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"DOING IT FOR THE DUDES": A COMPARATIVE

ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF PERFORMATIVE MASCULINITY

IN HEAVY METAL AND HARDCORE SUBCULTURES

by

J. IKE SEWELL

Under the Direction of Dr. Marian Meyers

ABSTRACT

This ethnographic study compares and contrasts performative masculinities of the male-dominated heavy metal (HM) and hardcore (HC) subcultures. Conclusions derived from this research indicate the following: identities associated with HM and HC conflate masculinity with working-classness; HM and HC identities (and thus masculinities) are merging at present; participation in HM and HC enclaves can serve to symbolically marginalize constituents, and this symbolic marginalization can result in repercussions in the lived world outside of subculture; the hegemonic masculinity of HM and HC subcultures is *double-edged masculinity*, meaning that it supports the male-dominated structure of mainstream culture without empowering HM and HC males in an extra-subcultural sense; and that despite these negative ramifications, HM and HC participants still find the shared identities and community interaction of these enclaves to be empowering.

INDEX WORDS: Heavy metal, Hardcore, Subculture, Masculinity, Performativity, Gender, Class, Ideology, Rock music, Identity, Double-edged masculinity, Proud pariah

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People often ask me why I do what I do
I answer confidently, honestly and true
It isn't for the glory, it isn't for the girls
It isn't for the booze
I'm here to tell you brothers
That I'm doing it for the dudes

— "Doing it for The Dudes"
by   The Retreads, 2002

1. INTRODUCTION

It is chaos as usual tonight in "Hell," the cavernous, 600-person capacity basement room

of the Masquerade, a three-leveled nightclub in Atlanta, Georgia. A horde of longhaired, sweat-

soaked revelers, predominately white and male and clad in black T-shirts with ominous logos,

hurl their bodies into one another as tonight's star performers aurally bludgeon them with a

deafening cacophony of heavy metal (HM) music. The featured act is Cannibal Corpse, a band

from Buffalo, New York, that has come to epitomize the death metal subgenre of HM because of

its hyperviolent lyrical content (Mudrian, 2004, p. 162). Songs on the band's set list for tonight

include titles like "Hammer Smashed Face," "Born in a Coffin," "Necropedophile," and "Post

Mortal Ejaculation." Lead vocalist George "Corpsegrinder" Fisher delivers the malevolent lyrics

in a throaty rasp that approximates what the voice of a demon might sound like, all the while

headbanging wildly. Although Cannibal Corpse's lyrics would probably be unintelligible to the

average listener, the fans at tonight's concert have clearly memorized them—relishing the

opportunity to scream these tales of dismemberment and torture back at the band while thrashing

violently in front of the stage. The band plays on, delivering complicated, crushing guitar riffs at

lightning speed—no small feat considering the dexterity required to play at such a pace for well

over an hour. Oddly enough, the ritualized pandemonium at this show is just another night's

work for the members of Cannibal Corpse, all middle-aged, married men with families to support

(Webster, 2009, part 3, para. 14). Indifferent to the criticism that their music promotes misogyny

and violence, the band's members claim that their gory songs are merely fictions which provide

cathartic release for listeners—in this way thwarting real violence rather than promoting it

(Webster, 2009, part 1, para. 23). Watching the show, however, it is impossible to tell just how

the audience members are interpreting these messages. What is patently obvious, though, is that

the crowd is loving this stuff.

A mere five blocks away, a similar scene is unfolding at the Drunken Unicorn, a tiny

venue that might be more accurately described as a dive bar with a one-foot high, plywood stage

crammed in the backroom. Tonight the club is packed to well over its legal capacity of around

200 people for a double bill featuring two California-based bands: Trash Talk, a "new school"

HC band from Sacramento, and Off!, an "old school" HC band fronted by 56-year-old Keith

Morris, an alum of Black Flag, the groundbreaking band that delivered the archetypal template

for proto-HC in Los Angeles, circa 1979 (Azerrad, 2001, p. 14). Despite the obvious age

differences between the members of Off! and Trash Talk, the youngish crowd's response to each

band's show is the same—utter mayhem, or at least *performed* mayhem, erupts as the bands bash

out short, loud/fast sonic tantrums expressing distrust for authority, a sense of alienation and/or

disgust at the consumerist conformity that is symptomatic of America's lookalike, prefab

suburbs. Although Off! is a bit more melodic than Trash Talk, both bands' sonic oeuvres are

similar: distorted guitars, driven by machinegun drumming, and punctuated by vocals more often

screamed than sung. The hot room is packed so tightly that no one present can avoid being

coated with beer and sweat, and pummeled by the slam-dancing crowd. The club smells like a

dirty gymnasium permeated with farts. Thrashing HC fans, the majority of them white and male, regularly traverse the miniscule boundary between the audience and the band to execute "stage dives" into the crowd. During Off!'s set, vocalist Morris delivers an onstage rap about "the assholes you see everywhere on the street" before the band charges into the anthem, "Fuck People." At the end of the show, the audience streams out of the club—smiling, sweaty and satiated. Some of the audience members may be bruised or bloody nosed, but it's all in fun.

At each of the aforementioned performances, the audience demographics, sounds and performed behaviors are similar. In fact, some of the people that were present at the Masquerade show later arrived at the Drunken Unicorn in time to catch most of Off!'s set. Each of the shows featured a kind of staged chaos, a cabalistic celebration of white maleness. Still, there were subtle (and sometimes not so subtle) ideological distinctions between the messages proffered at each venue, as well as variations between the ways that maleness was performed in each show. Just what is going on here?

Hardcore (HC) and heavy metal (HM) are distinctive genres of hard rock music, each with accompanying subcultures marked by specific modes of behavior, generic and performative particularities and structured social hierarchies. Both HM and HC are male-dominated, homosocial subcultures (Blush, 2010, p. 38; Krenske & McKay, 2000, pp. 287-288, Arnett, 1996, p. 139; Weinstein, 2009, p. 17). Because of the correspondences that link these subcultures, having access to observe each group from within its subcultural boundaries offers a unique opportunity to evaluate, compare, and contrast performative masculinity as enacted in strikingly similar yet also divergent communities. This dissertation is a comparative ethnographic study of HM and HC subcultures conducted over a nine month period (2011 and 2012) in the Atlanta area. With rhetorical theory as crucial implement from the "analytical

toolbox" used to unpack meanings in this project, the study is a cross-disciplinary venture that might be defined, variously, as a "rhetorical cultural study" (Rosteck, 2001,p. 54), as "cultural rhetoric" (Conquergood, 1992, p. 80), or as "critical-rhetorical ethnography" (Hess, 2011, p. 128). Comparative ethnography is employed to establish commonalities and differences in an examination of how masculinity is enacted in HM and HC subcultures, while rhetorical methods supply another means of decoding these meanings analytically. This study contributes to the fields of masculinity studies, identity studies, ideological criticism, performance studies, fan studies, and subculture studies.

Several pivotal studies (Arnett, 1996; Cagle, 1995; Hebdige, 1979; Muggleton, 2000; Waksman, 2009; Walser, 1993; Wood, 2006) support the understanding that rock music subcultures are communities that operate as sites for collective identity negotiation and group resistance to the larger, mainstream culture within which they are subsumed, perhaps all the while functioning to co-opt their own oppositionality through commodification and incorporation. Hebdige (1979) asserts that style is the signifier of subculture, the visible manifestation of transgression, a "symbolic challenge to a symbolic order" (p. 92). Hebdige (1979) further contends that the commercialization of subcultural transgression into commodity form sows the seeds for the subculture's reabsorption into mainstream culture (p. 94). In a similar study of the early 1970s glitter rock phenomenon, Cagle (1995) posits that such commoditization needn't necessarily dilute or skew the precepts upon which the subculture is originally based (p. 47), and that savvy subculture participants may knowingly exploit their own carefully acquired subcultural cachet as a means of enlarging the subculture's ranks and for personal profit (pp. 213-215). Muggleton (2000) advocates a postmodern understanding of subculture which takes into account appropriation—as well as pastiche and syncretism, the

cobbling together of disparate (sub)cultural elements—noting that the stylistic markers of subculture can both mark and mask identities and affiliations (pp. 39-40). For Muggleton, those who engage subcultural affiliations as "style surfing" are "post-subculturalists," dabblers who move freely among subcultures without the burden of having to establish authenticity for themselves (p. 47). All of the aforementioned authors, to varying degrees, agree that popularization simultaneously serves to extend and erode subcultures.

Although the scholars studying HM and HC have oftentimes noted that these subcultures are almost exclusively populated and dominated by males (Arnett, 1996, p. 12; Moore, 2010, p. 64; Walser, 1993, p. 109; Wood, 2006, p. 7), inquiries regarding how performative masculinity operates within these collectivities has been secondary at best, and cursory at worst. Tellingly, in his 1993 analysis of heavy metal culture, *Running with the Devil*, Walser posits that those involved in HM propagate a discourse equating power with obligatory masculinity—yet participants in HM actually hold little socioeconomic authority, if any (p. 109). While this observation regarding the role of masculinity in HM certainly offers a crucial point of departure, the author neglects to follow through with a thorough examination of masculinity's function. Arnett (1996) offers a more nuanced grasp of masculinity's role in HM, stating that adolescent males' participation in that subculture provides a milieu for masculine rites of passage apart from more conventional, parentally-sanctioned practices occurring in socializing activities such as sports (pp. 12-14). Likewise, Wood (2006) posits that HC is a subculture of "latent male oriented bias" which is somewhat benignly made manifest by continued references to the enclave as a brotherhood, and, more offensively, in overtly sexist terminology which denigrates women's roles in the HC scene (pp. 75-76). While all of the aforementioned literature does acknowledge the masculinist, homosocial structuring of HM and HC subcultures, none adequately interrogate

the ways in which performative masculinity operates in the process of collective identity negotiation for participants. As Moore (2010) contends, "with some exceptions, analyses of music and subculture have generally failed to theorize the symbols, music and styles of subculture in terms of masculinity and its social construction" (p. 29).

This comparative ethnographic study of HM and HC subcultures offers a host of opportunities to address the primary research question of how masculinity is enacted in subculture that expands upon preexisting scholarship (Arnett, 1996; Walser, 1993; Weinstein, 2000 & 2009, Kahn-Harris, 2007) via the practice of critical-rhetorical ethnography and through a co-interpretive analytical strategy which engages participants not only in the field and in interview settings, but also in the subsequent interpretation of these events and interviews. HM and HC share many similarities, such as outsider status for participants, the demographic correspondence that both enclaves are clearly male-dominated, and musical qualities of volume, speed and distortion. There is, in fact, much crossover among the subcultures, a melding that is most salient in the performances of both bands and audiences at shows (Waksman, 2009, p. 275). Introduced most clearly by Judith Butler (1991) in her canonical article, "Imitation and Gender Insubordination," performativity is the enactment of socialized characteristics that, through repetition, we come to understand as innate (p. 125). Butler (1991) contends that gender is not reflective of essence, but is in fact a performative act (p. 127). Bearing this in mind, this comparative study establishes both commonalities of masculine performativity shared by HM and HC and gender-based particularities pertinent to each. While there are many scholarly studies of HM (Arnett, 1996; Dee, 2009; Kelly, 2006; Walser, 1993) and scant studies of HC (Haenfler, 2006; Wood, 2006) available, there are no studies comparing and contrasting the subcultures—particularly in respect to the component of performative masculinity that is vital to

both subcultures. Although HM and HC are both longstanding subcultures in America, neither

of these enclaves has been researched extensively. Canonical analytical works concerning HM

are those of Walser (1993) and Arnett (1996), both nearly 20 years old. Analyses of HC are even

scarcer, limited primarily to the works of Wood (2008) and Haenfler (2006, 2010). This study

addresses the aforementioned gaps: the relative absence of recent study of both subcultures, the

dearth of specific analytical focus on performative masculinity in HM and HC subcultures and

the lack of comparative study of the two enclaves. Ethnography is a process of establishing

meanings through interaction. As such, the research design and structuring of this study has

evolved as new parameters emerged during the course of the fieldwork (Emerson, Fretz, &

Shaw, 1995, pp. 157-159). This study of performative masculinity in HM and HC communities

provides clues as to how masculinity is deployed not only in these particular subcultures, but in

culture in general.

The format of this dissertation is developed in the following way: first, I will examine the

literature pertinent to this study; secondly, I will explain the applicable methods for the execution

and subsequent analysis of this project; next, I will offer a detailed narrative of my observations

made during fieldwork, supplemented by accounts and explanations of the core participants

offered during personal interviews; then I will offer an account of processes leading toward the

conclusion of this work through co-analysis with participants; and, finally, I will summarize and

contextualize the findings of this work. The conclusions derived from this ethnographic study

indicate that: 1.) the identities associated with HM and HC conflate masculinity with working-

classness; 2.) HM and HC identities (and thus HM and HC masculinities) are merging at present;

3.) participation in HC and HM subcultures can function to marginalize its constituents through

social and artistic practices that produce an experience of power that is largely bereft of any

realizable sociopolitical potential; 4.) the hegemonic masculinity reinscribed in HM and HC subcultures is a *double-edged masculinity*, meaning that it supports the male-dominant structuring of the culture as a whole without necessarily empowering HM and HC males in an extra-subcultural sense; and 5.) despite the abovementioned negative repercussions of adopting HM and HC identities, participants still find their experiences in these subcultures to be empowering because they provide a sense of belonging to a vibrant community, a voice within that community, and a way to resist and/or refuse the dominant ideology.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Culture and Ideology

Before delving into HM and HC subcultures, their practices and processes, I first must establish definitions for culture and subculture. Often considered the founder of the field of social anthropology, Edward Burnett Tylor (1958) defines culture as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by a man as a member of society" (p. 1). This definition of culture provides the bedrock understanding that culture encompasses expression, artifacts and learned behaviors, a collectivistic rather than individualistically driven way of being and communicating that is related to a specific group. Hoggart (1972) notes that culture is both process and product, a dualistic ebb and flow where cultural artifacts represent the processes through which they were conceived—and where the practices of a given culture are in turn affected by the cultural artifacts which represent them. For Hoggart, culture "produce[s] a picture of the world and then ask[s] its people to approve that picture and the values which stem from it" (p. 101). Hoggart's notion that any given culture affects and is affected by its constituency is contiguous with Bourdieu's (1977) scheme which explains how what is understood to be "reality" in a given culture is in fact constructed in the cultural process (pp. 185-186). In this way, the goods created in cultural production carry messages which reinforce the strictures of social order as well or better than legal institutions or the economic system.

Raymond Williams (1961) notes the existence of three categories for defining culture: the ideal category within which universalities are established; the social category, which describes

motifs and/or modes of being that influence not only art and folklore but also ordinary behaviors;

and the documentary category, which examines the creative works of a culture and leads to

judgment and criticism (p. 154). Williams asserts that the ideal and, especially, the documentary

categories may mislead analysts toward the notion that "culture" specifically concerns creative

expression and aesthetic judgment (p. 42). Williams is likewise critical of the social category for

its emphasis on art and folklore as mere side effects of sociopolitical influence. He alternatively

contends that the aforementioned categories should be understood as intersecting and/or

overlapping—that all three should be employed as a means of comprehending the "genuine

complexity" of culture (p. 43).

Levi-Strauss (1963) offers a conceptualization which differentiates cultures from one

another. For Levi-Strauss, culture "presents significant discontinuities in relation to the rest of

humanity" (p. 195). This emphasis on difference is useful not only for making distinctions

between cultures, but also for making distinctions *within* an individual culture. Through Levi-

Strauss' structuralist lens, both continuities and incontinuities are the focus—the goal of the

researcher being to determine both differences among cultures and "invariants," mores that span

all cultures and operate as universals (p. 195). Such invariants can be established both among

cultures and inter-culturally. The assemblages that Levi-Strauss defines as different "cultural

units" which exist among a greater, encompassing culture are comparable to what scholars of the

Birmingham School would later define as subcultures.

Hebdige (1979), the scholar most notable for his expansion of the Birmingham School's

cultural studies approach into the analysis of subculture, asserts that culture is "a notoriously

ambiguous concept," (p. 5), explaining that the (then) contemporary understanding of culture is

twofold; both as a standard of artistry and/or decorum, and as a holistic system of myths, beliefs

and actions (pp. 6-7). The first understanding of culture as a "high" standard, demarcated from the "low" ways of being and expression symptomatic of the masses, has been complicated by technology's steady progress (Benjamin, 1936, pp. 6-7). The explosion of ways to reproduce and distribute information enabled by technology has certainly served to skew the high/low culture balance toward the latter. From modernity to the present, popular or mass culture has become "the" culture. Strinati (2004) posits that the emergence of mass culture in modernity and its present ubiquity has created a milieu of "atomisation," whereby the individual is immersed in and indivisible from the mass, lacking personal connection to others but nonetheless inseparable from the whole (p. 6). Although the term "culture" certainly holds different meanings in various contexts, any analysis of culture from modernity to the present requisitely includes the examination of mass or popular culture (Strinati, 2004, pp. 9-10).

In his pivotal "The Study of Philosophy," Antonio Gramsci (1971) notes that participation in cultural activities impels a reciprocal relationship similar to that of the teacher and student in that all who participate are simultaneously being instructed and instructing others (p. 350). "Every relationship of a 'hegemony' is necessarily an educational relationship that occurs not only within a nation, between the various forces of which the nation is composed, but the international and world-wide field, between complexes of national and continental civilisations" (Gramsci, 1971, p. 350). This is to say that through participation in culture, the participant receives ideological indoctrination which, in turn, leads to behaviors that are in sync with the status quo. As such, any anti-hegemonic struggle is necessarily political in nature (p. 352). For Gramsci (2006), hegemony is enabled by the continued circulation of ideology: the family, church, schools, news media and the culture itself are all "ideological structures" whose function is to support the existing order (p. 16). Any institution that has the ability to influence

public opinion belongs to this ideological structure (p. 16). Althusser (2006) defines the aforementioned structures as "ideological state apparatuses" (p. 79). While "repressive state apparatuses" such as the police and the military operate overtly through violence and coercion, ideological state apparatuses operate covertly, through the circulation of ideology (p. 81). As participants in these structures, we are subtly hailed or interpellated into ideology (pp. 84-85). "The existence of ideology and the hailing or interpellation of individuals as subjects are one and the same thing" (p. 86). Through being hailed—and through *accepting* our identification as subjects in this process—our very actions become ideological without our knowing it (pp. 86-87). In this way, through participation in the social processes of ideological state apparatuses, our actions that *seem* to be non-ideological are in fact suffused with ideology (pp. 86-87). Partaking in sociocultural activities necessarily involves immersion in ideology in ways that are oftentimes imperceptible. As subjects who are hailed by ideology, we do not perceive ourselves as being *in* ideology (p. 86). Hence, social institutions and the culture itself provide the means to train us to accept our lot—and to understand the existing order as being natural and inevitable. Interpellation occurs at the moment one joins an audience: When one acknowledges being a member of the particular group being addressed (such as HM and HC participants), that person becomes part of a collective ideological identity (Charland, 1987, p. 138). As I will expound upon at great length in this dissertation, although they are not "state apparatuses" per se, HM and HC enclaves operate in ways that nevertheless hail participants into ideology—in these cases, an ideology of masculinity.

Scholars of the Birmingham School of British cultural studies asserted that culture was best examined through a process which considers factors such as ideology, class, economic conditions and nationality. Their employment of a Marxist analytical tack provided the means

by which the production of culture and cultural products could be examined from a materialist perspective. Clark, Jefferson and Roberts (1975) explain that culture is defined not only by its cultural products, but also includes the "maps of meaning" that underpin and shape cultural products and the ways that they are perceived by individuals within a culture (pp. 10-11). Unlike earlier Frankfurt School theorists, Birmingham School scholars saw the individual as having agency and the (not always realized) potential to resist the dominant ideology which replicates the material relations of production, favoring those in positions of power in the existing order. The Birmingham School theorists were primarily concerned with meaning—with understanding how the dominant ideology uses and shapes cultural products to reinforce the status quo *and* how individuals use those cultural products, creating meanings from them that may, in fact, resist the dominant meaning. Hall (1991) posits that individuals may make their own interpretations of texts rather than passively receiving intended media messages (pp. 58-59) as explained by the more pessimistic and elitist Frankfurt School theorists.

From a cultural studies perspective, culture can be viewed in a dualistic way, as pertaining to product and process. Culture is both the values, ideals and beliefs of society that instruct us on who we are and how to be *and* the outlooks, customs, ways of being and identities of a society which shape the creative works of a particular social order. More simply put, culture is the messages embedded in the totems of a society and the processes that shape the creation of those totems—what makes us who we are, how who we are shapes what we make, and how what we make, in turn, shapes who we are. Still, as Williams asserted in *The Long Revolution* (1961), culture concerns not only cultural artifacts and what influences their creation—but is *lived* (p. 56). Regarding Williams' conceptualization of culture, Hall (1996) categorizes it as an "anthropological definition" which takes into account that culture and social practices are

interlinked in society (p. 19), meaning that culture is part and parcel of the day-to-day performance of life, in public and in private, for ordinary individuals. For Williams, all individuals take part in the creation and maintenance of culture in ordinary life, and what is conveyed through artistic expression is exceptional because of its intensity, focus, and/or new ways of connecting meanings—extraordinary renditions of what is also lived in the quotidian existence of the proverbial common man (Literature and Society Group, 1972-3, p. 231). Culture is lived in that it depends upon ordinary people, in social situations, creating shared meanings that are rooted in broadly-based similarities of being (Hall, 1997a, p. 4).

In *Understanding Popular Culture*, Fiske (1989) differentiates "popular" from "mass" culture by stating that mass culture is the body of works that are mass-produced by the culture industry, whereas popular culture is the "active process of generating and circulating meanings and pleasures within a social system" (p. 23). This is to say that popular culture is *of the populace*, even when it involves externally-produced, ready-made cultural artifacts. The public, through its appropriation of motifs and cultural products for its own uses, makes mass-produced cultural products its own. Popular culture, thus, is inherently contradictory. That a subordinated public produces popular culture from the resources provided by the very system of power that subordinates them is key to this contradiction (Fiske, 2011, p. 1). Critics of this notion of popular culture as set forth by Fiske and other Centre for contemporary Cultural Studies scholars maintain, however, that it is shortsighted in that it fails to account for the ways that mass culture inscribes ideology through the circulation of cultural products (Strinati, 2003, p. 234). Nevertheless, Fiske's account of popular culture draws strength from its idea that when mass culture texts are *made* into popular culture (by "the people'), they are rearticulated in ways that

promote the forces of domination as well as those which resist those forces at the same time (1989, p. 25). Fiske expounds:

> All popular culture is a process of struggle, of struggle over the meanings of social experience, of one's personhood and its relations to the social order and of the texts and commodities of that order. Reading relations[1] reproduce and reenact social relations, so power, resistance, and evasion are necessarily structured into them. (p. 28)

In this way, popular culture operates to communicate a multiplicity of messages at the same time—and what one perceives the "message" of a given cultural product to be is based upon an ever-evolving variety of contexts. Thus, an individual can "read" the same cultural artifact in a number of different ways, all depending on the time, place and social situation when the reading is made. Fiske (1996) likens culture (and thus, popular culture and cultural products alike) to a river, contending that it is a large and continually moving body of force—one whose surface likely masks numerous hidden undercurrents (pp. 8-9). Fiske's concept that culture is an intermingling of ideas, currents and forces is contemporaneous with the concept of polysemy, that symbols and texts, like culture itself, carry a multiplicity of meanings and can be encoded and decoded multiple ways (Condit, 1989, p. 106; Barker, 2004. pp. 146-147, Hall, 1991, p. 58-59).

Fiske (1989) claims that because of the aforementioned contradictions, popular culture is a site for contestation in which power is unequally distributed on the basis of factors of identity such as race, ethnicity and gender (p. 4). Conceding that popular culture circulates multiple messages and/or ideologies at the same time, Fiske posits that this model accounts for the

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[1] Here, Fiske is referring to the interplay between the receiver of a text and the cultural forces and ideology inscribed in the text. For Fiske, readings of popular culture texts (such as the texts of HM and HC) are always contradictory in that they encompass both what is to be resisted and the resistances to it.

inevitable contradictions of any culture. For Fiske, the "people" that are imbricated in popular culture are neither dictated to by an all-powerful and irrepressible ideological system, nor are they wholly autonomous in terms of how they decode popular culture messages (pp. 45-46). Bearing in mind these contradictions, Fiske posits that the examination of popular culture texts (such as the texts that are circulated in HM and HC subcultures, for example) requires a certain analytical duality: The analyst must focus both on the ways that the forces of domination exert power through the ideologies encoded in the texts and must also focus on how people *use* cultural products, as ideologically tainted as they may be, to their own ends by "making do" (pp. 103-105). In this way, recipients of popular culture messages function both as subjects and as agents. They are to a certain degree hailed by these messages, while at the same time they hold at least a degree of agency in that they have the option of decoding these messages however they see fit. Paradoxically, recipients of popular culture messages are still not altogether autonomous. This conditional agency is "not that of voluntarism or free will, but social in that it is produced and determined by the contradictoriness that is the core experience of the subordinate in elaborate, capitalist societies" (p. 181). Plainly, the Western societies where HM and HC are most popular would fall within Fiske's category of "elaborate capitalist societies."

Despite the fact that the receptive agency held by the decoder in Fiske's scheme is conditional, it is *still* a form of agency. Popular culture is constructed in relation to the system of power from which its (cultural) resources flow, so, for Fiske there are only two possibilities concerning people's relationship to cultural messages; resistance or evasion (2011, p. 2). For Fiske, people have agency in that they *can* choose just how they receive popular culture. Thus, people *can* resist the dominant ideology, even if this resistance is only symbolic and personal. Such conditional receptive agency provides the means of asserting oneself, the means of "saying

no" to the messages imparted by ideological state apparatuses, or at least the means of opting out. After all, refusal offers a certain agency in itself. As Fiske explains, "evasion [such as opting out] is the foundation of resistance; avoiding capture, either ideological or physical, is the first duty of the [subcultural] guerilla" (2011, p. 5).

From Culture to Subculture

Culture is the medium within which subculture is spawned. Within culture lies the possibility for subcultural formations to emerge. In his canonical *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (1979), Hebdige explains subculture as interference or noise, as irregularities that are, both by happenstance and sometimes by design, interwoven into the fabric of culture as a whole (p. 90). For Hebdige, style is the signifier of subculture, the visible manifestation of transgression, a "symbolic challenge to a symbolic order" (p. 92). Understood in familial terms, subcultures are both distinct from yet still linked to their "parent" cultures (Clarke et al., 1990, p. 14). Generally, some form of distinctive social activity operates as the nucleus around which subcultural accretion takes place. Subcultures exist not only in opposition to (or as variations of) the parent culture, but also, in a semiotic sense, in contrast to other subcultures (Waksman, 2009, p. 4). Participants in subcultures appropriate artifacts from the parent culture, adapting and interpreting them for their own use in the process of establishing a new symbolic system. When used in the subcultural context, appropriated objects are employed in ironic, contrarian ways that express ideas and values modifying and/or juxtaposing those of the parent culture from which they emerge (Jenkins, 1992, p. 39). Paying close attention to their social nature as "subversive collectives," Ellis (2008) likens subcultures to surrogate families or youth gangs, asserting that

the reactionary behaviors carried out in subcultural performativity operate in ways that bond

participants (p. 9). Once immersed in a certain subculture, participants adopt a shared system of

meanings, adapting behaviors to follow the given subculture's mores and accepted ways of

presenting/performing the self. As such, subcultures have their own orthodoxies, common

beliefs and ways of being which are, to varying degrees, schemes of ironic, reactionary and/or

oppositional behaviors.

Culture is necessarily a process of sociality. One cannot participate in culture without

having at least a dialogic interaction with others. Within the sphere of a given culture,

individuals acquire knowhow as a means of establishing credibility. Bourdieu (1986) defines

such credibility as "cultural capital," insider knowledge which facilitates upward movement

within the social hierarchy of a given culture that is potentially convertible to economic capital

and/or rank (pp. 46-47). Cultural capital occurs in three forms: the "embodied state" in which

enduring temperaments are established, the "objectified state" in the form of totems, cultural

products, and mundane objects that nevertheless carry societal messages, and in the

"institutionalized state" which confers status to individuals along a ranked hierarchy (p. 47).

Participation in the social world of any culture spurs a process of reorganization where

insider/outsider distinctions are continually negotiated. Cultural capital operates as a kind of

possession that enables individuals-as-insiders to distinguish themselves from

outsiders/interlopers (Pinto, 1999, pp. 194-195). Crucially, Bourdieu (2001) posits that cultural

capital operates as a substantial asset during any moment of symbolic subversion where an

outsider group is atomizing itself as a separate, autonomous social entity *or* seeking to dissolve

its own stigmatization within an already established group (p. 123). This is to say that having

cultural capital provides the means for making new groups or gaining a social foothold in a pre-established group.

Subcultures are oppositional hierarchies—not to be conceptualized as binary opposites of the culture as such, but as multiple divergent enclaves existing within the greater culture, all with ways of being and ways of making meanings that somehow contradict the structure of mores, meanings, and meaning-making of the parent culture. In her analysis of the British dance music scene of the late 20th century, Sarah Thornton (1996) coined the term "subcultural capital" to denote the status that an individual subculture participant might hold within that subculture's internal hierarchy (p. 11). Thornton posits that subcultural capital can be objectified by the number of subculture-related products that a subculture participant might own, and that it can be embodied by the ways that subculture participants present themselves in order to project an aura of subcultural authenticity (pp. 11-12). In other words, subculture participants "prove" their subcultural affiliation to other subculture participants through their collections, clothing, and knowledge of subcultural history. Through the acquisition of subcultural capital, participants show fealty to their chosen subculture, hopefully moving up in the subculture's hierarchy in the process. "Subcultural capital is therefore compensatory, allowing people who are outsiders in all other aspects of society [but who are insiders in subculture] to feel superior because they are hip or cool" (Moore, 2010, p. 138). Subcultural capital operates in a dichotomous way that oftentimes is at odds with its own purposes. To attain subcultural capital, one must take on a pre-established set of behaviors and self-presentational styles while at the same time being (or at least appearing to be) truly unique.

Kahn-Harris' (2007) analysis of extreme metal[2] subculture addresses this contradiction, refining Thornton's concept of subcultural capital by breaking it down into two principal forms—mundane and transgressive (p. 121). Mundane subcultural capital is acquired through participation in subcultural activities that maintain the status quo (p. 122). HM and HC subculture participants gain mundane subcultural capital through practices that require a great deal of commitment, such as knowing the intricate histories of the scene and its bands, writing fanzines, tape trading and booking shows. Mundane subcultural capital requires active participation in the scene and is obtained through activities that are more or less altruistic and collectivistic (p. 124). In contrast, transgressive subcultural capital is accrued through radically individualistic acts that criticize the scene, build iconoclastic perspectives and discursive innovations, and/or somehow set the individual apart from the herd (p. 127). Transgressive and mundane subcultural capital share a reciprocal relation with one another. The activities of HM and HC subculture participants that are productive of mundane subcultural capital serve to sanctify those of the transgressive: By chronicling and promoting iconoclastic artists, persons with significant amounts of mundane subcultural capital function as the rank and file whose work bolsters the structure which supports the few elite transgressors. Likewise, HM and HC transgressors must maintain at least a degree of mundane subcultural capital in order to stay in the scene. It is indeed possible to attain mundane and transgressive subcultural capital simultaneously (p. 130). Hence, those acquiring subcultural capital in the HM and HC scenes perform a balancing act. Still, one cannot be what one is not: Once the orthodoxies of HM and HC are transgressed to a great enough extent, the transgressor can no longer claim allegiance to these enclaves.

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[2] For his analysis, Kahn-Harris uses the term "extreme metal," a catch-all designation which certainly includes black metal.

For Hebdige and other theorists from the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies [a.k.a. the Birmingham School], subcultures have a relatively short half-life. Although they emerge as contrarian entities existing in opposition to the dominant cultures within which they are engulfed, subcultures are swiftly reabsorbed into the mainstream through the process defined as "incorporation," a process which involves the representation of the subculture in popular media and the commercial exploitation through merchandising that occurs once the subculture has been identified and portrayed through such conduits (Hebdige, 1979, p. 94; Muggleton, 2000, p. 21; Cagle, 1995, p. 40). In other words, once a subcultural way of being is identified, consumerism emerges in its wake as eager capitalists scramble to manufacture and sell goods and services associated with a particular subculture, providing the means to represent oneself as a participant. An exemplary case of such incorporation would be the emergence of Hot Topic clothing stores, which are now ubiquitous in suburban U.S. shopping malls. These stores offer a wide array of punk rock, HM and HC accoutrements, enabling their primarily teenage consumers to express their rebellion by donning prefabricated uniforms of their chosen subculture—offered at prices affordable for upper middle-class purchasers. Oddly enough, while the commodification of subcultures certainly serves to dilute their oppositional qualities for participants, it also enables subcultural newcomers with the means to portray themselves as outsiders—and thus perpetuates (for parents, outsiders and the "straight" world, that is) a sense of outrage associated with subculture.

Subcultures thrive on controversy and aversion. That subcultures provoke aversion from "the mainstream" spurs a certain dualism in the analysis of subculture itself—subculture is predicated upon the notion of "straight" society that exists in binary opposition to it (Williams, 2011, p. 9). As subcultures emerge, moral panics ensue in their wake. In his vital analysis of

mod and rocker enclaves of the mid 1960s, Cohen (2002) foresaw that moral panics would continue to be crucial stages in the lifespans of subcultures (p. 172). This is to say that subcultures gain momentum from negative representations in popular culture in that, by being portrayed as "deviant," subcultures tend to solidify their transgressive or outsider appeal. Hebdige (1979) explains that spectacular subcultures such as mods and rockers (and, ergo, HM and HC subcultures as well) "consistently provoke hysterical outbursts" realized as moral panics (pp. 96-97). Through commoditization, subculture-related products are sold to youths, enabling their self-portrayal as being somehow delinquent and/or resistant. The more youths are associated with a "deviant" subculture, the greater the alarm for the general public. Hence, the commodity form of incorporation serves to exacerbate moral panics associated with subcultures, contributing to the alienation of youth and reinforcing the separation of generations (Jenkins, 2006, 196).

When subculture-related styles become commodities, however, the subversive power of a subculture is diluted (Hebdige, 1979, p. 95). The aforementioned process of incorporation is nevertheless complicated by postmodernism. Cagle (1995) sets forth a postmodern explanation of subculture, positing that while incorporation indeed occurs, its effect is not necessarily to destroy the authenticity of the subculture. In his examination of the early 1970s' glitter rock phenomenon, Cagle argues that the commercial exploitation of a subculture need not inevitably dilute or skew the precepts upon which the subculture was originally based (1995, p. 47). In Cagle's view, incorporation is executed not only by outsiders, but also by subculture participants who are aware of the potential for both personal profit *and* for dissemination of whatever subculture they participate in—all the while being ironically aware of and indifferent to the irony

that their subculture will also be misrepresented in mass media during this process (1995, pp. 213-215).

While the subculture studies approach employed by scholars from the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies has provided the analytical lens through which most studies of youth cultures have been examined for the last 40 years, this approach still has its detractors. Key to this criticism is the idea that the concept of subculture has become outmoded in postmodernity, that *everyone* in the present day is marked at least to a degree by their affiliation and/or identification with certain niches of popular culture. Chaney (2004) argues that the accepted concept of subculture is obsolete because the personal investment(s) described by subculture theory are becoming universal (p. 37). "Cultural activities and concerns have become more self-evidently important in the everyday lives of the majority of individuals, not merely for those for whom [sub]cultural activities are accentuated through visual appearance or musical preference" (p. 39). Bennett's (1999) criticism of the concept of subculture follows suit with Chaney's with its claim that present day uses of the term "subculture" are reductive, identifying any and all collective practices of youth as subculture (p. 605). While both Chaney and Bennett certainly point to deficiencies in the traditional model of subculture, one could still counter that subculture participants, in postmodernity, are differentiated from the majority of popular culture dabblers (which means all of us) by the intensity of their devotion—and thus the old model is still applicable for their study. That others may indeed misuse the term "subculture" does not justify a wholesale rejection of subculture as a concept. Neither Chaney nor Bennett advocate a wholesale rejection of the subculture concept, for that matter. They are, instead, seeking to somehow re-conceptualize subculture in a way that is more applicable to the postmodern condition. Of subculture's detractors, Muggleton (2000) most nearly reclaims subculture in the

postmodern context by conceptualizing subcultures as neotribes, loosely aggregated groups with permeable boundaries whose interrelations are sutured by shared cultural affinities (p. 128). For Muggleton, this approach allows analysts to understand subcultures as ever-evolving entities, rather than as static and narrowly-defined communities.

Kahn-Harris (2007) is also somewhat critical of Hebdige's subculture model because the author's orientation is one of omniscient remove. For Kahn-Harris, Hebdige's model (which still provides conceptual bedrock for many analysts including myself) is lacking because of its sole reliance upon media report and the author's readings of them. "The subcultural members themselves are silent and lack any kind of reflexivity. They are 'read' as resistant, yet their own meanings are absent" (p. 17). This study addresses Kahn-Harris's criticism of Hebdige's approach through its extended involvement of subculture participants. Through the means of its ethnographic approach, this study enables participants a voice.

In summary, subcultures are collectivities that employ ironic, contrarian communication schemes which exist *within* the greater collectivity of mass culture. Participants in subcultures adapt preexisting genres, motifs and ways of being as their own through the practices of pastiche and cultural syncretism. Thus, we can view subcultures as alternative communities existing on the micro level, within the macro level of mass culture. Using this definition, HM and HC are distinct subcultures, both employing performative masculinity as a crucial means of displaying affiliation for their primarily white and male participants.

From Subculture Studies to Fan Studies

Fan studies and subculture studies are disciplines whose areas of focus oftentimes, but not always, overlap—especially in that the disciplines examine elements of identity in fan communities and subcultures, respectively. While participants of HM and HC subcultures are certainly drawn to these enclaves because they are venues for peer identification and social interaction (Arnett, 1996, pp. 69-70; Nilsson, 2009, pp. 166-167; Wood, 2006, pp. 150-151; Blush, 2010, p. 9), they are initially, in most cases, drawn to HM and HC because of the music. Hence, participants of HM and HC subcultures are also fans of specific genres and artists. Gray (2006) defines the social groups (fans) that accumulate around popular culture texts and/or genres as interpretive communities (p.32), expounding that cultural (and, thus subcultural) texts are polysemic, which is to say that they can be interpreted from a great variety of perspectives (p. 123). Although there is much potential for variation among the ways that texts are interpreted, fan communities (and also subcultures) *negotiate* interpretations, thereby producing understandings of and reading strategies for popular culture texts that are *shared* by the members of these communities (Gray, 2006, pp. 123-134). As Gray contends, "the interpreting community can bring together interpreting individuals to propose general, shared, and socially-activated meanings" (p. 125).

Jenkins (1992) considers the knowledge of fans respective to the texts and/or genres they follow, an area of expertise which is oftentimes disparaged as "trivia" by elitist outsiders, as a source for hierarchic status for members of fan communities (p. 87). In this way, fan expertise is similar to what Thornton (1996) defines as "subcultural capital" (p. 11). Jenkins' (1992) perception that fans see themselves "in highly individualistic terms, emphasizing their refusal to conform to 'mundane' social norms" (p. 88) is contiguous with Hebdige's (1979) understanding

that adolescents participate in subcultures as a means of establishing self-esteem through channels that are not sanctioned by parents and institutions of primary socialization, providing participants both a source of detachment from societal orthodoxy and a way *to* conform (p. 122). Williams (2011) notes a parallelism among fan cultures and subcultures in that both are grounded in non-normativity and share a dichotomously intense yet antagonistic relationship with media and cultural products (pp. 176-177). Yet again, subculture and fandom occupy or intersect upon similar sociological terrains.

Jenkins (1992) introduced the term "textual poaching" to describe fans' appropriation of content from preferred texts and/or genres and their subsequent reediting, rewriting or re-contextualizing this content in their own ways to reflect their own desires, styles and manners of being (p. 28, p. 44). Written at the dawn of the digital era, *Textual Poachers* was prophetic in that it described an underworld of fans that produced and traded their own texts through forums held at conventions (p. 47), postal mailing networks and Xeroxed fanzines (p. 41)—methods that seem antiquated a scant 20 years after the book's first publication. Jenkins noted that texts produced after popular culture content had been "poached" or usurped by fans and then retooled into new content were more than simulacra or quirky ephemera produced by overzealous devotees: these new texts that are "built from the semiotic raw material the media provides" contribute to the very cultures from which they emerged in novel and important ways (p. 49).

In his subsequent work, *Fans, Bloggers, and Gamers*, Jenkins (2006) explored the ways that the infrastructures created by pre-digital fan communities (which he first examined in 1992's *Textual Poachers*) evolved and expanded in the digital age. With communicative interconnectivity enabled by the worldwide web and an explosion of opportunities for regular people to record, edit and remix content on their own, the digital era saw the emergence of

bloggers, social media, and "culture jamming,"[3] phenomena which spurred an exponential

increase of methods for information to be shared, stored, sorted, recombined—and *distorted* in

revolutionary ways (p. 155). Jenkins posits that this revolution in digital media has catalyzed

moral panics and an ensuing division between computer savvy youth and suspicious, alarmed

parents and authority figures (pp. 196-197). Crucially, the digital revolution impacted fandom

itself. With interactivity, fan communities emerge and evolve at light-speeds, transforming fan

production and causing a reciprocal effect on the producers of the very popular culture texts

around which fan communities accrete (pp. 141-144). With digital media, the model of a single

sender creating cultural products and then broadcasting them one-way to multiple receivers is

rendered archaic. In cyber-culture, fans have become more included in the processes of making

and re-making, mixing and re-mixing popular culture content. This inclusiveness, of course, is

facilitated by technology: Today almost anyone can manipulate and redistribute most content

found on the internet with a few simple keystrokes. The digital era has impacted HM and HC

just as it has impacted all other facets of day-to-day life in both mainstream culture and in

subculture. Fanzines and music are now primarily distributed through the internet, and

participants also share ideas with each other about bands, performances, and the directions that

HM and HC are taking via digital channels. For present-day HM and HC participants, digital

media has become the primary medium where meanings are co-created in everyday life.

Certainly the face-to-face interaction of shows and social events where HM and HC participants

congregate are the periods when co-created meanings come to the fore most saliently; but with a

few keystrokes, and HM or HC participant can connect with peers 24 hours a day, seven days a

week. HM and HC kids are no different than other youths of today in that they are constantly

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[3] The term "culture jamming" refers to tactics used to disrupt and/or subvert commercial communication. A form of postmodern appropriation, culture jamming generally entails making slightly altered versions of advertiements that distort the ads' intended meanings in ironic and/or contrarian ways.

connected—even communicating with one another through digital devices during shows themselves.

While the aforementioned, postmodern understanding that fan communities blur and/or shatter the distinction between producer and consumer in the digital era is certainly important and provocative, it does not adequately explain the quasi-religious zeal which is a tacit component of fandom. Gray (2006) posits that fandom entails more than belonging to an interpretive community of consumer/producers, but that it also involves "an emotional, attitudinal element," a way of understanding oneself and the world which is particular to a fan community (p. 129). For example, fans that enjoy satirical, ironic popular culture content[4] are in fact likely to interpret their own life experiences in similar ironic ways (pp. 133-135). This is to say that when one has a particular affinity for a particular type of content, one is likely to share its worldview. As such, fans have a certain visceral, passionate affinity for their objects (or texts) of devotion that says a lot about who they are and how they interpret their lives.

In his analysis of fan communities that emerged in the wake of the popular animated sitcom, "The Simpsons," Gray (2006) focuses on the concept of intertextuality, a construct he defines as the interconnectedness of meanings of popular culture texts *vis a vis* the meanings of other popular culture texts and the variety of modes of textual reading that occur and interweave in community settings—all as analyzed, variably, through the lenses of ideology, genre, identity, and audience reception (pp. 3-4). Gray chooses "The Simpsons" as the unit of analysis for his research because he contends that the show is a text constructed with "intersectual intent" (p. 4). Gray asserts that fans of "The Simpsons" are well aware that the show parodies not only

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[4]Gray's book, *Watching with The Simpsons: Television, Parody, and Intertextuality*, focuses on the fan community that follows Matt Groening's popular animated sitcom, "The Simpsons," a show that is oftentimes considered to be something of an exemplar of postmodern irony.

contemporary society, but also mass media saturation, the TV network (Fox) that broadcasts the show, and even the show itself (pp. 55-56). Gray acknowledges that intertextuality is indeed a complicated set of conditions and perspectives which intersect in various ways. "The text is always in flux, being created by other texts and in turn creating other texts (p. 28)."

Although the earlier discussed literatures of fan studies provide valuable insights about the experiences and processes of fandom in terms of interpretive communities, textual poaching, emotional investments, shared worldviews and intertextuality, music fandom is not addressed per se in their work. Furthermore, the interpretive communities of fan studies are parallel with but *not* identical to HM and HC subcultures: Fan cultures are (more or less) cultures of followers, mimickers and/or manipulators of other people's content, whereas music subcultures such as HM and HC are understood, explicitly, by their participants as being pop culture-associated *ways of life* (Moore, 2010, pp. 79-80; Muggleton, 2000, pp. 153-154, Wood, 2006, p 70; Ellis, 2008, pp. 8-9). Members of many fan communities certainly share worldviews, but fandom does not necessarily entail the degree of intense participation (as a lifestyle) in subcultural hierarchies required for "true" participants of subcultures like HM and HC. Nevertheless, there are certainly many overlaps among fan cultures and subcultures. Fandom is generally more associated with the social communities centered around co-constructed criticism and/or reenactments of popular culture texts, whereas subculture entails active participation in a community that creates *new* texts—as well as, for participants of HM and HC subcultures, active participation in the performances at concerts and shows (of which, subculture participants critique *as fans*). HM and HC are not only genres that participants of their related subcultures enjoy, they are the axes of identity around which the very lives of their participants orbit. Likewise, fan cultures operate as axes of identity for their participants. Both fan communities and subcultures are socially focused

entities the involve criticism. Although the element of sociality is critical to both fan cultures and subcultures, fan cultures are more oriented toward criticism (Gray, 2006, pp. 32, 92) while subcultures are more oriented toward co-creation of new texts within a social context. Referring to fan studies provides a valuable supplement to this study, but the more direct approach to subculture as executed in the analyses of Muggleton (2000) and, especially, Hebdige (1979) are more in line with this study's intent to find the meanings behind the exteriors of performative masculinity in HM and HC.

"Secret Realm Devotion": Heavy Metal and Hardcore as Carnivalesque Inversion

HM and HC are subcultures that at least purportedly transgress the conventions of mainstream society in terms of behaviors, mores, and especially through the means of artistic expression. In its contemporary conceptualization, transgressive artistic expression intermingles dread with ecstasy and pleasure with pain, suspending the prohibitions of mainstream society without erasing them (Julius, 2003, p. 23). Julius posits that artistic transgression may be understood from two perspectives: the first regards the artist as heroically lawless, flouting convention in the process of creation (p. 100). The second reveres the artist that creates beauty as moral while reviling as immoral the artist who portrays and/or glorifies the ugly and profane (p. 100).   In the first conceptualization, the artist is above morality, whereas in the second conceptualization, the "true" artist, one whose artistic motivation is only to uplift, is morally superior. (p. 102). Julius asserts that transgressive art violates artistic conventions in three ways: by stretching the convention of composition to or beyond its breaking point (as in cubism—or in the more extreme variants of HM and HC, for that matter); by breaking taboos and thereby

challenging and/or repulsing the viewer (With hyperviolent, Satanic, misogynist and sometimes even racist lyrics, HM and HC often break taboos); and by creating politically resistant artworks[5] (pp. 104-113). Hence, HM and HC appear to meet Julius' specifications as transgressive art forms.

Actions and artistic expressions that appear to transgress are not always in fact transgressive, however. Such is the case with carnivalesque inversions, artistic expressions that ridicule the dominant culture from within the popular culture (Barker, 2004, pp. 20-12). Bakhtin (1984) suggests that acts of transgression, when performed during carnivalesque inversions, provide the means for an easing of tensions which operates to maintain the stability of the existing order (p. 6). Carnivalesque inversions offer a respite from the strictures of day-to-day life. The relief provided by carnivalesque inversons, however, is only temporary. "We find here [in carnivalesque inversions] a characteristic logic, the logic of the 'inside out,' of the 'turnabout,' of a continual shifting from front to rear, of numerous parodies and travesties, humiliations, profanations, comic crownings and uncrownings" (p. 11). Stallybrass & White (1988) concur, stating that the temporary liberation offered in carnivalesque inversion provides "a form of social control of the low by the high" that best serves the interests of those who are *in* control to *maintain* that control (p. 13). HM and HC events certainly share properties with the carnivalesque inversions of the Middle Ages examined by Bakhtin in his analysis of Rabelais' literary work: HM and HC operate as a separate (but oftentimes intertwined) spheres within the greater culture which celebrate the carnal and grotesque, make sacred the profane, and elevate the pariah (such pariahs spanning the gamut from the typical alienated teenager to Satan himself) to topmost status, at least figuratively. For the most part, however, the transgressions of HM and

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[5] Although Julius' work dealt with visual art in particular, his ideas about transgression can be applied to musical composition, including HC and HM.

HC are merely symbolic (Moore, 2010, p. 36; Kahn-Harris, 2007, p. 45). In this way, HM and HC events provide carnivalesque opportunities for participants to experience symbolic catharsis and, thus, "let off steam." Hence, HM and HC function as provinces for the disaffected to vent their frustrations within a confined space—thereby diverting them from the realities of domination and keeping them at least to a degree pacified.

Jenks (2003) posits that since the Middle Ages, the carnival has evolved from a temporal event to a spatial location (p. 169). Rather than awaiting scheduled carnivals, we go to "places of fun and naughtiness" (p. 169) such as nightclubs, discos, queer bars and strip clubs, where practices and performances deemed questionable and/or deviant by mainstream society are customary. Just as the practices occurring in carnivalesque inversion are thought to be at the margins of acceptability at best, the spaces where carnivalesque performances occur are likely at the margins of urban space. Venues that feature such fare tend to be located in transitional areas, the borderlands between "good" and "bad" neighborhoods (Schweitzer, 2000, pp. 66-67) and in zoned, 'red light" districts. The opening of a venue where carnivalesque performance occurs can be seen as a harbinger of gentrification[6] (Overell, 2009, p. 689). Clubs that feature HM and HC shows, of course, provide the spatial locations for the carnivalesque inversions that are the standard rites of these subcultures, the ceremonial conclaves where meanings and identities pertinent to these groups are co-created through social interaction.

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[6] HC and HM performances are usually held at nightclubs, most of which are short lived and located in "iffy" neighborhoods.

"The Devil's Crossroads": Merging the Ethnographic with the Rhetorical

Ultimately, the goal of this project is to analyze the signifying practices of HM and HC participants as they occur within their own subcultural milieus. As such, this project merges rhetorical and cultural studies traditions in an ethnographic study. Although they are often viewed as distinctly separate disciplines, polarities even, rhetorical studies and cultural studies ultimately share the same goals of observing practices of signification, understanding how power is enacted discursively through these practices of signification, and examining these practices to find how they operate as a means of control and/or resistance for the participant/individual (Rosteck, 2001, p. 51). As Conquergood (1992) contends, the contemporary conceptualization of ethnography is something of a merger between rhetoric and performance in that it examines individuals as "players within a cultural ensemble who exchange roles and share a repertoire of invention" (p. 80). Clearly, HM and HC function as such (sub)cultural ensembles where meanings are co-created. In fact, such co-creation is the principal function of these subcultures. And in the process of co-creation, ideology is imbedded in the discourses of these (sub)cultural ensembles. As such the very process of ethnographic study is politically charged. The interaction of the ethnographer as a participant/observer ushers in a host of moral/ethical responsibilities. Hess (2011) explains that the ethical ethnographer engages in "embodied advocacy" which connects analysis with activism: Through the process of uncovering ideological forces within the given (sub)culture being analyzed, the ethnographer holds the potential to illuminate—perhaps even to spur social change (Hess, 2011, p. 129). And rhetoric is "the primary *agency* through which social movements perform necessary *functions* that enable them to come into existence, to meet opposition, and, perhaps, to succeed in bringing about (or resisting) change (Stewart, 1980, p. 166). The merging of rhetorical and cultural studies

(ethnography) provides the researcher with the optimal conceptual tools for unpacking what is being communicated within certain (sub)cultural milieus, how ideology is inscribed and negotiated in these settings, and how sociopolitical forces[7] operate within the context of these social settings (Rosteck, 1999, p. 242). Stated more plainly, by employing rhetorical analytical methods, the ethnographer can more ably reach conclusions about how power is reinscribed and/or resisted through the discourses of a (sub)culture. Hence, by employing rhetorical analytic methods, the ethnographer's political project is empowered—and s/he can more closely reach her/his goal of unveiling the power relations that are discursively encoded in the processes of social interaction, thus providing enlightenment and/or emancipation (Brantlinger, 1999, p. 299).

For this study, rhetorical and ethnographic methods are merged through the combination of ideological criticism and participant/observation conducted within a co-interpretive analytical framework. The process employed in this study operated as follows: first, I conducted the study as a participant/observer; next, I prepared an ideological critique of HM and HC subcultures which I then presented to the core participants for review; then, I conducted a spate of follow-up interviews involving analytical interplay with the core participants; and, finally, I wrote the study's conclusions to reflect the interactions that occurred in the co-interpretation of the follow-up interviews. This co-interpretive model is innovative, both for its meshing of rhetorical and ethnographic methods and for its inclusiveness. Allowing the participants the opportunity to contribute not only on the front-side of the study but *also* in its analysis provided more accurate

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[7] Social forces are always somehow ideological and ideological forces are always somehow social. Hence, I chose the term "sociopolitical" to indicate the inevitable merger of the ideological and the social.

findings and also served to amplify the participant's voices in the entirety of this undertaking—thus giving them a higher degree of agency in the study *and* its political project.[8]

"The Kids[9] Will Have Their Say": Defining Hardcore

Bearing in mind that HM and HC share many qualities, differentiating between the two is necessary in order that they be compared and contrasted effectively. Although the subcultures are sometimes positioned as antitheses, HM and HC share many attributes, and cross-hybridity has certainly occurred among the enclaves (Waksman, 2009, p. 312).

To capably define HC, one must first have a basic understanding of its antecedent, punk rock. It is generally accepted that the term "punk" was first used to describe the rough and ready, psychedelic garage rock of groups like The Seeds, The Standells and The Stooges by critic Lester Bangs in the early 1970s (Kent, 2006, p. 14). As a genre, punk made its first move toward orthodoxy with the emergence of *Punk* magazine, a New York-based publication founded in 1975 which championed bands appearing at CBGB, a dive bar in Manhattan's Bowery district where acts like the Ramones, the Patti Smith Group, Television, Blondie and the Dead Boys first achieved limited notoriety in avant garde circles (Savage, 1992, p. 131). *Punk* magazine advocated loutish behavior, inebriation and (especially) rock'n'roll music stripped to its crudest and most rebellious essence (Savage, 1992, p. 133). By 1976, the term punk had taken root in

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[8] As the study proceeded, the participants became more passionately engaged—especially during its conclusion phase. At the onset of the study it was difficult to get the participants to make appointments or even to agree to be interviewed. But as the project proceeded and the participants gained a better idea of what the study was about and where it was going, they became much more active in their roles as co-interpreters.

[9] "The Kids Will Have Their Say" is the title of the 1982 debut album by Boston straightedge hardcore stalwarts SSD. "The kids" is a commonly employed term in the HM/HC vocabulary which is interchangeable with "the scene." denoting HM/HC subculture. "The kids" are referred to in many HC songs by bands such as Iron Cross, 7Seconds, The Replacements and British proto-hardcore street punk band, Sham 69, whose "If The Kids Are United" is an oft-covered anthem for both HM and HC bands.

London, where it was first used by manager cum provocateur Malcolm McLaren to describe the

Sex Pistols, a group he adroitly steered from total obscurity to public enemy status in the span of

a year by prefabricating media scandals involving the band (Heylin, 2007, p. 102). A spate of

likeminded British bands like The Clash, The Damned, X-Ray Spex, Generation X, The Adverts,

and Sham 69 emerged in the Sex Pistols' wake, and by early 1977 punk had become a

widespread teenage fad in England (Heylin, 2007, pp. 242-247; Robb, 2006, p. 341). While New

York punk was based in the avant garde, English punk was a popular and successfully deployed

teen phenomenon rooted in prefabricated outrage, musical ineptitude and anger concerning the

debased economy of the day (McNeil & McCain, 1996, pp. 243-248; Hebdige, 1979, p. 87).

Although New York and London punk were certainly different, both shared angry and aggressive

qualities that were the antithesis of the hippie ethos of the rock music of the 1960s. HC would

take the angry excesses of punk to another level.

The term "hardcore" first appeared in the lexicon of punk fanzines around 1980 to

describe a faster/louder variant of punk rock emanating from the North American suburbs. Early

HC is punk, reinvented from its New York and London origins in a suburban American guise

(Blush, 2010, pgs. 15, 56). It is generally agreed that "HC" first appeared in punk parlance

around 1980 and saw its initial widespread circulation through the title of an album by

Vancouver-based D.O.A., *Hardcore '81* (Blush, 2010, p. 18). HC was punk rock that was

"more punk" than what had preceded it. The emergent HC ethos was one of anti-fame, anti-

fashion, and anti-materialism (Moore, 2010, pp. 64-67; Blush, 2010, pp. 44-47). As Blush

(2010) states, "Hardcore extended, mimicked, or reacted to punk; it appropriated some aspects

yet discarded others. It reaffirmed punk attitude and rejected new wave [the diluted strain of

punk marketed with a degree of success by major record labels in the late '70s]. That's why it was hardcore punk—for extreme kids" (p. 15).

On the musical front, HC shares HM's predilection for speed and (especially) volume that is even more exaggerated than punk (Waksman, 2009, p. 258). Likewise, the onstage physicality of HC performers is more excessive than that of its predecessors. Archetypal first wave American HC bands include Black Flag, Dead Kennedys, Circle Jerks and Bad Brains (Haenfler, 2006, p. 11). Within a few years of its definition as a subset of punk, HC evolved from an adjective used to modify the term "punk" to a noun. "Hardcore punk" became simply "hardcore," and its original connection to punk, for many participants, began to wane (Haenfler, 2010, pp. 30-31). Concurrently, HC, which purportedly began as a reaction to the conformity of punk, took on a set of strictures which rendered it even more regimented and formulaic than punk had been (Azerrad, 2001, p. 40). HC has persisted well into the new millennium as a rock genre and subculture phenomenon. In the decades since HC's inception, the boundaries between HM and HC have become increasingly permeable (Dee, 2009, pp. 55-56). Still largely an underground niche, HC's influence has resounded most notably in the music of wildly successful acts like traditional HM group Metallica, the "nu metal"[10] of Slipknot and the grunge[11] rock of Nirvana, for example.

Although audience reactions are pivotally important for both HM and HC performances, the audience is more intrinsic to the successful execution of a HC show. Usually occurring on a

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[10]"Nu metal" is the term used to describe the fusion of heavy metal and rap music made popular by groups such as Limp Bizkit and Incubus in the mid-90s.

[11] "Grunge" is the term used to describe the heavily distorted merging of punk, HC, HM and classic rock typified by Seattle bands such as Mudhoney, Soundgarden and (especially) Nirvana.

much smaller scale than HM concerts, HC shows,[12] which take place as often in unconventional spaces like community recreation centers and suburban basements as they do in clubs and theaters, rarely provide separation from performer and audience. At a HC show, there is no proscenium per se. Audience members often traverse boundaries to the stage—provided there are any boundaries to begin with. Wiseman-Trowse (2008) notes that in HC performances, "the proscenium arch is entirely absent, allowing a singularity of experience between performer and crowd" (p. 141). The actions of musician and non-musician alike are integral to the success or failure of the show. The audience's performed quasi-violence at any HC show offers participants the opportunity to enact their "realness" by taking part in the seemingly chaotic, but, in fact, highly ordered choreography of slam dancing—a subcultural rite which strikingly enacts the public/private distinction as explained by Habermas (1991) and Arendt (1988): Those who take part in the mosh are "in" while those who choose to remain in the relative safety of the perimeter are "out"[13] (Waksman, 2009, p. 19). Presenting these shows in alternative venues for small crowds with low admission prices removes most of the profit motive and requires more cooperation from those in attendance, resulting in a scene that is more unified, socially-oriented and intimate.

HC lyrics are characterized by an anti-authoritarian ideological stance distinguished by angry words railing against police, government and a vaguely defined system of adult oppression (Peterson, 2009, p. 25). First wave HC songs circa '80-'82—such as the Circle Jerks' "Live Fast, Die Young," FEAR's "Let's Have a War (So You Can Go Die)," and Black Flag's "Life of

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[12] HC fans often differentiate between "shows" and "concerts," the former denoting a small, group ritual in an unconventional space, and the latter indicating a performance at a traditional venue where audience and performer are separated by a security staff, barriers and a raised stage.

[13] Those included in HC performativity operate publicly, whereas outsiders (passive observers) remain in private. Female participation in the moshpit is rare. As such, males occupy HC's public sphere and females occupy the private realm in a way that is correlative to labor and status divisions in traditional, Western society.

Pain"—glorified decadence and self-destruction (See appendix A.), but this emphasis on resistance began to give way by around late '82, supplanted by themes of unity and self-affirmation (Blush, 202, p. 28) in songs such as Minor Threat's "Straight Edge" and the Bad Brains' "Attitude (Positive Mental Attitude)" (See appendix A.). As HC gained momentum, its lyrics evolved from focusing on individual anger and alienation toward the promotion of a kind of groupthink, characterized by rhetoric that identified HC as a movement, stressed insider/outsider distinctions and offered blunt, oftentimes moralistic assessments of society (Wood, 2006, p. 3). Thus, HC songs operated as manifestoes for alienated adolescents. While the element of nihilism certainly remains in HC lyrics to the present, it is a nihilism that is driven by youthful hope. As Heanfler (2006) contends, the ideology of proto-HC was reflective of an emancipatory way of being that included a "'question everything' mentality, raw energy, aggressive style, and a do-it-yourself attitude" (p. 8). HC lyrics represent the adolescent male experience at its most angry extreme—yet the climactic anger expressed in HC also provides an empowering catharsis that "takes that mindset [of religious-like devotion to rock music] to unforeseen and unexpected extremes" (Blush, 2010, p. 50).

As HC became more balkanized and separated from punk and the greater rock culture during the '90s and into the present, its lyrics have become increasingly nebulous, continually referencing a "struggle," yet rarely if ever defining that struggle, its key players, or its goals. The lyrics to "Believe," a 1998 song by the long-running New York HC band, Agnostic Front, exemplify the undefined struggle portrayed in HC:

I know I can trust myself cause (sic) I believe in what I say

I believe in my friends cause their (sic) with me every day

Believe that we can overcome because the scene is strong today

Believe I live this life because I know hardcore's the way

Believe we are right

Believe we are strong

Believe in yourself

Believe – hardcore (Agnostic Front, 1998, track 2).

Typically, the song promotes unity and a sense of community—an "us" versus "them" scheme that sets up HC as an outsider enclave in opposition to the dominant, oppressive culture. What that oppression might be or how it might be opposed and/or toppled is never explained.

Although HM and HC are both restrictive subcultures operating underground, it is still important to understand that HC is *more* underground than HM. This is to say that HM is much more popular than HC: It has many more participants, greater visibility, and the cultural products of HM are more readily available. Involvement in HC entails active participation, while HM fans are oftentimes more passive consumers, less likely to contribute to the processes of their subculture beyond purchasing recordings and attending concerts. The smaller scale of the HC movement necessitates that constituents are vigorously engaged through performing, promoting shows, writing fanzines, taking photographs, or just allowing transient bands to sleep on their floors after a show. These activities spur a more intense sense of community loyalty. Peterson (2009) describes the HC scene of the Midwest in the late 1990s:

Hardcore was more captivating and passionate than anything else I had heard. The sound seemed to express a feeling of frustration that I felt about my surroundings and our culture. What separated hardcore from everything else was the fact that the individual had the power to take an active role in the scene and claim it as their own. There was no

waiting around for others to tell you what mattered—you could define the debate

yourself. This changed my outlook, as it also did for many of my friends in the hardcore

scene, which led to several years of going to shows, reading zines, playing in bands,

putting on shows, and driving long distances to fests. (p. 2)

Perhaps the comparative smallness of HC (*vis-a-vis* HM) requires more active participation: HC

shows are less common than HM shows, and HC participants are less numerous than HM

participants. Thus, HC's relatively small size might in fact impel greater devotion for those who

do participate.[14]

"Blood, Fire, Death": Defining Heavy Metal

Of the two subcultures analyzed in this study, HM has a longer history, greater popularity

and more cultural influence. HM includes but is not limited to the subgenres of thrash metal,

doom metal, grindcore, death metal, ambient/drone metal and power metal. Emergent from the

amplified, distorted hard rock of the 1960s made popular by artists such as Jimi Hendrix, The

Who and Cream, HM was popularized in the early 1970s as a term employed by rock critics to

describe the type of hard rock that was more extreme, both sonically and in its rebellious,

unrepentant ethos (Arnett, 1996, p. 43). Waksman (2009) suggests that the emergence of heavy

metal was contemporaneous with "arena rock," a format that began in the late 60s that redefined

what success and fame could mean for artists (p. 10). As its name suggests, arena rock must be

performed in an arena packed with spectators.   Musicians perform on an elevated stage, dwarfed

by the massive racks of equipment necessary to produce bombastic noise and an array of

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[14] Granted, many HM participants also feel that *theirs* is the more passionate and committed enclave.

dizzying visual effects which could reach audience members among the furthest tiers of the "nosebleed" seats. Arena rock was (and is) about excess: larger crowds, louder amps, brighter lights, the deification of the performer and, most importantly, more money. The conspicuous monetary rewards of arena rock led to the materialization of HM, which was arena rock at its most potent and efficient, as an established genre. The sound of HM "pushed the machinery of rock to its fullest capacity," while the function of the stage as an altar where distant rock stars performed "ritualistic displays of power" cemented the arena's status as HM's paradigmatic setting (Waksman, 2009, pp. 20-21).

HM is classified in various ways by various parties, although an inevitable element of any astute definition if HM is power. In his oft-cited analysis of HM, *Running with the Devil,* Walser (1993) explains that HM is, in fact, a variety of musically-based discourses, "all of which revolve around concepts, images, and experiences of power" (p. 2). However perceptive, Walser's definition of HM is overly inclusive, its boundaries stretched to include the spate of hedonistically-oriented "hair bands"[15] of the 1980s MTV era whose oeuvres were pop-oriented— acts such as Van Halen, Ratt and Poison, for example (1993, p. 53). Since the mid-'80s, HM fans have decried the pop-oriented hair band phenomenon as not being "true" metal (Moore, 2010, p. 10). With lyrical themes focusing on good times and a brighter, lighter sound, the hair bands' similarities to HM were loudness, guitar solos and, to a degree, their modes of dress. What the hair bands do *not* share with HM is a darker approach characterized by gothic, Wagnerian sonic textures and an overall aura of nihilism and despair. The band Bathory, early

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[15] Classified in the 1980s as HM because of the performers' long hair and loud guitars, the "hair bands" actually performed pop/rock music, reaping huge sales and becoming staples of MTV video rotation in the process. The classification of "hair bands' has actually evolved in the 25 years since such acts dominated what was then HM. Granted, hair bands *did* fall under the classification of HM in the late 80s—but since then, both critics and performers alike have retrospectively reclassified hair bands as "hard rock" or "glam." As HM has progressed, the types of bands that fall under the umbrella of HM have changes as well: Hence, what was HM in the late '80s (such as the hair bands) is not necessarily HM today.

practitioners of the "black metal" variant of HM, provided an accurate definition of HM, in the title of its album, *Blood, Fire, Death*. Arnett similarly explains that HM is based in "a fascination with evil, with the dark side of the human heart and of human experience" (1996, p. 43).

Arnett (1996) posits that HM emerged as an inverse reaction to the perceived docility of the music of the '60s and early '70s. HM musicians "made their performances and their songs outrageous enough to violate even the new, expanded boundaries of social acceptability" [of the '60s-'70s "peace and love" generation], delivering "a new sound of unprecedented fierceness to accompany their fierce, defiant, angry ideology" (p. 58). Lyrically, HM includes a wide spectrum of evils including themes of a dehumanized, dystopian future, dark fantasies of ghosts and monsters, sexual domination, serial killers, torture, mythology and Satanism. Kelly (2006) posits that such topics provide HM fans with content that is simultaneously alluring and repulsive (p. 155). For HM fans, these sinister themes provide the opportunity to confront fears, find catharsis and to embrace darker impulses within a milieu where there are no repercussions for harboring such malicious fantasies (Arnett, 1996, p. 89). As Farley (2009) asserts, such imagery is "not an expression of religious or philosophical views, but a form of [adolescent] rebellion and protest against societal norms" (p. 84).

Although HM has enjoyed consistent popularity in the U.S. for well over 30 years, it was originally an English phenomenon, its pioneers all British. Setting the template that continues to this day, British bands Judas Priest, Iron Maiden and especially Black Sabbath operate as archetypes for HM acts. Unlike the earlier discussed hair bands of the 1980s, these British HM forefathers eschewed pop melodicism and purposely presented themselves as "dudes," working class males who were neither handsome nor androgynously "pretty" like many gender-bending

glitter rock performers of the early '70s (Cagle, 1996, p. 11). The lyrics of Saxon's "Denim and Leather" define HM couture, also explaining the ethos behind the look:

Do you dream of playing guitar or smashing the drums?

Maybe you can learn to play the bass

You can always be a singer like me and front the band

When on the stage we wait at your command

Denim and leather brought us all together

It was you that set the spirit free (Saxon, 1979, track 9).

HM couture presents a hypermasculinized utilitarianism, mostly a combination of the aforementioned denim and leather, accented by studs and spikes. For metal fans, donning the "corpsepaint" of the HM subgenre, black metal, is generally not perceived as compromising masculinity (Moynihan & Soderlind, 1998, p. 36). Many adherents of the harder styles of HM as specified in this study are ardently opposed to androgyny or—even worse—modes of self-presentation that might encourage the perception that the wearer is homosexual (Weinstein, 2009, pp. 105-106; Dee, 2009, p. 60; Moore, 2009, p. 153; Walser, 1993, p. 130).

By the mid-'80s, "crossover" metal, the testosterone-fueled melding of HM and HC, came to the fore in the wake of the popularity of HM-leaning acts like Exodus and Testament, and HC-leaning acts like D.R.I., Corrosion of Conformity and Suicidal Tendencies (Walser, 1993, p. 14). While the aforementioned bands initially arose from opposite ends of the HM/HC continuum, respectively, all are classified as the thrash variant of HM at present. During this crossover period, HM subculture appropriated another performative element of HC, slam dancing or "moshing," the ritualized, mock violence that erupts at shows as audience members

flail against one another, oftentimes "stage-diving" from balconies, from the stage, or from the shoulders of their peers into the thrashing crowds. The inclusion of moshing into the HM ritual, however, did not entail structural transformations that changed the relationship of performer to audience (Waksman, 2009, p. 275). Even with ritualistic slamming at concerts, stages at HM shows are occupied by musicians only. At HM concerts, which are generally larger than HC shows, security staff manages the motion of the slam dancers, hopefully protecting the musicians from collisions with overzealous fans in the process (Arnett, 1996, p. 10).

As Weinstein (2009) unequivocally asserts, "British HM [and, thus, the worldwide HM phenomenon that ensued] is an expression of masculinity" (p. 17). Krenske and McKay (2000) contend that, because of its predominately white/male constituency and discursive practices which denigrate and/or exclude women, HM is "an aggressively heterosexist formation" (p. 290). The sensory experience delivered in HM is most attractive for males, who, by and large, have greater affinity for high-sensation entertainment (Arnett, 1996. p. 131).

Crucially, Walser (1993) avers that the masculinist discourse of HM produces a constituency which is "generally lacking in social, physical and economic power but besieged by cultural messages promoting such forms of power, insisting on them as vital attributes of an obligatory masculinity" (p. 109). This is to say that HM traffics in the imagery of power and rituals which provide an oftentimes false sense of power for participants—all the while alienating them from society as a whole and thus eroding political agency. Therein lays a key irony of HM's steel-plated rendition of hegemonic masculine ideology: The compulsory heteromasculinity parlayed through HM excludes and/or marginalizes women (Moore, 2010, p. 29) and bolsters regressive, patriarchic male sex roles, all the while producing a cynical and de-politicized, male citizen-subject (Arnett, 1996, p. 166). Nilsson (2009) posits that HM is a

"proud pariah" subculture in that behaviors and outlooks perpetuated *within* the subculture are frowned upon in the greater culture (p. 175). "Within the heavy metal subculture, those attributes (that is, anti-respectability) that stigmatize the (male, white and adolescent) working-class subject are re-defined as meritorious in direct dialogue with the hegemonic bourgeois discourse (Nillson, 2009, p. 167). In this way, in-group behaviors establish subcultural currency for participants while further estranging them from conventional society at the same time. Thus, HM's self-maintaining categorical imperative produces a constituency that is strictly demarcated and alienated from mainstream culture.

Intersectionality

With rare exceptions, participants of HC & HM subcultures are white and male (Blush, 2010, pp. 32, 36-40; Wood, 2006, p. 7; Weinstein, 2009, p. 18; Bayer, 2009, p. 185; MacLeod, 2010, p. 132). Whiteness, gender, class and sexuality are performative enactments that operate as enmeshed strands of identity associated with HM and HC subcultures. As a means of moving beyond essentialist identity dualisms such as oppressed/oppressor and proletariat/bourgeois often employed in canonical works of white, male academics, feminist standpoint and queer theorists have utilized the concept of intersectionality to account for the ways that multiple subject positions intersect in socialization/identity formation (Sullivan, N., 2003, p. 49). Speaking of the linkages between separate (and oppressive) identities, all of which applied to her as a lesbian woman of color in an interracial relationship, noted feminist scholar Audre Lorde (2006) asserted that the best strategy for multiply oppressed persons to assert themselves is to present a self that integrates and accounts for *all* of the various oppressed identities—rather than choosing an

individual subject position (such as that of a woman, not taking into account factors of race, class and sexuality, for example) that does not truly account for the totality of the person (p. 60).

Likewise, feminist standpoint theorists employ an avowedly political strategy to empower oppressed groups by constructing bodies of knowledge that "speak" from marginalized perspectives—as opposed to conventional modes of knowledge construction which privilege the historically white and male realm of elite academia (Harding, 2004b, p. 4; Harding, 1992, p. 50). For feminist standpoint and queer theorists, there is no single subject position from which a multiply subjugated person can approach the world, but rather a bundle of identities which operate in various combinations (Wiegman, 2002, p. 35). By examining how different subject positions related to gender, class, race, sexuality and other signifiers of identity are intertwined, reciprocally influencing one another in a process of identity formation for the individual, the analyst is better able to understand how such forces impel the formation of both collective identities and individual standpoints (Collins, 2004, p. 252). As Dowd (2010) contends, "we can learn more from those intersections [of race, class, gender and sexuality] about resistance and change, as well as the pull of privilege" (p. 25).

As Jonasdottir, Bryson, & Jones (2011) suggest, evaluating the confluences of gender, race and class "must lie at the heart of social and political analysis" (p. 1). Gender, race, class and sexuality are socially-constructed categories, and scholars analyzing subjectivities and identities necessarily consider these factors both in the context of individual groups and in the context of the larger culture—all the while cultivating exchanges across a variety of scholarly disciplines in the process (pp. 2-7). The social-constructionist understanding of identities is that they do not spring forth as a result of "nature" or "essence," but, rather, that ideitity categorizations are *constructed* through social interaction and then *internalized* through

repetition in a way that makes them *seem* to be innate (Butler, 1990, pp. 8-10; Wood, 2011, pp. 24-27; Sedgwick, 2008, p. 61). Harding (2004a) concurs, adding that "knowledge chains" constructed from individual subject positions (including those that are constructed from the perspective of the dominant) are lacking because the knowledge produced via a single position invariably yields work that is shaped by that position, its terminology and conceptual frameworks (p. 258). To avoid the aforementioned epistemic determinism, it is the goal of this study to examine the social construction and performance of masculinity, as expressed within the confluence of race, class and gender (masculinity) in HM and HC subcultures.

First introduced by female scholars of color, the concept of intersectionality was developed as a conceptual tool for use in the analysis of cases, such of those of non-heteronormative women of color, for example, where social locations interconnect in ways that burden the marginalized in more than way (Harding, 2004b, p. 8). Pioneering the concept of intersectionality, Davis (1982) asserts that "sexism can never be seen in isolation. It has to be placed in the context of its interconnections with racism and especially with class exploitation" (p. 6). Feminist theorist Patricia Hill Collins followed suit, employing the concept of intersectionality as a means of accounting for the multiple burdens borne by black women (Heckman, 2004, p. 230). Bearing in mind the bundle of oppressions that intersect for women of color, Davis (1982) concludes that the women's movement must revolve first and foremost around the needs of the multiply oppressed (p. 7).

Bearing multiple oppressions is certainly a liability for women of color. These multiple burdens, however, also provide the opportunity for insight. Collins asserted that women of color in academia have distinctive insights because of their stations as "outsiders within" (Wood, 2011, p. 60). Collins (2000) avers that instead of being burdened by the "both/and" status of

being both black *and* female, women scholars of color "make creative use of their outsider-within status to produce innovative Afrocentric feminist thought" (p. 474). Collins (2004) adds that for the multiply marginalized (such as women of color), intersectional consciousness offers insights not only about the operation of identity, but also about how institutional structures of power exploit the confluence of subjugated identities to perpetuate oppression and maintain the status quo (p. 249). Spurring the notion of the enabling power of intersectionality a step further, Davis opined that being aware of the duality of being black *and* female fostered critical consciousness and was in that way an asset for women of color in America's emancipation movement of the 1800s (Donovan, 2000, p. 91).

Although she did not use the term "intersectionality" per se, Latina feminist activist Gloria Anzaldua (2000) traversed similar theoretical terrain trod by both Collins and Davis. Anzaldua appropriated the Aztec term *Mestiza* to signify the decentered sense of self experienced by postcolonial women of color in postmodernity (p. 398). Anzaldua describes the *Mestiza*'s experience of intersubjectivity (a concept that is contemporaneous with intersectionality), as being "cradled in one culture, sandwiched between two cultures, straddling all three cultures and their value systems" whilst enduring an "inner war" among selves (p. 398). This inner struggle, however, yields heightened perception and strength. Sandoval (2000) refers to this intersubjectivity as "differential consciousness," a way for postcolonial women of color to pick and choose among a menu of subject positions (such as black, female, lesbian, for example) to most expediently suit whatever situation of diversity they may face (p. 30).

Although one could argue that the predominately white, male participants of HM and HC subcultures are not necessarily subjugated, employing the analytical lens of the feminist concept of intersectionality is nevertheless applicable for use in this study of how issues of whiteness,

masculinity and class intersect to shape HM and HC subcultural identities. Connell (2005) sums this up handily: "To understand gender, then, we must constantly go beyond gender. The same applies in reverse. We cannot understand class, race or global inequality without constantly moving towards gender" (p. 76). Conceptually, intersectionality relates to HM and HC in that elements of identity are interlocked in these enclaves—especially as pertains to race (whiteness, in particular), class and/or classness, and gender (masculinity). HM and HC participants are, of course, primarily white, male and middle-class. The performative masculinities enacted in these subcultures most particularly merge race, gender and class (as working-classness), as will be explained at great length in this treatise. Bearing in mind the intersectionality of the aforementioned identity classifications pertinent to the study of HC and HM subcultures, we will first examine these factors individually—and then proceed to analyze how these separate factors operate conjointly in HM and HC identities.

Performative Masculinity in Heavy Metal and Hardcore

As Butler (1990) contends, gender is an imitative performance that becomes internalized and naturalized upon repetition (pp. 185-186). Masculinity, the ways of being ascribed to the male, is thus clearly performative. Butler explains that through this process of repetitive imitation, we mistakenly come to an understanding that gender arises from a core essence (1990, p. 186). By way of this process, we see gender as an innate way of being rather than as a socialized one. Herein lays the fundamental contradiction of gender performativity: That we come to understand gender as reflective of a core essence operates to shroud the very process through which we internalize gender. For Butler, gender is not genuine, but fabricated— a

fiction that results from the inscription of discourse upon the *surface* of physical bodies (1990, p. 186). "Gender proves to be performative—that is, constituting the identity it is purported to be. …There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constructed by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results (Butler, 1990, p. 34). As Lloyd (1999) posits, "performativity produces that [gender] which it names" (p. 201).

In the enclaves of HM and HC, performative masculinity occurs in patently obvious forms. That HM and HC subcultures are centered in performances by and for males in ritualized settings (Blush, 2010, pp. 36-39; Moore, 2010, p. 29) only makes this point more salient. As Moore (2010) explains, subcultures such as HC & HM "focus on public spaces that privilege boys" (p. 29). Bands themselves, at the epicenter of enactments of staged chaos at HC & HM shows, operate as "the critical institutional locus of learning and initiation" (Clawson, 1999, p. 103). While bands are the primary point of attention at every HC & HM show, the audience is integral to the success or failure of a performance: In HM and HC, audience members are participants in the totality of a show (Sartwell, 2010, p. 104; Arnett, 1996, p. 83). Minus a hearty, physical reaction from a crazed (or crazed-acting) crowd, a HC or HM show is a failure. The pseudo-violence of HM and HC performances provide cathartic release for revelers, operating—more or less—as manhood rituals for those who choose to participate (Arnett, 1996, p. 12). Azerrad (2001) explains that the slam dancing, the choreographed enactment of violence at such shows, offers audience members "a way to feel powerful at a time in life [adolescence] when one can feel particularly powerless" (p. 152).

The staged violence, sensory overkill, and proscenium-traversing of HM and HC events offer its participants cathartic entrée into a kind of collective rapture (Arnett, 1996, pp. 83-84; Haenfler, 2006, pp. 18-20). At least for the moment, there is no distinction between the fans and

the bands: With orgiastic bliss, all are joined as a single Rabelasian entity—sweating, screaming and crashing together as one. The rapture enabled through the conjoint actions of audience and performer at HM and HC shows is analogous with what Dolan (2006) terms "utopian performatives," instances when individuals coalesce as a singular entity—allowing, at least for a thrilling and ephemeral flash of time, for all involved to imagine this shared elation as a doorway toward new ways of being (p. 165). Dolan asserts that the emotionally charged co-construction of meaning in utopian performatives delivers a form of non-religious ecstasy (p. 164). This is to say that through shared performativity, both the audience and the performers are enabled to re-envision themselves—to muster new, non-political identities that can then transmute in the outside world (away from the quasi-numinous performance space) into political action[16] (p. 164). And such rapture, in HM and HC contexts, is enabled through the enactment of maleness.

HM and HC shows provide a venue for adolescent males to display their masculinity for other males—as well as the opportunity to observe other males and pattern behaviors after their example. In this way, masculinity is performatively and ritualistically enacted in HM and HC subcultures. Body-reflexive practices at shows such as slam-dancing or "moshing," stage-dives, headbanging, and bodily postures that affect a general mien of hypermasculine menace, toughness, or "wildness" are commonplace at HM and HC events. As Taylor (2008) asserts, such embodied practices are best analyzed as performance (p. 101). "Practitioners [of body-reflexive practices such as slam-dancing] reaffirm their cultural identity and transmit a sense of community by engaging in these [sub]cultural behaviors"; participants and observers (or participant-observers, for that matter) "glean some understanding of a community's values and

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[16] Granted, the re-envisioned self enabled by participation in utopian performatives is only *potentially* realized as political action. One could assert that the rapturous event of a utopian performative delivers an experience of agency that is never realized. In this way, utopian performatives might operate as quasi-political experiences that divert participants—and thus dissolve their agency.

structure by being there, and participating or watching their performances" (p. 101). Connell (2005) notes that "seizing on a hypermasculine persona," in some circles, functions as resistance (p. 147). And resistance entails empowerment, at least in a symbolic sense. Such is certainly the case for the young (and therefore at least to a degree disempowered) men who take on the alpha male posturings of HM and HC identities as a means of gaining social power.

Both HM and HC are male hierarchies, created by and for young men. MacLeod (2010) asserts that early 1980s HC was unequivocally "male music" (p. 132). Hegemonic masculinity in fact plays a fundamental role in both how HM and HC are defined, and in how the subcultures define themselves (Lay, 2000, p. 227; Williams, 2011, p. 58). Lay further contends that music subcultures operate as "vehicle[s] for heterosexual concerns, and, more importantly, for the recuperation of hegemonic masculinity" in such contexts (2000, p. 239). In this gendered fashion, both HM and HC subcultures are configured and operate similarly to a host of other male-oriented hierarchies in Western society. Owing to the fact that this study concerns masculinity as performatively deployed in HM and HC, it is necessary to establish clear definitions of masculinity in general and of hegemonic masculinity in particular. Kimmel (2006) explains that homosocial relationships provide the foundation upon which *all* status in American male hierarchies is based: "In a large part, it's other men who are important to American men: American men define their masculinity, not as much in relation to women, but in relation to each other" (2006, p. 5). Kimmel further posits that in this way, masculinity is in fact a social enactment—the proverbial "proving ground" of manhood is an exclusionist, male-only space (2006, p. 5) such as those provided at HM and HC events.

Masculinity, of course, is the variation of gender performance attributed to the male. Granted, creating a typology of gender characteristics first requires that we define "men," and

"women," classifications that are themselves founded on common sense assumptions that are presently being interrogated by gender scholars (Connell, 2005, p. 69). As Bordo (1999) explains, categorizations such as "feminine" and "masculine" are socially mutable—and were "*never* as simple as we imagined them to be from bodily signs" (p.41). Nevertheless, such bodily signs have provided the archetypal bases upon which these categorizations are popularly understood—even those that are delivered through the purportedly detached gender assignations of science. Fausto-Sterling (1995) contends that scientific definitions of maleness and femaleness based on bodily signs are in fact "cultural interpretations" that serve to reinforce preexisting social beliefs (p. 133). The neutral, abstract language of such scientific texts imbues them with an aura of authority which renders their basis in social construction opaque—yet again solidifying the "naturalness' of socially-constructed attributions of innate masculinity and femininity. The very opacity of masculinity is a crucial element of its power (Robinson, 2002, p. 147).

In Western society, masculinity is most manifest in the form of body-reflexive practices such as sport, hard physical labor and even the masculine affectations which are part and parcel of HM and HC performativity. As Connell (1995) explains, body-reflexive practices cannot occur outside of social relationships (p. 65) The body-reflexive practices of males are mannerisms affected with the socialized and internalized, binary characteristics of masculinity and femininity in mind. Affectations of masculinity are formed by the socialized notions of what masculinity is *not* as much as they are formed by ideas of what masculinity *is* (Kimmel, 2006, p. 82). Impelled by notions of gender inversion, Western mannerisms of masculinity deployed through body-reflexive practices are driven by the motivation that the male displaying such characteristics is *not* being perceived as feminized, sissy, or homosexual (Kimmel, 2006, p. 83).

Body-reflexive practices provide men with the means of projecting the socialized traits of "inner" masculinity which are misperceived as being innate upon the external body (Kimmel, 2006, p. 82).

Shaped through social interaction, body-reflexive practices "constitute a world which has a bodily dimension, but is not biologically determined" (Connell, 1995, p. 65). This is to say that embodied masculinity is the result of repeated social practices which the individual internalizes and comes to understand as being indicative of essence—a social-constructionist conceptualization of gendered physicality which more-or-less follows suit with those of Bourdieu (1977), Foucault (1978) and Butler (1991), for example. In his examination of the patterns and practices of citizens living in a pre-modern, agrarian village, Bourdieu (1977) asserts that the very construction of the social spaces in the village led those who inhabited the spaces to internalize the town's (and, thus, the society's) gendered hierarchy (p. 163). Foucault (1978) notes a "technology of sex" first emergent around the end of the 18th century that requires all citizens to be under social surveillance, which reinforces gender hierarchy and constructs certain ways of being as "normal" or "perverted" (pp. 116-118). Butler (1991) asserts that gendered identities are imitative, and that all gendered identities are structured by the "dominant heterosexual frames" upon which all gender performativity is based (p. 129). The aforementioned scholars all share the notion that individuals come to accept as "normal" and essential the gendered ways of being that are actually the result of socialization.

Although masculinity is the ubiquitous construct upon which the bulk of social hierarchies are based worldwide, it would be remiss to identify masculinity as a unitary, monolithic concept. There is no singular masculinity. Instead, there are masculinities, intermeshed practices that we understand, through repetition, to reflect male essence. As Butler

(1990) posits, gender, and thus masculinity, is performative—a behavioral fabrication that is produced rather than instinctual (p. 185). "Performativity is not a singular act, but a repetition and a ritual, which achieves its effect through its naturalization in the context of a body" (Butler, 1990, p. xv). Following Butler's lead, we can conclude that masculinity[17] is social practice rather than essence. In gender performance, we recreate what is expected of our sex-assigned roles through the aforementioned social structures, thereby producing an *illusion* of essence that we understand to be real (Butler, 1990, p. 34). Qualities that we ascribe to the masculine actually result from the reiteration of behavioral motifs originating from hierarchies of power, hierarchies that are traditionally male-dominated in Western culture. Therefore, studying Western masculinities is not only a study of men, but a study of power and how power reproduces itself (Edwards, 2006, pp. 10-12). This connection of gender with power provides clues as to why masculinity is such a charged, contested and potentially elusive topic: Defining gender with the terms of the established, masculinist social system sustains power for the male hierarchies that established these terms to begin with (Connell, 1995, p. 3). As such, gender scholars are challenged to establish new vocabularies that do not reinforce the status quo.

Masculinity, the way of being arbitrarily associated with maleness, is a multiplicitous construct. Hegemonic masculinity, the culturally normative ideal of male behavior that associates heteromasculinity with the structures of hierarchic power, also occurs in many variations (Coltrane, 1994, p. 42). Hegemonic masculinities are masculinities that are productive of what Gramsci (1971) describes as "spontaneous" consent,[18] consent that is manufactured through the means of social interaction (p. 12). Paradoxically, non-hegemonic gender

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[17] I use the terms "masculinity" and "masculinities" interchangeably, as called for by sentence structure.
[18] Here I use Gramsci's quotations marks around the term "spontaneous"—Gramsci's quotation marks are to denote that this "spontaneous" consent is actually "as-if" spontaneous: This is the way that the existing order persuades those under its power that their obedient behaviors are innate, natural, and not coerced.

performances, as oppositional discourses, oftentimes serve to reinforce hegemonic gender roles *because* of their oppositionality—which is perceived to be an inversion of heteronormativity (Butler, 1990, p. xiv). When it is established that one thing (i.e. non-hegemonic gender performativity), is *not* something else (i.e. hegemonic gender performativity), the newly-established, antithetical entity operates in binary opposition to its antecedent, thereby bolstering the way that the initial entity is defined. For example, queer masculinity is oftentimes performed as an oppositional inversion of heteromasculinity in a way that establishes queer and straight as binary opposites, bolsters heteromasculinity, and therefore serves to remarginalize the oppositional party, i.e. the queer. Categorizing masculinities dialectically as hegemonic and non-hegemonic likewise implies that certain masculinities—queer masculinities, for example—are in some ways counter-hegemonic, while simultaneously reinscribing longstanding conventions of male power in the gay context (Jagose, 1996, p. 51). Tolson (2004) suggests that the notion that men might somehow consciously relinquish male privilege in a process of redefining masculinity is unrealistic, a symptom of liberal myopia (p. 77). While male privilege is a foundational construct of western society, specific variants of masculinity are neither exclusively hegemonic nor counter-hegemonic. Rather than classifying them as being either hegemonic or counter-hegemonic polarities, it may be more productive to conceptualize masculinities as layered or rhizomatically intermeshed strands of identity.

Coltrane (1994) asserts that hegemonic masculinity as is practiced in Western society is socially constructed and based upon hierarchic schemes which privilege the male (p. 42). More simply, Kimmel (1994) explains that the hegemonic definition of manhood is "a man *in* power, a man *with* power, and a man *of* power" (p. 125). Kimmel further contends that hegemonic masculinity concerns issues of access that different men have to different levels of "cultural

resources that confer manhood," involving modifications employed to perpetuate male power over women and, sometimes, over other men (1994, p. 125). Thus, hegemonic masculinity not only concerns the ways of being that privilege individual men, but also the societal structures within which male identity is constructed (Cornwall & Lindisfarne, 1994, p. 3). In this way, certain masculine hierarchies are "more masculine" (and thus more hegemonically successful—both in terms of producing "properly male" individuals and in terms of perpetuating the system of power which favors males) than others.

As Horrocks (1995) contends, popular culture presents a variety of images of masculinity that are oftentimes contradictory (pp. 26-27). Nevertheless, pop culture operates as a kind of shorthand in that it delivers simplified "types" or references that instruct us on who we are and how to be. Since we live in a male-dominated world, archetypes of hegemonic masculinity serve as the "master" prototypes for those in power. Former U.S. President Ronald Reagan serves as a paradigmatic example.[19]

In his lifetime, actor cum President Reagan built a constructed version of hegemonic masculinity in his film work, which he then carried over into the realm of the political. Kimmel (2006) posits that the Reagan era was "a decade of the reassertion of [male] pride, the retrieval of political and metaphoric potency for America and, hence, for the American man" (p. 192). Jeffords (1994) contends that Reagan's body served as the embodiment of hegemonic masculinity. Straddling the cusp between Hollywood film portrayals and, subsequently, self-portrayal as an able and determined president, Reagan "became the premier masculine archetype for the 1980s, embodying both national and individual images of manliness that came to underlie

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[19] Reagan served not only as the paradigmatic archetype of hegemonic masculinity in the 1980s, he also served to personify militarism, corporate greed, and the abuse of political power in HC: Scores of anti-Reagan songs were written by bands such as D.O.A., M.D.C., Reagan Youth, Intensified Chaos, Shattered Faith, and the Dead Kennedys. Anti-Reagan songs were so pervasive in '80s hardcore that they became something of a cliché.

the nation's identity during his eight years in office [and beyond]" (p. 10). Jeffords further suggests that Reagan and his team capably sutured his Hollywood image with his image as politician, thereby transferring the attributes of masculinity he had portrayed in film to his presidential persona (p. 14). Reagan serves as master archetype of hegemonic masculinity because 1.) his image was constructed and performative, 2.) such performativity was both *enabling of* and *enabled by* the very hierarchy that reinscribes male power, and 3.) his image still serves as an archetypal reference point to this day. Hence, Reagan operates as a concrete example of hierarchically-based hegemonic masculinity and its deployment as a co-created, social enactment.

Interestingly, although hegemonic masculinity is thought to be a "given" for Western males, few men actually come to inhabit the positions of power considered to be intrinsically masculine in their lifetimes. While American men, as a mass, are thought to by-and-large embody the socialized characteristics of masculinity, very few of them occupy positions among the top tiers of the socioeconomic hierarchy. Only a privileged and lucky few men can be "alpha males," while the majority toil somewhere amid the subservient ranks. This inherent contradiction of hegemonic masculinity draws attention to what Cornwall & Lindisfarne (1981) describe as the process of "mystification" that perpetuates male hierarchic power (p. 20). The implicit and explicit male gendering of political, economic and physical power equates masculinity with power, and femininity/queerness with disempowerment (Cornwall & Lindisfarne, 1981, p. 21). Paradoxically, such associations are productive of the connection of maleness and power in settings which in fact have little to do with men per se (Cornwall & Lindisfarne, 1981, p. 22). For example, women in positions of power such as former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and present U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton are

(mis)understood in popular consciousness as being somehow masculine, even "castrating." Thus, for this report, the term "hegemonic masculinity" refers not only to the variations of performative maleness taken to be the norm, but to the structures of power that bolster the equation of maleness with power. In this way, one who participates in the performativity of hegemonic masculinity is also perhaps unwittingly complicit in the perpetuation of hierarchies of power. For Kimmel (2000), hegemonic masculinity drives the inevitable construction of an externalized Other, the Other being whomever is subordinated by the structure of masculinized power that is taken to represent the "natural" order of things (p. 91).

The social-constructivist understanding of gender identifies masculinity not as a way of being per se, but as social enactment—a system of gender-assigned meanings associated with maleness, generated through performance, that occur in social contexts. Gender, of course, is performed for the self as much as it is for others (Sullivan, N., 2003, pp. 93-94). Nevertheless, such enactments for the self are based upon conventions and motifs that are established during social interplay. Employing Butler's (1990) assertion that gender is inauthentic, that there is no "core" from which gendered actions emanate—but "that [gendered] identity is performatively constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results" (p. 34), masculinity can be conceptualized as an amalgamation of ways of being, arbitrarily assigned to maleness because of their propensities to bolster the "naturalness" and/or "truth" of male power in hierarchic systems of domination. Masculinity is identified by the actions, vocabularies, comportments and outlooks understood to be innately male that are, in fact, choreographed enactments resulting from socialization which are also re-contextualized as they are re-enacted in social settings such as HM and HC events. In this way, masculinity is the end product of the internalization of external, artificial constructions of maleness. These constructions of maleness situate power and

agency as an exclusive domain of manhood. As Kimmel (2002) contends, a primary challenge

of any study (and thus this study) of masculinities is to elucidate how axes of power reinforce

and sometimes negate one another in such processes (p. ix). This study will address the

aforementioned challenge through its analysis of the ritualistic enactments of power that are part

and parcel of HM and HC subcultural participation—enactments which are persuasively

suggestive of power, yet ineffectual of affecting actual power for the primarily male participants

of these enclaves.

The comportments of masculinity characteristic of (especially) HM and HC have much

crossover with those described by Willis (1978) in his study of British "biker boys," a group

from whom much HM and HC iconography may well have been appropriated. The obvious

connection is manifest in the biker boys' style, which "looked tough, with its leather, spikes and

denim" (p. 20), but Willis's account of the biker boys' postures and body carriage explained as

"handling yourself" is perhaps even more telling:

> This style, or ambience, of masculinity is partly caught in the notion of "handling
>
> yourself": of moving quickly and confidently, in a very physical, even intimidating,
>
> practical world. …At one level this was the ability …to "handle yourself" in a *real* fight
>
> situation. At another level, the same physical propensities were symbolically expanded
>
> into a rough kind of bonhomie. …The style and roughness of this "bonhomie" was a
>
> *symbolic* extension of fighting ability, and not a direct extension. (p. 23)

Like the biker boys, HM and HC males "handle themselves" in similar ways: the pseudo-

violence enacted at HM and HC shows is contemporaneous with the "roughhousing" of the biker

boys and the "rough bonhomie" of the bikers is likened to the "brotherhoods" and/or "families"

of HM and HC.   Members of HM, HC and biker enclaves all display a certain "ready to fight"

demeanor, and all three are enclaves where class and masculinity are intertwined and enabled

through performativity and body-reflexive practices.

Although Western males are socialized to be "strong and silent," masculine behavior is

by no means limited to the nonverbal. As Wood (2011) posits, verbal communication itself is

gendered and is, in fact, "the primary means by which we express our gendered identities" (p.

124). Although defining speech patterns as gendered is perhaps a reductionist approach to

analyzing how language is deployed, assigning gendered associations to certain styles of

speaking is part and parcel of how we are socialized. For better or worse, individualistic and

aggressive speech is associated with masculinity while collectivistic and nurturing speech is

associated with femininity (Wood, 2011, 124-131).

Groups that share conversational norms, ways of achieving communicative goals and

jargon are defined as speech communities (Labov, 1972, p. 84). Wood (2011) defines masculine

speech communities as those that utilize language to achieve concrete goals, gain hierarchic

status, maintain autonomy and exert control (p. 130). Communication styles that are

characterized as being masculine include challenging speech, instrumentality, and conversational

command (pp. 130-132). Since HM and HC subcultures are male-dominated—each with their

own communication schemes, shared symbol systems, and mutual ways of interpreting

experience—these enclaves can certainly be categorized as masculine speech communities. As

such, analyzing the patterns of masculine speech pertinent to these communities is a useful

approach for this study. As established prior, while HM and HC are indeed male dominated

enclaves, there are certainly women involved. In order to function effectively in HM and HC

subcultures, women participants must take on the masculine norms and patterns of speech

pertinent to these groups. Although it is enabling for individual women to take on such patterns of speech within such hierarchies, the ultimate effect of such conversational style appropriation by women is only to uphold the male-dominated status quo of these groups "because it keeps a hierarchy of [male] privilege and power intact" (Meyers, 2012, p. 89).

Since masculinity is enacted by males and for males in hierarchic social situations, we can conclude that the variations of masculinity performed in HM and HC subcultures are hegemonic masculinities. Although hegemonic masculinity is also performed by the self for the self, performing hegemonic masculinity is most powerfully deployed in homosocial settings such as those provided by HM and HC subcultures, both of which bolster heteronormative archetypes through performativity. Within these milieus, the ways of being associated with hegemonic masculinity take on interconnected meanings. In this way, the *group* is the bearer of meanings associated with hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2005, pp. 107-108). That the masculinity performed in HM and HC settings is hegemonic is most saliently evidenced in the body-reflexive practices (slam dancing and general deportments of both musicians and audience members at shows), modes of hypermasculine self-presentation (tattoos and working-class attire) and masculine speech communities that are fundamental elements of both subcultures.

Compulsory Heterosexuality and Latent Homoeroticism in Heavy Metal and Hardcore

In studies of identity, factors of gender and sexuality are linked, conflated, and oftentimes even (mistakenly) assumed to be interchangeable (Vance, 1995, pp. 46-47). Hence, this study of masculinity in HM and HC subcultures must consider how the element of sexuality operates in these enclaves. In HM and HC subcultures, sexuality is an aspect of being which is marked as

much by its denial as its assertion (Blush, 2010, p. 36; Arnett, 1996, p. 139; Weinstein, 2009, p. 17; Wood, 2006, p. 17). Overlooking that the absence of women in heterosexist HC subculture does not necessarily remove the factor of homoeroticism from the equation, Blush (2010) states that since participation in HC subculture was not structured around "getting laid," that the proto-HC of the 1980s was "the first rock music not driven by sexuality" (p. 36). HM's exclusion of all things feminine operates at cross purposes in that it on the surface exalts hypermasculine heteronormativity, all the while shrouding for many participants the genre's latent homoeroticism (Moore, 2009, p. 153). As HM and HC are male-dominated and for the most part exclusionist collectivities marked by heteromasculine body-reflexive practices, the fact that hypermasculinity is not purported to be the expression of sexuality in these enclaves seems a purposeful omission. As Foucault (1978) contends, that sexuality is *not* expressed within a certain discourse only serves to solidify its presence (p. 27).

For Sedgwick (2008), heteronormative assumptions form the groundwork upon which contemporary, Western understandings of gender itself are based (p. 31). Heteronormative biases are intrinsic to the schemes which structure both maleness/femaleness and heterosexuality/homosexuality as inverses of one another (p. 31). Such foundations in heteronormativity invariably privilege heterosocial and heteronormative relationships, even in queer analyses which attempt to destabilize the notion that heterosexuality is natural and inevitable (Sedgwick, 2008, p. 32). The aforementioned heteronormative assumptions form what Butler defines as a "binary gender frame" which constructs the male as empowered and the female and/or non-heteronormative as a comparatively disempowered Other (1990, p. xxx). The emphasis on male power as expressed in the discourses of HM and HC certainly bolsters this dichotomy. Compulsory heterosexuality, as exemplified through the ways of being associated

with HM and HC performativity, is of course emergent from this structuring binary gender frame (Butler, 1990, p. 31). Wittig posits that the very system of symbols based upon the notion of compulsory heterosexuality (and thus emergent from what Butler defines as a binary gender frame) is in and of itself corrupt—and cannot be somehow reclaimed or retooled to better effect (1992, pp. 29-30). Still, it is not a realistic proposition that gender can be reconceived from a novel genesis point with a new set of epistemological building blocks not based in heteronormative biases. As such, we are compelled—at least to a degree—to speak in the terms of the preexisting symbol system which was originally constructed in a way that privileges heteronormativity.

In HM and HC, sexuality is something of an unreferenced behemoth: Both subcultures are suffused with sexual imagery and marked by sexuality which is at least performative, if not realized (or consummated, as it were) corporeally. The homosocial trappings of HM and HC are not atypical in youth and adolescent-based peer groups where sexuality may provide a *raison d' etree* for one's actions—even though such actions may not in fact result in actual couplings. Youth subcultures often provide the setting for same-sex interaction, even though performativity related to the subculture is at least ostensibly based in the expression of heteronormative sexuality. Tellingly, Kimmel (2006) posits that the hegemonic masculinity enacted and celebrated in homosocial communities (such as HM and HC subcultures) is also driven by homophobia, the male fear that one's homosexuality might be "unmasked" by another male (p. 5). As an unspoken but omnipresent element of HM and HC performativity, sexuality is expressed through the re-presentation of motifs of hegemonic masculinity appropriated from the greater culture and recontextualized in the subcultural milieu. While the HC experience and, to a lesser degree, the HM experience is not focused on heterosexual coupling per se, both enclaves

are emergent from a tradition that equates rock'n'roll music with an excessive lifestyle "based on a version of masculinity whose emphasis on virility and sexual prowess projects an almost archaic image of man" (Kramer, 2010, p. 166). The enclaves of HM and HC may in fact operate as what Horrocks describes as "a male hiding-place for women" (1995, p. 144) which provides a setting for expressions of arousal and release in a male-exclusivist space (Frith, 1981, p. 227). In this way, HM and HC subcultures offer their participants an arena for the homosocial exploration of sexuality, veritable "islands" of masculinity where the expression of sexuality in a by-and-large male-only space is understood as expressing male power yet somehow distanced from the stigma of homosexuality.

"Cometh Down Hessian": Defining Whiteness

In Western society whiteness is not so much a presence as an absence (Nakayama & Krizek, 1995, pp. 293-295; DiPiero, 2003, p. 52). Through its unspokenness, whiteness does not operate as an identifier of ethnic or cultural difference, but instead functions as a tacit identifier of those belonging to the dominant social order. "White people" are not identified as having *any* color—generally referred to merely as people, whereas persons of color are referenced in racial terms, as "black women" or "Hispanic men," for example . In this way, whiteness is nothing in particular, but "everything," a strategic political identity that draws power from its invisibility (Nakayama & Krizek, 1995, pp. 293-295). Those who are categorized as and benefit from being "white" do not experience shock or a sense of otherness during the process of socialization when they realize that they are white (Martinot, 2010, p. 14). Identifying as white impels immediate empowerment. "If one accepts this [white] position, one accepts a role and stratified position in

society" (Martinot, 2010, p. 14). This is to say that whiteness is a performative social enactment, a way of being that is both granted by an elite (white) caste and internalized through imitation and repetition (Warren, 2003, pp. 39-40). Whiteness does not come *from* the body, but is established and naturalized *in* the body *through performative acts*. In this way, the white raced body is a performative accomplishment whose construction is obfuscated through repetition (Warren, 2003, p. 30). Whiteness is an elusive construct in that it is socially mutable. Within whiteness's malleability lies both its discursive strength and its problematic nature. For scholars, invoking whiteness is a potentially volatile move: To define whiteness and delimit its population through definition is to legitimize and bolster the concept (Garner, 2007, p. 8). Nevertheless, whiteness is a powerful construct, and to ignore this dominant social construct is to ignore the ways that hierarchies of power shape and reinforce themselves in Western society. Simply put, whiteness *is*.

With a quick glance of the audience at any HC or HM event anywhere in America, one can easily and unequivocally make conclusions about the demographic makeup of the subcultures—both of which are overwhelmingly white and male.[20] Krenske and McKay (2000) posit that because of its predominately white/male constituency and discursive practices which denigrate and/or exclude women, HM is "an aggressively heterosexist formation" (p. 70). Blush (2010) avers that the "fucked-up but smart white kids" populating HC subculture are anti-racist, with a few "racist lunkheads" on the margins (pp. 32-33). For both HM and HC, the music itself eschews sonic structures such as groove or swing that are associated with blackness. This is not

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[20] While both HC & HM appeal predominately to adolescents, each subculture has an albeit smaller group of "old school" participants who have been involved in their respective subcultures for decades. In larger cities (such as Atlanta, where this study was be conducted) there are considerably larger percentages of older participants than in smaller scenes. This trend is likely to continue as HC & HM remain enduring subcultures. Although youth is celebrated in HC & HM, older participants of each enclave are respected for their subcultural capital, which usually is acquired through decades of passionate participation.

to say that either subculture is avowedly racist, although both enclaves have their share of

outliers that adopt racist rhetoric and supremacist ideology, usually crudely concocted (Blush,

2010, p. 32; Moynihan & Soderlind, 1998, p. 309). Moore (2010) contends that HM (and

likewise HC) developed as an unlikely counterpart to the left-leaning counterculture of the '60s

and '70s, "a deeply contradictory subculture whose enthusiasts took pride in their rebelliousness

but otherwise adhered to very conventional ideas about gender, race, and sexuality" (p. 78). As

such, it is necessary to examine the white identity of participants in HM and HC.

This analysis of how race, gender and class are symbolically co-constructed and enacted

in ways that conflate the aforementioned elements, in the main, into a singular HM/HC identity

is effectively a critical ethnographic study of rhetoric in that it is an analysis of the ways that HM

and HC participants are hailed, recruited, and persuaded to accept and emulate the ways of being

(in this case, masculine ways of being) by which they will be classified and, in many cases,

marginalized. The study is critical in that it examines the co-creation of the social structures

relative to these enclaves, rhetorical in that it considers how participants are hailed and

persuaded, and ethnographic in that it employs participant-observation, interaction, interviews,

and a degree of collaboration in its analysis. As Brummett & Bowers (1999) contend,

subjectivity is decentered, that the decentered subjects of the present are shaped through social

interaction, "that socially created subjects are defined by their group identities, and the

distribution of power among groups [in this case HM and HC subcultures] makes subject

creation a matter of political struggle" (p. 119). Through subcultural participation, HM and HC

subjects are persuaded not only about who they are in a way that conflates race, gender and class,

but that who they are and where they are situated in society (in this case as marginalized

members of proud pariah enclaves) is exactly as it should be. Regarding race (or of gender and

class, for that matter), the prevailingly white participants of HM and HC gaze upon their peers in the social settings of HM and HC events, perceiving what they see not only as a recognition of the self, but also as a range of possibilities about who they can be and the spectrum of identities (albeit a limited spectrum in the cases of HM and HC) that they can take on for their own (Krips, 1999, p. 193). In this way, the co-construction of group identities that conflate race, gender and class (or at least a performance of class) in HM and HC is indeed an ideological project.

In an attempt to confront the meanings and implications of whiteness, Shannon Sullivan (2006) differentiates being white, having the physical traits attributed to whiteness, from being "whitely," taking on the affectations connected with the notion of whiteness (p. 106). Sullivan concedes that one should employ the aforementioned white/whitely distinction cautiously. Sullivan expounds:

> One can and should acknowledge that whiteness is not a "natural" physical substratum that is overlaid by cultural forms of whiteliness. One can and should understand whiteness as transactional and acknowledge that spatiality helps constitute who counts as white. One also can and should recognize that often troubling political motivations for appealing to the existence of white and black races are informed by the racism of whiteliness. One can and should do all this at the same time that one retains the use of the category of whiteliness. This is because even though being categorized as white may be a product of whiteliness, being white is no less real for being such. (p. 160)

Sullivan further asserts that while whiteness is constructed, not biologically determined, the construct of whiteness will remain a useful analytical category for as long as white racist

societies perpetuate discrimination based upon arbitrarily determined physical characteristics (2006, p. 160).

True to form, whiteness operates powerfully as an absence in HM and HC subcultures. Macleod (2010) claims that race was "strangely almost absent" and "neither acknowledged nor appreciated" in California's primordial HC scene, circa 1980 (p. 132). While race is rarely mentioned in the discourses of HM and HC, that participants in these subcultures are white or at least perform whiteliness is an unspoken given. Blush (2010) describes HC's constituency as "overwhelmingly white" (p. 35), and HC's *raison d' etree* the expression of suburban (i.e. white) angst (p. 14). More bluntly put, "hardcore is white music" (MacLeod, 2010, p. 131). Walser (1993) asserts that HM is entirely focused on the expression and experience of power, itself a masculinist construct that is inextricably meshed with whiteness (p. 2). Bearing in mind both the demographic makeups and the discursive practices of HM and HC that implicitly glorify white male power, whiteness and masculinity might both be understood as the undeclared yet omnipresent ways of being that drive each subculture. Paradoxically, affiliating with HM and HC, both outsider enclaves, might be understood as a manifestation of white economic privilege. Traber (2007) contends that the self-marginalization affected by HC punks (and, ergo, metalheads) in the pursuit of subcultural capital is "an insulting gesture" when taking into consideration that such "border-crossing" needn't necessarily be permanent. "That they [HM and HC participants] opt to live like oppressed groups formed by the historical and social conditions they cannot claim may say something about [their] political dedication… but it also speaks to how people of their [white] social stature understand their relationship to the very idea of freedom" (p. 132). This is to say that to reject white privilege, one must first be in possession of that privilege—and, more crucially, that the prevailingly white participants of HM and HC

subcultures are often claiming a fictive oppression, an oppression that has no historical or social basis and that, therefore, they have no right to claim.

Martin, Krizek, Nakayama, and Bradford (1999) posit that in the United States, whiteness is "pan-ethnic," a distinct, yet variable racial category that has included different ethnicities at different times (p. 29). Crucially, whiteness is mutable: although people have defined themselves as white or have been denied white status variously through history, as a signifier, "whiteness" is indicative, more or less, of European origin (DiPiero, 2002, 55). "White" may refer to a distinct and exclusive collectivity at a certain synchronic point yet be seen as evolving in a diachronic sense. White's variability is key to its usefulness in maintaining hierarchic power: Since white is equated with power, being able to adapt whiteness to include whichever groups the powerful may be and exclude the disempowered at any given point in time bolsters the Western conceptualization of whiteness itself and, thus, of power. Those who are included in white culture go unnamed as part of "the" culture whereas those who are othered are marginalized through their definition as members of Black culture, Hispanic culture, etc. Curiously, whiteness functions most beneficially for its constituency when those self-defining as white are led to believe that the limited socioeconomic power held by non-whites in the purportedly egalitarian capitalist system is the result of individual failings, *not* because they themselves, as whites, are accessing the exclusive benefits of white privilege (Garner, 2007, p. 24). Yet again, whiteness is most potent when operating as an absence rather than as a presence.

Middle-Class Simulation of the Working-Class Mien: Class in Heavy Metal and Hardcore

Class, as connected with whiteness, is also obfuscated—in a way that reinforces both

constructs as "natural" but surreptitious "truths" (Garner, 2007, pp. 35-37). Predictably, "white"

people are more likely to claim white status only when it is to their benefit (this is to say when

they are at a disadvantage) and to otherwise view their privileges as being earned and deserved

(Garner, 2007, p. 36). White people are less apt to acknowledge that they are on the receiving

end of privileges accorded by a racist society: In such cases, the burden of proof most often falls

upon the (non-white) accuser, *not* the white person being accused of benefitting from a skewed

system (Marty, 1999, p. 66). Hall (1997) explains that difference, in Western culture, is most

often explained in terms of binaries that are "open to the charge of being reductionist and over-

simplified—swallowing up all distinctions in rather rigid two-part structure" (p. 235).

Employing binary structures such as upper-class/lower-class and white/non-white, however,

involves a power differential in that one polarity is always dominant (Hall, 1997b, p. 325).

Hence, this mode of structuring the way that we understand difference is ineffective and perhaps

misleading. Class and whiteness (or, for that matter, class and *non*-whiteness) are invariably

linked in that, in Western society, a lower-class white person may still wield more clout than a

middle-class person of color. Unsurprisingly, race trumps class in the characterization of

blighted urban areas: Poor neighborhoods occupied by white and non-white residents are

classified as "minority areas"[21] (Garner, 2007, p. 161).

Ultimately, the term "class" connotes social position in relation to profession and wealth.

This is to say that in the conventional way that power is defined in patriarchal, capitalist, racist

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[21] Participants in HC and HM subcultures often represent the first wave of gentrification in minority neighborhoods. Affluent, "slumming" adolescents affiliated with these subcultures frequently move into such areas in search of cheap housing. HM and (especially) HC clubs are regularly located in "fringe" neighborhoods, spearheading the paradoxical "white flight" from the suburbs to the inner city of prosperous HC and HM kids eager to establish a presence on the scene.

societies such as the U.S., the upper-class occupy higher socioeconomic tiers, the middle-class occupy the median range, and the working-class are along the lower tiers. In this way, the Western notion of empowerment is defined in the terms of money, employment and social mobility. The higher in the class ranking one rises, the more power one acquires. Like masculinity, class is socially-constructed rather than being innate. Subject positions are linked with notions of class and internalized in ways that foster the impression that class or "classness" is something that one is born into. In his pivotal examination of how the working class "lad"[22] identity was constructed in institutional settings in 1970s England, *Learning to Labour*, Paul Willis (1977) examined the syndrome where class identities were created within institutions of primary socialization such as schools—not intentionally, but through the means of emergent, oppositional social hierarchies within those systems (p. 3). Through their resistance to schooling, these lads took on readymade identities which were ideal for working-class labor and that also functioned in ways that effectively prevented upward social mobility once these working-class positions were taken (Kenway & Kraak, 2004, p. 95). The "lad" identity as explained by Willis was not the result of purposeful socialization in the school system, but its effect was the same. Authority figures in the school system operated as foils—and the lads created (and/or reified) working-class masculinities *in opposition* to those of their educators (Connell, 2005, p. 37). In this way, the lads were initiated into a strictly-defined social order which was disempowering for them (Willis, 2004, p. 169). Basically, Willis' study analyzed how the disempowered were imbricated into a structure of control.[23] Like the lad identity, HM and HC identities usher primarily male and middle-class adolescents into a lower tier of the

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[22] These "lads" were young men, resistant to the "sissy" strictures of school, who identified with a notion of masculinity that steered them directly into working-class professions.
[23] Class distinctions more clearly identified, more saliently performed, and thus more visible in the U.K. than in the U.S., especially as pertains to the "lad" culture studied by Willis.

social order. Willis' study was about the *maintenance* of a subordinated identity, whereas this study examines how people are funneled into a subordinate position by the means of subcultural participation. Participation in HM and HC subcultures is disempowering for the young men entering these enclaves because, historically, white middle-class males have had access to social mobility. The association of HM and HC with working-class styles of self-presentation serves to diminish the social mobility of the primarily middle-class young men who choose to affiliate with these subcultures.

In the American imagination, the term "working class" evokes the imagery of whiteness. Langston (1992) contends that the typical U.S. stereotype of the working class is "white guys in overalls" (p. 113). And of course, class is about much more than the occupation or amount of money one has. Class is both culture and comportment. Class is "socially-constructed and all-encompassing" (p. 112). "Class is a concept of historically constituted power and powerlessness rather than being confined to ownership of property alone" (Aranowitz, 2003, p. 141). And in America, being middle or upper-class means being empowered, whereas being working-class equates with dependence (on a limited spectrum of jobs) and at least a degree of subjugation (Willis, 2004, pp. 167-170). "What distinguishes the working class [from the middle and upper-classes] is its lack of relative power over the terms and conditions of employment" (p. 26). Brann-Barrett (2011) also notes that in the contemporary U.S., what meager cultural capital that once came along with working-class status is eroding as well (p. 277). Thus, the middle and upper-class, in comparison, have more power in terms of employment, material possessions, and even in terms of symbolic currency.

Bearing this in mind, we should consider how masculinity and working-classness are intertwined in HM and HC subcultures and what consequences these meshed identities may have

for participants. HM and HC participants are for the most part young and overwhelmingly male, and the body-reflexive practices, comportments and presentations of the self pertinent to their subcultures are primarily about physicality. As teenagers, even though HM and HC kids are primarily white, middle-class, and in these ways privileged, they are still disempowered. Simply put, because of their ages, adolescents are not accorded much status in Western society. The primarily male adolescents who join HM and HC subcultures are disempowered to begin with, and their participation in HM and HC enclaves is empowering, at least initially. As Snider (2001) notes, masculinity for adolescent males is "often premised on physical prowess, strength and sport—all linked to sexual success as a source for status" (p. 149). So, when young men join HM and HC subcultures in adolescence, assuming identities that link working-classness with masculinity is somewhat empowering. Working-class bodies are imaged as powerful, so taking on these comportments is empowering for young men. As life goes on, however, maintaining an image of rough and ready physical power (as enacted through working-classness) becomes not nearly as important as appearing to have status in the ranked hierarchies of business and political institutions. "With maturity, job success becomes paramount. In the merciless literally accurate language of the metaphor, occupational success 'separates the men from the boys'" (p. 149). The forms of performative masculinity linked with working-classness that are empowering for adolescent males in HM and HC give way as life proceeds. In other words, for adults, middle and upper-class masculinity is seen as the empowered position. By taking on the trappings of the working-class, young men in HM and HC symbolically subordinate themselves, and this symbolic subordination translates in real time.

The concept of intersectionality is an especially useful analytical tool when examining the effects of performative working-classness for the primarily white and male participants of

HM and HC subcultures. HM and HC identities conflate masculinity with class (or classness), which is *also* conflated with whiteness. The performative working-classness of HM and HC is effectively a rendition of white, working-class masculinity. For HM and HC participants, this conflation of elements of race, gender and class is a group-based experience. In other words, to participate in HM and/or HC, the individual takes on the identity of the group—and this is a conflated identity. While white working-class males tend to occupy a somewhat higher tier in the social hierarchy than their Black, male, working-class correlates, taking on the position of white, male working-classness is nevertheless a symbolic demotion for the middle-class kids entering HM and HC subcultures. Sedgwick (2008) asserts that choosing to become involved with groups (such as HM and HC) that intermesh the "dissonant dynamics" of gendered, racial, and class identities oftentimes wind up in tenuous social positions (pp. 61-62). As Collins (2004) contends, analyzing conflated identities from a standpoint which takes into account the "longstanding shared identities" of groups such as HM and HC subcultures provides a credible way to understand how elements of identity conceptualized as being separate such as gender, race and class are actually interconnected (p. 150). Affiliating with groups (such as HM and HC) that enmesh such identities to yield demoted social rankings is, of course, a rather dubious plunge for an individual to take. Still, HM and HC subcultures continue to hold strong appeal for the young people that continually join their ranks.

Class, like whiteness, is rarely addressed in the discourses of HM and HC. As Moore (2009) contends, "the most noticeable thing about the extent of politics in heavy metal is its absence" (p. 155). Moore further argues that in the British HM scene of the '70s and '80s, HM participants "knew they were screwed, but it was hard to articulate why" (2009, p. 156). For Moore, HM promotes an ideology of acquiescence to the system—even though the subculture

itself is purportedly a resistant one (2009, p, 156). In a later analysis (2010), Moore concedes that while the iconography of HM is fashioned after working class archetypes, "it would be dangerous to equate heavy metal and working-class culture" (p. 79). Arnett (1996) concurs, stating that the majority of the HM fans he interviewed for his study (which was, incidentally, conducted in Atlanta) were from middle-class and upper-middle-class families (p. 172).

With its initial roots in suburban Southern California, HC appeals to an audience that is perhaps more moneyed and socially mobile. Blush (2010) describes participants of HC's demographics as affluent suburbanites (p. 14) and prevailingly white (p. 35). While HC's lyrics are decidedly more politicized than those of HM, its lyrics generally convey vague "fuck the police/fuck authority" messages (Blush, 2010, pp. 41-43) which rarely addresses class issues.

Canonical analyses of music subcultures have been burdened by a working-class/middle-class dualism that perhaps inaccurately portrays music subcultures as expressions of blue-collar resistance. Beginning with the analyses of the Birmingham School scholars, class has been understood as the structure that provides the causal power for subculture (Muggleton, 2000, p. 20). Hebdige (1979) contends that the couture of late 1970s British punk is representative of working-class resistance expressed through style (pp. 18-19) *and* of the symbolic collusion of more privileged youth with the disenfranchised (pp. 114-115). Frith (1997) concurs, asserting that both the music and the masculine styles of punk were emergent from rock'n'roll's class-based traditions and tropes of populist masculinity (p. 167). Walser's analysis concludes that the symbolic violence of HM subculture is in itself an expression of anger about the lack of economic opportunities allowed to the working-class (1993, p. 109). Arnett (1996), however, asserts that Walser's analysis requires a leap of logic because HM is a predominately apolitical subculture, its constituency is "at least as likely to be middle-class as working class" and because

the anger expressed in HM is not the result of class-related inequalities (p. 172). While the participants of HC subculture are slightly more affluent and socially mobile than their correlates in HM, HC subculture is also separate from "the overt class and race bases of many other contemporary subcultures" (Wood, 2006, p. 7). Likewise, Willis (1993) asserts that HC does not reflect the response of a particular class against its social conditions—and that, therefore, HC cannot be classified as subculture in the class-based way that Birmingham School scholars had oriented their analyses (p. 375). The emergence of American HC subculture in the early 1980s, in fact, seems antithetical to the Birmingham School scholar's contention that subculture is necessarily an expression of working-class resistance: As a performed rejection of middle-class values emergent from *within* the middle class itself, proto-HC's location was affluent suburbia, coalescing almost exclusively around music and style rather than class frictions (MacLeod, 2003, pp. 3-4).

Subcultures such as HM and HC are certainly influenced by class, although their derivation cannot be traced to an elemental class-based foundation. Subcultures, while affected by multiple factors including (but not limited to) class, can be indicative of what Muggleton (2000) terms a "value convergence," a point of connection where participants from varied backgrounds congregate around a shared experience and outlook (p. 31). In Muggleton's view, contemporary subcultural affiliation, which he terms "post-subculturalist," is permeable and fluid. "Style surfers" pick and choose from an expansive menu of archetypes that are no longer rooted in class-based resistance—or in *any* primordial referent per se, for that matter (2000, p. 48). "For the post-subculturalists, the trappings of spectacular style [which, as per Hebdige, are deployed most significantly through mode of dress] are their rite of admission to a costume

party, a masquerade, a hedonistic escape" (Muggleton, 2000, p. 49). This concept of post-subculture is certainly applicable to the present day analysis of HM and HC subcultures.

This is not to say that contemporary analyses of subculture ignore class distinctions, but rather that their understandings of the construction of class in identity supersedes affiliations that are strictly limited to economic bases. While Willis (2004) contends that having certain subcultural affiliations[24] propel individuals toward class-related identities, in the digital era "young people are becoming less defined by neighborhood and class," instead purposely choosing identities connected with music, style, and social practices (p185). Hollingsworth & Williams (2009) proffer a broadened conception of social class as an element of identity that is produced not only by one's occupation and/or position in an economic hierarchy, but also through cultural practices (p. 468).

For tastemakers, HM and HC are classified as low (and thus working-class) culture primarily because of their focuses on the "animal" ways of humanity. Dismemberment, defecation, bodily fluids and carcasses (both human and animal) are staples of HM and HC lyrical and graphic iconography (Weinstein, 2000, pp. 27-39). Kipnis (1998) asserts that such depictions are almost always excluded from the high art canon because of the disgust factor (pp. 139-140). "Historically, the upper-class defined themselves against what they defined as dirty, low, repulsive, noisy, and contaminating [all of which are primary elements of HM and HC artistic expression]: acts of exclusion that precisely maintained their identity as a class" (p. 139). In this way, HM and HC's focuses on brutal corporeality are demarcated from high art and, thus, condemned to the low art classification—which is conflated with working class.

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[24] Willis most capably explained how subcultural affiliations are enmeshed with class identities in *Learning To Labor*, a canonical ethnographic study focusing on a group of 12 "lads" (a term connoted with skinheads in the U.K.) and their transitions from school systems into blue-collar life.

While neither subcultures are working class per se in America, blue-collar postures are affected by participants of HM and, to a slightly lesser degree, HC. The adoption of working-class performativity in HM and HC enclaves might be indicative of what Willis (1978) terms "the long, one-sided romance between bohemia and the lumpenproletariat" (p. 179). Such blue-collar posturing might also result from the aforementioned cultural practices which conflate resistance with class struggle—or those which conflate resistance with the individualism of hegemonic masculinity. Performative masculinity in HM and HC is interlocked with performative class identification, although such performances are often in fact faux renditions of class. This rendered working-class affectation is most evident in the clothing of HM fans, a mode of dress that—through its Spartan durability—visually conjoins HM masculinity with a blue-collar ethos. Weinstein (2009) posits that this "unselfconsciously masculine" style, first donned by the working-class fans of early British HM and later appropriated by American HM devotees, "affirm[s] an imaginary of power that valorizes various characteristics that they [HM fans] take for granted are male" (p. 28). That such self-presentations are oftentimes rooted in artifice supports Jackman's contention that, for Americans, class affiliation is oftentimes *chosen* as a means of expressing a lifestyle or viewpoint (1979, p. 461). The presentation of the self as working-class and the conflation of working-class with masculinity affected by middle and upper-class participants of HM and HC subcultures is indicative that class, in these enclaves, can be understood as more as a social or cultural affinity than it is based upon the realities of employment, social mobility and economics.

Although this cultural affinity is symbolic (as manifested in clothing and affectations of HM and HC participants), it can nevertheless yield serious repercussions in the social world. As hooks (1994) posits, the poor and working-class are rarely if ever portrayed positively in

polpular culture. Instead, they are condemned through demeaning and reductive stereotyping (p. 168). How a person chooses to portray their identity (through clothing and deportments) plays a key role in their social stratification, and when a middle-class person self-presents as working class, the consequence can be demotion to a lower social strata (Berry, 2008, p. 22). The affectations of working-classness by HM and HC participants results in stereotyping and scapegoating. HM and HC participants are often scapegoated as being the embodiment of "adolescent problems," and are thus othered, ostracized and deemed to be "folk devils" (Hebdige, 1979, p. 94). As Pickering (2001) contends, "the stereotypical construction of certain youth groups or subcultures [such as HM and HC] falls within the folk devil syndrome" (p. 191). So, the performative working-classness of HM and HC enclaves results in reduced status along the social hierarchy—and this reduced status is, of course, a reduction in class status. In the eyes of the general public, HM and HC subcultures are debased groups.

HM and HC are oftentimes thought to be "low" cultures (Blush, 2010, p. 44; Arnett, 1996, p. 56). Hence, those associated with these subcultures are pitied, denigrated, even classified as "white trash."[25] In contemporary U.S. society, term "white trash" functions as a semantic bludgeon: Not only are its assumptions both racist and reductionist, but it is productive of kneejerk reactions that conjure deeply-held (and wrongheaded) beliefs about the character of poverty and "low" culture (Henderson & Tickamyer, pp. 50-52). White trash culture (of which HM and HC are considered by many to be part of) is thought to be a culture of dysfunction which perpetuates parasitic tendencies, inertness, disassociation, even pathology (p. 61). As Newitz (1997) contends, white trash are thought to be such failures because they have transgressed the privilege and power of whiteness itself (p. 145). Newitz further notes, pivotally,

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[25] Terms like "redneck," "hillbilly," "country" and the most pernicious "white trash" were used by several of the interviewees of this study to describe the outside world's perception of HC and especially HM subcultures.

that white indie rockers (which would certainly include, at least to a degree, participants in HM and HC subcultures) use nihilism and a self-reduction to white trash status as a means of empowerment:

> Having lost, or losing the social entitlements of whiteness, white indie rockers [and, ergo, HM and HC rockers] turn their very disenfranchisement into a source of pride. No one can insult you if you've insulted yourself first; and no one can threaten you with extinction if you've asked for it already. (p. 147)

Still, this embrace of white trash identities can yield negative effects. One who self-portrays as white trash may well be perceived as white trash—and thus demoted as such.

Although gender, race, class and sexuality are generally thought of as separate categories, examining any of these classifications as a separate entity is something of an impossibility. The aforementioned categories operate in confluence. As Connell (2005) posits, gender (and, ergo, performative masculinity in HM and HC) is "a way of structuring social practices" that is "unavoidably involved with other social structures" such as class, sexuality and race (p. 75). Connell further asserts that this connection of gender, race and class carries great consequence for studies of masculinity (p. 75). Femininity (and non-normativity) play into the construction of masculinity just as blackness plays into the construction of whiteness—and class plays into the construction of both (p. 80). Factors of gender, race, sexuality and class, in fact, are interlocked in HM and HC.

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3. METHODOLOGY

This study synthesizes approaches from several methodological traditions. The purpose

of this study is to gain a clearer understanding of how masculinity is co-created by participants of

HM and HC subcultures. The ultimate goal of this study is to uncover how participants of HM

and HC subcultures see *themselves*—how they perceive the roles of HM and HC subculture in

their lives, how they interpret the meanings of their respective subcultures, and how their

subcultural participation relates to their own experiences of masculine subjectivity.[26] My

research question is how do young men perform masculinity within the subcultures of of HM

and HC: In which ways are performative masculinity similar in the two enclaves and in which

ways are they different? Bearing in mind that whiteness, class, gender, and sexuality are key

elements of HM and HC subcultural identities, examining how such factors intersect with

masculinity in these enclaves is a crucial area of inquiry for this study. The study primarily

employs the cultural studies framework established by Hall, Fiske, and Hebdige, bolstered by

Butler's concept of gender performativity and a feminist understanding of intersectionality, and,

finally, informed by the methodological merging of ethnography, critical studies and rhetorical

studies as advocated by Conquergood, Rosteck, and Hess.

For this study, HM and HC subcultures are examined as discourses, thus necessitating the

meshing of cultural studies and rhetorical studies approaches. As Charland (1987) contends,

social identities (such as the identities associated with HM and HC subcultures) are rhetorical in

that they require human cooperation to be established (pp. 133-134). HM and HC operate as

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[26] A portion of the interviewees in this study are women. Nonetheless, HM and HC are masculinist enclaves—and to participate in these enclaves is to enact characteristics understood in Western culture as being masculine and to experience masculine subjectivity.

vernacular discourses which work within the greater discourse of culture itself. Ono & Sloop (1995) define "vernacular discourses" as the discourses of local communities that have, for whatever reason, been systematically ignored (p. 20), such as diaspora groups and the subaltern. As vernacular discourses, HM and HC function from within the greater discourse much in the same way that subcultures function from within the greater culture. Analyzing the communication specific to such groups provides clues to in-group power relations. As such, vernacular discourses are productive topics for study (p. 20). Bearing in mind that such discourses are both indicative and productive of ideas and values, the analysis of vernacular discourse operates as ideological criticism: Through the examination of such discourses the researcher seeks to uncover the role of communication in support of an ideology of domination (Foss, 2004, p. 239-243). Such subordinate, vernacular discourses must be approached with "the [same level] of suspicion that rhetoricians have always given mainstream discourse," lest their analysis be prefigured by the very structures of power and historicity that ignored them in the first place (Ono & Sloop, 1995, p. 21). Vernacular discourses are never set, vernacular communities are always in transition, and those involved in such discourses occupy an "in-between space" in society (p. 27). Accordingly, scholars of vernacular discourses (such as HM and HC) are well-served by examining the ways that meanings are socially co-created through cultural syncretism and pastiche (p. 26). Ethnographic study offers the researcher a window to observe such meaning-making as it occurs.

Maleness and the enactments of "being" HC and/or HM are certainly intermeshed—even when performed by women.[27] Thus, any cogent analysis of gender performativity in these

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[27] Through participation in HC and HM events, women most often assume roles that either support their subordinate status in these enclaves (as "coatracks," spectators, or in supportive roles that offer only mundane subcultural capital) or that are somehow self-masculinizing (being a "tough girl" or "one of the guys").

enclaves employs an element of performance studies in its approach. As Conquergood (1998) contends, the performance studies approach relies upon the notion that immediate, kinetic, engaged enactments and static texts are equally worthy units of analysis (p. 25). "Whereas a textual paradigm privileges distance, detachment and disclosure as ways of knowing, a performance paradigm insists upon immediacy, involvement and intimacy as modes of understanding" (p. 26). The analytical process of performance studies favors process over product, bearing in mind that said process is fluid, its boundaries ever-permeable (Conquergood, 1998, p. 31; Kershaw, 2008, p. 26). Performance studies methodology by no means suggests that the researcher jettison static, closed texts[28] (Conquergood, 1998, p. 33). Rather, it is more pragmatic to analyze both conventional, closed texts and performance-as-text approaches in an effort to decenter and avoid the seemingly inevitable epistemological binarisms of traditional academia. In this way, advocacy for performance studies methodology reveals a conscious decision to democratize the critical/analytical process (Ridout, 2008, pp. 14-15; Kershaw, 2008, p. 24).

This study's focus on both performativity and performance necessitates that the two concepts be differentiated, lest the reader misconstrue it analysis. As previously established, performativity is the ritualistic enactment of a certain way of being (such as gender or working-classness, for example) "which achieves its effects through its naturalization in the context of a body" (Butler, 1990, p. xv). In this way, performativity enables the internalization of a constructed and externally-produced "essence." At all times we performatively enact the ways of being that we take to be innate—both for others and for ourselves—but these performative enactments are oftentimes unconscious. Through performativity, the individual creates herself

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[28] I use the term "closed text" to refer to items such as literary or artistic works (books, songs, images, etc.) that are fixed.

(Foster, 2008, p. 56). "Performance," on the other hand, requires a specific set of contextual circumstances, and that those who are performing are aware that they are on display. Auslander (2008) posits that "calling something a performance places it in a specific category of human actions that distinguishes it from other kinds of action" (p. 116). When performing (as opposed to making a performative enactment), the individual is aware that s/he is somehow informing a defined audience how the performance should be understood. The term "performance" suggests that the individual on display *knows* s/he is on display and delivers a specific skill for the evaluation of a group of people who will evaluate this display as an audience (p. 117). To perform, then, requires a certain delineation between audience and performer. This is to say that the audience is also aware of the delineation and is, thus, more than mere bystanders.

As Condit (1989) asserts, both encoding and decoding are social processes (p. 106). Condit offered the term "polyvalence" as an alternative to the term "polesemy" to account for the ways that receivers might decode a text differently in light of context (pp. 106-107). Condit asserts that recipients' different ways of decoding message are more dependent upon variables of context than they are upon the meaning(s) inscribed in the text. Taking Condit's notion a step further, Rosteck (2001) argues that a merging of cultural studies and rhetorical studies, renamed as "rhetorical cultural studies," offers the researcher an ideal means of surmounting differences in understanding the ways that meanings are encoded and decoded (and, thus, socially-constructed). Rosteck proposes that this rhetorical-cultural studies approach provides a better way to analyze the construction of meaning that occurs in social situations (p. 54). More recently, Hess (2011) pushes the ideas of Condit and Rosteck further still, recommending a newly-conceived qualitative method of "critical-rhetorical ethnography" which allows researchers to observe the interworkings of vernacular organizations (such as HM and HC

subcultures) by employing "common tools of embodied data collection such as participant-observation and conversational interviewing" for use in unpacking the ways that meaning is mutually constructed through social interaction (p. 128). Hess' critical-rhetorical ethnography is, in this way, similar to the methods—both in terms of data collection *and* analysis—used in this study. The critical-rhetorical connection comes most saliently to fruition in this study in its conclusion where, as Sloop & Olson (1999) contend, the "cultural studies [of this project] can then draw upon the findings and discoveries of rhetorical studies as a way to empower its political project" (p. 262)—this study's "political project" being to gain an understanding of how masculinity operates within the subcultural variations of HM and HC. In the final analysis, the rhetorical and ideological critiques in this study are offered with a goal of "enlightenment or emancipation from the illusions generated by [the] rhetoric and ideology" (Brantlinger, 1999, p. 299) of HM and HC subcultures.

Ethnographic methodology provides the best way to observe the intersection of gender, race and class in the performance of masculinity. This study was conducted via observation, interaction and interviews with participants and musicians from Atlanta's HM and HC scenes. The objective of this comparative study is to increase our understanding of how masculinity is enacted and performed in the HM and HC scenes of Atlanta, Georgia, a hub of HM and HC activity in the American Southeast. As Blommaert and Jie (2010) contend, the key undertaking of fieldwork preparation is to understand the conceivable contexts within which a situated event (in this case a HC or HM performance) will occur on both macro and micro levels (p. 19). For this research, I have examined HM and HC masculinity in light of the macro context (culture in general), the micro context (HM and HC subculture) and the sub-micro (the context of an

individual person's experience and the context of the individual performance events [shows], all of which *are* different—even though the rites and practices of such events may seem similar).

Bearing in mind that gender, and thus masculinity, is both socially constructed and performative (Butler, 1990, p. 34), conducting a comparative ethnographic study is the most effective way to observe the rites, behaviors and self-presentational strategies as deployed in both HM and HC. Since HM and HC are both male-dominated subcultures within which masculinity is performed *by males* and *for males*, my attention in this study was primarily (although not exclusively) focused upon male-to-male performativity. By observing HM and HC enclaves in the inter-subcultural settings that are cordoned off from the proverbial public eye, I have been allowed the opportunity to examine adolescent manhood[29] rituals that are separated from the strictures of parental and institutional authority. A primary function of any subculture is to provide symbolic representations of itself; its constituency, its practices and its ways of being, for the purpose of establishing outsider/insider distinctions. Levi-Strauss (1963) defines ethnography as the study of social groups regarded as entities unto themselves, analysis that, "aims at recording as accurately as possible the respective modes of life of various groups (p. 2). This study employs naturalistic inquiry, the methodological strategy defined by Lindlof & Taylor (2002) as making observations in the "customary arenas of activity for those being studied" (p. 15). For this study, those areas are the nightclubs, halls and alternative performance spaces where HM and HC shows are held, as well as other locations, such as cafes and record stores, where participants of HM and HC subcultures interact socially. These sites are appropriate for this research because they are the areas where the collective identities of HM and

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[29] While the ages of participants of HM and HC range from 10 to 50, the bulk of the primarily male attendees of the shows fall in the 18 to mid-20s range. High school and younger aged kids are not as likely to attend shows because of age regulations in bars and curfews. Likewise, as participants get older they tend to move away from HM and HC subcultures—usually because of job and family commitments, and because staying out all night in deafening, sweaty dives is, in its way, hard work. Old school "lifers," nevertheless, keep going to shows.

HC are most saliently asserted, via processes of shared communicative practice, "in which individuals participate with others in creating or sustaining a sense of self and others," oftentimes through the means of ritualistic customs (Martin, 2004, p. 33). Through participant-observation, the common ethnographic research method whereby the researcher interacts with other participants while engaged in the activities of that community (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002, p. 4), I have had special access to the social interworkings of both HM and HC subcultures in the informal settings where subcultural identification is enacted.

As a frequent attendee of HM and HC events in Atlanta, I am well-acquainted with several individuals who are younger and more active as participants than I am.[30] Still, I am generally understood by other participants of HM and HC subcultures to be a peer. I have employed these preexisting relationships as an entrée for connecting with other individuals in Atlanta's HM and HC scenes. As a part of this research, I have not only observed HM and HC events, but have also talked to and hung out with other participants in social situations—making field notes to document my observations. My Fieldnotes have included information sufficient to recall the event with a modicum of detail—yet not overwhelmingly so. In other words, while my fieldnotes are indeed detailed and complete, they were not so meticulously made that their transcription required more time than the crucial periods that I spent in the field, actually observing and interacting with participants of HM and HC subcultures (O' Reilly, 2009, p. 71). Through the process of induction, I have gained increasing focus on particular important elements of social interaction as the fieldwork continued (O'Reilly, 2009, pp. 72-73; Kleinman & Copp, 1993, p. 4). In the analytical stage of this research, I have continually revisited my fieldnotes systematically in a process of coding for emergent ideas, patterns and variations

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[30] As a (much) older attendee of HM and HC events with a long history of involvement, I may have a degree of "old school" credibility—but both subcultures are by and for the young.

(Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995, pp. 144-145). As a participant-observer in the field, I have

augmented this research with interviews of male and female participants, both fans and

musicians, that I recruited in the process of socializing at these events, through social networking

sites, and through contacts made on internet message boards related to the Atlanta HM and HC

scenes. Open ended, semi-structured interviews were conducted, along with impromptu,

unstructured interviews that occured within the context of participation at concerts and HM and

HC related social gatherings during the course of this study. As Lindlof & Taylor (2002)

suggest, naturalistic researchers should mix and match a variety of data-collection techniques,

including interviews, "to compensate for the limitations of each individual technique" (p. 3).

Fabian (1990) asserts that the procedure of interviewing/being interviewed is performative in and

of itself, but that such performativity does not rule out that interviews be conducted. By eliciting

answers in the interview process, the interviewer is a channeler of sorts. "The ethnographer,

then, is no longer that of a questioner; he or she is but a *provider of occasions*" (Fabian, 1990, p.

7). Through my fieldwork, observations, interactions and interviews, I have served as such a

"provider of occasions" in this study. My subsequent transcription and analysis of these

interviews was noteable not only because of the worthwhile insights about life in HM and HC

subcultures offered by the participants, but also because I could look at the transcriptions to find

recurring, key terms, a process that is similar to Kenneth Burke's cluster-agon method (Berthold,

1976, pp. 302-304). Examining the words and the association of words with concepts in these

transcripts offered clues to the underlying motivations of the individual speakers and to the

overarching narratives common to all of the interviewees (p. 308).

     Ethnographic research such as this study is more than a mere journalistic process of

taking notes and conducting interviews. From a position *within* the participatory events of HM

and HC concerts and in social settings where members of HM and HC communities converge, I have interacted with the participants of these subcultures—not as a disaffected, authoritative observer, but as a person who is engaged in these communities and engaged in the specific subculture-related events as they occurred. O'Reilly (2005) posits that the very notion that the observer can somehow *not* be part of the events where she or he is present is something of a fallacy (p. 106). Observing that ethnographers cannot use one-way mirrors or pretend not to be present at the occasions they observe, O'Reilly asserts that "to me, no observation in ethnography is non-participant" (2005, p. 106). As something of an insider in these enclaves, my own emotional investment and longstanding participation in HM and HC subcultures has provided a honed sensitivity to what is occurring within these factions as it occurred. Nevertheless, as participant/observer in this ethnographic research I had to perform a virtual balancing act in that it was necessary to continually "code shift" between roles of participant and observer (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995, p. 18) as the events of this study took place. O'Reilly defines the aforementioned dichotomy as the "participant observer oxymoron," a researcher's ongoing balancing act between subjective and objective orientations which cannot be realistically resolved—even though the researcher continually strives to do just that (2005, p. 109, p. 157). Lastly, it has been something of a burden for me to avoid the leap of logic that, since I am an insider/participant, my own reactions to events I observed in the field are necessarily the same as those of the communities that I observed. Bearing the aforementioned paradoxes and inconsistencies in mind, I have tried to maintain high ethical and epistemological standards while conducting this study.

As a participant-observer, my goal was to engage other participants in this study as active partners in the process of knowledge-creation. Ethnographic research is necessarily

collaborative in that the creation of ethnographic texts compels the researcher's engagement in the lives of the study's participants (Lassiter, 2005, p. 16). I acknowledge that this research has been participant-driven, and was constructed in an inclusive way with the goal of drawing participants into the process of knowledge-creation itself. Informing the participants of the focuses and goals of the study (as I did in this research) is not only a more ethical form of research practice, it also clarifies matters for those involved and provides them with at least a degree of influence on the eventual outcome of the study (Lassiter, 2005, pp. 120-121). As Lassiter points out, through the acknowledgement of moral/ethical responsibility, accessible writing, and the co-interpretation (with participants) of the data, it is possible to construct a body of work that oversteps outmoded ways of conducting research from the paternalistic stance of "scientific" remove typified by the antiquated tradition of white male academe (2005, p. 154).

Of the aforementioned ethical ethnographic practices, co-interpretation has certainly been the most difficult to actually accomplish in this study. Lassiter (2005) posits that co-interpretation is best executed when the researcher enlists key participants (which he refers to as "principal consultants") in the study as ad hoc co-editors (p. 139). In the process of conducting this research, I have enlisted the participants who have been most involved in the unfolding "story" of the study to read each chapter and comment on it (p. 139). Granted, I am the sole writer of this dissertation and, ultimately, the final interpretations of the report are my own. But by making the most committed participants privy to my interpretations as they emerged, there has been something of a system of checks and balances regarding the direction of the research findings as they were established. This process of co-editing was facilitated by technology: Via email, text messaging and phone calls I have maintained communication with key participants as

the analysis of this research ensued, asking their opinions about my conclusions as they unfolded in the process of writing.

As the research proceeded, my choices regarding which participants would be recalled for additional interviews or asked to comment on my work as it proceeded was based upon the nature and intensity of my relationships with these participants, their commitment (or lack thereof) to the project as it proceeded, and to the quality of the interaction that I had with the participants (Lassiter, 2005, 146). By employing the aforementioned methods, I have striven to allow participants to assert their own voices and perspectives from within the research itself in a way that is contiguous with the bottom-up epistemological practices advocated by rhetorical theorist Michael McGee (1983) and by feminist scholars such as Harding (1992, 2004), Collins (2000, 2004), and Hartsock (2004).

Participant-observation is necessarily a synchronic and restricted method "that is used to understand what is happening, *now*" (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002, p. 99). My analysis of HM and HC subcultures has occurred at a finite point in time, a nine month period from late 2011 through mid-2012, with the stated goal of gaining insights about performative masculinity as executed in both the HM and HC subcultures of Atlanta. As suggested by Emerson, Fretz and Shaw (1995), this study has operated as a case study only: In the study I have sought to establish *local* meanings that were co-constructed *locally* by HM and HC subculture participants in the period of this study (p. 112) as a means of understanding how participants viewed themselves (pp. 119-122). Comparable, consequential ethnographic studies such as those by Paperman (2003), McNeil (2009) and Tivers (2007) were conducted in similar time periods. As with any viable ethnographic study, my data collection extended until I reached saturation, the point at which "new data feed fewer, if any, new features into categories or explanations" (Lindlof & Taylor,

2002, p. 224). Once I had reached the point where I was not seeing anything new, I opted to conclude my fieldwork. I began my fieldwork in early December of 2011 and concluded it in early June of 2012, a seven month period, which falls within the six-to-nine month period I had originally proposed.

The participants of this study range in ages from 18 to 44. In the course of the study I interacted with literally hundreds of people in the field, noting their behaviors and conversations in my fieldnotes. I conducted 15 face-to-face, semi-scripted interviews with core participants, all of whom signed forms of consent. (See Appendix C for the consent form and Appendix D for the interview protocol.) Demographic information about these participants is as follows:

Table 4.1 Core Participant demographic Information

Core Participant Demographic Information					
Participant	**Age**	**Sex**	**Employment**	**Education**	**Follow-Up?**
Alan	36	M	Musician (professional)	Some College	Yes
Blake	28	M	Graduate Student/Auto Sales (plays in a band)	BS in Sociology	Yes
Carly	22	F	College Student	Junior in College	Yes
Chuck	32	M	Teacher	BA in Education	Yes

Participant	Age	Sex	Employment	Education	Follow-Up?
Dana	22	F	Musician (professional)	Some College	Yes
Fred	44	M	Musician (professional)	High School	No
Jacob	32	M	Graphic designer (plays in a band)	Associate's Degree (2 years college)	Yes
Jason	25	M	Bartender/Musician (semi-pro)	High School	No
Marie	22	F	Public Relations	BS in Communication	Yes
Mike	30	M	Law Student/Musician (semi-pro)	BA in Music (currently enrolled in law school)	Yes
Nash	44	M	Restaurateur/Radio DJ/Musician (semi-pro)	Some college	No
Nichole	28	F	Advertising	MA	Yes

Participant	Age	Sex	Employment	Education	Follow-Up?
Randy	32	M	Management/Musician (semi-pro)	Some College	No
Sam	25	M	Pawnbroker/Musician (semi-pro)	High School	Yes
Tom	34	M	Concert Promoter	Some College	No

After reading a draft of the dissertation, ten of the interviewees also agreed to participate in follow-up interviews.[31] Interviews (both initial and follow-up) took from between one and two hours.

All of the interviewees were assigned pseudonyms for use in this study to protect their anonymity. Interviewees were appraised of their rights before being interviewed and asked to sign a consent form. These waivers will be stored in a locked file cabinet. Interviews were recorded on analog, cassette audio tapes and with a digital audio recorder. The participants were not compensated for their involvement in the study.

Atlanta is *the* hub of HM and HC in the Southeastern U.S., with a longstanding history of subcultural activity (Henry, 2008). As such, the nightclubs, theaters and alternative performance spaces where shows are held were the principal locations where fieldwork was conducted. The bulk of the fieldwork for this study occurred at the Masquerade, 529, The Drunken Unicorn, and The Earl, the venues where HM and HC events took place during the course of this study.

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[31] I sent copies of the draft to *all* of the core participants. Of the five that did not participate in follow-up interviews, two expressed that the material was too dense for them to understand, and the other three just never responded.

Although concerts are the apexes of HM and HC life, it was also necessary for me to interact with musicians, fans and opinion leaders of these subcultures in other areas such as bars, coffee shops and record stores—spaces where participants in HM and HC subcultures interact socially.

As DeWalt and DeWalt (2002) contend, the elements of research design necessary for participant-observation include the following: positing a theoretical question based upon prior research (How do young men perform masculinity within the subcultural variations of HM and HC) "whether or not specific hypotheses are articulated," selecting proper research sites (venues where HM and HC events take place in Atlanta), choosing techniques to address the research question(s) and developing an analytical strategy "that suggests a set of analytical categories [which respond] to the research question(s) and hypotheses" (p. 97). The areas of focus (performative elements involving body-reflexive practices and discursive dimensions involving speech communities and terminology) that I have concentrated on in this study include: 1.) performed expressions of "alienated individualism" (Arnett, 1996, p. 17)—which might also be read as conformity—such as headbanging, slam dancing stage-diving, chanting antisocial epithets in unison, chest-baring, and aggressive, hypermasculine comportment that carry the social roles of connecting with other participants in masculinist subcultures (pp. 29-31) and are productive of moments of engagement in hegemonic masculinity, 2.) patterns of masculine language such as challenging speech, instrumentality (the use of speech to achieve instrumental objectives such as expressing knowledge and, thus dominance), and conversational command (Wood, 2011, pp. 130-132) that are shared by the masculine speech communities of HM and HC and other patterns of masculine speech that differentiate one from the other, 3.) variations among HM and HC masculinity based on the above categories, and 4.) emergent categories of behavior and comportment in HM and HC enclaves that I have not observed prior to this study.

With this study, I took into account several previously established markers of masculinity and the ways that they are portrayed and/or embodied. Markers of masculinity such as body-reflexive practices and masculine speech (as deployed in the masculine speech communities of HM and HC) were observed during this study and subsequently analyzed utilizing contours of masculinity established by scholars of masculinity studies such as Connell (1995, 2005), Kimmel (1994, 2000, 2006) and Bordo (1999). As Connell cautions, "masculinity is not a coherent object about which a generalizing science can be produced" (1995, p. 67). Nevertheless, observing how masculinity is socially constructed and performed within the context of HC & HM subcultures should add to our knowledge of both masculinity and identity construction. As a qualitative case study, this research is not generalizeable—but is most definitely useful in building theory about the enactment of performative masculinity in subcultural settings.

For this study I have employed the definitions set forth by Ramazanoglu and Holland (2002) which specify that method is a "general approach to research" (such as, in the case of this study, feminist standpoint) and that methodology is a linkage between ontology (in this case a social-constructionist understanding of gender) and epistemology, a means of providing justification for knowledge claims made in research (p.11). This ethnographic fieldwork is more of a process than a strictly-defined procedure—meaning that categories and procedures have emerged and evolved as the work itself continued.

I began my work by making detailed fieldnotes both during and immediately after HM and HC events at the sites (concert venues) where they occured. Following the constant comparative method explained by Blommaert and Jie, I persistently reread these fieldnotes in comparison with new data as it was collected, thereby establishing emergent themes and categories as they became evident (2010, p. 39). As my data collection continued, unexpected

moments referred to as "rich points" served as indicators of new ways of understanding and/or categorizing information (Blommaert & Jie, 2010, p. 41). Since I have a long insider history with HM and HC subcultures, the events and outliers that emerged as rich points are in fact noteworthy. This is to say that I have ample experience as a participant in HC & HM subcultures, and therefore have been better prepared to identify when notable events or outliers become evident than an outsider would. Employing the grounded theory approach of categorizing qualitative data as explained by Lindlof & Taylor, I have used an open scheme of unrestricted, preliminary coding and, subsequently, the in vivo scheme of cataloging terms used by participants to classify groupings and emergent practices, a process that has continually evolved throughout my research (2002, pp. 218-222). This process has produced a divergent body of data that chronicles not only what I have observed and collected from "the field," but has also operated as a history/archive of the ways that I acquired and reshaped analytical insights during the act of research (Blommaert & Jie, 2010, pp. 59-60).

Although qualitative analyses of a particular group of people for a limited time period such as this study are certainly not generalizable in social-scientific terms, they have allowed me the opportunity to examine my topics in much greater depth, delivering "thick description" which capably explains the symbolic meaning(s) of actions and practices in particular contexts (Fabian, 1990, p. 16). With this study I offer a thorough, detailed representation of HM and HC in Atlanta, 2011-2012—a comprehensive, comparative case study of two masculinist music subcultures which I have used to explore how constructed gender identities operate in subcultural variations.

Existing scholarship on rock subcultures such as the works of Haenfler (2006), Wood (2006), Cagle (1995), Hebdige (1979), Walser (1996), Waksman (2009) and Kelley (2006), for

example, is carried out from a more-or-less top-down perspective: The aforementioned scholars, to varying degrees, purport to be more informed and/or analytically savvy than the participants of the subcultures themselves. In my research I have allowed participants of HM and HC subcultures to "have their say" with the goal of conducting my analysis from the bottom-up perspective employed by feminist critics advocating for the breakage of binary perspectives which marginalize the research "subject" while inherently privileging the researcher's point of view. In this way I have subverted my own exercise of power in the process of data-collection by continually reminding participants of my interests in this study (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002, p. 158) and by including participants in the process of interpreting the data (pp.159-160).

Employing the aforementioned bottom-up epistemological perspective is a hallmark of contemporary feminist standpoint theorists such as Hartsock (2004), Collins (2004), Harding (1992, 2004a, 2004b) and Young (2005), a tack that I have also used for this study. Standpoint epistemology is at its core a critique of masculinist epistemology, the ways that patriarchal society selects what gets to count as knowledge. I contend that much of the scholarship on HM and HC aprior to this study has been amassed through a top-down epistemic tradition that presumes scientific distance, all the while (to varying degrees) perpetuating and reinscribing androcentric bias and privilege. The epistemological approach as advocated in feminist standpoint theory, in contrast, asserts that the bodies of knowledge which best serve subjugated groups are those which are collected through a process that is centered upon the subjugated themselves (Hartsock, 2004, p. 39).[32] Feminist standpoint theorist Sandra Harding (1992) advocates a continual reassessment of the process of knowledge collection from different

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[32] In most cases, "the subjugated" would refer to women: At its inception, feminist standpoint theory was based upon the notion that the bodies of knowledge that best serve women are those that are collected through a woman-centered focus. Feminism, for many, has since been expanded to become an emancipatory project for *all* subjugated or marginalized constituencies. I will follow this more expansive and inclusionary tack in my dissertation project.

perspectives—but, more so, urges approaching and interacting with marginalized subjectivities in the service of knowledge (p. 53). For Harding, the assemblage of knowledge from subjugated standpoints yields information that is less biased than that which is constructed through traditional, masculinist methods based in the notion of "scientific" remove (1992, p. 50). This notion of a bottom-up epistemological approach is not the sole domain of feminist standpoint theorists. Rhetorical theorist Michael Calvin McGee[33] (1983) also advocated this approach in his crucial essay, "Social Movement as Meaning" (p. 77).

As a longtime follower, erstwhile performer and participant in both HM and HC subcultures, I am something of an "insider." As advocated in feminist research frameworks, acknowledging one's own experience, gender, education and class status is a necessary component of any research report (Fine, 1994, p. 70; Henwood, 2008, p. 48). As Ramazanoglu and Holland point out, meanings are not things that are simply "uncovered" by objective researchers operating from a position of scientific remove (2002, p. 160). No matter how well-intended the research process, the product of research, the conclusion, is inevitably subjective (Blommaert & Jie, 2010, p. 66). Coffey (1999) suggests that all scholarly writing (especially ethnographic research) has an "autobiographical slant" in that the process of authorship is an account of one's processes (p. 132). As O'Reilly (2005) contends, anyone conducting ethnographic research should always give serious consideration to responsibilities pertaining not only to themselves and their research, but also (and perhaps more so) to the ethical responsibilities to participants and to those who may later refer to the work being produced (pp. 67-69). It is best to be aware of one's processes, and to alert both participants in and readers of

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[33] While Michael Calvin McGee is certainly not classified as a feminist standpoint theorist per se, the political goal of his advocacy of a bottom-up epistemological approach served the same ends and was likely reflective of similar doctrinal inclinations as those of the feminist standpoint theorists.

the study of one's subjectivity (Blommaert & Jie, 2002, p. 62). As such, in the hope of providing the reader with interpretive tools for use when assessing my work, a brief account of my participation in HM and HC, as well as an explanation of my background is included in this report.

In the final analysis, my goal in this study was not to produce an *interpretation* of the experiences of young men in HM and HC subcultures, but, rather, to accurately represent these subcultural experiences *as the participants understand them*. Problematizing ethnography itself leads to pivotal questions regarding whether or not an ethnographic researcher can accurately understand and/or represent the experiences of another individual or group. Is this possible?

This quandary is at least partially resolved through inclusionary research practices such as those I have employed which involve participants in the co-interpretation of the data. This procedure, known as reciprocal ethnography, is a feminist/humanist approach whereby the researcher presents her/his research findings (prior to final revisions, submissions and publishing, of course) to the participants, then revises the findings to acknowledge any analytical discrepancies pointed out by the participant/co-interpreters (Lassiter, 2005, p. 8). An expansion of the anthropological practice of reflexive ethnography, reciprocal ethnography provides the researcher with a better ability to come to conclusions about the data collected in ethnographic research that are reflective of the respondents' views (Lawler, 1992, p. 311). Lawler notes:

> I have not relinquished my role as interpreter, as thinker, as objective observer. But I have given up the notion of scholar voice as a privileged voice, the scholar's position as more legitimate because it is the more educated or more credible one. I have felt it is important for me to write about how this hermeneutic circle [the process of collaborative

interpretation with participants] affects my own thinking as I am forced to see the world

through their [the participants'] eyes—rather than only through my own—and to invite

them to see their world through mine. (p. 312)

Through the practice of reciprocal ethnography, Lawler does not surrender the authoritative,

author's voice, and she certainly does not write by committee (p. 311). Nevertheless, efforts are

made to incorporate participants in interpretive practice. "If we [as researchers] insist on

interpreting other people's interpretations, at the very least, we are obligated to allow them space

to respond. At the very most, we stand to learn far more than we ever bargained for" (p. 313).

This collaborative interpretation strategy is devised with the goal of constructing knowledge

from a bottom-up perspective as advocated by feminist standpoint theorists such as Hartsock

(2004), Collins (2004), Harding (1992, 2004a, 2004b) and Young (2005). In this study, having

allowed the participants an entrée into the process of data interpretation has yielded a body of

work that is more closely representative of the participants' experiences and their understandings

of how HM and HC identities affect masculine identities in these enclaves.

As Conquergood (1992) contends, "ethnography and performance intersect along axes of

power that should command the attention of rhetorical and communication scholars" (p. 84).

And rhetoric is "the primary *agency* through which social movements perform necessary

functions that enable them to come into existence, to meet opposition, and, perhaps, to succeed in

bringing about (or resisting) change (Stewart, 1980, p. 166). With this study, I have employed a

social-constructionist tack, observing the ways that meanings are made and the ways that

identities are performed in social settings. Viewing communication as a kinetic, active process, I

have examined performative elements of HM and HC in the settings where such performances

occur. With this research I have sought to resolve what Conquergood defines as the key

questions asked in ethnographic study: "'what is going on here?' and 'what does it mean?'" (p. 87). This study's combination of relatively unexplored subject matter with a bottom-up interpretive strategy yields results that contribute not only to the study of masculinity in HM and HC subcultures, but also offers clues as to how masculinity, and thus power, is enacted in contemporary society.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

During the period of this study I attended approximately 40 shows, witnessing the performances of over 70 bands (See appendix B for a complete list of band performances attended in the duration of the study.). Shows are the apex of HM and HC life. At shows, HM and HC identities (which are, for the most part, associated with masculinity) are co-constructed. HM and HC enclaves are imprecise hierarchies where the acquisition of subcultural capital translates as scene points,[34] "cred" (credibility), and upward social mobility within the scene. For audience members, HM and HC events are more about participation than spectatorship per se. As such, attending these shows provided the best opportunity to observe how HM and HC identities are forged and maintained *in situ.*

I did not come into this study as a neophyte to HM and HC. With over 30 years of involvement in both subcultures, I embarked upon this study with a host of preconceived ideas. Granted, my ideas and analytical abilities have evolved over the years. As a middle-aged adult I think differently than I did as an adolescent; and as a scholar I think differently than I did before acquiring advanced degrees. But for the sake of transparency, I grant that the opinions expressed in this work were forged through a lifetime of participation. In other words, I did not begin the study with a *tabula rasa.*

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[34] "Scene points" is a term used to describe someone's subcultural standing: One who has a lot of scene points has a lot of credibility in the scene. Of course, there is no scale for scene points. The term is merely subcultural jargon.

"Slave to the Grind": Double-Edged Masculinity

There is an inherent contradiction in labeling performative masculinity enacted in HM and HC subcultures as "hegemonic." Although HM and HC are indeed tiered male hierarchies, the primarily-male participants of these subcultures are only empowered through performed masculinity *within these enclaves*. Thus, while a pecking order is established through the enactment of maleness in these subcultures, establishing a position along the internal pecking orders of HM and HC does not translate as hegemonic male power once subcultural boundaries are traversed by participants. This is to say that male power in HM and HC does not equate with male power in mainstream culture because in mainstream culture, hegemonic masculinity is middle-class, as well as white. Hence, I will offer a new term for masculinity as enacted in HM and HC subcultures: *double-edged masculinity*. Performing masculinity in HM and HC supports the male-dominant structuring of society at large, as do other forms of white, working-class masculinity, yet it does not necessarily empower those males who enact it within the subcultural confines of HM and HC in the greater, "outside" world. The performative masculinity of HM and HC is double-edged in that it empowers participants in an intra-subcultural sense, yet at the same time disempowers them in an extra-subcultural sense. Double-edged masculinity reinforces the masculinist hierarchy of the greater culture in which wealthy white males are on the upper tiers, yet is not enabling in the extra-subcultural mainstream for the males in HM and HC subcultures. I will further expound on the concept of double-edged masculinity in the following chapters.

Outing Myself: A Truncated Autobiography of 30 Years in Subculture

For the sake of transparency and so that the reader can more ably evaluate factors that might have shaped my opinions and thought processes in conducting this study, I will offer a brief history of my participation in HM and HC subcultures. It would not be hyperbolic for me to say that my life has been shaped by rock'n'roll, particularly the louder, more outrageous and rebellious forms of it. As a teenager in the college town of Knoxville, Tennessee, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, I was present during the pre-crystallization stages of HM, and became even more subculturally engaged as punk rock morphed into proto-HC. Although the term "HM" had already been bandied about to signify the louder forms of denim-clad stoner rock, by the late '70s acts like KISS, Aerosmith, and Ted Nugent (all of which would be classified as "hard rock" or even "classic rock" in contemporary rock music parlance) were classified as HM, and the form had yet to become anything near the dark, aggressive and stylistically regimented genre it has become. In the late '70s, proto-metal was basically a cliché of rock'n'roll excess while punk (which would later gain stateside momentum as it ossified into HC in the early '80s) was understood to be a dangerous and potentially anarchic movement. At the time, punk was "harder" than HM, and it offered a prefab identity that I could easily adopt. As the antithesis of bloated arena rock, punk was an either/or genre: To be a punk you had to be in opposition to the conventions of commercial rock music. So, during this period I jettisoned the rocker pose for punk outlook and couture. Adopting the punk identity was empowering for me as a teenager, and I compartmentalized my life into two eras: before and after punk. For me, my entrée into the world of punk was a quasi-religious experience.

Around this time, HC erupted. Proto-HC was merely an intensification of punk—a "punker" form of punk, as it were. So, for those of us who had dived head-first into the punk

scene, HC was merely the next step. By 1982 I was fronting a HC band called (comically, in

retrospect) Angry Youth that achieved a degree of sub-underground notoriety, opened for some

national touring acts, and was reviewed in some of the bigger fanzines of the day like *Flipside*

and *Maximum RockNRoll*. By the winter of 1983 I was so into HC that I decided to move to

New York City, then a HC mecca, and start a band—an endeavor that got me into a lot of

misadventures but yielded little musically. In New York I lived only blocks away from HC hot

spots like CBGB, A7, and ABC No Rio, attending legendary shows regularly. New York's

Lower East Side was at this time a harsh and extremely dangerous place. So, from 1983 to 1985

I ping-ponged back and forth between New York and Knoxville, crashing on couches here and

there and playing brief stints with a succession of HC bands. By 1985 I permanently moved

back to Knoxville, where I predictably started another band and became a smalltime concert

promoter. At that time the HC touring circuit was morphing into what became an infrastructure

for America's indie rock circuit. If you had access to a stage and a P.A. system, it was likely that

bands would start calling looking for shows. I quickly acquired a reputation as a reliable

promoter and in short order I (along with a cadre of likeminded friends) promoted shows by now

legendary bands such as the Dead Kennedys, Black Flag, Suicidal Tendencies, DOA, the Circle

Jerks, the Descendents, the Meat Puppets, and many more.

Through all of this time HC was continually evolving into two polarities: The more

introspective, pop-oriented, and/or musically experimental HC bands morphed into "college

rock," while HC bands pushing toward further sonic extremes meshed with HM. As such the

underground rock scene of the mid-1980s became increasingly factionalized. Being a hipster, I

loved *all* of it. And it had become passé to be into HC at the exclusion of other genres. So by

1985 I began a period of continued musical subgenre shifts that Muggleton (2000) describes as

postmodern "style surfing" (p. 47). Of course I was neither aware of the concept of postmodernity nor that my subcultural practices at this time were in fact postmodern. Nevertheless, a style-surfer was in fact what I was, enjoying a decade of bohemian bliss where I worked part-time, spending the bulk of my efforts on booking shows, writing fanzines, being seen in all the right places, playing in band after band (all of which melded punk, HM and HC in some way) and basically "being cool."

By 1992 I had my first mid-life crisis and returned to college. During this period I also got more serious about my music and formed another HC band (with another awful name), Torture Kitty, that toured regionally and released two albums. By 1997 I graduated college with a degree in journalism and began writing for Metro Pulse magazine, the free weekly "alternative" paper in Knoxville. With this foothold, I found many other publications to publish my critical writing in, and became a smalltime rock scribe. So in my way I had backhandedly become part of "the establishment" while still straddling the figurative DMZ between the mainstream and the underground. For the next decade I wrote professionally, played in even more bands, and eventually ended up in Chicago where I played bass for Duvall,[35] a nationally-known band that toured full time. Predictably, that band crumbled too: I had another mid-life crisis and went to grad school—which brings us to the present in Atlanta. In my five years as an Atlanta resident, I have become more drawn to HM than to HC for the following reasons: HM attracts an older crowd and I feel more comfortable at the shows; HM is currently more popular than HC, so I have been exposed to it more; much of HC's rhetoric of anarchy and empowerment

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[35] Duvall was for all intents and purposes a regrouping of the group the Smoking Popes, a band that acquired a degree of fame in the 1990s, releasing two albums on the major label, Capitol Records. Duvall was formed in 2001 in hopes of cashing in on the Smoking Popes's influence on the then burgeoning emo genre. Duvall played primarily Smoking Popes material and featured the original Smoking Popes lineup—with the exception of the bass player, namely me. While I was in the band we toured with popular groups associated with emo such as Dashboard Confessional, Hey Mercedes, Rival Schools and Ultimate Fakebook, among others.

that appealed to me as an idealistic youth seems hackneyed to me now; and I feel that HM delivers what exactly what it promises—guitar solos, crushing riffs, dark lyrics, entertainment, and a closer connection to classic rock'n'roll than is found in new school HC. As of now I am still a music writer, I still play in a band sporadically, and I still attend shows regularly. As a performer in 11 different bands I have toured the U.S. several times over, played every state in the contiguous United States for crowds ranging from basement parties to sold-out arenas, released seven CDs and a couple of 7-inch vinyl records, and amassed a pile of music gear and a large debt load in the process. As such I self-identify is a "lifer" in underground rock. I will always be involved somehow, especially in the louder, harder forms of music like HM and HC. My participation in rock subcultures has literally shaped who I am.

"The Unholy Trinity": Three Emergent Trends in Heavy Metal and Hardcore, circa 2012

My attendance at scores of shows, interacting with HM and HC fans as a participant/observer at these events, conducting a spate of in-depth, semi-scripted interviews with key participants, and subsequent analysis of fieldnotes and interview transcripts has exposed three emergent trends in the evolution of HM and HC which I will expound upon in the following section. 1.) HM and HC are merging into a singular subculture—a process which, as many of the participants have reported, is already more or less complete. With the merger of HC and HM comes a newly evolved subject position and identity. This merging of subcultures is explained through the concept of *subcultural osmosis* that will be discussed in the following chapter. The resulting, hybridized HM/HC amalgam is accompanied by an evolved performative masculinity, a masculinity which has jettisoned much of HC's quasi-political language of

inclusion and allowed for more open expressions of sexism in the process of HC becoming by and large subsumed by HM. 2.) The newly-evolved, hybridized performative masculinity of HM/HC crossover has for the most part become the performative masculinity of HM, which is to say that the male identity associated with today's HM/HC male is one that meshes performative masculinity with performative working-classness: To "do" HM/HC masculinity one must also "do" working-classness. 3.) The forms of masculinity enacted in present day HM/HC crossover are productive of power within the merged HM/HC enclave—but the male power established within this hierarchy does not translate as male power for HM/HC males in the extra-subcultural realm of the greater culture. In other words, the male identities associated with hybridized HM/HC are enabling only within the subcultural confines of HM and HC. By "doing" HM/HC masculinity which entails performative working-classness, HM/HC subjects symbolically relegate themselves to a marginalized position in society. HM/HC masculinity recreates preexisting masculine archetypes and thus bolsters the masculinist structuring of Western society, yet is disempowering—at least in the terms of the bigger, parent culture within which it is subsumed—for the males that adopt these ways of being. HM/HC masculinity is a *double-edged* masculinity, which functions in a way that reinforces the hegemonic masculinity of Western society as a whole, yet offers no social mobility for HM and HC males. In this way, HM and HC subcultures operate in perfect collusion with the established structure of domination: These enclaves support the masculinist structuring of the world, yet yield a constituency that is both diverted and disempowered.

"Caught in a Mosh": The Moshpit as Proving Ground

In HM and HC, concerts offer the opportunity to view performative masculinity at its most salient. These shows, with preponderantly male performers and audiences, provide the venue for the enactment of masculinity which is carried out by males and for males. At HM and HC events, audience participation is a fundamental element of the show: The proscenium arch is regularly traversed and the actions (or lack thereof) of audience members located in the floor area adjacent to the stage are fundamental to the success or failure of the show. While both audience and performer are crucial elements of this transaction, the bands still rank higher on the social hierarchy. Without a band, there is no show. While the moshpit is integral to the execution of HM and HC shows, moshpits never occur without bands. The proscenium arch at these shows is to varying degrees permeable, but bands still occupy a position of prominence that is demarcated by staging areas.

The area where slam-dancing occurs, the moshpit provides the arena for the most overt expressions of masculinity at HM and HC shows (Arnett, 1996, p. 17). Accordingly, observing the practices of those participating in the moshpit provides a glimpse into how masculinity is enacted socially, through body-reflexive practices, in HM and HC communities. In the duration of my fieldwork for this study, slam-dancing occurred at almost all of the shows I attended: the only exceptions being (on one end of the HM/HC spectrum) performances by experimental bands such as The Melvins, Unsane, Swans and Boris, bands that have acquired a great deal of transgressive subcultural capital and influence in both HM and HC that are neither HC nor HM per se, and (at the other end of the spectrum) at a show by Van Halen, a band once classified in the late 1970s as HM in the genre's burgeoning, pre-crystallization phase that is now considered hard rock—commercially-oriented, mainstream hard rock at that. At the performances of the

aforementioned experimental, genre-resistant bands, the crowds were older (with a median age probably being in the mid-30s) and certainly more interested in listening to the music than participating in ritualized pseudo-violence. Nevertheless, while audience response was comparatively staid at these avant garde shows, the performances were productive of transgressive subcultural capital for bands and fans alike: They were too consumed with performing and listening to the genre-defying music, respectively, to be bothered with instigating or joining in the trite teenage ritual of slamming. The Van Halen concert, on the other hand, was held at Atlanta's Philips Arena, a venue with assigned seating and rigidly-executed crowd control. Granted, the predominantly middle-aged, upper middle-class crowd at the Van Halen show would have been unlikely to have responded physically, anyway. In summary, slamming occurred neither at the more artistically-oriented "extreme" shows on one end of the spectrum—nor at the opposite, flagrantly commercially-oriented extremity. With the exception of the abovementioned performances, the moshpit was a more-or-less fundamental element of all of the 40-plus shows I attended in the duration of this study.

Idealized Bodies and Subculture-Specific Moshpit Practices of Heavy Metal and Hardcore

Although the social function of the moshpit[36] (for participants to react to and physically enact the sonic violence of the music and establish position on a ranked, masculine hierarchy through the means of body-reflexive practices in the pit) is the same in both HM and HC enclaves, the physique of the participants is curiously different: HC kids tend to be thinner and more toned, while HM participants are more likely to be bigger. As Weinstein (2000) asserts,

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[36] Terms such as "thrashing," "slamming," "slam-dancing," "stage-diving," and "headbanging" are all used to denote moshpit activities in this report.

"The body type of the typical metal fan is mesomorphic, in contrast to the ectomorphic type found in the punk and hardcore subcultures" (p. 131). This dissimilarity among HM and HC body types might be explained in a two ways: 1.) HC fans are oftentimes more affluent than HM fans, thereby having better diets and fitness regimens, and 2.) HM is more centered on traditional, alpha-male imagery while androgyny[37] is at least to a degree sanctioned in some variants of HC subculture. Certainly, HM is perceived to be a more working-class enclave than HC. Weinstein posits that HM's idealized physique is similar to that of body-builders like Arnold Schwarzenneger and the exaggeratedly hypermasculine male body types depicted in the fantasy paintings of artists such as Frank Frazetta[38]—even though this unrealistic body standard is rarely realized by HM participants (p. 131). For HM fans, body-building, especially of the upper torso, "creates the look of the idealized blue-collar worker, similar to that iconized in the socialist realist paintings on the Stalinist era," even though paunches or "beerguts" are also common among metalheads (p. 131).

Jacob, 32, who self-defines as "more-or-less HC" and has played lead guitar in several bands that released albums and acquired regional notoriety, explains that HM fans are more rough-hewn in terms of self-presentation, physique, and moshpit behaviors. "I hate to say this, but they [HM fans] would probably stink a little bit (laughing). True metalheads are a little bit country and they like to get out there and, you know, like beat the shit out of each other." Carly, a 22 year-old woman who frequently attends HM and HC performances but does not identify as

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[37] HC androgyny is a variation of the sophisticated, urbane, "metrosexual" style of self-presentation.
[38] With the repetitive imagery of barbarian warriors extending lightning-struck swords atop a heap of skulls, with a scantily-clad woman clinging to their lower torso, Frank Frazetta's paintings provide the archetypal imagery upon which much classic HM iconography is based.

belonging to either subculture in particular,[39] explains that HM participants are perceived as being bigger, their moshpit behaviors as meaner and more aggressive.

> I think it's—appearance-wise, it [HM] is definitely like the bigger kind of meathead guys who are just out to fuck things up. There's kind of the violent aspect, like HC, that people kind of associate with it [HM]. So I kind of think that a lot of people think of metalheads as like cheeseheads who are like fucking shit up and just punching people in the face.

Still, Carly asserts that this perception of HM subculture is for the most part unfair.

> I think that's a pretty typical view that causes a lot of people to not want to associate themselves with it [HM]. I feel like a lot of people are just kind of scared by it, even though it's not scary. You've just got to go in and see what it's like.

At the HM performances I attended, participants *did* tend to be a bit bigger—most particularly at shows that featured traditional, thrash and death metal bands, and less so at the shows of the crossover bands that clearly merged HM and HC styles. Notations made in the field stated that fans at shows by Anthrax, Megadeth, Slayer, Megadeth, Deicide and (particularly) Mayhem seemed especially mesomorphic.[40]

Perhaps HM fans are physically bigger, but characterizing HM fans are meaner and more aggressive in the pit is a misinformed reduction. Granted, making broad brush generalizations about HM and HC does not account to the specificities of individual shows: While behaviors at

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[39] Carly would perhaps be more ably described as a "hipster," a postmodern music fan who attends all types of shows, all the time.

[40] These differences of height and (especially) body bulk respective to HC and HM might be explained that people are drawn to the enclaves where they find others that are most like themselves. It may also be that people with smaller builds stay away from the area in front of the stage to avoid being injured.

HM and HC shows may indeed be similar, no two shows are *ever* the same—and an exception can surely be offered whenever simplified conclusions are drawn. Still, I found that the likelihood of being injured was greater at HC and HM/HC crossover shows than at HM shows. This greater possibility for injury might be explained in two ways: 1.) HC show are generally held in smaller spaces with little or no security, which lessens one's ability to stay away from the pit and avoid injury, and 2.) crowds at HM/HC crossover shows are younger and more exuberant, therefore having more intense moshpit action.

"Who Cares Unless it's a Girl?": Gender Distinctions in the Moshpit

As previously established, the moshpit is primarily a male-only realm. Women do occasionally participate, but the usual arrangement at HM and HC shows is that preponderantly male bands perform in front of a preponderantly male moshpit while females are relegated to the sidelines. In other words, males participate while females spectate at HM and HC shows.

At a particularly violent performance by DRI, a quintessential thrash-metal crossover band from Houston, Texas, an unlucky teenage male mosher was knocked out cold. Members of the audience tried to get the band to stop playing so that the injured teen could be carried away. Laughing, DRI vocalist Kurt Brecht responded, saying "If we stopped playing every time somebody got hurt, we'd never play." He then qualifyied this statement by saying "Who cares unless it [the injured party] is a girl?" Pulled to his feet by bystanders, the injured teen cheered when he got up, then teetered to the sidelines. Later that night I saw him sitting against a brick wall, looking disoriented. I was unsure if the kid was injured, drunk, or both.

As progenitors of HM/HC crossover, DRI draws an especially ferocious crowd. At certain points during DRI's performance, so many kids were stage-diving at the same time that they would collide mid-air before plunging into the crowd below. The venue[41] was arranged with columns of PA speakers stacked on each side of the stage and additional large speakers hanging from chains off the ceiling. Several stage-divers mounted the PA columns to dive into the crowd from a higher position. Comically, one stage-diver mounted the PC column, only to knock his head into another overhanging speaker cabinet before falling into the crowd. The stage-diver appeared unhurt by this mishap, continuing his diving into the crowd several more times over the course of the evening.

Clearly, the delineation between male and female roles in HM and HC is most saliently displayed in moshpit action at shows. With the exception of a few outliers, women do not participate in the pit. Chuck, a 31-year-old veteran of several moderately popular regional bands, explains that while "boys only" is not an enforced rule in HM and HC communities, it is something of a de facto behavioral guideline for participants:

> I've heard women, in the HC scene especially, being referred to as "coatracks"—meaning that she and her boyfriend would show up at a show, he takes off his jacket because he wants to go slam-dance or stage-dive in the pit, and she's going to stand on the sidelines and hold his coat. The coatrack thing, which is common, was always offensive to me because I don't think that goes along with the [inclusive] idea of HC.

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[41] The DRI show was held in the "Hell" section of the Masquerade nightclub complex, a basement space that holds approximately 600 people.

Blake, a 28 year old HC singer, notes an even more offensive adage that is common in HM and HC circles. "There's a lot of stupid sayings like 'no clit in the pit,' meaning that girls shouldn't be dancing right alongside the boys."

The demarcations between "proper" and "improper" behaviors for males and females affected through actions in the moshpit reflect enduring gender classifications of Western culture: that men are aggressive, independent and physically engaged while women are passive, "soft," and occupy supportive, nurturing roles. At several of the shows, I observed young women standing at the barricade in front of the stage, with males standing behind, encircling them with their arms and holding the barricade on each side to form a protective barrier for the women, usually girlfriends. It is also standard conduct for men at shows to police the actions of adjacent slammers, frequently getting into fights or face-offs with other males—ostensibly to protect women, and oftentimes as a means of flirtation. Still, some women *do* participate in the moshpit. These women outliers, however, are often considered tomboys or deemed to be somehow "one of the guys." Marie, a 22-year-old woman who dabbled in HM and HC as a teenager before becoming an indie rock musician at 20, asserts that the women who participate in the moshpit invariably receive their fair share of drubbing. "Usually when you [a woman] are in that [the moshpit] they [males] don't treat you like a girl. You kind of have to expect to be thrown around and kicked and punched and stuff."

Carly explains that while the women who break form and join in the slamming are accepted, the structured gendering of HM and HC performativity is symptomatic of the ways gender divisions are enforced in the greater culture:

I don't particularly like to get involved in the pit too often unless I've had, you know, like a few beers—that's for sure. But I've never ever felt uncomfortable, even in terms of being a woman at a show and it's mostly men being their big, manly selves (laughing). I mean, it [gendered division of behaviors at shows] is just something that I've always just—you know, living in Atlanta—it's just the way it's always been. I've never really put too much thought into it. I don't know how it started, but I don't see a problem with it at all: I'm definitely not offended by it or anything. It kind of comes with the deal, I think.

At the DRI show, I witnessed one moshpit participant, a male in his early 20s, whose conduct seemed to humorously encapsulate exactly what moshing is about, males expressing dominance to other males through body-reflexive practices in a masculine rite. At this particular show, there were a couple of pylons laid on the floor in the approximately two feet wide area between the audience barricade and the stage. The young man was an enthusiastic slammer, and had crossed the barricade several times and then stage-dived back into the crowd. Later in the show, inspiration struck. The young man grabbed one of the pylons, placed it on his head as a hat, and jumped back into the raging circle pit. Then he had a better idea. As he held the pylon over his crotch, the "hat" became a two foot long phallus. Apparently pleased with himself, the young man continued slamming for the remainder of the show, bucking and thrusting with the pylon held over his crotch the whole time.

Transgression and Conformity in the Moshpit

Paradoxically, participation in the moshpit functions in ways that are productive of both transgressive and mundane subcultural capital. Certainly, the moshpit is a fundamental (and thus mundane) element of HM and HC performance—yet at the same time, the moshpit is transgressive in that it functions to nullify the performer/audience distinctions demarcated by the proscenium arch. Nevertheless, the actions in the pit are oftentimes dictated by the bands on stage. It is commonplace for vocalists to demand that the audience form an "old-school" circle pit, where moshers run in an expanding circle, arms flailing and fists crashing into the surrounding crowd. Such calls for the audience to form a circle pit are in fact so common[42] that it is something of an orthodoxy in both HM and HC shows, occurring most often during a song's "breakdown," the musical passage where the fast pace abates to deliver more defined riffs that are more easily danceable—provided that the moshing is indeed dancing, that is.

For its predominately male participants, the moshpit operates as a proving-ground of masculinity. Although moshing is generally thought of by participants as a unifying activity, it is patently obvious that the bigger, stronger, and more aggressive slam-dancers dominate the pit— and are therefore less likely to be injured. These alpha-male moshpit participants "win" the masculine competition of slamming, so to speak.

Occasionally, as dictated by the bands, slamming becomes an overt competition, a bout between gladiators or a team sport. One such example of open competition occurred at The Drunken Unicorn, an Atlanta basement dive bar that holds approximately 200 people. The Casualties, a crust/anarcho HC band deeply rooted in punk, offered the reward of a T-shirt to

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[42] Demanding that the crowd form a circle pit is a custom at HC and HM shows. Bands observed in this study that called for a circle pit include Skeletonwitch, Exodus, Carnifex, Nile, Slayer, The Black Dahlia Murder, the Casualties, and many others.

whichever couple won a "chickenfight." In a chickenfight, couples (usually both males) pair off: The smaller of the couple sits atop his larger partner's shoulders. Chicken fighters then square off in a pushing match. The last pair left standing wins. At the Casualties show, eight couples entered the fray—predictably, all males.[43] After around three minutes of pushing and shoving, one particularly hardy couple reigned supreme, and were each rewarded with their choice of one of the band's many T-shirt designs. Clearly, this chickenfight competition was all in fun. And while the competitors were aggressive in their quest for moshpit dominance (and a T-shirt), no one was hurt.

A more potentially injurious form of moshpit competition is the appropriately titled "wall of death."[44] In the wall of death, the audience, at the instruction of the band's vocalist, is divided into two halves. Each side of the audience crowds as closely as possible to their respective side of the stage to provide more momentum-gaining running space. Then, at the count of three, each side of the audience runs, plowing headfirst into the other side with as much speed and force as possible. Of course, whichever side knocking over more people from the opposite side "wins." At their Drunken Unicorn show, The Casualties also instructed the enthusiastically compliant crowd to form a wall of death. Granted, the miniscule area in front of the stage (40 feet, if that) precluded any of the wall of death participants from gaining much momentum. As such, this particular wall of death at the Casualties show might be more aptly rechristened the "wall of bruise."

More dramatically, at a show at the 2,600 capacity club, The Tabernacle, San Francisco thrash metal band Exodus directed the audience to form a wall of death during their performance.

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[43] Having females involved in a chickenfight competition would impose something of an ethical quandary for participants. After all, is it proper for a male to aggressively attack a female, even in this context?
[44] Alan noted that in Oklahoma City HC lexicon, the wall of death is called the "wall of bro."

The well over 200 unobstructed feet of space (the width of the venue) from one side of the stage to the other allowed wall of death participants a lot of room to gain speed. Also, the crowd on the floor of the venue at the Exodus show numbered at least 1,000 fans—overwhelmingly male, mesomorphic, and drunken fans, at that. Bearing in mind the number, combined weight, and momentum of the clashing halves of the audience, participation in the wall of death in this circumstance was a risky proposition indeed. Thankfully, I was sitting in the balcony while this occurred.[45] I might add that on this occasion, watching was certainly preferable to participating—and I felt in no way emasculated by watching the action from above.

Moshpit participation is risky business. Risk-taking behavior, however, is characterized in Western society as being an innately male attribute (Levine, 1998, pp. 12-14). So taking part in the moshpit offers young men at HM and HC shows the opportunity to perform masculinity, through the means of body-reflexive practices, in a male-dominated realm where masculinity is "proven," by males, to other males (Kimmell, 2006, p. 82). The moshpit is as much an arena for male bonding as it is for male competition, however. Such bonding, of course, emphasizes collectivism—the "we" over the "I"—therefore indicating that mundane subcultural capital is acquired through bonding practices. This bonding is produced through mutual catharsis, a shared passage through the ordeal of the moshpit and the sensory overload that is part and parcel of any HC or HM show. This unity through shared catharsis effect is comparable to what Dolan (2006) terms "utopian performatives," shared theatrical experiences that are productive of a sense of shared political efficacy for the audience, no matter how fleeting (p. 165). For moshpit participants at HM and HC shows, the more violent the slamming, the more cohesion is achieved—if only for a moment. An exemplary case where moshpit participation seemed to

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[45] In my younger days, however, I have participated in several walls of death, pigpiles, moshpits, circle-pits, chickenfights, etc.—and I have the scars to prove it.

produce this catharsis-to-rapture effect was an especially physical show by the HM/HC crossover band, Carnifex. Simply put, the Carnifex show was the wildest show that I witnessed during the study—a performance marked by its extremism in a subcultural milieu that is characterized by hypermasculinity and "extreme" peudo-violence. After an exceptionally intense musical passage, all of the players in Carnifex held their instruments aloft as deafening feedback and distortion filled the room, displaying the word "kill" emblazoned in large letters on the backsides of their guitars. The band then immediately plunged back into characteristically hyperspeed playing, punctuated with a barrage of "blast-beats"[46] from the drummer. The "kill" signs were enthusiastically received—first with laughter, and then with an intensification of the slamming. At the end of the show, moshpit participants were bruised but elated. In this way, the Carnifex performance was the most violently fun show that I witnessed during the study. Granted, this "fun" pseudo-violence that sometimes yielded real injuries was observed, on my part, from a safe vantage point at the side of the stage, behind a steel partition.

"The Brotherhood of Metal Dudes": Camaraderie in the Moshpit

HM and HC shows are male rites. Simply by attending shows, male spectators are engaged in a masculine bonding experience, while females are imbricated into a male-dominated hierarchy. As an attendee of HC and HC shows, the spectator is likely to engage in dialogue with others in attendance. Oftentimes, this dialogue is unspoken. By attending these shows, the spectator is thrust into a realm of behaviors, mores and posturings that is quite different than

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[46] Played with a double kickdrum pedals setup, blastbeats are 32nd note beats on the bass drum that sound like low end machinegun fire. First played in death metal music, the blastbeat has since become the hallmark of black metal music, subsequently imported into contemporary HC. For all intents and purposes, the blastbeat is what distinguishes contemporary, new age HC from its antecedents.

what one would encounter in the mainstream. Oftentimes at shows I would find myself talking

or somehow nonverbally communicating with others in my vicinity—even when I was trying to

keep to myself. At the shows I frequently stood near the outside perimeter of the moshpit so that

I could have a clear view of the proceedings, both onstage and in front of the stage. As a

nonparticipant in the mosh, I found myself in unspoken collusion with other non-moshing

bystanders. A certain camaraderie would invariably occur as we all tried to avoid being

pummeled while maintaining an unobstructed view of the show. Predictably, the moshpit would

on occasions become more frenzied and our shared "safe space" outside of the mosh would be

compromised: someone would run into us (both purposely and accidentally), a mosher leaving

the pit would collide with us, we would be splattered with beer, or a spectator who had drunk too

much alcohol would act obnoxiously. At such points I would find myself establishing eye

contact with those near me—as if to say "there they [the moshers] go again," "watch out," or to

share a chuckle when an overaggressive mosher would get clobbered.

While attending the shows I dressed appropriately, wearing sneakers, tight jeans or shorts

and a black T-shirt, usually decorated with a band logo on the front. All of this is standard

couture for HM and HC shows—I neither stood out nor looked "straight." In other words, I

looked pretty much like everyone else at the shows, and was received as an insider. I am fit and

have aged well, which is to say that for the most part I am received as a peer, not "the old guy."

As such, I have connected with many adolescent males wanting to "bro-down" while watching

the shows. These bro-down behaviors most commonly occurred in the form of handshakes of

high-fives, actions of which I would willingly (and bemusedly) engage in.

In one remarkably humorous instance, I found myself standing at the side of the stage at

the Masquerade's basement venue, appropriately called "Hell." Hell has raised platforms with

railings on each side of the stage. So, if you arrive early enough to a show at Hell, you can stand just feet away from the players and view the moshpit action from the point of view of the performers, all the while protected by a partition made of steel and brick. Of course this vantage point is a prized position at a show in Hell. If you leave this spot to buy a drink or go to the restroom, someone will take it immediately. For an avid fan like me, leaving such a prized spot during a show is not an option. On this particular night, during a show by Oakland, California-based HM band High on Fire, I found myself standing next to a young man clad in a Pantera T-shirt. I was wearing a Black Sabbath T-shirt. The young man was apparently intoxicated, and he would not leave me alone: jabbering about the "kick ass" show, high-fiving me, and shaking my hand repeatedly. I could not avoid him—I was trapped. Finally, the young man commented that my Black Sabbath shirt "kicked ass." Then, after he repeatedly pointed to his own Pantera shirt and thrust out his chest, it became clear to me that he wanted to "chest-bump." So I chest-bumped a man who was probably 20 years my junior in a bro-down ritual. I was amused at this of course, but also in a way flattered. Through the chest-bump, I was unwittingly inducted into a sacred order, the Brotherhood of Metal Dudes.

"Small Man, Big Mouth": Heavy Metal and Hardcore as Masculine Speech Communities

As previously noted, HM and HC subcultures are masculine speech communities. Participants in these enclaves employ a shared communication scheme and jargon (Wood, 2011, pp. 130-132). The jockeying for conversational command, instrumentality and dominance of masculine speech communities is oddly comparable to what goes on in the moshpit at HM and HC shows: In each of these configurations, males (or women who are employing the speech

patterns and bodily carriages characterized as male) are competing to "prove" their authority. Conversation, like the moshpit, operates as a proving ground. Analyzing the modes of speech employed by participants during interaction at the shows and from transcriptions of the interviews, I began to notice emergent patterns of speech, key terms, and ways that certain terms were linked or contrasted with one another.

Wood (2011) notes types five dominant patterns employed in masculine speech communities; controlling speech, instrumentality (use of speech to achieve instrumental objectives), conversational command (domination the conversation through management of topics and/or interrupting others), assertive speech, and a tendency toward conversational abstraction (pp. 130-131). One of the most salient ways of establishing dominance in the conversations of HM and HC communities comes in the form of attempts to gain status and control—in this case, of establishing credibility (p. 130). By displaying their knowledge of the intricate histories of bands and the scene, HM and HC participants earn insider credibility and enhanced status that Kahn-Harris defines "mundane subcultural capital" (2007, p. 122). Many of the conversations I overheard at HM and HC shows were overt showdowns where the participants "competed" to display who had the most insider knowledge and thereby had the most "cred."[47] In some cases I observed open disputes over particular points about the histories of bands and/or the scene. In other conversations I noticed that one (almost always male) conversant would take on a teacher/mentor role, offering background information about bands and types of music to his friends to better prepare them for upcoming band performances. Certainly, displaying that one knows a lot of subcultural lore is a good way to assert control and establish one's status in HM and HC groups. Such credibility-building speech is instrumental in

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[47] "Cred" is indie rock/HM/HC jargon for credibility.

that it accomplishes objectives of instructing peers and working through HM and HC histories and lore to analyze subcultural movements, categorize bands, spot emerging trends, and/or criticize performances.

Wood (2011) notes that "masculine speech tends to be less emotionally responsive than feminine speech" (p. 131), and that was definitely the case in the conversations that I observed and/or overheard at shows. HM and HC speech employs a certain conversational roughness: speakers take on harsh vocal tones, yelling is frequent, and the verbal interplay is liberally smattered with swear words. Swearing was in fact so common that in some instances the conversations were almost half cusswords.

HM and HC conversations are rich with ironic verbiage. Adjectives that are normally used to denote negativity in the colloquy of the mainstream denote positivity in HM and HC talk. "Brutal" cropped up quite often to describe music that is particularly heavy and/or abrasive and thus, appealing and pleasurable for HM and HC listeners. "Sick" is used to denote musical dexterity: If a riff is "sick," this means that it is complicated and hard to play. So, if a musician can play "sick riffs," this means that they have chops. And of course, HM and HC kids are well aware that their jargon is contrarian and even funny.

HM and HC language is dominated by two simple but omnipresent terms, "dude" and "fuck." Although the use of the term "dude" is certainly telling for its gender-specificity, the word does not necessarily denote male. As a term of endearment in these enclaves, "dude" can apply to male or female. For example, a woman might say to a man, "that band shreds,"[48] and the man might reply, "dude, I know." "Dude" tends to be more gender specific when used to

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[48] In HM and HC jargon, to "shred" is to display musical chops.

refer to someone that is external to a certain circle of friends. For example, if someone said "there was a really drunk dude passed out in the bathroom," that would almost certainly be referring to a male. "Dude," however, is for the most part an all-purpose designation that indicates camaraderie.

The term "fuck" occurs even *more* frequently in HM and HC conversations. "Fuck" is much more conversationally adaptable: it can be used to indicate pleasure, aggravation, astonishment, or to emphasize another adjective—such as in "fucking brutal!" Williams (2010) goes so far as to proclaim that fuck is "one of metal's great modifiers, endlessly recombined to specify the blackness and metalness of things" (p. 130). Of course, "fuck" is also useful in the description of all things HC: If a band is "fucking HC" this implies that they are more extreme, more intense, and have a "harder" core, so to speak. The endless iteration of "fuck" in HM and HC conversations is part and parcel of the aforementioned conversational harshness characteristic of these enclaves. The boundless repetitions of "fuck" and "dude" might suggest a conscious "dumbing down" of the conversations in HM and HC circles, another symptom of the anti-intellectualism and performed populism of these groups.

"Forged in Fire, Bonded By Blood": Demographic Makeup of Heavy Metal and Hardcore Subcultures

This study employs qualitative methodology to examine how masculinity is enacted in the subcultural variations of HM and HC. The goal of the study is to determine how participants in HM and HC perceive themselves and their respective subcultures to be and to gain an understanding of what their participation means to them and how it affects their lives—not to

establish exact figures about the demographic makeup of each group. As such, please bear in mind that the quotations of HM and HC participants used in this section are sometimes contradictory and were chosen to reflect the diversity of opinions held by different people in these enclaves. This is to say that the purpose of this study is not to reveal scientific exactitudes about HM and HC, but to gain insights into how participants of HM and HC understand their experiences.

While HM and HC are youth-oriented subcultures whose primary constituencies are adolescents, both enclaves are longstanding entities with rich histories. Hence, both communities have a substantial number of lifelong, "old school" participants. As Muggleton (2000) asserts, "hyperindividuality"—as enabled through *briccolage*—is a symptom of postmodernity in subculture (ppgs. 5, 45-46). In other words, present-day subcultures are assemblages of preexisting styles in new formations. Following this tack, one can conclude that while current subcultures may indeed be replications of previously established rebellious archetypes, they are nonetheless "new" in that the recombination of preexisting stylistic and genre elements in different patterns constitutes the new—or at least the neo (p. 47). Muggleton rechristenes subcultures as "neotribes" to account for present disassociations between subcultures and their economic/class bases as explained by Hebdige and other scholars of Britain's highly regarded Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (p. 128). In this way, while one can convincingly argue that HM and, to a lesser degree, HC subcultures have historically class-based roots, it is a leap of logic to say that HM and HC are *still* based upon class identities—or at least not identities that are truly reflective of economic realities that are experienced by participants in the present. Rife with contradictions, HM and HC subcultures are conundrums— things that are, but that cannot be; groups that are obsessed with constructing

"authentic" self-presentations that are not in fact accurate. Taking a look at the demographic makeup of contemporary HM and HC subcultures offers clues as to why these identities have become ever more unmoored from class, even though the performed identities perpetuated in these enclaves are affectations of class, working-*classness*[49] in particular.

"Brats in Batallions, Boys in the Brigade": Heavy Metal and Hardcore as Male Hierarchies

HM and HC are masculinist subcultures. At every show I attended during the course of this study, men outnumbered women in numbers of approximately 60 to 90 percent or more, depending on the band and venue. For the most part, larger audiences featured greater percentages of women in attendance. That HM and HC are in fact male-dominated is not lost on its participants, both male and female. Asked about the demographics of HM and HC, all of the interviewees except one responded that males outnumbered females. Granted, the male-to-female ratios reported by various interviewees varied quite a bit. Dana, a 22-year-old woman of color who plays lead guitar for an up-and-coming Atlanta band that just signed a high-profile management deal, explains that HM is "mainly a men's thing… definitely a boy's camp. I'd say it's probably like 75 percent dudes and 25 percent women." Jacob, the lone outlier regarding male-to-female ratios in this study, stated that the audience for the "new school" HC bands like Parkside Drive and Underoath actually draw a predominately female audience. "I think that the HC shows that appeal to younger audiences from ages like 13 to 20 are like 60 percent girls and 40 percent boys," said Jacob. One must bear in mind, however, that Jacob was referring to a specific niche of HC rather than to the subculture as a whole. Remarkably, interviewees such as

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[49] For the remainder of this treatise, the term "classness" will be used to denote the affectation of class, as opposed to the occupation by an individual of a certain class position. In other words, "classnness" denotes *acting* while "class" denotes *being*.

Jacob that identified as belonging specifically to either HC or HM[50] subcultures reported that

their respective subcultures had more female participants. Stated more plainly, HC participants

seemed to think that HC is more appealing to women than HM, while HM participants seemed to

think that HM was more appealing to women than HC. By and large, interviewees tended to

agree that HM/HC crossover, which draws a younger audience, draws the largest female

audience. In other words, there are more females among the younger participants in both HM

and HC.

Women's Roles in the Male Hierarchies of Heavy Metal and Hardcore

In both HM and HC subcultures, with rare exceptions women assume secondary roles—

or merely act as spectators. Asked what women's roles were in HM and HC, Marie responded,

"I didn't know they *had* any. I never really felt like I fit in." Oftentimes, women are simply

ignored in these enclaves—and this ignoring functions to further marginalize women. The

absence of women in popular culture (such as those of HM and HC) depictions other than those

that portray them in subservient or sexualized roles operates so as to "symbolically annihilate"

women—effectively removing them from the picture except in roles that are supportive at best

(Strinati, 2004, pp. 162-168). Nichole, a 28 year old woman who travels frequently to follow her

favorite HM and HC bands and, as a teenager, worked for several bands' street teams and fan

clubs, discusses the absence of women in the texts of HM and HC:

> I don't even know that there's so much sexism, but women are maybe *erased* a little bit
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> from the scene. And it's funny to me because I haven't really experienced a lot of sexism

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[50] These participants identified as being either exclusively HC or exclusively HM instead of saying that they participated in both enclaves or acknowledging that the subcultures have in fact merged.

from these people who go to these shows and these people who are into metal. There aren't a lot of women there, but I don't know that it's inherently sexist. I mean, there are some bands that say some bad shit about women, but maybe it's the invisibility [of women] that is worse. And I guess you could argue that that makes it sexist as well.

But *everything is sexist*. I mean [laughing], everything in the culture is sexist. It's set up that way. What I would like to see would be more women playing in these bands. I mean, to me that would be a way to fight sexism [in HM and HC] is to have women playing in the bands—women who are very involved, and not in a way that is supportive of the males. What I'm saying is that I want to see women in more than just supportive roles, as full participants. That's how you fight sexism [in the scene].

Nichole adds that sexism is not something particular to HM and HC, but is part and parcel of Western culture as a whole:

Maybe it [HM and HC] is so male-exclusivist because that's the way we're socialized— even the way that gender is pushed on us from such a super young age. It's OK for boys to be aggressive and show aggression and play aggressive music—to be in the pit enjoying these things. For girls, we're supposed to be little ballerinas or, you know, we're pushed in different directions because of gender. And maybe you can't blame metal for that. Maybe metal is just a reflection of that part of the larger culture.

In many ways HM and HC are indeed microcosms of the world as a whole: The gendered structuring of HM and HC subcultures is parallel with longstanding constructs of Western society such as the public/private distinction and the gendered division of labor. In other words, women's roles in HM and HC are supportive, nurturing, and secondary to those of males.

Acknowledging that such gendered structuring is indeed sexist, Chuck explains the positions and/or responsibilities held by women in HM and HC:

> I know that there are women that have enjoyed the music, just like males do, but many times you see the girls that are involved in a scene—they may be in a band, but that is few and far between. Most of the time you'll see girls selling merchandise at a table, or taking photographs from the side of the stage, or sometimes running fanzines or blogs. Also you'll see women booking shows for bands or promoting them. So it seems like they [women] always have a role to play at shows, but not necessarily for the purpose of listening to the band, dancing, or going off in the pit. A lot of times they'd just be working.

And the women not performing the aforementioned tasks at shows seem to occupy even more subordinate roles. Marie explains that "some girls [at HM and HC shows], they're more like eye candy for the guys, and they couldn't care less about the music." Carly concurs, stating that female attendees at HM and HC shows are, more often than not, "girlfriends of the guys in bands or somehow super-down with the bands."

Many women participants in HM and HC, however, purposely downplay their sexuality as a way to not be seen as "eye candy" or groupies. One way of doing this is through showing interest in and knowledge of the music. Nichole expounds:

> I always wanted people to understand that I was there for the music. And I wanted people to know that I was *not* there just there to fuck the band. I've always been really careful. I didn't date a lot of people in the scene and things like that. Maybe I was just careful about that.

Participation for women in HM and HC is often understood as masculinizing—especially when that participation is onstage or in the moshpit. Beyond the misogynist ideas regarding proper women's behaviors at shows such as the aforementioned "coatrack" comment and "no clit in the pit" adage, the notion that women simply cannot play aggressive music is rampant in HM and HC circles. Dana, a lead guitarist, explains that she is often met with suspicion about her playing abilities before people actually hear her play:

> A lot of times people come up to me after shows and they say, I saw you setting up on stage and I thought, "oh man, this band has a chick in it." Then they'll say that I don't play like a chick [which is, apparently, a backhanded compliment] or that I play like a guy and all that kind of stuff. As a woman, it [playing guitar] takes a little bit of proving for me, but I think it [proving musical competence] has happened pretty quickly. They [the audience] all give me a chance like any other band. Hopefully I deliver. It takes a little bit of proving, but once I do it, that's it.

In other words, since HM and HC are masculine forms of music, women who play it assume masculine characteristics—or are *assumed* to have them. While it is more or less a given that men can play the music of these genres, women are held suspect until they prove their worth. Playing HM and HC is understood in this way as being "a man's job."

As earlier established, the moshpit is a proving ground for masculinity. So, for a woman to participate in slam-dancing is a masculinizing activity. Yet again, women must "prove" that they are "one of the guys," so to speak. As Blake explains, "that is pretty much what it [moshing] is about: chest-thumping." "Some [women] do it [moshing], but it's pretty rare," says Marie. Dana expounds, stating that her subcultural affiliation has never been particularly

masculinizing for her—because she had never presented herself in a traditional, normatively feminine way in the first place:

> I've always been like a tomboy in a way. It's not like I'm the girliest girl in the world. So actually, it [participating] is fitting for me. I can just be myself and I don't have to pretend. You know, you've got to be a little tough—but that's fine. I don't have to compromise my femininity or anything.

Jason, the 25-year-old drummer of a long-running Atlanta HM band, agrees that women in the scene have to be tough to fit in, stating that "they [women] definitely have to be on the level. If they're into the music and they understand and respect that, well, that's cool. I think to be a HM female, you've definitely got to have a big pair of balls."

While participants in both HM and HC subcultures openly concede that theirs are male-dominated enclaves rife with sexist ideas, HC participants seem a bit more circumspect in their evaluations of women's roles than their correlates in HM. Several of the interviewees who claimed to be more closely affiliated with HC than HM asserted that HC is a subculture that is purportedly accepting of all types of people, regardless of race, gender or socioeconomic status. Blake expounds:

> [Sexism] is definitely not something that's promoted in HC. I do believe, however, that there are a lot of people in HC that would ascribe to those beliefs; that men are superior, that men should be in charge. I see that, you know. There's a lot of sexism that goes on. It happens everywhere, even in HC.

Blake continues, describing a long-running joke in HC circles that women cannot be straightedge.[51]

> That's basically a sexist joke. Girls [in HC subculture] sometimes get treated like sluts and whores, and they're not. There are a lot of girls that might have sex with two or three guys and for that they're labeled a slut. It's unfair. You think about guys that sleep around with 30 or 40 girls and they're macho men. If you look at a girl who does the same thing, she's a whore. The idea is that girls can't be straightedge because they're just gonna get fucked all the time. Meanwhile, a guy who is straightedge is gonna go fuck as many girls as he wants and still claim to be straightedge—even though that's against the original ideal—and no one says anything negative about it. I think it's a stupid joke, but it *does* get said a lot.

An emergent theme in several of the interviews was that women in HM and HC were indeed important—but that that importance was related more to women's ability to draw additional males into the scene more so than their worth as participants, contributors, and/or peers. Usually, such narratives would begin benignly enough, only to regress into misogynistic conversational territories as the dialogue continued. In most cases I doubt that the interviewees were even aware that their conversations had taken a sexist turn. A passage from an interview with Randy, an affable and intelligent 32-year-old singer from one of Atlanta's most popular melodic HM bands, serves as a representative anecdote to exemplify the backhanded and perhaps unintended way that chauvinistic attitudes crept into conversations which were probably intended to communicate inclusion and progressivism:

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[51] Straightedge is the subcategory of HC that advocates abstinence from drugs, alcohol, "promiscuous" sex and, in some cases, caffeine and meat eating.

I don't think anyone should be ignorant enough to limit themselves to a certain [male] audience. You don't want to limit your fan base or close any doors. I would say that females have a gigantic role in metal subculture because what gets guys to go do stuff is females. So if you've got a group of girls that loves metal that is going to come to the shows, they can probably get three more times the guys to come with them to the show than just one dude telling another dude, you know, hey—this band's playing so why don't you come out and hear them play. Of course, having female fans is one of the biggest blessings a band can have. And we *do* have a lot of that.

Crucially, Randy's ideas about the kind of HM that appeals to female fans are linked to timeworn notions of gendered essentiality that equate masculinity with aggression (delivered musically through distortion, speed, and cacophony) and femininity with nurturance and passivity (delivered musically through melody, dulcet tones, and harmonic resolution). Randy explains:

Since it's been kind of an OK thing in metal to have clean [undistorted, melodic, clear] vocals, I think that has opened the door to a lot of different audiences, especially women and younger girls, to come in and be able to enjoy the music. It's got pretty and it's got heavy. It's got dark and it's got light. And there's a certain dynamic that a lot more people can relate to. Today, you've got death metal bands that hit big choruses, you know, and that opens the doorway for women. It helps if they [the bands] have got good looking members too. Then it's a three-fer for women: You've got looks, you've got melody, and you've got, uh, guys. That works out well for women. So I think women are a very important part of metal and I would like to see more and more of them getting involved.

Sam, the 25-year-old singer of a popular Atlanta-based "southern groove metal" band, had ideas similar to Randy's that women were important to HM and HC because of their potential to draw more males to the scene. Also like Randy's narrative, Sam's began with inclusive language that eventually devolved into abhorrent sexist clichés (such as the "coatrack" joke and worse) that were perhaps used in an attempt to be funny:

> What's crazy to me is that in a way, women are the real reason that metal started. If the women didn't like you, you wouldn't have guys coming to the shows. But now you have women onstage, playing this big brutal metal. It's great to see women get up there and really rip. Women are starting to participate in the music and not just holding some guy's jacket. And I'm glad about that—but (laughing) I also think it's dangerous. In the ten, fifteen years that I've been involved in metal I've seen a lot of women come into it that really *do* care, that are involved. Maybe I'm just noticing this because I've become more involved myself. But as times progress, more women get involved. And the bigger we [Sam is referring to his band] get, the more whores show up.

The opinions about women's roles expressed by participants were remarkably similar to running lyrical themes particular to each enclave. HC's lyrical discourse is, for the most part, one of inclusion and tolerance, while HM's lyrical discourse features more overtly expressed sexism. As Randy asserts, a lot of metal music "talks about women and booze." Participants identifying themselves as HC were more likely to espouse equality for women in their scene (all the while conceding that there was indeed sexism in HC), while HM-affiliated participants were somewhat more apt to use language that is denigrating to women and to openly express that women in their scene occupied subordinate roles at best. HC participants purposely avoided using sexist terminology, while HM participants (even women) used questionable terms like

"chick" and "whore" more freely. In summary, neither HC nor HM participants openly espoused sexism, but did acknowledge its presence in their scenes.

"You Were Never My Age": Identity Stigmatization and Disempowerment in Heavy Metal and Hardcore

Historically, subcultures have provided safe havens for disaffected youths. One of the appeals of subcultural participation might indeed be that these factions are considered to be rebellious and apart from the mainstream. Marked by easily identifiable modes of dress, HM and HC provide adolescents with prefigured ways of self-presentation that at least ostensibly set them apart from the herd. Muggleton (2000) defines the contradictory conception that one must self-present in a certain way (such as donning subculture-specific clothes to appear as if one belongs to HC or HM subculture) as "distinctive individuality," a way that, through conforming to the fashion strictures of an outsider group, subculture participants set themselves apart from the greater culture that engulfs them (Muggleton, 2000, p. 63). Taking this explanation of the subcultural paradox of conforming to nonconformity a step further, Muggleton asserts that subcultures such as HM and HC "are characterized by inherently liminal tendencies" (p. 73). This is to say that while subcultures certainly *do* provide participants with an already crystallized set of conventions of unconventionality, participation in subcultures still involves a high degree of diversity and intricacy. As a means of spurring Muggleton's notion of distinctive individuality a further step forward, I offer a new term to describe the conundrum of conforming to nonconformity: *the pariah/conformist paradox*. The pariah/conformist paradox is something of a given for *any* subcultural participation—if only for the fact that subcultural participation is

in and of itself a social act. To join any outsider enclave is to paint oneself as an outsider while at the same time becoming an insider in an outsider enclave. Hence, the only way for the "nonconformist" to avoid the pariah/conformist paradox is to live outside the social world and thereby defy any and all identity categorizations. The only way one can avoid conforming to some kind of identity classification is to not interact with others, period—an impossibility in the social world. As Gardiner (2000) explains, "a total separation from the other and the aspiration to pure autonomy does not lean to mastery or ennoblement …but can only result in the loss of self, a figurative death" (p. 57).

In other words, it's complicated. As neotribes, HM and HC subcultures are assemblages of pre-established stylistic elements, and no two HC or HM fans look exactly the same. In fact, at present there is so much crossover among the stylistic and self-presentational hallmarks of HM and HC that establishing a typology of HM and HC archetypes is an unproductive and ultimately futile task. With easy access to subculture-related clothing with which one can self-present as belonging to a particular enclave, *and* the deluge of subculture-specific information (music, zines, criticism) readily available with the stroke of a computer key, the contemporary subculture participant is more *bricoleur* than a rebel. This awareness that subculture participants aggregate pre-established stylistic elements to establish new identities, however, is nothing new. Hebdige (1979) clearly launched the notion that subculture participants appropriate components of existent subcultures for their own uses (pp. 104-106) and Muggleton (2000) modified and expanded Hebdige's concept to account for the ever-increasing pastiche of postmodernity (pp. 5-6). Still, "certain subcultures [such as HM and HC] are, after all, supposedly composed of people who dress in a highly visible style that signifies a special attachment to a specific musical genre" (p. 74). Self-presentational differences between HM and HC are subtle and blurry. The

primary difference between HM and HC style is that HM males tend to have longer hair, while HC males affect a more punkish look. Of course, there are HC kids with long hair and HM kids who are shorn bald. That it is oftentimes difficult to differentiate metalheads from HC kids is in itself a testament to the continuing merger of the two tribes. Being ostracized from the mainstream an integral part of the HM and HC experiences—and this is an experience that serves to promote a sense of unity between the two enclaves. Such ostracization is facilitated by the fashions pertinent to these groups, however mixed and matched. By donning HM and HC attire, or a mixture of the two, one becomes an easily detectable and colorful target for abuse. Still, both HM and HC participants are well aware of the aforementioned subtle stylistic differences among themselves, and feel at least somewhat persecuted for affecting the style of their chosen group.

HC participants unquestionably reap a degree of subculture-related stigmatization, although not quite as much as their correlates in HM subculture. Current HC style is something of an aerobicized, cleaned-up and more fashionable variant of the Dickensian, purposely-disheveled couture of punk. Most of the ridicule experienced by HC participants at present results more from being "glam" or gender-bending than from being perceived as being drugged-up, threatening or underclass. A running theme of the interviews was that HC kids are more concerned with style (in terms of sexiness) than their counterparts in HM. My observations of the different ways people dressed at HM and HC events during the course of this study confirmed these ideas for the most part. Jacob explained that in the present, HC subculture is fixated on style (tattoos, hairstyles, clothing) at the expense of subversive content. "Just going out and talking to these [HC] kids, they associate HC with this shit that's devoid of anything good. These kids are all fashionistas." Chuck agreed, noting "a sense of fashion in HC that's

maybe attractive to girls" and adding that HC's newfound fashion focus might explain why HC (especially HM/HC crossover) is becoming more popular for girls in their early teens. Blake's ideas about HC fashion summarize the emergent theme of contemporary HC fashionableness found in this study quite well:

> I do know that in the HC scene that guys' fashion has been so much of a focus. I see a lot of guys coming to the HC shows that just look good: they dress well, they fix their hair well, they've got good manners, and they're clean-cut and in good shape. Now, aesthetically, the kids look a lot different than they did before. If you go to a HC show these days you're definitely going to see a bunch of guys who look like they stepped out of a GQ magazine, as opposed to just a bunch of kids in torn up jeans and a shitty shirt. I mean, guys with tattoos are just attractive. They just look good sometimes.

HM, on the other hand, occupies the stylistic domain of the "dude," a working-class adolescent male who values relationships with other males more highly than romantic relationships and is something of a slob. Perceived to be stoners, layabouts and losers, those who adopt HM styles are apt to find themselves bearing the brunt of open hostilities in public. As Mike, 32, the guitarist of two Atlanta-based bands (one is a metal cover band and the other is a controversial and internationally revered gothic rock act), explained that people are averse to HM because "they think it's weird." Sam explained that his band's heavily-tattooed, "burly, biker look" had resulted in the misapprehension that "we look like we do meth." Sam added that everyone in his band was gainfully employed, owned their own house, and paid taxes.

This openly-expressed disdain for HM is most often related to the (usually) misguided notion that HM fans worship Satan.[52] Almost all of the HM-identified participants in this study mentioned that they were frequently asked if they were Satanists. "I think it [HM] is kind of looked at as a negative thing all the time—as this devil-worshipping kind of music," said Dana, adding that 99 percent of HM was "not about that [Satanism] at all." Randy told of a time when he was harassed by a policeman in 1998 because he was presumed to be a Satanist for donning HM clothes:

> I swear this happened. I was wearing a Marilyn Manson shirt and I got detained by a police officer and told to turn my shirt inside-out or they would arrest me. That's because Marilyn Manson was on the front and the dude [the police officer] was heavily religious. I mean, I'm religious too. But that didn't matter. There are stigmas that go with metal where people think it's Satan-worshipping, like devil music. And people see it as this drug-related, violent, womanizing culture—pretty much every negative you can apply. People are automatically, like, "You're a Satan-worshipper."

Sam related a similar story of police harassment for his HM appearance, adding that "now I see what a Brother [a Black male] feels like." Harassment notwithstanding, the appeal of presenting oneself as an HC or HM participant may be directly related to the aversion to these enclaves from the mainstream. "I would think that they [HM and HC participants] portray themselves that way because they think it's cool," explained Marie. "A lot of people want to look like they're rebels, and that's their way of doing it."

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[52] Satanic imagery is a staple of HM iconography, and a large amount of HM songs are about Satan and/or the occult. For the most part such content is chosen because it is spectacular, because Satan is an easy metaphor for evil, and because it is expected by HM fans. Granted, a small percentage of HM fans and bands *are* Satanists—or at least claim to be.

Presenting oneself as HM or HC yields more than the occasional jeer in public or infrequent hassling from police and authority figures, however. The idea that participation in HM and HC places one "outside of society" (and thus lacking in potential for social mobility) was a running theme in the accounts of all the participants of this study. Several of the interviewees noted that those who participate in HM and HC have considerably less leeway than the average person in terms of job options. Granted, HC kids are usually taken to be a bit higher on the social stratum than their compatriots in HM. But as the subcultures are merging, the slightly higher rank occupied by HC kids is eroding. Today's HC kids are generally thought of as being part of the HM tribe and, therefore, reap similar burdens as metalheads when they interact in mainstream culture—especially in terms of employment. As Randy explains, "outside of the realm of music it [HM and HC identity] is not something that goes over well." Randy adds that when his cohorts on the job find out that he is a HM performer, "the questions that they ask me are usually ridiculous. They'll ask me some condescending questions. Metal is not a genre that people have warmed to." Mike agrees, stating that in the mainstream "metal is not a respected music," nor is the culture that surrounds it. Fred explains that his participation in HM has rendered him ineffective for any other type of employment:

> I think the heavier the music gets, the lower class the audience is. You don't see a lot of people with power and privilege that are into metal, you know? I never learned to do anything else [other than playing drums]. I can't picture myself ever doing anything else. It [drumming in a HM band] was never, like, "I've got a really good job."

Marie agrees, relating that "I've seen some people who have been really into it [HM and HC] that have never really gone anywhere. I know one guy who is almost 40 and he still plays out

regularly. He says it [HM] is a money pit,[53] but he never stops." Explaining that intense

participation in HM and HC subcultures entails hardships, Sam says that "I think that hardship

just creates people that are more diehard, you know? And if you don't understand it, well, we

are doing just fine without you."

Tattooing is the most salient and permanent way of representing oneself as belonging to

HM and/or HC subcultures, and this practice perhaps poses the biggest problems for HM and HC

participants on the job market. People with tattoos just don't look "professional." Alan

explains:

> Tattoos are huge! Tattoos are sort of expected [in HM and HC]. People are surprised
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> that I don't have any, but I'm just so indecisive. Tattoos are nothing new. If you're
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> walking around looking too glitzy or too glamorous, that's kind of frowned upon [in HM
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> and HC subcultures]. Tattoos, historically, have the vibe of somebody that came from a
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> situation that was tough. And now tattoos are sort of like a given [in HM and HC]. It's
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> more of a style than it is an expression that you've been in jail or whatever.

Still, tattoos are perceived by some people in mainstream culture as a proverbial badge of Cain.

Carly stated that many of the heavily-tattooed metalheads in Georgia end up having to work in

bars and restaurants because that is the only kind of employment their look is suited to.

> You know, all these guys that I see at the metal shows, they run these bars. Or maybe
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> they work at a pizza place, something like that. It's definitely the older kind of townie
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> guys. The guys that work in these bars, they play in bands. I think that's all they do. So
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> maybe they're like lower class [laughing].

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[53] Here, the term "money pit" refers to the high cost of the accouterments of HM and HC, especially for musicians.

Jason and CJ, two musicians interviewed for this study, do in fact work at bars. This is an example of how the double-edged masculinity of HM and HC operates. Jason explains that HM and HC are ways of life, and that the most dedicated participants take such lower wrung occupations as part and parcel of their subcultural affiliation:

> The lifestyle that comes along with this [HM and HC] is almost carefree. I mean, you do what you've gotta to [in terms of employment]. Most of my friends work at club venues and they're kind of saturated with the music. That's what my life is. I'm a bartender and I serve drinks to a bunch of drunks. And then after that I go play music.

> At the end of the day if I can get behind my [drum] kit and release some tension and just get off, man… You know, HM is just one of those things. You hang out in HM clubs—dirty, grimy shitholes. And I couldn't honestly give a shit. I can tour in our shitty-ass van for the rest of my life.

"The Wrecking Crew": Heavy Metal and Hardcore Subcultures as Ideological Communities and Surrogate Families

Participants in HM and HC subcultures must stay abreast of current in-group trends, stylistic innovations, controversies, and (obviously) new bands, lest they be considered passé. As Waksman (2009) contends, subcultures perpetually redefine themselves and monitor other subculture participants' status or "cred" as a means of maintaining separation from the parent culture—as well as maintaining distances from other subcultures (p. 4). Still, both HM and HC offer participants the opportunity to establish camaraderie with likeminded peers and a sense of belonging that they may not have found through more conventional social institutions such as the

family, schools, the church, and society in general. Overwhelmingly, the majority of this study's

participants noted in interviews that HM and HC were enclaves for the alienated and/or

dispossessed. The bulk of the interviewees also said that their participation in HM and/or HC

was "freeing." While there are certainly distinctions in the outlooks or ways of being fostered in

HM and HC communities, both subcultures (and, of course, the interconnected, postmodern

aggregation of HM and HC as well) find their bases in the notion that those who participate are

somehow rebelling against the parent culture. Still, one might wonder what it is that adolescents

find appealing about these outsider enclaves. By aligning oneself with HM and HC, the

individuals are setting themselves up for ridicule and harassment, as well as labeling themselves

as being disenfranchised and, thus, at least somewhat disempowered.

HM and HC enclaves are "proud pariah" subcultures where behaviors considered taboo

in mainstream culture are encouraged (Nillson, 2009, p. 175). Participating in the outré

behaviors of HM and HC offers a sense of connection enabled through conjoint, symbolic acts of

transgression that are both cathartic and unifying. Over the course of this study, band members

performing onstage soliloquys about the "family" of HC and/or HM were commonplace, almost

requisite. Giving "shout-outs" to friends in the audience, dedicating songs to local bands, and

offering spiels about playing in Atlanta "back in the day" all provided visiting touring bands with

a means of establishing mundane subcultural capital as credibility. For example, the

vocalist/guitarist of South Carolina based death metal band Nile lauded the "crazy

motherfuckers" of the Atlanta scene and asked the crowd to scream along if they were a part of

"the family of metal." Of course, this exhortation was met with howls of appreciation from the

enthusiastic, large audience in attendance. Apparently the "family of metal" concept rang true

for Nile's singer, who dedicated one song to his son. Later, after Nile's set, I saw the singer in the audience accompanied by a boy, approximately ten years old, who I assumed to be his son.

Expounding on HM, Dana explained that her participation had provided her with an easy entrée to establish friendships:

> It's kind of a big family to me. Metal's one of those things where once you find out someone else is into it, you automatically have everything in common. I feel like it brings together a lot of different people from different backgrounds. When you go see a band, there are all kinds of people there but they have this one big thing that unites them. It all comes together and it's like love. I see it as a big family. It makes you feel like you're a part of something big, you know? It just captured me, and it wasn't a phase. I just loved the culture—how when people got into a band they lived by it. I just thought that was really cool.

Blake carried the family analogy a step further by explaining that his participation in HC offered a sense of belonging to kids who felt marginalized and/or abandoned by conventional societal institutions:

> HC, for me, is basically a group of people, a subculture, centered around people who came from broken homes, broken relationships. There's a commonality of mistreatment or feeling disrespected. And those kinds of people get together to be a second family for one another. That's why I got into it. I had all these frustrations—whether it was losing

my parents as a kid,[54] not having any emotional support growing up, and then all these broken relationships I've had.

Sam's analysis is a bit more abstract, but no less insightful than those of his peers:

I see it [participation in HM and HC] as a void-filler. Everybody has a void and they pick different things to fill that void; whether it's religion, drugs, whatever. It's something that you can drive yourself into. I mean, if you don't have reason to get up in the morning, then what's the use?

While HM and HC are comparable in that both subcultures are seen as outsider enclaves that offer participants a supportive community within which expressions of alienation and rebellion are encouraged, there are perceived differences between the two groups. Primarily, HC discourse is thought to be more politically engaged, a discourse of empowerment and agency, while HM discourse is more about fantasy, morbidity, and fictionalized glorifications of power. HM's lyrical emphasis on a dark outlook, paradoxically, is understood as being more lighthearted and fun than the comparatively serious-minded homilies offered in HC lyrics. As Chuck explained, "They [HM performers] may sing about disturbing things like Satanism, or wizards, or storming the castle, but there's more of a fun spirit behind it." Sam agreed, asserting that HM music is uplifting. "As bad as it sounds in the music," said Sam, "it makes you feel good. You can be screaming, and you can derive a lot of satisfaction from that."

Emergent from punk rock, much of HC is politically-focused, employs language of empowerment, and delivers emancipatory messages that are oftentimes curiously ambiguous. This is to say that HC lyrics offer vague moral messages about breaking free from oppression

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[54] Both of Blake's parents died before he was ten years old.

that rarely address exactly what the oppression is and/or who it is that is perpetuating such injustices. Sam's explanation of HC lyricism exemplifies this lyrical ambiguity, even though he was probably trying to be specific in his account: "A lot of the HC lyrics are more like 'rise up,' like quit the self-pity thing and get up and do something about it." Tellingly, in his explanation Sam neglected to explain exactly which parties are being admonished to rise up or what oppression they are to rise from. A certain inconsistency in HC's purportedly emancipatory message is that HC oftentimes delivers bluntly moralistic, all-or-nothing messages which may be indicative of a backhanded fundamentalism, a naïvely optimistic yet nonetheless conservative desire to reestablish order in a world gone mad. Regarding this HC moralism, Blake expounds:

> I think a lot of people involved in HC would say that that the world is really messed up, that things don't run the way that they should—whether it be government or social—and that there is so much injustice in the world that we've got to at least give voice to it if not try to fix it. It [HC] gives you the outlet to speak your mind about whatever it is. Whether you're mad at God or mad at a girlfriend, whatever, you can do that kind of stuff. You can scream instead of trying to sing it or make it poetic, and it still works. Life sucks, but you've got to deal with it. And this is how we deal with it. But then you take those messages and you turn it into your creed. That's what you live by. You don't turn around and do the same shit to other people, essentially.

Granting that much of HC's lyrical dogmatism is sincere and well-intended, one could still reasonably argue that the subculture, with a 30 year tradition of cries for anarchy and revolution, has done little in the way of yielding any of the social change it champions. Asked about HC's ideology or lack thereof, Chuck explained that HC seems to have lost its way as the subculture continues its process of crystallization:

My opinion is that the [HC] culture is built on the ideology that we are an open-minded

community and accepting of any individual that don't (sic) necessarily fit into normal

society. So you're supposed to feel like you have a place to go in the HC community.

The HC community likes to think that it's open to all people. It was originally

established for outsiders who didn't fit into the norm. But what ended up happening is

that the people who are in that community [HC] like to have a self-righteous, elite, and

exclusive mentality.

In other words, as HC has become more stylized and commoditized, it may well have lost

whatever revolutionary potential it had at its inception some 30 years ago. The continuing

merger of HM and HC may have exacerbated this de-politicization. Or this could be interpreted

as simply another example of an empty liberalism that is symptomatic of the privileged, white

suburbia from which HC emerged.

Regardless that HM and HC subcultures may indeed be incapable of fomenting social

change, participants tend to agree that their involvement in these groups is an important and

defining element of their lives, oftentimes their very reason for being. In this way, HM and HC

subcultures can be understood as pseudo-spiritual entities that, like churches, offer participants

ways to connect with peers, a relatively structured community, and a source of inspiration and

assurance. Randy explains the importance and appeal of HM and HC for the average person

who attends shows:

They get a connection with the music and the culture. They get a good feeling from

learning every word and knowing every guitar solo and getting to see it performed live.

And people stagediving and slamming only happens at these kind of [HM and HC]

events. You've got guys letting out their aggression on one another and at the same time having each other's back. You'd be surprised how people can connect—and get really deep into what you believe in—*and* to find people that *believe in you*. There's an emotional connection. These kids are coming in there screaming along for an hour and a half and having a great time. They're part of a culture. And you don't see people leaving a show that are arguing and cussing at each other because they bumped into each other going down the steps. Everybody's got mutual respect, they're all there for the same thing, and they're going to get something out of it too.

Ultimately, though, it is the music that provides the elemental, initial appeal of HM and HC subcultures. Blake explains that he was initially drawn to these enclaves solely for the allure of the music—and the performative rites of passage that accompany it:

At this point in my life it [the appeal of HM and HC] is more about the community. I've built a lot of long-lasting relationships through it. But at the beginning it was more about the music. I didn't know anybody. I was going to the shows just because I wanted to see the bands. I wasn't there to fraternize and make friends and try to find a girlfriend or anything like that. I was solely there to get in the pit, to jump off some shit, and to scream words into some stranger's face. It's kind of evolved over the years I suppose.

But the reason I like it is what I said earlier. I had all this frustration built up in me. And when I heard this music, some of the bands were singing about stuff that I'd been thinking for so long. We were the same age and going through the same stuff. I just related to it so well. It made sense for me to listen to the music: it became part of my identity, it's all I wanted to listen to, it's all I thought about, and if I'm feeling down I'm

gonna put those records on. It just gave me comfort knowing that I wasn't the only one going through that shit.

Again, the musical, affective, and community elements of HM and HC operate synchronously to provide participants a life-affirming, numinous experience upon which their very identities can be shaped. And the identities of HM and HC are inevitably based upon the masculine archetypes that are performatively enacted in the subculturally-related settings of shows.

HM and HC are "extreme" subcultures. Excess is, in fact, key to the allure of these genres. However, such envelope-pushing can sometimes go too far. Bearing this in mind, I asked the interviewees if there was anything in HM and HC that they found disturbing or distasteful. Not surprisingly, the notion that Satanism is part of HM was the most frequently reported cause of concern for the participants in this study. Dana contends that although she has no problems per se with occult-themed lyrics and imagery of HM, she *is* concerned when the general public takes this too seriously. "It [her concern] is more [about] how others look at metal than with metal within itself. That's what I'm uncomfortable with is less of what goes on [in HM culture], but more of how people [outsiders] perceive it." Nash, 44, a longtime HM performer and popular radio personality in Atlanta, also has reservations about the Satanic content of HM, especially when taken to the literal extremes of some black metal bands.[55] "I understand why some kids would get into it [black metal], because it's *really* rebellious. But I don't think that's the right kind of message. I laugh at that stuff. It's like cartoons." Randy explains that as a HM musician and corporate manager, he lives "a double life,"[56] and that he does not tell his cohorts on the job about his subcultural participation: Divulging his status as a

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[55] Members of several prominent Norwegian black metal bands have been convicted for church-burnings and murders—all connected with Satanic or anti-Christian ideologies.

[56] Randy description of his experience of a "double life" draws to mind Bakhtin's (1984) notion that carnival offered a "second life"(p. 8). Randy's participation in the carnivalesque subculture of HM, of course, impels this dualism.

HM musician might lead to negative presuppositions from his peers, so he is mum on the job. "I don't want people at work judging what I do because of my band. I don't represent metal all day every day. People find out you're in a [HM] band, and automatically you're a Satan-worshipper." Jason also reports being stigmatized because of his participation in HM, relating that when people assume he is into the occult or performs Satanic rituals "I'm like, 'you know what—go fuck yourself, buddy.'"

Stigmatic or not, connections with Satanism and the occult provide HM bands with a means of acquiring transgressive subcultural capital—provided that its performance is convincing enough, that is.[57] While distancing himself from Satanism, Sam explains that it still has a dark allure for him:

> I'm not a religious person. But I kind of have a bit of respect for people that are crazy enough to take it that far [into the realm of Satanism and the occult], though—people that are crazy enough to say that there *is* a God—and, like, *fuck him.* My hat's off to them. Those people are crazy enough—that's the kind of crazy I've got to respect.

In this way, many participants dance along the margins regarding the Satanic content of much HM: They want to distance themselves from it personally, yet they venerate the most extreme metallers who fully embrace Satanism because that is something still forbidden by the mainstream.

A longstanding appeal of HM, in fact, is the sense for participants that they are involved with something forbidden and scary. Conversely, delving into such dark content of HM offers participants a way to confront their own fears. Mike reports that the first time he listened to a

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[57] Many HM bands openly admit that invoking Satan is just a gimmick and all in fun. For these acts, Satan serves as a metaphoric representation of evil, a cartoonish boogeyman, or both.

HM record "I turned it off because I was literally, like, scared by it. And I kept getting drawn back into it." Mike explains further that the sheer sensory overload of HM, including its frightening subject matter, operated as a diversion to his adolescent fears. "It [HM] had so much intensity and so much going on that it at least drew my attention away from the things that scared me in life, the things I feared."

Another element of HM and HC that several of the participants reported being uneasy with was the openly-expressed sexism in these enclaves. Misogyny is a rare element of HC lyricism, although it seems to be creeping into the genre as the popularity of HC/MM crossover continues to gain momentum. A recent online controversy in HC erupted over HM/HC crossover band The Paramedic's T-shirt which reads "Bitch, say one more word I'll rip your fucking throat out" (punknews.org, 2012, paras. 1-3). Asked to comment on the message of the shirt, The Paramedic's guitarist responded that "sometimes we have to say things that everyone thinks but could never say in real life" (para. 2). Gradually evolving from its anarcho/punk roots to become a more popular, style-oriented genre, HC is currently—at least from some factions— presenting sexist diatribes, probably as a means to be seen as "edgy" or "extreme." While many of HC's younger converts are apparently not bothered by such language, more socially-aware HC participants have voiced much opposition to sexist discourse erupting in the genre. Blake explained that he sees such misogyny becoming a lyrical staple of the more fashionable, youth-oriented music at the crossover of HM and HC:

> There's a lot of misogyny, and it's always been there. I mean, that's what's gonna
> happen when you get testosterone-filled guys writing angry songs. But I think that
> especially the newer bands like Whitechapel, they really talk about, um, harming women
> a lot and mutilating their bodies and rape—just shit like that. And it's gross. It's just

repulsive stuff and I don't know where they come up with it. It's kind of unnerving to think that 20-year-olds are writing lyrics about that kind of stuff like it's fun.

Despite the aforementioned stigmatization and inherent contradictions of HM and HC subcultures, these groups (and the emerging, linked HM/HC subculture) hold visceral appeal for their participants. Sure, the music is what first draws kids to HM and HC, but the community interaction within these subcultures is what keeps them involved. In HM and HC, the music operates as a binding agent. Dana explains:

> I've met so many people through the music. Like, just being involved with metal I've met some of the coolest people I've ever met in my life—and I continue to meet cool people every day. Metal brings so many different types of people together. No one that I know through music is the same: everyone is different.

Through HM and HC subcultures, disaffected kids find a sense of belonging. For these kids, the community interaction enabled by HM and HC is empowering in and of itself. Nichole expounds:

> I think a lot of people [in HM and HC], maybe they haven't felt like they really fit in anywhere else. And maybe they've been kind of going through life as loners, and they find this music that they can identify with. And then they meet these other people that feel the same way. And, you know, they become friends: they go to shows together, they always have something to talk about because they can talk about the bands and the shows… And I think maybe it's a lot of people who have been kind of floating through the world, not fitting in anywhere, and then they find this idea of kind of like family— people who are maybe a little weird like they are. Maybe a little I guess the larger culture

might even think of them as socially retarded. But they find each other. And, you know,

they do become fiercely loyal to one another. It's like an 'us against the world' thing.

"True Till Death": The Divergent Paths of Hardcore and Punk, circa 2012

The continuing stylistic convergence of HM and HC—and the de-politicization of HC

that is apparently part and parcel of this process, leads to the question, is modern day HC still

part of punk rock? Bearing in mind that today's HC subculture is enmeshed with HM (as well as

with other music-related subcultures like goth and indie rock), one can certainly conclude that

HC is a neotribe—and one might conclude as well that as HC continues to evolve, it is becoming

unmoored from its roots in punk.   As Carly contends, "actually, all three of those genres [HC,

HM, and punk rock] are kind of merged into one big thing—and some people definitely think it's

all the same." Again, it's complicated. Alan, the 36-year-old guitarist of an internationally

famous band that merges HC, HM, alternative and experimental rock, asserts that HC is no

longer part of punk rock—but then qualifies his statement by saying "It's hard for me as a 36-

year-old to really relate. I mean, the kids are going to define the movement that they're in, and

that's a beautiful thing." After contemplating the question, Nichole is likewise reluctant to

accede that the punk/HC connection has entirely dissipated:

> It's funny because in my mind [contemporary HC] is not [part of punk rock]. And that's
>
> probably just because I'm older. That's just the music snob in me coming out. But then
>
> again, if I step back and look at the kids who are going to those shows that are into that,
>
> they *are* the little punk rockers now. And you know, those bands are just as important to

those kids as a band like Black Flag[58] is to us. I mean, what these kids see as HC *is* punk

rock because they have to actively go out and find it. It's not like they're hearing it on

the radio. And they're going to find that same kind of community that I found.

CJ, who contends that HC is no longer a subset of punk, feels that the blurring of

distinctions between HM and HC has ushered in "a whiff of the mainstream" to both the music

and the subculture. "That [commercialization] brought a whole lot more kids to it, [but] that

[popularity] also brought in a short attention span. For some of these kids it's just a fad, and that

hurt it, in a sense." For more 'old school" participants, HC's evolution away from punk rock left

them feeling disillusioned. Chuck expounds:

> I don't think it [HC] is [a part of punk rock] because I think it's become as processed and
>
> planned out as much as pop music, even. Punk rock just had an energetic, rebellious and
>
> original spirit to it that HC has lost because everything has become so planned out. The
>
> behavior and the music is becoming predictable, and none of that appeals to me because
>
> none of it is interesting or genuine. Everything has become marketable—and the look of
>
> HC bands, the artwork on their albums, the production, the equipment that they use—
>
> everything just seems like something you can purchase somewhere. So when you buy
>
> this stuff you can become HC or HM overnight.

Granted, the incorporation of subcultures is inevitable (Hebdige, 1979, pp. 94-99). And with a

30 year history, how could *any* subculture avoid such commoditization?

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[58] Black Flag is arguably the most influential (and best) HC band of all time. The band's longest-serving singer, Henry Rollins, serves as the paradigmatic example of HC masculinity. Notably, Black Flag veered stylistically toward HM near the end of its career.

Despite the continuing commercial exploitation of HM and HC, these subcultures maintain attraction for alienated adolescents that oftentimes extends into lifetime commitments. Both HM and HC enclaves have their share of venerated, "old school" participants who have more or less dedicated their entire lives to participation in their chosen subculture. Of the two groups, however, HC is considered something that a participant is more likely to grow out of. Tom, a prominent concert promoter in Atlanta who regularly books HM and HC acts at one of the city's largest club venues, asserts that HC appeals to the young (which is why HM/HC crossover shows are so well-attended) while HM participation continues for a lifetime. "HC fans in general are a lot less dedicated to particular bands," he explains. But "in general, someone who is into metal is not a passive fan. HC fans are super young these days, and the metal crowds stay with the bands through their whole career." Chuck agrees, attesting that HM's lifetime appeal may be linked to both the genre's musical complexity and its less dogmatic and more entertainment-focused lyrical content.

> I think there's (sic) still more true metal fans that have stayed with metal through the years than there are HC people. I think that people from the original HC scene have left it because they're probably not happy with the direction HC has taken. People who got bored with HC or bored with punk rock gravitated to HM because the music seems to be more complex, and it also seems more fun. I don't think they [HM fans] take themselves as seriously as the people in the HC scene.

Ultimately, though, the appeal of both HM and HC lies in the sense that these enclaves are rebellious—and that through unifying with other likeminded rebels, participants can attain a voice and, thereby, establish an identity in a realm that is separate from both parental authority and from more conventional institutions of primary socialization such as church, family, or the

educational system. Mike maintains that the appeal of HM and HC "is connected with the idea of the troubled teenager—with choosing the type of music that pisses your parents off." Dana asserted that HM and HC attract extreme people who are more likely to stay committed to the scene. "It's always a part of you," says Dana. "It never leaves you. There are some people who live metal their entire lives, and that's all there is." Agreeing that HM and HC inspire lifelong commitments, Mike ponders, "I wonder if in the future it will be acceptable for 75 year old men to listen to aggressive music like Pantera? I can't imagine me not being that guy, because the music makes me feel young when I hear it." Likewise, Randy concurs. "It's such a big part of my life and engraved so deeply into my soul that there's just no way I could quit." Clearly, HM and HC participation inspires religion-like zeal. For HM and HC participants, the scene seems like an eternal, secret and sacred order, a nirvana that only the most ardent seekers can access. Sam describes the quasi-religiosity of the HM and HC experience perhaps most vividly:

> It's an underground scene—even for the bands that seem big. There are bands that have been around forever that you *think* are big, but they're still really underground. Everybody is always defending HM or HC because it's what you love. You have an appreciation for it. When nobody else appreciates it, that's when you're going to push that much harder. That's when you get the lifestyle, when you get the diehard fans— because everybody cares so much. You want to turn people on. I want to turn kids on to metal. You see their eyes light up and you know—there's gonna be a metal fan. You give them the right music and the right gateways to it and you know; there's another one that's gonna be a lifer.

Through this synchronous mix of dramatic music, cathartic rites of passage, the allure of the forbidden, and the sense of belonging to a special community, HM and HC enclaves are ideally suited to perpetuate themselves, continually recruiting avid lifetime participants.

Fred, the 44-year-old drummer of two internationally renowned HM acts, pushes this notion a step further by explaining that through affiliation with the rebellious enclaves of HC or HM, the disempowered can establish individualism and power, or at least a sense of it:

> I think it [the appeal of HM and HC] is people trying to find their own individuality, their own person. There are people out there who need to feel rebellious. They feel boxed in by society and what you're supposed to do with your life. This gives people a way to stand up and say they're not going to be like that. I think that anybody that plays aggressive music has at some point in their lives felt a sense of powerlessness—of being put upon in some way. Maybe they got bullied at school and they went home and cranked up the metal and felt powerful.

Assuming that the HM and HC experience is indeed an experience of empowerment for participants leads to the pivotal question: Where does this power come from? And bearing in mind that HM and HC are male-dominated subcultures where male power is performatively enacted, the answer is patently obvious: The overwhelmingly male participants of HM and HC attain this sense of power through the repetition of performative enactments of masculinity within the subcultural boundaries of HC, HM, or the shared subcultural space occupied by HM/HC crossover. More simply put, HM and HC males gain a sense of power by imitating the behaviors of other males in these groups. In this way, HM and HC subcultures operate as venues for the representation and re-presentation of male power.

"Iron Men": Power, Privilege, Class and Working-Classness in Heavy Metal and Hardcore

The majority attendees (males) at HM and HC events affect variations of the styles associated with their respective genres: HC fans don HC garb and HM fans don HM garb. HM and HC styles, of course, are intermingled—especially so at HM/HC "crossover" shows. So the bulk of the males in attendance at HM and HC shows are, en masse, already representing themselves in ways that communicate the certain types of maleness respective to these subcultures. At the shows attended over the course of this study (and at all of the HM and HC events I have attended over the last 30 years, for that matter) HM and HC fashions are accompanied by body-reflexive practices (body carriage and overall mien) that communicate a certain toughness. Such representations of toughness intensify markedly as the band performances begin. When the music starts, *it's on*. Of course the staged pseudo-violence of the moshpit is the most obvious demonstration of HM and HC masculinity, but the males on the periphery of the pit also adopt the postures of performative masculinity: males along the margins of the pit assume a certain combative stance, as if to say "don't fuck with me," and the entirety of the audience seems to take on a physically articulated posture of collective strength. In other words, there are "no sissies allowed" at HM and HC shows. Regarding behaviors displayed at HM and HC shows, CJ defines these posturings as "alpha-maleism." "I think that they're just to try and be macho and that's all that is—they're showing out. People are going there [to the shows] to be the biggest, baddest guy in the pit." Women who assume active roles at HM and HC events as performers and moshers are also required to affect demeanors associated with male aggression, as was earlier mentioned in Dana's discussion of having to "prove" her worth as a female guitarist and Marie's explanation that females "don't get treated like a girl" in the pit. Basically, HM and HC events are exhibitions of hypermasculinity performed by males, for

males. Alan elaborates that HM and HC shows are, in effect, rituals of exaggerated

masculinity—visually, sonically, and behaviorally:

> I totally understand the phallic thing with the guitar and its phallic presence (laughing).
> The loud guitars, the moshing, this sort of meat-headedness—I would agree with that
> angle [that HM and HC shows are rites of male power]. I can see that there's an element
> of showboating [by males]. I don't know if you could say that it's done on purpose. I
> mean, I don't know anybody who is like 'oh hell yes' to the idea that we're men and I'm
> going to crush somebody's skull in the moshpit or play so loud it's gonna hurt people and
> prove how tough I am. But there is that aspect to it, you know—guys just strutting
> around.

In summary, HM and HC events provide the arena for such "strutting around," and those who

attend these events, both males and females, are complicit in a shared process of defining

subcultural variations of masculinity through social interaction.

"Walk Like a Man": For Whom is Moshpit Masculinity Performed?

The moshpit is a proving ground where physical behaviors—body-reflexive practices,

routines that offer young men a means of projecting the socialized traits of "inner" masculinity

upon their external bodies—are performed (Kimmel, 2006, p. 82). This is something of a double

refraction: Through body-reflexive practices such as moshing, the socially-constructed,

"masculine" external traits that males have internalized are externalized. In the moshpit, young

men (and the occasional young woman as well) establish dominance, in a way "proving their

mettle" (pun intended) to their peers in attendance at HM or HC shows. Fiske (1989) explains

that violence is a prominent element of masculine popular cultures (p. 136). In HM and HC, this element of violence—or the performativity of pseudo-violence—comes most saliently to the fore in the body-reflexive practices of the moshpit. HM and HC are homosocial yet heterosexist enclaves where heterosexuality is performed by males and for males, but serves the dual purpose (or intended purpose, at least) of simultaneously impressing men *and* women. Impressing women is doubly purposeful for young men in the moshpit: By impressing women (and thus hopefully garnering their favor), they can also impress other men. "The boys want to go and rock out and mosh and get in the pit," relates Jason. "The girls think these guys are like rock stars, so [they] want to go and get their pictures made with these guys and stuff like that."

Mike, who is outspokenly anti-moshing, further explains the objectives of moshpit performativity and for whom it is performed:

They're trying to impress, um, everyone there. It's one of those like birds flapping their beautiful feathers things—one of those male-dominant things. And anyone who is there [male or female], that's who they're trying to impress. I don't think they're trying just to impress girls. I just think it's kind of this extra male-dominant thing that pops up.

I have seen the kind of thing where people kind of set up barriers around the girls and it becomes a protection thing. At that Melvins show a couple of people tried to start some shit and I was like, "listen, dude: Stop. I'm trying to listen to the music." I don't understand how you can be like engrossed in the music and at the same time be kind of flailing and being knocked down and knocking other people down. But there's obviously something to it because it happens every show. Maybe it's just those people letting go.

From observing, it seems like most of what's going on in the moshpit is just an excuse. This is just a place where it's acceptable to beat the shit out of other people. There's a camaraderie to it that I can't totally connect to. I'm just worried about getting my head knocked off.

This "strutting around" is clearly performative masculinity, young men enacting maleness—for anyone who will watch, male or female. "Yeah, people acting out [moshing] at shows are doing it for other people, for their friends, for themselves," says Alan. Dana concurs, stating that "a lot of guys are like, "I'm gonna go in there and I'm gonna tear up everybody in the pit," and it makes them feel bigger and stronger than everybody else—like they can take 'em, they're tougher." Dana adds that the few women who participate in the moshipt are doing some proving of their own:

Sometimes you see a girl in there [in the moshpit], and usually they're trying to prove they're as tough as the guys or they can do it too. If they're not proving that they're as tough as the guys, I guess it's to show that it's not a man's world. Actually, I'd never thought about it before, but I guess it's just a way for them [women] to prove how tough they are *too*. That's pretty interesting [laughing].

The few women in the moshpit are performing masculinity—proving that they are tough enough, to show the boys that they can rock hard too.

"The Poorest, Ugliest Kids on the Block": Class Issues in Heavy Metal and Hardcore

As Willis (2004) contends, social classifications such as race, gender, and class are reconstructed in new forms through "cultural production" (p. 173). In other words, social classifications (which are social constructions in and of themselves) are rearticulated, recombined, and retooled in processes of symbolic interaction such as those that occur at HM and HC events. As such, Willis' aforementioned conceptualization will serve as a cornerstone for the following analysis of the intersection of class (or the affectation of working-classness) and masculinity in HM and HC subcultures.

As earlier established, HM and HC are primarily Caucasian enclaves. While both enclaves are, at least for the most part, not avowedly racist, a quick glance at the audience at any HM and HC show proves that these groups are dominantly white.[59] Perhaps predictably, the spectre of racism rears its ugly head on occasion in the Atlanta scene. At the HC end of the spectrum, Atlanta was once a hub of skinhead activity in the Southeast, and crowds of skinheads still congregate at certain shows. And Mike reports a vague sense of conservatism emerging on the HM scene as well:

> I don't know if HM was always like this, but I've noticed this lately and I'm troubled by it. HM is the only kind of American music that was solely invented by white males. And eventually, it seems like a conservative bonding thing happened. Maybe it's just the South, something about Atlanta, but I notice a conservative thing happening I'm kind of disturbed by. I also think that people who are playing HM now don't have the

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[59] There are, however, certain HC and HM scenes that are not primarily Caucasian, most often in large cities. In the Western United States, HC and HM are also popular with Hispanics, and every scene has outliers belonging to other ethnic groups. Still, HC and HM are perceived as "white" scenes.

connection to the blues [which is thought of as a Black musical domain] that they once

had.

Such racism and conservatism in HM and HC, however, is no more than a subtle undercurrent in

the Atlanta scene at present. Dana, an Atlanta-based African-American HM guitarist, says that

race has never been an issue for her—and that her racial status has actually made her seem more

interesting to others: "I think people are more interested in how I became the guitar player in a

band of white guys. Even like, you know, white dudes—they come up to me and say, you know,

I wish there was more diversity in metal."

There are certainly class-related differences in HM and HC. In my many years of

subcultural participation I was always under the impression that HC participants occupied a

somewhat higher tier of the class hierarchy than HM fans. HC is primarily an upper middle-

class phenomenon (Blush, 2010, p. 14). HM, paradoxically, is more of a lower middle-class

phenomenon that is nevertheless thought to be a working-class phenomenon (Moore, 2010, p.

79; Arnett, 1996, p. 172). These ideas about the socioeconomic class bases of HM and HC are

certainly borne out by the observations of the interview participants. Granted, these are broad

brush generalizations—as many of the participants conceded in the interviews. As Chuck

explains, in HC subculture "you're going to find more suburban white kids that come from at

least middle-class families that have money." Blake, who self-defines as belonging to the HC

camp, feels that HC participants are most often affluent kids: "It's (laughing) definitely got a

backbone of rich white males. You know, somebody's gotta put up the money somewhere,

somehow." Alan agrees, stating that HC's upper echelon (band members and influential

participants) is a privileged group: "The scene is usually split between middle-class and a

contingent of really wealthy white kids—kids (laughing) who, through no fault of their own,

came from wealthy families—they're heavily involved." Blake expounds on the notion that HC is more or less sponsored by families of privilege:

> There's an exception to every rule, but in a lot of places the kids that are booking the [HC] shows and taking care of all that, they're not coming from a place of having to work their asses off to get that. They're coming from a higher place of parental monetary support, and they're definitely not working-class. And that's the way it's always been. If you go back through punk and HC history, you had to have those kids with money to be there to be a crutch for the whole movement.

Perhaps that HC kids come into the subculture, for the most part, from places of privilege is key to the reason that participation in HC is more of a "phase" and less a lifelong commitment. Participation in HC is understood as a temporary bohemian or "slumming" phase that people of privilege go through, knowing all the while that they have the option of going back to college or entering family business with parental support. Nevertheless, HC certainly has its share of venerated "old school" participants.

HM, on the other hand, sprang from working-class roots (Weinstein, 2000, p. 75; Arnett, 1993, p. 17). Although the early practitioners and fans of HM were indeed working-class, it does not necessarily follow that today's HM subculture is a working-class enclave (Arnett, 1993, p. 176). But since the early metallers who developed the archetypal ways of being for HM subculture were in fact working-class, present day HM fans follow suit and present themselves in ways that are evocative of working-class. As such, HM is perceived to be a working class enclave, oftentimes derogatorily. Asked to describe a typical HM participant, Alan explains: "I think the most obvious example of a metal guy is the kid whose father is a mechanic, he went to

school with you, and he's wearing a Sepultura shirt when everybody else wasn't." Chuck agrees, asserting that "I think there's a sense of quote unquote rednecks that are still into metal, and they're gonna be metal from when they're little kids until the day they die." Blake pushes the redneck description a step further by saying that "Metal has a connotation of white trash involvement. I don't know that that's necessarily fair, but it is what it is. I've definitely seen a lot of white trash at metal shows." Sam, who self-identifies as HM, bemusedly agrees that HM is understood as a lower-class phenomenon, even though such reductions are not always the case:

> It's the poorest, ugliest kids on the block (laughing). That's the real metal fans. In different places there are different kinds of people [into HM]. Overall it seems to be the poorest, ugliest kids on the block, the disassociated. I definitely know it [the typical HM fan] is a crazy individual on some level—somebody that enjoys the shock and awe of it.

Dana also stated that while HM is understood as being working-class, its participants are oftentimes from other stratums: "It's known to be the music of choice for people of like lower means, but that's not necessarily true. For me and a lot of people, we come from pretty good backgrounds: good homes and stuff like that. And we love it [HM] as much as anybody else." The sheer cost of participating in HM may be one reason that the subculture has become a middle-class phenomenon in the present. Frequently attending shows takes a good deal of money, not to mention the cost of HM-associated clothing, alcohol, and expensive musical gear for performers. Also, presenting oneself as an HM (or HC) participant is perhaps backhandedly denotative of privilege. People who stay out until the wee hours of the morning drinking alcohol and perhaps taking drugs are unlikely to be able hold conventional jobs. And those who have "the look" of HM and HC, especially tattoos, are not as likely to get high-profile jobs, anyway.

Granted, these same people may well be supporting themselves through working-class or sub working-class jobs—all the while knowing that they can return to college whenever they get tired of "slumming." All of this might in fact indicate that many of the most ardent participants in the HM and HC scenes have family money to fall back on.

Regardless of family privilege or lack thereof, HC and especially HM fans present themselves in a way that mimics archetypal imagery of the working-class. And such representations of working-classness are inextricably linked with the conventional heteronormative masculinity of Western society. This is to say masculinities are presented in HM and HC enclaves as performative working-classness. Bourdieu (2001) explains that labor has traditionally been gendered—with subordinate and ancillary functions being accorded to women and individualistic roles of power accorded to men (p. 94). Nowhere is this gendered division more visually apparent than in the jobs performed by members of the working-class. As Bourdieu explains, "it falls to men, who belong on the side of all things external, official, public, straight, high and discontinuous to perform all the brief, dangerous and spectacular acts" that are exemplary of working-class labor (p. 30). Clearly, the actions and ways of being integral to HM and HC identities are indeed external, public, dangerous, spectacular—and thereby masculine. Likewise, HM and HC subcultures are steeped in notions of "authenticity" that are symbolically represented—through fashion and body-reflexive practices—in ways that mimic the archetypal imagery of the working-class. In this way, HM and HC appropriations of working-classness are symbolic rejections and/or refusals of the dominant culture. To be "true" metal or "old school" HC, participants must portray themselves in ways that quite often belie their positions of privilege in the socioeconomic hierarchy, perhaps more so in HM than in HC. Thus, to "be" HC and/or HM, participants must conform to a rigidly strictured set of motifs and body-reflexive

practices, all of which more or less mimic postures portrayed in Western iconography of the white working-class. In summary, the performative masculinity of HM and HC subcultures is a performativity of working-classness. Performative masculinity and performative working-classness are, in this way, two inextricable elements of an emerging, conjoint HM/HC identity.

"United Blood": Emergent Themes and Identities of Postmodern Hardcore/Heavy Metal Crossover

Based upon countless observations made as a participant/observer in the field, and further solidified by the participant responses obtained via the many in-depth interviews conducted over the course of this study, it has become clear that HM and HC identities are merging for many participants. This process of merging, which I define as subcultural osmosis, is in fact an already-completed process for many of the younger HM/HC fans who entered the scene with the preconceived notion that the two entities (HM and HC) are in fact a fully-crystallized and singular enclave. This continuing merger of the once separate enclaves of HM and HC is symptomatic of postmodernity enabled by the practices of pastiche, *bricolage*, and cultural syncretism—and further exacerbated by the (sub)culture industry's eternal scramble to produce "new" (sub)cultural products to market to a gullible and dependent consumer population (Ono & Sloop, 1995, pp. 21-25; Jameson, 2006, pp. 484-486; Horkheimer & Adorno, 2006, pp. 47-52).

The aforementioned subcultural osmosis of HM and HC into a singular entity has yielded a number of complications and/or contradictions for both the ideology and the performative masculine identity associated with HC. Old school HC, at least on the surface level, supported an ideology of inclusion and acceptance, delivered, at least purportedly, with the hope of

fomenting revolution and producing social change (Haenfler, 2006, p. 11; Wood, 2006, p. 3; Azerrad, 2001, p. 134). As HM and HC have become continuingly intertwined, certain sociopolitical elements of HC discourse have fallen away. In other words, as HM and HC become one in the same, HC's ideological component has eroded. Aesthetic elements of contemporary HC, albeit evolved from proto-HC, have been introduced to the HM realm as complimentary stylistic adornments. In this way, the introduction of HC sounds to HM's musical palate has operated as what Adorno (1990) defines as "pseudoindividualization," the process by which sonic variations such as riffs, flourishes and solos are introduced to differentiate one piece of popular music from another in the quest to continually produce the new (p. 304). These newly introduced elements have offered novel ways of further intensifying the HM experience, especially musically, but are bereft of old school HC's emancipatory discourse. Still, the jackhammer speed and crushing sonic devastation of HM/HC crossover is alluring for HC participants, many of whom have abandoned HC ideology in the process of subcultural osmosis with HM. For that matter, many of the younger kids being introduced to the HM/HC scene were never introduced to HC's ideology of inclusion and emancipation in the first place. For these kids, HC is a variant of HM, one that has never been about politics, one that was never associated with punk—and most certainly one that has never involved even a smattering of political correctness to begin with. As Jacob explains, contemporary HC is considered by many to be an offshoot of metal instead of an intensified version of punk. "With modern HC, I can't see any kind of sociopolitical outlook or mindset. With most modern HM and HC bands, I don't see any type of political motivation behind it at all."

The evolution of HC into a depoliticized offshoot of HM, the result of subcultural osmosis, has certainly resulted in alteration of masculine identities associated with HC more so

than it has those of HM. Today's HC participants are less concerned with political correctness

(or at least presenting a façade of political correctness) than their antecedents in proto and old

school HC had been. More simply put, today's HC kids are less anarchist and more dude—more

party and less protest.

As such, HC participants of today have a more *laissez faire* attitude about sexism and are

likewise more concerned that they self-present as alpha males. Granted, today's HC look for

males is a bit more glam—but presenting oneself in this way is presumed to be a means to "get

chicks." In this way, the more androgynously styled HC participants are still more or less

accepted among the hierarchy of HM dudes. With the amalgamation of HM and HC identities

comes the abandonment of HC's emancipatory discourse, as evidenced through openly

misogynistic lyrics, fashion accouterments (and, thus, consumerist/materialist outlook), and the

open admissions of careerism by contemporary HC performers.[60] This is not to say that proto

and old school HC were (and are—what remains of them, that is) avowedly masculinist enclaves,

but that new school HC and HM/HC crossover is shorn of even the trappings of political

correctness that had characterized earlier HC discourse. As contemporary HC has become more

and more imbricated by HM, HC participants, especially those (and there are many) who have

not adopted neo-glam HC styles are more likely to take on the working-class postures of their

counterparts in HM. The aforementioned increase in sexist attitudes among HC participants is

perhaps a symptom of the encroachment of HM's performative working-classness upon HC

identities. This is not to say that the working-class is more sexist than the middle-class, but that

the performative working-classness of HM being adopted by today's HC kids includes

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[60] Early HC was, at least purportedly, an anti-materialist and anti-fame, "no rock stars" enclave.

performed expressions of sexism such as referring to women as "chicks," "whores" and "coatracks," or repeating the asinine adage, "no clit in the pit."

For the most part, HC is being absorbed by HM. Many of the participants in this study have asserted that this absorption process is in fact already complete. (Granted, there are also factions of both HM and HC that vehemently oppose this merger, insisting that in order to "stay true," the two enclaves should always remain strictly demarcated.) Likewise, HC masculinity is being subsumed by HM masculinity, which is to say, basically, that HC kids are aping the performative masculinity of HM and therefore, the once separate identities are becoming one. Bearing in mind the working-class roots of HM and the subsequent linkage of HM masculinity and working-classness, it becomes clear that HM/HC masculinity is as well inextricably linked with working-classness. It reasonably follows that the performance of working-classness by the many middle and upper-class participants of HM and HC could be interpreted as "a form of resistance, albeit not a radical one, to middle-class and upper class culture, and as a spirited defense against their own subordination" by the very class structures that actually afforded them lives of privilege (Strinati, 2004, p. 31). As Bourdieu (2001) explains, society is structured in an androcentric way—a method that surreptitiously places males at the forefront of motion and instrumentality—and that such androcentrism is most visibly symbolized through the depiction of males performing physical (i.e. working-class) labor (p. 82). Thus, in the context of the masculinist enclaves of HM and HC, to affect working-classness (as "dude-ness") is to affect masculinity. To "do" masculinity in today's merged HM/HC scene, participants must also "do" working class. By "doing" one, the male HM/HC participant also "does" the other. As Butler (1991) contends, almost any form of self-representation "requires a certain performance and production of a 'self' which is the *constituted effect* of a discourse that nevertheless claims to

'represent' itself as a prior truth (p. 124). Crucially, with the repetition of any performance of the self comes the internalization of that performance: Once we imitate behaviors pertinent to certain ways of being long enough, we come think of those repeated, performed behaviors as being innate and natural—and in this way we become what we portray (Butler, 1990, pp. xv-xvii).

For many HM and HC participants, affectation becomes reality in short order. As Butler contends, identities are internalized as a result of "gendered stylization of the body" (1990, p. xv). Such stylization of the body comes quickly and permanently in the form of tattooing. HM and HC participants are oftentimes heavily tattooed. And the practice of tattooing, obviously, has long-term consequences. Through tattooing, HM and HC participants can quickly and permanently mark themselves as members of a particular tribe in ways that may prove to limit their options in the future. Such a situation occurred during in my interaction with Marie over the course of this study. Prior to this study Marie had been a student of mine. While she was still one of my students (prior to this study) Marie had decided to get a tattoo on her birthday. When she asked me what kind of tattoo she should get, I advised her to think it over for a long time, perhaps indefinitely—my hope being that if she kept putting it off for long enough, she would decide not to get one at all. Around a year later, once this study had commenced, I interviewed Marie, who had by then gotten several tattoos, graduated from college and joined the work force. Asked how participating in HM and HC might affect someone's place in society, Marie responded as follows:

> I would say (long pause), oh man… I would say you're probably lower on the totem pole [as a consequence of portraying oneself as part of HM and/or HC]. From where I work now, I would say that the hiring opportunities aren't that good if you look a certain way.

Remember when we had that whole talk about tattoos before I got one (laughing)? Luckily, my boss doesn't care. But there's a manager at my work [who plays in a popular Atlanta HM band] who has had real problems getting work because he has full sleeves[61] and dresses a certain way. So I would say you can lose more respect [in the workforce] if you present yourself in a certain way.

In this way, when HM and HC participants portray themselves as belonging to these enclaves through tattooing, they are oftentimes stigmatized—perceived by outsiders as belonging to lower or criminal classes and, therefore, denied job opportunities. Thus, performative working-classness results in in having less potential for social mobility,[62] if not necessarily *becoming* working-class.

In yet another way, the pseudo working-class masculinity of HM and HC is reflective of the postmodern condition. With the neoliberal economics of globalization, the working class is an enclave that is fast disappearing from Western society. As Hardt & Negri (2009) contend, we tend to think of the working-class (and thus working-classness) via the abstraction of labor—"the working class" is more a construct than a population, and the conceptualization of this working-class construct is enabled most easily through the visual representation of labor in different contexts (p. 159). As America continues its move away from the production of material commodities toward a polarized economic structure with creators of intellectual property occupying the middle-class tier, a sustenance-level (at best) class of service providers performing menial tasks and little in-between, "the working class," as commonly associated with factory work and other blue-collar jobs, becomes only a fiction—and this fiction is supported through

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[61] The term "full sleeves" means that a person's entire arms are covered in tattoos.

[62] Granted, this is a somewhat extreme story. With a haircut and a change of clothes, non-tattooed HC and HM participants can easily "pass" in straight society. But tattoos are *de rigueur* in HC and HM communities, and a significant proportion of HC and HM participants do in fact get them.

the representation of working-classness as it occurs in HM and HC.[63] In this way, subcultural

authenticity itself is a simulacrum of a class position that is shrinking if not disappearing in the

U.S. As such, the self, as performed in HM and HC enclaves, is reduced to below the level of

abstraction. The performance of the self in HM and HC is a reference to a way of being that, for

the most part, no longer exists—or at least no longer exists as it is portrayed through

performative working-classness. Nevertheless, the symbolic representation of HM and HC

participants as working class yields an effect of disempowerment. Whether or not the fictive

"working class" practitioners of HM/HC masculinity perform physical labor becomes a moot

point. The symbolic representation of oneself as working-class results in the classification of

being working-class, or at least being, as Marie explained, "lower on the totem pole." The

interconnection of gender, class and race occurring in HM and HC identities as masculine

working-classness operate in this way as simulacra. HM and HC working-class identities are not

grounded in the lived world (as if they ever were), but representing oneself as such nevertheless

yields both social and economic repercussions.

"Fractured Mirrors": Heavy Metal and Hardcore as the Hyperreal

HM and HC kids, however, are by no means dupes. Many are in fact quite savvy about

the nature of performativity that ensues in their subcultures, its meaning (or lack thereof), and the

inanity and illusoriness of what is presented as authenticity in these subcultural settings.

Regarding the connection of performative masculinity and working-classness, Blake comments

that "I don't know if that [masculinity] is connected more with the class of the people attending

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[63] HC and HM are by no means the only groups whose members self-portray as working-class. Participants of
country music and hip-hop subcultures, for example, similarly affect working classness as self-representational
strategies.

the shows or more with the class they're trying to portray." Expounding about the performativity

of working-classness in HM and HC enclaves, Alan is more adamant, perhaps even cynical:

> It's like people [in HM and HC] are not really from that [working-class] background but
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> wanting to be that background. Where I came from there are people who came from these
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> rich backgrounds and they're like, 'I'm going to move into the city, and I'm going to live
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> in this dumpy apartment, and I'm going to wear these shitty clothes." I would say that a
>
> lot of times it's people sort of aping working-class in a way to sort of be seen as legit—
>
> like, "I wasn't born with a silver spoon in my mouth."

Perhaps such awareness of the hollowness of the identities presented in pop culture content (in

this case being HM and HC content) as "authenticity" is indicative of what Baudrillard (2006)

defines as "hyperreality," the postmodern condition of all references and no referent, a virtual

hall of mirrors where everything is a copy of a copy with no original object, no *a priori* thing

which is of essence, nothing that "has it" (pp. 453-454). Pivotally, Baudrillard's notion of

hyperreality echoes Hebdige, whose structural analysis of punk rock in *Subculture: the Meaning*

of Style was oddly prophetic of postmodern fragmentation and simulacra: "Subcultures are…

representations of these representations, and elements taken from the 'picture' of working-class

life (and of the social whole in general) are bound to find some echo" in the communicative

practices of subcultures such as HM and HC (p. 86). That the identities presented as real are in

fact inauthentic needn't necessarily make HM and HC any less compelling for participants who

are aware of this duplicity, however. Perhaps the HM and HC kids of today know that the

suspension of disbelief is a requisite action in a media-saturated world, just another necessary

step that must be taken to pursue what is exciting, spectacular, dramatic and/or entertaining.

Maybe the postmodern masquerading of pseudo-authenticity is part of the fun of subcultural participation, even.

While the masculine, white working-classness of HM and HC is a form of play-acting for the majority of its participants, such performances oftentimes evoke visceral and truly emotionally-charged responses and provide the participants with the *experience* of activism, anarchy and revolution, however contrived. Muggleton (2000) articulately summarized the following experience with his explanation that "subculturalists revel in simulation culture, refusing meaning in the name of the spectacle" (p. 46). A performance by the HC/crust punk[64] band the Casualties at the tiny venue, The Drunken Unicorn, perhaps best exemplified the way that such performed rebellion is received experientially as the real thing and provokes a dramatic response. In this particular case, subculturalists (the HC/crust punks in attendance) set aside that what was presented as reality was not real so that they could fully embrace and best enjoy the experience. At the show, around 200 HC and crust punk kids, most of them in their late teens, congregated in the smoky basement venue that was surely filled over its legal capacity to participate in a rite of ritualized mayhem that, judging by the fervor of the audience, was taken seriously indeed. The dialogue at the show was chock full of revolutionary rhetoric that, however empty, was received as gospel truth. At one point in the show the Casualties' singer exclaimed, "We're poor, you're poor, the system has failed us again," as an introduction to a song of the same title ("The System Has Failed Us Again"). Shaggily coiffed and clad head-to-toe in expensive punk couture, the middle-class audience, clothed in pricey accouterments of faux poverty, responded in a frenzied crush of slam dancing. If you were in the room, you were

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[64] Crust punk is a subgenre of punk/HC that espouses anarchist politics. Its participants are "crusty" because they rarely bathe and dress in ragged, dirty clothes. Bands that are influential in the crust punk scene include the Subhumans, Discharge, Crass, Anti-Cimex and the Casualties. Many runaways are crust punks, especially those who hang around the bohemian neighborhoods of Atlanta like Little Five Points and Cabbagetown.

getting knocked about, period. Later in the show, the Casualties' singer announced, "If you're subculture, you're one of us: punk rock, hardcore, metalheads, skinheads, it's all the same to us! But if you're not subculture, we fucking hate you!" Again, the audience responded rapturously. Clearly, those in attendance were indeed part of subculture. But to say that they were necessarily poor or that they had been subjugated by "the man" in some way was a stretch.[65] It seemed that the audience almost wished that they were oppressed so that they could be involved in the sexy, rollicking good times of an honest-to-goodness riot. After the show the kids left the building sweaty and exhausted, feeling as if they had done something wild and participated in a deviant rite. How do I know this? I used to be the same kind of kid. Like almost everyone else in attendance, I had a blast—and then drove my sensible, reliable car back to my well-furnished suburban apartment for TV and a warm bed. After a brief and exciting respite that felt like anarchy and *was* chaotic in its way, I returned safely to the contentment of home and hearth. My experience was probably no different than those of the rest of the oppressed anarchists at the show.

Involvement in HM and HC subcultures produces a feeling of empowerment, a certain spiritual ecstasy, even, for participants. And, retrospectively looking back at my 30-plus years of involvement in these enclaves, I still see my involvement as a means to attaining a voice—if only in the demarcated enclaves of HM and HC and not in the "real" world. HM and HC are havens for those who somehow feel that they are misfits. And through involvement in these enclaves, thousands upon thousands of people have found a place to fit in. Still, such entities might be regarded simply as highly evolved forms of "bread and circus" within which participants can experience faux catharses that yield a feeling of insurgency that in fact produces

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[65] Allowing that *everyone* is at least somehow subjugated by "the man," I still contend that the bulk of the kids in attendance at the Casualties show came from middle-class or higher stations.

nothing in terms of social change (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 6; Stallybrass & White, 1988, p. 13;

Horkheimer & Adorno, 2006, p. 52).

As social microcosms that are structured similarly to society at large, HM and HC are

white, masculine hierarchies. The contradiction of HM and HC hierarchies, however, is that

while the masculinity of HM and HC is only a slight variation on the heteronormative

masculinity of the greater culture, establishing a position for oneself within the masculine social

hierarchies of HM and HC does not translate as male power in the extra-subcultural, "real"

world. In this way, masculinist subcultures like HM and HC might provide the proverbial

powers-that-be with the ideal means of placating and diverting discontented and rebellious sorts

while maintaining the gendered social order at the same time. In terms of gender and race, HM

and HC most certainly maintain the status quo: Hierarchic power is attained in these enclaves

through performative enactments of maleness that support the white phallogocentrism of

Western society while simultaneously subjugating the males in these hierarchies.

In summary, male power is strictly held in place by the structuring of these subcultures—

but the males in these enclaves are nevertheless rendered second-class citizens through their

participation, or at least held in stasis in the second-class positions they already occupied in the

first place. On the margins, the males in power in HM and HC subcultures are the butts of jokes,

pitied, ridiculed, or just ignored by the mainstream. Therefore, the masculinity of HM and HC

subcultures can be classifiable as double-edged masculinity, a form of masculinity that maintains

male power, all the while keeping the male participants of these enclaves "in their (class-based)

place." This is not to say that HM and HC were developed as a part of a sinister plan, but that,

once again, in a Gramscian way, the structures of power replicate themselves—just as the

structures of subjugation beget further subjugation. The effects, however, are the same: The

young and primarily male participants of HM and HC subcultures may feel the experience of

power through these enclaves on a visceral/emotional level, but this power is only experiential

and, thus, fleeting. And yet these enclaves *do* serve a real purpose—for what is life if not the

experiential? Regardless of how one experiences meaning, it is *still* meaningful for them. So the

experiences of HM and HC can be as real as the participants want them to be. Meanwhile, those

atop the social hierarchy go on about their business, heedless of the performed anarchy and

pseudo-violence that deafens the ears of HM and HC devotees at shabby, smoke-filled venues in

every town. And so it goes.

"Walk Together, Rock Together": The Follow-Up Interviews

At this point in the study, I was beset by nagging doubts. I had chosen to study HM and

HC in this dissertation for three reasons. First, HM and HC are primarily male enclaves where

gender, race, and class are key elements of subcultural identities that are co-constructed in social

interactions by males and for males. Through the analysis of these distinct yet overlapping and

merging subcultures, I would have the opportunity to observe how masculinity is enacted in

subcultural variations. Secondly, I chose to study HM and HC because these subcultures are

ideologically laden and participants enter these enclaves at a crucial juncture (adolescence) for

identity formation. Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, I chose to study HM and HC because

they are communities that operate in subterfuge: People know that these subcultures exist, but

their impressions of these groups are quite often misled. And, as someone who has participated

in both of these subcultures, I felt that I could shed light on exactly what is going on within these

groups. I love HM and HC, and participating in these subcultures has had a profound effect on

who I am. And that was the sticking point. I had a nagging feeling that I was on a crash course

toward the conclusion that HM and HC subcultures were "dead-end" enclaves—that HM and HC

participation was a one-way ticket to Loserville. Yes, there are many questionable facets of

these subcultures, especially as pertains to the ways that gender is portrayed. And yes, some HM

and HC participants *do* find themselves in something of a subcultural cul-de-sac. Nevertheless,

HM and HC are compelling and have profound emotional resonance for me—and surely my

lifetime participation in these groups has been worthwhile. It seemed that the analytical tack I

was taking with the research was leading me toward results that were perhaps too severe. I was

also worried about presenting my work to the core participants of the study for their review.

How would they respond? With the direction it was going, would the dissertation anger the

participants—people whose very lives rotated around HM and HC subcultures?

Still, I soldiered on, following the plan. I submitted the drafts to all of the core

participants and asked for their reactions to the interpretations that I had reached. Following suit

with the bottom-up epistemological approach advocated by rhetorical theorist Michael McGee

(1983) and by feminist scholars such as Harding (1992, 2004), Collins (2000, 2004), and

Hartsock (2004) and explained at length in the methodology section, I sought these participant

responses to my conclusions as a means of allowing the participants to have a "voice" in the

execution and analysis of this project. To my surprise, the core participants' reactions were

initially supportive and in agreement with the direction the dissertation was taking, although

further prodding revealed some reservations.

Perhaps the most surprising positive response was Blake's, regarding my somewhat

pessimistic analysis of the Casualties' show (see pages 142-143). I was intrigued by Blake's

response, not because he was critical of the Casualties,[66] but because he likened the experience of performative anarchy of the "posers" at that show to his own in the more dogma-driven and politically correct sub-enclaves of HC. The following passage from one of Blake's emails[67] is telling for its candor and self-reflexivity:

> I think the most important assertion you made came …where you talked about being at the Casualties show (I fucking hate that band, by the way. What a bunch of posers.) and it had that element of anarchy, yet everyone was wearing this overpriced shit to try to look poor and punk. And after you guys got all sweaty and rowdy at this show, you got in your cars and drove back to comfort.
>
> I do the same thing and I never think about it. I'll go play a show and scream about all these things that have hurt me or that anger me, and the whole time I'm just brooding. Then I get in my car, with the nice sound system and the leather seats, and I'll plug in my iPhone for some music. I get home and I turn on my high-definition TV and my Mac and get lost in the internet. I'll lay down in my bed, in my air conditioned room and go to sleep with ease. None of that is to say that what I'm in hardcore for is any less valid, it's just that it isn't quite my life's mission the way that it maybe was in the past.

Blake,[68] who was exceedingly invested in HC and in a lot of ways followed the HC "party line," was still very critical of his subculture, openly and honestly admitting that in some ways the very subcultural practices that held such meaning for him were for the most part symbolic, perhaps even empty.

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[66] Apparently, the Casualties are regarded as being a "poser" band by many in HM and HC circles. In the follow-up interviews, Blake, Chuck and Alan all called the Casualties posers. Still, the band has a devoted following.

[67] Although I did communicate with participants via email, none of the interviews were via email. Blake's above quotation was from an email where we were making arrangements to have another face-to-face interview.

[68] Readers should be aware that Blake is highly educated, currently pursuing a Master's degree in sociology. As such, Blake is perhaps better prepared to offer a nuanced, abstract and detached analysis of his subcultural participation than some of the other participants.

Of all the participants in the follow-up interviews, Blake was the least troubled by the tack the dissertation seemed to be following at this point. Others were not so comfortable. With a little bit of conversational prodding, one by one they acknowledged that they were in fact uneasy because they felt that the study was too harsh of an indictment of HM and HC subcultures. Sam said that reading the draft made him feel a bit silly that he so ardently participated in HM:

There's not anything in there [the dissertation] that I feel exempt from because I… Some of the stuff in there comes out being sad but true, almost. Some of that stuff, the conclusion you came to, inevitably I've come to the same conclusion several times. In a weird way sometimes when it's put in your face [the trivial aspects of HM and HC], you say to yourself, "well, what am I doing?" Maybe it [the dissertation] trivializes everything. That's the conclusion I'm coming to on my own—but maybe I'm in denial.

But metal makes you feel a certain way. Even though I've come to the same conclusion [as the draft] that maybe it's just a bunch of boys beating their chests and trying to be as masculine as possible, it's still something that you can't give up. Even if someone breaks it down to you and says how stupid this is, the emotion that you get when you see a crowd working together, or see a band working together, it doesn't seem to matter. If you're doing HM or HC, *you want to do it*. Nobody told you that this was the cool thing to do. You do it because it's what you believe in and it's who you are. It runs so deep.

In her follow-up interview, Nichole was especially critical of the way that the dissertation seemed to belittle HM and HC. Her point of contention was mainly about how the ways that

power had been defined. She felt that HM and HC were in fact empowering for participants—at least on a personal level. Nichole expounds:

> I think it's important for you to realize that, you know, people that are into metal feel empowered. And maybe it's important to just look at the difference between… A lot of it rests on how you define empowerment. Is it [participating in HM and HC] empowering yourself to live a better life, a life that you find more rewarding, or is it about being empowered in the larger culture? I mean, what is empowerment? Is it something that you feel personally as you go through life, or is it something that other people assign to you? And if other people assign it to you, then what's the value of that—to you?

> But anyway, it seems like in the paper maybe it [HM and HC] is not that important and that maybe these people [participants] are disempowering themselves and becoming "white trash." Maybe I'm struggling a little bit with the whole idea of these people getting into metal and becoming disempowered white trash! But by the same token, if that's what they're becoming, then maybe that's not so bad.

> I mean, these people are very loyal to one another [laughing], they're *very* loyal to their bands, you know? But it's not just about the music. It's the music that leads them there, but it's also about the people and this family that they find and the relationships that they find. I don't know, I would hate for people to look at that [the dissertation] and think those people are kind of stupid. I mean, there *are* dumb parts to the culture [laughing], but it's like that with *any* culture, you know?

Each and every one of the participants in the follow-up interviews expressed some kind of disagreement regarding the notion that participation in HM and HM is somehow productive of

disempowerment. Blake asserted that "there were times when I was reading it [the paper] and I felt myself getting defensive about it—kind of wanting to interject and say, 'wait a minute—that's not how it really is.'" Chuck vented that "maybe you're not looking at the positives that it gives the young male." Dana enthused that "when I got into metal, it gave me an identity. People saw me and they saw *that*: like she's *that* chick, she plays in a band, she's into metal. It [participation in HM] *did* give me that power. Without it, I don't think I would be who I am."

Of course, all of this gave me pause. And I was *already* unhappy with the direction the dissertation was taking. Sure, in the terms of the entire culture, participation in HM and HC subcultures may be disempowering in some ways—but so what? As Fiske (1989) contends, looking only at the ideological impact of (sub)culture impels a certain analytical myopia: "Analyzing popular texts, then requires a double focus. …To confine ourselves to this [ideological] focus alone is not only to cut ourselves off from an equally important area of culture… but also to confine ourselves to a position that is ultimately disabling in its pessimism" (p. 105). And in my analysis, I was doing exactly that. By looking only at how the forces of domination were working within HM and HC subcultures, I was underestimating the importance of these subcultures and focusing only on the negatives—which was antithetical to my own ideas that HM and HC *are* in fact important and *do* empower participants in some ways. At this point of illumination, I decided to reconsider, refocus, and reanalyze. It was also time to revisit the literature to support the emerging argument of the dissertation. Thus, with the urging of the core participants, the co-interpretation I have advocated in the methodology section would become a reality: I would neither glorify nor trivialize HM and HC subcultures, but would instead strive to present a balanced picture that weighed both the negatives and the positives.

5. CONCLUSIONS

"Going Nowhere Faster Than You": Ideological Entailments of Heavy Metal and Hardcore

As enthusiastic members of proud pariah enclaves, HM and HC participants are hailed or interpellated into ideology (Althusser, 2006, pp. 84-85) in subtle ways. Participation in HM and HC is voluntary, and to participate in these enclaves offers an experience of empowerment and/or emancipation. HM and HC are more than genres, more than collections of similar (musical) texts. They are social entities, vibrant communities. Moreso than mere fandom, involvement in HM and HC subcultures is productive of an identity or subject position for participants. In other words, participants of HM and HC subcultures do not just like certain kinds of music—they *become* a certain kind of person as a result of their involvement in a music-related subculture. Through engagement with the texts and communities of HM and HC, participants are summoned into being in a certain subject position (White, 1987, p. 193). As Brummett & Bowers (1999) contend, "People are called to [through hailing] in such a way that they are socially defined and situated subjects. Thus, whole groups of people… are socially defined by the texts of popular culture" (p. 120). For HM and HC participants, this subject position conflates masculinity with performative working-classness. The effect of this subject position in not limited to males in these enclaves, however. Female participants in HM and HC are hailed into masculinist ideology as well, oftentimes assuming subjugated positions within these subcultural hierarchies as a result. Ultimately, participation in HM and HC enclaves is an inherently political process—even though HM and HC participants are quite often avowedly apolitical and experience their participation in these communities as being likewise bereft of

political engagement. As explained prior, the adoption of HM and HC identities (and the intermingling of these identities explained as subcultural osmosis) yields lived, material consequences for participants; and, therefore, the meanings and meaning-making activities of these subcultures are inherently politically-charged. The texts and discourses of HM and HC constitute the identities of the participants of these enclaves. And since HM and HC are masculinist enclaves, the ideologies of these enclaves are ideologies of masculinity. One needn't be misled, however, that the masculinist ideology espoused and/or enacted in HM and HC subcultures is necessarily the result of "natural" or innate attributes of maleness. The masculinist proclivities of HM and HC are the result of socialization. Gardiner (2000) perhaps put it best by stating that "nothing [is] 'essential' about men that encourages the reified character of the masculinist worldview; it is a by-product of their location in a specific set of social and cultural practices that reinforces a certain ideological perspective on the world" (p. 193).

This ideological perspective pertinent to HM and HC is something of a bait and switch. The feeling of empowerment offered through participation in HM and HC subcultures is at least to a degree illusory. Granted, establishing subcultural capital is indeed empowering for participants of HM and HC from *within* these enclaves. But this in-group power does not translate as tangible (male) power in the extra-subcultural, "real" world. Nevertheless, participation in HM and HC is *understood* by participants as enabling of power. From a critical perspective, participation in HM and HC is understood as an experience of empowerment which is in truth marginalizing. As Gramsci (1972) explains, who stated that the function of hegemony was to manufacture "spontaneous" consent (p. 12). Participants in HM and HC voluntarily enter these enclaves, feel as if they are rebelling by joining groups that are somewhat conformist,[69] and

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[69] This contradiction is explained earlier in this work as the pariah/conformist paradox.

experience their alienation and/or disassociation from the mainstream as emancipation. So, how does this process take place? Why do HM and HC participants willingly adopt subject positions that are in some ways disempowering for them?

The key to the "success" of HM and HC as discourses that surreptitiously perpetuate the ideology of the existing white, masculinist order lies in the conjoint function of performative masculinity and performative working-classness that is part and parcel of these enclaves. HM and HC have proven ideal for producing politically disempowered constituencies through the many paradoxes of these subcultures: they are both rebellious and conformist, they are anarchistic/leftist yet conservative, they are inclusive yet elitist, they are anti-materialistic—yet the iconography of these enclaves is to a large degree based upon the archetypal imagery of white, working-class masculinity. The aforementioned paradoxes of HM and HC identities are somehow enabled by equating power and agency with mythic maleness. Through this symbolic connection of power with maleness, and through the symbolic connection of maleness with working-classness, HM and HC produce constituencies that effectively cancel out their own potential—all the while delivering an experience of power for their primarily male participants.

The subject positions of HM and HC are created first through the music of HM and HC performers and, secondly and more powerfully, through participation in HM and HC communities. Through hailing, HM and HC music creates both ways of being and communities. Then, through social interaction and repetition (as performativity), HM and HC communities reify themselves. First and foremost, subject positions are created by propagating the idea that those being hailed are somehow empowered or at least hold the potential for empowerment and/or authority. Brummett & Bowers (1999) expound:

> To create subjects, then, a text will say (to a subject or about a group of subjects) "you do what you do because of the decisions you have made." …Second, a text will call to an identified subject position as one having a *voice.* …That voice has a distinctive style that marks the subject as "real," as personal, as individual. A subject's voice reflects a distinctive verbal and nonverbal style; it may include a vocabulary or argot (p. 125)

The subject as created through the music/performance-as-text and communities of HM and HC meet these specifications: HM and HC are steeped in the language of power and rebellion, the HM/HC subject is hailed as an individual, both HM and HC discourses perpetuate the idea that participants are empowered or "given a voice" through participation in these enclaves, and HM and HC have distinctive vocabularies, musical and visual styles, and comportments that mark the subject as "real." Establishing and maintaining authenticity (as "cred") in these enclaves is in fact one of the key activities for any participant of HC and/or HM. All of the abovementioned elements are equated with masculinity in HM and HC subcultures: decisiveness and instrumentality are masculine characteristics, those "having a voice" in HM and HC enclaves are almost exclusively males, HM and HC are masculine speech communities, and the visual styles and comportments associated with HM and HC[70] are also those that are understood as being characteristically male in Western society. Woman participants in HM and HC communities are effectively complicit in their subordination in these enclaves in a binary way: Those who become "one of the guys" take on a masculinized identity and postures which in effect mimic those of their predominately male counterparts, while those who adopt more feminized roles operate in collusion with the binary gender frame by assuming a passive identity that is positioned as the inverse of masculinity. "She [the woman assuming a passive, feminized role] reflects masculine

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[70] In both the literature used in this research and in the interviews of both male and female participants, participation in HC and HM subcultures is repeatedly noted as being somehow masculinizing for females in these subcultures.

identity precisely through being the site of its absence" (Butler, 1990, p. 52). As Irigaray (1985) contends, this "woman as inverse" stratagem is not truly even binary—for it is based solely on the discursive construction of a single entity, the male: The "female" in not ideated so much an opposite of the male, but only as an absence or nonentity (p. 69). However one chooses to conceptualize the gendered structuring of HM and HC subcultures (or of the parent culture within which HM and HC subcultures exist, for that matter), the effect is the same. Yet again, "spontaneous" consent is fabricated through the machinations of social interplay—the only difference being, in this case, that the conventional, masculinist gendered order is being replicated from within the subcultural contexts of HM and HC.

After being effectively hailed, many participants in HM and HC subcultures at some point consciously decide to "be" HC and/or HM. For example, Dana explained that her assumption of an HM identity was swift and complete. "Once I found the music, that was it. Everyone's like, when did this change happen? I just liked the culture more—everything about it." At this juncture, HC and/or HM becomes more than a genre, but a way of life. Once one "becomes" HC and/or HM, maintaining and policing the membership of the subculture becomes a *raison d' etree*. As Hebdige (1979) explains, subculture participants "in part contest and in part agree with the dominant definition of who and what they are" (p. 86). "Struggle takes place over how groups of people are textually represented because those representations are the raw materials for constructing subject positions" (Brummett & Bowers, 1999, p. 121). Therefore, while HM and HC kids commonly see what they do in their respective subcultures as being apolitical, their day-to-day efforts to maintain and delineate insider status are inherently political. In other words, since HM and HC participants contribute to the ways that their subcultures are presented, represented, and re-presented, their activities are characteristically political.

Likewise, participation in HM and HC is political in that these subcultures, through their

symbolic embrace of the working-class, are resistant to the dominant ideology of white, upper-

class materialism while at the same time reifying the dominant ideology of masculinity. And

since the imagery and constituencies of HM and HC are overwhelmingly male and connotative

of a masculinist worldview, HM and HC identity politics are fundamentally struggles over the

representation of masculinity in these groups.

When a person chooses to adopt a proud pariah identity associated with HC and/or HM

subcultures, that person is also (most likely unknowingly) taking on a host of beliefs,

comportments, suppositions and orthodoxies that Bourdieu (1998) defines as *doxas*, politically-

produced systems of relations that are presented as common sense assumptions (p. 56). "Doxa is

a particular point of view… which presents and imposes itself as a universal point of view" (p.

57). For participants, the rhetoric of HM and HC produces what McKerrow (1989) defines as

doxatic knowledge, knowledge of ways of being that are unquestioned in a particular set of (in

this case subcultural) social relations (pp. 104-105). Through doxas, the established order (in the

case of this study, a white, masculinist order) presents what is socio-politically constructed (male

power within the constraints of capitalism) as unspoken "truths" or as human nature. In this

way, relations of power that were constructed in the abstract realm of thought by those in power

are understood to be manifestations of biology and corporeality (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 470).

Hence, what Bourdieu defines as doxa is remarkably similar to what Butler defines as

performativity. Noting this conceptual confluence, Butler (1999) contends that "the 'rules of the

game' [as doxas] are, quite literally, *incorporated*, made into a second nature" (p. 116). As

Butler explains, through performativity, socially-constructed doxas become, for all intents and

purposes, inscribed upon the body: The socially-constructed *becomes* the corporeal through

performativity. Butler contends that such processes of bodily inscription are particularly

efficacious in terms of gender construction (p. 120). Taking Butler's concepts a step further, it

becomes clear that identity classifications such as gender, race, class, and the intermeshing of

these elements, are (in succession) first discursively constructed, then performed, and, finally,

embodied through repetition. And this process is first set in motion through hailing. "The

performative is not merely an act used by a pregiven subject, but is one of the powerful and

insidious ways in which subjects are called into being" through interpellations (p. 125) which are

most potently set in motion for adolescents in high-intensity social groups such as HM and HC

subcultures. Thus, HM and HC become the conduits through which relations of (male) power

are internalized by adolescents drawn by the maximal-sensation allure of "the devil's music."

Although HM and HC are indeed subcultures, they are hardly different from more standard

institutions of socialization such as sports, the church, educational systems and the family as

pertains to gender construction. As earlier established, HM and HC communities operate for

many participants as surrogate families, and the gender socialization enabled through these

channels is astonishingly similar to that which takes place in the family context. In terms of the

construction of the gendered subject, HM and HC are simply microcosms of the parent culture—

another way that the gendered order is reinscribed, this time through the means of the subcultural

"families" that accrete around violently sexy music.

Tellingly, HM and HC are defined by participants not only as "families," but also as

"brotherhoods," a designation that is indicative of the patriarchal structuring of these subcultures.

Granting that males negotiate their interaction in HM and HC enclaves with a higher degree of

social power than their female counterparts, the double-edged hegemonic masculinity of HM and

HC nevertheless does little if anything to bolster the masculine power of HM and HC males

within the larger society. This is to say that while HM and HC are indeed male hierarchies, and while young men *enter* these enclaves more empowered than females, that they do not become more empowered as males *in the parent culture* through their participation in these subcultures. Basically, HM and HC subcultures strictly enforce the status quo of male dominance while, at the same time, holding their primarily male participants in a form of stasis in regard to the larger culture.

HM and HC are carnivalesque subcultures, and therein lays a clue as to how these enclaves are productive of disempowered subject positions within the context of mainstream society. The carnival of the medieval period, as explained by Bakhtin (1984), was an all-involving, *lived* spectacle: Everyone participated; and in the period of the carnival, all experienced something of a "second life" (pp. 7-8). Likewise, members of HM and HC subcultures experience a second life through participation in these enclaves. As Gardiner (2000) theorizes, "everyday life" is the proverbial common thread that binds all human existence, the shared, mundane experiences that constitute what we come to know as the common elements of being and the self (pp. 1-3). Carnival and the carnivalesqe operate in ways that deliver inverse takes on the identities and ways of being of everyday life (Bakhtin, 1984, 6-14; Gardiner, 2000, pp. 66-67). For the most immersed participants of HM and HC, the carnivalesque becomes the commonplace. Likewise, the carnivalesque identities of HM and HC—identities understood by those outside of subculture as being grotesque, exaggerated, and temporary—become fulltime identities. Through the adoption of hypermasculine posturings that equate working-classness with an "elemental" maleness,[71] HM and HC participants gain subcultural capital and become more alluring to other participants within their subcultures, but, at the same time, become "the

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[71] This "elemental" maleness is, of course, socially-constructed, replicated through performativity, and then *understood* to be of essence.

grotesque" in the eyes of the mainstream. Ironically, as the most dedicated participants of HM and HC become further estranged from the mainstream as the grotesque, their actions and ways of self-presentation function in a way that backhandedly supports the mainstream—and, likewise, exponentially decreases their opportunities in the extra-subcultural world outside of HM and HC. In this way, when the carnivalesque becomes everyday life, HM and HC participants function in a way that is analogous to that of the geek, the carny, the circus freak, the mutant. Antagonistic to the comparatively "high" orders of the everyday world and/or more conventional forms of artistic expression, the carnivalesque (such as HM and HC subcultures) nevertheless reinforce the power of the mainstream (Jenks, 2003, p. 173). Those most committed to HM and HC become the rank and file of these subcultures—enclaves that serve to affirm the very mainstream cultures that they mock (Julius, 2003, p. 193). Curiously, through becoming alpha males, replicating the most exaggerated postures of male deportment, and performing behaviors which are in many ways most conforming to archetypal Western masculinity in subculture, HM and HC males spur their own disempowerment in the parent culture.

As previously stated, HM and HC are homosocial enclaves where heteromasculinity is performed by men to gain the approval of other men. Noticeably, there are unambiguous homoerotic elements of both HM and HC (Blush, 2005, p. 38; Weinstein, 2000, pp. 103-105). Rooted in patriarchy, the skewed power relationships that favor men over women in HM and HC subcultures operate, in some ways, to enshroud the homoeroticism of these subcultures. As Irigaray (1985) explains, patriarchal hierarchies (such as HM and HC subcultures) employ male-exclusive systems of exchange that are deployed in ways that promote a homosexual mindset, all the while concealing its very existence. "The ruling [patriarchal] power is pretense or sham,

which still fails to recognize its own endogamies" (p. 192). Expounding on Irigaray's concepts, Butler (1991) notes that "the relations among patrilineal clans are based in homosexual desire, a repressed and, hence, disparaged sexuality …which is, finally, about the bounds of men, but which takes place through the heterosexual exchange and distribution of women" (p. 55). Such "transactions" most certainly take place in HM and HC subcultures: The minority of women in HM and HC are more or less treated as chattel, their acquisition (as girlfriends and/or sexual conquests) providing males with a means to "prove" their heterosexuality in paradoxically homomasculine subcultural environments. Certainly, the aforementioned patriarchal "exchange system" was noted by many of the interview participants in this study. That women were part of such an exchange system was stated most clearly (although perhaps unwittingly) by participants Sam and Randy, both of whom expressed that women were important to HM and HC communities because of their potential to draw other men to shows and, thereby, draw more men into these subcultures.

So, while participation in the masculine hierarchies of HM and HC rarely translates into male power outside of these subcultures, HM and HC males still are on the receiving end of certain powers accorded to them by the parent culture. In this way, HM and HC's replication of the masculinist structuring of the world at large yields in-group power for males in these enclaves. The situation occurring when males are accorded certain gender-related powers (but not necessarily the full spectrum) while not being in full agreement with the ideology of the hegemonic gender order is defined as "complicit masculinity" (Connell, 2005, p. 81). The double-edged masculinity of HM and HC subcultures falls into this category: HM and HC males, some of whom claim to be anti-sexist, certainly exploit whatever advantages hegemonic masculinity offers them in the subcultural milieu of HM/HC. As Connell (2005) posits, terms

such as "hegemonic masculinity," "complicit masculinity, and "marginalized masculinity" are useful when describing specific situations, but are by no means fixed identity classifications (p. 81). Such terms (and the new term offered in this study, "double-edged masculinity," for that matter) are "not fixed character types but configurations of practice generated in particular situations in a changing structure of relationships" (p. 81). Stated another way, the individual male may (unconsciously) pick and choose from a palate of styles of masculinity—opting for whatever is most expedient in a particular situation. Just as no individual has a singular identity, no individual male has a singular style of masculinity. Doubtlessly, HM and HC males are as fickle and sycophantic with their styles of masculinity as any other male in any other enclave, be it subcultural or mainstream. Over the course of this study, I encountered countless HM and HC males (both in my fieldwork and in interview settings) who would speak and act in ways that flip-flopped from one style of masculinity or one ideological stance to another in milliseconds: A young man would heedlessly pummel a woman in the moshpit and then, seconds later, take on a more protective, paternalistic posture around another female he was trying to shield from the slamming action; a young man (Sam) would express that it was great to see more women involved in HM, and seconds later refer to women who attended his band's shows as "whores." I even once heard a young man use the mismatched verbiage, "equality for chicks." All of these instances capably illustrate the complexity of gender relations in HM and HC. The aforementioned instances could also be understood as micro-level examples of the intricacies of gender relations that occur at the macro level in mainstream culture.

That involvement in male-dominated HM and HC subcultures impels a certain disenfranchisement, marginalization, and/or political de-mobilization for participants is best explained by the performativity of working-classness that is characteristic of these groups.

Assuming HM and HC identities, in this way, can be a pernicious process. Young men who already feel ostracized from the mainstream take on the identities related to HM and HC by donning the garb and assuming the postures characteristic of HM and HC maleness. These young men, then, are made more obvious targets for abuse. By joining these proud pariah subcultures, participants separate themselves further from the mainstream—from which they are already estranged and alienated. Nevertheless, there is the proverbial "strength in numbers" factor which fuels the fire: Young people who participate in HM and HC feel empowered by belonging to these groups; and they intensify the behaviors encouraged by these groups that are perceived in the parent culture as being antisocial. So their estrangement perpetuates itself. HM and HC identities are constructed discursively. And through their participation, HM and HC kids more or less *become* the persons they portray themselves as being. Through discursive and performative practices, the HM/HC subject position is developed—and this developed subject position translates tangibly in the mainstream. In this way, HM and HC operate as what Warner (2005) defines as "subaltern counterpublics," groups with contrary communication schemes that operate within the greater public (referred to as the parent culture in this treatise) whose members' subordinate status is created through their willing participation. Warner elaborates, stating that "some youth-culture publics or artistic publics [such as HM and HC] operate as counterpublics, even though many who participate in them are subaltern in no other sense" (p. 72). This is to say that through participation in HM and HC, alienated youths from middle-class backgrounds become the subaltern *by choice*. Symbolically, through the conjoint affectation of working-classness and heteromasculinity, HM and HC participants generate a form of identity for themselves that becomes doxa, is inscribed on the body through performativity, and, coming full circle, is realized as socioeconomic disempowerment. What begins as merely symbolic

representation and re-presentation of interconnected archetypal masculinity and working-classness in these enclaves produces subject positions, identities, and a constituency that is indeed disempowered within the structures of the parent culture. Having an affinity for HM and HC music is not what is subordinating for participants. What *is* subordinating for participants is the enmeshing of performative working-classness with masculinity. By self-portraying as working-class, HM and HC kids reduce their stations in mainstream culture.

In this way, modes of self-representation that begin as postmodern masquerade for HM and HC participants yield a newly reduced caste. Constitutive rhetorics such as the discourses of HM and HC create identities that have repercussions in the material world (Charland, 1987, p. 142). Ideologies (such as those that are embedded in HM and HC discourses) become inscribed upon the body through these processes—and the illusory becomes the actual (p. 143). Through involvement in HM and HC, the primarily white, male and middle-class adolescent participants can be said to have joined the ranks of the "white trash." And once one has been classified as "white trash," it is difficult to impossible to rejoin the middle-class. For example, Blake may have real difficulties finding a professional job once he finishes graduate school because of the imagery of demons and skeletons permanently inscribed on his arms in his sleeve tattoos.

"Always a Friend for Life": Heavy Metal and Hardcore Participation as Empowerment, and the Agency of Refusal

As Nichole expressed earlier, maybe the hierarchic demotion in mainstream society that is brought about through participation in HM and HC subcultures is not necessarily such a bad thing. Granting that HM and HC participants are at least to a degree marginalized within the

parent culture, the pivotal question is—do they care? These kids have found a place where they feel they have a voice, an identity that they find strength in—so what does it matter if their participation lessens their political agency in the culture as a whole? The personal *is* the political: The intra-subcultural power generated through participation in HM and HC enclaves is enabling of confidence and pride, and such self-assurance *can* translate as potency and/or capability in the greater culture as a whole. If participating in these subcultures makes HM and HC kids feel better about themselves, how can this participation not be enabling of agency? And furthermore, HM and HC participants don't really give a fuck what the proverbial "powers that be" think of them, anyway.

Fiske (1989) notes a (then) new direction for analyses of popular culture, one that "while accepting the power of the forces of dominance, it focuses rather upon the popular tactics by which these forces are coped with, are evaded, or are resisted" (p. 20). Following Fiske's counsel, I assert that HM and HC subcultures are indeed resistant—and that the resistance of these enclaves regularly comes in the form of symbolic rebukes of and/or refusals directed toward the parent culture. While symbolic refusals of HM and HC sometimes only come in the form of style, these stylistic refusals are nevertheless important. "I would like to think that this refusal is worth making, that these gestures [as style] have meaning, that the smiles and the sneers have some subversive value, even if …they are …just so much graffiti on a prison wall" (Hebdige, 1979, p. 3). The constituencies defined by HM and HC subcultures "are a shifting set of social agents within a social terrain that is theirs only by virtue of their constant refusal to cede it to the imperialism of the powerful" (Fiske, 1989, p. 46). And no matter how the social terrains occupied by HM and HC are won or how slight these symbolic victories may be, they are victories nonetheless—and hard fought victories, at that.

For participants, HM and HC subcultures serve what Gregg (1971) defines as an "ego-function," a function of self-affirmation that is inwardly-directed, and that gains power through "the emotional consternation and response" that it arouses from the outside world (pp. 74-75). HM and HC discourses create a "language" for participants that affects stylistic differentiation from the mainstream, affirms the validity of the group, *and* affirms the validity of the individuals within the group. In other words, the ego-function of HM and HC exacerbates the feelings of alienation that participants might have by labeling the "outside world" (in this case, the mainstream culture within which HM and HC subcultures are subsumed) as oppressors and the inside group (HM and HC subcultures themselves) as oppressed. Paradoxically, by identifying as the oppressed, in-group members feel empowered. Their estrangement from the mainstream spurs a kind of euphoria. By identifying as the alienated, HM and HC participants forge a sense of solidarity that in turn "becomes easily transposed to a feeling of individual ego-satisfaction" (p. 84). As established in the review of literature, HM and HC subcultures employ a rhetoric of protest. This rhetoric of protest serves the ego-function for HM and HC by maintaining distance from an adversary (the outside world), by creating jargon that redefines the situation and thereby provides symbolic control for participants, and by generating acknowledgement—and perhaps fear—from the oppressor (p. 87). So, the more that HM and HC kids scare the hell out of their parents and other authority figures, the stronger and more unified they become as a group.

Social movements, subcultures, and even artistic movements represent an urge for perfection, a drive to establish a new social and/or artistic order, to find new ways of seeing the world and new ways of coping with its burdens. Social, political, and artistic movements are *all* characterized by utopian visions (Griffin, 1969, p. 202). Artistic expressions are oftentimes, in fact, part and parcel of social movements and the drive toward perfection: The artistic

expressions of a movement offer participants new ways of understanding the world, thus allowing them to reimagine how life could be. New modes of expression in artistic realms (such as HM and HC) are productive of new communities and new communication schemes that have political impact (Ranciere, 2006, pp. 13-18). In his discussion of the emancipatory potential of literature, Marcuse (1977) praised transgressive works by writers such as Poe and Baudelaire, claiming that reading such works held the potential for rupture that comes through the aesthetic dimension: "In this sense, art is 'art for art's sake' inasmuch as the aesthetic form reveals tabooed and repressed dimensions of reality; aspects of liberation" (p. 19). Granting that HM and HC subcultures have become orthodoxies, the artistic expressions of these groups are *still* oppositional, *still* break taboos, and still transgress the orthodoxies of the parent culture. For Marcuse, works of art can be deemed revolutionary when they offer radical changes in style and/or technique and when they represent the petrified social reality of the established order (pp. 10-13). Art (such as the creative expressions of HM and HC subcultures) fights pertification and the petrification of language, thus operating, at least in some small way, as an entrée for social change.

People are motivated by communication and language. Thus, the study of movements (such as HM and HC) is the study of rhetoric. Griffin (1969) posits that alienated people, motivated by a drive for perfection, create movements as a means of rebelling from the established order (pp. 202-203). Griffin describes the moments of inception for movements in a way that is certainly comparable to what occurred in the beginnings of both HM and HC:

> Perversely goaded by the spirit of hierarchy, moved by the impious dream of a mythic
> new order—inspired with a new purpose, drawn anew by desire—they are moved to act:

moved ingenious men to rise up and cry *No* to the existing order—and prophesy the

coming of the new. (p. 205)

In this way, HM and HC emerged as social/artistic movements that railed against the established

orders of both mainstream society and the strictures of rock'n'roll music itself. While the

majority of HM and HC participants claim to be apolitical, their subcultures are in fact

politically-charged. For Griffin, social movements move through three stages: 1.) an initial focus

on the absurdity of the existing order, 2.) a catharsis and conversion phase where the

movement's rhetoric has a proselytizing function, and 3.) a period of linguistic crystallization

where the movement's rhetoric seeks to maintain member solidarity (pp. 208-211). At this

juncture, the movement reaches a crisis point: The drive, then, is for solidity; to *maintain* its

constituency (pp. 212-214). With histories of around 40 and 30 years, respectively, HM and HC

have certainly been in this final stage for decades. While HM and HC still represent a negation

or "no" to the outside world, this negation comes in the form of a specified language. HM and

HC are still evolving (and part of this evolution, presently, is osmosis of the two subcultures),

but are no longer functioning as fissures into new ways of seeing the world per se. Nevertheless,

HM and HC's crystallized languages of refusal *seem* new to the adolescent "converts" who

continue to join these enclaves every day. The aforementioned subcultural drive for

proselytizing and converting new participants has become a primary function of these

subcultures—one which was clearly articulated in this study by Blake, Chuck, CJ, Randy, and

especially Sam.

HM and HC serve as social spaces where resistance is articulated. The subcultural

milieus of HM and HC are more or less hidden from the purview of mainstream society. Scott

(1990) conceptualizes the dominant power order as being front-stage or external, a "public

transcript," whereas resistance is a baskstage, internal, or "hidden transcript" (p. 111). In other words, power is expressed overtly and for all to see, while resistance to power often operates as subtext or code, a private language that can only be "read" by those (such as HM and HC participants) having the insider knowledge necessary to decipher that code. The realm(s) of the hidden transcript, in this case being HM and HC subcultures, is a space for the "ideological negation" of the discourse of domination (p. 114), a "safe place" to express hostilities against the parent culture from which subculture participants are alienated. "Resistance to ideological domination requires a counter-ideology—a negation—that will effectively provide a general normative form to the host of resistant practices invented in self-defense by any subordinate group" (p. 118). Although Scott's scheme was formulated to explain patterns of resistant communication pertinent to more severely marginalized groups such as slaves and peasants, it is nevertheless an effective analytical tool for understanding HM and HC subcultures as counterideologies. Such counterideologies, however, needn't necessarily be realized as overt political force to still have impact. "There is in any society a reservoir of raw, anti-status-quo feelings which crystallize in some symbols *quite independently of the forms of their political articulation* and it is their presence we intuitively perceive when we call a discourse or mobilization [such as HM and HC subcultures] 'populistic'"[72] (Laclau, 2007, p. 123). Yet again, however, the personal is the political. HM and HC subcultures are sites for the contestation of identities linked to class, race and gender—and "*all* struggles are, by definition, political. To talk about a 'political struggle,' is, strictly speaking, a tautology" (p. 154). This is to say that whether or not HM and HC discourses yield revolutionary action is irrelevant: Since identities are presented and re-presented, constructed and co-constructed in these milieus, HM and HC are inherently political. Thus, what goes on in these enclaves is indeed important.

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[72] For Laclau, a "populism" is *any* social movement—not just "brown shirts" or rightwing movements.

As Fiske (1989) suggests, "we can learn at least as much, if not more, about resistance to the dominant ideology from studying popular everyday tactics [such as those deployed in the discourses of HM and HC subcultures] as from theorizing and analyzing the strategic mechanisms of power" (p. 187). HM and HC subcultures operate as venues for the expression of resistance, albeit that these are most often contained and symbolic expressions. Still, to portray these expressions as trivial would be unproductive and downright wrong. HM and HC provide an experience of empowerment for participants that, whether political or personal (or both), is important *for them*. And ultimately, their experiences and their perceptions are what matters most in their worlds. Blake's explains the importance of his participation in HM and HC subcultures:

> It [participation in HM and HC] is important not only for me, but it's important to the world. It trickles down through people that are going to the shows. And in some small way it's building the next generation of people that are gonna run this country.

For Blake, the communities that accrete around HM and HC music trump the music itself:

> When I first started going [to shows], it was about the bands. But not long after that it became *not* about the bands. I would go to the shows because the bands were playing, but on the same level of those bands playing there were all the other people that were there that I wanted to see, that I wanted to spend time with. I know that there are people there that have my back, more so than my own family.

> And there's nothing more unifying I think than jumping up on top of each other and screaming all these words [lyrics] at the same time and punching each other in the face and then hugging each other and saying I love you at the end. As stupid and crazy as

it sounds, I get high off it. I live for it. It's huge for me. It's made my life better overall. The people I've met through HC have made me a better person and have made me want to continue to be a better person.

So, involvement in HM and HC *is* empowering for participants, whether or not that empowerment is realized in the terms of the parent culture. HM and HC kids experience this power on their own terms, and *they don't care* what the parent culture thinks of them. This refusal and/or negation of the values of the parent culture is in its way empowering for HM and HC kids. Sam explains:

> For me, it all goes back to the power thing. When I was a kid and I found metal, I can't necessarily say I was in a hard spot—I was never bullied or anything like that—but I guess everybody goes through problems and I was too. But metal, when I listen to it, it gives me a feeling of power. It makes you feel like you can conquer the world in a sense. It's a soundtrack to getting off your ass and not moping. It sends something through your body that I can't [long pause]… I can't find words to explain the electrifying feeling that it gives you. But it's almost like it's become a religion. When you're having problems you can use it [HM] as a way to step into another world.
>
> There are so many different kinds of metal and it's not all hate, not all politics. It's just got the push and the anger and the emotion that you're looking for as a wild-ass open kid and, later, as a wild-ass open adult. For some reason the emotion in the push and the aggression of metal, it gives me a "rise up" feeling. I feel stronger. It's like a soundtrack. You put this music on and you can just feel the rise.

In Summary

Although there are certainly separatist factions of HM and HC communities that are

dead-set against crossovers between the two subcultures, for the most part HM and HC are

merging into a singular entity—in terms of musical style, modes of self-presentation, and

ideology. Although the term "HC" is certainly bandied about today, it is oftentimes used in an

adjectival sense to modify descriptions of various forms of HM. This adjectival usage of HC is

indicative of the continuing trend of HC being subsumed by HM. For many of today's HM/HC

kids, HC is no longer associated with punk rock,[73] but is instead a subset of HM. Evolving away

from its punk roots, many of HC's ideological components have fallen away as well. As HC is

being perceived more to be a permutation of and/or supplementary to HM, many of the

anarchist/leftist/anti-sexist/pro-queer sentiments which were common in proto-HC are being

jettisoned in favor of the more apolitical and at least somewhat sexist "dude" stance of HM.

While HC becomes more engulfed by HM, its political ideology is being erased. As many of the

participants in this study have expressed, today's HC is "all style and no substance." The newly

hybridized HM/HC subculture, the result of postmodern subcultural osmosis, ushers in a likewise

newly evolved subject position and identity for participants. Basically, the primarily male HC

kids are becoming only slightly dissimilar variations HM kids—and, in the process, taking on the

HM subject position and identity which links masculinity with working-classness through

performativity. This performative masculinity in the recently amalgamated HM/HC subculture

(which is for all intents and purposes merely a postmodern permutation of HM subculture) is, by

and large, only enabling of male power within the subcultural confines of HM/HC. Hence,

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[73] HC's move from being an autonomous, left-leaning, punk-oriented enclave toward becoming an apolitical subset
of HM is explained earlier in earlier passages of my interviews with Chuck, Blake, Carly, Jacob, and CJ. HM
participants Randy and Sam did not even consider that HC had *ever* been associated with punk; seeing it, instead, as
a supplementary permutation of modern HM.

HM/HC subculture operates almost perfectly in collusion with the established structure of (male) domination: It supports hegemonic masculinity yet, through the means of the double-edged masculinities of these enclaves, renders its primarily male constituency less powerful outside of the subcultural confines of HM/HC. Diverted and disempowered, the HM/HC community, effectively, is held in a state of sociopolitical inertia.

The crux of this study, then, is that HM and HC enclaves (and, of course, the hybridization of the two) are, in effect, microcosms of the parent culture—especially as pertains to masculinity and male power. Through participation in HM and HC subcultures, "spontaneous" consent to the gendered order is manufactured.[74] Through their involvement in HM and HC subcultures, participants gain a feeling and experience of empowerment and emancipation that might be regarded as illusory. The interconnectedness of performative masculinity and performative working-classness is key to the ways that HM and HC subculture participants are disempowered. In brief, young men (and a minority of young women as well) are indoctrinated and/or enjoined into these groups via the process of hailing: HM and HC texts (that is, the music) tell the participants who they are, that they have authority, and that they will gain agency through their affiliation. Those being hailed who find HM and HC content beguiling enough then opt to "become" HM or HC. And since these new "recruits" are entering a masculinist order, they become embroiled in the identity politics of these enclaves conerning what constitutes maleness and how masculinity is represented in these groups. HM and HC subcultures, then, become conduits through which the relations of (male) power of the dominant order are internalized. HM and HC are homosocial subcultures with male-exclusivist systems of exchange. These exchanges are primarily symbolic, yet also materialize as the exchange of

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[74] This gendered order is for all intents and purposes *the* order of things at present. We live in a society that is structured in a way that privileges males, a masculinist hierarchy.

women as chattel within these enclaves. In HM and HC subcultures, "everyday life" becomes the carnivalesque, and carnivalesque identities which mesh hypermasculine imagery with the imagery of freakishness are *de rigueur.* This symbolic metamorphosis of HM and HC youths, however, may yield material consequences in the lived world.[75] Through participation in HM and HC, the predominately white, middle-class youths who enter these groups may be rendered a new subaltern class. Whether or not this metamorphosis is symbolic, thus, becomes a moot point. In the all-surface, no substance world of postmodernity, the symbolic is crucially important in terms of how people are defined, what possibilities they might have, and, ultimately, who they become. Enabled through the intermeshing of performative masculinity and performative working-classness, HM and HC identities basically reproduce the masculinist order of the parent culture, retooled in the trappings of rebellion.

Whether or not the packaged rebellion of HM and HC is fictive is something of a moot point, however. For HM and HC participants, subcultural participation *feels* empowering—and therefore it *is* empowering. And furthermore, who is qualified to judge whether or not the inter-workings of a given group are empowering, anyway? Only the participants are qualified to report on how they experience subcultural affiliation, what feelings and emotions it produces and what its meanings are—both to the outside world and *to them*. In this study, I have offered the participants a voice. And their voices say that agency—whether it comes as resistance or refusal, whether it is merely symbolic, confined within subculture only, or realized in the greater culture—is enabled through their participation in HM and HC. These are their subcultures and these are their lives: And thus, they may be best equipped to answer the pivotal ethnographic question of any ethnographic study, "what is going on here and what does it mean?"

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[75] These material consequences are explained most capably in Marie's account of being "lower on the totem pole."

(Conquergood, 1992, p. 87). What it means for HM and HC participants, then, is a community of resistance, a safe haven for the disaffected, a separate realm where certain actions and expressions deemed unfit in mainstream society are encouraged, an empowering identity, a means of getting by.

This study is by no means an indictment of HM and HC subcultures per se. I love the music, I love the community, and have established important, lifelong friendships and found my life partner as a direct result of my involvement in these subcultures. Granted, there are many things about HM and HC subcultures that I am uncomfortable with, just as I am uncomfortable with much of mainstream culture—and these discomforts generally arise from the ways that gender and sexuality are portrayed and how such portrayals function to reinforce the existing, masculinist order. It is certainly a paradox that I, an academic, claiming to be a left-leaning, feminist, queer-positive and progressively-oriented person, have chosen to remain affiliated with subcultures known for their reactionary, kneejerk politics, herd mentalities, anti-intellectualism, excesses, and flagrant misogyny/homophobia. Still, there is much to love about HM and HC. The music is incredible, the shows are great fun, and I get a sense of community—a feeling of belonging, even—from HM and HC that I will never find in the mainstream. HM/HC is my church. And I am a skeptical parishioner who finds fault with many of the tenets of my cult, yet still habitually attends a service at least once a week and goes home feeling somehow cleansed. That I love HM and HC is no justification for passively accepting the elements of these subcultures that I find disquieting, however. But there is something about HM and HC's unfettered embrace of all that is carnal, morbid, repulsive and profane that makes it, for me, all the more compelling. I am not unique in this way, but, rather, one among many members of a secret and at least symbolically resistant and transgressive order.

This study of performative masculinity in HM and HC enclaves is important not only for its micro level comparative analysis of the particularities of two merging subcultures for a finite time period in a single city, but for the clues it has offered as to how the intermingling of identities operates, at a macro level, to produce subject positions that still somehow reinforce the existing structure of power. While HM and HC are indeed rebellious subcultures, participation in these groups does little or nothing that is enabling of agency in the outside world for its participants—all the while delivering the experience that one has somehow taken part in a collective act of challenging the existing order. These enclaves' connection of performative masculinity with working-classness is certainly the means through which these potentially anarchic subcultures are rendered politically toothless. Unless and until the gendered ways of being that are characteristic of the order of power as it exists are jettisoned, affecting change through identity politics is more or less an exercise in futility. This is not to say that subcultures are incapable of creating exciting art, of course. But such art, when intermeshed with collective identities that connote agency with traditional, white, Western maleness, is sadly incapable of fomenting anything but symbolic revolution. This leaves us with a fundamental question: How might power be expressed symbolically in a way where it is not somehow connotative of patriarchal, hegemonic masculinity? Is such a project even possible, or is our only option to simply make do as best we can with the already ideologically laden system of symbols that we have?

6. LIMITATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

While this study has drawn into light a number of subcultural developments and offered new concepts that will function as tools for theory-building, new areas that have yet to be studied and certain deficiencies of this study have also become apparent. First and foremost, the ages and subcultural statuses of the participant population come into question. All of the participants in this study were more or less members of the HM/HC "elite," meaning that they occupied a higher tier in the subcultural hierarchy because of their roles as band members, zine writers and/or music journalists, and show promoters. Granted, the core participants of this study were definitely more invested in these subcultures than the average participant and had more carefully considered what participating in these enclaves might mean. So, the very attributes that made the core participants of this study most valuable could also be said to make them less representative of HM and HC scenes as a whole. The issue of participant ages also comes into question. For expediency's sake and to meet the requirements of my university's Institutional Review Board, the participant population was limited to persons 18 and older. Bearing in mind, however, that HM and HC kids usually begin their subcultural participation in their *early* teens, my being allowed to interact with and interview younger participants would certainly have provided different insights about HM and HC identities *as they were being taken on by the younger participants.* Hence, a study of younger HM and HC teenagers would be especially productive. Lastly, bearing in mind the continued and inevitable fragmentation of HM and HC into countless subgenres, more specific analyses of sub-subcultures within HM and HC would provide opportunities to examine sub-subcultural identities as they emerge on a sub-micro level.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

"Live Fast, Die Young" by the Circle Jerks

I don't wanna live to be 34

I don't wanna die in a nuclear war

Go on out—get some more

Go on out—to the bar, the market, or the liquor store

I don't wanna live to be 43

I don't like what I see going on around me

Go on out—get some more

Go on out—to your favorite liquor store

Go on out—don't worry about it no more

Go on out—get fucked up, pass out on the floor

I don't wanna live to be 57

I'm living in hell, is there a heaven?

Live fast, die young

Life fast, die young! (The Circle Jerks, 1980, track 11)

"Let's Have a War (So You Can Go Die)" by Fear

There's so many of us, there's so many of us, there's so many (4x)

Let's have a war—so you can go die

Let's have a war—we could all use the money

Let's have a war—we need the space

Let's have a war and clean up this place

It already started in the city

Suburbia will be just as easy

Let's have a war—jack up the Dow Jones

Let's have a war—it can start in New Jersey

Let's have a war—blame the middle class

Let's have a war—we're like rats in a cage

It already started in the city

Suburbia will be just as easy

Let's have a war—sell the rights to the networks

Let's have a war—make our wallets fat like last time

Let's have a war—give guns to the queers

Let's have a war—the enemy is within

It already started in the city

Suburbia will be just as easy (FEAR, 1981, track 2)

"Life of Pain" by Black Flag

Look what you've done to your arms

I know you don't care who you harm

I know you're not the girl next door

But now you're worse than before

Self destruct, self destruct!

Life's misery, pain runs deep

Does it matter that anyone cares?

Can't there be another outlet?

No one comes close—nobody dares

Self destruct, self destruct!

You're digging your own grave

And you're taking my feelings with you

There's got to be a way to get out (Black Flag, 1982, track 14)

"Straight Edge" by Minor Threat

I'm a person just like you

But I've got better things to do

Than sit around and fuck my head

Hang out with the living dead

Snort white shit up my nose

Pass out at the shows

I don't even think about speed

That's not something that I need

I've got the straight edge

I'm a person just like you

But I've got better things to do

Than sit around and smoke dope

'Cause I know that I can cope

Laugh at the thought of eating ludes

Laugh at the thought of sniffing glue

Always gonna keep in touch

Never gonna use a crutch

I've got the straight edge (Minor Threat, 1981, track 4)

"Attitude (Positive Mental Attitude)" by Bad Brains

Don't care what they may say we got that attitude

Don't care what they may do we got that attitude

Hey we got the P.M.A.

Hey we got the P.M.A. (Bad Brains, 1981, track 3)

Appendix B

Table B Shows Attended

SHOWS ATTENDED

Heavy Metal	HC/HM Crossover	Hardcore	Genre-Resistant
Anthrax	Toxic Holocaust	Take Offense	The Melvins
Death Angel	DRI	Soulsearch	Unsane
Testament	Corrosion of Conformity (2X)	Rotting Out	Boris
Wizard Smoke	Black Dahlia Murder	Another Mistake	Torche (3X)
Xilaba	Carnifex	Focused Minds	Russian Circles
Black Tusk	All Shall Perish	The Casualties	Pelican
Chairleg		Know Your Rights	Harvey Milk
Deicide		Agent Orange	Swans
Iced Earth		Burns Like Fire	
Warbringer		Sheer Terror	
Jucifer		Magoo's Heroes	
Order Of The Owl		Peter & The Test Tube Babies	
Fleshgod Apocalypse		Uncle Touchy	
Nile		Off!	
Skeletonwitch		Rise Against	
Tetrarch		Against Me!	
Church of Misery		Retox	
Gates of Slumber		Trash Talk	
Behemoth		Foundation	
Watain		Negative Approach	
The Devil's Blood		Everything Went Black	
In Solitude		Shots Fired	
Overkill			
Mastodon			
Opeth			
Ghost			
Van Halen			
Down			
Mayhem			
Dark Castle			
Withered			
Municipal Waste			
Xerodema			
Faster Pussycat			

Heavy Metal	HC/HM Crossover	Hardcore	Genre-Resistant
Fear Factory			
Shadows Fall			
God Forbid			
Legion X			
Suidakra			
Exodus			
Slayer			
Megadeth			
High on Fire			
Fu Manchu			
Ringworm			
Ceremony			

Appendix C

<div align="center">

Georgia State University
Department of Communication
Informed Consent

</div>

Title: Doing it for The Dudes: A Study of Rock Music Scenes in Atlanta

Principal Investigator: Dr. Marian Meyers
Student Principal Investigator: John Ike Sewell

I. _____ Purpose:

You are asked to join in a research study. The point of the research is to study the hardcore and heavy metal scenes in Atlanta, Georgia. You are asked to join this study because you take part in one or both of these scenes. 40 people will be asked to join this study. Joining in the study will take a few hours of your time over a 6 to 9 month period. Joining in the study is by your own choice. Your name and identity will not be shared with others.

II.   Procedures:

If you decide to participate, you will agree to join in one-on-one and/or group interviews held in public places such as clubs, cafes and coffee houses. In these interviews, you will talk with the researcher (John Sewell) and any others who may have agreed to join the interview. These interviews will be taped. These interviews will take from 30 minutes to an hour of your time. There may be up to six interviews during this study. The most possible time you could spend in these interviews would be around 6 hours during the 6 to 9 month span of this study.

III.   Risks:

In this study, there is the slight possibility that you may experience minimal stress when discussing topics that you find unpleasant or disagreeable. There is no more risk of discomfort than you would risk in a normal conversation on a normal day, however.

IV.   Benefits:

By participating, you will benefit by being able to state your opinion in this study. With this study, we hope to gain information about the hardcore and heavy metal scenes of Atlanta.

V.   Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal:

Being involved in this research is your choice. You do not have to be in this study. If you decide to be in the study and change your mind, you can drop out at any time. You may skip questions or quit at any time.

VI.   Confidentiality:

We will keep your records as private as possible. Only John Sewell (the student principal investigator) and Dr. Marian Meyers (the faculty principal investigator) will be able to see the information you give. Those who agree to participate in small group interviews will have an additional minimal risk of their confidentiality being compromised—it is possible that other participants might mention other individuals' responses in subsequent conversations with friends and acquaintances. Participants in small group interviews will be assessed of this risk. Information may also be shared with those who make sure the study is done correctly including the Georgia State University Institutional Review Board and the Office for Human Research Protection. We will use a nickname instead of your real name on study records. Once the study is done, the information you have given will be stored in a locked box for 10 years. After 10 years, the information will be destroyed. The key to the locked box will be stored in another place to protect your privacy. Your name and other facts that might point to you will not be shown when we present this study or publish its results. The findings will be reported in group form. You will not be identified personally.

VII.   ContactPersons:

Contact John Sewell by calling (423) 741-1474 or emailing john_sewell@comcast.net or Dr. Marian Meyers by calling (404) 413-5636 or emailing mmeyers@gsu.edu if you have questions about this study. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a person involved in this research study, you may contact Susan Vogtner in the Office of Research Integrity at 404-413-3513 or svogtner1@gsu.edu.

VIII.   Copy of Consent Form to Subject:

We will give you a copy of this consent form to keep.

If you are willing to join in this research and be recorded on audio tape, please sign below.

_____   _____
Participant   Date

_____   _____
Principal Investigator or Researcher Obtaining Consent   Date

Appendix D

John Sewell
January 6, 2012
Study: "Doing it For The Dudes": A Comparative Ethnographic Study of Masculinity in Heavy Metal and Hardcore Subcultures

Interview Schedule/Protocol
Questions for one-on-one and group interviews

The following is a list of general questions which will be used as an entrée into more specific areas of questioning.

1. Would you describe yourself as a participant in Atlanta's hardcore (HC) or heavy metal (HM) subculture—or of both?

2. What are your reasons for describing yourself as a participant in HC and/or HM?

3. If you do not define yourself as being a participant of either subculture, why not?

4. If you *do* identify as a participant in either or both of these subcultures, when would you say was the point at which you became actively engaged?

5. What is it that attracted you to HC and/or HM?

6. What would you describe as the defining characteristics of a participant in HC and/or HM subcultures?

7. What do you see as the similarities between HC and HM?

8. What do you see as the differences between HC and HM?

9. Are there facets of either subculture that you find distasteful or do not want to be associated with? If so, why?

10. Based on outward appearances alone, how would you describe a typical participant of HC and/or HM? In other words, what are the outward markers of participation in either of these enclaves?

11. What do these ways of self-presentation say about participants in HC and/or HM subcultures? Are those who don such fashions fully aware of the implications presenting oneself in this way might have? Why or why not?

12. How would you describe the demographic makeup of HC and/or HM subcultures?

13. Why do you think HC and/or HM attracts this constituency?

14. What would you describe as the generalized worldview or ideology of HC and/or HM? Why is this outlook compelling for you in particular—and for those who participate in general? Is it?

15. Is your participation in HC and/or HM a lifelong commitment, or is it something you will grow out of eventually? Why should one grow out of or remain actively engaged in either of these enclaves? Is there a particular time of life when participation inappropriate?

16. Does participating in HC and/or HM change you? If so, how does it change you? Are these changes permanent?

17. What would you describe as the typical role for a male participant of HC and/or HM?

18. What would you describe as the typical role for a female participant of HC and/or HM?

19. Why do you think male and female roles are relegated in such a way in these subcultures?

20. Are there typical behaviors that specifically include or exclude males or females in HC and/or HM? If so, why do you think these behaviors are apportioned in this way?

21. Is there a particular political outlook associated with HC and/or HM? If so, what might that outlook be?

22. Is there a particular philosophical outlook associated with HC and/or HM? If so, what might that outlook be?

23. How would you describe the lyrics of HC or HM? How seriously do participants take these lyrics?

24. What does participation in HC or HM say about the participant's place in society?

25. What messages are conveyed in the graphic imagery of HC and/or HM?

26. What do you think is the general message of HC and/or HM for the majority of its participants?

27. What does participation in HC and/or HM mean for you in particular?