



Bits and Pieces of Truth: Storytelling, Identity, and Hip Hop in Saskatchewan

CHARITY MARSH

It's time for you to listen for a minute
Cause this is where I share bits and pieces of my truth
What I know and don't know about life
It's time to think back
To remember who we were
Whoever that may be
Take back what we dream
And say what we mean
I want to know more
You want to know more
But I always feel like obstacles are stopping me
And could it be that I'm trying not to see
Creating diversions convenient to me
Running away hurting my people, my family
And those most important to me
Well I can't do that anymore
Because I'm guessing through experiences and lessons
And I'm stopping the cycle and sending the message
And I'm trying every day I walk this earth
To stay away from what's bad for me
And the only way I can do that
is by recognizing the strengths we have
Power in numbers
We got ... power in spirit
I got ... power in music
I got ... power in my voice
Hear it!

The Canadian landscape is shaped by key 1999, Young 1990), its global identifier 2000, Day 2000), and its proximal 1997, Krims 2000, Pegley 2008). So to youth music cultures within Canada? of these discourses and the processes geographical, social, cultural, and of cultures across Canada, globalization: pact on the way that cultural forms a practices signifying the "traditional" porary" – are adopted, adapted, and that are isolated from major urban ' that the consequences of globalization tures are often complex and contradi 1993, Taylor 2001), the globalization hip hop contributes to provocative i the cosmopolitan citizen (Kristeva r bleeding of identities and cross-cult Witmer 1994, Mitchell 2001, Bennett and continuing rapid growth of a vi the prairie provinces, specifically in things. And if hip hop is a "vehicle fo for reworking local identity all over i to think about why and how hip hop e living in Saskatchewan is an import concerning complex issues of identit ship within the context of Canada.³

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The Canadian landscape is shaped by its colonial past and present (MacKey 1999, Young 1990), its global identity as a multicultural nation (Banerji 2000, Day 2000), and its proximity to the United States (Théberge 1997, Krims 2000, Pegley 2008). So too are the contemporary Indigenous youth music cultures within Canada's borders influenced by the effects of these discourses and the processes by which they are mapped onto the geographical, social, cultural, and political landscape. For local music cultures across Canada, globalization continues to have a profound impact on the way that cultural forms and practices – both those forms and practices signifying the “traditional” and those understood as “contemporary” – are adopted, adapted, and developed, particularly in regions that are isolated from major urban “cultural” centres.² Despite the fact that the consequences of globalization and its impact on local music cultures are often complex and contradictory at best (King 1997, Guilbault 1993, Taylor 2001), the globalization of popular music cultures such as hip hop contributes to provocative ideas of hybridity (Bhabha 1994), to the cosmopolitan citizen (Kristeva 1991, Derrida 2001), as well as to the bleeding of identities and cross-cultural identifications (Diamond and Wimmer 1994, Mitchell 2001, Bennett and Peterson 2004). The emergence and continuing rapid growth of a vibrant Indigenous hip hop scene in the prairie provinces, specifically in Saskatchewan, illustrate these very things. And if hip hop is a “vehicle for global youth affiliations and a tool for reworking local identity all over the world” (Mitchell 2001), we need to think about why and how hip hop culture created by Indigenous youth living in Saskatchewan is an important cultural site for new dialogues concerning complex issues of identity, community, politics, and citizenship within the context of Canada.³

In contemporary Saskatchewan many unique, rich, and complicated narratives of “traditional” Indigenous musics are represented – narratives that have developed out of, or in spite of, the horrific circumstances associated with colonization, settlement, and a federal policy of assimilation. These narratives can be differentiated from those of other regions within the context of present-day life in the prairie provinces. Today, music and cultural practices represented as “traditional” (e.g., drumming, round dance singing styles, powwow dancing, etc.) continue to play a primary role in the preservation of identity, culture, and resistance for Indigenous peoples. And yet many Indigenous youth living in Saskatchewan are turning toward the arts practices of hip hop culture (rapping/emceeing, djing/beat making, break/hip hop dancing, and graffiti arts) as a way to express and make sense of present-day lived experiences, including the ongoing legacies of state enforced residential school programs and

other practices of colonization, the current climate of contentious government initiated truth and reconciliation processes, and systemic issues of racism, poverty, and violence faced by young people today. These expressions are, as suggested in the title of this chapter, "bits and pieces of truth," a phrase that reworks the second line of Saskatchewan encee Eekwol's lyrics to her song "Apprento," presented above.

One outcome has been the emergence of a different and arguably "new" style of hip hop. Similar to other musical genres that have been borrowed by Indigenous artists, this style of hip hop combines local, cultural, and regional elements with current global hip hop forms and stylistic traits; but what makes it so interesting and provocative is that this new style of hip hop allows for a rethinking of everyday life for young Indigenous people living in Saskatchewan today.

Taking into account the relevance of hip hop culture on both a local and global scale, in this chapter I address the significant impact of hip hop culture created and practised by Indigenous youth living in Saskatchewan. To shape this discussion, I begin with the following questions: How does hip hop play an integral role in narrating colonialism (as experienced today) in Saskatchewan? How does hip hop as it is created, produced, and consumed by Indigenous youth challenge contemporary Canada to think about "Aboriginal" politics currently and in the future rather than think of colonialism as relevant only to the past? In what ways does hip hop contribute to the struggle for decolonization in Saskatchewan?

Through a contextualization of the places and spaces in Saskatchewan where hip hop culture thrives,⁴ interviews with artists, organizers, and young people participating in hip hop, and an analysis of musical examples from Saskatchewan encee Eekwol, I argue that hip hop is a contemporary example of a culture of sublimation through which Indigenous youth living in Saskatchewan convey the contradictions, struggles, resistances, and celebrations of their current lived experiences while simultaneously attempting to acknowledge and respect the (hi)stories of their ancestors.

The Many Spaces, Places, and Faces of Hip Hop Culture in Saskatchewan

Contrary to its mythic identity as a ubiquitous flat prairie landscape used solely for agriculture, Saskatchewan is geographically diverse with a topography of partial desert conditions south in the badlands, ocean-like fields of wheat, barley, and flax, rolling hills and numerous fresh-water

lakes, heavy forests, and dense and unrain in the northern part of the province, the province's population is with almost half of the population living in the province, and Saskatoon, the province. Smaller cities, towns, and highway and grid roads running north yet one can travel for hours only to vacant buildings, or the remains of an evidence of once thriving settler communities, decrepit, and boarded-up buildings, of schools, post offices, and other services of farm land by large agri-businesses railway. The uncertainty of crops, the pressed markets for wheat, barley, flax, and other commodities has led to a growing pattern of relocation Saskatchewan's home to numerous cities in Canada) and twenty-eight urban cross through Cree, Saulteaux, Sioux and the communities are divided into approximately 142,000 Indigenous people, 2006 census collected by Statistics Canada's Indigenous peoples were living time equaled about 14 per cent of Saskatchewan's total population.¹⁰ These numbers illustrate the rise in "Aboriginal" populations, we are illustrating what one could interpret as a landscape – social, cultural, geographical historically had a considerable influence. Today, its effects are clearly evident in the development and is understood through

Hip Hop in the (Neighbour)hood

Hip hop culture seems to be everywhere in Saskatchewan. Over the past five years, based arts projects, school projects,

practices of colonization, the current climate of contentious government initiated truth and reconciliation processes, and systemic issues like racism, poverty, and violence faced by young people today. These questions are, as suggested in the title of this chapter, "bits and pieces of truth," a phrase that reworks the second line of Saskatchewan emcee J. Cole's lyrics to her song "Apprento," presented above.

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In this chapter, I contextualize the places and spaces in Saskatchewan where hip hop culture thrives,¹ interviews with artists, organizers, and community members participating in hip hop, and an analysis of musical examples from Saskatchewan emcee Eckwol. I argue that hip hop is a contemporary example of a culture of sublimation through which Indigenous youth living in Saskatchewan convey the contradictions, struggles, triumphs, and celebrations of their current lived experiences while simultaneously attempting to acknowledge and respect the (h)stories of their ancestors.

Many Spaces, Places, and Faces of Hip Hop Culture in Saskatchewan

Contrary to its mythic identity as a ubiquitous flat prairie landscape used only for agriculture, Saskatchewan is geographically diverse with a topography of partial desert conditions south in the badlands, ocean-like plains of wheat, barley, and flax, rolling hills and numerous fresh-water

lakes, heavy forests, and dense and unwieldy bush and rocky mining terrain in the northern part of the province. For such a great and diverse landmass, the province's population is small, just over the million mark with almost half of the population living in the cities of Regina, the capital of the province, and Saskatoon, the corporate big business centre of the province. Smaller cities, towns, and reserves dot the vast amounts of highway and grid roads running north and south or east and west. And yet one can travel for hours only to come across a signpost, a cluster of vacant buildings, or the remains of an old house or barn. The remaining evidence of once thriving settler communities amounts to abandoned, decrepit, and boarded-up buildings, which followed the amalgamation of schools, post offices, and other services, along with mass purchases of farm land by large agri-businesses and the decline in the use of the railway. The uncertainty of crops, the rise in farming costs, and the depressed markets for wheat, barley, flax, canola, and other crops have created difficult socioeconomic conditions for independent farmers, and this has led to a growing pattern of relocation – from the rural to the urban.

Saskatchewan is home to numerous rural reserves⁵ (some of the poorest in Canada) and twenty-eight urban reserves.⁶ The provincial borders cross through Cree, Saulteaux, Sioux, Anishnawbe, and Dene territories, and the communities are divided into Treaty Areas 4, 5, 6, 8, and 10.⁷ Approximately 142,000 Indigenous people live in Saskatchewan, and in the 2006 census collected by Statistics Canada, approximately 12 per cent of Canada's Indigenous peoples were living in Saskatchewan,⁸ which at the time equalled about 14 per cent of Saskatchewan's total population.⁹ By 2045 it is predicted that the number of Indigenous people (including First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples) will increase to 33 per cent of Saskatchewan's total population.¹⁰ These kinds of statistics are important for a couple of reasons: first, following the reports about the trend toward a rise in "Aboriginal" populations, we are witnessing a variety of responses illustrating what one could interpret as white-settler anxiety; second, the landscape – social, cultural, geographical, economic, and political – has historically had a considerable influence on cultural and arts practices.¹¹ Today, its effects are clearly evident in how the culture of hip hop has developed and is understood throughout the province.

Hip Hop in the (Neighbour)hood

Hip hop culture seems to be everywhere one turns these days in Saskatchewan. Over the past five years, many hip hop-related community-based arts projects, school projects, public awareness events, perform-

ances, and hip hop-affiliated businesses have sprung up in the major cities of Regina and Saskatoon, in smaller cities and towns, including Prince Albert and Moose Jaw, as well as in some rural communities.¹² In Regina and Saskatoon there are hip hop events (often break battles or rap "warz") held at cultural exchange centres, restaurants (like Selam, an Ethiopian restaurant in Regina), or community halls, which bring artists, listeners, and dancers together on a monthly basis. Other smaller communities (Prince Albert) and some of the reserves (White Buffalo) also organize and present hip hop events, although these are not scheduled quite as regularly. There are many hip hop shows presenting local, national, and international talent throughout the province. Online, there are many list-serves, websites, social network sites, and forums dedicated to hip hop culture in Saskatchewan and its connections with hip hop in Canada and around the globe.

Over the past few years, there has been a significant increase in the number of free public workshops focusing on one or more of the four primary hip hop elements (DJing, rap, break dancing, and graffiti). Many of these workshops are geared toward Indigenous youth and/or young people living in the inner cities and are sponsored by arts organizations such as Paved Arts (in Saskatoon)¹³ or Common Weal (in Regina and Prince Albert). Other workshops are spearheaded by community neighbourhood organizations that hold weekly or monthly sessions on the hip hop elements as a way to support the interests of young people specifically from their neighbourhood. One of the most important pioneering community projects in Saskatchewan was the Prairie Roots Project: A Provincial Youth Hip-Hop Community Collaboration (PRP). The PRP was created under the umbrella arts organization Common Weal. Common Weal's vision and mandate is "to engage communities and professional artists to come together and create art ... [to] inspire ideas for social change through art ... [and to] empower people – and their communities – to tell their stories in their own voices."¹⁴

For the PRP, the primary goal was to organize hands-on workshops of the hip hop creative elements as a way to promote social change and foster connections between established and emerging hip hop artists and youth, offering access to arts practices that may not otherwise be available.¹⁵ In the liner notes of the first PRP CD, the initial project coordinator, Oin Nicholson, provides the parameters for the project: "[The 'hands-on' collaborations between established and emerging artists and youth provided a forum for skill development and voice, while promoting access, diversity and inclusion. The project covers a broad spectrum of content:

the social-political history and creation, recording, performance and production. The sites for the project were in the Prince Albert. The programming included to equipment and materials, facilitated presented as part of the Saskatchewan Saskatchewan Jazz Festival. In successful in that it connected youth from full experience, and provided a forum for ewan hip hop, promoting understanding each other and with other Saskatchewan

When I spoke with Nicholson at maintained a positive, almost idealistic I asked about issues of sustainability sponsors became vague and he offered women who had been into the space hip hop dance.¹⁶ When I asked what dancing, the answer was no, they were sponse spoke volumes about the ongoing created with hip hop culture and its artistic complex dance form that demands complex fitness, creativity, and rhythm. Yet, the demand specific acrobatic and strength is often gendered as masculine, which presented as the feminine dance in a cur space for women's participation.

Nicholson opened up more about access to the project as our conversations were about gender and the important facilitate workshops and to act as role models such as access to the project site around the province and the three projects geographically located in the southern province, it was not always easy for young communities or on reserves to travel to the shops do travel to more remote locations. PRP was its mandate to enable access, facilitate participation both within and around organized sessions. Another concern not necessarily contain the same type

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the social-political history and creative process of hip-hop, production, recording, performance and product development” (Nicholson 2005). The sites for the project were in three locations: Regina, Saskatoon, and Prince Albert. The programming included workshops, mentoring, access to equipment and materials, facilitators, and recording a compilation CD presented as part of the Saskatchewan Centennial Celebrations with the Saskatchewan Jazz Festival. In Nicholson’s words, “the project was successful in that it connected youth from across the province in a meaningful experience, and provided a forum for the voice of youth and Saskatchewan hip hop, promoting understanding of their unique culture amongst each other and with other Saskatchewan communities” (Nicholson 2005).

When I spoke with Nicholson at the Regina site about the PRP, he maintained a positive, almost idealist vision of the project. And yet, when I asked about issues of sustainability and gender representation, his responses became vague and he offered a comment about some young women who had been into the space the day before participating in some hip hop dance.¹⁶ When I asked whether these women were also break dancing, the answer was no, they were practising hip hop dance. His response spoke volumes about the ongoing gendering practices often associated with hip hop culture and its arts practices. Hip hop dance is a complex dance form that demands competence, skill, strong cardio vascular fitness, creativity, and rhythm. Yet, because of certain break styles, which demand specific acrobatic and strength movements, break is a form that is often gendered as masculine, whereas hip hop dance is often represented as the feminine dance in a culture that generally offers very little space for women’s participation.

Nicholson opened up more about some of the issues concerning access to the project as our conversation continued. Some of these issues were about gender and the importance of drawing on women artists to facilitate workshops and to act as role models, as well as about other concerns such as access to the project sites. Although the PRP held workshops around the province and the three project sites were established in cities geographically located in the southern, central, and northern parts of the province, it was not always easy for young people living in smaller communities or on reserves to travel to the sites. Different events and workshops do travel to more remote locations, but an important aspect of the PRP was its mandate to enable access to the sites and equipment and to facilitate participation both within and outside of specifically designated and organized sessions. Another consideration was that each site did not necessarily contain the same type of physical space or technological

equipment; one location may have had a concentration on graffiti arts, whereas another location focused on recording and production.

For Nicholson, and many of the other artists and youth who participated, the project "created a spark of creative, positive and conscious energy that has already started to have a residual effect" (Nicholson 2005). In response to a paper presented in June 2008 at a conference held at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon, hip hop emcee Eckwol spoke about the significance of the PRP and the positive impacts it had on Saskatchewan communities:

[W]ithin the last maybe four or five years, we've really started to see these programs popping up everywhere, and it's really nice to be consulted when these [programs] are coming up in youth facilities and schools ... When I started eleven years ago, there was absolutely nothing like this. Hip hop and rap were considered a horrible, horrible genre, negative, gangsta.' So I've been spending all these years trying to prove that it is a positive form of expression that young people relate to because of the oral practice ... the storytelling that's involved in it and the way we can relate our experiences through it.

Hip hop projects/workshops help artists like Eckwol and organizers like Nicholson to demonstrate that hip hop can be a positive and socially conscious cultural expression rather than tied only to media representations of gangs and violence. For Eckwol, hip hop also allows Indigenous youth to connect with each other and their Indigenous cultures through the practice of storytelling, which is so much a part of her Cree culture.

"Keep It Simple": A Hip Hop Education

Hip hop is also becoming more visible in Saskatchewan in some of the high schools, not only because of the commercial success of the hip hop fashion that many students are wearing but more so because of the implementation of hip hop programs in the curriculum or extracurricular activities. Some Saskatchewan schools are welcoming hip hop projects or clubs as a way to create and/or hold students' interest in subjects such as English, poetry, music, arts, and social studies. Hip hop is also being used, however problematically, to offer incentives to keep students in school, as well as to provide an alternative for students who do not necessarily identify with or participate in conventional extracurricular activities like soccer, band, or basketball. Robert Usher Collegiate was one of

the first schools to initiate hip hop projects. By introducing hip hop and creating curricular activity, vice principal Cor keeping students in school and working simple: participation in the club was optional, passing grades and attended classes, a of about 20 per cent in achievement attendance.

In March 2006 I presented a communi Canada as part of the Nourishing Focus, and prior to the event I was invited to castigate Corporations' (CBC) Saskatchewan hip hop and respond to the aired CBC Collegiate hip hop club.¹⁸ During this explained that most of the students Indigenous youth, and then she asked in Saskatchewan are drawn to hip hop four thoughts. First, there is a product in allowing young people agency are politics, culture, social relations, and enjoy. Second, hip hop culture offers are fairly accessible (physically and ecipate by rapping (or writing rhymes), d (graffiti arts), DJing, or creating music ample, by beat-boxing or by using freestyle – or one can engage in the role of auditing other's attempts or skills).¹⁹ Third ized communities from all over the world cially conscious politics of hip hop are origins. Hip hop is a culture that has time and place and has evolved out of before it, practices that also have his new form of cultural and political eican American and Latino youth living elsewhere in the United States) during Indigenous youth living in Saskatchewan these roots/routes of hip hop culture, alization, segregation, poverty, and r tions with stories concerning the imp resistance, and empowerment through made the suggestion that Indigenous

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the first schools to initiate hip hop programming in Regina (2005-06).¹⁷ By introducing hip hop and creating a break-dance crew as an extracurricular activity, vice principal Corrine Miller had greater success in keeping students in school and working on their studies. Her rules were simple: participation in the club was open to all students who maintained passing grades and attended classes. What she saw was an improvement of about 20 per cent in achievement and a significant rise in regular attendance.

In March 2006 I presented a community talk on Indigenous hip hop in Canada as part of the Nourishing Food Bank lunchtime community series, and prior to the event I was invited to speak on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's (CBC) Saskatchewan morning show to discuss hip hop and respond to the aired CBC radio documentary on the Usher Collegiate hip hop club.¹⁸ During this segment, radio host Sheila Coles explained that most of the students who participated in the club were Indigenous youth, and then she asked why I thought Aboriginal youth in Saskatchewan are drawn to hip hop culture? In my response, I offered four thoughts. First, there is a productive (and perhaps innovative) aspect in allowing young people agency around how they connect to school, politics, culture, social relations, and the various artistic practices they enjoy. Second, hip hop culture offers a wide variety of entry points that are fairly accessible (physically and economically) – a person can participate by rapping (or writing rhymes), dancing (break or hip hop), painting (graffiti arts), DJing, or creating music or beats in other ways – for example, by beat-boxing or by using free downloadable software programs – or one can engage in the role of audience (giving "props" and appreciating other's attempts or skills).¹⁹ Third, it is not surprising that marginalized communities from all over the world identify with and adopt the socially conscious politics of hip hop and the mythologies surrounding its origins. Hip hop is a culture that has a context – it comes from a specific time and place and has evolved out of many cultural practices that came before it, practices that also have histories. Early hip hop represented a new form of cultural and political expression for disenfranchised African American and Latino youth living in the South Bronx (and then elsewhere in the United States) during the late 1970s and early 1980s. For Indigenous youth living in Saskatchewan, there are identifications with these roots/routes of hip hop culture, including similar stories of marginalization, segregation, poverty, and racism, as well as strong identifications with stories concerning the importance of community ties, acts of resistance, and empowerment through creativity and music.²⁰ Finally, I made the suggestion that Indigenous youth living in Saskatchewan need

a voice – not necessarily a voice tied to words but a voice rooted in more of a presence – and that these young people need to be heard by an audience who will listen to their stories and engage with them in dynamic and respectful conversation. Hip hop programs found in Saskatchewan schools seemingly have the power to offer a fulfilment of these needs while also offering a critical injection of arts programming into an arts curriculum devastated by ongoing budget cuts.

For these reasons, the Scott Collegiate/IMP Labs Hip Hop Project was launched in the fall of 2008. The project is a collaborative initiative between the high school and the Interactive Media and Performance (IMP) Labs, which are housed in the Faculty of Fine Arts at the University of Regina.²¹ Scott Collegiate is the only high school located in the North Central neighbourhood of Regina, made familiar to the nation as one of Canada's most notorious 'hoods in a controversial issue of *Maclean's* magazine published on 15 January 2007. The majority of the school's student population are Indigenous and live in North Central.²² Scott Collegiate offers students project-based learning as a way to manage and reduce problems associated with regular attendance and with students completing work in the classroom or at home, achieving (and maintaining) passing grades, and acquiring hands-on skills. These projects also aim to assist students in their understandings of self-preservation, self-esteem, and "positive" life choices.²³

Given that one of the primary mandates of the IMP Labs is to build bridges between the surrounding communities and the University of Regina, the partnership with Scott Collegiate (both teachers and students) was an exciting opportunity. As part of the project, it was decided that the students would come and work in the IMP Labs at the university two days a week for three hours each day during the fall 2008 and winter 2009 semesters.²⁴ During these sessions, the students had the opportunity to work with and were mentored by local, national, and internationally recognized hip hop artists, as well as with the IMP Labs' research assistants, and had full access to the technologies required for the creative practices of hip hop culture.²⁵ And although there are myriad tensions and contradictions within such programs, this new hip hop—"positive" curriculum has enabled the students (and the school) to work against stereotypes and generalizations mapped onto hip hop culture, the neighbourhood, and Indigenous youth.²⁶ The project has also become a blueprint for similar projects that are being developed in other high schools and elementary schools around the province.

"The People / The People / It's all ab-

A number of successful Indigenous artists produce, and perform hip hop regular of a larger group. As expressed previous and established artists, including emcee per InforEd, participated in the project at their communities and across the region to cities, towns, and reserves to facilitate associated with hip hop, to perform, art, to mentor young Indigenous people to Saskatchewan in 2004, what I have is the emergence of an arguably hip culture – one that combines aspects and performance practices that signify of global hip hop culture.

For some, the burgeoning Indigenous resents the globalization (read America) and yet Tony Mitchell, along with many simplistic readings of the impact of hip hop cultures, arguing against "the prevalent hip hop is an exotic and derivative outgrowth idiom subject to assessment in terms (Mitchell 2001, 1–2). Rather than view theories, styles, and artistic elements a critical to recognize that "the commodification has facilitated its easy access to all parts of the world" (Bennett 2004 Bennett has also noted, "such approach a reworking of hip hop in ways that everyone respect hip hop is both a global, 180). Young people from all around social, economic, and political background the culture allows for a confluence of and cultural sensibilities with its aesthetic. For media theorist Murray Forman images, and values of hip-hop culture activities to construct different spaces spaces differently" (Forman 2002, 3). focuses primarily on the politics of

voice – not necessarily a voice tied to words but a voice rooted in more of presence – and that these young people need to be heard by an audience to will listen to their stories and engage with them in dynamic and respectful conversation. Hip hop programs found in Saskatchewan schools might have the power to offer a fulfillment of these needs while also offering a critical injection of arts programming into an arts curriculum ravaged by ongoing budget cuts.

For these reasons, the Scott Collegiate/IMP Labs Hip Hop Project was launched in the fall of 2008. The project is a collaborative initiative between the high school and the Interactive Media and Performance (IMP) program, which are housed in the Faculty of Fine Arts at the University of Regina.²¹ Scott Collegiate is the only high school located in the North Central neighbourhood of Regina, made familiar to the nation as one of Canada's most notorious "hoods" in a controversial issue of *Maclean's* magazine published on 15 January 2007. The majority of the school's student population are Indigenous and live in North Central.²² Scott Collegiate offers students project-based learning as a way to manage and solve problems associated with regular attendance and with students completing work in the classroom or at home, achieving (and maintaining) passing grades, and acquiring hands-on skills. These projects also to assist students in their understandings of self-preservation, self-empowerment, and "positive" life choices.²³

Even that one of the primary mandates of the IMP Labs is to build bridges between the surrounding communities and the University of Regina, the partnership with Scott Collegiate (both teachers and students) is an exciting opportunity. As part of the project, it was decided that students would come and work in the IMP Labs at the university two days a week for three hours each day during the fall 2008 and winter 2009 semesters.²⁴ During these sessions, the students had the opportunity to work with and were mentored by local, national, and internationally recognized hip hop artists, as well as with the IMP Labs' research assistants, and had full access to the technologies required for the creative practices of hip hop culture.²⁵ And although there are myriad tensions and contradictions within such programs, this new hip hop – "positive" curriculum enabled the students (and the school) to work against stereotypes and generalizations mapped onto hip hop culture, the neighbourhood, and Indigenous youth.²⁶ The project has also become a blueprint for similar projects that are being developed in other high schools and elementary schools around the province.

"The People / The People / It's all about the People"²⁷

A number of successful Indigenous artists living in Saskatchewan create, produce, and perform hip hop regularly, either independently or as part of a larger group. As expressed previously, many of these up-and-coming and established artists, including emcee Eckwol, producer Mills, and rapper InfoRed, participated in the PRP and continue to act as role models in their communities and across the region. These artists are often invited to cities, towns, and reserves to facilitate workshops on the arts practices associated with hip hop, to perform, to host events, and most important, to mentor young Indigenous people through music.²⁸ Since moving to Saskatchewan in 2004, what I have observed from some of these artists is the emergence of an arguably new, provocative, and hybrid music culture – one that combines aspects of music, dance, language, stories, and performance practices that signify local "indigenicity" with elements of global hip hop culture.

For some, the burgeoning Indigenous hip hop scene in Canada represents the globalization (read Americanization) of Indigenous youth. And yet Tony Mitchell, along with many other scholars,²⁹ challenges such simplistic readings of the impact of globalization on new local hip hop cultures, arguing against "the prevailing colonialist view that global hip hop is an exotic and derivative outgrowth of an African-American owned idiom subject to assessment in terms of American norms and standards" (Mitchell 2001, 1–2). Rather than view the appropriation of hip hop aesthetics, styles, and artistic elements as diminishing cultural identity, it is critical to recognize that "the commercial packaging of hip hop as a global commodity has facilitated its easy access by young people in many different parts of the world" (Bennett 2004, 180), and as cultural theorist Andy Bennett has also noted, "such appropriations have in each case involved a reworking of hip hop in ways that engage with local circumstances. In every respect hip hop is both a global and a local form" (Bennett 2004, 180). Young people from all around the world with diverse cultural, social, economic, and political backgrounds are drawn to hip hop because the culture allows for a confluence of a multitude of national, regional, and cultural sensibilities with its aesthetics, styles, and pleasures.

For media theorist Murray Forman, "Youths who adhere to the styles, images, and values of hip-hop culture ... have demonstrated unique capacities to construct different spaces, and, simultaneously, to construct spaces differently" (Forman 2002, 3). Although Forman's study on hip hop focuses primarily on the politics of place, race, culture, and identity in

the United States, his statement challenges the notion that hip hop culture, and the spaces within which it exists or is constructed, is only about appropriation or mimicry. Rather, the adaptations of hip hop culture by young people to include local cultural practices, sounds, vernacular, landscape, politics, etcetera demonstrate an interconnectivity between local and global discourses. What has become apparent is that "hip hop is culturally mobile" and that "the definition of hip hop culture and its attendant notions of authenticity are constantly being 'remade' as hip hop is appropriated by different groups of young people in cities and regions around the world" (Bennett 2004, 177). Indigenous hip hop artists, audiences, or participants living in Saskatchewan may at times draw on and adopt hip hop aesthetics, styles, and performance practices found within America, Australia, the United Kingdom, Germany, Japan, New Zealand, Turkey, or other regions of Canada; there are, however, elements that are distinctive, being generated from the local vernacular, landscape, cultural practices, politics, and place.

The combining of culturally (and locally) specific elements with mainstream styles is not a new practice. In her research on Indigenous women and music, ethnomusicologist Beverley Diamond states, "Contemporary First Nations, Inuit, and Métis women may choose to be primarily classical or folk musicians, reggae or blues artists, or rappers. But many – in fact most in some part of their work – draw upon a combination of culturally specific elements and mainstream styles, creating syntheses or stark juxtapositions in some cases that are unique in feel and in message, while contributing to a redefinition of the genres in which they work" (Diamond 2002, 12–13). This redefinition of genres that Diamond refers to is what interests me. This "redefined" hip hop, which I am arguing is a new style, represents a dramatic shift in the way that young Indigenous people living in Saskatchewan are telling their stories – stories that are steeped in a colonial history and a colonial present as well as stories that offer counter-resistance to the national discourse on Aboriginal youth living in Canada today. The discourses associated with global hip hop offer young Indigenous people living in Saskatchewan a relatively new oral culture (building on older cultures) and encourage the articulations of both unique and shared sensibilities.

For an excellent (and innovative) example of what this redefined hip hop sounds, looks, and feels like, I want to shift the focus away from a broad contextualization of hip hop in Saskatchewan and look at hip hop emcee Lindsay Knight (a.k.a. Eckwol) and at some specific examples from her 2004 album *Apprentice to the Mystery* and from lyrics on her 2007

album *The List*, which she recorded with Mills).

"Keepin' It Real": Eckwol Redefining It

Eckwol's family is from the Muskoday, Saskatchewan, near Prince Albert, the small town where she resides in Saskatoon, and she works closely and performs regularly, I would say, as a young teenager. Eckwol has access to mixed tapes shared between friends, and she has had access to the Internet for about ten, fifteen years ago, it was limited to Calgary or somewhere and probably we'd dub it like thirty times just to his dub mix tapes" (interview, 18 June 2007). Eckwol's access to rap and hip hop music is key; and she has access and then share the music, even if it is to recordings dubbed multiple times. There was a reduced quality of sound. There was a respect for her; as a teenager, Eckwol identified with her; as a teenager, she respected the skills it took to create and started listening to all these teen and started listening to all these ways that they could throw words to and these stories, and talk about issue Public Enemy, *Fear of a Black Planet* had a substantial impact on the creation of her music today. She expresses the rebelliousness and social and political movement, because that's where hip hop is a bit as well as underground hip hop mainstream, because of those issues within the lyrics."

Eckwol's early relationship with hip hop is full of contradictions. When I asked her why she was living in Saskatchewan have such a rich culture, and whether it was a result of her parents, and mentors like her, Eckwol questioned rather than drawing a route back to her. Rather than drawing a route back to her, I expected, Eckwol suggested that I

nited States, his statement challenges the notion that hip hop culture and the spaces within which it exists or is constructed, is only about appropriation or mimicry. Rather, the adaptations of hip hop culture among people to include local cultural practices, sounds, vernacular, rap, politics, etcetera demonstrate an interconnectedness between and global discourses. What has become apparent is that "hip hop is really mobile" and that "the definition of hip hop culture and its attendant notions of authenticity are constantly being remade/as hip hop appropriated by different groups of young people in cities and regions of the world" (Bennett 2004, 177). Indigenous hip hop artists, audi- or participants living in Saskatchewan may at times draw on and hip hop aesthetics, styles, and performance practices found within Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom, Germany, Japan, New Zealand, and other regions of Canada; there are, however, elements that are native, being generated from the local vernacular, landscape, cul- tures, politics, and place.

Combining of culturally (and locally) specific elements with main- stream styles is not a new practice. In her research on Indigenous women's music, ethnomusicologist Beverley Diamond states, "Contemporary nations, Inuit, and Métis women may choose to be primarily clas- sified as folk musicians, reggae or blues artists, or rappers. But many – most in some part of their work – draw upon a combination of locally specific elements and mainstream styles, creating syntheses or juxtapositions in some cases that are unique in feel and in message, contributing to a redefinition of the genres in which they work" (Diamond 2002, 12–13). This redefinition of genres that Diamond refers to interests me. This "redefined" hip hop, which I am arguing is a new style, represents a dramatic shift in the way that young Indigenous living in Saskatchewan are telling their stories – stories that are rooted in a colonial history and a colonial present as well as stories that challenge and resist the national discourse on Aboriginal youth in Canada today. The discourses associated with global hip hop among Indigenous people living in Saskatchewan a relatively new culture (building on older cultures) and encourage the articulations unique and shared sensibilities.

An excellent (and innovative) example of what this redefined hip hop sounds, looks, and feels like, I want to shift the focus away from a contextualization of hip hop in Saskatchewan and look at hip hop artist Indya Knight (a.k.a. Eekwol) and at some specific examples from her 2007 album *Apprentice to the Mystery* and from lyrics on her 2007

album *The List*, which she recorded with her brother Justin Knight (a.k.a. Mills).

"Keepin' It Real": Eekwol Redefining Hip Hop Culture

Eekwol's family is from the Muskoday First Nation in northern Saskatchewan, near Prince Albert, the small city where she grew up. Currently, however, she resides in Saskatoon, and her brother Mills, with whom she works closely and performs regularly, lives in Prince Albert, 134 kilometres away. As a young teenager, Eekwol listened to "old-school" hip hop en- cees on mixed tapes shared between friends: "around here [...] we didn't have much access because Internet wasn't around and when it was avail- able ten, fifteen years ago, it was limited. If some kid in the hip hop scene went to Calgary or somewhere and picked up a cool underground tape, we'd dub it like thirty times just to listen ... So I still have a lot of my old dub mix tapes" (interview, 18 June 2008). For Eekwol, being able to ac- cess rap and hip hop music is key, and she and her friends found ways to access and then share the music, even though it often meant having to listen to recordings dubbed multiple times, resulting in a dramatically reduced quality of sound. There was something in rap that compelled her; as a teenager, Eekwol identified with some of the stories, but she also respected the skills it took to create a flow. "Since I was twelve or thir- teen and started listening to all these emcees, I was [...] amazed by the way that they could throw words together and [...] create this imagery and these stories, and talk about issues [...] The very first CD I bought was Public Enemy, *Fear of a Black Planet*, 1990." These musical experiences had a substantial impact on the creation and shape of her earlier music, as they do on her music today. She explains, "You can just sort of feed off the rebelliousness and social and political issues of the African American movement, because that's where hip hop originates. I drew on that quite a bit as well as underground hip hop, the kind that never made it to the mainstream, because of those issues and the discussions that went on within the lyrics."

Eekwol's early relationship with hip hop culture, however, is filled with contradictions. When I asked her why she thought Indigenous youth living in Saskatchewan have such an intense relationship with hip hop culture, and whether it was a result of the many workshops, role mod- els, and mentors like her, Eekwol quickly sidestepped taking any credit. Rather than drawing a route back to the underground hip hop scene as I expected, Eekwol suggested that the embodiment of hip hop among

Indigenous youth in Saskatchewan is to some extent an outcome of the success of commercial hip hop: "A lot of times the commercial is really negative, but at the same time, it's relatable. When I was a teenager I listened to Tupac. That's what I loved. Tupac. I related [...] Hip hop is a relatable genre because a lot of the people who are doing hip hop are in the same sort of social struggle, whether or not they're recognizing it or doing anything to change it." And yet an ongoing concern for Eckwol is youth who identify with the stereotypical and overly romanticized experiences represented in much of commercial rap and hip hop today. Whether young people can consciously recognize these identifications while also seeing the potential for transformation, rather than just glamorizing the violence, is crucial. Given her status as an emcee and a role model in Saskatchewan, Eckwol feels a sense of responsibility to convey something more positive. "When I see inner-city kids, Indigenous or not, doing positive for the underground conscious hip hop, that's when I feel, okay maybe they are getting a little bit of what we tried to do back in the day or what we do now. I can only hope that's where that is coming from."

Taking her responsibilities as a role model seriously, Eckwol incorporates socially conscious elements in her music and her everyday living. Along with the emcees she listened to in her youth (underground and commercial), she is "inspired by people who stand up and take action for what they believe in for the good of their people, like Leonard Peltier, Malcolm X, Vine Deloria Sr. and Jr., Alfred Tataké and so many young people who are starting to speak about correcting and creating an awareness of history" (interviewed in Sealy 2007, 29). Rapping into a microphone while on a stage or recording an album has become a critical place from where Eckwol feels comfortable to speak out:

It doesn't take a genius
to see the situation
Oppression class systems
control of the nation
We want to be equal
but it just don't cut it
All my good people
it's time to rise above it...³⁰

For Eckwol and other young Indigenous people living in Saskatchewan, hip hop is a "safe" place to talk about politics and all of the other issues that people are afraid or unwilling to discuss openly. In an interview with freelance journalist David Sealy, Eckwol explains, "I'm all about honesty,

I grew up in an environment where people even though there were huge elephant dictions. To survive that you have to be (Sealy 2007). Eckwol's albums focus on a number of issues that are difficult, painful, and including moments of celebration and

Creating a Place: On Being a "Girl" in

As a woman who writes, produces, an artist and in collaboration with many other women and the stereotypes associated with Indigenous women in a music culture that has been at times both liberating and fru

I get endless requests to drop a verse used to find that very rewarding. But it's not for free. Now I've got this huge status started to realize why I'm asked. Because of my novelty status as a female, the only reason they want me on the album is to that realization, I was like, oh (interview, 18 June 2008)

Although Eckwol is considered by many to be a highly skilled, emcee, hip hop culture in Saskatchewan, representing women and objectifying them or treating them as parts, offering less opportunity for them to shine their skills. She vocalizes her frustration when she asks, "Is it because I write about Indigenous, filling a category in the industry?" (interviewed in Sealy 2007, 29). For many other women who create music that are represented as masculine are industry gatekeepers who continue to come down to issues of access, opposition and partnerships.

When questioned about how her own creation of her music and what it means in the scene, Eckwol's discomfort with

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29). Eckwol's albums focus on a number of these elephants in the room –
issues that are difficult, painful, and challenging to take on – while also
including moments of celebration and reclamation.

Creating a Place: On Being a "Girl" in Hip Hop

As a woman who writes, produces, and performs in hip hop both as a solo
artist and in collaboration with male artists, Eckwol works against the
grain and the stereotypes associated with the genre. Her identity as an
Indigenous woman in a music culture that is still dominated by men has
been at times both liberating and frustrating, as she explains:

I get endless requests to drop a verse, requests from all over. And I
used to find that very rewarding. But a lot of the times I'd be doing
it for free. Now I've got this huge stack of CDs that I'm on, but I
started to realize why I'm asked. Because I'm well known, but also
because of my novelty status as a female emcee. A lot of times that's
the only reason they want me on their track. When I started com-
ing to that realization, I was like, oh, okay – that's not what I want.
(Interview, 18 June 2008)

Although Eckwol is considered by many of her peers to be a "dope," or
highly skilled, emcee, hip hop culture continues to be harsh to women (in
Saskatchewan), representing women who participate as novelty figures,
objectifying them or treating them differently from their male counter-
parts, offering less opportunity for them to perform or gig, and devalu-
ing their skills. She vocalizes her frustrations with these sexist attitudes
when she asks, "Is it because I write good lyrics or is it because I'm female
and Indigenous, filling a category no one else is occupying at the mo-
ment?" (interviewed in Sealy 2007, 29). "The difficulty for Eckwol – and
for many other women who create and perform within musical genres
that are represented as masculine arenas and that are heavily guarded by
industry gatekeepers who continue to perpetuate normative standards –
comes down to issues of access, opportunity, networking, and collabora-
tive partnerships.

When questioned about how her gender influences or plays a role in the
creation of her music and what it means in relation to how she is treated
in the scene, Eckwol's discomfort with normative ideas of gender categor-

izations and behaviours is evident: "There is no escaping it. I mean, I grew up my whole life hanging out with guys, and even that term 'tom boy' I don't like, because then you're saying I'm more like a guy." When pressed for more on the subject, Eckwol is able to quickly articulate the contradictions in attitudes, behaviours, and expectations that are informed by gender norms. At the same time, she also speaks about her ability to avoid being completely overwhelmed by such oppressive frameworks:

It's totally there. There's no getting around it. But when I write lyrics, I'm not consciously thinking from a "woman's perspective." I'm not trying to be, "I am woman, hear me roar" type of thing. To me, the issues don't have gender. Like, I guess, "Let's Move"³¹ for example. We all have to move and my music's always reflected just that. All of us, we can all do this, we can all work together. Or else the stories reflect people, not men and women. Unless ... One of my more recent songs is the "men" song that stems from a more personal place. There are a lot of guys that rap about their girlfriend or their mom [...] But at the same time that doesn't really pigeonhole the guys [...] If they're talking about a woman, people aren't saying, you know, that's a guy rapping.³²

The contradiction that Eckwol highlights is typical of the normative gender roles that are prominent in rap and hip hop narratives. Why is it still that when a man raps about a woman he cares for, he is represented as a compassionate and upstanding guy, in spite of rap's prevalent narrative of objectification and sexualization of that woman, but when a woman raps about a man, it tends to be read as sentimental, emotional, or a manhunt?³³

On 2 April 2008, during the launch of the IMP Labs, Eckwol was one of ten hip hop artists who participated in the roundtable discussion on hip hop in Saskatchewan (and the only woman).³⁴ Her initial comments concerned gender and some of the issues she faced because she is a woman who likes to rap and because there are so few women who participate in the scene living in Saskatchewan:

[T]he thing about hip hop here is that there aren't many girls who are doing it. It's kind of a lonely thing, because whenever I'm somewhere else where there are girls that are rapping or break dancing or whatever, it's always just this automatic connection. It's like this vibe, like we're doing this, and you know it would be nice to have more.

The loneliness that Eckwol discusses something I asked her about in a follow the reasons why so few women partic

[I]t is lonely because there's really we have a little cousin who's taking the [...] well, why does it have to be that to create lyrics. She loves to put the to also take that on? It's not really f You know?

The hip hop scene constantly remind participate) that she is a woman, that body else. "I get a lot of respect to my f true feelings come out in different w Eckwol openly challenges this sexist of why she is sought out as a mentor ?

Contradictions and Tensions in (Sask

The contradictions surrounding hip wol's experience. Clearly, some hip aled in order to critique colonialism, patterns concerning gender norms at avoid being identified within this ca career Eckwol changed her style and her shape:

I'd rock the baggy clothes – baggy that so I wouldn't get placed in the to hide my body in order to get res these things as you get older. Why working so damn hard to, you know give a shit.

This is the attitude – self-reflection, roundings, and a genuine appreciation around them – that comes through c

from the roots/to the trunks/ the change I want to see is the

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contradiction that Eckwol highlights is typical of the normative roles that are prominent in rap and hip hop narratives. Why is that when a man raps about a woman he cares for, he is represented as a compassionate and upstanding guy; in spite of rap's prevalent theme of objectification and sexualization of that woman, but when a woman raps about a man, it tends to be read as sentimental, emotional, and vulnerable?³³

On April 2008, during the launch of the IMP Labs, Eckwol was one of the hip hop artists who participated in the roundtable discussion on hip hop in Saskatchewan (and the only woman).³⁴ Her initial comments on gender and some of the issues she faced because she is a woman were to rap and because there are so few women who participate in hip hop in Saskatchewan:

One thing about hip hop here is that there aren't many girls who are doing it. It's kind of a lonely thing, because whenever I'm somewhere else where there are girls that are rapping or breaking or whatever, it's always just this automatic connection. It's this vibe, like we're doing this, and you know it would be nice to have more.

The loneliness that Eckwol discussed openly during the roundtable is something I asked her about in a follow-up interview. Here she reflects on the reasons why so few women participate in the scene:

[I]t is lonely because there's really very few and it's just cool that I have a little cousin who's taking that on. But to say "taking that on," [...]] well, why does it have to be that? She loves the music. She loves to create lyrics. She loves to put them to a beat. Why does she have to also take that on? It's not really fair. It's just not fair! [She laughs.] You know?

The hip hop scene constantly reminds Eckwol (and other women who participate) that she is a woman, that she is different and not like everybody else. "I get a lot of respect to my face from all these guys [...]] but their true feelings come out in different ways: 'you're pretty good for a girl.'" Eckwol openly challenges this sexist myth, offering yet another example of why she is sought out as a mentor and role model.

Contradictions and Tensions in (Saskatchewan) Hip Hop Culture

The contradictions surrounding hip hop culture are highlighted in Eckwol's experience. Clearly, some hip hop in Saskatchewan is being created in order to critique colonialism, and yet predictable and depressing patterns concerning gender norms and constraints continue to exist. To avoid being identified within this category of "woman," early on in her career Eckwol changed her style and donned hip hop fashions that hid her shape:

I'd rock the baggy clothes – baggy jeans and big hoodies and I'd do that so I wouldn't get placed in the "hoochie" category. Like I have to hide my body in order to get respect. Then you learn to question these things as you get older: Why are we doing all this? Why are we working so damn hard to, you know, be accepted? And now I don't give a shit.

This is the attitude – self-reflection, a critical engagement with her surroundings, and a genuine appreciation for those who respect the people around them – that comes through clearly in Eckwol's lyrics:

from the roots/to the trunks/to the branches/to the leaves
the change I want to see is the change I got be

from the roots/to the trunks/to the branches/to the leaves
all in together we're just planting the seeds³⁵

In 2004 Eekwol released *Apprentice to the Mystery*, her first full-length solo album. The album, which was co-produced by Eekwol and Mills (by Mills's production company), won the award for best rap and hip hop album at the 2004 Canadian Aboriginal Music Awards. The co-production and the development of Mills's own production company conveys the importance of the DIY (do-it-yourself) aesthetics of hip hop culture. It also speaks to the significance of having access to technologies used to create hip hop tracks today: "We have industry-standard recording equipment that can be used anywhere. We've recorded in hotel rooms. Thanks to technology, it's easier for broke artists to collaborate and create high quality music. We produce albums on a small budget that are comparable to what you hear on the radio" (Eekwol, interviewed in Sealy 2007, 31). Taking into account this comment, I asked Eekwol about the technologies of production and how much easier it seems for young people to create hip hop tracks today. In her response, Eekwol speaks out against what she feels is a common misconception:

People say nowadays there's no real hip hop anymore and that the young generation they have no idea what real hip hop is. But I like to argue against that idea. [Hip hop] comes from passion, it comes from within, and either you're good at it or you're not. Technology has always been advancing ever since the beginning of time, right? So I don't think it's fair to these young kids [...] yeah sure, they can make a beat a lot easier than my brother could've made a beat ten years ago, but they're still using the talents and the passion that comes with hip hop.

The DIY component of hip hop is also indicative of Eekwol's political ideology concerning the commercialization and "selling out" of hip hop and the representations of hip hop in the mainstream. And although she argues against the problematic misconception that all mainstream hip hop is "bad" and "a sell-out" and that all underground hip hop is "good" and "socially conscious," Eekwol admires and respects originality and thoughtfulness in other hip hop artists' work: "Everything comes from somewhere right? So a lot of times we have outside influences and we end up utilizing them in our own way and that's what is happening with hip hop, with the different cultures within the culture of hip hop." For Eek-

wol, the artists who have something on their histories, culture, and local pe-

[This music] sounds different from the Bronx, and that works as long as respect for where the music comes from everywhere I go. It's always one of the things I do hip hop but I know where I'm from, I know where I'm from my history, my background. But it's oral history, my oral culture, the social politics and stuff like that.

Hip hop is an oral culture, having deep traditions. This orality, in Eekwol's opinion, is indigenous youth to hip hop culture. It is some elders and other community members not turning from their cultural history to the present and future:

I have this notion in the back of my mind that runs through our blood and our spit that sometimes youth relate to the storytelling, the storytelling traditions. And maybe they don't have that knowledge and maybe it comes out, but that they can't fully comprehend yet.

From the title of the album *Apprentice to the Mystery*, and the sounds, Eekwol uses various metaphors, and the sounds, Eekwol uses throughout the thirteen tracks, she tells us that she and others fictional representations of hip hop titled "Apprentice." Eekwol begins using a straight-up rap. Accompanying her voice is as though it is breathing with each move on the board sounds. At various points throughout the album, the rattle sounds fade in and out. As Eekwol guesses through experience and less through technical knowledge, the volume, in the present, increasing in volume, introducing a dynamic tension through dynamic building the tension through dynamic voice becomes stronger and fuller as the vocal range, participating in the built

from the roots/to the trunks/to the branches/to the leaves all in together we're just planting the seeds³⁵

2004 Eekwol released *Apprentice to the Mystery*, her first full-length album. The album, which was co-produced by Eekwol and Mills (by production company), won the award for best rap and hip hop album at the 2004 Canadian Aboriginal Music Awards. The co-production and development of Mills's own production company convey the importance of the DIY (do-it-yourself) aesthetics of hip hop culture. It also points to the significance of having access to technologies used to create hip hop tracks today: "We have industry-standard recording equipment that can be used anywhere. We've recorded in hotel rooms. Thanks to technology, it's easier for broke artists to collaborate and create high-quality music. We produce albums on a small budget that are comparable to what you hear on the radio" (Eekwol, interviewed in Sealy 2007, 31). This statement into account this comment, I asked Eekwol about the technology of production and how much easier it seems for young people to create hip hop tracks today. In her response, Eekwol speaks out against what she perceives to be a common misconception:

People say nowadays there's no real hip hop anymore and that the new generation they have no idea what real hip hop is. But I like to argue against that idea. Hip hop comes from passion, it comes from within, and either you're good at it or you're not. Technology always been advancing ever since the beginning of time, right? I don't think it's fair to these young kids [...] yeah sure, they can make a beat a lot easier than my brother could've made a beat ten years ago, but they're still using the talents and the passion that comes with hip hop.

My component of hip hop is also indicative of Eekwol's political stance concerning the commercialization and "selling out" of hip hop. Her representations of hip hop in the mainstream. And although she argues against the problematic misconception that all mainstream hip hop is "bad" and "a sell-out" and that all underground hip hop is "good" and "socially conscious," Eekwol admires and respects originality and authenticity in other hip hop artists' work. "Everything comes from here, right? So a lot of times we have outside influences and we end up bringing them in our own way and that's what is happening with hip hop. It's the different cultures within the culture of hip hop." For Eek-

wol, the artists who have something original to say are the ones drawing on their histories, culture, and local politics:

[This music] sounds different from something coming out of the Bronx, and that works as long as you continue to have that respect for where the music comes from. I always push that idea everywhere I go. It's always one of the first things I say about hip hop. I do hip hop but I know where it comes from. It doesn't come from my history, my background. But I can relate to it because of its oral history, my oral culture, the oral storytelling traditions, the social politics and stuff like that.

Hip hop is an oral culture, having developed out of a long history of oral traditions. This orality, in Eekwol's opinion, is one of the forces drawing Indigenous youth to hip hop culture. It is also a sign of understanding for some elders and other community members that Indigenous youth are not turning from their cultural history but incorporating the past with the present and future:

I have this notion in the back of my mind that our ancestral history runs through our blood and our spirits, and I think a lot of the times youth relate to the storytelling aspect [of hip hop] because of the storytelling traditions. And maybe they have it in their ancestral knowledge and maybe it comes out, and maybe that's an attraction that they can't fully comprehend yet. I like to think that.

From the title of the album *Apprentice to the Mystery* to the lyrics, the metaphors, and the sounds, Eekwol embraces the culture of storytelling. Throughout the thirteen tracks, she tells stories, some autobiographical and others fictional representations of other peoples' lives. In the track titled "Apprento," Eekwol begins using a spoken-word style rather than a straight-up rap. Accompanying her voice is a strong bass line that feels as though it is breathing with each movement as well as synthesized keyboard sounds. At various points throughout the introductory section, rattle sounds fade in and out. As Eekwol speaks the lines, "Because I'm guessing through experience and lessons," the keyboard becomes more present, increasing in volume, introducing additional melodic sounds, building the tension through dynamics and an ascent in pitch. Eekwol's voice becomes stronger and fuller as she drops to the lower part of her vocal range, participating in the building of tension. When she arrives

at the phrase "We got power in numbers," she is joined by another voice, that of award-winning round dance singer Marc Longjohn. His vocalizations give weight to the meaning of the line. Eckwol is speaking both literally and metaphorically.

Eckwol continues with the line "We got ... power in spirit" and then shifts from "we" to "I" in the lines "I got ... power in music/I got ... power in my voice." Literally, her voice sounds as though it is becoming more powerful as additional effects and filters are added, along with a slight echo. Her enunciation of "I got" in each phrase becomes crisper, and she holds onto the last word of each phrase ("music," "voice," or "it"), extending the length of the sound and emphasizing the lyric. When she gives out the last line, "Hear it," there is a slight pause, followed by a heavy bass beat dropping on the first count of the next measure as she begins to rap the verse.

These changes in her vocal style cause a renewed sense of urgency, and her rap demands the listener's attention. The melody, played by a synthesized keyboard, moves up and down the scale, contributing to a continual forward rhythm that complements Eckwol's style of vocal delivery. The bass beats remain heavy and fat as she offers narratives of the complexities of identity, loss of culture, responsibility to one's culture, anxiety, the seduction of power, money, confusion, and the possibilities of empowerment that come with the passing of wisdom down through the generations from the elders to the rest of the community. For Eckwol, these are her "truths," bound by what she knows, what she does not know, and what she hopes to come to know – the mystery.

As she arrives at the chorus, Eckwol implicates herself in the stories and then goes on to explain how she makes herself accountable:

- So what I'm doing is
- Observing the mystery
- Understanding the mystery
- Following the mystery
- Becoming the mystery
- I'm nothing without the mystery
- I know nothing about the mystery
- A tiny source of the force of this universal history

Here, her vocal style changes again. The chorus is sung in a lyrical style, the syllables becoming more fluid, which gives a sense of inward reflection. The bass lessens and the melodic synthesized sounds that had a strong presence at the beginning of the tune return. As she builds to the

second section of the chorus, her intonation, and rapid delivery style return. It is round dance singing builds in volume, and moments throughout the track, points of intensity his vocalizations are narratives – an interconnection of "trigenous cultures. There is a synergy and Eckwol needs/wants/hopes to an embrace/challenge/resist past and present are change for the present and future.

In the remaining tracks of *Apprentice* and seeks to transform. She concerning renewed spirituality, communities, loneliness, strength, alcoholism celebration, and mourning. In the breaking free from cycles of violence:

too sick to stop this cycle
hammer this nail into my head
living in the cost of a culture
some say I'm better off dead⁵⁶

"Too Sick" is literally about domestic violence, but it can also be understood as representing a story of violence toward women perpetrated outside and within. "Too Sick" is a song that asks the listener to remember the hundreds of women, the lost women, the dead women, their homes and communities across these conventionally gendered narratives; different narratives for herself, other women, and of the community.

The politics of place and combining; *Apprentice*, as Eckwol incorporates new hybrid musical styles, namely hip hop combination as well as indigenous vocalizations and is also an inclusion of instrumental and commercial North American mainstream music. The album is a collection of sounds from a variety of instruments, including an organ, a flute, a guitar, rattles, an

phrase "We got power in numbers," she is joined by another voice, of award-winning round dance singer Marc Longjohn. His vocalizations give weight to the meaning of the line. Eckwol is speaking both literally and metaphorically.

Eckwol continues with the line "We got ... power in spirit" and then from "we" to "I" in the lines "I got ... power in music/I got ... power in voice." Literally, her voice sounds as though it is becoming more powerful; additional effects and filters are added, along with a slight echo, truncation of "I got" in each phrase becomes crispier, and she holds the last word of each phrase ("music," "voice," or "it"), extending the end of the sound and emphasizing the lyric. When she gives out the last "Hear it," there is a slight pause, followed by a heavy bass beat drop in the first count of the next measure as she begins to rap the verse. These changes in her vocal style cause a renewed sense of urgency, and she demands the listener's attention. The melody, played by a synthesizer keyboard, moves up and down the scale, contributing to a continual and rhythmic that complements Eckwol's style of vocal delivery. The lyrics remain heavy and fat as she offers narratives of the complexity of identity, loss of culture, responsibility to one's culture, anxiety, the erosion of power, money, confusion, and the possibilities of empowerment that come with the passing of wisdom down through the generations from the elders to the rest of the community. For Eckwol, these are "truths," bound by what she knows, what she does not know, and she hopes to come to know – the mystery.

she arrives at the chorus, Eckwol implicates herself in the stories that men go on to explain how she makes herself accountable:

So what I'm doing is
Observing the mystery
Understanding the mystery
Following the mystery
Becoming the mystery

I'm nothing without the mystery
I know nothing about the mystery
A tiny source of the force of this universal history

her vocal style changes again. The chorus is sung in a lyrical style, syllables becoming more fluid, which gives a sense of inward reflection. The bass lessens and the melodic synthesized sounds that had a strong presence at the beginning of the tune return. As she builds to the

second section of the chorus, her intense rapping voice, clear enunciation, and rapid delivery style return. It is at this moment that Longjohn's round dance singing builds in volume. Longjohn's voice is present at various moments throughout the track, sometimes barely audible, but at points of intensity his vocalizations are strong, offering an integration of narratives – an interconnection of "traditional" and "contemporary" Indigenous cultures. There is a synergy between past, present, and future, and Eckwol needs/wants/hopes to understand the mystery in order to embrace/challenge/resist past and present – and most important, to create change for the present and future.

In the remaining tracks of *Apprentice*, Eckwol interrogates, confronts, and seeks to transform. She continues to tell complicated stories concerning renewed spirituality, community crisis, sickness, healing, apologies, loneliness, strength, alcoholism, love, suicide, nurturance, death, celebration, and mourning. In the track "Too Sick," her emphasis is on breaking free from cycles of violence:

too sick to stop this cycle
hammer this nail into my head
living in the cost of a culture loss
some say I'm better off dead³⁶

"Too Sick" is literally about domestic violence, and metaphorically, it can be understood as representing cultural abuse and hatred. It is a familiar story of violence toward women perpetuated by men who claim to care. This narrative calls attention to the devaluing of Indigenous women from outside and within. "Too Sick" is a song of crisis – a song that challenges the listener to remember the hundreds of Indigenous women, the missing women, the lost women, the dead women, who have disappeared from their homes and communities across Canada.³⁷ Eckwol deconstructs these conventionally gendered narratives as a method for (re)shaping different narratives for herself, other young Indigenous women, and the rest of the community.

The politics of place and combining of cultures is prevalent in *Apprentice*, as Eckwol incorporates new hybrids of musical genres and soundscapes, namely hip hop combinations of rap and R&B singing styles as well as Indigenous vocalizations and aspects of Cree language.³⁸ There is also an inclusion of instrumentation that is not usually found in commercial North American mainstream (or underground) hip hop. In addition to more conventional-sounding hip hop beats, the listener also hears an organ, a flute, a guitar, rattles, and traditional drums, many of these

ly sampled or synthesized. The listener is reminded of both Eckwols roots and routes in all of her lyrics. She challenges the listener to hear her stories and to embody the affects of the storytelling act the storyteller's meaning. Eckwol puts herself, and her contradictions out there, simultaneously becoming vulnerable and powerful as uses the listener to reflect and to move.

Hop is the genre that enables Eckwol to convey the contradictions burdens of the current colonial situation in Saskatchewan. From a hip hop culture, she has begun to think about decolonization and possibilities of what this might look like: "I can only speak for myself but I do try to use music as a tool to try to comprehend exactly what to happen to decolonize, to decolonize myself and to try to talk it, to try to get that discourse going [...] whether it be music or not, ceremonies, a resurgence of the ceremonies and the desire to learn learn the ceremonies and revitalize the language. That's starting to learn a bit." Decolonizing actions are subjective; they are social so personal and psychic. For Eckwol, hip hop culture presents many abilities for reflection, speaking out, and returning to a place out of colonial history. In her music, she fights against a reified identity to a historical past and represented through a colonial lens. She is out of this narrative. But at the same time, she is compelled not to sit alone, nor does she believe that hip hop culture holds all the answers. "Music itself is obviously a good tool. But it's not enough. We still have to act because we speak it. I can speak it to death, and I will, but the action has to be there. We have to live it too."

vision

As from the examples provided throughout this chapter, contemporary hip hop practices in Saskatchewan contribute to a current dialogue on nationalism as it is experienced today. Indigenous hip hop artists live, produce, and perform in Saskatchewan, like Eckwol and Mills, create the discourse on Indigenous youth in Canada – so much so during past Canada Day celebrations outside the provincial Legislature in Saskatchewan, hip hop artists have performed alongside non-Indigenous drummers and powwow dancers. Indigenous artists are adopting a culture and adapting this culture to represent their own. They are constructing spaces differently and in so doing telling new stories. Cultural anthropologist Julie Cruikshank suggests, "Stories allow us to embellish events, to reinterpret them, to mull over what they mean and to learn something new each time, providing raw material for

developing philosophy" (Cruikshank 2002, 154). The stories being told in the hip hop scenes in Saskatchewan are diverse, contradictory, political, and at times, fantastical.

The discourses surrounding hip hop culture in Saskatchewan are incredibly contradictory and tension-filled. As I argue in other works, hip hop programs in Saskatchewan are successfully used as incentives to keep young people in school, while at the same time, hip hop is represented by the media through a lens of racism that draws connections between hip hop, gang culture, and Indigenous youth.³⁹ Hip hop is used to critique colonialism by some artists, participants, and community members, but the culture also holds strong to gender norms and constraints, promoting male dominance, marginalizing women in the scene, and devaluing women's contributions. Thus the question of mimicry – and whether or not hip hop in Saskatchewan is just caught up in the sensationalized and romanticized "bling," "booty," and violent images of American mainstream hip hop – cannot be answered with a simple yes or no.

As I have demonstrated, there is a new, "redefined" style of hip hop that has developed in Saskatchewan, and this hip hop is what Tony Mitchell (2001) describes as an example of "glocal" culture, a culture that represents a dynamic relationship between the local and global, a culture that is in flux. In a keynote talk given at the "Critical Race" conference, held at the University of Regina in May 2006, Indigenous studies scholar Emma LaRocque argued that Indigenous youth need to embrace cultural styles that speak to current lived experiences. She was not suggesting that historical practices be abandoned, but her argument takes into account the understanding that culture, arts practices, and communities are not static. Indigenous hip hop is a relatively new form of popular culture, which offers the potential to challenge the reified identities and cultures that liberalism within a multicultural framework invites. In the music discussed throughout this chapter, for example, it is evident that Eckwol's (and Mills's) hip hop does not solely focus on the preservation of past traditions but also attempts to explore the complex experiences of Indigenous youth living in Saskatchewan today, which include community workshops based on the hip hop arts, hip hop programs and projects in schools, hip hop-affiliated media and businesses, and hip hop performances. Eckwol tells stories, and these stories and performances are informed by her surroundings – her community, her experiences, and her history. Eckwol's music is politically, socially, culturally, and ethically relevant to today.

However, because the possibilities for identifications on an international scale are extraordinary and vast, it is essential to understand, as

Andy Bennett has determined, that "the localization of hip hop, rather than being a smooth and consensual transition, is fraught with tensions and contradictions as young people attempt to reconcile issues of musical and stylistic authenticity with those of locality, identity and everyday life" (Bennett 2004, 180). It is essential that we understand the complexities of what this may mean in relation to the social, political, economic, cultural, and geographical landscape of Saskatchewan. Even the few examples offered here for analysis show the soundness of the argument that hip hop culture in Saskatchewan is a possible strategy for decolonization. Hip hop culture has been redefined in Saskatchewan – adopted and adapted – to reflect local Indigenous culture, politics, and experience, as well as other hip hop cultures from around the world. Within this new style of hip hop, there are some intelligent, thought-provoking, critical, and complicated narratives being conveyed. Old stories are being retold through innovative and new hybrid forms, and current experiences are being (re)shaped and expressed as new stories ready to be told and to be heard.

NOTES

¹The stories told within this chapter are only glimpses into the diverse and evolving hip hop cultures in Saskatchewan. I want to express my deep gratitude to all the hip hop artists and enthusiasts who shared their stories with me and gave me permission to interpret these stories and contextualize them within this collection of music narratives. To convey these stories ethically, I must acknowledge that I write as both insider and outsider: I am an insider because I am a longtime lover of hip hop, as well as a facilitator of hip hop workshops and a producer of hip hop shows in Regina, Saskatchewan. And yet I am an outsider because I moved to Saskatchewan in 2004 and because I am someone who speaks from a place of privilege, a trained popular music scholar working in one of the three universities in Saskatchewan, and a non-Indigenous woman. Knowing these things, many people shared their stories with me, granting me permission to retell their stories in academic-speak, a form of language that is for the most part foreign to the culture of hip hop and to many of the young people who participate in this culture. I have a deep appreciation for these stories (the "truths," the "fictions," the "in-betweens"), and I have a profound respect for these storytellers and the roles they carve out for themselves.

¹ "Apprentice," from Eekwol's *Apprentice to the Mystery* (2004).

² Generally, the cities in Canada that are represented as major urban cultural centres are Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg, and Edmonton. Cities such as Saskatoon, Regina, Halifax, Victoria, St John's, and Quebec City, although large and unique, tend to fall outside of such categorization.

³ I contextualize Canada both as a liberal state-initiated policy on multiculturalism process of decolonizing (psychically, geographically) and as a process of decolonizing (psychically, geographically). These include grassroots community art on reserves, education-oriented hip hop academies, music festivals, businesses at production studios, online forums, and live events.

⁴ For a complete list of the reserves found in Saskatchewan at <http://esask.usg.gov> to the First Nations Bands of Saskatchewan at <http://www.sicc.sk.ca/bands> (accessed 21 June 2011).

⁵ An urban reserve is defined as "land that status from the Federal Government and Northern Administration District" (Lorn Reserves: *The City of Saskatoon's Partnerships* Economic Diversification Canada – information on urban reserves in Saskatchewan/research/urban_reserves (accessed 21 June 2011)).

⁶ Ocean Man First Nation, Pheasant Run First Nation are all located within the area of Treaty 5; see <http://www.sicc.sk.ca> adhere to Treaty 5; see <http://www.sicc.sk.ca>

⁷ For more information concerning the process of decolonizing (psychically, geographically) and as a process of decolonizing (psychically, geographically), refer to <http://www12.statcan.ca/tables/tables.htm> (accessed 21 June 2011).

⁸ For more information about the concert, refer to <http://www12.statcan.ca/companion/abor/canada.cfm#5> (accessed 21 June 2011).

⁹ For more information, refer to "Aboriginality of Saskatchewan at <http://esask.usg.gov> (accessed 21 June 2011).

¹⁰ For examples and theoretical analyses of arts practices in Saskatchewan, refer to <http://www12.statcan.ca/tables/tables.htm> (accessed 21 June 2011).

¹¹ The businesses range from beat making and record stores, skate shops, clothing and performance companies committed to a complete list of current businesses, refer to the IMP Labs website, <http://www.implabs.ca> (accessed 21 June 2011).

¹² An example is the K-Beez Cook-Out hip hop event, sponsored by the Buffalo Youth Lodge and sponsored by <http://www.commonweal-arts.com> (accessed 21 June 2011).

¹³ Some of the artists who participated in the event were: Aries, Truth, Merky Waters, Cippo, La

¹⁴ Aries, Truth, Merky Waters, Cippo, La

Bennett has determined, that "the localization of hip hop, rather than being a smooth and consensual transition, is fraught with tensions and contradictions as young people attempt to reconcile issues of musical authenticity with those of locality, identity and everyday life" (Bennett 2004, 180). It is essential that we understand the complexity of what this may mean in relation to the social, political, economic, and geographical landscape of Saskatchewan. Even the few examples offered here for analysis show the soundness of the argument that hip hop culture in Saskatchewan is a possible strategy for decolonizing hip hop culture has been redefined in Saskatchewan – adopted and adapted – to reflect local Indigenous culture, politics, and experience, as well as other hip hop cultures from around the world. Within this new definition of hip hop, there are some intelligent, thought-provoking, critical, and implicated narratives being conveyed. Old stories are being retold in innovative and new hybrid forms, and current experiences are being (re)shaped and expressed as new stories ready to be told and to be

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100 "from Eckwöl's *Apprentice to the Mystery* (2004).

101 By the cities in Canada that are represented as major urban cultural
102 are Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg, and Edmonton,
103 such as Saskatoon, Regina, Halifax, Victoria, St. John's, and Quebec City,
104 all large and unique, tend to fall outside of such categorization.

- 3 1 contextualize Canada both as a liberal pluralist nation-state with a contested state-initiated policy on multiculturalism and as a neocolonial state still in the process of decolonizing (psychically, geographically, culturally, and socially).
- 4 These include grassroots community arts-based projects in urban centres and on reserves, education-oriented hip hop projects in inner-city schools, dance academies, music festivals, businesses affiliated with the hip hop scene, home production studios, online forums, and live concerts.
- 5 For a complete list of the reserves found in Saskatchewan, refer to *The Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan* at <http://esask.uregina.ca/home.html> (accessed 21 June 2011), to the First Nations Bands of Saskatchewan website at <http://www.sicc.sk.ca/bands> (accessed 21 June 2011), or to the Government of Saskatchewan website at <http://www.gov.sk.ca> (accessed 21 June 2011).
- 6 An urban reserve is defined as "land that has received official Indian Reserve status from the Federal Government and is located within a municipality or a Northern Administration District" (Lorrie A. Sully and Mark D. Emmons, *Urban Reserves: The City of Saskatoon's Partnership with First Nations*, 6, quoted in Western Economic Diversification Canada – Saskatchewan Region 1999). For more information on urban reserves in Saskatchewan, refer to http://www.wed.gc.ca/reports/research/urban_reserves (accessed 21 June 2011).
- 7 Ocean Man First Nation, Pheasant Rump Nakota Nation, and White Bear First Nation are all located within the area of Treaty 2 but are signatories of Treaty 4. Similarly, Red Earth First Nation and Shell Lake First Nation are in Treaty 6 but adhere to Treaty 5; see <http://www.sicc.sk.ca/bands> (accessed 21 June 2011).
- 8 For more information concerning the percentages in other provinces and territories, refer to <http://www.w12.statcan.ca/english/census06/analysis/aboriginal/tables/table2.htm> (accessed 21 June 2011).
- 9 For more information about the concentration of Aboriginal peoples living in Canada, refer to <http://www.w12.statcan.ca/english/census01/Products/Analytic/companion/abor/canada.cfm#5> (accessed 21 June 2011).
- 10 For more information, refer to "Aboriginal Population Trends," in *The Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan* at http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/aboriginal_population_trends.html (accessed 21 June 2011).
- 11 For examples and theoretical analyses of how these have influenced culture and arts practices in Saskatchewan, refer to Rogers and Ramsay (forthcoming).
- 12 The businesses range from beat making and production studios to graphic design and record stores, skate shops, clothing stores, live music venues, and dance and performance companies committed specifically to the styles of hip hop. For a complete list of current businesses, refer to the "Friends and Affiliates" section of the IMP Labs website, <http://www.interactivemediaandperformance.com> (accessed 21 June 2011).
- 13 An example is the K-Beez Cook-Out hip hop events that were held at the White Buffalo Youth Lodge and sponsored by Paved Arts.
- 14 <http://www.commonweal-arts.com> (accessed 21 June 2011).
- 15 Some of the artists who participated in the initial Prairie Roots Project were Def 3, Aries, Truth, Merky Waters, Cappo, Lok-1, Eckwol, Talisman, and osho.

- 16 I asked Nicholson about gender representation because of the glaring absence of women each time I visited the Regina site.
- 17 Usher was a high school located near one of Regina's industrial neighbourhoods and drew a student population from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds and cultures; however, due to budget cutbacks, Usher Collegiate was one of three schools to close in Regina in 2008.
- 18 Produced by Jennifer Canal for CBC Saskatchewan.
- 19 By making this suggestion, I am not in any way downplaying the importance of the rituals and expertise that go along with being an audience member of a music culture. At the same time, insider knowledge does not always preclude young people from actively participating as audience members.
- 20 The new global hip hop culture is indeed an integral part of what Paul Gilroy (1993) has referred to in his work on the "Black Atlantic" as the "routes" of African-derived hip hop. For another current example of how hip hop culture is being appropriated as a strategy of resistance, see my paper with Sheila Petty on the Hip Hop Parliament, which was initiated in Nairobi, Kenya (Marsh and Petty 2010).
- 21 For more detailed information, refer to <http://www.interactivemediainperformance.com> (accessed 21 June 2011).
- 22 For the full article, "Canada's Worst Neighbourhood," see http://www.macleans.ca/article.jsp?content=20070115_139375_139375 (accessed 21 June 2011), and for the follow-up article, published 29 January 2007, see http://www.macleans.ca/article.jsp?content=20070129_139986_139986 (accessed 21 June 2011). To read the article "Article Stirs Hot Debate," in the *Regina Leader Post*, see <http://www.canada.com/reginaleaderpost/news/viewpoints/story.html?id=35fdcc0-1c28-4c8b-9b3f-b10592a83158> (accessed 21 June 2011). One year later, on 17 January 2008, *Macleans*' published the article "Regina One-Year Later: Residents and Local Leaders Have Done Much to Improve Life in North Central," see http://www.macleans.ca/canada/opinions/article.jsp?content=20080117_95971_95971 (accessed 21 June 2011). In my article "Keepin' It Real?: Masculinity, Indigeneity, and Media Representations of Gangstar Rap in Regina, Canada" (Marsh 2011), I analyze the original *Macleans*' article within the context of place making and also discuss the racialization of urban ghettos in relation to indigenous bodies.
- 23 The Albert Scott Community Centre, attached to the high school, houses daycare facilities and a police detachment, speaking to a number of other social and systemic issues that these young people face in their daily lives. During my first visit to Scott Collegiate, I asked about the needs for both the daycare and the highly visible police presence on school property. One of the teachers suggested that the daycare services were used mostly by members of the community and that the police presence was overstated and then completely absent by the middle of the day. And yet, while visiting the school at various times during the past two years, I have seen and worked with a number of pregnant students and/or young mothers, and I have witnessed a strong police presence – police officers detaining young men in the parking lot for a variety of reasons.
- 24 A third version of the Scott Collegiate/MTI winter of 2010, and a fourth segment of *The*
- 25 For a critical analysis of the Scott Collegiate with a theoretical discussion of the compelling hip hop programs into inner-city schooling hip hop programs into inner-city schooling
- 26 For a detailed discussion of how the media indigenous bodies and hip hop in Regina see
- 27 "The People," featuring Def3, from Eckwol
- 28 Giving back to one's own community and decided an essential component of the music artists with whom I have had the privilege
- 29 This aspect of indigenous music culture hip hop but is evident in most genres of popular
- 30 Other scholars who contribute to this discourse are André J.-M. Prévos, Ted Sedenburg, David Mark Penny, Claire Levy, Mir Wernutt, Morelli, Ian Maxwell, and Roger Chambeau
- 31 "That's Just Me," from Eckwol's *Apprentice*
- 32 "Let's Move," from Eckwol and Mills' *The*
- 33 To read more of this interview, refer to *Hop Artist Lindsay Knight* (Marsh 2009)
- 34 For more in-depth discussions of this argument (1994).
- 35 "Roundtable Discussion on Hip Hop in Saskatchewan," University of Regina, 2 April 2008, org Marsh. The participating artists were I Truth, Merky Waters, and Def3.
- 36 "The Tree," from Eckwol and Mills' *The Tree*
- 37 "Too Sick," from Eckwol's *Apprentice to the*
- 38 For more information and a list of women <http://www.missingwomencanada.org/> alter <http://www.amnesty.ca/campaigs/sister> (2011), and <http://missingwomen.blogspot.com>
- 39 Supported by the Saskatchewan Arts Board new hip hop album entirely in the Cree language
- 40 See Marsh (2011).

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 47 *1 Leader Post*, see [http://www.canada.com/reginalleaderpost/news/
 48 points/story.html?id=35f5dc1e0-1e28-4c8b-9b3f-b10592a83158](http://www.canada.com/reginalleaderpost/news/points/story.html?id=35f5dc1e0-1e28-4c8b-9b3f-b10592a83158) (accessed 21
 49 2011). One year later, on 17 January 2008, *Macleans* published the article
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 66 ing mothers, and I have witnessed a strong police presence -- police officers
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- 24 A third version of the Scott Collegiate/IMP Labs Hip Hop Project occurred in the
 25 winter of 2010, and a fourth segment of the project took place in March 2011.
 26 For a critical analysis of the Scott Collegiate/IMP Labs Hip Hop Project, along
 27 with a theoretical discussion of the complexities and contradictions of integrat-
 28 ing hip hop programs into innercity schools in Canada, see Marsh (2010).
 29 For a detailed discussion of how the media constructs narratives concerning In-
 30 digenous bodies and hip hop in Regina, see Marsh (2011).
 31 "The People," featuring Def3, from Eckwol and Mills's *The List* (2007).
 32 Giving back to one's own community and the surrounding communities is in-
 33 deed an essential component of the musical careers of most of the Indigenous
 34 artists with whom I have had the privilege of working within Saskatchewan.
 35 This aspect of Indigenous music culture is not unique to the artists working in
 36 hip hop but is evident in most genres of popular music.
 37 Other scholars who contribute to this dialogue in Mitchell's *Global Noise* (2001)
 38 are André J.M. Prévos, Ted Sedenburg, David Hesmondhalgh, Caspar Melville,
 39 Mark Pennay, Claire Levy, Mir Wernuth, Jacqueline Urla, Ian Condy, Sarah
 40 Morelli, Ian Maxwell, and Roger Chamberland.
 41 "That's Just Me," from Eckwol's *Apprentice to the Mystery* (2004).
 42 "Let's Move," from Eckwol and Mills's *The List* (2007).
 43 To read more of this interview, refer to my "Interview with Saskatchewan Hip
 44 Hop Artist Lindsay Knight" (Marsh 2009).
 45 For more in-depth discussions of this argument, refer to Shaviro (2005) and Rose
 46 (1994).
 47 "Roundtable Discussion on Hip Hop in Saskatchewan," at launch of IMP Labs,
 48 University of Regina, 2 April 2008, organized and facilitated by Dr. Charity
 49 Marsh. The participating artists were Eckwol, Mills, DJ Quartz, Eten, Ariles,
 50 Truth, Merky Waters, and Def3.
 51 "The Tree," from Eckwol and Mills's *The List* (2007).
 52 "Too Sick," from Eckwol's *Apprentice to the Mystery* (2004).
 53 For more information and a list of women who are missing, see
 54 <http://www.missingnativewomen.ca/alert.html> (accessed 21 June 2011).
 55 http://www.amnesty.ca/campaigns/sisters_overview.php (accessed 21 June
 56 2011), and <http://missingwomen.blogspot.com> (accessed 21 June 2011).
 57 Supported by the Saskatchewan Arts Board, Eckwol is currently working on a
 58 new hip hop album entirely in the Cree language.
 59 See Marsh (2011).