *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present,* ed. Richard G. Fox (Santa Fe: School of American Research, 1991), 138.

3. Vine Deloria Jr., and Clifford M. Lytle, *The Nations Within: The Past and Future of American Indian Sovereignty* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984); Haunani-Kay Trask, "Natives and Anthropologists: The Colonial Struggle," *The Contemporary Pacific* 3, no. 1 (1991): 159–67; Rosemary J. Coombe, *The Cultural Life of Intellectual Properties: Authorship, Appropriation, and the Law* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998); Michael F. Brown, *Who Owns Native Culture?* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003); Taiaiake Alfred, *Peace, Power, Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); Amy Ku'uleialoha Stillman, "Cultural Rights, Indigenous Communities, and Access to Collected Resources: the Case of Native Hawaiians," in *Music and Cultural Rights*, eds. Andrew N. Weintraub and Bell Yung (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010), 86–109.

4. Richard Cornelius and Terence J. O'Grady, "Reclaiming a Tradition: The Soaring Eagles of Oneida," *Ethnomusicology* 31, no. 2 (1987): 261–72; David Samuels, *Putting a Song on Top of It: Expression and Identity on the San Carlos Apache Reservation* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2004); Kristina Jacobsen, "Rita(hhh): Placemaking and Country Music on the Navajo Nation," *Ethnomusicology* 53, no. 3 (2009): 449–77; Craig Proulx, "Aboriginal Hip Hoppers: Representin' Aboriginality in Cosmopolitan Worlds, in *Indigenous Cosmopolitans: Transnational and Transcultural Indigeneity in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Maximilian Christian Forte (New York: Peter Lang, 2010).

5. Native hip-hop artists are also an intervention into the paradigmatic Black-White appropriation model. See Eric Lott, *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993). Scholars are increasingly thinking holistically about Native North America in the Atlantic World. See *When Brer Rabbit Meets Coyote: African-Native American Literature*, ed. Jonathan Brennan (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003) and *Crossing Waters, Crossing Worlds: The African Diaspora in Indian Country*, ed. Tiya Miles and Sharon P. Holland (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006).

6. Joshua Tucker, "Permitted Indians and Popular Music in Contemporary Peru: The Poetics and Politics of Indigenous Performativity," *Ethnomusicology* 55, no. 3 (2011): 388.

7. Wab Kinew, *Winnipeg's Most Documentary on CBC Television!,* web video, 12:52, January 12, 2012. Found at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=doukokf9cEo. Last accessed January 17, 2012. Winnipeg is now the city with the highest per-capita Aboriginal population in North America. The median age of this population is 27, compared to the median age of the city, which is 40. The main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway and Winnipeg Yards, one of the largest railway yards in the world, acts as a physical barrier between the North End and the rest of the city.

8. Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (2006): 387–409; see 402.

9. Robert F. Berkhofer Jr., *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (New York: Knopf, 1978); Rayna Green, "The Tribe Called Wannabee: Playing Indian in America and Europe," *Folklore* 99, no. 1 (1988): 30–55; Philip J. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004); Michael Brown, "Heritage Trouble: Recent Work on the Protection of Intangible Cultural Property," *International Journal of Cultural Property* 12 (2005): 40–61.

10. Elizabeth A. Povinelli, *The Cunning of Recognition: Indigenous Alterities and the Making of Australian Multiculturalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002).

11. Roger M. Keesing, "Creating the Past: Custom and Identity in the Contemporary Pacific," *The Contemporary Pacific* 1, nos. 1–2 (1989): 19–42. Kessing argues that Natives react to colonialism by idealizing the past and "inventing" their culture and has been criticized for his assertion that Natives should be "liberated" from the past. In response, Hawaiian scholar Haunani-Kay Trask wrote, "Liberation is from colonizers, not the past." Like Trask, my argument here is not that the past should be "liberated" but that Native actors are making their own decisions about how they experience the past in the present.

12. Tiokasin Ghosthorse, "Voices of Indigenous Solidarity," presentation hosted by Native Resistance Network (Judson Memorial Church, New York, April 13, 2012).

13. David Sommerstein, "Beats & Politics at A Tribe Called Red's 'Electric Pow Pow,'" November 21, 2012, accessed November 27, 2012, http://www.northcountrypublicradio.org/news/story/20923/20121121/beats-politics-at-a-tribe-called-red-s-electric-pow-wow.

14. Wab Kinew, *Mide><Sun Music: The Mixtape*, music download, accessed September 10, 2010, http://www.wabkinew.ca/.

15. D-Script, "D-Script 'The Tlingit,'" *Reverb Nation*, accessed September 4, 2012, http://www.reverbnation.com/scriptthetlingit.

16. Ibid.

17. Jacques Derrida, "Choosing One's Heritage," in *For What Tomorrow: A Dialogue with Elisabeth Roudinesco* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 3.

18. Ibid., 8.

19. John Trudell and Paola Igliori, *Stickman: John Trudell Poems, Lyrics, Talks, a Conversation* (New York: Inandout Press, 1994), 32.

20. Tricia Rose, "Black Texts/Black Contexts," in *Black Popular Culture*, ed. Gina Dent and Michele Wallace (Seattle: Bay Press, 1992), 223–27; Samuel A. Floyd Jr., *The Power of Black Music: Interpreting Its History from Africa to the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); Mark Anthony Neal, *What the Music Said: Black Popular Music and Black Public Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1999); Murray Forman, "'Represent': Race, Space and Place in Rap Music," *Popular Music* 19, no. 1 (2000): 65–90; Scott Crossley, "Metaphorical Conceptions in Hip-Hop Music," *African American Review* 39, no. 4 (2005): 501–12.

21. Robin D. G. Kelley, *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class* (New York: The Free Press, 1994); Neal, *What the Music Said*. Hip-hop emerged in the South Bronx as the construction of the Cross-Bronx Expressway (Interstate 95) was nearing completion. The construction of the highway caused massive economic and social devastation to many low-income communities of color in the South Bronx.

22. Taki Telonidis, "Supaman: Rapping On The Reservation," October 11, 2011, http://www.npr.org/2011/10/11/141238763/supaman-rapping-on-the-reservation.

23. Ostwelve, *RPM Podcast #007: Native Hip Hop*, podcast audio, Revolutions Per Minute, MPEG audio, September 22, 2011, http://rpm.fm/podcast/rpm-podcast-007-native-hip-hop/.

24. Lakota Jonez is one of the more visible female artists in Native North American hip-hop music. The music scene in Winnipeg, the nexus of North American Aboriginal hip-hop, is primarily

dominated by male artists. Lakota Jonez expressed her ambivalence about being a female MC: "It can be good, and it can be bad." Jonez proceeds to explain that, "I have to prove [myself] even more. . . I gotta come even harder. . . . Yeah, it can be tough." Ibid.

25. A Tribe Called Red, "A Tribe Called Red," *Blogspot*, accessed March 3, 2013, http://atribecalledred.blogspot.com.

26. Sommerstein, "Beats & Politics at A Tribe Called Red's 'Electric Pow Wow.'"

27. toksala, "Q&A With Powwow Step Pioneers A Tribe Called Red: "Ke$ha Must Have A Big Pair [Of Balls]," *MTV IGGY*, January 31, 2011, http://www.mtviggy.com/interviews/qa-with-powwowstep-pioneers-a-tribe-called-red-keha-must-have-a-big-pair- of-balls/1/. Members of A Tribe Called Red are among the many young Natives who wear straight-brimmed fitted caps and T-shirts bearing the mascots of the Cleveland Indians, the Washington Redskins, Atlanta Braves, and the Chicago Blackhawks, both in their original form and in subversive re-imaginations. Sacramento Knoxx asserts that the appropriation of these logos is a powerful act of decolonization, akin to Black people and the use of "nigga" as a term of camaraderie. Equally important, he insists, is that "Young NDNs rock those clothes because they look dope" (personal communication with author). Robin Kelley noted that after the beating of Rodney King, young Black men in Los Angeles wore LA Kings caps, identifying themselves as "just another King."

28. Laura Boulton spent fifty years recording the music of Indigenous peoples, whose cultures she believed to be "vanishing." Allison Warden's use of these recordings as samples is indicative of some of the innovative ways Native peoples are re-envisioning and remixing cultural patrimony. See http://music.columbia.edu/cecenter/BASC/ for the Iñupiaq-partnered repatriation project.

29. Tara Gatewood, "Repatriating and Owning Our Music," *Native America Calling*, live webcast, Native American Calling, October 29, 2010, http://www.nativeamericacalling.com/.

30. Ibid.

31. Brown, *Who Owns Native Culture?*

32. Allison Warden, "Repatriation as Community Activism," panel discussion, Music and Indigeneity in the Americas Conference, Columbia University, New York, NY, October 1, 2010.

33. Proulx, "Aboriginal Hip Hoppers: Representin' Aboriginality in Cosmopolitan Worlds," 39–62.

34. Alfred, *Peace, Power, Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto*.

35. toksala, "Q&A With Powwow Step Pioneers A Tribe Called Red."

36. John Troutman, *Indian Blues* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2009). Troutman offers a comprehensive analysis of how early-twentieth-century Lakota dance practices shaped local implementations of federal Indian policy.

37. Clyde Ellis, "We Don't Want Your Rations, We Want This Dance: The Changing Use of Song and Dance on the Southern Plains," *Western Historical Quarterly*, 30, no. 2 (1999): 133–54; Clyde Ellis, "The Sound of the Drum Will Revive Them and Make Them Happy," in *Powwow*, ed. with Luke Eric Lassiter and Gary H. Dunham (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005).

38. Troutman, *Indian Blues*, 38.

39. Ostwelve, *RPM Podcast*.

40. Conway K, *Emcee Official Music Video Conway K/Red Power Squad*, music video, 5:04, January 10, 2010, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zm01TPVAQhg&feature=player_embedded#!.

41. Stillman, "Cultural Rights," 109.

42. The Sans-Titres, "What is Direct Action? (translation from Sans-Titres - bulletin n°1)," *A-Infos News*, November 22, 1999, http://www.ainfos.ca/99/nov/ainfos00282.html.

43. Sommerstein, "Beats & Politics at A Tribe Called Red's 'Electric Pow Wow.'"

44. James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time* (New York: Vintage International, 1962), 99.

45. Andrea Smith, "Queer Theory and Native Studies," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 16, nos. 1–2 (2010): 41–68; see 58.

46. Derrida, "Choosing One's Heritage," 8.

47. Rez Loyal, *RezLoyal—Wut About (Official Music Video)!!!*, music video, 3:27, October 9, 2011, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hJhiYA0JjXM.

48. Martin Patriquin, "Straight Outta Winnipeg," *Macleans Magazine*, December 3, 2010, http://www2.macleans.ca/2010/12/03/straight-outta-winnipeg/.

49. Brooklyn, *Dead Fly' Brooklyn FT Charlie Fettah & Tha Rupness Monsta*, music video, 4:12, December 2, 2011, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FUN1K3A3ceM.

50. Jesse Red Eagle, Myspace page, accessed February 9, 2012, http://www.myspace.com/redeagle405.

51. Red Eagle, "*RED EAGLE- High above the clouds*, music video, 4:44, May 5, 2011, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JBKgQET7rV8.

52. Frank Waln, *Frank Waln*, web video, 0:40, February 7, 2012, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ochudkxQ0Yo.

53. Frank Waln, Facebook page, http://www.facebook.com/fwaln.

54. Frank Waln, *Hear My Cry Frank Waln featuring Cody Blackbird*, music video, 4:47, November 17, 2011, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S5hxFkQm3Fg.

55. Leonard Peltier, USP #89637-132, *Prison Writings: My Life Is My Sundance*, ed. Harvey Arden (New York: St Martin's Griffin, 1999), 16.

56. Frank Waln, wall post, Facebook, March 8, 2012, http://www.facebook.com/fwaln.

57. Allison Warden, personal communication with author, September 21, 2012.

58. Jon-C, *Winnipeg's Most and Other Aboriginal Hip Hop Artists Meet to Form a New Coalition*, web video, 0:43, September 8, 2011, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WTEXYVdp9Pg.

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61. Wab Kinew, *Last Word—Wab Kinew featuring Tinsel Korey*, music video, 3:37, August 2, 2009, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CP9zDbBHMlU.

62. Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time*, 95.

63. John Blacking, *How Musical Is Man* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1973), 103.

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67. Joy Harjo, "Joy Harjo's Web Log: June Jordan Tribute," http://www.joyharjo.com/news/2005/10/june-jordan-tribute-in-honor-of-her.html.

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71. Ibid.

72. Ostwelve, *RPM Podcast*.

73. Sacramento Knoxx, personal communication with author, January 1, 2012.

74. Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time*, 92.

75. Ibid., 34.

76. "Por un mundo donde quepan todos los mundos"—a Zapatista ideal. First mentioned in their Fourth Declaration of the Lacandón Jungle in 1996.