

The Booty Don't Lie: Dancefloor Explorations of Feminism and Hip Hop

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Abstract

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This thesis draws on theories of affect, performativity, and dance practice to consider how women with varying feminist values negotiate them within sexist hip hop spaces. Using a targeted group of research participants, accessed through snowball sampling, the author engaged in four different outings which produced four specific scenic descriptions and twelve interviews to better investigate if such a negotiation is possible. Taking the view that negotiation can occur between feminist values and sexist hip hop spaces through the body, this research demonstrates four particular tactics through which such a negotiation occurs. In engaging theories of affect and performativity in dance the author outlines humour as intervention, hypersexualization of movement as a resistance, memory and nostalgia as a buffer and disassociation as negotiation, as tactics that reveal themselves in sexist hip hop spaces.

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For Mariana Kelemen and in loving memory of Matei and Andrei Kelemen.

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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	9
From the Schoolyard to the School Books: My Love for Hip Hop	9
The Theory.....	14
The Methodology.....	16
<i>The Fieldwork Methodology</i>	16
<i>The Participants</i>	19
<i>The Researcher</i>	21
<i>The Spaces</i>	22
(RE)Defining Hip Hop Music Within the Scope of this Project	24
The Thesis.....	25
Chapter One: The Hip Hop Feminist: Finding the Intersection Between Hip Hop and Feminism	27
Introduction.....	27
Hip Hop: Not a Generation but a Culture	28
The Hip Hop Feminist	30
Consumption of Hip Hop Beyond the Borders of the Bronx.....	42
Conclusion	44
Chapter Two: Affect, Performativity and the Hip Hop Dancing Body	47
Introduction.....	47
Affect, “Thisness” and Performativity; The Feminist Kill-Joy on the Dancefloor	49
Understanding Affect in Performative Hip Hop Dances	64
Conclusion	70
Chapter Three: Hip Hop Dancing Events: Four Scenic Descriptions	72
Introduction.....	72
Outing 1 – B-Side Bar – November 18 th 2012.....	75
Outing 2 – Royal Phoenix Bar – December 15 th 2012	81
Outing 3 – Salon Officiel – January 26 th 2013	87
Outing 4 – Blizzarts – February 15 th 2013.....	92
Feeling the Event(s).....	98
Chapter Four: Tactics For Feminist Negotiations in Sexist Hip Hop Spaces	105
Introduction.....	105
Humour as an Intervention.....	111
Hypersexualization of Movement as Resistance	117
Memory and Nostalgia as a Buffer	124
Disassociation as a Tactic of Negotiation.....	130
Conclusion	137
Conclusion	141
The Project	141
The Value of the Project	143
The Future.....	144
Works Cited.....	147
Appendices.....	151

Appendix A: Selected Lyrics	151
Appendix B: Playlists from the Hip Hop Outings	157
B-Side – Selected Playlist – November 18 th 2012	157
Royal Phoenix Bar <i>Cousins Cousin Cousins</i> – Playlist – December 14 th 2012	157
Salon Officiel <i>Please Me Saturdays</i> – Playlist – January 26 th 2013	159
Blizzarts <i>Get Nice Fridays</i> – Playlist – February 15 th 2013	164

Introduction

From the Schoolyard to the School Books: My Love for Hip Hop

Hip hop culture, music and lifestyle have played a very influential role in my life. Music in general seems to have a large place in people's lives. For some it is pop music, rock'n'roll, even metal; for me it always was and still is hip hop. Hip hop gave me a voice, letting me know that I wasn't the only one feeling marginalized, and gave me the courage to move to my own groove. In short, hip hop has defined my musical experience in my youth and well into my young adult life.

Growing up in a tight knit community in Israel, one of the major lessons learned was that struggle was a necessary part of our culture, that it indeed strengthened us individually and as a community. Arriving in Canada was a rude awakening; I no longer shared the same history as my peers. This was both frightening yet beautiful, a revelatory moment in my blooming new Canadian childhood. Having moved from a community that was close, my family and I settled into a building seventeen stories high in downtown Windsor, Ontario. This was my first experience with a multi-cultural neighbourhood.

Although Rishon Le Zion had an eclectic mix of immigrants, our commonality was our identity and history as Israelis. Windsor however, had a mix of cultures and identities that were unknown to me, which I then began to discover.

My first friends in school were the African Canadian girls skipping rope in the concrete schoolyard. It was a ritual practiced at every recess break and after school. They would gather and invite me to skip along. Eventually, I became as agile and as speedy as the best of them, quickly becoming one of the top players at skip rope. It is right there, between those fences and on the greyish concrete that I discovered my first African American hip hop group.

From the moment I picked up *The Score* by The Fugees, I was hooked on the words, on the beat and on the intricate sampling of styles. I didn't know it yet, but this album, along with frontwoman Lauryn Hill's subsequent solo album *The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill*, would shape completely how I would come to consume music. Hip hop not only spoke to me musically, but the entire culture which had birthed it made me feel kinship, as an Israeli who was away from home.

Consequently, hip hop became a driving force in my attitude and outlook in growing up in Canada. Armed with an allowance, I spent almost every single dollar I could on CDs that ranged from pop with hip hop interventions, such as Cleopatra ZYC's *Comin Atcha!*, to full on gangsta rap like Dr. Dre's *The Chronic*. I lived and breathed hip hop and all its elements.

As I grew up and, while I discovered affinities and allegiances to ideals which did not coincide with what commercial hip hop had become, I kept this music close to me, dancing and singing it at every occasion, continually building on my knowledge as a hip hop connoisseur.

November 12th, 2011. I am in the middle of the dancefloor at Il Motore, a small venue on Jean-Talon known to showcase indie up-and-coming artists. I wait with bated breath for Star Slinger, a DJ known to remix some excellent tunes with an electro spin. In the meantime, the bar turned club for the evening is enjoying Shlomo, an artist in the same vein as Star Slinger. While my friends and I are dancing, Shlomo begins to brilliantly remix Lil Wayne's *Lollipop*, a song containing an extremely crude, explicit, and exploitative description of an encounter between Lil' Wayne and a woman. I freeze.

It is not the first time this has happened, but it was in that specific moment that something broke for me. I cannot escape verses like Lil' Wayne's, and the slang, music and writings of hip hop, without being complicit to this type of abuse. How can it be that I have let this slide for so long? That I have passively accepted cruel denominations of my gender to be so easily consumed?

This was a feeling which kept on growing, becoming larger, louder and ever more contradictory to my now established love for all things hip hop; a feeling that my feminist self could no longer ignore even when I put on my headphones to listen to artists that didn't just reduce me to a body part for the sake of a rhyme and a dollar.

[H]ip-hop and I have loved harder and fallen out further than I have with any man I've ever known. That my decision to end our love affair had come only after years of disappointment and punishing abuse. After I could no longer sacrifice my self-esteem or that of my two daughters on an altar of dope beats and tight rhymes. (Lonnae O'Neal Parker¹ qtd. in Rose 124)

While I am a lover and a fan of hip hop culture, I am nonetheless conflicted much like the woman quoted above. It wasn't the act of listening to hip hop music that really bothered me. Listening to hip hop and choosing what type of hip hop I was listening to was an act which I was firmly in control of. If Dr. Dre's *Bitches Ain't Shit* would play on my iPod, I could easily cut Dre's performance short and shuffle on to Erykah Badu's affirmational *Love of My Life*.

I questioned my commitment both to hip hop and feminism on the dancefloor. I sought to understand if it was possible to negotiate between my feminist values and the dancing space I was in, and if so how it could be done. How have I managed to survive these spaces for so long without actively critiquing this phenomenon? I wanted to know *how* I negotiated hip hop and feminism in the experiential, during Lil' Wayne's *Lollipop*,

¹ Parker, O'Neal Lonnae. "Why I Gave Up on Hip Hop," *Washington Post*. Oct. 15 2006. Web.

sandwiched between the several dozens of other people who were dancing, grinding and just purely enjoying a moment which, to me, was void of pleasure.

These were the beginnings of my exploration as to how to I performed my embodied feminist values on a sexist hip hop dancefloor. In reflecting on the freeze moment and on the fundamental question which arises from this freeze moment, *can one negotiate between one's feminist values and the sexist space one might find herself in*, I argue that yes, there is potential for such a negotiation. This occurs through a disruption of the sexist moment by disturbing it from its intended and underlying sexist context. I call these tactical negotiations, as they disturb the hip hop dancing space while maintaining one's participation within it.

These disturbances are possible through corporeal practice; the embodied negotiations between feminist values and sexist space, noticeable through dance. Do certain movements disturb the club space more so than others? If so, what type of movement or embodied displays of discontent or discomfort cause the disturbance in the sexist moment? Can this be considered a potential negotiation? Can negotiations be valued in the same way if you are surrounded by a familiar group of people rather than a larger crowd? Are such disturbances and, subsequently, negotiations inherently singular and individual events or do they take more meaning if a community of participants engages in the same disturbance?

These were some of the initial questions which lead to the elaboration of four particular moments analyzed in my fieldwork. I term these moments tactical negotiations between feminist values and sexist hip hop space. Moreover, I would like to elaborate on what a sexist hip hop space means within the scope of this research. Although hip hop

dance spaces have several connotations and are often considered sexualized spaces, a sexist hip hop space refers to a sexist moment within a hip hop club. This sexist hip hop moment is most often attributed to the lyrics of a particular song, or the biography of a particular artist, and the reaction that potentially arises from such a moment in the hip hop club space.

Since dancing is an enormous aspect of both hip hop and my life, I seek to explain and understand this potential negotiation through dance, and specifically during the “freeze” moment on the dancefloor. Because my questions are rooted in the experiential, dance practice is of particular importance within the scope of this research. This is because dance is the principal form of movement and embodied practice on the dancefloor. Dance is also the principal activity at a hip hop dance club. It is a deeply personal and yet a very social activity. Observing dance practice in club culture allows me to think through moments of disjuncture between feminist value and sexist hip hop space and consequently allows me to discern the negotiations and potentially the disruptions through the experiential and through the body.

Within this research, club spaces are of specific interest to me because these are where the rupture between value and sexist space occur in the experiential. Club culture is also part of many young adults’ social praxis. It is in these hip hop spaces that I am interested in seeing if the negotiation between one’s values and the sexism inherent to hip hop is possible; how and through what embodiment does this negotiation potentially occur?

Why particularly on the hip hop club dancefloor? While we have made strides in identifying sexist behaviour in contemporary culture, sexism is still deeply rooted within

our society, whether insidiously or openly. We have come to a certain plateau in our visible feminist politics in that most young women now accept certain behaviours as part of “the game” of being a woman in society. This is most visible in club behaviour. In clubbing, the “it is part of the game” attitude, combined with a mix of alcohol and the potential awkwardness which derives from *harshing* someone else’s — and of course your own — buzz, makes calling someone out on their sexist behaviour in a club simply not bode well for the girl who is wearing those tight jeans and those heels. Throw into the mix some aggressive commercially successful beats, some verses detailing sex, sexual innuendo, sexual gratification, sexual voyeurism, sex and violence, and sex for money — the staples of commercialized hip hop — and your club space is rife with enough sexism to make anyone’s head spin.

In the moment of being *trapped on the dancefloor*² what body practice can be used to negotiate feminist values and hip hop space? I borrow from cultural theorist Lawrence Grossberg on the importance of investigating such spaces: “Even if the popular is not always or necessarily a site of resistance to or support of any particular position or practice, this is not to say that at certain moments, in certain conjunctures, it may organize resistance and possibility through any number of different forms of discursive effectivities” (327-328).

The Theory

Building on Lawrence Grossberg’s indication of the importance of looking at popular culture critically and in seeking to explain this “freeze” moment through the experiential, I turn to the theoretical underpinnings of Sarah Ahmed, Charles J. Stivale

² A song recorded by Will Smith and DJ Jazzy Jeff in 1991 of the *Homebase* album.

and finally Judith Butler to help me investigate negotiation in bodily terms. Drawing on these theorists allows me to reflect on this negotiation between feminist values and sexist hip hop spaces in the aftermath of the dancing event.

In *Happy Objects* Ahmed reveals, “We are moved by things. And in being moved, we make things. An object can be affective by virtue of its own location (the object might be *here*, which is *where* I experience this or that affect) and the timing of its appearance (the object might be *now*, which is *when* I experience this or that affect)” (33). Affect Theory then is the key conceptual resource in understanding the experiential and a way to notice how the body may negotiate between feminist values and space.

Additionally, I draw heavily on Stivale’s influential work from *Feeling the Event: Spaces of Affects and the Cajun Dance Arena*, which deals more specifically with the affect present in dancing spaces. Determining the quality of a dancing space aids me in thinking through how space affects the body’s experience, specifically in an arena dedicated to hip hop dance.

Finally I turn to Judith Butler’s continuous work on performativity and performance to make visible the tactics of negotiation that can occur through bodily movement.

In my own explorations, I have found that the clubs in which one goes out to dance are those from which one usually derives pleasure and happiness from. The precursor to the participation in dancing is the pleasure one gets from the activity of going out. Ultimately, there is an expectation of pleasure that one has from “going out dancing.” In being in a space that creates a happy affect one is bound to “feel” this happiness, to derive pleasure from this object. If a woman identifies as a feminist, or

claims to ascribe to feminist values, how does her presence complicate the dancing space which is host to sexist behaviour, through music and movement?

Furthermore, because I am interested in the experiential, I seek to understand if my moment of unhappiness at Il Motore was but my own unhappy experience or if there are other young feminists which experience similar contradictions while nonetheless allowing themselves to feel the pleasure of dancing to hip hop.

The Methodology

The Fieldwork Methodology

In order to see if such a negotiation is possible, I recruited a snowball sample of six female participants from the ages of twenty-two years old to thirty-one years old. The Snowball sampling technique as outlined by Chaim Noy in *Sampling Knowledge: The Hermeneutics of Snowball Sampling in Qualitative Research* “is effective in the research of *organic social networks*” (340). I reached out to potential participants based on our previous outing experiences together, as well as their willingness to participate. Some potential participants who were originally interested in partaking in this research were unable to commit but instead had passed on the details and the scope of this project to other young women who in turn agreed to participate. Hence, the snowball sample effect of this research. I ended up with six engaged young women who were willing to participate in the several months-long journey with me through some of my deeper questions about hip hop club culture and feminist values within Montreal.

Given that all six participants are friends, or friends of friends, who agreed to go out and be part of this research, I found this method to be one where I would be able to gain most access throughout. “[O]bservation that snowball sampling relies on and

partakes in the *dynamics of natural and organic social networks*” (Noy 329) was crucial for me, given that what I was looking for needed to be organic and experiential rather than data driven.

Secondly, because using the snowball sample is part of a reflexive and qualitative method I found it particularly well suited in helping me explore theories of affect and performativity within my participants’ interviews. In addition, having my personal connection with all of these participants allowed for a certain candidness and freedom to flow from our conversations. Such ties also allowed me to bypass one of the larger issues that could affect my research such as the consumption of alcohol in these spaces. In having a prior connection with my participants, and having engaged in dance outings prior to this research, my participants and I could speak with the sincerity that can only come from friendship. In order to better understand how friendship fueled this research I draw on Lisa Tillman-Healy’s *Friendship as Method*.

Tillman-Healy reveals that “we research and write not to capture the totality of social life but to interpret reflectively slices and glimpses of localized interaction in order to understand more fully both others and ourselves” (Denzin³ qtd. In Tillman-Healy 732). In engaging my participants in a soft interview – that is, an interview which flows like a dialogue or discussion, rather than a preset list of questions — the process of my research enriched both my companions and myself. The goal of the interviews was to create a space for mutual understanding, debating and sharing of the lived experiences on the field.

³ Denzin, Norman K. *Interpretive ethnography: Ethnographic practices for the 21st century*. California: Thousand Oaks Sage Publications, 1997. 325. Print.

Tillman-Healy reveals, “central to this approach is dialogue, where the subject-object relationship of positivism becomes a subject-subject one, in which academic knowledge combines with everyday experience to reach new and profound understandings” (733). Choosing a more casual approach of interaction with the participants in this research allowed not only for a gaining of knowledge, but more importantly, a sharing of the knowledge of the everyday practices and uses of our bodies in commercial hip hop culture in Montreal.

Combining the snowball sampling method with friendship as method was particularly useful for my type of research. This is because, as stated by Noy, I was researching within an organic social network and engaging my snowball sample of participants in a social activity that produces pleasure. I wanted to be able to discuss the experiences of these participants on the dancefloor in way that mirrored the flow of a genuine conversation between friends. This combination allowed for a way to get at the experiential moments of the dance outings in a very honest and open way. As well, this combination of methods gave my participants the freedom to interact with me in a sense of trust.

Including friends and acquaintances in this research, allowed for a genuine flow and an immediate interaction between participants and situations. In contrast, had I expanded the circle of participants to people outside this group, perhaps the chemistry between the participants would have been slower to build and would have affected the outcomes and the interactions of the evenings. Another concern about fieldwork in club culture is the worry of the consumption of alcohol in such spaces and how it may affect the engagement of my participants. But engaging in such research with a closer group of

participants helped in circumventing such issues due to their own concern for the process of this research. They displayed a level of engagement within this research that went beyond my own request.

In limiting my research through snowball sampling and friendship, I also delimited the scope of this research. I do not aim to make assumptions about all women who identify themselves as feminists and who participate in hip hop culture. I only discuss the potential negotiations that may occur within the specific climate of mainstream and commercialized hip hop culture present in Montreal at this time.

The Participants

I want to briefly detail who the young women participating in this research are and how they engage with hip hop club culture in Montreal.

All of the participants were invested in social outings and are hip hop consumers; some more heavily than others. Within this research, the names of the participants that will appear are the real names of the young women who partook and consented to this project. For example, in Martha (26 years old), Alin (26 years old) and Stephanie's (23 years old) experiences, going out was a regular occurrence, and as such, their engagement in club culture in Montreal was particularly high. In Emilie (27 years old), Meagan (31 years old) and Dalia's (25 years old) experiences, their dance outings were more rare, and resulted in outings surrounding specific events.

For the purpose of this research, it is important to note that each of these participants has a different ethno-cultural background that contributes to the makeup of this sample. Within this snowball sample there is a mix between Algerian Canadian, Armenian Canadian, Venezuelan Canadian, Togolese Canadian, English Canadian and French Canadian. This particular mix of ethnicities speaks to the very multi-cultural

characteristic of Montreal. All of these identities, while playing a role in each participant's heritage to the degree of their involvement within their parent culture (some are more involved within their culture while others are not), within the scope of this research are not discussed, partly because the participants did not bring this subject up in our conversations. Additionally, taking into account the cultural variety within hip hop would have enlarged the scope of this research to include a *glocal* aspect of (Togolese, Armenian, Venezuelan, Algerian, English, French) globalized hip hop rather than North-American hip hop. Their engagement is based on the mainstream and commercialized hip hop that is present within this larger mainstream hip hop club culture, which most young adults participate in. Furthermore, these participants' educational backgrounds are also as varied as their cultural backgrounds. While some are pursuing higher education some have been on the workforce for several years. Each participant has a particular approach to their hip hop engagement in Montreal as well as a varying degree of feminist identity.

Finally, it would be worthy of mention that the six participants who agreed to contribute to this research all have varied definitions of what it means to be a feminist, contributing to the idea that there is no unified idea of what feminism is. While some identify more strongly with the feminist title, others are more hesitant to take on this identity although their ideas reflect a feminist ideology. For the purpose of the following research, the categorization of "feminist" will include the nuances between those who strongly identify as feminists and those who demonstrate feminist values without strongly defining themselves as feminists.

The Researcher

Because this research stems from my personal involvement in hip hop club culture, I found it imperative to include an auto-ethnographical method to my fieldwork. More specifically, I have been influenced by the concepts of writing and stance respectively developed by Laurel Richardson and Jeff Todd Titon.

Laurel Richardson discusses in *Writing a Method of Inquiry* the action that writing has in discovering one's own research. "By writing in different ways, we discover new aspects of our topic and relationship to it" (516). I find this to be a key quality to my research. As I sought to engage with concepts that influence me as a young adult participating in the Montreal hip hop club scene, writing as a method of discovery, even more so, of self-discovery, was a key method to employ. "I write because I want to find something out. I write in order to learn something that I didn't know before I wrote it. I was taught, however, as perhaps you were, too, not to write until I knew what I wanted to say" (Richardson 517).

Richardson's notion of writing is a method of discovery. In spending time with participants, analyzing and thinking through the different ways one may interact with the music playing, and the inevitable crowded scene and environment one might find herself in, I sought to explore how my participants negotiated their values within a sexist hip hop space.

Additionally, in developing my own auto-ethnographic method, I borrowed from Jeff Todd Titon's essay *Stance, Role, and Identity in Fieldwork among Folk Baptists and Pentecostals*. Titon clearly places himself in the midst of his ethno-musical research,

much like I have alongside my participants, and discusses the importance that fluctuating identity serves in his fieldwork:

[W]hen an attempt is made to play a role and thus to project a stance that knows is not authentic, it leads not any kind of objectivity, but rather to a more pronounced subjectivity; and this is due to the triple dissonance between the acted-out, inauthentic role, and one's inner identity as an ethnomusicologist and whatever else one may be. (18)

Titon situates the researcher in the middle of the research and demonstrates that identity for the researcher in the investigated environment should be fluid. Titon helped set the shift from auto-ethnography to the method of participant-observation within my own research.

The Spaces

Moreover, in order to help set the scene in which I investigated hip hop and feminist values, I turned to dance scholar Lis Engel, and her methodology of participant-observation, that of "Scenic Description." In her essay *Body Poetics of Hip Hop Dance Styles in Copenhagen*, Engel describes her immersion into the hip hop dance culture in specific clubs in Copenhagen. In her work, it becomes evident that Engel observes the body of the hip hop dancers, and deciphers feminine and masculine movements through her analysis of the dancing event. She also observes the spaces and the elements surrounding the dancers in order to get a better feel of the event. Consequently, this method proves useful in cultural research that is qualitative. In using the method of scenic description, I was able to observe the space in which my participants interact with 1) music, 2) dancing space, 3) and each other.

In order to determine what were the potential negotiations which occur between feminist values and hip hop spaces, and how they occurred, I spent several months

attending hip hop specialty nights in different Montreal clubs with the six participants who committed to this research. The fieldwork of this research occurred between November 2012 and February 2013. It consisted of four different outings in bars which doubled as clubs, and all hosted specialty hip hop nights, with the noted exception of one. All four locations, B-Side, Royal Phoenix Bar, Salon Officiel and Blizzarts were chosen due to the participants' familiarity with their locations, their proximity and, in the case of The Royal Phoenix, in order to discover a new location. Choosing venues this way allowed my participants to have a say in where and how they wanted to experience their nights and to derive maximum pleasure from these spaces. Each evening, with the exception of the outing at B-Side, had its own spin, or collective of DJs, hosting the hip hop night.

Each of these four spaces presented a different ambiance to the club-goer. In sampling these four establishments, one can get a sense of the current atmosphere of the club scene in Montreal, especially when it comes to the consumption of commercialized hip hop music. Each of the four clubs will be discussed at length and detailed within the scope of Chapter Three.

Finally, as I interrogated the space in which feminist values and hip hop dance intersect, I understood that I may have complicated the understandings of some of my participants about feminist identities in hip hop culture. When entering a space that is rarely questioned I may have changed the outcome of the outset behaviour of the participants. Additionally, given that the participants were asked to discuss these matters in interviews following the dance outings, I also understood that there was a high possibility that for each person which I asked to think through such issues, there are

several other consumers of hip hop dance in the same space that participated solely for pleasure and did not aim to understand or think through questions of feminism and hip hop culture.

(RE)Defining Hip Hop Music Within the Scope of this Project

Hip hop culture is a combination of four art forms which originated in the streets of the South Bronx. The four elements are graffiti as the visual art, breakdancing as the movement, DJing and emceeing as musical and lyrical expressions. More often than not, lyricists refer to emceeing as rhythm and poetry, or RAP. The latter, when combined with DJing, is the fundamental building block of hip hop music.

Although it began as a subculture in the inner city of New York, hip hop and subsequently all the art forms associated with it have permeated popular culture and gained a life of their own beyond the borders of the Bronx. These days, hip hop caters to a larger audience and that audience is predominately white (Bakari Kitwana, Jeff Chang, and Tricia Rose). This is also in part due to musical aesthetics, which presented through rap and DJing, including the art of sampling, have been widely consumed and re-appropriated. In the quest for making rap, and consequently hip hop music, the most commercially successful genre, popular culture, and popular elements, have all re-appropriated the fundamentals of hip hop and absorbed them into their productions. Suffice to say, hip hop music is possibly the most popular of musical genres, given its constant re-appropriation and use.

Within this research, what I refer to as hip hop music is first and foremost rap, but within the scope of this investigation, extends past rap and seeks to include all musical elements that incorporate rhythm and poetry into their genre. Sometimes this line is

blurred through collaborations, such as Justin Timberlake and Pharrell's song *Like I Love You*. At times what is considered to fall under hip hop music is much clearer with collaborations such as Kanye West and Daft Punk's *Stronger*. Both these examples blur the lines between what is and what isn't considered rap, but both, given the artists and producers such as Pharrell and Kanye West, fall under the category of hip hop music.

Hip hop music essentially derives from the African American urban communities; From these communities were also born Motown, popular R'N'B, Soul, as well as Rap. Casting the net wider for hip hop music has better allowed for the observation of how young women interact with hip hop music in club spaces.

The Thesis

In Chapter One: The Hip Hop Feminist: Finding the Intersection Between Hip Hop and Feminism, I will seek to identify the space where research involving hip hop and feminist values can be contextualized. I will do this through Tricia Rose and Joan Morgan's analysis of the engagement of hip hop and feminism in contemporary culture. I will investigate how two seemingly diverging concepts actually intersect through the notion of the hip hop feminist (Joan Morgan).

In Chapter Two: Affect, Performativity and the Hip Hop Dancing Body I will draw on theories of affect and performativity and how they aid me in thinking through what the experiential can tell us. Particularly, Charles J. Stivale's work of Cajun Dance Arenas will be seminal in my elaborations as to how we negotiate our feminist values in hip hop spaces.

Next, Chapter Three: Hip Hop Dancing Events: Four Scenic Descriptions, is dedicated to the fieldwork analysis and scenic descriptions of my outings. In describing

and elaborating on my field notes, I will be able to better examine how affect played a part in my participants' negotiations and how their bodily movements made visible those negotiations.

Finally in Chapter Four: Tactics For Feminist Negotiations in Sexist Hip Hop Spaces, I will draw on the twelve interviews with my participants and discuss the main negotiations which occurred throughout the four dance outings. I will draw on Michel De Certeau's concept of *tactics* to explain how these negotiations occur. Coupled with the scenic descriptions from Chapter Three, the analysis of the interviews yielded four major tactical negotiations between the participants and the sexist hip hop spaces in which they were dancing.

Chapter One: The Hip Hop Feminist: Finding the Intersection Between Hip Hop and Feminism

Introduction

In order to begin explorations of feminist negotiation in hip hop spaces, I must begin by “setting the scene” in which this research takes place. In what follows, I will attempt to frame my research within a contemporary feminist critique of hip hop culture. While both of these subjects are tremendously wide in scope and approach, focusing on specific key points within hip hop and feminism will allow me to find the intersection between both.

At this intersection stands what I will refer to as the hip hop feminist, allowing me to consequently ground my research about the negotiation of feminist values within hip hop spaces in the current debates about feminism in hip hop. This entails defining what a hip hop culture is, as opposed to a generation, within contemporary culture. Understanding the meaning of hip hop culture, one which my participants and I belong to, will aid me in thinking through how my participants engage with hip hop music in the diverse clubs we attended throughout the months of my fieldwork.

As a second task within this chapter, I will draw on two specific hip hop feminist writers, Joan Morgan and Tricia Rose. This is where I aim to situate the hip hop feminist. While Morgan’s essay *Hip Hop Feminist* elaborates on why the category of the hip hop feminist is needed, she outlines the paradox between hip hop and feminism. Morgan’s work enables us to see where the intersection occurs. Building on Morgan’s hip hop feminism, I turn to Tricia Rose, influential hip hop theorist, whose deep analysis of the for and against arguments about hip hop culture in the United States sheds light on *What It Means When We Talk About Hip Hop*. To supplement Morgan and Rose’s work on hip

hop feminism, I will briefly address the intersectionality present within hip hop studies, through the works of Anaya McMurray and Ronni Armstead, who engage with hip hop feminism, but within specific intersections relating to their respective field of study.

Furthermore, a critical look at non-black consumption of hip hop music is needed in order to frame the following fieldwork research. This is done in order to better understand the spaces where hip hop music is consumed in Montreal. More importantly, as a non African-American consumer of hip hop culture, to start talking about a specific culture that many would deem me to not belong to is difficult. Yet hip hop has become a widespread participatory culture, and more so, widely consumed and commercialized. I believe that as a consumer—and more importantly—as a hip hop aficionado, I can think critically through how I participate, consume, and replicate this culture. I can explore, at times, how it diverges from some of my fundamental values as a woman. However, through my use of black hip hop feminist thought, I do not claim to be able to equate my own struggle within hip hop culture to the struggle described by Morgan and Rose. As a researcher borrowing from their approaches, I aim to draw on hip hop feminism to situate my own critiques of mainstream consumption of hip hop by a specific audience.

Hip Hop: Not a Generation but a Culture

Author Tracy Denean Sharpley-Whiting defines the loaded term of “hip hop generation” in her book *Pimps Up Hoes Down* as “[a] term [that] defines those born in the post-movement era — post-civil rights, black power, and women’s movements — yet profoundly influenced by those movements. It is a term which transcends geography in that it refers to those coming from urban epicenters and suburban outposts” (xv). Whiting ultimately narrows down this definition as to only include black youths born between

1965 and 1984 (xv). However, for the purpose of this research, of course with some limitations and further explorations, I would like to extend this definition beyond the specific racial lens Sharpley-Whiting has focused through — as well the restriction of years — to include generations of young people, black and non-black alike, who have grown up and maintain a link to hip hop, through music, fashion, dance and art appreciation; all facets of hip hop which have permeated popular culture. This enables us to move beyond the definition of a hip hop generation to a hip hop culture.

I say this fully knowing that my background as an Israeli-Canadian does not imbue me with the same sense of struggle which many of the hip hop songs — rap and R’N’B alike — do in many others that are closer to African-American culture. Although, my exposure to artists such as The Fugees and, subsequently, Lauryn Hill did create meaning for me through songs about displacement, community, “making it,” and of course, without a shadow of a doubt: love.

Nevertheless, in maintaining that the term *hip hop generation* “defines those born in the post-movement era — post-civil rights, black power, and women’s movements — yet profoundly influenced by those movements,” (Sharpley-Whiting xv) I would like to extend the definition beyond black youth to a multi-racial participatory audience — such as myself and my participants — given hip hop’s commercial success in the last fifteen years. As mentioned previously, this in no way equates non-black consumption with the understanding of the meaning of hip hop and African-American struggle. Yet, it is important to note that as young adults, we have been exposed to hip hop and feel ourselves belonging to hip hop culture which mirrors, in some ways, our “post-movement” values, understandings and difficulties, all extending beyond strictly African-

American hip hop culture. First generation children (such as a majority of my participants and myself) have all grown up with history of these movements (Civil Rights, Feminist, anti-war etc.). We have the knowledge of these seminal events at our fingertips. These movements have without a doubt affected all our upbringings. We grew up with these histories. This is perhaps why it is easy for one to nonchalantly say that we are “post” movements, because these movements have been historicized, and as in any historical tale, there is always a lesson we should have “learned” from. Having assimilated these “lessons” into our popular culture can fool us into thinking that we have achieved the goals that were set within these movements (i.e. equal rights), and thus leave out designations such as civil rights activist or feminist. In order to see where hip hop fits into a larger cultural frame of feminism and feminist analysis in contemporary culture, I turn to feminists Joan Morgan and Tricia Rose.

The Hip Hop Feminist

The category of the hip hop feminist within third wave feminism is a very interesting one. Stemming from a muted voice in second wave feminism, hip hop feminism emerges from the category of women of colour, who were widely underrepresented in second wave feminism. While second wave feminists sought sexual freedom and liberation, women of colour, specifically black women in the United States, sought to undo some of the most negative representations that are associated with black women in mass culture. Stereotypes of black women like the *mammi* and the *angry black woman* still to this day saturate popular culture and affect the representation of black women in mass media. Images of the sexually in charge hot mamma, or the loud-mouth black woman who will “smack” you if you cross her — think of Tara in *True Blood*, or

Dr. Bailey In *Grey's Anatomy*⁴ — are but some of the staples that fall under postfeminist emancipatory images which circulate in the public sphere.

The current and most recognizable images pertaining to hip hop culture are the *ho* and the *video vixen* described both by Tricia Rose⁵ and Sharpley-Whiting⁶. These images are fixtures in contemporary, commercialized hip hop culture.

Thus, the work of feminists who find themselves dealing with popular culture, and more specifically with hip hop culture, usually deals with untangling these misrepresentations of black women and deciphering wherein the problem with these images stems from. Within this research, I claim the hip hop feminist and consequently hip hop feminism as the space, and the place where the intersection between hip hop culture and feminist approaches may be found. Joan Morgan and Tricia Rose's engagements with feminism and hip hop have been critical in the formation of this intersection.

While there are many ways, narratives, and identities which can be described within hip hop feminism, I choose to focus on how both Joan Morgan and Tricia Rose display their engagement with feminism and black womanhood in practices of hip hop culture.

Hip hop is fraught with complexities and paradoxes, and how women can engage in hip hop and utilize it as pedagogy is a testament to the third wave feminist redefinition of feminism in action. Hip hop feminism is one which utilizes and critiques hip hop

⁴ These two characters, Tara and Dr. Bailey, are part of some of the most popular TV shows currently circulating in popular media.

⁵ Rose discusses the trifecta of three images of African American culture that are constantly consumed; the "ho," the "playa," and the "pimp."

⁶ In *Pimps Up Hos Down*, Sharpley-Whiting details some of the most popular representations of hip hop culture in the media; most notably the "Video Vixen."

culture while simultaneously engaging specific issues of black womanhood within this culture. This can be seen extensively through Morgan and Rose's interventions.

Joan Morgan's work in framing the paradox of what it means to be a hip hop feminist is essential to the scope of this project. In *Hip Hop Feminist*, Morgan writes in a style revealing itself as personal narrative, one of the underpinnings of the third wave feminist approach. "So I broke out [of the Bronx]. Did a Bronx girl's unthinkable and moved to Brooklyn — where people had kids and dogs and gardens and shit" (Morgan 414).

Morgan tells the story of her feminism in her own words revealing what it means to grow up as a black girl in the Bronx. She herself wonders what place feminism holds in her life, a symptom of the ever-growing skepticism cemented by postmodern thought, and the ever-present hooks of cultural postfeminism in contemporary culture. She touches on the inherent sexism that exists in black culture in the United States, made even more visible through commercialized hip hop. Morgan positions herself as a feminist and a black woman, looking at the larger issues surrounding the African-American community. Morgan bemoans in her essay, that it is a misdeed to claim that black women should always support black men by remaining subservient in their march to peaceful representation and freedom (415), but the fact that these black men are taking a collective peaceful action to claim a space for themselves in American society is a big step for the African-American population in the United States, according to Morgan.

What is interesting about Morgan's approach is that while she considers herself a feminist, she maintains a distance with what has been traditionally established as feminism. While claiming feminism, she is still trying to find, define, and experience the

building blocks of her feminism, a staple of the personal narrative approach which is considered one of the principal methodologies of third wave feminism. Morgan situates herself within the critiques of second wave feminism and highlights how issues stemming from second wave feminism are “drawn on someone else’s history.” For example, she brings to light a problem with the categorization of the black community, and issues that can arise within that community, especially in regards to gender equity. “Acknowledging the rampant sexism in our community, for example, means relinquishing the comforting illusion that black men and women are a unified front” (416).

One of the important contributions Morgan makes in defining hip hop feminism, is that while she sees the space black men hold in that context, she seeks to move away from the focus on black male behaviour in hip hop culture, to a discussion centered around women who participate in hip hop culture. “I wanted a feminism that...claimed the powerful richness and delicious complexities inherent in being black girls now — sistas of the post-Civil Rights, post-feminist, post-soul, hip-hop generation” (416).

Morgan walks an unpopular line by asking questions that many women may not be comfortable admitting to. How can one exist as a feminist and acknowledge that there are parts of intrinsically sexist, read patriarchal, culture that we like. In her words:

Is it foul to say that imagining a world where you could paint your big brown lips in the most decadent of shades, pile your phat ass into your fave micromini, slip your freshly manicured toes into four-inch fuck-me sandals and have not one single solitary man objectify—I mean roam his eyes longingly over all the intended spaces—is, like, a total drag for you? (417)

She brings the conversation to a more specific discussion of hip hop. “And how come no one ever admits that part of the reason women love hip-hop — as sexist as it is — is ‘cuz all that in-yo-face testosterone makes our nipples hard?” (417) Morgan is left

contemplating the precarious position she finds herself in. If the feminism that her mother and older generation have brought forth pushes her to assert herself independently, strive for a career and education, how is it that the men in her culture, constantly talk of the women who “use them for money” or sell themselves? How is Morgan supposed to hook up with a *brotha*, when a *brotha* isn’t interested in an equal partnership but would rather spend his time with a “bitch or ho”?

This is one of the questions Morgan contemplates. The realization here is that there needs to be a discussion of the *inbetweenness* of things, especially in hip hop culture. She calls for a feminism that savors gray zones, the in-between spaces of femaleness and feminism. In walking this thin line, while trying to maintain a grounded developed idea of her feminism, Morgan looks towards her contemporary culture for answers as to how to move forward. She states:

More than any other generation before us, we need a feminism committed to “keeping it real.” We need a voice like our music—one that samples and layers many voices, injects its sensibilities into the old and flips it into something new, provocative, and powerful. And one whose occasional hypocrisy, contradictions, and trifeness guarantee us at least a few trips to the terrordome, forcing us to finally confront what we’d all rather hide from. (418)

Joan Morgan demonstrates the way in which hip hop can be used as a tool of self-critique within the African-American community, and a learning tool amongst the current hip hop generation, to find a space for a feminist approach within this culture. Defining hip hop feminism, as Morgan has done, allows us to explore the ways in which authors discuss women’s issues in American hip hop culture; a culture which permeates several levels of our society. Using hip hop in the same way which Morgan wants to use it, as a vehicle for “telling the truth,” enables us to look beyond the stereotypes circulating within this popular culture, deconstruct them and understand the larger goal of hip hop in

the black community and the community at large, as a uniting, powerful tool of black expression.

While Morgan maps out the terrain where third wave feminism and hip hop culture can intersect, hip hop scholar Tricia Rose sheds some light on the arguments against/for hip hop and the place it occupies in global contemporary society. Rose helps elucidate how hip hop extends beyond the simple representation of black culture in America, and how uncritically we consume it.

The seminal idea that Rose presents in *The Hip Hop Wars What We Talk About When We Talk About Hip Hop and Why It Matters*, is that no matter what side of the fence you might be arguing in regards to hip hop, the conversation that really needs to be had is never just about hip hop but rather about the issues surrounding the culture from which it stems.

Why should hip hop matter? It doesn't really go beyond the music and the money? Or does it? Often hip hop stands in for a discussion about larger issues related to race, class and sexism in black culture. In keeping with the spirit of this research, we will focus on Rose's analysis pertaining to the arguments regarding sexism in hip hop. Nonetheless it is worthy to note in her writing, as well as in discussion of hip hop culture at large, that issues of gender and race are closely entwined. One cannot look closely at the sexualization of a black body in hip hop without understanding the racist implication as well as the sexist implication of that stereotype.

What Rose first presents is the need to understand that the driving force behind current popular hip hop and its peripheral cultures (fashion, art etc.), is the corporatization of this culture. Rose explains, "this commercial juggernaut has played a

central role in the near-depletion of what was once a vibrant, and complex popular genre, wringing it dry by pandering to America's racist and sexist lowest common denominator" (Rose 2).

Rose continues in explaining that the three most marketable representations of hip hop culture which drive this commercialization are the "pimp," the "gangsta," and "ho," what she calls the trinity. She elaborates, "The trinity of commercial hip hop – the black gangsta, pimp, and ho – has been promoted and accepted to the point where it now dominates the genre's storytelling worldview" (4). As the most marketable and consumed images in hip hop, it is no wonder that deconstructing them, and calling attention to where they originate, is part of Rose's hip hop feminist agenda. "Commercial hip hop," then, refers to the heavy promotion of gangstas, pimps and hoes churned out for mainstream consumption of hip hop" (24).

Why then do women participate in such a culture? Rose explains, "Because street culture and the exploitative culture on which it is based have become such key sources of black identity in the hip hop generation, many young black women parrot sexist ideas that are widely circulated in hip hop; it's key to belonging" (174). This extends to a wider audience which consumes hip hop culture. Furthermore, it speaks again to the acceptance of sexism by women in contemporary culture. Rose's statement that "its key to belonging," (174) demonstrates how this behaviour is considered as part of "the game" of being a woman in contemporary society, even more so, a woman who loves hip hop.

However, through her analysis of arguments in defense of hip hop, Rose draws on the idea that sexism is not inherent to hip hop culture. Sexism existed long before hip hop established itself as the purveyor of sexist talk and action. Why it is a part of hip hop

culture is a larger symptom of how our society deals with issues of sexism, or better yet does not deal with those issues. “Thus, hip hop does not break from the fundamental logic of mainstream masculinity so much as convey it with excess, bravado, and extra insult” (Rose 119).

Those who argue against hip hop often bring up the issue that hip hop enables a culture of disrespect. Rose explores this argument and uncovers how this perspective, at its fundamental level, reveals an intrinsically racist assumption about hip hop and the problematic of disrespect. A problematic which circulates in the public sphere and is not confined only to hip hop culture. Rose clarifies this by explaining:

The power of gender inequality and sexual disrespect is its ability to be everywhere at once, to seem normal and inevitable. Thus, every fight against sexism (or against any systemic form of injustice, for that matter) is necessarily partial and incomplete; we cannot fight the entire system at once. Telling people that they should fight on another front is evading the issue and thus our own responsibility. (153-154)

Still, Rose does not simply let hip hop and its defenders off the hook by simply stating that sexism is found everywhere, but instead asks people partaking in this culture to begin taking responsibility for some of the content circulating. “Should we not be concerned about how the sexism promoted by so many mainstream black youth celebrities affects black women and girls who are already facing oversized hurdles in our society? At what point are we responsible for our contributions to the state of the world?” (153)

In engaging hip hop in such a critique, Rose utilizes some of the staples of hip hop culture such as “authenticity,” and “being real,” as a way to turn the mirror onto it and hold it accountable to its own standards. “To tell the truth about just how much sexism and homophobia help create and support distorted and destructive forms of

manhood and sustain injustice is not the kind of truth telling most of the commercially celebrated rap community to which Simmons refers is really interested in” (160). Doing so allows Rose to explore some of the intricacies and complexities in hip hop, especially in relation to sexism and the exploitation of black women within this culture.

By outlining and analyzing all the arguments against and for hip hop, Rose manages to get to the direct issues that need to change in what we produce, consume and replicate. Although she extensively deconstructs the arguments presented in her book, she most importantly opens the discussion of how hip hop can be used as a progressive tool to talk about larger issues in American, not only African-American, culture. Here, Rose demonstrates the pedagogy possible with hip hop. In her last chapter she lists groups and organizations which engage hip hop as a tool and method for change. Whether it engages black youth in urban communities, or is a coalition of women and people concerned about the images circulating in contemporary culture, Rose demonstrates that from its roots, hip hop engages communities and centers them.

Having drawn on Morgan and Rose, I move to two examples of hip hop feminism, centered around religious faith, a value much like feminism, and cultural activism within hip hop culture, by Anaya McMurray and Ronni Armstead. This, in order to address how hip hop feminism navigates through some of the intersectional issues presented within commercialized hip hop⁷. While Morgan and Rose are seminal in situating black hip hop feminism specifically in African American consumption, I want to draw on McMurray’s work to address the work of hip hop feminism, specifically through Muslim feminist engagement with and within hip hop. In addition, I will briefly

⁷ Hip hop feminism as an approach and method of inquiry is still a budding field. As there have not been extensive critiques from transnational hip hop feminists, I draw on two particular instances to be able to demonstrate the strength of the hip hop feminist approach within cultural production and consumption.

explore Armstead's work in how feminism and hip hop, combined, can function as an activist critique of contemporary Cuban cultural politics.⁸

As mentioned earlier, even with my own engagement with hip hop as an Israeli-Canadian, issues of race, gender and sexual representation in hip hop culture are not easy to pull apart. One is often tied to the other. The sexualization of the black woman in popular culture is something that heavily relies on "otherness" and "othering," by patriarchal society and its desire. Nevertheless, hip hop culture as a paradigm, even though an alternative one, does not escape this othering by virtue of being "an other." As demonstrated by Rose, commercial hip hop easily works in such way as to create a disparity between men and women, as well as outline and heighten racial differences.

Hip hop feminism, much like the hip hop generation, extends beyond consumption and production of African Americans. Anaya McMurray elaborates on how black Muslim women negotiate their faith within hip hop. McMurray harnesses Morgan and Rose's idea that hip hop may be used as pedagogy specific to feminist Muslim consumption of hip hop. She deals with this particular issue of intersectionality which, when viewed from my research approach to feminist values and hip hop space, demonstrates what degree of importance hip hop feminism bears in intersectional politics.

McMurray states, "The ways in which black Muslim women have become agents in negotiating Islamic faith and hip-hop culture in their music is of great significance when considering issues of power representation that work to define and control black Muslim womanhood" (75). The use of hip hop amongst female rappers to talk about Muslim values, is a way for Muslim female artists to combine their cultural faith and the

⁸ I use these two specific examples to demonstrate the strength of the hip hop feminist perspective. While McMurray and Armstead deal with issue of faith and culture, I find their research parallel to mine, although centered around different intersections.

alternative pedagogy of hip hop, creating a space of resistance of stereotypical imagery of women in hip hop through their Islamic faith. She calls this “an improvisation zone” (77). These improvisations zones, while at times filled with many of the double-standards that exist between the two sexes present in commercial hip hop, is McMurray’s tactical negotiation between her Muslim faith, the stereotypical images of black women, and a lack of Muslim representations of women in hip hop.

It is worthy to note that McMurray’s analysis relies heavily on female Muslim production of hip hop; she cites Erykah Badu, Eve, and herself as examples of producers. These examples challenge missing representations of Muslim women in hip hop, and more so, challenge the hegemonic black Christian majority of images of hip hop artists as well. One can see this as McMurray’s take on Morgan’s *visit to the terrordome*. In using hip hop as pedagogy and creating improvisation zones, McMurray helps “create spaces for other black Muslim women to see and/or read themselves into hip-hop culture’s narratives,” (91) hence women from a wider audience who belong to the hip hop generation and hip hop culture.

In further elaborating issues of intersectionality within hip hop, I turn briefly to Ronni Armstead’s ethnographical exploration of hip hop feminism as activism in Cuba.

Armstead’s research relies on ethno-cultural interviews with a specific group of female *raperas* who participate in hip hop culture as feminist pedagogy. Las Krudas, the name of the all-female feminist hip hop group,

[O]ccupy a unique position within a growing Black hip-hop intelligentsia. While their activities and lyrics point to specific issues of contemporary concern around the politics of race and gender in Cuba... Las Krudas therefore calls attention to the situation of Black women in a social and political context that denies the existence of racism, sexism, status, and privilege. (Armstead 109)

This particular group promotes feminist values through hip hop music more specifically through their Cuban appropriation of hip hop. “Afro-Cuban music, including a strong drum beat and traditional rumba sounds, is blended and combined with rap to form something original acknowledging and paying homage to the legacy of Cuba’s African musical heritage” (Armstead 109).

Combined with a feminist outlook, Las Krudas work through some of the social and cultural issues present in Cuba regarding sex, gender, and race. Olivia, one of the artists of the group states, “the rap world is (*hmmmmph!*) *tan fuerte*, so strong... Very sexist, very, very, very” (qtd. in Armstead 110). Armstead continues, “La Krudas have used their music to speak openly about issues of racial and sexual identity that are often aired publicly” (111).

Thus, Armstead demonstrates how hip hop and feminism intersect through Cuban musical culture and are used as pedagogy, mirroring Morgan and Rose’s approaches and analyses of the relevance of hip hop feminism.

Both McMurray and Armstead work through feminist issues with hip hop, and utilize hip hop as a tactical negotiation to create a space for their specific values within their culture. For McMurray, it is the use of the Muslim faith to talk about the space women can take as feminist hip hop artists; for Armstead it is the use of Cuban inspired culture to discuss the specific hardships of the black Cuban feminist within this the Cuban communist regime. Hip hop feminism is used to discuss the marginalization of these women of colour and to elaborate on possible ways of negotiating feminist values within their specific hip hop situations.

Nevertheless, the work that can be done with hip hop feminism still has to account for the sexist messages prevalent within mainstream and commercial hip hop. Whereas the corporatization of this culture has led to exploitative and manufactured images of both men and women in America, the authentic spirit of hip hop is in its power to teach and extend love to a community beyond the borders of the Bronx, much akin to McMurray and Armstead's endeavors.

The works of Morgan and Rose both critique what has become of the commercialized aspect of this culture, while maintaining a link to hip hop. As hip hop feminists, their work relies on using "what we talk about when we talk about hip hop" to talk about the real issues and problems that stem from within that culture. In the case presented by both authors, talking about sexism in hip hop culture, brings to light some of the larger issues between male and female relations within hip hop, and of course beyond it, into popular culture.

Consumption of Hip Hop Beyond the Borders of the Bronx

In situating research about the potential negotiation of feminist values within hip hop spaces, one would be remiss to not discuss non-black consumption of hip hop. There are two specific issues to be dealt with, (1) the globalization, or glocalization⁹ of hip hop and (2) consumption of hip hop beyond the African-American community. However, the one most pertinent to the scope of this research is the consumption of hip hop beyond the African-American community.

⁹ Tony Mitchell explains this term in his introduction to *Global Noise Rap and Hip-Hop Outside the USA*: "Roland Robertson (1995) has employed the term "glocal," combining the global with the local, to emphasize that each is in many ways defined by the other and that they frequently intersect, rather than being polarized opposites" (11).

Widespread consumption of hip hop is due, in fact, to what Tricia Rose illustrates as the corporatization of hip hop. As Rose demonstrated earlier on, there is a certain kind of hip hop that garners more attention in the public sphere and therefore is consumed by the public at large. What is the repercussion of such wide consumption of the images that stem from commercialized hip hop? Rose states, “For the wider audience in America, which relies on mainstream outlets for learning about participating in commercially distributed pop culture, hip hop has become a breeding ground for the most explicitly exploitative and increasingly one-dimensional narratives of black ghetto life” (3). Furthermore, she clarifies, “This consumption is compounded by a general lack of knowledge of the history of black culture or racial oppression, the working of white privilege and power, and few lived experiences with black people” (228).

What happens then, when we participate in hip hop culture without truly understanding where it comes from and knowing how to critique it? As participants, often times we happen to reproduce the images and situations that we are exposed to, even more so unintentionally. We become complicit to a practice that we openly, or at least some of us, denounce. Consumption without critique then leads us into replicating a behaviour which we fundamentally are against. Rose puts it in terms where flaunting hip hop’s universality, as an instrument which can unite, unfortunately perpetuates the negative stereotypes that scholars like her and Morgan fight to dismantle. While artists in Bosnia rap about their war torn country, the fact that they popularize monikers such as *DJ Pimp Da Ho*, is a testament and a hindrance to hip hop culture. The effect and use of such language have a larger consequence than we can see. Rose critiques this idea of a unifying global hip hop by explaining:

[R]ather than becoming a hopeful sign of shared lived experiences and community connection, white consumption of hip hop – in this moment, at least – has a strong likelihood of reproducing the long and ugly history of racial tourism that requires black people to perform whites’ desires in order to become successful in a predominantly white-pleasure-driven marketplace. (232)

The consumption of hip hop culture has a larger consequence, and we must find a way to address its significance. Consuming representations of pimps, gangstas and hos feeds into a desire which is fueled by the corporatization of black culture, and those desires “For better or for worse, ...[are] central to “the mainstream”; as they shape our collective conversation. As a space we all share, it must be taken seriously and challenged” (242).

Rose leaves us with a thought about how to begin understanding hip hop’s use of sexism and racism while accepting that these two *isms* are inherent to our society. “Categorically rejecting songs about sex or violence or materialism is not the answer, although reducing their overall space certainly is” (245).

Conclusion

Hip hop has reached a level of consumption which moves it beyond the categorization of a generation. Rather, thinking of hip hop as a culture enables us to see how largely it is consumed, adapted and represented in the public sphere. As well, considering the importance it takes within popular culture, a feminist critique within hip hop is of utmost importance if we are to continue to engage in and consume it.

Building on the works cultural theorists and authors like Joan Morgan and Tricia Rose in understanding the space that women hold in hip hop culture, we can begin these critiques and negotiations from inside hip hop culture. As Morgan declares, “we need a feminism committed to ‘keeping it real.’ We need a voice like our music—one that

samples and layers many voices, injects its sensibilities into the old and flips it into something new, provocative, and powerful” (418). Hip hop music has that possibility but we must realize some of the not-so-pleasant parts of this culture which we directly participate in.

Morgan and Rose employ a feminist critique within hip hop culture, thus illustrating some of the fundamental problems women are faced with within hip hop; not only in their stereotypical depictions, but in their participation as well. Drawing on Rose’s claim that “Categorically rejecting songs about sex or violence or materialism is not the answer,” (245) I aim to situate my own research here. While we cannot escape the songs of a sexist nature which permeate our culture, we can find a way to negotiate between our values and the environment we are in.

In a culture which specifically caters to the lowest common denominator, where we are faced with songs and images that depict exploitative imagery of women, violence and materialism, and furthermore, when we find ourselves in spaces like clubs which act as vehicles (although indirect vehicles) for these messages, how can a feminist critique occur in the experiential? How can this negotiation transpire without removing the pleasure of participating in such a culture?

While I draw on Morgan, Rose, McMurray and Armstead in using their insight into African American, Muslim and Cuban work with hip hop pedagogy, my research fundamentally differs from these authors. Mainly because these authors focus on oppositional and activist productions through hip hop while my work concentrates on the performative consumption specifically of commercialized and mainstream hip hop present in dance clubs. While McMurray and Armstead provide a way of understanding

intersectionality in hip hop culture studies, their work refers mainly to makers of hip hop rather than consumers. Furthermore these authors engage feminist negotiations through hip hop but at a specific group level (Muslim and Cuban), their work is community based, while my own research is rooted in individual feminist negotiations. I aim to look at individual responses to sexist hip hop spaces and how these, in turn, become an individual tactic to navigate through the experiential of the hip hop dance space. I draw on these authors, specifically Morgan and Rose, to demonstrate how hip hop as art form, as music, through its paradoxes, is still a space of pleasure and how a feminist body can unconsciously perform itself in a hip hop environment, and thus make itself visible to the analytic eye.

Having set the scene in understanding where a feminist critique takes place within hip hop, I now move to how a participant may negotiate her values within a sexist hip hop space in the experiential.

In the following chapter I will explore how those who participate in hip hop culture can negotiate their feminist values within hip hop spaces in Montreal through their bodily experience. I draw on Morgan's perspective of moving beyond the focus of male behaviour in hip hop culture, to a more female and thus feminist focus within hip hop. I do so through engaging the theoretical concepts of affect and performativity within a club space.

Chapter Two: Affect, Performativity and the Hip Hop Dancing Body

I would begin with the messiness of the experiential, the unfolding of bodies into worlds, and the drama of contingency, how we are touched by what we are near (Ahmed 30).

Introduction

Building on a feminist critique in hip hop culture, I turn to the initial problem I was faced with in that particular night at Il Motore. What happened in that moment on the dancefloor when I froze and the rupture between my values and love for hip hop occurred?

As Rose discussed earlier “Sexism *is* everywhere; we know this. But should we simply accept it? Should we absorb as much of it as can be dished out just because it is around us? If we can’t fight it everywhere, should we not fight it at all, anywhere?” (153) The club is a messy space that is full of moments of negotiations for any club goer. Because my concern is in practice, I am interested here particularly in how the feminist body is negotiated in a hip hop space that is not welcoming to its core values. It is “the unfolding of bodies into worlds” (Ahmed 30), specifically the unfolding of the feminist body into the sexist hip hop space which concerns me. I turn to the concepts of affect and performativity in dance practice to better understand the messiness of the experiential. At once responding to Rose’s “Should we absorb as much of it as can be dished out just because it is around us” (153), affect and, subsequently, performativity help me investigate how a feminist body in a hip hop space doesn’t only “absorb” the sexism dished out to it, but manages to negotiate it through its embodied practices.

I draw on affect theory as the foundation of my theoretical explorations. I understand that within the scope of this research, the space where the negotiation occurs between feminist values and hip hop spaces is an intangible space. The impalpability of

feelings can nonetheless be made palpable through interpreting affect. Affect ties itself to feelings, moods and imagination. As Lawrence Grossberg explains in his thorough interview with Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth: “Organizations of affect might include will and attention, or moods, or orientation... and the various culturally and phenomenological constituted emotional economies” (316). In exploring affect in dancing events, I aim to draw on what Grossberg details in order to understand how the moods of my participants, the “feeling” of the dancing space, as well as the music, drive the embodied negotiations which can occur during the dance outings.

Affect is lived experience, unconscious and conscious at the same time. Eric Shouse helps define it as “[the] most abstract because affect cannot fully be realised in language, and because affect is always prior to and/or outside of consciousness” (Shouse). Shouse continues, “The body has a grammar of its own that cannot be fully captured in language because it ‘doesn’t just absorb pulses or discrete stimulations; it infolds contexts’” (Massumi qtd. in Shouse).

Although affect is difficult to explain, as it deals with the phenomenological rather than the linguistic, I will attempt to explicate affect as experiential, sensory, and performative and consequently as a way for one’s body to communicate to and with the world. To do so, I will draw on Sara Ahmed’s essay *Happy Objects*, to outline how objects¹⁰ are deemed affective and how one derives affect from them, and more importantly, what happens at the disjuncture between an object that is supposed to produce happiness and one’s affective unhappiness. In addition I will draw upon Charles J. Stivale’s Chapter *Feeling the Event: Spaces of Affects and the Cajun Dance Arena*, in

¹⁰ Ahmed terms objects as things, situations that contribute to our moral economies. In her specific case, these are things we can derive happiness from.

which he utilizes affect to map out the specificity of a dancing event. Then, I will turn to Judith Butler to inform us of the importance of performativity, through her elaboration of Pierre Bourdieu's notions of habitus and field.

Affect, "Thisness" and Performativity; The Feminist Kill-Joy on the Dancefloor

Sara Ahmed utilizes the concept of happiness in conjunction with affect in her essay *Happy Objects*. She does so in order to explain how one may be understood as deriving affect from, and thus viscerally responding to, an object. Ahmed utilizes objects from which we derive happiness to discuss how affect makes itself present. She explains, "I want to consider happiness as a happening, as involving affect (to be happy is to be affected by something), intentionality (to be happy is to be happy about something), and evaluation or judgment (to be happy about something makes something good)" (29). In discussing affect, one then has to account for something which can have an effect on one's self. Ahmed continues: "To be affected by something is to evaluate that thing. Evaluations are expressed in how bodies turn toward things. To give value to things is to shape what is near us" (31). This is akin to Shouse and Massumi's notion of infolding context; how a body moves expresses an embodiment, "infolding" its inherent beliefs and values.

Consider the following: It is Saturday night and you have just walked into a bar turned club for the evening. You have spent ten minutes trudging through the snow in the darkened streets of the Plateau when you walk into the bar Salon Officiel. You are beginning to thaw out from the minus twenty weather which is freezing the streets of Montreal. You have placed your coat in your booth and are excited to pick your drink up at the bar. The space is populated with people your age, all dressed impeccably. As you

make your way to the bar, you sway and shimmy in confidence, partly due to the elation of being out this evening, and partly due to your awesome outfit and of course your entourage. It seems like this particular night is “coming up you.” Before you know it, the DJ begins to spin an old school Biggie Smalls tune, *Hypnotize*, and your body propels you, seemingly of its own volition onto the dancefloor.

This description is one that can be linked to any person who participates in club culture in Montreal. Ahmed explains what a description like this means in terms of affect: “We are moved by things. And in being moved, we make things. An object can be affective by virtue of its own location (the object might be *here*, which is *where* I experience this or that affect) and the timing of its appearance (the object might be *now*, which is *when* I experience this or that affect)” (33).

The hip hop space in which you find yourself, drives the intentionality of how you may experience affect within that space. If the music is loud, familiar, with a funk that you enjoy, the hip hop space will offer you pleasure; it will direct you to the happiness of this object. Here, the affect derived from this setting can be attributed to two specific moments, or happenings, as Ahmed would say. The affect produced in the club, and how it affects one’s disposition, and secondly, the affect created by one’s participation in dancing in the club. The objects which then drive the intentionality are music and dance. Tia Denora, in her chapter *Musical Affect in Practice* states, “Music can, in other words, be invoked as an ally for a variety of world-making activities, it is a workspace for semiotic activity, a resource for doing, being and naming the aspects of social reality, including the realities of subjectivity and self” (Denora 40). Here, the affect existing in

the club space can be invoked through music, or vice versa, the music can invoke the space, to create affect conducive to dancing.

Ahmed continues, “To experience an object as being affective or sensational is to be directed not only toward an object, but to “whatever” is around that object, which includes what is behind the object, the conditions of its arrival” (Ahmed 33). In the example above, put simply, you “feed off” the vibes of the space you are in. The table next to you is shouting and laughing in unison, a clear sign of delight, and as mentioned above, the music flowing through the club enticing people to move to the dancefloor or sway in their seats. Here the mood of the hip hop club has created a space, a visceral sensation, in which one may feel elated while participating in the night out. In turn, you the participant, also produce an affect. As affect is messy and sticky, it is easily transmissible, according to Ahmed. It is into this *affect* that we try and tap into through dance to feel the pleasure, and the connection between the space, ourselves and any object within the space that promotes affect.

Affect, amongst several other considerations, can function as a catalyst to your friends’ desires to come and join you on the dancefloor; and your feeling of happiness, your affective engagement of the space, seems to rub off on them. Together, your mood and your dancing seem to overtake the territory of the dancefloor that you have delineated for yourself. Your dancing, your moves, begin to flow beyond the boundaries of you and your entourage’s bodies, and spills onto the floor. Ahmed quotes, “Bodies can catch feelings as easily as catch fire; affect leaps from one body to another, evoking tenderness, inciting shame, igniting rage, exciting fear—in short, communicable affect

can inflame nerves and muscles in a conflagration of every conceivable kind of passion (2001,1)” (Gibbs qtd. in Ahmed 36).

Up to now, Ahmed has discussed happiness as the object of affect, and we’ve utilized this discussion to reveal affect in a club space. Understanding affect in such a space is seminal to understanding how one will and can negotiate one’s values in this environment. But more importantly, and significantly for this research, Ahmed draws attention to affect-aliens, specifically in her argumentation of happy objects. To paraphrase Ahmed’s discussion, she posits the question, what if in the space where happiness is created and emulated, one does not reproduce these ideas, meanings, and feelings? In Ahmed’s example of the happy family, she specifies: What happens when you are supposedly in a happy environment, one that homologously produces happiness, but you as a participant, cannot reproduce this happiness? Ahmed states, “We become alienated—out of line with an affective community—when we do not experience pleasure from proximity to objects that are already attributed to being good” (37).

It is here that Ahmed introduces the feminist kill-joy persona, as one that can disturb what would otherwise be a hegemonic ideal of affect created happiness. She places the feminist kill-joy in the example of an “ideal family.” We see that the place which a feminist kill-joy holds in this situation is to call attention as to what is not happiness, hence unmasking the dominion of “happiness” inside a happy family. Thus, everything that arises from a happy family should automatically create and lead to happiness. Nonetheless, the point that Ahmed emphasizes through the addition of the affect-alien is that if the idea of happiness directs you towards something, then

uncovering the “unhappy” in this milieu directs us to a greater exploration of how affect does (and doesn’t) work.

I go back specifically to the evening at Salon Officiel. You are out at a club with your friends; this evening has all the makings of a “magical” night. Your mood and that of your counterparts is that of sheer delight; the space you inhabit is conducive to pleasure. You and your *homegirls*, as they say in the vernacular, are busting a move, and the DJ is playing a slew of tunes that just make you want to bump and grind. You feel in control of the mood and your surroundings, and all of the sudden, what hits the hot sweaty air of the dancefloor is Ludacris’ *Move Bitch*, a very popular anthem. And you stop. For you, this is a breach in your pleasure, but what about the others?

Here, I identify as the feminist kill-joy described by Ahmed, as the “you” in my example. And perhaps this is the moment where the feminist kill-joy begins to do her work.

Does the feminist kill other people’s joy by pointing out moments of sexism? Or does she expose the bad feelings that get hidden, displaced, or negated under public signs of joy? The feminist is an affect alien: she might even kill-joy because she refuses to share an orientation toward certain things as being good because she does not find the objects that promise happiness to be quite so promising. (38-39)

What Ahmed successfully demonstrates is how we can investigate affective objects and spaces, such as families in Ahmed’s example, or hip hop spaces in my example, and how these objects and spaces emanate affect through producing “happiness” and pleasure. However, conceptualizing objects as only “happiness” inducing would be wrong. Introducing the category of affect aliens in such situations and environments helps us map out the larger tensions at work in such spaces. In my own research in hip hop clubs around Montreal, I aim to investigate how a hip hop space, with

its collection of objects, can cause affect on the dancing body, or how the body becomes affected by the objects within that space and through what intentions. As well, how can one make a judgment to whether the hip hop space is negative or positive, and how one's body movement may express this judgment.

While Ahmed's analysis helps us situate the feminist kill-joy in affective spaces and demonstrate how affect can be articulated, Charles J. Stivale draws on affect, in order to specifically explore dancing spaces. Exploring Cajun dance arenas across the United States, Stivale investigates how "the multifaceted elements of the dance and music event [work] as constituting 'spaces of affects'" (110-111). While Ahmed is influential in exploring how affect works, and how one may or may not derive pleasure from affective objects, Stivale's work is instrumental in the exploration of affect present in dancing spaces.

In his chapter *Feeling the Event: Spaces of Affects and the Cajun Dance Arena*, Stivale builds on Ahmed's presentation of affect in a particular space. More specifically, Stivale attempts to explain the magical quality of an event, much like the "magical" evening at Salon Officiel described above.

Stivale elaborates on how affect functions in places and spaces of Cajun dance. When describing the multitude of aspects which can contribute to an evening involving dance, I look to Stivale's interpretation of affective spaces to better frame and understand how affect in dance spaces works. Mood, dress, music, spatial flow, crowd, all of these aspects contribute to interpreting affect. In Stivale's engagement with affect in the dancing event, he designates the mood of space and the crowd engagement as

haecceities¹¹. He explains, “‘haecceities’ quite simply designates an intersection, a conjunction of speed and affects that constitute the event” (111).

To better understand the value of affect in dance spaces, we must look at all the aspects Stivale enumerates. In a way, it follows that haecceities, along with the affects generated and interpreted by the participants in the evening and which are on display, are larger than the sum of their parts (and thus that the affect generated is bigger than each of these specific features). Understanding the affect present in a dancing space takes understanding the various structures which make up this whole. “[T]he combination of setting, open dance space, crowd participation and responses to the dancers, and close interaction between dancers and musicians created something of a dream space of affect, a particular kind of thisness” (112).

One of the key distinctions, which Stivale develops, is the difference between smooth and striated spaces¹², and how it might affect those inside this space. Smooth and striated spaces offer another way of circumscribing the affect in movement during the dancing event. Rather than look at them in a dualistic manner, Stivale presents them together, as an intersection that helps comprise the dancing event. He explains, “only passages and combinations of movement and rest between smooth and striated spaces emerge to animate the initially empty dance site” (115). What Stivale maintains is that we

¹¹ “In order to discuss these spaces as they are constituted, night to night and site to site, as experiences of thisness, I have taken to conceptualizing them less in terms of the people who inhabit them than in spatial terms, which Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari call “haecceities” –that is, ‘longitude and latitude...nothing but affects and local movements, differential speeds (1987, 260)’” (Stivale 111).

¹² Stivale borrows these terms from Deleuze and Guattari who “present them as a complex intersection of elements that constitute the ‘event’ ...The relation of dance movement to spaces of affects is not fully striated—that is, not strictly hierarchized by customs and rules in space...nor is the relation entirely smooth—that is, allowing unfettered openness to free flows of movement or total improvisation” (114-115).

may access the affective, the in-between space of an open dancefloor and a regulated (whether internally or physically) dancefloor.

To better understand the value of affect in dance spaces, we must look at all the elements that compose the evening. In addition to feeling the event between the smooth and striated space, a dancer's body can be the site for affect. Stivale presents several considerations to this effect:

I understand the trajectory of this analysis, then, as moving from spaces of affects in territorial terms toward the affective assemblages of dancers, spectators, and musicians engaged together in multiple sensory experiences of music and dance, and then toward a disruption of the geographical specificity of the cultural practices as new modes of thisness are constituted in a broad array of venues. (114)

According to Stivale, all these affective assemblages help create the affect of a dancing space. All the particularities of an evening come together to create a 'thisness'¹³, the expression of a seemingly magical moment, a happenstance. While Ahmed concentrates on how one can create or disregard happiness through affect, Stivale tries to pull apart all the differing elements that constitute an affective event, and in turn how this may invoke affect within the dancers, whether as a group or individually.

In "yielding" to haecceities as we do, for example, each time that we step onto a dance floor, we thereby accede to a "becoming" ("longitude and latitude, a set of speeds and slownesses between unformed particles, a set of nonsubjectified affects" [1987, 262]). That is, the constitution of spaces of affects—these events, haecceities, becomings—occurs nonetheless as in-between modes of individuation through the movement and speed of the individuated aggregate in relation to the assemblage. (117)

Stivale draws on Deleuze and Guattari to explain that in being able to look at the dancing space as an assemblage of haecceities, these haecceities produce an experience on the body that we can term as movement and expressiveness. The chemistry between

¹³ Stivale explains 'thisness' to be, "a succinct way to describe spaces of affects...of the event, the immediacy at once of the 'magic place' and the 'time warp moment'" (111).

dancers, the way they may touch, or avoid touch, the speed at which they move, as well as the sights and sounds, all these factors contribute to Stivale's "feeling the space."

Bodies in motion, with their relative speeds and affective intensities, correspond to faciality in that this concept designates a decoding, then an overcoding, of individual bodily traits into something that Deleuze and Guattari designate as "the Face," a totalizing "screen with holes, the white wall/black hole, the abstract machine producing faciality" (1987,170). The body parts, they maintain, can all become facialized. (121)

Stivale utilizes the concept of faciality to help us reveal affect linguistically, through the corporeal. In being able to term bodies' interactions with the visual, the aural and with each other, we can begin to outline the affect circulating in the dance space and between the dancing bodies.

However, conceptualizing movement in terms of faciality limits the expanse in which affect takes space. Stivale recounts the differing events in which he describes Cajun dancing. Much like the scene described above in a Montreal club, Stivale takes into account how the interiority of affect, experienced within the body, effects the exteriority, the dancing space and the objects within it, and vice versa, and how affect within these instances gains momentum. He continues,

Within the dancing couple exists the aural landscape, rhythm or beat, from which they gain propulsion. Depending on the dance step, they communicate through precise contact points—hand and body positions, subtle gestures of body weight and thrust, and eye contact (minimum for waltz and two-step; maximum for the jitterbug). (127)

What Stivale brings to light with his in-depth analysis and participation in Cajun dancing is that affect in events such as these is made up of several differing structures of feeling. Affect in dancing events can be mapped out by levels of engagement within a space, whether the space is smooth, open and ungoverned by social guidelines, or if it is striated, limited by social rules. Furthermore, the interactions of bodies in sight and in

touch, and of course the inter-actions between interiority and exteriority of a participant with the crowd and the space.

To conclude Stivale explains:

[N]o dance step or musical selection is performed “inside” without relation to the sociocultural context and inherent limitations, and no aspect of this apparent external context determines or constrains absolutely, in any first or last instance the performance flows that construct the dance and music arena. (131)

Thus, according to Stivale, the in-betweenness of a smooth and striated space, the haecceities of sight, sound and body, and not to mention the reception of affect interiorly as exteriorly, all help set the scene and explain the particular “thisness” of a dancing event. In my own investigations of hip hop club spaces around Montreal I will draw on Stivale’s elaborations of spaces of affects to better understand the setting which my participants’ will be in, as well as how their bodies contribute to the affect flowing within the dancing space. In addition, Stivale’s use of the Deleuzian concepts of haecceities and faciality help me in revealing the embodied affect of my participants on the dancefloor.

I now turn to Judith Butler to push my investigations of affect in dancing spaces along. More specifically, Butler’s work in her essay *Performativity’s Social Magic*, is fundamental to my investigations of embodied feminist values and hip hop spaces. Her concept of performativity helps me in thinking through how a body makes visible its feminist values in a specific sexist hip hop space.

Discussed earlier, Ahmed deals with how affect is sticky, and what type of affect is transmitted, and thus what can create a disjuncture between the object that supplies a “happy” or “pleasurable” affect and the social construct it strives for; this through her concept of the affect-alien. Stivale articulates the “thisness” specific to affect that is

produced in dancing events. The striation of space, and all the embodied qualities that can be portrayed, and lastly the inside/outside noticeable aspects in affect spaces and spaces.

In *Performativity's Social Magic*, Butler draws on Pierre Bourdieu's notions of habitus, and of social field. She explains Bourdieu's concept of the habitus as "those embodied rituals of everydayness by which a given culture produces and sustains belief in its own "obviousness" (30).

The habitus according to Butler, depicts the body as a vessel where we've accumulated and collected the knowledge of how we are and how we act in the world. Body movements, gestures, and expressions can be interpreted as habitus, as they are considered how one's body reacts "normally" in a space. This because, they are processes continually repeated over time, and as such, have become completely internalized mechanisms.

Let us place ourselves back in the club on that wintery evening, described earlier. Let's say, in returning to my story, that I am the main character. My sense of dress, my sway, the way I look at people in the room, and the general disposition I am in, all comprise my habitus, things and situations that I've learned to navigate in a certain way through the many times I have repeated the same actions. After all, this isn't my first time at a club, or at this club in particular. I am well versed in club etiquette and this mode of being is "second nature to me". Butler elucidates: "The practical sense is a sense of the body, where this body is not a mere positive datum but the repository or the site of incorporated history" (30). Here my habitus is the accumulation of bodily knowledge pertaining to how to be and act in a club setting. Even more so, my habitus colours my experience in the club, thus my habitus is my individuated way of being.

Moreover, Butler reflects on Bourdieu's concept of the social field and pushes it in a different direction; she terms the social field as objective in comparison to the habitus. In our case, the specific social field we are exploring is that of the club space, rife with its own set of tacit rules and guidelines, akin to Stivale's notion of a striated space. According to Butler, Bourdieu keeps these two facets, habitus and field, separate and thus inadvertently gives more power to one than to the other. More specifically, according to Bourdieu, the habitus is overpowered by the social field, in other words, the body conforms to the field.

However, Butler makes an interjection, one that rings true as to how we will infer the affect of a body within the discussion of the interdependence of habitus and field. Essentially, Butler establishes the body as a site for struggle between habitus and field, hence adjoining the two together, in contrast to Bourdieu. "[O]nce the body is established as a site for the working through of performative force, i.e., as the site where performative commands are received, inscribed, carried out, or resisted, can the social and linguistic dimensions that Bourdieu insists on keeping theoretically separate at all in practice?" (Butler 31)

In linking habitus and field within the body, Butler places importance on how a body then carries out actions and responds to affects within a given space. I go back to my initial example. In addition to my personality being on display in the social field of Salon Officiel, there are parts of my beliefs that perhaps aren't as transparent in the "thisness" of that specific night. But they appear, as my habitus can be made visible in moments of dissonance, as in the example of the Ludacris song. Here, integral to my habitus, my way of being, are certain feminist beliefs developed and realized over time,

ones which stand at odds with the clear message of Ludacris's *Move Bitch*. So, how then, and where do the two ideas presented by Butler reconcile? Butler attempts an explanation:

[S]ince the habitus does not merely encounter the *field*, as a subjective phenomenon encounters a countervailing objective one; rather, it is only on the condition that a "feeling for the game" is established, that is, a feeling for how to operate within the established norms of the social field, that the *habitus* is built up. Indeed, the *habitus* is the sedimented and incorporated knowingness that is the accumulated effect of playing that game, operating within those conventions. (33)

But again, while I am fully capable of "feeling for the game," the interplay between habitus and field on the site of my body is not operating within the conventions that I know to be of norm here, neither by my own social guidelines (don't make it awkward) nor by the bar space (as my body might stop moving to the song, and disrupt the dancing bodies around me). What then does this make me? In Ahmed's terms this would make me the affect alien, better described as the feminist kill-joy. I clearly then become the participant who does not reproduce the line of happiness usually derived from the dancing space. It would then seem that there is a clear rupture between habitus and field within my situation.

Butler continues, "[it] is important not only to underscore that the *habitus* does not primarily "encounter" the field as an external or objective field but to show that the field could not be reconstituted without the participatory and the generative *doxa* of the *habitus*" (36). Here, feminist values would be considered part of one's *doxa*. Continuing then, if my values and ideals as a feminist make me the feminist kill-joy, and apparently are in discord with the social field, guidelines of hip hop club culture and of the club I am in, where does this leave me in negotiating my body between the habitus and the social field?

What Butler adequately demonstrates is that the act of naming, in linguistics, and thus transposed here into my specific situation, gives power. In returning to my case of the dancefloor: given that my feminist values are not the normative ones on the dancefloor, in identifying myself the feminist kill-joy, I can disrupt the situation in which I am by naming myself and hence giving me power within that specific situation. She continues, “The 'social magic' of the performative is thus extralinguistic” (42). Hence, performativity brings out embodied values; it concerns itself with what cannot be uttered in the moment of performance.

“If a performative brings out what it names, does it do it by itself or does it proceed through a kind of citation or appropriation of “authority” that effectively produces the *effect* of authority at deauthorized sites on the map?” (Butler 42) What then of my feminist kill-joy outburst, of my refusal to cooperate with the affect circulating in the bar space? I disturb the space with my outburst, I potentially disrupt that specific moment though my resistance to the “authority” of the DJs who set the scene and more importantly, by taking this stance, I affect the “thisness” of my entourage. Butler concludes in explicating performativity’s social magic:

[I]t is one of the powerful and insidious ways in which subjects are called into social being, inaugurated into sociality by a variety of diffuse and powerful interpellations. In this sense the social performative is a crucial part not only of subject *formation* but of the ongoing political contestation and reformulation of the subject as well. In this sense, the performative is not only a ritual practice: it is one of the influential rituals by which subjects are formed and reformulated. (44)

In naming myself the feminist kill-joy at the bar space, I perform my identity as a feminist. Attracting discontent to the event, the space and situation, is my way of reformulating that space which enacts a sexist trope. Here, Butler demonstrates what it means to perform one’s values within the conjunction of habitus and field. In naming

myself the feminist in the sexist hip hop space, hence as part of the cultural hip hop social field which propagates sexist beliefs through song choices as *Move Bitch*, I perform my values by turning away from what I would “normally” do (continue dancing); this means that I stop my movement, I stop my dancing, effectively disturbing the normative space in the club.

In drawing on Sara Ahmed’s *Happy Objects* I sought to explain how one can draw affect from a dancing space. In Ahmed’s account of objects which aim to produce happiness she elaborated on the notion of the affect alien; a person who does not reproduce the line of happiness from a given object. More specifically, Ahmed names the affect alien a feminist kill-joy. In engaging feminist values within a hip hop dancing space such as Salon Officiel, I demonstrated how one can be the feminist kill-joy at such a dancing event. In continuing my theoretical exploration of affect, I also elaborated on Charles J. Stivale’s *Feeling the Event: Spaces of Affects and the Cajun Dance Arena*. Stivale aided me in thinking through how the “thisness” of dancing comes to be. In engaging the space in which dancing occurs, I drew on Stivale’s explorations and built on Ahmed’s notion of affect. While Ahmed’s central work is about how one can derive affect from objects, Stivale built on Deleuze and Guattari’s notion of haecceities, in conceptualizing affect in the dancing event through “longitude and latitude...nothing but affects and local movements, differential speeds” (1987, 260)” (Deleuze & Guattari qtd. in Stivale 111). Furthermore, in exploring the interiority of affect and how it can manifest itself exteriorly, I drew heavily upon Judith Butler’s *Performativity’s Social Magic*. Butler builds upon Pierre Bourdieu’s concepts of habitus and field in order to explain

how “social performative is a crucial part not only of subject *formation* but of the ongoing political contestation and reformulation of the subject as well” (Butler 44).

I now turn to look more specifically at to how dancing and performativity, specific to hip hop dancing, can provide an insight into affect, and create embodied meaning within hip hop spaces. To do this I look at writings from Halifu Osumare, who draws on Butler’s notion of performativity in her study of Hawaiian breakdancing in her essay *Global Breakdancing and the Intercultural Body*. In further explorations of dance practice, I draw on Sarah Campbell’s discussion of the particular dance of “booty dancing,” belonging to hip hop culture, in her article *Go White Girl!: Hip Hop Booty and the White Female Body*. Finally I turn to prominent dance scholar, Lis Engel who through her scenic descriptions in *Body Poetics of Hip Hop Dance Styles in Copenhagen*, attempts to map the affects of the dancing events.

Understanding Affect in Performative Hip Hop Dances

In her essay *Global Breakdancing and the Intercultural Body* Halifu Osumare discusses how cultural dances from regional dance groups in Hawaii are incorporated into the global trend of breakdancing. She states: “enactments are [I mean] those acts that bring forth, through the body, what has been previously invisible, submerged in the psyche” (Osumare 31). Osumare defines enactments as notions of performance and performativity merged within breakdance culture in her native Hawaii.

For her, performance is a conscious way of moving and making your body interact with the environment, while performativity is “often [an] unconscious but meaningful series of bodily postures, gestures, and movements that implicitly signify and mark a sense of social identity or identities in everyday pedestrian activity” (31). Here we

see Osumare's notion of performativity mirror Butler's earlier elaboration. Osumare explains, "Everyday bodily gestures, drawn from the habitus and the field, become embodied social identity, forming the often unconscious performativity of social practice" (39).

Osumare continues, "Such social praxis demonstrates performance and performativity as two components of enacted bodily text through the prism of hip hop dance" (39). Through this, Osumare is then able to explain how personal identity, particularly an allegiance to a Hawaiian identity, helps construct an intercultural hip hop body. Her elaboration of Pierre Bourdieu's theoretical groundwork regarding habitus and field, and Butler's further expansion on performance & performativity all provide an insight to the understanding of one's identities and responses in a hip hop environment. Moreover, in placing Osumare's work with Ahmed's elaboration on affect, we can begin to see how the dance of an individual may affect the circle around her. "Thinking of affects as contagious does help us challenge an 'inside out' model of affect by showing how affects pass between bodies, affecting bodily surfaces or even how bodies surface"(Ahmed 36).

While Osumare concentrates on body movement, she identifies how dance, within hip hop, incorporates one's individuality. Within Osumare's investigations, dancers enact their Hawaiian identity through their performance and performativity. She calls this the "intercultural body," a body that is both Hawaiian and African American. She clarifies:

[T]his complex bodily language is created through improvisation, in which moment-by-moment choices are made that allow performativity and performance to merge...these performance decisions represent the agency that the dancer practices in order to mediate the vicissitudes of global pop culture influences in relation to his or her individual personality. (36)

Through her concepts of improvisation and appropriation “moment-by-moment choices are made that allow performativity and performance to merge” (36), in which one can choose to enact the lyrics and dance more provocatively, or subdue her movements and consciously and at times unconsciously convey her attitude towards the environment and music playing.

For Osumare, the “intercultural body” has more to do with a Hawaiian identity. Within my investigations, the “intercultural body” refers to a feminist identity. Thus through dancing, the manifestation of one’s identity can be embodied, and can be as politically charged or uncharged as is the will of dancer.

I return to my initial question: when faced with an environment which is familiar to you but does not project your ideals, such as the hip hop space which plays *Move Bitch*—therefore considered a sexist hip hop space—does your social identity change consciously, hence in performance, and/or unconsciously, hence in performativity? In observing the “often unconscious but meaningful series of bodily postures, gestures, and movements,” (31) I seek to explore the potential disjuncture between social identity and hip hop space through dance performed. Thus, the movements that are performed in hip hop dance are an affective response to the specific dance space and its affects. If I continue dancing, perhaps more enthusiastically to the tune, I enable this power dynamic, that of the sexist moment to control the space I am in, and thus a part of my identity, of my habitus, as it retreats and makes itself unknown. In contrast, I could mess with the social field of the hip hop club. I can walk off, signaling my taking a break, and at the same time creating a break in the flow of the movement on the dancefloor. The affect

present in that space will then be altered through my performativity in that particular moment.

While Halifu Osumare has been instrumental in elaborating on Butler's notion of performativity and in revealing through such concepts the embodied identity of the dancer, I turn to Sarah Campbell's exploration of another type of dancing associated to hip hop dance, "Booty Dancing." Campbell's inquiry into this type of dancing with a group of Australian women directly relates to the investigations I make with my participants in hip hop clubs in Montreal.

In her article *Go White Girl!: Hip Hop Booty and the White Female Body* Sarah Campbell discusses the particular dance of "booty dancing," belonging to hip hop dance that white Australian women dancers partake in. Campbell differentiates between the aesthetic of b-boying, which is a precise dance form that is considered one of the four pillars of hip hop, as discussed by Osumare, and the more accessible "booty dancing" which any dance amateur can perform.

While Campbell discusses a more racial and cultural aspect of appropriating such dance moves from the African American community, rather than a gender based analysis, she touches on an important aspect that relates to my own inquiries regarding hip hop dance. Put simply, she states:

When a white girl shakes her booty, is she colonizing back female bodies with her own, ironically performing both race and gender, or negotiating new spaces for her own sexuality? And what relationship does she have with the music that drives her gyrations, associated as it is with a hypermasculinized and often explicitly misogynistic strand of African-American culture? (498)

The question of ironically performing the "booty shake" can put into perspective how white female dancers negotiate the space in which they are dancing. Is the song

provoking a sexualized move while the female dancer remains completely unattached the meanings of the lyrics? Is she playing the role of the sexual vixen without paying mind to the consequences attached to that role? Exploring “booty dance” as a method of dance in hip hop allows Campbell to discuss how white women consume black culture.

In discussing the quality of irony in “booty dancing,” Campbell points out that although it can be used as a method of resistance it can often fail as a device, given that “its meaning depends on...the reader’s ‘discursive community’: ‘a complex configuration of shared knowledge, beliefs, values and communicative strategies (Hutcheon 1994, p.91)¹⁴” (Campbell 506). This use of irony is particular to the attitudes of the women going out together and experiencing the dance and the music as a community. One can dance ironically, and this can be recognized as irony only if her surrounding companions are aware of her attitude towards such music and dance moves. Thus, in order for her moves to be interpreted as ironic, the space in which she is surrounded must contain objects that garner an ironic affect.

In drawing on Campbell’s succinct explorations of booty dancing I aim to see how irony is conveyed within my group of participants in dance outings, and how irony can also be perceived as sticky and messy within the experiential. I now turn to Lis Engel, dance scholar, in her explorations of hip hop dance culture in Copenhagen. Engel’s work is fundamental in my own explorations of hip hop culture in Montreal because of her approach to such events, and because of her method of descriptions of embodied experiences in dancing spaces.

¹⁴ Hutcheon, Linda. *Irony's Edge: the Theory and Politics of Irony*, London: Routledge, 1994. 248. Print.

In her examination of breakdancing culture in Copenhagen, Lis Engel undertakes several scenic descriptions to elucidate how a crowd and dancers belonging to this specific hip hop scene behave in that environment, and thus create affect in those events. Engel expands on a very interesting point: “The different ways of moving, the body techniques, vary not just between individuals but even more between societies, educations, properties and fashions and that different ways of moving mirror cultural ways of thinking” (Mauss¹⁵ qtd. in Engel 351). Each movement is an expression of one’s values, whether conscious or unconscious, which creates affect, and mirrors Stivale’s elaboration on affect and spaces. Engel continues: “Hip hop dance is such an embodied process of interrelatedness with self and surroundings, a symbolic art form of life expression” (352).

Mapping dancers’ behaviours through her scenic descriptions, allows Engel to notice the interaction between dancer and dancer, dancer and culture, and dancer and environment. She states: “It is possible to look at the movements as signs and expressions of the body-mind-event attunement and as important embodied ways of being and expressing life” (352). Although focusing on the specifically technical art form of breakdancing, I believe Engel’s observations, just as those made by Sarah Campbell, apply to my research. In contrast to Engel, I am inclined to see the negotiations made between participants and their environment as well describe their behaviour in a specific club space.

Lastly, Engel is able to conclude, “At its heart the dance styles are related to the self, to attitudes, and to ways of life, while the individual and collective consciousness

¹⁵ Mauss, Marcel. “Techniques of the body.” *Economy and Society* 2.1 (1973): 70-88. Taylor Francis Online. Web.

are created and expressed through the body and the way the body relates to its surroundings” (371). While Engel’s method is particularly well suited for observation, a more in depth analysis is needed to understand possible conflictual attitudes within a hip hop space which can only be understood through performativity and affect.

Dance practice, specifically hip hop dance practice, is a “different way[s] of moving [which] mirror[s] cultural ways of thinking” (Engel 351). What is interesting is the moment of conflict, where ideals and reality do not coincide. It is that moment of disjuncture where all is not symbiotic, where there is potential for a disturbance and a negotiation of the space, whether through irony, moments of performativity, or transgressions between male and female enactments of gender in dance.

Conclusion

Within my own investigations, the hip hop dancing arena is one that is messy and full of moments of negotiations between bodies, spaces, and music. Affect theory helps me in thinking through how one may convey one’s experience in a dancing environment. Particularly, if one is not deriving pleasure from that environment, or is the source of the unhappiness, the affect alien, more specifically in our case, the feminist kill-joy, as discussed by Ahmed; how does she, the feminist kill-joy, influence her own reactions and consequently the environment she is in?

Drawing more specifically on Stivale’s analysis of Cajun dance spaces, I was able to further explore “spaces of affects” particular to dancing events. Stivale’s elaboration on smooth and striated spaces and on Deleuzian concepts such as haecceities and faciality, helped me in articulating what can be characterized as the “thisness” of a dancing event. Building on Stivale in order to complete my considerations about affect, I

turned to Judith Butler who draws on Bourdieu to elaborate on her concept of performativity. Performativity, within my research helps me in understanding the experiential, thus revealing the embodied negotiations that may occur between the participants' feminist values (habitus) and the hip hop space (social field).

In order to better illustrate how affect and performativity help me I turned to Halifu Osumare, Sarah Campbell and Lis Engel in their specific explorations of dancing bodies in hip hop culture. Osumare, Campbell and Engel, all use affect and performativity to be able to explain dancing bodies in hip hop culture. Each one of these authors reveal how affect in culture, play, irony, and space, all cause a visceral reaction in the dancing body and in the dancing space. Affect helps us understand how and why a Hawaiian b-boy would incorporate a hula move into his routine, or why a woman feels comfortable booty dancing to a particular song in a particular club, and why a particular move would be considered masculine or feminine.

In drawing on all these cultural theorists, I now move to the fieldwork of hip hop spaces in Montreal, where I aim to observe how affect and performativity occur within the dancing space. I draw particularly on Engel's method of scenic description to reveal these affective and performative moments in my participants' dances within hip hop spaces.

Chapter Three: Hip Hop Dancing Events: Four Scenic Descriptions

Introduction

In investigating affect and performativity in hip hop dance spaces, I turn to Lis Engel's methodology of the scenic description¹⁶. I find it particularly useful when dealing with the embodied experiential. Because affect is never fully realised linguistically, I use Engel's scenic description as a way to record the evenings full of noticeable affective moments in a narrative, at once descriptively and reflexively, to try and convey the 'thisness' of the event. Writing about the event as a narrative, as an unfolding story, helps convey "will and attention, or moods, or orientation... and the various culturally and phenomenological constituted emotional economies" (Grossberg 316) that occur throughout the evening. Similarly, describing the participants' actions within the hip hop spaces and then recalling them in following conversations, allows me to capture the moments of performativity within the dancing event. Engel explains, "dance is a strong medium for expressing this symbolic relationship between embodied form and meaning in a differentiated way, and dance is also like a laboratory for exploring new ways of being human" (Engel 352). Her method is particularly suited for my explorations of affect and performativity on the dancefloor and in the dance space.

In addition to Engel's scenic description, I rely heavily on Laurel Richardson's *Writing as Method of Inquiry*. As mentioned earlier, writing the dancing events as a narrative allows me to convey the 'magical' quality attributed to the evening, and allows

¹⁶In Engel's article she defines scenic descriptions "as a way of creating a multidimensional text of the events, and the patterns and figurations that are experienced as sensory registrations of these experiences. The specific possibilities of this method, anchored in practice, lie in the balance among open awareness, the sensing, the doing, and reflection. It is a method that intends to balance practice and theory" (353).

for a reflexive exploration of the evening's events. It aids me in thinking through the "messiness of the experiential" (Ahmed 30). Richardson stipulates that the action of writing helps in discovering one's own research. "By writing in different ways, we discover new aspects of our topic and relationship to it" (516). I find this to be a key quality for my research. As I seek to engage with concepts that influence me as a young adult participating in the Montreal hip hop club scene, writing as a method of discovery, even more so, as self-discovery, seems extremely appropriate.

Utilizing writing as a process of thinking about what I see and describing the scene set before me, I am better able to understand my position as a researcher and participant in this environment, as well as to open my writings to analysis and discovery.

Combining these two methodologies allows me to understand and investigate the affective moments within the evenings in question, and eventually grasp how one may negotiate their own space in seemingly conflicting hip hop environments.

Most importantly, describing these dancing events allows me to place the discussions which followed the outings with my participants, into a more nuanced and clear context.

In what follows, I will present four scenic descriptions alongside my reflections on my field notes about the various evenings of the four dance outings. These four outings in which I was a participant-observer, along with my participants¹⁷, occurred in four different locations in Montreal between November 2012 and February 2013. These four locations, B-Side, Royal Phoenix Bar, Salon Officiel and Blizzarts were chosen on

¹⁷ With the exception of the six participants who have agreed to take part in this research, the names of the casual participants (friends and acquaintances of the participants) have been changed in order to protect their privacy.

the basis of participants' familiarity with the dancing spaces but most importantly because they were all known, bar one, to host a hip hop specialty night.

These four clubs are part of a specific makeup of a clubbing culture in Montreal, with a vast array of participants. As my research focuses on commercialized hip hop consumption, these four choices (B-Side, Royal Phoenix, Salon Officiel, Blizzarts) were key, in order to explore commercialized hip hop within these mainstream clubs. While all cater to young adults aged 18 and older, each club's target audience varied in age, gender and sexuality. However, in keeping with the spirit of the snowball sample of the widely differing ethno-cultural backgrounds of the participants, these clubs catered to multi-cultural participants that extended beyond our group.

While these four clubs are not the only clubs in Montreal to host hip hop nights, they are the ones that cater to a predominately multi-cultural audience. With a large Haitian community in Montreal, there are more specialized hip hop clubs in Montreal North, which cater to a predominately African-Canadian audience. Those particular clubs are known to play more specific strands of hip hop music such as Reggaeton and Dancehall, and can fall under the category of a sub-cultural scene.

Drawing on the contrast between the clubs chosen to attend during my research and the more specific hip hop clubs in Montreal, we can see how commercialized consumption of hip hop is distributed in the city. More commercialized hip hop music plays in mainstream clubs in Montreal, situated on the Plateau or Downtown Montreal. In contrast, more specialized clubs are on the outskirts of the "going out" epicenter of the city. The exception to this observation is Royal Phoenix Bar because it is known to be a lesbian bar (the only club space out of the four to have this designation), and is placed on

the fringes of the Plateau, within Mile-End. Nevertheless, being able to situate these four specific clubs, amongst the more specialty driven clubs outside of this area, gives us an idea of how hip hop culture is consumed in Montreal.

Each night explored within the four clubs presented a different set of considerations in what would shape my participants' experiences in a hip hop club, and ultimately my scenic descriptions. These scenic descriptions were written in the present tense as to convey as closely as possible the sequence of the evenings' events.

Outing 1 – B-Side Bar – November 18th 2012

It is 11:30 PM on a Saturday night in Montreal. I walk into B-Side accompanied by my friends Emilie, Dalia, Meagan, Alin and Martha who have all congregated at my space two hours early for customary to a young adult's pre-outing ritual. We have all donned clubbing appropriate attire, going from casual chic with heels, to skin tight dresses and sliver heeled booties, all depending on the flamboyance, comfort level and style of each of my friends. B-Side's dress code mirrors ours: young, funky and sexy, a very "care if you want to care, or pull on your jeans and just dance" attitude. Having been considered veterans of B-Side's, we have no problems getting in, arriving in the nick of time before the lineup gets too long.

Inside, the walls of the space are *lacque* red, with retro art hanging from the walls. In the back where we make our way to, there is a painted panel that is reminiscent of old school 90s boom box and "Fresh prince of Bel Air" graffiti. There is a mish mash of old albums stuck in Plexiglas casings on the walls, from Pink Floyd albums to Michael Jackson's *Thriller*, the over-used record sleeves are indecipherable in the low lighting of the club.

While we have arrived early, we notice the crowd is beginning to trickle in. It consists of mostly young men and women ranging in age between late teens to late twenties, students from the English universities in Montreal. The majority of the crowd speaks predominately English. B-Side is considered a very popular club amongst the young English and university population of Montreal.

We all sigh in happy relief having reached our destination, standing by some red vinyl covered booths, dropping our bags off and smiling at the fact that we've arrived with just enough time to claim our space on the narrow dancefloor. While it is in the natural order of things to claim your space in which you will dance, our group didn't have to do so as we were the first on the dancefloor. Drinks in hand, we begin to dance.

The beginning is always slightly awkward. You're sussing out the DJ and his selections, you're looking over your shoulder for anyone trying to get to your spot. You're everywhere else but the dancefloor. But somewhere that begins to melt away. B-Side's atmosphere is casual and in the spirit of its mish mash albums on the wall, it plays a mish mash of tunes. Saturday night allows for an excellent club atmosphere, and a wide array of club goers. Although the evening is not hip hop centric, it is still infused of many hip hop elements, and with the many hip hop songs that populate the top 40 charts.

It takes about twenty minutes, around midnight, for the narrow space at the back to begin to fill up with young women dancers, and skinny young men in plaid and badly grown mustaches (it is after all *Movember*). It is at that moment that the space begins to change from a somewhat relaxed atmosphere to a dancing space.

The first song to come on that bonds the club and bonds our group is *I'm Sexy and I Know It* by LMFAO. All of the sudden there is a sea of coherent words as everyone

throws their hands up yelling *When I walk on by, girls be lookin' like damn' he fly*. Alin and Martha begin to sway more energetically while Meagan enacts the words. Everyone begins to liven up, let loose and just dance. Behind us, Emilie asks me to turn and look, two young women, one blond and one brunette, dressed in barely there black see-through shirts begin to grope the bus boy who has just passed through with a bin full of empty glasses. Helpless to put an end to what looks to the observer's eye as blatant harassment, he stands there a few seconds as he wrestles his way through the crowd to get to his post.

What would normally be considered an inappropriate gesture had it been a *bus girl*, the two girls were screaming of joy, as if relishing this act of pure "If men can do it so can I," this objectification of a man at his work. Emilie is as shocked as I am. Never have we in our experiences, seen a young girl invade someone's space in a club.

Situations such as this one raise questions about third wave feminism, post-feminism, and current club etiquette. Often times, in my own experiences, and the experience related to me by my participants, we have been on the receiving end of such harassment in a club. We are aware that we are prone to this type of behaviour in a club. However, seeing sexism in "reverse" demonstrates that whether sexism is perpetuated by the men in a club or the women in a club, it is still a sexist environment.

Martha begins circling Meagan shaking her torso to the beat, mimicking the way in which the two girls who just harassed the bus boy, are dancing. It's a comedic break, in the now crowded space, with more people dancing and circling each other. I wonder if that is Martha's tactic in dealing with the awkward moment created by the two young women harassing the bus boy. This comedic intervention, motivates our group and

everyone kind of begins to laugh and get back to a more relaxed and free mode, easing into the music, the beat and 50 Cent's *P.I.M.P.*

Continuing the evening, I notice in the sea of people who are sweating out the frustrations of their week, hands are rising, hips are gyrating and lips are mouthing some of the most explicit, and simplistic lyrics in hip hop. Again, like a tidal wave, a song hits the club where the chorus of the participants singing is louder than anything else.

Ludacris's *Move Bitch*, is being chanted. This song has reached royal status in dirty south hip hop. Everyone seems to know it, and to my alarm I notice even my closest friends mouth words and dance along. I wonder for which of my participants this moment is one that causes issue for their feminist values, and how they work through it. What could possibly be the tactic used to negotiate this moment for them?

It is easy for me to see that I am walking this fine line between participant and researcher. And maybe because this is a first outing, I am being too careful, too attentive and not carefree enough to just let go. But this attentiveness allows me to see a certain "hypocrisy," (I use the term loosely) in action. This hypocrisy being that women who concern themselves with the images, portrayals and gender equity, are allowing themselves a moment of relief to simply dance and not care about what is being said.

This hypocrisy seemed to be coming in waves, with specific songs in the evening. Because of the intermittence of hip hop songs, amongst more pop or progressive rock songs that were playing throughout the evening, I easily notice which hip hop songs seemed to garner most attention. Of the many hits that continued to play, I was able to mark down the ones that seemed to spark the most interest and interaction.

As the DJ transitions out of a song, all of the sudden Khia's *My Neck, My Back* comes on. A sexually charged song, Khia—the singer—explicitly depicts where she would like her partner to touch her, in order for her to receive the sexual pleasure she desires. Dalia and I begin to dance back to back, moving our curvatures in sync; I feel out of it. My mind keeps trailing to conflicting thoughts, and so I feel myself stiff up a little change tempo and move away. Thinking back on it now, I wonder about “cultural post-feminism,” “doin’ me” mentality, and the blond girls molesting the bus boy. Somehow it feels like the song is geared towards a male audience even though it is about female pleasure. Regardless, before I give it too much thought, I get back on my dancing heels the second Sean Paul comes on with *Get Busy*.

The beat, the pure ridiculousness of the fast lipped Sean Paul telling the girls to shake their “thing” and of course Emilie's exaggerated moves are all prompting me to just throw myself into the sweaty crowd and roll with it. This song just brings out the best of our moves; it is almost like a performance. Emilie and I know when to shake our bodies, and sway our hips, move our torsos in the mimicked *crunking* motion we've gulped down as kids through the hours of music videos that played on Much Music. I see her across from our dancing circle; we may not be speaking but our moves are doing all the talking. As the tempo slows down from Sean Paul to Max-a-Million, so does the mood of our group.

With Max-a-Million's *Sexual Healing* Dalia seems to be overtaking the dance space around her. She is relaxed and in tune with the music. Her arms are swaying and she has a big smile on her face; her hips movements begin to be more exaggerated and she just seems elated. I think this rubs off on the group and everyone just “mellows out” a

little. This action finally propels the young man nervously dancing with his friends adjacent to our circle, to match Dalia's bolder moves. It's almost a little like the cliché vulturine move all girls experience at one time or another when going out to dance. However, this one seemed less threatening. As the young man circles her, Dalia keeps on smiling. They both, in tune with the music, dance in sync; although very subtly, the boy tries to get closer and Dalia's arms keep swaying to the music, creating an invisible shield around her, delineating her comfort space while maintaining her dance space with the young man. I think the boy understands, albeit after two or three tries, and softens his determined approach before easing into casual dancing. Once the song ends, he proceeds to the bar accompanied by his friend, leaving Dalia dancing, seemingly unmoved by the departure. The transition brings us to a more upbeat song, but the final one for our evening.

Although the club is at a high this will be the last song that our group will dance to (hurt feet, potential liver repercussions and, too much red bull would be the culmination of the group's decision to leave at 2:30 AM). *Starships* is Nicki Minaj's newest single, a high energy simplistic song about a "gangsta" lifestyle; remixed with Kid Cudi's *The Pursuit of Happiness* made for an upbeat high energy wave in the crowd and in our group. Alin and Martha break off from the group and take up more space on the dancefloor, jumping and moving wildly. Dalia and Emilie are thrusting about and Meagan seems to be in her bubble. I'm trying to enjoy the last minutes of the outing, maybe letting go of certain restraints and inhibitions of my night. It seems that knowing that this is the last song for the evening allows all the participants to let loose and enjoy each other's company one last time before we all head out.

We exit the club, still elated. It feels like everyone could still dance to one song, but as soon as our feet hit the pavement everyone seems to remember why clubbing at B-side's has its C-side. The street of St-Laurent is swarming with newly christened young adults and barely there dresses, something that most of my participants seem openly turned off by. We part ways on the most populated corner on a Saturday night in Montreal, Prince-Arthur and St-Laurent, and vow to talk over some of the things we saw throughout the night later in the week.

Recalling this evening in question, I am able measure the mood of the space around the group of my participants through waves, in thinking through specific moments as longitudes and latitudes as discussed by Stivale; moments where the energy of the crowd was high or low. When a song came on that had an infectious beat, the crowd around us raised their hands and became much more of a united crowd. In contrast, in moments where the song did not incite such a reaction, the space around became more fragmented, with groups of people huddled in corners and a line snaking through the crowd at large. Measuring these moments in waves helped me interpret particular affective moments in the crowd and potentially my participants' reactions to those moments.

Outing 2 – Royal Phoenix Bar – December 15th 2012

Our second outing begins much like the first, albeit with a little more reluctance given everyone's busy week. Whereas in our first evening together we were dressed fairly fancy to go out and were possessed with a certain excitement and a twinge of reservation given the choice of location, this evening begins as a slower and more relaxed

night. We are all dressed in jeans and boots with tops that highlight each of our “going out” personalities. Some were more flow-y and comfortable other slightly tighter but just as comfy with cardigans. In addition, this particular evening several other companions decided that they would join us for our dance outing.

We are all excited to discover this new space, given that we have grown accustomed to the popular clubs in Montreal and are looking for a new experience.

Around 11 PM we begin to make way out of the house, and pile into two cars to drive up to Royal Phoenix Bar, on St-Laurent corner Bernard Street. The location of the club is a slightly peculiar one. While it is situated on St-Laurent it is further up at the cross street of Bernard, up in Mile-End territory, which is known more for its relaxed atmosphere and bar mentality than for its dancing spaces. In Montreal, Mile-End is considered to be a very trendy low-key area. The Royal Phoenix however, is home to several specialty nights (Leg Work, Lipster, Audio Porn, etc.) and is anything but low-key. It is considered a gay bar outside of the village in Montreal, and has gained a reputation as the gay (mostly lesbian) bar, that gay people like to frequent outside of the village.

On this particular evening, The Royal Phoenix Bar is hosting a specialty night dedicated to hip hop, called *Cousins Cousins Cousins*, with a trio of DJs taking over the booth. Meagan, Alin and Martha are already waiting for me, having found a high table to sit at and drinking their PBR, the beer on special for the evening. As I line up for the coat check, I suss out my new surroundings and try and not worry too much about what the evening will entail, allowing it to occur naturally.

At half past 11 PM, the space is still quite empty, with evenly spaced bodies outlining the area. There are three tables to the left, one of them with velour booth seating, the rest are high table and high seats. Around the opposing wall, which is made out of windows and is covered in heavy dark red drapery, is a thin bench like table with high stools. The table continues until it reaches the platform the DJs play from.

The space is vacant between the bar and the three walls of the Royal Phoenix, and most of the population of the club is sitting comfortably either at the bar or the high tables. It is clear that it is not time yet to get on the dancefloor, although the DJs have started playing some excellent tunes.

Everyone in the club is dressed as casually as we are, with the exception of the bartenders who happen to be part of the burlesque troupe Glam Gam; they are dressed a little more flamboyantly but comfortable with their attire. As I make my way to our table, both Alin and Meagan greet me with “This space is awesome!” which puts me a little more at ease. With the hesitation gone from my mind I am happy to see that even if my companions were slightly fatigued, that the red bull wings have lifted them and that they are genuinely excited to be here.

As our group gathers around the high table everyone is talking a little faster, with motivation and general cheerfulness; their bodies seem to begin to sway a bit from side to side to the beat of the DJs, as if subtly dancing in their seats. This is especially true for Meagan. Both her and Alin, and Martha as well, look onto the dancefloor to see if anyone begins to take the dancing stage; still no one, and they hold back. We continue talking, until a track inspires Meagan: Nelly featuring DJ Black’s *Grillz*.

She knows the lyrics by heart and begins to sing them to Julian, one of our accompanying friends. Her hands move widely and she smiles, singing the song. I see this as a potential tactic, allowing Meagan full participation in the pleasure of the dance outing while maintaining a distance from what the lyrics actually mean. Meagan's rendition is joyful and sincere; something that Meagan herself remarked a lack of at our previous outing. As the *Grillz* song finishes the DJ segways into Lil' Kim's *Lighters Up* at which point Martha and Alin grab hands and hurriedly get off their stools and make their way to the dancefloor, beginning to populate the still empty space. Another friend of ours, Martin, joins them and they begin to light up the dancefloor. Slowly people begin to trickle in and move around them. Meagan, Julian and the rest of our group join them, creating a large circle and taking up a good portion of the dancing space.

I notice a fundamental difference between the two clubs we have been to (B-Side and Royal Phoenix). B-Side's dance section is narrow and lined with seating while the Royal Phoenix has an open space which feels dedicated to dance, even though B-Side has a more commercial reputation and is larger in patronage than the Royal Phoenix. B-Side is known for its dancing space, yet doesn't provide it, while the Royal Phoenix has a more marginalized patronage but a more open and authentic feel.

As the bar fills up around 12:30 AM I begin to notice more of the people who make up the crowd for the Royal Phoenix. They are closer in age to my participants and I, which is a nice change from B-Side, and everyone looks genuinely happy to be there and relaxed in their skin. In comparison to B-Side the crowd is older but maybe a bit more homogeneously Caucasian. While B-Side was predominately English, it housed a varied group of young men and women with Middle Eastern and African Canadian

backgrounds. In comparison, Royal Phoenix has a more predominant Caucasian Quebecois and English makeup. As well, as the Royal Phoenix bar is a lesbian club, there are a lot of androgynous looking women. Nonetheless none seemed concerned with sharing the space with our group and several other patrons who may (or may not) ascribe to that specific sexual orientation. This sharing of space between my participants and the other crowd members, from what I notice, creates a sense of belonging and authenticity in my participants. They venture out of the comfort of the space that was designated as “ours” (the tall table with 4 chairs in the back) and explore the club without feeling like they are encroaching upon someone else’s space or feeling judged by their exploration. What typically is be ascribed as marginality actually fosters this sense of belonging, putting everyone at ease and in a space of pleasure. This raises questions for me about a gendered dancing space.

As the dancefloor becomes more crowded, the DJs begin playing more beat prominent hip hop. One notable song is Foxy Brown’s *Hot Spot*. It seems to hit a chord with our group, as we become more entrenched in the beat and melody. Alin is dancing closer to Martin while Martha is inching towards Sebastien. It seems as if my participants look like they feel freer in the company of our male friends in comparison to our outing at B-Side. While in the last outing we were vigilant about maintaining our circle, at Royal Phoenix, our circle is bigger and there is fluid movement from side to side. The entire space seems to be emanating feelings of pleasure, perhaps a broadly shared affect. People on the dancefloor are syncing their bodies to one another, smiling, dancing to the music, raising their hands in response to the DJs.

Meagan comes to dance next to me while we mouth the words to Brown's song and we both turn to face the stage in admiration of the DJs. The trio looks elated to be doing what they do, and they seem to be feeding off the vibe of the dancing crowd, like a feedback loop. The more the DJs play songs which are now considered hip hop classics, like Foxy Brown *Hot Spot*, the livelier the club seems to be, the more joy seems to circulate between bodies. I exclaim to Meagan "I wish I was them!" Their choices of songs bring cohesiveness between them and us, the dancers. We turn back to our group just as Mase's *What You Want* begins to play.

With this sense of identity freedom, this comfort created in the space, the girls in our group let loose; but instead of dancing more provocatively it seems to be more comedic. Alin and Meagan begin doing squats to the rhythm and funny facial expressions. I wonder if this is another method of intervention. As we look around, each group of huddled people is "doing their own thing." We see an elderly couple, perhaps in their sixties, dressed like Santa Claus and Mrs. Claus (perhaps the oddest in the club, without seeming like an oddity), and a trio of two skinny men and a shorter and rounder woman grinding *à trois*.

Throughout the evening there are a lot of comedic interventions especially coming from Meagan and Martha. I wonder if it is out of comfort and familiarity, but before long the song leads into another, new school track, a collaboration between Brandy and Chris Brown called *Put It Down*. The song's quasi-sexual nature inspires both Meagan and Martha to begin dancing slightly more provocatively, playfully. Martha joke grinds on Meagan and Meagan plays along. The song ends, and there is consensus that we should begin heading out. As we begin to pile to the coat check DJs spin the last

song for the evening, Ginuwine's *Pony*, all of the sudden Meagan, Alin and myself leave our coats with Julian and run to the dancefloor for one last jam. As the song winds down, Julian greets us with our coats and we happily end our evening walking out and feeling satisfied with our experience.

Outing 3 – Salon Officiel – January 26th 2013

Our third outing is very polarized from the start. With the weather of the week affecting everyone's mood and timeliness, most of my collaborators arrive about an hour late, and lounge on the couch, just happy to be in the warmth. You could see those who are more excited to go out and those who are not into the idea of getting back out into the cold. Alin, Martha and Meagan are all dressed in jeans and t-shirts/sweaters, opting for a more comfortable attire than Emilie, Dalia, Stephanie and myself, who don tights and dresses, usual outing attire. Although music is playing at the house, a mix of hip hop and some pop songs, and as more friends start to pile onto the couches, it seems to be a night where most would rather stay in. Although the atmosphere is jovial you can see people are disconnecting and disconnected; some are tired from the previous evening, some are a bit tense from some inter-group conflict, and some are busy texting. Although the group is fragmented, and a little lazy, we leave my apartment at around 11:15 PM. Since Salon Officiel is just a short walk from my living quarters, we brave the cold in groups of two following each other to the club.

When we arrive, to my surprise, the club is much fuller than what I expected for the time of the evening. The doorman points us further down towards the bar and asks us to check our coats. As we wrestle through the crowd and make it to the coat check, a diverse demographic is noticeable at the bar, and the side tables. There is a mix of a

younger crowd in their early twenties and several older groups in their late twenties and early thirties. Salon Officiel caters to mostly Plateau hipsters, middle-aged white men and a lot of androgynous looking men and women; a style which has recently overtaken the young students of the French and English universities of Montreal. In comparison to B-Side and Royal Phoenix Bar there is much more of a mix of the English and French young population of the city. This in part due to the fact that Salon Officiel holds French specialty nights as well, and has several hosts that are French and Quebecois. The fashion on display this evening is an illustration of the type of hang out space Salon Officiel is; a laid back, bilingual and trendy bar.

Looking up to one edge of the bar, a large TV displays old re-runs of Soul Train interspersed with cuts of Beyoncé's *Single Ladies*, an incredibly popular hit which has become a household favourite during hip hop nights. At the other end of the club, Mayday Malone, the resident DJ for Saturday nights, is spinning. All my companions remark how it's surprising that she is a lone DJ, dressed in all in black, more fitting a "Punk" or "Metal" look, but she's really into her hip hop music. Spinning up at the front of the bar, the complete front of the booth is lined with what looks like a regular entourage of young men who are all encouraging her on, favouring her with high fives for her song selections.

Once everyone settles in, putting their coats away and gotten a drink, we find a spot on the dancefloor and huddle in circular fashion moving to the beat. While Mayday spins excellent tunes, her songs are more of a tie-in of thirty-second interludes, which really take Alin and Emilie out of the mood. Every time I see Emilie get into her groove the song phases out and she is left unsatisfied, restarting her cycle of dancing.

While our group is dancing, Martin and Martha start dancing together closer to *Ebonics* by Big L. Once the song finishes they leave to the bar to have a drink which lasts about fifteen minutes. When they come back, Martha corners Alin and Meagan and dances with them provocatively. But as soon as Amerie comes on, our group lets loose a little more.

With the songs by Destiny's Child and Beyoncé following suit, Emilie moves her entire body, while stopping from time to time to grin and tell me stories of “the youth” around the club. At one point I see Dalia dropping her bag in the middle of our circle, and I can't help but think to Sarah Thornton's discussion¹⁸ of girls dancing around their purses, a faux pas, when it comes to going out. But as soon as I think that, Stephanie throws her bag into the mix, and before I know it, I'm just happy to put my down as well. “Maybe it's ok,” I think to myself, “I mean, I already feel like an imposter and my homegirls are trailing off in their minds, and their own situations.” I think at that point, I blur the lines for myself between researcher and dancing participant, much like Jeff Todd Titon explains in his exploration of music in the south in his essay *Stance, Role and Identity in Fieldwork Among Folk Baptists and Pentecostals*.

I am working through people's emotions in that circle, and while we are all there to dance, I feel that there is a huge disconnect, which only gets wider with the music, and all I want to do is forget, tune in to good funk and tune out any discomfort.

While Alin is dancing in her zone, a young man approaches her and puts his hand on the small of her back, and begins to dance with her. While she is receptive, it is only within the friendly space of a dancefloor; she is still maintaining her distance. This

¹⁸ See Thornton *Exploring the Meaning of the Mainstream (or Why Sharon and Tracy Dance Around their Handbags)*.

continues on for about three songs until the young man gets the hint and backs away. Much like the situation with Dalia and her male partner at B-Side's, Alin's dancing companion seems to be more aggressive and with intentions that go beyond dancing, which in turn make Alin become aware of her body movements as well as attempt to create an empty space between her body and the young man's.

As Destiny's Child comes on with *Bills Bills Bills* our group livens up a bit more, collectively enjoying this song. Stephanie and myself lock eyes and begin to enact the words. Our gestures become a little more theatrical as we recite the words to the song. I feel at once as we are claiming a "strong woman" approach, and at the same time, mocking the fact that Beyoncé and her girls are telling their lovers that they should be paying instead of spending money.

As the night progresses, the small dancefloor keeps filling up, with friendly faces as well as with many of the young neighbourhood regulars who are tired of the St-Laurent bar scene. Around 1 AM, the dancefloor is packed with grinding groups and odd couples here and there, our circle shifting from one side of the bar to the next, thanks to all the shoving of bodies. I can tell my participants are beginning to get annoyed with the volume of people; at one point a large man with a red puffer coat crosses the sea of people on the dancefloor and cuts directly into our group. As he passes in back of me, and almost stands still, I take the chance to play a lighthearted joke and perhaps have my friends crack a smile. I pretend to melt into his red coat, a coat that takes so much space, it almost engulfs me whole. It elicits some smiles, which seem to break the ice a little. At that moment Ginuwine's *Pony* comes on and both Emilie and Alin smile! Emilie exclaims, "I want you to remember this! This song is the epitome of objectifying men!" I

think, “how interesting, given that Alin would say the opposite.” Emilie being the pop culture connoisseur that she is, promises me a little story about her comment, citing *Magic Mike*, a popular movie about male strippers that had come out recently, as the main reason for her argument.

Continuing with the light heartedness that has given our group some momentum, as the *Pony* song continues and Alin and Emilie jokingly say “ Ilana! How do you deal with this song?” I gain my confidence as my friends are in a circle and begin dancing as provocatively as I can while smiling and laughing! “Like this!” I exclaim, while I lower myself to the floor and find a way to move my body in a snakelike fashion, at once completely salaciously and comedically. I exaggerate, maybe in way to alleviate the awkwardness between a few of my friends, and to bring them back to the dancefloor and out of their negative headspace. I want them to have fun now, and not worry; and perhaps the best way I can do that is in exaggerating myself, my movements, in this space and becoming the contradiction between my ideals and my body movements. I see this as my own tactic, in utilizing a sexist moment within the club space.

Within a time frame of about ten minutes, both Meagan and Martha leave. Meagan has spent the better part of the night silent; which reflected in her dancing, as she was more or less swaying from side to side with none of the particularities that she usually brings to the dancefloor. She takes the opportunity of a change of set by the DJ to take off, with Martha not too far behind her as she is driving home tonight.

Dalia, Emilie, Stephanie, Alin and myself are left with a few of our male companions in the dancing space. But the momentum is waning, as is the will for the group to stay. As soon as Dalia and Emilie make their way to the door, Stephanie, Alin

and I try to keep the evening going and luckily for us, our friend Sergio stops by, and livens up our remaining group. Sergio, a rap connoisseur, takes the space between Alin and myself, and livens up our dancing by reciting all the words to Notorious B.I.G. His performance gives Alin and myself an extra boost of energy for a few more songs, although the mood of the evening has already seeped into our moves. Stephanie trails off and so we end the night a little bit shorter than expected at around 2 AM, pushing our way through the people into the cold night.

Outing 4 – Blizzarts – February 15th 2013

In comparison to previous outings, this dancing event happens on a Friday night rather than a Saturday. The location we are attending hosts its hip hop night on a Friday. As usual, the evening begins in the comfort of my home. Seeing as I live closest to the nightlife in Montreal, it is always the choice for pre-outing hangouts.

People begin to trickle in around 9 PM. My partner and I have prepared some songs to play on our stereo, and several music videos, to get ourselves as well as our friends, in the mood. Friday night is always a difficult time to navigate for our friends given that most of us work a full 40 hours a week. However, we are going out to celebrate Emilie's birthday, amongst other reasons that evening, and so the mood is upbeat and jovial. As we occupy the living room, we keep discussing one song, which has gone viral this week; the *Harlem Shake*, a fusion of a dubstep song and an urban dance move, and several million video variations. The comedy of the song seems to set the tone for the evening. Relaxed humour seems to be what is fueling the beginning of our evening. The house fills up with participants and friends who are beginning to get antsy to make their way to Blizzarts.

Blizzarts is a staple of the St-Laurent strip of bars and clubs. Although not of the same reputation as B-Side, Blizzarts caters to a young adult crowd which is usually more concerned with the space and music rather than the dress code. The bar is simplistic in decor, with a few retro images on the walls, the most noted and famous one is the block colour *Instagram*-looking thunderbird car which adorns the wall facing the square dance floor. The bar itself is long and narrow, where the first three quarters of the space is dedicated to three red vinyl booths and a some narrow circular tables by the bar. The bar is long, and spans the length of the booths, making the walkway to the dancefloor even narrower. The lighting is reminiscent of 60s mod clubs, with fluorescent orange and pink colours lining the bar counter. The establishment is considered a neighbourhood bar, often populated by Plateau residents and university students, and was often voted as one the favourite bars in Montreal in the annual Montreal Mirror *Best of Montreal* edition. It has a specialty night for almost every night of the week, and has been running a hip hop night on Fridays for almost two years. In my own experience, as a university undergraduate, I used to attend the Tuesday specialty night, *Triangle Trouble*, almost religiously. It would host an R’N’B, Hip Hop, Rap mix of DJs which would make Tuesday “the new Saturday”. In my own experience, Blizzarts helped me cultivate a lot of my skills and memories in the Montreal hip hop bar scene.

The specialty evening in question this Friday is called *Get Nice Fridays*, the Blizzarts website explains it as such: “Get Nice Fridays is an intimate gathering of true music lovers looking for good rap music and a safe haven for girls who like to dance to songs they know. Many folks in Montreal like to refer to it as “The rap night with a lot

of chicks' and we couldn't find a better way to describe it" (Bar Blizzarts). And so it is into this evening that our lively group walks into.

Upon our arrival, and payment of cover, Emilie, Martha and I walk directly to the dancefloor. We begin to feel the lower parts of the wall for the coat hooks that line the small space. Even though Blizzarts is marketed as a bar, it knows its audience, and instead of having a coat check, it conveniently places hooks by the dancefloor, below a makeshift ledge, for those who didn't arrive in time to find a spot to sit in and who want to store the coats for the evening. For the first time, I wish that when we had arrived in the bar, the dancefloor would already be somewhat full of dancing bodies; I feel it would have matched up with the feeling already in bloom back at my apartment and during the walk to the bar. Before I know it, Martha and Emilie are taking over the dancefloor, just the two of them. Whereas before the music that was playing was low by bar standards, low enough to not mask the conversations at the bar, it becomes more audible and louder, as soon as Emilie, Martha and I step onto the dancefloor. It seems as if our three bodies give the space a cue, that it is time to get your dancing on. Shortly after, Alin, Martin, Julian and the rest of our gang join us, and we begin to occupy more than three quarters of the dancing space with our movements.

Blizzarts caters to an audience similar to that of Salon Officiel. However, in Blizzarts case there are many more "regulars" who attend the specialty evenings. The age range of the attendees varies from early twenties to early thirties. Although predominantly an English space in Montreal, since it is on the St-Laurent strip of hot spots, there are a variety of ethno-cultural backgrounds in the space. That evening, in comparison to our other outings there is a larger African Canadian presence in the club

which comes to enjoy the hip hop night like the many regulars. Blizzarts' *Get Nice Fridays* is one of the most popular in the city and in hip hop culture in Montreal.

I think for the longest time, I notice Martha, Alin, and Emilie take up most of the space on the left side of the dancefloor, closest to the hooks with our coats and bags. However no one was worrying about the bags, as we did at Salon Officiel, which is a relief to me. It feels like this night is freer, that my participants are more relaxed and that their bodies are taking the space on the dancefloor to equal their personalities; big, colourful and full of life.

Slowly the small square dedicated to dancing at Blizzarts begins to fill up with more groups of people, evenly distributed across the floor, still respecting the space mapped out for our group. Martha and Alin seem to be the most complicit in their dancing together, especially when a Tribe Called Quest comes on, and then *Ms. Fat Booty* by Mos Def, my all-time favourite. Alin even approaches Martin and dances shoulder to shoulder.

As the dancefloor begins to get packed, so do our other friends begin to arrive. Meagan and Sarah, along with Alex, and Stephanie and her roommate both wrestle their way through the growing crowd to get to us. We have conveniently taken a large spot of the dancefloor however we have become a bit scattered, in mini groups of friends. Meagan drops her coat and heads directly to the dancefloor and just starts dancing as if it was her calling.

As soon as the DJ plays an old school tune of *Doin' It* by LL Cool J, Emilie begins to undulate her entire body, with a look of pure joy on her face. I myself feel get a little more groove in my step and I feed off the fun and the pleasure I am sensing. It

seems like the crowd is producing the same sense of fun and before we know it, the DJ segways in to a crowd pleaser, Outkast's *Ms. Jackson*. At this point, much like the experience at B-Side, the crowd is reciting the lyrics to *Ms. Jackson*, and the sea of people almost drowns out the voices of the artists being played. The DJ manages to tap into something unspeakable, which continues past *Ms. Jackson* and into Aloe Blacc's *I Need a Dollar*. Whereas there usually is a separation between the groups that make up the whole of the dancefloor, in these seamless four minutes and some of music, the dancefloor becomes a collective crowd. Even in manner of dress, people seem all casual and not too made up, as if everyone had the same idea about going out tonight.

Even though we are there together as a group, our circle breaks into several parts scattering all over the dancefloor. Stephanie, Catherine and Julian are dancing on one side, while Alin and Martha are more in the middle of the floor with a separate crowd dancing around them. Meagan, Emilie and I are closer to the DJ Booth, enjoying the beats and the mood. All of the sudden the DJ plays a Beatnuts song, and Meagan begins some of her fancier footwork and Emilie also rubs shoulders with me as we dance and sway our hips to the beat. Meagan seems particularly keen on dancing tonight, more so than during our prior outing; throughout the night Meagan is perhaps one of the only participants who takes up the most space and dances alone. She moves her arms and legs without a care for the constraint of the crowd around her. Furthermore she looks comfortable taking that space, by just being in her space, unapologetic for her movements. It shows specifically in the Beatnuts song and continues throughout the night with various other songs, such as *F**kin Problems* and *Birthday Song*.

On the other side of the floor Stephanie and her roommate Catherine are looking to the crowd in the interior of the dancefloor and begin to sing the lyrics to Pharrell's and Snoop Dogg's *Beautiful*. Their hips and arms begin to undulate moving in sync with the velvet voice of Pharrell. Of the entire group the two most done up participants are Stephanie and Catherine. All of the sudden, there seems to be another wave in the crowd as the DJ plays Eve. It is in this moment, that Emilie begins to let loose more so than before. She continues as the DJ plays some crowd favourite, like Sean Paul and Dr. Dre.

Before too long, Stephanie approaches one of our friends, and begins to dance a little closer and more provocatively next to him. She is trying to show him how to dance to the beat, as he seems to suffer a bit from lack of rhythm. She backs herself into his mold and begins to move more seductively to the song, Beenie Man's *Who Am I*, he seems to catch on for a little. As soon as the song is finished, she walks back to the other side of the circle to be with her friend. I see this as Stephanie's potential negotiation between her pleasure of dance and her more feminist perspectives. Stephanie is quite an open person as well as set in her feminist identity. She allows herself to participate in the experiential but still maintains her feminist values by distancing herself from this particular situation once the song is over.

Emilie at the same time, continues to dance moving her entire body, accentuating her curves. The DJ seems to be playing some of the staples of past hip hop culture, songs that most 80s and 90s kids have grown up with, which seem to jolt the crowd into a wave of pleasure. But as the night progresses into the early morning the DJ begins to play some more recent music, namely A\$AP Rocky's *F**kin Problems*. This song is the most recent in commercialized gangsta hip hop to have come out and continue the cycle the

sexually exploitative and explicit lyrics that have begun resurfacing in the evening. Oddly though, while most of my participants are turned off by this song, Meagan is the only one who is dancing harder, still delineating her space.

The time is nearing 2:15 AM and all of a sudden, there is a shift in vibe at Blizzarts. Although it has filled up to its capacity about an hour prior, the dancefloor is packed to the point of overflowing. People are dancing shoulder to shoulder, but seem to be stepping on each other's territory. What began as an evening spent dancing in the likes of similar company is fast turning into the scene from B-Side's; girls dancing on the podium next to the DJ booth, while a group of young men stand up close; who knows if it is to save someone from hurting themselves should they fall off, or to look up a skirt. It is the time of night where the mood shifts from being a dancefloor of fun dancing, to a dancefloor of raunch. Soon after, Meagan, who has been the most enthusiastic about the night, grabs my hand and asked, "Can we go?" a feeling which seems to be manifesting itself on most of our friends' and participants' faces.

Feeling the Event(s)

These four scenic descriptions have helped me in investigating affect in dancing hip hop spaces in Montreal. While there are variations in the dancing spaces due to crowd movement, and the visibility of what reveals affect, these evenings seem to have underlying similarities in what creates positive affect and in what moments my participants' disengage from affect present in the hip hop space. Each of these spaces attracts a different clientele, provides a different mood, a "thisness," according to Stivale, that makes a space conducive to different types of movement. In certain moments, it becomes clear who is the affect-alien, like during B-Side's *Move Bitch* moment, where

Meagan as well as myself were the ones who noticed a certain behaviour from the crowd that did not sit well with us. In other moments it is unclear what causes the dissonance, whether negotiation of territory between groups or, the break in dance because one must leave the dancing space.

Noticing the difference between smooth and striated spaces, and how they affected my participants' dancing and freedom, helped me investigate the affect flowing within that space. For example, in the Salon Officiel outing our group was the one responsible for the striated space, by dancing around our handbags. This clearly created a constraint on the participants (those who didn't want to stray from their bags) and of the crowd at large who could no longer move across our circle. In contrast, in our Blizzarts outing, both Martha and Emilie used the smooth space of the dancefloor to move as freely as they can. Their dancing movements mirrored the open space in that it appears free and unstructured.

On more than one occasion the local social field, influenced the habitus of my participants, whether allowing them to take up more space or encroaching on them, making them perform louder or mute their movements. An instance of this, occurred during the B-Side outing where our group started out by occupying a space but slowly and subtly over the time that we were there, were moved to a more constrained area. It seems that spaces populated on the dancefloor hold similarities to territories negotiated by different groups.

However, cultural theorist Lawrence Grossberg helps me in elaborating on the concept of territorialization. Grossberg explains that territorialization "is about how you can move across those relationships, where you can and cannot invest, where you can

stop/rest and where you can move and make new connections what matters and in what ways” (313).

Here it is easy to see that the club space in which these evenings took place was a territorialized space. Your body moves across the striated or smooth space, interacting with the various other bodies inhabiting the same space; whether you are entering a space that is populated with your group, your territory, or you are walking through someone else’s circle, another’s territory. If the space is striated and you disturb it by your presence, then you change the affect that is present within that space.

Grossberg continues, “Affect then becomes a magical way of bringing in the body. Certainly, there is a kind of mediation process but it is a machinic one. It goes through regimes that organize the body and the discourses of our lives, organize everyday life, and the produce specific kinds of effects” (316). Here Grossberg demonstrates, as have Ahmed and Stivale, the ways in which affect is present in our every moments, and how it helps us navigate, and negotiate our bodies through moments and spaces, continually altering the body’s experience, much like moving through a crowded space or being stuck in a dancefloor when the music becomes unappealing to you.

Much like Stivale, Grossberg attempts to explain affect as particular pieces that create a whole, similar to Stivale’s (and inherently Deleuze and Guattari’s) “haecceities”. Grossberg describes them as following: “Organizations of affect might include will and attention, or moods, or orientation, what I have called “mattering maps,” and the various culturally and phenomenological constituted emotional economies” (316). What one can notice in the descriptions above are the mattering maps, the haecceities of each evening.

For instance within our B-Side outing there was a moment where I characterized the flow and the space of the evening as waves. I was able measure the mood of the space around me through waves in thinking through those moments as longitudes and latitudes as discussed by Stivale. In recalling that evening, and remembering the territorialization between our group and the crowd at large, I was able to see in what way this territorialization contributes to how my participants act and react within the dancing event. Recalling a once open space, which then became more of an imploding circle amongst our friends, shifted the way in which my participants danced. Of course there were exceptions such as Martha and Alin, who towards the end of the evening headed directly to the middle of the dancefloor and disrupted another circle by dancing. Similarly, on our third outing to Salon Officiel, the haecceities became more visible with Dalia's and subsequently Stephanie's and my dropping of the bags in the middle of our dancing circle. The bags became a clear target in the longitude and latitudes of our circle and the space in which we were dancing. Crossing within that spot guaranteed an unpleasant encounter at once disrupting our group and disrupting the space of dance.

Mapping out the affect of these outings allowed one to tap into the feeling, of not only the evening in question, but of the participants, in understanding how they may have navigated the spaces throughout the nights. Utilizing Lis Engel's method of scenic description along with a reflexive practice of writing allows for just that. While implementing these combined methods, it also allows me as the researcher to understand the wider contexts in which my participants function in, borrowing from Butler's (and consequently Bourdieu's) idea of *habitus*. This aids me in thinking through my participants' conversations following the dance outings.

Conclusion

These four outings were formative in my investigation of affect and performativity in dancing spaces. The particular clubs attended during the outings gave a particular view as to the consumption of commercialized hip hop within Montreal. As mentioned previously, these four locations were chosen according to the comfort, familiarity, popularity, and discovery of the participants. They make up a sample of the club hip consumption specific to commercialized and mainstream hip hop music within the city.

Through these dance outings, working through some of the theoretical notions that were presented by Ahmed, Stivale and of course Engel allows me to better visualize how affect can manifest itself, rather how I can begin to grasp affect, in dancing spaces. Mattering maps, haecceities were all influences on my participants and the space they were in. Stivale asserts:

This example helps us better to grasp the very nature of the dance and music event in terms of its thisness, which is not rigidly just ‘this’ or ‘that’ but in fact unfolds as a becoming, consisting, according to Deleuze and Guattari ‘entirely of relations of movement and rest between molecules or particles, capacities to affect and be affected (1987, 261)’. (117)

In the following chapter I will analyze some of the key elements that have come out from these dancing outings within my interviews with the six participants. These conversations took place shortly after our dance outings.

Combining the scenic descriptions with the interviews allows me to complement both methodologies in order to see the framework in which these negotiations occur. In spending the time recalling the evenings with my participants and writing down all the occurrences in the dance outings, allows for deeper analysis of the evenings. In my

examination of the evenings, through the scenic descriptions and interviews, I am able to move fluidly between all the outings in order to see if the behaviour of a specific participant was the same or changed depending on the evening. In what instances did a negotiation occur, and what were the affective moments discerned that lead up to a certain type of movement, or a participant's performative action. Combining the scenic description with the participant interviews allows for discussions of certain points which would have remained uncovered if I were not looking for them. For example, I was able to notice moments in the club that stood out for me, whereas for some of my participants these moments were unnoticeable and commonplace, not paying mind to what actually had occurred. In recalling such moments in the interviews, I am able to remind my participant of these specific instants and discuss their meaning. This combination is also a way to re-engage my participant in the moment of the dance outing in our interviews; much like the recalling of pleasure, discussed by Ahmed. In describing the scene, and retelling it like an anecdote or a story that we shared, allows for a more enjoyable conversation that opens the door to further explorations not only about the moments in question, the tactics of negotiations within the evening, but also about how these values manifest within the participant's day-to day life.

I am also able to tap into moments that were forgotten by my participants, unconscious moments of performativity, which when discussed with the participant in question creates the 'aha' moment. Combining the scenic descriptions with the interviews produces a balance between the auto-ethnography and ethnography which occurred in the research and helps form a fuller picture of the evenings and negotiations in question.

Drawing on certain elements from the various evenings, I investigate further how my participants negotiate feminist space in the hip hop spaces mentioned above. Understanding the spaces the participants negotiated help map the ways in which they consciously and unconsciously negotiate their values within those spaces. In invoking the evenings in which we danced, the participants helped me explain and expand on some of the dissonant moments, or in contrast, the moments of pleasure where hip hop and feminism ostensibly did not intersect.

Chapter Four: Tactics For Feminist Negotiations in Sexist Hip Hop Spaces

Introduction

In previous chapters, I was able to explore the intersection between hip hop and feminism, the importance of understanding affect in a dancing event, more specifically in hip hop dance, and lastly describe dancing events using Richardson's and Engel's auto-ethnographic and participant-observation methodologies of writing as discovery and scenic descriptions. Employing these methodologies in my fieldwork helped me better understand the affect flowing through the hip hop clubs and in between my participants during the evenings described. Exploring how affect sticks to bodies, travels between objects and how values can manifest themselves through dance practice was a way for me to see if my participants could negotiate their feminist values within a hip hop space which at times was explicit, exploitative and sexist. And if such negotiations were possible, what were the ways in which they occurred.

Within this chapter, I will investigate what potential tactics occurred on the dancefloor during our four outings. Doing so will allow me to understand how a female participant can negotiate her feminist values within a hip hop space which may, at times, stand in opposition to them.

With the exception of Martha and Alin, all the interviews were conducted in a one on one format. This because Alin and Martha were more comfortable speaking about the evenings when they were interviewed together. It is worthy to note that these two participants have been friends for over a decade, and thus participated in dance outings frequently and together. Their chemistry in talking about the night came from their shared experiences on and off the dancefloor.

All of the interviews occurred several days after each outing in order to keep the events of the evening fresh both in my participants' and my own mind. They occurred in two coffee shops in the city, La Petite Cuillère (Plateau), and the Second Cup (Downtown McGill) as well as a little resto-bar *Auprès de ma Blonde*, on the Plateau. These informal settings were chosen for several reasons: the first being that La Petite Cuillère and *Auprès de ma Blonde* are fairly close to the Sherbrooke metro station. While my participants come from all over the city, the Plateau is still their number one destination when it comes to spending their free time. Secondly, both spaces are low-key Plateau hangouts my participants were familiar with. They both exhibit a relaxed atmosphere that would ease my participants in conversation. Similarly, The Second Cup location was chosen as a halfway point between the participants who live in the suburbs and who would have to travel in the evenings outside of the city.

In contrast, were I to have held the interviews in my home or a more private location, I strongly believe my participants would have felt the interview process as more of a procedure-like meeting rather than a conversation. Thus, keeping the space informal and lively at the same time, allowed for our conversation to occur naturally, just as if we were meeting like any other time to talk about our lives (a pastime that occurred quite frequently between the participants of my group).

The interviews ranged in length from twenty minutes to one hour and were based more on our exchange of the evenings' happenings rather than a pre-set of questions I had prepared. At times I found myself answering questions my participants had about the evening and moving on to related topics that did not necessarily have to do with the evening in question, much like a conversation between two friends; thus reflecting the

scope of this method. In addition, given that most of the interviews occurred on weekdays (after the weekend of the dance outings), they were scheduled for the early evenings around 5 PM or so, to allow the participants time to arrive to the space, sit down have a coffee or a glass of wine (depending on the venue), and relax, therefore not feeling rushed into the topic of conversation.

The interviews occurred between November 2012 and February 2013. Each participant was interviewed at least twice throughout the duration of this research. Within my interviews, I was interested in investigating what were the commonalities between the participants' dancing experiences, and what were the particular types of patterns amongst my participants in their club behaviour. In my analysis of the scenic descriptions as well as the interview transcripts, I determined four tactics of negotiation between the feminist participant dancers and the sexist hip hop space in which they were.

In order to proceed with the analysis of these four tactics, I want to elaborate first on what a negotiation between feminist values and hip hop spaces means within the context of this research. I began my investigations to see if there was a possibility of embodied negotiation between feminist values and hip hop spaces. Through my deep analysis of the scenic descriptions, coupled with the detailed interviews, I determined that yes, a negotiation does occur in such spaces, and that this negotiation between self and space is possible through tactics used by the participants. But negotiation here serves as a force of disturbance, at times as a resistance but also at times as an accommodation. Certain tactics are clearly disruptive and serve as a well-defined resistance between the participant and the space. Others function as more of an accommodation, reconciling the participant with the sexist space as a way to get through that particular moment.

However, neither resistance nor accommodation, within those sexist moments, serves as a method of unification of feminist value in hip hop space. Rather, they both work as tactics of dancefloor survival (negotiations). I draw on Michel De Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday Life*, to elaborate on how tactics serve as negotiations between feminist values and hip hop spaces.

De Certeau's work is seminal in understanding how the participants of this research can exist in a space that at times opposes their values. De Certeau cites in his book an example which I find is relevant to my own research. He discusses the Spanish colonization of the indigenous Indians. What is revelatory is how the Indians who were conquered managed to exist within this new power structure. Drawing from Michel Foucault's work on power relations, De Certeau explains:

...they subverted them not by rejecting or altering them [Spanish customs], but by using them with respect to ends and references foreign to the system that they had no choice but to accept...their use of a dominant social order deflected its power which they lacked the means to challenge; they escaped it without leaving it. (xiii)

Tactics are "an art in manipulating and enjoying," (xxii) which directly speaks to this research. The tactics employed by my participants are a way for them to continue engaging in the hip hop dancing space while maintaining the pleasure they can have from participating within the moment in question, which does not reflect their feminist values. Tactics as "negotiation" work only because my participants are within a contextual frame of sexist hip hop space, the dominant power in the club space. It is within such a space, and within sexist moments, that tactics can work as forms of performance in order to create embodied negotiations between feminist values and the space itself.

De Certeau continues in elaborating how tactics are presented within a larger dominant space. I draw on his analogy of the proprietor and the renter:

This mutation makes the text habitable, like a rented apartment. It transforms another person's property into a space borrowed for a moment by a transient. Renters make comparable changes in an apartment they furnish with their acts and memories; as do speakers, in the language into which they insert the messages of their native tongue and, through their accent, through their own 'turns of phrase,' etc. (xxi).

Tactics through this example are exactly what De Certeau calls "Making Do." Much like the renter in the apartment, the feminist participant "makes do" within the sexist hip hop space. Performing tactics for a potential negotiation allows her to make the sexist moment her own, to negotiate between her feminist values and the sexist space.

De Certeau qualifies the use of tactics as methods of the "disempowered," within the paradigm of the dominant, such as the Indians with the Spanish or the renter with the proprietor. I would say that within this research the disempowered is the "feminist other" within a sexist hip hop space. Thus, in order to be able to maintain one's feminist legitimacy within a sexist space, and continue to derive pleasure from the activity of dance and social interaction within the club space, this feminist other performs potential tactics of negotiation.

Moreover De Certeau elaborates that tactics are "a clever *utilization of time*, of the opportunities it presents and also of the play that it introduces into the foundations of power" (38-39). This is of particular importance in maintaining the pleasure from participating in dance outings. Tactics often times rely on moments, within this research the sexist moment, to make themselves visible through potential embodied performances. The moment of discordance between feminist values and sexist hip hop space, is a crack where a tactic can take place. "[Tactics] must vigilantly make use of the cracks that particular conjunctions open in the surveillance of the proprietary powers. It poaches them. It creates surprises in them. It can be where it is least expected. It is a guileful ruse"

(37). As well, since tactics rely on timing, they remain transitory, fleeting moments within the moment-to-moment choices the feminist participants make on the dancefloor, through their performative dance practice.

In drawing on De Certeau's concept of tactics, I elaborate on ways in which there is a potential for negotiation from my participants on the dancefloor through their dance practice. I will begin my analysis of the tactics that were used as negotiations in hip hop spaces, with the most prevalent of all the tactics: humour as intervention. Throughout the four outings, comedic interventions were a staple of my participants' behaviours; whether it was through facial expressions, gesticulating the lyrics or even more deliberately taking the space around them and performing a humour "show" by dancing flamboyantly, humour was used as a tactic of negotiation within these hip hop spaces to songs that were explicit as well as outrageous. As I will explore in a later section, humour is a tactical intervention that allows for a participation in hip hop space without feeling bad about one's pleasure in participating. Humour creates a space of comfort and a way to display protest and disturb the space without creating a negative awkwardness; a feeling most participants don't like in dancing events.

The second tactic of negotiation that occurs is the hypersexualization of movements as resistance. Several participants engaged in this method as a way to display the explicitness and exploitative nature of the music, and subsequently the affect in the club. By hypersexualizing the movements, I will argue they demonstrated the gap that exists between their values and the space in which they were dancing.

Thirdly I will investigate how some of the participants used memory, more specifically nostalgia, as a tactical buffer between their values and the hip hop space. In

attributing memories from their past to certain songs that were deemed explicit and derogatory, these participants were able to create a safe space to dance in.

Lastly, I will consider how certain participants disassociated themselves from the hip hop space, and the circulating affect which inferred sexist behaviour, by some conventional tactics, such as walking away from the space, or a more unusual method, in viewing the artists and their songs, as performances part of a larger theatrical game.

Humour as an Intervention

In the four outings for this research, the most notable tactic used as a negotiation between participants' values and hip hop spaces was humour as intervention. This tactic was fairly easy to spot given the exaggerated out-of-the-ordinary movements, although the reasons behind the humour remained elusive until the interviews took place. The moments when this occurred were either in moments of pure joy or understated discomfort due to the songs that were being played within the dancing space. The participants which were most inclined to participate in comedic interventions were Alin, Meagan and Martha.

In looking back at the descriptions of the outings, the moments where one noticed comedic interventions are quite important because these moments occurred through understanding the social field and the feeling of the dancing event. Much like Grossberg's "mattering maps," or Stivale's "feeling the event," seeing the place of humour in dancing spaces was due to several factors of the event such as dancing space, the movement of the crowd, and the explicit music within the dancing space. If participants felt claustrophobic, in certain instances because of the crowd, they either retreated, or as in Martha and Alin's case, they would dive directly into it. If the music

was deemed ridiculous, and a participant like Meagan immersed herself into the song such as *Grillz*, this definitely created a flow of humour within the group.

The first time this tactic of humour was noticed is with Martha and Meagan at our B-Side outing. As part of the joke, Martha danced around Meagan and comedically shook her torso to the beat in the crowded space. This moment provided a distraction from the ever-filling space. This action in the crowded hip hop space, as well with the more flamboyant song playing by LMFAO allowed both Martha and Meagan to perform aspects of their personality, of their identity within the sea of strangers at B-Side. Although both participants don't identify as feminists, both have specific views on feminism, and how they may define their "f" word. For Martha "it depends on the meaning of feminism. I'm a strong woman depending on the situation that I'm in." For Meagan "I wouldn't consider myself one. I feel like I have great potential." Their dancing to this particular song doesn't necessarily associate with their ideals but more so to their personalities.

Here, although these actions fall under the rubric of performance in a club space, I believe it is important to stress the difference between performance and performativity, a distinction Osumare herself underlines in her study of breakdancers in Hawaii. Osumare reveals performativity is "often [an] unconscious but meaningful series of bodily postures, gestures, and movements that implicitly signify and mark a sense of social identity or identities in everyday pedestrian activity" (31). If we engage Butler's focus of performativity's within this instance, we can see that the habitus, the participants' identities and personalities, is exteriorized through the light-hearted response to their surroundings. They describe themselves as "silly, goofy," all comedic aspects of their

behaviour. However, the hip hop club space, in Butler's elaboration of Bourdieu—the social field that is hip hop club culture—may or may not be conducive to such behaviour. In the above example, it would seem that the affect in the space along with the song choice helped propagate comedic intervention. Why? Well, LMFAO is a known duo of performers which often present themselves as comedic and overly-theatrical. In addition, associations are easily made between the artists' music and the artists' videos, and while the lyrics themselves already allow some humour into the mix, the music video strengthens that relation to the comedic.

Specifically, the music video attached to *I'm Sexy and I Know It* has both male artists walking around in barely there speedos and into a room full of glitter. Deriving comedy from this social field is not difficult, and thus performing it to demonstrate one's identity isn't either. When I asked Martha about that evening, if joking and comedy play a part in her dancing habit she answered: "Yeah the joke thing in dancing, even at B-Side's, I close my eyes and 'I don't give a fuck' I'm just going to do my thing. I love just dancing and I just want to move however my body wants to move because at that moment I am just there with my friends." Similarly, in other instances, Meagan felt that the familiarity of the songs she allowed her to be "silly." More specifically, for Meagan knowing a song allowed her to perform it. The best example of this is *Grillz*. "I knew the words to these songs...it didn't feel silly to be silly, it came naturally, that's what I was doing that night. And it happened way more than it usually does. Was it the music? I don't know, I was just more comfortable doing that."

In contrast, moments of comedic intervention in which performance arose from discomfort rather than pure joy, can occur within the same space. During our evening out

at Royal Phoenix Bar, there was a moment where another humoristic intervention occurred. It was right at the beginning of a Brandy and Chris Brown collaboration, *Put It Down*. This is very interesting because the song itself did not seem to portray ideals that were explicit or exploitative; rather the main artist, Chris Brown, has a history of physical abuse towards a famous singer. It may have not been the lyrics, but rather the fact that we were aware of this artist's sordid past which created the moment of discomfort in our dancing.

Throughout the evening at Royal Phoenix Bar, Alin had participated alongside Martha and Meagan in dancing flamboyantly, making faces and acting out the lyrics, though it coincided at times with some of the raunchiest song lyrics of the evening. When I asked Alin about this intervention she said: "It's because we were taking a situation that to me [that] in videos and public, for me is degrading. And I'm taking and making it into something funny, or different. I like different as opposed to degrading... I think it's more my personality, if someone says to dance sexy, I probably won't be able to dance sexy." Martha continues in explaining:

You don't have to dance raunchy to a raunchy song, or dance ghetto to a ghetto song. I think I was making fun of ghetto. Instead of grinding and having sex on the [dance]floor with a guy, I will rub my ass against her and she'll smack it. I think it's funny and she thinks it's hilarious.

The use of humour as a tactical intervention within these two types of negotiations between the participants' values and the hip hop spaces, reminds me of the notion of protestival¹⁹. According to Graham St. John, the "protestival" can be considered a "complex of action performances enabling exposure and revelation" (168). Here, the

¹⁹ "Protestival' is a term coined by radical technician John Jacobs, and offers a useful heuristic for contemporary events which are simultaneously negative/positive, transgressive/progressive, aesthetic/instrumental" (St. John 168).

diverging habitus and social field open up the space for humour as intervention. Given that these dancing spaces and the social fields are codified by the crowd (whether looking to hook up or not, free-flowing sexuality etc.), and by the music, there are certain expectations tied into entering such an environment. These codified expectations and anticipations are easily demonstrated by the B-Side example of the two young women harassing the bus boy in the first scenic description.

My participants are aware of the expectations of the social field in in which we were, and extended beyond our dancing group. This is because of their continued participation in club culture in Montreal throughout the years, and the context of hooking up that is attached to club culture. Those who participated in a comedic intervention “throw a wrench” into the codified system, prying open the dancing environment being used, like for example at B-Side’s, for “hooking up” and turning it into a space of dancing pleasure. Meagan, Martha and Alin managed to mess with the striated space by changing the rules and opening up the floor for the consumption of the music and the dancing to stand for something other than intended.

This is analogous to what a protestival stands for; humour as intervention is “transgressive in movements” (St. John 170). St. John goes on to explain that the idea of protestival “effectively subvert[s] the normative function of space through a carnivalesque hacking” (172). Thus using the joy of comedic intervention allows one to pry open the dancing space, with its social field constrictions, and allow this hacking of the space to occur. Protestival simply conjoins the terms protest and festival; and while one normally should be conscious of what he or she is protesting, applying this term to comedic intervention is accurate given that Alin, Martha and Meagan all demonstrated

the performativity of their identities through comedic intervention. As Alin explained in her interview: “I always feel goofy when I’m dancing. It’s how I am. It’s my humour and actions on a daily basis that is goofy. It doesn’t hide away when I’m dancing.” Meagan continues this thought in saying, “I think it goes back to the dancing for fun. It’s not about the sexy aspect of dancing; it’s about having a good time. So songs – and I think that’s why the silly part came out too – those songs could be silly instead of having to be sexy and provocative.”

How is comedic intervention then considered to be performative? Drawing on Osumare’s idea that “Performativity is “often [an] unconscious but meaningful series of bodily postures, gestures, and movements that implicitly signify and mark a sense of social identity or identities in everyday pedestrian activity” (31) we see how a dancer’s identity is performative. For Osumare this was made clear with her example of a breakdancer who improvises a freestyle and performs variations of Hawaiian traditional dances as part of his ‘keep[ing] it real’ (39) moment within the dancing circle. Similarly in my exploration, this translates to Alin’s comedic dancing on the dancefloor at Royal Phoenix Bar.

The tactic of humor as intervention is one that is most utilized and noticeable on the dancefloor. This particular tactic of negotiation can be termed as a resistance given that it is a very public and visible disruption of the hip hop space. Comedic outbursts garner an attention beyond the restrained group of the participants, while maintaining their pleasure in participating in the sexist hip hop space. This particular tactic helps attract attention to the larger system in place; that of a potential sexist acceptance within the hip hop club. “Tactics are procedures that gain validity in relation to the pertinence

they lend to time – to the circumstances which the precise instance of an intervention transforms into a favorable situation, to the rapidity of the movements that change the organization of a space” (De Certeau 38). Within this example, the comedic intervention transforms an uncomfortable situation into a favourable one, open to feminist participation. This particular tactic can also incite a larger audience to participate, creating potentially a momentum of feminist intervention within the space, maintaining a status of resistance as it expands its visibility.

Hypersexualization of Movement as Resistance

While comedic intervention is a major tactic of negotiation between feminist values and sexist hip hop spaces popular with Meagan, Alin and Martha, several of my other participants revealed another type of tactical negotiation; that of performance of hypersexualized movements as negotiation within the sexist space.

Performance, in contrast to performativity, as stated earlier, is an action considered conscious. What participants such as Dalia, Emilie and Stephanie displayed in their dancing is a hypersexualization in their movements that would be considered as performance. Although the movements were conscious, the intent behind was demonstrated to be unconscious, through further discussions with these participants. Various aspects of the events were conducive to such a negotiation. The funk, the melody, the crowd, and of course the mood of the participants, all affected the level of hypersexualization of the movements.

In Dalia’s participation in the B-Side outing, she attributed her reaction to certain explicit and exploitative songs as follows: “When you go clubbing you can be a totally different person, you can do whatever you want...I feel like it is not totally your identity

that you're showing there. You're performing something, you're entering something; there is not your total intellect there. You are using your body, you are using the rhythm.”

In that moment, Dalia was dancing quite provocatively to Max-a-Million's *Sexual Healing*, a quite explicit song that falls under the rubric of old school hip hop. Her movements were particularly sexualized within that song and somewhat exaggerated. Although Dalia did not see them as exaggerated, in comparison to the group that she was in, they were. She continues, “I don't think I'm performing part of my identity, I think I'm performing something social, connecting with other people, not necessarily on the lyrics but on the music, on the movement...when you go in a club it's a play, you're playing not an entire role, but part of you is playing something.”

For Dalia, the attitude she is performing is part of the social etiquette of the club, although she herself makes the distinction between what happens in the club and what happens outside of it. Her performance to hip hop songs such as Wiz Khalifa's *Young Wild and Free*, as well as Ludacris's *Move Bitch* demonstrates that performing to the expectations and guidelines of the social field, her habitus is affected only slightly. Her performance can only be perceived as a resistance when this moment is taken within the context of her life. I draw here on Campbell's discussion of irony in booty dancing: “its meaning depends on...the reader's 'discursive community': 'a complex configuration of shared knowledge, beliefs, values and communicative strategies (Hutcheon 1994, p.91)”” (Campbell 506). Dalia's performance only works as a resistance of the space because her discursive community is present and is aware of her feminist values.

She admits to feeling a “pinch” when she hears songs that don't coincide with her values. She continues “I tell myself “well you did it, you had a good time and that's it,

and you know what you stand for in real life.” I don’t think that clubbing is [the] real life. I think it’s just a performance, you’re playing something. The idea of the game is fundamental.” But by playing the game, and admitting to it, she draws attention to it, and thus resists it.

Similarly, Emilie takes a song she hears and pushes it to her limits. She explains:

It’s a method to own it, that I decide that yes this song ridiculous, and yes this song is objectifying, but you know what, I’m going to go with it, I will take it and run with it and be my bad self and everyone else can just deal. There is a level of... not of wanting to be objectified...It’s not that it has to do with anything around it but through the expression of those lyrics, I think you can decide to take them for yourself. I will dance my heart out, I will be kind of raunchy and way into it, but I don’t think it necessarily objectifies me. I don’t think it’s me letting the objectification work, more than it’s me deciding to take it and run with it.

This is obvious in Emilie’s case when she is dancing to Sean Paul or Ludacris. It is easy to notice the fluidity between her performativity and performance. She continues, “It does go back to performance, and things not being real. It’s a performance. It’s fun but at the end of the day it’s just that.” Here the tactic for Emilie, who self-identifies as a feminist, occurs in knowingly playing the “video vixen,” or the “ho,” stereotypes of women heavily discussed in Sharpley-Whiting and Rose’s analyses of the black female *misrepresentation* of images circulating in commercial hip hop. Emilie elaborates that playing that role is part of her performance, her tactic. In taking pleasure of dancing, and hypersexualizing her movements, by undulating her body to the beat, by “getting her grind on,” she is calling attention the nature of the song, and in fact blatantly exposing its sexism through her exaggerated movements. This again, is similar to Campbell’s analysis of irony in booty dancing because the irony in dancing directed towards the close circle of participants who know her.

The tactic demonstrated comes here through the exaggeration of movement. The intended irony comes from Emilie's position as a feminist. "I consider myself a feminist and I'm always a bit baffled as to how it is considered an ugly word. I feel that being a woman kind of de facto makes you a feminist...you want your life to be good you want to be treated equally, or want to be happy, like everyone, to achieve that, in a world that's not always fair, I think it's important to be a feminist." Here Emilie dances ironically through her movements, and this can be recognized as irony because those who surround her are aware of her values as a feminist, much like Dalia's dancing negotiation. Although she may not be negotiating her values within the dance space at large, she manages to negotiate them within the hip hop space of her immediate surroundings. She concludes: "In a matter of speaking it's being able to keep control over it. I mean I'm happy to play along but I have to be with people that play along."

However, this may pose a problem. If Dalia and Emilie's discursive community is not present, then the irony in their tactical resistance would be considered a failed one given that any crowd member at large within the hip hop space will view their hypersexualized dance as confirming of the space. Rather than call attention to the sexist moment, it may in fact replicate it. Campbell asks:

When a white girl shakes her booty, is she colonizing back female bodies with her own, ironically performing both race and gender, or negotiating new spaces for her own sexuality? And what relationship does she have with the music that drives her gyrations, associated as it is with a hypermasculinized and often explicitly misogynistic strand of African-American culture? (498)

What is then the implication in the failure of irony? It is then a tactic that is engulfed by the dominant paradigm of the hip hop space. The irony in this type of resistance is lost if no one there is aware of its ironic intended meaning. For irony to work as part of this

tactic, “It must vigilantly make use of the cracks that particular conjunctions open in the surveillance of the proprietary powers” (De Certeau 37). However, if no one there is able to recognize the cracks of the conjuncture, aside from Emilie, then the irony is lost in the ether of the club.

In contrast to Dalia and Emilie, Stephanie feels more comfortable performing when she is surrounded by people that she is less familiar with. Stephanie is aware of her performance, and most often when she feels like it, it involves someone in her surroundings. “I have a tendency to feel more comfortable with people that I don’t know than people that I do know because people who don’t know me can’t judge me; they can’t really know what I’m like. I’m usually very shy but with someone that I don’t know there seems to be fewer boundaries.” Through Stephanie’s engagement of movement in dance she is able to perform, and enact the affect of certain songs through her body. How is this performance then considered a tactic of resistance? In that the act brought forth by dancing provocatively, the act of hooking up, remains incomplete; this then becomes a disruption of the intended context of the sexist space.

Part of the inherent social field in club culture, is the notion of “hooking up.” Promiscuous dancing in a club setting such as B-Side or Salon Officiel promotes a certain mentality of “hooking up.” However, participating in grinding or booty dancing (usually a precursor to hooking up) and leaving the sexual tension between dancers on the dancefloor thus means leaving the action (highlighted by the languorous beat or by the explicit lyrics) of hooking up incomplete, hence leaving the performance unfinished. In leaving the performance incomplete, Stephanie manages to circumvent the habitus of the field and still fully participate in the dancing. There are contexts and histories that extend

beyond dancing (what is associated with the music, the dance culture, the dancer, etc.) and as such we can explain why hooking up can be considered a context that is articulated beyond a dancefloor. Here, in our specific dance setting, the context is Stephanie's values which extend beyond her dancing space.

She is using this tactic to “manipulate[ing] and enjoy[ing]” (De Certeau xxii) the space around her. Stephanie's use of hypersexualization as a tactic which “develops in an atmosphere of tensions...for which it provides symbolic balances, contracts of compatibility and compromises, all more or less temporarily. The tactics of consumption, the ingenious ways in which the weak make use of the strong, thus lend a political dimension to everyday practices” (De Certeau xvii). The tension here exists between her feminist values and the pleasure from dancing within the sexist hip hop space. This tactic through Stephanie's dance practice is in fact temporary and allows her a way to continue her participation, her consumption.

Outlining performance as a tactical resistance, most often through the hypersexualization of movement, or the interaction of movements between participants and their dancing partners, can show how one can negotiate feminist values within hip hop spaces such as B-Side's, Royal Phoenix Bar, Salon Officiel and Blizzarts. In drawing on Butler's concept of performance, the body then speaks “extralinguistically” over the message sung through specific songs and the affect created within the space. What materializes then is that the body “speaks” for itself, whether by irony or by pleasure; this body manages to negotiate its own space, to negotiate its values through the tactic of hypersexualization of movement within its habitus, and the social field of the club.

In Butler's Chapter *Subversive Bodily Acts*, she brings to light with her notion that bodies aren't just social beings that are politically and socially regulated from outside sources, the social field, but are considered "variable boundaries" depending on the habitus, and of course affect. Attracting attention to the performance of the songs, lyrics and environment changes how bodies interact in the space and amongst each other. The bodies then become the site of struggle and thus negotiation, always intricately dancing the line between more habitus and less social field.

As Butler explains:

The abiding gendered self will then be shown to be structured by repeated acts that seek to approximate the ideal of a substantial ground of identity, but which, in their occasional *discontinuity* (sic), reveal the temporal and contingent groundlessness of this 'ground.' The possibilities of gender transformation are to be found precisely in the arbitrary relation between such acts, in the possibility of a failure to repeat, a de-formity, or a parodic repetition that exposes the phantasmatic effect of abiding identity as a politically tenuous construction. (192)

In having the body enact and repeat what the lyrics portray in some of the songs throughout the evening, and in observing the hypersexualized dance movements of certain participants we can see the breakdown between the participant and the space. While the body draws attention, and performs the lyrics, the fact that the participant cuts this enactment short of its fulfilling social field, shows us how the participant negotiates her values within the hip hop space. Stephanie eloquently explains this: "I like that it's the type of environment that you construct yourself [on the dancefloor] that you let a persona out. I don't do that at home, but at the same time it feels like you free yourself, a sort of escapism, and you don't feel judged because you're with your friends."

The tactic of hypersexualization of movement as resistance has a different visibility in the sexist hip hop club. In comparison to humour as intervention, this

particular tactic relies heavily on irony which can often times fail if the participant's discursive community is not there to notice the ironic moment, as Campbell explains. However, hypersexualization as resistance can have a similar visibility as humour as intervention. Coupled with the participation and the gaze of one's discursive community, this tactic can draw attention to the sexism inherent in hip hop spaces, rendering the situation "parodic" as Butler elaborates. The tactic within this case can be considered a double-edged sword; at once very revelatory and at the same time very much in line with the sexualized space within the club. In order for it to be understood as a resistance, the participant must be surrounded by her discursive community.

Memory and Nostalgia as a Buffer

A further tactical negotiation that emerged out of the several interviews was the use of memory, more specifically nostalgia as a buffer between the club that is playing music that is explicit and exploitative, and the memories of my participants.

Several of the participants cited recalling memories from an earlier time when they used to go out dancing, or listen to those songs when they were younger, that were attributed to certain songs in the clubs. This was an interesting discovery, one I had not anticipated. In using the pleasure of recalling these memories, the participants were able to create for themselves an imaginary safe space to participate in without feeling guilt or discomfort in their participation.

Ahmed investigates this idea of recalling an object as pleasurable. "We can just recall pleasure to experience pleasure, even if these pleasures do not involve exactly the same sensation, even if the impressions of memory are not quite as lively" (Ahmed 32-

33). The object here is the song playing in the hip hop space, and participants thus derive pleasure from recalling their youth when this song had a different meaning for them.

Moments in which the tactic of memory and nostalgia occurred were moments either associated with the music itself and/or the space in which the participants were dancing. These associations allowed the participants more comfort in the social fields of the dancing spaces, thus feeling a certain comfort in negotiating their values within the various hip hop spaces explored. Here, their memories helped negotiate a moment of discordance, similar to De Certeau's notion of "cracks," between their values and the music playing.

It is no surprise that music helps evoke memories. Associations are easily made which trigger memories, and in the case of our dancing, nostalgia. For Alin, the artist Ginuwine holds a specific memory. I recall a specific moment in our Salon Officiel outing, in which Emilie exclaimed that the *Pony* song was the epitome of objectifying men and how I knew from a previous discussion that Alin would say the opposite. Alin recounts, "I have connections [to] the song[s], like the *Pony* song by Ginuwine. If that song would have come out now, I would have no attachment to it, I wouldn't be dancing to it and like it as much [as I do], but for me like I said, the *Pony* song is more acceptable because of the connection I have to it [from when I was younger]."

For Alin her connection to the *Pony* song comes from her childhood and is what allows her to negotiate between the explicit song and her participation.

I'll be honest when I was younger it didn't really bother me as much because I was still figuring out who I was. Figuring out my beliefs and my standards at a younger age. And that's why to me that *Pony* song is probably less degrading because of those connections I made when I didn't have these beliefs and standards in my life, and now when I hear those songs, like the *Pussy* song by Iggy Azalea, it bothers me.

This is a very interesting point, as feminist sensibilities develop over time. Especially in a generation that consumes hip hop culture, where most young women have grown up with knowledge of the feminist movement and knowledge of hip hop culture. Being part of this generation, into which feminism has already helped shape popular culture, it is easy to be less aware of feminist inclinations, and yet still thrive as a woman. Alin explores this more specifically when I ask her about her values: “I’m not a feminist; I’m an independent woman like Beyoncé said it (*laughing*). I’m a strong woman depending on the situation that I’m in...Unless someone holds my gender against me, but no one really does, that’s why I don’t consider myself a feminist.” Not considering herself a feminist is a symptom of postfeminism, much akin to the “I’m not a feminist but...” outlook. However, Alin’s ideas about feminist identity are more closely tied to the negative categorization of feminism, rather than the ideology itself, given that many of her experiences of being a strong woman are tied to the family dynamics between her brothers, father and herself.

In comparison to Alin, Stephanie’s nostalgia is determined by the dancing space and by the social field in which she remembers and makes the connection between what it was and what it is.

Before, Salon Officiel used to be known as Roy Bar, and I remember when I was younger, when I would use fake IDs and I would go to Roy Bar and dance at the hip hop nights. I didn’t understand English as well as I do now. All these memories from my teenage years, even if I wouldn’t be listening to this music, it reminds me of a time when I was more naive, and I had the impression that I could do anything without any repercussions. So when we got inside Salon Officiel, everything reminded me of that time. The room was the same dimensions, even the lighting, it was the same type of atmosphere, and it was just me that changed. The entire experience reminded of my generation of young kids, and how we would go out and dance in spaces like these; we would listen to this music. It brought back good memories, whether the music was degrading or not.

For Stephanie, it seems that memory of space rather than a memory of a song helps evoke her comfort. Here affect and memory seem intertwined in the space of Salon Officiel. In this case we see how clearly affect matters in Stephanie's negotiation of values and environment. I find it important here to reiterate Ahmed's concept of affect and happy objects: "Affect is what sticks, or what sustains or preserves the connection between ideas, values, and objects" (29). Here the object that creates her happiness is the memory of the space in her youth. Thus, Salon Officiel conjures memories for Stephanie; memories which work as a nostalgic tactic, enabling her to negotiate between her values and her participation in the sexist hip hop space.

According to Ahmed "Objects that give us pleasure take up residence within our bodily horizon. We come to have our likes, which might even establish *what we are like*. The bodily horizon could be redescribed as a horizon of likes. To have our likes means certain things are gathered around us" (32). For Stephanie the memories she keeps of her outings to hip hop nights when she was younger are part of her horizon of likes, her habitus. When she walked into the club space her horizon of likes effectually influenced her mood. Stephanie's happiness and pleasure is produced not only because she is out and dancing (an activity that produced pleasure for her) but because of the recollection of her pleasure, through the memory she has of Roy Bar. At times, memories can often produce pleasure simply through the act of remembering. Ahmed continues: "We are moved by things. And in being moved, we make things. An object can be affective by virtue of its own location (the object might be *here*, which is *where* I experience this or that affect) and the timing of its appearance (the object might be *now*, which is *when* I experience this or that affect)" (33). Thus Stephanie's negotiation happens through the

affect of her nostalgia. Doing so enables her to dance and reject any negativity or “degradation” as she calls it, in her dancing.

Another example of how memory as a tactic affects this negotiation is the memorization of lyrics of certain songs. This is most predominant in Meagan’s enactments. For her, having the time prior to the outing to get to know, and familiarize herself with the songs and the lyrics produces more comfort for her in the dancing environment. She explains, “I listen to hip hop playlists all week long...so just recognizing it [the music], seems to make me really happy on the dancefloor. If I don’t know a song, I find it definitely slows me down a bit. A lot of it is in the recognition for me.” For Meagan, the moments in her negotiation are between, for example, spaces such as B-Side and Blizzarts. In comparison to the Blizzarts outing, Meagan was less comfortable with the crowd and the music at B-Side as well as Salon Officiel. “Yes I felt much more comfortable, due to the music. I knew most of the music, and when I know the music it makes me feel more comfortable to dance.” This particular tactic of memorization seems divergent from what I would normally consider a tactic of negotiation. Nevertheless, drawing on De Certeau’s elaborations of tactics, I see how memorization in Meagan’s negotiation is used as a *timely* tactic. Her memorizations of lyrics wholly depend on her timed delivery of these lyrics, and make her performance one of play rather than of resistance.

In our outing at Blizzarts Meagan was the most enthusiastic about some of the raunchiest, explicit and exploitative songs that played that evening. More specifically, while most of my participants were disappointed with the DJ’s song choice of A\$AP

Rocky's *F**kin Problems*, Meagan was the only participant who was excited about this song and was able to recite all the lyrics.

Here the negotiation occurs for Meagan through her tactical memorization of the lyrics. In habituating herself to the words of the song prior to the dance outing, she is able to dance to the music without feeling vulnerable to it. This recalls Ahmed's discussion of bodily transformations in that the "Bodily transformations might also transform what is being transformed as delightful" (31). Meagan is able to transform the meanings of songs such as *Birthday Song*, or *F**kin Problems* into something that is more palatable for her on the dancefloor through her tactical memorization.

In these three instances we see how memory functions as a tactical safeguard between the participant's ideals and the hip hop environment. Recalling moments of youth, before the development or awakening of feminist ideals that are associated to hip hop music, recalling spaces in which one participated in dance outings, and finally memory and familiarity with the song lyrics prior to outings, allow the participants to negotiate their ideals within the specific sexist hip hop spaces.

Nostalgia and memorization as a tactic of negotiation between feminist values and sexist hip hop spaces, while a popular tactic carry a very different visibility than humour as intervention and hypersexualization as resistance. Nostalgia and memory work as a tactic more of accommodation than resistance, given that this tactic is much more of an internal, private and individual negotiation. This particular method relies heavily on the personal relationships of the participants to songs and places, rather than a direct link to one's values. Here the performative aspect of these tactics is masked by nostalgia and memorization and functions much like irony. It relies on a discursive community, and on

the participant's pleasure to make itself explicit to the others, either by the admission of the participant "Hey! I love this song! I used to listen to it when I was younger," or the visibility of the participants' memorization through reciting the lyrics out loud.

Nevertheless this tactic plays a big role, especially in one's personal involvement in hip hop culture and dance practice. Furthermore, this negotiation is the least visibly resistant of the four tactics because it is the one of the most internal negotiations in the sexist hip hop club space. Nostalgia and memory as a tactical negotiation fall more under the spectrum of accommodation, as well as relying on the participants' speech act rather than bodily movement to make itself noticeable. Nevertheless, the tactic of nostalgia and memory creates a buffer allowing for a feminist body to be within a potential sexist hip hop space without the inherent discord that can occur within such situations.

Disassociation as a Tactic of Negotiation

The final tactic that was noticeable amongst my participants was disassociation as a way to negotiate one's values within the sexist hip hop space. This was the most definitive of tactical negotiations given the varieties of ways of negotiating one's feminist values in a particular dancing space. Almost all participants engaged in this action at one point or another during our outings. Some were more easily recognizable than others, such as taking breaks from the dancefloor, and others were more complex, such as making distinctions between reality and play.

For participants such as Dalia, Alin and Martha, moments of disassociation occurred when they literally chose to leave the dancing space. For Alin, this moment came at Royal Phoenix Bar, with Iggy Azalea's *Pussy* song, an explicit song sung by a female rap artist. She explains in her interview, "for a moment I stopped dancing. I was

dancing and I stopped because I couldn't dance to the song anymore. I just remember hearing *pussy* constantly in the song, and I just stopped and laughed for a bit [and] I thought, 'wow, people actually listen to this shit'. I [on the other hand] get annoyed and I stop dancing." Alin takes this moment, and leaves the dancefloor, opting to go to the bar and grab a glass of water, as she is the designated driver for the evening. Moments like these symbolize a "commercial break" (Martha) for the participants. It allows them to disturb the space from its intended use of dancing, and to move away from it. Alin continues in explaining, "I'll go to the bathroom or I'll go grab a drink. When I used to smoke I used to grab a cigarette but then I'd be angry because the upcoming song would be the song I would want to dance to but by the time I would come back another shitty song would come on and then I would dance anyways." Even Dalia, who usually makes a distinction between clubbing standards and her values outside the dancing space, agrees: "I think that the song is disgusting, but when you're in a club you have lower standards, I think. When I go in a club I don't think that the music will be amazing."

This precise method of disassociation is a deliberate move on the part of the participant. As De Certeau explains, "a *tactic* is a calculated action determined by the absence of a proper locus. No delimitation of an exteriority, then, provides it with the condition necessary for autonomy. The space of a tactic is the space of the other" (36-37). Thus, disassociation as a tactic of negotiation works because the participant actively removes herself from the sexist space. In drawing from Foucault's analysis of power relations, De Certeau exemplifies a tactic to be the space of the other. Within this exploration, the action that the "feminist other" can take, is to actively remove herself from the dominant space.

In contrast, Emilie outlines another method of disassociation. Emilie is able to disassociate herself by imagining the artist as a character and a performer. Her tactic of disassociation rests on a “play of the imagination” to distinguish between the real world, in which what certain artists like Ludacris and 2 Chainz say is unacceptable, and envisioning mass culture as a performance you play into, where these same artists are characters and actors rather than “real” artists. In conceptualizing these artists as the performers, characters, and herself as the recipient of the performance, Emilie disassociates herself from the sexist context. She explains:

I think in a way that I can do this, and not feel like a bad feminist. I think that mass culture is not real life. I think there is a role we play too. You have Snoop Dogg and Jay-z that plays gangsta, because that’s what sells...and in real life it’s not a way to talk about people. I think, in my mind, I draw a separation. I don’t think I’m a commodity but I think it’s funny in a theatrical kind of way but I don’t think it’s reality.

This mirrors some of the examples that Tricia Rose brings forth in *The Hip Hop Wars*. “The trinity of commercial hip hop – the black gangsta, pimp, and ho – has been promoted and accepted to the point where it now dominates the genre’s storytelling worldview” (Rose 4). Having participated in the three of the four outings, Emilie was all too aware of these personas. However, Emilie’s method of disassociation manages to point to what Rose is critiquing:

I always feel like that, there is this big heap of fakeness that’s associated with mainstream hip hop...to me it plays completely to disassociation. ‘If it’s not real then I can’t see it’...When you’re dealing with characters, and artists that are larger than life, overproduced, cult-ish and large personalities, I find it easier to deal with because it’s probably very difficult for me to believe that these people are real. I guess even the more commercialized form of hip hop, because I don’t really believe in the rhetoric of the pimp and ho and all that, it’s easy for me to think of it as fake, so if I play along I feel no negative incidence to me.

For Emilie, thinking through Rose's trifecta of the gangsta, pimp and ho – which are staple representations of the many hip hop songs she hears in clubs – as “characters” to be performed, and the artists themselves as characters and actors, helps her negotiate her values as a feminist with her participation in the dancing sexist hip hop space. She explains, “I think in a way I can do this [dance to sexist hip hop music], and not feel like a bad feminist.” She continues, “It does go back to performance, and things not being real. It's a performance it's fun but at the end of the day it's just that.”

This becomes evident when Emilie analyzes the type of environment she allows herself to perform in. “When I become less comfortable with it, is when it becomes ambiguous to me.” When discussing some of the artists, better yet personas, that played at the bars we frequented, she states Ludacris and Snoop Dogg as examples, which she finds ease performing to. However, had she found herself in other bars than the ones discussed within this research, outside the mainstream commercialized periphery discussed earlier, she may have not participated in such a performance. Here, affect plays a role in determining her comfort level.

For example, if I were in a Montreal-North club, just because I'm perfectly happy playing *the ho*, doesn't mean I'm happy to be pigeonholed as one and being, and having an expectation attached to it. I think also I can not care so long as it's stays fun and entertainment. When it becomes real and serious then I'm uncomfortable. If people were looking at me with intentions, I would become uncomfortable.

Emilie's choice to participate in this type of performance, this disassociation, is similar to De Certeau's example of the proprietor and the renter. In viewing the artists and the world they open up in the hip hop club through their music, Emilie takes space in that world, as a renter. She speaks the language through her dance practice and inserts herself and her feminist values within that performative, imaginary world. When she

leaves the dancefloor, she leaves her rented space; she leaves behind the sexist theatricality presented by those specific artists in the dominant hip hop space.

Additionally, it is at the renter's discretion, just as at the discretion of Emilie, to make that space her own through her performance, or leave the rented space unoccupied, and thus not participate.

Finally, the overarching consensus amongst the participants was that there is a strict distinction between the hip hop one listens to, and one dances to. In ways to try and justify dancing to sexist hip hop music, some participants cite differentiation between types of hip hop to which one can dance to and one can just listen to. Participants like Dalia, Meagan, Stephanie and Emilie have expressed this distinct separation. In one of our initial interviews Emilie explains, "I also like hip hop that is more political, but not to dance to but to listen to. I like the old NWA, Ice Cube...but not to dance to, because it's a lot more about the poetry, you cannot dance to those songs. The very raunchy commercial stuff, you get to shake to." Similarly, Meagan also professes: "If I'm listening to hip hop at home, it's real, and it's really good. I think that I know that I dance differently when I dance [to] hip hop [in the club]."

Additionally Dalia made a remark in one of our interviews in which she explains that one considerably lowers their standards when entering a club space.

We feel more in our element even if it is not our element because it is a particular situation, and outside of a club, listening [but not dancing] to this song wouldn't have the same effect I think. If I go home and listen to the songs I heard at the club especially the one by Khia; I mean I reacted in the club, because it was really, I really know this song, I know the lyrics, it's sexual and dirty, everyone knows it...but if I were listening to this song at home, I would just shut it off.

There seems to be a divide between commercial hip hop and political hip hop.

Political hip hop and which one garners a dancing response. Emilie explains this

difference, in how she engages with the different types of hip hop. “Political hip hop is here to pass a message. Mainstream hip hop is there to make people dance, that is ultimately its purpose. I think there has to be a divide because ultimately I cannot see myself dancing to *Fuck tha Police*; it’s an awkward beat to dance to.”

Although Rose does not make the distinction between political hip hop and mainstream hip hop, she does present a chapter in *The Hip Hop Wars* discussing “guiding principles” for lovers of hip hop in aiding them to find alternative and progressive artists who look to create meaningful rhymes beyond the commercial stream of contemporary hip hop.

Suffice to say, many of the artists deemed progressive also participate in the commercialization of this art, like Kanye West. However they also produce consciousness-raising music. “Politically thoughtful consumption, while not the only means of contributing to positive change, is an important strategy in a market where sales often determine visibility and power” (Rose 245). In making these distinctions between “mainstream” hip hop and progressive (political) hip hop, my participants illustrate how this distinction adds to their negotiations of feminist values on the dancefloor. Listening to hip hop then is not the same as dancing to hip hop.

Disassociation as a tactic of negotiation of one’s feminist values and the sexist hip hop space, was the most common tactic revealed by my participants. By using specific songs as cues to take breaks from the dancing, by going to have a drink at the bar or using this time to go to the washroom or outside for air, it enabled them to ease out of any discomfort created by the song, and by the affect circulating on the dancefloor. Doing so, allowed my participants time away from what was causing them the discomfort. In

Stephanie's case, she would take her time in the washroom, waiting out the several songs that did not convey pleasure to her. In Alin and Martha's case it would be a trip outside, or even in Martha's example she would sit and refuse to dance. She admits that in those moments "I sat down and played with my phone, I did that I remember, and Dalia came and sat next to me and said come dance and I said 'not to this'." This outright refusal was a way for her ideals and environment to coexist. Refusing the sexist hip hop space, particularly the sexist moment on the dancefloor, was a way in which my participants to made their feminist values noticeable. It is a form of resistance in which they refuse the sexist moment while still circulating within the club space, participating in non-dance activities (getting a drink, sitting down, going to the washroom, etc.). This outright refusal was therefore their tactic of disassociation to negotiate between their feminist values and sexist hip hop space.

In addition, using the artists and the songs in the club space as the imaginative performance allows one to participate in the performance without having to question one's values. This suspension of disbelief allows full participation without the guilt associated in feeling as the "bad feminist," without being the feminist kill-joy. Imagining popular culture, and club spaces, which cater to objects of popular culture, as fantasy and fantasy spaces, allows one to play a fantasy role. As summed by Emilie, "there is a level escapism, in that it's not – I don't consider it to be real life, so to me it's fine if I dance to it because that's not how I live [my every day life] or portray myself." This particular tactic of disassociation rests similarly to that of nostalgia, as it relies more on the internal struggle of the participant, and can be seen as more of a tactic of accommodation.

Conclusion

There are many other ways to conceive a negotiation of female values within hip hop spaces. In seeing how the tactics of humour, performance, memory and disassociation work within these club spaces we can begin to do more work in understanding participatory feminism in the heart of hip hop culture.

The tactic of humour as intervention allowed us to investigate how identities of participants are brought forth and onto the dancefloor through Butler and Osumare's explorations of performativity. Moreover, viewing humour as intervention within the idea of protestival, allowed me to explore how comedic actions can be viewed as transgressive within the space they are taking. In drawing on the concept of protestival, I saw humour in dance as a "social hacking" of what the space was actually intended for.

Examining further tactical negotiations, I sought to investigate how the hypersexualization of a movement can create resistance in the space by my participants' dance practice. By performing hypersexualized movements and creating a dissonance between one's feminist values and the sexist hip hop space, one could see certain participants "turn the sexism in the music onto itself" as to call attention to the sexually explicit and exploitative nature of the song while simultaneously assert their values by calling attention to this sexist moment. Furthermore, in engaging in the various tactics of hypersexualized movements through dancing, dancing with a partner, and ending the dance, participants like Stephanie and Dalia undermined the hip hop space by leaving the intended action, that of hooking up, incomplete.

The most surprising tactic discerned through my interviews was the use of nostalgia and memory as a way to negotiate feminist values within the hip hop spaces.

Using memories which were attached to explicit and sexist songs, memories from one's childhood softens the discomfort and disconnect which occurs when hearing that particular song that does not coincide with one's values. This was acceptable to the participants because most of their feminist values developed after their liking and bond to a certain song. In Stephanie's case, nostalgia also came from the space she was in. Remembering the space and how she acted there when she was younger, was a tactical buffer between the hip hop space and her feminist values, which functioned as more of an accommodating tactical negotiation rather than an outright resistant one. Lastly, memorization in Meagan's case also created a buffer between her values and the hip hop space. In knowing the music Meagan felt more comfortable participating in the dancing event. This was most apparent in moments where she recited the words to songs such as *Grillz* and *F**kin Problems*.

Finally, the last of the negotiations that was discussed was the tactic of disassociation. Disassociation in these dancing spaces was done in several ways. Some more straightforward than others, such as stepping away from the dancefloor thus breaking the space. Usually participants used the songs that didn't reflect their values or ones they could not negotiate through other methods, as "breaks" to go smoke a cigarette, line up at the bathroom, get some fresh air or get a drink. Another and more creative method of disassociation explored was through Emilie's rationalization of certain hip hop artists as performers, actors that are larger than life. She defined mass culture and popular culture as theatre, and so her participation in such a culture is a performance that is disassociated from "real life". Another aspect that was useful in thinking through how participants could disassociate from explicit, sexist hip hop spaces was in seeing how the

participants drew a line between political hip hop and mainstream hip hop. Political hip hop is music that you listen to and that has a message and intent behind the music while mainstream hip hop is the type of music that is danceable because the focus is not on the lyrics or the message but rather the funk and the beat.

These tactical negotiations are not as direct as Rose's discussion of the "'Groove Squad,' a group of two dozen or more women who go to clubs and enjoy the hip hop music until they hear a song that is openly offensive or derogatory. They walk off the floor en masse. This is a powerful statement because it joins women who love the music into groups, not just as a protest but as a form of musical affirmation" (Rose 128). They do however provide insight to the individual battles that occur in those undefined, in-between moments, cracks, as De Certeau terms them. Whether these negotiations occur consciously or unconsciously, both point us in the direction that more attention needs to be given to these phenomena. Rose eloquently asserts, "We live and breathe in a world that normalizes sexism. But this does not excuse it, nor can reproducing it with consistency do anything but replicate it" (172).

Investigating these tactical negotiations nonetheless brings to light how one may deal with the discomfort or resist this accepted sexism in popular culture. The discussions that the participants engaged in following these outings, opened doors for further explorations which Rose determines to be, similar to Morgan's *trip to the terrordome*, paramount to understanding the space women hold and should contest in hip hop culture. Questions about what is and is not acceptable open up the inherent sexism in these spaces for further exploration. Martha expressed this very well in questioning her own behaviour "I'm pissed that I find them acceptable... Now that we're talking about it, I don't think

that it makes sense at all that how come I find 'lick you from your head to your toe'
[acceptable] and [not] the 'pussy pussy' song; why do I react to them differently?"

Conclusion

The Project

In this thesis, I have considered the engagement of a group of particular female dance participants in specific hip hop spaces in Montreal. To understand the ways in which female dancers can negotiate their feminist values in hip hop spaces, I drew on literature that draws on affect, performativity, and hip hop dance practice. In engaging the methodologies of writing as practice, scenic descriptions, and interviews I was able to gain a fuller understanding of how affect can shape a participant's embodied negotiation in a hip hop space. Through a careful analysis of twelve interviews, including two group interviews, four scenic descriptions and reflections on my own experience participating in the dancing events within the clubs mentioned, I was able to explore questions about feminist identity in hip hop spaces.

The participants of this research were all identified using the snowball sampling technique. Coupled with Lisa Tillman-Healy's *Friendship as Method* this process of participant-observation was best suited for my type of research given the already established connection between us. The result from these collective experiences was a collection of unconscious and conscious negotiations through body movement.

In engaging with these participants and their feminist values, I was confronted with questions about my own commitment to feminist practice and values and my love for hip hop music and dance. It faced me with my own trip to the *terrordome* as Morgan says, but opened my eyes into the ways in which we, as women, make sense of spaces that at times just do not coincide with our values, and in turn, how I understand my own behaviour in these spaces.

Researching two passions of mine, hip hop and dance, alongside my friends was a deeply rewarding, if at times challenging, experience. However, in engaging in this research along a familiar group, it was possible for me to run into issues of bias, given our friendship. In order to avoid this, I interviewed my participants several times, making sure that I provided them a space where they were free to express whatever they felt regardless of the results of my findings. As mentioned previously, employing friendship as method allowed me to circumvent some of these issues, allowing the subjectivity and the free flow of conversation to guide us, rather than a strict and more traditional method of qualitative data collection.

My theoretical engagements with concepts of affect, performativity and dance proved to be one of the most complex and satisfying experiences in writing this thesis. I was faced with many revelatory moments while delving deeper into Ahmed's *Happy Objects* and Judith Butler's *Performativity's Social Magic*, while pieces like Stivale's and Campbell's also helped concretely elucidate some of the more theoretical analyses I was undertaking. In my own experiences and explorations of dance and hip hop I sought to explain the practical through the theoretical and these authors have allowed me to do just that. I will say that I have spent many a frustrating hour pulling at the seams and investigating the significance of affect in my outings. But this was by far one of the most exhilarating moments; the realization of how academia and pragmatic "life" coincide, especially through De Certeau's elaboration on tactics, and of how I could begin to understand how we, a youthful hip hop generation, negotiate our strengths and weaknesses within the culture in which we participate.

Allowing myself to transition from moments of researcher to participant and vice versa, completed my research process. This helped me see how I, myself, negotiate these spaces and feminist values in hip hop spaces. As well confronting my own limitations as a participant in this culture, drawing on affect theory coupled with performativity helped me navigate through the sometime indecipherable moments, and feelings, I had, towards my participation in this paradoxical culture.

The Value of the Project

Although this project has tremendous personal value, it is worthy of academic attention given the current status of feminism in popular culture. In several of my interviews, statements were made about feminism in contemporary culture which were dangerously close to forgetting some of the fundamental issues we still have to work through. “I don’t think there is much happening; I don’t feel like a need to get involved in it. I’m not sure there is a need to have a strong feminist action. I don’t know it’s never...I haven’t been bothered by it yet” (Alin). But there is a need. As Rose states, “We live and breathe in a world that normalizes sexism. But this does not excuse it, nor can reproducing it with consistency do anything but replicate it” (172).

In exploring spaces where sexism thrives tacitly through music, we can begin to see how a feminist intervention can take space in such spaces. It is not simply by submitting to the standards of the space, as Dalia evokes in her interview, that we simply allow this sexism to occur. However, as Dalia explains, she also cannot disrupt the system she is in, because she has chosen to be there. What to do then when faced with this paradox? This negotiation between value and space must to happen somewhere. This is the infinite battle between habitus and social field. Rose argues:

Yes, we can ignore some lyrics on occasion; but when the music that gets played over and over at the clubs and on hip hop-oriented commercial radio, BET, and MTV is saturated with hustlers, gangstas, bitches, hoes, tricks, pimps, playas, and stories that glamorize domination, exploitation, violence, and hustlers – when this becomes the primary vocabulary for hip hop itself – then the power of the funk has been manipulated. The life force of the funk has been wedded to a death imperative. (263)

This research contributes to feminist perspectives on contemporary popular culture. We cannot let ourselves simply accept images and depictions of “hustlers, gangstas, bitches, hoes, tricks, pimps” and “playas,” but further work needs to be done, in the stream of Rose and Morgan’s hip hop feminism, to understand the root of these depictions, what they actually mean, and understand how as passive dancers we consume them. Rose concludes: “white [I would extend this to non-black] consumption of hip hop – in this moment, at least – has a strong likelihood of reproducing the long and ugly history of racial tourism that requires black people to perform whites’ desires in order to become successful in a predominantly white-pleasure-driven marketplace” (232). As consumers of hip hop music, we must begin to take responsibility for our role in the reproduction and consumption of these paradigms. The negotiation between feminist values and hip hop spaces is but the beginning of this endeavor.

The Future

As I write this conclusion, left to wonder how this project would to continue, I stumbled upon a recent blog posting from *The Crunk Feminist Collective* that touches upon the crux of my research, which within a matter of hours, had been taken down. This posting detailed a hip hop feminist's disdain and apt analysis of Lil’ Wayne’s and Future’s collaboration *Karate Chop (Remix)*; namely a specific verse which goes as follows: *Beat that pussy up like Emmet Till*. There are several issues which occur here:

the use of an African American icon in a derogatory manner, and of course the use of this new expression of *beating that pussy up* as a metaphor for sex.

It is not enough that Wayne equates Till's unfortunate death with this act, but in fact, that we can now equate a sexual act with violence just demonstrates how much more work we is left to be done off and on the dancefloor. Where does this leave women who love hip hop? "The struggle, in this climate of 'blame hip hop versus explain hip hop,' is to be able to give transforming love and have it be received in that spirit" (Rose 273).

Future research possibilities for this project may include a diversified methodological approach, with a younger group of participants. This would yield undoubtedly different results than my own research but nonetheless would contribute to the continued building of the foundations for this feminist involvement in hip hop.

Another approach that could be investigated would be to involve the purveyors of hip hop music in the clubs within this research. Engaging the DJs who spin these specific songs would allow us to flip the script and ask what are these artists' thoughts about playing this music? How can they in fact negotiate between their feminist values (if they have any) with the music that they propagate in the clubs? Even more so, a dedicated exploration of non-mixed, marked lesbian, clubs spaces and the subversion of normative gender roles would also be an interesting investigation; an investigation that draws on hip hop feminist Andreama Clay's idea of "Queer women [of color] flipping the script in dance clubs" (355).

In realizing how we consume commercialized hip hop and how we participate, we can begin also move from negotiating these moments to a more active refusal, akin to Rose's example of *Groove Squad*. As Rose declares, we live in a sexist world, but it

doesn't mean we should just accept it. Perhaps the first step is to question ourselves and get angry with our negotiations, perhaps as Martha said it is time to get "pissed that [we] find them acceptable."

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Appendices

Appendix A: Selected Lyrics

P.I.M.P. – 50 Cent

Now shorty, she in the club, she dancing for dollars
 She got a thing for that Gucci, that Fendi, that Prada
 That BCBG, Burberry, Dolce and Gabbana
 She feed them foolish fantasies; they pay her cause they wanna
 I spit a little G, man, and my game got her
 A hour later have that ass up in the Ramada
 Them trick niggas in her ear saying they think about her
 I got the bitch by the bar trying to get a drink up out her
 She like my style, she like my smile, she like the way I talk
 She from the country, think she like me cause I'm from New York
 I ain't that nigga trying to holla cause I want some head
 I'm that nigga trying to holla cause I want some bread
 I could care less how she perform when she in the bed
 Bitch hit that track, catch a date, and come and pay the kid
 Look baby this is simple, you can't see
 You fucking with me, you fucking with a P-I-M-P

Move Bitch - Ludacris

Move bitch, get out the way
 Get out the way bitch, get out the way
 Move bitch, get out the way
 Get out the way bitch, get out the way

Young and successful - a sex symbol
 The bitches want me to fuck - true true
 Hold up wait up, shorty
 "Oh wazzzupp, get my dick sucked, what are youuu doin'?"

My Neck, My Back – Khia

My Neck, my back
 Lick my pussy and my crack

You might roll dubs, you might have G's
 But fuck that nigga, get on your knees
 A bitch like me moans and screams
 Thug misses know what I mean
 At the club so fresh, so clean
 Hoes hatin' niggas watchin' me
 So hot in the line, on green
 With a unit on my face, so mean
 I gotta pick which nigga I need
 to suck a thug nigga satisfy me

Try me nigga I'll make you see
 them bitches aint got shit on me

Get Busy – Sean Paul

Girl get busy, just shake that booty non-stop
 When the beat drops
 Just keep swinging it
 Get jiggy
 Get crunked up
 Percolate anything you want to call it
 Oscillate you hip and don't take pity
 Me want fi see you get live pon the riddim when me ride
 And me lyrics a provide electricity
 Gal nobody can tell you nuttin
 Can you done know your destiny

Sexual Healing – Max-a-Million

Sexual Healing, oh baby
 Makes me feel so fine
 Helps to relieve my mind
 Sexual Healing baby, is good for me
 Sexual Healing is something that's good for me
 Whenever blue tear drops are falling
 And my emotional stability is leaving me
 There is something I can do
 I can get on the telephone and call you up baby, and
 Honey I know you'll be there to relieve me

Hot Spot – Foxy Brown

Yo! Cats bustin out the six, cash flushin out the niggaz
 Platinum heart in half hangin 'tween the two tit-ties
 Scheme on your team, lookin over graph pictures
 Pick the finest, then I put it on the minors
 Love, after the club, meet me at the diner
 So you can bring your boys, we got ten cars behind us
 Order a steak, a glass of OJ to break-fast
 Hop in the car and head straight up Eighth Ave.
 The night is young, I'm likin son
 Either he don't have one, or his wife is dumb
 His whole hand numb, nigga iced his thumb
 Pull up my tights some, enticin him
 You can handle the work, I'll play wit it
 Til he curve and swerve nigga, stay wit it
 Bitches in the club they, hated it
 Cause I put my mack down then I, skated i

Can't Nobody Hold me Down – Mase

I'm through with bein a player and a baller
 Just want me one bad bitch so I can spoil her
 Mase wanna be the one you respect, even when you're vexed
 Rock Versace silks over spilled brunette
 Got green never seen so you suck my jewels
 Clutch my uz', anything I touch I bruise

Doin' It – LL Cool J

It's the first time together and I'm feeling kinda horny
 Conventional methods of makin love kinda bore me
 I wanna knock your block off, get my rocks off
 Blow your socks off make sure your G spots soft
[LeShaun]

I'm gonna call you Big Daddy and scream your name
 Matter fact I can't wait for your candy rain

[LL Cool J]

So what cha sayin, I get my swerve on, bring it live
 Make it last forever, damn the kitty cat's tight

[LeShaun]

Mmm... daddy slow down your flow
 Put it on me like G baby nice and slow
 I need a rough neck nigga Mandingo in a sec
 Who ain't afraid to pull my hair and spank me from the back

[LL Cool J]

No doubt, I'm the playa that you're talkin about

[LeShaun]

But do you really think that you can work it out

[LL Cool J]

I guarantee shorty it's real, baby stick it out
 Here comes the man of steel

Put It Down – Brandy feat. Chris Brown

ain't nobody put it down like me though
 why are you playing? girl you know
 with all this money, and all your cake
 girl you better stop, i got a big ego
 i'm sipping on that brandy
 that liquour comes in handy
 and girl i know you fancy
 but this party i'm financing
 it's so me, it ain't even like that
 the way you hating all night
 a friend uptight, all right
 (so put it down)

i took her at the club
 told the girl she'd be right back
 back to the crib
 and in the morning all this is worth it
 baby go get your hair did
 and buy you a couple purses

Pony – Ginuwine

If your horny, Let's do it
 Ride it, My Pony
 My saddle's waiting
 Come and jump on it

Sitting here flossing
 Peeping your steelo
 Just once if I have the chance
 The things I will do to you
 You and your body
 Every single portion
 Send chills up and down your spine
 Juices flowing down your thigh

Ebonics – Big L

A deuce is a honey that's ugly
 If your girl is fine, she's a dime
 A suit is a fine, jewelry is shine
 If you in love, that mean you blind
 Genuine is real, a face card is a hundred dollar bill
 A very hard, long stare is a grill
 If you sneakin' to go see a girl, that mean you creepin'

Birthday Song – 2 Chainz

They ask me what I do and who I do it for
 And how I come up with this shit up in the studio
 All I want for my birthday is a big booty hoe
 All I want for my birthday is a big booty hoe

She got a big booty so I call her Big Booty
 Scrr Scrr, Wrists moving, cookin' to it
 I'm in the kitchen, yams everywhere
 Just made a jugg I got bands everywhere

It's your birthday, it's your birthday
 Bad bitch contest, you in first place
 You in first place, you in first place
 Bad bitch contest, you in first place

I show up with a check to your work place
 (Then hand the valet the keys to the Mercedes)
 Tell the DJ play your song, this shit come on
 (What I'm seein' from the back I can't front on)
 They ask me what I do and who I do it for
 When I die, bury me inside the booty club
 Get it girl, get it girl, get it get it girl
 I might switch it up and get you girl

Who Am I – Beenie Man

yu ever buck a gal weh deep like a bucket draw fi yuh needle
 an yuh needle can't stitch it draw fi yuh axe
 and like a cow yuh all a chop it draw fi yuh pick axe
 and like a rung yuh all a dig it is like a riverside
 upon di banking yuh tek it is like a bicycle so yuh hold it
 and dash it now yuh wash it so yuh crash it
 she a tell yuh seh yuh crabbit gal
 she a beg yuh and a bawl seh fi stop it
 bad man plug in and mi a move off a electric is like a basket ball
 she tek time out fi vomit unuh listen to mi style
 an unuh listen to mi lyrics a beenie man deh yah a drop it(a seh)

F**kin Problems – A\$AP Rocky

I love bad bitches, that's my fucking problem
 And yeah I like to fuck, I got a fucking problem

Yeah hoe this the finale
 My pep talk turn into a pep rally
 Say she's from the hood but she live inside the valley now
 Vacate in Atlanta, then she going back to Cali
 Got your girl on my line, world on my line
 The irony I fuck 'em at the same damn time
 She eyeing me like a nigga don't exist
 Girl, I know you want this dick
 Girl, I'm Kendrick Lamar
 Aka Benz is to me just a car
 That mean your friends need to be up to a par
 See my standards are pampered by threesomes tomorrow
 Kill 'em all dead bodies in the hallway
 Don't get involved listen what the crystal ball say
 Halle Berry, hallelujah
 Holla back I'll do ya, beast

Still Dre – Dr. Dre

I'm representing for the gangsters all across the world
 Still hitting them corners in them low low's girl

Ms. Fat Booty – Mos Def

I seen her on the avenue, spotted her more than once
 Ass so fat that you could see it from the front
 She spot me like paparazzi; shot me a glance
 in that catwoman stance with the fat booty pants, Hot damn!

Ms. Jackson – Outkast

“Look at the way he treats me”, shit, look at the way you treat me
 See your little nose ass home girls got they ass up in the creek G
 Without a paddle, you left the straddle and ride this thing on out
 And then you and this girl ain't speaking no more 'cause my dick all in her mouth
 Know what I'm talking about, jealousy, infidelity, envy
 Cheating, beating, and to the G's they be the same thing
 So who you placing the blame on, you keep on singing the same song

Mo Money Mo Problems – The Notorious B.I.G.

Uhh, uhhh
 B.I.G., P-O, P-P-A
 No info, for the, DEA
 Federal agents mad cause I'm flagrant
 Tap my cell, and the phone in the basement
 My team supreme, stay clean
 Triple beam lyrical dream, I be that
 Cat you see at all events bent
 Gats in holsters girls on shoulders
 Playboy, I told ya, bein mice to me
 Bruise too much, I lose, too much
 Step on stage the girls boo too much
 I guess it's cause you run with lame dudes too much
 Me lose my touch, never that
 If I did, ain't no problem to get the gat
 Where the true players at?
 Throw your roadies in the sky
 Wave em side to side and keep their hands high
 While I give your girl the eye, player please
 Lyrically, niggaz see, B.I.G.

Appendix B: Playlists from the Hip Hop Outings

B-Side – Selected Playlist – November 18th 2012

I'm Sexy and I Know It – LMFAO

P.I.M.P. – 50 Cent

Shake Your Tailfeather – Nelly

Move Bitch - Ludacris

My Neck, My Back – Khia

Get Busy – Sean Paul

Sexual Healing – Max-a-Million

Starships – Nicki Minaj

Pursuit of Happiness – Kid Cudi

Royal Phoenix Bar *Cousins Cousin Cousins* – Playlist – December 14th 2012

Heartless – Kanye West

Baby Boy – Beyoncé

DJ Black and Nelly – Grillz

Lighters Up – Lil' Kim

One Minute Man (remix) – Missy Elliott

Ten Crack Commandments – The Notorious B.I.G.

Take Ya Home – Lil' Bow Wow

Stutter – Joe

Always Be My Sunshine – Foxy Brown

Back That Thang Up – Juvenile

Shot Caller – French Montana
On to the Next One – Jay – Z
Hot Spot – Foxy Brown
Family Affair – Mary J. Blige
Electric Relaxation – A Tribe Called Quest
I just want to love U – Jay-Z
Wavvy – Mykki Blanco
What You Want – Mase
It’s All About the Benjamins- Puff Daddy and the Family
Work It – Missy Elliott
The Jump Off – Lil’ Kim
Return of the Mack – Mark Morrison
One More Chance – The Notorious B.I.G.
Only You (Bad Boy Records) – 112
Can’t Nobody Hold me Down – Mase
Hot This Year – Planet Dancehall
Heads High – Mr. Vegas
Brand New Toy – The Jeremy Days
Never Leave You – Lumidee
Losing You – Solange
Red Red – Robyn
Everyone Falls in Love – Tanto Metro & Devonte
Clarks (feat. Popcaan & Gaza Slim) – Vybz Kartel

Oops (Oh MY) – Tweet

All of the Lights – Kanye West

Doin' It – LL Cool J

One Two Step – Ciara

Make Me Proud – Drake

B R Right – Trina feat. Ludacris

Iggy Azalea – Pussy

Snap Backs & Tattoos – Driicky Graham

Put It Down – Brandy feat. Chris Brown

Big Pimpin' – Jay-Z

Hip Hop – Dead Prez

Hyfr (Hell Ya Fuckin' Right) – Drake

Round of Applause – Waka Flocka Flame

Doin It – LL Cool J

Can't You See – Total

Crush on You – Lil' Kim

Pony – Ginuwine

Salon Officiel *Please Me Saturdays* – Playlist – January 26th 2013

All I need – Method Man

How Do You Want It? – K-Ci & Jojo

Ebonics – Big L

Bossy – Kelis

Handle the Ride – Tanya Stephens

Ring the Alarm – Tenor Saw
Shook Ones Part II – Mobb Deep
Sound of da Police – KRS-One
Hit ‘Em Up – 2Pac
Full Clip – Gang Starr
Family Affair – Mary J. Blige
Single Ladies (Put a ring on it) – Beyoncé
Hyphy – Federation
1 Thing – Amerie
Freaks Come out at night – Whodini
Hey Ladies – Beastie Boys
The Message – Grand Master Flash
Straight Outta Compton – N.W.A
Can’t Trust It – Public Enemy
Hellz Wind Staff – Wu-Tang clan
Gravel Pit – Wu-Tang Clan
Ghetto Superstar – Pras
Too Much of Heaven – Eiffel 65
Bootylicious – Destiny’s Child
Walk this Way – Run-DMC
Jiggle It – Young Leek
Got the Power (Mix) – Snap!
Hollaback Girl – Gwen Stefani

Da Funk – Daft Punk
It Takes Two – Rob Base & DJ E-Z Rock
Disco Band – Scotch
Let Your backbone Slide – Maestro Fresh – Wes
Promiscuous – Nelly Furtado
The Way You Make Me Feel – Michael Jackson
Billy Jean – Michael Jackson
Bust a Move – Young MC
Dare – Gorillaz
My Love – Justin Timberlake
Wind It Up – Gwen Stefani
Over and Over – Hot Chip
It's Like that – Run DMC
Erotic City – Prince and the Revolution
212 – Azealia Banks
Push It (Remix) – Salt-n-Pepa
Bills Bills Bills – Destiny's Child
Low – Flo Rida
Low (Album Version) – T-Pain
Show Me Love (Extended Mix) – Steve Angello
Hands up Right Now – Ed Solo
Ayo Technology - 50 cent
Big Pimpin' – Jay Z

Grove St. Party – Waka Flocka Flame
Rude Boy (Chew Fu Vitamin S Fix) – Rihanna
Pony – Ginuwine
Birthday Song – 2 Chainz
Who Am I – Beenie Man
Bookshelf – Beenie Man
Say Woooo – Tanto Metro
Like Glue – Sean Paul
Real Niggaz – Spragga Benz
Money 2 Burn – T.O.K
Never Leave You - Lumidee
Pon de Replay – Rihanna
Lean Back – Terror Squad
Arab Money – Busta Rhymes
We Fly High – Jim Jones
Let Me Clear my Throat – DJ Kool
Party Up – DJ Lt. Dan/ DMX
California Love – Tupak Shakur
Hit Em Up – 2Pac
Juicy – The Notorious B.I.G.
Ten Crack Commandments – The Notorious B.I.G.
I just want to love you – Jay –Z
Danger (Been So Long) – Mystikal

Ms. Jackson – Outkast

Young Wild and Free – Snoop Dogg & Wiz Khalifa

F**kin Problems – A\$AP Rocky

Faded – Tyga

Rack City (Remix) – Fabulous

B.O.B. – Outkast

Hip-Hop – Dead Prez

Mercy – Kanye West

All I do is Win – DJ Khaled

Turn My Swag On – Soulja Boy Tell Em

Solid as a Rock – Sizzla

Welcome to Jamrock (Clean) – Damian “Junior Gong” Marley

Come Around (G-Unit Remix) – Collie Budz

Blind to You – Collie Budz

Country Grammar – Nelly

Big Poppa – The Notorious B.I.G.

You Know What it is – T.I.

Bad Boys – Inner Circle

Afro Puffs – The Lady of Rage

Breathe (Rap Version) – Blu Cantrell

Still Dre – Dr. Dre

Hit Em Up – 2Pac

Bring Em Out – T.I.

Family Affair - Mary J. Blige

Crazy in Love – Beyoncé

Southern Hospitality - Ludacris

Blizzarts *Get Nice Fridays* – Playlist – February 15th 2013

Notorious Thugs – Bone Thugs-N-Harmony

No Church in the Wild – Jay-Z

Rebirth of Slick (Cool Like Dat) – Digable Planets

Paid in Full (Seven Minutes of Music – The Coldcut Remix) – Eric B. & Rakim

Addictive – Truth Hurts

Check the Rhime – A Tribe Called Quest

Ms. Fat Booty – Mos Def

Ol' Time Killin' – Kardinal Offishall

Creep – TLC

ABC – The Jackson 5

If I Ruled the World (Imagine That) – Nas

Return of the Mack – Mark Morrison

Doggy Dog World – Snoop Dogg

What U See is What U Get – Xzibit

Roc the Mic – Freeway

Rite Where U Stand – Gang Starr

Lost Ones – Lauryn Hill

Doin It – LL Cool J

Be Happy – Mary J. Blige

Whatta Man – Salt-n-Pepa

Summertime – DJ Jazzy Jeff & the Fresh Prince

Nothing' but a “G” Thang – Dr. Dre

I'll Be There for You/ You're All I Need to Get By (Instrumental) – Method Man

Rock My World – Michael Jackson

Ms. Jackson – Outkast

Kush – Dr. Dre

I Need a Dollar – Aloe Blacc

I Shot the Sheriff – The Wailers

Flashing Lights – Kanye West

No Escapin' This – The Beatnuts

Speakin in Tungs – Camr'ron

Lean Back – Terror Squad

We Fly High – Jim Jones

Hate it or Love it – Game

The Learning (Burn) – Mobb Deep

Get Me Home – Foxy Brown

The Ladies – Crooklyn Clan

Murder She Wrote – Chaka Demus & Piers

Deport Them – Sean Paul

Snake – R. Kelly

Freaks – Doug E. Fresh

Money in the Bank – Swizz Beatz

Blow the Whistle – Too Short

Dias de Luta, Dias de Gloria – Charlie Brown Jr.

The Motto (*) – Drake

Rack City – Tyga

Snoop Dogg feat. Pharrell – Beautiful

Bartender – T-Pain

Yeah! – Usher

Like I Love You – Justin Timberlake

I Want You Back – The Jackson 5

California Love (Enhanced Stereo Mix) – Tupac Shakur

Let Me Blow Ya Mind – Eve

The Next Episode – Dr. Dre

No Diggity - Blackstreet

Tipsy – J-Kwon

Grindin’ – Clipse

It’s All About the Benjamins – Puff Daddy & the Family

Shot Caller – French Montana

What Happened to the Boy – Baby Aka the #1 Suma

Breathe – Blu Cantrelle

Who Am I – Beenie Man

Heads High – Mr. Vegas

Get Busy – Sean Paul

Never Leave You (Uh huh) – Lumidee

No Letting Go (Album Version) – Wayne Wonder

Single Ladies (Put a Ring On It) – Beyoncé

F**kin Problems - A\$AP Rocky

Otis – Jay-Z

Here Comes the Hotstepper – Ini Kamoze

Work It – Missy Elliott

I Just Wanna Love U (Give It 2 Me) – Jay-Z

Crazy in Love – Beyoncé

Be Faithfull (Dirty Version) – Fatman Scoop

Ante Up (Robin Hoodz Theory Version) – M.O.P.

Party Up – DJ Lt. Dan/DMX

Thrift Shop – Mackelmore

Shimmy Shimmy Ya – Ol' Dirty Bastard

The Seed – Cody Chestnutt

American Boy – Estelle feat. Kanye West

Only Girl in the World – Rihanna

Apache – Grandmaster Flash

Rapper's Delight – The Sugarhill Gang

Mo Money Mo Problems – The Notorious B.I.G.

Da Rockwilder – Redman

Birthday Song – 2 Chainz

Bandz A Make Her Dance – Juicy J

Dance (A\$\$) – Big Sean featuring Nicki Minaj & Young Jeezy