MARGINAL/MINORITY POPULAR MUSIC

The Concept of the "Third Space"
and
The Case for "Hybridities" of Cultures/Identities

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ABSTRACT

The topic of this thesis is marginal/minority popular music and the question of identity; the term “marginal/minority” specifically refers to members of racial and cultural minorities who are socially and politically marginalized. The thesis argument is that popular music produced by members of cultural and racial minorities establishes cultural identity and resists racist discourse. Three marginal/minority popular music artists and their songs have been chosen for analysis in support of the argument: Gil Scott-Heron’s “Gun,” Tracy Chapman’s “Fast Car” and Robbie Robertson’s “Sacrifice.”

The thesis will draw from two fields of study; popular music and postcolonialism. Within the area of popular music, Theodor Adorno’s “Standardization” theory is the focus. Within the area of postcolonialism, this thesis concentrates on two specific topics; 1) Stuart Hall’s and Homi Bhabha’s overlapping perspectives that identity is a process of cultural signification, and 2) Homi Bhabha’s concept of the “Third Space.” For Bhabha (1995a), the Third Space defines cultures in the moment of their use, at the moment of their exchange. The idea of identities arising out of cultural struggle suggests that identity is a process as opposed to a fixed center, an enclosed totality. Cultures arise from historical memory and memory has no center. Historical memory is de-centered and thus cultures are also de-centered, they are not enclosed totalities. This is what Bhabha means by “hybridity” of culture – that cultures are not unitary totalities, they are ways of knowing and speaking about a reality that is in constant flux. In this regard, the language of “Otherness” depends on suppressing or marginalizing the productive capacity of culture in the act of enunciation. The Third Space represents a strategy of enunciation that disrupts, interrupts and dislocates the dominant discursive construction of US and THEM, (a construction explained by Hall’s concept of binary oppositions, detailed in Chapter 2). Bhabha uses the term “enunciation” as a linguistic metaphor for how cultural differences are articulated through discourse and thus how differences are discursively produced. Like Hall, Bhabha views culture as a process of understanding and of signification because Bhabha sees traditional cultures’ struggle against colonizing cultures as transforming them.

Adorno’s theory of Standardization will be understood as a theoretical position of Western authority. The thesis will argue that Adorno’s theory rests on the assumption that there is an “essence” to music, an essence that Adorno rationalizes as structure/form. The thesis will demonstrate that constructing music as possessing an essence is connected to ideology and power and in this regard, Adorno’s Standardization theory is a discourse of White Western power. It will be argued that “essentialism” is at the root of Western “rationalization” of music, and that the definition of what constitutes music is an extension of Western racist “discourses” of the Other.

The methodological framework of the thesis entails a) applying semiotics to each of the three songs examined and b) also applying Bhabha’s model of the Third Space to each of the songs. In this thesis, semiotics specifically refers to Stuart Hall’s retheorized semiotics, which recognizes the dual function of semiotics in the analysis of marginal racial/cultural identities, i.e., simultaneously represent embedded racial/cultural stereotypes, and the marginal racial/cultural first person voice that disavows and thus reinscribes stereotyped identities. (Here, and throughout this thesis, “first person voice” is used not to denote the voice of the songwriter, but rather the collective voice of a
marginal racial/cultural group). This dual function fits with Hall’s and Bhabha’s idea that cultural identity emerges out of cultural antagonism, cultural struggle. Bhabha’s Third Space is also applied to each of the songs to show that cultural “struggle” between colonizers and colonized produces cultural hybridities, musically expressed as fusions of styles/sounds.

The purpose of combining semiotics and postcolonialism in the three songs to be analyzed is to show that marginal popular music, produced by members of cultural and racial minorities, establishes cultural identity and resists racist discourse by overwriting identities of racial/cultural stereotypes with identities shaped by the first person voice enunciated in the Third Space, to produce identities of cultural hybridities. Semiotic codes of embedded “Black” and “Indian” stereotypes in each song’s musical and lyrical text will be read and shown to be overwritten by the semiotic codes of the first person voice, which are decoded with the aid of postcolonial concepts such as “ambivalence,” “hybridity” and “enunciation.”
CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The topic of this thesis is popular music and its relation to racial minorities’ cultural identities. Popular music is generally defined as music which has a large audience share, commercial success and sometimes situated within cultural or democratic movements. This thesis is concerned with contemporary popular music, in particular what will be referred to as marginal/minority popular music. This term was specifically chosen as it not only speaks of the underlying intent of the music but also indicates the origins of the music rather than simply its content. Although a wide range of popular music can be considered to carry cultural or political messages, the scope of this thesis is limited to the messages communicated by members of racial and cultural minorities who are socially and politically marginalized. Thus, throughout this thesis, the term marginal/minority refers specifically to cultural/racial minorities who are marginalized. This thesis will argue that popular music produced by members of cultural and racial minorities establishes cultural identity and resists racist discourse. The question of identity is confined only to marginal racial/cultural identity. The thesis argument does not apply to every minority group in every country but extends only to marginal and minority groups in Canada and the U.S. Specifically, two songs by African-American musicians/songwriters, Gil Scott-Heron’s “Gun” and Tracy Chapman’s “Fast Car,” and one song, “Sacrifice” by Canadian born Native songwriter/musician Robbie Robertson will be examined.

There are a number of successful marginal/minority artists in popular music whose music could have been chosen for analysis in this thesis. Artists such as Canadian born Native singers/songwriters: Buffy Sainte-Marie, who is often regarded
as one of the founders of Aboriginal rock (Baxter-Moore 2000: 9), Susan Aglukark the Inuk artist, the musical duo Kashtin who are members of the Innu/Montagnais First Nation in Quebec and who gained a popular audience despite singing almost exclusively in their own language, Laura Vinson who is best known for her popular songs in the country genre, Eagle Feather also popular for their country songs, War Party a popular rap trio; African-American artists like Lauren Hill, Erykah Badu, Jill Scott, Indie Arie, the hiphop/rock band The Roots are just a few among a number of commercially successful artists whose music would have been appropriate for analysis in this thesis.

Gil Scott-Heron, Tracey Chapman and Robbie Robertson were chosen as representative of marginal/minority popular music because they have firmly established a place for themselves within popular music as artists with a social/political conscience. All three have been consistently releasing albums for many years, with some of their music continuing to achieve commercial success and critical acclaim. Each artist’s songs, at one time or another, have been on the popular music charts in the categories of “single hits” or “top albums.” Scott-Heron’s hit, “Johannesburg” has widely been credited for helping to raise America’s consciousness during the 1970s about the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa and Nelson Mandela’s imprisonment by the Afrikaans leaders of the Apartheid regime (http://www.allmusic.com: 2003) (http://www.oafb.net: 2003). Chapman’s and Robertson’s music have been recognized by two very influential institutions of popular music in the form of (the American) Grammy Awards and (the Canadian) Juno Awards respectively. In addition, Robertson’s music has received recognition and legitimation by the Native community in the form of an Aboriginal Achievement Award. Within popular music, Scott-Heron, Chapman and Robertson are recognized as artists whose music has a social/political conscience. They have a well-
established place within popular music due to the commercial success of their songs and
the longevity of their musical careers. Some of the social/political character of their
music and the social causes they have supported are outlined in Chapters 3 and 4.

The argument of this thesis, that marginal/minority music helps establish cultural
identity and resists racist discourse, will draw from two areas of study: popular music
and postcolonialism. Many of the postcolonial concepts used in support of the thesis
argument, such as “hybridity,” “ambivalence,” “enunciation,” and the notion of identity
as a process of cultural signification, are also common to the field of cultural studies.
“Postcolonialism” is one theoretical approach within the broad field of “Cultural
Studies.”

Within each area of popular music and postcolonialism, there exists a very broad
range of theorists, theories and perspectives. In the area of popular music, this thesis is
specifically interested in responding to an argument about popular music arising from
the point of view of critical theory. There are numerous strands of critical theory, but its
main underlying ideas are derived from Marx’s fundamental idea that conflicts of
interests in society are rooted in uneven economic relations of power. In relation to
contemporary popular music, Theodor Adorno (collaboratively with Max Horkheimer)
undertook the most significant work in the field of critical theory. The focus of this
thesis is limited only to Adorno’s theory of “Standardization” which is situated within
the larger theory of the “Culture Industry” by Adorno and Horkheimer.

This investigation is limited to one very specific aspect of Adorno’s
“Standardization” theory: Adorno (1990) writes that popular music lacks authentic
musical form/structure, or more specifically, that its structure is standardized for
commercialization. “Standardization” means that the melody and the lyrics of a popular
song are constructed within a definite pattern or structural form and the music is therefore not free to interpret the meaning and feeling of the words because it follows a set pattern or form (314). Standardization for the purpose of money-making is the music industry's way of exploiting a passive audience under the illusion of "pseudo-individualization." Adorno writes that the standardization of popular musical form results in "a system of response mechanisms wholly antagonistic to the ideal of individuality in a free liberal society" (305). For Adorno, commodification robs culture of its intrinsic value. Adorno's theory suggests that popular music is worthless because, essentially, it is void of real emotion or inner vitality. The general assumption of Adorno's theory of Standardization is that mass art is produced for profit and the pursuit of profit determines its form and content. This suggests that the most important social function of contemporary popular music is commercial; the music is made to sell.

Numerous theorists within the field of popular music have responded, either directly or indirectly, to Adorno's theory. Most of the responses generally disagree with Adorno because the authors argue that popular music's function can be measured by more than just economic variables. Those theorists who see popular music as functioning to define identity are of interest to this analysis. It is important to note again that the focus of this thesis is limited only to marginal racial/cultural identities, and specifically to African-American and North American Native identities. In addressing issues of African-American and North American Native identities, this thesis is not suggesting or making any claims about any other kinds of identities that are expressed in numerous kinds of popular songs by a variety of artists.

Jon Weiner and Simon Firth are two notable critics in the field of popular music who have extensively studied the ways in which the mass culture has commercialized
and appropriated rock and jazz. Frith’s work in particular is referred to extensively in this thesis, because like Hall and Bhabha (who will be discussed momentarily), Firth (1996) also sees identity as “a process, a becoming.” He writes that identity is “an experiential process which is most vividly grasped as music” (110). Firth argues that “popular music has the capacity to authenticate and materialize the common feelings and experiences of any given sub-group” and this can easily be applied to marginal/minority music.

In presenting some arguments against Adorno’s theory of Standardization this thesis is not in any way diminishing Adorno’s contributions to the analysis of popular music. In his book *Musical Elaborations*, Edward Said (1991) writes, “there is a tendency for other musicologists to pick at Adorno’s weaknesses rather than to confront his postulations or emulate the theoretical breadth and magisterial scope of his best work” (xvii). Although he is discussing Adorno in the context of classical music and musicology, Said’s comments are also relevant to Adorno’s work on popular music. This thesis has no intention to diminish the breadth and depth of knowledge and insight in Adorno’s theory of Standardization and his larger theory of Mass Culture. This thesis is not questioning that Adorno’s way of speaking about music as a structural form offers us a way of rationalizing sound in order to analytically understand it, and that Adorno and Horkheimer’s (1977) theory of the “Culture Industry” also offers us a way to understand the creative “process” that “produces” artistic work like music. Rather, the arguments against Standardization aim to show only that musical form is not always the dominant aspect in a song. Music is not only about “form.” The complexities of music express the complexities of human experience/human relations, and human relations for the purpose of this thesis means the colonial condition, the meeting of different cultures.
Colonialism is based on domination by force and political occupation, as in the case of Black slavery in North America and the social/political/economic European domination of Native cultures in North America. Because the authors of marginal/ minority popular music are members of minority groups, part of their experience of culture/identity is rooted in the histories of colonial powers, specifically how representational Western "discourses" reinforced racist colonial practices to define a relationship of domination. Racial stereotypes are "discourses" which function to misrepresent cultural identities. The idea of "discourse" is an important part of this thesis' argument and within this thesis "discourse" means "ways of referring to or constructing knowledge." The theoretical concept of "discourse" as developed by Michel Foucault will be detailed throughout the thesis.


> what is impressive about musical practice in all its variety is that it takes place in many different places, for different purposes, for different constituencies and practitioners, and of course at many different times. To assemble all that, to herd it under one dialectical temporal model is — no matter how compelling or dramatic the formulation — simply an untrue and therefore insufficient account of what happens. (xviii — xix)

This thesis aims to show that Standardization rests on the assumption that there is an essence to music, an essence that Adorno rationalizes partly as being "structure/form." Adorno's theory of Standardization incorrectly implies that creative expression or creativity of the musician/artist is confined within the form of the music, and by "form" Adorno means the "composed" form of classical music. But the essence, the universal form, is "constructed" by a White Western rationalized view of what constitutes music in the first place. This thesis will demonstrate that "constructing" music as possessing an inherently universal structural form is connected to ideology and power, and for this
reason views Adorno’s Standardization theory as a discourse of White Western power. It is for this reason that this thesis positions Adorno’s Standardization theory in opposition to the postcolonial perspective which sees White Western rationalizations of other cultures as an extension of colonial power suppressing the productive capacity of colonized cultures. Said (1991) writes that it cannot be denied that “thinkers like Adorno . . . have dignified so much of contemporary intellectual discourse [on music]” (55). However, “no social system, no historical vision, no theoretical totalization, no matter how powerful, can exhaust all the alternatives or practices that exist” (55). In terms of popular culture and popular music, the postcolonial perspective is thus very suspicious of who is assigning “intrinsic value” and “worth” to culture and music. This thesis aims first to understand Adorno’s theory of Standardization in relation to marginal/minority popular music as a theoretical position of Western authority, in order to undermine it and to legitimate musical fusion and the first person voice of experience as the authorized speaker of meaning and signification.

Within the area of postcolonialism, the concentration of this thesis is on the perspectives of Stuart Hall and Homi Bhabha, specifically their shared view that identity is a process of cultural signification, where “process” involves “the absolutely essential relations of cultural power – of domination and subordination – which is an intrinsic feature of cultural relations” (Hall 1981: 232). For Hall, popular culture is defined by the dialectic of cultural struggle involving “resistance and acceptance, refusal and capitulation, which make the field of culture a sort of constant battlefield” (233). Hence Hall (1981) defines popular culture as

a site where a struggle for and against a culture of the powerful is engaged: it is also the stake to be won or lost in that struggle. It is the arena of consent and resistance. It is partly where hegemony arises, and where it is secured. (239)
This means that the “process” of cultural signification is partly a struggle for power, which makes the messages communicated in marginal/minority music complex, involving many aspects of identity that are both unstable and ambiguous.

Like Hall, Bhabha also sees culture as a process of understanding and of signification. In referring to Frantz Fanon’s (1965) text on the colonial relationship during the decolonization of Algeria after the Second World War, Bhabha (1987) writes that out of the colonial relationship a new unstable kind of postcolonial culture emerged. For Bhabha, traditional cultures have been transformed by their contact with and struggle against colonizing cultures. He writes that culture is itself the act of articulation or “enunciation” (1995b). Bhabha (1994) defines cultural enunciation as “the place of utterance” where meaning is produced, meaning that is never “simply mimetic and transparent” (36). Bhabha’s concept of enunciation emphasizes cultural agency because the subject’s own enunciation defines identity, as opposed to, for example, when identity is defined by racial stereotypes where the stereotype is “constructed” as static and transparent – we can see through the stereotype to the racial “image.” However, when a culture represents itself, by its own symbols, icons, such as rituals and language, the representation is from within the “I.” This is partly what Bhabha means by the “Third Space.” Identity is created from a fluid fusion of cultural realities, the meeting place of the White Western “I” and the colonial “You.” Enunciation within the Third Space dislocates dominant culture’s constructed, assigned, designated identities by reinscribing cultural identity at the places of contact between cultures. Bhabha (1995b) writes: “The pact of interpretation is never simply an act of communication between the I and the You . . . The production of meaning requires that these two places be mobilized in the passage through the Third Space” (36). Bhabha’s Third Space defines cultures in the
moment of their use, at the moment of their exchange. The Third Space represents a strategy of enunciation that disrupts, interrupts and dislocates dominant culture’s “assigned” identities constructed by the language of US and THEM.

The methodological framework of this thesis comprises: a) applying semiotics to each of the three songs examined and b) also applying Bhabha’s concept of the Third Space to each of the songs. Like other academic areas of study, semiotics encompasses a very broad range of similar and differing theoretical perspectives. Although Hall is not considered a semiotician, his writings on the subject of “sign” and identity as a “process of cultural signification” play a key role in defining issues of cultural identities within postcolonialism. Hall’s (1997) view of semiotics starts off very much within the semiotic tradition of language as a representational system of “signs” and symbols which represent or signify concepts, ideas and feelings (1, 4). Words are seen as signs that enable us to encode (give) and decode (read) meaning. However, in terms of cultural meaning, postcolonialism sees the (representational) “system” (of signs) itself as misrepresenting the European (colonizing) and Non-European (colonized) cultures as separate enclosed unitary realities.

For Hall, embedded in the semiotic codes of cultural representation are “discourses” of racial/cultural “stereotypes” which function to misrepresent cultural identities. Hall (1997) defines “discourses” as “ways of referring to or constructing knowledge” and the practice of constructing knowledge as “discursive formations.” For Hall, “discursive” analysis means “any approach in which meaning, representation and culture are considered to be constitutive” (6). This translates into the racial Other being defined completely by racial stereotypes. Stereotypes are constructed with the language of “Otherness,” using signs of binary oppositions, such as US/THEM, “civilized”/
"primitive," "White," "Black," etc., where US, "civilized," "White," etc. represent the White Western Self (the colonizers) and THEM, "primitive," "Black," etc. represent the non-White colonized Other. Hall (1997) defines "stereotype" as "reduce to a few essentials, fixed in Nature by few simplified characteristics" (249). Idealization of identity and thus cultural misrepresentation are inherent in the language of "stereotyping" – what Hall also calls closure and exclusion, since they function to assign boundaries and exclude what does not belong.

Hall (1997) refers to stereotyping as "fixed" racial representations and writes that the language of Otherness is ambivalent as it is both positive and negative. It is positive because "it is necessary for the production of meaning, the formation of language and culture, for social identities and a subjective sense of the self" (238). But it is also filled with negative feelings of fear, hostility and aggression towards the 'Other' (238). When different cultures met under colonialism, such as European and African/Native cultures, conquering the Other culture(s) did not repress negative feelings such as fear. Rather, fear became part of the "desire" to be like the other culture(s). For example, historically jazz and blues artists were simultaneously feared and desired by White North Americans – feared for their African heritage which was stereotypes as "savage" and "primitive," and desired for their Black musical styles.¹

Bhabha shares Hall’s view of “ambivalence.” For Bhabha, the concept of desire is inherent in colonial authority’s construction of the Other. For example, as mentioned above, dominant White America’s construction of Black music as sexually primitive, something to be feared, is also inclusive of “White” desire for the creative expression of

¹ "Ambivalence" works both ways. The early evolution of ragtime, jazz, blues, for example, also involved the ambivalent feelings of Black musicians. “Blacks” also both feared and desired “White” musical ingenuity – they feared the power of the “Whites” because of their superior social/political position and at the same time desired creative mastery over European instruments such as keyboards and brass.
jazz, blues, etc. The “desire” to be like the Other comes from feelings of ambivalence — fear of the Other’s “primitiveness” and desire for the Other’s musical expression. Ambivalence is musically expressed as “fusion” of White and Black/Native styles of music such as jazz, blues, Native rock, Native country, etc. Fusion of musical styles is an example of how ambivalence produces cultural hybridities. Popular music in North America reflects the hybridities of cultures that characterize the Continent’s history.

The language of “Otherness” interpreted semiotically, is a representational system of “signs,” where racial stereotypes represent culture/identity. For Hall (1997) the discursive practice of stereotyping is an important indicator of gross inequalities of power (258), because culture is represented with signs that “actually create meaning by exploiting ‘difference’” (38). Hall argues that the language of stereotypes not only represents culture, but at the same time exploits race/culture and in this regard it is misrepresenting culture/identity. This is why unequal relations of power are embedded in the representational “system” itself; dominant culture’s power is inherent in the semiotic codes of racial “stereotypes,” in the language of “Otherness.” And this is exactly what this thesis argument is all about — marginal/minority music resists racist discourse and establishes cultural identity by overwriting “stereotypes” with the first person voice of experience, which Bhabha describes as enunciation in the Third Space. And this specifically is why semiotics is applied to each of the songs examined in this thesis. The semiotic analysis will identity signs of embedded “Black” and “Indian” stereotypes in the musical and lyrical language of each song. This language takes the form of what is commonly referred to in postcolonial theory as “silenced memories” of the colonial condition. For our purposes, this translates into conditions of Black slavery in America and the colonial occupation and social/political/economic domination of
North American Aboriginal peoples. In each of the songs analyzed, the semiotic codes of embedded stereotypes are overwritten by the singer/songwriter’s “silenced memories” enunciated as the first person voice of experience.

Hall and Bhabha go beyond just identifying semiotic codes of “otherness.” They show that the language of racial stereotypes misrepresents culture as an enclosed static reality. Both view identity as emerging out of cultural struggle, and thus draw attention away from the kind of semiotics orientated towards linguistics and language to focus attention on semiotic codes that speak to the historical aspects of cultures and uneven relations of power. This does not mean that they disregard the role that language plays in marginal racial identities. Hall’s concept of “binary oppositions” (discussed in Chapter 2) clearly shows how cultural signs, such as “Black”/“White,” US/ THEM, “savage”/“civilized,” etc. depend on language and the interconnectedness of binary oppositions and stereotyping for their meaning.

For both Hall and Bhabha then, semiotics is still a system for analyzing language but they want to point out that signs of culture do not represent static, enclosed cultural realities. Rather, the semiotics of marginal racial identities encompasses the whole field of cultural struggle, a push-and-pull kind of movement between dominant and subordinated cultures. And Hall’s retheorized semiotics grasps and grapples with the antagonism of the representational language “system” itself. From a postcolonial perspective, semiotics itself is an antagonistic representational system, as it simultaneously comprises of signs of racial stereotypes and signs of the first person voice of experience. Thus, Hall has retheorized semiotics to reflect the struggle for power between dominant and subjugated cultures. By applying semiotics and the concept of the Third Space to “Gun,” “Fast Car” and “Sacrifice,” this thesis aims to
show that semiotic codes of embedded “Black” and “Indian” stereotypes are overwritten by semiotics codes of disavowal and resistance iterated as the first person voice of experience. Hall retheorizes semiotics by adding the social/historical context of colonialism to semiotics’ traditional relationship to language and linguistics.

Bhabha’s concept of the Third Space coincides with Hall’s retheorized semiotics in its suggestion that semiotic codes of cultural identity function on two levels; 1) they represent embedded “stereotypes” and 2) they represent the first person voice of disavowal. The first person voice displaces the stereotype because it enunciates identities of hybridities. Bhabha’s notion of “hybridity” of cultures as described in his theory of the Third Space can be visualized as follows (Bredin 2002):

Semiotic analysis and Bhabha’s Third Space theory are each applied to the three songs examined in this thesis to substantiate the argument that marginal popular music resists racist discourse. Hall’s retheorized semiotics draws from the idea that the colonial condition defines culture as a site where a struggle for and against the powerful
is engaged and "partly where hegemony arises, and where it is secured." Hall's retheorized semiotics reads the "struggle" for identity as "a process of cultural signification." Bhabha's Third Space theory is applied to each of the songs to show that signification of culture involves communication/contact between cultures which produced postcolonial hybrid identities. Cultural hybridity is musically expressed as "fusion" of sounds/rhythms, narrative (including the tradition of storytelling), lyrical styles, etc. Fusion of musical styles signifies the crossing of cultural boundaries, what Homi Bhabha calls the Third Space and thus represents negotiated identities both in musical and political terms because hybridity is a result of negotiated power.

The progression through the thesis is as follows: Chapter 2 will present an overview of the principle literary contributions and theoretical concepts central to establishing the relationship between cultural/racial identity and marginal/minority popular music. Adorno's theory of Standardization will be presented and discussed. Some "standard" responses to Adorno's argument (including issues of "audience appropriation") by theorists in the field of popular music studies will be presented. These theorists generally are saying that popular music's function can be measured by more than just economic variable. Simon Frith's work will be referenced to show how popular music can function to define cultural identity. Chapter 2 will establish the relationship between cultural/racial identity and marginal/minority popular music by presenting Adorno's Standardization theory and responding to Adorno using the arguments of Hall and Frith.

Chapter 3 consists of a review of the relevant literature on postcolonial perspectives (mainly Bhabha, Hall, Foucault, Said and Francis). The works of these postcolonial theorists will introduce the idea that racist "discourse" is grounded in the
theoretical concept of the Other. Michel Foucault's (1980) theory of "Power/Knowledge" is presented to explain how power resides in "discourse" and thus discourse is defined as a set of techniques and tactics of domination. Edward Said's concept of "Orientalism" (1978) is presented to demonstrate that Said draws on Foucault to reveal how discourses produce races and racial differences. Daniel Francis' (1992) "The Imaginary Indian" is presented to show how the Europeans invented the "Indian" largely based on "discourse" or "constructed" reality. Francis argues that the "White Man" was the image-maker who had the power to "construct" the Indian, and this construction was based upon the discursive structures of the "Vanishing Indian."

A brief discussion of the early history of popular music in the U.S. will also be presented in Chapter 3. The idea of racial "myths" such as Black music being a product of the "noble savage," and the misrepresentation of Native music as monophonic (one part sound) and therefore "simple," will be introduced and examined. This discussion will be placed in the larger context of the philosophical tradition of "essentialism," having to do with the Mind/Body "dualism," where the Mind is perceived as superior and the Body as inferior. Essentialism is discussed only to the extent that it explains how the Western "rationalization" of music and the definition of what constitutes music can be seen as an extension of Western racial "discourses" of the Other.

Chapter 4 examines Gil Scott-Heron's "Gun" and Tracy Chapman's "Fast Car," and Chapter 5 examines Robbie Robertson's "Sacrifice." In each case, the song's fusion of musical/lyrical/narrative styles will be analyzed as semiotic codes of enunciation in the Third Space representing hybrid cultural identities. Each song's first person voice signifies the language of "ambivalence," i.e., silenced memories of subordination and, at the same time, the desire for inclusion. The silenced memories in "Gun" and "Fast Car"
have to do with America’s history of Black slavery, the meeting of White and Black cultures that produced hybrid musical styles and thus genres like ragtime, blues, jazz, rock, etc. In “Sacrifice,” the silenced memories have to do with the devastation of North American-Native cultures by European colonizers. As a result of European occupation, European folk fiddle music, square/step-dancing, country and western music became a part of “Indian” Reserve life. This in turn produced the fusion of European musical styles and Native chanting/dancing, Native drumming, etc. and the fusion of “organic” and “artificial” (computer-produced synthesizer) musical sounds that are exemplified in “Sacrifice.” The analysis of the songs in Chapter 4 and 5 will show how the semiotic codes of assigned identities of “Black” and “Indian” are overwritten by the first person voice of experience, thereby illustrating that the first person voice symbolizes enunciation in the Third Space. This is how popular music, produced by members of cultural and racial minorities, establishes cultural identity and resists racist discourse. The songs reveal an identity shaped by historical memory (the past), represented in each song’s language of “Otherness” and by the subject’s desire for inclusion in dominant society (the present), represented in the first person voice. In each song, the first person voice overwrites the semiotic codes of embedded “Otherness” to articulate hybrid identities enunciated from within the Third Space, i.e., the meeting of past and present.

The Conclusion, Chapter 5, will consider some aspects of this thesis that warrant further investigation and deeper research. Finally, the notion of “popular” as meaning “commercially successful” will be discussed in relation to marginal/minority music. It will be proposed that the commercial success itself of marginal/minority music is a process of signification and meaning.
CHAPTER 2

The Relationship Between Culture/Race/Identity
And
Marginal/Minority Popular Music

This chapter will argue that Adorno’s Standardization theory is rooted in the belief that there is an “essence” to music. Adorno discusses music as if it has a “form” separate from the events and experiences of peoples’ daily lives and experiences. Using Hall’s retheorized semiotics and Bhabha’s Third Space, this chapter will reposition music from an essentialistic framework (like Adorno’s Standardization theory) back into a context of human life/experience. For our purposes, human experience translates into the first person voices of those who carry the memory of the colonial experience. This chapter will also argue that Adorno’s theory of Standardization does not fully describe popular music because his theory dismisses the very complex and numerous functions of popular music. Adorno’s theory focuses exclusively on the “power of the music industry” and is more accurately an analysis of the culture industry than an analysis of the structural “form” of popular music. This chapter will show that the view of the audience as innocents exploited by the music industry is oversimplified. Under capitalism, the production of commodities is determined by their “exchange value,” whereas people consume products for their “use value,” making consumption an activity that involves identity and the production of meaning. Popular music has less to do with how the music or performance reflects the people and more to do with how it produces them, and in particular, how popular music creates and constructs an experience—a musical experience, an aesthetic experience. This chapter will argue that identity is a process, a becoming, a transformation, and that popular culture is defined by

2 “Peoples” refers to people in general and is not used as a euphemism for multiple ethnic or racial groups.
transformation where transformation involves both containment and resistance. This chapter will conclude that marginal/minority popular music can represent a strategy of resistance that disrupts, interrupts and dislocates dominant discursive structures of identity/culture through the first person voice, resulting in a redefinition of identity as cultural hybridity. The meaning of marginal/minority popular music is not found in its structural form but in the “performance” itself, where performance is defined as a movement, a flux of experience and, more completely, an identity. The conclusion of this chapter will also propose that, by representing popular music as a Standardized form, Adorno draws attention to the end product rather than to the “process” of creating meaning. This misrepresents popular music, and cultural/racial misrepresentation is addressed in the next chapter’s discussion of Hall and Bhabha’s arguments that identity is a process of cultural signification.

In his 1941 essay “On Popular Music,” Adorno writes that the fundamental characteristic of popular music is Standardization. “Standardization” means that the melody and the lyric of a popular song are constructed within a definite pattern or structural form, and the musician is therefore not free to interpret the meaning and feeling of the words because it follows a set pattern or form (Adorno 1990:314).

Adorno writes that initially it was the competitive process that developed the standards of popular music; specifically, as one particular song became successful, others imitated the successful one. Thus standardization is motivated by the music industry’s desire for profits. Adorno identifies this motivation as “pseudo-individualization.” This means, “endowing cultural mass production with the halo of free choice or open market on the basis of standardization itself” (308). For Adorno, this is how popular music maintains its hold on the masses.
Adorno’s argument is an extension of his conception of culture as shaped by economic factors, which is developed in *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*, by Adorno and Horkheimer (1977). They write that the culture industry’s ordering and categorizing of culture and human identity, a process of rationalization, helps the dominant group(s) establish a cultural monopoly that subsumes individuality and cultural difference into a “false” identity of the general. Cultural production translates culture into uniform commodities to facilitate mass production. Adorno and Horkheimer argue that ideology, when partnered with the power of capitalism, commodifies culture into an “industry” and thus achieves total domination through popular culture. They suggest that domination is a result of the legacy of Enlightenment; rationality, which, as well as leading to emancipation, further deepened social control thorough ideology — represented by popular culture. In cultural production, human values and the human social order become reorganized through the process of rationalization, specifically, social differentiation. For Adorno and Horkheimer, the standard of the culture industry is measured by creating false consumer needs, standardization, mass production and the rationale of domination itself (350). For the culture industry, cultural value is derived not from the consciousness of the individual or a mass consciousness, but rather from the “consciousness of the production team” (352). For Adorno and Horkheimer, the system of culture production results in the repression of creativity, and the culture industry’s partnership with “the absolute power or capitalism” ultimately serves to suppress any resistance to dominant culture.

There are a number of direct and indirect responses to Adorno’s Standardization theory. David Horn (2002) writes,

Though his [Adorno’s] insistence on the connections between twentieth-century popular musics and the imperatives of capital was and remains
immensely important, there is a strong residual sense in reading Adorno that what ultimately bothered him was the failure of the music to be sufficiently like great classical music, which operated on principles according to which it was the composer’s task to use harmony (especially), melody and structural development to challenge the listener. (17-18)

Although Horn’s comments are in the context of Adorno’s attack on improvisational jazz, they are relevant to our discussion because Horn’s comments suggest that all Adorno is saying is that popular music and improve jazz are not like classical music.

Nicholas Cook (1990) is another scholar who examines some of Adorno’s criticisms of music in his book *Music, Imagination and Culture*. Cook writes,

Theodor Adorno considered a technical understanding of music to be a prerequisite for its appreciation at the highest level – a level which he considered unlikely to be achieved by anyone other than a professional musician. (17)

Although Cook’s discussion of Adorno is in the context of classical music, it again reveals that most of Adorno’s negative views of popular music (and improv jazz) were greatly influenced by his knowledge of classical music. And Cook points out that trying to fit jazz and popular music into a European classical/concert music frame of reference would only demonstrate the many ways they differ from classical music. In responding to Adorno, Cook further writes that “listening to music for the purpose of establishing facts or formulating theories and listening to it for purposes of direct aesthetic gratification are two essentially different things” (152).

Cook suggests that theorists like Adorno criticize both popular music and improve jazz partly because they dislike the idea that “the element of improvisation is such that ‘the piece’ is sometimes little more than a show-case for the performance”

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3 In his work, ‘*Uber Jazz*, Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung V, 2 (1936), Adorno attacks both jazz and popular music for their standardization because he thought that the performance of the music, whether improvised or not, could not introduce what was not already there: “all its apparent departure from the original could ever do was remind the listener of the inexorable grip of the original, in all its limitations” (Horn 2002: 18).
In much of 20th century popular music in North America, the song or performance is often characterized by an improvisational musical dialogue between two or more instruments/musicians, or between musician(s) and singer(s), or an improvisational instrumental solo to showcase a musician’s talent.

For Horn, it would have been more useful if Adorno had tried to understand popular music on its own terms rather than try to measure it against classical music. He suggests, “rather than think of much popular music as structured around pieces and their performance, it is useful to think of in terms of popular music as ‘events’” (Horn, 2002: 20). By ‘events’ Horn means all the different things that come together in creating a song:

The origination, borrowing, development and arrangement of an ‘idea’, the participation of persons and technical equipment whose task is to produce sound, the relationships between them the execution of the task, the transmission of the results, the hearing of the result, the context in which the hearing takes place. (20)

Unlike popular music, classical music is not made of “events.” The defining feature of each classical piece is that it is already completely composed and its value as a piece of music is gauged by how strictly the conducting and playing of the music adheres to the original composition, i.e., the written music must be played exactly. In this regard, popular music (and similarly improv jazz) are like classical music. Horn describes the whole process of popular song as a “nexus” characterized by “movements and negotiation which permit many alternatives” (20). Unlike classical music, where performance of the music demands strict adherence to composition, popular music involves movement and negotiation between songwriter and technicians, other musicians, record companies, the audience. For Horn, both popular music and improv

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4 A musician can interpret written music, but in improvisational playing there often is no written music or it is purposely not played exactly as written.
jazz share the idea of “nexus”. He writes, “Here [in improv jazz] as in popular music, the concept of negotiation with the nexus of performer-performance-performed offers a persuasive alternative to more traditional concepts” (20). And by “traditional concepts” Horn is directly referring to Adorno’s use of classical music concepts to critique popular music.

Adorno’s Standardization theory assumes that the structural form of music represents the “real” existence of musical constructions. But as Cook points out, the existence of musical constructions is about as “real” as Freud’s psychological constructions of the unconscious, ego, and id! Cook (1990) writes,

Now Wittgenstein put forward an influential critique of Freudian theories, in which he accepted the therapeutic value of psychiatric practice while at the same time rejecting the entire Freudian concept of causation. In essence his argument was that neither the traumatic experiences that were recalled through psychoanalysis, nor Freud’s reified unconscious, ego, and id, had any real existence at all: they were no more than imaginary constructions on the part of the psychiatrist. But these constructions were valid to the extent that they allowed the patient to come to terms with his predicament on the one hand and made possible the detailed description of individual cases on which the practice of psychiatry depends on the other. (224-225)

Cook applies Wittgenstein’s argument about Freudian psychological constructions to music and argues that musical structural form is an imaginary construction which is valid to the extent that it enables the musician to create aesthetic pleasure for the listener (225). For our purposes, this means that Adorno’s explanation of popular music (and improv jazz) is a false explanation because it does not explain musical experience but rather the limitations that the theory has imposed upon the experience. Standardization theory represents music as having a reality, i.e., musical form, independent of human experience. In their book Visions of Sound, Diamond, Cronk and von Rosen (1994) write, “Within academic work we often discuss music as if it were separable from events
and experiences of our daily lives.” To view music as an extension of daily life is to understand music within the realm of human experience. In the context of this thesis, human experience translates into the silenced memories of the colonial condition. This means interpreting popular music from experience directly, the first person voice, rather than by imposing any essentialistic structures. Applying Hall’s retheorized semiotics and Bhabha’s Third Space to marginal/minority popular music then allows us to examine experience directly, i.e., to decode the silenced memories of the first person voice.

Although Adorno’s theory of Standardization dismisses the very complex and numerous functions of popular music, still we cannot deny that Adorno’s theory of mass culture clearly shows the importance of placing popular music and its associated practices within the context of its economic determinants. But to suppose that this therefore addresses questions of audience appropriation perhaps points to the incompleteness of Adorno’s theory, as it collapses everything about popular music into the economic realm. This approach focuses exclusively on the “power of the music industry.” Adorno’s theory does indeed demonstrate that the music industry has enormous economic power which allows it to shape culture. Horn writes, “his [Adorno’s] ultimate target was not jazz itself, or indeed any other idiom, but the culture industry that produced it” (17). Even if Adorno’s criticism were ultimately targeted at the power of the music industry, the industry is not completely in control as Adorno suggests. Frith (1983) writes that only 10 per cent of all records released (a little less for singles, a little more for LPs) make money (147). (Though these statistics obviously reflect the technology of the times, they still are true for the sale of CDs today). The
reality of popular rock music, for example, is that once it is in the market place the recording companies have little control over its use.

In his essay, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” Walter Benjamin (1968) rejected Adorno’s position and saw mass reproduction as a positive, progressive force. Mass artists are seen as the vehicles of democracy since their work is shared with an audience in which everyone is an expert. In this regard Frith (1981) writes, “creation has become a collective rather than an individual process” (47).

Related to the idea of audience appropriation is the general question often raised in mass culture theory – is there such a thing as a mass audience? Mass culture theorists of Adorno’s time generally assumed that the answer was “yes.” Cook (1990) writes that because Adorno was a Marxists sociologist writing in the years immediately following World War II, when mass culture had been used as an instrument of repression:

Adorno’s politically motivated distrust of popularity in music coincided with the widespread reaction in post-war Europe against a climate of subjectivity and emotionalism which had become suspect or even disreputable through its association with nationalism, racism, and mass hysteria. (179)

The Frankfurt School defined popular culture as a way of manipulating members of a completely “administered” society. Like the other members of The School, Adorno and Horkheimer came from middle-class Jewish families and fled Germany for the U.S. in the 1930s because of their political views. The Frankfurt School was deeply influenced by Marx and was interested in combining psychoanalysis and Marxism and this partly shaped their critical theory of Mass Culture; i.e., the economic system, specifically cultural rationalization/commodification (for profit), distorts and destroys the personality. The idea is reflected in Adorno’s suggestion that “standardization” for the purpose of money-making is the music industry’s way of exploiting a passive audience
under the illusion of "pseudo-individualization". The standardization of popular musical form results in "a system of response mechanisms wholly antagonistic to the ideal of individuality in a free liberal society" (Adorno 1990: 305).

Questions of mass culture in today's society are obviously much more complex and much more difficult to answer, considering the immense commercial success of contemporary genres and sub-genres like world-music, rap, hip hop, Latino pop, etc., that now make up popular music. There is much more room for marginal/minority music in popular music today than during Adorno's time and therefore, it is much easier to challenge Adorno and Horkheimer's claim that the culture industry's partnership with the absolute power of capitalism ultimately serves to suppress any resistance to dominant culture. From the point of view of the musician/singer/songwriter and other producers of contemporary popular music, a mass audience does not exist. The popular music market is differentiated according to personal tastes, values, income and social status. Stuart Hall and Paddy Whannel (1964) write that the view of the audience as innocents exploited by the popular music industry is oversimplified because, for capitalism, the production of commodities is determined by their "exchange value," whereas people consume products for their "use value" (269). Hall and Whannel see consumption as an activity that involves identity and the "production of meaning." Frith writes that popular music is popular not because of any criteria of authenticity, i.e., because it authentically articulates an experience, but because "it creates our understanding of what 'popularity' is, because it places us in the social world in a particular way" (Frith 1981: 121). The "authenticity" of marginal/minority popular music has less to do with ideas or concepts and more to do with a way of living them. What we should be looking at in popular music is not how "true" one piece of music is
compared to a theoretical ideal, “but how it sets up the idea of ‘truth’ in the first place – successful pop music is music which defines its own aesthetic standard” (121). In other words, how we talk about the music should not become detached from how people (musicians and listeners) feel about it (Frith 1996: 116). Jacques Attali (1985) writes that “music is more than an object of study: it is a way of perceiving the world” (4).

In this thesis, analyzing “Gun,” “Fast Car” and Sacrifice” means examining experience itself, as expressed by the first person voice. The application of semiotics and the Third Space theory in the analysis of the songs can be seen as a postcolonial analytic strategy for understanding contemporary marginal/minority popular music. The songs themselves are seen as contemporary postcolonial discourses because the origins of their messages are rooted in the histories of cultural displacement. From a postcolonial perspective, the songs signify how cultural meaning is produced in the process of cultural translation and thus the “signification” of culture contrasts with the “construction” of culture. To more clearly understand the idea of “signification” of culture it is helpful to briefly discuss Bill Nichols’ (1991) view of phenomenology because “signification” is rooted in his conception of this approach.

The word “phenomenology” is derived from the Greek “phenomenon,” meaning “appearance.” According to Wallace and Wolf (1995), phenomenology may be defined as “a method of philosophy that begins with the individual and his own conscious experience and tries to avoid prior assumptions, prejudices and philosophical dogma” (214). The origins of phenomenology are in European philosophy, especially in the work of the Swiss-German philosopher Edmund Husserl (1859 –1938). He was the first to use the term phenomenology. He defined it as an interest in those things that can be directly apprehended by the subject’s senses. This is the important point of
phenomenology: it denies that we can know more about things than what we directly experience about them. Husserl concluded that anything else is speculation and he argued that we should not even try to speculate.

Martin Heidegger (at one time, Husserl’s student) defines phenomenology as a means “to let that which shows itself in itself be seen from itself” (cited in King 1964: 155). What this means is that human experience is not defined by speculative constructions such as ontologies, essentialistic metaphysics, or quantitative or qualitative methodological frameworks of knowledge. Rather, phenomenology attends to the experience itself (Urmson 1960: 293). For our purposes, this translates into the first person experience of people of minority groups. Phenomenology is a radical procedure for gaining knowledge because it requires “suspension of all beliefs, and all scientific knowledge as well” (Urmson 1960: 293). This means suspension of “constructed” knowledge. Phenomenology rests upon the assumption that the experiences of individuals cannot be doubted. Phenomenology aims to delimit the realm of human experience, thereby acknowledging the complete realm of all human experience, and thus legitimating the first person voices of marginal minorities: “If all beliefs in existence, or in truths of any kind, are suspended, we are left with the experiences themselves” (Urmson 1960: 293). This is what Martin Heidegger means by letting “that which shows itself in itself be seen from itself” – whatever shows itself, identity/culture, in the first person voice of experience, will be seen from that point of view. Nichols (1991) applies the concept of phenomenology to ethnographic film-making, i.e., the idea that the first person voice is the authority of knowledge, which he refers to as “embodied” knowledge. He writes.

The phenomenological tradition shares with ethnographic film a commitment to the appearance of things in their specificity. It takes
considerable interest in the question of the body and how embodied action – performance – constitutes a sense of self in relation to others. Phenomenology addresses the issue of experience directly. (39)

The first person voice plays a key role in addressing “the issue of experience directly.” We will revisit the discussion of phenomenology later on in this chapter.

Semiotic analysis is usually applied to textual language, as in poetry, novels, the language of advertisements and particularly in the field of popular culture, to visual images such as photography and film. However, music also signifies. Susan McClary (1991) writes that music signifies because its representational character is inherent in the sound that is created. She illustrates this by discussing how music can represent emotions of happiness, sadness, or how it can sound “American” or religious, funky, sexy, etc. McClary writes that “Composers of music for movies and advertisements consistently stake their commercial success on the public’s pragmatic knowledge of musical signification” (1991: 21). She gives examples of how “the semiotic codes of the late nineteenth-century symphony” were manipulated by John Williams in the very commercially successful films, *E. T. The Extraterrestrial* and *Star Wars* (21). This manipulation was possible because language has many similarities to music. The linguistic/textual concepts of poetry are often analyzed and written in terms of musical qualities such as rhythm, meter, beat and repetition. And poetry, like music, can indicate a reading/singing which involves rhythm and structures of sound.

A number of other authors have also applied semiotics in order to gain a postcolonial analytic understanding of music. For example, in her article, “Ethnifying Rhythms, Feminizing Cultures,” Frances R. Aparicio (2000) discusses the image of the “mulatta,” which means ‘black woman dancing,’ as a “cultural sign or signifier, that in its national and transnational circulation, reveals the tensions, contradictions and inner
working of patriarchy in (post) colonial, intercultural contexts" (95). Aparicio also discusses how Cuban white males represent the concept of “mulatta” in poems as ‘pure rhythm’ and “thus constructing her as another instance of black primitivism” (97). Tera W. Hunter’s article, “Black Women in the south,” is about Black music and Black dance. She writes that “Black dance itself embodied a resistance to the confinement of the body solely for wage work. The feelings of self-empowerment and transcendence emanating from the blues and dance were evident in the power African-Americans invested in sound and bodily movements” (Hunter 2000: 156, 159). Hunter identifies the “semiotic relationship” between music and dance as one of allowing African-American “workers” (ex-slaves) to reclaim “their bodies from drudgery and exploitation and [one that] actually changed, momentarily, their existential condition” (159). In his article, “The Excluded Middle of the American Racial Imagination,” Christopher A. Waterman writes that “Blues music has been figured as a totem of Negro experience, a metaphor for black resistance throughout the Americas, ‘a survival technique, aesthetic equipment for living’, ‘a way of life’, a noble and ‘essentially American’ epic, an embodiment of African-American theology” (Waterman 2002: 177). In all of these articles, the addition of a postcolonial perspective to the semiotic analysis of the music reveals what Hall and Bhabha believe; that cultural identity is a process of signification and that “signs” of culture do not represent a fixed/static cultural reality but signify the process of domination and subordination that defines culture, in particular, minority cultures. The postcolonial perspective works well with marginal/minority music because both “help erode the borders and boundaries of stereotypes by showing that members of different social and cultural groups, majority and minority, cross constantly between self/other or we/them in the Third Space” (Bredin: 2000). The first person voice of the
songs assigns authority to the subject as the knowledgeable speaker and this allows the songs to establish categories of culture/identity as unstable, unfixed, fluid and continuous, thus erasing identities based on stereotypes. Bill Nichols (1981) writes that “signifying practices are social practices . . . When a discrete unit of signification like a text enters into exchange, as with an audience, its value comes to it from outside, from its function within a system founded upon a higher level of organizations” (6). ‘Higher level of organizations’ specifically refers to the discursive systems of ideological power. For our purpose, this means that the politics of contemporary popular music emerge as much from the reception strategies of audiences as from the intentions of artists.

But marginal/minority popular music is not only about the people who play and use it. It is also about how it creates them as a people, as a web of identities (Frith 1996: 121). The relationship between identity and popular music has less to do with how the music or performance reflects the people (or masses according to Adorno) and more to do with how it produces them, and in particular,

how popular music creates and constructs an experience – a musical experience, an aesthetic experience – that we can only make sense of by taking on both a subjective and a collective identity. The aesthetic describes the quality of an experience (not the quality of an object); it means experiencing ourselves (not just the world) in a different way. (Frith 1996: 109)

For Frith, identity is a process; specifically, it is a becoming. He writes that identity is “an experiential process which is most vividly grasped as music” (110). This is closely linked to Hall’s (1981) view that ‘transformations’ are “at the heart of the study of popular culture” (228). He sees popular culture as being in part “the ground on which the transformations are worked” (228). For Hall, both containment and resistance exist on the “inside” of popular culture, and there is movement between the two poles.
Although Nichols discusses the idea of "embodied action" in the context of film, the concept can also be applied to music because "embodied action" describes the first person voice of experience that speaks of the memories of the colonial condition. In marginal/minority music, embodied action can refer to what Bhabha (1990) calls "forms of contestatory subjectivites that are empowered in the act of erasing the politics of binary opposition" (196). In both film and music, the first person voice constitutes a poetics that displaces referential knowledge and replaces the Other with the first person voice of the Self. In listening to the music of marginal minority voices, we are able to view the inwardness of the speaking subject. The aesthetics that embrace marginal/minority music are created from the first person voice of experience, the voices of those who want to tell their own stories, their own histories – the reiteration of culture and identity by those who experience and shape it. Just as the voice of experience acknowledges cultural knowledge in certain documentary style films, the first person voice of marginal/minority music also reorients questions of culture/race/identity to include "the inextricable relation to experience, affect, content, purpose and result" (Nichols 1991:40).

Popular music, such as the three songs that will be examined in this thesis, represents a strategy of resistance that disrupts, interrupts and dislocates dominant discursive structures of identity/culture through the first person voice, and thus redefines identity as cultural hybridity. However, the music is not just about semiotic messages of cultural identity. Marginal/minority music is also an experience in its own right because of the dialectical interplay that exists between the cultural/political and the aesthetic. Willis (1978) writes that culture is sometimes made by "oppressed, subordinate or minority groups" because of the power of marginal groups to take certain artifacts as
their own and reinscribe them to express their own meanings (166-170). The songs themselves are seen as artifacts of human experience and of the historical moments in which they are located. Homi Bhabha writes that culture is a strategy of survival as much as a heritage, "so that the gap between inherited or official meaning [ideology] and its individual performance provides room for resistance and individuation" (Bhabha 1990: 190).

Marginal/minority music reinscribes culture and identity through the expression of issues that involve social authority and political discrimination. The music reveals "the antagonistic and ambivalent moments within the 'rationalizations' of modernity" (Bhabha 1990: 191). Some of the "rationalizations" have to do with stereotyping, more specifically, dominant culture's construction of the 'Other', a construction of identity based on the binary structure of opposition. As Hall (1997) writes, "the ideological sign can be discursively rearticulated to construct new meanings, connect with different social practices, and position social subjects differently . . . Its 'unity' is always in quotation marks and always complex". It is always "organized around arbitrary and not natural closures" (9-10). This means that dominant culture's assigned meanings of Black and Native cultures/identities give the "impression of being there, while remaining separate from the reality that is represented" (Nichols 1991: 33). For our purposes, this means that the location of dominant culture's "Other" resides less in the Black and Native cultures' histories and more in the White unconscious.

For Hall (1977), meaning is produced rather than simply "found" (5). This corresponds to Frith's (1996) view that the experience of music (making and listening) is more completely understood as an experience of self-in process (109). Frith writes,

My point is not that a social group has beliefs which it then articulates in its music, but that music, an aesthetic practice, articulates in itself
an understanding of both group relations and individuality on the basis of which ethical codes and social ideologies are understood. (111)

Thus, music is seen as a performance, a movement, a flux of experience and more completely, as identity. Roland Barthes' (1977) concept of escape from the "tyranny of meaning" can appropriately be applied to the idea that musical form and structure are not reflections of meaning but rather the production and actualization of meaning. The meaning of marginal/minority popular music is not found in its structural form, but in the "performance" itself. The performance produces significations beyond the "tyranny of meaning." The first person voices of the songs function as language that deconstructs, decenters (away from the center and towards a consciousness of the marginal). To read (or in Hall's terms, to "decode") a text is to invest oneself in the production of meaning and not in the product (the song). The semiotic analysis of the songs examined in this thesis involves interpreting both the lyrics and sounds as musical signs, specifically, as the first person voice of culture, and as metaphors of an identity that is "claimed either from a position of marginality or in an attempt at gaining the center" (Bhabha 1990: 195).

For Adorno, the concept of "popular" has a "market" or commercial definition, where commercially defined culture is associated with manipulation and debasement. Adorno's view of the popular partly assumes that the masses who consume culture are living in a permanent state of "false consciousness" and are thus "cultural dupes." As Hall points out, Adorno's view fails to address "the absolutely essential relations of cultural power – of domination and subordination – which is an intrinsic feature of cultural relations" (Hall 1981: 232). For Hall (1981), popular culture is defined by the dialectic of cultural struggle involving "resistance and acceptance, refusal and capitulation, which make the field of culture a sort of constant battlefield" (233). Hall's
view of culture suggests that it is neither completely corrupt nor completely authentic.

What is fundamental to popular culture is the relationship which defines "popular culture" in a continuing tension to dominant culture (Hall 1981: 235). Hall sees cultural forms and activities as existing in a continually changing field; this idea partly captures the complexity of "resistance." The structure of domination and subordination as a process has "at its center the changing and uneven relations of force which define the field of culture— that is the question of cultural struggle and its many forms" (235). Hall writes that understanding the notion of cultural struggle means viewing it as a historical process (236).

Adorno listened to popular music (and improv jazz) in the same way he listened to classical music, which lead him to conclude that departing from the "original" (composed music), meant departing from the most important thing that the "original" composition was bound to, "intrinsic value." Adorno’s Standardization theory imposes the rules of "representation" of European classical music on popular music, and popular music is fundamentally more fluid than classical because as Horn suggests, popular music is more a "nexus" and less a composition. By representing popular music as a standardized form, Adorno draws attention to the end product rather than to the process of creating or meaning.

By applying the same representational system of classical music to popular music, Adorno limits the range of meaning of popular music to an end, i.e., standardized form, as opposed to recognizing popular music as a process of creativity or meaning. Meaning in popular music is produced in part in the process of creating the song, as Cook points out, in "the origination, borrowing, development and arrangement of an 'idea,' the participation of persons and technical equipment whose task is to produce
sound,” etc. By representing popular music as a standardized form, Adorno has dismissed rather than recognized popular musical form as a way of knowing and being.

Though there are many problems with Adorno’s theory of culture, it is however significant as it points to the contradiction that exists in the music industry, namely between profit making and cultural content. And this contradiction also extends to popular marginal/minority music, because while the music aims to entertain, it also challenges the discursive practice of cultural stereotyping. Those who make marginal/minority music want to promote understanding of cultural identity and in the process reveal how identity is often politically shaped. Popular music is itself viewed by the many singers/songwriters as a site for expansion and invention that draws on distinct social, political and technological practices associated with cultural traditions which define identity. These distinct practices often produce oppositional possibilities as they are in constant dialogue with each other. Theoretically, this translates into analytical tension between the vision the music expresses and the cultural politics that the practices enact. Different ways of seeing the world are in part a result of differing histories often characterized by one culture dominating another. This theme is concentrated within the postcolonial perspective and is the topic of discussion in the next chapter.
CHAPTER 3

Cultural “Hybridity” and Marginal/Minority Music

This chapter will introduce the idea that racist “discourse” is grounded in the theoretical concept of the Other. Michel Foucault’s (1980) concepts of “Power/Knowledge” are reviewed to show how power resides in “discourse,” defining discourse as a set of techniques and tactics of domination. Edward Said’s Orientalism (1978) is presented to substantiate the argument that discourses produce races and racial difference. Daniel Francis’ (1992) The Imaginary Indian is explained to demonstrate that the Europeans invented the “Indian” largely based on discourse, a constructed reality. The concept of “stereotypes” is also examined to show that “Black” and Indian” are designated or assigned identities. The relationship between semiotics as a representational language system and the discursive practice of stereotyping reduces race “to a few essentials, fixed in Nature by few simplified characteristics” (Hall 1997: 249). The concept of ambivalence is also detailed, as it is a central part of this chapter’s examination of the discursive practice of stereotyping.

Adorno’s view of popular culture as defined primarily by economic variables is reexamined in relation to “discourse” to further substantiate the argument that Adorno’s view fails to address “the absolutely essential relations of cultural power – of domination and subordination – which is an intrinsic feature of cultural relations” (Hall 1981: 232). For Hall (1981), popular culture is defined by the dialectic of cultural struggle involving “resistance and acceptance” (233). “Cultural struggle” engages cultures in what Homi Bhabha describes as “communication between cultures.” For Bhabha, traditional cultures have been transformed by their contact with and struggle against colonizing cultures. In terms of music, “transformation” means the fusion of Black, White and
Native styles of music that defines popular music in North America. A brief discussion of the early history of popular music in the U.S. and the early fusion of European and Native music in Canada is presented. Racial “myths,” such as Black music being a product of the “noble savage,” and “simple” monophonic music of the “primitive” Indian, are also examined. This discussion is placed in the larger context of the philosophical tradition of “essentialism,” having to do with the Mind/Body “dualism,” where Mind is perceived as superior to the Body. Western “rationalization” of music is rooted in essentialism and is an extension of Western racial “discourses” of the Other. This chapter will conclude showing how hybridities of cultures arise from “enunciation” in the “Third Space.” This will lead into the next two chapters’ analysis of “Gun,” “Fast Car” and “Sacrifice,” demonstrating the idea of designated versus enunciated cultural identities.

The concept of the Other is often the starting point of postcolonial theory. Postcolonial theory is concerned with the exercise of discursive power that ultimately controls and disables the expressive capacity of colonized cultures. The works of Homi Bhabha, Stuart Hall, Edward Said and Daniel Francis help illustrate how the Western world’s Other – specifically, the cultural and racial Other to the White Western Self – is discursively constructed and naturalized to allow the White Western culture to give specific meanings to the “Black” and Native cultures on the African and North American continents.

Edward Said’s concept of Orientalism (1978) demonstrates how discourses produce races and racial differences. It draws on Foucault’s concept of “Power/Knowledge” (1980) to explain the West’s discourses of the Other, showing how representational Western discourses reinforced racists colonial practices and that the
relationship between the Orient (East) and Occident (West) is a relationship of power and domination. For Foucault, power resides in “discourse” and thus discourse can be defined as a set of techniques and tactics of domination. Power flows through discourse, like blood through the body. Foucault (1980) writes:

> What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn’t weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression. (119)

Power is intimately connected to knowledge, as power produces what counts as knowledge (89-91).

Said uses Foucault’s concept of discourse to show that the systematic use of power to construct an ideology of Orientalism enabled the European culture to manipulate the Orient. Western discourse served the purpose of defining a European cultural identity in the colonial period partly based on its binary opposition to the East. In Orientalism (1978), Said writes that the authority and self-interests of the West are inherent in the concept of Orientalism. The concept functions to construct a geographical, historical, cultural “reality” that reflects very little of the Orient. Said concludes that the connection between the Orient (East) and Occident (West) is a relationship of power and domination. This is what Said (1978) means by the “sovereign Western consciousness” (90). The Western idea of the Orient and its concepts of Orientalism are rooted in the discursive construction of cultural differences. Western culture makes the Orient the subject of academic discipline, an epistemological category demarcating East from West, Orient from Occident. The academic discipline of Orientalism is an extension of a dominant ideology that supports a set of institutions and practices that facilitate the definition, analysis and colonial occupation of the Orient.
The West can collect and display cultures in museums and books because of the colonial relations of domination that already exists. The discourse of Orientalism ultimately serves to dominant, control and manage the Orient, to colonize it.

There are many parallels between Said’s *Orientalism* and Daniel Francis’ *The Imaginary Indian*. Francis argues that the European culture invented the “Indian” largely based on a “false” reality. The “White Man” manufactured Native history; an extension of the “ambivalence” he experienced at claiming the North American continent in the name of “civilization,” and at the same time destroying the cultural and social fabric of the Indigenous people.\(^5\) Francis substantiates his argument by uncovering the origins of the “Imaginary Indian.” The “White Man” was the image-maker, the one who had the power to “construct” the Indian, and this construction was based upon the discursive notion of the “Vanishing India.” The stereotypical Indian was wild, untamable, uncivilized, and “progress” dictated that the “inferior” culture, which obstructed civilized values and national progress, be conquered by the “superior” European culture. The Indian existed only in relation to the “White Man.” He had no reality of his own, other than the one the “White Man” constructed for him. The Imaginary Indian had no history because history began with “civilization!”

In the early 1900s, J. P. Morgan financed Edward Curtis’ “great” 20 volume work, *The North American Indian*, which included not only pictures and text but also the music and languages of the Indians, (captured by a wax cylinder recorder, invented by Thomas Edison in 1878) (Boesen & Graybill 1977: 55). Curtis is labeled the “first ethnographer” who used photos to document history – he was the “first photo-historian,”

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\(^5\) The concept of “ambivalence” is central to understanding the discursive relations of power the colonial Western cultures established to “manage” and control the colonized. “Ambivalence” is an important concept in postcolonial theory and will be further explained throughout this chapter.
defining him as a combined artist, photographer, historian, explorer and ethnologist (Boesen & Graybill 1977: 43-46). Critics of the time called Curtis' pictorial story the "greatest" artistic and historical work in American ethnology (Boesen & Graybill 1977: 47). Across the country, the print media gave him rave reviews for his "authentic and artistic" portrayal of the Indians:

Critics praised the authenticity of Curtis' photographs. People admired the way they showed Indians as they really were. But in fact, the photographs were carefully posed renderings designed to convey a particular view of the Indian. He was trying to present the Indians as they existed before the White Man came; or, more accurately, as he thought they existed before the White Man came . . . Native people as they actually lived did not interest him because in his eyes they were no longer Indians. Only in his photographs might one find the real Indian, which is to say, the Imaginary Indian. (Francis 1992: 41)

The legendary and mythical qualities of Curtis' ethnography reflect European appropriation of Native culture, presenting them as the Vanishing Race, a race of the past.

For Francis, Curtis' ethnographic photography reflects the "White Man's" discursive practice of "stereotyping" the Indian, and this is exactly what Curtis achieved by immortalizing the "Vanishing Race" on film. However, Curtis' "ethnography" contained no record of Indian reservations, residential schools or the confiscation of Indian land. There were no photographs of Indians living in poverty and sickness on reserves, or the seizing of their land by new European settlements; in other words, there were no photographs of Indian reality. Curtis' documentation never attempts to reveal that the Indian world was disappearing because of the "White Man's" systematic devastation of their culture. His idealized photographs never prompted anyone to question the knowledge that the Indian race was disappearing, and there was no suggestion that their extinction should be stopped!
The Indian image was constructed by non-Natives out of a European (colonial) unconscious conflict that materialized in Curtis’ idealized portrayals of Indians as savages or wise elders. The image of the savage Indian who inhabited the North American continent made it seem a dangerous place, and thus the “White Man” was seen as the one who makes it safe. This image portrayed the “White Man” as the saviour of the Indian. Francis writes that Native peoples’ historical presence in North America gave them knowledge of the continent, and made their survival a successful process. In denying the reality of the Native people, the “White Man” denies Native presence in North America. Like the Imaginary Indian, the Continent has no history before the “White Man’s” arrival. And this belief continues to be discursively practiced today. Bruce Trigger (1985) writes,

Canadian ‘history,’ the discipline which traces development and interaction over time, has centered on the English and the French and regarded the First Nations as ‘prehistory,’ while ‘anthropology,’ concerned often with marginalized groups, has often cast them as ‘people who lacked their own history’. (4-5)

This is what Said (1978) means by the “sovereign Western consciousness” (90). Western culture makes the First Nations the subject of academic discipline, an epistemological category demarcating “history” from “prehistory,” English and French from the “Indian”. The academic discipline of Canadian “history” is an extension of a dominant ideology that supports a set of institutions and practices that facilitate the definition, analysis and European domination of the North American continent. The discourse of North American “history” ultimately serves to dominant, control and manage the North American continent. There are numerous writers who have also examined the issue of idealizing the “Indian.” Eleanor Leacock (1982) writes that Euro-Canadian stereotyping of “Indians” results in the denial of Native peoples’ history. For
Leacock, idealizing Native cultures “freezes” them in the “past,” denying their growth and development (167). In Fluffs and Feathers, Deborah Doxtator (1988) writes that “Indians” are stereotypes in a wide range of media, including exhibitions. She discusses how North American children are in the habit of “playing Indian” because of the influence of “Indian” stereotyping in Western films. She writes that tourists wear “Indian” headdresses to fulfill their fantasies of Indianness. She discusses the infamous Archie Belaney, who as a White man, assumed the “Indian” identity of “Grey Own” to fulfill his fantasy of “Indianness.” Doxtator, like Francis, also argues that either Indians are depicted as “savages” below Euro-Canadian “civilization” or as “noble savages” who are more moral, stronger, kinder than any Euro-Canadian (67-78). Rarely have Indians been treated by Canadian society as equals because as Francis (1992) writes, stereotyping of the Indian is partly a result of the moral ambivalence the White Europeans experienced over claiming a continent that was already home to someone else.

Said's concept of “Orientalism”, Francis' concept of the “Imaginary Indian” and Hall's concept of “stereotyping” can be linked to Bhabha’s (1995a) idea of “cultural diversity,” which sees culture as something fixed and static, an “epistemological” object to know about and study. Dominant culture's discursive practice of stereotyping is an example of “cultural diversity” at work as African-Americans and North American Natives become the objects of “White Man’s” knowledge. Stereotyping also illustrates Foucault's concept of “Power/Knowledge.” It reflects the power dominant culture has to racially represent the colonized Other in a manner that best serves dominant culture’s own interests. Said’s concept of “Orientalism” also involves the practice of stereotyping. Just as discourses of Orientalism produce the East, the discursive practices
of stereotyping allow “White” dominant culture to manage and produce “Black” and “Indian” identities. The success of blues, jazz and rap for example, is often attributed to the “innate” sexuality and rhythm possessed by African-Americans, and the sexuality expressed in the music is seen as part of their innate “primitivism.” As Hall (1997) writes, “For black, ‘primitivism’ (culture) and ‘blackness’ (Nature) became interchangeable. This was their ‘true nature’ and they could not escape it . . . Not only were blacks represented in terms of their essential characteristics. They were reduced to their essence” (245). When minorities are successful at something, it is often explained by a racially derived reason for their achievement. This functions in the best interest of the dominant culture as it eliminates “the direct competition and exchange that actually exists” (Scherman” 1995).

For Bhabha, the concept of desire is inherent in colonial authority’s construction of the Other. For example, White America’s “representation” of the pleasures/desires expressed in Black music as sexually primitive and primal, something to be feared, is inclusive of White culture’s desire for the musical ingenuity of jazz, blues, funk, rap, etc. Throughout the history of popular music in North America, racial myths of Black identity have misrepresented African-Americans. There are many authors who have examined misrepresentation of “Blackness” in music. For example, George Lipsitz (1990, 1994) has written about American popular music and the intermixing or fusion of class, gender, different age groups of audiences and how musical interpretation is often distinct to different regions of the U. S. Paul Gilroy (1993) discusses the fusion of

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6 In comparison to the numerous writings on the “construction” of “Blackness” in popular music, there is very little written about how “Whiteness” is created in popular music. Eric Lott (1993) has contributed to the few writings available on “Whiteness” by showing how the Blackface minstrels of the 1830s helped define the turn of the 19th century “White” working class, and also the identities of hoboes, bohemians that emerged during the depression years in the U. S. Lipsitz’s (1998) “White Desire: Remembering Robert Johnson” is also a work on “Whiteness.” He gives an analysis of how “Black” musicians are often romanticized by “White” musical artists, “constructing” a kind of idealized paternalism.
musical styles globally, (often called "worldmusic"). He writes about how audiences within what he geographically calls the "Atlantic Diaspora" read Black music. Lipsitz (1998) has written about how popularizing or commercializing music in the U.S. involved the "selling" of "Black" music for "White" profits. His discussion is in the context of the early blues and specifically, the blues of the legendary artist Robert Johnson, whose life although very short, greatly shaped the blues "style." Many authors in the field of popular music argue that Johnson's work was basically "stolen" by a range of artists that extends from Elvis Presley and the Rolling Stones to Led Zeppelin.

Robert Walser (2002) writes that like any cultural activity, music can be ‘articulated’ (as Stuart Hall puts it) to particular ideologies (309). Within the context of early jazz and blues, the myth of the "noble savage" was part of the ‘articulation.’ Early writers and critics of popular music created this myth. Despite the fact that the music is a product of the history of Black slavery, these styles of music were often regarded as a product of noble savages – music produced by untutored, semi-literate – for whom history does not exist (Sherman: 1995). The media and music critics were partly to blame for the perpetuation of this myth. The media perpetuated racism through stereotyping, and the critics (who often operate as an extension of the media) were partly responsible for misunderstanding and misrepresenting popular music, and thus partly reproducing racist ideologies in society. The misrepresentation is based on the myth of the "innate" ability of early "Black" musicians; "Because of these writers' lack of understanding of the mechanics of music, they thought there weren't any mechanics. It is the 'they all can sing, they all have rhythm' syndrome" (Scherman: 1995). This kind of stereotyping continues today, and is reflected in the public's association of "Blacks," often exclusively with sports and entertainment such as music and dance as opposed to
film, stage and literature. Ambivalence is embedded in discursive structures of stereotyping, and racial myths like the noble savage of early jazz and blues music demonstrate how ambivalence is typical of the colonial record.

Walser (2002) explains;

One of the earliest published discussions of jazz, a 1917 article in the *New York Sun*, shows how enthusiasm about jazz could easily be based in the same fantasies that supported blackface minstrelsy. On the one hand, its author praises jazz musicians' musical skills and links their innovations to modern life and art. On the other hand, he imagines that jazz puts him in touch with the exotic, spectacles of the African jungle. (309)

Though many writers have exposed hidden feelings of ambivalence towards early jazz and blues, ambivalence in the context of the early fusion of Native and European music has been much more difficult to recognize and reveal. Diamond, Cronk and von Rosen (1994) point out that there is relatively little writing to date about the musical responses of Native people to the early exposure of European musical styles, and “even less about non-traditional indigenous music which functions in First Nations’ ‘social’ setting including weddings, church socials, legion concerts, square dances, and house parties” (178). The authors also write that,

synthesis between one tradition and a new borrowed activity, however commonplace in other human societies, have been little acknowledged in First Nations contexts until recently. (176)

The reason for this is that sharing of traditions was viewed as a “one-way road” where Europeans could adopt Native traditions such as the toboggan or snowshoe without risk to their identity but Indians who played a fiddle, for example, were represented as “assimilated” (176). This “one-way road” of assimilated identity is connected to the systematic devastation of Native culture by the European colonizers, and music censorship was part of the devastation. For example, in the James Bay coastal
communities, “Drums were destroyed or their use not permitted” (175). There is evidence from early photographs that in the first half of the 20th century Native children were given violin, lute or mandolin in addition to keyboard and singing instruction within the residential school system (178). But the residential school system itself was a vehicle for destroying Native culture. Therefore it is not clear if the music instruction was part of the oppression or part of the encouragement of creative musical expression (178). In terms of ambivalence, clearly fear of the Other existed; Natives feared the “Whites” for their power and “Whites” were fearful enough of Native culture to systematically destroy it. But the question of “desire,” in relation to music, is not clearly demarcated in the Native context, as in the early fusion of “Black” and “White” music.

One issue that is addressed in the Native context is the myth of Native music as being “simple.” This myth is part of the discourses of the “primitive” Indian. Diamond, Cronk and von Rosen (1994) write that European classically trained musicians labeled Native music as “simple” because the only way they could make it fit into the European “model” of music was to rationalize it as a category of “monophonic” (one part). Even though many genres of Native music have either vocal or instrumental rhythmic accompaniment, they did not fit into a European “system” of music because it is a system which privileges pitch over rhythm (45). When European structures of music were applied to Native music, Native music became misrepresented; the meaning of Native monophonic form became limited to the range of European music’s symbols. But in Native culture, the ritual of drumming creates meaning for members of the community. Groups(s) of individuals sitting in a circle around the drum and beating the same monophonic beat and chanting in the same monophonic pitch over and over again,
“is an expression of togetherness, of community, of on-goingness” (Diamond, Cronk and von Rosen 1994: 31).

But Western rationalization of music is not just about the music, it also involves the traditions of the “textual” versus the “oral.” Most critics of music (perhaps like Adorno himself and others during his time) generally were grounded in the European tradition of music which is “literate” as opposed to the Native and African traditions which are “oral/aural” (Jackson 2002: 90). Music critics and commentators often reduced oral or aural phenomena to notation and applied text-based analysis to the music. And their conclusions were based upon imposing categories of textual representation onto a “system” of music that was more fluid than text. Jackson (2002) writes:

Scores, lead sheets and transcriptions do make it possible for those who read music to see relationships they might not hear. But, at the same time, such texts encourage their readers to see them as ‘objective’ renderings of musical practice, when in fact they hide as much as the highlight. Writing of whatever kind, Walter Ong observes, ‘fosters abstractions that disengage knowledge from the arena where human being struggle with one another. It separates the knower from the known. By keeping knowledge embedded in the human lifeworld, orality situates knowledge within a context of struggle’. (90)

Jackson (2002) also writes:

By favouring oral/aural procedures, jazz musicians endeavour to keep their performing and recording vital and connected to the contexts in and out of which they make music rather than to those associated with textual analysis. (90).

And again, though Jackson is referring to jazz, his comments are very applicable to popular music. Cook (1990) has pointed out (as mentioned in Chapter 1) that in both improv jazz and popular music, the song or performance is characterized by an improvisational style musical dialogue between two or more instruments/musicians, or
between musician(s) and singer(s), or an improvisational instrumental solo to showcase a musician’s talent (37). Horn’s (2002) (as discussed in Chapter 1) description of the whole process of a popular song as a “nexus” characterized by “movements and negotiation” and allowing many “alternatives” (20), fits Jackson’s above description of oral/aural traditions of music.

From a postcolonial perspective, “the ontological mapping of music onto race leads to stereotype and prejudice” (Radano and Bohlman 2002: 7). It is a way of constructing racial differences musically, and shows the hegemony of the European canon of music. Radano and Bohlman (2002) write:

Music and race interact far too often in the history of Europe . . . to sustain attempts to deny race and to silence the ways in which music calls attention to racism. (28)

They also write:

The putative inseparability of dance and music in the African diaspora is an obvious case in which music participates in the construction of race. The metaphysical essence of ‘African music’ is, therefore, physical and bodily. (7)

Racial myths then are built upon the underlying presumption that race and culture are defined by an “essence.” As Hall (1997) has pointed out, “Not only were blacks represented in terms of their essential characteristics. They were reduced to their essence” (245). This applies as well to the North American “Indian.”

The concept of “essence” emerges out of the larger philosophical tradition of “essentialism” characterized by the Mind/Body dualism, where Mind is positioned as superior to the Body and European societies as made by “things” of the Mind and the racial Other’s by “things” of the Body. Essentialism is related to marginal/minority popular music because it explains how the Western “rationalization” of music and the definition of what constitutes music are an extension of Western racial “discourses” of
the Other. Western rationalizations of Black and Native music were facilitated by essentialist discourses that assigned meanings of “primitive,” “savage” to the racial Other. European rationalization of Native and Black music functioned as discourses because the rationalization produced stereotypes, such as “simple,” “untutored,” “noble,” “savages.” From a postcolonial perspective, European rationalization of Native and Black music demonstrates that essentialism itself is a discourse of White Western power. Rationalization is a condition of essentialist discourse and thus does not describe Native and Black music beyond the practices of Western colonialism any more than discourses of the Other describes the histories of the races and cultures of the North American continent.

Simon Frith (1996) writes that anti-essentialism is necessary because it rightfully denies “the separations of body and mind on which such ‘essential’ differences (between black and white, female and male, gay and straight, nation and nation) depend” (122). Essentialism is at the root of discursive associations of, for example, “savage” to the “sexuality” in Black music, and “primitive” to the “simple” in Native music. From the larger postcolonial perspective, identity is always “in-process” because it involves the productive capacity of the self and this is disregarded in essentialism. From a postcolonial perspective then, essentialism obscures the means by which racial difference is discursively constructed; discourses of power are inherent in the racialization of cultural metaphysics. For postcolonialism, the uneven flow of power defines cultural identity as always negotiated and transformed by the colonial experience. It is for this reason that semiotics needed to be retheorized. In retheorizing semiotics, Hall is addressing its underlying “essentialistic” influences.
D. A. Masolo (2000) argues that dominant culture reformulated "savage" by rationalizing cultural rituals, folklore, "certain undefinable beliefs and influences" (Masolo p. 351 quoting Temple 1959: 36). These became rationalized into a category of "different" from European culture. "Difference" equates with absence, the absence of "civilized" behaviour. In relation to music, the West's reformulation of "savage" and "primitive" place African and Native rhythms and sounds as coming from an imagined "Heart of Darkness" (Conrad: 1971).

Masolo writes that even from an analytical stance cultural definition based on "difference" cannot be substantiated. The concepts of "uncivilized," "primitive," "savage" are analytically disconnected from their referent, the referent being the very cultural practices that characterize "uncivilized." Concepts such as "uncivilized" are discursively defined by conditions of "difference" which have to do with linguistic referents of opposites such as "Black"/"White," "civilized"/"savage," US/THEM, Self/Other, "modern"/"primitive," etc. These oppositions do not describe cultural practices.

This extends to the very concept of art itself and this is connected to Adorno's theory that a rationalized system of cultural production results in the repression of creativity. Adorno and Horkheimer (1972) write that the value of a work of art lies in its expression of creative "tension" or "discrepancy" which is part of "the passionate striving for identity" that engages the artist in the creation of the work of art.

Standardization robs art of the "intrinsic values" of "tension" and "discrepancy." Adorno and Horkheimer's definition of art rests on the Western concept of art itself as the transformation of form to matter. This suggests that there is a conscious rationale to creating and this constitutes the creative process (Masolo 2000: 355). This Western
view is based on what is theoretically referred to as an “imagined” creativity. The West has reformulated “art” by rationalizing the undefinable act of creating, and this has implications for the idea of culture. Masolo writes that

the West’s rationalizing of art results in defining ‘primitive’ art as devoid of a rational basis and in this way the Enlightenment created a hierarchical order of cultures/races founded upon whether or not the culture was based on ‘rationality’. (345)

In his article, “From Primitivism to Ethnic Arts,” Rasheed Araeen (1991) writes that the primitive world is seen as

trapped in the irrationality of its past history, in its primeval or pre-rational existence. In fact this [primitive] entity does not even possess consciousness of itself, its own past, present, future. It is the victim of its own timelessness, a static condition characterized and contained by ethnic, tribal, communal, irrational, unconsciousness, traditional . . . modes of existence. (160) (Also quoted by Masolo 2000: 355)

But the West’s notion of “primitive” existed long before European colonial rule on the North American continent. In The Idea of Africa, V. Y. Mudimbe (1994) writes that the Greco-Roman era conceptualized the racial Other in their depictions of “barbarism” and “savagery.” Dore Ashton (1984) cites the French philosopher Michel de Montaigne as saying:

each man calls barbarism whatever is not his own practice, for indeed it seems that we have no other test of truth and reason than the example and pattern of the opinions and customs of the country we live in. (152)

This is one explanation of how the colonial Other became a racial stereotype based on Western colonial discourses of “primitive,” “savage,” and “uncivilized.” And the Rationalized framework of the Enlightenment continued this Western tradition of the racial Other by placing European cultures at the top of its cultural hierarchy, and thus primitivizing the non-European cultures.
Still, the discursive practice of racial stereotyping and the resulting “inferior” representations of music like early jazz and blues and traditional Native music did not and cannot grant dominant “White” culture absolute power over “Black” and “Indian” identities. In this regard, Foucault’s concept of power, as uneven and everywhere, compliments Bhabha’s concept of the Third Space – first person enunciation is juxtaposed with dominant culture’s “representations” of the Other. Both theories can accommodate changes that occurred throughout history because both view power as a mediating rather than an absolute force.

The idea that power is a mediating force partly underlies Foucault’s theory of “Power/Knowledge.” As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, Said applies Foucault’s theory to the concept of “Orientalism.” But Bhabha (1994) writes that there is an inconsistency in Said’s application (74). For Bhabha, Foucault’s “Power/Knowledge” theory, “places subjects in a relation of power and recognition that is not part of a symmetrical or dialectical relation – self/other, master/slave – which can then be subverted by being inverted” (72). Here Bhabha is specifically referring to Said’s discussion of the West’s objectification of the Orient as an epistemological category of knowledge. Said is suggesting a “unidirectional” flow of power but Foucault’s power is uneven and flows everywhere, like blood in the body. Foucault’s idea is that power does not flow in one direction, from the top down, because it is not hierarchical. For Bhabha, there are two things going on simultaneously in the West’s objectification of the Orient; the Orient has become a topic of learning, discovery on the one hand and a site of dreams and fantasies on the other (71). Bhabha suggests that Said is aware of the inconsistency in his application of Foucault’s concept of power to “Orientalism,” as Said “continually hints” at the idea of “polarity or division.” Polarity or division is “the
symbolic decentering of multiple power relations which play the role of support as well as target or adversary” (72). Though Said’s discussion of the West’s objectification of the Orient does not perfectly fit Foucault’s concept of power as uneven, Said does qualify his inconsistency by “continually hinting” at the idea of “polarity or division.” “Polarity” repositions the colonized Other out of the receiving end of a “unidirectional” flow of power, and inside the uneven, mediating flow of power. This then is consistent with Foucault’s idea that power is not absolute; it is a mediating force, and this is why we can account for historical change – because of shifts of power. And this also captures Hall’s (1981) view of popular culture as defined by the dialectic of cultural struggle involving “resistance and acceptance, refusal and capitulation, which make the field of culture a sort of constant battlefield” (233). This explains how identity, enunciated in the Third Space, is produced by the flow of power between the colonizer and colonized. The uneven flow of power accounts for contact, communication between cultures, between the past and present. The uneven flow of power is the condition that authorizes hybrid cultural identities enunciated in the Third Space. As Bhabha writes, “hints” of “polarity or division” in discourses of colonial powers make resistance and disavowal possible and this is consistent with Foucault’s “power/knowledge” theory - power is uneven and flows throughout society.

The evolution of popular music in North America shows that discourses of racial myths such as the “noble savage” of jazz and blues and the “simple” Indian of monophonic Native drumming do indeed reflect colonial control and manipulation of African-American and Native identities, but not absolutely. The fusion of “White,” “Black” and Native musical styles in North America is a result of the meeting of African, Native and European cultures which produced hybrid cultural identities – a
clear illustration of “enunciation” in the Third Space. White musical styles such as classical and country & western, combined with African musical styles, produced new “hybrid” genres such as ragtime, jazz, rhythm & blues, rock & roll, hiphop, rap, etc. (Cox, Listening Tapes: 2001/02). Ragtime, the chief precursor of jazz is a fusion of African and European music and is an example of cultural “hybridity,” the meeting of African-Americans and Europeans in the Southern U. S. Ragtime incorporates the European lefthand/righthand paradigm of the piano but unlike European “composed” rhythmic patterns, its lefthand African influenced rhythms are syncopated, improvisationally adding and removing notes, while the righthand melody follows the “composed” pattern of European music (Cox, Listening Tapes: 2001/02).

The blues also are a product of the fusion of African and European musical elements, the rhythms and timings of African music playing a key role. Syncopation or the “off beat” is characteristic of African tribal music and drumming. The “freer” more improvisational beats heard in the blues are attributed to African influences (Monson 1994: 128-130). The blues also draws from the African tradition of dissonance, the clashing of notes that don’t necessarily harmonize but are appealing for their “off beat” sound. Blues singing incorporates traditional European melodic form but dissonance is made more prevalent (Radano and Bohlman 2002: 5-10). The African musical tradition of “call and response” from singer to singer, musician to musician, referred to as antiphony, also became the focal point of the blues (Hunter 2002: 158-160). The idea of discrepancy is also an intrinsic part of the blues tradition when we consider that in blues music, sadness is often expressed with sharp witty lyrics:

The Blues always impressed me as being very sad, sadder even than the Spirituals, because their sadness is not softened with tears, but hardened with laughter, the absurd, incongruous laughter of a sadness without even a god to appeal to. (Scanlon 2000: 532 quoting
In addition to discrepancy, the idea of frustrated desire is also a part of blues music:

A desire for transcendence [from pain and suffering] that knows itself doomed from the start and so can do nothing but continually re-enact its own frustration. (Scalon 2000: 532)

Scanlon further writes that the profound pessimism that is central to the blues can be explained as symbolizing the re-enactment of frustration (532).

The evolution of blues as a genre illustrates Bhabha’s concept of the Third Space because the blues evolved from the distillation of African music brought over by slaves to become African-American music. It is an example of “enunciation” in the Third Space because blues expresses the fusion of African style field hollers (arhoolies), Anglo-Celtic ballads, church music involving English hymns, Negro spirituals, sermons, ring shouts and African influenced rhythmic dance tunes called jump ups (Cox, Listening Tapes: 2001/02). At another level, the basic attitude of the blues is an expression of cultural “hybridity” – “that joyful music can come out of real pain” (Cox, Listening Tapes: 2001/02); joyful music (music that enlightens the soul) came out of conditions of slavery.

Cultural hybridity also ensures cultural continuity, and genres such as blues, jazz, rap, hiphop, etc., that make up marginal/minority popular music are all about cultural continuity. Cultures continue because the meeting of different cultures does not destroy one culture for the survival of another, but facilitates change through hybridity and fusion of musical styles. And fusing musical styles often involves fusing musical categories. For example, Kevin Gaines (2000) and M. Cooke (2002) write that jazz musicians like Duke Ellington not only fused different styles of music but disregarded musical categories by “blending African-American, popular, and classical idioms” in
such early works like *East St. Louis Toodle-O* (1927). The blending of idioms partly explains how blues and jazz shifted from their originary place as popular music of "Blacks" to their contemporary elite status, further illustrating Bhabha's concept of cultural "hybridity." Blues' "strongest links today are to the rock genre and include numerous contemporary 'White' musicians/artists." And like jazz, blues is now studied in the dominant culture's institutions such as universities and colleges.

The history of popular music in the U. S. demonstrates how cultural "hybridity" can function to mediate power between the dominant White culture and the marginalized Black culture. African-Americans shaped their own identity through their own music, expressing their historical memory in their own versions of Black history and by their experiences of slavery and urban life. The first person voice assigns authority to African-Americans to define their own identities and thus reinscribes over stereotyped identities. The history of popular music in America is filled with examples of "enunciation" in the Third Space. The brief outline presented gives a sense of the fusion of "Black" and "White" influences in the music's early history, from the 1900s musical (ragtime) styles of Joplin and Jelly Roll Morton of combining European sectional form with the African influenced improvisational style, to the emergence of jazz, blues influenced rock and roll, to urban blues and numerous musical fusions which came to define popular music, including the contemporary genres and sub-genres of hiphop and rap. Throughout American history European instruments have influenced Black artists and White artists have musically expressed their influences by Black "styles." This musical hybridity demonstrates that systems of discourse such as stereotyping are best understood by examining discourse not only as a function of history but also as a political function. Thus, history of popular music in North America obviously involves
many complex economic, social and political considerations that produce its “regime of truth” constructed upon racial “ambivalence,” tensions and harmonies that exist between “White” and “Black” American. But this is perhaps too large a topic to cover in this thesis, and thus I will consider only two specific songs as instances of this form of cultural politics.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, there is very little written about the early fusion of European and Native music in North America. A lot of information that does exist is in the form of early photographs depicting Native and Europeans instruments. Diamond, Cronk and von Rosen (1994) write that music of the Christian Church, the introduction of the fiddle by Celtic and French fur traders in the 17th and 18th centuries and regimental bands of the British colonists had variable impact in different Native communities. Twentieth-century photographs show drums present in religious processions, revealing “that drums were integrated into Christian events in some Northeastern Woodlands village contexts” (175). Recently, descriptions of Christian hymn singing in Native performance contexts have emerged (Diamond, Cronk and von Rosen 1994 citing Cavanagh 1988; Grant 1984; Powers 1987). This suggests that Christian practices were borrowed and adapted to traditional Native contexts and that music was something integral to the fusing of traditions. For example, around the turn of the century, the Saulteaux around Lake Winnipeg incorporated the fiddle into the Native practice of “vision quest” (Diamond, Cronk and von Rosen 1994: 176). The ubiquitous fiddle and button accordion were especially popular in Northern Ontario and Quebec. “In the community of Maniwaki, we were told that virtually every adult owned and played a fiddle a generation ago” (178). Traditional Cree dancing was sometimes accompanied by a fusion of alternate rock, country and fiddle tunes (178). “In addition
to ‘old time’ square or step-dancing, western swing and country music were popular with Native audiences from the 1940s” (178). All this early history is evidence of cultural hybridity in the form of fusion of Native and European styles of music. However, it is difficult to clearly place the concept of ambivalence in a discussion of the early fusion of Native and European musical styles because, as mentioned earlier, synthesis of cultural traditions was rarely acknowledged in First Nations contexts until recently. And thus, the early fusion of musical styles would also perhaps be represented as Indian assimilation. In other words, the Native influence on European music would not have been acknowledged in early popular culture. The reality of cultural synthesis was discursively represented in popular culture as a one-way road of Indian “assimilation” (Diamond, Cronk and von Rosen 1994: 176).

However, the concept of ambivalence is much more recognizable in the challenges encountered by contemporary Native musicians in Canada. Before 1951, the (unrevised) Indian Act made it illegal for Natives to enter places that were licensed to sell liquor. Of course this was a large barrier for Native musicians and singers. It is in challenging these barriers that some Native musicians/artists caught the attention of the public. One such artist was Robert Jamieson (1877-1966) a popular jazz pianist from “Six Nations Reserve” in Ontario. “In the 1920s and 1930s, Jamieson was in demand in nightclubs in southern Ontario and New York State; his performance style was strongly influenced by Fats Waller, Count Basie, and Stan Getz” (Diamond, Cronk and von Rosen 1994: 178). The very act of challenging the Indian Act and the success of Jamieson as a jazz pianist demonstrates the idea of “ambivalence” – fear of the Indian Act and at the same time a desire to succeed in mainstream popular culture such as, nightclubs and other entertainment venues.
The diverse musical influences in contemporary popular Native music are evident in many artists' musical styles. The blues are very popular among Native artists such as Murray Porter, Ben Simon, and Leonard Martin. Though these artists have not reached the height of commercial success of people like Aglukark, Robertson or Saint-Marie, they have played on other successful artists' albums and in various concerts with other popular singers/songwriters such as Tom Jackson. Bands such as Eagle Feather have achieved international success with their 1993 European tour of traditional and country/rock music (Diamond, Cronk and von Rosen 1994: 180). The most consistently popular music in Native communities is country music but few performers have acquired success beyond their own communities. Among the few are Mark Laforme, Eagle Feather, and the C-Weed Band.

In the Native context, new hybrid genres function as "forces for renewal and at time, resistance" (Diamond, Cronk and von Rosen 1994: 180). The fusion enunciates a cultural hybridity that identifies; 1) the close connection between music and dance and 2) the uses of music as vehicles of social change (180). Gilles Chaumel (1989) writes, "The new aboriginal music is precisely about building an identity. This new music is alive because it is constantly changing. It reflects aboriginal society . . . which itself is being transformed." And transformation is part of what Frith (1996) means when he writes that identity is a process of becoming, "an experiential process which is most vividly grasped as music" (110). In the Native context, we could not discusses cultural hybridity without recognizing the difference between disruption of culture and cultural transformation:

The use of new materials for musical instruments (whether Pepsi cans for Anishnabe rattle or plastic water pipe for Iroquois water drums) does not represent disruptive change if the right sound and right connection to the natural and social environment are maintained.
Because almost all aspects of Native culture were systematically destroyed by colonial occupation, in the Native context, renewal of culture is an integral part of cultural hybridity. In terms of popular music, the commercial success of artists like Buffy Sainte-Marie, Susan Aglukark, Robbie Robertson, Kashtin, Eagle Feather, C-Weed Band, etc., represents cultural hybridity as opposed to threats to traditional music, because their success creates "opportunities to renew the language and the traditional values of Aboriginal people" (175). In Bhabha’s Third Space, "traditional values," in the Native context, would mean revitalized values, produced by postcolonial hybrid Native identities.

Marginal/minority popular music is a discourse of power as it represents enunciation in the Third Space, and thus gives authority to and harnesses the individual’s own suppressed knowledge of culture and identity. Foucault (1980) writes, “individuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application” (98). Ideology’s discourses of the Other in the practice of stereotyping represent a form of discursive power; works of art such as marginal/minority music are also forms of power as the songs themselves reinscribe dominant culture’s constructed “other” in a strategy of enunciating identity that disrupts, interrupts and dislocates the dominant discursive Self. Postcolonialism is not only consistent with the messages of marginal/minority popular music but it also gives insight into Adorno’s argument about the commodification of popular culture. Bhabha’s concept of hybridity illuminates how commercial success is achieved in popular music. Much of popular success is due to creatively combining old styles with the new and gradually familiarizing the audience and the record industry to the “new” music. However, the producers of music have no control over how the
audience interprets their music and they have no way of predicting why and when a new style of music will become popular. Generally, to maintain and generate the popular market, the music industry has relied on producing “new” sounding music that is progressive enough to be different but not too different, as the industry wants the music to be commercially successful as well. Thus, the musicians’/songwriters’ constant experimentation with formulas involves exploring new sounding music and perhaps adjusting it to meet the dominant style – and this has translated into a kind of hybridity, i.e., mixing musical styles from different cultures. The analysis of “Gun,” “Fast Car” and “Sacrifice” in the following two chapters demonstrate that musical fusion is and expression of hybridities of cultures.
CHAPTER 4

Cultural Identity
As Enunciation in the “Third Space”
Gil Scott-Heron’s “Gun” & Tracey Chapman’s “Fast Car”

In this chapter, Gil Scott-Heron’s “Gun” and Tracey Chapman’s “Fast Car” (see Appendix A & B) are analyzed to show how popular music produced by members of cultural and racial minorities establishes cultural identity and resists racist discourse. The examination of the songs illustrates how resistance is “enunciated” lyrically and instrumentally through “signs” that assign meaning to African-American culture/identity. This means that the analysis of the two songs is concerned with “how” identity/culture is represented, specifically how the first person voice of each artist in question produces meaning which rests upon the assumption that their experiences as individuals cannot be doubted. Both the lyrical and instrumental language of “Gun” and “Fast Car” involve the fusion of different styles of music which translate into musical signs and symbols of emancipation and inclusion that reorient the signified ‘Other’ to include experience, affect, content and purpose.

Gil Scott-Heron is an African-American singer/songwriter, poet and political activist. Scott-Heron is often referred to in the music industry as one of the pioneers of “rap” style music as he was one of the first to achieve success with songs that combined street-poetry-reading with music. He came into the public eye when he recorded a reading of his volume of poetry, Small Talk At 125th and Leno, to a background of congas and bells for jazz producer Bob Thiele. Released in 1972, Small Talk documented the world-view of the “Black Arts Movement” with songs such as “Whitey On The Moon,” a very funny attack on American economic priorities, and a shorter
version of his most famous song, “The Revolution Will Not be Televised” (Gil Scott-Heron:http://www.oafb.net). Much of Scott-Heron’s commercial success is due to danceable disco-style single hits, such as “The Bottle” (1974) followed by another single hit, “Johannesburg” (1975), proving “that disco could celebrate something aside from hedonism, the anti-apartheid struggle and yet still move bodies” (GilScott-Heron:http://www.oafb.net). His 1981 hit single “B Movie” from his Reflections album, “was perhaps the most bitter explicitly political song ever to be a hit on radio. With its smart setting (a second-rate western) and savage characterizations of Reagan and his cronies, ‘B Movie’ perfectly captured the Left’s mood at the time” (GilScott-Heron:http://www.oafb.net). Scott-Heron’s Spirits was released in 1993, and in 1998 an Anthology of his work, including unreleased often hilarious live tracks of his rap sermon-lectures on “bluesology,” was released (GilScott-Heron:http://www.oafb.net).

Scott-Heron began his career by writing and reciting no-nonsense street poetry and as he added more instrumentation he began to sing his poem-songs, thereby inspiring a future generation of rap artists. From the beginning of his musical career, he has been an artist with a social conscious. In the 1970s and 80s, he was an outspoken advocate for the anti-apartheid struggle in his song “Johannesburg” and became one of music’s most eloquent anti-nuclear campaigners in songs like “South Carolina” (1976) and “We Almost Lost Detroit” (1977) (http://www.oaf.net: 2003). In the early 1970s and 80s his songwriting style placed him in the R & B charts. However, much of his jazz-based work was tempered with danceable disco-inspired funk basslines, positioning some of his songs in the popular music category; songs such as his Top 30 single “Johannesburg” from the album From South African to South Carolina (1976), and the number 15 hit “Angel Dust” from the Secrets (1978) album (http://www/allmusic.com:
His most famous single is “The Revolution Will Not Be Televised” from the *Pieces of a Man* (1971) album. The song is “an aggressive polemic against the major media and White America’s ignorance of increasingly deteriorating conditions in the inner cities” (http://www.allmusic.com: 2003). Scott-Heron is often referred to as the “proto-rapper” as he is considered by many in the music world to be one of the fathers of rap music (http://www/allmusic.com: 2003).


Chapman burst into the popular music scene in 1988, with her (three) Grammy award winning untitled debut album containing the single chart busting hit, “Fast Car.” She won another Grammy in 1997 for Best Rock Song, “Give Me One Reason.” In 1999, Chapman was ranked #54 on VH1’s “The 100 Greatest Women in Rock‘N’Roll.” Throughout her musical career, Chapman has supported a range of social causes, such as human rights, racial equality, economic justice and saving the environment (http://www. about-tracy-chapman.net/html: 2003). Included in the artwork of her latest album *New*
Beginning (2002) is an offer for her fans to get a free packet of seeds if they bring the coupon to a Chapman concert. Chapman says that she wanted to get “people to think about the potential and possibilities that exist in even something as small as a seed” (http://www.elektra.com/elektra/tracychapman.net/html: 2003).

Scott-Heron’s Reflections featuring “Gun,” and Chapman’s self-titled album featuring “Fast Car” are categorized in the rock genre and their musical styles are classified as fusion (http://www.allmusic.com: 2003). “Fast Car” is a fusion of rock, folk and blues, and “Gun” is a fusion of rock, jazz and blues. Although today, fusion generally is taken to mean the mixing of many styles and categories of music, it was originally defined as “a mixture of jazz improvisation with the power and rhythms of rock” (http://www.allmusic.com: 2003). It is generally agreed in the music world that jazz and rock remained separate until around 1967:

as rock became more creative and its musicianship improved, and as some in the jazz world became bored with hard bop and did not want to play strictly avant garde music, the two different idioms began to trade ideas and occasionally combine forces. (http://www.allmusic.com: 2003)

In this regard, rock music has also expanded and changed its boundaries over the years. Very often “rock and roll” is used as a generic term but its sound is rarely predictable.

Initially rock was defined by

its energy, rebellion and catchy hooks, but as the genre aged, it began to shed those very characteristics, placing equal emphasis on craftsmanship and pushing the boundaries of the music . . . rock and roll had a specific sound and image for only a handful of years. For most of its life, rock has been fragmented, spinning off new styles and variations every few years, from Brill Building Pop and heavy metal to dance-pop and grunge. (http://www.allmusic.com: 2003)

From a postcolonial perspective, the fusion signifies the process of overwriting colonial discourse. “Gun” and “Fast Car” represent emancipation from the ideologies of the
"master," i.e., White America, as both reposition Black identity from the status of Other to the reiterated Self. And thus both songs represent minority music that speaks from within the Third Space. As minority voices, both artists signify American identity from the periphery of authorized power. Scott-Heron’s periphery is “the ghetto” and Chapman’s is “the shelter.”

_BrotherMan nowadays livin’ in the ghetto
where the danger’s sho’ ‘nuff real . . .
(Scott-Heron)

You’ll find work and I’ll get promoted
We’ll move out of the shelter . . .
(Chapman)

Each song’s text falls into the blues genre as it engages the complex musical history of Africans in America. “Gun’s” street-style form of line repetition and poetic meter is characteristic of blues rhythm. The first person voice in “Gun” and “Fast Car” is characterized by blues style refrains, motifs and metaphor. Both artists’ first person enunciation of identity assigns the songs their authority as a knowledge of referential truth, because Scott-Heron’s and Chapman’s enunciation gives us a sense of the origins of the African-American struggle, making both their stories cultural performances.

From Bhabha’s perspective, this means that there is an I and You designated in the songs and interpretation does not simply mean communication between the I and You. Meaning is produced when the I and You are “mobilized in the passage through the Third Space” (Bhabha 1994: 36). Meaning takes shape from within the Third Space where cultural identity is produced performatively. This means that the songs themselves negotiate cultural identity. Both songs are enunciatory sites for listening to the inwardness of the African-American experience from the “outside.” The signifier of “outside” is the material history of Black slavery in the U. S. and African-Americans’
resulting marginality, marginality as represented by dominant White culture. “Gun” recreates the self in a world of violence, social injustice and inequality – all of which characterize American power and domination. “Fast Car” recreates the self within the “American Dream” of middle-class suburban life, a dream which is practically out of reach for Black women.

Scott-Heron approaches “Gun” via the blues, jazz, rock repertoire. Rock-inspired rhythms signifying African-American ghetto life are accompanied by blues-style lyrics:

\begin{verbatim}
BrotherMan nowadays livin' in the ghetto
where the danger's sho' 'nuff real...
I'll lay you nine to five he's walkin' with steel.
BrotherMan said he's 'fraid of gangsters
messin' with people just for fun
\end{verbatim}

Scott-Heron’s use of “BrotherMan” in the first person voice reverses the colonial identity of “African” to postcolonial hybrid identity of African-American. In other words, it corrects “disembodied” assignment of Blackness to “embodied” enunciated identity of African-American citizen. One of the subtexts of “Gun” is the attitude of “might is right,” signifying an American “politics” of violence. Scanlon (2002) writes that the profound pessimism that is central to the blues symbolizes the re-enactment of frustration (532). This is demonstrated by “BrotherMan’s” desire for a gun even though the desire is a re-enactment of its own frustration about the “violent” conditions of everyday life. When faced with the pervasiveness of violence in American society, “BrotherMan” in his frustration buys a gun. The subtext of “Gun’s” frustrated desire drives the “ambivalence” of African-Americans’ desire for inclusion into dominant culture. The song draws attention to the contradiction of violence and power; violence affords American citizens power but it is a power built on oppression/subjugation of
other races/cultures. "BrotherMan" bears arms to fight for his country, the same country his ancestors fought against for "Black" freedom. The use of "Brother" thus conveys a self-awareness of collective identity. The blues narrative, rock style lyrical form and jazz style "scat" define the textual style of "Gun." Words such as "ghetto" signify the social text of the song and thus provide information about the unequal relations of power that exists between White American and African-American citizens. The text functions as a critique of the pervasiveness of violence in American society, calling for the audience to contemplate the very notion of power as both a liberating and oppressing force.

From the opening of the song the dominant rhythm is defined by the drum and basslines, giving the song its rock "feeling" and an experience of physical intensity; for example, as Scott-Heron sings the chorus, "Everybody got a pistol," horn instruments play fast repeated notes mimicking the firing of a gun. However, the song also transcends the "physical" with jazz-style percussion prompting us to ponder the American ideal, "When the other folks give up theirs [guns] I'll give up mine." The prompting does not stop as Scott-Heron allows no instrumental or vocal pause between the end of the chorus and the beginning of the next verse, creatively connecting the American ideal of bearing arms to the notion of a violent civilization:

\[
\ldots \text{The philosophy seems to be} \\
\text{at least as near as I can see:} \\
\text{When the other folks give up theirs I'll give up mine.} \\
\text{This is a violent civilization} \\
\text{if civilization's where I am.}
\]

As Scott-Heron sings, "And he don't want to be next – he's got a family to protect, so just last week he bought himself a gun," an electric guitar plays urban blues style chords at very distinct blues style vocal intervals. Scott-Heron's blues-influenced singing also
carries a rap "attitude" to the extent that the lyrics are expressed in distinct Scott-Heron "no-nonsense" street-poetry form. His vocal expression is fused with jazz-inspired polyrhythmic horn instrumentals, bringing an immediate feeling of tension and anxiety into the song's atmosphere of violence:

I'll lay you nine to five he's walkin' with steel.  
BrotherMan said he's 'fraid of gangsters  
messin' with people just for fun

The dissonance created by the fast repeated notes played in typical improv jazz style by the tenor sax, trumpet and flugelhorn (identified by the credit on the CD cover) adds a sense of alarm and urgency to Scott-Heron's second singing of the refrain:

Everybody got a .45.  
The philosophy seems to be,  
at least as near as I can see:  
When the other folks give up theirs I'll give up mine.

In addition, fast offbeat triple clashing of cymbals embellished with short drum beats, very effectively establishes a sense of chaos that violence brings into everyday American society. Throughout the song, the lyrics and instrumentation exchange a blues form of dialogue, antiphony ("call and response"), continually reflecting upon the ambiguity underlying America's violent acts of power:

(And) since you don't want to be next-  
you've got a family to protect,  
nine out of ten you've got a friend  
you call it gun.

The rock influenced electric guitar lead, immediately followed by the full sounding grandeur of jazz-inspired horns, accompanies the lyrics, "Saturday night [street slang for gun] just ain't that special." The lead of the guitar seems to sidetrack the grandeur of the horns, signifying concurrence with the lyrics' message that violence provides only an illusion of power. This is further confirmed by the disappointed tone in Scott-Heron's
voice as he sings those lyrics. A constant "speech-making" style vocal rhetoric (distinct Scott-Heron rap) is faintly heard in the background through most of the song. However, it is made slightly louder as Scott-Heron sings "violent civilization," as if to inform us of the "political" that is hidden in the notion of "civilization." The blues convention of poetic wit is also evident in Scott-Heron's lyrics:

This is a violent civilization
if civilization's where I am.
Every channel that I stop
got a different kind of cop on
and they're killin' 'um by the millions for Uncle Sam.

As the song ends, Scott-Heron repeatedly sings, "Everybody, everybody, everybody, everybody, got a pistol . . .," emphatically reminding us that violence is part of the All American Way, and thus erasing its exclusive association with Black Americans.

Chapman approaches "Fast Car" via the folk, rock and blues repertoire. The acoustic melody of the song incorporates a "call and response" style characteristic of (country) delta blues. The folk influence engages Chapman's guitar melody in a regular musical pattern which follows her speech pattern in fairly close unison. The song opens with the guitar melody, and the guitar remains the dominant speaker throughout each verse. As Chapman begins to sing, there is immediate and deep intimacy between the guitar and her voice. The folk tradition embraces this intimacy allowing it to flow freely out to the listener. There's an organic "feel" to the way Chapman plays the acoustic guitar as it reaches out and offers comfort to the dense melancholic spirit in her voice.

The slow steady rock rhythm of the drums stabilizes the intimate flow of feelings between the guitar and Chapman's spirit. Her voice is powerful and her lyrical expression is innocent, signifying her identity as a idealistic, optimistic young artist. Her innocent perspective of the world gives her power because her innocence allows her
hope, ideas, vision and dreams of emancipation and inclusion. This is part of her inwardness, her embodied expression, and it lets us see that her image as a marginalized "Black" is not equivalent to her identity as an African-American.

The rock influenced rhythm of the drums, fused with the folk style melody of the acoustic guitar, continues unchanged throughout each verse until the refrain:

I remember we were driving in you car  
The speed so fast I felt like I was drunk  
City lights lay out before us  
And your arm felt nice wrapped 'round my shoulder  
And I had a feeling that I belonged  
And I had a feeling that I could be someone, be someone, be someone

Here the drums become much more pronounced, their sound moving to the foreground and a rhythm guitar fading well into the background. The depth of Chapman's feelings is captured by the full sounding brass instrumentation in the chorus, signifying the immense hope she carries in her heart. Throughout the song, she hopes to escape her marginality, her condition of poverty, and the "fast car" becomes a signification of her hope for inclusion. But the "fast car" also symbolizes the ideals of youth and freedom in dominant White America, reflecting the ambiguity inherent in Chapman's desire to be part of the American Dream.

You got a fast car  
And I got a plan to get us out of here  
I been working at the convenience store  
Managed to save just a little bit of money  
We won't have to drive too far  
Just 'cross the border and into the city  
You and I can both get jobs  
And finally see what it means to be living

In his analysis of Elizabeth Fox-Genovese's *Within the Plantation Household*, a novel about slave resistance, Homi Bhabha (1994) writes, "When historical visibility has faded, when the present tense of testimony loses its power to arrest, then the
displacements of memory and the indirections of art offer us the image of our psychic survival” (18). In this regard, historical visibility has faded in “Fast Car” because Black slavery is now in the distant past. Chapman’s song cannot serve as testimony to “arrest” American White culture for Black marginalization. In “the present tense” her desire for inclusion “loses its power” if she appeals to her ancestral situation of forced subjugation (slavery). It is her silenced memory that authorizes and assigns power to her cry for inclusion. Part of Chapman’s desire for inclusion is expressed in the sadness of her guitar melody. The melody is an expression both of her melancholy over her marginalization, and her deep desire for inclusion. And the sadness symbolizes her silenced memory of displaced identity. Her outburst of pain and hope as she repeats, “be someone, be someone, be someone” is her embodied response to marginalization and signifies cultural historical displacement. The song’s first person voice lets us imagine Chapman’s “psychic survival” because her song gives us a sense of the origins of her struggle – the history of Black slavery in America and the resulting marginality of African-Americans:

*Anyplace is better*
*Starting from zero got nothing to lose*
*Maybe we’ll make something*
*But me myself I got nothing to prove.*

Both “Gun” and “Fast Car” signify the articulation of cultural difference – not just the difference of being White or Black in America, but the “hybridity” of White and Black that is the result of the larger reality of class division (being rich or poor) in America. This is what Bhabha calls the ‘in-between’ spaces and it is specifically this ‘in-between’ terrain that provides both songs a place to articulate new “signs” of identity. In Chapman’s “Fast Car” the new “signs” define “African-American” as associated less with its originary African subjectivity and more with the dream of
middle-class America. In Scott-Heron’s song, the new “signs” of identity restage the past by dislocating White America’s association of violence with Black Americans and repositioning it in the larger context of the American ideal of “might is right.”

However, in articulating new “signs” of identity, the song’s cultural mode of subversion and resistance becomes reabsorbed into dominant culture. The right of all Americans to bear arms serves as Scott-Heron’s enunciatory site for showing the inwardness of African-American’s from the outside: signs of African-American inwardness are heard in the lines,

BrotherMan said he’s ‘fraid of gangsters messin’ with people just for fun.
And he don’t want to be next
he’s got a family to protect
so just last week he bought himself a gun.

The “outside” is represented in signs of American culture:

This is a violent civilization
if civilization’s where I am.
Every channel that I stop on
got a different kind of cop on
and they’re killin’ um by the millions for Uncle Sam.

Stuart Hall (1997) writes that racialized discourse of the “savage” African was structured by a set of binary oppositions between ‘civilization’ (White) and ‘savagery’ (Black). The White Western ideology of the Black race was constructed by the discourse of Africa as a place of “savagery, cannibalism, devil worship and licentiousness.” This discourse effectively polarized the “Black” and “White” races “into extreme opposites – each the signifiers of an absolute difference between human ‘types’ or species” (243). Discourses of “the Negros” characterized them as slaves who “remained by nature savage brutes; and long buried passion, once loosed, would result in

Scott-Heron’s “Gun” rewrites stereotypes of Black primitivism, aggression, and savagery as conditions of civil authority, specifically colonial powers. In effect, “Gun” is saying that if Blacks are violent, savage and aggressive it is because they are part of the larger American ideology/history that equates acts of American violence with American power. “Gun” reveals that the stereotype of Blacks as violent and Whites as civilized is a myth because the stereotype is fundamentally undermined by the colonial situation – specifically, the ambiguity embedded in the idea of civilization itself. Scott-Heron’s song resists the relationship that has been established between violence and power in the American consciousness, and his lyrics, “got the Constitution on the run” and “Saturday night just ain’t that special - Freedom to be afraid is all you won,” symbolize this resistance.

Scott-Heron’s use of “civilization” signifies the language of White Western colonialism. Cowbells are generally associated with “primitive,” “traditional” societies such as East Indian, various African and Middle Eastern cultures. The subtle use of cowbells foregrounded by the sounds of brass instrumentation in “Gun’s” introduction questions the discursive division between primitive and civilized. Bhabha refers to this discursive division as a “perversion” because it is the “representative” figure of post-Enlightenment man (Bhabha 1994: 44). Scott-Heron’s first person voice in “Gun” subverts the racist gaze that dismisses Black contribution in America’s rise to power. The song enunciates a counter-gaze that turns the discriminatory look, i.e., Blacks as violent, back on itself – “and they’re killin’ ‘um by the millions for Uncle Sam.” The American consciousness that equates power with violence is affirmed in the
Constitutional right of all citizens to bear arms. However, the song questions if this "right" in fact empowers or rather promotes a misunderstanding of power:

\[
\text{Cause even though you got the right} \\
\text{to defend you home, defend you life,} \\
\text{got to understand, got to get it in hand} \\
\text{about the gun.}
\]

"Gun" resists racist discourse because Scott-Heron articulates Black identity as part of the larger American ideology of "might is right." African-Americans' struggle for citizenship into American society and the ambiguity that underlines their patriotism signify identity as a process of negotiation between dominant and subjugated cultures, a negotiation that results in hybridities of cultural identities.

Chapman's "Fast Car" resists racist discourse because it enunciates Black identity in the larger context of the American Dream – she dreams the American dream of middle-class suburbia:

\[
\text{You got a fast car} \\
\text{And we go cruising to entertain ourselves . . .} \\
\text{You'll find work and I'll get promoted} \\
\text{We'll move out of the shelter} \\
\text{Buy a big house and live in the suburbs}
\]

"Fast Car" signifies African-American identity as a process of negotiation between marginality and middle-class American living. Chapman expresses feelings of alienation and marginalization that are a direct result of conditions poverty for those groups that dominant White America wants to keep out of the "mainstream."

Chapman's song enunciates African-American identity in the Third Space as she overwrites "Blackness" with "Americaness," both of which involve the "constructing" of identity. We have discussed how "Blackness" is constructed through dominant culture's discursive practice of stereotyping. Now we will discuss how "Americaness" is partly constructed through the mechanism of hegemony.
Gramsci’s concept of hegemony interrelates culture and politics because cultural production is seen as being integrally connected to political and economic considerations. In his *Prison Notebook* (1988) Antonio Gramsci describes hegemony as the mechanism for cultural, moral and ideological domination (423). However, domination operates with the consent of the individuals in the context of civil society, civil society being everything that is not the state, i.e., family, religious organizations, and economic systems such as businesses. Although the idea of “cultural struggle” is not included in Gramsci’s concept of hegemony, the overall view of hegemony as a mechanism of ideological domination can be applied to the American “ideal” of the middle-class family.

Hegemony underlies the “ideal” form of the American family that emerged in the 1950s largely due to the media’s depictions of the nuclear family as a happy and autonomous unit. Hegemony functioned through the media to establish the nuclear family as the natural way of thinking about family. Other forms of families such as single-parent, low income families were therefore seen as abnormal or “deviant.” Given the pervasiveness of middle-class family values in 1950s America, unemployment, slums and low wage work were attributed to the lack of middle-class family norms (Coontz 1992: 111). Middle-class family values became rooted in a consensus of what constituted “decency” and “respectability” – “building a comfortable home life was the most morally worthwhile act one could undertake” (Coontz 1992: 102). And suburban life was hegemonically constructed through the media as the most worthwhile goal for each family. The suburban family had a hegemonic function because it perpetuated middle-class values that served the interests of the dominant capitalists. There is a clear correlation between the economic prosperity of the 1950s in America and the successful
promotion of the nuclear family in the media (Coontz 1992: 24-25). The media was one of the tools used by the dominant capitalists to obtain consensual acceptance of its economic ideology. The national identity of the nuclear family embodied the American ideals of "patriotism, freedom and consumption," and these ideals were continually reinforced in the media. During the 1950s, hedonism and materialism were introduced into American culture by attaching them to family togetherness (Coontz 1992: 171). And television portrayed family togetherness most effectively in numerous popular sitcoms and dramas of the time.

But the media's depictions of suburban American families were a myth because they "don't even describe most white middle-class families accurately" (Coontz 1992: 6). The idealized family, from the 1950s to the present day, does not reflect the diversity of family life that exists in America. In reality, "there has never been a single family model in the United States, and change has been a constant feature of every kind of family" (Coontz 1999: xii). The myth of middle-class family life ignores the existence of other forms of family and, for our purposes, African-American families that live in marginality:

*You see my old man's got a problem*
*He lives with the bottle that's the way it is*
*He says his body's too old for working*
*I say his body's too young to look like his*
*My mama went off and left him*
*She wanted more from life than he could give*
*I said somebody's got to take care of him*
*So I quit school and that's what I did*  
(Chapman).

When family is constructed as an ideal, self-reliant and autonomous unit, the rhetoric of family values displaces attention from the very root of social problems such as poverty, racism, violence, inequality, and for our purposes, the violent history of
Black slavery in America. It also holds the family accountable for the problems of American society. The hegemonic ideal of America’s “middle-class” effectively conceals deeper problems of racism. The “ideal” depiction results in families rather than governments bearing the burden of America’s social problems of ghettos, poverty, violence, drug addiction, alcoholism, etc. For example, Chapman bears the burden of her alcoholic father and the mother who abandons them, by quitting school. In Chapman’s song, as well as in the reality of American society, hegemony defines White middle-class family as the ideal. Hegemony of the “ideal” family, for our purposes, results in the denial of America’s violent acts of colonialism that underlie its history of Black slavery and the resulting marginal reality of many contemporary African-American families. The effects of hegemony cast African-Americans outside the range of Middle America and the problems of economic and class inequalities continue to affect American social reality.

The hegemonic ideal of Middle America that underlies Chapman’s ambivalent and antagonistic desire for inclusion alienates both the voice of the marginal I, and the dominant White American I represented in the song’s symbols of middle-class living. Bhabha refers to this as “duplicity or doubling” (1994: 53). The song’s first person voice erases what Bhabha refers to as “the analogical relation in the discursive language of racial difference” (1994: 53). By “analogical relation” he means that the “construction” of identities that produce oppositions, such as Self/Other, is based on a linear or sequential (as opposed to dynamic and synchronistic) appropriation of language and human reality. For this reason “discourses” of racial difference do not reveal the “ambivalence” embedded in the relationship of Self/Other. It is the first person voice which reveals the ambivalence and antagonism that are embedded in the subject’s
experiences of the Other, as the first person voice expresses both desire and fear. Both Chapman’s and Scott-Heron’s enunciation speak from within its own “presence,” a presence embedded in its own historical memory and its own process of cultural signification. Each of their embodied experience shows that identity cannot transcend difference. Their identity as African-Americans involves experiencing their presence within the relationship of difference, White/Black – Self/Other. Each of their first person voice signifies the movement between the polarities or binarisms in the exercise of White American power, between the White-American Self and the African-American Other. The hegemonic ideal of Middle America and Chapman’s ambivalent desire for inclusion in the American dream signify the negotiation between these polarities. Identity is experienced but never enclosed into a cultural totality. Chapman’s and Scott-Heron’s songs present identity as unstable and fluid, undecided, continuous and as negotiated.

In “Fast Car,” part of Chapman’s desire for Middle America involves her hope to emancipate the next generation from a life of marginality:

*I got a job that pays all our bills*
*You stay out drinking late at the bar*
*See more of your friends than you do of your kids*
*I’d always hoped for better*
*Thought maybe together you and me would find it*
*I got no plans I ain’t going nowhere*
*So take your fast car and keep on driving*

Chapman wants something “better” than the past identity of “marginalized” Black. She does not want to perpetuate her cycle of poverty but at the same time she behaves as a person with a conscience. She doesn’t abandon her father; she quits school to take care of him. Chapman understands that her mother abandoned them because she wanted something better than her father’s life of misery could offer. Chapman dreams of
moving out of the shelter by getting better work and better wages. She perceives the past, present and future with a social conscience because she hopes for something “better” for herself and for the next generation. She “ain’t going nowhere” that cannot accommodate her social conscience. She tells her partner, who lives life perpetuating his/her own marginality, to “take your fast car and keep on driving.” These lyrics show us that Chapman not only desires inclusion but she also wants to negotiate her participation in Middle America as an African-American with a consciousness of her historical selfhood.

From a semiotic point of view, the standardized musical form of both “Gun” and “Fast Car” appear to substantiate Adorno’s contention that popular music lacks authentic musical form/structure and specifically, that its structure is standardized for commercialization. There are numerous “signs” of standardization in both songs; the uniform number of bars, the tempo and time signature of each verse and chorus are examples of conventional form, though there is more variation in “Gun” than in “Fast Car.” The steady rock/funk bassline and drums in “Gun” and the slow harmonic melody of the guitar and drums in “Fast Car” are also standardized throughout the verses. Vocal articulation and timbre perhaps initially sound uniform through the verses and chorus, although this is more the case in Chapman’s than in Scott-Heron’s song.

For Adorno, standardization is a result of the process of competition that drives the music industry’s desire for profits. He views the standard of popular music itself as being determined by economic variables. Though there are many “signs” of standardization in “Gun” and “Fast Car,” from a postcolonial viewpoint, simply equating standardization with commercialization presupposes a linear and oversimplified historical view of popular music in the U.S. As was discussed in Chapter 2, the fusion
of European-based music and African musical elements was central to the development of popular music in America. The dominant polyrhythmic convention of African music, which later evolved into jazz elements of syncopation, embellishment and dissonance, is perhaps the antithesis of standardization.

But just for argument's sake, this thesis will temporarily grant Adorno that his theory of popular music as standardized form can be applied fairly consistently and extensively to popular songs. Still from a postcolonial perspective, it appears that Adorno ignores or dismisses the fact that in the U. S. the construction of race was also standardized. This means that all popular music was standardized to reflect "White" morality by erasing the open sexuality of, for example, jazz and rhythm and blues music. Standardizing popular music's morality took the form of "blanching" – music by African-American artists was "blanched" in order to attract the White masses. Elvis Presley is a famous example of "blanching" – a "White" boy who sound Black even after the original songs' "sexuality" has been "white washed." Most of the White world has credited Elvis as the founder of rock and roll. But in fact, it was "blanching" of rhythm and blues that produced rock and roll. "In the 1950s, R & B branched in two directions. It went into the white world as rock 'n' roll and, some years later, evolved within the black world into soul" (Otis 1974: 1). Historically it was the "blanching" of rhythm and blues then that partly led to the emergence of rock & roll:

Rock 'n' roll actually began in the early '50s with black blues artists like John Lee Hooker, T-Bone Walker and Howlin' Wolf and with black vocal groups like the Ravens, the Orioles and the Clovers. But most of us white kids didn't hear about these performers until the mid-'50s, because, until then pop radio was dominated by [White] artists like Dean Martin, Jonnie Ray, and Frankie Laine. It wasn't until there were white rock stars that rock 'n' roll really became nationally known. (Ochs 1974: 7)
And because Black music and the “Black style” of singing and dancing were “blanched” most famously by Elvis, he came to be known as the “king” of rock ’n’ roll.

The music of African-Americans, such as rhythm and blues and jazz, as defined by colonial discourse, was an extension of the discursive construction of Blacks “as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest and to establish systems [of segregation]” (Bhabha 1994: 70). The polyrhythmic structures of jazz, for example, empowered and stimulated pleasure in its audiences and thus, historically, Black music has been socially constructed to represent Black culture as an internal threat to dominant American culture and social order. The coded familiarity of the rhythms of Black music, “carries with it the power of black collective memory. These sounds are cultural markers, and responses to them are in a sense ‘automatic’ because they immediately conjure up collective Black experience, past and present” (Rose 1995: 536 quoting Lipsitz: 1990). In dominant perceptions of rap music, for example, the social construction of violence is “fundamentally linked to the social discourse of Black containment and fears of a Black planet” (Rose 1995: 533). This dominant construction of rap present “Black influences as a cultural threat to American society . . . and Black youth in general are constructed as co-conspirators in the spread of Black aesthetic and discursive influence (Rose 1995: 533). White American culture’s ideology of Black music “articulates the ways in which racial discourses deeply inform social order” (Rose 1995: 533). In this regard, Adorno’s theory of standardization, though it exposes the economic power of the culture industries, ignores and dismisses the racism that is part of the culture industries’ power. In the U. S., “blanching” of Black music by dominant White America for the mass White audience was a large part of “standardization.”
Scott-Heron’s song “Gun” represents the struggle to estrange dominant ideology’s constructed Black identity, “originary identity” (Bhabha 1994: 2) and reinscribe cultural hybridity “through the conditions of contingency and contradictoriness that attend upon the lives of those who are ‘in the minority’” (Bhabha 1994: 2). The contradictoriness lies in the White Western Self’s violent acts of colonialism. Scott-Heron’s song resituates violence back into the larger context of White colonial power, a power that was driven by the “might is right” ideology. Scott-Heron’s and Chapman’s reiteration of cultural identity in the Third Space gives us a sense of the origins of their struggle, specifically, the role that racism, racial conflict and oppression played in America’s rise to economic power and political domination. Embodied in the first person voice of each artist is the residue of slavery—racism and income disparity between Blacks and Whites.

The first person voice of both songs functions as much more than a signifier of cultural identity. “Gun” and “Fast Car” symbolize “a memory of the history of race and racism” (Bhabha 1994: 63). The marginal status of African-Americans in contemporary American society stands as “a painful remembering, a putting together of the dismembered past to make sense of the trauma of the present” (Bhabha 1994: 63). The “trauma” that Chapman’s song tries to make sense of is the reality of African-Americans living in the cycle of poverty, involving difficult access to education, alcoholism, low wages, little job mobility, poor housing, low earning single mother families, etc. The “trauma” in Scott-Heron’s song involves taking up arms to protect yourself and your family in a culture of racialized violence, all the while living in a “civilized” society. The “performance” of both songs identifies them as a form of resistance, as an address to the masses and as an attitude of inclusion and thus the performance signifies “a
history of the poetics of postcolonial Diaspora” (Bhabha 1994: 53). The first person voice in both “Gun” and “Fast Car” gives us a sense of the minority struggle because the “embodied” voices means that they speak from “outside the sentence.” Their enunciation in the Third Space reveals how discursive structures of White Western history predicate the Other as an identity in relation to the past. In both songs the past clearly lays within the confines of colonial history and the discursive structures of Black slaves as unintelligent and primitive savages. U. S. history of black slavery typically represented African culture as one of savagery and barbarism. However, African-Americans’ contemporary status as U. S. citizens, from a postcolonial perspective, shows that identity is a process of negotiation between dominant and subjugated cultures, between the past and present, a negotiation that results in hybridities of cultural identities.

Genres like jazz, blues, rock, folk and their varying sub-genres are defined by the fusion of White and Black musical styles. In both “Gun” and “Fast Car,” part of the songs’ meaning is that they are a result of the fusion of Black and White cultures/histories in the U. S. For example, the dominant melodic structure of Chapman’s “Fast Car” flows in close unison with the melody of the lyrics thus identifying the folk style alive in the song. The spirit of her first person voice lives in the unified layering of the melodies. This is typical of the country and western style, which is rooted in the music of European colonizers who came to North America. The earthy, sensual organic spirit of Chapman’s voice and her intimate folk/blues style guitar playing signify the embodied enunciation of historical identity, what Bhabha might call the “poetics” of postcolonial identity. In this regard, musical fusion is about the performance as opposed to structural form. The first person poetics of both Chapman and Scott-Heron speak
from within the Third Space as a performance. “BrotherMan’s” patriotism for Uncle Sam, his desire to participate in the American “ideal” of power by violence in Scott-Heron’s “Gun” and Chapman’s desire for Middle-America in “Fast Car” are both performances of the ambivalence that underlies African-Americans’ desire for inclusion.

The musical and textual/lyrical fusion of “Gun” and “Fast Car” has been analyzed to read as signifiers of the experiences of historical memories of African-Americans. The memories and experiences are expressed in the first person voice, signifying the lived experience of the songwriters/artists and therefore function to displace dominant culture’s constructions of racial Otherness. The first person voice erases the notion of racial idealized types, and presents identity as shaped by the “silenced memories” of the conditions of Black slavery in America. All the cultural significations in the song are read as silenced memories that are a part of negotiated identities. The memories symbolize how the meeting of different cultures opens up boundaries as a result of communication, musical dialogue between cultures. And musical hybridities of cultures also created cultural continuity because the fusion of European and African musical styles, specifically, the fusion of rhythmic styles involving melodic/harmonic and polyrhythms continued to exist in hybrid forms in genres like ragtime, jazz, swing, big band, rhythm & blues, rap, etc.
CHAPTER 5

The Link Between Native Spirituality
And
The Native Cultural Vision

THE PRINCIPLES OF FREEDOM, JUSTICE AND EQUALITY

Robbie Robertson’s “Sacrifice”

In this chapter Canadian born Native musician/songwriter Robbie Robertson’s “Sacrifice” (1998) from his CD, Contact From the Underworld of Redboy is examined as an aesthetic performance that establishes cultural identity and resists racist discourse. The song’s sounds and images express a vision of Native culture that is defined by a social conscience. The first person voice of experience serves as “Sacrifice’s” narrative text and signifies Native identity’s alignment with the principles of freedom, justice and equality. The “signs” of Native culture in the song represent a complex set of social values which are organized around a belief in freedom, justice and equality. The song’s performance articulates cultural knowledge and history, as it shows how various elements of Native culture fit and operate, thus challenging discursively structured representations of First Nations peoples in North America.7

Robbie Robertson has had a long and successful musical career in popular music. He initially achieved commercial success with the musical group The Band in the late 1970s and decided to leave the group at the peak of its success. Nick Baxter-Moore (2000) writes that The Band was “perhaps the greatest modern syncretisers of rural American and popular music traditions” (25). Leaving The Band, Robertson embarked on a solo career, and in 1987 his self-titled CD was a great success, receiving three Juno

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7 In this chapter, no distinction is made between First Nations peoples in the U. S. and Canada, because Native identity is discussed mainly in relation to colonialism and the shared North American Native history of systematic devastation of their language and culture by the European colonizers. In this regard, contemporary North American (Canadian and American) Aboriginal peoples have similar political/social issues and concerns.
Awards for “Best Album,” “Male Vocalist” and “Producer of the Year.” Roberson expanded his talents into the world of film as writer/producer of movie soundtracks: 
*Carny*, 1979; *Raging Bull*, 1980; *The King of Comedy*, 1983; *The Colour of Money*, 1986; *Jimmy Hollywood*, 1994 (Baxter-Moore 2000: 4). Baxter-Moore also writes that Robertson mixes various aspects of Aboriginal music with elements of rock and popular music. He blends “the conventions of contemporary popular music (rock, pop, country, hip-hop, dance) with elements of Native music and culture to create a cross-cultural synthesis of musical traditions” (2). The songs on his *Contact from the Underworld of Redboy* blend “Robertson’s blues-rock idiom with drums and chants derived from traditional aboriginal music” (The Globe and Mail: March 1/03).

Robertson’s early membership in *The Band* and his musical associations with such legendary artists as Canadian-born Joni Mitchell, Neil Young, Ronnie Hawkins and the American icon Bob Dylan have helped firmly establish his place in popular music. Baxter-Moore (2000) writes that in much of his solo work, Robertson has used music to express the social and political concerns of Native peoples (1, 6) and even his less political songs “celebrate customs and rituals long suppressed” (7). Baxter-Moore describes Robertson’s 1998 *Contact From the Underworld of Redboy* as “one of the most explicitly political, as well as one of the most musically innovative albums by a Canadian artist in the last decade” (26).

“Sacrifice” is about Leonard Peltier, a member of the American Indian Movement who has been in prison since 1976 for the murder of two FBI agents on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. “Sacrifice” is a complex song to analyze because it is a multistructured piece, consisting of two different dialogues (Peltier’s and Robertson’s) in two different textual styles (spoken and sung). As well, the song is
expressed on two social levels; Robertson sings his text as a Native artist and Peltier iterates his text as a Native prisoner speaking from a U. S. federal penitentiary. The analysis is further complicated by Peltier positioning the song’s multi-textual narrative styles within a larger context of yet another narrative style, the Native tradition of “storytelling.” The song begins with Peltier saying:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{You know we have a million stories to tell} \\
\text{I'm just one of a million or more stories that could be told}
\end{align*}
\]

These lines are part of the song’s recorded phone conversation between Peltier and Robertson. Peltier is speaking to Robertson from within a U. S. federal penitentiary. Except for the chorus, the song’s “lyrics” consist of Peltier speaking on the phone to Robertson, expressing his feelings about his imprisonment, which he views as another incidence in the long history of social injustice and inequality against the Native people.

Popular music often functions as a public platform that affords marginalized groups visibility and influence in order to articulate a cultural and political vision that aims to address social injustices. Part of marginal/minority music’s cultural and political vision often involves principles such as freedom, equality and justice because the music aims for minority inclusion in the democratic space of dominant culture’s social practices. Simon Firth (1996) writes that any good musical performance “depends on the rhetorical truth, on the musicians’ ability to convince and persuade the listener that what they are saying matters” (117). Addressing issues of social injustice is what “Sacrifice” is all about and it contributes to a renewed democracy through its cultural/political vision. The idea of renewed democracy is closely connected to the revival of Native culture within many Native communities in Canada, as theirs was a culture which was systematically destroyed by the European colonizers. “Sacrifice’s” vision of Native culture relies on negotiating culture and identity based on a belief in
freedom, equality and justice – a vision which symbolizes negotiation and enunciation in the Third Space.

Marjorie Beaucage (1996), a Native filmmaker, writes: “We dispel the lies through stories that are circular and organic.” She also writes, “Then we will make history, not be history” (216). Robertson’s song is a story of the Native people’s history of cultural sacrifice. In the song, Peltier says:

Some gave their lives
Some had to stand there
and watch their children die in their arms

The story is both organic and circular; organic because it is the first person voice of experience, enunciation in the Third Space, and circular as it links the injustice of Peltier’s own prison sentence to the injustices committed historically against the Native people as a whole. The cross-cultural synthesis of the song’s musical traditions also symbolizes enunciation within the Third Space as the synthesis signifies the meeting/communication between two cultures. Part of the communication between the European “I” and Aboriginal “You” involves the Native struggle for legal and moral justice. In “Sacrifice,” Peltier’s own sacrifice and the sacrifices of the Native people are symbolic of this struggle and of the larger Native vision that all life on earth lives in freedom. “Sacrifice” symbolizes the connectedness of Native spirituality and the Native cultural vision because both define a human existence that has to be struggled for and developed out of the imperatives of freedom, equality and justice.

Stuart Hall (1997) writes that identity of the Other is “formed at the unstable point where the ‘unspeakable’ stories of subjectivity meet the narratives of history, of a culture. And since he/she is positioned in relation to cultured narratives, the colonized subject is always ‘somewhere else’: doubly marginalized, displaced, always other than
where he or she is, or is able to speak from” (135). As members of the Native culture, Robertson’s and Peltier’s designated identities define them as the “other,” thus denying identity spoken from within one’s own presence. And as the Other, both are discursively positioned on the margins of dominant culture. This is what Hall means by “somewhere else” – the colonized subject is positioned somewhere else other than within his/her own presence and other than inside dominant culture. Peltier’s designated identity as the Other is double marginalized:

I am living in the United States penitentiary
Which is the swiftest growing
Indian reservation in the country

As a Native he is identified by both “reservation” and “penitentiary” and thus is not able to speak from within his freedom. He is one statistic in the rapidly growing statistics of Aboriginals in prisons. Peltier has been in prison since 1976, as a jury of non-Indian people found him guilty of shooting and killing an FBI agent. His trial and imprisonment are an extension of the unjust “imprisonment” of the Native people by the “White Man.” Robertson’s designated identity as the Other also positions him ‘somewhere else’ other than within his own silenced memory. In speaking of his mother’s Mohawk Indian heritage, Robertson remembers: “My mother told me that they weren’t allowed to learn any of the languages, any of the customs, all of that was to be erased” (Aboriginal Voices 1996: 30). In the chorus of “Sacrifice” Robertson sings:

Take away your language
Cut off all your hair
Sacrifice the loved ones
Who always stood by me

These silence memories speak of displaced, dismembered Native identity and signify Robertson’s discursively assigned position of ‘somewhere else.’ His designated identity
as the Other demands sacrifice of his Native culture and thus sacrifice of his own freedom.

In Chapter 1 of this thesis, Hall’s (1997) idea of “arbitrary closure” was introduced: “The ideological sign can be discursively rearticulated to construct new meaning, connect with different social practices, and position social subjects differently . . . Its ‘unity’ is always in quotation marks and always complex.” He also writes that it is always “organized around arbitrary and not natural closures” (9-10). Peltier’s imprisonment signifies Hall’s notion of “arbitrary closure.” As an ideological sign, Peltier’s imprisonment symbolizes the growing statistic of Aboriginals in the U. S. prison system (this growing statistic applies also to Canada). In “Sacrifice,” Peltier says:

And I am living in the United States penitentiary
Which is the swiftest growing
Indian reservation in the country.

The growing statistic rearticulates Indian stereotypes such as “savage,” “violent,” “drunken,” “lawless,” etc., in order to construct new Indian stereotypes such as “convict,” “inmate.” And these new meanings now connect “Indians” to the violence that exists within the prison system. But Hall also writes that the complexity of arbitrary closure is that it describes identity as always evolving and changing. Thus, as an ideological sign, Peltier’s imprisonment is not an ending, but the beginning of a “new” identity. Peltier’s new identity as an imprisoned Lakota/Anishnabe has dimensions of power because it “makes both politics and identity possible” (Hall 1997: 137), i.e., his sacrifice signifies possible freedom for all Natives. Peltier says:

I’ve gone too far now to start backing down
I don’t give up
Not ’til my people are free will I give up
And if I have to sacrifice some more
Then I sacrifice some more
Peltier's narrative reflects what Hall describes as the new politics shaped by a new terrain of cultural identity. Peltier's "new" identity challenges existing stereotypes such as the "noble Indian." Ponting and Kiely (1997) write that the image of the "noble Indian" implies that "First Nations people acquiesce in their plight with dignity, they are supposed to acquiesce and this disempowers Natives" (172). Peltier's narrative signifies not consent, nor surrender, nor radical rebellion. His sacrifice is the voice of passive resistance as its inclusion in Robertson's music symbolizes empowerment, Native solidarity.

In a 1987 interview Robertson describes his music as based on "stories within stories — that need to be documented somehow" (Globe and Mail: 03/03). "Sacrifice" opens with Peltier's telephone narrative:

*You know we have a million stories to tell*
*I'm just one of a million or more stories that could be told*

The song is a "story" of injustice and sacrifice. However, the word "story" and "could be told" signify the authors' (both Robertson and Peltier) concern with describing the injustice and sacrifice more than legitimating them. Stories are a part of how knowledge is defined in Native culture. In the context of music, knowledge about instruments like the Native drum(s) is gained through stories such as "the 'grandfather' water drum of the Anishnabek. Midewiwin water drums are referred to as 'grandfather' and 'little boy'." Knowledge of "family" is revealed through these stories. "Such teachings or stories can be heard at Elders Conferences and traditional gatherings in many regions of Eastern Canada (and elsewhere) where they are told by elders as part of the process of healing within Native communities" (Diamond, Cronk and von Rosen 1994: 31). There are other stories in the Algonquian Nations that describe the woman's body as a drum, the heartbeat of the baby she carries, the drum-beat (31). All these stories describe
"knowledge" of the drum; it is more than a sound producing instrument or a mere object.

Mistassini elders speak of the drum as having a head and tail and a spirit:

It can speak to him who understands its language when it is beaten. It talks, but all do not understand. When it is beaten by one whose soul is strong, it reveals what is going to happen. Sometimes during sleep the drum will address itself to the soul of a man and urge him to rouse himself and consult its meaning by attacking it with his drumstick. (Speck 1935: 176-177)

Stories of the moon designate Aboriginal women as the keepers of the drum: "If a woman who had dreamed the colours for a drum when she was a girl had not honoured the dream, as an adult, she might have problems until she had a drum made" (Diamond, Cronk and von Rosen 1994: 37 quoting Jim Durmont, no references given for Durmont).

In all the stories, music is described as symbolically representing the natural world to which every living creature is related. In discussing stories about "drum-making,"

Diamond, Cronk and von Rosen (1994) write:

For all [First] Nations, an intimate and detailed knowledge of natural materials and processes . . . may point to or embody a deeply felt sense of relationship. The concept of relationship cannot be discretely categorized as part of a religion or belief system, as Eurocentric ethnography has tended to do, but rather as an ability to recognize spirit in all life. (38)

In most Western methodologies of knowledge, the word "spirit" is often analyzed as being problematic, mainly because its analysis cannot be grounded in an empirically defined science. However, Spirit worlds are an integral part of Native knowledge (Diamond, Cronk and von Rosen 1994: 38).

Diamond, Cronk and von Rosen (1994) write that the "describers" of history were, in centuries past, the European colonizers and "the most privileged mode of their discourse – print – acquired a legitimacy which disempowered not just other modes of discourse such as storytelling, but other styles as well"(44, discussing Spivak: 1990).
Peltier's storytelling style in "Sacrifice" is signification that the meaning of his sacrifice and the sacrifice of the Native peoples in North America's history cannot be analyzed or legitimated within the mode of a Western discourse of knowledge. Their sacrifices are not historically documented, i.e., written down, but are carried as silenced memories in Native stories such as Peltier's own story, and other stories of residential school abuse, stories of family members suffering or left to die on reserves from conditions of poverty and sickness due to TB, influenza, polio, etc. — European diseases, which the Natives had no experience in treating or curing. Peltier says:

There's a lot of nights that I lay in my cell  
And I can't understand why this hell, this hell and this terror  
That I have been going through for twenty-one years hasn't ended.

In Peltier's story, the meaning of sacrifice is embedded in the spiritual realm, the belief that the act of sacrifice aligns us more closely to our own humanity. Peltier says:

But yet I know in my heart that someone has to pay sacrifice  
To make things better for our people

He cannot substantiate how he "knows." He can only describe it as something he carries in his heart, lending a sense of mystery to the act of sacrifice itself. What sacrifice achieves cannot be verbally shared. The means by which sacrifice "makes things better" is a profound mystery, thus placing it on the side of the spiritual.

Storytelling, as part of the tradition of oral history, is an organic process of knowledge because it cannot be owned the way "discourses" are owned by dominant culture. For example, discourses of "Indian" identity are owned by dominant culture because the meaning of "Indian" is severed from the life that produced it and then circulated as "stereotypes." From the perspective of "Western" knowledge, storytelling is a radical and unacceptable procedure for gaining knowledge because it rests upon the
assumption that the experiences of individuals cannot be doubted. In his article, Auger (1997), quotes Monture-Okanee (1992):

In academic writing, the rule is that authors do not identify their voices. They speak from a pedestal of knowledge. The individual speaking is not a central part of that knowledge, nor is he or she actively involved in the knowledge he or she has produced. The knowledge is outside of the self... In my culture [Mohawk] not speaking from the ‘me’ is a violation. The only true knowledge that I can have is that which I learned from what I have experienced. (327)

In this regard, Marie Battiste (1987) writes, “Authority of Western knowledge was not of the spirit world but was acquired by specialists and elites who formed socially and politically acceptable paradigms which changed with society through time” (110-111). Homi Bhabha questions the “critical theory” paradigm itself as a methodology of knowledge precisely because it is exclusively “White Western.” He writes, “It is, obviously, a designation of institutional power and ideological Eurocentricity” (Bhabha 1994: 31). Bhabha views “critical theory” as an inadequate methodology of knowledge because it makes the other culture the object of knowledge. He writes;

the knowledge of cultural difference must be made to foreclose on the Other; difference and otherness thus become a fantasy of a certain cultural space or, indeed, the certainty of a form of theoretical knowledge that deconstructs the epistemological ‘edge’ of the West. (31)

Because the theoretical concept of the Other is often the starting point of postcolonial theory, Foucault’s Power/Knowledge can function to “foreclose on the Other” because it reveals that cultural differences are constructed by “discourses,” thus exposing the struggle for power that exists between dominant and subjugated cultures.

Foucault (1980) writes that knowledge is about power relations. All social relations are power relations. Power is intimately connected to knowledge, and thus power produces knowledge (89-91). For Foucault, the language of knowledge is best
understood as a tactic for power. He (1980) writes, "discourses and knowledge as genealogy should be analyzed not as types of consciousness, forms of ideology and modes of perception but as tactics and strategies of power" (77). Foucault (1980) uses the example of Marxism to explain his idea of genealogy. He writes that for more than half a century scholars have questioned whether Marxism was, or was not, a science and the same has been asked about psychoanalysis and the semiology of literary texts.

Foucault writes that the genealogists would reply:

even before we can know the extent to which something such as Marxism or psychoanalysis can be compared to a scientific practice . . . it is surely necessary to question ourselves about our aspirations to the kind of power that is presumed to accompany such a science. When I see you straining to establish the scientificity of Marxism . . . for me you are . . . investing Marxist discourses and those who uphold them with the effects of a power which the West since Medieval times has attributed to science and has reserved for those engaged in scientific discourse. (84-85)

Foucault uses "genealogy" to explain that complex and multiple factors produce scientific knowledge. All of these factors have to do with power and producing knowledge through discourses that uphold power. Foucault sees the West as upholding its power through the kind of scientific discourse he describes in the above example of Marxism. And this is why Foucault sees it best to analyze Western discourses of knowledge as tactics of power. In contrast, the procedure of oral history as a source of knowledge is better understood if analyzed as a type of consciousness than as a tactic of power, because oral history draws from a consciousness of the Spirit worlds. The Spirit worlds describe fundamental Native cultural principles, such as the connectedness of all life. The Spirit worlds are an integral part of storytelling in Native culture, and storytelling is part of the tradition of oral history.
The elders of the community are the traditional keepers of knowledge who create an awareness of their past through the tradition of oral history (Auger 1997: 332). Oral history takes the form of storytelling and within the stories themselves animals are often represented as sources of knowledge, as the animals knew how best to survive and live in harmony with the forces of nature. Oral history for Aboriginal cultures serves to illustrate the “oneness” of the earth. Stories told through oral history establish that “The language of ‘natural relationship’ include proper respect given to other beings” (335). Oral history serves as a source of knowledge about the land. The land reveals the power of the seasons. The land gives knowledge about the connectedness of all beings, “human, the Animal, the Trees and all that is part of our Mother Earth” (338). Rick Ponting (1997) writes, “most First Nations’ traditional cultures were profoundly spiritual before the arrival of the Europeans” (258). Dale Auger writes that the Language of the Cree was spiritual language: “It contained secrets of how to enter the spiritually philosophical thought” (339). The stories told in the Aboriginal culture are a source of knowledge about spiritual Messengers.

In Aboriginal culture’s tradition of oral history, knowledge is passed on, never being written. The purpose of oral history in Native cultures is the “crossing” of knowledges, “Old knowledge meets new knowledge” (Auger 1997: 347). Oral history is the process of combining old and new knowledges. Although the procedure for oral history contrasts with Western discourses of knowledge, they are similar in one way. Oral history, as the “crossing” of knowledges, complements Foucault’s idea that the struggle for power between dominant and subjugated groups/cultures takes the form of discourses, and reflects the uneven flow of power/knowledge in society. As in oral history, in discourses of knowledge/power, power is constantly crossing over (between
dominant and subjugated cultures/groups), inevitably combining old and new knowledges in the ongoing struggle for domination. Knowledges become combined because the back and forth flow of power refuses to place ownership of knowledges in what Bhabha (1994) refers to as “a symmetrical or dialectical relation – self/other, master/slave – which can then be subverted by being inverted” (72) (as mentioned in Chapter 2). And the fusion of White, Black, Native musical styles is a clear example of the combining or crossing over of musical knowledges.

Returning to the analysis of “Sacrifice,” this section now examines the song’s chorus. Robertson sings;

Sacrifice your freedom
Sacrifice your prayer . . .
Stranded in the wasteland
Set my spirit free

“Wasteland” signifies the “White Man’s” systematic devastation of Native culture: the seizing of their land by new European settlements, Indians living in poverty on reserves, residential schools, the “legal” confiscation of Indian land, etc. Robertson’s lyrics uncover a link between Native “sacrifice,” “wasteland,” and “spirit.” The concept of sacrifice that the song describes is rooted in Native spirituality which views human existence/identity as an extension of the balance and harmony that is part of nature. From this perspective, the idea of balance and harmony elevates human existence to the spiritual plane. In Robertson’s song, the Native peoples’ sacrifice of “freedom” and “prayer” symbolizes an alignment with the land/earth, the spiritual, because their “sacrifice” brings balance to the “wasteland.” When the democratic ideal of freedom is denied, as it was in the case of the First Nations peoples, life becomes a “wasteland.” The Native peoples’ sacrifice signifies the uneven forces, attempting to harmonize, to balance history. Specifically, the free state of the spirit/nature balances the oppressed
state of their lives. In “Sacrifice,” the principles of freedom, justice and equality are as much spiritually based as they are politically based because the song’s view of the act of sacrifice links Native spirituality and the Native political/cultural vision.

Marjorie Beaucage (1996) writes, “Stories are medicine, they are our connection to the sacred power that is in all things” (214). Medicine signifies healing power, and in Robertson’s song, sacrifice is the medicine that heals the pain inflicted upon the Native people. Healing is part of the process of emancipation for the Native people. Clearly the concept of freedom in this song is very different from the concept of freedom in Scott-Heron’s “Gun.” Freedom in “Sacrifice” is more deeply tied to spirituality than in “Gun’s” politically defined freedom to bear arms. However, the ideal of freedom itself links the spiritual and the political realms. To admit that there is a form of knowing other than White Western knowing is an issue of freedom. The Other’s knowing must have the context of freedom to be a distinct (cultural) knowing. Peltier’s story of sacrifice illustrates that, if the Native people are deprived of freedom, their knowing is conquered and ceases to exist in a form that is meaningful. “Sacrifice” is saying that when Natives, as the “Other,” are robbed of their freedom, knowledge about them becomes defined by domination and one cannot “know” the Other who exists in captivity. “Sacrifice” as part of marginal/minority music provides opportunity to listen to the Other in the freedom of the Other’s own presence.

“Sacrifice” is an example of what Nick Baxter-Moore (2000) describes as Native music that involves “the syncretism of contemporary popular music conventions with elements of pre-existing musical forms” (11). He defines musical syncretism as “blending or synthesis” (8). The mixing of musical styles, traditional with popular, in “Sacrifice,” signifies both the democratic ideal of facilitating cross-cultural presence and
the renegotiation that is a result of cultural synthesis. The song's musical syncretism also signifies a place where people entered into dialogue to articulate and understand differences, a place that Bhabha describes as the Third Space. Robertson's ability to translate his cultural consciousness into "the language of show business" in itself signifies a new cultural identity. The commercial success of his music demonstrates how marginal/minority music offers opportunity for dialogue and understanding.

"Sacrifice" enunciates the meeting of two different cultures, Native and European, "primitive" and "civilized," and Robertson's performance partly defines these terms as the process of musical syncretism. The song's basslines, the synthesized keyboards, the background traditional chanting, the sound of jingles (part of traditional Native dance) and maracas create a sense of the past, a sense of the movement of time, a continuum of Native sacrifice and the struggle for liberation which links the past with the present and to the future. The slow steady rhythmic heartbeat of the drums, intertwined with the melody of the synthesized keyboard, symbolizes the presence of both Natives and Europeans in North America's history. Throughout the song, the traditional Native (female) chanting is recorded with a very slight delayed echo producing an operatic style vibrato. This is layered with the muffled traditional Native chanting by the male background singer. The chanting brings a consciousness of the earth into the song, a sense that there are no boundaries separating the primal and spiritual and, in this regard, questions the discursive binary oppositions of "primitive" and "civilized." Throughout the song, the background vocals never retreat too far, but rather ride above the rhythms and harmonies of the instrumentation. This engineered effect signifies the presence of Native spirit in the song, and reflects a consciousness of the circularity of life that is part of Native spirituality.
In the final verse of the song, Peltier describes the story of his guilty verdict:

\[\ldots\] I was found guilty before a jury of non-Indian people
The prosecutor stated that they did not know who killed their agents
Nor did he know what participation Leonard Peltier
may have played in it
But someone has to pay for the crime

His words are followed by the sounds of the earth symbolized in the extended rhythmic heartbeat of Native drumming and the frantic sound of the maracas, moving us inside the “primitive,” closer to the earth. The vocal chanting then begins to sound slightly distorted, reflecting the feeling of confusion surrounding the “justice” handed down to Peltier. All music completely stops and the song ends with only Peltier’s slightly muffled phone voice saying, “If I need to sacrifice some more then I sacrifice some more.” The sound of his voice is engineered to create a feeling of isolation and alienation, signifying that even with all the sacrifice that is part of Native history, the struggle for freedom, justice and equality has not come to an end.

The tradition of storytelling is part of how Native people learn and experience their culture/identity and at one level, perfectly parallels the concept of enunciation. Storytelling, like enunciation is rooted in experience directly, as opposed to “beliefs” in existence or in “truths” of any kind, thus legitimating and authorizing the first person voice as the knowledgeable speaker of culture/identity. In destroying their culture, the “White Man” also destroyed Native peoples’ own access to knowledge:

The law that followed after Canada made treaties with Indian nations, called the Indian Act, outlawed First Nations’ spirituality and attempted to put an end to our way of thinking and the way we gather knowledge. Taking our way of thinking and replacing it with another does not always work, especially when it is done by force, as in this case. (Auger 1997: 339)

For Native people, identity that was defined by their spirituality was replaced with an identity defined by stereotypical images such as the noble savage, the drunken Indian,
the backward simpleton; the uncivilized, immoral lawless degenerate; the promiscuous ‘squaw’; and the pampered, dependent welfare bum who exploits taxpayers’ generosity without reciprocating. (Ponting and Kiely 1997: 170)

Robertson’s “Sacrifice” symbolizes how the articulation of “the social concerns, political demands and/or cultural identities of Canada’s indigenous peoples” (Baxter-Moore 2000: 11) can contribute to defining a new cultural identity for North America’s Native peoples.

Robertson’s/Peltier’s “story” of injustice against First Nations people partly signifies how the tradition of storytelling offers opportunity for Natives to redefine themselves to themselves and to dominant culture in their own traditions of memory and legend instead of “in response to stereotypes and shame” (Ponting and Kiely 1997: 173).

Ponting (1997) writes,

The spiritual revival is taking many forms among First Nations peoples. The Sacred Assembly, held in Ottawa in December 1995 and organized under the auspices of Elijah Harper, M. P., is one manifestation of the spiritual revival at the national level. (Ponting 1997: 259)

The First Nations peoples within Canada are beginning to define their own ideals and visions of society and human life. They are asking for negotiation based on achieving equality and fairness. For example, their ideas were reflected in “the effectiveness of Native spiritual leaders in ending the armed confrontation at Gustafsen Lake, B. C. in 1995, after the failure of secular leaders like Ovid Mercredi” (259). Within Native communities, many individuals are trying to return to the traditional ways of the elders, by practicing the use of the sweat lodge, sacred sweetgrass in purification ceremonies and in the use of traditional healers (259). The return of “sacred bundles and artifacts from museums” to the “rightful owners” was negotiated with the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples’ by Native representatives (259). Ponting writes that a renewed
interest in sacred sites attests to the spiritual revival of both Natives and Non-Natives, but Natives are still not granted full equality and freedom as their "access to some of those sites is restricted by government policy (e.g., in national parks)" (259).

Joanne St. Lewis (1997) writes,

The new North American nations espoused individual freedom while enslaving others and using cultural differences to justify theft and genocide. As Toni Morrison describes it in Playing in the Dark, 'what was distinctive in the New [World] was, first of all, its claim to freedom and second, the presence of the unfree within the heart of the democratic experiment – the critical absence of democracy, ...' The continued presence of First Nations peoples and of the African diaspora is the physical marker of this contradiction. (24)

The contradiction is embedded in the way that dominant culture constructed the Native (and African) Other. Ponting and Kiely (1997) write:

Since the time of the first British contact with the aboriginal people, Canadian legal traditions have assumed that the Indians were too primitive to have a legal system that could be considered "civilized" and "worthy" of recognition by the British-based courts. The non-Christian aboriginals were considered to be 'pagans.' (164)

Peltier’s narrative in “Sacrifice” decenters the formulaic structure of Native identity that defines “Indian” as primitive and savage. Peltier’s first person voice enunciates Native identity as one of having vision and spirituality. Peltier’s performance comes from inside his own heart, signifying Hall’s idea of “outside the sentence,” outside the tyranny of “discourse.” Marjorie Beaucage (1996) argues that, “cultural knowing takes place on the spiritual plane ... from experiencing life rather than measuring or controlling it” (214). Leonard Peltier’s sacrifice and the sacrifices of the Native peoples are part of the spiritual plane.

There is a great overlap between Native spirituality and the Native cultural vision because inherent in both is the belief that our actions and the effects they have on others,
defines us and our relationship to society. In other words, a social conscience unites Native spirituality and the Native cultural vision and this union symbolizes the process of meaning that is part of Native identity. "Sacrifice" represents marginal/minority music because Robertson expresses aspects of Native culture and political issues that concern the North American Native population. As a result, much of Native artists' music has helped define a new cultural identity for North American Natives which involves both a rival and hybridity of cultural identities. As was outlined in Chapter 2, in the Native context, we could not discuss cultural hybridity without recognizing the difference between disruption of culture and cultural transformation. And the spiritual revival within many Native communities is an important part of negotiation and cultural transformation of First Nations peoples. Spiritual revival is one story among many of Native peoples' stories of survival despite the systematic devastation of their language and traditional cultures. Enunciation in the Third Space symbolizes cultural hybridities, and both cultural hybridities and cultural revival have facilitated cultural continuity for First Nations peoples in North America.
I have argued that contemporary popular music, produced by members of
cultural and racial minorities, establishes cultural identity and resists racist discourse. In
support of the argument this thesis has understood Adorno’s theory of Standardization as
a theoretical position of Western authority, arguing that Adorno’s theory rests on the
assumption that there is an “essence” to music, an essence that Adorno rationalizes as
structure/form. This thesis has demonstrated that constructing music as possessing an
essence is connected to ideology and power and in this regard, Adorno’s Standardization
theory is a discourse of White Western power. This thesis has argued that
“essentialism” is at the root of Western “rationalization” of music, and that the definition
of what constitutes music is an extension of Western racial “discourses” of the Other.
This thesis has shown that Western rationalization of “Black” music is a way of
constructing racial differences musically and circulating stereotypes such as the “noble
savage” of jazz and blues music. This thesis has also demonstrated that Western
rationalization of Native music resulted in misrepresenting the music as “simple” and
thereby extending the myth of the “primitive” Indian into music.

This thesis has undermined Adorno’s theory of Standardization by legitimating
the fusion of musical styles and the first person voice of experience as the authorized
speakers of meaning and signification. The semiotic analysis of the “Gun,” “Fast Car”
and “Sacrifice” in addition to the application of Bhabha’s Third Space to the three songs,
has demonstrated that enunciation draws from hybridities of cultures, fusion/syncretism
of musical styles, where hybridities and fusion/syncretism signify the expanding of
cultural boundaries. In each song the condition of enunciation is cultural hybridities of
identities. In all three songs, cultural identity is a signifier whose capacity for expanding cultural boundaries is inexhaustible. The analysis of “Gun,” “Fast Car” and “Sacrifice” reveal that there are no stable signifiers of culture(s) in the songs and this is consistent with Hall’s idea that the meaning of cultures is always unstable and undefined. The songs provide no stable meaning of what it is to be African-American, Native. Each song’s imperative is to enunciate the impossibility of fixed cultural boundaries and this is the process of signification in each song. Enunciation is a process of signification that does not draw from assigned meanings of culture/identity. Enunciation draws from hybridities of cultures, fusion of musical styles. In each song analyzed, the crossing of boundaries signifies culture(s), where meaning emerges at the meeting place of cultures, i.e., fusion of musical styles – where hybridities/fusion are read as signifiers of disavowal and resistance. Fusion of musical styles is also a reflection of the political/social/historical contexts inherent in all three songs because fusion is the referent of both resistance and cultural continuity. The analysis of each song has revealed that fusion of musical styles signifies the crossing of cultural boundaries, through what Homi Bhabha calls the Third Space, and thus represents negotiated identities both in musical and political terms because hybridities are a result of negotiated power.

If this thesis were to be expanded at some future date there are some concepts that can be further contemplated and applied to popular music. The concept of dominant culture involves numerous variables that need detailed consideration in order to more specifically define the very idea of “dominant.” Within this thesis, dominant culture has been used to mean White Western culture. However, this meaning does not address issues of class and wealth. In relation to Marxist thinking, dominant culture is
associated with the "ruling class," meaning the capitalists, those who own the means of production. But this aspect of dominant culture has not been the focus of this thesis. Here, the concept of dominant culture has been used to mean White Western culture in the context of discourses of the racial Other; White versus non-White, West versus East. A Marxist perspective would introduce the concept of class – rich versus poor, capitalists versus proletariat – and would open up a discussion of the hermeneutic of "dominant" culture within a culture. For example, do all the subjects within European-based cultures, such as the British culture, interpret "dominant" culture as White Western culture? Or does the question of class play a role in the hermeneutic of "dominant"? There is a large body of literature which argues that uneven relations of power have less to do with race and culture and more to do with the uneven distribution of wealth. Expanding this thesis' definition of dominant culture to include Marxist literature would allow for a more in-depth understanding of the term "dominant culture."

In this thesis, the "West" has been used to mean Western powers that have subjugated the non-White, non-Western colonized cultures. The concept of the West in relation to "Western" knowledge also warrants future investigation because within Western traditions of knowledge and music, there are conflicting views and theories. It is sometimes confusing to group frameworks of knowledge into a category of "Western" and present Western knowledge as a monolithic entity of the West, because it is precisely within the tradition of Western academia that Western intellectuals themselves constantly challenge and dismantle "Western" frameworks of knowledge. For example, Foucault’s theory of discourses and power deconstructs Western knowledges based on a critique of ontologies, metaphysics and essentialism. And this extends into the area of Western musical knowledge, where there exist conflicting attitudes and traditions. For
example, in the tradition of Canada’s East Coast popular folk music, the music is passed down from person to person, generation to generation. In contrast, in the world of European classical (“composed”) music, folk music is viewed as “inferior” because it is not composed/written. These conflicting views of music exist within the Western tradition of music, within frameworks of Western musical knowledge. There is some literature that argues that “Western” knowledge is the result of the struggle of different professions and disciplines to establish “systems” of knowledge that could secure them power for complete jurisdiction over their field or area of work. The concept of Western knowledge as a homogeneous framework of empirical/text based knowledge warrants further research.

This thesis has also focused on how the racial Other is constructed but the construction of “Whiteness” also warrants future research. Including an examination of the construction of “Whiteness” would help present a more complete picture of racial “discourses.” As mentioned earlier in this thesis, there is little literature on the construction of “Whiteness” in comparison to the literature on the construction of the racial Other. Richard Dyer is among the few who have undertaken an analysis of the construction of “Whiteness.” Dyer’s work gives a complex explanation of the media’s discursive representations of the non-racialized Self. Others have discussed how the discursive practice of stereotyping based on binary oppositions not only damages and destroys non-White identities but also White identity because the White Western Self comes to be defined only in relation to and in opposition with the Other. The discursive construction of other cultural identities inadvertently also constructs its own “Whiteness” because the other culture is seen as having colour, traditions, customs, values and beliefs which must be oppressed and denied in order to mark White culture as
the norm. The examination of racial discourse would be more complete in this thesis if
the discussion of racial “discourse” was expanded to include the construction of
“Whiteness.”

And lastly, the concept of “popular” also warrants future research. The meaning
of “popular” in relation to culture and music has itself been a topic of debate in the
literature. As mentioned in Chapter 1, there is agreement in the literature that, in the
definition of popular music, the equation of “popular” with “mass” does not always
work. Moreover, “popular” cannot mean a product/song because as Hall and Bhabha
have pointed out, “popular” has all the characteristics of a process, of signifying
practices, of negotiating spaces. In this thesis, popular has generally been used to mean
music that is commercially successful. In this regard, Adorno’s theory of
Standardization does correctly describe popular music in North America because all
popular music within contemporary popular culture is defined by commercial success
involving extensive media coverage. But for marginal/minority music to gain
commercial success means more than profits for the artists of the music. The
commercial success of marginal/minority music is in itself a process of signification or
meaning. The musicians/songwriters examined in this thesis, Scott-Heron, Chapman
and Robertson, are commercially successful artists and thus occupy an influential
political space in dominant popular culture. Their success has contributed to marginal/
minority groups’ institutionalized recognition and legitimacy and most importantly,
visibility. The recognition that their commercial success brings, gives them an
influential public platform to engage in a political struggle over culture/identity.
Marginal/minority music can be seen as a cultural strategy which challenges and
rearranges dominant culture’s conceptions and judgments of “popular” music itself as
something defined by and for the “mainstream.” The growing popularity of marginal/minority popular music has placed it in the position of helping to reshape societies’ cultural and political identities. The increasing media attention and the public interest in minority popular music symbolizes progress for marginalized groups as the music continues to receive increasing institutionalized recognition and thus legitimation—institutionalized space on television music channels MTV and MUCH Music and airplay on mainstream radio stations all over Canada and the U. S.; legitimation in the form of Grammy and Juno Music Awards and Nominations.

Music has been an instrumental force in shaping identities not only in Black and Native histories, but music is an important part of identity in all societies. This links back to Adorno’s initial assumption that “composed” music is important because it structurally transcends social forces and popular music is “aesthetically uninteresting because it is determined by them” (Frith 1996: 119, discussing Adorno). On one level, Adorno is correct in his view that the standardization of popular music results in a “system of response mechanisms wholly antagonistic to the ideal of individuality in a free liberal society” (Adorno 1990: 305). Often, the very people who create the music, the musicians themselves, resist being forced into someone else’s mould, whether it be the producers or the record companies telling them what and how to think and create. Many artists feel that commercialism has corrosive effects on their artistic/creative expressions. However, Adorno’s view does not allow for the possibility of resistance on the part of the artists and consumers. Adorno’s theory fails to recognize that popular music, specifically marginal/minority popular music, can function to correct misrepresentations of identity/culture. The commercial success of the music also helps restore to the musicians/artists the authority to represent their own music and thus
marginal/minority popular music in general can function as a forum that can disorient assigned political boundaries and change political reality. Part of the process of signification of marginal/minority music has been precisely to uncover those social/political/historical forces hidden in the "ideology" of cultural identity, the "ideology" of musical "form." If this thesis were to be expanded at a future date, the concept of "popular" would be further researched in order to develop a definition of "popular" music that includes the function of marginal/minority music in correcting misrepresentations of identity/culture.
APPENDIX A

“Gun”
(Scott-Heron)

BrotherMan nowadays livin’ in the ghetto
where the danger’s sho’ ‘nuff real,
(Well) if he’s out late at night
and he’s got his head on right
I’ll lay you nine to five he’s walking with steel.
BrotherMan said he’s ‘fraid of gangsters
messin’ with people just for fun.
And he don’t want to be next -
he’s got a family to protect,
so just last week he bought himself a gun.

Everybody got a pistol.
Everybody got a .45.
The philosophy seems to be,
at least as near as I can see:
When the other folks give up theirs I’ll give up mine.

This is a violent civilisation
if civilization’s where I am.
Every channel that I stop on
got a different kind of cop on
and they’re killin’ ‘um by the millions for Uncle Sam.
But Saturday night just ain’t that special -
yeah, got the Constitution on the run.
Cause even though you got the right
to defend your home, defend your life,
got to understand, got to get it in hand
about the gun.

Everybody got a pistol.
Everybody got a .45.
The philosophy seems to be,
at least as near as I can see:
When the other folks give up theirs I’ll give up mine.

Saturday night just ain’t that special
Freedom to be afraid is all you won.
(And) since you don’t want to be next -
you’ve got a family to protect,
nine out of ten you’ve got a friend
you call it gun.
Everybody got a pistol.
Everybody got a .45.
The philosophy seems to be,
at least as near as I can see:
When the other folks give up theirs I’ll give up mine.
“Fast Car”
(Chapman)

You got a fast car
I want a ticket to anywhere
Maybe we make a deal
Maybe together we can get somewhere
Anyplace is better
Starting from zero got nothing to lose
Maybe we’ll make something
But me myself I got nothing to prove

You got a fast car
And I got a plan to get us out of here
I been working at the convenience store
Managed to save just a little bit of money
We won't have to drive too far
Just 'cross the border and into the city
You and I can both get jobs
And finally see what it means to be living

You see my old man's got a problem
He live with the bottle that’s the way it is
He say his body's too old for working
I say his body is too young for looking like his
My mama went off and left him
She wanted more from life than he could give
I said somebody's got to take care of him
So I quit school that's what I did

You got a fast car
But is it fast enough so we can fly away
We gotta make a decision
We leave tonight or die this way

I remember we were driving in your car
The speed so fast I felt like I was drunk
City lights lay out before us
And your arm felt nice wrapped 'round my shoulder
And I had a feeling that I belonged
And I had a feeling I could be someone, be someone, be someone

You got a fast car
And we go cruising to entertain ourselves
You still ain't got a job
And I work in a market as a checkout girl
I know things will get better
You'll find work and I'll get promoted
We'll move out of the shelter
Buy a big house and live in the suburbs

I remember we were driving in your car
The speed so fast I felt like I was drunk
City lights lay out before us
And your arm felt nice wrapped 'round my shoulder
And I had a feeling that I belonged
And I had a feeling I could be someone, be someone, be someone

You got a fast car
And I got a job that pays all our bills
You stay out drinking late at the bar
See more of your friends than you do of your kids
I'd always hoped for better
Thought maybe together you and me would find it
I got no plans I ain't going nowhere
So take your fast car and keep on driving

I remember we were driving in your car
The speed so fast I felt like I was drunk
City lights lay out before us
And your arm felt nice wrapped 'round my shoulder
And I had a feeling that I belonged
And I had a feeling I could be someone, be someone, be someone

You got a fast car
But is it fast enough so we can fly away
We gotta make a decision
We leave tonight or die this way
"Sacrifice"
(Robertson)

You know we have a million stories to tell
I'm just one of a million or more stories that could be told

chorus:

Sacrifice your freedom
Sacrifice your prayer
Take away your language
Cut off all you hair
Sacrifice the loved ones
Who always stood by me
Stranded in the wasteland
Set my spirit free

My name is Leonard Peltier
I am a Lakota and Anishnabe
And I am living in the United States penitentiary
Which is the swiftest growing
Indian reservations in the country.

I have been in prison since 1976
For an incident that took place on the Oglala-Lakota Nation
There was a shoot-out between members of the American Indian Movement
And The FBI and the local Sheriffs State Troopers
Two agents were killed and one Indian was murdered

Three of us were charged with the death of the FBI agent
My co-defendants were found not guilty by reason of self-defense
My case was separated and I was found guilty
before a jury of non-Indian people

The prosecutor stated that they did not know who killed their agents
Nor did he know what participation Leonard
Peltier may have played in it
But someone has to pay for the crime

There's a lot of nights that I lay in my cell
And I can't understand why this hell this hell and this terror
That I have been going through for twenty-one years hasn't ended
chorus:

Sacrifice your freedom
Sacrifice your prayer
Take away your language
Cut off all your hair
Sacrifice the loved ones
Who always stood by me
Stranded in the wasteland
Set my spirit free

But yet I know in my heart that someone has to pay sacrifice
To make things better for our people
The sacrifice I have made when I really sit down to think about it
Is nothing compared to what our people a couple of hundred years ago
Or fifty years ago or twenty-five years ago have made
Some gave their lives
Some had to stand there and watch their children die in their arms
So the sacrifice I have made is nothing compared to those

I've gone too far now to start backing down
I don't give up
Not 'till my people are free will I give up
And if I have to sacrifice some more
Then I sacrifice some more.
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