"THEY WASN'T MAKIN' MY KINDA MUSIC": HIP-HOP, SCHOOLING, AND MUSIC EDUCATION

By

Adam J. Kruse

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

Music Education—Doctor of Philosophy

2014

ABSTRACT

"THEY WASN'T MAKIN' MY KINDA MUSIC": HIP-HOP, SCHOOLING, AND MUSIC EDUCATION

By

Adam J. Kruse

With the ambition of informing place consciousness in music education by better understanding the social contexts of hip-hop music education and illuminating potential applications of hip-hop to school music settings, the purpose of this research is to explore the sociocultural aspects of hip-hop musicians' experiences in music education and music schooling. In particular, this study is informed by the following questions:

1. How do sociocultural contexts (particularly issues of race, space, place, and class) impact hip-hop musicians and their music?

2. What are hip-hop musicians' perceptions of school and schooling?

3. Where, when, how, and with whom do hip-hop musicians develop and explore their musical skills and understandings?

The use of an emergent design in this work allowed for the application of ethnographic techniques within the framework of a multiple case study. One case is an amateur hip-hop musician named Terrence (pseudonym), and the other is myself (previously inexperienced as a hip-hop musician) acting as participant observer.

By placing Terrence and myself within our various contexts and exploring these contexts' influences on our roles as hip-hop musicians, it is possible to understand better who we are, where and when our musical experiences exist(ed), and the complex relationships between our contexts, our experiences, and our perceptions. Employing both authenticity and identity as dynamic and performative concepts, findings demonstrate that these elements can have an

important impact on musical experiences and perceptions.

My history as a professional educator and Terrence's perspective as a high school dropout offer a valuable contrast of beliefs, values, and assumptions about school and education. Exploring Terrence's experiences with and perceptions of school provide additional material for placing him as a musician and learner and also allow for a critical investigation of my own perspectives. Recognizing my privileged and assumption-laden perspectives offers valuable layers of nuance toward better understanding the relationships between schools, those who school, and those who are schooled.

In addition to exploring Terrence's musical learning experiences, I participate in the study as a novice hip-hop beat producer under Terrence's mentorship. Investigating our musical teaching and learning delivers compelling findings toward better understanding music education as it exists outside of school. The relationships between collaborators, the spaces in which they work, and the backgrounds that inform their perspectives all perform important roles in the development of applicable music skills in a practice far more complicated and demanding than I had initially imagined.

Terrence's experiences with and perceptions of music, school, and education challenge many of my preconceived notions and offer important considerations for music educators. My experiences as both researcher and case in this project reveal complex issues of privilege and provide opportunities to better understand and confront these issues. I ultimately contend that hip-hop cultures possess the potential for critical improvements in some school music settings and that music educators might consider making a place for hip-hop within scholarship and practice.

For GMAK.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION—"THE JUNCTION"

In this work, I employ the lenses of race, space, and place to examine hip-hop music education in and out of school. I formally discuss the purpose of this study, the concepts of race, space, and place, and the rest of the theoretical underpinning of my research in the first three chapters of this dissertation. Prior to this information, I want to invite readers into this study via a place-conscious narrative that serves as a metaphor for exploring areas (both physical and conceptual) that may be unfamiliar to many in the field of music education. The following excerpts from my field notes recount my reflection of attending a live hip-hop performance.

When Terrence (pseudonym) described The Junction (pseudonym) to me during our previous interview, he told me it was next to the bus terminal downtown. Following a brief pause and shaking off a blank stare, I mustered up some insincere confidence and told him I would find it. I assume that for Terrence, the downtown bus terminal is an obvious landmark, and he assumes I know where it is. I have lived in this city for over six months and have yet to ride a bus. Instead, I looked up the name of the venue online, found the address, and entered that address into the GPS in my car. Even getting to this venue highlights differences between Terrence and myself. He does not own a car, so I assume he traveled to the show tonight via the city bus. The Junction, after all, was conveniently located next to the bus terminal.

Despite my access to the transportation and technology necessary to arrive at The Junction in veritable middleclass comfort, I suffer the relative inconvenience of trying to find a parking place. I make a cautious left onto a street I have never driven, taking in a new neighborhood through the narrow field of headlight glare. Between following the inanimate commands of the voice on my GPS, the poorly lit street corners, and my tunnel

vision focused on a place within these foreign blocks that I can fit my vehicle, I am not

"observing" the surroundings of The Junction by any means. What I now know about the

neighborhood around The Junction is that there is almost nowhere to park a car.

Perhaps I should have taken the bus.

After driving increasingly frustrated circles around my destination, I decide to

park in an area I know well. The city's civic theatre is about twelve blocks from The

Junction. The previous fall, my wife had performed on the civic theatre stage, and I had

attended many performances. A multitude of friends and family from out of town had

come on various nights to see these performances, and I happily acted as tour guide and

concierge for the guests. Despite only living in the city for half a year, this experience

afforded me knowledge of almost every restaurant, coffee shop, bar, and museum within

a half-mile radius of the civic theatre. I know the best bar to visit after a performance, the

best entertainment for a visiting grandparent, and most importantly, the best places to

park. My understanding of my new hometown, which had seemed so thorough compared

to that of our frequent play-going guests, now feels as shallow as a tourist's and as

narrow as four city blocks.

I park near the theatre and begin the fifteen-minute walk to The Junction. The

streets and sidewalks shine with remnants of the day's rainfall, but I am out of my

graduate student "uniform" tonight, so the walk is easy. With no professors to impress or

undergraduates from which to distance myself, I have shed the personal hang-ups of my

necktie and the insecurity of slacks and carefully coordinated shoes, belt, and glasses.

Instead of telling those at my institution (and more importantly myself) that I belong by

dressing slightly above my station, I wear denim jeans, an un-tucked red plaid sport shirt

2

with the sleeves rolled neatly halfway up my forearms, my casual black glasses, a navy cotton jacket that I zip three-quarters of the way up, and tennis shoes. The tennis shoes have proven to be my wisest wardrobe choice as I make the trek by foot from the known into the unknown . . .

The front lounge of The Junction appears much larger on the inside than I had anticipated. An expansive ceiling with exposed metal rafters and large glass windows provide an illusion of open space, while the hanging tubes of fluorescent lights ensure that this room has not been too artfully designed. A long bar with two bartenders sits almost centered in the room and six patrons are seated at stools with their drinks in hand. The limited taps and meager amount of liquor bottles visible announce that this is the kind of bar that will serve cheap beer in plastic cups or domestic brews from a bottle or can. I get the immediate feeling that this is not the place to order a cocktail, and since I generally only drink cheap beer when it is my payment for playing a gig, I decide to pass on drinks for the evening. A large amount of floor space between the bar and the stage will allow for an easy flow of people from the bar to the restrooms, to the stage, and to the two areas of seating in the room. At each corner of the large open room are sets of small wooden tables and chairs. Each table has four chairs and enough room on the table for roughly eight elbows and nothing more. A thick layer of black film covers the wooden floors and causes my rubber-soled shoes to stick slightly in the dirt and spilled beer of many evenings past.

I had intended to arrive early enough to scope the place out, make a sketch of the room, and choose a strategic location to sit (ideally in a corner where I can see more of

the room and stay out of the way), but my struggle to find parking has caused me to

arrive mere minutes before the scheduled start of the show. I should have known that the

advertised 8:30pm start time would not be close to the actual starting time of this event.

Although this is a hip-hop event, it apparently runs on what my friends and I used to refer

to as "punk rock time." A punk rock show scheduled to begin at 10:00pm rarely kicks off

before midnight, and the musicians and audience members know this ahead of time. I

take a seat at an optimal table in the corner with an unobstructed view of the stage and

most of the rest of the room and observe the end of the sound check . . .

By the end of the sound check and over the proceeding half hour, the room begins

to fill with fifty and then at least one hundred people. At least three quarters of the night's

attendees are Black men in their late teens and twenties. A handful of White and Latino

young men wearing backpacks and tight jeans who look barely old enough to enter the

club immediately occupy the floor space directly in front of the stage. Other young people

join them shortly, until about 25 people are standing in this group. I see only one young

woman among this crowd. Behind the group nearest the stage, a small gathering of men

in their mid-late twenties stands facing the stage in a makeshift line from the bar to the

sound booth. The body language of these men appears hesitant and possibly judgmental.

Hands press on hips, thumbs and forefingers hold raised and tilted chins, and eyebrows

are elevated as this group observes carefully both the activity on stage and the actions of

the young people next to the stage.

As there is no "back stage" area, the members of the headliner's band, a few

other groups of men who will perform later in the night, and at least a dozen other people

have congregated on the sidewalk and street outside. Rejuvenated precipitation has returned as a light drizzle, but these men are not deterred. Circles of four or five men form as the yellow glare from the streetlights reflects off of the puddles of water on the pavement. Clouds of smoke begin to bellow from each circle, as some men smoke their own cigarettes and others pass (what I assume are) joints of weed around their group. My assumption that some of this smoke has come from marijuana is confirmed as the men outside reenter the club as the night goes on. The coats worn outside to protect from the light rain carry in a distinctive odor, which mixes with the aroma of adolescent sweat, cigarettes, and cheap beer to provide an olfactory sensation that is all too familiar . . .

Light applause from the group in front of the stage follows Terrence's opening number, but the judgmental onlookers between the bar and the sound booth barely react. I realize that the venue is noticeably divided by what appears to be proximity of respect. As the night progresses, more and more attendees move closer and closer to the stage. With every passing performer, each more adept than the last, the crowd shifts until over 100 people are standing as close as possible when the headliner and his band perform. One by one, the onlookers passing silent judgment join the young people at the front of the stage and are then replaced by the smokers who had been waiting outside or the completely disengaged people who had been seated at tables on the far side of the room. There appears to be a message to performers, "If you're good, we will get close and listen. We might stand in between if we are not sure, and if we know we don't want to hear you, we will go outside or sit on the opposite side of the room."

This analysis of the places within the space comes too late for me. I sit in my seat during the rest of Terrence's brief set. During the subsequent performer's set, I make my way across the club looking for Terrence and eventually find him seated on the opposite side of the club by himself looking at his cellphone. He looks up from his phone in time to see me, the glare of the phone illuminating his face as he flashes me a familiar grin. I extend my hand as I approach, and he jumps up to slap it with his. "You made it," he beams, "But you missed it." I explain that I had been here the whole time, and he asks where I was. When I point to the corner where I had been sitting, his expression sinks and with a furrowed brow he responds, "You were sittin' down?" I realize that I had inadvertently disrespected Terrence by not standing near the stage during his performance. I was there, but I wasn't present. I made it, but I missed it. I apologize and he forgives me with a laugh and a pat on the back, but I can tell that I have not held up my end of the bargain in this relationship.

CHAPTER 1—SCHOOL MUSIC: A PLACE FOR THE VERNACULAR?

A diverse and pluralistic society has charged American public schools with providing equitable educational opportunities for all students; however, many American music classrooms have failed to reflect the social and cultural variety of the student populations they were designed to serve (Elpus & Abril, 2011; Gustafson, 2008; Koza, 2008; Stauffer, 2012). When professional organizations, school administrators, and music educators make decisions regarding school music curricula, they demonstrate not only *what* music is worthy of study, but also *whose* music is valued and valuable (Apple, 2000). Neglecting to include musical genres and traditions that are meaningful to students in favor of perpetuating the privileged musical values of the academic canon is tantamount to purposeful exclusivity and homogenization. Better understanding of musical genres normally found outside of the classroom walls and exploring their potential for inclusion in school settings might offer music educators and their students additional viable options for school music experiences. In this study, I explore hip-hop music education as it occurs outside of school with the aim of more thoughtfully contextualizing the sociocultural milieu in which these traditions take place as well as informing potential inclusions of hip-hop music in school settings.

School and Education

It is imperative at the outset of this project to clarify the concepts of education and schooling as I intend to use them. Considering education, I employ Dewey's (1916) description of education being concerned with growth, but not inherently limited to settings of formal instruction. Education involves experiences and processes that support and develop skills and understandings toward the growth of an individual and/or group. Elements of formality, structure, and authority occur in education in a variety of dynamic ways. These elements are

never adequately described in essential binary relationships (e.g., formal or informal, structured or unstructured, autocratic or democratic), as the distinctions between these dubious poles are negotiable and often permeable. The most important clarification to make regarding education for the purposes of this project is that education need not always or only occur in a school environment.

Unlike Dewey (1916), I do not perceive of some social groups as "undeveloped" or "savage"; therefore, I do not employ his conception of formal schooling being a feature of advanced or complex societies. I recognize that different groups of people educate one another in different ways and that, among particular groups, some education occurs in formalized school settings. I also acknowledge that the function of formal schooling can at times conflict with a society's ideals for education (D. Elliot, 1995). Put simply, education happens everywhere for all people in all settings, whereas school and schooling refer to a specific location and organization of sanctioned knowledge and skills. Additional uses of the words "school," "schooling," and "schooled" exist among some hip-hop cultures (within which this research is situated), and I will clarify the intended uses of these terms whenever the surrounding context does not make these distinctions clear.

Place Philosophy

Increasing the relevance of students' school music experiences requires a better understanding of in-school and out-of-school musical environments. Place philosophy offers a lens through which to investigate these environments and to reimagine music classrooms. Building on the work of place-based and place-conscious education scholars, Stauffer (2009, 2012) employed place philosophy both to challenge ingrained assumptions in the field of music education and to offer considerations toward potential transformations.

What is Place Philosophy?

Place philosophy involves the ways in which locations become sites of social meaning. At times incorporating elements of philosophy and geography (Casey, 2001), the notion of a place includes components of locality, space, time, experience, and perspective. Place philosophers engage these elements in order to describe the many ways in which people's experiences, perceptions, and values affect and are affected by their surroundings. Far beyond serving as a passive backdrop for human existence, place can be "a lens of sorts that mediates one's perspective on social relations" (Forman, 2002, p. 192) and also contributes to "our sense of being in the world" (Stauffer, 2012, p. 437).

Place philosophers often differentiate between place and space; however, the distinctions between the two concepts can be blurred. Some scholars have portrayed space on a larger scale (Tuan, 1977) or as more abstractly arranged (Ley, 1989) compared to a more localized and bounded place. Grossberg (1992) described places as "sites of stability where people can stop and act" (p. 295). Others have distinguished place from space by describing space in physical terms and place as encompassing the physical characteristics of space as well as various human experiences and perceptions (e.g., the passage of time) (Carr, 2001; Flay, 1989; Stauffer, 2012).

Places are locations with subjective and socially constructed meanings. Physical and sensual attributes contribute to places, but the meanings associated with places are not imbued therein. Meaning is socially (re)constructed within a space dependent upon human experience and perception (Giddens, 1984; Lefebvre, 1991). For example, the religious and spiritual meanings associated with a church building do not exist as a result of the arrangement of physical materials but rather by the experiences that occur within and the values that are socially

and culturally assigned to the church. In this way, locations do not inherently exist as places. Instead, they become places as they act and are acted upon by individuals and groups.

As an example, consider the space and place of the band room. The band room exists as a definable location within the broader physical space of a school and also within the spatially abstract concept of school. Either way, the band room is a specific and bounded site. Viewing the band room as place involves uncovering the meanings and values present by considering the relationships between its physical characteristics and the experiences and perceptions of the individuals who have assigned those meanings and values. The band room as place could be a site of great joy and accomplishment for some and a place of frustration and humiliation for others. It could also be all of these things to the same individual at different times in her life. The band room has been associated with musical and cultural values that are not inherent to a semi-circle of chairs with a raised wooden square at their center, but this physical arrangement plays a part in perpetuating specific musical traditions and values.

Place Philosophy and Education

An awareness of place in education literature has recently manifested in two occasionally coinciding categories. The first appears as "place-based education" (PBE). PBE generally involves connecting classrooms to the local community. This experience-based approach to learning has elements in common with outdoor, ecological, and environmental education (Gruenewald, 2003a) and aims for improving the quality of life for students and their community by addressing local social issues (Smith & Sobel, 2010; Smith 2002a; Sobel, 2005; Wason-Ellam, 2010). PBE perceives of place as both "the classroom" and "the community." These are local and interrelated places whose meanings and values are constructed by students, educators, and area residents.

PBE can exist within any school subject area and often directly engages local environmental and ecological issues (Graham, 2007; Knapp, 2005). Sobel (2005) suggested that, in addition to increased relevance and academic achievement, PBE "helps students develop stronger ties to their community, enhances [their] appreciation for the natural world, and creates a heightened commitment to serving as active, contributing citizens" (p. 7). Similar to constructivist perspectives, PBE recognizes students as producers of knowledge (Smith, 2002a). This viewpoint can put PBE at odds with standardized curricula and assessments. As Smith (2002b) explained, PBE's connection to specific settings means that "generic curricular models are inappropriate" (p. 587); however, others have argued that this conflict is primarily rhetorical and that state-level standards and PBE can coexist (Jennings, Swidler, & Koliba, 2005).

Proposed by Gruenewald (2003a), place-conscious education (PCE) combines PBE's local focus with elements of critical pedagogy. The resulting concept also is referred to as a "critical pedagogy of place" (Gruenewald, 2003b, p. 3). PCE embraces the raising of social consciousness and cultural analysis found in critical pedagogy (Friere, 1970), positions these concerns first within the contexts of local places, and then uses those experiences as a foundation for exploring more globally. While some scholars have argued that this combination of theories is oxymoronic (Bowers, 2008), others have reported on PCE's potential for transformation in positive lights (Buxton, 2010; Graham, 2007; McInerney, Smyth, & Down, 2011). Gruenewald suggested dual aims for PCE consisting of decolonization and reinhabitation. These processes involve challenging and questioning oppressive forces in order to establish or restore liberating and sustainable social and environmental practices. Like PBE, PCE avoids adherence to homogeneous and predetermined curricula and instead embraces local places as meaningful sites worthy of attention and action.

11

Place Philosophy and Music Education

Applying place philosophy and its previous applications to education, Stauffer (2012) argued that American music education has become "place-bound" because "the actions we associate repeatedly with 'music education' have become so habitual – so stable, so much a part of our identities, so seemingly inevitable – that we are, literally and figuratively, stuck in place" (p. 448). For Stauffer, these place-bound characteristics include the normative assumptions that the terms "music education" and "music educator" refer solely to K-12 school settings, school music's seemingly entrenched traditions of Western European art music and values of White middle-class suburbia, and school music's deep-seated attachment to content objectives and national standards. Viewing music classrooms as places, these apparently inherent elements of school music (e.g., the exclusive use of standard notation, a teacher who directs student activity, large ensembles that replicate centuries-old performance traditions) need not be automatic and unquestioned. American school music programs often perpetuate these traditions and values, quite possibly as part of the field's "habitus" (Bourdieu, 1977) and not as a series of conscious choices.

Stauffer (2009, 2012) suggested that adopting a place-conscious perspective in the field of music education would seek to reconnect school music classrooms and local communities. Instead of perpetuating tradition, classroom activities might better reflect the musical experiences and interests relevant to students' lives. These experiences then could serve as foundations for broader musical explorations. To view music classrooms as places would be to appreciate that the people occupying these places can (re)determine what is meaningful, what is valued, and what is relevant. Stauffer shared stories of music educators who had adapted the content of their music programs and redefined their roles as teachers as examples of increased place

12

consciousness. These transformations included the inclusion of non-traditional school music genres and practices (e.g., popular guitar music, mariachi). While the addition of different musical genres into school settings is by no means a cure-all for the place-bound nature of school music education, it is worth considering how changes like these might contribute to school music becoming place-conscious.

To move toward place consciousness, Stauffer (2009, 2012) called for a change in the ways that educators and scholars ask questions about the field of music education. Emphasizing questions concerned with *who*, *where*, and *when* as opposed to conventional considerations of *what*, *how*, and *why* might allow for issues of place to enter our professional discourse more meaningfully. Traditional curricular, pedagogical, and philosophical conversations in music education have focused on what music is taught, how music is taught, and why music is taught. Stauffer's recommendations would encourage music educators to ask questions concerned with who is (and is not) studying music in school, whose interests does school music serve, where is music education happening outside of school, from where and when do our musical traditions come, and other questions concerned with issues of place. Notions of *who*, *where*, *when*, *what*, *why*, and *how* may not be entirely discrete (nor neatly divided into "place-conscious" and "not place-conscious" categories), but increasing questions specifically focused on *who*, *where*, and *when* could profoundly change the field of music education including the ways in which music educators conceive of vernacular music in school settings.

Vernacular Music Education

Every term (e.g., popular, informal, vernacular, participatory) used to describe music that often occurs outside of school but rarely as often in school is limited and cannot describe complex musical landscapes and the relationships between school and non-school music

adequately. Perhaps "canonical" and "non-canonical" would describe the issues at hand in this study, but I have chosen to use "vernacular" as the insufficient stand-in for the wealth of music that (at least in American schools) is less likely to find a home within a school music classroom. I chose the label vernacular because it implies use by common (i.e., not necessarily formally schooled) people and also relates to traditions of a common (i.e., similarly experienced) time and space. In this way, the term vernacular subsumes the concept of informal practices (although not necessarily exclusively so), could be participatory (Turino, 2008) in nature, and is (or has been) popular with some group(s) of people at some time(s). In short, vernacular music is music of a place.

Interest in the Vernacular

Influenced by an arguable disconnect between in- and out-of-school musical experiences (Kratus, 2007; Lamont, Hargreaves, Marshall, & Tarrant, 2003; Williams, 2011; Woody, 2007) as well as young people's general preference for popular music genres (Hargreaves & North, 1997; Mills, 2000), many music education researchers have explored learning processes in musical genres outside of the academic canon with the hopes of informing and improving the experiences of students in school music classrooms (e.g., Abramo, 2011; Allsup, 2003, 2011; Cope, 2002; Davis, 2005; Dunbar-Hall & Wemyss, 2000; Green, 2002; Jaffurs, 2004; Kastner, 2012; Rodriguez, 2004; Seifried, 2002; Söderman & Folkestad, 2004; Thompson, 2012; Woody & Lehman, 2011). In a review of literature on vernacular music in school settings, Isbell (2007) described an ongoing discourse regarding the differences between students' musical experiences inside and outside of school. Those in favor of an increased presence of vernacular music in American classrooms have argued for both musical and social advantages. Such advantages have included improving aural musicianship (Woody & Lehman, 2010), better reaching student

14

populations not enrolled in large ensemble classes (Ginocchio, 2011; Williams, 2011), and increasing lifelong participation in musical activities (Kratus, 2007; Woody 2007).

Numerous scholars have contributed to the discussion about vernacular music in school settings, arguing for the merits of informal learning strategies (Allsup, 2003; Cope, 2002; Folkestad, 2006; Green, 2002, 2004, 2006, 2008; Jaffurs, 2004; Westerlund, 2006). Green (2002) associated formal learning with common schooling practices (e.g., a teacher instructs and assesses in a linear and sequential series of activities) but described informal music learning practices as ones in which musicians "teach themselves or 'pick-up' skills and knowledge . . . by watching and imitating musicians around them and by making reference to recordings or performances and other live events involving their chosen music" (p. 5). These descriptions likely ring true for many settings; however, formal and informal learning practices are neither inherent nor exclusive to specific musical settings or genres, and the lines between formal and informal are most certainly indistinct (Folkestad, 2006). With these considerations in mind, Folkestad (2006) suggested that a beneficial practice for music educators would be "to observe and describe the switch between the formal and informal ways of approaching learning" (p. 142). Increased exploration of formality issues for both in- and out-of-school music education settings could offer important implications toward place-conscious and student-centered (Blair, 2009) music teaching and learning.

Vernacular Music in School Settings: Re-Placing the Questions

Vernacular music literature has made important additions to the field of music education and could contribute toward school music becoming more place-conscious; however, this literature is not without its limitations. One limitation relates to the questions that are and are not asked. Green (2005) suggested that the inclusions of vernacular music into school settings had

previously been limited to issues of content and that questions regarding the "how" of vernacular music should take precedence over the prior concerns of "what." "How" concerns appear to have grown remarkably in the music education literature as researchers and scholars have explored and discussed the ways in which vernacular musicians learn (e.g., Green's 2002 book titled "How Popular Musicians Learn" has contributed tremendously to this area of the profession and has been cited abundantly among the music education literature concerned with vernacular music). While Green's assertion was and remains important to music educators attempting to understand unfamiliar musical genres better, Stauffer's (2009, 2012) suggestion regarding moving away from traditional *what*, *how*, and *why* questions toward place-conscious questions of *who*, *where*, and *when* offers new ways to consider vernacular music in school settings. Exploring vernacular music traditions as socio-musical phenomena could lead to more place-conscious music education scholarship and place-conscious school music classrooms.

Another limitation of this literature is that it has predominantly focused on the pop and rock music genres. These musical traditions often have been omitted from American school music classrooms, and explorations in these areas have offered valuable insights; however, greater diversity in this literature would improve efforts toward place-conscious music education. Pop and rock music certainly are relevant for some students in some places, but it should not be assumed that this music will be relevant for all students in all places. If providing musical experiences that reflect students' lives outside of school and will support students' musical endeavors beyond the classroom are goals of place-conscious music education (Stauffer, 2012), then it would behoove music educators to consider more of the musical variety that exists outside of the classroom. Green (2002) acknowledged this limitation in her research and argued that

studies of pop and rock musicians should be used in comparison with studies of other vernacular genres as opposed to representing an exhaustive scope of how *all* popular musicians learn.

Hip-Hop Cultures

Scholars often trace the foundations of hip-hop cultures to specific New York City boroughs and low-income neighborhoods in the late 1970s where the artistic and cultural expressions of predominantly people of color (largely African American and Caribbean American) displayed unique and imaginative responses to arguably oppressive conditions (Chang, 2005). Seidel (2011) described the products, processes, and perspectives of hip-hop cultures as exhibiting "creative resourcefulness in the face of limited resources . . . flipping something outta nothing" (p. 1). Seen by many as an extension of cultural traditions rooted in the African diaspora, hip-hop consistently has defied both physical and cultural boundaries. In a matter of decades, hip-hop cultures influenced and were influenced by every region of the United States and most of the world (Mitchell, 2001). Throughout this work, I use "hip-hop cultures" as opposed to "hip-hop culture" to reflect the notion that a monolithic hip-hop culture does not exist.

Hip-Hop Music

Hip-hop's fundamental artistic areas include music, dance, visual art, and fashion. While each of these is worthy of consideration for application in school settings, this study focuses solely on hip-hop music. While the earliest hip-hop music consisted of creative playback of cassette tapes and vinyl records to accompany South Bronx dance parties (Chang, 2005), hip-hop music has resisted boundaries. Beginning with the appropriation of disco, funk, R&B, rock, and soul music, hip-hop since has made use of elements from any and every musical genre imaginable. The influence of hip-hop music globally and the hybrid collaborations with even the

17

most unlikely of genres (e.g., American country music) has contributed to hip-hop music and hip-hop-influenced music becoming rather nebulous terms.

Current musical elements most commonly associated with hip-hop music include DJing, rapping, and beat producing. DJs (short for disc jockey) mix and play back prerecorded music for live audiences. Many DJs manipulate multiple digital or analog turntables to cue music, combine tracks, or perform scratches. These DJs also are called "turntablists." Rappers (some use and prefer the term "emcee," an appropriation of MC, or "Master of Ceremonies") perform vocally with combinations of rhythmic spoken word and singing. Rappers originally served to engage the crowd and highlight the performance of the DJ at block parties, but rappers since have headlined musical performances and they are often the main focus in recordings and at live concerts. Producers compose backing tracks for singers and rappers most often consisting of the use of digital instruments (e.g., drum machines, synthesizers) and samples (sections of prerecorded music from other artists edited and reassembled into new works). The roles of DJ, rapper, and producer often are flexible with many musicians taking on multiple roles.

Data from The Nielsen Company (2014) (who reports annually on media consumption in the United States) have reflected hip-hop's popularity in America. Of the top ten albums sold in 2013, three were identifiable hip-hop albums (Eminem's "Marshall Mathers LP2," Drake's "Nothing was the Same," and Jay-Z's "Magna Carta…Holy Grail"), and two were hybrid albums consisting of hip-hop, pop, and R&B influences (Justin Timberlake's "20/20 Experience," and Beyonce's self-titled album). Overall, 26.2% of albums sold (physical or digital) in the U.S. were R&B/rap albums. This was second only to rock albums (34.8%) and greatly overshadowed the number of albums sold from the genres most commonly associated with American school music, classical (2.8%) and jazz (2.3%).

Album sales only tell part of the statistical story; especially considering that album sales have declined in recent years compared to online streaming and the purchase of individual digital tracks (The Nielsen Company, 2014). When considering African American populations, The Nielson Company reported that these consumers were 12% more likely than the average adult to listen to music primarily online. With this in mind, the top three songs streamed online in 2013 (and six of the top ten) were either hip-hop or some kind of hip-hop hybrid. R&B/hip-hop made up 18.6% of individual digital tracks purchased in 2013, again second only to rock (22.6%) and dominating those from the classical (0.5%) and jazz (0.6%) genres.

Although classical and jazz music may not be as popular with the American public, Brinckmeyer, Gonzales, and Stein (2010) reported that classical and jazz were the most prominent musical backgrounds of American college music majors. Kruse (2014) found similar predominance of classical and jazz backgrounds among preservice music teachers and in addition, this population reported hip-hop as one of the genres with which they had the least experience. These differences between future music teachers and the general population are cause for serious consideration.

Hip-Hop and Music Education

Exceptions exist (e.g., Dhokai, 2012; Söderman, 2011; Söderman & Folkestad, 2004; Thompson, 2012), but music education research literature about hip-hop music has been scant compared to the predominance of literature about rock and pop music. As Green (2002) hypothesized and Thompson (2012) affirmed, DJs, turntablists, and hip-hop and dance music producers acquire skills and understandings differently compared to rock musicians. Therefore, further exploring the ways that hip-hop's inclusion in school music settings might differ from the inclusion of rock music could be an important area to address in this research gap.

Given the popularity of hip-hop music and its subgenres both in the United States (The Nielsen Company, 2014) and around the world (Mitchell, 2001), a lacuna appears to exist in this area of the music education literature. Considering the decades it has taken for rock music to be considered a viable option in American school music programs (and it is still far from prevalent in U.S. schools), one would hope that hip-hop music would not be subject to a comparable wait. One possible contributing factor to the dearth of hip-hop in music education could be a preoccupation with "appropriateness" of specific artists and recordings (Campbell & Clements, 2006), although some music educators have reported success following hip-hop implementations in school music settings (Minott, 2008; Vagi, 2010). Because hip-hop music can differ tremendously from the traditional Western art genres with which many music educators are most familiar, a need exists for research in this area.

The small number of published music education research studies focused on hip-hop offers useful glimpses into hip-hop musicians' composing and learning experiences. Söderman and Folkestad (2004) observed the composition processes of two hip-hop groups and described a sampling or "collage" method. These musicians used selected portions of recorded music, arranging them in new ways to create the accompanying music for their rap lyrics. Describing the nuance of sampling methods is beyond the scope of this chapter; however, Thibeault (2010) described this and other technological practices commonly associated with hip-hop (e.g., online distribution of recordings) as "changing the face of music education" (p. 46).

Comparing the learning experiences of hip-hop and dance musicians to the rock musicians studied by Green (2002), Thompson (2012) found that the study's DJs and turntablists differed from the musicians in Green's study. The musicians in Thompson's study learned informally and in peer groups (similar to the rock musicians in Green's study), but they started at

younger ages (between 16 and 20) and more strongly valued solitary practice to hone their skills. These electronic musicians also consistently mentioned important individual mentors (usually a friend or family member) who introduced them to music composition and aided their musical growth in relationships resembling a master and apprentice.

Considering the possible significance of a hip-hop musical mentor, Söderman (2011) suggested that hip-hop music education compares to the Swedish folk practice of "folkbildning," a self-education similar to an apprenticeship model. Söderman argued that previous music education models for rock music in which students were given instruments and left to their own devices (e.g., Green, 2005) might not be successful in hip-hop music education. Instead, Söderman recommended recruiting local hip-hop enthusiasts to serve as mentors in the music classroom. This could be an especially important suggestion for music educators who may not have experience with hip-hop music but have an interest in including the musical genre in their classrooms.

Race and Music Education

Given the connections between hip-hop and racial identity (Chang, 2005; Forman, 2002; Rose, 1994), exploring race issues in music education could offer potentially important considerations toward hip-hop's inclusion in school music settings. Despite reform attempts, student and teacher populations in American school music programs do not reflect the racial diversity of the United States (Elpus & Abril, 2011; Gustafson, 2008; Hewitt & Thompson, 2006). As the population of the country continues to grow in racial diversity (United States Census Bureau, 2012), the overrepresentation of White populations in the field of music education may become too profound to be neglected. One could argue that in order for the field of music education to become more place-conscious, we also must become (among other things)

more race-conscious. Research studies can play an important role in addressing these issues by investigating and "listening for" (Koza, 2008) music education's racial issues in deeper and more complex ways.

The ~~Nature~~ Nurture of Race

Race scholars outside of music education largely have accepted race as a social construct (e.g., Dei, 2000; Gilroy, 2000; Haney López, 2013; Obach, 1999; Smedley & Smedley, 2005). This means that instead of being a genetically-predetermined biological category, race (like gender) is (re)negotiated among social groups. While some may use this perspective to support a "color blind" approach to racial issues, in which race is ignored entirely, "color blindness" often perpetuates racist perspectives (Powell, 1999). Within music education scholarship, Bradley (2007) argued that, "race is a fiction that masquerades as reality with great success" (p. 142). I agree. My perspective throughout this work is that the socially constructed nature of race does not make race, racism, racial identity, and other racial issues any less "real."

Race does not exist in a vacuum separate from other social issues. Bradley (2007) reminded music educators that race is connected intricately to other social issues including (but not limited to) gender, sexuality, and socio-economic status; this is what Crenshaw (1989) called *intersectionality*. For some, race also may be inextricably linked to issues of nationality, citizenship, and/or language. Scholars choosing to focus on race should not ignore these other factors. Instead, scholarship that emphasizes race might achieve greater levels of nuance by acknowledging and exploring the complex relationships between race and the many issues with which race intersects.

22

Race-Related Research Studies in Music Education

Summary of past studies. Some race-related research studies in music education have involved comparing musical preferences and performance characteristics between students of different races, most commonly White and Black students (e.g., Chinn, 1997; Johnson & Stewart, 2005; Killian, 1990; McCrary, 1993, 2000; McCrary & Gauthier, 1995; Morrison, 1998; Walker, 2006). A common theme among these studies is that race can make a difference. Some of these researchers failed to find statistically significant results, but this does not mean that racial issues do not exist in music education. Multiple researchers consistently reported that race (as well as sex/gender) can influence students' musical preferences and that race might have a stronger influence for students of color. While the connection between students' musical preferences and their musical experiences may not always be explicit, the results of these studies lend support to the notion that race issues in music education are complex and meaningful.

Another area of investigation for racial issues in music education explored the potential influence of race on evaluations of musical performance (Davidson & Edgar, 2003; C. Elliott, 1995; VanWeelden, 2004; VanWeelden & McGee, 2007). These researchers suggested that racial stereotypes could influence the evaluation of musical performances. This offers important considerations for music educators concerned with equity and social justice. Even when evaluators hear the same audio, racial expectations and associations may affect how an evaluator interprets a performance. Not only is the validity of musical performance evaluation called into question, but these researchers also exposed the existence of racial stereotypes for performers, conductors, and musical styles (e.g., Western art music is better performed by an ensemble under the direction of a White conductor, while gospel music is better performed by an ensemble under the direction of a Black conductor).

Race-related research studies focused on music teacher education have included investigating the lack of racial diversity among college music students (Bates, 1997; Hamann & Walker, 1993; Walker & Hamann, 1995; Wilson, 1990) as well as preparing pre-service teachers for diverse teaching environments (Emmanuel, 2003) and exploring issues of White privilege in music education (Bradley, Golner, & Hanson, 2007). Demographic trends suggest that these issues may remain as vital topics in music teacher education as the United States population continues to become more racially and ethnically diverse (United States Census Bureau, 2012). If a more racially diverse teaching force may be better-prepared to teach in racially diverse settings (McKoy, 2013), recruiting and retaining music education students of color should become a priority for music teacher education programs. Regardless of a pre-service teacher's racial identity, all music educators should be prepared to teach in environments that are invariably diverse in many ways (Emmanuel, 2003).

Limitations of past studies. Race-related research in music education has inspired meaningful considerations and improved understandings in the field, but limitations exist for any study. Limitations of past research of interest to this study primarily deal with how the concept of race has been used in research rather than with particular methodologies of specific studies. Every study exists within its own time and space, and to argue against this contextual nature of research would be undue and unproductive criticism. That said, as our understanding of the concept of race evolves, so too must our race-related research. Applications of race as a binary either/or, as a fixed category, or as an independent variable do not reflect the notion of race as a fluid and social construct. Instead, ways in which more nuanced concepts of race can and have been applied in music education research offer more meaningful ways to explore and understand race issues in music education.

24

Moving Forward with Race-Related Research in Music Education

Areas of research. Butler, Lind, and McKoy (2007) have offered a conceptual model for investigating the ways in which race, culture, and ethnicity relate to music learning. The scholars presented potential connections between the five areas of teacher, student, content, instruction, and context and suggested that each relationship offers opportunities for both barriers and support in music teaching and learning. This framework can aid scholars by making sense of previous, current, and future race-related music education research. Investigations in and between all five of these areas could offer valuable insights for music education scholarship. Considering not only how race affects relationships between people but also the impact of race on elements such as curricula, literature, pedagogy, and learning environments would serve race-related research in music education well.

Race as a tool. The use of critical race theory's application of race as an analytical tool (Sleeter & Bernal, 2004) may offer further insights and research opportunities. Pursuing questions related to racial labels (and the navigation of racial labels) can offer meaningful understandings and challenge exclusionary practices; however, the notion of race as a tool could provide more nuanced ways to understand the impact, influence, and experience of race. If scholars employ race as a lens through which to examine sociocultural experiences, specific labels, categories, and expectations might be avoided or at least expanded upon. In some settings it could be beneficial to pursue research questions as broad as, "How does White privilege manifest in an elementary music classroom?" or, "What does it mean to be Black and an orchestral musician?"

Race as experience. Because racial identities, perspectives, and experiences can vary contextually within groups and individuals, race-related research in music education could

benefit from exploring race as experience. Shedding the limitations of race as a category would allow researchers to focus studies on the navigation and negotiation of racial identities along with perceptions of racial issues in music education. Various music education settings may offer a wide array of experiences related to race considering the local majority and minority populations, the musical traditions present, and the backgrounds and experiences of the teachers and learners. Research studies focused on race as an experience might investigate the experience of moving between social groups from school and home, the ways in which different cultures are represented and perceived in music curricula, or the impact of racial identity navigation on music learning.

   Situating researchers, readers, and participants. All research studies present situated analysis performed by a specific researcher or group of researchers. It is important for these researchers to understand, reflect upon, and present their own position within the topic(s) they have examined. This commonly is referred to as the "researcher's lens." A researcher's own racial identity undoubtedly will influence her construction, perception, and presentation of a race-related research study. This lens should be made clear to readers and used as an additional opportunity to employ race as an analytical tool and to explore race as an experience. For example, by acknowledging their perspectives as White music educators, Bradley et al. (2007) limited their specific study and accepted the contextual nature of their findings. Readers also should be reminded that their own racial identity and perceptions affect the ways in which they make sense of race-related research studies and scholarship. Furthermore, the racial identities of participants in research studies play an important role in understanding their experiences. This may be true regardless of whether the study specifically focuses on race. Authors should be sure to include these critical details particularly in race-related research.

Complexity as a goal. Finally, future race-related research in music education could benefit from embracing and pursuing complexity as a goal. Race can be a difficult topic to pursue, discuss, and comprehend, and its challenging relationship to other sociocultural issues can make it downright intimidating. This difficult atmosphere could tempt scholars to "explain" or "define" race, which might lead to problematic assumptions and conclusions. Instead, scholars can make complicating racial issues, expectations, and understandings a goal of their work. Presenting additional and occasionally confounding threads to the tapestry of race-related music education research can help to create a deeper and more nuanced picture of the relationships between race and music education.

Recent Race-Related Research in Music Education

Some recent research studies in music education have explored racial issues in music education in ways similar to those just described. Carter (2013) showed the relationship of racial identity to another sociocultural issue (sexual orientation) in his qualitative study of individuals who are gay and Black who participated in Historically Black College or University marching bands. This collective case study offered a contextual investigation of four men's (re)negotiation of black masculinity in a specific music education setting and complicated notions of race and its relationship to music education, gender, and sexual orientation. Carter found that these men experienced both anxiety and acceptance related to their identity navigation within their marching band community. This study demonstrated the socially constructed nature of race as well as the use of race as an investigative tool. The experiences shared by the participants in this study provided a complicating layer to the understanding of race issues in different music education environments.

Informed by a critical race theory perspective, Hoffman and Carter (2013) conducted a qualitative investigation of African American middle school students' experiences in an instrumental music classroom. The researchers co-taught a composition-centered curriculum, purposefully contrasting traditional rehearsal- and performance-centered American instrumental music classes. The researchers employed race as a tool in this study for telling a *counterstory* (Denzin, 2002; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Yosso, 2006), which challenged racism and oppressive forces by deconstructing master narratives (Sleeter & Bernal, 2004). The study's participants described feelings of animosity toward their previous traditional instrumental music education related to distrusting authority figures and feelings of disconnection between school music and their personal music, which the authors argued caused conflicts in participants' emerging musical identities.

Need for the Study

The inclusion of vernacular music in school settings offers at least the *potential* to reflect and meet the needs of a diverse American population better. Investigating rock and pop music and their applications to school settings has begun to address school music's prospective place consciousness, and exploring a greater variety of vernacular music genres could further inform these issues in meaningful ways. The under-examined world of hip-hop music stands to challenge place-bound perspectives and provide additional considerations toward a more race- and place-conscious field of music education.

Purpose and Problems

With the ambition of informing place consciousness in music education by better understanding the social contexts of hip-hop music education and illuminating potential applications of hip-hop to school music settings, the purpose of this research is to explore the

sociocultural aspects of hip-hop musicians' experiences in music education and music schooling. I employ the overlapping lenses of race, space, and place in the study's design, data collection, interpretation, and analysis.

In particular, this study is informed by the following questions:

1. How do sociocultural contexts (particularly issues of race, space, place, and class) impact hip-hop musicians and their music?

2. What are hip-hop musicians' perceptions of school and schooling?

3. Where, when, how, and with whom do hip-hop musicians develop and explore their musical skills and understandings?

CHAPTER 2—TOWARD HIP-HOP PEDAGOGIES IN SCHOOL MUSIC SETTINGS

The lyrics in hip-hop music regularly have accused formal education systems of failing to meet the needs of urban American students of color (Au, 2005). These lyrics often describe schools as ineffective, irrelevant, and/or contrary to Black urban identities. The iconic underground hip-hop musician KRS-One (whose moniker is an acronym for the phrase, "Knowledge reigns supreme over nearly everyone") often is referred to as "the philosopher," and "the teacher." Despite these labels, KRS-One's lyrics about traditional schooling highlight the often-vexed relationship between students of color and their formal school environments. In the 1989 single, "You Must Learn," KRS-One demonstrates this perspective:

What do you mean when you say I'm rebellious?

'Cause I don't accept everything that you're telling us?

What are you selling us? The creator dwell in us.

I sit in your unknown class while you're failin' us.

I failed your class 'cause I ain't with your reasonin'.

You're trying to make me you by seasonin'

Up my mind with "See Jane run." "See John walk" in a hardcore New York?

Come on now, that's like a chocolate cow.

It doesn't exist. No way, no how.

It seems to me that in a school that's ebony

African history should be pumped up steadily,

But it's not. And this has got to stop.

"See Spot run. Run get Spot."

Insulting to a Black mentality, a Black way of life, or a jet-Black family.

So I include with one concern, that

You must learn. (KRS-One et al., 1989)

A desire for increased culturally relevant and responsive pedagogies (Ladson-Billings, 1995) and an interest in the liberating potential of critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970) have inspired numerous scholars to explore hip-hop as an educational resource toward various aims. While music has served as a vital element of hip-hop cultures (Chang, 2005; Forman, 2002; Rose, 1994), music education scholars previously have done little to consider developments in hip-hop pedagogy, critical hip-hop pedagogy, and hip-hop based education. Potential inclusions of hip-hop cultures in music classrooms could be informed meaningfully by considering this previous literature.

Hip-Hop Pedagogies

Emerging largely from the subject areas of language arts and literacy, hip-hop pedagogy scholars initially offered historical analyses and described the educative potential of hip-hop cultures. This was followed by arguments for hip-hop's ability to connect to traditional school curricula, and more recently by considering hip-hop as an identity resource and a source of cultural capital (Hill & Petchauer, 2013). Many scholars have focused on students of color in American urban areas, frequently exploring the perspective of a teacher-researcher (Petchauer, 2009). While American urban schools have been the common locations for hip-hop pedagogy scholarship, educators in a wider variety of settings may have an interest in pursuing applications of hip-hop pedagogies (Irby & Hall, 2011).

Reviewing previous hip-hop pedagogy scholarship, Hill (2009) provided three classifications of hip-hop pedagogy consisting of *Pedagogies With Hip-Hop, Pedagogies About Hip-Hop,* and *Pedagogies Of Hip-Hop. Pedagogies With Hip-Hop* involve connecting hip-hop

cultures and school experiences, *Pedagogies About Hip-Hop* include teachers and students engaging with critical perspectives of hip-hop and with hip-hop, and *Pedagogies Of Hip-Hop* entail the applications of a hip-hop worldview within education settings. I describe Hill's categories using the labels of *Hip-Hop As A Bridge, Hip-Hop As A Lens,* and *Hip-Hop As Practice.*

Pedagogies With Hip-Hop: Hip-Hop As A Bridge

In efforts to increase the relevance of school experiences for students, some education scholars have argued for connecting school curriculum to hip-hop cultures. These connections often involve employing rap lyrics toward improving language, writing, and/or literacy skills (Biggs, 2011; Cooks, 2004; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2005; Hallman, 2009; Hanley, 2007; Hill, 2009; Hill & Petchauer, 2013; Morrell & Duncan-Andrade, 2002; Paul, 2000; Petchauer, 2009; Rice, 2003; Sánchez, 2010). Scholars have argued for making these connections with secondary school students (Cooks, 2004; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2005; Emdin, 2010; Hill, 2009; Mahiri, 2006; Morell & Duncan-Andrade, 2002; Paul, 2000; Stovall, 2006) and college and university students (Evelyn, 2000; Rice, 2003; Sánchez, 2010). Replacing or supplementing conventional texts used in school with rap lyrics arguably has increased relevance and engaged potentially disenfranchised students with traditional school concepts in addition to honoring hip-hop practices, understandings, and knowledge.

Research studies investigating the use of *Hip-Hop As A Bridge* have found meaningful implications and considerations for a variety of fields. As teachers/researchers, Morrell and Duncan-Andrade (2002) explored a high school English poetry unit in which students engaged established canonical poetry as well as hip-hop texts. The aims of study included "tapping into popular culture and facilitating academic and critical literacy development" (p. 90). The urban

California students in this study used their involvement with and knowledge of hip-hop cultures as a framework for better understanding "traditional" poetry as they engaged in analysis, composition, and presentations of rap lyrics alongside various historical types of poetry. Also in the role of teacher/researcher, Cooks (2004) aimed to improve the "in-school" literacy skills of his eighth-grade summer school English class by capitalizing on the urban California students' "out-of-school" literacy understandings (i.e., knowledge of rap texts). Cooks shared samples of one student's work consisting of an essay and a rap on the same topic and highlighted the shared strategies the student employed for the two styles of writing.

Hallman (2009) also explored the use of "out-of-school" literacy to improve "in-school" literacy in a study of an English class for pregnant and parenting teens in the American Midwest. The students in this study engaged with topics relevant to hip-hop (e.g., the values of hip-hop, students' relationships to hip-hop cultures) through "traditional" writing activities including journaling, narrative writing, and poetry. Hallman argued that hip-hop served as a "critical bridge" (p. 36) between students' life experiences and the school curriculum by relating important cultural figures (e.g., Tupac Shakur) to class themes and topics and also by socially connecting the "at risk" young women of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds to their middle-aged White male teacher.

Other researchers have exhibited how including hip-hop in school can challenge traditionally accepted school knowledge (Abe, 2009) and conventional uses of texts. Sánchez (2010) examined an essay written by an African American student for a "remedial" (Sánchez prefers "transitional") college writing course. The essay, which analyzed a hip-hop text, challenged linguistic standards and demonstrated the student's cultural profit (the positives possessed) as opposed to deficit (the expected understandings lacked). Hill (2009) investigated

how hip-hop texts could be used to teach traditional literary concepts for urban American students but also found that students used these texts to navigate collective memory and generational identity. These findings support those of Dimitriadis (2009), who examined similar phenomena in an urban American Midwestern community center and found that youth employed hip-hop cultural texts to navigate identity, community, and history.

Scholars also have applied hip-hop in academic areas outside of language arts. Emdin (2010) found that students who more closely identified with hip-hop also were more alienated from school and science education. He argued that concepts such as the complicated analogies found in hip-hop lyrics could be employed in teaching science. Hip-hop texts also were used to teach social studies to African American and Latina/o students in Chicago, leading Stovall (2006) to argue that such inclusions could help students develop a critical perspective. Outside of texts, Mahiri (2006) used an audio-visual process similar to hip-hop beat production to explore issues of poverty and to teach critical media literacy, while Stein (2011) showed how a hip-hop music video could be used in a postsecondary political science setting to teach about the concept of White privilege.

Considering Ward's (2013) assertion that some urban school administrators value and might seek to hire teachers with "hip-hop cultural competency" (p. 13), *Pedagogies With Hip-Hop* also offer meaningful implications specifically aimed at teacher education. Greenfield (2007) suggested that teaching popular culture, such as hip-hop encourages teachers' reflective practice, increases awareness of their social positions, and affects teaching philosophies. Hanley (2007) concurred that knowledge of hip-hop made her a more informed and approachable educator. By describing experiences of exposing preservice teachers to hip-hop settings and

34

utilizing an open mic event in her teacher education classes, Hanley argued that hip-hop could employ learner-centered processes fostering critical thought of dominant paradigms.

Hill (2009) described *Pedagogies With Hip-Hop* as necessary for both connecting elements of hip-hop to school as well as creating new forms of knowledge. Hip-hop in the classroom may serve to bridge the possible cultural divisions between students and teachers (Evelyn, 2000) and privilege the voices of people of color (Paul, 2000); however, numerous scholars have argued for teaching hip-hop based on its own merit (Morrell & Duncan-Andrade, 2002) and warned against using hip-hop as a "pedagogical lure" (Paul, 2000, p. 246) to teaching traditional school knowledge. Increased relevance and "bait-and-switch" tactics both exist as possibilities among *Pedagogies With Hip-Hop* (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2005), but scholars have shown that meaningful inclusions of hip-hop in school can serve to improve learning outcomes for students.

Pedagogies About Hip-Hop: Hip-Hop As A Lens

Hill (2009) described *Pedagogies About Hip-Hop* as settings in which students and teachers work as cultural critics employing critical perspectives in response to power structures and meanings both within and through hip-hop cultures. While some of the previously described hip-hop pedagogies aim toward using hip-hop as a means to teach other subjects, numerous scholars have argued for the ability of a *critical* hip-hop pedagogy to raise students' social consciousness (Abe, 2009; Akom, 2009; Alim, 2007; Au, 2005; Baszile, 2009; Bridges, 2011; Campbell, 2007; Dimitriadis, 2009; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2005; Guy, 2004; Hanley, 2007; Mahiri, 2000-2001; Morrell & Duncan-Andrade, 2002; Pardue, 2004; Paul, 2000; Pulido, 2009; Scherpf, 2001; Stovall, 2006). Akom (2009) synthesized Friere's (1970) critical pedagogy and the critical race theory scholarship of Solórzano and Delgado Bernal (2001) and presented

critical hip-hop pedagogy as a means of sociopolitical analysis that empowers the voices and perspectives of marginalized communities through cooperative and youth-centered learning.

Using *Hip-Hop As A Lens* generally has involved exploring sociocultural issues within hip-hop. This includes critiquing hip-hop itself (e.g., gender issues in rap lyrics) as well as the ways in which hip-hop reflects and comments on the larger world (e.g., socioeconomic issues present in 1970s South Bronx block parties). Although hip-hop includes and reflects a vast array of sociocultural issues (Chang, 2005; Forman, 2002; Keyes, 2004; Rose, 1994), hip-hop pedagogy scholars most commonly have explored the issues of economic class and race. For example, scholars have discussed the ways in which White privilege manifests in traditional education systems through favored language and how hip-hop pedagogy might instead privilege the language of people of color (Alim, 2007; Campbell, 2007).

While social consciousness and critical examinations more frequently appear in theoretical and philosophical scholarship related to hip-hop pedagogy, empirical researchers also have explored *Pedagogies About Hip-Hop*. In addition to previously described studies that included elements of critical investigation and social consciousness, Pulido (2009) interviewed Latina/o high school and college students from the American Midwest and found that for these students, hip-hop served as a lens through which to view racial issues in academic and social contexts. Pardue (2004) explored hip-hop as alternative education in a Brazilian youth prison and found that musicians, educators, and social workers presented hip-hop skills as useful for employment (e.g., literacy) as well as critical consciousness. Further empirical research is needed in the area of *Pedagogies About Hip-Hop*, and Petchauer (2009) argued that future studies could benefit from including perspectives beyond the experiences of teacher-researchers (e.g., learners' perspectives).

Hill (2009) acknowledged that *Pedagogies About Hip-Hop* could run the risk of becoming an attack on hip-hop itself. While elements of hip-hop cannot be naïvely implemented in school settings with the assumption that only empowering social messages and outcomes exist, bringing hip-hop into the classroom only for the purpose of ridicule does not offer constructive experiences for students. The critique of hip-hop, and most commonly rap lyrics, can be a meaningful and arguably imperative exercise for learners; however, the greater potential for critical consciousness might exist within the practice of critical examinations *through* hip-hop. Whether it is the musical, linguistic, dance, visual art, fashion, or knowledge of hip-hop, using *Hip-Hop As A Lens* for viewing and understanding power structures and sociocultural issues stands to offer meaningful and powerful insights for learners and teachers.

The possibilities and practices of hip-hop pedagogies are at least as varied as the global cultures (and subcultures) of hip-hop have become. Because the lines between *Pedagogies With Hip-Hop* and *Pedagogies About Hip-Hop* are not always clear or fixed, educators might apply hip-hop pedagogies in any number of ways. Using hip-hop cultural artifacts as a bridge toward connecting to and/or challenging traditional knowledge may or may not involve aspirations for critical social consciousness. Conversely, *Pedagogies About Hip-Hop* may involve critical examinations of the social issues present in hip-hop making no direct connections to traditional school subjects or aiming for broader social consciousness. Hip-hop pedagogies contain further complexity as the focus shifts away from the use of specific artifacts (usually rap lyrics) to the application of a hip-hop worldview in educational practice.

Pedagogies Of Hip-Hop: Hip-Hop As Practice

Mahiri (2006) showed how hip-hop processes could be applied beyond the analysis of hip-hop products by applying beat production skills to teach media literacy. At an even wider

level, *Pedagogies Of Hip-Hop* apply hip-hop worldviews (referred to in some literature as "aesthetics") to educational settings. Hill (2009) described *Pedagogies Of Hip-Hop* as recognizing hip-hop's unique sites of cultural production and reflecting hip-hop's various values, beliefs, and practices. As opposed to (or in addition to) applying hip-hop to traditional educational settings, these pedagogies acknowledge hip-hop as its own education (Dimitriadis, 2009), including the elements of knowledge, consciousness, search and discovery, and participation (Peterson, 2013).

In teaching writing, Rice (2003) employed the "whatever" principle of hip-hop sampling. "Whatever" contains multiple meanings including indifference and the practice of taking whatever one can find and applying it in new ways. Hip-hop beat production often applies the latter by using sections of prerecorded music or sounds to compose a new piece of music. Rice argued that scholars apply similar principles when citing previous work in order to construct a new piece of scholarship and used this principle with university writing students. Petchauer (2010) demonstrated hip-hop's role in education settings far beyond a textual analysis of rap lyrics by exploring principles of sampling in a research study focused on six undergraduate university students from the American Southwest. For the students in Petchauer's study, hip-hop connected them to various communities, issues, and understandings and they employed sampling practices using a variety of hip-hop sources in their academic work.

Viewing and applying hip-hop as a community of practice, Wilson (2013) explored how students in a Southern American Historically Black College experienced hip-hop in their daily lives. Students were engaged in learning "authentic leadership" to prepare themselves for professional lives after school. Wilson found and described the hip-hop aesthetics of sampling, signifying, and knowledge of self in these students' experiences. She argued that the

38

combination of signifying and schooling (or "schoolifying") created new perspectives with which to view the world and construct meanings.

Hip-hop's inclusion in education might benefit teachers just as much as it could benefit students. According to Irizarry (2009b), the hip-hop aesthetic of "representin'," which involves the shared sense of identity and a responsibility to one's social community, reflects a positive disposition for urban teachers. Irizarry argued that teachers who "represent" base their teaching in sociopolitical contexts and are members of multiple shared communities with students. These teachers tend to value relevance, flattened power dynamics, and engage in reflexive curricula. When Bridges (2011) studied the practices of some "successful" Black male teachers, he found that these teachers exhibited similar characteristics, including a call to service, a commitment to self-awareness, and a resistance to social injustice. Bridges contended that these traits should be central to teacher education, perhaps particularly for teachers in urban and/or racially diverse settings.

Also concerned with teacher education, Petchauer (2011) applied the hip-hop aesthetic of kinetic consumption (Kline, 2007) to investigate how preservice teachers of color from American urban settings responded to justice-oriented teaching and a democratic curriculum. Kline described kinetic consumption as the way in which hip-hop was experienced bodily through movement beyond hearing or seeing. Using this aesthetic and the non-dichotomous nature of hip-hop as tools for inquiry, the preservice teachers in this study saw benefits to justice-oriented teaching and a democratic curriculum (e.g., increased relevance and student engagement), but also recognized potential barriers for student learning (e.g., decreased efficiency).

Rodríguez (2009) employed a hip-hop concept known as *dissing* (disrespecting) as a tool of inquiry examining interactions between preservice teachers and American urban students seeking dialogue as a tool toward culturally relevant pedagogy. Rodríguez found that the mostly White preservice teachers frequently *dissed* the students during group conversation (e.g., interrupting) and called for increased and improved dialogue between teachers and students. The concept of *dissing* in this piece played a vital role and served as a frame for exploring alternative ways to read the scenarios under investigation.

Hip-Hop As Practice demonstrates a meaningful application of hip-hop perspectives. While specific hip-hop artifacts might be used in activities, it is the hip-hop worldview that impacts learning experiences in these pedagogies and research studies. Previous researchers in this area have focused mainly on the postsecondary level, but applications to younger students appear entirely plausible. *Pedagogies Of Hip-Hop* could offer the deepest connections to some students' lives outside of school, but Hill (2009) does not argue that these three categories of hip-hop pedagogies are hierarchical. Each category of pedagogies appears to offer different educational values, practices, and implications for students and teachers, and since no strict demarcations exist between categories, every pedagogy of hip-hop might contain varying elements of *Hip-Hop As A Bridge, Hip-Hop As A Lens,* and *Hip-Hop As Practice*.

Limitations and Challenges

Hill and Petchauer (2013) stated that hip-hop pedagogy scholarship is "at a crossroads" (p. 2) and in need of expansion. They suggested three major areas for growth in future research. First, scholarship would benefit from exploring a wider variety of hip-hop cultural production. An over-reliance on rap texts and underrepresentation of the many other forms of hip-hop cultural production (e.g., graffiti, dance, music composition) has unnecessarily limited hip-hop

pedagogies. Similarly, Seidel (2011) described many previous approaches to implementing elements of hip-hop cultures into school settings as "too literal and too literary" (p. 3) and that analysis of texts "often kept students in the position of consumers rather than creators of cultural products" (p. 4).

Hill and Petchauer's (2013) second recommended area of growth was that hip-hop pedagogy scholarship can and should be applied with greater frequency in subject areas outside of English and language arts. While these areas have provided many meaningful insights for educators, further and more varied exploration is needed. Finally, Hill and Petchauer offered that hip-hop pedagogy research has lacked input from sources other than teacher-researchers. Investigating and examining the experiences of students, as well as other educators and stakeholders, undoubtedly would offer greater understandings and provide valuable nuance to future hip-hop pedagogy research. Seidel argued that positioning teachers as authorities in this way was "a peculiar position when studying something of which students often have more knowledge than their instructors" (p. 3).

Hill (2009) admitted that hip-hop pedagogies could run the risk of romanticizing hip-hop cultures. Although many have offered hip-hop as a rich source of empowering educative potential, all hip-hop artifacts do not reflect the empowering social values espoused by most hip-hop pedagogy scholars. While many exceptions exist, potentially damaging characteristics including consumerism, materialism, sexism, heterosexism, racism, and violence can be glamorized and celebrated in some elements of hip-hop culture (Chang, 2005; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2005; Forman, 2002; Guy, 2004; Low, Tan, & Celemencki, 2013; Rose, 1994). These elements cannot be ignored, but critical examinations of the ways that these characteristics reflect the larger society and represent specific contextual sociocultural issues might offer even

41

more valuable learning experiences for teachers and students. In a related way, the predominance of male academics in hip-hop pedagogy scholarship arguably reflects complicated and longstanding gender issues within hip-hop cultures (Rose, 1994). Further exploration of how hip-hop pedagogy scholarship might perpetuate or confront hip-hop's many sociocultural and sociopolitical issues could provide meaningful growth for this area of inquiry.

Because many hip-hop pedagogies rely on students' interest and experience with hip-hop cultures, hip-hop's relevance is a crucial element for any meaningful hip-hop pedagogy. Petchauer (2009) argued that, as hip-hop continues to age, relevance should not be assumed for future generations of learners. Some populations of students might find hip-hop altogether irrelevant; however, a more complex issue relates to the pluralistic nature of hip-hop cultures. As the beliefs, values, practices, and products of hip-hop have spread over decades from New York City's South Bronx to nearly every corner of the globe, there is no single monolithic hip-hop culture. While many current hip-hop educators identify with socially conscious rappers[1] (often from hip-hop's "Golden Age" of the mid 1980s to the early 1990s), these artists and their music might be unknown and less relevant to students born decades after the zenith of these artists' careers. Hip-hop's relevance for students should not be assumed and must be continually investigated and evaluated if hip-hop pedagogies hope to provide meaningful learning experiences for students.

Authenticity in Hip-Hop and Music Education

The numerous and complex authenticity claims surrounding hip-hop cultures present unique challenges for educators hoping to connect their classrooms to these cultures (Low et al.,

---

[1] Socially conscious rappers discuss issues such as politics, economics, philosophy, and other social and sociopolitical concerns. They often challenge dominant narratives and oppressive power.

2013). Authenticity has always played an important role in hip-hop cultures (Neal, 2012), arguably being valued at times over a performer's skill or talent (Wang, 2012). However, authenticity also has been intensely disputed (Gilroy, 1991). Exploring performances of authenticity associated with hip-hop music potentially could inform and improve applications of hip-hop pedagogy in music classrooms.

Performing Hip-Hop Authenticity

Authenticity as performance. Dimitriadis (2009) cited various social scientists (e.g., Abercrombie & Longhurst, 1998; Bauman, 1992; Clifford, 1997; Conquergood, 1991, 1992; Denzin, 1997, 2003; Kellner, 1995) when arguing that culture was an "unfolding performative narrative" (p. 12). This position situates culture as a process rather than a product, an action as opposed to a condition. Likewise, instead of viewing authenticity in hip-hop as a condition that either exists or does not exist, positioning authenticity as an action allows for the complex and dynamic nature of hip-hop authenticity claims to be understood in more nuanced ways. These claims require performance in order to be recognized (Rodman, 2012) and performances of authenticity occur in contextually meaningful ways.

Kelley (2012) argued that social scientists seeking a singular "authentic" have created a pathological and damaging image of the Black urban ghetto. She contested that Black urban cultures resist limited concepts of authenticity. As Bendix (1997) would suggest, our questions regarding authenticity in hip-hop therefore should not focus on, "What is authentic hip-hop?", but rather, "Who is performing authenticity claims?" and, "Why, how, for what, and for whom are these claims performed?" Consequently, instead of reviewing hip-hop literature with the intention of discovering an essential hip-hop authenticity, I will describe the various ways in

43

which authenticity has been performed and conceptualized within hip-hop music in hopes of informing hip-hop pedagogies in school music settings.

Hip-hop authenticities and their challenges. Scholars have described authenticity claims in hip-hop surrounding numerous concepts. Related to hip-hop's roots being planted in urban neighborhoods of color in New York City, some scholars have explored authenticity claims situated on racial issues (Forman, 2002; Rose, 1994). Specific examples include the ways in which authenticity performances described the unfavorable and challenging truths about Black urban life (Rose, 1994), demonstrated what Du Bois (1903) called African American "double consciousness" (Nyawalo, 2013), as well as revealed connections to African folklore characters such as the "trickster," or the "badman" (Hill, 2009; Judy, 2012; Nyawalo, 2013; Smith, 2005). While relationships to African folklore offer compelling considerations, Dimitriadis (2009) argued that associating Black American hip-hop directly with Africa ignores the specific contexts and perspectives of the actual people involved in hip-hop cultures. Other racial authenticity claims abound in hip-hop cultures (traditionally privileging Black racial identities), and these claims also have been and continue to be challenged (Gilroy, 1991). For example, the enormous commercial success of a White rapper such as Eminem, or the presence of a variety of Latino and Chicano hip-hop musicians in the United States (Flores, 2012; Kelly, 2012) greatly complicate the notion of hip-hop being seen solely as Black music (Rodman, 2012).

In addition to race, hip-hop authenticity also has centered on issues of physical and conceptual notions of space and place. Forman (2002) linked hip-hop authenticity to Black urban neighborhoods (or 'hoods), suggesting that hip-hop musicians' lyrics were expected to discuss and refer to issues, circumstances, and perspectives relevant to their local communities. Hip-hop's relationship to the 'hood has always been complicated, including the dubious query of

which 'hood was most authentic (Gilroy, 2012), but this relationship has grown even more complex as hip-hop cultures have been adapted throughout the world. Even within the same urban classroom, the students in Hill's (2009) research study disputed hip-hop authenticity. Some associated authenticity in hip-hop music to the conceptual "streets" valuing lyrical content that reflected the realities of urban American life. Other students, however, challenged this claim, asserting that authentic hip-hop music rejected commercial and capitalist interests by discussing socially conscious issues and remaining loyal to hip-hop's underground.

Hip-hop's underground (often characterized by its non-mainstream and anti-commercial values) has been a site for passionate authenticity claims since the music began engaging with commercial interests in the 1980s (Chang, 2005; Forman, 2002; Judy, 2012; Rose, 1994), and the relationship between hip-hop music and economic interests has only grown more complex since. Hess (2005) presented this struggle as a conflict between underground authenticity and commercial marketability. Seen initially as a subculture in 1970s New York City, hip-hop's foray into the American and global mainstreams created a tension for many concerned with the commodification of hip-hop cultures (Forman, 2002; Judy, 2012; McLeod, 2012). While some argue that corporate interests have exploited Black urban culture (Rose, 1994), others see the connections between corporate, personal, and social interests as more reciprocal (Forman, 2002). Regardless, the persistent claims to the authenticity of hip-hop's underground, as well as the "old school" (Perry, 2004; Smith, 2005) demonstrate important reactions to the assimilating and coopting powers of economic forces (Judy, 2012; Perry, 2004) in an attempt to preserve and protect valued cultures (McLeod, 2012).

Due to the fluid, dynamic, and hybrid nature of hip-hop authenticity, some scholars have attempted to categorize the claims into various classifications and typologies. Armstrong (2004)

introduced three kinds of hip-hop authenticity consisting of (a) being true to one's self, (b) coming from and representing a specific location or place, and (c) having a relationship with and/or proximity to an original source of hip-hop music. These authenticities reflect the values of hip-hop's temporal and special traditions as well as the concept of individuality. Similarly, Low et al. (2013) presented a typology of authenticity in hip-hop involving six dimensions comprised of (a) the "streets," (b) "hard" heterosexual masculinity, (c) "Blackness," (d) representing one's place and culture, (e) being true to one's self, and (f) the political and social consciousness of the "underground." The authors maintained that these traditional authenticity claims complicated and confounded the liberatory educational aims of critical hip-hop pedagogies, but that authenticity could be challenged and reclaimed by teachers and students.

Asian American female rapper Awkwafina can serve as a demonstration of the complex notion of hip-hop authenticity. Like many previous female hip-hop musicians, Awkwafina has challenged hegemonic masculinity in her lyrics (Rose, 1994). She recorded a parody version of Mickey Avalon's "My Dick" (Melik, Cutright, Perl, & Brunjes, 2006), a lewd anthem comparing the rapper's and guest artists' genitals favorably to those of their adversaries, called "My Vag" (Lum, 2012). Awkwafina's comedic and boastful taunts about her vagina simultaneously challenge other women while also ridiculing the absurdity of genital bragging. Her sarcastic tone and lyrics present herself as both more desirably female than other women and also superior to men:

My vag feed the homeless.

Your vag date the homeless.

My vag make the dean's list.

Your vag couldn't pass a HIV test.

It's time that we let the world know

Bitch, your vag is only so-so.

Awkwafina's a genius

And her vagina is fifty times better than a penis. (Lum, 2012)

Possibly related to the "model minority" status often assigned to them (Lee, 2009), Asian Americans might be seen as the antithesis of Black people in America. This complicated potential position can complicate Asian Americans' hip-hop authenticity claims (Wang, 2012); however, Awkwafina does lay claim to hip-hop authenticity. While she challenges established hip-hop expectations of race and gender, she performs a location-based authenticity that conforms to conventional notions of New York City as the "real" cultural home of hip-hop. The lyrics to the single, "NYC Bitche$," present Awkwafina as a cultural authority by naming, claiming, and describing details of New York City life and positioning "outsiders" as less-than-authentic:

New York City, bitch.

That's where I come from,

Not where I moved to on Mom and Dad's trust fund.

New York City, bitch.

That's how I'm rollin'.

You out-of-state fakes get your iPads stolen. (Lum, 2013)

The notion that authenticity cannot be defined in static and concrete terms does not diminish the importance of authenticity claims in hip-hop cultures. Because authenticity is not an essential condition or set of conditions, hip-hop musicians regularly challenge and appropriate assertions of authenticity, reclaiming "real." Authenticity as an action, not a condition, allows

Awkwafina and many others to "keep it real" and demonstrate authority in their music. The dynamic nature of authenticity in hip-hop has meant that individuals and communities can create contextual meanings within these cultures, navigate and negotiate identities, and traverse the complicated relationships of cultural resistance and economic commodification.

Glocalizing the 'Hood

Adapting hip-hop cultures. The "global noise" (Mitchell, 2001) of hip-hop music has contributed meaningfully to an immense "culture without a nation" (Pennycook, 2006) as the popularity of hip-hop cultures has expanded far beyond American soil. Within diverse social environments, hip-hop can serve as a site for (re)claiming and redefining racial identities (Perry, 2012), and by locating narratives in the margins of societies (Kahf, 2007), hip-hop cultures offer vehicles for voices of resistance and navigating identities around the globe (Mitchell, 2000, 2001). However, performing authenticity in hip-hop is complicated and multilayered, perhaps even more so for hip-hop musicians outside of the United States. Scholars have suggested that performing authenticity in global hip-hop means endorsing oneself with the authority of traditional American hip-hop culture while also maintaining connections to and representing one's local roots (Barrer, 2009; Loureiro-Rodríguez, 2012). This means that hip-hop cultures have been adapted rather than adopted by people outside of the United States.

Applying the work of social scientist Lull (1995), Dyndahl (2009) described the various ways in which the global phenomenon of hip-hop has been made locally meaningful in a three-part, fluid taxonomy. The first level of interaction between hip-hop and local cultures is that of *transculturation*, where the original global culture is adopted in its "pure" and unchanged form. Next, was the act of *hybridization*, involving mixtures between global and local cultures. Finally, *indigenization* consists of the reterritorializing of global cultures to the point where the

48

delineations between global and the local are no longer recognizable. Dyndahl argued that participants in these *glocalized* hip-hop cultures aimed to travel global "routes" while maintaining local "roots." In this way, members of *glocalized* hip-hop cultures cannot successfully employ the notion of authenticity as condition and must instead perform actions of authenticity in ways that are *glocally* meaningful.

Glocalizing hip-hop. Many of the issues with which scholars engage *glocalized* hip-hop music focus on identity, politics, and language. Within the United States, social groups beyond Black urban communities have *glocalized* hip-hop music to affirm identities related to gender (Cohen, 2009), race, ethnicity, and nationality (Flores, 2012; Kelly, 2012; Sharma, 2010). These identities often have been approached through the adaptation of Black urban linguistics and dialect (Alim, 2003; Cutler, 2003; Morgan, 2001; Newman, 2005; Rose, 1994; Smitherman, 1997), but also include the use of other culturally relevant languages (Devitt, 2008; Flores, 2012; Kelly, 2012; Sharma; 2010). Internationally, hip-hop musicians have employed hip-hop as political and social resistance (Kahf, 2007; Mitchell, 1995; Perullo, 2012) by engaging and reflecting local societal issues (Barrer, 2009; Sarkar & Winer, 2006).

Many scholars have explored the issue of linguistic politics in *glocalized* hip-hop including multiple collections of such work (Alim, Ibrahim, & Pennycook, 2009; Terkourafi, 2010). Some researchers have reported how the use of multiple languages and dialects reflects multiethnic societies (Sarkar & Allen, 2007; Sarkar & Winer, 2006) and how the use of English demonstrates global commercial viability and authenticity related to hip-hop's roots, while the use of local languages and dialects demonstrates local authenticity (Barrer, 2009; Devitt, 2008; Durand, 2002; Fenn & Perullo, 2000; Loureiro-Rodríguez, 2012; Mitchell, 1995; Perullo, 2012; Ramsdell, 2012; Sarkar & Winer, 2006; Simeziane, 2010; Vens, 2004). These *code switches* are

not arbitrary applications of language, but rather reflect meaningful decisions for artists as they *glocalize* their practices in hip-hop cultures.

Glocalizing hip-hop requires both local and global awareness. In addition to balancing attempts at commercial success on the global level against claims of relevance and authenticity at the local level, successfully *glocalizing* hip-hop musicians often are astutely aware of how they are perceived. For example, Manabe (2013) found that, in pursuit of success in international competitions, Japanese DJs would include traditional Japanese folk music in their compositions and performances in order to play into Westerners' exotic expectations and stereotypes. This kind of awareness reveals the intricate give-and-take between global and local and illustrates the complexity of hip-hop authenticity.

Authenticity in Music Education

Applications of the concept of authenticity in music education literature often have been used in conversations regarding the inclusion of global, international, world, multicultural, popular, vernacular, and other "outside" music into school settings. In these conversations, authenticity most frequently has been employed as a condition. In the most obvious applications of authenticity as a condition, some quantitative researchers have measured differences between conditions labeled as either authentic or inauthentic (Demorest & Schultz, 2004; Pembrook & Robinson, 1997; Swanwick & Lawson, 1999). Researchers exposed subjects to musical stimuli and subjects consistently preferred or achieved at higher levels with the instruments, recordings, and music that the researchers labeled as authentic. In these studies, researchers employed authenticity as a static condition.

Other music education scholars who have explored authenticity as a more flexible condition often treated authenticity as something that is real, accurate, or personally meaningful

and arranged a dichotomy in which out-of-school musics were authentic and in-school musics were inauthentic (Abril, 2006; Belz, 2006; Karlsen, 2010; Martin, 2012; Palmer, 1992; Schippers, 2006). Authenticity concerns in these applications often involved balancing authenticity and inauthenticity, striving for the most authenticity possible, and avoiding the perpetuation of cultural stereotypes. In engaging the popular music education work of Green (e.g., 2002, 2008), Väkevä (2009) discussed authenticity as both relating to the "real world" outside of school and personally relevant meanings, arguing that authenticity was flexible as opposed to inherent in music.

Koops (2010) summarized numerous authenticity issues and presented four models of authenticity in music education. The first was Palmer's (1992) continuum model, which balanced the authenticity of music against the compromise of bringing that music into a school setting. The second was a historical/personal model related to the work of Kivy (1995), which conceptualized authenticity as both an accurate reproduction and personal meaning making. The third model, inspired by Swanwick (1994), used Kivy's historical/personal authenticities (called "reproduction" and "relevance") and added the element of "reality," which associated authenticity with existence in the "real world" outside of school.

While the first three models offered by Koops (2010) treated authenticity as a condition (or conditions) that music either had or did not have in various and flexible degrees, the final model was what Koops called "beyond authenticity" (p. 26). This included the arguments of Johnson (2000) and Bendix (1997) that authenticity did not exist as a condition but rather as a strategic action. Johnson suggested that dichotomous constructions of authenticity (e.g., musical performances or lyrics being either "authentic" or "inauthentic") hindered the teaching of diverse musical traditions and that contextualizing authenticity claims was a useful endeavor in teaching.

51

Koops chose to reject the model of "beyond authenticity," perhaps due to the nature of her question regarding whether or not to change the "authentic" words of Gambian children's songs in English speaking classrooms, but this model is the most applicable to the questions relevant to how authenticity claims complicate applications of hip-hop pedagogy. Johnson's (2000) compelling application of Bendix's (1997) multifaceted concept of authenticity to music education argued that authenticity was non-dichotomous, culturally constructed, and relative. Of the models offered by Koops, this "beyond authenticity" conceptual model best fits the issues of informing hip-hop pedagogies for music education.

Authenticating Hip-Hop Pedagogies for School Music Settings

Low et al.'s (2013) warning that hip-hop's traditional authenticity claims present challenges to critical hip-hop pedagogies was accompanied by strategies for addressing authenticity in hip-hop. Citing the dynamic and fluid nature of authenticity claims, Low et al. argued that hip-hop authenticity could be challenged and reclaimed in the classroom. These scholars offered four strategies for addressing the challenges of hip-hop stereotypes entailing (a) defining critical thinking and communicating expectations about analyzing hip-hop culture and ourselves, (b) making use of hip-hop cultural critiques, (c) examining rap lyrics as artistic, and (d) recognizing that identities are performed. These strategies aim not to avoid traditional and conflicting authenticity claims in hip-hop, but rather to engage them in hopes of encouraging critical consciousness.

Applying Low et al.'s (2013) strategies in a school music setting might include such activities as deconstructing and socially contextualizing hip-hop recordings, describing and analyzing the relationships between students' identities and hip-hop cultures, studying and applying the social and musical critiques found in the vast literature of hip-hop studies,

52

examining and understanding the differences between author and narrator in rap texts, and acknowledging the ways in which hip-hop musicians reflect and relate to their sociocultural contexts. Activities such as those mentioned above stand to potentially relate to and engage some students' out-of-school realities while also encouraging critical thinking and inspection. Conceived of in this way, hip-hop pedagogies would not just increase student interest by coopting hip-hop cultures, but could promote student growth through expanding the ways in which students interact with hip-hop cultures.

If hip-hop authenticity is not a single prescription of social characteristics, authenticity claims need not hinder music educators interested in applications of hip-hop pedagogy. On the contrary, perceiving of authenticity as action and authenticity claims as situated and challengeable provides music educators with a wide range of possibilities in the classroom. Because authenticity claims do not reflect a concrete set of values and beliefs, music educators applying hip-hop pedagogies could explore the many ways in which hip-hop musicians perform authenticity. Instead of being concerned with the "appropriateness" of some hip-hop lyrics and themes (Campbell & Clements, 2006), music educators might embrace an opportunity to engage challenging social issues. Music educators also might make use of the many underground and/or socially conscious artists who confront some of the negative stereotypes associated with some hip-hop authenticity claims.

In addition to musical analyses, hip-hop pedagogies in music education might experience authenticity as action through musical performance. If performing "authentically" as prescribed by some outside set of conditions is no longer the driving force behind attributing musical value, students in a music classroom might *glocalize* hip-hop cultures in ways reminiscent of international hip-hop musicians. By adapting (as opposed to adopting) hip-hop cultures in the

53

classroom, students could perform their own hip-hop authenticities by relating hip-hop cultures to their own local worlds, including the world of school. Like international hip-hop musicians, *glocalizing* hip-hop to the music classroom would require both global awareness of hip-hop cultures and local awareness of what is meaningful and relevant to students' personal situations. *Glocalizing* hip-hop to the classroom in this manner offers the potential to perform culture in ways that challenge and reclaim the very notion of authenticity, allowing students to (re)define what it means to "keep it real."

Conclusion

The time for including hip-hop music in American schools is well past due. These inclusions can happen in a variety of ways and work toward a range of goals, but continuing to ignore the relevance and appeal of hip-hop music in the lives of young people would be to miss out on a host of potential educative benefits. Hip-hop pedagogies offer the possibilities of creating engaging musical activities, increasing the cultural relevance of music classrooms, and developing students' critical social consciousness. Perhaps most importantly, representing the musical cultures of many students' lives outside of school sends the message that all students are welcome and valued in school music settings.

In order to inform potential inclusions of hip-hop cultures in school music settings, it is necessary for music educators to understand hip-hop music learning better as it occurs outside of school. Exploring not only the traditional music education concerns of *what*, *how* and *why* but also the issues of *who*, *where*, and *when* (Stauffer, 2009, 2012) as they relate to hip-hop music could provide important additions to the ongoing dialogue regarding vernacular music, music education, and music schooling. These efforts toward place consciousness in the field of music education could assist greatly in the pursuit of equity, inclusiveness, and relevance in school

54

music classrooms. While hip-hop cannot serve as a "one size fits all" solution for school music, complicating and challenging possible assumptions surrounding hip-hop music and its potential applications in school settings could generate meaningful implications for music educators.

CHAPTER 3—METHODOLOGY

When I first was considering and designing this study, I purposefully avoided any prescriptive research design and chose to focus on my informant and the organically arising issues of our time spent together in social and musical contexts. In this way, I could tell the story of my informant and myself in ways that are honest and tied to lived experiences. Kelley (2012) suggested that storytelling was essential to social scientists avoiding "cardboard typologies" (p. 136) and "monolithic interpretations of Black urban culture" (p. 137). He recommended that avoiding superficial notions of a "real," "authentic," or "true" version of Black urban culture allowed for more nuanced understandings and could help to avoid pejorative and pathological interpretations. The emergent design of this study is intended to follow Kelley's advice and to engage in a study that reflects as well as challenges reality.

Design

Case Study

Because this study aims to inform place consciousness in music education, an in-depth exploration concerned with *who*, *where*, and *when* is necessary. The most appropriate design for this investigation is that of a case study as this design "seek(s) to explain some present circumstance" and "requires extensive and 'in-depth' description of some social phenomenon" (Yin, 2009, p. 4). The present circumstances at hand are those of the personal experiences related to hip-hop musical practice, particularly teaching and learning within the genre. This study also is concerned with the sociocultural contexts within which hip-hop musical practices occur, specifically Black urban culture in the Midwestern United States. In this setting, "the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (Yin, 2009, p. 18); therefore, a case study design is best equipped to explore both the personally experienced phenomenon of hip-hop

musical practice as well as the specific contexts in which these practices take place. In this way, this study is not limited to asking *how* hip-hop musicians learn but rather is concerned with understanding *who* hip-hop musicians are and exploring the ways that sociocultural contexts affect and are affected by hip-hop musical practice.

Stake (1995) described case study as the focus on a case or issue illustrated by a case within a bounded system. As opposed to the *intrinsic* case study, which focuses internally on the case itself, Stake went on to define the *instrumental* case study as one in which the case was used to better understand broader issues. In this study, the cases investigated are a single informant (an adult amateur hip-hop musician) and myself in the roles of researcher, musician, pupil, educator, and friend. I intend for the exploration of these cases to inform the broader experiences of in-school and out-of-school hip-hop music learning as well as the sociocultural issues surrounding these practices.

The holistic multiple case study design described by Yin (2009) calls for each case to be considered with their broader contexts. The contexts for the two cases in this study will be explored both separately and jointly. My informant and I have lived most of our lives in separate sociocultural contexts that have affected and been affected by our different experiences and perceptions. The ways in which these contexts, experiences, and perceptions inform one another will be a major focus of this study. Additionally, my informant and I have spent various amounts of time together for more than two years and some of our contexts have begun to overlap. While our perceptions of the time we have spent together are unique, the study of these experiences takes on a different character and requires different investigative tools. The types of data, methods for collection, and techniques employed for analysis are described later in this chapter.

The first case in this study is that of my informant, Terrence (pseudonym). Terrence was chosen initially by means of criterion sampling (Miles & Huberman, 1994), where the criteria consisted of current hip-hop musical activity and prior experience in school music settings. Additionally, Terrence fits Yin's (2009) description of a revelatory case. "This situation exists when an investigator has an opportunity to observe and analyze a phenomenon previously inaccessible to social science inquiry" (p. 48). While informants like Terrence have not been strictly inaccessible to music education researchers, the nature of the data I was able to collect with Terrence has. My two-year relationship and variety of shared musical experiences with Terrence put me in a unique position to deeply explore the complex issues related to this study.

The study's second case (myself) fits Yin's (2009) description of a representative case or Miles and Huberman's (1994) description of a typical case, where my perspective as a traditionally-trained music educator makes me normal, average, everyday, or commonplace. While I have had musical interests and experiences outside of the academic canon, my knowledge of and performances within hip-hop music had been on par with the typical school music teacher (i.e., essentially nonexistent). I have been an occasional listener to specific subgenres of hip-hop music since my adolescence, but prior to my work with Terrence, I had no experience creating music within the genre. As a professional music educator, my interest in hip-hop music might be considered somewhat different; however, from the perspective of the hip-hop musicians with whom I have interacted over the past two years, I believe that my formal education and lack of experience in creating hip-hop music contribute to my presence as a typical music teacher.

Ethnography

While some research methodologists have argued to the contrary, case study and ethnography are not inherently discrete forms of inquiry (White, Drew, & Hay, 2009). In particular, holistic case studies (Yin, 2009), which value and investigate the contexts in which a case exists, can blur the lines between case study and ethnography. This multiple case study is ethnographic in nature as it exists in "real-world" settings (Willis, 2007) and attempts to "reveal the cultural knowledge working in a particular place and time as it is lived through the subjectivities of its inhabitants" (Britzman, 2003, p. 243). My data collection and rapport-building experiences occurred within real-world music studios and hip-hop clubs, where I both have observed and participated in social and musical activities. My focus on people and their practices as opposed to detached musical products and processes views music as a social experience rather than a solely sonic phenomenon. Cohen (1993) described this type of ethnographic approach to music as "illuminat(ing) the ways in which music is used and the important role that it plays in everyday life and in society generally" (Cohen, 1993, p. 127).

A crucial ingredient to the ethnographic nature of this study was my role as a participant-observer. Jorgensen (1989) explained that participant-observers both observe a group or individual while also participating in the cultural setting under investigation. The initial position of the participant-observer could be that of a complete outsider to the cultural setting, a knowing and experienced insider, or anything between. Jorgensen described that these positions and roles are likely to change throughout the course of an ethnographic study. My initial position when first interacting with Terrence certainly was that of a cultural outsider, but it became clear early on that social and musical participation would be necessary to improve the depth of exploration possible in this study. My experiences as a cultural participant impacted the nature of this study

greatly. I navigated the role of participant-observer with Terrence and his fellow musicians and friends for over two years, and, while I am far from a genuine insider, this navigation provided a depth of analysis that otherwise would not have been possible.

Autoethnography

It is common in the qualitative literature in music education (as it is in many disciplines) for the researcher to acknowledge her perspective, the experiences she has that inform her position, and any other social, cultural, emotional, or theoretical "baggage" that might affect her role as researcher. Commonly referred to as the "researcher's lens" (Patten, 2009), this acknowledgement allows the reader to understand the researcher's intentions better and to use this lens to inform their own reading of the study. I offer a similar acknowledgement later in this chapter, but I have chosen to go a large step further in treating my experience in this study as its own case. Exploring my experience as one of the cases in this multiple case study allows for what hopefully will be a relatable perspective for other music educators. Understanding my experiences as a hip-hop musical novice, including the successes, the struggles, the conflicts, and the insights, might offer valuable and meaningful implications for others coming from similar backgrounds and positions. This "intimate involvement, engagement, and embodied participation" (Bartleet & Ellis, 2009, p. 7) is referred to as *autoethnography,* and while this is not a common research practice in music education, a few examples do exist in the literature (e.g., Brenneman, 2007; Dhokai, 2012; Harrison, 2012; Kruse, 2013; Saldaña, 2008).

In the simplest terms, autoethnography combines autobiography and ethnography. It is not only a telling of one's own story, but also an investigation of one's own story. The processes and products of autoethnography document the personally meaningful experiences of the researcher as well as reporting the ways in which the research study has changed the researcher

(Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2010). The description provided by Ellis (2004) offers a foundation for how I employed autoethnography in this study:

> Autoethnography refers to writing about the personal and its relationship to culture. It is an autobiographical genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness . . . Back and forth autoethnographers gaze: First they look through an ethnographic wide angle lens, focusing outward on social and cultural aspects of their personal experience; then, they look inward, exposing a vulnerable self that is moved by and may move through, refract, and resist cultural interpretations. As they zoom backward and forward, inward and outward, distinctions between the personal and cultural become blurred, sometimes beyond distinct recognition . . . They showcase concrete action, dialogue, emotion, embodiment, spirituality, and self-consciousness. These features appear as relational and institutional stories affected by history and social structure, which themselves are dialectically revealed through actions, feelings, thoughts, and language. (pp. 37-38)

Reed-Danahay (1997) suggested, "whereas the ethnographer translates a foreign culture for members of his or her own culture, the autoethnographer translates 'home' culture for audiences of 'others'" (p. 127). Reed-Danahay also argued that an autoethnographer acts as a "boundary-crosser" (p. 3) challenging the dichotomous relationships between self/society and insider/outsider. Given both of these arguments, I saw my role as autoethnographer not as an "authentic" voice of an "insider" but rather as a translator of my personal position within larger societies and my vacillation between insider/outsider statuses in hip-hop musical settings. This translation takes the form of narrative within the confines of an academically accepted format (a

61

written dissertation), as autoethnography often involves the appropriation and application of devices employed by those in power (Pratt, 2008).

Similar to grounded theory, the reflexive nature of autoethnographic research can disrupt isolated and linear concepts of data collection and analysis (Charmaz, 1983). It is in fact the reflexive nature of how I have conceived of this project from its outset that allowed my experiences with Terrence to inform the research questions I have asked as well as to influence the overall design of the study. By starting without the limitations of a specific design, I searched for the most meaningful findings among the pilot data I collected over two years in addition to personal experiences outside of what was initially intended to be research activity. Instead of asking research questions informed only by previously published literature and then setting out to answer these questions through a prescriptive methodological design, the methods of ethnography and autoethnography have emerged as most applicable, and I have framed them within an instrumental and holistic multiple case study.

Researcher's Lens

Experiences and Perceptions

My interest in the topic of hip-hop music in school music settings relates to my broader interests in diversity and social justice. I believed from the outset of this project that excluding traditions beyond Western art music from school music settings contributes to an exclusive, irrelevant, and "place-bound" (Stauffer, 2012) music education for some students. As I have previously stated, I do not believe that the inclusion of hip-hop music in school music settings is a cure-all for these issues, but I think that adding hip-hop music to the conversation of vernacular music in school music settings would improve the inclusion, relevance, and "place consciousness" (Stauffer, 2012) of school music specifically and music education in general.

With this in mind, I make no effort to convince readers or myself that I have a "null-hypothesis" in this study. I expected interesting and useful findings to emerge from this study and have presented what I found to be most meaningful and honest.

Musically, I brought a diverse array of interests and experiences to this study. While my in-school education has involved heavy amounts of Western classical music primarily played on a tuba, my out-of-school musical experiences have been strong influences on my musical identities. As the child of liberal-minded and "longhaired" parents who spent their adolescence in the 1960s and were wed in a courthouse on their way to a Little Feat concert in the late 1970s, guitar-based rock and Americana folk activist music both played major roles in my musical and social development. Since my own adolescence in the 1990s, I have performed in punk rock, folk, bluegrass, post-punk, and Americana bands primarily on different forms of stringed bass instruments. Additionally, I have sung in barbershop quartets and choirs, played tuba in Dixieland bands and community bands and orchestras, and electric bass, mandolin, trombone, clarinet, and guitar in pit orchestras for countless civic and community theatres. My wide range of musical performing experiences has admittedly made me what I consider a "jack-of-all-trades but a master of none."

Despite exploring many musical avenues for most of my life, I had never attempted to create or perform hip-hop music before working with Terrence. A few particular artists (KRS-One and Public Enemy) played on heavy rotation during my high school and undergraduate college years, but I engaged with this music primarily for its social consciousness and left-leaning politics. The messages related to those found in the punk rock music that dominated my listening preferences at the time, and, while I did not dislike the other musical elements of these hip-hop recordings, the lyrics were my primary focus.

This perspective on hip-hop music severely limited my first attempt at a hip-hop research study in my doctoral studies. I designed a study for a research methods course in which I planned to explore the ways that hip-hop music informed adolescents' sociopolitical identities, because this was a meaningful experience for me. After finding three young (ages 18-21) amateur hip-hop musicians to interview, I realized that my "lyrics-first" appreciation of a limited group of artists did not relate to everyone's experience. My research and interview questions failed to turn up much useful data, and the study was mostly abandoned. This experience had a strong influence on my choosing a more emergent design for this dissertation.

Racially, my family is entirely White with the exceptions of an adopted sister and nephew who are Asian American and another nephew who is biracial (his mother is my White sister, and his father is her Black partner). I grew up in two different small towns whose populations were at least 95% White. My teaching experiences (in public schools and at the post-secondary level) have also been in predominantly White settings. I was 29 years old when I first met Terrence and 32 years old at the dissertation's completion.

As an educator, I spent six and a half years teaching instrumental and general music in southern and central Indiana. My priorities in teaching largely have focused on students' social growth through musical experiences. I included vernacular music in my own teaching, primarily in the general music and music technology settings. Because I felt that students' interests should play a large factor in what musical activities occurred in the classroom, and because the students I taught were predominantly interested in guitar-based rock music, this music became a strong focus for our music curricula. Hip-hop music made some appearance in these courses as listening examples, loop-based music composition, and arrangements for pep bands, but hip-hop music did not play a large role in my own teaching.

Theoretical Frameworks

In addition to being informed by past experiences, multiple theoretical frameworks contribute to my lens as a researcher. I began this study with these perceptions and acknowledge that these perceptions contributed to the ways I designed and executed this study.

Social constructionism. Perceiving knowledge as socially constructed (Berger & Luckman, 1966) is a fundamental perspective at work in this study. The notion that knowledge is dynamic, contextual, and power laden consistently informed my past experiences and perceptions of teaching and learning. The idea that school structures privilege the knowledge of some groups of people over others (Apple, 2000) also was a central concept at work in this study's design and analysis. My informant and I both brought musical knowledge indicative of our past experiences to this study. Understanding and appreciating the contexts in which these different ways of knowing were developed served as a central focus throughout our interactions.

Place philosophy. As described in Chapter One, place philosophy contributes prominently to my lens as a researcher. Issues of locality, time, and the socially constructed meanings of spaces and places figure notably in this study's findings, interpretation, and analysis. I agree with Stauffer's (2012) description of music education as "place-bound" and affirm her call toward "place consciousness" in the field.

Critical race theory. A primary principle of critical race theory (CRT) is that racism is embedded in the fabric of American society (Parker & Lynn, 2002). This perspective as well as its applications to educational settings (e.g., Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995) is another key aspect of my researcher's lens. CRT can be used as a framework for deconstructing dominant narratives and challenging oppression (Sleeter & Bernal, 2004). This framework has been demonstrated through the use of *counterstories* (Denzin, 2002; Hoffman & Carter, 2013; Solórzano & Yosso,

2002; Yosso, 2006), which challenge dominant and oppressive narratives by featuring often-unheard points of view. The idea of Terrence's story as *counterstory* is explored throughout this study.

Informant

I use the term "informant" for Terrence in this research, which is the traditional term given to participants in ethnographic research. Beyond the observation of a research *subject* or even the conversation with a research *participant*, a research *informant* not only answers a researcher's questions but also helps to determine the questions themselves. An informant shapes and defines what a research study will be and what could be explored in a broader body of research (Spradley, 1979). Terrence played a pivotal role in guiding this study, not only in its findings, but in its questions and design as well.

Selection

Terrence was one of the three musicians I interviewed for my first hip-hop related research study. My contact with Terrence initially occurred through an online music website where musicians promote their music. I had searched online for "hip-hop musician" and the city where I lived. Among the online profiles on a number of websites, I emailed or sent messages through a website's internal message system to at least a dozen musicians. Terrence was the only one to reply, and he did so in a matter of a few hours. In my initial query, I introduced myself and explained my interest in interviewing local musicians for a research project. This was his response:

> I'm flattered, but I haven't really done anything of importance yet. My music has yet to go anywhere, but I am doin my first big opening (for Black Milk) in March. Besides that,

I've no shows or exposure. That said, if I could contribute regardless, I'd love to. (email,

January 26, 2012)

We met for a first interview at a local bar of his choosing less than a week later. This

interview lasted over three hours, covered a wide range of topics, and Terrence shared many of

his recordings with me. We followed up via email, and I attended his performance in March. As

the research project faded out, we maintained a casual relationship revolving mostly around

talking about music and trying out new restaurants in the city. While I was considering having

Terrence act as informant for this larger research project, we met for dinner, and I proposed the

arrangement. I explained that this would be a larger time commitment and that I would be

interested in going to studios with him, doing more in-depth interviews, analyzing music and

lyrics together, and other research-related activity. After my explanation, he paused, put his

thumb and forefinger to his chin, and looked quietly at me across the table. "I just have one

question," he said, "Do you smoke weed?"

Description

Terrence is a 23-year-old (he was 21 years old when we first met) Black male who lives

in the same mid-sized Midwestern city where he was born. He identifies the neighborhood he

grew up in as "the ghetto," and when we met, he lived with his sister and mother in the same

neighborhood on the city's northeast side. He later moved into an apartment with his sister and a

cousin on the city's further east side, less than a mile from the apartment where I lived with my

wife and daughter. Known by his friends as "T," he produces hip-hop beats, performs as a

rapper, and reviews music albums under the stage name, "T-spit." This moniker, given to him by

a cousin, is tattooed in Old English script along the length of his right forearm. He has

experience with school music education as an elementary school student in general music classes and played violin and percussion for a few years in secondary school orchestras.

Terrence dropped out of high school during his third year and earned his General Educational Development (GED) equivalency later that year. Following high school he worked at a fast food restaurant chain for two years but was unemployed when we met. During the course of this study he had a long string of mostly third-shift manual labor jobs that rarely lasted more than a few months. At one point, Terrence was paying rent and supporting himself by donating plasma twice per week at a medical center in the city. At the time of this dissertation's completion, Terrence was working in a new job as a cook at a Mexican restaurant. Terrence does not have a driver's license or access to a car, so transportation to work often has been a struggle for him. He frequently has been let go from positions because of his poor work attendance. Terrence's motivations for employment as well as for continuing his education have appeared to wax and wane over the time that I have known him.

T-spit has a strong reputation among the region's hip-hop insiders but is not well known in the general population. He has multiple connections to local recording studios and independent labels, but he is an unsigned artist and his multiple album releases have been completed without professional assistance. T-spit also is a former member of a hip-hop group that is now becoming more widely known (e.g., releasing professionally produced music videos, touring the United States and internationally). He has strong ambitions for a career in music but an even stronger commitment to doing music on his terms. As he has stated, "This music shit? I do it when I can however the fuck I want" (personal communication, March 29, 2014).

Researcher and Informant Relationship

During a graduate course in my doctoral study, I had the chance to revisit some of the data I had collected in my previously abandoned hip-hop research study. In field notes, summaries, descriptions, and explanations to my fellow students, I explained that Terrence and I were "not friends" during this study, merely acquaintances. While this was an honest description of my opinion of our relationship at the time, Terrence and I have developed a friendship over time. This relationship development is common for ethnographers and their informants (Ellis et al., 2010), and our friendship affected this study in many meaningful ways. As our relationship grew closer and more complicated over the years, I had been privy to deeper insights and had access to a greater variety of experiences with Terrence. Neither of us hesitated to invite the other to a musical activity, and our friendship was the foundation upon which our musical collaborations were built.

My friendship with Terrence solidified somewhere in the year and a half between my abandoned research project and this dissertation. Between these projects I read Karen McCarthy Brown's (2011) book, *Mama Lola: A Vodou Priestess in Brooklyn* for another course in my graduate coursework. While this book related little to the topic of this study, it was Brown's description of her relationship with her informant, "Alourdes," that inspired me and, I felt, granted me permission to pursue a research study with Terrence. Brown shared in the introduction to the book that:

> As Alourdes and I became friends, I found it increasingly difficult to maintain an
> uncluttered image of myself as scholar and researcher in her presence. This difficulty
> brought about a change in the research I was doing. As I got closer to Alourdes, I got

69

closer to Vodou. The Vodou Alourdes practices is intimate and intense, and I soon found

that I could not claim a place in her Vodou family and remain a detached observer. (p. 9)

Taking influence from the work of Geertz (1973), Brown (2011) claimed that:

Ethnographic research, whatever else it is, is a form of human relationship. When the

lines long drawn in anthropology between participant-observer and informant break

down, then the only truth is the one in between; and anthropology becomes something

closer to a social art form, open to both aesthetic and moral judgment. This situation is

riskier, but it does bring intellectual labor and life into closer relation. (p. 12)

In this study, I also traverse the "in between" regions of the many roles I took on with

Terrence. The navigation of our relationship created a unique opportunity to understand the

broader issues at hand in this study from deeply personal and intimate perspectives. This is why I

consider Terrence a revelatory case (Yin, 2009) and why my own case became part of the

analysis and interpretation of the study as well.

Setting

Terrence and I both lived in a mid-sized city (population roughly 190,000) in the

American upper Midwest. Terrence had lived in this city his entire life, and I moved to the city in

2011 to begin my doctoral degree. Terrence had numerous friends, acquaintances, and relatives

in the city, and his connections to local musicians and studios allowed him to act as a

"gatekeeper" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995) for my entrance into these venues. Observation

and participation took place in local recording studios as well as the studios that Terrence and I

created in our apartments. I dedicated a corner of my family's living room to our recording and

composing equipment, and Terrence's bedroom in his apartment served a similar function.

In addition to recording locations, Terrence and I attended live hip-hop performances in our city and surrounding cities. Terrence did not perform live again after the aforementioned opening for Black Milk and before the conclusion of this dissertation. Terrence and I also co-presented at multiple academic conferences and gave lectures for music education undergraduates at local universities. Informal conversation at and in between all of these locations were either recorded or recalled in field notes, and semi-structured interviews took place mostly at local restaurants and bars.

Data

Sources and Collection

Case study requires multiple sources of data in order to describe and analyze the cases and their contexts (Creswell, 2007; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009). Data collected from and with Terrence for this study included semi-structured interviews (which I audio recorded and transcribed), field notes from observations in studios and performance venues (usually written immediately after the experience as my participation inhibited note taking), musical and lyrical analysis of T-spit's musical recordings, stimulated recall exercises in which Terrence and I listened to musical recordings of himself and others engaging in dialogue about the pieces, online communication between Terrence and myself (e.g., email, text messages, instant messages through social media websites), Terrence's multiple online profiles on social media websites (where he appears as both Terrence and T-spit), and Terrence's online music reviews. In addition, I kept a journal of my thoughts and experiences for autoethnographic analysis.

Analysis and Interpretations

This study involved both within-case and cross-case analysis (Creswell, 2007). Within-case analysis looked for the emergent themes of each case, and cross-case analysis explored the

similarities and differences between cases. All analysis began with "in vivo" coding (Creswell, 2007), which uses text found directly in the data to describe and sort findings into larger patterns or themes. I present these emergent themes in narrative form in order to both describe the cases as well as their relation to the broader issues of the study (Creswell, 2007; Stake, 1995; Wolcott, 1994).

Trustworthiness

In addition to acknowledging researcher bias, Merriam's (1998) suggested methods for increasing trustworthiness in qualitative research include: (1) triangulation; (2) member checks; (3) long-term observation; and (4) peer examination. I utilize each of these approaches in this study.

Triangulation

The large variety of data sources used in this study provided ample opportunity for data triangulation. Patton (2002) argued that triangulation need not only confirm the same findings across different data sources, but also that inconsistencies can contribute to the nuance of a qualitative study. In this study, triangulation efforts involved checking across data sources both to corroborate and challenge various findings.

Member Checks

From his prior participation in a research study with me, Terrence already was versed in reviewing transcripts and discussing what I had found as emergent themes. He enjoyed conversations about this research study and was invested in the outcomes and applications of this work. He did not hesitate to tell me when he disagreed with something I thought, and these occasions consistently resulted in fruitful dialogue.

Long-Term Observation

Spending so much previous time with Terrence allowed me to ask better questions during the study, facilitated many arrangements and logistics (e.g., our home studios and a working relationship as beat producers, access to other musicians and studios), and informed many of the strategies I undertook throughout the study. The experiences during the two years of collecting and analyzing data already alerted me to which avenues and topics were worthy of pursuit and which did not yield meaningful results.

Peer Examination

Two colleagues familiar with qualitative research served as peer reviewers of data and analysis. One was a graduate student with experience in vernacular music composition and knowledge of hip-hop music as a listener. The other was a former graduate student and music teacher who taught guitar-based rock music and had experience as a qualitative researcher in the field of music education. These peer reviewers examined portions of transcripts, field notes, lyrics, and other data as well as my assigned codes and emergent themes. They offered their perspectives on my analysis and suggested changes, additions, and/or subtractions as necessary.

Limitations

Generalizability

The findings of this study cannot and should not be made to represent what is "real" for all hip-hop musicians. Ethnographers acknowledge and celebrate the notion that "real" is "contested territory" (Britzman, 2003, p. 246). While generalizability may not be possible in this study, the findings could be transferable (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) to other contexts and can inform and positively complicate discussions related to vernacular music, hip-hop, race, and

place consciousness in music education. Stake (1995) offered that, while case studies may not be found entirely true for all people in all places:

> We are often amazed at how much our readers will recognize as relevant to their own cases, even though in many ways the studied cases are different. Most find a commonality of process and situation. It startles us to find our own perplexities in the lives of others. (p. 7)

Validity

Understanding how autoethnographers consider the concept of validity should allow for an appropriate perspective on the intentions and expectations for this scholarship. Ellis et al. (2010) explained that:

> For autoethnographers, validity means that a work seeks verisimilitude; it evokes in readers a feeling that the experience described is lifelike, believable, and possible, a feeling that what has been represented could be true. The story is coherent. It connects readers to writers and provides continuity in their lives. (para. 34)

By critically and personally interacting with the text and considering similarities and differences between their own experiences and those reported in the study, it is ultimately the reader who provides validation for autoethnographic research (Ellis, 2004; Ellis et al., 2010). Therefore, the responsibility of the autoethnographic researcher (as it should be for all researchers) is to present a text that is honest, accessible, and engaging.

Counterstory

My intention for telling Terrence's story was that his perspective would serve as a *counterstory*. By privileging an often-unheard perspective in music education research, I hoped to shed light on new ways of thinking about important issues facing our profession. On one level,

I continue to believe that the narrative created within this work may indeed serve such a function; however, deeper analysis of my role within this research tells a more complicated tale. As author of this text, I had the ability to weave threads together into a depiction of a character whom I have partially created. Terrence is indeed an actual person, and the data that I offer throughout this work are genuine, but the character of Terrence found on these pages is strongly affected by my influence.

The processes of member checking and peer examination ideally lend credence to what I have opted to include, but these are "ex post facto" efforts. Less can be done to adjust at the "front end" of this project. Despite the use of an emergent design, I still carried assumptions into this research. These preconceptions colored my perspectives, limited the topics I explored, and informed the questions I asked. I believe that my length of time "in the field" with Terrence aided greatly in my ability to recognize and challenge some of these issues.

Addressing Assumptions

With these limitations in mind, I have chosen to include a critical commentary in and among some of the presented data. This commentary takes the form of text boxes titled "Addressing Assumptions" and identifies some of the personal limitations I brought into this research. I do not offer these asides in order to diminish the study's data, but rather to encourage a more critical reading of the findings, my position within this research, and the reader's own role as consumer of the document. Indeed, these statements ideally will offer the reader a chance to check her own assumptions about the issues explored throughout this work.

Gender

Because I could not adequately explore every factor related to race within this study, I focus primarily on issues of race and social class. This resulted in numerous issues going

underexplored. Primary among these underexplored issues in my mind is that of gender. I acknowledge that every major individual within this study is male, and while this is the reality of the settings in which I completed this research, this is a serious limitation for this study. Hip-hop pedagogy scholarship has room to grow in this (and many) ways, and I hope that despite this study's lack of gender diversity, individuals with non-male gender identities might still feel welcome as readers and contributors within this scholarly area.

Conclusion

The use of an emergent design in this work allowed for the application of ethnographic techniques within the framework of a multiple case study. Because disrupting linear processes of design, data collection, analysis, and interpretation is such an integral element of the study, the construction of the forthcoming chapters also reflects the blurred lines between data, analysis, and interpretation. Particularly in authethnography, the reflections on data serve as data themselves and the ensuing narrative relates the feedback loop created between reporting and critiquing perspectives and experiences. The following three chapters are situated within meaningful spaces and places: (a) small towns, the ghetto, and the 'hood; (b) school; and (c) the studio.

CHAPTER 4—PLACING HIP-HOP MUSICIANS AND THEIR MUSIC

This chapter deals primarily with the study's first research question: How do sociocultural contexts (particularly issues of race, space, place, and class) impact hip-hop musicians and their music? By placing Terrence and myself within our various contexts and exploring these contexts' influences on our roles as hip-hop musicians, it is possible to understand better who we are, where and when our musical experiences exist(ed), and the complex relationship between these concepts. I use a loose framework to place both Terrence and myself within our contexts consisting of *spaces and places*, *challenges*, *relationships*, *hip-hop identity*, and *goals*.

Placing Myself

I introduce myself here for the purpose of contextualizing my role as researcher as well as a hip-hop musician. The latter title is not one I would have expected to wear at the inception of this project, and I still use the term with some apprehension. A majority of my musical experiences have been outside of hip-hop; however, through this project I began experiencing the role of a novice beat producer. Because this chapter and related research question are concerned with the sociocultural contexts of *hip-hop* musicians, I focus mainly on my foray into hip-hop. That said, in order to place myself as researcher and to understand my prior musical background better it is necessary to begin my story further back.

Spaces and Places: Anywhere But Here

During the spring semester of my fifth grade year my family was preparing to move from Western New York State to Hillsburg (pseudonym), a small rural town in Southeastern Indiana. Although we planned for the official move to take place in the summer, we took a weekend visit to Indiana during the school year. Upon our return, I recall writing in my English class journal

about how much I preferred Hillsburg to my current location. I exaggerated the beauty, cleanliness, and purity of rural living, arguing that my family's impending move was one for the better. One of my sisters had mysteriously developed an accent (more indicative of the American Southeast than Midwest) during this trip and returned home as a welcome outcast based on her affected pronunciation and speech patterns. Indiana was a new and exotic location for my family, and we looked eagerly toward our rustic future.

When we arrived in the Hoosier State, things changed. As a new student in my sixth grade class in Indiana, I recall publicly lamenting the lack of excitement and vitality in my new location. I created and performed daily a narrative of my former life built from urban stereotypes. I invented a dark and mysterious past made up of petty criminal activity and ambiguous gang involvement, all of which intrigued my rural classmates (or at least that was the intention) and all of which were entirely fictional. I self-consciously played the role of "New Yorker" (topped off with a newly-acquired Brooklyn Dodgers cap) for at least a year before somewhat assimilating and settling into a steady position of vacillating comfort in Hillsburg. I graduated from Hillsburg High School and, though I lived there for a longer period than I had lived in New York, to this day I refuse to call the Hillsburg my "hometown."

While leaving New York and upon my arrival in Indiana, I defined each location by its differences from the other. In reality, my hometown in New York and Hillsburg were remarkably similar. Both had populations around 5,000 (Hillsburg was actually larger than my home in New York), and both were predominantly White, Christian, and middle class. Both featured one local radio station playing American country music, and neither conformed to the rural/urban dichotomy I had employed in my adolescence. Hillsburg was more like a city suburb surrounded by agriculture, and the town in New York (though I claimed residence "near Buffalo") was more

than 30 minutes away from the city and the sign welcoming you from the highway featured the slogan, "Farms, Homes, and Industry." I invented differences between each location in order to place myself in opposition to where I was. Looking back, this seemed like a strategy to make myself appear more interesting and also fits a contrarian streak running through my personal and musical history.

Anti-small town, anti-racist? Particularly in my high school years, I developed and eagerly voiced contempt for Hillsburg. Having been raised in a politically liberal household and embracing what I felt were radical positions, I consistently placed myself outside of Hillsburg's social circles. Musically, this meant that I gravitated toward genres that were not popular with my classmates but rather supported my philosophical leanings. In the late 1990s, this meant punk rock – specifically the melodic hardcore and pop punk genres. Prior to pop punk's commercial success in the early 2000s, this set me far afield from most of the other teenagers in Hillsburg, who mostly were listening to country music and classic rock. I found a small circle of other self-removed castaways and made playing electric bass in a three-piece pop punk band the foremost element of my adolescent identity.

The punk band rehearsed in the garage attic of a band mate who lived on the outskirts of town. The reckless power chords, unrelenting drumbeats, and exuberant non-singing emblematic of our chosen genre penetrated through the walls and fell on the deaf ears of surrounding sweet corn. The band performed on rare occasions with little care and less success, but perhaps our most meaningful musical experiences as a group came as audience members. On most weekends, the three of us plus other members of our small group of social misfits piled into poorly maintained vehicles and drove an hour east across state lines to the nearest large city in order to attend local punk shows. For us, finding places in which we felt accepted and normal meant

leaving where we lived. What we brought back to Hillsburg were colorful (and often exaggerated) tales of our exploits in the "big city," which were used strategically to shock and amaze our small town acquaintances. Beyond positioning ourselves in an alcove outside the cafeteria for lunch to declare our elusion of the herd, we defined ourselves as outsiders by locating our social and cultural sites of meaning well beyond Hillsburg's city limits and its encasement of cornfields.

Playing in this band and identifying as "punk" also resulted in predictable presentations of dress, hairstyle, and other playfully disobedient behavior. Part of visually demonstrating this affiliation included covering my guitar case and car bumper with stickers from favorite bands and anarchistic political statements. Within the school halls I insolently plastered my backpack (worn over *both* shoulders instead of the one-shoulder carrying method favored by most of my classmates – that showed them) with fabric patches of the same ilk. These safety-pinned proclamations declared my defiant difference from my small town surroundings. Of these, the visual statement that attracted the most vehement and vocal responses from passersby was a six-by-two-inch maroon patch with white stamped lettering in all capital letters spelling "ANTI-RACIST" positioned at the top center of my backpack. Beneath a buzzed haircut with long bangs spiked straight up in front, the patch on my back broadcasted that I was choosing not to belong.

Hillsburg (though well north of the Mason-Dixon line) was cluttered with Confederate Flags and a casual (and occasionally overt) racism I found troubling as a teenager. My liberal leanings told me racism was bad, but that was about the extent of my thinking on the concept of race at the time. It was important for me to identify as "not racist" – which is essentially the limited definition I was able to assign the rectangular talking point – but the term "anti-racist" was well beyond me. I had close to no experience with any people of color in my life and would

most certainly have struggled to identify my White racial identity and the privilege imbued therein. From my perspective at the time, people were either "racist" or "not racist," and I considered myself "not racist." Even this seemingly benign position drew ire from some in the hallways as classmates launched verbal assaults upon me and my rebellious backpack with persistent and misplaced racial slurs. I assumed these attacks were meant to upset me and/or elicit some kind of reaction, but I always kept my head down and brooded from class to class. This has been my modus operandi for as long as I can remember, quick to thumb my nose and even quicker to back down from confrontation.

Safety. During the time I have been writing this dissertation I accepted a position as an assistant professor of music education at a large Midwestern university. In the ensuing search for housing I encountered frequent references to "safe neighborhoods" and "good places to raise a family." I recognize this to be, in some part at least, code for, "where the White people live." While I understand the problematic nature of such terms, I will admit that "how much the realtor recommends the neighborhood" was a motivating factor in my family's home buying decision. Although other factors were involved, we chose a house near the city's country club – as "safe" a neighborhood as we could have found.

Confronting personal notions of safety was an important aspect of placing myself within this research. Eschewing the notion that "racist" is something that a person is or is not, and instead viewing race as a lens that affects one's perspectives and experiences, I began to recognize the impact that race and racial stereotypes had on my role as researcher. When planning to meet Terrence for the first time at a bar of his choosing, I will admit to having passing thoughts about where I should park my car to avoid having it stolen or broken into. When we discussed meeting at my apartment, I recall wondering if it was a good idea for this

stranger to know where I lived. Maybe he would come back and rob me, since I own more things than he does and live in relative middle class comfort. I had similar apprehensions about driving to Terrence's friends' studios and the potential for inviting some of his musical partners to my home. I am not proud of these apprehensions, but they cannot be ignored.

I am left to wonder how this anxiety came to my mind. Was it because I am nervous about meeting and interacting with strangers in general (a realistic part of my everyday existence), or was it because these strangers were Black? (In my defense, I also feared for weeks that the White woman providing in-home childcare for my daughter would kidnap her and/or rob my home as well.) Does my lack of experience with people of color mean that I have accepted racial stereotypes as a part of my perspective? I am embarrassed to admit these concerns, but they are an important demonstration of the impact of race and racism. It is a much simpler task to wear the label of "not-racist" than it is to identify and challenge the influence of race and racism on one's experiences and perceptions.

If my trepidations were the manifestation of racial stereotypes, they were the most obvious manifestations and the easiest to reject. After multiple interactions with Terrence, it was clear that he was anything but dangerous and his associates were similarly pleasant and nonthreatening. What is perhaps more nefarious than my initial anxieties about safety are the more subtle ways in which race, racism, and racial stereotypes might affect my positions as a researcher and friend. Exploring the racial impact on my perspective became a vital ingredient to this research and will be expounded upon throughout this document.

Challenges: Moving Spaces, Moving Places

The motivation behind my family's aforementioned move from the state of New York to the state of Indiana was purely economical. We had been living in what now seems like an

uncomfortable level of poverty in New York, based largely on the underemployment of my father and the four children my parents were raising. This move was a major turning point for my family prompted by my father earning his master's degree in library science. As a 41-year-old former teacher, former disc jockey, former factor worker, former music store owner, former restaurant entrepreneur, and likely other jobs I cannot recall, my father was finally in a position to find long term employment and he did. He began a job at a public library in Indiana and at the time of this document's composition he had been working there for 21 years. This work, in addition to my mother's fulltime work in the healthcare industry, propelled my family into veritable middle class comfort.

The important link between formal education and upward social mobility in my family's past is not lost on me. My English speaking White family, for whom access to education involved few barriers, was able to pull ourselves up by our proverbial bootstraps and climb into a life of beds for every child, dinner every evening, two functioning automobiles, and the first time I was able to buy clothes from a store and not receive hand-me-downs in black plastic garbage bags from a family friend. Moving from New York to Indiana was the physical expression of my family moving spatially, but this represented the even more meaningful movement of place from poverty to middle class. For most of my life, this transition felt like an inevitable and clearly upward-moving series of events. I assumed that all people would be striving for a similar story and that formal education served as a necessary ingredient for this progression. My conversations with Terrence called these assumptions into question and are primarily discussed in Chapter Five.

Relationships

Because making hip-hop music is such a recent development for me, it is difficult to pinpoint specific relationships that have impacted my experiences as a hip-hop musician. The one obvious relationship that has meant a great deal in this area is the relationship I have with Terrence. While becoming friends seemed irrelevant at the time that we first met, our friendship ultimately has acted as the foundation upon which this research is built. I explore specific musical interactions and effects that my time with Terrence has had on my hip-hop musicianship in Chapter Six, and, while the precise influence of friendship might not be easily identified, this in no way diminishes the impact of our relationship on my research and my musicianship.

Hip-Hop Identity

Hesitation. As previously mentioned, the title of "hip-hop musician" is not one that I ascribe to myself with great confidence. While in some of my professional circles I might appear as highly knowledgeable and experienced in hip-hop music, I do not have to look far to find groups within which I am merely a novice beat producer with precious little hip-hop cultural capital. That being said, I bring a variety of musical strengths to my beat production, many of which are the envy of my new acquaintances in the local hip-hop community. Regardless of how new the mantle might be, I do accept "hip-hop musician" as one of my musical identities. Specifically, I have a strong background in assorted audio engineering skills (e.g., digital and analog recording, mixing and mastering in digital audio workstations), and I possess technical proficiency on a number of musical instruments that have been used in the beats that Terrence and I have made (e.g., electric bass, keyboard, guitar, flute).

My experiences with Western classical music as an undergraduate music education major and public school music teacher undoubtedly have informed my hip-hop musical practices.

Particularly in my earliest efforts at beat production, I relied heavily on Western classical music as a material source for sampling. Because no musical genre is off-limits in hip-hop sampling, this practice is not unprecedented; however, my access to and knowledge of a variety of Western classical music recordings put me in a unique position to execute this technique compared to Terrence and his peers. In this way, it is indeed difficult to distinguish my hip-hop musical identity from my broader musical identity. As simple as genre distinctions may appear in text, the aural divisions between these categories can be muddled and arguably nonexistent.

Comparatively speaking, I found the title "hip-hop scholar" a slightly easier fit than "hip-hop musician." Perhaps this is because in contrast to a majority of my colleagues in the field of music education I have had more interest in and experience with (even if just as a listener) hip-hop music. However, I initially was hesitant about the identity of "hip-hop scholar" and pursuing research in this area. I was overwhelmed by the wealth of hip-hop scholarship from other academic areas and questioned whether I had anything of consequence to offer a conversation I had come to so late. While I am still overwhelmed by the scholarship about and cultural production from hip-hop cultures, the potential of connecting the field of music education to these areas is too valuable to ignore. In some ways, reporting my experiences as a new hip-hop musician and scholar could be especially useful considering the great majority of professional music educators who might be coming to this topic with a similarly-limited background.

Presentation. As a high school student, I used punk rock music as a presentational tool to separate myself as unique from my surroundings. As a graduate student, I often have employed hip-hop in similar ways. While as an adolescent I adopted dress, mannerisms, or other obvious cultural markers to antagonistically display my proud differences, I have taken a more subtle approach as an adult. My clothing in academic settings is "professional" (often more

85

professional than necessary as what is likely an overcompensation for my impoverished childhood where out-of-date and ill-fitting fashions left me feeling self-conscious and inadequate), but I often find myself demonstrating hip-hop cultural knowledge with colleagues more as evidence of my difference than as a genuine reflection of myself. However, as I have become more immersed in hip-hop cultures, the lines between insecure demonstrations and honest expressions have been blurred considerably.

Considering that public presentations of my identity are both reflections of who I am as well as how I would like to be seen, I reviewed statements and links I had posted on a social media website over the past three years (during which time I was studying as a doctoral student). The self I project through social media often is calculated and deliberate. At the beginning of my doctoral study in particular, I used social media to display a self-image to my colleagues from whom I had been fairly withdrawn. Later in my academic program, I continued to use social media as a way to demonstrate both who I felt I was (a scholar and musician interested in hip-hop) and who I felt I was not (neither a typical hip-hop musician nor a typical music educator). Among the profile I presented was a hip-hop identity consisting of the themes *I know hip-hop*, *I do hip-hop*, and *hip-hop authority*.

I know hip-hop. In order to substantiate my claim to a hip-hop identity, I have often posted updates to social media informing others of artists I was listening to that day such as, "Soundtrack for today's drive featured large amounts of Lauryn Hill because...no explanation is necessary" (social media, February 18, 2014), or, "It's been a morning spent listening to Public Enemy. That's a good morning" (social media, August 30, 2012). At other times, I juxtaposed the artist I was listening to with my typical academic settings. I took pleasure in the mild dissonance between my surroundings and my chosen soundtrack with comments like, "Want a

more enjoyable conference morning? Listening to some Biggie on the drive in helped me. Been grooving all morning" (social media, January 17, 2014), or, "It was a Wu-Tang morning on today's drive to campus. These Intro to Music Ed students better be ready to protect their necks"[2] (social media, August 28, 2013).

I also posted lyrics from socially conscious hip-hop musicians on social media to combine my political and social views with my musical identity. Similar to the patches on my high school backpack or the stickers on the bumper of my car, these quotes presented both my worldview and musical taste. Examples of this include, "'Democracy is just a word when the people are starving.' – Immortal Technique" (social media, October 19, 2011), and, "'America was violent before rap.' – KRS-One" (social media, September 22, 2011).

I do hip-hop. Beyond demonstrating knowledge of hip-hop music, I also used social media to share my participation in hip-hop cultures. For example, I announced my attendance at hip-hop performances with posts like, "DJ Premier vs Pete Rock in a beat battle about to kick off at Dilla Day. Be jealous" (social media, February 7, 2014), or, "I am off to a Ghostface Killah show. It's research" (social media, May 1, 2013). I also posted blurry pictures and status updates chronicling my sporadic hip-hop karaoke performances, usually with a comment about the song I was performing, which was often the end credits musical number from the 1990 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles movie, *T-U-R-T-L-E Power* by Partners in Kryme.

Additionally, I posted comments to social media informing others about my experiences with beat production. Some were simple comments about the fact that I was doing beat production like, "It's going to be a good night when the next item on your to-do list is 'finish that beat'" (social media, January 7, 2014), while others contained details about my background in

---

[2] Reference to the Wu-Tang Clan song, *Protect Ya Neck*.

Western classical music influencing said activities such as, "I'm sampling Beethoven, Hindemith, and Shostakovich in some beats. Why not?" (social media, July 18, 2013), or, "Making triple meter beats cause that's how I do" (social media, November 25, 2013). It was not until my most recent post about beat producing that I feel I demonstrated specific and tangible acuity related to hip-hop beat production. In this post I state, "*Superstition* was playing in the restaurant where I was eating dinner tonight and all I could think was, 'Man, I've gotta sample that hi hat'" (social media, April 5, 2014).

    Hip-hop authority. On a few rare occasions, I used my social media posts to establish a small amount of personal authority on value in hip-hop music. I once took a jab at Shaquille O'Neill's brief and infamous rap career following the birth of my daughter with a post that read:

    At three weeks old, [my daughter] just tipped the scales at three pounds for the first time.

    If you piled about 109 [of her] together, you would have roughly the weight of Shaq.

    That pile of babies would probably make a better rapper. (social media, August 14, 2012)

In addition, I posted a public complaint about a scholar who had categorized hip-hop musicians in a way with which I did not agree. My statement of, "I'm reading somebody's hip hop dissertation and the author has created some troubling categories to classify artists including putting Wu-Tang Clan, Nas, 50-Cent, and Black Eyed Peas all in the same category. Hmm" (social media, February 18, 2013) shared both my contempt for categorization in general as well as my awareness of who these artists are and where they do and do not belong.

    Finally, I accepted some traditional notions of hip-hop authenticity and questioned the intended irony of appropriating Black urban stereotypes with my complaint, "Online videos of suburban folk 'rapping' about parenting can stop yesterday. Please" (social media, March 15, 2014). This comment served both to ridicule the original videos and also to separate myself from

White middle class people who I felt were using stereotypes in unimaginative and arguably offensive ways. Throughout this project, I have been aware that some might accuse me of being another one of these White middle class people without a genuine interest in hip-hop music, and I have been very sensitive (perhaps overly so) to this possible perception.

Goals: Bringing It All Back Home

I brought no delusions into this project about becoming a famous (or even accomplished) beat producer, and I developed no such delusions upon my exit. I found hip-hop beat production to be enjoyable, challenging, and informative, and I plan to continue producing as a hobby and as a way to further enlighten my teaching and research. I always kept a foot in the research world while engaging with beat production and, while this could be a limitation to complete immersion, it was a practical reality of my position. By perpetually considering the ways in which my experiences could be brought back to this research study, I hoped to develop implications toward the meaningful inclusion of hip-hop in school music settings.

<div align="center">

Placing T-spit

</div>

In this chapter, I focus mainly on Terrence as a rapper (T-spit) and explore his school experiences and role as a beat producer in subsequent chapters. Specifically, this chapter concentrates on the influences of sociocultural contexts on T-spit's rapping, his musical identity, and his goals for his music. Personal relationships and the spaces and places within which T-spit creates his music not only strongly impact his musical experiences, but his music is so saturated in these elements that T-spit's music and Terrence's sociocultural contexts cannot be discretely dissected for simplistic analysis. With this in mind, I present portions of Terrence's background through the same framework I used for myself (*spaces and places*, *challenges*, *relationships*, *hip-*

hop identity, and *goals*) in order to contextualize his music and demonstrate the dynamic and complicated relationships between space, place, self, others, and music.

Spaces and Places: "Ghetto is Ghetto and 'Hood is 'Hood"

Terrence's relationship to and place within neighborhoods he labels as *the ghetto* and *the 'hood* are complicated and often vexed. These issues appear frequently in T-spit's lyrical content, and we discussed them often in interviews. When describing his background, Terrence said, "I was born here, raised here, I'm still here" (personal communication, May 2, 2014). In this context, "here" meant the physical location of the mid-sized Midwestern city in which we both lived at the time. Terrence had spent his entire life in this city, and, while he spoke frequently about a desire to travel, he did not have the financial resources to travel great distances or even the necessary means for convenient local travel (e.g., a car, a driver's license). He described his earliest years as living in a "rough" neighborhood he identified as "*the 'hood*" but he soon moved to a "regular neighborhood." "By the time my second birthday came along we moved out to a regular neighborhood. It was still a ghetto, but whatever. Like, I consider it a regular neighborhood" (personal communication, May 2, 2014).

Exploring issues of space and place in hip-hop cultures, Forman (2002) blended notions of *the ghetto* and *the 'hood*, but also differentiated *the ghetto* as a broad space of low-income and low-class communities and *the 'hood* as a "'home' environment" (p. xix) defining physical and social location. Contrarily, Terrence defined *the ghetto* and *the 'hood* as entirely unique and simultaneously existing places. He cast *the ghetto* in positive light based on social unity and *the 'hood* negatively based on rampant crime and violence.

> Well, the ghetto is milder than the 'hood . . . [The 'hood] is more hard edge. You know, I
> feel like, if you talkin' about like, *'hood* 'hoods, we talkin' about a place where you can

get robbed for zero reason, with zero warnin', just because you're not from there. You

know what I mean? The ghetto, you could probably stroll through, have a little fun,

whatever. Just mind your business, you know, and won't nobody fuck with you. I say

like, the west side of [our city] . . . like, where all the Mexicans and shit are at . . . I would

describe that as ghetto. . . I don't know if it sounds fucked up or not, but this is as real as

it gets right here. Mexicans are a unified people. If you get a lot of Mexicans in one place

and put them in like, a certain situation, they will find a way out of that situation by

workin' with each other . . . So, that's why ghetto is ghetto and 'hood is 'hood. Ghetto is

a place where, you know, some people – a lot of the people can be unified, but the 'hood

is just cutthroat. (personal communication, April 24, 2014)

Within these spatial contexts, Terrence further illuminated issues of *race and unity*, *thugs and violence*, and his place within *the ghetto* and *the 'hood.*

Race and unity: "Lookin' after they people." Terrence felt that one of the reasons that "*the ghetto* is ghetto" is that some social groups are able to come together, pool resources, and generally live together peacefully. In contrast, Terrence described *the 'hood* as being focused on macho boasting and that White American culture has contributed to the struggle for Black American neighborhoods to experience unity.

Mexicans come from Mexico with nothing. Zero. And they come to America, they find

these shitty-ass jobs that pay them jack shit, but they don't have to pay taxes and then

they come up . . . they all bring they bread together so they can all come up at the same

time. Like, Mexicans are unified. And that's why the ghetto is the ghetto and not the

'hood . . . But then the 'hood is 'hood because you have a bunch of people who are of the

same ethnicity but there's no unity. There's just chaos. There's just people lookin' after

91

theyselves instead of – whereas Mexicans lookin' after they people. Jewish people look after they people. White people, you know what I'm sayin', *obviously* look after they people. Like, everybody looks after they people except for us [Black people] . . .

I'd describe the places I've been with more Black people as more 'hood. Because like, I can obviously tell that there were people who weren't lookin' out for me . . . We got different types of people tryin' to get along with each other and Black people for the most part are worried about, you know, "How tough am I?" You know, "How macho can I be?" You know what I'm sayin'? Instead of just livin' life to the fullest and acceptin' people and stuff. But that's why the 'hood is the 'hood, because you have a bunch of people who ain't unified . . . And really, White America has broken down our ability to be unified. Fuckin' with our brains. You know, slavery fucked us up. It still hurtin'. It still affects our day-to-day . . . And the White man like, oppressed everybody of color. Like, they brought us to America. You know like, Black people and stuff. And have systematically broken down our ability to like, be unified. (personal communication, April 24, 2014)

Addressing Assumptions

This is the only substantial comment Terrence made about White people and race during our two years together. There were definitely times where I wanted him to play the "angry Black man" and rail against the racism he had encountered. I felt that it would have made a more compelling story to have him play this role and provide a platform for me to make anti-racist comments. I pushed the race conversation often and perhaps my insistence (or maybe my being White and his friend) discouraged him from offering up much passion on the topic.

Thugs and violence: "They say the good die young, so I gotta get colder." Terrence's

ostensible contempt for *the 'hood* appeared to be linked to his distaste for bravado and senseless

violence. At the same time, because Terrence lived in areas where poverty and crime were a part

of daily life, he did not reject *the 'hood* entirely. He shared some stories from his childhood

about his typical run-ins with violent and criminal behavior.

> People tried to get me to steal bikes with them. I'm like, "Why?" I went to school with
>
> this muthafucker. And like, he called me on my street, I was just walkin'. Like, I don't
>
> know where he came from, but he like, called me on my street or whatever. He was like,
>
> "Hey man, I need you to come do somethin' with me." I's like, "Aight." Then we went
>
> over and he was like, "Yo bro, I'm tryin' to take these bikes" or whatever. And I was
>
> like, "Um, no." He was like, "Man, don't be a pussy," and I was like, "Nigga, fuck you!"

Addressing Assumptions

> *Meeting Terrence at restaurants for interviews provided ample opportunity for me*
>
> *to examine my position. I recall waiting for Terrence at an early interview and sitting by*
>
> *myself in the restaurant's waiting area. Three young White female employees stood in the*
>
> *area and I remember thinking, "Just wait until they see who I'm meeting. I'll bet they'll*
>
> *be surprised when a Black guy comes to join me." I am embarrassed to admit that I took*
>
> *a strange pride in being seen with Terrence in public places and at the academic settings*
>
> *explored in Chapter Five.*
>
> *This pride occasionally turned to discomfort, particularly when Terrence loudly*
>
> *exclaimed, "Man, don't be a pussy," and, "Nigga, fuck you," in a crowded restaurant*
>
> *next to a White suburban-looking family of four. My strange satisfaction vanished in that*
>
> *moment as I avoided eye contact with our dining neighbors and purposefully lowered my*

---

own voice in an attempt to lower Terrence's. As someone who strongly promotes the

inclusion of underrepresented voices in academic writing regardless of (and even

encouraging of) vulgarity and profanity, this was a challenging moment for me.

I was jumped, man. Like, I don't even know who these dudes were. And they

thought I was somebody else . . . Like, that was crazy . . . I was like, eleven or twelve, I

don't remember how old I was exactly, but I was comin' from [the store] . . . Like, I had

just bought some cheese crackers, I was havin' a good time. I was like, "I'm about to go

home and eat some Cheez-its," you know? And then like, these dudes rolled up on me

and like, "Are you such-and-such?" And I was like, "Nah, I don't even know who the

fuck that is." Yeah, I was cussin'. And like, I's just mindin' my business. I was just

walkin' . . . And so I just kept walkin', you know? Just mindin' my own business like,

"Hopefully, these muthafuckers will just leave me alone." Right? "I don't know what

they talkin' about. I don't know who they lookin' for." But that ain't what happened.

They just ran up on me. (personal communication, March 27, 2014)

Addressing Assumptions

I am still left wondering whether I encouraged Terrence's stories of crime and violence

as a meaningful device for placing him within his sociocultural contexts, or as a

sensationalizing effort to obtain colorful data and present him as "exotic" to what is

undoubtedly a majority White middle class audience. By presenting Terrence's surroundings

as "dangerous" am I perpetuating exotic Black urban stereotypes similar to those capitalized

upon by hip-hop corporate interests?

94

Despite the feeling that people around him were involved in crime and violence, Terrence largely avoided participation. He cited an awareness of the consequences associated with the escalation of such activity as influencing his lack of involvement.

I've managed to stay outside of, you know, drug life. Like, thug activity and shit. You know what I'm saying? I'm not above it…like, frankly, I've done some things. I'm not above it, but in terms of that being my lifestyle…not so much. (personal communication, April 2, 2014)

Like, I didn't mess with anybody. Like, I would get problems from other kids and shit, but I would never start anything. Like, I tried to avoid violence. I've never been the one to like that kind of shit. And that's just mostly because – why not just live and let live? I don't – like, I know what a fight can turn into, you know? I've seen it with my own eyes. You can win that fight, but that person might have people. And those people might be like, "We gonna kill this muthafucker." And then that's when everything just turns into shit. There's a cycle of violence because then your family is mad, and then it's just like a crazy – it's a crazy thing. I hate it. (personal communication, March 27, 2014)

And I know for a fact that if you go around talkin' tough, you know, you only as tough as you are at that moment. You know? If you puttin' on a bravado-type thing, that bravado is all you got. And if you just some dude hangin' out and you tryin' to mind your business, but somebody makes you made, you know, you fightin' for a reason, you know, you have a cause, you know? Or like, you're fightin' for somebody or somethin', that's the only time violence is even remotely worth it. So, you shouldn't go around puffin' yourself up 'cause you don't know what the next man's capable of. (personal communication, April 24, 2014)

95

T-spit's complicated relationship with crime and violence comes out often in his rap lyrics. In the song "Colder," he positions himself precariously within a violent world. While he prefers not to participate, he understands that he may need to defend himself or retaliate when necessary. The lyrics in the verses are laid bare with only one vocal track (unlike his typical use of complex layers and textures of vocals) and accompanied by a muffled and booming kick drum, steady guitar hits with ominous reverb, and a haunting female vocal sample. T-spit's vocals arguably typify his complicated position within *'hood* culture with a seemingly contradictory smooth belligerence. His rapping showcases an amalgam of aggressive delivery, unpredictable cadences, a mellow timbre, and a voice pitched slightly higher than his medium speaking range.

Look in my eyes and you'll see a soul that's older than ancient scrolls.

In this place it's told the road to the riches ain't paved with gold, but

Rather the blood spatter and gun powder.

Even if you have the voice of reason, a gun's louder. Earshot.

I'm within it, but hesitation is deadly.

If he see me walkin' down the street, he'll probably pop a round in me.

Just thinking about how easy you could lose your life,

Make you wanna stay in the crib grippin' a butcher knife.

Or loading your clips. I can't take this shit.

Every night it get colder. I'm lookin' over my shoulder.

'Cause every block was once the scene of a murder.

It seems my sanity done slipped even further into the darkness.

Heartless, I gotta be as long as I'm still here.

Scared of niggas comin' back, the instinct's to kill fear.

Meanin' kill them if they ever threaten me.

All you gotta do is let him be.

(What do they want from me?)

All I got is my life.

(Niggas is scheming on mine.)

But I'm livin' it right.

(I guess I'm paranoid)

The evils of the streets be on it.

They say the good die young, so I gotta be colder.

Placing Terrence: "Ghetto ways and 'hood tendencies." Terrence recognized that while he sees *the ghetto* and *the 'hood* as separate places, both have informed who (and where) he is.

I got ghetto ways and 'hood tendencies. You know? And there's definitely a difference. Like, the 'hood tendency thing, like, to this day, I still have a bit of an anger issue, but it's more directly focused on who I get mad at rather than just blind fury. Like, punchin' a fuckin' wall or somethin' like that. I'd rather punch that person in the fuckin' face . . . But most of the time I'd just rather not do it because I know better. You know? . . .

I'm not a gangsta. But rather, somebody that will kill you if you rub me the wrong way, or if you do somethin' that really violates me. Like, for instance, let's just say my sister gets into a relationship with some dude. I find out that he put his hands on her, I'm immediately gonna lose my shit and come for him. Whether it be a blade or a bullet, he's catchin' somethin'. You know what I'm sayin'? And that's just who I am, but I won't go

97

around like, promotin' that kinda shit. Like, I'm not out here sayin', "Yo, I'm 'hood."

You know what I'm sayin'? The thing is, you gonna find out how 'hood I can be if you

fuck with me. (personal communication, April 24, 2014)

I know drug dealers, thugs, and flat out crazy people and the most I've taken from

them is a bit of pot smoking, a killer instinct (when it's needed) and (surprisingly) the

knowledge that if you don't show respect, you will get put in check. (email, April 7,

2014)

Representing one's home neighborhood is a pervasive theme in a predominance of hip-

hop music (Forman, 2002). In terms of environmental and contextual impact on his lyrics,

Terrence recognized some influence, but he identified more closely as an individual at odds with

his surroundings as opposed to someone recalling and representing their neighborhood.

I could talk about it [growing up in the 'hood], but it's not me. That's why I don't feel

obligated to do so. 'Cause I never felt connected to the 'hood, I've just been my own

person. That's what kills me. It's like, people feel like you gotta be a certain way, or like

you owe somebody somethin'. You don't. Where you're from, maybe I guess you can be

proud, but like, you're not obligated to like, you're not obligated to be that person.

(personal communication, March 27, 2014)

People would misconstrue who I am if I was just representin' my city like, all the

time. Like, I'll tell you I'm from there, but I'm not gonna be all over it every song . . .

There's nothin' wrong with representin' your team as long as you know who you are as a

person. There's nothin' wrong with reppin' your city, but me particularly, I don't do

either a lot because, fuck it. My crew didn't make me who I am. (personal

communication, April 24, 2014)

Why do you have to represent a whole thing? Why can't you just represent you?

Like, I don't understand that. I have no problem like, writin' a song and bein' like, "Oh,

by the way, raised on the west side of [our city] where all this crazy shit is happenin'."

But it's not like that's what made me. I mean, I made me. (personal communication,

March 27, 2014)

Addressing Assumptions

Early in the project, I asked Terrence frequently about our city and how his music

represented the area. I had been motivated by many of the scholarly readings linking hip-hop

cultural practices closely to specific locations (e.g., Forman, 2002) and was consistently

disappointed in the ways that Terrence's music did not seem to function in the same way. I

eventually saw this is an intriguing difference, but I invested a lot of time trying to make

Terrence's music fit the narrative created by scholars as opposed to exploring his music more

naturalistically.

Numerous scholars have reported on the use of hip-hop cultural production in response to

oppressive conditions (e.g., Chang, 2005) and as a means for opposing and escaping these

conditions (e.g., Keyes, 2004). Terrence did not see his musical endeavors as a way to "rise up"

from his past or present, but did recognize that he was not content with his current economic

conditions. Still, he chose not to "complain" about issues like these in his lyrics.

For what it's worth, I wanted to get the fuck out of there. All the way . . . I'm still near all

the shit that I hate. You know? Beyond that, I'm a strugglin' motherfucker. Like, I'm not

rich. By no means am I livin' a great life. Know what I'm sayin'? I can say I might be

kinda content, but even then – like, I'm strugglin' to make due. So, I'm not content. So,

for what it's worth, I'm still tryin' to get out of it, but I'm not gonna make a fuss about it.

Like, not too much of a fuss . . . It just wasn't somethin' I felt I should complain about.

(personal communication, April 27, 2014)

Challenges

Regardless of whether or not he chose to "complain," the challenges that Terrence has

faced have had a large impact on his music. These challenges most often have revolved around

issues of *financial constraints* and *employment*.

Financial constraints: "What the fuck am I gonna do if I'm homeless?" Looking

back over multiple years of his posts to social media websites (he has accounts in his given name

as well as his performing moniker), Terrence/T-spit frequently announced his "return" to making

music and apologized for his sometimes lengthy absences. These absences often were related to

financial constraints that negatively impacted his access to transportation and musical equipment.

He often communicated these apologies with posts such as, "Sorry I haven't been posting. Not

much to post about. That said, I'm getting my life back on track and hopefully the music will

follow" (social media, December 3, 2013).

He has also announced his return(s) within his lyrics, including the chorus of a 2014 song

titled, "Hello World." This chorus makes use of T-spit's typical thick musical textures including

three part vocal harmonies, delays (which create an echo effect on portions of the lyrics), and

numerous densely packed synthesized lines in the instrumental accompaniment. This complex

texture arguably displays a confidence that seems apropos to his attitude upon his many musical

(re)arrivals.

Hello world, I came to take the stage.

I know I've been gone a long time, and I'm the one to blame.

100

My apologies for the wait, I'm here to ease the pain.

And even though things change, I remain the same.

While T-spit consistently returned with the utmost confidence, Terrence continually faced financial struggles that negatively impacted his ability to make music. He shared this frustration publicly on social media with posts such as, "Needs me a cougar[3] w/ mad cash so I can focus on my damn music!" (social media, August 5, 2010). His financial troubles affected his ability to pay his rent and buy food, but Terrence's principle concern appeared to be related to his opportunities to make music. He described this in a conversation with his friend and musical partner, Rob (pseudonym). In this conversation, they discussed a missed opportunity to sign with an independent music label (through which Terrence would have been paid). The label representative had suddenly stopped returning communication with Terrence after initially reaching out to him about the opportunity.

> Terrence: 'Cause you know, I don't have money. There's no way for me to pay my bills and shit. And like, eat. You know what I'm sayin'? So, it's just –
>
> Rob: You just scrapin'.
>
> Terrence: Yeah, there's nothin'. You know? There's nothin'. And I don't know if I should be job searchin' or somethin', you know?
>
> Rob: Yeah. So basically, you was like, "I spent all this time waitin' while I coulda been doin' something else."
>
> Terrence: Something. Anything. You know what I'm sayin'? Like, it's an inconvenience to me and it's a fuckin' hazard to my health. I could end up homeless, you know? That's not cool.

---

[3] An older woman who dates younger men.

Rob: Definitely.

Terrence: What the fuck am I gonna do if I'm homeless? Where am I gonna be writin' at? You know what I'm sayin'? I don't understand. But yeah, I'm not – I'm not even thinking about it. I'm gonna be job huntin' and this music shit: I do it when I can however the fuck I want. (personal communication, March 29, 2014)

Employment: "God didn't put me on this Earth to pack shit into boxes."

Unsurprisingly, Terrence's financial situation was closely linked to his employment (or more often, his lack thereof). Among his many part-time jobs following dropping out of high school, Terrence had found little satisfaction or happiness. He had expressed his dissatisfaction on social media with posts like, "God didn't put me on this Earth to pack shit into boxes. It's time to make rash decisions" (social media, 2011), and also in his lyrics with lines such as, "It's not all good when you're rapping and burgers is your main hustle."

He expressed that he does not respond well to high-pressure situations and authoritative relationships with superiors.

At the last job [at a packing and distribution center], you know, there wasn't a lot of us, and there was way too much pressure to keep on makin' rate, you know, and stuff. And I'm not about to have somebody yellin' at me when I'm doin' the best that I can, you know? I'm here with a bunch of convicted felons and shit. I feel I should be treated better than this, you know? So fuck that. I had to leave that situation 'cause I didn't feel that my pay reflected my work or my workin' conditions, you know? (personal communication, May 3, 2014)

At the time of writing this dissertation, Terrence was employed as a prep cook and this was the first job about which I had heard him speak positively. This was closely related to a positive relationship he had with his supervisor.

At my new job, I'm a cook. I've never worked in a kitchen before. Me bein' inexperienced, there's this other chef named Alex [pseudonym]. And in my opinion, we immediately [snaps fingers] clicked. He knows what he's doin'. I immediately go to him for everything. I ask so many questions. When it comes to things that I don't know, but I am passionate about, I seek guidance. Like, I will immediately seek guidance . . . I seek that guidance because it's somethin' that I'm passionate about but I don't know anything about it and I need to get started somewhere. (personal communication, April 16, 2014)

The difference between being told what to do and seeking guidance in order to get started was an important distinction for Terrence when it comes to school and music. I explore and expand upon these issues in subsequent chapters.

Addressing Assumptions

I was often befuddled by Terrence's inability to keep a job. His relaxed attitude toward searching for work or attending whatever his current job was confronted my middle class values and assumptions about the value of gainful employment. For me, working was something everyone just does and people would not leave one job without arranging for another.

Relationships

Terrence's life and music were intricately shaped by relationships with other people. Three of the most salient past relationships that emerged in our time together were those with his *mother*, his *cousins*, and his *first crush*.

Mother. Terrence's mother (his primary and often only caregiver during his childhood) had a big influence on Terrence's rejection of a "thug" lifestyle. Terrence recalled that, despite often being at work, his mother tried to keep him and his sister "sheltered" from the potentially negative aspects of their surroundings.

> She always kept a job, but usually two. And she was barely there or whatever so it was always me and my sister watching ourselves. And my sister says we basically raised ourselves. You know, I didn't notice at the time. (personal communication, May 2, 2014)

> Believe it or not, I lived kind of a sheltered childhood. But nowadays, I see where I was livin' and stuff and I know that shit coulda been way worse than what it was. But my mom was real protective, you know? (personal communication, April 27, 2014)

Terrence felt that, in comparison to those around him, his childhood was not so bad. The details were unclear (to both Terrence and myself), but Terrence was confident that this is related to the notion that at some point during his childhood, his mother was involved in selling drugs.

> She did [sell drugs]. At some point in her life. I'm inclined to think it was when I was younger too because for what it's worth . . . I mean she didn't just come out and say it. I mean, I asked her about it. I mean, 'cause I was – I always thought to myself, "It must be kinda hard to get us everything we need, payin' like, rent for a house, and um, be able to do a lot of the shit that we did." You know, we didn't have – you know, for people who lived in the 'hood, we didn't have like, too much of a struggle, you know what I'm sayin'? And that always surprised me. (personal communication, April 27, 2014)

Although his mother might have sold drugs at some point, Terrence reported that she made it clear to him that he ought to avoid such activity.

She just told me that she didn't want me to [sell drugs] . . . I just figured it's one thing

that I should respect. And for the record, it's not like there's a ton of things that my mom

said I shouldn't do that I did. So, to me, it's just like, something I wasn't gonna do.

(personal communication, April 27, 2014)

I made a promise to my mom. I told her I wouldn't sell drugs. I told her I

wouldn't be one of those people. That was always important to her. (personal

communication, May 2, 2014)

Not being "one of those people" is a common thread within T-spit's music. I explore additional

examples of this later in this chapter.

Cousins. Terrence's cousins (not blood relatives, but close family friends) played

essential and formative roles in his music making. He improvised songs with his sister, but later

picked up details (e.g., "counting bars" in order to structure traditional 16-measure verses) from

his cousins. Their modeling and encouragement shaped Terrence's early attempts at rapping and

remain as important markers in his musical development.

Me and my sister . . . would make up songs while we walked to and from school. And

that's when I was in the third grade. That was just kid stuff. We made songs about a

quarter machine, or toys and shit . . . And we had lyrics and everything, we had full-

blown songs . . . But we didn't know how to count bars and stuff. I kinda had an idea

though, just from listenin' to songs. I would tell my sister, "No, man. You can't end it

right there. You gotta be a little longer or a little shorter." And she was like, "What the

fuck are you talkin' about?" And I was like, "I can't explain it, man . . . I got it in my

head, man. I promise." (personal communication, May 2, 2014)

When I turned twelve, I wanted to write songs and stuff for my cousin 'cause he just did all the time. I was impressed with what he did, so I was like, I just started writin' but I didn't have any structure or anything. And then he taught me all about it [counting bars]. Like, it wasn't even that hard, he just told me what he did. He put a line after every bar. So that's just kinda what I ran with. (personal communication, April 15, 2014)

Terrence was labeled with the performing moniker "T-spit" as a result of his first informal cipher[4] along with his cousins.

The whole "rappin' for real" thing started with a freestyle session. My cousin, Devon [pseudonym], a.k.a.[5] "Prospect" [pseudonym] . . . he had been rappin' for a long time . . . And they was freestylin' and he was makin' a beat on the bedpost. And I'm just hangin' out. And my cousin Devon was like, "Yo T, spit[6] somethin'." And that's where my name came from. [laughs] It was a suggestion turned name, or moniker. Suggestion turned moniker. And I was just like, "Man, I don't rap." And they was just like, "Man, just say whatever." Like, they was just – I think they was just messin' with me. Like, maybe I would embarrass myself. But then, like, all I thought about was listenin' to that Eminem album and I just came out with that crazy shit I can't describe. Oh man, it's makin' me tear up, 'cause it's a dead man gave me my name. [sigh] [pause] But yeah. All I did was draw upon my inspiration, which was Eminem. And, I spit that sick shit. It was a specific line about uh, like – you know how you can make like, a point on a candy cane? Like, I don't know exactly how I delivered the rhyme scheme, but it basically boiled down to, "Make a shiv out a candy cane, stab Santa Claus with it." Somethin' like that . . .

---

[4] A group of rappers taking turns improvising, or "free-styling" verses.
[5] Also known as.
[6] Rap.

I was twelve. And believe it or not, I was in a dark place when I was twelve actually. Twelve through thirteen, fourteen, fifteen. And so like, that came out and they went crazy. They was like, "This little muthafucker's ill."[7] And I ran with it. I was just like, "Hey, I guess I should probably do some rappin'." So that's how that happened. That's how I got into it for real. That's how I got my name at twelve years old. Thirteen is when I actually started writin'. (personal communication, April 15, 2014)

Shortly after his start writing verses and songs as T-spit, Terrence's most influential cousin (Devon) was murdered. The surrounding circumstances arguably contributed to Terrence's rejection of violence, drug dealing, and a "thug" lifestyle.

All I know for certain is that he [Devon], you know, he sold – he sold drugs or whatever. And um, what happened was – one of his cousins from his family . . . was like, a dope fiend or a crack head or some shit. I don't know. She did drugs. That was basically the jist of it. And she had stole some cocaine from these Mexicans, right? I don't know where they lived, but they had to be cross, you know? And she took refuge in the place where like, he was at, you know? And he wanted to know what was goin' on and apparently she was panickin', whatever. And then she told him like, what was goin' on and she hid. And while she was hidin', these Mexicans came through – I guess they kicked the door down, I don't know. It'd have been pretty foolish if he had let 'em in. I don't know. I don't know the details. But you know like, he wouldn't give up her location and they ended up shootin' him . . .

He did nothin'. It was all her. And like, you know, I don't even know her. I don't even know who she is. I don't know her name. But for that like, I hold a lot of ire. I don't

---

[7] A positive description similar to "cool."

like that. You know what I mean? In my mind it's her fault. It's just her fault. You know? And I don't like it. You know? He coulda done a lot of great things. (personal communication, May 3, 2014)

First crush. Around the time of his cousin's death, a thirteen-year-old Terrence was inspired to write a song for a girl he liked at school. This event, while socially frustrating, served as motivation for Terrence to pursue writing about his personal experiences.

But eighth grade there was this girl I liked . . . I liked her so much, I ended up going in my book and writin' a song about her. I just wrote a song dedicated to her or whatever. It was actually pretty fuckin' good . . . So, I ended up tellin' her friend . . . that I had a crush on her friend. Now she had told her and she was like, "Would you ever go out with so-and-so?" And she was like, "Hell no." So, she was all out about it trying to embarrass me, and I was like, "Fuck you, bitch." I closed the book, stopped writin' the song, and I was like, "Fuck that shit." But then the next day, I opened the book back up and just started writing about other shit. And I threw her in there with a little animosity, but that was only one time. But that's when I started writing more and more. I got addicted to it. I was like, "This is something I can do." (personal communication, May 2, 2014)

From then on, every time I wrote what you would say, "Oh, this is a love song" or somethin', it was actually about someone. It was never just random. It was always about somebody I was like into, somebody that I talked to, somebody that I had a crush on. You know? It was always like that. (personal communication, April 27, 2014)

Hip-Hop Identity: "Everything Music Should Be….Self"

One of T-spit's online social media profiles offers a one-sentence description of who he is. It states, "Everything music should be….self" (social media, undated). Who Terrence is (and

is not) is at the very heart of his music. His identities as musician and person are overlapping and complex. When I first set out to understand the relationships between hip-hop music and identity, I had assumed a much more linear relationship between the two. In our first meeting, I asked Terrence about how music had "shaped and defined" who he was, and his responses helped to reframe my thoughts on the concepts of music and identity.

Adam: How do you feel the music you make and the music you listen to shapes and defines who you are?

Terrence: It doesn't.

Adam: It doesn't?

Terrence: I had an identity before I made music. All I'm doing is puttin' my identity into my music. And the music in no way, shape, or form identifies me at all. I listen to music, purely, frankly for entertainment. But that's all you can do, mostly, nowadays, 'cause that's mostly all it is. But I know people who have told me that hip-hop is their life, or what not. Like, KRS-One, embedding them with knowledge and shit to keep them off the streets . . . As for me, not so much. I just like the music for music. It's never really been a part of my personality . . . See, because the music couldn't…because I couldn't identify with the music I was listening to, you know like, "Blah, blah, we got guns, blah, blah, we shootin' niggas," you know, that's not me. So, what I do when I do music is I make references to things that I'm into. I talk about shit that I like . . .

But, in terms of putting my identity into stuff, that's what it is, basically. It's stuff that I can identify with. I can identify with being, like somebody who got picked on. I can identify with somebody who likes weed, but is not a complete weed head. You know what I'm saying? I can identify with somebody who would much rather be in a plutonic

relationship than to like, just fuck a ton of bitches. You know? Those are things that I

heard on a lot of songs that I liked, but I couldn't necessarily relate to them because I was

raised different. (personal communication, May 2, 2014)

Addressing Assumptions

What I expected to hear from Terrence in this first interview was that hip-hop music

(and rap lyrics in particular) informed his worldview, made him who he was, motivated him to

rise up against his oppressive surroundings, and other typical themes found in hip-hop

pedagogy scholarship. I wanted to hear stories about how socially conscious rappers inspired

Terrence to stay in school, get off drugs, or other uplifting outcomes demonstrating the positive

power of musical engagement. What he told me was far more complicated and arguably more

compelling.

Terrence rejected many of the concepts commonly associated with what commercially

successful hip-hop music presents as authentic (e.g., "hard" Black masculinity, loyalty to both

the abstract concept of *the 'hood* as well as one's particular neighborhood). In fact, his identity as

a musician appeared linked as much to who he is *not* as to who he is. Regardless, he saw his

identity as existing outside of his music and music as being a vehicle for expressing his identity

as opposed to music informing or defining his identity. The essential elements of the identities

that he projects in his music include *being real*, *being an individual*, and *being underground*.

Being real: "All these niggas is spittin' fake." As mentioned at length in Chapter Two,

"keepin' it real" is a prodigious (and arguably clichéd) trope referring to authenticity in hip-hop

cultures. While "real" is a dynamic concept subject to contextual beliefs and perspectives, "real"

is a valued (if not mandatory) characteristic in hip-hop cultural productions. Reflecting on his

early rapping, Terrence argued that he favored imitating famous and favored artists over drawing upon his own life experiences.

> When you young, what you usually do when it comes to music is you follow what you listen to. Like, you try to imitate what you like . . . I started listenin' to like, Roc-A-Fella[8] artists and shit. Like, Freeway. I started rappin' like him for a second. I don't know what the fuck that was about. But that's when I started lyin' to myself. I was talkin' about shit that, you know, I wasn't about. Not necessarily like, any thug stuff. You know, just stuff that I really wasn't about . . . I was rappin' about pullin' hoes[9] and shit. And like, everybody knows that that wasn't happenin'. Like, I don't care to have like, just women, just out there, who just I be fuckin' and shit. That's not my style. (personal communication, April 15, 2014)

While few recorded examples exist of T-spit's earliest work, a similar example exists on his debut album, *Open 4 Bizness*. This album was recorded over 2008-2009 (when Terrence was 18 and 19 years old), but Terrence wrote many of the songs years earlier when he was in high school. One such work is "The Life," which features an uncharacteristic chorus about the (then) aspirations of the artist.

> The music, the money, the bitches, the life, man.
>
> We tryin' to have it all. (We tryin' to have it all.)
>
> The fame, the fortune, the chains, the whips[10],
>
> I'm tryin' to get it, tryin' to ball[11]. (Tryin' to get it, tryin' to ball.)

---

[8] A popular and commercially successful New York City record label.
[9] Getting girls.
[10] Expensive cars.
[11] Live with affluence.

As T-spit matured as an artist, he turned away from imitating other artists and toward finding his own voice. In terms of lyrical content, this meant drawing from actual lived experiences.

So at some point, I decided to like, step back, look at what I was doin'. I was like, "I like to make music, but this music isn't me." You know? Like, this happened to every one of us actually. All the people I do music with. We had to reevaluate what we were talkin' about in our songs. So now, I just keep it honest. I rap about shit that I know about, shit that I see, shit that I go through . . . But it's different shit affecting me in different ways and molding me into the artist that I am today. (personal communication, April 15, 2014)

T-spit often engages with issues of "real" and "fake" in his lyrics, including in the song "Hi," which calls out artists who appropriate "thug" identities.

Real talk, but all these niggas is spittin' fake.

Born loser, winnin' with music. Get it? I'm slippin' fate.

Showin' you a different way. I kill it with sicker verbs.

Fake thugs never flipped a brick[12] so I be flippin' birds[13] at 'em.

Up and at 'em. I'm ready for whatever.

For better or worse I remain tougher than alligator leather.

'Cause mufuckas used to look at me lower than dirt

For reasons I never understood. Tryin' to hurt 'em.

T-spit's performing moniker is another important element of his navigating "real." The name carries important sentimental value, but also suggests that he is a skillful rapper. "Spitting" is a synonym for rapping, but can also be a specific kind of wanton, lyrical, and assertive vocal

---

[12] Sold a pound or kilogram of drugs. Also, to be fed up.

[13] Obscene gesture (i.e., giving the middle finger). Also, selling kilograms of cocaine.

delivery. Therefore, to have "spit" as a part of his performing name carries certain expectations about T-spit's music. At the same time, he is not aiming to be the "rappingest rapper of all time," instead favoring musical nuance and developing advanced compositional prowess.

> Adam: The name "T-spit"– I mean you've had it for a long time and it's part of you. But does it mean more since it comes from somebody who was influential? Do you feel like you have to carry it around for that sort of reason? Or it's just a name?
>
> Terrence: I guess the former, but the thing is like, my name no longer means what I set out to represent.
>
> Adam: Mmm. What do you mean?
>
> Terrence: Just to be like, the rappingest rapper of all time and stuff. But now, like, [chuckles] I like to make actual songs and shit.
>
> Adam: Do you feel like with a name like, "T-spit" that there's a certain expectation that you're gonna –
>
> Terrence: Yeah.
>
> Adam: 'Cause you could be on lots of different kinds of things, but if you've got "spit" in your name, doesn't that mean you've gotta be able to spit?
>
> Terrence: And I've been able to do it. Ain't nothin's changed. [laughs] Muthafuckas know that I got my name for a reason. (personal communication, April 3, 2014)

Being an individual: "Give a fuck what the rest do." In addition to, as well as overlapping with the concept of being "real," is the notion of being an individual. Arguably, one cannot be "real" without being an individual. Individuality is perhaps the most common theme in T-spit's lyrics (followed closely by songs about women and smoking marijuana). In the song "Supa Sick," he announces that he is an "individual, give a fuck what the rest do." The lyrics

113

from the song "Rock On*"* also support the idea that T-spit values individuality and looks down upon those who imitate others.

This is what I'm on Earth to do.

I'm an individual, homie.[14] So, what are you?

Apein'[15] the style of a drugged out fool

While I kick shit with dope[16] dudes from [my city] . . .

You can be the next them.

We doin' what we do.

An important aspect of T-spit's individuality is his previously mentioned separation from the violence and "thug" life he associates with *the 'hood*. Instead of focusing on this issue negatively, he often argues this point in a more positive light. In the song "Alright," he offers such an uplifting message. From the midst of the hard living he has encountered, he reminds the listener (and perhaps himself) that everything will work out optimistically.

I take a pull[17] from the joint[18] and look at life.

The only way I've ever been able to do a show or rock a mic.

Instead of complaining to people my struggle and strife, I put it

In words for knowin' that I'ma be alright.

It's a lot of shit that could've went down, but didn't,

And it's a blessin' that I'm still here spittin'.

Took a cue from the *Book of Common* the way that it's written, you can hear it.

---

[14] Shortened version of "homeboy," friend.
[15] Imitating, copying.
[16] A positive description similar to "cool."
[17] An inhalation of a cigarette.
[18] A rolled marijuana cigarette.

The inevitable moment of death is what I'm fearin'.

But everything that happens along the way,

I take the time to appreciate, never initiate

Negative shit, but wishing for peace is foolish.

Forever the conflict rages blades and bullets.

I know I could never end wars,

But I could probably wage peace between nations when I begin tours.

You probably think the shits I didn't give could stretch miles,

But I'm a part of Operation: Make the World Smile.

Being a role model to my biggest cousin's child

Or lifting a girl's spirit when she's feeling like a pile.

Wow. I never thought I'd be compassionate,

But the older I grow I feel like it's somethin' I had to get.

So when you're feeling low and you ain't got no place to go

I'm just here to let you know that (it's alright, it's alright).

Makin' minimal dough, you at the end of rope.

Baby, don't lose hope 'cause (it's alright, it's alright).

You tried to play it smart, you got a broken heart.

Don't tear yourself apart 'cause (it's alright, it's alright).

It's alright (it's alright), it's alright (it's alright),

It's alright (it's alright, it's alright) . . .

Yeah, it's worth it now. Do what you love right?

The only thing to stop me is catching a slug right

In the kitchen 'cause whether it's fatal or not,

The ferocity with which I get it would stop.

So, let's pray for the best like I do for those around me.

Hopin' I make it, never lettin' the fakers or hatred bound me.

Being underground: "I don't care where the rap game is going, I'm not following."

Deeply related to individuality and some concepts of "real" is the positioning of oneself as

"underground." "Underground" can be a slippery term, though Smith (2005) classified

contemporary hip-hop musicians as either "popular" or "underground" including that

"underground" artists were also socially conscious. I began my first hip-hop research study with

a similar sense of discrete labels, but soon found these categorizations to be far more

complicated. I now argue that what "underground" means can vary tremendously, but for

Terrence it equates to a sense of anti-mainstream (neither he nor I would call his music socially

conscious). He felt that following whatever is most popular or seeking to be popular by

mimicking the latest trends went against his values of being an individual and being real. He

made this point in a social media post declaring, "I don't care where the rap game is going, I'm

not following" (social media, July 26, 2012).

As a listener and reviewer of hip-hop albums, Terrence consistently found his taste in

opposition to that of the general public. Among his online album reviews, he stated that "it seems

I'm destined to hate things everyone loves and moderately like everything everyone else

hates" (social media, 2011). Terrence did not associate an artist's commercial success with their

value and instead often argued that commercial success equated to pandering to the "lowest

common denominator."

[2Pac's] best album . . . was *Me Against The World*. Reason being is, it's just, it's just cohesive . . . Like, you know where he was at. He was talking about shit that actually mattered to him. You know? It wasn't just, "Thug life, [imitating gun shot sounds]," which was *All Eyez On Me*, which was mostly just commercial bullshit. You know? And yet, it's the most recognized album of them all . . . 'Cause Death Row[19] was like, "2Pac!" You know? They were all about the 2Pac business . . . It just got more attention . . . But like I said, it was a bunch of commercial bullshit. There was something there for the lowest common denominator. (personal communication, May 15, 2014)

T-spit's disdain for mainstream music appears frequently in his lyrics. This is often demonstrated by dissing[20] commercially successful artists in favor of those whom T-spit approves. This was especially common in his first studio album, *Open 4 Bizness*, in which T-spit placed himself largely in opposition to the mainstream on many of the album's tracks.

Don't count on seein' me doin' a dance on BET.[21]

Lookin' all slave-tastic, movin' for the masses.

Homie, fuck the masses. I'm here for the underground, mainstream's bastards.

Trust me, I relate to that and just like you, I'm hatin' that.

Judge rappers simply by who they choose idolize.

Lots of cold shoulders for Nastradamus[22] and Hova.[23]

Generation "Why Bother?" I pray to our father.

We get the respect we deserve when we're older

---

[19] A Los Angeles based commercially successful and popular record company.
[20] Disrespecting.
[21] Black Entertainment Television.
[22] An album by the artist Nas.
[23] A nickname for Jay-Z.

'Cause the younger you are, the wacker your taste.

Wayne ain't better than Common. Don't get slapped in the face.

You gettin' force-fed the bullshit with minimum variety.

So, we rarely by a CD in its entirety.

Dudes' beats is crap and they flow is wack.

Bitin' off[24] Jeezy and got a brotha off track.

I draw inspiration from artists,

But it's hard to do when a lot them niggas garbage . . .

I did the research and found Little Brother.

Got rid of my Lil Wayne for these bad motherfuckers.

Terrence's position as anti-mainstream includes a concern for staying relevant: not being forgotten with time, or what some in hip-hop cultures might call "staying fresh."

I have no real concerns for like, commercial viability and shit. Because like, I put that

kind of thought into my stuff, but not so much that I end up makin' shit like . . . shit that

you know was made for the radio. Shit that you know when it came out that – and that's

another thing, if I chase the trends, I'm gonna be stuck in this fuckin' – I'm gonna be

stuck where I'm at. I'm gonna be Mr. 2014 . . . You gotta not give a fuck. You do that,

and you transcend time. You transcend trends and you just have good music instead of

somethin' that coulda been hot, but it just ain't with the times right now. (personal

communication, April 16, 2014)

---

[24] Copying, mimicking, or otherwise "ripping off."

The label of "underground" can be problematic as it can be difficult to pin down exactly what it means. Terrence and I wrestled with the term together in order to determine if underground was an appropriate label for his work.

Adam: Are you underground when you aren't getting played, when you aren't signed to a label? Does that mean that you're underground if you're not on a label, but you're tryin' to get on a label? Are you underground because you're purposefully not tryin' to get played on the radio? You know? Like, what does that mean? Can you be underground because you suck? Can you just be like –

Terrence: That is a good question. I gotta be honest, I don't know anymore. I'm done tryin' to understand because the way I see it, I'm not tryin' to be underground or commercial. Because at this point in time there's no such thing. If I make a song that I like, then I stand by it.

Adam: I felt like I could have told you before, "Well these guys are underground, these guys aren't, this is whatever." But to me, it's way more complicated than that . . . Tell me about what you mean by there not being a difference between being commercial and underground.

Terrence: All right. There is no difference to me because [pause] – now you heard some of the songs on the mix tape right? . . . I noticed a huge change in my own approach to music. Like, I'm just not afraid to do whatever, whatever I want, whatever I feel sounds good now. And what I feel sounds good is a little bit of singin' here and there. I can't help it . . . Anyway, so it's just somethin' that I also kind of liked and I had no idea that it would be so acceptable at this point in time . . . The perception now is that if you do that type of thing, you tryin' to be Drake or somethin', you know?

119

Adam: Just 'cause they're singing on a track.

Terrence: Yeah, just 'cause they singin' on a track. Some people do it different. Like, Wiz Khalifa . . . You know, can you call that commercial? That's my question. Specifically, Kid Cudi. Can you call that underground? What is that?

Adam: I'm not sure. I've never tried to label underground and commercial based on what it sounds like. You know what I mean? I've always tried to think of it as, "What label owns this music? How's it getting sold?" And it's not necessarily the musical elements that define what it is, but it's more of the production and distribution of the music that makes it whatever it is.

Terrence: I think that's what underground is. Like, independent. Independent of independent.

Adam: Right.

Terrence: Like, you don't even have independent labels backing you or anything in stores. It's your own thing. I think that's what it is.

Adam: Right. But then I wonder, "Can I call myself underground because I just can't get on a label?" You know? Can I just say, "Yeah, I'm underground" even though you're trying to sound like Drake, but you can't get on anywhere? Can you just say that's underground? 'Cause then I feel like that shouldn't count.

Terrence: I don't think it does. That's funny. Like, you actively tryin' to be the next "so-and-so" that's not underground. That's just fake.

Adam: So, you're not on a label.

Terrence: Right.

Adam: You're not necessarily creating music to get radio play.

120

Terrence: Right.

Adam: You wouldn't consider yourself a commercial artist. Would you consider yourself underground?

Terrence: Yeah, I guess.

Adam: Would you consider yourself underground because you're not commercial or is there something else about your music that makes it underground?

Terrence: I don't know. I'm just some dude makin' music. [laughs]

Adam: Mm-hmm. Is "independent" a better label than "underground?"

Terrence: Not even because it's not like I'm doin' it for money at the moment. So, I don't know. "Independent" would be gettin' money. I think that's the difference between "underground" and "independent." It might be. It sounds legit.

Adam: Well, I mean, you can define these terms however you want.

Terrence: Well, for me it's just because I'm just some dude makin' music. Right now, I'm just some dude tryin' to get music out there and get people to like it. That's what underground is. When you don't have – when you don't have your foundation. You're still a person fightin' for a name.

Adam: Can you stay underground then? Because Black Milk has a name, but he's still considered underground.

Terrence: Yeah. [chuckles] I have no idea. This is some – this is hard stuff to define.

Adam: Well, we don't have to define it for everybody.

Terrence: Right. What does make Black Milk underground? I guess it's 'cause he's – you know, I guess "underground" is multifaceted. There you go. 'Cause I think it depends. Like, for him it's because he's not chasin' radio play. So I guess that makes him

underground.

Adam: Would you say that's the same for you then? Could you be underground in the same way – that you're not chasing radio play?

Terrence: Yeah, I guess so. I never thought about it that way. In that way, I'm definitely underground. (personal communication, April 3, 2014)

Addressing Assumptions

I had expected (or hoped) that Terrence would more eagerly embrace an underground identity with which I was more familiar. I expected an underground identity to consist of a concern over economic issues and the influence of money on people and music. Terrence's underground identity was more focused on concerns over individuality and control. In other words, I had anticipated an anti-commercial definition and he offered an explanation that was anti-mainstream.

Goals: "I Just Wanna Be Hip-Hop With No Boundaries"

Informed by his contempt for musicians who sacrifice their individuality in search of radio play and recording contracts, Terrence did not include getting rich and famous among the reasons why he makes his music. He said that he would not turn down the opportunity to get paid (particularly as a beat producer), but escaping his current life conditions through musical notoriety was not part of his plan.

It's not like I need to pull myself out of a situation or anything. Then again . . . I would like somethin' to happen with the music. To get paid for somethin' – mostly production . . . Other things are just for my own benefit. It's therapy. It's my own thing. It's like talkin' about shit, get it off my chest. (personal communication, March 27, 2014)

122

Instead of aims consisting of celebrity and economic mobility, Terrence's most prominent goals for his music included *being heard*, *being felt*, and *being in control*.

Addressing Assumptions

It was difficult to shake the assumption that wanting to "make it" was an inevitable goal for Terrence. This is especially curious because as an amateur musician myself I have no aspirations of becoming famous or making money with my music. Why then did I assume that Terrence would be striving for these goals? In my darker hours, I wonder if I had so little respect for Terrence's intelligence and awareness at the start of this project that I assumed he was naïve enough to be aiming for musical celebrity. Of course, I soon learned that Terrence's understanding of the music industry is deep and that he is more than capable of determining realistic and fulfilling goals.

Being heard: "I'm lookin' for whoever's listenin'." When I first asked Terrence about where he wanted to take his music, he described a desire to simply be heard. In a later conversation, I inquired about whether his lack of distribution kept him from reaching the audience for which he was looking. He replied, "Who is the audience I'm lookin' for? 'Cause I'm lookin' for whoever's listenin'" (personal communication, May 3, 2014). By rejecting commercial success and a large (or even specific) audience, the principle of being heard by whoever is listening allowed Terrence to remain faithful to his aforementioned hip-hop identity.

While Terrence aimed for his music to be personally resonant, this does not mean that he made his music only for himself.

I never do shit that I don't feel is gonna hit with somebody. Like, at least with one person. 'Cause like, I'm not tryin' to be Mr. Everybody. You know what I'm sayin'? I'm

123

makin' music that I like and hopin' that somebody else could connect with that music or relate to who I am as a person when I put this music out there . . . Like, I just hope I could connect with people like me. I'm not tryin' to reach for the charts, I'm tryin' to reach for you. You know, the person, the individual. (personal communication, April 16, 2014)

Being heard as a goal impacted T-spit's rapping technique as he aimed for clarity in his diction in addition to largely avoiding regional or other cultural slang.

I remember when I was younger, I would just try to cram as many words as I could into a verse. You know? Like, with no regard for whether or not somebody could actually rap along with it or shit. And to some degree . . . I've simplified it only enough to where I can say things that matter and shit and somebody could like, connect with what I'm sayin' about myself . . . You can tell in the way that I write. I use like, zero slang. I use minimal slang 'cause I want just anybody to be able to catch what I'm sayin'. (personal communication, April 16, 2014)

Being felt: "Make 'em feel what you're sayin'." At a deeper level than being heard, was Terrence's goal of being felt. The motivation for being felt came from the feedback of a friend and fellow hip-hop musician.

My dude . . . he was like, "Aight, people know you can spit. Like, they know that you can like, you can rip. Know what I'm sayin? But now you gotta make 'em *feel* what you're sayin'." And I understood what he was sayin'. He was sayin' like, "Write more personal music and like, make it more digestible. Like, easier to follow." And while I feel like, I am lyrical, I'm also easier to understand now . . . I want people to relate to some guy who never had the best look or social standing. He just happens to be very talented. 'Cause

124

there's a lot of those people out there and I would like to see all those people shine. It's like, "Hey, I'm not – I don't play football, but look what I can do." You know? Stuff like that. 'Cause everybody's special in their own way. That's what I've learned. Like, there's so much you don't know about people until you talk to 'em. You know? And that's what people never did. They never talked to me. They never got to know who I was. But nowadays, like, you ask these people who deal with me, and they like, "He's a cool muthafucker." Or like, "He makes some kickass music." (personal communication, May 15, 2014)

The concept of "feel" is one that relates meaningfully with the musical experiences explored in Chapter Six, and also has strong connections to Terrence's school experiences (Chapter Five).

Being in control: "On my own fuckin' terms." Perhaps above all else, Terrence aimed for his musical experiences to be under his control. Concurrent with a hip-hop identity typified by an individualistic and anti-mainstream kind of "real," Terrence valued comprehensive power over his music.

Adam: Would it be worth being more aggressive and pursuing labels? Like, sending demos to producers or record people? Would that be worth your time?

Terrence: It would probably be worth more if I cared that much about the financial gain, you know? But with the financial gain, you lose your self and that's not what I'm tryin' to be, man. So, it would be more beneficial in a mainstream way. Or if my goal was to just get rich or something, then sure. That would work out, but that's not what I'm focusin' on. I'm focusin' on findin' people who like the music for what it is no matter what I do. If it sounds good, it's good. They not tryin' to box me in. They not tryin' to

say, "Oh, he does this and that." That's what I want. I want somebody to accept every facet of my musical, you know, being. (personal communication, May 3, 2014)

I'd rather just have my taste and be able to be the tastemaker – the person who makes my shit how I want it to sound and stand by it . . . I don't like other people dictatin' my change in sound. Listenin' to other people, it got me nowhere. And technically, I'm nowhere now, but I'm puttin' in the work so I can get somewhere on my own fuckin' terms. (personal communication, May 15, 2014)

When considering joining a small independent record label, Terrence and I shared a text message conversation in which issues of expectations and compromise further illuminated the notion of controlling his music. Without control, Terrence feared having limitations and boundaries placed on his musical expression.

Terrence: I'm not fond of "owing" anyone or potentially compromising my material to fit something. I've been described as "hardcore hip-hop/boom bap", but my sounds reach beyond that . . .

Adam: Yeah, I'm sure it's tougher to be on your own, but if you can't be you on a label it's probably not worth it. But do you know you'd have to compromise to be on the label?

Terrence: I'm not sure how much compromise. I simply wanna do what I feel when I feel it. If I have to fit the mold of a certain type of musician, it limits my boundaries. If I'm supposed to be hardcore, how the fuck can I harmonize on a song and be taken seriously as such? I just wanna be hip-hop with no boundaries. (text messages, April 5, 2014)

Addressing Assumptions

I will admit to feeling disappointed when Terrence would pass on opportunities to perform live, record, or sign with a record label. I feel that he has all of the musical skills to

126

succeed at whatever level he chooses, but his choices conflict with the American celebrity

narrative where everyone wants to be famous. I am left to wonder whether I wanted Terrence to

experience traditional notions of success in music because he is my friend or because it might

make my research more interesting. In this case, I feel confidently that it is my genuine care for

Terrence as a person that compels my wish to see him succeed; however, his definition of

success does not conform to my prior assumptions.

Terrence eventually abandoned the possibility of joining the independent label, though he has kept the door open to possibilities like these. Whatever future musical opportunities arise for Terrence, I would expect that he will remain committed to his hip-hop musical identity of *being real*, *being an individual*, and *being underground* as well as his goals of *being heard*, *being felt*, and *being in control*. I cannot say whether a record label exists that will meet his standards in this way, but I anticipate that he will continue to make music "on his own fuckin' terms" regardless.

Discussion

The aim of this chapter was to address the study's first research question: How do sociocultural contexts (particularly issues of race, space, place, and class) impact hip-hop musicians and their music? For both Terrence and myself, our sociocultural places strongly influenced our hip-hop musical experiences and identities. Situating ourselves as contrary within these places prominently informed our musical experiences and perceptions. Additionally, issues of authenticity both negatively and positively affected my ability to claim a hip-hop musical identity.

Place and "Counter-Place"

T-spit's music and musical identity are undeniable centered on relationships to and within place. Hip-hop music has been the primary soundtrack to Terrence's life and his desire to emulate his cousins and favorite artists shaped his foundational experiences within the music. The motivations behind his early music making appeared primarily social, and while he and his music matured, this social motivation did as well. An adolescent T-spit began rapping as social activity with his cousins and began writing as an expression of romantic interest. Instead of aiming for commercial success as an adult (an option I maintain as entirely viable given his abilities), Terrence's goals remained focused on being heard and felt. As it developed, Terrence's music also featured an oppositional attitude toward his local surroundings. Violence, crime, and "thug" life have left an indelible mark on Terrence and his music, and his oppositions to these and commercial music forces play a critical role in his identity as a hip-hop musician.

My hip-hop musical identity also is placed strongly within my sociocultural contexts. The fact that I was and am so hesitant about identifying as a hip-hop musician in many ways relates to historical notions of hip-hop authenticity and my differences compared to Black urban cultures in America. My path to hip-hop music came via my role as a hip-hop scholar and was influenced largely by a motivation to inform school music practice. My position as professional music educator and researcher affected my musical experiences through my use of Western classical music in beat production as well as the assumptions and preconceptions I brought to the beat production process (explored in detail in Chapter Six). I also employ my hip-hop identity as a way to claim a unique place within my field and among my music education colleagues.

It would be a gross reduction to simply argue that "place matters" for Terrence and myself. Obviously, where we come from does make a difference to who we are, but our

identities also have been tied up in resistance to our local places. Terrence's "anti-thug" identity and my consistent desire for separation from my peers (as a high school punk, or graduate student beat producer) demonstrate how "counter-place" identities can draw definition through resistance. This does not reduce the importance of place, but rather further complicates the relationships between self and surroundings. For both Terrence and myself, "who we are" consists largely of "who we are not" and the identities we resist are place-specific.

The notion that identity is not only placed, but also "counter-placed" carries important implications for place-conscious education. In Chapter Seven, I explore these implications in greater detail.

Authenticity

Terrence has access to traditional hip-hop authenticity claims in ways that I will never have, including being Black and his proximity to *the ghetto* and *the 'hood*. Despite this access, he rarely addresses racial issues in his lyrics, at least in concrete ways. He does make occasional use of racial terms that would (or should) be "off-limits" to White musicians (e.g., "nigga"), but these are far more colloquial than purposeful statements about race. Terrence does lyrically employ his urban vicinity, but this does not take the expected role of glorifying the "streets" or representing his neighborhood. While Terrence expresses his hip-hop authenticity in ways contrary to some traditional hip-hop authenticity claims, his ability to perform a commonly accepted role as Black urban rapper allows him to possess a hip-hop identity without the qualms I experienced.

As previously mentioned, my reluctance to claim a hip-hop identity was steeped in traditional notions of hip-hop authenticity. I cannot assess whether embracing this identity would have been easier if I had not been White and spent most of my life in non-urban middle class

129

locations; however, I can attest to the powerful effect that being seen as "fake" within hip-hop

cultures can have. Because my path to hip-hop musicianship came primarily via hip-hop

scholarship and a background in other musical genres, I often feared being called out by more

seasoned hip-hop enthusiasts and/or by music education colleagues arguing that my interests

were insincere and self-serving. While I feel confident about defending my scholarly interests in

hip-hop and music education, I still struggle with claiming musicianship within the genre. I

contest that authenticity is both a source of and solution to this struggle.

Authenticity as a basis for my hesitations relates to how important being "real" is within

hip-hop music. If authenticity were indeed a static condition (as discussed in Chapter Two), I

would have little opportunity to meaningfully participate in hip-hop cultural experiences.

Because I share so little in common with hip-hop's founding and well-known contemporary

practitioners, authenticity as condition would have acted as a strict barrier to my involvement.

While I do not ascribe to the notion of authenticity as a static condition, common knowledge of

traditional authenticity claims in hip-hop cultures still affected my willingness to assert an

identity within cultural practice.

Reclaiming authenticity through performance involved confronting the conceptual notion

of authenticity as well as gaining access to authenticity claims via experience within hip-hop

cultures. Dismantling static authenticity and viewing authenticity as performance allowed for my

eventual (though reluctant) embracing of a hip-hop musical identity. My initial attempts to

present this identity through social media eventually were bolstered by lived experience and

increased knowledge. After spending time with veteran hip-hop cultural members and gaining

experience within hip-hop musical practices, I now claim hip-hop as a genuine and valued

portion of my musical identity. I recognize that "being real" does not have to be limited by the

characteristics set forth by others, but can be (re)claimed through explorations, examinations, and experiences of one's self.

Conclusion

Employing both authenticity and identity as dynamic and performative concepts, the findings related in this chapter demonstrate that sociocultural and environmental contexts can have an important impact on individuals' musical experiences and perceptions. How persons identify themselves within their surrounding spaces and places can have an additionally meaningful influence as well. These concepts could serve as essential components toward better understanding hip-hop's musical place(s) and informing applications of hip-hop cultures in school music settings.

CHAPTER 5—"WHY THE FUCK SHOULD I BE IN SCHOOL?"

Since the inclusion of hip-hop cultures in school music settings is a fundamental concern of this study and better understanding the experiences that adult hip-hop musicians have had in school could be a vital ingredient toward informing this potential inclusion, this chapter addresses the study's second research question: What are hip-hop musicians' perceptions of school and schooling? My history as a professional educator and Terrence's perspective as a high school dropout offer a valuable contrast of beliefs, values, and assumptions about school and education. In this chapter, I explore Terrence's experiences with and perceptions of school, the ways in which this research challenged my views of school and schooling, and our shared experiences in academic settings.

Pride in Progress

I begin with a reflection on my experiences as a middle school music teacher at a public school in the American Midwest. The contemplations offered here represent many of the attitudes and beliefs about school and music education that I brought into my doctoral study and this research. I examine and challenge my perspective on many of these issues later in this chapter. I offer here my voice as Mr. Kruse, the music teacher at Ogdenville (pseudonym) Middle School.

> *Upon completing my undergraduate degree in music education, I worked for six and a*
> *half years as a public school music teacher in the American Midwest. The latter half of*
> *this period was spent in Ogdenville. Ogdenville has a population of about 20,000 and*
> *defies urban/suburban/rural labels. It is a relatively small municipality located roughly*
> *30 miles from a very large Midwestern city. Some residents work in agricultural areas*
> *while most work in the service and manufacturing fields. It is mostly a lower-middle class*

population with a large amount of racial diversity (due mostly to the Asian American and Latina/o immigrant populations who have come to the area for either administrative work or manual labor).

Despite a sluggish economy and crumbling local infrastructure, the highway signs at Ogdenville's entrances read, "Pride in Progress." Whether this meant that Ogdenville was proud of the progress it had made or that pride was something currently under development, I was never sure. For my middle school band students in Ogdenville, I felt strongly that if they possessed any kind of pride, it was "in progress" at best. Having recently been featured on a cover story in a national news magazine as a "dropout factory," the dropout rates for students at Ogdenville High School were around 32% for all students (more than three times the national average at the time) and close to 50% for African American and Latino students.

For someone like me, who valued formal education and its ability to provide upward social mobility, I felt that instilling a sense of pride, a commitment to excellence, and a traditional American work ethic in the students I saw could play a positive role in their present as well as their future. I never argued that learning an alternate F-sharp fingering would help a twelve-year-old graduate from high school, but I did contend that the positive social experiences, the feelings of empowerment, and the sense of community we experienced in band class would eventually help these adolescents develop into the type of people that would graduate from high school. I often summarized these feelings by stating that our goal was "to become better people through music."

To achieve this goal, the Ogdenville Middle School band students applied themselves tremendously. By insisting on student responsibility, active participation, and

critical musical thinking, we developed strong musical skills and performed difficult

repertoire at a very high level. To put that into "band director" terms, "We received the

highest marks possible at the highest level of competition in our state." Replacing the

embroidering that had read, "OMS," I updated the ensemble's uniformed polo shirts to

now read, "Ogdenville Middle School Bands." "You wear 'Ogdenville' on your shirts

every time we perform," I would remind the students. "What does that mean for you?

What does that mean we have to do every day in this class?" I sold the notion of

representing their town as motivation for their continued efforts. If these students had

nothing else in which to take pride, they could take pride in this. They could take pride in

us.

My days spent at Ogdenville were easily the happiest of my career. The band

enjoyed a family atmosphere in the classroom where high expectations were achieved

through a commitment to helping each other and having a lot of fun. As their teacher, I

made sure to communicate frequently how much I cared about my students as people and

how much their musical and social growth meant to me. I have no data whatsoever to

support whether or not success at the middle school band level affected graduation rates

at Ogdenville High School, but the story I tell myself is that I made a positive difference

in the lives of those students. Their pride was continually in progress, and I took great

pride in the progress they made each day.

Terrence and School

When I first reached out to Terrence as a potential research participant, the only

prerequisites I had were that he was a hip-hop musician and that he had experience in some kind

of school music. I was particularly curious about how an adult who actively participated in

musical activity reflected upon his school music experiences. Were these experiences positive? Did they encourage or support his musical engagement outside of school? My assumption going into our first interview was that Terrence's school music experiences would have had little in common with his out-of-school musical interests, and he unsurprisingly confirmed this expectation. While his recollections of his school music experiences are undoubtedly important, what is perhaps even more valuable to this study are his perceptions of school in a broader sense. With this in mind, I include in this section Terrence's reflections on his *school experiences*, as well as his *perceptions of school*, *schooling*, and *school music*.

School Experiences

Terrence attended public schools in our mid-sized Midwestern city beginning in kindergarten and dropping out of high school in his third year. While he recalled academic success and happiness in his elementary school years, he reported disinterest and social struggles in middle school and high school. As a high school student, he frequently skipped classes and completed little coursework. Soon after deciding to drop out during his junior year of high school, Terrence earned his GED in place of a high school diploma and began working at a fast food chain restaurant in the city. The emergent themes among Terrence's reflections on his school experiences were *relevance*, *belonging*, and *freedom*.

Relevance: "They wasn't makin' my kinda music." Terrence's only recollections about his compulsory elementary school general music classes involved playing the recorder. Despite having a passionate interest in music, he felt that he and his fellow students were largely unmotivated to play the three-note recorder songs often found in these classes. "You remember *Hot Cross Buns*?" he once asked me, "That song's some bullshit" (personal communication, April 2, 2014). He could not recall whether his middle school orchestra class was mandatory or

135

elective, but he had similar memories of these experiences. Mostly, he complained of a disconnection between the musical styles present in school and the music he preferred.

Adam: What sort of music were you playing in orchestra?

Terrence: Classical. Of course it was classical, why you even gotta ask? [laughs]

Adam: What made you want to quit?

Terrence: Just the experience. They wasn't makin' my kinda music . . . Kids like me don't listen to that [classical music]. I had no interest in music that didn't speak to me, my generation, or my culture. (personal communication, April 2, 2014)

In addition to feeling that Western classical music did not represent his culture or his generation, Terrence's perspective challenges the very notion of what counts as music and musicianship. As a young violinist and then percussionist, Terrence's orchestra teacher expected him to learn to read standard music notation. Instead, Terrence figured out tunes by ear. When discussing his propensity for playing music by ear he explained, "That's how I've always made everything. Even music. I'll tell you about that when we get to talkin' about music" (personal communication, April 2, 2014). We had been discussing school music in this conversation and what Terrence wound up expressing was that *his* music was music but he did not consider what he did in school to be music at all.

Addressing Assumptions

While Terrence supported my assumptions about his not getting much out of school music, he did not rail against school music in the ways in which I had hoped and expected. What I had anticipated was a laundry list of complaints about school music's irrelevance. Instead, Terrence could barely remember his school music experiences, arguably because he felt they had such little effect on his life. I pushed often for more information and detail, but the fact that

a passionate adult musician had precious little to report on his school music experience speaks volumes about the impact (or lack thereof) that these classes had on him. Still, my assumption entering this study was that Terrence would feel strong negative feelings about school music as opposed to the indifference I discovered.

Belonging: "High school was not the place for me." Terrence's most passionate complaints about his school experiences related to his struggle to belong. He described a downward trend following elementary school and wanting to escape from the other "terrible" students.

> After elementary school, shit fell apart . . . Middle school was like hell, man. Like, here's this chubby kid, you know what I'm saying? And like, everybody's picking on him and shit. And I couldn't fuckin' escape it for nothin' . . . I tend to not focus on a lot of my old school life because all of the kids were fuckin' terrible. A majority of them kids were terrible. I was like, the one person who knew how to behave. I was quiet. Even if I didn't do the work, at least I was quiet. (personal communication, March 29, 2014)

According to Terrence, things did not improve after middle school. He skipped classes often (usually to listen to music) and made few attempts to complete his assignments. He was still officially attending school, but he had withdrawn almost entirely from participation.

> High school was a dark time, man. I just didn't give a fuck. Anti-social. I just wanted to listen to music. I wanted people to leave me alone, man. That's all that was. So, I would skip classes . . . they still didn't let you walk around with headphones and shit, but I would like, find a quiet corner. I would specifically go behind the gym and just put some headphones on and listen to whatever I had. (personal communication, April 15, 2014)

High school was not the place for me. Like, I didn't like most of the teachers or the kids, and I can't really pay attention to the people that I don't give a fuck about . . . This is why my school life is so boring. 'Cause like, by the time I got to high school, I just didn't care for all the people. I would spend as much time as I could in the hallway listenin' to my CD player. Like, class would start, I'd bail. It'd be like, breakfast, and I'd leave breakfast and go to where the gym was at. (personal communication, April 24, 2014)

During Terrence's junior year of high school (his sister's senior year), both he and his sister decided to officially end their enrollment. The motivation for this decision related to a run-in with a "badass kid" outside of school.

The story of how I dropped out was quite fucked up. Me and my sister were waiting for the bus to go home. We was skippin' class, we didn't have any business there [at school]. But this badass kid took her purse . . . And my sister was like, "Man, fuck this shit. I can't deal with these badass kids no more. I can't deal with this dumbass school no more. I'm leaving." And I'm like, "Aight, I'ma leave with you." And we both left. We went and got our GEDs, and we ain't never looked back. Fuck 'em. Just, fuck 'em. (personal communication, April 2, 2014)

Addressing Assumptions

Unfortunately, I did not follow up on Terrence's issues with belonging *as thoroughly as I did* relevance *and* freedom *(I explore this later in the chapter). I believe this was at least partly due to my assumption that Terrence's complaints about school would be motivated by inept curriculum or teachers who could not relate to him. I expected a simple "Terrence vs. School" story in which the poor Black kid hated his classes, but what he provided me was far more*

intricate. The elements of "Terrence vs. His Classmates" and "Terrence vs. His Surroundings"

complicate this story and make an easy diagnosis and prescription for change impossible to

provide.

Freedom: "If I could just do what I want, I'd be happy." In addition to a lack of

interest in the content and a feeling of not belonging in school, Terrence complained about the

structure of his classes. A "rigid" set of expectations and "boring" procedures did not fit

Terrence's preferred methods of learning.

> I guess school was too rigid, you know? I like to be hands on. I like to reach out and feel
>
> what I'm doin'. I don't like classes. I want loose construction, you know? Or like, strict
>
> instruction on how to do one thing and then let me master that on my own damn terms . .
>
> . Fuck, if I could just do what I want, I'd be happy . . . If I don't feel like I'm bein'
>
> fulfilled in any way with what I'm doin', I'm like, "Fuck it" . . . I just can't function if
>
> I'm bored. (personal communication, April 16, 2014)

The idea of "strict instruction" followed by the freedom to explore on one's own more closely

matches Terrence's description of the music education he experienced outside of school. I

explore this process in greater depth throughout Chapter Six.

Similar to his musical experiences, Terrence would have preferred to have his learning

take place on his own terms; however, he felt that his school environment was not conducive to

this kind of learning.

> I can't stand school. While I love to gain knowledge, I hate school. I think what it is, is I
>
> don't like the compartments. I don't like being put in a box, and they was always tryin' to
>
> box me in. With just, like, "Do this, study that, learn what I say" every fuckin' day. I just

like to learn on my own terms. I like doin' things on my own terms. That's where I can really thrive, as myself. You gotta let children have their own world and shit, you know? Like, there's things that kids should be able to control and that's their destiny. (personal communication, May, 4 2014)

Perceptions of School, Schooling, and School Music

I asked Terrence often about why he quit school, if he regretted his choices, what could have prevented this outcome, and similarly motivated questions. My goal was to understand what had gone wrong in Terrence's school experience as a way to help prevent (or at least reduce) the same outcome for similar students in the future. Instead of easy answers, Terrence complicated these issues for me by questioning the *outcomes* of schooling and explaining that he had *no regrets* about dropping out of high school. Additionally, he offered important considerations for *reimagining school music*.

Outcomes: "Schoolin' wasn't gonna get me where I wanted to go." Terrence justified his choice to drop out of high school as well as his decision not to pursue further education by arguing that the outcomes associated with traditional schooling had little to offer him. Because he was not interested in the typical trajectory following conventional schooling (e.g., more schooling, student loan debt, white-collar employment), he stood proudly by his elected path.

I guess it's all about your perspective and what you're tryin' to do with your life . . . Traditional schoolin' wasn't gonna get me where I wanted to go. It's not what I wanted to do. I don't wanna be a fuckin' accountant. I don't wanna be a teacher . . . Like, I don't want that job title. I don't wanna do any of these like, buttoned-down type deals. (personal communication, April 16, 2014)

If I had a college education, maybe I'd have a better chance of workin'. But then

I'd be in debt. And then I'd have to pay that debt off . . . And I'm gettin' sick of people

sayin', "Oh, you should go back to school." And I'm like, "Why? So I can be in debt? So

I can struggle more than I already am?" You know, there's no guarantee that I'm gonna

have a job, and you know that debt is gonna crush me. (personal communication, March

27, 2014)

For Terrence, "being a good person" carried more weight than attainments within formal

educational. I did not overtly pose questions as if formal education were a requirement for one to

be a good person, but the fact that Terrence felt compelled to clarify this suggested that perhaps I

had insinuated this idea.

Man, bein' a good person – to me, is more important than any amount of education,

money, any of that shit . . . And for what it's worth, I'm not a terrible person. I'm poor as

fuck, but that doesn't change the fact that I'm a decent person. And I work for my check

and I pay my rent. (personal communication, April 24, 2014)

Addressing Assumptions

Based on the assumption that people are supposed *to finish high school, did I assume that*

not having finished school made Terrence a bad person? It is too easy to dismiss the idea that I

thought he was bad, as I do not see bad/good as universal descriptors. That said, bad/good

certainly reflect one's values and Terrence stated his opinion regarding the relationship (or lack

thereof) of bad/good to schooling. While I can argue that I did not see Terrence as "bad," I think

it is entirely possible that my assumptions about the inevitability of schooling led me to view

Terrence disparagingly.

No regrets: "Ain't shit changed." As part of trying to envision how Terrence's school experiences might have been improved, I often inquired about what changes he might have made to his past actions and what potential impact these changes could have had on his present life.

Adam: If you could put your mind currently into the body of yourself as a thirteen-year-old and do those orchestra classes again, how would you do it differently?

Terrence: I wouldn't. Ain't shit changed . . . 'Cause the way that I was then is the way that I am now. I still wouldn't wanna do that shit. It was just boredom. And it made me not wanna go. Boredom, and just workin' too hard with little-to-no payoff . . .

Adam: Would your life be different now if you had finished school?

Terrence: I guess that depends. What would my diploma have gotten me that a GED couldn't?

Adam: I don't know. That's what I'm askin'.

Terrence: I don't think so. I still wouldn't want to do any normal jobs . . . Nothin' much would have changed, I guess. I probably would have immediately went to college without thinkin' about it . . . I think I'm lucky to have had the time that I've had to think about life and shit. To figure out what I want, or at least what I think I want. (personal communication, April 16, 2014)

Addressing Assumptions

Again based on the assumption that people are supposed *to graduate high school, I expected that given the opportunity Terrence would change his schooling past. Because I presumed that his experience was somehow "wrong," I insinuated that he had made mistakes during his schooling and would carry regrets. By assuming that he* should *have graduated, I was essentially judging him as incomplete, or perhaps more nefariously, as a failed version of myself.*

142

Reimagining school music: "It could have meant more." Terrence and I frequently discussed the possibility and potential of including hip-hop in school music settings. He initially found the idea difficult to imagine and argued that reaching a student like him in school was inconceivable. Over time, however, he began to offer important and thoughtful suggestions for reimagining school music. After he and I participated in numerous lectures and presentations in traditional academic settings on this topic, I asked him how his thinking about this possibility had changed.

> Terrence: I had thought it would be impossible to reach someone like me, just like, I don't know how to explain it. When we started, I had no idea how hip-hop in school would work, and it still feels like, pretty fuckin' different. But I mean, I guess I was thinkin' how we coulda made beats and shit in the classes I had instead of reworkin' the whole deal. Like, I was thinkin' that if you don't read music notes you can't write music, but obviously I do that [write music] and everybody I know does that, and basically like, everybody doin' this kinda music does that without readin' music notes and shit.
>
> Adam: Yeah. Do you think – I don't know how you'd know, but do you think these ideas have potential for actual application in a classroom? I mean, it's easy to sit at a conference and say, "This is a cool idea," but when you actually try to put these ideas into practice, like with kids in a school, with teachers – do you think there's something to that? Do you think it's actually a thing that could happen?
>
> Terrence: If I didn't, I wouldn't be ridin' around with you . . . It's a concept worth explorin'. That's all I can say. (personal communication, April 16, 2014)

When asked to imagine a music class ideally designed for himself as a young student, Terrence described a classroom heavily focused on a freedom to explore. He explained the

143

teacher's role not as an instructor, but as an overseer dedicated to assisting students with their own interests. Terrence did not see the possibility of students having narrow interests as a problem and argued that as a student, he might have thrived in this environment.

> Terrence: My [ideal] class would be a classroom – the number of kids is not important. The number of teachers probably is. The class would probably need at least two people instructin' or – not even instructin', but overseein' the class. My class would just be an explanation of these ideas that I apply to music and shit, you know? I'd explain it, then I'd ask these kids like, "What kind of ideas do you have?" Like, "What kind of music would you make? How do you want it to sound?" And then based on the answers and such – you know, it would probably be difficult, but I would try and help each kid mold the sounds that they wanna make . . . Whatever they passion is, I'll try and help them make that sound work. Adam: What about the argument that says, "These kids are just going to come in and learn what they already know." If a kid just wants to do house music and that's all he's going to experience, shouldn't he have his mind opened up to a wider world of music?
>
> Terrence: That's his choice. Like, I'm all for people expandin' they mind and bein' all open to different genres of music, but if they don't want to and you can't convince them, I say leave him alone. That's for anything. I don't like to force ideas or beliefs on anybody. You know? And that's how my class would operate. If that's all you wanna do, that's fine. But there are kids who will wanna expand and do other things, and that's good too . . . The kid could only wanna do house music, but he could be fuckin' incredible at it. He could really get into it and be great. And for me, that's good enough . . .
>
> Adam: What if you could go back as a student and take the class you just designed?

Terrence: That would be the shit . . .

Adam: Do you think you'd be a better musician now if that had been your music class?

Terrence: Oh, hell yeah . . . I'd probably be that much further along and who know what that might mean. (personal communication, April 16, 2014)

In addition to the possibility of improved musicianship, Terrence felt that having hip-hop present in school might have altered his perception of whether or not he belonged in school.

I just wish teachers cared more about the individual student and the kinds of things that they might like. It would help them learn better. Having this kinda shit [hip-hop music] in school would have made me feel more welcome. Like, school was actually a place for me. It just would have been more relatable. It could have meant more, and school might not have been so easy to walk away from. Hip-hop's the kind of stuff that I was growin' up listenin' to and what was up at the house most of the time . . . But it just wasn't welcome at school. (personal communication, May 2, 2014)

Schooling My Perspective

As mentioned in Chapter One, the term "schooling" (or "schoolin'") does not always refer to the experiences within or outcomes of formal educational environments. For some in hip-hop cultures, "schooling" indicates educating (or defeating) someone through some type of embarrassment. The term often implies the superiority of the one performing the "schooling" and the associated inferiority of the one being "schooled." As a professional educator pursuing a doctoral degree in music education, I did not expect to be "schooled" by Terrence on the topic of education; however, after two years of inquiring after his experiences and perceptions in school, I found myself both educated and embarrassed. In short, Terrence "schooled" me on school and schooling.

My conversations with Terrence exposed a number of assumptions and limitations affecting my perspective on school and education including my *searching for failure* and *overvaluing curriculum and pedagogy*. Identifying and challenging my perceptions resulted in new dimensions of understanding my past experiences as a professional educator. I explore these new understandings in this section via a narrative exploration of my interactions with a previous student.

Searching for Failure

When we discussed school, Terrence's dropping out became something of an obsession for me. As someone who had participated so meaningfully in and benefited so directly from formal education, the notion of not finishing school puzzled me. I saw this principally as a failure. Whether this was Terrence's school failing to engage and educate him, Terrence's failure to commit and complete his schooling, or perhaps even Terrence's mother failing to insist on his continued school attendance, I had assumed that some or multiple elements of this equation had failed. Extended time with Terrence and critical self-reflection helped me to identify that my perception of Terrence quitting school as a failure revealed a number of previously unidentified assumptions influencing my point of view.

> Adam: I think up until maybe like, this very point I've been comin' at the school thing totally wrong.
>
> Terrence: Yes. [laughs]
>
> Adam: 'Cause I feel like I've totally missed this. I know a lot about school and I don't think I'm wrong about what's wrong with school, but I think in thinking about your story and trying to ask you about school, I think I'm coming at it wrong. Because I feel like – for somebody coming at this from my perspective, where I finished high school, I got a

146

college degree, then I got a Master's degree, now I'm gonna finish this Ph.D., like, I've

done a lot of school and I value school. And for me growing up, the big difference

between my family being like, dirt poor and my family moving into the middle class was

my dad getting a Master's degree and that allowing him to get a better job and like, the

family moved and everything changed. For me, I've seen in my life the value of the

difference that education makes in terms of your general comfort in life. It allows you to

make more money and be more comfortable. So, from my perspective, like, formal

education, schooling - although there's all kinds of problems with it – is such a positive.

And then, to have not finished high school is a failure of some kind. Whether it's that the

school failed, the student failed, the system failed, the teacher failed, the parents failed,

whatever. But like, to not finish school, based on like, where I come from, is like, it's an

embarrassing thing. It's a bad thing. You know, it means that something went wrong. So

I keep trying to find out, "What was the terrible thing? What was the awful thing? What

was the failure?" And that's not your story.

Terrence: Yeah, no.

Adam: And I keep trying to understand what this is, but it's a perspective I don't get. It's

a perspective I don't understand because it's not my life . . . I think that I have been

trying to understand and define and make sense of your education by what it isn't as

opposed to what it is. You know? By saying that – by defining you as someone who

didn't finish high school as opposed to defining you as someone who does all these other

things – you know what I mean? It's not just that you didn't have interest in school. You

had interest in other things instead. You define what's a good person in other ways. Not

by being formally educated, but you just have a different set of beliefs, and values, and

standards, and traditions. You know? It's just different from the life I grew up in . . . I mean, a lot of people hate high school, but I'm sure that my high school experience and your high school experience were not the same thing. My sister never got her purse stolen on the way to school. Like, that was never going to be a part of my privileged experience going to school. But still, I try to project this idea of, "A person *should* finish school and if not, there's something lacking." And that's baggage I carry with me and then I think I'm trying to make sense of your story in some way and I look at it as if I'm trying to figure out what went wrong. And I don't think – I'm not asking the right questions. I'm looking at it as what you're missing as opposed to what you have.

Terrence: Hey, I appreciate the fact that you can realize that.

Adam: Yeah. Well it's taken me this long, so –

Terrence: Fuck it. It takes time to learn. (personal communication, April 24, 2014)

By measuring Terrence's schooling on whether or not it met *my* expectations of successful education, I used my unexamined beliefs and values to negatively judge his experiences. Completing certain levels of formal education was an unchecked assumption that caused me to view Terrence as deficient instead of proficient in ways with which I am less familiar. If Terrence did not value the common outcomes offered by traditional schooling, perhaps the most important "failure" present in this scenario was my failure to understand a viewpoint that did not conform to my own assumptions.

Overvaluing Curriculum and Pedagogy

Terrence's previously described issues with his school experiences were presented under the themes *relevance*, *belonging*, and *freedom*. I recognize that these issues are more complex than one-word labels and that matters of *how*, *what*, *when*, *where*, *who*, and *why*, undeniably

148

overlap with one another; however, thinking of each of Terrence's school themes as question words does reveal a difference between Terrence's story and my focus. While all of Terrence's experiences and his perceptions of these experiences took place within a *where* and *when*, Terrence's issues of *relevance* in schooling related strongly to customary curricular concerns with *what*, his struggle with *belonging* reflects matters of *who*, and his craving for *freedom* was thwarted by *how* his classes were structured and taught. In short, issues of *what*, *who*, and *how* negatively affected Terrence's school experiences.

Although Terrence identified undesirable experiences with *what*, *who*, and *how* during school, my concentration during this project remained almost entirely focused on curricular and pedagogical issues, or *what* and *how*. When inquiring toward ways to improve school experiences, I mostly contained my questions and suggestions to matters of classroom content and instruction. I felt that replacing portions of curriculum that Terrence found irrelevant with more hip-hop friendly material and encouraging classroom environments supportive of student freedom might have improved his experiences and consequently the experiences of like-minded students. While these possibilities might carry positive potential, these are not the only important elements to consider.

Terrence reported disinterest in much of his school curriculum and argued that "it could have meant more" to have his out-of-school life better represented in the classroom and that a lack of freedom was stifling, but he dropped out of school due largely to social issues with classmates. Despite his frequent indications toward the importance of *who*, revisiting interview transcripts consistently revealed my dedication to questions of *what* and *how*. My focus on *what* and *how* and my exclusion of *who* demonstrates Stauffer's (2009, 2012) depiction of the underutilization of place-based concepts (*who*, *where*, and *when*) in music education scholarship.

By reshaping this document to better reflect place-based concepts (e.g., the socio-cultural contexts explored in Chapter Four, the out-of-school music education detailed in Chapter Six), I hoped to better address issues beyond curriculum and pedagogy and offer meaningful implications toward place-conscious applications of hip-hop cultures in school music settings.

Reexamining Mr. Kruse: The Darius Problem

A common question I have asked either outright or implicitly in music teacher education environments has been, "How can we better engage, instruct, support, and include students like Terrence in school music settings?" I maintain that this question matters tremendously if our field has hopes of improved diversity, inclusion, and equity; however, prior to writing this document I had not explored this question within my own public school teaching. Internalizing this question and asking myself, "How have I engaged, instructed, supported, and included students like Terrence in school music settings?" offered an opportunity for difficult but valuable reflection. In particular, my experiences with a previous student named Darius (pseudonym) provided a challenging opportunity to examine my previous practices. I have offered this reflection here in the shape of a narrative exploration. Expanding upon the earlier section titled "Pride in Progress," I reflect *on* Mr. Kruse by reflecting *as* Mr. Kruse.

> *In addition to successful performances, the Ogdenville Middle School bands take pride in the size of our ensembles. Beginning band classes in sixth grade routinely contained well over 100 students and we generally retained roughly 90% of these students each year. The size of these bands afforded instrumentation capable of handling almost any configuration of voices (we always had double-reed parts handled!) and, admittedly, also provided places for weaker players to "hide." If some students in a section were incapable of mastering a particular section, there were always others in the group that*

had them covered. This supported the notion of a good ensemble sound, even if it encouraged marginal musical growth by some players.

Despite sizable large ensembles, I saw missing individuals from band performances as problematic. Performances were our (or perhaps my) chance to demonstrate our accomplishments, and I sold these events as the purpose behind our daily work. In order to ensure students' concert attendance, I organized their quarterly grades in a way that severely penalized a skipped performance. In fact, it was difficult for a student who had missed a performance to receive a passing grade for that quarter. I made exceptions for students whose parents provided prior communication or students who were sick from school, but missing a concert without an excuse was unacceptable in my book. Whether as a result of the grading policies or the high levels of student "buy-in," unattended performances by Ogdenville Middle School band students were exceedingly rare; however, a skipped concert was the impetus for one of my most memorable and regrettable missteps as a teacher.

As a sixth grader, Darius stood out to me more for his charisma than his musicianship. He was taller than most of his classmates with a lanky, yet strong build and when a wide grin crossed his smooth dark complexion, Darius could get away with just about anything. He was a handsome and traditionally masculine young Black man with friends and poise to spare. His wardrobe reflected the latest trends without reeking of effort and he was a gifted athlete. Most of all, he possessed what every middle school student both craves and lacks – confidence.

As a student, Darius was average at best. As a student musician, I found him to be a reliable percussionist although a below-average music reader. Still, once Darius

151

learned a part he was solid and his abilities on drum set were always impressive. It was easy to connect with Darius and, despite my feeling that he was somehow "too cool" for participation in band, he remained enrolled in band for his seventh and eighth grade years. He was never the type to visit the band room after school or during recess, but Darius must have valued his membership at least enough to continue participating.

Despite what I had assumed was a commitment (albeit a casual one) to the ensemble, Darius did not attend our first concert during his eighth grade year. He had been present at school that day, but when the concert began in the Ogdenville Middle School auditorium he was conspicuously absent. The defiant silence of his un-played crash cymbals during our opening piece resonated disappointingly within me. As a teacher, I took moments like these personally and the hurt I felt with each choreographed gesture toward the place he should have been was only exacerbated by my conversation with Darius the following morning.

I found Darius in his usual spot in the cafeteria before the start of school the next day. He stood near the center of a handful of mostly Black young men shifting his upper body hard to the right and the left as some in the group pounded out rhythms on the cafeteria tables. The young men took turns performing verses in a self-claimed performing space complete with intrigued onlookers and doting "fans." Darius saw me approach and seemed to guess my intentions immediately because as soon as we made eye contact and my tilted head gestured toward the doorway he excused himself from the group and jogged in that direction.

"Where were you last night?" I asked.

"Home," Darius replied.

"You know we had a concert, right?"

"Yeah."

I had had this conversation a few times before in my career. The script was supposed to proceed with the student's sheepish responses, defeated body language, and a lackluster excuse and/or apology. I would act out a gentle "shaming" reminding the student of his obligations, laying out the ramifications of his actions, and devising a strategy toward avoiding this situation in the future. Darius, however, went off script.

"Why weren't you here?" I asked.

"Didn't feel like goin'," Darius responded with calm eye contact, his shoulders as proud as ever. As an eighth grader, he had grown taller than me. He was a veritable man standing up for himself. Throughout the ensuing conversation about responsibilities and repercussions, it became clear that Darius felt no remorse for his actions. He engaged with me respectfully and without hostility as I explained that he would likely fail band this quarter. He nodded his affirmation and simply replied, "Aight." I expected him to at least fight me on that. Did he really care this little? Disappointed with his lack of repentance and frustrated by a non-confrontational attitude, I then concocted a spur-of-the-moment ultimatum for Darius.

"Since you've lost our trust and we don't know if we can count on you to be at our next concert," I explained, "We're going to put you on mallet parts only for the next quarter. That way, if you're not at the concert somebody else will already be doubling your part."

"Just mallets?" Darius asked.

"Just mallets," I replied. "You either play mallets or you quit."

Without granting me the satisfaction of changing his affect, Darius chose to quit. When the voicemail I left for his parents explaining our conversation and Darius's decision yielded no response and Darius returned the next day with a signed change-of-schedule form, Darius's enrollment in the Ogdenville Middle School bands officially ended. I was left disappointed, but not devastated. Students quit band from time to time, this was not a momentous occasion. The rest of the group moved on with little-to-no impact on our activities. We continued to perform at high levels, we still grew as musicians and citizens, and we remained committed to one another.

The next and last time I interacted with Darius was at the school's spring talent show at the end of that school year. Alongside three friends, he performed a hip-hop dance number on the school auditorium's stage as I ran the sound and lights for the event. Darius and I shared an unspoken nod and smile backstage endorsing the lack of animosity between us and further supporting the impression that Darius quitting band had little impact on either of us. I expect to this day that this remains true at least for him.

Darius's dance performance consisted of moves I recognized as "breaking" and well-received (if not unexceptional) acrobatics. Just as I had previously, the audience adored his every move. Whatever finesse his execution might have lacked, his self-assured swagger and that winning smile demanded appreciation and applause. I was happy for Darius to return so successfully to this stage but disappointed that it was not as a percussionist in the Ogdenville Middle School band. Just like for all of my students, it was my intention to help Darius become a better person through musical experiences and there was nothing I could offer him after I had essentially forced him into quitting band. I

felt guilty for my role in this series of events, but I felt even worse grasping the notion

that Darius was likely indifferent toward everything that had transpired between us.

My recollections of Darius quitting band reveal a disappointing response to the question, "How have I engaged, instructed, supported, and included students like Terrence in school music settings?" In short, I was unsuccessful with the student I identify as the most similar to Terrence whom I have seen in my teaching career. My story with Darius shows that, despite his interest in musical activity outside of band class, Darius was largely apathetic toward band class participation. Because he was unwilling to demonstrate interest in *my* class in a way that *I* found acceptable, I steered him toward quitting altogether. I cannot claim that had I found ways to integrate his apparent interest in hip-hop cultures into the classroom he would have been more invested; however, looking back, I am at least curious to know whether any such activity might have made a difference for students like Darius – especially those whom I never saw in the classroom because they chose not to enroll in band at all.

Beyond creating a classroom environment that arguably lacked relevance for Darius by excluding musical genres beyond the Western art canon, it was perhaps my unquestioned commitment to large ensemble culture that was my greatest misstep. While I convinced myself that participation in band led to improved citizenship and compassionate social responsibility, my ensemble-centric actions devalued individual musicianship and treated performance as the ultimate goal. I was so personally invested in the idea that "high-level" performance made a positive difference for students (and perhaps it did for some) that I took it personally when a student acted toward this notion with indifference. I have strong regrets when I think of my interactions with Darius but I also value the exercise of identifying some of the uninvestigated beliefs and values that affected my teaching and my perspectives on school music.

155

Speaker Circuit

Because I valued the impact that time spent with Terrence had had on my own thinking, I pursued multiple opportunities to include Terrence in my typical academic activities as a doctoral student. During a four-month stint, we co-presented at two professional academic conferences and gave three lecture presentations for classes of music education students. In these sessions, we focused largely on potential applications of hip-hop in school music settings by way of beat production demonstrations, explorations of Terrence's school experiences and perceptions, and conversations on why and how hip-hop might be included in school. Re-introducing Terrence to school settings (now in the role of "expert") in this way uncovered issues related to *confronting class* and *claiming authority*.

Addressing Assumptions

By inviting Terrence to join these activities, I acted on the assumption that his involvement was not purely for my own gain. I undoubtedly benefited from Terrence's participation and I was well aware of the notion that I was in a position to use Terrence as something of a "mascot" or "puppet." I remained exceptionally sensitive to this possibility and consistently communicated with Terrence about having total freedom in both the design and execution of our sessions. He gave valuable input at many times and often reported how much pleasure and excitement he took from participating in these events. Still, I would be remiss not to acknowledge my arguably overshadowing influence on these presentations. Terrence had freedom, but I had control, and neither of us preferred to share control (I include further examples in Chapter Six) when it came to performing our craft.

Confronting Class

Inviting Terrence into my professional world afforded me opportunities to recognize elements of privilege as well as some of the assumptions associated with expected and accepted behavior. For example, my privileged access to transportation and technology was on full display as I waited for Terrence to arrive for a conference presentation. Communicating with Terrence had always been inconsistent given that he does not pay for mobile phone service, nor does he have access to the Internet at home. Given that he had also worked a full shift the night before (ending at 7am) and followed this with a trip to a medical center to be paid to donate plasma, arriving at the conference at all (via a ride from his girlfriend) exemplified Terrence's efforts to participate in our academic speaking events. The fact that his often-inconsistent communication and unreliable arrival times made me uneasy highlighted some of my privileges and demonstrated the different places from which we came to these shared presentation experiences.

Terrence also challenged my perspective of acceptable behavior at conferences when he proposed that he and the other members of a panel discussion on which we were speaking should smoke marijuana prior to our session. He felt that the activity might calm his nerves and improve his conversational abilities. He also suggested that smoking with our group members might be a positive social experience. This series of text messages shows Terrence introducing the idea.

> Terrence: I'll try and sneak some bake[1] in beforehand. Or not. I don't wanna compromise you or me in any way while there, honestly.
>
> Adam: Do you think it would help you in the discussion?
>
> Terrence: Just enough makes for interesting conversation and less stage fright; too much will impair complex motor skills and cause slight speech impediment. I'm high as shit

---

[1] Smoking marijuana, usually in an enclosed area.

right now, to be honest.

Adam: If you can toe that line, we'd just need to find a spot for you to partake. We'll be in a hotel-type setting so there'll obviously be no smoking indoors.

Terrence: I'll be fine though, if only a little less talkative. It's the main benefit in my case: more conversational.

Adam: It's your call. Bring some along if you like and we can decide in the moment.

Terrence: Now that I think of it, I WOULD if I knew any of our colleagues were interested as well. Bonding! Otherwise, I'll leave the fun bag at home.

Adam: I don't know any of them well enough to know. I suppose I could ask. I know that [one person] has to read a paper right before so she'll probably be out.

Terrence: It's all bueno. Get the scoop if you can. (text messages, March 12, 2014)

At the time, I did not communicate how apprehensive I was about this idea. While I did not have a problem with Terrence getting high before our panel discussion because I had observed the benefits he described in other contexts (described in Chapter Six), I had no intention of inviting the other members of our panel to participate. I cannot say with certainty whether this related to my concerns about keeping up "professional" appearances, fear of legal consequences, or other White middle-class prudishness, but the fact that I chose not to engage with this topic reflects more of the differences that Terrence and I brought to these experiences. Without mentioning this again, Terrence chose not to bring his "fun bag" to the conference at all.

Claiming Authority

Terrence entered these professional academic experiences with a hesitation similar to that which I experienced entering hip-hop musical practices. At first, whenever I introduced him to colleagues he would suggest that he knew very little, claimed to not have anything valuable to

say, or otherwise apologized for himself. Many of these colleagues greatly encouraged

Terrence's participation, reminding him that he possessed valuable understandings and

experiences and that many in our profession were eager to know what he knew. Still, it took

multiple outings before Terrence outwardly claimed his place among the pre-service music

teachers, in-service music teachers, and music teacher educators with whom we had been

interacting. An excerpt of my field notes from a music education conference in which we co-

presented reports a symbolic representation of Terrence claiming this place.

> *Among the slacks and sweaters, suits and ties, and other tucked-in, buttoned-down*
>
> *regalia, a pair of white-soled tennis shoes under loose fitting dark jeans and a navy*
>
> *cotton jacket worn over a gray patterned t-shirt would have been enough to identify*
>
> *Terrence as an outsider among the crowd of music teachers at the conference;*
>
> *nevertheless, his noticeable enthusiasm and sincere interest in the sessions further*
>
> *declared his status as a stranger to professional decorum. Instead of staring at a glowing*
>
> *screen and occasionally communicating approval or contempt with subtle facial*
>
> *expressions, Terrence sat on the edge of his auditorium seat with his hands resting on the*
>
> *seatback in front of him. He had maintained this level of focus and curiosity throughout*
>
> *the morning's sessions despite what I know was a lack of sleep following a late work shift*
>
> *the night before.*
>
> > *During this session on improvisation with digital accompaniment tracks, Terrence*
> >
> > *turned frequently to me asking questions about terms the speaker used and offering his*
> >
> > *opinion on the presentation's content. We both listened and discussed until the presenter*
> >
> > *indicated to a table covered in musical instruments and invited session attendees to*
> >
> > *approach the stage and participate in an improvisatory activity. The instrument options*

included a violin, a trumpet, a trombone, a flute, a clarinet, a tambourine, and a pair of congas. As audience members shifted in their seats, a few brave souls rising to the occasion, Terrence spun his upper body toward me with excitement and asked, "Do you think I should go play that tambourine?" Despite a solid (or at least rudimentary) knowledge of playing all of the available instruments, the idea of going to the stage to participate had not come close to crossing my mind. Terrence, on the other hand, did not wait for my reply before bounding out of his seat and down the aisle toward the stage.

All told, six instrumentalists took the stage for an impromptu musical activity. In addition to Terrence were three men with dark hair and light skin who each appeared to be White and in their mid-to-late twenties. These musicians chose a clarinet, a trombone, and the congas, situating themselves behind and to the stage left side of the black table. Another White man, likely in his early thirties, with very short hair and a beard selected a trumpet and stood stage right of the table. Behind and to the side of him was a blonde-haired White woman in her early thirties. She had chosen a flute from the table. Terrence, who had arrived on stage as one of the earlier performers, seized the sought-after tambourine and retreated six feet away from the table and the other instrumentalists.

As the session presenter explained the activity, Terrence slowly turned the tambourine in his hands. He made a purposefully contemplative gesture stroking his chin with his thumb and forefinger while squinting slightly at the instrument. His fellow musicians readied their instruments with half-intentional and half-nervous adjustments of mouthpieces and ligature screws and the digital backing track began a sixteen-measure blues pattern. The musicians stammered clumsily at first, each tussling with fleeting

melodic statements. Having no prior experience with the tambourine, Terrence's right

fingertips gripped the black wooden edge of the instrument and his wrist shook in short

repetitive strokes rattling the metallic jingles to every passing beat. His left hand planted

itself firmly in the pocket of his jeans communicating a casual nonchalance as his head

and chin performed a familiar sideways rhythmic tilt toward his playing hand.

     Upon the first repeat of the accompanying sixteen measures, the bearded trumpet

player had found an appropriate melody and turned with conviction toward Terrence and

the blonde flautist. Had Terrence not placed himself so far from the rest of the group, this

would have created a classically arched trio. All at once, Terrence's shoulders betrayed

his uncertainty with a fluid and instinctual roll backwards. A quick grin flashed across

his face as his left hand joined his right in clutching his instrument. With its white

synthetic head now facing the ceiling, Terrence shook the tambourine up and down

matching the swung eighth note pattern in the accompaniment. Terrence's smile grew

and his head tilt gave way to an enthusiastic forward bob. He looked at his fellow

musicians with what appeared to be admiration and pleasant surprise as he took two

steps toward the trumpet player and decisively took his place in the trio arch, and in a

more important way, claimed his place at the conference. (field notes, March 25, 2014)

Eventually, Terrence embraced his role of "visiting expert" and appeared to enjoy sharing

his insights with music teachers. Following our third class lecture for music education students, I

asked Terrence directly about how he saw these professional academic experiences.

It's been interestin'. I've never seen people with such a lack of knowledge of this music

that I love so much. So, it's equal parts fun and intriguing. 'Cause it's like – it's almost

the same as seein' like, a baby deer or some shit. 'Cause like, they don't know what's

goin' on. Like, "What's this?" You know? With the curiosity. It makes me happy that

somebody is like, interested in the shit that I do because of the fact that they don't know

shit about what I do. You know? Like, I've never been in that position . . . To have

people be like, uninitiated basically and they wanna be initiated, they wanna know, they

wanna hear it, like, it's excitin' for me. (personal communication, April 16, 2014)

Discussion

In this chapter, I offered a response to the study's second research question: What are

hip-hop musicians' perceptions of school and schooling? Terrence's relationship to school and

schooling met some of my expectations regarding irrelevance to his hip-hop musical practices,

but the complexity of his experiences and perceptions provided opportunities for deeper

investigation. Our engagement with the concepts of school and schooling as well as Terrence's

foray into academia as a knowledgeable vernacular practitioner demonstrated additional

considerations regarding issues including authority and privilege. My analysis exposed some of

the assumptions informing my perceptions of school and schooling allowing for meaningful and

critical self-reflection.

Deficit Perspective

My aforementioned perception of Terrence as a "failure" due to his dropping out of high

school is reminiscent of what scholars have referred to as a cultural deficit model (Irizarry,

2009a). Educational scholars have employed cultural deficit models to blame the academic

underachievement of marginalized student populations (most often students of color and students

in poverty) on elements rooted within their cultures and communities (e.g., Payne, 2001). These

deficit perspectives have arguably been influenced by negative social and cultural stereotypes

and may contribute to the perpetuation of the same.

In my defense, my use of what I feel was a deficit perspective was broader in nature and not necessarily (or at least as obviously) built upon classist and racist stereotypes. I did not blame Terrence for his not graduating from high school. On the contrary, I was most eager to assign culpability to his school (in particular) and formal schooling (in general). Still, White middle-class assumptions heavily tinted the lens I used to view Terrence as "incomplete." The notion that everyone is *supposed* to graduate from high school served as an undercurrent to my thinking and this limited my perspective as a researcher. Identifying my deficit perspective served as a valuable transition point in this research. Upon recognizing this limitation, I was able to understand Terrence's attitude toward the perceived outcomes of schooling better and why we did not value these outcomes.

If researchers cannot recognize their own limiting baggage they could run the risk of assuming that all people have (or should have) the same educational and schooling goals. A place-conscious perspective would acknowledge that the apparent values of school and schooling are not inherent to these institutions, but rather placed there by those with the power and authority to do so. Additionally, coming to these institutions from various backgrounds and with diverse perspectives could result in experiencing these spaces as markedly different places. Exploring Terrence's experiences and perceptions of school and schooling in this way offered his voice in contrast to the dominating narrative with which I was most familiar, arguably delivering on my intention of employing his story as a *counterstory*.

De-Claiming the Initiative

After reflecting on my experiences at Ogdenville Middle School, I am faced with the powerful realization that, despite using we/us/our language, the goal of "becoming better people through music" belonged solely to me. "Our" goals were really "my" goals and, no matter how

163

noble my intentions might have been, assumptions about what my students *should* do (e.g., graduate from high school, attend band concerts) informed the ways in which I interacted with students. This is not to say that my teaching ought not to have been informed by anything or that the experiences I shared with my students were not valuable, but rather that when it came to designing this musical experience, I held the authority and my perspective was affected by many uninvestigated assumptions.

Coming to this study, I had many preconceived notions about what might have been "wrong" with Terrence's school experience; however, speaking with Terrence and especially *listening* to his story challenged my hypotheses and added valuable nuance to this research. By acknowledging my own perspective, I was able to challenge some of my own authority as a researcher. I would argue that this is a fundamental strength of this dissertation. Identifying and attempting to relinquish claims to power may not be easily accomplished tasks, but they offer the potential for impactful change in music education. The invisible privileges of a White middle-class background strongly affect my role as a scholar and musical novice within hip-hop cultures. A continually critical perspective on these privileges will offer more complex and useful findings and implications in my research.

Applying this idea in a broader sense would mean that I should check my status within the amorphous "movement" of hip-hop pedagogy scholarship. If I aim for "impactful change" in the field of music education through the inclusion of hip-hop cultures in school music settings, am I prepared to de-claim this initiative? The endless diversity of school settings and student populations creates environments in which no single version of hip-hop pedagogy can be presented as "best" practice. Exploring and challenging the positions of scholars involved with hip-hop pedagogy might continue to offer valuable insights and positive complications.

164

Conclusion

Exploring Terrence's experiences with and perceptions of school and schooling provided additional material for placing him as a musician and learner and also allowed for a critical investigation of my own perspectives as an educator and scholar. As mentioned previously, the inclusion of hip-hop cultures cannot be offered as a "silver bullet" solution to school music's arguable place-bound shortcomings, and Terrence's complicated feelings toward school and schooling further illustrate the intricacy of this possibility. Additionally, recognizing issues of privilege and assumption-laden perspectives might offer valuable layers of nuance toward better understanding the relationships between schools, those who school, and those who are schooled.

CHAPTER 6—AN EDUCATION IN PRODUCTION

Acknowledging the potential value of better understanding the music education that occurs outside of school, this chapter addresses the study's third research question: Where, when, how, and with whom do hip-hop musicians develop and explore their musical skills and understandings? I have concentrated on the experiences of hip-hop learning as exemplified through the practices of beat production located within the confines of various recording studios. I have organized my findings from the experiences of observing, interviewing, participating, and journaling into the primary areas of *foundations*, *processes*, and *skills*.

An Inauspicious Entry

As a means of introducing my experiences as participant-observer in hip-hop music studios, I offer excerpts of field notes from an evening spent at a local studio with Terrence and other hip-hop musicians. Although Terrence and I had some experiences within my home studio prior to the activities reported here, these events were pivotal in my beginning to question, explore, and appreciate "the studio" in a broader sense and my place within studio activity.

> *As frequent as Terrence's visits to my home and its rudimentary living room recording studio had become, his last-minute cancellations and abrupt exits were just as common. So when Terrence answered a call on his cell phone while we were working on a new track one evening, I expected to be disappointed by his departure. I did not, however, expect the call to lead to one of the most compelling and embarrassing musical events of my life.*
>
> *The call was from Terrence's acquaintance, Fresqo (pseudonym). Although I had not heard of him at the time, Fresqo was a locally renowned hip-hop producer with an impressive reputation and résumé. He had called to inform Terrence that he had gained*

access to someone else's studio for the evening and invited Terrence to come work on

beats with him. Apparently, among Fresqo's fames was the ability to disappear for

extended periods and his musical cohort met his moments of reemergence with great

anticipation. Terrence described this opportunity as a "can't fuckin' miss" so as quickly

as we could throw the six-pack of beers we had planned to consume that evening into his

backpack, we were off.

We drove toward an area of our city I had never visited, but because Terrence

knew the location well, we had no need for directions. After passing the high school that

Terrence had attended in another life, the neighborhoods changed. Large older homes

closely situated to the busy street featured front yards sheltered in chain-link and

something shy of "curb appeal," while commercial buildings sitting largely vacant

played host to plywood window coverings and tasteful graffiti tags. A fifteen-minute drive

transported us to a location prompting familiar and embarrassing concerns over the well

being of my modest vehicle.

After parking the car in the long empty lot of a strip mall, we ascended a staircase

located between two apparently unoccupied businesses. A hallway at the top of the stairs

led to what seemed to be condemned efficiency apartments. The light of the late afternoon

had no way to enter the building so we walked slowly through the dark toward a

portentous rhythmic thumping. Terrence's initial knocks on the door to the studio were

met only with the continuation of the music inside. A second knocking effort after waiting

for a pause in the music eventually brought Fresqo to the door.

Fresqo, a light-skinned Black man in his late twenties with a bushy black beard

and thick plastic-rimmed glasses, greeted Terrence with a handclasp pulling into a one-

armed embrace I know as the "bro hug" and Terrence pointed in my direction saying, "This is my man, Adam." I opted for the traditional handshake over the bro hug and Fresqo immediately asked me, "You a producer?" "No," I replied. "I mean, I mess around a little with Terrence, but…" Fresqo had already turned his attention back to the work at hand.

Defying its humble surroundings, the studio boasted an impressive amount of professional-level equipment. Computers, turntables, keyboards, and mixers lined three of the room's twelve-foot walls. On the fourth wall, where we entered the room, sat a black leather couch. Terrence placed his backpack on this couch and immediately joined Fresqo at a computer desk in the middle of the left wall. Directly across from the couch, and on Terrence and Fresqo's right was the room's only exterior window. The sun peeking through the closed horizontal blinds cast two bobbing silhouettes as the producers commenced their craft.

It did not take long for me to recognize Terrence and Fresqo's composition process, as it almost mirrored (if not in quality, at least in sequence) that which Terrence and I had employed. Fresqo began by selecting source material to sample. He extracted audio files from YouTube videos (these were mellow sounding tracks of what sounded to me like a hybrid of 1960s soul music and Caribbean steel pans) and then split these files into sounds lasting only a second or so. He played back these short sounds via a sampling machine with large square buttons and through filtering, pitch shifting, and other audio editing he reordered the sounds into the foundation for his new composition. Once a satisfying sequence (generally eight measures in length) had emerged, Fresqo

looped the musical idea and played it back without stopping for the entirety of the process.

Terrence and Fresqo took turns entering individual drum tracks (e.g., kick, snare, cymbals) triggered by the same sampling machine. The bodies in the room swayed hard in time as the drums joined the looped sample. At this point, Fresqo rose from the computer desk to contribute more parts from a full-sized digital keyboard. He adjusted timbres until finding an electronic bass, an acoustic piano, orchestral strings, and other synthesized instruments improvising on each until finding a pleasing addition and recording it into the loop. I watched Fresqo's hands as he appeared only to be employing the keyboard's black keys and I guessed that he had pitch shifted his source material in such a way to support a simpler pentatonic improvisation. As it turns out, I was partially correct.

I could only take passive observation of this musical creation for so long. I had been geared up tonight to make music with Terrence and I was eager to contribute. Having no experience (at this point) with the sampling machine and doubting my keyboard skills, I asked Terrence and Fresqo if they would welcome an electric bass. "I've got one at home and I don't live far," I said. Terrence vouched for me, explaining, "And he can play it." "Yeah, live bass could be tight," responded Fresqo and I flew from the couch to my car . . .

The composing continued as I sat on the couch with my bass in my hands like a little leaguer anticipating his pinch-hit homerun. Although I could not hear my unplugged instrument, I played along with the under-construction track – more a nervous

169

presentation of my willingness to participate than an active engagement with the music.

In fact, I was barely listening to the music that Fresqo and Terrence were making. I

watched their movements and my confidence grew every time I saw Fresqo playing the

black keys on the keyboard. "I know where those notes are on the bass and I can

improvise like that," I told myself. "This really isn't that complicated."

Finally, Fresqo turned to me and asked, "You want in?" I nodded, stood, and

approached the computer. I handed Fresqo the instrument cable and he plugged it in

through a two-channel digital interface, we tested levels, and I was up. Because I had no

consciousness of such a thing, I neglected to wait until the loop repeated and like that

overzealous child up to bat, I swung as hard as I could. While I did adhere to some sense

of timing and rhythm, a disgusting array and inappropriate amount of pentatonic notes

vomited forth from my fingers. I forced through a few measures of playing all the notes I

could reach and soon realized that I was in over my head. I found where the pattern

began and started a syncopated ascending line followed be a descent of longer tones. The

style was a poor match and the pitches (while in the correct key) did not fit either. I could

feel my temperature rise and forehead sweat as my hands continued to struggle. I

probably should have allowed my ears to get involved, but that wasn't part of my musical

training. I had learned to rely on my eyes and my hands and this preparation had

forsaken me.

"It's that one," Fresqo said, pointing his finger to a fret on the neck of an

instrument he had never played. I started the pattern again beginning with this note and

he was right. I tried again, simplifying the pattern, and only then recognized that the loop

was a twelve-measure pattern and not the eight I had guessed. "Do you guys want

170

something busier and melodic, or just something supportive?" I asked partially to inform

my part and partially to take a break from the shit I was taking all over the studio floor.

Fresqo offered no response but instead had buried himself in the computer screen and

was searching through menus and settings. "It's not recording in stereo," he explained.

The rising and falling of only one green indicator level confirmed his concern and after

investing about five minutes into failed solutions, I was relieved of my duties.

I returned my bass to its case, sunk my body into the couch, and placed my foot

firmly into my mouth. This was indeed more complicated than I had guessed. After

opening a new beer and swallowing hard on my pride, I sat and I watched. And I learned.
(field notes, March 27, 2014)

<div align="center">**Foundations**</div>

Understanding the music education involved in beat production and studio activity

requires an exploration of the foundations upon which these practices takes place. For Terrence

and myself, certain elements of our backgrounds played major roles in shaping how each of us

began as beat producers. The most salient of these elements consist of our *relationships* with

mentors and fellow musicians, the *prior knowledge* we brought to the beat production process,

and our access to tangible musical and technological *resources*.

Relationships: Partners in Crime

Terrence and Rob: "To the death." In Chapter Four, I described the influential

relationships that affected Terrence's musical identity and lyrical content. In addition to these

significant interactions and affiliations with others, Terrence's primary foundational relationship

as a beat producer was with his aforementioned friend, Rob. Terrence and Rob attended middle

school and high school together, though Rob was a more traditionally successful student. Rob

graduated from high school and later earned an associate's degree at the local community college. At the time of writing this dissertation, Rob was enrolled in a Bachelor's of Music Production program at a nationally accredited institution in the American Southeast. Terrence and Rob met during high school and a shared musical interest brought them together.

> Rob: But then high school, I used to listen to beats in class and stuff just to try and study up on other peoples' styles and stuff. And I was basically listenin' to industry beats…And I used to show him [Terrence] beats and stuff. 'Cause he used to write [rap lyrics] in class . . . he used to rap the whole entire hour . . . I was wonderin'. Like, he used to be noddin' his head, I'm lookin' around like, "What the hell's he noddin' for?" You know what I'm saying? So, I went over there and I talked to him. I was like, "Well," and he told me, "I'm writin'." "Dude, what you writin'?" "I'm writin' verses." I was like, "Word." So basically, I gave him beats . . . (personal communication, March 29, 2014)

After Rob had provided Terrence with beats to accompany his rapping, Terrence eventually inquired about making beats of his own. This led to a longstanding relationship between the two musicians, including multiple albums written and recorded in Rob's basement studio. Because Rob had more experience and was more knowledgeable about the production aspects of their work, Terrence credited Rob for introducing him to many specific software programs and composition techniques. The typical learning process for Terrence consisted of asking questions, being introduced to information and particular strategies, and eventually exploring and applying his newfound knowledge.

> Terrence: But the way I got better was by hangin' out with [Rob]. Like, we'd make beats in his basement . . . You know, I'd see him do stuff and be like, "How'd you do that?" And he was like, "Ah bro, you just do this and that." And I was like, "Oh, OK." And then

172

I would apply the knowledge later. Or, I would just find things and fuck with 'em. See, the way I learn is by tinkerin' with things. Like, I love to get instruction where I can, like if I'm around somebody who knows more than me, I'm gonna ask a bunch of questions. But when nobody else is around, that's when I can go mess with things. (personal communication, April 10, 2014)

While Rob served as something of a mentor for Terrence at the start of their working relationship, things became "mercurial" as time passed. Later, Terrence considered Rob an important musical collaborator, but he argued that his learning now took place more individually.

Adam: So, would you describe [Rob] as a mentor?

Terrence: Not necessarily. Back in the day, yes. But now I'm more, I'm more of a, "Just do it" type of dude . . . [Rob] started me off and from then on, it was just me listenin' to music and workin' shit out.

Adam: So for you, [Rob] is kind of a partner and kind of a mentor?

Terrence: Yeah . . .

Adam: It's not necessarily a strict relationship where it's "teacher/student" or "master/apprentice." But it's sort of –

Terrence: It's mercurial.

Adam: Yeah. There you go.

Terrence: You know, it changes depending on the situation . . . Like lately, I've been the guy who's been guidin' our productions because like, I don't know. [Rob]'s so stuck in the R&B mode. And that's his thing. That's what he does . . . You know, I'm just like, "You know, we can't have it too soft." You know what I'm sayin'? So I'm like, "Alright. The melody should this and that" or like, he'll put somethin' down and I'll listen to it and

173

then like, "Alright, let's change this. Let's make it like this." So, I want something that's more, you know, rap-able. You know? So like, whereas we began as partners-slash-me bein' a student or whatever, now we just partners. You know? And like, the only places that I learn from these days are just by me messin' with things, you know, listenin' to music itself and just bein' like, "That sounds interestin'. I wonder if I can make somethin' that sounds like that." And then goin' in and fuckin' with shit until I get the sound that I'm lookin' for. (personal communication, April 16, 2014)

Overall, Terrence described his relationship with Rob as critical to his growth in the past as well as his musical present and future.

> Adam: Do you feel like [Rob] is kind of a vital element to you being successful in what you do musically?
>
> Terrence: I definitely feel like it. So far, there would be no me without Rob. You know? He's my partner in crime . . . Me and [Rob], it's us to the death. We gonna push forward, do what we can as a team. He's the backbone of me. (personal communication, April 16, 2014)

Terrence and Adam: Educating the teacher. In many ways, the musical learning I experienced with Terrence emulated his relationship with Rob. During my earliest attempts at beat production, I relied heavily on Terrence to inform my practice. I brought songwriting and digital composition experience to the table, but Terrence's mentorship strongly affected the development of my hip-hop composition process. I gathered new understandings from observing Terrence and other producers working in studios, and I began asking Terrence better questions after attempting to apply what I had seen. I particularly depended on Terrence to critique my attempts and offer suggestions for improvement.

174

While I would describe our initial musical interactions as something of a "master and apprentice" relationship, I grew to take on a more active role over time. Terrence always remained the more experienced and effective contributor, but as my skills, confidence, and discriminating taste developed, the "master and apprentice" relationship evolved. Eventually, Terrence began trusting and even seeking my opinion, and I found myself relying on his feedback less and less. While we never reached the depth of relationship that Terrence shared with Rob (either socially or musically), our partnership did produce multiple works of backing tracks and complete recordings including my recording and mixing T-spit's rapped and sung vocals. The progression of our working associations closely coincided with our friendship, and indeed I cannot discretely separate those relationships from one another. Defying a simplistic label, our interactions consisted of simultaneous and overlapping elements of friendship, instruction, and collaboration.

Addressing Assumptions

It was incredibly humbling to discover how much I needed Terrence at the beginning of my attempts at beat production. I had great confidence coming into these experiences and assumed that my background in songwriting, guitar playing, digital audio production, and the like would have negated starting at a novice level. However, without an understanding of genre-specific compositional techniques and the necessary aural skills, I found myself struggling mightily when starting out. Once I recognized and worked to address my limitations, I felt that my compositional abilities improved drastically.

Prior Knowledge: Come as You Are

The prior knowledge that Terrence brought to his beginning beat production stemmed from extensive listening and his own song writing. He described his immersion in hip-hop culture and knowledge of "good music" as fundamental to his motivation for attempting beat production as well as his ability to critique his own work.

At first, wantin' to make beats was all about findin' ways to deliver to my rappin' and shit, you know? That was the motivation, plain and simple. But once I got started in production, it got to be more about like, the art of it. More about how I could be doin' music in this other way . . . And then that made my rappin' better because I was payin' more attention to what was in the beats instead of just, "Blah, blah, blah, blah," you know? It made me more of a complete artist . . . And I knew what was hot just from listenin' to music and shit. I had all the ideas already goin' in based on what I thought was hot at the time . . . and I just needed somebody to show me how to make 'em actually happen. So learnin' to use like, Fruity Loops[1] and shit was all about gettin' what I needed to make happen what I wanted to make happen . . . I knew if what I was makin' was bullshit 'cause I already had good fuckin' taste, just from listenin' to good music. Some people don't get that. They listen to shitty music and then what they make sounds like that shit. It's just shit all around. (personal communication, May 12, 2014)

While Terrence had a strong background in hip-hop music prior to beginning as a beat producer, my musical background was more versed in genres outside of hip-hop. To Terrence's credit and my benefit, Terrence treated this as a strength and not a weakness. Prior to beginning my musical collaborations with Terrence, I imagined being seen and defined by what I did not

---

[1] A computer program designed for hip-hop beat production. It is arguably *the* standard for introductory beat production.

176

know about hip-hop music. I feared that others would look down upon my rudimentary knowledge as a hip-hop listener. Luckily, I could not have been more wrong about this. Terrence frequently was excited when he learned of an instrument I could play (e.g., the flute, the guitar) and continually looked for ways to include my specific skills in our music.

Terrence described working with me as a unique opportunity for him to make use of new sounds and ideas as opposed to treating my musical knowledge outside of hip-hop as irrelevant or unusable.

> You [Adam] just got a different way of lookin' at things and that's refreshing for me. So many of the people I usually do music with come at it from the same or similar points of view and that can get old . . . You always got like, good samples and shit like, sittin' on deck. You might not be able to apply them that well yet, you know, but you definitely always have good ideas and shit. And that comes from your musical schoolin'. You know? If you know what sounds good by way of your education, you know, that helps you build a foundation with your sound. You know, like, you can come up with all kinds of crazy melodies and shit. Like, I know you can. I've seen you play the keys and shit. (personal communication, May 2, 2014)

Having Terrence treat my musical differences positively acted as what I felt was an important validation of my musical background, and this arguably aided my willingness to take on the hip-hop musical identity described in Chapter Four.

Resources: "It Ain't About the Equipment, Dog."

While a visit to a hip-hop recording studio might overwhelm someone unfamiliar with the technology and instruments being used, the essential resources needed to begin as a beat producer do not have to include more than a single computer. I observed producers (e.g., Rob,

Fresqo) also making use of digital keyboards and sampling devices, and these instruments became critical to my growth as a producer as well; however, Terrence created his massive library of beats with only the use of his personal computer and a small handful of software programs. While additional technology can be alluring, Terrence recalled an important message from a colleague that these technologies are no substitute for one's musical abilities and aspirations.

> It's just like [he] said – he was like, talking about like, me havin' good beats and shit. And um, I was basically wallowin' in self-pity and shit and like, "My shit can't touch his shit," you know? Like, 'cause – and I thought it was just because he had better equipment. And he was like, "It ain't about the equipment, dog. It's about your skills." And I was like, "You know what? You're right." It's all about your drive to make somethin' that sounds good. (personal communication, April 16, 2014)

While technological resources cannot replace artistry, they can allow for new and different musical opportunities. Terrence described how obtaining additional materials helped him to access further musical avenues.

> Just startin' out, all I was usin' was Fruity Loops demo. Then I found out how to download the whole thing, get like key cracks[2] and shit, then I got the whole thing and I could do a lot more . . . I started gettin' different drum kits from people and the Internet and whatever and then shit just took off . . . it's just about expandin' your palette, you know, like, as an artist. The more sounds I have and the more different ways I can fuck with 'em, it's like a painter havin' more kinds of brushes and like, different colors of fuckin' paint. (personal communication, May 9, 2014)

---

[2] Illegally-obtained codes for unlocking full versions of computer software.

I experienced similar musical growth linked to my progression of equipment use. I found that the use of new technological resources allowed for approaching my musical composition in decidedly different ways. When I began producing beats I used a digital audio workstation (GarageBand) and recorded many live instruments (e.g., electric bass, guitar, an acoustic piano) with microphones. While this practice was typical in my previous musical endeavors, I had not yet appreciated how much editing and altering of original source sound takes place in hip-hop beat production. As I observed and learned more by watching Terrence and other producers in studios, it became clear that the use of digital instruments (e.g., drum machines, USB keyboards) carried distinct advantages, since their sounds could easily be altered ad infinitum without degradation of audio quality. I eventually purchased a smaller version of the drum machine and sampler that I had observed Fresqo use and described this purchase to Terrence in an email as "a total game-changer" (email, March 30, 2014).

Processes

While I would generally consider compositional methods as issues primarily concerned with *how*, understanding beat production practices as navigations of time (*when*) and space (*where*) might offer music teachers new ways to think about musical creation and could inform potential applications of hip-hop music in school settings positively. I include here brief descriptions of the ways that my experiences with hip-hop beat production have challenged linear and rigid conceptions of time and space. I do not offer this section as an answer to the question, "How do hip-hop musicians compose?", but rather as a means for viewing my learning experiences as a beat producer through a place-conscious lens.

Composing Across Time

In comparison to my experiences in traditional school ensembles (e.g., marching band, orchestra) and guitar-based rock bands, I experienced the notions of creating and collaborating with others in hip-hop to be profoundly different. For example, my high school punk band practices largely consisted of a group member introducing a song he had written to the others with his own part in place followed by the other members creating complimentary parts on their instruments. We would follow this with rehearsing either large sections or the entire piece repeatedly in attempts to perform the musical number from start to finish in increasingly satisfactory ways. In my experience, large ensemble rehearsals worked in a similar way, only replacing the introduction of an original song with the instruction of how to play individual parts and the deciphering of a composer's musical notation. In these experiences, the aim was to align disparate parts played by multiple musicians together "vertically" (or, in time) as they progressed "horizontally" (or, over time).

My experiences creating and collaborating in hip-hop recording studios, however, involved a different conception of time. As opposed to working towards cohesion in time as a piece progresses over time, hip-hop beat production often involves transcending time altogether. Terrence and his fellow producers whom I observed composed their beats as a finite length of measures (usually eight) repeated for extended periods of time (sometimes for multiple hours at a time). The purpose of this repetition (or, "loop") was not to progress from one section to another or to depart from and return to tonic, but rather to create a present sound that was happening "now." Musical time does not "progress" in this loop, but rather producers create a moment or window of time and work inside that time.

Within this window, producers add and alter individual layers of instruments and sounds. In my observations, producers often searched for these sounds "timbre first," browsing libraries of countless digital sounds until a preferable instrument or sound quality emerged. Producers then used the chosen sound and improvised over the previously recorded section until deciding on, recording, and possibly adding digital effects to the newest addition. Additional layers combined until all of the elements of the beat were present simultaneously. If the finished track would contain varying sections and all elements did not fit with one another, producers might also create additional discrete windows for these sections. Producers then would extract each individual sound element of the beats and reassemble them into sections of verses, choruses, introductions, and breaks over a traditional notion of time expressed in a multitrack digital audio workstation. Every composed element would not be concurrently present for each musical section, but instead producers selected different sounds from the previously composed beat to play at different moments within different sections.

Depending on a multitude of variables, the length of time necessary for the process of searching, adding, and editing layers and constructing these sounds into the structure of a song differed tremendously. I observed this entire process take place in less than hour, but much more often, the time from initial sound selection to a finished track with different sections would take multiple sessions over a period of days. Rob and Terrence's most common method of composition involved creating all of the elements of a beat using the loop (prior to extracting parts and reassembling them into song sections) to write the song's lyrics. These lyrics then determined the piece's structure, and Rob and Terrence would develop the track's song sections around the verses and choruses written. Because this was Terrence's preferred process, I adopted the same series of events when working with him.

Collaborating Across Space

Particularly when we first began working together, it was helpful for Terrence and I to collaboratively compose in the same room. He would bring his computer to my apartment, or I to his, and we would play ideas for one another and jointly proceed through the aforementioned beat production process. In general, Terrence's primary duty was to create the percussion parts (e.g., individual drum lines, auxiliary percussion) while I created pitched parts (e.g., keyboards, guitars, bass). We created almost every part via keyboards and drum machines, with the occasional use of a "live" instrument such as guitar or flute.

Being together allowed me to receive instant feedback, which squashed bad ideas early. In the beginning especially, I noticed a stark difference between the quality of beats I attempted to compose on my own compared to beats I made while working with Terrence, confirming that Terrence's presence made a positive impact. I kept a journal and wrote after composing sessions with Terrence. Multiple entries from this journal corroborate Terrence's impact.

> *After listening to the track we made tonight, I realize just how awful that thing I made yesterday with the saxophone was. Terrence really makes me take my time and consider timbres before moving ahead. When I'm on my own, I just grab whatever and hurry into writing parts. Then when I've got a pile of crappy parts it's hard to come up with stuff that will sound good with it. His pace is much slower, but it really winds up sounding better.* (journal entry, March 30, 2014)

> *I keep struggling with drum sounds, but Terrence seems to know exactly what will sound good before it even goes in. I often think that the preset drum sounds work just fine and I'll have something sounding pretty good, but then he comes in and deletes them and replaces them with drums from his library and it sounds so much more legit. I guess I've*

182

been intimidated by how many drum sounds he has and haven't wanted to venture into

that area yet. Baby steps, I suppose. (journal entry, April 21, 2014)

While working in the same location offered positive benefits, it was challenging for Terrence and me to share space. Combining ideas from separate computers running in different operating systems impeded our progress and switching headphone and speaker cables back and forth to listen to one another's contributions became cumbersome. Over time, our collaborative composing sessions consisted of Terrence and me sitting next to each other wearing headphones while working on different tracks on different computers. This continued to offer the opportunity for feedback, but as my skills and confidence grew, I did not require this as often. Additionally, Terrence and I both struggle with relinquishing control of a project. We often would attempt to take over the other person's machine to model a musical idea and lose momentum waiting for the other to finish using an instrument or computer.

It still was valuable to observe Terrence after he had commandeered something on which I had been working, but my patience for this diminished as my own abilities increased. I found myself frustrated with our arrangement at times and craved the freedom that Terrence had described so often.

Terrence came by today and I had an idea to sample a vocal part from a Dionne

Warwick song I had heard over the weekend. The song itself ["Do You Know the Way to

San Jose"] is pretty bad, but there is a backup vocal that could be pretty cool. I had the

sample all chopped up and ready and Terrence heard it and agreed that it could be a

great start for a beat. I had my own ideas about how to apply it, but Terrence wanted to

re-chop the sample and he spent a long time on my computer with it. After at least half an

hour, he got bored with it and we started talking about sampling the harmonica from

"That's What Friends Are For" because we thought it would be funny. We then spent a ton of time trying to find a usable recording of that song and lost most of the afternoon. I was frustrated because I had a good idea and didn't even really need his help in trying it out. I guess I'm still stuck on wanting his approval, but if I had just taken my idea and run with it on my own I might have accomplished something today. (journal entry, April 30, 2014)

Terrence and I continued to get together to share and work on ideas, but we eventually developed a system for online collaboration that suited our individual control needs as well as the value we placed on input and feedback. Once I had developed sufficient skills and acquired enough of Terrence's lexicon, we were able to email or text one another with ideas and send audio files back and forth that we had created. The following is a text message conversation indicative of this style of collaboration.

Adam: Which beat do you want to use?

Terrence: E Down, most definitely.

Adam: Yeah, that one's pretty tight. I'll see if I can arrange into something good.

Terrence: Take the clap out if you do, as well as the staccato hi hat. The clap will remain gone, but I think a new hat is in order. Honestly, this sounds similar to some old Neptunes work.

Adam: I can handle this. I'll try a few hats out and send them your way to see what you think.

[The next day.]

Adam: I'll try to get the beat done after I hear about your hat preference, and you have lyrics ready for whenever . . .

Terrence: I listened to them. I wanted to change the pattern of the hats as well, but I like D with the tambourine hits. I'd keep it at that volume too. Low-key.

Adam: Yeah, I liked that one too. Do you have anyway to show me what you want the pattern to be?

Terrence: Nope. I say let it run and figure out what could be done to differentiate verses from choruses. Drop things to see what sounds good with vocals. Verses shouldn't be crowded. If it sounds verse ready already, that's when it's time for aux effects or foley. I like sounds that correspond to certain lines, so that could be interesting.

Adam: Yeah, changes can easily occur later and after vocals. I'll put something together, but we can always adjust as needed to fit the vocals.

Terrence: Right, which is why I'm not super concerned.

Adam: Do you know how many verses you'll have?

Terrence: 2 verses and a little 8 bar thing after the last chorus.

Adam: Thy will be done.

Terrence: Epic!

Adam: Like an 8 bar break section, or 8 bars of full accompaniment?

Terrence: Break session. Simple stuff like dropping out the bass.

Adam: I've got an 8 bar break already, we'll see if it works for what you're thinking.

Terrence: Word.

Adam: So is it verse, chorus, verse, chorus, break...and then a final chorus?

Terrence: No chorus after the break. Verse, chorus, verse, chorus, break

Adam: With intro and outro?

Terrence: Outro, yes. Intro, only a small count in.

Adam: I have 8 bars currently. You want less?

Terrence: Far less. Like 2 bars. I plan to start with the verse and no drums.

Adam: Can do. I'll shoot you a draft later tonight. Like a bar of no drums, 4 bars of no drums, (gasp) 8 bars of no drums?

Terrence: 4 please. ^_^

Adam: That's actually already how I had the second verse starting. Easy change.

Terrence: Nice.

[Later that night.]

Adam: Just emailed a first draft. Happy to make changes.

Terrence: Wow. I'm thoroughly impressed! You, my good man, are a producer!

Adam: Fuckin A. The new software certainly helps. Let me know what changes you need. (text messages, May 8, 2014)

This communication demonstrates how our collaborative efforts spread across space in ways that I had not previously experienced in school music settings. Sharing files and feedback online is in no way exclusive to hip-hop music, but the digital and textural nature of hip-hop beats might make this genre more conducive to such collaboration compared to the creation of a 45-minute symphony for a traditional orchestra. At the very least, online collaboration offered relief for Terrence and me, who both required freedom and control within the composition process.

Smoking

Comparing musical productivity at my home versus his home, Terrence always remained focused longer and accomplished more at his apartment. This could have been connected to many things, but Terrence reported that the difference for him related to smoking marijuana.

When Terrence initially inquired about my own smoking habits (apparently the *only* contingency for his participation in this research project), I reported that I had smoked weed occasionally in the past (a handful of times in social and musical settings) but that I preferred not to. This reply was obviously satisfactory as Terrence explained that it was mostly important to him that I had at least tried it and that I would not look down at him for doing so.

Addressing Assumptions

After our first conversation and listening to some of his music, the fact that Terrence smoked and got high regularly was no surprise to me; however, I was admittedly apprehensive about how this might impact my research. The questionable effects of contact highs[3] and hotboxing[4] aside (both of which I experienced frequently), I carried stereotypical images of the "unreliable and irresponsible pothead" into this project and at times, Terrence reinforced these expectations. Still, I cannot confirm whether his frequent transgressions in terms of keeping appointments had anything to do with his drug use. If I had to guess, this had more to do with his lack of transportation, his erratic work schedule, and my obedience to the clock and calendar.

Smoking marijuana and getting high appeared to be common practice for Terrence and is one of the most celebrated activities in T-spit's lyrics. His song, "Open the Door" presents an image of a person who enjoys getting high, but is otherwise a "good man."

Another day another roll up.

Dub sack[5] swisher sweets have the blunt[6] swole up

And I ain't really out for the name.

---

[3] The psychological effect of being around a drug user and taking on the effects of their drug use.
[4] Smoking marijuana in an enclosed space in an effort to maximize the drug's effect.
[5] Twenty dollars worth of a drug in a baggie.
[6] A hollowed-out cigar wrapper filled with marijuana.

If it's weed it's getting smoked, the high is what I'm out to obtain.

Nigga, refrain from the bad talk, we here for the good times.

Throwbacks, samples, and smoke homies and good rhymes.

They do it in all states; I feel I'm in good hands.

So what, I like to get blunted?[7] I'm still a good man.

And it ain't ever drive me to murder unless

It was on the mic then it's something I've never heard of.

I'm three years in with professional pot partners who go

Back like that Vanna White bitch and Bob Barker.

From the moment I spark up 'til the blunts is finished,

Whatever you say is a punch-line and my stress diminishes.

The joy replenished, my physical senses 'll elevate.

And I don't give a damn if you notice. I let it permeate

And turn into a fog with my road dog C Dot (pseudonym).

Then get some Wu[8] up in the spot what the bumbaclot[9].

We do that bowl of pot like alcoholics do with shots.

And have me getting slumped as a dead body on [a local] block.

The murder spot. Oh yeah, I heard it's hot.

But they ain't tripping 'cause they ain't looking for what I got.

They looking for burners, I'm tryna burn it up.

If you Schedule one-ing[10], nigga turn it up.

---

[7] High from smoking a blunt.
[8] Wu-Tang Clan.
[9] Term common to Jamaican dancehall music referring to a menstrual cloth.

Terrence never smoked in my home and never asked to, but at his apartment, he smoked all throughout the beat production process. While his lyrics present smoking as a simple pleasure, he described this as an integral element of his compositional practice.

There is literally no method to the madness beyond just sittin' at the desk and gettin' high. Bein' high helps me stay focused, 'cause it's easy to lose concentration in the process 'cause makin' a beat can take a long time and be like, really fuckin' tedious. But you need that time to really nail the details and bein' sober, I tend to jump around from one idea to the next. When I'm smokin' I slow down and I can handle the tedium. (personal communication, April 24, 2014)

My observations confirmed the apparent effect of smoking marijuana on Terrence's beat production process.

Tonight we actually started and finished an entire beat in one sitting. Being at Terrence's place seemed to make all the difference. We stayed on one idea and saw it through as opposed to jumping around from one half-baked idea to the next. Terrence seemed more comfortable in his space (although it took everything in my power to ignore the disaster that is his bedroom) and I think smoking really helped him. It felt like every spark of his joint brought him further into the process. Whenever I took control and messed with the sample tonight he just sat back and smoked. When he jumped back in he seemed interested and much more focused. (journal entry, April 5, 2014)

Skills

Technical facility on instruments (e.g., keyboards, guitars) can be helpful, but more than anything, the work of beat production relies on a producer's aural capabilities. Advances in

---

[10] Using Schedule One drugs (e.g., cannabis), as defined by the United States Controlled Substances Act.

digital instrument and multitrack recording technology have made the performance, recording, and editing of musical ideas much more accessible over the past decades, but a producer must be able to hear intricate details and be attuned to countless stylistic elements. Entering this study, I may not have appreciated the intricacy of these auditory phenomena, but I was better prepared to engage these concepts than the more tenuous notion of feeling. I would now argue that the skills of *hearing*, *listening*, and *feeling* are all paramount to the success of beat production.

Hearing

As Terrence said once about himself in a social media post, "These ears are close to perfect, I swear," (social media, January 21, 2014) and I would have to agree. From the first time we attempted to collaborate on music together, Terrence's ability to distinguish auditory detail impressed me. For example, I had recorded a bass line to which Terrence intended to add drums and after the lengthy process of transferring files, creating new parts, adjusting formats across computer platforms, and other technical hurdles, we finally had our musical contributions combined. Upon playback, I was happy with the merger, but Terrence was visually displeased. He explained that each part sounded good individually but the parts were not working together. According to Terrence, the timing of all the bass notes was too early. Although I did not hear this discrepancy, I rerecorded the bass part and played it back with the metronome. Terrence and I both agreed that it was exactly in time, but while this was technically "right," it was stylistically wrong. Terrence explained that, in hip-hop, almost every instrument sounded just behind the beat and although I had listened to plenty of hip-hop music in my life, I had never heard this nuance. It took awhile for my ears to pick up this detail, but I came to recognize it in the music of others and apply it in my own compositions.

Terrence's ability to hear details extended beyond genre-specific techniques into general playback qualities that I was rarely able to appreciate. During an early attempt at using my computer and wearing headphones, Terrence complained that the sound was all "off-center." When I asked whether it was an individual instrument part or not, he explained that every sound was "leaning left." After failing to hear the issue after repeated hearings, I assumed that the problem was in Terrence's head; however, a later browsing of my computer's system preferences revealed that the entire system audio had indeed been set just barely to favor the left speaker. I likely would never have heard this detail, but without attending to this problem Terrence would not have been able to use my computer at all without being bothered. Terrence even noticed upon entering my car once that I had adjusted the balance of the car's speakers to favor those closest to the driver. We could not proceed to our destination without Terrence rectifying this arrangement.

Hearing at such detailed levels is more than just a parlor trick for Terrence. Having such a discriminating ear informs his ability to work with digital sounds as a beat producer. Whether applying intricate sound effects to an instrument, modifying the starting and ending points of an excerpted musical sample, or adjusting the left/right balance and volume of sounds in a track's mix, Terrence's attention to detail is arguably what sets him above many of his contemporary producers. While I did not enter this study with an ear so finely tuned to these particulars, I was able to develop and improve my own skills in these areas and found their application incredibly useful in my own compositional activity.

Listening

Beyond the concept of distinguishing detail through hearing, the activity of engaged musical listening was a central skill for both Terrence and myself as beat producers. In addition

to the social influences described previously (primarily his cousins and Rob), Terrence argued

that listening to recordings was a vital means by which he learned to make his own music.

The thing is, I'm not classically trained or anything. I learned how to do everything I did

just by listenin' to it and/or watchin' it. You know what I'm saying? Just bein' observant.

And that's how I learned to do my shit . . . The only way I knew how to make music was

from listenin' to music. From that, I knew what a chorus was, I learned how to make

beats that way, just by listenin' to what I thought was dope, and then doin' what I thought

was dope on the computer. (personal communication, April 2, 2014)

Terrence argued that, for those interested in making hip-hop music, listening to high

quality hip-hop music should be a top priority.

Terrence: I quite literally learned how to make music by listenin' to music.

Adam: So, those that wanna learn how to do this should probably –

Terrence: Just listen to the fuckin' music. Like, really listen to it. And not just the shit

that's available as the lowest hangin' fruit. That radio shit ain't gonna get you anywhere,

you know what I mean? Find shit that's dope, really listen to it, and learn to appreciate

why it's dope, and *then* you might have a chance at makin' music of your own that's

dope. (personal communication, April 15, 2014)

Additionally, we discussed the ways that the practices of listening and beat producing

informed one another in a reciprocal fashion.

Adam: For me, the relationship between what I do and what I listen to is such an

important back and forth.

Terrence: Oh yeah.

Adam: Like, between the music – listening to the music made me want to start doing the music, then I pick some things up through doing it, then I recognize and appreciate some more things in the recordings, and then it's like, "Oh, I wanna be able to do that specific thing. I didn't know what I wanted to do before, but now I hear this and that's what I wanna do." And so you go back –

Terrence: Yeah!

Adam: Then you come back to the recordings and you have new listening skills based on what you've done. It's a back and forth between –

Terrence: It's fuckin' exciting!

Adam: Yeah, it is . . . And it really makes you appreciate good beats that way, when you've done some of it yourself.

Terrence: Since we started, every time we get in this car, you know?

Adam: Definitely.

Terrence: We both just, "Aw, yeah. You hear that?" That's where it's at. (personal communication, April 16, 2014)

Feeling

When it came to skills relevant to beat production, the notion of feeling was the most unfamiliar and frustrating to me. I entered this study armed with a plethora of textbook definitions and large ensemble instructional strategies for imitating the emoting of feelings through musical performance, but the indescribable essence of the impression of music, which Terrence described as "feeling" was largely beyond me. I felt that my past musical experiences (especially those in school) had been more concerned with notions of accuracy, but for Terrence, the feeling of beats and rapping were his primary concerns.

These days, I just rap however I feel it. And it's determined by how the beats feel. The beats mostly give you a feelin' and all I do is roll with that feelin'. It's not really about anything else . . . I mean, people have preferences and they like what they like, but they don't like, like it because it's right or wrong . . . They like what they like 'cause it's fuckin' good, and it's fuckin' good if they feelin' it. That's what really matters at the end of the day. (personal communication, April 15, 2014)

Terrence referred to feeling regularly when providing feedback on beats we had created and my inability to understand what he meant frustrated me. Since I was concerned with creating finished products, I often wanted Terrence to be clear about what in the music he preferred or disliked so that I might be able to create something he would rap over; however, he often dismissed finished beats simply because he "wasn't feeling them."

Adam: Hey, man. I've got some free time tonight. You got anything to rap over those beats we made?

Terrence: Nope. Wasn't feeling them that much. I think we have to ditch the concept and just make shit. (text messages, March 26, 2014)

Terrence: I know for a fact that I'm not usin' – that I'm not gonna be writin' to that one beat that we did.

Adam: OK.

Terrence: You know which one I'm talkin' about?

Adam: Which one?

Terrence: The one with the Droopy sample.

Adam: Oh yeah . . . Why don't you want to write to it?

Terrence: I dunno. It just wasn't fittin' my whole – I don't know. It's kinda hard to

explain. It's like, I have a style, but I don't. But like, that's just somethin' I just can't

imagine rappin' with. Wasn't feelin' it.

Adam: Like, too much stuff goin' on? Too fast?

Terrence: Oh, no. None of that. Just not feelin' it. I do like the drums that I chose though.

Adam: I do too.

Terrence: I like that melody, everything that you did. It's pretty fuckin' good, which is

funny. It just came from a bass line and then you just put some shit on it.

Adam: Yeah. I mean, we could change it. If there's a part or two that you like, we could

pull that out. I like the horn part on there.

Terrence: I like that too. I fuckin' love the beat . . . I'm not sure what else we could use it

for though. (personal communication, March 27, 2014)

The concept of feeling exasperated me at times because I was often in a hurry to create a

finished product. Terrence, on the other hand, appeared incapable of lowering his standards, and

if he was not feeling a beat, there was no convincing him to use it. As challenging as it might be

to pin down exactly what "feeling" is, it is inarguably important and reflects a level of

musicianship I sense that I have yet to attain. It is apparent that feeling does involve something

beyond aural skills and is informed by one's taste and experience.

Discussion

By exploring the practice of hip-hop beat production within recording studios, this

chapter addressed the study's third research question: Where, when, how, and with whom do

hip-hop musicians develop and explore their musical skills and understandings? The foundations

upon which Terrence and I developed as producers served to bolster our compositional

processes, which were aided by genre-specific musical skills. In particular, the role of mentoring and the potential impact of a musical background on beat production emerged as compelling considerations.

Mentoring

For both Terrence and me, the role of a mentor was vital in our earliest efforts in hip-hop beat production. This finding is consistent with the temporary apprenticeship model Thompson (2012) found among DJs, turntablists, and electronic music producers in the United Kingdom. In Terrence's case, Rob served to introduce and explain important technological techniques in order to produce the sounds that Terrence was attempting to create, but these roles did not remain static and the movement of musical knowledge did not remain unidirectional. As time went on, Terrence and Rob's relationship progressed into a mutual partnership in which each collaborator had distinct input and authority. Terrence referred to Rob as his "partner in crime," indicating that they supported and assisted one another in shared musical activities.

In my attempts at beat production, Terrence functioned in a position similar to that which Rob had occupied with him. Terrence introduced me to numerous musical and technological techniques, but he took on responsibilities beyond these as well. Since I lacked the immersive experience that Terrence brought to his early production efforts, Terrence also served as a barometer of taste in my work. He had a more finely tuned ear toward what worked and what sounded "hot," and he did not hesitate to voice his opinion on these matters. Over time, this relationship also evolved as I gained confidence and abilities. Terrence's feedback remained welcome, but I grew to require more freedom and craved solitary space at times to pursue my own musical ideas.

Background Impact

Again similar to the findings of Thompson's (2012) study, listening played a pivotal role in the compositional practices in which Terrence and I participated. Terrence's strong background in hip-hop listening limited his need for the more intense form of mentoring that I required and positively affected the quality of his compositions. All that Terrence required of Rob as a mentor was instructions on how to get started, and his already discriminating aural pallet provided the rest. I, on the other hand, used my more meager background as a hip-hop listener as a gateway informed by curiosity and needed additional guidance as a novice producer. Terrence and I both argued that continued listening as producers wound up forming a reciprocal relationship between consumption and creation in which each activity improved the other.

Because my musical background favored genres outside of hip-hop, I came to beat production as something of an outsider. To my great benefit, I found Terrence welcoming to my differences and encouraging of my efforts. He valued and included my technical facilities on certain instruments throughout our compositional collaborations and served to welcome me "as I was" into hip-hop beat production. While this encouraging atmosphere yielded many positive results, my musical background outside of hip-hop did not always transfer smoothly to this new setting. At times (such as the experience with Fresqo), I found that the musical skills and understandings I possessed created a misplaced confidence that impeded my earliest attempts at hip-hop participation. Even my more "vernacular" musical experiences playing bass guitar had favored following chord progressions I could memorize by name instead of using and developing my aural skills. I required further growth in this area as well as genre-specific understandings in order to purse hip-hop beat production in a meaningful way.

Conclusion

Investigating the experiences of learning to become a hip-hop beat producer delivered compelling findings toward better understanding music education as it exists outside of school. This information could be valuable for those interested in potential applications of hip-hop cultures in school music settings. The relationships between collaborators, the spaces in which they work, and the backgrounds that inform their perspectives all perform important roles in the development of applicable music skills in a practice far more complicated and demanding than I had initially imagined.

CHAPTER 7—REFLECTIONS, APPLICATIONS, AND SUGGESTIONS

The findings I have shared in this document in no way represent ubiquitous or generalizable hip-hop musical perceptions and experiences, but rather, I hope, have illuminated some important issues and provided additional considerations for the field of music education. As opposed to communicating findings that I could generalize, I ideally have reported that which might confound and positively complicate the understandings, assumptions, and expectations of professional music educators such as myself. I offer the following reflections, applications, and suggestions as a way toward placing this single narrative thread within the complex tapestry of music education scholarship.

Reflections

Reflecting on this project within some of its influential concepts offers the opportunity to contextualize this specific study within broader issues as well as to use this research to demonstrate the complexity of these concerns. The most palpable topics at hand in these findings consisted of *place issues, race issues and privilege*, and *vernacular music education*.

Place Issues

The notion that places *become* meaningful has been a fundamental concept throughout this dissertation. A place-conscious perspective of school music classrooms would acknowledge that beliefs and values are not innate to these settings but rather reinforced through practice. Consistent with Stauffer's (2012) position that common practice in American music schooling has been bound to Western European art music and White middle-class suburban principles, this study brought some seemingly inherent values of music schooling out into the open. Because questioning and challenging oppressive forces is central to place-conscious education (Gruenewald, 2003a), place-consciousness in school music settings might be aided by studies

199

such as this one. Without identifying potentially foundational beliefs and the associated assumptions that music educators might bring into their practice, these forces are made even more powerful. Arguably, the most difficult paradigms to challenge are those that we cannot identify and assume to be "normal."

When considering the many viewpoints present within a music classroom, the notion that places *become* meaningful offers important opportunities for teachers and learners to (re)define beliefs, values, and practices. Instead of indiscriminately passing on unexamined traditions, music educators might consider a place-based perspective to detect and addresses issues relevant to learners and their communities (Smith, 2002a; Smith & Sobel, 2010; Sobel, 2005; Wason-Ellam, 2010). This dissertation might contribute to place-based efforts by demonstrating the value in examining the perspectives and experiences of an individual and considering his specific sociocultural contexts. These contexts are paramount to "placing" individuals and exploring what is important to them. Terrence "wish[ed] teachers cared more about the individual student" and perhaps this type of research might contribute to educators doing just that.

When it came to music learning, Terrence found studios to be more fruitful places than classrooms. He attributed much of this difference to issues of relevance and freedom. In the classroom, Terrence described disinterest in the kinds of music being played as well as negative feelings toward what he perceived as a lack of autonomy. Conversely, Terrence credited his musical growth in the studio to experiences of uninhibited exploration and experimentation. Choosing his own music and creating on his own terms contributed to studios becoming places of meaningful musical learning; however, it would be a gross oversimplification to argue that studios are inevitably superior to classrooms. Personally, I have found both classrooms and studios to be valuable places for music learning. Different locations certainly have their

200

advantages and disadvantages, but relevance and freedom are neither inherent nor exclusive to studio settings.

Because places are experienced subjectively, learners in the same studios or classrooms might experience these locations as markedly different places compared to one another. I cannot speak to Terrence's classmates' perceptions of their own school music experiences, but it did appear that Terrence and I experienced various studio settings in different ways. Certainly, Terrence and I entered the studio experience with Fresqo with contrasting perspectives, backgrounds, and understandings. This resulted in our decidedly different experiences during the evening's music making. Additionally, while the composition processes were almost identical, the contrasting conditions under which we collaborated in our home studies (e.g., smoking marijuana occurred at Terrence's apartment and not mine) strongly affected the experiences for both of us in different ways.

Even the small sample size of studios in this study reflects the notion that despite similar methods of composition, experiences vary from person to person in the same studio environment. This should lend credence to the value of asking questions beyond *how* to include place-conscious questions as well. Had I limited myself to a process-oriented research question such as, "How do hip-hop musicians compose beats?" my findings would have been almost indistinguishable from one location to another. Instead, investigating studio activity with a place-conscious perspective allowed me to explore greater nuances of personal interactions and socially constructed meanings.

Race Issues

A number of the assumptions I called out in the previous three chapters of this document reflect my preconceptions about how I thought race might function in this study. My

expectations focused largely on how Terrence being Black might have affected his perceptions and experiences and largely ignored my own White identity. Whiteness and White cultures can be difficult to identify and/or can be taken for granted by White researchers. Therein exists some of the potential for White hegemonic power (Frankenberg, 1993; Perry, 2001). The invisibility of Whiteness masquerading as "normal" contributes to environments where the concepts of race, ethnicity, and culture only matter for non-White "others." Left unexamined in educational contexts, Whiteness (and the many factors that intersect with race) can contribute to a dominating narrative affecting the perspectives, assumptions, and beliefs of teachers and learners.

While I entered this project interested in how Terrence's race related to his musical and educational experiences, I wound up finding out much more about my own Whiteness than his Blackness. My middle-class White experiences largely influenced my perspectives as a musician, educator, and researcher. Grappling with my own race- and class-based assumptions provided a platform upon which I could identify some of my privileges and demonstrate their complex relationships to music teaching and music education research. Whiteness strongly affects the field of music education, often in ways that might be difficult to identify (Koza, 2008). Ideally, those reading this dissertation might have also taken these moments in the document to struggle with their particular privileges and how these might affect their own beliefs, values, and practices.

Privilege

Exposing dominant and invisible cultures in music education could aid in endeavors toward equity and justice. Despite an interest in such efforts during my public school teaching experiences, race and class stereotypes and assumptions greatly limited my own practice as well

202

as my perspective as a researcher. Critically examining these limitations offered me the chance to understand and confront these issues better in my work. Attempts toward improved equity and justice in music education that do not include critical investigations of dominant cultures might miss out on these more meaningful possibilities. For example, concentrating solely on issues such as access to school music could suffer from the assumption that what educators offer to students is inherently positive and valuable. For Terrence, his complaints about school music were not related to access at all. This is not to say that access does not matter, but addressing issues that might make a difference for a student like Terrence could require inquiries beyond access. These might include investigating relationships between what educators offer and their students' interests, problematizing static roles of "teacher" and "learner," and challenging privileged assumptions affecting the music classroom.

In some ways, "privilege" may be an inept description of my position compared to that of Terrence. While I identify with many social labels instilled with privilege within middle-class American experiences (e.g., straight, White, middle-class, male), these "privileges" might have hindered more than helped my endeavors as a hip-hop musician and scholar at times. The assumptions and hesitations that I chronicled throughout the previous three chapters obstructed some of my efforts, or at least complicated my experiences. My path from a low-income childhood to graduate study and middle-class comfort may have been paved with privileges that were less available to Terrence, but my past experiences presented challenges for me within my hip-hop undertakings and clouded my ability to initially understand issues such as Terrence's attitudes toward school and schooling.

Vernacular Music Education

As described in Chapter One, issues of formal and informal music learning have been popular in recent music education scholarship. Common themes in this literature include the notion that school settings have been formal, vernacular musicians have learned in informal ways, and that classrooms might adopt the informality of vernacular musicians as a way toward improving practice (e.g., Green, 2002). These binary conceptions of formality have been complicated positively (e.g., Folkestad, 2006), but the concentration on informal and formal learning that arguably has dominated recent vernacular music education research largely has examined procedural *how* issues and under-examined the many other important aspects of students' musical lives that occur outside of school. Concerns over people and their musical experiences in and out of school require examinations of issues beyond the processes of learning, creating, and performing. Social contexts matter, and to understand these musical traditions is to understand their contexts. Those understandings are necessary in order to make meaningful changes in school music settings. By reducing the emphasis on teaching and learning processes and increasing the focus on social issues, I hope that I have demonstrated the value of investigating people, their relationships, their contexts and locations, and other place-related concerns.

In addition to a different focus, this study supports the arguments from scholars such as Söderman (2011) and Thompson (2012), who contended that hip-hop differs from guitar-based rock music in important ways. I certainly experienced a clash between my own rock music experiences and my early attempts at hip-hop beat production, discovering that not every skill transferred from one vernacular genre to the other. Also, this study complicates the arguably prevalent notion that vernacular music is learned informally. While neither of us learned

following a strict curriculum and the roles between mentor and mentee were flexible and changed over time, the ways that Terrence and I learned beat production went far beyond merely picking up skills by observing and imitating. Direct instruction (followed by freedom to experiment) played a vital role in both of our earliest experiences as producers.

Compared to previous music education research concerned specifically with hip-hop, the findings of this study offer many similarities. The "collage" method of sampling in the composition process that Söderman and Folkestad (2004) observed definitely rang true in my observations. I entered this research familiar with the concept of sampling, but I had no significant experience with the practice. I would now consider my increased understandings of sampling to be paramount to my growth as a hip-hop beat producer. Additionally, the apprenticeship experiences described by Söderman (2011) and Thompson (2012) had much in common with the ways that Terrence and I developed our beat production skills. Both of us made important use of a mentor relationship (which included friendship), but also necessitated solitary practice in order to improve. Terrence and I also valued a variety of listening skills to inform our compositions similar to the participants in Thompson's study.

Applications: Hip-Hop Pedagogies for School Music Settings

Based on this research, I can neither suggest nor endorse any prescriptive version of a hip-hop pedagogy or curriculum; however, "illuminating potential applications of hip-hop to school music settings" was a major aim of this study. The possibilities for these applications are as diverse as the settings in which they might take place, and I offer the following applications as a variety of considerations and departure points for thinking about the many ways that hip-hop cultures might be incorporated in school music settings. As hip-hop pedagogy scholars have noted, previous literature has underutilized the diversity of hip-hop cultures and reflected an

205

overreliance on the textual analysis of rap lyrics divorced from their musical contexts (Hill & Petchauer, 2013). Other processes and products of hip-hop cultures (e.g., dance, visual art, music, fashion) might provide additional opportunities for the benefits that hip-hop pedagogy has to offer.

The following suggestions and examples are intended to encourage thinking about the possibilities of potential hip-hop pedagogies for music education. I present these ideas within Hill's (2009) hip-hop pedagogy classifications (described in Chapter Two); however, real-world applications of hip-hop pedagogies in school music settings might include characteristics from any of these groups and fluctuate across these fluid categories.

Music Pedagogies With Hip-Hop: Hip-Hop As A Bridge

Connecting traditional school music practices to hip-hop music might increase student interest and engagement while encouraging connections between possibly unfamiliar and familiar experiences. While traditional Western art music and hip-hop may not share a common set of musical values (Rose, 1994), they do share many similar concepts. For example, a music teacher might use a familiar hip-hop piece to introduce concepts like form and texture. Although numerous intriguing variations exist, many hip-hop compositions are constructed out of 16-measure verses and 8-measure choruses. Listening to hip-hop pieces and analyzing their form could offer accessible and engaging ways to connect hip-hop to school music. Also, textural variation in hip-hop compositions can be extremely complex. In addition to the intricate ways in which textures are used in hip-hop beat production, many audio recordings of rap vocal lines contain various layers of a performer's voice either performing the same part, accentuating certain words or phrases, and/or providing additional background commentary. Understanding

how hip-hop composers employ textural variation could encourage students to explore musical textures in other genres and their own compositions as well.

These examples are only a glimpse into a world of possibilities connecting hip-hop and school music. Understanding how hip-hop music relates to other musical traditions (and vice versa) could offer tremendously meaningful and relevant musical experiences for many students. While these connections could certainly serve to increase some students' initial interest and engagement in a music class, music educators must be wary of "bait-and-switch" tactics and the overt or subtle messages they send that hip-hop music is a tool for introducing "better," "more appropriate," or "real" musical experiences (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2005; Paul, 2000). Hip-hop music can be taught for its own inherent value (Morrell & Duncan-Andrade, 2002) and should not be seen as merely an add-on or enhancement to canonical school music.

Music Pedagogies About Hip-Hop: Hip-Hop As A Lens

Critical examinations of hip-hop music and its relationships to society and cultures could help students to understand their own world more deeply. Analyzing the music itself (beyond just the lyrics) could lead to greater and more profound appreciation among students for whom hip-hop is a part of their musical lives. Music classrooms could become locations of both deep and broad hip-hop musical exploration. Complicating the ways in which students listen to favorite pieces of music can introduce them to new depths of familiar compositions. Like the musicians in Thompson's (2012) study, Terrence and I both found that learning to listen in different ways greatly informed our composing activities (and vice versa). Likewise, hip-hop explorations in a music classroom could increase the breadth with which students experience hip-hop music. Gilroy (2012) argued that hip-hop cultural productions have become so immense that even hip-hop scholars cannot stay abreast of all that is happening and changing in the

world's hip-hop cultures. While an all-encompassing hip-hop musical knowledge may not be possible, the enormity of this musical world presents an exciting amount of new discoveries to be made for both teachers and learners in music classrooms.

The use of *Hip-Hop As A Lens* also offers opportunities for encouraging critical perspectives and social consciousness. Hip-hop music's relationships to sociocultural issues are vast and complex and often involve the perspectives of marginalized populations (Chang, 2005; Forman, 2002; Keyes, 2004; Paul, 2000; Rose, 1994). Privileging these often-unheard voices in a school setting could inform students' understandings of sociocultural issues in rich and meaningful ways. Students in a music classroom potentially could study hip-hop cultures within the historical, geographic, economic, social, and cultural contexts in which they exist(ed) in addition to examining the complex and important ways in which sociocultural issues are included within hip-hop music. For example, understanding the relationship between hip-hop's foundations and the economy of specific neighborhoods in New York City, examining the volatile gender politics in hip-hop cultures, or the glamorization of "thug" lifestyles in some hip-hop music could offer incredible opportunities for using hip-hop music as a lens to critically investigate sociocultural issues.

Music Pedagogies Of Hip-Hop: Hip-Hop As Practice

A seemingly obvious suggestion (though still worth stating) is that students in a music classroom could actually compose and/or perform hip-hop music. This might include composing and/or performing vocally or instrumentally over prerecorded backing (accompaniment) tracks, composing original backing tracks, or both. As the technologies involved in hip-hop beat production and live audio recording continue to become more affordable and easier to use, the possibility of music classrooms functioning as legitimate hip-hop recording studios becomes

more realistic. With no more than a single laptop computer, the processes of composing an original backing track, sampling new or previously recorded material, and adding multiple layers of live instruments and/or vocal parts are entirely feasible in a classroom setting. While music educators previously might have been halted by concerns about appropriateness of lyrics and themes in hip-hop albums (Campbell & Clements, 2006), a music classroom could now focus on composing original pieces while developing musical skills and understandings relevant to hip-hop music.

The skills and understandings relevant to hip-hop music do not have to end with composing and/or performing strictly within hip-hop traditions. Similar to Rice's (2003) application of hip-hop sampling techniques to a writing setting, music students could listen and think like a hip-hop composer during experiences in a variety of musical activities. Students studying music in any genre could learn a great deal from a sampling activity in which they employ formerly constructed musical material in new and inventive ways. They also might benefit from listening and aurally deconstructing the textural layers of a piece of music like a DJ, or creating music that evokes their physical surroundings like a rapper lyrically "represents" her neighborhood.

Hip-Hop Pedagogies for Greater Change

Hip-hop pedagogies might find an important place within some school music settings as they currently exist, but hip-hop pedagogies also might contribute to the (re)creation of new and different conceptions of school music altogether. In particular, critical hip-hop pedagogies might act as a powerful lens toward problematizing hip-hop music, its relationships to society and cultures, and its place within various educational venues. Explorations such as these might provide opportunities toward transforming learners as well as the systems within which they

209

learn. Popular music education scholarship has referred to similar transformative aims (e.g.,

Allsup, 2003; Green, 2006; Lebler, 2007; Westerlund, 2006); however, further inclusion of hip-

hop cultures into popular music education discourses could offer new and important insights.

Investigations of and experiences within hip-hop's essential differences (from Western art music

and from other genres of vernacular music) might confront some foundational Western

assumptions about music, and consequently, music education.

Suggestions for Future Research

The research presented in this document shares what I hope is a launching point for

future scholarship that might support as well as challenge our understandings about vernacular

musicianship, hip-hop cultures, and issues of race, space and place. As a means for encouraging

further exploration in these areas, I offer the following suggestions for future research.

Place Consciousness

In this study, investigating hip-hop music through a place-conscious lens allowed for the

exploration and analysis of musical meanings as they are socially created within various

contexts. Music exists well beyond its sonic attributes and the means by which it is created and

performed. The social contexts within which people experience music can offer important

considerations for music educators, particularly those concerned with issues of equity and social

justice. Future scholarship might make good use of place philosophy as well as place-based and

place-conscious education in order to explore music's contexts and to consider additional ways

of connecting music classrooms with the rest of the world.

I agree wholeheartedly with Stauffer (2009, 2012) that music education scholars have

underexplored matters of *who*, *where*, and *when* compared to matters of *what*, *how*, and *why*;

however, I also contend that all of these issues interact with one another in numerous important

ways. Investigations in music education research could be well served by concentrating on place-conscious topics, but these topics may perpetually remain profoundly connected to issues of philosophy, curriculum, and pedagogy as well. The connections between all of these types of questions could serve to expand our understandings and better connect music education research and practice. Future scholars might consider exploring both place-conscious concerns *and* the ways that these issues relate to the more established music education research questions.

Expanding "Vernacular"

As I have stated multiple times throughout this document, a great need exists for additional music education research concerned with hip-hop cultures. Hip-hop music has claimed a critical portion of the public consciousness, and, as the world continues to adapt and (re)create hip-hop cultures, music educators ought to take notice. The work in the area of vernacular music education has offered many important implications for music classrooms, but expanding notions of vernacular music to include hip-hop might provide continued and potentially complicating considerations. Generalizations about vernacular music might suffer from the dubious assumption that all vernacular music shares the same traditions and values. This study has contributed to the complication of this potential myth, and future scholars might continue to elaborate on the diversity of vernacular music understandings by studying different genres of vernacular music.

There is much room for additional hip-hop scholarship in music education, including genre-specific creation and performance practices and a plethora of sociocultural issues. While I opted to aim my focus in this study away from explicit processes and products, future researchers could find important implications for music teaching and learning in these areas. Other underexplored issues in this study included gender and sexual orientation. Hip-hop cultures offer

compelling and critical sites of investigation for such topics and other scholars could very well conduct crucial research dedicated to these and other social issues as well.

Autoethnography

American music education's commitment to its traditions arguably is well established and deeply rooted. While these traditions might have much to offer, examining the beliefs and values behind these traditions could provide valuable insight toward more just and equitable practice. Autoethnography is a relatively new approach within music education research, but I hope that its application within this project has revealed some of its potential for such critical examinations. I applied autoethnography in this dissertation as a means to investigate my privileged positions as an educator and researcher. Future scholars might consider this method for meaningfully placing themselves within their own work and critically reflecting upon their situations. Whether communicating about one's "'home' culture" (Reed-Danahay, 1997, p. 127) encompasses that of an underexplored minority or the invisible culture of a hegemonic majority, deeper understandings from personal perspectives could offer valuable considerations for the author as well as her audience.

Different Voices

Because voices like Terrence's have been woefully underrepresented in music education research, this project's findings offer unique and valuable considerations for the field. Increasing the diversity of voices in music education scholarship might help to provide new considerations and a platform for marginalized voices. Future researchers may find great value in seeking out underrepresented populations of subjects, participants, and informants in their work. For decades, college music undergraduates have served as the most researched populations in music education research (Draves, Cruse, Mills, & Sweet, 2008; Kratus, 1992), but perhaps students

who have *not* continued their music schooling into their postsecondary education or even those with *no* school music experience whatsoever could offer challenges to the ingrained assumptions affecting music education at large.

Conclusion

By exploring hip-hop musicians' social contexts, their perceptions of school and schooling, and their out-of-school music education, I hope that I have offered meaningful implications toward informing a more place-conscious and inclusive field of music education. Terrence's experiences with and perceptions of music, school, and education challenged many of my preconceived notions and may offer important considerations for music educators. My experiences as both researcher and case in this project revealed complex issues of privilege and provided an opportunity to better understand and confront these issues moving forward. I ultimately contend that hip-hop cultures possess the potential for critical improvements in some school music settings and that music educators might consider making a place for hip-hop within scholarship and practice.

REFERENCES

REFERENCES

Abe, D. (2009). Hip-hop and the academic canon. *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice, 4*(3), 263–272.

Abercrombie, N., & Longhurst, B. (1998). *Audiences: A sociological theory of performance and imagination.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Abramo, J. M. (2011). Gender differences of popular music production in secondary schools. *Journal of Research in Music Education, 59*(1), 21–43.

Abril, C. R. (2006). Music that represents culture: Selecting music with integrity. *Music Educators Journal, 93*(1), 38–45.

Akom, A. A. (2009). Critical hip hop pedagogy as a form of liberatory praxis. *Equity & Excellence in Education, 42*(1), 52–66.

Alim, H. S. (2003). "We are the streets": African American language and the strategic construction of a street conscious identity. In S. Makoni, G. Smitherman, A. F. Ball, A. K. Spears (Eds.), *Black linguistics: Language, society and politics in Africa and the Americas* (pp. 40–59). London, England: Routledge.

Alim, H. S. (2007). Critical hip-hop language pedagogies: Combat, consciousness, and the cultural politics of communication. *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education, 6*(2), 161–176.

Alim, H. S., Ibrahim A., & Pennycook, A. (2009). *Global linguistic flows: Hip-hop cultures, youth identities and the politics of language*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Allsup, R. A. (2003). Mutual learning and democratic action in instrumental music education. *Journal of Research in Music Education, 51*(1), 24–37.

Allsup, R. A. (2011). Popular music and classical musicians: Strategies and perspectives. *Music Educators Journal, 97*(3), 30–34.

Apple, M. W. (2000). *Official knowledge, democratic education in a conservative age*. New York, NY: Psychology Press.

Armstrong, E. G. (2004). Eminem's construction of authenticity. *Popular Music and Society, 27*(3), 335–355.

Au, W. W. (2005). Fresh out of school: Rap music's discursive battle with education. *The Journal of Negro Education, 74*(3), 210–220.

Barrer, P. (2009). "My white, blue, and red heart": Constructing a Slovak identity in rap music. *Popular Music and Society, 32*(1), 59–75.

Bartleet, B., & Ellis, C. S. (2009). Making autoethnography sing/making music personal. In B. Bartleet & C. S. Ellis (Eds.), *Music autoethnographies: Making autoethnography sing/making music personal* (pp. 1–20). Bowen Hills, Australia: Australian Academic Press.

Baszile, D. T. (2009). Deal with it we must: Education, social justice, and the curriculum of hip hop culture. *Equity & Excellence in Education, 42*(1), 6–19.

Bates, M. J. (1997). Factors involved in the selection of music teaching as a career choice by 11th- and 12th-grade African-American students. *Dissertation Abstracts International, 59*(01), 116A. (UMI No. 9822832)

Bauman, R. (1992). Performance. In R. Bauman (Ed.), *Folklore, cultural performance, and popular entertainments: A communications-centered handbook* (pp. 41–49). Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press.

Belz, M. J. (2006). Opening the doors to diverse traditions of music making: Multicultural music education at the university level. *Music Educators Journal, 92*(5), 42–45.

Bendix, R. (1997). *In search of authenticity: The formation of folklore studies.* Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.

Berger, P. L., & Luckman, T. (1966). *The social construction of reality: A treatise in the sociology of knowledge.* Garden City, NY: Doubleday.

Biggs, C. D. (2011). Sung solecisms: Hip hop as non-prescriptive pedagogy. *Scholar-Practitioner Quarterly, 5*(1), 39–51.

Blair, D. V. (2009). Stepping aside: Teaching in a student-centered music classroom. *Music Educators Journal, 95*(3), 42–45.

Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of a theory of practice.* Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.

Bowers, A. C. (2008). Why a critical pedagogy of place is an oxymoron. *Environmental Education Research, 14*(3), 325–335.

Bradley, D. (2007). The sounds of silence: Talking race in music education. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education, 6*(4), 132–162.

Bradley, D., Golner, R., & Hanson, S. (2007). Unlearning whiteness, rethinking race issues in graduate music education. *Music Education Research, 9*(2), 293–304.

216

Brenneman, J. (2007). *Footsteps of my own: Gender issues that influence the formative experiences of exemplary women choral conductors*. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses database. (AAT 3264145)

Bridges, T. (2011). Towards a pedagogy of hip hop in urban teacher education. *The Journal of Negro Education, 80*(3), 325–338, 435.

Brinckmeyer, L. M., Gonzales, C. I., & Stein, R. (2010). Music majors' levels of familiarity with fifteen musical styles. In M. C. Moore & P. Ewell (Eds.), *Kaleidoscope of cultures* (pp. 3–9). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Britzman, D. (2003). *Practice makes practice: A critical study of learning to teach* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: State University of New York Press.

Brown, K. M. (2011). *Mama Lola: A Vodou priestess in Brooklyn* (3rd revised ed.). Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.

Butler, A., Lind, V. R., & McKoy, C. L. (2007). Equity and access in music education: Conceptualizing culture as barriers to and supports for music learning. *Music Education Research, 9*(2), 241–253.

Buxton, C. A. (2010). Social problem solving through science: An approach to critical, place-based, science teaching and learning. *Equity & Excellence in Education, 43*(1), 120–135.

Campbell, K. E. (2007). There goes the neighborhood: Hip hop creepin' on a come up at the U. *College Composition and Communication, 58*(3), 325–344.

Campbell, P. S., & Clements, A. C. (2006). Global music: Rap, rock, race, and rhythm: Music and more in a methods class. *The Mountain Lake Reader,* 16–23.

Carr, D. (2001). Place and time: On the interplay of historical points of view. *History and Theory: Studies in the Philosophy of History, 40*(4), 153–167.

Carter, B. A. (2013). "Nothing better or worse than being black, gay, and in the band": A qualitative examination of gay undergraduates participating in Historically Black College or University marching bands. *Journal of Research in Music Education, 61*(1), 26–43.

Casey, E. S. (2001). Between geography and philosophy: What does it mean to be in the place-world? *Annals of the Association of American Geographers, 91*(4), 683–693.

Chang, J. (2005). *Can't stop, won't stop, a history of the hip-hop generation*. New York, NY: Picador.

Charmaz, K. (1983). The grounded theory method: An explication and interpretation. In R. M. Emerson (Ed.), *Contemporary field research: A collection of readings* (pp.109–125). Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland.

Chinn, B. J. (1997). Vocal self-identification, singing style, and singing range in relationship to a measure of cultural mistrust in African-American adolescent females. *Journal of Research in Music Education, 45*(4), 636–649.

Clifford, J. (1997). *Routes: Travel and translation in the late twentieth century.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Cohen, J. (2009). Hip-hop Judaica: The politics of representin' Heebster heritage. *Popular Music, 28*(1), 1–18.

Cohen, S. (1993). Ethnography and popular music studies. *Popular Music, 12*(2), 123–138.

Conquergood, D. (1991). Rethinking ethnography: Towards a critical cultural politics. *Communication Monographs, 58*, 179–194.

Conquergood, D. (1992). Ethnography, rhetoric, and performance. *Quarterly Journal of Speech, 78*(1), 80–96.

Cooks, J. A. (2004). Writing for something: Essays, raps, and writing preferences. *English Journal, 94*(1), 72–76.

Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A Black feminist critique of antidiscrimination, feminist theory and antiracist politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum,* 139–167.

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Cope, P. (2002). Informal learning of musical instruments: The importance of social context. *Music Education Research, 4*(1), 93–104.

Cutler, C. (2003). "Keepin' it real": White hip-hoppers' discourses of language, race, and authenticity. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology, 13*, 211–233.

Davidson, J. W., & Edgar, R. (2003). Gender and race bias in the judgement of Western art music performance. *Music Education Research, 5*(2), 169–181.

Davis, S. G. (2005). "That thing you do!" Compositional processes of a rock band. *International Journal of Education & the Arts*, *6*(16), 1–19.

Dei, G. J. S. (2000). *Power, knowledge and anti-racism education*. Halifax, NS: Fernwood Publishing.

Demorest, S. M., & Schultz, S. J. M. (2004). Children's preference for authentic versus arranged versions of world music recordings. *Journal of Research in Music Education, 52*(4), 300–313.

Denzin, N. K. (1997). *Interpretive ethnography*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Denzin, N. K. (2002). Social work in the seventh moment. *Qualitative Social Work, 1*(1), 25–38.

Denzin, N. K. (2003). *Performance ethnography: Critical pedagogy and the politics of culture*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Devitt, R. (2008). Lost in translation: Filipino diaspora(s), postcolonial hip hop, and the problems of keeping it real for the "contentless" Black Eyed Peas. *Asian Music: Journal of the Society for Asian Music, 39*(1), 108–134.

Dewey, J. (1916). *Democracy and education: An introduction to the philosophy of education*. New York, NY: Macmillan.

Dhokai, N. (2012). Pedagogical ideas on sonic, mediated, and virtual musical landscapes: Teaching hip hop in a university classroom. *International Journal of Music Education, 30*(2), 111–119.

Dimitriadis, G. (2009). *Performing identity/performing culture: Hip hop as text, pedagogy, and lived practice*. New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing.

Draves, T. J., Cruse, C. S., Mills, M. M., & Sweet, B. M. (2008). Subjects in music education research: 1991–2005. *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education, 176*, 19–29.

Du Bois, W. E. B. (1903). *The souls of black folk*. Chicago, IL: A. C. McClurg & Co.

Dunbar-Hall, P., & Wemyss, K. (2000). The effects of the study of popular music on music education. *International Journal of Music Education, 36*(1), 23–34.

Duncan-Andrade, J., & Morrell, E. (2005). Turn up that radio, teacher: Popular cultural pedagogy in new century urban schools. *Journal of School Leadership, 15*(3), 284–304.

Durand, A. P. (2002). *Black, blanc, beur: Rap music and hip-hop culture in the Francophone world*. Oxford, United Kingdom: Scarecrow Press.

Dyndahl, P. (2009). Negotiating the roots/routes of authenticity and identity in Nordic hip-hop. *Musiikkikasvatus/The Finnish Journal of Music Education, 12*(2), 22–38.

Elliott, C. A. (1995). Race and gender as factors in judgments of musical performance. *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education, 127,* 50–56.

Elliot, D. J. (1995). *Music matters: A new philosophy of music education*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Ellis, C. S. (2004). *The ethnographic I: A methodological novel about autoethnography.* Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.

Ellis, C. S., Adams, T. E., & Bochner, A. P. (2010). Autoethnography: An Overview. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research, 12*(1). Retrieved from: http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs1101108

Elpus, K., & Abril, C. R. (2011). High school music ensemble students in the United States: A demographic profile. *Journal of Research in Music Education, 59*(2), 128–145.

Emdin, C. (2010). Affiliation and alienation: Hip-hop, rap, and urban science education. *Journal of Curriculum Studies, 42*(1), 1–25.

Emmanuel, D. T. (2003) An immersion field experience: An undergraduate music education course in intercultural competence. *Journal of Music Teacher Education, 13*(1), 33–41.

Evelyn, J. (2000). The miseducation of hip-hop. *Black Issues in High Education, 17,* 24–29.

Fenn, J. B., & Perullo, A. (2000). Language choice and hip hop in Tanzania and Malawi. *Popular Music and Society, 24*(3), 73–93.

Flay, J. (1989). Place and places. In D. W. Black, D. Kunze, & J. Pickles (Eds.), *Commonplaces: Essays on the nature of place* (pp. 1–9). Lanham, United Kingdom: University Press of America.

Flores, J. (2012). Puerto rocks: Rap, roots, and amnesia. In M. Forman & M. A. Neal (Eds.), *That's the joint! The hip-hop studies reader* (2nd ed., pp. 73–91). New York, NY: Routledge.

Folkestad, G. (2006). Formal and informal learning situations or practices vs. formal and informal ways of learning. *British Journal of Music Education*, *23*(2), 135–145.

Forman, M. (2002). *The 'hood comes first: Race, space, and place in rap and hip-hop.* Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.

Frankenberg, R. (1993). *White women, race matters: The social construction of whiteness.* Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed.* New York, NY: Continuum.

Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Giddens, A. (1984). *The constitution of society.* Cambridge, MA: Polity Press.

Gilroy, P. (1991). Sounds authentic: Black music, ethnicity, and the challenge of a "changing same." *Black Music Research Journal, 11*(2), 111–136.

Gilroy, P. (2000). *Against race*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Gilroy, P. (2012). It's a family affair. In M. Forman & M. A. Neal (Eds.), *That's the joint! The hip-hop studies reader* (2nd ed., pp. 92–101). New York, NY: Routledge.

Ginocchio, J. (2001). General music: Popular music performance class. *Teaching Music, 8*(4), 40–44.

Graham, M. A. (2007). Art, ecology and art education: Locating art education in a critical place-based pedagogy. *Studies in Art Education: A Journal of Issues and Research in Art Education, 48*(4), 375–391.

Green, L. (2002). *How popular musicians learn: A way ahead for music education*. London, England: Ashgate.

Green, L. (2004). What can music educators learn from popular musicians? In C. X. Rodriguez (Ed.), *Bridging the gap: Popular music and music education* (pp. 225–240). Reston, VA: MENC.

Green, L. (2005). The music curriculum as lived experience: Children's natural music-learning processes. *Music Educators Journal, 91*(4), 27–32.

Green, L. (2006). Popular music education in and for itself, and for "other" music: Current research in the classroom. *International Journal of Music Education, 24*(2), 101–118.

Green, L. (2008). *Music, informal learning and the school: A new classroom pedagogy*. Aldershot, United Kingdom: Ashgate.

Greenfield, D. (2007). What's the deal with the white middle-aged guy teaching hip-hop? Lessons in popular culture, positionality, and pedagogy. *Pedagogy, Culture, & Society, 15*(2), 229–243.

Grossberg, L. (1992). *We gotta get out of this place: Popular conservatism and postmodern culture*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Gruenewald, D. A. (2003a). Foundations of place: A multidisciplinary framework for place-conscious education. *American Educational Research Journal, 40*(3), 619–634.

Gruenewald, D. A. (2003b). The best of both worlds: A critical pedagogy of place. *Educational Researcher, 32*(4), 3–12.

Gumperz, J. J. (1982). *Discourse strategies*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.

Gustafson, R. (2008). Drifters and the dancing mad: The public school music curriculum and the fabrication of boundaries for participation. *Curriculum Inquiry, 38*(3), 267–297.

Guy, T. C. (2004). Gangsta rap and adult education. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education,* (101), 43–57.

Hallman, H. L. (2009). "Dear Tupac, you speak to me": Recruiting hip hop as curriculum at a school for pregnant and parenting teens. *Equity & Excellence in Education, 42*(1), 36–51.

Hamann, D. L., & Walker, L. M. (1993). Music teachers as role models for African-American students. *Journal of Research in Music Education, 41*(4), 303–314.

Hammersley, M., & Atkinson, P. (1995). *Ethnography: Principles in practice* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.

Haney López, I. F. (2013). The social construction of race. In R. Delgado & J. Stefancic (Eds.), *Critical race theory: The cutting edge* (3rd ed., pp. 238–248). Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Hanley, M. S. (2007). Old school crossings: Hip hop in teacher education and beyond. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, 115,* 35–44.

Hargreaves, D. J., & North, A.C. (Eds.) (1997). *The social psychology of music.* Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press.

Harrison, S. D. (2012). "Letting go": An auto-ethnography of higher degree supervision in music. *International Journal of Music Education, 30*(2), 99–110.

Hess, M. (2005). Metal faces, rap masks: Identity and resistance in hip hop's persona artist. *Popular Music and Society, 28*(3), 297–311.

Hewitt, M. P. & Thompson, L. K. (2006). A survey of music teacher educators' professional backgrounds, responsibilities and demographics. *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education, 170,* 47–61.

Hill, M. L. (2009). *Beats, rhymes, and classroom life: Hip-hop pedagogy and the politics of identity*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Hill, M. L., & Petchauer, E. (2013). *Schooling hip-hop: Expanding hip-hop based education across the curriculum*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Hoffman, A. R., & Carter, B. A. (2013). Representin' and disrespectin': African-American wind band students' meanings of a composition-based secondary music curriculum and classroom power structures. *Music Education Research, 15*(2), 135–150.

Irby, D. J., & Hall, H. B. (2011). Fresh faces, new places: Moving beyond teacher-researcher perspectives in hip-hop-based education research. *Urban Education, 46*(2), 216–240.

Irizarry, J. G. (2009a, December 23). Cultural Deficit Model. *Education.com*. Retrieved May 22, 2014, from http://www.education.com/reference/article/cultural-deficit-model

Irizarry, J. G. (2009b). Representin': Drawing from hip-hop and urban youth culture to inform teacher education. *Education and Urban Society, 41*(4), 489–515.

Isbell, D. S. (2007). Popular music and the public school music curriculum. *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education, 26*(1), 53–63.

Jaffurs, S. E. (2004). The impact of informal music learning practices in the classroom, or how I learned how to teach from a garage band. *International Journal of Music Education*, *22*(3), 189–200.

Jennings, N., Swidler, S., & Koliba, C. (2005). Place-based education in the standards-based reform era-conflict or complement? *American Journal of Education, 112*(1), 44–65.

Johnson, S. (2000). Authenticity: Who needs it? *British Journal of Music Education, 17*(3), 277–286.

Johnson, C. M., & Stewart, E. E. (2005). Effect of sex and race identification on instrument assignment by music educators. *Journal of Research in Music Education, 53*(4), 348–357.

Jorgensen, D. L. (1989). *Participant observation: A methodology for human studies.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Judy, R. A. T. (2012). On the question of nigga authenticity. In M. Forman & M. A. Neal (Eds.), *That's the joint! The hip-hop studies reader* (2nd ed., pp. 102–115). New York, NY: Routledge.

Kahf, U. (2007). Arabic hip hop: Claims of authenticity and identity of a new genre. *Journal of Popular Music Studies, 19*(4), 359–385.

Karlsen, S. (2010). BoomTown music education and the need for authenticity: Informal learning put into practice in Swedish post-compulsory music education. *British Journal of Music Education, 27*(1), 35–46.

Kastner, J. D. (2012). *Exploring informal music pedagogy in a professional development community of elementary music teachers.* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses database. (3548741)

Kelley, R. D. G. (2012). Lookin' for the "real" nigga: Social scientists construct the ghetto. In M. Forman & M. A. Neal (Eds.), *That's the joint! The hip-hop studies reader* (2nd ed., pp. 134–152). New York, NY: Routledge.

Kellner, D. (1995). *Media culture: Cultural studies, identity and politics between the modern and postmodern.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Kelly, R. (2012). Hip-hop Chicano: A separate but parallel story. In M. Forman & M. A. Neal (Eds.), *That's the joint! The hip-hop studies reader* (2nd ed., pp. 153–163). New York, NY: Routledge.

Keyes, C. L. (2004). *Rap music and street consciousness*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Killian, J. N. (1990). Effect of model characteristics on musical preference of junior high students. *Journal of Research in Music Education, 38*(2), 115–123.

Kivy, P. (1995). *Authenticities*: *Philosophical reflections on musical performance.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Kline, C. (2007). *Represent!: Hip-hop and the self-aesthetic relation.* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Indiana University: Bloomington, IN.

Knapp, C. E. (2005). The "I-thou" relationship, place-based education, and Aldo Leopold. *The Journal of Experiential Education, 27*(3), 277–285.

Koops, L. H. (2010). "Can't we just change the words?": The role of authenticity in culturally informed music education. *Music Educators Journal, 97*(1), 23–28.

Koza, J. E. (2008). Listening for whiteness: Hearing racial politics in undergraduate school music. *Philosophy of Music Education Review, 16*(2), 145–155.

Kratus, J. (1992). Subjects in music education research, 1961–1990. *The Quarterly Journal of Music Teaching and Learning, 3*(4), 50–54.

Kratus, J. (2007). Music education at the tipping point. *Music Educators Journal, 94*(2), 42–48.

KRS-One, D-Nice, D-Square, Foster, R., Spaceman, & Mills, S. (1989). You must learn [Recorded by Boogie Down Productions]. On *Ghetto Music: The Blueprint of Hip Hop* [CD]. New York, NY: Jive/RCA Records.

Kruse, A. J. (2014). Preservice music teachers' experiences with and attitudes toward musical genres. *Journal of Music Teacher Education.* Advance online publication. doi: 10.1177/1057083714530721

Kruse, N. B. (2013). Locating the road to Lisdoonvarna via autoethnography: Pathways, barriers and detours in self-directed online music learning. *Journal of Music, Technology and Education, 5*(3), 293–308.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). Toward a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. *American Educational Research Journal, 32*(3), 465–491.

Ladson-Billings, G. (2004). New directions in multicultural education: Complexities, boundaries, and critical race theory. In J.A. Banks & C.A. McGee Banks (Eds.), *Handbook of research on multicultural education* (2nd ed., pp. 50–65). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Ladson-Billings, G., & Tate, W. F. (1995). Toward a critical race theory of education. *Teachers College Record, 97*(1), 47–68.

Lamont, A., Hargreaves, D. J., Marshall, N. A., & Tarrant, M. (2003). Young people's music in and out of school. *British Journal of Music Education, 20*(3), 229–241.

Lebler, D. (2007). Student-as-master? Reflections on a learning innovation in popular music pedagogy. *International Journal of Music Education, 25*(3), 205–221.

Lee, S. J. (2009). *Unraveling the model "minority" stereotype: Listening to Asian American youth* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Lefebvre, H. (1991). *The production of space.* Oxford, United Kingdom: Blackwell Publishing.

Ley, D. (1989). Modernism, post-modernism, and the struggle for place. In J. Agnew & J. Duncan (Eds.), *The power of place: Bringing together geographical and sociological imaginations* (pp. 44–65). Boston, MA: Unwin-Hyman.

Lincoln, Y.S., & Guba, E.G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Loureiro-Rodríguez, V. (2012). "If we only speak our language by the fireside, it won't survive": The cultural and linguistic indigenization of hip hop in Galicia. *Popular Music and Society, 36*(5), 659–676.

Low, B., Tan, E., & Celemencki, J. (2013). The limits of "keepin' it real": The challenges for critical hip-hop pedagogies of discourses of authenticity. In M. L. Hill & E. Petchauer (Eds.) *Schooling hip-hop: Expanding hip-hop based education across the curriculum* (pp. 118–136). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Lull, J. (1995). *Media, communication, culture: A global approach*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Polity Press.

Lum, N. (2012). My vag [Recorded by Awkwafina]. On *My Vag – Single* [Digital download].

Lum, N. (2013). NYC bitche$ [Recorded by Awkwafina]. On *NYC Bitche$ – Single* [Digital download].

Mahiri, J. (2000-2001). Pop culture pedagogy and the end(s) of school. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy, 44*, 382–385.

Mahiri, J. (2006). Digital DJ-ing: Rhythms of learning in an urban school. *Language Arts, 84*(1), 55–62.

Martin, J. A. (2012). Toward authentic electronic music in the curriculum: Connecting teaching to current compositional practices. *International Journal of Music Education, 30*(2), 120–132.

McCrary, J. (1993). Effects of listeners' and performers' race on music preferences. *Journal of Research in Music Education, 41*(3), 200–211.

McCrary, J. (2000). Ethnic majority/minority status: Children's interactions and affective responses to music. *Journal of Research in Music Education, 48*(3), 249–261.

McCrary, J., & Gauthier, D. (1995). The effects of performers' ethnic identities on preadolescents' music preferences. *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education, 14*(1), 20–22.

McInerney, P., Smyth, J., & Down, B. (2011). "Coming to a place near you?" the politics and possibilities of a critical pedagogy of place-based education. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education, 39*(1), 3–16.

McLeod, K. (2012). Authenticity within hip-hop and other cultures threatened with assimilation. In M. Forman & M. A. Neal (Eds.), *That's the joint! The hip-hop studies reader* (2nd ed., pp. 164–178). New York, NY: Routledge.

McKoy, C. L. (2013). Effects of selected demographic variables on music student teachers' self-reported cross-cultural competence. *Journal of Research in Music Education, 60*(4), 375–394.

Melik, A., Cutright, S. R., Perl, Y., & Brunjes, R. (2006). My dick [Recorded by Mickey Avalon featuring Dirt Nasty and Andre Legacy]. On *Mickey Avalon* [CD]. Beverly Hills, CA: MySpace Records.

Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: A sourcebook of new methods* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Mills, S. (2000). Recognizing middle school students' taste for popular music. *General Music Today, 13*(3), 3–6.

Minott, M. (2008). Using rap and Jamaican dance hall music in the secondary music classroom. *International Journal of Music Education, 26*(2), 137–145.

Mitchell, T. (1995). Questions of style: Notes on Italian hip hop. *Popular Music, 14*(3), 333–348.

Mitchell, T. (2000). Doin' damage in my native language: The use of "resistance vernaculars" in hip hop in France, Italy, and Aotearoa/New Zealand. *Popular Music and Society, 24*(3), 41–54.

Mitchell, T. (2001). *Global noise: Rap and hip-hop outside the USA*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.

Morgan, M. (2001). Nuthin' but a g thang: Grammar and language ideology in hip-hop identity. In S. L. Lanehart (Ed.), *Sociocultural and historical contexts of African American English* (pp. 187–210). Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press.

Morrell, E., & Duncan-Andrade, J. (2002). Promoting academic literacy with urban youth through engaging hip-hop culture. *Advances in Physiological Education, 91*(6), 88–92.

Morrison, S. J. (1998). A comparison of preference responses of white and African-American students to musical versus musical/visual stimuli. *Journal of Research in Music Education, 46*(2), 208–222.

Neal, M. A. (2012). "No time for fake niggas": Hip-hop culture and the authenticity debates. In M. Forman & M. A. Neal (Eds.), *That's the joint! The hip-hop studies reader* (2nd ed., pp. 69–72). New York, NY: Routledge.

Newman, M. (2005). Rap as literacy: A genre analysis of rap ciphers. *Text, 25*, 399–436.

The Nielsen Company. (2014, January 22). *U.S. music industry year-end review: 2013.* Retrieved from http://www.nielsen.com/us/en/reports/2014/u-s-music-industry-year-end-review-2013.html

Nyawalo, M. (2013). From "badman" to "gangsta": Double consciousness and authenticity, from African-American folklore to hip hop. *Popular Music and Society, 36*(4), 460–475.

Obach, B. K. (1999). Demonstrating the social construction of race. *Teaching Sociology, 27*(3), 252–257.

Palmer, A. J. (1992). World musics in music education: The matter of authenticity. *International Journal of Music Education, 19*(1), 32–40.

Pardue, D. (2004). "Writing in the margins": Brazilian hip-hop as an educational project. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly, 35*(4), 411–432.

Parker, L., & Lynn, M. (2002). What's race got to do with it? Critical race theory's conflicts with and connections to qualitative research methodology and epistemology. *Qualitative Inquiry, 8*(1), 7–22.

Patten, M. L. (2009). *Understanding research methods* (7th ed.). Glendale, CA: Pyrczak Publishing.

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Paul, D. G. (2000). Rap and orality: Critical media literacy, pedagogy, and cultural synchronization. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy, 44*, 246–252.

Payne, R. K. (2001). A framework for understanding poverty. Highlands, TX: aha! Process.

Pembrook, R. G., & Robinson, C. R. (1997). The effect of mode of instruction and instrument authenticity on children's attitudes, information recall, and performance skill for music from Ghana. *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education, 133*, 115–120.

Pennycook, A. (2006). *Global Englishes and transcultural flows*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Perry, I. (2004). *Prophets of the hood: Politics and poetics in hip hop*. New York, NY: Duke University Press.

Perry, M. D. (2012). Global black self-fashionings: Hip-hop as diasporic space. In M. Forman & M. A. Neal (Eds.), *That's the joint! The hip-hop studies reader* (2nd ed., pp. 294–314). New York, NY: Routledge.

Perry, P. (2001). White means never having to say you're ethnic: White youth and the construction of "cultureless" identities. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography, 30*(1), 56–91.

Perullo, A. (2012). Hooligans and heroes: Youth identity and hip-hop in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. In M. Forman & M. A. Neal (Eds.), *That's the joint! The hip-hop studies reader* (2nd ed., pp. 315–335). New York, NY: Routledge.

Petchauer, E. (2009). Framing and reviewing hip-hop educational research. *Review of Educational Research, 79*(2), 946–978.

Petchauer, E. (2010). Sampling practices and social spaces: Exploring a hip-hop approach to higher education. *Journal of College Student Development, 51*(4), 359–372.

Petchauer, E. (2011). I feel what he was doin': Responding to justice-oriented teaching through hip-hop aesthetics. *Urban Education, 46*(6), 1411–1432.

Peterson, J. B. (2013). Rewriting the remix: College composition and the educational elements of hip-hop. In M. L. Hill & E. Petchauer (Eds.) *Schooling hip-hop: Expanding hip-hop based education across the curriculum* (pp. 47–65). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Powell, J. A. (1999). The color-blind multiracial dilemma: Racial categories reconsidered. In R. D. Torres, L. F. Mirón & J. X. Inda (Eds.), *Race, identity and citizenship* (pp. 141–157). London, England: Blackwell Publishers.

Pratt, M. L. (2008). *Imperial eyes: Travel writing and transculturation.* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.

Pulido, I. (2009). "Music fit for us minorities": Latinas/os' use of hip hop as pedagogy and interpretive framework to negotiate and challenge racism. *Equity & Excellence in Education, 42*(1), 67–85.

Ramsdell, L. (2012). Cuban hip-hop goes global: Orishas' "A lo Cubano." *Latin American Music Review/Revista De Música Latinoamericana, 33*(1), 102–123.

Reed-Danahay, D. E. (1997). *Auto/ethnography: Rewriting the self and the social.* New York, NY: Berg.

Rice, J. (2003). The 1963 hip-hop machine: Hip-hop pedagogy as composition. *College Composition and Communication, 54*(3), 453–471.

Rodman, G. B. (2012). Race…and other four-letter words: Eminem and the cultural politics of authenticity. In M. Forman & M. A. Neal (Eds.), *That's the joint! The hip-hop studies reader* (2nd ed., pp. 179–198). New York, NY: Routledge.

Rodriguez, C. X. (2004). *Bridging the gap: Popular music and music education.* Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group.

Rodríguez, L. F. (2009). Dialoguing, cultural capital, and student engagement: Toward a hip hop pedagogy in the high school and university classroom. *Equity & Excellence in Education, 42*(1), 20–35.

Rose, T. (1994). *Black noise: Rap music and black culture in contemporary America*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.

Saldaña, J. (2008). Second chair: An autoethnodrama. *Research Studies in Music Education, 30*(2), 177–191.

Sánchez, D. M. (2010). Hip-hop and a hybrid text in a postsecondary English class. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 53*(6), 478–487.

Sarkar, M., & Allen, D. (2007). Hybrid identities in Quebec hip-hop: Language, territory, and ethnicity in the mix. *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education, 6*(2), 117–130.

Sarkar, M., & Winer, L. (2006). Multilingual codeswitching in Quebec rap: Poetry, pragmatics and performativity. *International Journal of Multilingualism, 3*(3), 173–192.

Scherpf, S. (2001). Rap pedagogy: The potential for democratization. *The Review of Education/Pedagogy/Cultural Studies, 23*, 73–110.

Schippers, H. (2006). Tradition, authenticity, and context: The case for a dynamic approach. *British Journal of Music Education, 23*(3), 333–349.

Seidel, S. S. (2011). *Hip hop genius: Remixing high school education*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Seifried, S. (2002). Making the scene: Popular teenage music, guitar class, and the creation of identity and place. *Dissertation Abstracts International, 63* (01), 24A.

Sharma, N. T. (2010). *Hip hop desis: South Asian Americans, blackness, and a global race consciousness*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Simeziane, S. (2010). Roma rap and the black train: Minority voices in Hungarian hip hop. In M. Terkourafi (Ed.), *The languages of global hip hop* (pp. 96–119). New York, NY: Continuum.

Sleeter, C. E., & Bernal, D. D. (2004). Critical pedagogy, critical race theory, and antiracist education: Implications for multicultural education. In J. A. Banks & C. A. McGee Banks (Eds.), *Handbook of research on multicultural education* (2nd ed., pp. 240–258). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Smedley, A., & Smedley, B. D. (2005). Race as biology is fiction, racism as a social problem is real: Anthropological and historical perspectives on the social construction of race. *American Psychologist, 60*(1), 16–26.

Smith, G. A. (2002a). Going local. *Educational Leadership, 60*(1), 30–33.

Smith, G. A. (2002b). Place-based education: Learning to be where we are. *Phi Delta Kappan, 83*(8), 584–594.

Smith, G. A., & Sobel, D. (2010). *Place and community-based education in schools.* London, England: Routledge.

Smith, W. E. (2005). *Hip hop as performance and ritual: Biography and ethnography in underground hip hop*. Washington D.C.: CLS Publications.

Smitherman, G. (1997). The chain remain the same: Communicative practices in the hip hop nation. *Journal of Black Studies, 28*, 3–25.

Sobel, D. (2005). *Place-based education: Connecting classrooms and communities.* Great Barrington, MA: Orion Society.

Söderman, J. (2011). "Folkbildning" through hip-hop: How the ideals of three rappers parallel a Scandinavian educational tradition. *Music Education Research, 13*(2), 211–225.

Söderman, J., & Folkestad, G. (2004). How hip-hop musicians learn: Strategies in informal creative music making. *Music Education Research, 6*(3), 313–326.

Solórzano, D. G., & Delgado Bernal, D. (2001). Examining transformational resistance through a critical race and LatCrit theory framework: Chicana and Chicano students in an urban context. *Urban Education, 36*(3), 308–342.

Solórzano, D. G., & Yosso, T. J. (2002). Critical race methodology: Counter-storytelling as an analytical framework for education research. *Qualitative Inquiry, 8*(1), 23–44.

Spradley, J. P. (1979). *The ethnographic interview*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Stauffer, S. L. (2009). Placing curriculum in music education. In T. A. Regelski & J. T. Gates (Eds.), *Music education for changing times: Guiding visions for practice* (pp. 175–186). Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer.

Stauffer, S. L. (2012). Place, music education, and the practice and pedagogy of philosophy. In W. D. Bowman & A. L. Frega (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of philosophy in music education* (pp. 434–452). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Stein, R. (2011). Seeing white through rap: A classroom exercise for examining race using a hip-hop video. *Journal of Political Science Education, 7*(3), 312–328.

Stovall, D. (2006). We can relate: Hip-hop culture, critical pedagogy, and the secondary classroom. *Urban Education, 41*(6), 585–602.

Swanwick, K. (1994). Authenticity and the reality of musical experience. In H. Lees (Ed.), *Musical connections: Tradition and change, proceedings of the 21st World Conference of the International Society for Music Education* (pp. 215–226). Tampa, FL: International Society for Music Education.

Swanwick, K., & Lawson, D. (1999). "Authentic" music and its effect on the attitudes and musical development of secondary school students. *Music Education Research, 1*(1), 47–60.

Terkourafi, M. (2010). *Languages of global hip hop.* London, England: Continuum.

Thibeault, M. D. (2010). Hip-hop, digital media, and the changing face of music education. *General Music Today, 24*(1), 46–49.

Thompson, P. (2012). An empirical study into the learning practices and enculturation of DJs, turntablists, hip hop and dance music producers. *Journal of Music, Technology and Education, 5*(1), 43–58.

Tuan, Y. F. (1977). *Space and place: The perspective of experience.* Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Turino, T. (2008). *Music as social life: The politics of participation.* Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

United States Census Bureau. (2012, December 12). *U.S. Census Bureau projections show a slower growing, older, more diverse nation a half century from now*. Retrieved from https://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/population/cb12-243.html

Vagi, R. (2010). From Haydn to hip-hop. *Teaching Music, 17*(4), 28–30.

Väkevä, L. (2009). The world well lost, found: Reality and authenticity in Green's "New Classroom Pedagogy". *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education, 8*(2), 7–34.

VanWeelden, K. (2004). Racially stereotyped music and conductor race: Perceptions of performance. *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education, 160*, 38–48.

VanWeelden, K., & McGee, I. R. (2007). The influence of music style and conductor race on perceptions of ensemble and conductor performance. *International Journal of Music Education, 25*(1), 7–19.

Vens, H. (2004). Hip-hop speaks to the reality of Israel. *World Press Review, 51*(1), 36–37.

Walker, L. B. (2006). Influence of musical characteristics on style preferences of African American students in urban areas. *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education, 168,* 7–19.

Walker, L. M., & Hamann, D. L. (1995). Minority recruitment: The relationship between high school students' perceptions about music participation and recruitment strategies. *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*, *124,* 24–38.

Wang, O. (2012). Rapping and repping Asian: Race, authenticity, and the Asian American MC. In M. Forman & M. A. Neal (Eds.), *That's the joint! The hip-hop studies reader* (2nd ed., pp. 199–224). New York, NY: Routledge.

Ward, L. J. (2013). Exploring the distinct hip-hop culture of urban students. *Gender, Education, Music, and Society, 6*(3). Retrieved from http://library.queensu.ca/ojs/index.php/gems/article/view/5065/4935

Wason-Ellam, L. (2010). Children's literature as a springboard to place-based embodied learning. *Environmental Education Research, 16*(3–4), 279–294.

Westerlund, H. (2006). Garage rock bands: A future model for developing musical expertise? *International Journal of Music Education, 24*(2), 119–125.

White, J., Drew, S., & Hay, T. (2009). Ethnography versus case study. *Qualitative Research Journal, 9*(1), 18–27.

Williams, D. A. (2011). The elephant in the room. *Music Educators Journal, 98*(1), 51–57.

Willis, J. W. (2007). *Foundations of qualitative research: Interpretive and critical approaches.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Wilson, J. A. (2013). The MC in Y-O-U: Leadership pedagogy and southern hip-hop in the HBCU classroom. In M. L. Hill & E. Petchauer (Eds.) *Schooling hip-hop: Expanding hip-hop based education across the curriculum* (pp. 66–91). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Wilson, L. P. (1990). *Recruitment and retention practices for African-American students in music units of selected colleges and universities.* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Ball State University, Muncie, IN.

Wolcott, H. F. (1994). *Transforming qualitative data: Descriptions, analysis, and interpretation.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Woody, R. H. (2007). Popular music in school: Remixing the issues. *Music Educators Journal, 93*(4), 32–37.

Woody, R. H., & Lehmann, A. C. (2010). Student musicians' ear-playing ability as a function of vernacular music experiences. *Journal of Research in Music Education, 58*(2), 101–115.

Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research, design and methods*. (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Yosso, T. J. (2006). *Critical race counterstories along the Chicana/Chicano educational pipeline.* New York, NY: Routledge.