

The Legacy of Punk and Hiphop: 1979 - 1985

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ABSTRACT

The Legacy of Punk and Hiphop: 1979 - 1985

Timothy Taylor

This thesis investigates how and why members of the Hiphop and Punk scenes were using the spatial terrain of New York City as a site of cultural struggle and survival between 1979 and 1985. It engages discourses on race and class with respect to the dominant culture with which Hiphop and Punk would find themselves in constant tension.

This examination of the Hiphop and Punk scenes uses concepts from cultural studies in space, 'logics of change' and disciplined mobilization. Further, it highlights the crossovers that occurred between musicians and artists in the Hiphop and Punk scenes, often addressed separately in previous literature, with a particular interest in the unique and groundbreaking film *Wild Style* (1982).

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INTRODUCTION

The Legacy of Punk and Hiphop: 1979 - 1985

This thesis looks at the relationship between Hiphop and Punk Rock, their development from 1974 to 1988 with an emphasis on the years 1979 to 1985 and some of the academic literature, pop histories and films that have documented them, from resistant underground subcultures to popular cultural formations. The research will contribute to the areas of music history and cultural studies. Additionally, it may also provide an insightful point of reference and perspective for fans and aficionados as well as the artists involved in both the Punk and Hiphop scenes. Insight on what similarities Punk and Hiphop possess arise on a number of fronts: the social, political, economic and, at multiple levels, the ideological and the everyday. An analysis of the different dimensions of Hiphop and Punk will engage critical discourse on music, art and the concept of the 'scene'—a volatile formation whose existence hinges on the fulfillment of immediate needs, changing and evolving over time according to varied circumstances—as well as the race and class divisions to which they are often too easily associated. This thesis will primarily focus on specific instances where crossover and artistic collaborations occurred between the Punk Rock and Hiphop scenes. This will provide an opportunity to study and derive from these analyses, information on what factors were involved in their development as subcultures and what specific factors facilitated cultural contact. It will also call for a new narrative that brings together their respective histories, given that few studies include these heavily constructed race-specific genres in the same analysis.

This research on the crossover in Hiphop and Punk contributes to an ongoing

iterative process meant to enrich and reflect the sophistication of these subcultures and to inspire new perspectives. While work in the Hiphop and Punk scenes is abundant, its 'sedimentation' and current status as 'official' canons risks the overvaluation of certain aspects of these subcultures while undervaluing others. A proper record of the Hiphop and Punk movements in our history is very important but how it is recorded is of equally great concern.

A large body of work has developed in the areas of cultural studies in music, dating back to the seventies with the 'official inauguration' of music into the academic canon with Simon Frith's *Sociology of Rock* (1978). This growing body of work signals the importance of music and 'musical cultures' in academic research that has contributed to a rich understanding of youth cultures and how they function in the context of Western societies. This demonstrates the importance of the ever expanding soundscape within which we live, as not only having become the 'soundtrack to our lives' but a window into the role of academic studies when documenting this period. As social agents we are constantly imbuing the space within which we live with meanings, and these spaces are continually marked by the presence of music. While not limited to this art form alone, music has tended to be the primary means for expressing group identity within youth cultures. Because the spaces within which one dwells are imbued with this cultural material, musical and otherwise, how subcultures define themselves in terms of a group identity can be derived from their constitution. Much emphasis has been given to a homology of youth clusters where it has been identified that youth subcultures frequently construct their identity around artistic expressions. The large body of research covering the period of Punk Rock demonstrates its appeal and importance as a subject of study and

has been documented in popular histories such as *One Chord Wonders* (1985) and *England's Dreaming* (1991) to name but a few. A plethora of biographies and documentaries are continually emerging on groups during the period of Punk further emphasizing its appeal. While much of the material from the early days of Hiphop has not been documented, over the past thirty years efforts have been made to recover the memories of events from those pioneering days. Following the seminal work of Tricia Rose in *Black Noise* (1994), studies in Hiphop culture and Black Cultural Studies are rapidly developing a Hiphop canon.

New perspectives on cultural activities of the period from 1979 to 1985 will provide insights into how cultural identities are formed by a heterogeneous group of eclectic youths. Many questions emerge pertaining to culture and identity within the context of these 'moments of contact'. How does one accommodate for cultural change while still maintaining the frontiers and parameters of one's own culture? Do these boundaries become elided? Or are boundaries reinforced within a context of heterogeneity? Is there perhaps more to be looked at here in terms of the treatment of academic studies with regard to this period? In order to expand this research one must move away from social discourses surrounding Hiphop and Punk steeped in *raciology*, in order to facilitate a break from a homological perspective where one is subject to the politics of division such as Rock's relationship to Black music which is often in the context of a tension. The break of Rhythm and Blues and Rock in the 1950s exemplifies the process of naming and incorporation that takes place of a new commodity while simultaneously omitting those who contributed to its birth. Rock's history since the 1950s involves the exploitation of Black music while simultaneously appropriating it and

creating a new genre. While the unfavourable relationship of Rock to Black music is certainly a justifiably pertinent area of concern in cultural studies, I posit that the period during which Punk and Hiphop thrived three and four decades later situates this relationship within a more ambiguous post-modern framework where the crossover of Punk and Hiphop have produced new and multiple discourses. Given that, I would posit that Punk Rock's relation to Black music, namely Reggae and Hiphop stands apart from a relation to colonialist practices. That is not to say that the past has had no effect on its trajectory but in the worse case scenario, Punk Rock might be recognized for its successful and failed attempts at an escape from past actions of its predecessors thereby complicating any wholesale dismissal of Punk Rock and Hiphop's unique relationship. This is an area that warrants more consideration and exploration of the nuances and ambiguities that constitute 'cultural identity'.

Historically, music is one of the oldest forms of communication; it is able to traverse cultural frontiers without relying on traditional forms of spoken or written communication. Here, Lawrence Grossberg (1992) has indicated that affective alliances privilege the feeling or 'mood' that music can create (p. 153). This suggests that although lived experiences and music may differ across cultures, an unquantifiable mood can connect these varied narratives and representations through its ability to move people on intellectual, physical and emotive levels. The responses of individuals to music surpass simply that of say, hearing or sound. It can be experienced physiologically such as changes in heart rate, mood and emotion as well as cognitively. The fact that music has physical emotional and cognitive effects may be tantamount to its power. The importance of music and its relationship within everyday life around the period of 1979

to 1985 became more evident as technology changed. The burgeoning service and technology industry generated innovation in electronic media such as the new portability of music. Music became even more important not just in how it was being produced, but by the way it was becoming an accompaniment to one's daily life and to other art forms (such as the intimate relation it had with New York's downtown art scene). Its capacity to affect the moods and rhythms of the lives of this generation of youth in New York City demonstrates the pervasive reach of its efficacy.

The 'moments of contact' that are the subject of analysis in this thesis constitute instances where artists collaborated on musical and artistic projects or played concert venues together, forming a shared physical and/or ideological space. Discourse on space will always be in relation to the concept of *everyday life* or *the everyday* which is defined according to periods of *pre-* and *post-capitalism* by Henri Lefebvre (1984) in *Everyday Life and the Modern World*. According to Lefebvre, during pre-capitalism there was *daily life*, which is lived out through acts of style that retain their own character and permit that one *own* the movements and acts which constitute a daily existence in its most basic and organic form. For Grossberg (1992), *pre-capitalist daily life* is predicated on individual agency free of a capitalist power structure: "Undoubtedly people have always had to be fed, clothed, housed and have had to produce and re-produce that which has been consumed; but until the nineteenth century, until the advent of competitive capitalism and the expansion of the world of trade [the everyday] as such did not exist" (p. 148).

Chapter 1 surveys the periods during which HipHop and Punk flourished and receded between 1974 and 1988. The 'stories' of these two genres are recounted and

reconstructed in a manner that creates a counter-narrative on how events during this period actually took shape. This chapter foregrounds the role that music and art played as a source of social revitalization during times of duress. Additionally, it emphasizes the role of music as a tool for communication adopted by youth culture as a means through which to negotiate everyday life. Chapter 1 also includes a review of seminal research done in the area of cultural studies in music and the key points of its authors.

Chapter 2 furnishes the theoretical concepts that will be fundamental to establishing the framework for Chapter 3. Chapter 2 suggests new ways to conceive of Punk and Hiphop cultures as existing within fluctuating discursive spaces and elaborates how ‘moments of contact’ between them emerged from this dynamic flow. Too frequently, work in a particular field becomes canonized and uncritical. Chapter 2 introduces theoretical perspectives on place, space and music that will be used to ‘disturb’ what are often rapidly sedimenting histories that if left unagitated, risk perpetuating hegemonic practices. What is at stake, here, is how history becomes recorded and who is authorized to do so. What this Chapter offers is the opportunity for further critical thought on the period of 1979 to 1985 as a unique and remarkable moment in cultural history to be celebrated—rather than ignored.

Chapter 3 considers spatio-geographic discourse and how space can be utilized to form multiple articulations that are sometimes contradictory. Emerging within this discourse are theories in vectored movements, territorialization, and deterritorialization that will be looked at through an analysis of the seminal Hiphop film *Wild Style*.

As music flows through culture it affects its constituents in a myriad of ways. It can galvanize fans and cultivate artists catalyzing people into action. Music has always

been a beacon at the forefront of change throughout history in Jazz, Rhythm and Blues, Soul, Funk, Motown and Reggae to name but few. It has been the face of the unrepresented in society, always at the vanguard, one of the unspoken yet understood torchbearers of liberty and unity for cultures, a secret language of solidarity.

Music possesses the characteristics of an almost prophetic quasi-revolutionary apparatus of freedom. It has been the precursor to other forms of artistic expression. In the Punk scene for example, Punk Rock's initial rejection by the record industry only bolstered its self-sufficiency and cultivated a *DIY* (do-it-yourself) ethic. Hip-hop's astoundingly vital underground economy, the circulation of media technologies such as the cassette tape, the ghetto blaster and the LP, word of mouth communication and all around organizational resourcefulness, epitomized this *DIY* attitude often associated with Punk Rock. The level of entrepreneurial skills it took to organize and manage logistics such as electricity for unlicensed jams and multiple art-form events demonstrates a stupendous amount of ingenuity. What makes these scenes pertinent areas of exploration for this study is when we consider the social positioning of Hip-hop and Punk Rock and the threat they have posed to dominant culture. The struggle over power lies in the scenes' subversion of the status quo. Part of the role of youths is to challenge the status quo which is guarded with vigilance by those whose livelihood depends upon it. Dissent from the values espoused by dominant culture suggests there are important implications that one must consider regarding Hip-hop and Punk scenes relationship to authority, as these genres are arguably the most prominent subcultures to date. According to Jacques Attali, "in the codes that structure noise and its mutation we glimpse a new theoretical practice and reading establishing relationships between the history of people and the

dynamics of economy on the one hand and the history of the ordering of noise on the other and how the evolution of one occurs via the forms of the other” (p. 5). The complex relationship that Attali outlines between society, the economy and music provides an integral perspective. Youth cultures are microcosms of society. Its problems are a red flag when things have gone awry. Tuning in to these issues that have affected youth’s development can provide insight into the state of society at large.

A ‘scene’ according to Straw (1991) is “that cultural space in which a range of musical practices co-exist, interacting with each other within a variety of processes of differentiation and according to widely varying trajectories of change and cross-fertilization” (p. 372). Scenes reflect in many ways the contemporary issues tied to the everyday such as struggle over meaning. Implicit in these struggles over meaning which span place, space and social justice, is power and the “institutionalization of the silence of others to assure the durability of power” (Attali, 1977, p. 8). The aim here is to emphasize the role power plays in music and culture. “Power is that which must to be explained” according to Foucault (1981, p. 14) which suggests that power must at all costs be exposed. Without essentializing the concept of power I would like to look at it in terms of how we “formulate a general conception of relations between what constitutes knowledge and the exercise of power”, the basis of Foucault’s ambitions. It is important to consider the deeper implications of Hiphop and Punk scenes in these terms as well. Music is charged with the weight of social responsibility, not only as a product of culture, but as something much greater and much more autonomous. It is not surprising that subcultures, which initially tend to be carelessly discarded as socially insignificant suddenly can command the attention of those wielding power. “Noise is a source of

power and power has always listened to it with fascination” (Attali, 1977, p.6).

According to Foucault, localizing problems is indispensable for theoretical and political reasons. What we can ascertain from this statement is how society defines itself in opposition to subcultures and what makes the subculture defined outside of society. The very need for a ‘sub’culture suggests a break and subcultures often become the locus of problematization and scapegoating.

Power is instituted in many forms such as law, the academy, city planning, etc. which provide an example of how vast this discursive territory is and how varied its manifestations can be in a culture, community or scene. Exploitative power upon a culture strengthens and reinforces the effects of division and “rendering asunder the body of society” (Attali, 1977, p. 5). This method of control—rendering asunder—manifests itself in many forms namely, ideological constructs of race and class which play prominent roles in the definitions of division in social infrastructure. “No organized society can exist without structuring differences at its core” such as outside/in, White/Black dominant/subordinate, etc. (p. 5). Yet it needs social groups to work together and be functional on some level in order to maintain productivity and harmony while simultaneously perpetuating difference. This truly identifies the contradictory nature of the functioning of Western society and the effects on cultural groups trying to exist within it.

A large body of work has accumulated in the research areas of Hiphop and Punk. Several pop culture books and a number of documentary style films have covered Hiphop, and even more have covered Punk Rock. The continued fascination and celebration of these cultures provide testimony to the profound impact they have had

across generations. Some of the bodies of literature that help the analysis take shape are both pop culture and scholarly. Four key works provide the central concepts for this thesis: Will Straw's "Systems of Articulation: Logics of Change" (1991) analyses the role of music as well as its relationship to culture and processes of change. Murray Forman's *The 'Hood Comes First: Race, Space, and Place in Rap and Hip-Hop* (2002), provides the framework for understanding the spatialized discourse within which Rap and Hip-hop culture operate. Lawrence Grossberg's *We Gotta Get Out of this Place: Popular Conservatism and Post Modern Culture* (1992) and his earlier *Rock, Territorialization and Power* (1991) present studies in the Rock Formation within the context of popular Western society providing critical theory on the politically charged spaces of cultural circulation. In addition to these key works, Jacques Attali's *Noise: The Political Economy of Music* (1977) looks at music's essence as a powerful 'revolutionary noise' at the fore of change, a key theme resonating throughout the thesis. George Lipsitz's *Dangerous Crossroads: Popular Music, Postmodernism, and the Poetics of Place* (1994) introduces analyses of music in international contexts from Reggae in Britain to New York Hip-hop, their potential as harbingers for cultural values and, the contentious terrain that is continually negotiated. Lipsitz provides apt observations which support my claims on music's subversive potential and the threat that it can pose to dominant culture. Greil Marcus' *Lipstick Traces* (1989), foregrounded by the story of Punk Rock iconoclasts the Sex Pistols, is an exploration of historically poignant events and their connection to culture, society, and politics. Marcus' accounts of historical events add a colourful perspective to the topic of popular music and subculture that help build an analysis on Hip-hop and Punk. Reported by Punk journalist Jon Savage, *England's Dreaming* (1991)

is widely recognized as coming the closest to a comprehensive biography on Punk and New Wave. Providing a consistency of both academic and popular examination, Savage's meticulous coverage of the Punk period aids this work in the production of a dialectic on the inter-relatedness of Hiphop and Punk. Tricia Rose's *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America* (1994) is a pioneering work in the Black Cultural Studies canon which takes on a gamut of topics concerning Hiphop culture such as identity politics and feminism. Rose's intimate accounts shed light on the dynamic and complex environment in which Hiphop thrived. Her contributions inform some of the facts and examinations presented in this thesis on Hiphop's ability to defy the status quo and produce its own rich and complex discourses. Dick Hebdige's *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (1979) is the foremost book in subcultural studies and essential to any work embarked upon concerning youth culture of past and present. *Subculture* covers 1960s and 1970s British youth movements from Teds to Skinheads, Mods to Rockers and Rastas to Punks, and is integral to our understanding of youth cultures. Here, *Subcultures* (1979) and the follow up study on Reggae *Cut 'n' Mix*, (1987) serve as an example of where omissions have taken place with regard to the burgeoning crossover art and music scene that was occurring in New York City between Hiphop and Punk during the period of 1979 to 1985. *Resistance Through Rituals* (Hall et al, 1976) is the flagship anthology of essays comprised by leading cultural studies researchers of the 'Birmingham School', at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in England. Throughout the thesis, specific uses of terms germane to cultural studies discourse can often be credited to this essential work. Finally, Paul Gilroy's *Against Race* (2000), one of a number of contributions in Black Cultural Studies by this author, is especially useful

here for its theorization on race and *raciology*. These important works in cultural studies inform a discussion on how music functions in culture as a harbinger for democratic values. In addition, they will supply the tools for understanding how music and culture interact and communicate with society and what areas have been overlooked or strategically omitted such as the cross-genre coalition of Hiphop and Punk. In addition to this literature, are pop culture books which provide historical and biographical information on the Punk and Hiphop scenes as a 'sign of the times'. These biographies delve into thick description of key players, places and hallmark moments that define not only the scene but the socio-political climate: *No Irish No Blacks No Dogs* (1994) is an autobiography by Punk's number one iconoclast, John Lydon *aka* Johnny Rotten of the Sex Pistols. As an active participant in the scene Lydon's perspective is fresh and insightful furnishing 'insiders' facts for this study. *Hiphop America* (1999) is a contribution made by Nelson George who has been a long time pop cultural critic and editor for Billboard magazine. Hiphop America provides a solid foundation for understanding the culture, politics and business of Hiphop from its nascent times to its position in contemporary Western pop culture. The manner in which it is presented offers a unique point of view from someone who not only grew up in the culture but became its resident cultural critic, offering a uniquely intimate perspective that helps this thesis take shape. Bakari Kitwana's *The Hip Hop Generation: Young Blacks and the Crisis in African American Culture* (2002) defines the Hiphop Generation as those born between 1965-1984. Kitwana tackles a gamut of issues in Hiphop from social responsibility to Hiphop's potential as a force of social change. This work, although not present in the body of this study, has certainly been an important read for understanding

the concept of culture in crisis, and Pat Gilbert's *Passion is a Fashion: The Real Story of the Clash* (2004) documents the career span of The Clash, the most popular group to emerge from the Punk scene with a detailed record of their exploits in New York City in the early 1980s. Gilbert's extensive coverage aids in 'filling out' this investigation with detailed accuracy.

Although the information in this literature has provided a well of intimate detail surrounding the genres, I would suggest that the race/genre dynamic still remains unsatisfyingly rigid. There is a lack of attention given to the *shared* history of HipHop and Punk, while racial categories remain strictly adhered to, creating a need for the production of more material in academic and non-academic forums on these genres and cultures. There have been many films documenting the HipHop scene, even more documenting the Punk scene. The sole and unique film that truly captures a critical moment, which itself has become a part of that history, is *Wild Style* (1982) directed by Charlie Ahearn. Its making constitutes a part of some of the 'moments of contact' that will become a major focus in Chapter 3 of the thesis. The musical and artistic collaborations that emerged from this period will demonstrate that the right 'blend' of circumstantial and environmental conditions (social, political, economic, cultural) in which they were produced were in place. *Wild Style* exemplifies one of the instances where elements of HipHop and Punk Rock have converged and therefore it will become the subject of a broader inquiry on how its narrative texts are a statement on issues of race, class and the social power structure.

CHAPTER 1

Switched On: New York & The Underground – 1974 - 1988

This chapter will have two areas of focus: a survey of the origins and early development of Hip-hop in New York City in the early 70s and 80s, and a survey of the origins and early development of Punk in New York City in the early 70s as well as its transition into post-Punk/New Wave in the 80s. Chapter 1 sets the foundation for the theory presented in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 addresses the moments of contact. The ‘moments of collaboration’ that are the subject of analysis in this thesis, constitute instances where artists shared the same physical and/or ideological space by participating in a concert, producing music, film and visual art together. Finally, this chapter also includes a review of seminal research done in the area of cultural studies in music, the key points of its authors and where an analysis of the ‘moments of contact’ between these two contemporaneous subcultures has been omitted.

The dark abandoned streets, dilapidated buildings and subways coming and going, with little to no one occupying the graffiti-covered cars, is the poetic, romanticized ideal of a nihilistic landscape of the ‘urban wasteland’ or ‘ghost town’ depicted in films such as *Warriors* (1979) or *Fort Apache Bronx* (1981). However, the deindustrializing urban landscape of 1970s America is not quite as abysmal as these cinematic dramatizations would have us believe. The city also became a site for youth to experience creative and existential renewal, a space in which to make sense of the chaos of the everyday. The urban pioneers of deindustrialized America that would make up the residents of this post-industrial ‘dystopia’ were those members of the future Punk and Hip-hop scenes.

Since the advent of an economy of youth culture in the 1950s (which coincides with the emergence of everyday life), capitalism has benefited from a longstanding and thriving relationship of opportunistic exploitation. With the birth of each new subculture this symbiotic relationship never fails to emerge. Harmonious at times and oppositional at others to a youth subculture, the city can embody the complexities of its relationship with and against capitalism. This dynamic was captured in an account of the city in Jon Savage's *England's Dreaming* (1991):

The city I loved everybody else hated, it was totally deserted, people fled when the sun went down. It was run down but we thought it was beautiful at the time of youth when you're prone to romanticism....I wondered at what point a civilization hits its peak and then begins to decline. All those deserted cities, the jungle overgrows them: at what point does the city die? At what point do the people who live there no longer understand the vision of the builders (p. 137)?

I would suggest that these comments made by David Thomas of Punk group Pere Ubu are a new vision of the city. It demonstrates how a subculture is able to articulate and affirm an alternative vision in which youth are permitted a range of experiences, have a 'free rein' over a claimed territory, as well as an oppositional reading to that of the original builders on how a city should be 'used', and whose interests it should serve. While these comments suggest a celebration of the death of a city, they may also double as a lament, and sympathetic relation to its builders.

In the 1970s, the 'up-and-coming' generation was living in a period of 'posts'—post-WWII, post-Vietnam, post-Watergate, the tail end of the Cold War, and post-Civil Rights. This generation inherited many changes, complications and contradictions some of which manifested in policies, others, socially, and still others culturally. The most prominent change amongst these 'post' periods is the marked presence of capitalism in the name of modernization and progress gone awry. Colouring the spectrum in 1970s

and 1980s were high inflation, unemployment, poor education, inadequate housing facilities and deficient social welfare programs; in addition to these socio-economic changes were technological changes such as the retail introduction of the *VCR*, decline of the 8-track and rise of the cassette, the ghetto blaster, the mixer, the synthesizer and the drum machine. Advancement in technology and portability allowed for previously unforeseen innovation particularly in Hiphop culture. Further changes in mentality, social norms, and leisure such as rises in crime, drug use and choice amongst many other issues constitute the circumstances of the time. How youth were contending with these changes warrants further exploration.

In almost any given in depth study of Rock 'n' Roll, where there is an homage to the liberating subversion of the Punk Rock movement, without fail, there is 'special mention' of Hiphop as its subversive contemporary. Each has been cited as being one of *the* most destabilizing movements in the history of music while also having been deemed as successes owed to the pioneering breakthroughs of the forebears of socio-musical dissent: jazz musicians. Hiphop's leading impresario Fab Five Freddy, in fact had a personal connection to jazz musicians as he grew up in the presence of renowned jazz drummer Max Roach.

Hebdige (1987) among others, recognizes Reggae as having been an important source of inspiration influencing artists such as Hiphop's Jamaican born DJ Kool Herc (p. 137) and Punk's The Clash who did an exceptional rendition of Junior Murvin's "Police and Thieves" (p. 95). Reggae paved the way for formerly silenced voices to come forth in a manner that galvanized a pan-African revolution with artists such as Bob Marley, Jimmy Cliff, Desmond Dekker and Toots and the Maytals. Reggae's revolutionary voice comes from a confluence of American Soul, Pop, Afro-centrism and Rastafarian. The

African connection derives from roots in Ethiopia and Emperor Haile Selassie who is regarded as 'Jah' or God incarnate, as well as American Marcus Garvey who is regarded as a prophet in Rastafarian culture (pp. 51-52). The cursory mention of the relatedness of Hip-hop and Punk as notables in music history, begs the question of what more might be learned from them if greater attention is dedicated to these two genres collectively? I propose to extend the 'one-liners' and snippets into a full body of work in itself, 'filling in the gaps', so a bottleneck in information can be permitted to open up.

Hip-hop and Punk endured four American government administrations (Nixon-1969-1974; Ford-1974-1977; Carter-1977-1981; Reagan-1981-1989), the most (in)famous of which was in the 1980s underscored by a conservative political philosophy forming a strong Western axis known as the United Kingdom's *Thatcherism* and the United State's *Reaganomics*. These two genres can be considered to be on a parallel timeline, while still retaining their unique character as microcosms. In addition to this, looking respectively at experiences where artists from each genre have chosen to express themselves artistically, lyrically and stylistically, one can discern multiple and overlapping articulations in these subcultures, that are striving to give meaning to their existence during this period. These articulations produce a nexus where two genres, often spoken about separately, are in close proximity to one another philosophically or ideologically. They may seldom share the same physical space—be it a venue, neighborhood or radio frequency—but, there are connections that should not be ignored. This thesis has particular significance by virtue of the fact that few studies include these overly categorized race specific, or *racialized*, genres in the same analysis. I use this term in the sense that Paul Gilroy (2000) has used it previously in *Against Race* where there is an overvaluation of 'race' as 'naturalized' as opposed to an astute awareness of

its history as a social construct, and a political tool (p. 220). This term also introduces another concept Gilroy applies to his refutation of *raciological* thought. He posits that *raciological* thought is steeped in a regressive anti-modernism, a rejection of the increasingly complicated dynamics that grow out of a deindustrialized society, where a new segment of the population has emerged to take up the slack in the sagging economy of crumbling American cities (p. 220).

In Hiphop it is not uncommon to hear lyrics that are very much placed in the context of combat, war, or protest. It is specific (however not exclusive), to the nascent moment in Hiphop that I will define as circa 1974. The city was bankrupt and so was the emotional morale of most who lived there. This pessimism had even pervaded the present head-of-state as the headlines “Ford to City: Drop Dead”, depicted the president’s sentiments towards New York City after he declined to bail the city out of its fiscal crisis (Savage, 1991 p. 131). During a time where there was nothing to celebrate, it became exponentially more important to do so, to exploit the space of the city in a regenerative and innovative fashion. This is exactly what youth in the Bronx did by throwing clandestine block parties that were taking place in public spaces with DJs¹ who would bring the sound system. Soon, in a socio-political climate that was suffocating its working class and immigrant communities, emcees began to freestyle over their beats and attention turned from ‘breaking’, to this new form of music which was an extension of Hiphop’s seminal components of graffiti writing and break dancing.

¹ Popmaster Fabel, from New York’s premier break dancing crew, the Rock Steady Crew, names DJ Kool Herc and Afrika Bambaataa as New York’s Hiphop heavyweights respectively credited as being the “Father” and “Godfather” of the genre (Popmaster Fabel, The 3rd Annual HipHop Symposium, March 12-14, 2004)

Onward from the early 70s was a marked slow down in economic productivity, the United States workforce was undergoing a drastic demographic shift (Palmer, 1982, p. 40). In this climate, youth like Joseph Sadler, would eventually develop his alter ego Grandmaster Flash. It was as if the new direction of the economy required different and innovative action for different times, and that faced with the reality that no 'legitimate' employment was available, Sadler would take his certification in electronics to new levels. Developing the concept of the audio mixer and innovative theories on technique, Flash along with DJ Kool Herc and Afrika Bambaataa created a maelstrom in the evolution of Hiphop. While the Punk Rock edge seemed to be a response to being bored and fed up with the direction of Rock 'n' Roll, conversely, in poorer and predominately Black and Latino areas, experimentation in music seemed to occur when traditional materials for producing music such as bass, drums, and guitar, were no longer available. The Punk Rock ethos 'here's a guitar, here's a chord, there's another, now go form a band' could no longer apply nor provide a solution. It was as if the musical impetus was reworked into, 'here's some records, here's two turntables, a mixer and a mic, now go throw a jam'.

A number of differences can be drawn out between Punk Rock and Hiphop. The Bowery, the nation's most notorious skid row and home to Punk landmark CBGB contrasts quite starkly against the landscape of the South Bronx. The anecdotal statement on the availability of musical instruments to the citizens of these boroughs respectively, in effect, underscores the disparity between each culture's socio-economic positions. Looking at such a schema positions Punks as those who often reject dominant culture in part or wholesale (i.e. Punks who come from a middle class background); conversely,

denizens of the Bronx and members of the Hip-hop scene grew up in the harshest conditions perpetuated by America's economic fallout, severely stifling the options that a citizen of the ghetto would have compared to the relative choice (albeit, limited) varying from one borough to another.

Musical and cultural rebirth became a possibility as future Hip-hop DJs started to listen to their parents' record collections and music on the radio. Contrasted with middle class White America, there appeared to be a relative lack of opportunity to learn a musical instrument in New York's ghettos. It also seemed that there was little opportunity to hear live music in this barren environment where nightclubs and music venues were once located. It was as if making something from nothing became the only means of survival resulting in the invention of arguably the most cutting edge scene of all the scenes thriving contemporaneously in New York at the time. Hip-hop culture developed into a sophisticated network of artistic expression. It was able to appeal to a large cross-section of youth in the ghetto by using a variety of elements. Rap is one part oral, Emceeing, and one part aural, DJing. Graffiti is a visual art and Break dancing is acrobatic. Hip-hoppers were on the counter-offensive, expressed concisely in Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five and Melle Mel's well-known proverbial warnings:

Don't push me 'cause I'm close to the edge./I'm trying not to lose my head./It's like a jungle sometimes,/ it makes me wonder how I keep from going under.

“The Message”, *The Message*, 1982.

The longer you stay, the more you pay/my white lines go a long way/Either up your nose or through your vein/with nothing to gain except killing your brain/white lines, go away...don't, don't do it.

“White Lines”, *Grandmaster Melle Mel and the Furious Five*, 1984.

The latter song seemed like a plea and protest against the insidious drug infiltration that had permeated impoverished communities on such a large scale, that it appeared to be reaching genocidal levels (Chang, 2000, pp. 23). Ghettos in New York City arose during a time of severe underemployment and unemployment as the industries left the city and country. Skilled trades were no longer required and were replaced by low paying jobs in the exploding information and service sectors. The unemployment rate for Blacks in the labour force in 1973 was at 9.4 percent. In 1975, 1978, 1979, it was at 14.8, 12.8, and 12.3 percent respectively. In 1980 it was at 14.3 percent and in 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986 it steadily rose from 15.6, 18.9, 19.5, down somewhat at 15.9, 15.1 14.5 respectively (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1988, p. 381).

While the 1970s was a relatively safe and idle, time for middle class White America the class disparity between American Punk and the British counterpart was fairly distinct. However, despite British Punk being largely a working class movement contrasted against the relatively privileged American middle class counterpart, British and American Punk shared a binding history. In the late 60s and earlier 70s, American 'Proto-Punk' became the definitive music on which some British Punk bands modeled themselves. In 1976, British Punk would subsequently gain popularity and to a degree, eclipse the American movement, demonstrating the ensuing influence of British Punk in America. This inextricable history linking the two scenes together remerged during the period of crossover in New York between 1979 and 1985, notably involving British Punk Rockers, The Clash.

In theory, one would speculate that the middle class American Punk movement would have little to complain about however, in New York (and other major American cities), underneath the surface of the middle class façade, being supposedly content with

the 'American Dream', brewed something much darker. Once again, music became the outlet of choice to vent frustrations. Loud, fast and furious, three-chord Rock 'n' Roll stripped of its Black roots and sped up to maximum velocity with ripped clothes and leather jackets as uniform—accompanied with drugs and alcohol in the worst part of town—constituted the everyday lives of a certain contingent of White youth in the 70s. The psychic state of Punk culture and what contending with the terrain of the everyday meant was summed up by punk journalist Jon Savage (1991) in this way: as a “desperate, stubborn refusal of the world, a total rejection: the kind of thing that once drove men into the desert...it should be remembered that we had all grown up with Civil Defense drills with dreams of the bomb at night; we had been promised the end of the world as children, and we weren't getting it” (p. 136).

Bands such as The New York Dolls, Television and the Ramones, were all setting the stage for a new generation of apathetic youth, nihilism and flamboyant defiance of the status quo. Notable, is Richard Hell, who by some is credited with the 'Punk look' of ripped cloths and sloganeering such as a t-shirt on which he had painted a bull's-eye with the words 'please kill me', and then proceeded to walk the streets. Hell wrote “Blank Generation”, a declaration and anthem for youth that sounded out the disillusionment with the American dream “growing up when the economy was contracting rather than expanding when the innocence of the 60s was curdling into 70s cynicism” (Savage, 1991, pp. 60-61). The Ramones' obsession with 50s style bubble-gum pop contrasted with the abrasive tone of Joey Ramone's voice and oft-used *negationist* lyrics, “I don't wanna”, or self effacing escapism, “Now I Wanna Sniff Some Glue” and “Carbana Not Glue” represent the nihilism of Richard Hell's anthem “Blank

Generation. Marcus (1989) describes this generation as “gorged on...excess but lacking the idealism with which that excess had been inaugurated” (p. 161). The Ramones’ 1950s style can be construed as both sardonic and nostalgic, a conscious effort to submerge in the consumerist utopia that was similarly promoted in previous generations of youth. The Ramones’ conspicuous embrace of naïveté suggests that pretending that all was right with the world was almost a mandatory delusion in order to spend frivolously within an environment of false security. The overall feeling, although I am not making any claim that every Punk band was politically aware, was that in the 70s, there was at least a general feeling of malaise. “Don’t it make ya feel sick”, were lyrics that Joey Ramone would often pelt out at his audiences. The Ramones’ delivery could easily be seen as a mocking childish naivety or taken at face value as a parody of themselves, however, eating away just underneath the surface was a bitterness and *ennui*, many people’s outlooks of that period. “As Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five’s “The Message” would describe it, the New York ghettos that fuelled hip-hop’s re-creative project were spaces of state neglect and fading liberal dreams.

*Broken glass everywhere/People pissing on the stairs/you know they
Just don't care/I can't take the smell, I can't take the noise/Got no
money to move, I guess I got no choice/Rats in the front room,
roaches in the back Junkie's in the alley wit a baseball bat/I tried to
get away , but I couldn't get far/Cause the man with the tow-truck,
repossessed my car.*

The Message, 1982.

However, this *ennui* also generated “...spaces of spiritual and creative renewal.” (Chang, 2000, pp. 23-25).

Overseas, The Sex Pistols and the Clash formed at a time during which Britain faced challenges of a grand scale culminating in what Hall (1983) terms a crisis of hegemony (p. 44). The ‘order’ of Britain was at stake with factors of not simply nation-

wide recession and the general problems associated with advanced capitalism but threat to its social infrastructure, concepts of nation-hood and identity. The 'winter of discontent' in late 1978-79 marked the entrance of Thatcherism which might be thought of as a reactionary solution to Britain's state of crisis (p. 30). Effectively, this period constituted the political-economic backdrop and the environment in which UK Punk would flourish. Punks such as Steve Jones and Paul Cook of the Sex Pistols constituted part of Britain's working class contingent. It seemed that growing up in a time of civil and national unrest might have prompted such songs as "No Future (God Save the Queen)":

*God save the queen her fascist regime/It made you a moron
a potential h bomb!!/God save the queen she ain't
no human being/There is no future in England's dreaming`.*

Never Mind the Bollocks: Here's the Sex Pistols, 1977.

Also notable during this period of relative instability is the involvement of Joe Strummer and Paul Simonon of The Clash in the Notting Hill riots of August 1976. Due to over-policing at a Caribbean festival celebration, a group comprised primarily of West Indian citizens retaliated. The commotion soon escalated into pandemonium (Gilbert, 2004, pp. 100-101).

The Sex Pistols were arguably more outrageously political than the Clash but overall, British Punks embodied a politicized existence manifested most obviously sartorially. This was part of a lifestyle which involved a strategy of embracing oblivion and then turning it back for the outside world to see in order to escape the constraints of the everyday. In the Punk scene, particularly in the UK, even taking a stroll down the street in Punk Rock regalia constituted grounds for possible assault or arrest. For example, Johnny Rotten was accosted and stabbed while sitting in a car, after the Sex

Pistols' infamously disastrous Grundy interview on a widely viewed talk show on the BBC. Also, in 1976, London was teeming with the court controversy over Malcolm McLaren and Vivienne Westwood's infamous "Two Cowboys" T-shirt. For sale at the couple's shop "Sex", the shirt portrayed two cowboys, staring at each other, one with a cigarette balancing on his lips, their mid-sections leaning forward, scantily clad from the waist down in nothing but chaps and boots. This T-shirt was designed for The Sex Pistols to wear and John Lydon had done so. Once in court, the judge deemed the shirt obscene and suffice it to say, McLaren lost the case.

In his work in *Lipstick Traces* (1989) Greil Marcus states, "since 1979, Thatcher's new U.K. had served as a harbinger of Ronald Reagan's U.S.A. Failed mass strikes and riots in the poverty [*sic*] ghettos were not only costs of this new economy, but linchpins. In operation was a system of organized social and economic exclusion where the philosophy of the right ruled the day: "abundance is dangerous to power, and privation, if carefully managed, is safe" (p. 135). Unemployment and strife amongst Britain's working class left youth who fell on the other side of the class divide in a state of hopelessness and boredom. That hopelessness was translated into music and an overall lifestyle rooted, it has been claimed, in a *negationist* attitude that would reject all things 'British'. The best example of this was The Sex Pistols' "God Save the Queen", and the Grundy interview where their apparent disregard for 'proper etiquette', such as defiling the Queen's image and using profanities on national T.V., got them banned virtually everywhere in England skyrocketing their popularity.

Conversely, rather than reject society or espouse a 'negationist' attitude, *per se*, younger Punks involved in the American 'hardcore' scene expressed themselves somewhat differently. Inspired by original UK Punks the Damned and local Washington

D.C. pioneers the Bad Brains, Minor Threat were trailblazers for an emerging 'hardcore' scene who addressed critical issues in international politics. In one remarkable instance, Minor Threat staged an anti-war slogan campaign against the U.S. Defense Secretary. The unanticipated level of efficacy managed to attract the attention of the Secret Service (Anderson & Jenkins, 2003, p. 21).

*The Western Hemisphere and all inside,/ we learn who is murdering
the innocent, eating the poor/they are children playing with
countries,/ mining harbors, creating contras, games with lives and
ego,/ they bank their monies in this country they steal from Indian
(a colonial trait that is much too old)/ the banks, the Ives, the
profits, the lies,/ I would call it genocide,/ any other meaning
would be a lie.*

"Untitled Song for Latin America", *Double Nickels on the Dime*, 1984.

The Minutemen were amongst some other 'hardcore' Punks who chose to voice discontent with international issues in perhaps a more direct manner than their older British counterparts had done previously, with The Clash as the exception.

Hiphop and Punk are not simply explained away as socio-cultural anomalies that happened to have occurred along the same time-line. There are many factors that play a role in the evolution of music due to varied social, economic and cultural circumstances some of which have been outlined above. How a particular political climate affects and influences a substantial contingent of the American population who eventually pioneer ground breaking and innovative ways to express and give meaning to their life experiences is only a part of the equation.

At this point I would like to discuss the concept of 'conjuncture' in order to better 'frame' the context within which I wish to portray the circumstances surrounding the development of Punk and Hiphop in their nascent stages of 1974 through to the post-Punk/New Wave era until 1988. Hall (1983) defines conjuncture as the "coming

together of often distinct though related contradictions, moving according to different tempos, but condensed in the same historical moment” (p. 21). It was within the period of 1979-1985, at this particular ‘historical moment’ that crossover was able to occur. During this time, a multitude of circumstances began to take shape that would form the ‘backdrop’ for the moments of contact. It is important to note that no *one* set of circumstances can be attributed to crossover but that there were several which, when looked at in their totality, serve to ‘paint a picture’ of an atmosphere within which this generation of youth lived. Neither political-economic nor socio-cultural variables can be said to have had a universal effect on the development of youth culture. It can neither be proven empirically nor disproved but rather viewed as a blend of experiences or what Forman (2002), informed by Stuart Hall’s definition of discourse, would term “experiencings” (p. 9). Using theory derived from Martin Jacques and Stuart Hall in *The Politics of Thatcherism*, where an emphasis is put on the precariousness of attempts to align culture with political-economy, Hip-hop and Punk scenes might be thought of as comprised of various elements being mediated by the other and, at this particular conjuncture, through a confluence of factors, these two scenes gravitated toward one another. There is no empirical evidence that can prove that there is a relationship between culture and political-economy as culture cannot be reduced to one set of experiences or another. That is to say, it cannot be proven absolutely that elements of one exists or has been influenced as a result of the other. Styles of dress, trends, art, tastes, mood, political policies, recession, municipal elections, the mass media, global and international relations, or boredom all might to varying degrees have contributed to crossover. The objective here is not to prove in any capacity a causal argument, but rather to emphasize how through music, art and the unique spaces of New York City,

these scenes were able to communicate with one another as well as dominant culture in powerful and remarkable manners made more astounding by the transgression of the politics of race and class. It is at the point of crossover in New York where the lines formerly distinguishing race/genre and race/class became blurred. This is where one begins to see how the creation of music and art was distinctly different during this period because of its ambiguity, obscurity, difference and its embrace in spaces that have been previously closed to it. Most importantly, were the people involved facilitating crossover. In some senses, it was a state of mind where an open and inclusive participation allowed an amalgam art scene to successfully thrive in New York between 1979 and 1985. There is no one set of circumstances that constitute the 'character' of this historical moment but a range where there is a constant process being undergone of mediations between and amongst these variables. Both Hip-hop and Punk are monumental movements whose influences are deeply engendered today in the way we are using music to create different meanings. Looking at their origins will help bridge a dialogue between the two genres that can serve to strengthen understanding of that particular historical period, beyond the conventional academic analyses and pop histories and perhaps, spawn a new discourse on the intertextuality of these socio-cultural phenomena as different sides to the same story.

Historically, there has always been a conception about music defined along racial lines of what is Black music and what is White music. I would suggest that Punk does more to conflate those categories than any other genre in the Rock formation. Additionally, it has been the most successful at returning music back to a period before it became suffused with capitalism after the Rock 'n' Roll/R & B split in the early 50s, when *recorded performance* was still valued over *performance recording*. Where the

music was “an expression held together in the shared cultural and social context of the audience and performer...the music is worked up in a living social and cultural context...” (Chambers, 1976, p. 164). That is to say, that after the explosion of the war economy post-WWII, there was a push towards modernization and progress out of which precipitated the advent of youth culture. Youth culture, and the Rock music to which it would become inextricably associated, became one of the leading commodities from which this new economy stood to profit. One of many characteristics emerging from this shift towards capitalist values included the manner in which music was ‘delivered’ or ‘pre-packaged’ for the audience. Music became less participatory and organic due to these changing economic and technological imperatives. This will be extrapolated on in Chapters 2 and 3 where art and life have become worked up into an ethos that aimed to expunge some the undesirable characteristics of capitalism that became suffused in the art world, including socially constructed concepts such as race and class.

Between 1979 and 1985, moments of contact between the Hiphop, Punk and the art scene exemplify how redefining the parameters of cultural struggle beyond race and class has been a powerful source of agency. Fashion Moda, an art collective that formed in the Bronx in collaboration with both downtown artists and uptown artists constitutes a break in a racializing pattern. Using Rock music as his example, Iain Chambers (1976) asserts that social divisions of class have been complicated by the added dimension of cultural division. Chambers states that with respect to music, Blacks and Whites have shared the same history albeit from opposite sides (p. 157). For example, Rock ‘n’ Roll developed out of the exploitation and cooptation of Black Rhythm and Blues by White artists. Moments of contact during the period of 1979-1985 between Hiphop and Punk

has been a notable exception in this history of exploitation. Fashion Moda represents a rejection of a past where, in the case of Rock 'n' Roll, Whites have stood to benefit from Black artistic forms through varying degrees of participation and cooptation while remaining within the safety of cultural divisions. This has resulted in a new sensibility that awakens one to the notion that 'classism is racism for dummies'. Racism acts as a diversion for many and an invaluable tool for some. Without the concept of race the face of capitalism would drastically change. I would like to clarify this statement, in which, I do not intend to convey myself as reckless. What I am urging here is consideration of this point in the context of an ideological warfare. I am not suggesting that racism does not exist or 'apply' to the historical moment of 1979 to 1985 but to consider how concepts of 'race' and 'class' can be manipulated to the detriment of all those whom it directly effects. Furthermore, consider how race and class are configured into a strategic equation and finally, how through this strategic manipulation it might be much easier to contain and constrain groups when they are preoccupied with the micro-economics of survival. The 'system' depends on one's predilection for *racialized* thought in order to better exploit the masses—the working class be they Black, White, Latin Asian etc. Race simply becomes a tool and a means toward an end—profit and power of the dominant class. It might be much easier to attribute problems to a group of people at a parochial level who provide a more tangible and immediate explanation for the plausible sources of bleak socio-economic circumstances as opposed to a 'larger-than-life' figurehead that rarely presents itself. One might say that during periods of recession and high unemployment attitudes of entitlement could manifest in concepts of who is defined as American or the American family, and who is entitled to access to the American Dream.

Those who fall outside of this narrow definition become disempowered and often 'scapegoated' as a part of the problem. On rare occasion is one ever afforded the opportunity to bring accountability 'squarely on the shoulders' of those decision-makers by whom the middle and working class poor are directly being affected. However, one instance where this did occur embodies the entire 'ethos' of the formation of an amalgam Hip-hop and art-Punk scene. Notions of belonging were redefined along artistic lines thereby erasing those of race and class: In 1979, at Fashion Moda, where downtown artists converged with uptown graffiti writers, Ronald Reagan would hold a press conference. One of the artists had sprayed "broken promises" and "decay" on a wall that would serve as the backdrop for Reagan's conference (Webster, 1996, *ibid*). The timing and irony of the event cannot be overstated. These actions foreshadow further discussion in the chapters to come on how active movement through the spaces of New York City as well as the creation of art and music generated a powerful means for the Hip-hop and Punk scene to articulate their position with respect to dominant culture. Through the convergence of this amalgam scene multiple discourses were addressed on race, class and space through the power of artistic expression. To suggest that one ought to abandon notions of race is not to be taken lightly. However, Gilroy (2000) makes an important point when he states that "the idea that action against racial hierarchies can proceed more effectively when it has been purged of any lingering respect, for the idea of "race" is one of the most persuasive cards in this political and ethical suit" (p. 13). One might ask, in exchange for what? To abandon these notions would appear to disregard the struggles of those forebears who have fought so hard for a position for one's racial or ethnic group. However, the objective here would not be to discredit history, but to learn from it and

move forward by looking at how for a brief moment in 1979 to 1985, a seemingly unlikely group of youths managed to break free from a racialized history to which society has been so loyally bound.

The following section focuses on different accounts of Hiphop and Punk, what areas have been covered in previous literature and what connections draw Hiphop and Punk together. Marcus's *Lipstick Traces* (1989) highlights the relationship of 'Black' and 'White' music as well as Punk Rock's (and as later will be addressed, Hiphop's) connection to Situationism. What has transpired between 1979 and 1985 on some level was a heightened awareness in youth subculture of what was going on and an overwhelming propulsion towards an uncomplicated truth: it has always been about class structure predicated on a need for profit. This is capitalism's premise, everything else is a by-product including human casualty. If Hiphop was perceived as a threat early on, it would have never been allowed to flourish. When a subculture poses a threat to the stability of cultural norms, dominant culture will become involved. The point where recording contracts were being offered to Hiphop artists marked the dominant culture's interest in what was previously a subculture. Pre-1979 Hiphop was either ignored or existed in relative obscurity which suggests that Hiphop in its early stages, was not overtly seen as a new Black politick. Marcus (1989) asserts that "due to the cultural power of White society to determine what aspects of Black experience were 'acceptable' and what were not...[w]hile Black 'entertainment' and Black 'art' became acceptable, Black politics most certainly never did" (p. 161). That is to say, in the wake of the Civil Rights era, Black music was undergoing a transformation and a 'reassessing' of resources and approach to addressing issues of race, culture and society. The messages in Hiphop

were not always as overt as James Brown's Civil Rights anthem "Say it loud, I'm Black and I'm proud". With the brutal suppression and dismantling of the Black Panthers, there really was nothing left on which to bolster a Black political forcing new creative means in the underground (George, 1999, p. 38). I am not suggesting that Civil Rights efforts failed, however, it was becoming clear that new and creative means for Black cultural expression that may not have appeared overtly political or aggressive were being generated in Hip-hop culture in a manner that was acceptable and familiar—entertainment. However, Hip-hop undeniably had a manifest political character. Its focus on innovation and subversion of traditional art forms are prevalent in all four elements of Hip-hop: graffiti and breaking, DJing and emceeing. This political character manifests itself in struggles against institutions with which it must co-exist such as law, education, family, workplace, leisure etc. Hip-hop had to co-exist alongside dominant culture in the marginalized environment of New York's ghettos where the spaces in which it was allowed to produce its own cultural expressions were limited. Despite having to contend with the limitations of restricted space, youth still thrived.

In adverse circumstances music can be an articulation of a secret language of solidarity, oppression, cultural resistance and hope (p. 161). Here Marcus points out the history of the relationship between Black music to dominant culture and how there were certain exceptions where White artists recognized Black music's subversive potential. Punk Rock serves as another instance where this has occurred through co-mingling of members of the Punk and Hip-hop scenes. Marcus (1989) points out that as a language of survival, many sought out and appropriated Black music: It doesn't matter if it was "the Beatles hi-jacking the "yeah, yeah, yeahs" from Ray Charles (p. 160) or, Iggy Pop

moving to Chicago to ‘learn’ the Blues, “outside this process of incorporation and emasculation stood Black music itself” (p. 160). Those that had the wherewithal to truly apprehend this process of objectification and alienation could arm themselves with that knowledge, not to perpetuate the institutional process of division but to appropriate the music’s potential for themselves. This was the music that was going to transfuse life and energy (and maybe deliver salvation). Expressed aptly as ‘the only music that is going to save you’, The Clash reiterate an apocalyptic warning derived from Rastafarian prophet Marcus Garvey’s prediction of the fall of Babylon ‘when the two sevens clash’ in “1977”:

*Danger Stranger,/You’d better paint your face,/No Elvis
Beatles or the Rolling Stones./In 1977!*

The Clash, 1977.

In the tradition of dissenting music and subversive underground culture, Marcus (1989) states that “Black music engaged in a continual process of refinement and rebirth” (p. 163). For example, in order to “catch the experience of inner city life the guitar was electrified and rhythm section added to set the noise of the ghetto into the blues...” (p. 163). Following in this tradition, evolution of Hiphop using the mixer, turntable and sampler set the new noises that were to constitute the post-modern city into *R & B*, Funk and Rock. It became the quintessential avant-garde musical medium that had inherited the legacy of its predecessors. Punk also engaged in refinement and rebirth through simplification. Rather than pursuing the complex sounds of Arena Rock, Punk chose to reduce music to the three chord foundation of the Blues, but at a higher velocity. More than anything, what was most prevalent was not simply boredom with society at large but a genuine disdain, which could not be more evident than in expression in its purest form,

Black music. What made Punk such an irrefutable force at the time was its refusal to accept its incorporation into dominant culture and when it finally subsumed, its refusal to go on statically was just as important. When Punk became co-opted, its embrace of unfamiliar forms made sense as its vitality had always thrived on the unfamiliar. There was almost a desperateness to be transformative and to move forward in search of something that could resuscitate its trademark frantic energy. Hiphop, in its early days, possessed that fervor.

Lipstick Traces (1989) takes a familiar group and a familiar story, the Sex Pistols, and attempts to weave it together with other notable historical events and musical periods. At times disparate and esoteric ruminations, Marcus' ponderings take the reader on an historical odyssey through moments in time including the rein of the Sex Pistols as well as other musical and non-musical occurrences that challenge facts and emphasize the 'what ifs'. Shifting the focus to the non-empirical, this book looks at a number of possible connections to the Sex Pistols that cannot necessarily be substantiated and therefore are somewhat open to the imagination. It is among many things the story of boredom and its history. The Sex Pistols' story acts as a contemporary link to a concatenation of events spawned from late nineteenth century Zurich out of which the artistic movement Dada was born, host to many a delirious night, at the Cabaret Voltaire. Other moments in time seemingly unrelated to the Sex Pistols' short-lived two year Punk Rock 'gig' with destiny are also visited and revisited: the Paris Commune of 1867, the formation of the *Lettrist* International in the 1950s, succeeded by the *Situationist* International (which enjoyed greater longevity and success) whose mark in history dates May 1968, the year of the *SIs* greatest revolt in the streets of Paris. *Situationism* is an

artistic and intellectual movement that sought to disrupt the landscape of a presupposed reality through the assimilation of art and life into one and the same experience. Marcus' effort to link this constellation of events would have the reader infer that without their remarkable exploits Punk would never have existed (or at least not in the way it is known to have existed today). Marcus provides us with a diary of snippets in time that provide glimpses at what it might have meant to have a conversation in a café with Guy Debord (whose name has become synonymous with the *Situationist* movement), or be at a Pistols concert or what it might have been like to witness the Dadaists in the hot sweaty delirium of ecstatic evenings at the Cabaret Voltaire. Allegations of a *Situationist* philosophy have been retroactively ascribed to Punks. The *Situationist* link is highly contentious and theoretical at best, yet nevertheless a very insightful perspective on Punk subculture. Intellectual speculation has developed surrounding its legitimacy but does not necessarily rule out the possibility of a small minority of Punks who, at the time, may indeed have been aware of its association and integration into a 'whole way of life'. To what extent we can attribute to Punk a politically subversive twist is challenged by Johnny Rotten's wholesale rejection of these stipulations. However, a more obvious political connection can be drawn to the more 'artful' New York scene which has been associated with an Americanized version of *Situationism* coined "Happenings" such as Andy Warhol and the Velvet Underground's Exploding Plastic Inevitable (*EPI*) or, the Bronx art centre Fashion Moda. The significance of Fashion Moda will be explored further in Chapter 3 as connections to Punk Rock, Hiphop and the New York art scene continue to strengthen. The connections become increasingly apparent due to the manner in which Hiphop and Punk have challenged the status quo through stylized acts in the visual arts and music.

These 'acts' will be explored further as 'discursive acts', lived experience that is 'talked into life' through action.

This section moves away from some of Marcus' more tenuous speculation on Situationism toward a continued emphasis on the relationship between HipHop and Punk. The following suggests a relationship between the two scenes by looking at where previous accounts of Hiphop and Punk begin and end. This analysis facilitates the 'push' needed towards a comprehensive perspective that sets up a dialogue between Punk and Hiphop cultures. Dick Hebdige's *Subculture* (1979), talks about five leading youth movements occurring within three decades prior to 1979: Teds, Rastas, Mods, Skinheads, and Punks. Aside from the fact that Hebdige's work focuses on European (and transplanted European) cultures, Hiphop only began to become internationally known almost a decade later with the release of Run DMC's *Raising Hell* in 1986. With groundbreaking crossover success on the Run DMC/Aerosmith collaboration "Walk this Way", Run DMC became the first Rap act to have its video shown on MTV and to solidify rap's crossover into the pop mainstream. Two years later MTV inaugurated *Yo, MTV Raps*, a show dedicated to playing solely Rap music hosted by Fab Five Freddy. Until Rap became broadcasted on television, it still remained partially underground. In 1987, Hebdige made another contribution to subcultural literature with *Cut 'n' Mix*, that focused minimally on Rap devoting analyses to Caribbean music—calypso, ska, reggae—and culture, still missing the mark on what a year later was to be largest cultural phenomenon since Punk to date. Reggae and Punk have been recognized by many as having inherent similarities undeniably linking them together. As Savage (1991) has asserted in *England's Dreaming*, Reggae has been the soundtrack to social resistance, a

transmitter and beacon for those most ostracized in England and Punk 'wanted in' (p. 235). But part of the soundtrack has transmuted from the heavy bass, percussion and dub of 1960s and 70s Reggae, moving the Jamaican *sound system* into the future via Hip-hop which further innovated the artistic expression by taking the mixer and turntables out of the disco and into the streets. But that relation is not extended to the realms of New York's inner city when New York is brought into Savage's detailed account of the British Punk movement. Savage covers up until 1979 with the express purpose of telling the Sex Pistols story. His chronicles of New York cover the travails of Malcolm McLaren in the downtown art and CBGB scene exclusively. However, Pat Gilbert's *Passion is a Fashion* (2004), the story of the Clash *does* take that leap, although limited, documenting Hip-hop's ubiquity and rapid ascent in New York.

1979 was the year that galvanized Hip-hop fans as it began its ascent into the mainstream gaining more exposure than ever before. America was recovering from the Sex Pistols frenzy just the year before opening up the floodgates for other bands (The Damned were actually the first British Punk band to tour North America in 1977). Americans would experience first hand, the highly coveted new torchbearers of Punk, The Clash and it was also the year that Rap broke into the mainstream. Many people were being exposed to Rap for the first time. It was inevitable that the atonal rants and Reggae-influenced 'talk-overs' by The Clash's Joe Strummer would serve as preamble for another chapter on the transition from *Reggae* to *Rap*. Among these pivotal transitions were the spontaneous New York-inspired *Sandinista* (1980) containing the Clash's official foray into Rap "Magnificent Seven", *The Escapades of Futura 2000* (1982), a collaboration with iconic graffiti writer Futura 2000 as well as Futura's Rap

contribution to the Clash's "Overpowered by Funk" on *Combat Rock* (1982). *Combat Rock* marked the last album with the original Clash line-up due to creative differences. The Clash, were not alone in the growing cross-fertilization of musical styles. Contemporaneously, was Blondie's "Rapture" (1980), a bold move for the CBGB Punk group, tipping the hat to Hiphop and one of its key graffiti writers and entrepreneurs, Fab Five Freddy, *aka* Fred Braithwaite, to which they owe their involvement in Hiphop. As the media directed increasing attention toward Hiphop, Braithwaite was there to take advantage of this opportunity as well as Malcolm McLaren who like Braithwaite, possessed clarity of vision. They both realized that "pop is one of the very few areas in...society where members of different classes can mix on anything resembling equal terms..." (Gilbert, 2005, p. 296). McLaren's tendency to keep abreast with the underground New York art scene would soon lead him to two notable crossover projects, Bow Wow Wow and The World Famous Supreme Team. A leader in taking Hiphop to the media and art world, Braithwaite pushed Hiphop into the realm of avant-garde art. For a few years, Braithwaite had New York's complete attention having met Blondie's Debbie Harry and Chris Stein at one of his art house graffiti exhibitions, this would lead to a major collaboration with Chris Stein on the production of the music for Hiphop's premier film *Wild Style* (1982). *Wild Style* would foreshadow future cross-town/cross-cultural creativity. Hiphop and Punk were both invented by people disenfranchised by the big musical trends of the day—Disco and Arena Rock. On the counter-offensive, was Hiphop, as a "living, aggressive art...[a] perfect fit with the anti-establishment attitudes that ruled at Punk landmarks like CBGB, if this was rebel music, [graffiti] was just as truly rebel art" (George, 1999, p. 12). Malcolm McLaren and Fab Five Freddy

had a working knowledge for the ingredients of a successful scene. According to Savage (1991) those ingredients consisted of “a frantic, committed lifestyle that ignored orthodox convention at the same time as it observed strict rules of behaviour”. McLaren and Braithwaite had seen how subcultures interacted with the media music and fashion industries, “it was time to begin marrying this experience with their fundamental politics” (p. 69).

In 1983, Malcolm McLaren and Afrika Bambaataa met at a Zulu Nation party. McLaren embarked on his own Rap project with the highly successful song (on which he rapped!) “Buffalo Gals” by The World Famous Supreme Team, the group he put together. A year later in 1984, Johnny Rotten *aka* John Lydon would cut a single, “World Destruction” with Afrika Bambaataa *aka* ‘Bam’, an unsurprising collaboration given Bambaataa’s eclectic taste in music foreshadowed early on in the 70s when Bam began cutting and mixing his favorite tunes, Funk, Rock, and Disco. Music was an escape from the reality of the drab conditions that poor working class Black and Latino kids lived in. This was music coming from people who had nothing and used music to make the most of it. Punk/Reggae DJ/filmmaker and ‘scenster’ Don Letts attests that Hiphop is Punk’s equivalent: “...until Hiphop came along, none of the other movements since Punk had that content and weight beyond the music” (Lydon, 1994, p. 273).

New York was incontestably the locus of cultural production for the world. It seemed to (and still does) provide an opportunity for expression in its purest form. Members of the Punk and Hiphop scene were involved in a cultural struggle taking place in New York against dominant culture and the institutions with which it had to co-exist. Two notable incidents exemplifying this struggle took place at the Bond Casino. The

June 1981 concert at the Bond Casino celebrated the ascent of HipHop. Taking place in mid-town Manhattan, the concert featured The Clash as well as up-and-coming Rap groups such as Grandmaster Flash, and the Furious Five, the Treacherous Three and the Sugar Hill Gang. In this case, Punk and HipHop's tension with dominant culture and institutions manifested in an attempt by the fire department to shut down the Bond's show permanently due to city ordinance. While it is not possible to precisely establish any underlying motive by the city, a general attitude toward Punk and HipHop based on these actions might begin to emerge here. In addition, tension escalated as a result of Grandmaster Flash's 'less-than-friendly' reception by a mainstream audience. In some ways, The Clash's ascent into the mainstream positioned them in fundamental conflict with new fans coming from dominant culture. Originally, the scene from which the Clash hailed harboured notions steeped in a political and musical philosophy that eventually would converge and form part of an amalgam art scene. The Bond's audience did not share the ideas or the deeper roots to which The Clash were connected. However, after-hours a unique subcultural *mélange* was occurring between key members of the graffiti scene (many of which are featured in the film *Wild Style*) and Punk scene including a reincarnated Johnny Rotten-come-John Lydon and his new post-Punk group *PiL* (Public Image Limited) as well as Afrika Bambaataa, to name but a few. This kind of cross-cultural contact underscores the role of place and how art provided a language of solidarity, survival and self-expression (Frith & Corrigan, 1976, p. 232).

There are no readily apparent cultural similarities between these two musical genres and their respective cultures but as alluded to above, and as I address in the following chapters, there do seem to be some similar ways of producing culture and

challenging dominant culture that can be argued, *do* link them culturally, as well as philosophically and ideologically. Furthermore, these links between Hip-hop and Punk have been the very reason for interaction manifested in artistic and musical collaborations. Take for example, some of The Clash's motivations born from a desire to express themselves on social and political fronts. In order to do so they exercised the power of cultural borrowing. Rather than being strictly bound to one's own cultural history, the Clash sought elsewhere for a powerful cultural expression. Discovering Reggae, for the Clash was like gaining a new voice that gave them a language through which to articulate their own revolution à la "White Riot".

White riot, I want a riot, white riot, A riot of my own!

White Riot, 1977.

After Punk died unofficially in 1978 with the demise of the Sex Pistols, there was a turning point for many Punk bands, including The Clash, in which they turned to Black music, as a revolutionary and autonomous form. 1979 provided an opportunity for change. It was the year that Hip-hop broke out with the release of *Rapper's Delight*. What I suggest here, is that although the Sex Pistols disbanded, youth discontent was not suddenly eradicated (not that Punk was ever supposed to be ultimate solution). There still was a need for Punk Rock but also a need for its resuscitation and reinvention. That outlet was found in a newer form of Black music, this time from New York, that also shared ties to Reggae thus perhaps the Clash's attraction. That music and culture was Hip-hop. "[The Clash] were the first real band to really embrace the cross-cultural revolution' explains New York producer Rick Rubin [co-founder of *Def Jam Records* and producer of premier Rap group Run D.M.C.]...they brought reggae to rock fans and it was the same with hip-hop..." (Gilbert, 2005, p. 294). The Clash's direct link to Black

music provides a concise example of the intertextuality between Punk and Hip-hop cultures.

This chapter serves as the foundation for a deeper analysis on the crossover of these two unique and pioneering scenes whose trajectories eventually converged to form one of the most unique and memorable instances where race and class lines were diffused. A survey of the period 1974 to 1988, in which Punk and Hip-hop as well as post-Punk flourished and receded provided the 'stories' of these two genres in both the United States and United Kingdom with primary emphasis on New York.

Documentation in both scholarly and popular form suggests that these subcultures impart a wealth of material and knowledge which elucidate the complex terrain of social discourse. Crossover—that which has *not* been fully addressed in these bodies of work—suggests further analyses on a neglected area of study in youth subculture. How Hip-hop and Punk developed and the circumstances surrounding their transformation were recounted. The concept of conjuncture helps to underline the importance of understanding how a cornucopia of elements intersect, overlap and converge. The 'stories' of these two genres are recounted and reconstructed in a manner that creates a counter-narrative to how the events occurring during this period actually begin to take shape.

In both Punk and Hip-hop culture there was a deep desire for change, and a longing for something different. Out of the imaginations of these youth cultures emerged something previously considered quite unmusical, a *noise* that became music as its messages disseminated. I would posit that Fab Five Freddy's movements circulating between the uptown and downtown scenes and The Clash's international circulation represent examples of how music and art become empowering as they circulate through

communities. Additionally, I would also suggest that this movement holds tacit political connotations as well, engaging issues at several levels ranging from discourse on race and class, and ideological issues on the control of power, art and public space. Furthermore, this movement symbolizes the flow of music through culture which can incite people to action as music has often been able to mobilize people and other movements through its ability to effectively produce multiple articulations. Music and art have acted as a beacon of change reflecting the face of the unrepresented in society, always at the vanguard and have been an unspoken torchbearer of liberty and unity for cultures. Although seldom the focus of histories of revolutions or insurrections, they no doubt play a key role as the backdrop, as the *revolution* behind revolutions.

CHAPTER 2

Ruminations on the Everyday: Theorizing Hiphop & Punk

Chapter II will draw from theorists in cultural studies in music including Murray Forman's *The 'Hood Comes First: Race, Space, and Place in Rap and Hip-Hop* (2002), Will Straw's "Systems of Articulation: Logics of Change" (1991) and Lawrence Grossberg's "Rock, Territorialization and Power" (1991) and *We Gotta Get Out of this Place: Popular Conservatism and Post Modern Culture* (1992). In the first section, Forman's views on discourse, space and place in Hiphop culture provide the tools for understanding how Hiphop and Punk produced unique forms of cultural expression. The second section takes into consideration the function of music, accompanied by art, as a social and cultural barometer. Straw's key ideas on the *logics of change* in music and culture facilitate an investigation on how music works through culture reflecting and promoting change in the constantly fluctuating dynamics of the Hiphop and Punk scenes. Finally, Grossberg's examination of the Rock Formation utilizes concepts such as *disciplined mobilization* which help delineate the movements of the Hiphop and Punk scenes within the spaces of New York City. Looking at how movements are negotiated by members of the Hiphop and Punk scenes highlights the tensions between these scenes and dominant culture and underscores how the convergence of these two scenes has produced a powerful counter-narrative on race and class. The work by these theorists contributes to the production of an analysis on the crossover of Hiphop and Punk Rock between 1979-1985 as an historically unique and overlooked period.

The following section is anchored in work in *The 'Hood Comes First: Race Space and Place in Rap and Hip-Hop* (2002) where Forman's use of the 'discursive formation' provides a manner in which to conceive of the overlapping and sometimes contradictory methods through which scenes express themselves. Further building on this, Forman turns to work by Nancy Fraser whose concept of 'coalition based aggregates' and 'discursive arenas', facilitate an interpretation of the points of contact between diverse groups based on notions of difference.

Space and place are sites of cultural production. Culture according to Hall et al (1976), is "the way in which groups handle the raw material of their social and material existence" and when they embody the antithesis of meanings and values of institutions around them they become cultures of resistance, of antipathy" (p 10). As subcultures, Hiphop and Punk have posed a threat to dominant culture through the manners in which they have chosen to express themselves. Space constitutes the 'raw material' and the locale in which these cultural expressions take place. Whether it is the graffiti in Hiphop or the Punk 'aesthetic' (such as style of dress or art) of the downtown scene, the messages being articulated by these groups can often challenge the status quo in the form of discursive acts which threaten the order of hegemony. These 'acts' constitute what Forman describes as a "discursive formation", the active manipulation of free flowing discourses, the mowing over of gaps between and amongst multiple and colliding discourses (p. 11). Hiphop and Punk exist within a politicized space where the tensions between the dominant and the subculture become acute. These tensions can culminate in the production of a discursive formation where the values of the dominant culture and the subculture are simultaneously reflected. As a result, what occurs is a form of 'discursive

play' (pp. 10-11) which can at times make Hiphop and Punk appear to be ambiguously situated. However, this volatility is a key characteristic that constitutes the formation of a scene which will be discussed further on in the chapter. The following examples provide instances where tension between dominant cultural values and the values of the Hiphop and Punk scenes have produced discursive formations.

The experiences of members of the Hiphop and Punk scenes are 'talked into life' through various discursive acts such as for example, the fusing of life and art through graffiti, and then taking this organic form to a controlled space such as an art house. There is an inherent 'reflexive' relation of a culture to its society (the subculture to its parent culture) and an influence of one on the other where one threatens to dominate. This has been expressed in Hebdige's (1979) work on subculture suggesting that often the parent culture is parroted or reproduced in a subculture. The point at which this pattern can be identified in Hiphop or Punk is when it began to overtly espouse mainstream values. These mainstream values are often embodied in institutions such as the art house or the record label. Where there are two seemingly ideologically opposed groups sharing part of one larger (public) culture, one will inevitably consume the other. At the point of overlap there will be an inevitable co-optation. For example, it is the desire of a graffiti artist to sell his/her work or to transfer it to a canvas that creates a pull towards the values of the parent culture for success. Forman draws on the term discursive *bricolage* as a critical tool for opposing dominant values which I suggest can also be used by a subculture to reject the notion of a uniform culture that is predictable and easily reproduced from one context to next.

The idea that Hip-hop or Punk could be easily reproduced in effect, would signal its commodification by dominant culture which would be anathema to some of the members of these scenes. Therefore for example, one might view Public Enemy's contradictory adoption of the Black Panther aesthetic within the context of a discursive *bricolage*. Provocative song and album titles such as *Fear of a Black Planet* seemingly evoke Panther's propaganda while simultaneously working at a corporate and creative level with Jewish music moguls such as Rick Rubin, Lyor Cohen and Bill Adler. Their apparent contradictory embrace of free market capitalism over the Panther's anti-establishment radicalism is further complicated by the irony of an alleged anti-Semitic song:

*Stole Rock And Roll And Ain't Gave It Back/This Is For The Blues
People In The Delta/This Is For Everybody In The 50's That
Didn't Get their money/Little Richard Gettin' Half A Penny A Penny
All The Super Soul Singers Of The 60's/All The Bands Of The 70's
On The Outside Lookin In/All The People That Didn't Make A
Dime Off Their Session Playin/And Even The Rappers In The
Master Own You/Who Do You Trust From Swindler's Lust/From
The Back Of The Bus/Neither One Of Us Control The Fate Of Our
Soul/And Swindler's Lust.*

“Swindler's Lust”, *There's a Poison Goin On*, 1989.

A reading of Public Enemy's behaviour suggests that coming dangerously close to the 'semiotic edge' with the manipulation of signs and symbolism in a contradictory fashion was commonplace in Hip-hop. Similarly, Punk was infamously ambivalent on many issues from homosexuality to racism. This is apparent in Dee Dee Ramone's "53rd and 3rd," for example, where he depicts his experience with male prostitution. It is also apparent in the Nazi imagery in "Today your Love Tomorrow the World:"

*53rd and 3rd Standing on the street/53rd and 3rd I'm tryin' to turn a trick/
53rd and 3rd You're the one they never pick/53rd and 3rd Don't it
make you feel sick?/Then I took out my razor blade/Then I did what God
forbade/Now the cops are after me/But I proved that I'm no sissy!*

The Ramones, 1976.

*I'm a shock trooper in a stupor yes I am/I'm a Nazi schatze y'know I
fight for fatherland/I'm a shock trooper in a stupor yes I am/I'm a Nazi
schatze y'know I fight for fatherland/Little German boy/Being pushed
around/Little German boy In a German town...*

The Ramones, 1976.

In both examples given above, Public Enemy and The Ramones demonstrate how elements of dominant culture emerge in a manner that would appear to be in fundamental conflict with the values of the subcultures from which they came. It also underscores how these scenes function in volatile and at times contradictory manners which makes any conclusive interpretations about Hiphop and Punk including their eventual crossover, impossible.

Returning to the notion of space and place as sites of cultural production, the following section places an emphasis not only on how to 'think' about the cultural expressions produced by Hiphop and Punk as discursive acts, but the importance of where these acts take place. The Bond's Casino concert held in June 1981 is an important event for a number of reasons. First, it was here that many people not familiar with Hiphop would hear it for the first time. Hiphop was preparing for the world stage as the following year it would embark on its first overseas tour to Europe. The Clash's transformative experience in New York which culminated in *Sandinista* (1980) in many ways marked a reincarnation of Punk. For the first time U.S. record sales surpassed that of the UK suggesting the Clash's popularity in the U.S. was at an all time high. Further, the Bond's show signaled the Clash's embrace of New York's underground art scene as well as interest in what was occurring at local and national levels with two Rap styled

tracks:

...Graffiti Jack Sprays in Black/But can an Englishman read it back?

“Lightening Strikes”, *Sandinista*, 1980

This Sound does not subscribe to the international plan/in the psycho shadow of the white right hand/them that see ghettology as an urban Vietnam/giving deadly exhibitions of murder by Napalm.

“This is Radio Clash”, *This is Radio Clash*, 1981

The concert was meant to celebrate the rise of Hiphop by way of featuring Grandmaster Flash, the Sugar Hill Gang and the Treacherous Three. Many key figures involved in the New York art scene were present at the after-hours party. Those present included graffiti artist Futura 2000, with whom the Clash would eventually work, Afrika Bambaataa, and John Lydon. The latter two individuals would also work together a few years later under the name Time Zone.

Forman introduces the work of Nancy Fraser (1992) into the analysis on space as a means to effect dialogue between disparate ‘aggregates’—in this case, members of the Hiphop and Punk scenes. Fraser’s concept of a discursive arena provides perspective on less easily explained points of cultural crossover and borrowing where there is a “multiplicity of discursive formations that...are in dialogue across disparate social settings and cultural contexts... *under historically specific conditions*, lead[ing] to coalition-based...aggregates”. Thinking about the diverse space of the Bond’s Casino show in terms of a discursive arena aids in articulating the cross-cultural overlap of subcultures that sometimes share the same social space. What may be viewed as a coalition based on a ‘cultural map of difference’ becomes more clearly articulated in these spatial terms and corroborates the notion of individual or group agency. This notion of human agency both instills new meaning and redefines and redistributes meaning in

ideological and physical space thereby displacing borders and *reterritorializing* frontiers. An event such as the Bond's Casino show demonstrates the willingness of both scenes to collaborate out of a mutual interest and an awareness that what the other was doing was socially significant and cutting edge. The members of both scenes made choices that effectively *reterritorialized* boundaries. The possibility for new cultural production and new meanings were no longer proscribed. The apparently natural or obvious elements associated with the local become complicated by the presence of the 'other' opening up new discursive terrain where boundaries can be dissolved, displaced or maintained—the choice belongs to the subject. Issues surrounding race and class emerge where alliances are developed across former lines of division. This alliance indicates that music and art possess the power to incite crossover. This also highlights categorizations of race and class which are often divisive as actually being secondary to the notion of an instinctual gravitation toward survival. The coalition of Hip-hop and Punk demonstrate how these underground scenes possess their own notions of 'society'. These notions are embodied in a counter-ideology which emerges in the multiple articulations that these cultures produce in day-to-day life (music, art, graffiti, etc.) forming part of an economy of survival. Within the broad range of the 'working class', a co-cultural power-through-solidarity is harnessed across race. The exploitation of one group by another no longer constitutes the primary means of attaining success or even ensuring survival.

During the time in which coalitions occurred—such as that of Futura 2000 and the Clash or John Lydon and Afrika Bambaataa—at the local level New York City was in a fiscal and social crisis; nationally, there was a country-wide recession and warring on a global stage between the two fundamentally opposed political ideologies of the United

States and the former Soviet Union. Members of the Hiphop and Punk scenes were creating an authentic space in which to express themselves; a 'subaltern counter public' would serve as an alternative public sphere which Forman likens to a 'sphere within a sphere'. I would suggest here that an alternative public sphere might be thought of as a temporarily *deracialized* territory. The *deracialized* and 'remapped spaces' of the underground art scene included both Hiphop and Punk cultures during the period roughly spanning 1979 to 1985. The hierarchy characterized by capitalism in terms of its common class and race exploitation was challenged. Control could no longer be enforced through the circumscription of space and ideological concepts imbued in that space such as for example 'ghetto', 'poor', 'black', 'other', or 'danger'. Such concepts and constructs of race, class and the cultural divide, were part an apparatus of domination, and were being challenged. In an alternative public sphere, this 'apparatus of domination' would be temporarily displaced, new frontiers established and subsequently *reterritorialized*. While the coalitions may have appeared 'unnatural', the conditions that kept them apart were the same conditions that brought them together in a "coming to consciousness" (Freire, 1970). Hiphop and Punk Rock's avant-garde (and at times outlaw) status drew them together despite the conditions that kept them apart. The controlled physical and ideological divisions indoctrinated into the everyday (including the physical structures of city planning, civil engineering and notions of otherness which inhabit constructs of race and class) were dispelled in favour of a union based on artistic cultural expression. There was a certain commonality between the Punk and Hiphop scenes in the desire and search for a solution to the *ennui* and restlessness. There existed a desire to forge a place for their cultures, and 'own' their boundaries as opposed to

having them ascribed. For example, the formation of alternatives to art houses such as Fashion Moda, an art house in the Bronx, demonstrates a viable cultural solution. Projects such as this are effective because they are located in spaces outside of the official institutionalized venue of the mainstream where graffiti artists and downtown artists could be a part of a community project that facilitated a sharing of technique and culture. Davis suggests that it is this type of “integrative logic” that must accompany one’s struggle and which may attenuate the race and class ties just long enough to provide an objective awareness of one’s place. Furthermore, this approach allows one to step back and observe how one’s social position is relevant to various other forms of oppression across a broad spectrum of social experiences (p. 13). For example, the formation of Fashion Moda, as an alternative to the mainstream also indicates that there was an awareness of the importance of transgression of borders. The art house could only be successful if it was able to reestablish a territory outside of the official locations for such a project, such as the East Village or Soho. Reterritorialization involved the generation of an optimized point of view that allowed one to glimpse beyond one’s own situation to gain perspective and to permit oneself to *re-imagine* possibilities outside of the everyday.

In Grossberg’s (1992) terms, “mattering maps” help indicate what “affective investments are being made” (p. 13). The text most certainly does not tell the whole story, rather it is the interstices and the intertextual material that suggest there is more to be revealed. While on first reading, each scene’s texts may be considered different, they comprise a social reality that forms a part of a greater narrative. It is the grand narrative that holds meaning above and beyond the superficial realities of a particular scene or

community. New York's 'reality' is the reality of all of its constituents. For example, the effects of an economic recession, the political climate, and the economy have varying 'effects' on the population of New York however it is one's role or position that differs. There are those who are 'less' affected than others and those who have the official power to curtail or perpetuate those effects. Similarly, there are others in more disadvantageous positions, such as constituents of unrepresented communities: the Hip-hop and Punk scenes for example, or often the cultures of which they are a part. These subcultures chose to negotiate those effects through actions that created livable alternatives to their reality by breaking mainstream rules and challenging perceptions of criminality. For example, individuals might subversively paint graffiti as a snub to the perceived rules of vandalism. Similarly, alternative art spaces were created as a symbol of transgressing frontiers and generating spatial alternatives in a situation where no such spaces were extant. The totality of the multitude of actions and events such as the graffiti painting and the creation of the alternative art spaces had many effects. It even resulted in the abandonment of notions of belonging in historically traditional ways. In this case, it is the narratives that flow from these cultural texts that people and cultures carry with them. By bringing these narratives to different locals, sonically, visually, orally—through the entire gamut of lexical and non-lexical modes of expression, parameters were being challenged, new narratives were formed and new realities were 'lived into'. Bringing narratives to other locales forced people to look at circumstances and preconceived notions of race and class differently—in a new context. As Forman (2002) has written, "[t]he process of rendering space meaningful in cultural terms involves the reproduction of society by defining spaces according to the ways they are inhabited and used as lived,

experiential space” (p. 23). Forman is here referring to the process of rendering ‘real’ these spaces by using the tools of music, art, and so on. During this process, one redefines previously ‘set’ cultural texts, and in the process gives new meaning to the old. In concrete terms, this might be achieved, for example, by the *reappropriation* of space when using it in a manner not necessarily originally intended by its ‘overseers’. The downtown art scene and Hiphop scene’s use of the space in the Bronx itself, represents a joint discursive act which subverts the intended use of that space.

The problem with the now standard biography on the Bronx (*aka* uptown) and CBGB (*aka* downtown) scenes is that these spaces are given an ascribed identity. However, in so doing, this identity is unmitigated and unchallenged. Concomitantly, all of the actors-cum-icons associated with these locations are also subject to an ascribed identity. While the locations may be landmarks, they are also arguably much more nuanced spaces than this reified identity might suggest. Forman, in particular, highlights this notion in his writing on Hiphop. He suggests that there is a certain fluid character to spatial identifications and that “identity is formed on the move...across and through socio-spatial boundaries in a process of endless encounters with different places and their accompanying localized discourses” (p. 31). An analysis of the music, art and actors in the Hiphop and Punk scenes will bring new light to these archetypal spaces as locale can only provide a partial text as it is both static and incomplete.

Some theorists have suggested a different relationship between a musical scene, cultural identity, and change. Will Straw (1991), for example, privileges the notion of change resulting from music flowing through culture. This suggests that in the case of the Punk and Hiphop scenes, venues such as CBGB, or an art house where music would be

performed or a concert such as the Bond's Casino, the narrative brought with subjects to new locales and the new text produced from moments of contact are part of a preponderant affect. Straw's work would suggest that music (and I would add, the accompaniment of visual art), are capable of producing affective shifts which in this case have resulted in crossover, as they move through spaces, cultural, physical and otherwise.

Where Forman, Grossberg and others help clarify how change occurs, Will Straw examines a different aspect of change. Straw's concepts of cultural change in "Systems of Articulation, Logics of Change" (1991) account for the volatility of a scene and the rapidity with which it is able to adapt. Definitions of a community and a scene will assist in clarifying how the terms 'scene' and 'community' are used throughout the thesis. For Straw, the musical community is a fairly stable entity with a strongly rooted sense of place and space. Straw defines it as "a population or group whose composition is relatively stable—according to a wide range of sociological variables—and whose involvement in music takes the form of an ongoing exploration of one or more musical idioms said to be rooted within a geographically specific historic heritage" (p. 372). This imbues the community with a sense of historicity which a scene, per se, might lack. As mentioned earlier, a scene in contrast to a community, is "that cultural space in which a range of musical practices co-exist, interacting with each other within a variety of processes of differentiation and according to widely varying trajectories of change and cross-fertilization" (p. 372). In this regard, Straw views a scene as less stable in that it has 'frontiers' that are more porous and it has a lifespan that is much more volatile.

At the theoretical level, Straw's work helps construct a framework to examine points of contact between cultures. A framework of this sort is particularly helpful in

explaining the complex New York underground culture. Straw outlines three ‘logics’ which are here, looked at with regard to how processes of change have precipitated crossover between the Hiphop and Punk scenes. The first logic explores how music moves through cultures. Music is examined in terms of its relationship to processes such as commodification and canonization. Additionally, there is an examination of how these processes are tied to a cyclical temporality. The second logic addresses the notion of cultural adaptability while maintaining cultural boundaries. The third logic of circumstantial change is applicable during instances where there is no apparent causal relationship. Moreover, it relies on variables localized in the cultural specificities of a scene.

All three logics often draw on the related notion of music’s powerful potential. Music is often conceptualized as being both prophetic and a sign of the times according to some cultural critics such as Jacques Attali (1977). Music is usually the first to reflect change, and it is often conceptualized as being built around change. Straw’s framework of multiple ‘logics’ offers a fluid analytical approach by which to conceptualize music as something that flows through culture. This is both helpful and appropriate given the continually changing process of music. In such a framework, music gives meaning to space, culture, and even time.

The period before any moments of contact occurred—prior to 1979, (Punk’s heyday and Hiphop’s incubatory years), as well as the post-Punk period during which the moments of contact occurred between 1979 and 1985—highlight the temporality of the process and by extension, the evolution of artistic and musical collaborations. One of three key points in Straw’s essay situates music in a shifting time/space continuum.

Music is shaped by different variables such as temporality for example, it may change over time as it becomes commodified and canonized. These aforementioned processes can directly influence a scene's longevity and life cycle. In this light, the period prior to 1979, before Hiphop broke into the mainstream and in the wake of Punk's death there existed two distinct yet simultaneously occurring cultural moments. The timing and circumstances surrounding the eventual meeting was contingent upon these moments. It was here that both shifts in tastes and ways of thinking occurred and what Grossberg calls "mattering maps", aligned (1992, p. 80). Punk's assimilation into the pop canon, its penchant towards cultural borrowing, and its constant search for reinvention eventually led it to Hiphop. Stasis is a danger for a subculture, as the moment it begins to atrophy is often its cultural moment of assimilation. There is a certain point where underground musical cultures reach an apex of power or begin to rapidly amass a cultural capital. As the value of the culture increases, so does its potential for power. This new position of influence often brings with it the capability to make significant change. Paradoxically, it is at this point that it will also find itself in direct tension with authority. The dominant authority will decide whether or not to legitimate the subculture. This often occurs after attempts have been made to neutralize the subculture or to re-cast its narrative. As Lipsitz (1994) points out, "...[c]ultural symbols and the communal relationships they express and sustain are so powerful in their hold on people that political formations everywhere, including the state, always manipulate them in their own interest..." (p. 138). This underscores the perceived threat of newly empowered subcultures. When subcultures amass power they are often met with attempts to diffuse that power.

The second logic explores how people maintain cultural boundaries while still accommodating for change. With respect to Hiphop and Punk, this process is once again inextricable from processes of commodification and canonization, as it was in the first logic. As Hiphop gained momentum, and began to mirror what had occurred a few years earlier in Punk, the processes of commodification and canonization entrenched themselves in all four elements of Hiphop. For example, these processes were evident in the fact that graffiti became co-opted and street artists such as Keith Haring and Jean Michel Basquiat were becoming pop-stars. A commercial was made featuring the Pillsbury Doughboy break-dancing and recording contracts were being offered to emcees. The star status of the emcee coupled with the popularity of studio recording eclipsed the role of the DJ and eventually rendered him obsolete. Clandestine jams in parks and abandoned spaces were a relic of the past. Hiphop was being appropriated and moved 'from the streets to the executive suite'. Post 1985, it was difficult to find remnants of the thriving multicultural scene—a remarkable fact even if this scene was largely anomalous.. Rap moved on and so did the art scene. Punk and even post-Punk had ended as the term New Wave came to full prominence (I would assert that in the 1980s, unofficially, Punk lived on in various hosts such as the Hiphop scene albeit, not under its old moniker). The Clash officially dissolved in 1986 and people returned rather elastically, back to their respective groups. This would appear to substantiate Straw's logic concerning cultural accommodation while retaining boundaries and frontiers. And I would append, to which they might return at any time. Moreover, this would imply that those boundaries might never have been forgotten.

The volatility of a scene has been directly tied to the concept of ‘logics,’ which attempts to explain its seemingly random trajectories. Conventional explanations of the timing of Punk’s end, Hiphop’s explosion, and the crossover of the two, usually rely on circumstantial evidence, providence, or randomness. Straw’s third logic offers a rationale for this phenomenon. The third logic, of circumstantial change, assumes that views change according to an “elusive micro-sociology” (p. 375). That is to say, change might occur due to an unknown or ‘*nth*’ variable that does not follow logic. Rather, it might be attributed to change for the sake of change, a gamble on setting the next trend, the search and maintenance of status, or simply, shifting alliances. This last variable suggests how a scene might benefit from a perceived reputation of being unstable or unpredictable. For example, the more in flux a scene and its expressive medium are, the more difficult it is to commodify. One cannot commodify what one cannot understand and it is difficult to stay abreast of that which one cannot understand (p. 375).

Straw examines Rock and Dance when considering the third logic of circumstantial change. Straw characterizes Rock as tending to produce varied style and of amassing a “cartographic density” across space. Similarly, Hiphop’s incorporation of several different styles would also suggest a cartographic density. Conversely, Dance’s “spatial diversity is marked out in temporal sequence” (p. 381). Straw observes Dance as similar to the fashion and art worlds where there are ongoing disputes concerning the imminent decay or appropriateness of emerging styles. When several styles emerge it is interpreted as a problematic sign of dissolution. This dynamic can be characterized as an almost frenzied need for constant change and innovation that is quite similar to Punk’s experience during its turbulent life span. Note however, that this volatility is not

exclusive to Punk. For example, by 1985, break-dancing and graffiti were no longer popular, and to an extent, were considered embarrassments in the Hiphop scene. Punk's direction and varying emerging styles were prominent issues within the scene itself as well as in the media, especially in the U.K. Straw observes that "[f]ollowing the emergence of Punk in Great Britain, one finds a preoccupation with pre-existent forms which might sustain the cultural space of Punk, and a sense that these forms—whether revived, like the Mod sound of the 1960s, or borrowed laterally, from Funk or Reggae—might serve as poles of collective attraction for post-punk as a whole..." (p. 376). Punk's speed and growth created an environment where it was struggling to keep up with its own pace. Punk's volatility and its ability to make one hundred and eighty degree turns was not a sign of aimlessness. Rather, Punk's adaptability is arguably better explained using Straw's 'logics of change.' On the one hand, Punk's perceived aimlessness might be attributed to the passing of time—"the function of the way in which value is constructed within [a culture] relative to the passing of time" (p. 374). Alternately, it might be explained as part of the "ongoing transformation of social and cultural relations—and of alliances between particular musical communities—occurring within the context of the contemporary Western city" (p. 375). In effect, I am suggesting here that we consider Hiphop as yet another form that might sustain Punk's continued existence. In other words, one might infer an almost parasitic relation where Hiphop as a host, is essentially providing an 'after-life' for a scene that is conventionally viewed as having died in 1978. During, Punk's final stages, one of its final lateral borrowings would be from Electro/Hiphop. At that time, Electro/Hiphop was then, the latest contemporary embodiment of those values highly lauded by Punk Rock and its quest for continual

renewal. Hip-hop emerged at the right moment. Reggae, Funk, and Hip-hop all possessed an invaluable idealized revolutionary sensibility.

The factors which precipitated the emergence and dissipation of a multicultural scene cannot be reduced to one or another of the three 'logics' offered by Straw, nor any additional speculations. However, they are all better understood as part of a totality. This totality is a combination of possibilities that, it is safe to assume, might be present to varying degrees. Together they may be understood to at least partially explain what occurred in New York's underground scenes leading up to the 1980s and beyond.

The framework Straw has built around a 'logics of change', is a theoretical breakdown of music's movement through culture. Multiple factors influence the trajectory of music. When contemplating the intersection of Hip-hop and Punk and how certain affective alliances occurred in New York, these logics underscore a process of evolution of a subculture from the underground to the mainstream. During this process of evolution, there are parameters and boundaries that are negotiated. Music works through culture in many ways and Straw indicates that there is a cycle and temporality to its existence as a changing form. Eventually it becomes inaugurated into the mainstream and eventually something else must replace it.

The porous nature of a scene allows for unpredictable movement that a community might otherwise find contradictory. With the formation of a scene, the rules change just as definitions and modes of operation change. The very nature of the two are different. It is through the interstices and fluctuating spaces of a scene that new—albeit temporary—alliances develop, flourish, and recede. According to Straw, a scene will

either cease development, will incorporate, a part of cyclical change, or evolve while remaining stable over a long time frame (p. 372).

Looking at form and content with respect to Hiphop and Punk, I posit that a musical scene's content ultimately becomes what is most important when it is on the verge of dissolving or evolving. For example, when the exclusive codes that constitute a scene begin to lose their meaning, or a scene begins to stagnate and lose direction, change might occur. Punk provides an example of how this occurred as it transgressed into other genres in the 1980s. For a short period, from 1979 to 1985, cultural divisions along the lines of race and class were elided and the importance of the 'genre' as such, became less meaningful. The scene was not predicated on traditional ideological constructs. Rather, the Punk scene organically evolved and developed in accordance with the needs and tastes of its constituents. One might infer that despite Hiphop and Punk Rock's 'cultural map of difference', their convergence was an organic phenomenon. The diversity of the content of the New York Punk scene, ranging from the Talking Heads to the Dictators, is illustrative of this phenomenon. These groups certainly were not the archetypal Punk Rock groups that have become mythologized in the same vein as Ramones iconography. The content produced by each group was very distinguishable, thus making it hard to imagine that all of these groups constituted what actually was both the Punk Rock genre and scene.

The role of form and content is less easily discerned in Hiphop, as it thrived in a more internally stable and cohesive environment. However, one can observe practices in cultural borrowing and bricolage by the DJ-come-*bricoleur*, Afrika Bambaataa. He would 'mix' music of different cultures into the beat while break-dancers incorporated

multi-cultured dance techniques (George, 1999, p. 18). Prior to 1979, the Hiphop scene was very obscure. This suggests that form was never quite as integral to Hiphop as it was less 'self-conscious'. Hiphop's position as 'outside' afforded it certain freedoms that Punk lacked. Unlike Punk, Hiphop was able to avoid the process of 'naming' that makes it easier to be incorporated into the mainstream. Hiphop was not named 'Hiphop' until 1980 whereas Punk was ascribed a name much earlier on. The importance of a 'genre', as such, is questionable *vis à vis* Hiphop because it was less self-conscious in relation to the outside world. However, I would opine that its move towards the art scene was far from unknowing or haphazard. On the part of both scenes, the move was made with an astute, yet uncontrived awareness. This underscores elements such as style, both sartorial and musical, and how they were utilized. Style as staple in subcultural analysis would suggest strong emphasis on content. Hiphop and Punk as youth subcultures in their early forms, can be looked at in these terms. This change and gravitation from *form* to content may coincide and signal a move toward the integration of different scene formations, with style assuming a bridging role. This has been demonstrated by Punk Rockers such as Mick Jones of The Clash walking around with a ghetto blaster, or Dee Dee Ramone's transformation into Dee Dee King, the rapper. As scenes mature or dissolve, form and content dynamics change, as do the terms under which a scene is defined. The aesthetic appeal of a particular 'form' loses importance in favour of a 'content' that may stray from traditional categories previously held in tact by form alone.

Examining the impetus for the co-mingling of these two cultures is very instructive. An analysis of both form and content provides at least partial insight in this regard. Straw states that "the manner in which musical practices within a scene tie

themselves to processes of historical change occurring within a larger international musical culture will also be a significant basis of the way in which such forms are positioned with that scene at the local level..." (p. 373). In terms of the larger musical culture, in 1979, Punk was fizzling out with the death of Sid Vicious, who was the prevailing Punk icon and anti-hero. During this same time frame, Rap was gaining momentum but was still relatively unknown, and New Wave was on the rise. Sub-genres such as No Wave and Electro were also taking shape, but a general sense of a lack of creativity, was still commonplace. Rock and Disco had all but disappeared, which left very little music for the airwaves. A heavy reliance on synthesizers marked the desire for something different. The 1980s was an experimental and interim period from which much change occurred. There was a prevailing sense that change was both needed and desirable. The result of this is the emergence of many aspects of Hiphop and Punk during this brief period from 1979 to 1985. Perhaps then not surprisingly, Straw's analysis of the volatility of musical scenes is well suited to this time period. These scenes might, indeed, be considered an attempt to disrupt historical continuity, to 'cosmopolitanize' and to revitalize other musical communities (p 373). This highlights the fact that one key function of a scene is to disrupt the 'fossilizing' effects of tradition in favour of a new voice. It is not intended as a permanent fixture, but rather a means to assert influence and claim its place in history and the Rock formation. The period during which this occurred seemed to be one of uncertainty, political doubt, and governmental antipathy to social and economic inequalities.

One theory alone does not explain with full certitude how Hiphop and Punk arrived at a point of crossover. However, it is undeniable that music played a central

role. The treatment of music as something that moves through culture highlights its transgressive qualities. This underscores music's semi-autonomous existence which imbues it with substantial affective power. This is evident in instances where shifts occur in the terms under which a scene has defined itself. The art itself moves towards what is naturally occurring, and is unconcerned with arbitrary categorizations such as genre. Secondly, one might observe subsequent changes in content and concomitant style manifestations. The inference here from Straw's conceptualization of music is that it is helpful to understand it as an entity that seeks to nurture, and further that it will move toward whatever is sustaining. Deleuze and Guattari proffer a similar conceptualization of music in their theory on "refrain of creation" (Grossberg, 1991, 1992). The "refrain of creation" suggests that music has the power to assuage moments of tension or disequilibrium (pp. 153-154). It is in this regard that I would suggest that music's shifts are a naturally occurring phenomenon. This concept might aid in contextualizing Hip-hop and Punk and the national circumstances in which its musical and artistic activity occurred. This approach is highlighted by Straw's (1991) assertion that "examining this musical activity underscores how these particular musical practices work within the conditions of metropolitan music scenes" (p. 373). Music's attentiveness to changes occurring in other domains arguably endows it with a unity of purpose. In this regard, music promotes affective alliances that are just as powerful as those normally observed within practices which appear to be more organically grounded in local circumstances. This seems to speak directly to the crossover discussed here between the seemingly unrelated Hip-hop and Punk scenes.

An analysis of 'mood' offers another way to conceptualize how Punk Rock and Hip-hop's trajectories were set to collide. The social climate during the years 1979 and 1985 stated mildly, was pessimistic. Punks often manifested the reality of growing up with an omnipresent fear of the 'H-bomb' into a nihilistic longing for the oblivion they had been promised long ago. In addition to the threat of nuclear annihilation, unemployment rates were peaking, particularly in New York where the poverty level was the second highest in the country. It was as if the constituents of New York's ghettos and skid rows often suffered the greatest hardship during this economic recession. The Bowery grew into somewhat of a lawless haven for immoral behaviour. Notorious for its flophouses, the Bowery was a host to prostitution, drugs, alcohol and crime. In fact, a flophouse was located directly above CBGB! Contrary to the burlesque history of the Bowery, the Bronx had a severe landscape. Characterized by its notoriously incendiary days of burning buildings and 'White flight' in the early seventies, the Bronx was a ravaged shell. The economic fallout from the recession almost seemed to coincide with, the neighbourhoods's aesthetic transition to an urban war zone. It was, a terrain where simple physical survival was foremost on one's mind. Music was a means of survival that served as a tool to facilitate cultural expression and unity. Hip-hop and Punk scenes shared similar bleak circumstances; it is testament to music's rallying power that artists from both scenes adopted it as a means of self-expression.

Music has extended across the physical and ideological boundaries of borough and race culminating in an all-encompassing cultural *raison d'être*. This has served both as the source of its unifying impact and its resulting means for survival. This dynamic has been described by both Straw (1991) and Grossberg (1992). They describe an

affective alliance where the volatility of the relationships in music are “short-lived intimacies and epiphanies, magnifying mundane feelings into the massively felt things they seem when we experience them” (p. 153). This underscores music’s affective power as a phenomenon that at times is temporary while remaining essential and real. It is thus important to recognize the significance of the crossover between Hip-hop and Punk from 1979 to 1985. Grossberg (1992) further emphasizes music’s significance stating that “[b]ehind the diverse uses of music is the implicit recognition that, somehow, such musical environments strongly influence the rhythms, tempos and intensities of our lives. This can in fact determine the sorts of investments we make and the activities we undertake in their musically constructed spaces” (p. 153). Here, Grossberg indicates that affective alliances privilege the feeling or ‘mood’ that music can create. This suggests that although lived experiences and music may differ across cultures, an unquantifiable ‘mood’ can connect these varied narratives and representations.

We’ve Gotta Get Outta this Place: Popular Conservatism and Post-modernism (1992) presents some of Lawrence Grossberg’s work in popular culture and the Rock formation. It contributes concepts such as disciplined mobilization with focus on the arena of cultural struggle which he terms the everyday or everyday life. Disciplined mobilization suggests that there is an overt objective to maintain social relations and relations of production through the manipulation of one’s environment. The analysis in this section demonstrates how Hip-hop and Punk act in opposition to this form of domination.

Grossberg (1992) views “[d]isciplined mobilization [as] a particular dynamic

structuring of places and spaces [that manifests in] a closed circuit of everyday life. [Upon] enter[ing] into its spaces, there are no longer any frontiers or boundaries to cross, for any such line would mark the possibility of a place” (p. 364). This emphasizes why place is initially important in establishing boundaries. It provides the locale, support and material to work up a counter ideology. For example, in Hiphop and Punk Rock’s early stages of development, crossover could not have occurred. The period of maturation is imperative. Place assumes a crucial role in this incubation period where the objective is the development of a homogenous form around the familiar. The allusion to mobility in the term disciplined mobilization is not freedom: rather, it refers to a perceived mobility culminating in a depoliticization, or divestment of power, of social groups. Grossberg goes as far as calling this a “narcoticization” (p. 365). In effect, what is being described is a method of systemic intervention and neutralization via hegemony as well as a systematized sabotage and dismantling of the apparatuses of freedom. This freedom can manifest itself in constitutional rights such as one’s freedom of choice and expression. The production of music and art by the Hiphop and Punk scenes have been key in exercising those democratic rights. A disciplined mobilization suggests that concepts such as liberty, civil justice and constitutional freedoms are under siege in an ideological warfare that manipulates the familiar to further support dominant discourses.

Deterritorialization of personal and public space, – i.e. of the ‘*familiar*’ – both corrupts and disables a culture’s ‘sense-making’ mechanism (p. 364). For example, territory such as that demarcated by a bridge, freeway or river in the Bronx, or housing projects, neighbourhoods, boroughs and nomenclature such as downtown and uptown, permit the maintenance of frontiers and boundaries. The ‘naturalization’ of all of these

boundaries neutralizes division by rendering them seamless. In effect, no underpinnings are able to be exposed that might otherwise reveal a dominant ideological strategy. The common adage that ‘what one doesn’t know, won’t hurt them’ suggests a form of naturalization of a controlled space where “modern society tries to control the changes that take place in the everyday” (p. 294). Grossberg’s concepts of a disciplined mobilization, the constraint and containment of possibility, and a closed circuit of the everyday, suggests that there are limits to empowerment and boundaries to freedom. His work is particularly helpful in mapping out the social conditions and challenges confronted by members of both Hiphop and Punk scenes. Grossberg conceptualizes a disciplined mobilization as being a “conservative deployment...enacted as an attempt to disempower and rearticulate the rock formation” (p. 295). He suggests that it is deployed with the aim of diffusing subversive power dynamics. Locale becomes the active site of this constant tension where an inherent politicized existence is ‘naturalized’ and, a new spatial component emerges. When Grossberg speaks of a disciplined mobilization he refers to it as “a triumph [of the illusion of] an unconstrained mobility which is nothing but a principle of constraint” (p. 295).

The power of any movement lies in its ability to evolve and adapt, and to survive. This often means transcending the instituted adverse mechanisms, such as a disciplined mobilization, which serves to disorient and destabilize. As evolution and revolution begin to build momentum, there is a potential for power; a potential for power is often coupled with a potential for threat. There is a constant tug-of-war between the producers of art and music and the people who want to control it. That struggle revolves around the manipulation of discourses articulated by these art forms. Apparatuses of domination are

strategically deployed for the control of power. This often involves ideological co-optation and incorporation—and a struggle over hegemony. This suggests that people can be manipulated and ‘told how to think’ without ever explicitly being ordered to do so. Constructs such as race and class play a key role in the erection and maintenance of these strategic barriers and the perpetuation of these methods of domination. Hiphop and Punk play integral roles in the challenge to this form of dogmatic manipulation. Certainly media and other institutions have played a role in perpetuating hegemony, as evidenced by the ascription of the name ‘Punk’ Rock and the exaggerated treatment of its image, particularly in the UK. Hiphop’s ‘outlaw’ image largely resulted from the controversy over graffiti. It was portrayed as criminal vandalism and not as art due to the manipulation of New York media and the mayoral administration’s crusade against it. Disciplined mobilization works in opposition and tension with the constantly changing dynamics of a subculture. Since a subculture is constantly changing and taking on new forms, disciplined mobilization connotes an attempt at constraining the parameters within which a subculture operates. This can be observed in the control over public space, manipulation of a culture’s public image or the surveillance of that culture. There is no explicit prohibition of its existence, yet there are definite limitations that are imposed on its expression.

Punk’s erratic history of cultural borrowing and *bricolage* made it difficult to pigeonhole, categorize and effectively commodify. Punk’s apparent ‘mish-mash’ of cultures rendered it somewhat ahistorical and placeless. These particular attributes made a siege and control of Punk’s cultural parameters and meanings challenging and therefore disruptive to the process of a disciplined mobilization. Punk’s ‘placelessness’ is arguably a result of a conscious rejection of dominant culture and its subsequent refusal to occupy

a position within the structure of everyday life. It has instead chosen to exist outside the purview of its parent culture in an effort to produce counter-discourses that challenge the status quo. That is not to say that Punk is literally 'without place'. Landmarks such as King's Road, the Roxy, the Westway, the Marquee—or the impoverished conditions of North London where Punks such as Johnny Rotten grew up—mark places, specific spaces within which cultural texts were produced. These are all where counter-discourses were worked up into a whole way of life. Punk Rock managed to eschew any lingering ties to a particular locale by evoking imagery and espousing a lifestyle that was alien to that of the dominant culture. In effect, Punk removed itself from any sense of 'rootedness' or place with which one might identify it. As a result, institutions may have been relatively ineffectual against Punk's hyper-adaptive and transient practices such as cultural borrowing. But what began as Punk Rock's strength, ultimately became its weakness and the cause of its downfall. Punk only lasted a metaphorical minute. In terms of stability, a sense of place and history are key. It provides the raw material and the locale for discursive struggles and discursive formations (Forman, 2002, p. 10). However, I would warn against an overemphasis of the role of 'place' as it may lead to its romanticization. Conversely, Punk's 'placelessness', which was initially its strength, allowed it to succumb to mechanisms of social and economic constraint and manipulations. Furthermore, I posit that Punk's placelessness was partially self-imposed due to its own internal codes and politics. That is to say, a 'Punk Rock code of ethics' suggests a level of self-awareness that dictated certain ways acting, looking and 'being'. For example, behaviour that was contradictory or misunderstood and a perception of being displaced and enigmatic might have been alluring for some youths. Once one was

able to apprehend its meanings and ascribe to it new ones, Punk became familiar and vulnerable.

The moment a subculture has become familiar through various methods of systematization and incorporation into dominant culture, it can be controlled and commodified. Part of this process might include purging undesirable aspects that cannot be commodified and popularized. One highly notable method of control that occurred during the period of 1979 to 1985, when Hiphop and Punk culture intersected, involved efforts to police the increasing crisis of drug circulation in New York. The efforts to address the crisis became politicized and widely publicized as ‘The War on Drugs’. When Grossberg talks about *depoliticizing* a section of the public, this suggests that in order to be accounted for in society one is *politicized* or ‘counted in’. This is different than Hiphop culture’s desire to be counted socially and economically. Historically, Black music has always been on the outside looking in and without voice. The point at which an attempt was made to depoliticize Hiphop, was the point at which it became politicized as a merely topical issue needing to be ‘managed’ and neutralized. This amounted to an attempt at its annihilation and total effacement. ‘Epidemics’ as tools that manage sections of the public will be explored further in Chapter 3 by looking at the relationship of ‘The War on Drugs’ to the Hiphop and Punk scenes.

If indeed, a disciplined mobilization is a tool to dismantle and assimilate, it has had mixed results. Hiphop in particular, has been remarkably adept in its ability to openly embrace and work within a capitalist/consumerist aesthetic and mode of operation, while, on the other hand remaining extremely subversive. While the fate of Punk in this regard might seem analogous to Hiphop, it is markedly different. It is

inaccurate to suggest that its failure can be traced to its assimilation into mainstream capitalistic pop culture. I would suggest that its volatile nature, breakneck pace and short lifespan afforded it the ability to make 'knee-jerk' reactions. Its unpredictability provided a creative space for erratic behaviour. Eventually its *rootlessness* would transcend the frontiers of the underground where it would remain in the 1980s as post-Punk rendering it transient and therefore dead or inauthentic to the Punk purists. Disciplined mobilization can be viewed in a mixed light as both negative and positive. It was positive in that the decision that Punk was an issue that needed to be managed endowed it with an infamous voice for more people to hear. Its music became a site of investment and of struggle for power. The inherent disadvantage of disciplined mobilization lay in the fact that Punk Rock was disarmed at the very moment its voice entered the realm of the popular. It suddenly had to cope with the struggle to preserve the integrity of the scene while simultaneously confronting the socio-economic challenges that threatened to destroy it.

Grossberg has described everyday life as a "transit compulsion" (p. 297) in which sites of investment are transformed into epidemics that appear everywhere, and hence nowhere, such as 'The War on Drugs'. This warfare serves as a dismantling and assimilating mechanism where one is never truly ever able to 'zero in' on the problem or, more importantly, the root cause(s). The epidemic is disorienting and one only need "Just Say NO!" to win the war that is ubiquitous but 'being taken care of'. In effect, soon it will be 'nowhere'. 'The War on Drugs' also exemplifies the strategic methods of effacement of groups of people who pose a threat to the normalcy and predictability of everyday life. Charged with politicized concepts of race and class, that both contain and

constrain, place becomes a safety zone of stability, but it is also a complex terrain of confusion and cultural struggle. The warfare becomes ideological. For instance, I would suggest that the discrete and seamless initiation or ideological 'ghosting' of race onto class is a methodical strategy that attempts to reshape and redefine identities and frontiers. What I am suggesting here relates to the struggle over power via the manipulation of meaning and the deployment of concepts that become a naturalized part of the everyday. Concepts such as 'race consciousness' and 'class struggle' are in severe need of further examination. Further studies are needed to explore how these terms have been manipulated, and with whose interests in mind.

The juxtaposition of the histories of Punk and Hip-hop and the topic of race and its history alongside music is interesting yet quite complex. Black music's relationship with Rock 'n' Roll has been both erratic and volatile. While a discussion of these two cultures without reference to or reliance on issues of race is highly desired, history has made this compellingly unavoidable. While the instances of cross-cultural unions may have been temporary and fleeting, they are revealing concerning the subject of the relationship between Hip-hop and Punk. Some Punk artists have adopted an anti-racist stance, but the Punk scene in general has not. On the occasional time that such a stance has been adapted, it is usually an ambiguous stance. This ambiguity has been particularly evident among Punk artists in the United Kingdom. Curiously, however, Punk has had a relationship with, for example, Reggae. This was popularized by groups such as the Clash, the Slits, ska/punk and Two Tone off shoots and even Bob Marley (Savage, 1991, p. 398, Hebdige, 1987, 111):

*We're gonna have a party/a punky reggae party/The Wailers will
be there/the Slits, the Feelgoods and the Clash/rejected by
society, treated with impunity/protected by their dignity.*

Grossberg’s inclusion of Punk in the Rock canon calls into question Punk Rock’s place and relationship to Rock ‘n’ Roll. Rock ‘n’ Roll has benefited from a myth of being a rebel music while its values remained steeped in capitalist culture to which it supposedly posed a threat. Although borrowing heavily from Black music, it still remained a beneficiary of the very values it appeared to reject. It was able to adopt the position of a rebellious outsider while still benefiting from inclusion in mainstream. Whether Punk Rock’s connection to Black music is simply a continuation of colonial relations or an autonomous entity is thus arguably ambiguous. While this is an important point of consideration, simplistic conclusions that characterize it as a perpetuation of colonial relations is arguably a facile teleological position.

Concepts of race and class can appear very real and are vividly imagined through a process of concretization. They are manifested physically, and begin to form a social infrastructure in cities and neighborhoods. Race and class also form part of one’s subconscious, hence becoming a naturalized presence in the everyday. These constructs influence the way music is produced and the choices one makes. For example, the options and choices leading one to become a *DJ* are different than those leading one to choose to play guitar, which is a phenomena that is reflected in popular music and art. Once music becomes popular, it is inaugurated into a systematized environment. One of the requisites of such a process is the imperative of being easily identifiable. Straw (1991) asserts that “popular music is marked by its importance within processes of social differentiation and interaction...[t]he drawing and enforcing of boundaries between musical forms [and], the marking of racial, class-based and gender differences...” (p.

373). Once the mainstream has become aware of an underground culture and the culture begins its transition into the pop canon, it also undergoes a process of institutionalization. Integral to this process are mechanisms such as the role of genre and category. When for example, a record company such as Epic of the Clash, or Sugar Hill of Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five, markets the group according to a certain genre or category, ideas about that style of music are already being formed and ascribed that are related to a particular consumer demographic. Moreover, a term such as 'demographic' is itself, a tool to categorize and ultimately exploit race and class concepts. This process extends to other social institutions as well such as the media. There are a myriad of decisions involved in a radio station's choice of play lists that revolve around questions of musical genres and determinations of cultural trends. In fact, Punk did not initially receive radio airtime, as it was either characterized as not being sufficiently serious or as being inappropriate (Savage, 1991, p. 101). Hiphop too, went unrecognized as a true musical and artistic form (George, 1999, p. 29). It was associated with an inner city youth fad and in some cases a symbol of rising criminality and delinquency in New York City (Chang, 2002, *ibid*). Dominant ideologies permeate many elements of society that range from government to mass media, and between cultures. Race and class consciousness manifest in well-established belief systems of the dominant majority. Often resulting from this are imposed judgments on how to interpret cultural phenomena such as Hiphop and Punk. These judgments are often based on prominent and arbitrarily-chosen sets of characteristics associated with one's status or position, such as "youth", "black", "inner city", "crime", "poor", "white", "delinquent", "punk", "skid row", etc. These terms form part of a dominant consensus that situates Hiphop and Punk Rock in heavily steeped race

and class-based ideology. These concepts are further manipulated at the local level via an emphasis on race-based difference. This often results through mechanisms such as the control of space, which will often intentionally divide one culture from another. The less one knows about the other, or the more one thinks one knows about the other through constantly mediated sources, arguably the easier it is to maintain the uninterrupted continuities of the everyday.

Neither Punk nor Hip-hop are overtly political in the common institutional connotations of this term. However, what they do and how they communicate culturally, make them powerful elements that may serve to validate the voices that fall outside of the range of the popular. Grossberg (1992) has emphasized this positionality in spatial terms where voices that fall outside of the range of the popular are defined outside of the everyday (p. 151). Scenes are important in that they function as a voice for the underrepresented. Defining how Hip-hop and Punk were 'political' actually helps move the two cultures closer together in definition. What they share is the tradition of youth subcultures, as they are both descendants of the original youth cultures of 1950s. Just as in the case of Rock 'n' Roll, they continued to be defined outside of themselves. Grossberg (1991) suggests that Rock sought to open mainstream culture to the needs and experiences of its own audiences (p 361). This suggests that in carving out a place in society, and thereby becoming legitimized became the point of politicization. Opposition can and often does take on many forms and occurs on many levels. Lipsitz (1994) suggests that "...it is no accident that the state so often involves itself in questions of culture. Governments sustain or suppress artistic expression out of self-interest, out of recognition of the complex connection linking the nation with the imagi-nation..." (p.

137). It is clear that Punk Rock and Hiphop have connected on a very discernable level. They have connected in a way that raises issues such as the overuse of race or the appropriate invocation of race when looking at these particular subcultures. The way that these cultures have communicated and how they have been defined by the mainstream has similarly positioned them at the margins. Sometimes the identical space has been chosen as the locale in which to struggle for a voice.

Chapter 2 has furnished the theoretical concepts of space and place and the logics of change and disciplined mobilization. All of these concepts facilitate the fundamental and underlying function of this body of work: to understand the complex and synergetic movements of the Hiphop and Punk scenes and how they have negotiated the terrain of everyday life through multiple articulations via music and art. This has established the framework for Chapter 3 where a detailed analysis of 'crossover' or 'moments of contact' will occur by looking at the seminal 1980s urban cult film *Wild Style* (1982). Chapter 2 has explored new ways of conceiving of Punk and Hiphop cultures. This reconceptualization views Punk and Hiphop as existing across constantly fluctuating discursive spaces. Further, this reconceptualization explores how these moments of contact emerge from this dynamic flow. This chapter has encouraged a reevaluation of the process of critical thinking on the period of crossover, 1979 to 1985. This is reflective of the exceptional achievements that emerged during this time period from which there is much to be learned regarding traditional notions of race and class.

Challenging dominant institutions and orthodoxies that serve to perpetuate hierarchical relations of production is a central function of counter-cultures such as Hiphop and Punk. Historically, this is where music has been able to play a key role in neutralizing countervailing strategic forces such as a disciplined mobilization. The

continuous ebb and flow of territorializing, deterritorializing and reterritorializing boundaries and constantly shifting and oscillating frontiers animates this ongoing process of cultural struggle and conflict and negotiation. The space in which this movement occurs is both ideological and physical. These interstitial spaces where Hiphop and Punk Rock move through one another are crucial. As such, there is a need for an expanded inquiry on the articulations and counter-discourses that this relatively undisturbed and neglected terrain produces.

CHAPTER 3

Wild Style: Space & Vectored Movements

New York City has an almost larger-than-life relation to the rest of the world where it is often perceived as being a major centre. New York is comprised of landmarks and symbols, from the Statue of Liberty, to Times Square to the notoriety of the boroughs themselves. New York's status as a centre and the way it is talked about suggests the importance of place. The language used to describe Hiphop and Punk, two premier scenes which arguably originate in New York, is often steeped in spatio-military vernacular that suggests that Hiphop and Punk are embattled subcultures in a constant state of crisis. The war takes place in New York. The language of Hiphop is often active: an emcee 'battles', a graffiti artist 'bombs' or 'burns'. The language of Punk can often describe or directly address war: anarchy, chaos, the H-bomb, no future, and so on. These are like urban wars and epidemics that need constant management. The spatial terrain on which struggle occurs is the space of the Bronx and the Bowery. The film *Wild Style* (1982) represents the *mise-en-scène* where the elements of Hiphop and Punk during 1979 to 1985 converge. This film encapsulates the period on which this chapter focuses: race and class and its roles in ongoing ideological struggle, New York as an active site of cultural struggle and production, the subway as an important symbol and metaphor in the early years of Hiphop, and the integral role of music and art as transgressive and cross-cultural tools for expressing freedom. Rendering an analysis of *Wild Style* even more pertinent, is that it is also a product and artifact of this unique time.

A common consensus in the Hiphop community is that *Wild Style* (1982) is the quintessential film embodying everything Hiphop (George, 1999, p. 13). In terms of

authenticity, it is unparalleled, as it managed to ‘capture’ an historical and cultural moment in late 1970s and early 1980s America, particularly, New York City, its underground movements and their connectivity. What made *Wild Style* unique and what secured its position within the Hip-hop canon was that at the time of its filming, as attested to by the director and co-producer Charlie Ahearn and Fab Five Freddy, things were happening while the movie was being shot that were influencing the actual world that it was depicting. Inversely, much of what was actually happening in the real world ended up inspiring what would be onscreen in the movie. The film’s transparency, as a window into an underground culture that was not yet commodified, allowed it to capture an avant-garde moment in time. It was truly the culmination of a fervent artistic underground culture reflecting the alternative to a utopic and illusory American Dream. *Wild Style* was the reality, this was America’s underbelly which few wanted to know about or have any association with. In fact, the only reason that the film actually was made was largely due to foreign funding which initially came from Germany and Channel 4 in the UK (Ahearn & Braithwaite, *Wild Style*).

This film is unique in many ways, most notably in its ability to transcend the everyday. It is a product of that transcendence as well as a representation of a creative movement to which it owes its existence. And therefore, it is the culmination of various *lines of flight*, which Grossberg (1992) defines as “vectors of effectivity which disrupt and escape any particular power structure” (p. 297), and dissent from the assimilating and desensitizing forces of the everyday. Part of being able to transcend the everyday includes the ability to move beyond borders, and to redefine frontiers that are both physical and ideological. *Wild Style* serves as a visual document that literally reorganizes

the space of the city according to the mattering maps of those constituents that it intends to represent. Having achieved this, positions it beyond the category of simply a seminal Hip-hop film. The director brings the viewer into areas of New York City that had not yet been commodified and therefore retained a certain innocence and purity to its nature, while at the same time presenting 'truths' from the point of view of a generation on the edge. A particular discourse begins to emerge regarding the geo-political and racial character of the ghetto as wasteland, the 'urban hinterland' and the 'underground' to which is associated a particular racial and ethnic character. Areas such as 'Fort Apache', where Grandmaster Flash began spinning his turntables, are descriptors that conjure imagery of an apocalyptic underworld or battlefield rather than merely a borough in New York City (Naison, 2002). In addition to this, art enabled the creation of alternative discourses and offered a challenge to the mainstream at the level of ideology. Art catalyzed the formation of an alternative or subaltern public sphere. It provided the opportunity for individuals in the Hip-hop and Punk scenes to rearticulate their position as 'marginal' or 'outside', creating a narrative that constructed itself within a new social infrastructure or communal framework. It is within these creative cultural spaces that have been officially 'closed off', deemed wasteland—where anyone old enough or healthy enough to hold down a job would have long since vacated—that cultural renewal-cum-survival took place. [Re]creative underground economies emerged (or submerged) as the only viable alternative, whether legal or illegal, whether leisurely and/or outlawed (drugs, prostitution, crime etc.) providing alternative public spaces to gather in the midst of barely tolerable living conditions.

Wild Style harkens back to a point in time in the late 1970s, right before Hip-hop

was to emerge from obscurity. This suggests the *mise-en-scène* for the film was late 1970s, which preceded the song “Rappers Delight” by the Sugar Hill Gang (1979) just before this new and obscure scene began to receive publicity in the local media. The story behind the making of the film itself actually constitutes one of those moments of scene crossover. In 1980, Fab Five Freddy was just beginning to enter the art scene. The idea for the making of *Wild Style* actually occurred within the space of an art house. Director Charlie Ahearn, who at that point had been an important fixture in the downtown art and Punk scene, was having a screening party in Times Square for his Kung Fu film, *The Deadly Art of Survival* (1979) (which itself contained elements of HipHop). It was there that he began speaking with Fab Five Freddy about doing a film on the HipHop scene. Both could see the connection between all of the artistic creativity that was occurring in New York and how the HipHop scene in particular held something quite unique. He states for example, that at an art club in Soho, there was a group experiment with music, sound and instruments, and that the affiliation to HipHop, Rap and Turntablism also referred to as DJing, became apparent. In many ways what was going on in the HipHop scene was the most avant-garde because of its relative total obscurity and complete anonymity (Ahearn & Braithwaite, *Wild Style*). The art connection essentially formed the nexus through which effectively, an interconnectedness and integrated network developed in New York City making it a thriving art mecca.

As is evident, particular locales are quickly unfolding here as key players in the growth of both scenes. Movement can also be identified as a prominent element in terms of the transitions between genres in *Wild Style*. There are constant references to vectors and directions, the mention of places, what they mean to the community and how these

areas are lived in. These vectors also suggest that there were active movements or lines of flight away from *the everyday*, which Grossberg has also likened to a *Möbius Strip* (p. 297). Certain key events marked the inter-cultural connection between the HipHop and art/Punk scenes. The diegetic material in the film revisits a concatenation of events occurring in the late 70s that form a clear narrative. One can start to trace the steps that bring together an eclectic group of artists from different backgrounds in starkly contrasting cultural spaces. In one of the film's key scenes, the protagonist, Patti Astor travels from downtown to the Bronx to discover more about what was considered a very obscure and avant-garde scene. Astor teams up with HipHop's de facto representative Fab Five Freddy, to introduce HipHop to New York's art scene. The commuting of Patti Astor, underground film star and art buyer, can be seen as a symbolic pilgrimage to the Bronx (with both the negative and positive connotations that this may encompass). Over the course of her commute in the film, Blondie's "Heart of Glass" blasts playfully in the background, juxtaposed against the harsh visuals in which one views the transition between mid-town and the South Bronx and a slow degradation of the scenery. The further she travels into the Bronx, the more one can see her astonishment and perhaps hope, leave her face, which seems to exclaim, "there couldn't possibly be people that actually lived here". With her progression into the Bronx, Astor was, in effect, moving across boundaries whereupon she finally enters the Dixie, a little-known space with a one light-source where HipHop jams were held. Access to the Dixie involved having an intimate cultural knowledge that Astor would not have been privy to without having met members from the HipHop scene. Astor's very presence at the Dixie constitutes an act of transgression across spatial terrains guarded by barriers, that otherwise excluded her, for

reasons of race, class, and gender. What thus occurs is the opening up of new discursive terrain—or discursive arena—in which there is the possibility of exchange. Her subsequent departure from the Dixie with two graffiti artists, Fab Five Freddy and Lee Quinones, and their arrival at an uptown party full of art buyers, marks the beginning of a relationship between the downtown and uptown scenes that was particularly powerful until approximately 1985 (Ahearn & Braithwaite, 1982). The presence of Patti Astor, Fab Five Freddy and Lee Quinones in both scenes, symbolized the point of contact and infusion of two subcultures that truly saw in the other, desirable qualities that the other lacked. Confronting taboos associated with otherness, barriers that are not there physically but whose presence are felt all the same, was key. Rejecting racialized predispositions steeped in established discourses that emphasized extreme difference and even threat, suspicion or mistrustfulness were temporarily elided. These instances surrounding and within the film all mark *lines of flight*, ruptures from the routinized, vectored movements which are both physical and ideological machinations of the everyday.

What occurs when diverse, racialized, cultural groups suddenly come into close contact? The involvement of the downtown scene with the uptown scene symbolized a mutual desire to transgress borders. New York was in a state of total decay unlike at any other time in its history. Perhaps it was these extreme circumstances in which young people were living that propelled them towards a new politick born out of an intercultural art explosion.

At this point I would like to look deeper into the physical movements of the two cultures and the space which when mapped forms the downtown/uptown juncture with

specific reference to the uptown art world's migration into neighborhoods such as the Bronx, including the director of *Wild Style* Charlie Ahearn whose brother was also involved in the art scene. John Ahearn moved to the Bronx and became a prominent figure there for his uniqueness both as White person in the Bronx and his acclaimed work in casting artistic molds depicting local street culture. In addition, were art collectives such as COLAB and its highly noted Times Square Show which according to Paul McCormick, writer for the East Village Eye during this period, represented a "cul de sac of ideas and a winding down in an era of 'posts' ... where in many ways, radicalism had failed" (Alteveer & Sudul, n.d.). COLAB members were closely involved in the emerging new music and nightclub scene. Like the artists, young musicians were being squeezed out of the market however, the Punk Rock and New Wave scenes flourished around CBGB and Max's Kansas City. The music scenes ability to generate effective self-promotion, (sometimes unsolicited) and to sustain an underground economy acted as a source of inspiration catalyzing the visual arts (once again noting the successful independent production of *Wild Style* as testimony). This once again returns focus to the privileged position that music plays in terms of its ability to construct around itself a space within which an entire scene would thrive and where other art forms would play a bridging role consolidating an umbrella scene. COLAB's involvement was truly expansive conflating the borough/genre, life/art divisions; an amalgam of cultures seemed to be forming.

In 1981, COLAB's Times Square show featured some of the Hiphop scene's most noted graffiti artists including Lee Quinones, Zephyr, Futura 2000, and 'street artists' associated with the graffiti scene, such as Jean-Michel Basquiat and Keith Haring. These

shows further implicated the importance of art in the bolstering of an amalgam scene. The roles that both Jean Michel Basquiat and Keith Haring would play as highly visible artists are particularly remarkable, in their ability to navigate the interstices of the everyday effectively reterritorializing once invisible 'frontiers' and subsequently deterritorializing them with apparent ease. Their oscillating movement between the point of rupture and the everyday may have been facilitated by their varying degrees of acceptance and rejection in the mainstream art world, Basquiat being a Black artist, and Haring being gay. That Haring and Basquiat were not associated with the Hiphop scene exclusively was demonstrative of the bridging role that they may have facilitated. This overlap became apparent at the Times Square show which featured both graffiti and post-Punk artists at a time when graffiti was appearing in underground art houses. In addition, it was featured in the "Rapture" video by Blondie which portrayed Debbie Harry sashaying around a yard doing a rap about graffiti artists, particularly Fab Five Freddy, while other graffiti writers did a mural in the background (George, 1999, p. 99). Additionally, Haring's graphic contributions underline the emerging union between Punk and Hiphop scenes such as a cover design for *Scratchin' - A Six Track Hiphop Party Mix* (1984), by UK Punk mastermind Malcolm McLaren and The World Famous Supreme Team. Among other notable crossovers were Beyond Words, a performance art event held in 1981, put on by the writing collective Soul Artists, of which Keith Haring was a part. Notable attendees at the event were Patti Astor as well as Afrika Bambaataa who opened the show, further demonstrating the increasing convergences of scenes (Lutyens, 1997).

Aside from COLAB, other art cells were doing their part in the art scene such as

ABC No Rio and Fashion Moda. Stephan Eins founder of Fashion Moda, a Bronx based alternative art gallery took his art school background uptown to facilitate the interaction of trained and street artists (Rose, 1994, p. 46) resulting in the involvement of several community artists such as Crash and Lady Pink who later collaborated with artist Jenny Holzer, a prominent figure in the downtown art scene. Fashion Moda was also often host to shows of both Hiphop and Punk groups. Eins claimed that Fashion Moda never truly functioned as an art gallery so much as a *Happening*—a spontaneous performance-event or situation meant to be considered itself as art (Webster, 1996). Once again this returns the art/Punk and in this particular instance, Hiphop scenes to its contentious connections with *Situationism*, associated with the French artistic/intellectual movement of the 1960s in France and Malcolm McLaren's alleged incorporation of *Situationist* philosophy into London Punk.

Visual art and music have been mutually beneficial in terms of the inspiration and power that music has had such as its ability to literally galvanize groups towards creative and existential renewal. The creative and artistic renewal of the Punk scene and its ability to establish an underground economy of style, aesthetic and belonging was coded across multiple mediums such as John Holmstrom and Legs McNeil's premier *Punk* fanzine or Mark Perry's UK equivalent, *Sniffin' Glue*, Richard Hell's trademark *bricolage*-Punk 'look' or Arturo Vega's incendiary Day Glo swastika art. In spite of its (initial) wholesale rejection by the mainstream Punk was able to flourish and provide an outlet for an alternative subcultural expression. Hiphop's multiple elements further underscore the mutual identification with innovation and cross-fertilization or discursive

bricolage through cultural art forms promoting growth and evolution in an astoundingly powerful and symbiotic manner.

Hiphop, Punk and by extension, the broader art scene that link the two together, operate within a spatialized discourse which one can observe emerging from these two scenes. This can be better understood when considering the relation of a geographic language to military metaphors and how this language is frequently applied to Hiphop and Punk which is suggestive of an embattled daily existence. Since its inception, geography has played a politicized role in the establishment of boundaries and the maintenance of a particular power structure (Foucault, 1972, pp. 68-70). Foucault states that having grown up in the shadow of the military, it is no accident that the spatial metaphors are often employed in contexts involving struggle, engaging discourses on the militarized nature of political operation. In the context of Hiphop and Punk, the spatial metaphors used to describe them contribute to a discursive formation on the geographic nature of war, power, race and class where space and place are clearly at the forefront on any discussion about these scenes. For example, the “region of the geographers is the military region from *regere*, to command a province is conquered territory or terrain (from *vincere*) and field evokes the battlefield...” (Foucault, 1972, p.69). New York’s boroughs are essentially regional divisions that are not only mapped according to geographic location, but to the complex cultural terrain in which each ‘region’ or borough is associated. Where an event took place was just as important as the event itself. Place and space become situated as a terrain of political practices. Here, Foucault is drawing attention to the importance of not only the act but also the space within which the act is

taking place. Similarly, in this work, place and location are treated with equal importance when examining ‘moments of contact’.

Grossberg’s concept of disciplined mobilization in the control and struggle of power over cultural terrain, evokes the military-geographic discourse addressed by Foucault, as geography is used as an apparatus and prosthetic of the government to enforce dominant codes and political practices. Geography supports the territorializing superstructure which consolidates dominant culture’s hegemony. Disciplined mobilization would suggest that there are no barriers of which one is aware, that the illusion of the everyday is a seamless transition from one action or event to the next. However, this occurs without realizing the degree to which the conscience is manipulated and held hostage by the constraints of the everyday. One wants to stay in the company of the familiar—which may be within the company of one’s own racial or ethnic group, neighbourhood or club hangout. An affective investment in place plays a key role in providing stability amidst chaos. It is however the ideological space that I suggest harbours the potential to initiate release from the everyday which is then acted upon through a process of expansion across *physical space*. For example, the crossovers in *Wild Style* demonstrate how once one ‘digs deeper’, as occurs with the meeting of Fab Five Freddy and Patti Astor, one begins to challenge norms based in dominant ideology, thereby eschewing concepts such as otherness, fear and ignorance. These discursive acts, this reterritorialization, closes distances and gaps maintained by the physical structuring of urban planning. Take for instance, the bifurcation of the Bronx by two freeways, the Cross Bronx Freeway and the Sheridan in the 60s and 70s which are often associated with the decline of the Bronx. The physical space, the barriers and paternalistic

structures in this instance represented by bridges, freeways, and subways were supposed to be 'pragmatic' yet were also divisive ends by city planners or 'Fathers of the City'. Facing opposition to erect these structures in other more well-to-do areas such as Soho and TriBeCa, the Bronx was targeted.

The presence of geography in subcultures such as Hiphop and Punk cannot be emphasized enough, as it plays a key role historically in the establishment of power dynamics and the relationship of a culture to society and politics, as well as one culture to others. It has been established that New York is closely tied to discourses in geography through the language that was often used in Hiphop and Punk. The boroughs were the battlefields and between 1979 and 1985, they form part of a unique multi-cultural blueprint of New York City. In many ways, 'tagging' and bombing trains, stylized manners of applying graffiti and war vernacular were, in effect, attempts at changing this blueprint and infiltrating the city. They were attempts at subverting the visions of the builders of the city by adding a customized 'subspatial' imprint. Graffiti writer Lee Quinones' view on the subway reflected the concern for the cultural terrain at stake, and how the imminent threat to one's culture made subversive action mandatory in order to diffuse that threat in an almost 'guerilla' approach. Quinones further asserts that subways were corporate America's way of coercing people to participate in the 'workforce' and the trains were clones themselves; the trains were supposed to have silver and blue motifs which suggested a form of imperialism and control which graffiti writers appropriated and completely changed (Chang, 2002). In other words, Quinones is alluding to 'workers' as almost drone-like, or as 'clones' who are systematically integrated into the lines of production that maintain the seamless continuity of everyday life. A recurring

motif, a reminder of being trapped and routinized within the everyday, the subway became a primary means for initiating a dialogue with the builders and the gatekeepers of the city. The greater the perceived control, the greater the desire of the individual for autonomy. The revolt of a section of the social body is a ‘reverse effect or reaction to this encroachment’ (Grossberg, 1991, p. 56).

Hiphop occupies a unique position as being both outside the everyday whilst simultaneously being entrapped by it. Hiphop is reminded of its outsider status through its disenfranchisement by the structures that impose its socio-political exile. Those structures are systemic ones, operating at political, economic and social levels. This situates Hiphop in a double-bind where being counted-in also risks cooption and opting into the everyday. For example, there might be a risk involved in the temptation of being offered a recording contract by a major record label or commission by a mainstream art house. The risk is in the potential that the integrity of the music or art in its original organic form might be compromised. Identities must be traded in for the opportunity to participate in what Grossberg terms the “transit-compulsion”, that is the core of everyday movement (p. 297). Everyday movement can be understood in terms of vectors such as the subway. The subway is a manifestation of a vector and a characteristic of the “transit compulsion”. It is a mechanism with a specific design to support the structure of everyday life. The subway’s movement is a repetition that no longer has a beginning or an end. As a result, one might say the effect is “disorienting” or a dead end, that one simply reaches and turns back to repeat the same numbing experience over again. Once within the space of the everyday, one is no longer looking from the outside in, as such concepts lose their meaning. Hiphop’s position as being affected by the trajectories of

the everyday situates it externally however, I would argue, its proximity to the everyday and the delimiting structures outside of which it dwells, precariously positions Hiphop 'nowhere'. That is to say, even when 'outside' of the everyday, one still has a 'life' but it is externalized and alienating. One can never escape the everyday and its effects entirely, even when situated outside of it. And so, the escape from without or 'nowhere' to 'somewhere else', becomes equally as dire as the escape from within. The subway system epitomizes this 'double-bind' as it embodies in metaphor, the "transit compulsion" of the everyday of which Grossberg speaks. Does one 'get on' the subway or, redefine how it is used? The subway's dual function—its original utilitarian and ideological purposes (its function as a capitalist tool to shuttle people to and from work), is turned back on itself, as graffiti artists, in response to the encroachment of dominant culture, produce a subversive counter-narrative on the subway.

The production of new articulations by New York's art scene (which includes Hiphop, Punk and the associated downtown art scenes), provides the groundwork in which much of the thesis is interested. The section that ensues looks at the subway's role in Hiphop culture and how narratives are actively rewritten through discursive acts committed in the space of the train yard:

It was Labor Day weekend in 1973 when another artist and I ventured down in the No.1 tunnel located between 137th St. and 145th St. just some 30ft. below Broadway. What hoped to be our finest moment had quickly turned to disaster. Equipped with a duffel-bag containing over 50 cans of spray paint we had planned to do pieces on all 6 trains that were in the tunnel. After a shaky start, we settled down and begun working on a very nice combination. At some point we heard sweepers moving through the trains, which meant that some of those cars were going to be pulled out of the tunnel. We had calculated on a holiday weekend, but didn't realize the holiday was over, and these trains were getting ready to roll for the weekday rush. When the lights of the train went on we immediately froze. What would it be, a raid, a high speed foot race? Not realizing that the

track had gone 'live', we were not ready for what happened next. Suddenly there was this enormous flash and the next thing I saw was a ball of fire that had engulfed my friend instantly. Defective paint, mysterious spark, or fate dealing the cards...what is certain, is that my life would never be the same again.

"Futura Speaks", 1996.

The vivid and intense description of legendary graffiti artist Futura 2000's experience in the train yard emphasizes the dire urgency to be heard. Broadcasting the message was even worth breaking the law not to mention putting oneself in harm's way or, in this very tragic instance, mortal danger. The risk involved in illegal and discursive acts in HipHop whether it is the unauthorized occupation of public space while break-dancing, at a 'jam', or in a subway train yard, have come to define HipHop as an 'outlaw' culture. Reference to a graffiti artist as a 'writer' might be viewed in terms of individual agency as well, 'one who rewrites or writes one's own narrative'; such a reading reveals some of its subversive connotations. Although HipHop owes much to its predecessors, it is very much avant-garde insofar as it defined its future not by its past, but through its present conditions. A deeper reading of HipHop as situated outside of the law also suggests its status as 'outside' of the everyday, and in this scenario, the train yard occupies the 'centre'. It becomes the nucleus for cultural production as well as the *place*, the locale for the production of the 'raw material' in which are comprised discursive formations. Acts such as doing graffiti on the side of a train were clandestine and illegal, and this contributed to making the act itself very important, not simply the art. Forman (1992) has referred to this as a discursive formation, a 'mowing' over of multiple, sometimes contradictory discourses. In this instance, the subway is both an expressive vehicle representing freedom as well as repression: it is both celebrated modern canvas for multiple articulations as well as a symbol of cultural imperialism and corporate

capitalism. The idea of using the subway as a symbolic and literal tool testifies to the innovation and subversive creativity of Bronx denizens who had to rise above the deplorable conditions with which they had to contend. The subway as a vehicle both literally and figuratively demonstrates Hip-hop's innovative nature and moves towards an active representation of the voices of the subculture. As a recurring motif, literally moving through culture in a fluid and circular pattern, it disseminates the graffiti artwork which acts as an expression and representation of that culture. This circulation and flow communicate at the level of the ideological speaking to issues that involve and extend beyond the community itself challenging concepts of governance and social justice. As a system of distribution, the subway circulates the graffiti and its messages through the city in a sense, redistributing the balance of power by naming who and what matters, through the messages being expressed by the art. It reinvests in members of the Hip-hop scene by 'calling attention' to their existence, thereby giving them a 'voice'. The subway has a highly effective method of exposure in Grossberg's terms, "instantiating what matters and what does not, where one invests", (p. 149) in one's own cultural livelihood.

Straw (1991) attributes to Rock a cartographic density that can be found in Hip-hop as it expands through space from borough to borough. Eventually, graffiti tags would begin appearing everywhere in the space of the city, yet at the same time remaining relatively anonymous and misunderstood. Its stealth-like operation eventually brought attention of both the good and bad variety. For example, praise from New York Times Journalist Norman Mailer and condemnation from Mayor Lindsey, the first to begin the mayoral war on graffiti in New York (Rose, 1994, p. 44; George, 1999, p. 12). It thereby established a reputation as a highly coveted cultural event. Controlled spaces

of the city were now being turned inside out. The messages and presence of the Hiphop scene were now circulated throughout the spaces of the city in a topographic warfare which visually challenged ideological and physical spaces with each passing of subway cars from one borough to the next. The subway acted as a medium well-suited to the fast paced and continual growth and morphing of Hiphop as it was actively being defined by rewriting narratives (via graffiti) that otherwise would dictate convention.

Punk Rock's reputation for breaking dominant codes precedes it, constituting a virtual Punk Rock code of ethics: break convention and produce counter-narratives. In this sense, one can see the relations between Punk Rock and Hiphop. Operating outside the social order of dominant codes was not necessarily always a conscious choice but sometimes the only choice. The various modes of expression (graffiti, recreational drug use, 'shock' fashion, and experimental music) that Punk Rock and Hiphop chose as cultural harbingers were defined outside the law. As a result, much of the culture was considered problematic. The expressions that created a cultural coherence between Punk Rock and Hiphop were the very things that threatened the coherence and stability of the mainstream. Both scenes were targeted as 'undesired elements' of society to be closely surveyed and criminalized. Punk's modus operandi was in the desperate desire to escape. Punk Rock's tension with authority lay in its successful and failed attempts at excommunicating the forces of the everyday. Hiphop and Punk's synergetic moments of contact constitute what can be described as *lines of flight*, albeit from opposite directions—Punk wanted out; Hiphop wanted in.

How members of Hiphop and Punk scenes went about breaching the constraining conditions of their own existence became key. After the rupture occurred, through the

transgression and deterritorialization of borders, there was the possibility of connecting on real terms that were unmitigated and deregulated. This is depicted in *Wild Style* through the cultural crossover of Fab Five Freddy and Patti Astor where her humble effort to take part in break-dancing at the Dixie Club not only 'broke the ice' but established a cultural affinity. The creation of new deinstitutionalized territory occurred where organic forms of demarcation were able to take form. These included cultural affirmation and exchange as well as the potential for the formation of a coalition-based, aggregates, based on mutual goals and philosophies, consensus on joint purposes as well as a similar sense of social displacement and antipathy towards mainstream populist values. On some level a 'heightened consciousness' was in operation when Astor and Fab Five Freddy began exploring one another's cultures and the conspicuous division of various territories of a distinctly racial character. They became privy to insight on the broader implications of their cultures' coalition and their social significance with respect to dominant culture. With this knowledge, Astor and Fab Five Freddy succeeded in transgressing the everyday and replacing it with *daily life*. Daily life aids in understanding or 'naming' what exists once one is able to transgress the frontiers of the everyday. Daily life is distinguishable from everyday life by *style*. Style enables the subject to reclaim ownership of one's daily existence, in effect permitting the recovery of agency. According to Grossberg, pre-capitalist daily life is predicated on individual agency free of a capitalist power structure: "Undoubtedly people have always had to be fed, clothed, housed and have had to produce and re-produce that which has been consumed. Until the nineteenth century, until the advent of competitive capitalism and the expansion of the world of trade [the everyday] as such did not exist..." (p. 148).

Lefebvre states that “in the heart of poverty and oppression there was style...style gave significance to the slightest object, to actions and activities, to gestures ” (p. 149).

Lefebvre suggests that no matter how banal the task, one owned it. This is what differentiates *daily life* and *the everyday*. In the Hip-hop and Punk scene there existed unique styles in contrast to the homogenizing effects of dominant culture which, working through a process of consensus disallows claims to autonomy. This is how everyday life can successfully be reproduced. Fundamentally there is a power differential here where human agency is substituted or perhaps subordinated to the investment in and production of capital. The production of capital requires that possibilities of transcendence be circumscribed in favour of its requisite ingredients and three principles: repetition, redundancy and recurrence that are needed for successful maintenance of the relations of production (the ideal condition for the “Möbius Strip”).

The divestment of human agency outlined above could otherwise be reinvested through *style*, giving both coherence and meaning to the specific activities of daily life which endow every action with value as an expression of that agency (p. 149). For example, the styles of dress, art, graffiti, and music produced by the Hip-hop and Punk scene all constitute ways of claiming voice. Hip-hop’s identification with expensive brands is not accidental—it subverts the perception of Hip-hop as delinquent and criminal through the identification of material goods typically available exclusively to the upper class. Through a process of signification Hip-hop attempts to subvert established social codes (Rose, 1994, pp. 36-38). Punk’s ‘appearance’ made famous by the rips and tears of Richard Hell, or the twisted version of 1950s iconography espoused by the Ramones clad in black leather jackets, Keds and tight jeans, or even the flamboyant cross-dressing of

the New York Dolls, engage discourse on how race, class and sexuality are manipulated and what purpose they serve. By doing the opposite of their urban counterparts, in effect, 'slumming it', they are refusing the ascription of a particular status, in favour of a much more transient lifestyle. In the climate of everyday life, space is stripped of the possibility for transcendence—bereft—it is a barren terrain and spatial void. The only option if not passive acceptance is nihilism. Some have chosen this (i.e. Punk Rockers Sid Vicious and Nancy Spungen, Richard Hell), others have opted for a more active attempt to redistribute how the conditions of existence are met such as Hiphoppers' technical ingenuity in the production of Rap music or the use of the body as art and instrument via break-dancing when there were no instruments or music programs available; these all constitute lines of flight. Removal of the conditions of everyday life entirely would require a revolution. While neither Punk nor Hiphop have achieved a generational revolution, their steps towards this to varying degrees proved disruptive enough to warrant attention and scrutiny by authorities that govern and shape the face of mainstream popular culture by for example 'black listing' Punk music, graffiti and the policing of break-dancing in public spaces (many including Forman, 2002, p. 143, cite the Parent's Resource and Music Center, *PMRC*, as one of these apparatuses of control). Lefebvre's definitions of daily life and the everyday are important because they help to situate Hiphop and Punk within the context of modern day capitalism. The introduction of the notion of pre- and post-capitalist America serve well in terms of underscoring the shift in governing from that of a system that no longer puts the values of its citizens before the value of the market, "a world where each instance is commoditized (p. 149). What is important here is the idea of every action having inherent value and expression.

Through the stylization of acts, one can take ownership (at least partial) of the conditions that constitute the everyday, as style becomes an expression of multiple articulations. An artistic style or style of dress such as that in Punk Rock or Hiphop for example, provides examples of how these articulations engage discourses on a multiplicity of issues. Style, along with place and space offer the potential for transcendence as it can act as an impetus for addressing deeper issues of a fundamentally ideological nature.

The Punk and Hiphop scenes were creating an extremely subversive and innovative atmosphere to the point of generating inspiration and the makings of a whole and complete community. For example, Lee Quinones tagging a subway car or doing a mural as a discursive act, challenges fundamental capitalist notions attached to the 'official' use of the subway as a vehicle to transport people to and from work, as well as a polemic on how public space should be used, what constitutes a recreational activity and social norms on how youth ought to spend their time. The same can be said for example, of a Punk such as Richard Hell walking on the street wearing a 'ragamuffin' hair-do and ripped shirt that says "Please Kill Me" on it. The statement is not subtle and the act can be interpreted in a number of manners. It can be understood as a somewhat intellectualized challenge to codes of conduct and rejection of typical class-based notions related to one's 'role' in society as well as well as a polemic similar to that in Hiphop on how one ought to conduct oneself in public space or a claim of that space suggesting "I'm here! And I think things are messed up! Look, I'm living proof!" The union of the two genres had occurred for many reasons. New York was fervent with creativity and a restless energy; after the failed idealism of the 1970s, cynicism and desire to voice that disappointment were claimed as rights for a generation that felt duped. This new

generation began to recognize how unique it was that it was doing something oppositional, deeply coded and misunderstood, culminating in Fab Five Freddy's eventual commute from uptown to downtown to hang out with Punks. He recognized that something special was going on with this group and vice-versa. In terms of Punk and Hiphop's positioning, there was a mutual respect that they were both challenging the status quo—that one saw in oneself the other or desired certain elements of the other. Musical collaborations are particularly important as an art form because they are able to circulate more widely via radio, cassette or record articulating cross-culturally as well as oppositionally with dominant culture. This is important as it can potentially elide race and class lines as one subculture becomes more familiar with the cultural practices of the other. Multiple instances and forms of collision between the Hiphop and Punk scene have occurred on the basis of a coalition or affective alliance rooted outside of the infrastructure of the everyday based on a consensus about where and how one invests in the everyday. Take for instance, the musical collaboration "World Destruction" by Afrika Bambaataa and Johnny Rotten/Lydon. Why did this occur? What were their mutual interests in one another? A shared political point of view? Frustration with a floundering economy; neglect of poor sectors seeing the rich get richer and poor get poorer? One can speculate that Rotten's work with Afrika Bambaataa under the name Time Zone, was a continuation of Punk Rock's cultural borrowing, of seeking the novel and constantly evolving as the atrophying of the Punk scene became the point where it could be 'nailed-down', boxed up' and commodified.

Nationalities are fighting with each other. Why is this? Because the system tells you

"World Destruction", World Destruction, 1984

Punk's cynicism and (over)use of irony made it difficult to read. John Lydon's/Rotten's other post-Punk project Public Image Limited (*PiL*) openly embraced capitalist values but one never knows to what degree he intends to be ironic and to what degree he submits to mainstream values, once again demonstrating Punk's predilection toward contradiction.

Big business is very wise/welcome aboard free enterprise.

"This is Not a Love Song, *Live in Tokyo*, 1983.

Was it selling out or being ironic? These works were released less than a year apart yet one is anti-establishment while the other is apparently very pro-establishment. While a reading on the graffiti in subway yards can be relatively clearly enunciated as not only an act of creativity but against certain values represented by the establishment, Punk's sometimes more ambiguous methods of articulating positions leave open a somewhat conflated reading, presumably part of the mystique surrounding Punk culture.

The dual mythologies of both Punk and Hiphop—the iconoclastic Punk Rocker 'hopped up' on speed, or the dystopic vision of the drug underworld in the South Bronx ghetto can be viewed in part, as culminations of a sensationalized discourse on race and class where a certain under class exists to which can be identified a racial 'otherness'. The following section is a final observation on the major conditions out of which Hiphop and Punk were born. These conditions might be described as an epidemic. It focuses on how these subcultures were able to turn an epidemic centered on its disenfranchisement back onto itself. It was during a period where drug use had been recast as 'The War on Drugs in America' calibrated to the machinations of the everyday, that the Hiphop and Punk Rock scene would begin to expand beyond the borders of their ascribed genres and cultures. When looking at the Hiphop and Punk scene as terrains of political struggle,

and the effects of drug use, circulation and infiltration, there can be identified three emergent themes: survivalism, escapism and defeatism which will identify problems with the dominant discourse on how drug use has been perceived. Furthermore this section identifies a particular *function* that ‘The War on Drugs’ serves as a political tool. To better understand the ‘The War on Drugs’ and its role in the maintenance of the everyday, Grossberg has come to describe these events as ‘epidemics’.

‘The War on Drugs’ is a definitive example of how “sites of [political] investment become [sensationalized] epidemics and ultimately pure mobilities” (p. 297); it underscores how culture becomes the principle terrain of struggle over power. It also positions the problem as having a particular race and class based association demarcating a cultural and spatial character beyond which there can never be a permanent and originary location or source (or, it suggests that a particular demographic *is* the source). One should note that the presence of drugs in either subculture should only be considered symptomatic of wider social, political and economic issues which implicate government accountability for its presence and proliferation in New York City as opposed to simply a pathological trait inherent in ‘deviant’, ‘troubled’ or ‘criminal’ youth cultures. Stated lightly, Punk Rock’s association with moderate to heavy drug use and, generally speaking, ‘disruptive’ behaviour made it notoriously targeted for heavy mediating by authoritarian organs such as the media or direct government intervention (UK Punk played a major role in Punk’s infamy in this regard). Affective investments play an integral role in strategic intervention aimed at obtaining consensus on what matters and where but what matters can only be mapped within the contour of the everyday. This contour forms a cycle with neither an end nor a beginning, only a perpetual *in-between*.

Its frontiers are kept discrete if not invisible through specialized vocabulary steeped in ideological appeals to morality and virtue—for instance, the family, the church—that are incorporated into capitalist rhetoric which delimits the allowable, what can and cannot be talked about. In this instance the underground economy of survival was the object of affective investment managed through a process of recuperation through a campaign of appeals incorporated into popular rhetoric against the heroin-coping junkie downtown and the pusher working the block uptown. The same drugs and crime that made the streets dangerous in the Bronx, pervaded New York City in ways that affected both scenes. It affected the living conditions and the environment in which Hip-hop was born and it fed into the escapist desires of the Punk scene in a perhaps more romanticized view of the recreation that drugs could bring (ultimately resulting in the deaths of some key figures in the Punk scene: half of the New York Dolls: Billy Murcia, Jerry Nolan and Johnny Thunders, and Dee Dee Ramone). HipHoppers risked harm just by living within the claustrophobia and chaos of the Bronx which was literally burning everyday (in the late 70s as insurance fires became a property owner's ticket out of crumbling neighbourhoods), a purgatory run by slum lords where one waited for the opportunity to participate in something much better, which would never come (Rose, 1994, 31-33). It was vital to own one's fate, to claim autonomy by doing something (or even nothing, in the case of Punk, just the fashion statement alone was enough to turn heads), as long as it was done as Sid Vicious sang in his rendition of Frank Sinatra's hit, "My Way".

With the focus on 'what matters' turned toward a war on an epidemic that had 'suddenly' materialized in a problematic segment of the population, for the first time in U.S. civil history, military level force was condoned and SWAT teams deployed in

ghettos to restore 'law and order' (Forman, 2002, pp. 52-53). As long as the epidemic was actively being managed, no question need be asked. In effect, the entire process of containment which had surfaced in many forms: The War on Drugs, the Cold War, or grounded in local circumstances such as the PMRC (Parents Music Resource Center) censorship crusade on music, underscore how survival can be at odds with law and order (George, 1999, pp. 37-39). The double bind lies in the fact that in order to participate in the everyday, one must undergo a process of anesthetization or else work outside of it in an outlawed underground economy. Fundamental issues of survival and power complicate the role that drugs played in this process. In essence, the War on Drugs, The Cold War or 'The War on Communism', to name but a few I would suggest are fueled on and depend upon what Grossberg has posited are 'epidemics', which play a key function in the control and maintenance of public opinion and everyday life.

Another facet of this control can be understood through the role that 'appeals to fantasy' undertake. Grossberg (1992) emphasizes the role that fantasy plays in managing the 'facts' which he partially implies "don't really matter", a paraphrase of Reagan's statement at a 1988 Republican Convention that facts are 'stupid things' (p.165). This denotes the role fantasy plays in the support of hegemony. It becomes a tactic for creating confusion and ambiguity. One is never too certain of anything but so long as one is surrounded by the familiar, one is able to continue onward, undisturbed and uninterrupted. The fantasy is the illusion that renders invisible the constraining frontiers that shape everyday life such as bridges, highways or constructs such as race and class. They become so naturalized that reality and fantasy become inverted. These conditions suggest that drug use in the Punk Rock scene may have played dual roles as a means to

escape against any hope or it may have simply functioned as an exercise in nihilism, to believe in nothing while simultaneously embracing these appeals to fantasy. That is to say, drug use may have effectively been a surrender or a concession to defeat, a submission to populist dogma of the everyday in exchange for temporary relief. This certainly gives pause to any theory on drug use as having played a transcendental role as much as a utilitarian one and reiterates the politicized role that culture and space play in tension with authority and the controlled space in which it thrives—the everyday.

New York's Lower East Side represented a class divide and was America's most notorious skid row, the epitome of life on the margins also known as The Bowery. It was home to hobos, alcoholics, junkies and prostitutes—to anyone seeking illicit thrills and the violence and seediness that often accompanied it. The Bowery was also the home of CBGB and the locale in which temporary relief from the everyday was sought out. The circulation of drugs, one might say, was a part of the machinations of the everyday which involved the *narcoticization* of oneself or others in order to tolerate the tedium or facilitate the survival of the everyday. Those immersed in everyday life such as Punks either engaged in a continual process of anesthetization, numbing oneself to the monotony of the everyday or otherwise engaged in an ecstatic frenzy, through a reordering of one's senses by either fragmenting each second into *hyperreal* instants or slowing each moment down to one eternal moment. Both attempted to obliterate the centrifugal forces of the everyday which continually disintegrated the possibility for the convergence of a politicized thought. The consumption or circulation of drugs did not constitute the only fashion in which to engage in a counter discourse. It is through multiple discursive acts, where life and art were lived out through songs such as "53rd

and 3rd” (*The Ramones*, 1976), or the drug addicted tale described by Richard Hell and Johnny Thunders and the Heartbreakers, “Chinese Rock” that members of the art/Punk and Hiphop scenes were expressing themselves at the level of the *real*—at the level of a *daily life*:

Somebody calls me on the phone./Say hey-hey-hey is Arty Home./You wanna take a walk. You wanna go cop./You wanna go get some Chinese Rock./I'm livin' on a Chinese Rock. /All my best things are in hock./I'm livin' on a Chinese rock/Everything is in the pawn shop./The plaster fallin' off the wall./My girlfriend cryin' in the shower stall./It's hot as a bitch./I should've been rich./But I'm just diggin' a Chinese ditch.

“Chinese Rock”, 1976.

Chapter 3 has presented an analysis on the field of cultural struggle in the Hiphop and Punk scenes, theorizing on their emergent relationship and crossover culminating in a greater New York art scene. This chapter has engaged spatio-geographic discourse on how language used to talk about Hiphop and Punk harkens back to geography’s militaristic origins. This has suggested that the Hiphop and Punk scenes existed in a state of crisis evoked through the use of space such as the subway and other artistic expressions produced by these scenes. Furthermore, this artistic expression drew the two scenes together to form a powerful and unique amalgam scene between 1979 and 1985 that disturbed traditional concepts of belonging based in dominant discourse on race and class. Effectively, the events occurring during this crossover period and depicted in *Wild Style* suggest a reevaluation of the historically traditional tendency toward racialized thought.

A universal reality emerges here, that constitutes the urban escapist fantasy and the extraordinary reality of the urban underground music and art scene, be it at the Dixie Club and Ecstasy Garage in the Bronx or at downtown clubs such as the Negril, Mudd Club and Roxy in the Punk Rock and the associated art scene. The characteristics of any given ‘scene’ in New York during this period become subordinate to the common feeling

of restlessness, malaise and alienation built up in direct tension with the forces which cause them. This demands that we abandon notions of belonging in historically traditional ways such as race and class in order to breath energy into a new discourse which resituates and deterritorializes boundaries based on these conventionally dominant constructs. Art possesses transgressive qualities privileging music as having tremendous affective agency and territorializing power. Art has been able to rally 'dispersed aggregates' together through mood and affect. I would suggest that in this instance, at this 'moment' between 1979 and 1985, both musical elements of Punk and Hip-hop possessed that affective agency, which was enhanced by multiple art forms, which in their own right, were already powerful cultural entities. The convergence of all of these forms in effect, consolidated an entire movement culminating in a remarkable reterritorializing power.

CONCLUSION

There have been a considerable amount of contributions made by pop-historians and cultural critics on Hiphop and Punk. This thesis has underscored the importance of revisiting the period between 1979 to 1985 in order to re-evaluate the relationship between the Hiphop and Punk scenes. This examination holds particular importance as it offers a counter-narrative on their 'official stories' which are frequently disassociated due to dominant discourses on race and class. The unique circumstances that constitute this period have arguably not been reproduced to date, thereby rendering the crossover of Hiphop and Punk a relevant point of reference for contemporary society and cultural studies.

"Punk's not Dead" is a familiar adage that circulates from time to time which one can see tagged on a wall or the occasional shirts of Punk revivalists. To date, there is certainly no lack of reincarnations of the originals however, it is much more difficult to view them as 'movements' in the manner they embodied when they began. Hiphop also lives on. Graffiti stakes a presence globally across frontiers, through new forms of discursive space such as the Internet, and pockets of 'Hiphop Heads' keep the other three elements alive through specialized collectives and events that celebrate its roots. Due to processes of change not unlike those suggested by Will Straw in *Systems of Articulation Logics of Change* (1991), factors such as how a scene evolves in relation to processes such as commodification and canonization as well as temporality germane to a scene, are key variables which suggest that the livelihood of a scene is predicated on the guarantee of its demise.

Within such considerations, it is worth noting that the untimely deaths of members of the original Punk scene occurred around the moment that I began to think about doing research in these areas of Hip-hop and Punk music. Notable amongst those who passed on since then, were Joey Ramone of The Ramones in 2001, and Joe Strummer from The Clash in 2002. Prior to this, being equipped with the knowledge that mythic icons from these periods were still around doing other things, had provided me with sufficient enthusiasm. The potential to relive the first wave of Punk would exist as long as they did; after all, the Sex Pistols had reunited in 1996 and again in 2003. It was the death of these two figures that made me realize how little I knew about these people, their lives and the impact they had on the rest of the world. Both Hip-hop and Punk Rock have always been genres that on some level I have been able to identify with. The allure of art and the desire to express oneself that had prompted the young versions of these legendary icons to embrace music and art so intensely, as a way of life, continues to inspire others thirty years later. Coming from an awareness that this was rebel music, and certainly not the kind of music that one's parents would listen to, my musical preferences over the years had always oscillated between Punk and Hip Hop, depending on what phase I was going through in that particular period. Over time, finding a place where both would be equally important developed with my own ability to negotiate the socio-cultural parameters that led to becoming either a 'Rock' fan or a 'Rap' fan. Effectively mapping the music and myself across a terrain of cultural difference, my agency and ability to choose and 'instantiate' what mattered was integral to the connection made between both genres and my own sense of self. Existing within that

'zone of discomfort' and ambiguity of race and class became tolerable and perhaps welcomed.

More recently, a phenomenon has recurred, again born of New York and a culmination of historical events dating back to the original Punk and Hip-hop movement—Afro-Punk. It is too soon to know whether or not Afro-Punk is truly a *movement*. However, Afro-Punk raises interest with regard to how music today is being used to create new meaning. Counter-discourses emerging from Afro-Punk suggest that there is a new Black-identity politick to be addressed that has been overlooked that is affecting a relatively obscured group in the Black American diaspora. The film *Afro-Punk* (2003) is a documentary about the politics of race and identity. It explores the lives of Black youths who have become involved in the Punk scene, and the issues that arise from this investigation generate a powerful message. New readings on race and class can be inferred from the cultural *mélange* of an 'Afro-punk' that invoke discourses emerging from the 'moments of contact' of the early Hip-hop and Punk scenes. That this particular subculture has turned to Punk Rock as a harbinger for its values and sense of self, suggests that the discursive setting out of which a new terrain of struggle for individualism and identity has emerged, in some ways parallels the struggle of their Punk and Hip-hop predecessors.

Three major points can be made regarding how *Afro-Punk* can be viewed as a return to some of the circumstances that constituted the 'cultural fusion' between 1979 and 1985. Firstly, themes of space emerge here in terms of the creation of a new discursive arena in which to address issues of race and identity through the style, music and art aesthetic of Punk Rock. Secondly, one can identify the importance of music, once

again, as a galvanizing and binding medium. Finally, reiterated as a meta-narrative, is the struggle over what subjects are deemed legitimate and acknowledged by dominant culture. The director of *Afro-Punk*, James Spooner is in effect, staking a claim in what and *who* should matter in an increasingly alienating global society. That is to say, like *Wild Style*, *Afro-Punk* is not only a document of underground culture, but moreover, a testimony that there is once again a need to give voice and place to individuals who are defined outside of dominant culture.

What is 'Afro-Punk'? This prefix, *Afro*, to the familiar movement, *Punk* is suggestive. The concern generated by the use of the prefix *Afro* is that it suggests that Punk-identified youth of colour can only be *counted-in* or legitimated with this racial qualifier which is immediately *Othering*. Albeit self-named, 'Afro-Punk' also calls attention to the racialized vocabulary that we continue to be restricted by, and dominant culture's far-reaching effects and power to delimit the allowable—that is to say, *what* is talked about and *how* we talk about it. Specifically, although appending the prefix *Afro* suggests a claim to identity, it also underscores the notion that a 'Punk' cannot simply be a 'Punk'. Race is often invisibly attached in an exclusive manner. Even when one is able to claim a voice it is still shackled to the constraints of a dominant discourse.

Within identity politics are issues of alienation, and what Spooner effectively represents in the film, *Afro-Punk*, is the triple displacement of Black Punk Rockers with respect to the Black diaspora, Punk subculture and greater society at large. It is interesting that Black youth in contemporary America would choose Punk Rock as a means of self-expression, choosing to dwell within the discomfort of ambiguity. This is made even more remarkable given the heightened state of self-consciousness occurring in

instances where race is foregrounded and difference situates that individual as 'not belonging' amongst his or her own group of peers. Within this context, there is no escape for these Black youth, back into a 'safe zone' or any possibility of retreat into the territory of one's culture of origin, as it may be even less familiar. The boundaries and frontiers established through dominant constructs in conventional scenarios can no longer apply. This entangled space within which the displaced Punk challenges issues that are steeped deeply in race, poses a triple threat: the choices made by an 'Afro-Punk' demand a deeper look into how constructs such as race fail, in these instances, to sustain the boundaries which facilitate and maintain the infrastructure on which America has been built.

The politics of this movement's name is where conformism begins and ends. Afro-Punk is particularly remarkable because it has not developed within the safety of a scene or a community, but through the relatively solitary and courageous actions of individuals (although now, there does appear to be a scene converging). Seeking out an alternative to *racialized* discourse that dominates contemporary America, these youths have instead chosen to embrace a subculture whose history *does* in fact converge with Black musical and artistic expression. Afro-Punk is in effect, an affirmation of the complicated relations of race and culture where the past is reemerging in a fused version of a unique period that should not become another lost relic in history. That this group of youth would choose to identify with and articulate themselves using a White cultural aesthetic and subculture suggests that what had occurred between 1979 and 1985 was not entirely anomalous, and that, once again, Punk is being used to work up a counter-discourse on notions of race and identity. It suggests that the co-mingling of an African-

American subculture with that of a typically White youth subculture has resonated 30 years later for a new generation of disaffected youth. Both Punk and Hiphop continue to be, in various incarnations, means to articulate less easily explained or ambiguous cultural phenomena that fall outside of the realm of what is considered socially acceptable. Once again challenging the status quo, Punk or *Afro-Punk* is a platform for the silenced, alienated or disenfranchised to claim a place in the Black diaspora and society at large. I have not even begun to touch on a deeper analysis of this area, which would require expanding my literature with more research in the area of Black Cultural Studies, which was beyond the scope of this thesis. Nevertheless, Afro-punk, as a recent phenomena related to Punk and Hiphop crossovers, deserves to be explored much further.

In closing, I would like to address some of the areas that might have benefited from further research. Firstly, I would like to have had access to more primary research. Although I was fortunate enough to obtain a copy of *Punk* magazine, *Sniffin' Glue* and the *FACE*, having had access to more archival material covering Hiphop—specifically *Rap Pages* and *Billboard*, as well as additional copies of *Punk* magazine—would have allowed me to glean more intimate detail on the scenes, allowing for more proximity to the period. Instead, I have been dependent on mostly secondary resources and accounts of the period which although, invaluable, did limit the scope of my thesis and the possibilities for an analysis that had gone through fewer ‘channels’ of mediation.

In addition to looking at Afro-Punk as an emerging movement, the possibility of using music theory as tool for engaging in an in-depth study of music’s affective power might serve effectively in considering music’s relation to subcultures and everyday life. As previously mentioned, music can promote and stimulate a myriad of mental states

such as excitement, sadness, depression and etcetera. For example, minor chords and major chords can stimulate sadness and happiness respectively and rhythm and tempo can promote dignity and vigor. In fact, I would suggest that the ‘upbeat’ rhythms found in Hiphop and Punk played a key role in stimulating and instilling cultural agency. Extending this approach further might yield insightful theorizations.

Elsewhere, another altogether different approach might have focused on the development of the technologies that facilitated Hiphop and Punk: the cassette tape, ghetto blaster, synthesizer, turntable and mixer. This examination would engage a history of communication, approached with an emphasis on technology and artistic development. There was the issue of access: having had access to more music itself, would have allowed for more analysis of musical texts and may have led to an approach that focused much more heavily on these musical techniques. Or, perhaps from yet another approach one might produce a detailed interpretation of the visual art being produced during the late seventies and early eighties, including graffiti, street art and the art being produced by the downtown artists. I found that visual art alone could warrant an entire thesis surrounding it, as this material was abundant, almost overwhelming. The world of graffiti and the quasi-neo-expressionism or ‘Punk art’ aesthetic emerging from this period was remarkable and unique—there is much more to learn from these vibrant practices.

And, in a final reflection, there is a challenging dynamic to writing about Hiphop and Punk as a fan in an academic setting; trying to find an objective voice while still harnessing and channeling that passion derived from being a fan, presented certain obstacles. It was important to write on the subject to a degree, in as close to an objective

manner as possible in order to properly convey the material in a coherent and logical manner. An obvious challenge in this regard, was the way in which factual information that seemed commonplace from a fan's perspective, required the appropriate referencing or expanded description that was grounded in existing research. However, being a fan has also afforded me the benefit of an integrative perspective. This perspective has resulted in a shift in focus, on an often racialized monolith of studies in Hiphop and Punk.

The treatment of Hiphop and Punk in a highly striated and controlled manner suggests that petrified in the value systems of society is the notion of difference based primarily on race, secondarily on class. This becomes woven into the social fabric of communities, scenes, individuals and everyday life. It is also embedded systemically, reaching the highest institutional levels where complicit perpetuation of this 'segregation' remains a reality reflected and evidenced in omissions ranging from academic studies to highly controlled and managed physical spaces (i.e. from radio frequencies to public spaces, etc.). This 'racial streamlining' according to Black/White categories and music genres has impeded the treatment of Punk and Hiphop in the same analysis to the extent that it warrants, creating missed opportunities for a more comprehensive and accurately recorded history. It demonstrates that there should be more extensive investigations of these texts and how they may be communicating enriching this area of study for the benefit of not only scholarly work but, future and emergent contemporary scenes.

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