Embodied Hip-Hop:
Gender, Race and Street Dance in an Urban Arts School

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Abstract

This work looks at the role of street dance in forming student understandings of hip-hop culture and identity in an Urban Arts high-school. In particular, this thesis asks how the incorporation of street dance and hip-hop culture by community artists into the school affect the gendered and racialized dynamics of the school culture. These questions are addressed through a focus on bodily practice and how that practice affects students' sense of belonging within hip-hop based education. Drawing from ethnographic data collected over two years of involvement in the school, the thesis focuses on student and artist perspectives on two hip-hop dance units taught in physical education classes. Through narratives, found poetry and theoretical analysis, the author connects the ethnographic data to Judith Butler's theory of performativity and Kimberlé Crenshaw's writing on intersectionality. The author poses an argument that embodied practice creates a form of discourse that can be particularly valuable for learning and discussing connections between hip-hop, race and gender in school spaces.

Résumé

Ce travail examine le rôle de la danse de rue dans la formation des connaissances des étudiant.e.s sur la culture et l'identité du hip-hop dans une école secondaire ayant une programme d'arts urbains. En particulier, ce mémoire de maîtrise examine l'incorporation des danses de rue et de la culture du hip-hop par les artistes de la communauté dans l'école et comment ceci influence les dynamiques sexospécifiques et racialisées de la culture scolaire. Ces questions sont abordées en mettant l'accent sur la pratique corporelle et comment cette pratique influence le sentiment d'appartenance des élèves dans l'éducation basée sur le hip-hop. À partir des données ethnographiques recueillies au cours de deux années de participation à l'école, ce mémoire se concentre sur les perspectives des étudiant.e.s et des artistes sur deux unités de danse hip-hop enseignées dans les cours d'éducation physique. Grâce à des récits, à la poésie trouvée et une analyse théorique, l'auteure lie les données ethnographiques à la théorie de la performativité de Judith Butler et la théorie de l'intersectionnalité de Kimberlé Crenshaw. L'auteure pose un argument selon lequel la pratique incorporée crée une forme de discours qui peut être particulièrement utile pour apprendre et discuter des liens entre le hip-hop, la race et le genre dans les espaces scolaires.

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(Friedmann, found poetry, drawn from reflective memos 2016)

What Am I Looking At?

The data presented in this thesis is drawn from two years of involvement as a researcher in an Urban Arts High School Partnership in the neighbourhood of St. Henri, Montreal. The Urban Arts Partnership between Simone Elliot[1] high school, McGill University and community arts organizations began as part of an effort to keep the school alive. Simone Elliot had faced closure, and with steadily dwindling enrolment numbers, the school

[1] All names, except the University's, in this thesis are pseudonyms.

recognized a need to make a major change in order to offset the demographic shifts impacting enrolment and low graduation rates. Highly successful hip-hop based extra-curricular activities (ECA), namely a literacy through rap program called Writing Our Rhymes Down, a lunchtime hip-hop dance program, and an after-school street art club, became the basis for an idea to transform Simone Elliot into an Urban Arts school. The principal and head of the Community Learning Centre[2] at the time saw the ECAs as a factor in fostering student engagement and attendance. The project focused on infusing artistic forms such as rap music, dance, street art and music production into the curriculum. The goal was to make urban arts a focus, not only through music and art classes, but across the curriculum, thought units co-created and co-taught by artists and teachers.

Located in the rapidly gentrifying neighbourhood of St. Henri, Simone Elliot is a diverse school in a traditionally working class neighbourhood that serves students that some of my interlocutors would argue could not be served anywhere else. This project was funded by the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada, as part of a three-year Partnership Development grant. The long-term structure of this "tripartite partnership" between McGill, Simone Elliot and community organizations made this project unique, but also carried with it a unique set of problems.

Along with working as a general member of the research team, my background as a street dancer and interest in the educational potential of street dance led to me taking responsibility for integrating dance across the curriculum. This took many forms over the course of my two years at the school, most notably, the incorporation of street dance into four physical education classes,

[2] "Community Learning Centres (CLC Schools) have a dual role in Quebec: supporting student perseverance and contributing to the vitality of English-speaking communities." (learnquebec.ca)

and an artist-residency funded through culture in schools that brought a b-boy into French, visual arts, math and career planning classes. I also ran an extra-curricular "dance club" twice a week in the school that focused on teaching students the values of street dance culture such as exchange and creativity. This club was structured as an exchange space where students shared and created embodied narratives, learning to express themselves through freestyle dance. It was an open space for students and me to explore together, rather than a dance class where students learnt choreography or technique.

These experiences gave me a sense of some of the potential for dance to engage students in new ways, and methods for using dance as part of a wider ethnographic research project. My time in the school made clear to me how rigid gender divides could seem in a high-school space, and I wondered if street dance, historically a male dominated dance form that directly resists stereotypes around dance as feminine, might open these divisions up. Likewise, hip-hop's connection to racialized discourses and structures led me to consider how the incorporation of street dance and hip-hop culture by community artists into a high-school curriculum affect the intersecting gendered and racialized elements of the school culture. This led me to ask, in this thesis research: How might it shift student perceptions of gender and gender relations?; and, how might it challenge racialized discourses and structures at the school? Finally, I also wondered about the nature of embodied knowledge through street dance and how it might shape student learning and engagement in the hip-hop dance unit.

So What Does Urban Arts mean?

Hip-hop music and graffiti were seen as two major interests of the students at Simone Elliot. Extra-curricular programming in dance, street art and rap music had existed at the school for many years. School administration as well as community members involved in the ECAs saw

an opportunity to expand student success in these programs into success in the classroom. The decision to work with the lens of "Urban Arts" rather than hip-hop based education, however underlines the reality that hip-hop based education creates a narrow definition for the types of arts that can be brought in to the fold of the project. I argue that the choice of the term urban arts was also influenced by the positionality of the school principal and the Community Development Agent, both as outsiders of hip-hop culture. In the SSHRC Partnership Development Grant application, the principal investigator Bronwen Low provided a working definition of urban arts pedagogies as "aesthetic practices closely tied to, but also extending beyond the art forms and values of hip-hop culture." She expanded on this definition further stating "Urban arts pedagogies tap into hip-hop's ethic of innovation, resourcefulness and collaboration, while extending hip-hop's forms" (Low, 2014).

My own relationship with the term shifted throughout my experiences in the project. At first, I viewed the term with some trepidation, worried that the term "urban arts" white-washed what in practice I thought would be purely hip-hop based education. The term "urban" in my experience was commonly used to refer to Black culture without explicitly naming race, which I found problematic. I understood the term as a tool to make hip-hop more palatable to those who categorized it as a violent, misogynistic musical style that trafficked in racial stereotypes[3]. However, as the project unfolded and I had discussions with co-investigators and interlocutors on the subject I realized the potential of the term to include a wider array of art forms, as well as enable those who were hesitant to embrace hip-hop to engage with the project. This being said my concerns with the term remain; I chose to situate my own work within the literature on hip-

[3] While there is literature discussing this perception of hip-hop (Dyson, 2006; McWhorter, 2008) I base this conclusion in statements made by a teacher in my fieldwork at Simone Elliot as well as reactions of certain students who echoed this views in informal interviews and conversations various times.

hop based education. I do this partially due to a commitment to fore-fronting the racialized history and current practice of hip-hop culture, which is an important piece of my research. When working with hip-hop culture it is vital to not only recognize the history of the culture in Black and Latino neighbourhoods of New York in the 1970s, but also to acknowledge the continued importance of race and identity politics in the culture today.

Researcher Positionality: Where I Stand

I self-identify as a white, middle class, Anglophone, Jewish, woman, born in Mexico City and raised in Richmond, BC. I write this thesis from my own perspective, which is shaped largely through my experience as a member of the Canadian Street Dance community, as well as a student of feminist anthropology. Intersecting identity is a reoccurring theme throughout my research as artists, teachers and students describe and embody the layered nature of their identities. Over the course of my two years of ethnographic research at Simone Elliot (some details of which I describe in the final section of my introduction to methods), I became increasingly involved at the school. The point that marked a shift for me in what I had perceived to be my official position at the school came after my first four months in the school when I began facilitating a dance session at lunch twice a week. The choice to involve myself as a program facilitator led to a development in my research methodology from observer to active participant, as well as a development in my relationships with students and teachers. I also found myself gradually incorporated into the school culture much more than a research assistant, often assisting teachers and artists with work in classrooms, chaperoning a YMCA exchange with a class from Simone Elliot to a school in rural Saskatchewan, and also becoming involved with other aspects of the project such as my co-investigator's work creating a student-run art gallery in the school. Alongside this shift in my role at the school

came an increased sense that the work I was doing was less focused on documenting the school culture and more on changing it through the incorporation of hip-hop dance. The effect of this transition on my data collection and analysis is something I am still in many ways grappling with, and has emerged as an unexpected yet central theme of my work.

What is Hip-Hop Based Education/Where Does Dance Fit In?

Before situating my work within the cannon on hip-hop based education (HHBE), I first should describe the definition of hip-hop I am engaging in this work. In the introduction to his book: F*oundation: B-boys, B-girls and Hip-Hop Culture in New York,* Joseph Schloss (2009) outlined the semantic problem that one faces when writing about hip-hop. He described three distinct yet intersecting understandings of hip-hop. One of which is in my experience the most common perception of the meaning of hip-hop held outside of the community: hip-hop as a form of popular music, consisting mostly of, but not exclusively, rap music. He also described hip-hop as a category "used as a kind of loose demographic designation for contemporary African American youth, regardless of whether or not they have any overt connection to rap music or other hip-hop arts" (Schloss, 2009, p. 5). The definition I will be engaging with in this work is what Schloss depicted as commonly referred to as "hip-hop culture." This definition is based on the lived practice of a variety of interrelated art forms "that were practiced in Afro-Caribbean, African American and Latino neighbourhoods in New York City in the 1970s." (Schloss, 2009, p. 4)

While there is a great deal of academic work discussing this notion of hip-hop as culture (Chang, 2007; Schloss, 2009; Petchauer, 2009), I chose to use a description given by Latifah, one of the teachers who came into Simone Elliot to teach dance, and one of my interlocutors. Latifah's classes were almost always divided into two parts, the first being movement, where she

would teach and rehearse dances and movements with students, the second being what she called "theory," wherein Latifah shared her own understanding of hip-hop theory and history. This history was based on her lived experience within the community and research she had done within that community. After over thirty years of being a hip-hop dancer, the theory section of Latifah's class was built from information she had collected online, and through personal narratives shared with her by other members of the community. Latifah teaches theory through a focus on the story of DJ Kool Herc, a Jamaican DJ whose parties in the 1970s she describes as the "birthplace of hip-hop." She also focuses on Kool Herc's sister Cindy Campbell's role as the organizer of these parties, which she describes as a space in which different elements of hip-hop and hip-hop culture come together. While much of the academic work on hip-hop identifies four key elements to hip-hop culture—breakdance (b-girling/b-boying)[4], DJ-ing, MC-ing—and graffiti, Latifah's description went beyond this to include a fifth element, knowledge (following in the tradition of other scholars and artists, such as KRS-1). Latifah describes these five elements as the foundation of hip-hop, but goes on to add another five elements which she describes as evolving from the five foundational elements into what we understand as "hip-hop culture." These five elements of hip-hop culture are: rapping, beatboxing, street fashion, street slang and street entrepreneurship (or street biz). Latifah's description reflects the malleability of current definitions of hip-hop as a culture. The definition of hip-hop as a culture based in a wide net of practices with intrinsic connections to street parties in Black and Latino neighbourhoods of

[4] The politics of this terminology are fascinating, particularly the gendered nature of this term. Within breaking there has been much critique of breakdance as a term that represents the commercialization of the dance form. The identity of b-boy and b-girl then becomes part of a wider system of resistance within breaking. However, due to the male-dominant spaces of breaking b-girls are often absorbed as b-boys; some embrace this and reject b-girl as an identity, while others insist on the importance of b-girling as an identity and dance form. (Simard, 2014; Schloss, 2009),

New York is commonly laid out within work on hip-hop based education (Lamont-Hill, 2013; Petchauer, 2009; Emdin, 2010; Low, 2011).

Many of these works have engaged with the definition of hip-hop as a lived culture, examining the ways in which practices such as the cypher (Emdin, 2013) can be utilized in re-thinking pedagogical practices; however, few of the hip-hop education texts have drawn on elements of the culture beyond music. There is notable writing on street dance, primarily breaking, that I draw from and bring to the work of hip-hop based education in building the foundations of this paper. I use the term street dance here as it is the term I most commonly have heard used by the Montreal community to describe the wide array of dance styles that fall under the umbrella of "street dance." There is much debate within the street dance community about the usefulness of such a term; the complexity of what constitutes the "street dance community" deserves a thesis of its own. While I have chosen to narrow my focus on the particular case of a hip-hop dance unit in this particular school, I use the term street dance as much of the work I draw on discusses specific forms of street dance, namely breaking (b-boying/girling). To clarify, breaking is generally the dance form most closely associated with the four element definition of hip-hop culture. Hip-hop dance, however, is based primarily on party dances from the 1970s to today and is not the same as breaking. Both dances have unique techniques and histories and continue to evolve. I draw on work from authors who discuss breaking, however, as their work reflects many of the same concepts with relation to hip-hop culture, race and pedagogy.

Within the Canadian context, Mary Fogarty (2007; 2012), Helen Simard (2014) and Haidee Lafebreve (2011) have written extensively about the breaking community. Simard's grounded theory work on dance focused on differences between breakdance and b-boying/b-

girling[5] through a qualitative study of movement and interviews in the Montreal community. Her comments on aspects of identity in relation to b-boying/b-girling were helpful in considering the importance of intersectionality in considering identity in my context. She described a "cultural authenticity" in b-boying/b-girling, or a sense of belonging within the community of b-boying/b-girling. She touched on how this cultural authenticity connects to race, gender and socio-economic status in interviews with b-boys and b-girls in the community (Simard 2014, p. 200). Fogarty's (2007) work on global networks of breaking includes a consideration of how "embodied musical practices" help shape what she labeled "imagined affinities" amongst breakers in international contexts. This focus on embodied experiences and practices as vital to building a sense of community was helpful in forming my focus on embodied practices as central to analysis of the dance units.

Lefebvre's (2011) thesis examined the use of the b-boy cipher as a pedagogical function through an ethnographic approach. She used participant-observation within the street dance communities of Montreal, Ottawa and New York to build an argument around the use of the cipher[6] concept in educational settings. Lefebvre utilizes Nonaka et al.'s theory on knowledge creation through situated actions in specific spaces which they term "ba," which Lefebvre described in her paper as "a Japanese word that denotes physical space, a specific time and space, and the space of interpersonal relationships." (2011, p. 53). Lefebvre's application of ba to the practices of b-boys explicates the ways in which both b-boying and ba emphasize the role of

[5] For this thesis I will be using the term breaking as I have concluded it is the most authentic and gender neutral term. However, Simard's analysis is much more nuanced and in respect of this when citing her work I use the terms she uses in the sections cited.
[6] See Lefebvre's (2011) work for full explanation of the difference between cypher (which is what I refer to in this work) and cipher.

interactions. This focus was useful for me in analyzing my research, in particular because she focuses on the pedagogical role of dance in knowledge creation and social interactions.

Aside from a few notable exceptions such as Lefebvre's work, much of research done in hip-hop based education in North America is concerned with literacy and using rap music in spaces such as English and science classes (Emdin, 2010; Petchauer, 2009). Others have looked at hip-hop as a space for fostering critical consciousness and community reflection in community-based educational projects (Lamont-Hill 2013). Dance is commonly left out of the pedagogical studies of hip-hop, particularly in work that examines the integration of hip-hop as culture into schools.

Hip-Hop Dance and Race

Within a wider global context, work on hip-hop dance and gender (Harris & Lemons 2012), as well as the intersections between hip-hop dance forms and race (Johnson 2009) have contributed to my methods for analyzing the data gathered throughout my research. Imani Kai Johnson's 2009 thesis *Dark Matter in B-Boying Cyphers: Race and Global Connection in Hip-Hop* takes race as a central question in an exploration of the globalization of breaking. Johnson draws on various examples from her ethnographic work in challenging breaking culture's 'illusion of meritocracy' by explicitly looking at the ways in which hip-hop's history in Black and Latino neighborhoods continues to shape its practice. If we acknowledge in academic work on street dance that race is intrinsic to the history and development of the culture that surrounds the dance, then we cannot allow our work to fall into the disappearance of race.

David Goldberg's (2013) work was helpful for understanding certain views amongst the staff and students at Simone Elliot who could recognize "congregation of Black kids with the Black kids and white kids with the white kids" (Teacher Interview) yet explain this behavior as

detached from racism. Though Goldberg's focus lies in issues of equality before the law in America I believe his core arguments are useful for understanding that the post-racialized world is a myth and that an effort to trivialize or deny racial tensions "draws attention away from the structural arrangements constituting socialities of the skin" (Goldberg, 2013, p. 120). He based his argument on the notion that "when race disappears, so too supposedly will racial arrangement" (Goldberg, 2013, p. 124). He argued against this view, positing that the erasure of racial conception does not mean the erasure of racialization, but instead the reformatting of race into forms of racism that are new and more difficult to address, once the concept of race disappears. I argue that this can be seen in academic writing on street dance where we erase race from the narrative not through direct of a denial of race, but through the compartmentalization of race using the conception of history. I argue that scholars engaging in street dance history who recognize it as embedded in resistance to systemic racism, must also recognize the ways in which the racialized history of street dance, and the continuation of structural racism in contemporary society, continues to impact its practice.

Theoretical Framework:

Performativity and Embodied Knowledge

Judith Butler's notion of performativity (1990) is central to my analysis of gender and race at Elliot Simone. Butler argues that gender performativity is a process of behaviours and utterances through which a gendered subject emerges (Butler, 1990). What I draw from in this thesis is how the process of performativity relates to theories around embodiment and embodied knowledge in dance education (Barbour, 2011; Bresler, 2004; Stinson, 2016). Work on embodied

knowledge in dance education aims to disrupt the application of a mind-body divide[7] in pedagogical practices by examining the ways bodies learn and know. I draw connections between performativity and embodied cultural knowledge of hip-hop through an analysis of how student understanding of identity is reinterpreted by learning hip-hop dance. The role of discourse in creating a subject is important to Butler's understanding of performativity. In *Bodies that Matter*, Butler made an argument about performativity in relation to the operations of discourse, arguing that "performativity must be understood not as a singular or deliberate 'act' but, rather as the reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effects that it names" (1993, p. 2). What I am interested in exploring then is how non-verbal discourse such as dance can be analyzed through this lens.

Performativity has been drawn on by various academics both in the realm of feminist theory and dance studies. Two particular articles are helpful for framing the ways in which performativity can be drawn upon in considering dance pedagogies and intersectionality. Harris and Lemon's 2012 "Bodies that Shatter: Creativity, Culture, and the new Pedagogical Imaginary" describes the authors' experience working with Culture Shack, an arts education workshop program that works with hip-hop, theatre and animation in Australia. The article opens with a description of a particular incident in which Samoan teen girls danced to thank a gay American male teacher, Greg, for his work on the project. The girls perform a traditional Samoan dance. Harris and Lemons focus on the response of the academics and teachers involved feeling unease due to their perceptions of the dance as sensual. The authors argued that dance can lead to moments of discomfort, but this discomfort can be pedagogically valuable, particularly if it leads to moments of awareness of limits of understanding. Dance performance can be used to draw

[7] I explain the dynamics of this divide in the third chapter of this work. It is essentially a concept that argues the mind and body function separately.

attention to that which is always already there in gender performance. They drew on Butler, arguing "that her notion of performativity can be productively extended to include the ways in which intercultural pedagogical and creative moments are representative of exactly why arts education needs a blood transfusion" (Harris & Lemons 2012 p. 420). Looking at hip-hop dance as a potential site of performative practice, rather than just performance, places the emphasis on the ways in which student identities and views are shaped through embodied learning, and how the body helps construct racialized and gendered experience. Hip-Hop dance can also be a blood transfusion to arts education, opening up moments of discomfort and potential new understandings, as it brings hip-hop cultural representations of gender and race into formal education.

Intersectionality

My discussion of race in relationship to dance and education is shaped by Kimberlé Crenshaw's work on intersectionality (1995). Crenshaw's work criticized identity politics that created a system that "frequently conflates or ignores intragroup differences." Crenshaw argued that antiracist and feminist movements "have frequently proceeded as though the issues and experiences they each detail occur on mutually exclusive terrains." (1995; p. 1242). Feminist academic work can be entrenched in the constant consideration of various forms of feminism and ways of theorizing around questions of gender and sex.

Crenshaw proposed a focus on intersectionality, which takes into consideration all aspects of identity such as race, class, gender, and sexuality as intersecting rather than discrete categories. Intersectionality helps to expand work on identity politics and in doing so also highlights how layers of oppression can exist. To explain the concept, Crenshaw used the

example of black woman's experience with abuse and legal structures as distinct from a white woman's (1995).

Focusing on embodied experiences in shaping student understandings of hip-hop culture through dance leads me to consider how both race and gender are embodied by students and artists in the school. Like Crenshaw, I acknowledge that the focus on intersections of race and gender in this thesis does not provide a "totalizing theory of identity" (1244) amongst the youth and the artist I examine in this thesis. However, that is not the project of intersectionality, which instead rejects the notion that such a totalizing theory can truly exist. As Crenshaw herself notes, class and sexuality are also important factors to the identity politics of the subjects of my work. In the context of Quebec, student identity as Francophone, Anglophone, or "allophone" is also very important in the politics of understanding positions in Canadian society. However, due to space limitations, I have chosen to follow Crenshaw in focusing primarily on race and gender as they intersect in my study. That said, my analysis of student identity in Elliot Simone also takes into consideration aspects of class, sexuality and language.

Etalia Thomas' work on cultural identity and dance also framed my understanding of the relationship between race, gender and dance at the school. Thomas described her research as Community-Based Participatory Research in which she collaborates with a diverse group of 8th grade girls to create a performance piece. The goal of the piece was to explore the dimensions of gender and ethnicity through embodiment. Thomas also drew on Butler in discussing the social construction of masculine and feminine roles, describing the ways in which her participants often discussed their identities as girls as binary to boys (2015, p. 186). It is Thomas' discussion of embodiment in relationship to narrative and identity that is particularly useful for my work. Thomas argued that "embodied narrative has the power to transcend the discrete categories of

research, social justice and art to explore the human experience of social inequities" (2015, p. 178). Thomas' argument that embodiment allows us to transcend categories between research, social justice and art was important in my own efforts to build a clearer analysis of the role of embodiment in relationship to my research on gender and race at Simone Elliot. I argue that dance empowers students with new forms of engaging with discourses through their bodies. Furthermore, using the body as a means of expression through this type of embodied narrative can also enable students to discuss issues around gender and race that have been pushed out of verbal discourse due to post-race and post-gender narratives that permeate student and teacher discussions at Elliot Simone.

Thomas' work also takes an intersectional approach to identity exploration in an educational setting, noting that "over the course of the project, race and ethnicity became prominent themes in the participants' explorations of identity" (2015, p. 188). This reflects my observations of how race layers onto student identity and interactions at Simone Elliot in relationship to hip-hop culture, which I will dissect more through specific examples in the upcoming chapters. Thomas' work also spurred reflection on my own role as a researcher who became increasingly involved in my research site over the two years spent there. As Thomas stated near the end of the article: "The author was involved in the school community as a counselor and saw the participants in classrooms, outside of the research sessions, multiple times per week. Participants may have altered their verbal and non-verbal responses in order to please the author or the larger school community." (2015, p. 192). This moment in which Thomas recognized the ways in which her own involvement impacted her relationships with her interlocutors was vital in my own reflections on positionality and its effect on my work.

Feminist Anthropology

My history in feminist anthropology laid the foundation for my work and my rationale for an ethnographic approach to this research. The complexity of overlapping feminism and anthropology is described by Marilyn Strathern in her introduction to *The Gender of the Gift* (1988). Strathern argued that in feminism, "[t]he aim is not adequate description but the exposing of interests that inform the activity of descriptions as such." (1988, p. 22) This point of "conflict" between the social sciences and feminism is powerful in relationship to certain anthropological theorists who historically failed to recognize the power and gender dynamics that influence their own ethnography. Feminist description is also subject to certain interests, namely "the promotion of women's interests" (Strathern 1988, p. 23). Herein lies an important "blockage" between the "radicalism" of feminism and the aims of "objective" anthropology[8]. Starthern outlined various ways in which feminism and anthropology are both compatible and at the same time dissonant. She pointed to difference in structure: feminism with its focus on polyvocality as "postmodern" and mainstream anthropology with its maintenance of an "us/them dichotom[y]" as "modernist" (Strathern 1988, p. 37). I find her discussion of structural difference between the two important to understanding how some of these blockages become influential in my own work. I lean towards a feminist postmodernist approach in attempting to analyze my findings as a dialogical practice between myself, interlocutors and theory, steering away from an us/them dichotomy. In attempting to create an ethnographic account of the intersections of gender and race at Simone

[8] See the work of Ruth Benedict (1961); Franz Boas (1982); Clifford Geertz (1973); and James Clifford, George E. Marcus (1986) for some key work on anthropological method and theory. Also important to note is that anthropology like education is a constantly shifting and growing field. Activist anthropology continues to be a growing faction of the anthropological cannon. I lack the space to fully flesh out the complexities of this but Margaret Eisenhart's (1988) work on educational anthropologists in particular is helpful for further reading on the relationship between activist anthropology and education.

Elliot, my commitment to feminist theory as the main theoretical framework for my work, and hip-hop based education as the field to which I aim to contribute to with this thesis, has shaped the ways in which I interact with interlocutors and analyze data. In particular, my background in feminist anthropology is an important influence on my positionality and relationship to the ethnography presented here.

Feminist anthropology (Abu-Lughod, 1986; Mahmood, 2005; Ortner, 1972, 1995) has shaped the ways in which I understand ethnographic data and my relationship to it. First, in defining ethnography and its importance to my work, I use Sherry Ortner's definition from her work *Resistance and the Problem of Ethnographic Refusal*. Ortner defined ethnography as "minimally…the attempt to understand another life world using the self—as much of it as possible—as the instrument of knowing." (1995, p.173). This definition and her impassioned push for the use of ethnography in anthropological studies of resistance helps to contextualize my decision to use ethnography as my main method of research. Ortner's description of using as much of the self as possible to know things about one's research site reflects my interest in extending the boundaries of knowledge into a focus on embodied learning and knowing. [9] Also important in shaping my thesis was Abu-Lughod's narrative approach to ethnography. Abu-Lughod (1986) opens *Veiled Sentiments*, her book on gender through examination of honor and poetry in Bedouin society, with what she calls a "sketch." This sketch takes the form of a long narrative description of her personal experiences arriving to the community in which she did her ethnography and the ways in which that experience changed over time. She rationalized her use of this narrative portrait of her research site:

[9] Debates in feminist anthropology around issues of positionality and relationships with interlocutors have helped shape my research style profoundly. Notably the work of Lila Abu-Lughod (1986), Saba Mahmood (2005), and Sherry Ortner (1972) are books and articles I consider to be fundamental to my views on research, feminism and ethnography.

> The problem this book explores became apparent to me in the course of living with this group of people, and in part as a function of the interactions I had with them. Therefore, the reader will need some sense of the fieldwork experience (1986, p. 8).

Abu-Lughod's interspersing of narrative pieces, poetry and theory inspired my own method of "ethnographic sketches" which I will describe more fully in the next section.

Abu-Lughod's description of the relationship between the problem of her book and the experience of her fieldwork is also reflective of my experiences at Simone Elliot. Though I had been working with feminist theory throughout my undergraduate degree in anthropology, the decision to make gender and race a central concern came only after my first few months of work at the school. Throughout my initial observations, I recognized the ways in which students organized themselves in space along gendered lines—I coined it the "gender-divided classroom" in my field notes. This came in various forms, whether it be seating arrangements in classes where teachers did not enforce seating charts, or in groupings where students were allowed to choose their groups. In the majority of observed classes in my first few months, I was shocked by the consistency with which the students at the school divided themselves along the lines of gender.[10] Though shocking once my attention had been drawn to it, I recognize the ways in which my own high school experiences were similar with "girls groups" and "guys groups" being common at every grade level.

I also draw on Saba Mahmood's (2005) analysis of the Women's Mosque movement in Egypt, particularly her discussion of "embodied virtues" of the mosque movement and Butler's conception of performativity. Embodied virtues include bodily practices such as donning a veil

[10] Though gender was the more consistent and clear division within the classroom, it is important to note that race also seemed to be a factor particularly in social groupings at the school; I explore this more in the chapter on embodiment and hip-hop.

that her interlocutors see as a part of the practice of piety. Notably, Mahmood warned us against an easy comparison between the embodied practice and performativity, using Butler's own warning against a "perfunctory approach" to the use of theory (2005, p. 163). Mahmood's caution of too easily equating embodied practices with performativity was helpful in my own efforts to draw connections between embodied cultural knowledge and performativity.

Methodology:

Ethnography

I selected ethnography as a methodology since I feel the practice of extended presence and participation within the school culture was the best means of addressing the questions of my thesis in relation to the theoretical frameworks I have described. As mentioned in the opening of this chapter, this thesis addresses how the incorporation of street dance and hip-hop culture by community artists into a high-school curriculum affects the intersecting gendered and racialized elements of the school culture. I ask: How might hip-hop dance shift student perceptions of gender and gender relations?; and, how might it also challenge racialized discourses and structures at the school? I am particularly interested in the role of embodied knowledge through street dance and how it might shape student learning and engagement, and saw no better tool than my own body as a research instrument for researching these questions.

In order to explore these questions, I draw upon two years of ethnographic research. This includes observation and facilitation of extra-curricular programming, as well as observation and participation within teacher-artist collaborations in art, physical education, career explorations, French, math, music, entrepreneurship, and English classes. Though most of the data is focused on the units within physical education classes, I also draw on interviews, field notes and self-reflection informed by these wider experiences. I conducted semi-structured interviews with

artists, teachers, and students involved in the project, ranging from twenty-minute post-study interviews with students to three-hour informal conversations with artists. My research was also shaped by my role as a research assistant for the wider project; therefore, my findings and process are framed by the larger goals of the project and my role as a member of a research team rather than an independent researcher. My role in committee meetings as well as conversations with my supervisor and fellow research assistants significantly impacted my positionality at the school, and my methods throughout the course of this project.

Ethnography is the primary research method in feminist anthropological, and well suited for exploring embodied knowledge, given the emphasis on extended physical involvement in the research context. I have come to understand ethnography as a process through which we attempt to interpret cultures based on extensive periods of being present within said cultures, observing, and participating in the activities and rituals of it. Ethnography is not purely a process of detailed description and observation, but also ultimately a layered process of interpretation as the researcher interprets the interlocutor's own interpretations of their world (Geertz 1973). It was not only through extensive interviews and classroom observations of the units described below that I came to form this thesis. My physical presence and participation in the school over the course of two years brought all aspects of myself, or "as much of it as possible" (Ortner 1995, p.173) into the research in ways that purely interview or survey-based research could not. My work notably differs from the ethnographies of feminist anthropologists on which I model my research process. Unlike Abu-Lughod, Strathern or Mahmood my research is not based on extended periods of time living amongst those I write about, far from my own culture. My field site was a school, and those who work and attend the school live in various different communities across Montreal. However, these researchers' focus on the convergence of feminist

theory, ethnography and identity politics all greatly influenced my methodological practise as I chose to focus on the complexities of different perspectives, particularly in connection to race, gender and embodiment.

Methods:

Ethnographic Data Collection: Field Notes and Interviews

My methods for researching these units were grounded in anthropological ethnographic methods of field notes and semi-structured interviews (Bernard 2002). I attended almost every class[11] of two units in grade ten and eleven physical education classes over the course of four months in the Winter and Spring of 2017. Throughout these classes I took detailed field notes, collected video data and conducted interviews with the artist, students and teacher involved. Through this process, I built a better understanding of my interlocutors, in particular the artist featured in much of this work, Latifah, whom I'll describe below in the more detailed description of the two units. I interviewed Latifah four times over the course of her work at the school. Aside from these interviews with Latifah, this thesis draws from interviews with a total of five students involved, four from the first unit and one from the second, the details of which I will describe below. At the end of both units I also conducted an hour long semi-structured interview with the physical education teacher. Through the process of writing found poetry and ethnographic sketches based on the field notes and interviews, I was able to explicate central themes to the work and draw a more nuanced depiction of my research.

[11] With the exception of one week I was absent from Simone Elliot.

Found Poetry

While I recognized a gradual shift of my experience from detached ethnographer to active participant, I was faced with the challenge of representing clearly the weight of my own transition in the space of the school culture. It was in a moment of frustration and a strong desire to tear the text of my detailed field notes to shreds, that I turned to the idea of poetic inquiry. As a dance artist with a focus in hip-hop culture throughout my undergraduate degree in Anthropology, arts-based inquiry appealed to me. It began as simply a creative method of coding my notes. Rather than using traditional methods or coding software I drew on Lynn Butler-Kisber's work on found poetry in qualitative inquiry (2010) and began to pull out quotes and pieces from my notes that I felt represented many of my experiences and findings. As I went along pulling out quotes and recompiling them I found that more and more what was really conducive to analysis were not the detailed description of events, spaces and people but my personal memos that were littered throughout the ends of my field notes. I selected words, phrases and sentences and reorganized them in a way Butler-Kisber would label creating poems that have been "treated." I began to change their order and reorganize the words through literal collage. I embraced my desire to tear my notes apart and began cutting and pasting the phrases together in a new form of representation that was both academically fruitful and artistically satisfying. Focusing mostly on my personal memos ultimately produced a representation of core themes and patterns in my research that reflected my own subjective analysis. This process of found poetry then became not only a method for coding my data but also within my theoretical reading as I created found poems from texts in an effort to better identify elements of the theories that related to my work. I also repeated this process at the end of my data collection during the writing process, constructing short

poems that mixed my reflections from my second year of data collection with quotes from student interviews. It was through this process that my interests in race, gender, and hip-hop as culture emerged as clear reoccurring themes in my work. It was also thanks to this process that I was able to make connections between the work of Judith Butler, Crenshaw and Hip-Hop based education.

One poem, "Today I Put Down My Notebook", serves as the opening for this introduction. Another, "The resistance to the same things persist," is included at the end of chapter two. The poems at the end of chapter three and four, "I don't wanna sound racist" and "We're not like other schools," respectively are drawn purely from student interview transcripts. I chose to include some of these poems for many of the same reasons I selected the narrative approach of ethnographic sketches. The poems give the reader a glance into the research process whilst also resisting traditional forms of academic writing. Poems are also open to a literary analysis through which readers are able to draw their own conclusions and connections to the work that may differ from the analysis I present. I have included these poems at the end of chapters in hopes that the reader may engage with these texts as separate literary pieces. I aim to empower the reader with their own agency to draw conclusions from the data in this form. This is why I do not open the upcoming chapters with a found poem as I did the introduction. While the data in the poems is curated by my process of found poetry, I hope that sharing pieces of raw data in such a way—without inscribing my own explicit analysis—may inspire readers to critically reflect upon the analysis I provide for the ethnographic sketches.

Ethnographic Sketches

Another important piece of my writing methods was drawn from Abu-Lughod's (1986) narrative approach. I use the term "ethnographic sketches" to describe these narrative

accounts. I open each chapter with an ethnographic sketch, drawing upon my field-notes, as a means of drawing the reader into the world of Simone Elliot. I follow these sketches with theoretical analysis that I have titled "Break it down". I hope that these sketches inspire other types of analysis aside from the ones I provide in the same way as the found poetry. The ethnographic sketches are meant to function as literary pieces that are open to various interpretations rather than as clear pictures of "reality." I have emphasized certain events that inspired theoretical description but also included greater details in hopes of painting a clearer picture of the experience of researching the unit. These sketches also were designed to address the issue of accessibility. Though this work draws on a great deal of academic language and theory I feel the sketches are spaces within the work that are both free of academic jargon and stylistically easier to engage with than my theoretical analysis.

Description of Units and Interlocutors

Latifah was the teaching artist leading both units, and so central to the research. She is a hip-hop educator, dancer and event organizer whom I met through involvement in the dance community when I first came to Montreal in 2014. Latifah dances and teaches various forms of street dance, though in this thesis I only write about her teaching of hip-hop dance. Born to a household of dancers, Latifah was introduced to dance as a toddler and is a strong example of embodied hip-hop due to her long and deep connections with the community.

The grade eleven class was a nine-week unit that met two to three times a week. The class began with a group of six girls, but dwindled to four after the first class, with two additional students joining for sporadic classes. The two girls who left the class stated a disinterest in Latifah's style of dance as their main reason for leaving. One of the students only attended two classes due to health issues that led her to be absent from school many days

during the unit. Another left the school after only a few weeks of the unit due to her status at the school as a sixth year student,[12] she also missed the first few weeks of the unit due to absences and only attended three classes.

The core group of four girls that are in both ethnographic sketches shared in this thesis from the grade eleven class was diverse, consisting of two students of colour, one Black from Caribbean descent and one Arab student who had recently immigrated from the middle east, as well as two white students. This class was only girls due to a decision by the physical education teacher to only make the option available to the girls in the class. I discuss the dynamics of this decision from student and teacher perspectives in the third chapter of this thesis, "Questioning Difference". I at first resisted the physical education teacher's decision, and still struggle with combating the reification of gendered norms around dancing in this way. After interviewing the students on their thoughts however, I also recognized how despite my own trepidations the decision was viewed very positively by the girls who ultimately participated in the study.

The grade ten group of boys was also racially diverse. The class described in the ethnographic sketch consisted of four students of colour—one Korean exchange student who was new to Elliot Simone that year, three Black students—and three white students. The number of students in this class also fluctuated though all students described in the sketch attended the entire unit.

Knowing that the unit in the grade eleven class with the girls would likely be the central focus of my thesis I was able to interview the four central girls involved in the unit

[12] Sixth year is an option or students at James Lyng who are few credits form graduating at the end of their first five years of high school. Students return and attend certain classes to gain the necessary credits in the first term of the year then graduate after January exams.

before and after the class. I also had permission from all of the consistent participants except one to film the class, so I was able to place a camera in such a way as to create a blind spot for the one student and the sporadic presence of others that had not brought me back permission forms. This way I was able to film the majority of the classes, and was able to refer back to the files a few times during the writing of the ethnographic sketches be able to describe the interactions more accurately. I recorded planning sessions with the physical education teacher, except during a period that he asked for his comments to not go on record.

The analysis of the grade ten unit with the boys, which I do in the chapter titled "Questioning Difference," does not map neatly onto a comparison of the all-girls. This unit was much reduced in length and intensity compared to the grade eleven girls group. The boy's unit lasted for only three classes in total over the course of four weeks. This was due mostly to the timing and scheduling of the two distinct classes. We had originally discussed starting a new unit with the grade ten group right after the grade eleven unit in March. This was complicated by Latifah's travel, the b-boy artist in residency I was also researching, and Mr. Matthews' structuring of his gym class. The result was a decision to do a short unit in May with the grade ten class, which we framed as an opportunity mostly to gage interest and introduce the students to Latifah. The plan was and remains to follow-up this unit with a longer, more in-depth unit with the same group in grade eleven. Despite the brevity of this unit I also draw on my experience working with this class in an extended unit in their English class that helped to contextualize their behaviours in the dance class within their more general school practices

The length of the unit is not the only reason my analysis of this piece is not as thorough as I would have liked. Due to the timing and less methodological planning of this unit, I was unable to interview the majority of students pre and post unit. In the end I only conducted one

student interview in this class. This semi-structured interview was conducted post-unit and lasted about an hour. The last class of this unit fell on the last week of class giving me very little opportunity to interview the students. Also the short duration of the unit itself made it nearly impossible to get permission from the students and parents to conduct interviews. I also lack the same rich relationships with this group that I had with the grade eleven girls[13]. This also impacts how willing the students were to do interviews, particularly as I had to conduct the post interviews during the exam period. As such most of this analysis is drawn from observations and post-unit interviews with Mr. Matthews and Latifah and lacks the student perspective I aim to bring to the fore much more in the findings and final body chapter of this work.

I had initially planned on complementing the girl's unit data with data drawn from my work with a b-boy artist in residence that had worked in French, visual art, and career explorations classes. What was interesting about these units was the use of dance in classes outside of physical education, which is under-represented in work on dance and education (Stinson 2009). Despite the fact that I had collected much more data on these units, I have chosen instead to focus on Latifah's work only. This was in part because Latifah's position at the school as a Black woman came to be very important to my analysis of how hip-hop dance shaped student understandings of race and gender relations and discourses through the embodied practice of hip-hop dance. I consider both Latifah's position at the school as a Black woman, and the ways in which Latifah covered the content of her class through movement and verbal discourses. I put Latifah's work in dialogue with student interview data, analyzing the effect of her work on the student's perceptions of gender and race.

[13] This is not something I can provide evidence for with anything aside from my difficulty in getting permission forms, and a general lack of ease with the group; while certain individuals knew me quite well from past classes I was not able to form the same friendships I was able to form with the girls.

Though the data on the grade ten boy's unit is not as thorough as with the grade eleven girls, I felt that Latifah's teaching in those classes and the one student interview (though not representative of the class views) provided enough data for at least a point of comparison and an extending of the analysis I do throughout this work. I also decided to focus on Latifah as she had a long history of working with Elliot Simone, having previously ran the extra-curricular dance program prior to the start of the urban arts partnership. She is also a community member of Montreal and the south west of Montreal, having taught in community centres and various schools around the city.

Outline of Thesis

The rest of the thesis is organized into three main chapters. Chapter two, "Dancing No," opens with an ethnographic sketch of the first day of the unit with the grade eleven girls and explores the relationship between dance performance and gender performativity. Chapter three, "Questioning Difference," opens with an ethnographic sketch of the grade ten boys' second dance class, then examines differences in Latifah's teaching with this class. The chapter expands on the conversation in chapter two, focusing on race as well as gender in Latifah's interactions with the diverse group of boys. Chapter four, "Embodied Hip-Hop," begins with an ethnographic sketch of the final class of the girls' grade eleven class and explores possible connections between embodied cultural knowledge, and hip-hop as culture with connections to a racialized history. I then conclude, in chapter five, with a summary of how this work has addressed the questions presented in this introduction, as well as a discussion around the limitations and future directions of my work. I close chapter five with some reflections on the process of writing this work, in dialogue with the voices of the students and artist involved.

CHAPTER TWO: Dancing "No"

Day One

Latifah rushes through the double doors of Simone Elliot faster than I can hop off the benches that line the front entrance lobby. She is apologizing for a non-existent lateness; class is still ten minutes away. We wind our way through the locker maze of the atrium up the back stairs to the Urban Arts office. She leaves her jacket and gloves; I admire her all red bright Adidas outfit and colourful windbreaker; she adjusts her blue toque; and, we return to the stairs to pass the final flight to the gym.

The gym lives on its own floor, separate from the rest of the high-school, embedded in the realm of the adult education's third floor. We stand awkwardly just outside of its door as Mr. Matthews—the physical education teacher—ushers a group of girls out into the hallway. Latifah recognizes some of the students from her history in Simone Elliot and the wider space of Montreal as a dance teacher. An awkward exchange begins in the hallway between Latifah and Mr. Matthews about whether she should come into the gym to introduce herself to the whole class, or if we should just go straight to the dance room with the pre-selected group of girls; he shrugs, figuring we can just head down. Christy gives me a warm hug as Sandra complains that I elbow her in the exchange. I apologize to Sandra, making light of the accident as we start down the stairs. I'm pleased to see that Cheryl has decided to join us as I only just asked her this morning at recess if she was going to be in dance. We begin down the stairs and I stay with Mr. Matthews as he asks Maya about whether or not she would be interested in joining the dance group. Maya asks for confirmation multiple times that it is "just girls," then explains she needs to change which Mr. Matthews and I assure her she can do downstairs. In the meantime, the other

girls and Latifah have started back down the stairs, twisting all the way down to the base below ground where the cafeteria and dance room lie.

I fumble with my keys and unlock the space. The girls, six in total, fill the room, pairing up or standing alone as Latifah grabs a desk and moves it next to the speakers to set up her computer. As she sets up I ask the girls to put their phones away, pointing out they are still in class. I feel odd doing this, since I rarely discipline kids, but also have built a level of comfort with this group. After over two months of work in their English class, I find myself more capable and comfortable with discipline than usual. After some hesitation and protest that their cell phone use is warranted from the girls, I shrug off the arguments and the students all hesitantly put away their phones. Latifah walks to the front of the room taking in the students. She asks each individual for their names; Alicia is offended when she gets to her and can't remember her name, Latifah laughs apologizing, recognizing "I've known Alicia since she was eight" and motioning the student's height at the time just below her bellybutton.

Latifah then begins the official class facing the students; she starts explaining that there are "three foundations" to hip-hop dance. She starts by bending her knees on an imaginary beat, her hair bouncing beneath her toque as she presses the students to guess what this first foundational movement is. "Bouncing," offers Christy almost immediately, to which Latifah responds happily "yes, the bounce is the first foundational move." She then continues to bend her knees but adds a rocking motion with her upper body switching from side to side as she asks the students to guess the second foundation that she is now exhibiting for them. The students stare in an awkward silence as she continues to press them for a response. They exchange looks with one another as Latifah begins to lose her patience, imploring them to guess anything, tipping them off as she points out "I'm rocking back and forth like a crazy person, come on girls guess

something!" The silence maintains itself, a silence I've grown used to at Simone Elliot. A silence drenched in trepidation and self-consciousness. She insists, "I'm just going to keep doing this until you guess something," a touch of frustration in her voice. Finally, the girls make guesses—incorrectly a few times—before Latifah feeds the answer to them, imitating the motion of rocking a baby in her arms and Christy finally pipes up "rocking." Latifah moves on to the final foundation, nodding her head steadily to the hum of the heater; she still hasn't put music on. She again asks the girls to guess what this is called, slightly less hesitation this time as they shyly offer ideas such as nodding, and bopping. Latifah continues to press them, asking them to pay attention to the movement, to think about "what everyone does when they first hear a song" finally, frustrated, Latifah says, "It rhymes with movin,'" to which Cheryl responds, surprisingly loudly, "oh groovin!" I am caught off guard by the usually extremely quiet student's moment of outburst and excitement, laughing as I say, "I think that's the loudest I've ever heard Cheryl be!"

Latifah reviews the three foundations again quickly before she moves back to put on the music. She then steps back in front of the class, facing the mirror now. The girls back away from the mirror, forming a single line along the back of the room, spaced awkwardly and unevenly. The nervousness of the class is palpable as they begin to follow along with Latifah as she moves through the layers of foundation, pressing on them to bend their knees to bounce, rock their body and groove with their heads. She then begins to use her arms and legs, getting the girls to follow along as she practices pushing her arms away, pointing forward, pushing down along her legs with her arms. The girls giggle and scorn themselves for making mistakes. Latifah presses them to really use their arms, using the example: "pretend you're pushing away a boy, like nuh-uh, nope, push away, push away." The girls follow the movement between giggles, pushing away their imaginary male pursuant. After the context of pushing away the boy has been given, the

girls' arms move with more power, as if the imagined presence of a boy's body pressing against their hands has impacted their intention and intensity.

Maya comes up to me as I move to my computer to take a few notes on the exercises, pausing for a moment from my participation in class. She asks again if I'm sure no men will be coming into the class. I assure her it's just the girls, the question "why?" burning on my lips as she explains, "ok, then can I take my headscarf off?" I smile and nod, "ya of course, I'll even close the door so you don't have to worry about it." She lets her hair out, as I move to close the door of the studio, a long cascade of dark brown waves with light brown ombre tips drops in a ponytail out of the scarf. I can't contain the compliment as I exclaim, "Wow your hair is beautiful!" She blushes and thanks me reaching out to touch my own messy curls gently commenting on their softness; I shrug and lament my hair's strong will to do as it pleases as Latifah begins moving on to a new exercise and both our focuses shift back to the front.

The class moves on to what becomes the main lesson of the day: posing. Latifah introduces posing as a means of working towards confidence in freestyle, contextualizing the exercise within wider street dance cultural practices of freestyle. She also emphasizes the "everyday" as being the central source of inspiration for hip-hop dancing, particularly posing. The girls all struggle with the concept of choosing their poses, turning to each other and myself with whispers of, "I don't know what to do," or, "I'll look stupid." Latifah brushes off the concerns, calling on the students again to reflect on their "everyday" behaviours. The stillness persists, the students' slight flicking extremities, crossing arms, moving their arms slightly, or shifts in weight the only evidence of understanding. Often they stop dancing completely: they stand actively in a self-conscious resistance, tense shoulders shrugging, blank stares, slight smiles. Maya laments the difficulty of looking in the mirror. Latifah pairs off the students

getting them to face one another and explains: “You are going to use your poses to have a conversation.” She pulls me to the front of the room to demonstrate with her. We begin bouncing together. The music is paused and we bounce to the imaginary beat shared in both our minds. She poses first, arms out to her sides; we bounce twice. She counts the beats out “one two,” I respond, arms crossing my chest, “three four.” She shifts hands on her hips, saying, “five six,” and I move, one hand under my chin and the other behind my back for “seven eight.” Latifah explains that the concept is to treat the exercise “like a conversation” and we exemplify more clearly how this is helpful in choosing poses as we repeat the same back and forth exercise. Latifah begins hand to her head holding an imaginary phone as she speaks on beat, “Imma call your man,” I respond, hands on my hips, and as I bounce Latifah narrates, “Oh no you didn’t.” She shifts, flicking her hair, “oh yes I did,” and I bring my right hand up, my palm facing her, as I bounce and Latifah describes, “get out my face.” A few of the girls giggle at the performance. Latifah explains the relationship between street dance and conversation, emphasizing the social aspect of things as she asks them to try it with us. After a few more attempts, Latifah and I stop demonstrating to put on music and move around the room, giving the three pairs each more careful attention. Latifah begins pulling out the pairs one at a time to do the exercise. Sandra and Christy go first, both of them immensely anxious about having to “perform” their conversation; they freeze up and miss their counts both turning to complain to me about having to do things in front of everyone else, an example of the Simone Elliot performance anxiety I have come to know too well over the past year. Latifah moves along getting each group to do it, and I find my mind wandering to thoughts about the importance of seeing their peers try in bolstering their own confidence to do so.

Latifah moves on to another series of posing exercises, the girls gradually gaining confidence, then ends the class with a review of the movements they started the class with in a kind of short choreography, mixed in with some of the posing exercises. The review is cut by the bell at which point the students rush out for the end of the day. Latifah and I check in; she is happy about the gradual comfort already beginning to develop. We discuss particular students as I start packing up my stuff, and head out of the dance room back to the office for her to grab her things. As we wind up the stairs we continue to discuss her plans for the future, and her rationale for the posing exercise as a means of working towards comfort with freestyle through relating to their everyday. She reflects on the power of getting the students to work in pairs or as a group rather than as individuals. I point out the ways in which this approach parallels the wider culture of street dance which is one built on social dance and the use of dance as a means of interaction, either at dances or parties, historically and today.

After retrieving her stuff from the office we get caught up in the atrium, running into a fellow research assistant. We chat about her all women hip-hop event that I have offered to help out with in June; this leads to a discussion about Latifah's experience as a black female event organizer/dancer. A conversation about resisting the stereotypes of "black girls always being late" contextualizes her rushing through the doors ten minutes early before class, which I laugh about and bring up now. I am fascinated by the dynamics of the conversation and yet fight the urge to fall asleep on the purple bench while we talk – experiencing what has become an all too familiar combination of exhaustion and excitement that comes at the end of every day of dance-focused research, as my mind reels trying to process everything I'm learning. The rush of students leaving for the end of the day has quieted rapidly around us, with only a few stragglers left at lockers and benches around the space. Finally, we too walk out of the school. My mind

begins racing, reviewing the events of the class. I find myself returning to one moment of the class in particular, the pushing away. Saying "no" with a dance move. What gender norms are being upheld in such a movement? What does it mean to dance no?

Break it Down: Saying "No" to a Boy

As the dance unit progressed the concept of "performing" the everyday through posing exercises, as well as the idea of saying "no" to boys through dance movements such as pushing, kicking or blocking were two consistent themes that started on the first day but re-occurred almost every class. In this section, I connect the notion of "everyday" movement and the ways in which Latifah frames these movements in the space of the dance class to Judith Butler's notion of performativity (Butler 1990). Butler's theory argues that gender performativity is a process of gendered "everyday" behaviours and utterances through which the subject is created (Butler 1990). This theory has been drawn on by various academics both in the realm of feminist theory and dance studies. What I aim to dissect here is the relationship between language, dance, and the body in creating the female subject by analyzing Latifah's emphasis on "pushing away" boys and posing in "everyday" ways in relationship to Don Kulick's 2003 article "No" and Butler's complication of the relationship between language and the body in her 2004 book "Undoing Gender." What is important to clarify in looking at dance in relationship to performativity is the distinction between performance as a product and performativity as a process. What Latifah's explicit naming of the everyday in connection to dance practice does is underline the ways in which participation in a dance unit over the course of various months becomes part of the process of performativity for these students. By invoking the concept of the "everyday" Latifah both reifies gendered norms such as fighting over a boy and actively draws student attention to it.

What does it mean to say no? In his article "No" Don Kulick (2003) draws on Butler's

concept of performativity to examine the ways the utterance of "no" in the spaces of heterosexual rape trials produces "the subject position of 'woman' … in part by the exhorted utterance of "no" when encountering male desire" (p. 141). Kulick juxtaposed this with the case of the male subject "who, in contrast, is normatively exhorted to *never* say "no" when confronted with female desire" (2003, p. 141). Kulick's argument is not that the utterance of "no" exclusively produces a sexual scenario, but that the utterance of "no" within different scenarios "produces a sexualized, gendered field of power." (2003, p.146).

It is in Kulick's contrasting the example of the utterance of "no" in heterosexual rape trials with the use of the "Homosexual Panic Defense" that a connection can be made in relationship to Butler, dance, and the production of the female subject in the Simone Elliot dance class. The Homosexual Panic Defense is a legal defense used in cases where a man murdered another man that he claimed made sexual advances (Kulick, 2003, p. 143). Kulicks draws upon Althusser's theory of interpellation, which suggests that social interactions affirm and subtly normalize our subjectivity and place within an ideology. Althusser argued there are no individuals, only subjects, within wider apparatuses of power, which he distinguished into two categories, repressive and ideological, that are maintained in part through the process of interpellation (Althusser 1971). Althusser exemplified this through the concept of "hailing,": when a police officer says "hey you," your position as a subject of a state rather than individual is affirmed within a system of repressive and ideological state apparatuses (1971). Kulick argued that "in the case of both rape and Homosexual Panic, from the perspective of performativity theory, a "no" is not just a refusal of that subjection. It is also an acknowledgment of it; a response to the interpellative call that even disputing it affirms" (Kulick 2003, p. 145). The subjection Kulick refers to here is either a man or a woman faced by the sexual advances of

another man and so being interpellated into becoming a sexual subject. In cases of Homosexual Panic Defense, the utterance of "no" cannot be made; instead the man being interpellated by another man can only react and reject the interpellation "with vicious physical violence" (Kulick, 2003, p.146). Thus the same logic that leads to the dangerous thinking of "no means yes," that "allows men to claim they have misunderstood a woman's "no" in heterosexual rape trials, also means that for a man to say "no" is "to be forced to produce oneself as a non-masculine subject" (Kulick, 2003, p. 146).

While obviously the context is very different than that of sexual assault, I wonder how in the context of the dance class, the notion of the utterance of "no" as essential in the creation of a female subject is challenged or reinforced through the embodiment of "no" through dance movements. Considering Butler's point that "performativity is not just about speech acts. It is also about bodily acts. The relationship between the two is complicated" (2004, p. 198), how can we understand Latifah's use of "no" in describing certain movements in relation to this normalization of "no" as an essential part in the process of female performativity. This connects to my own goal of examining dance not as just performance of movement but of identity.

Latifah's dance class offers an opportunity for building student understanding of the multiple ways in which their bodies work as a tool of communication. This was embodied in the opening sketch, such as the moment when Latifah literally vocalized a conversation between us through our bodies, or when students were asked to think of their poses as "acting out" their everyday experiences. What is important, however, in a performativity-based analysis of this space is to consider whether the transmission of speech acts into bodily ones results in a shift in the ways in which the students are produced as subjects in the dance room. I argue that through drawing student attention to the concept of 'everyday' gestures? and pressing the students to

overcome their hesitation to dance through relating dance to everyday practices, processes through which their bodily acts become a part of the process of performativity are made explicit rather than purely subconscious. This, Butler argues, is how much of the relation between the body and performativity functions.

This ethnographic sketch allows us to better understand the relationship between dance and the ways in which students emerge as subjects in the space of the high school. Performativity theory calls our attention to everyday actions and discourse as a process through which gendered subjects are formed. Now, dance performance can be seen as distinct from this process as it is an active effort to perform a certain character or movement. A conscious performance is not the same as everyday gender performance. However, what is interesting about Latifah's class is her call on the students to draw from their "everyday" lives to create a dance performance, and particularly, as we exemplified in our demonstration, a gendered everyday performance. I posit that over the course of the unit the distinct line between dance performance and the process of performativity was blurred due to this explicit drawing from "everyday" gender performance.

One reading of Latifah's use of "no" as a reference point could see it as upholding the norm through which women are constructed as sexual subjects, in keeping with Kilick's notion of performativity as producing norms of being a girl through the maintenance of a particular heterosexual narrative. Likewise, in our dance exchange during our demonstration to the girls, a heteronormative narrative is upheld by Latifah's story choice of "Imma call your man." Though the performance was playful and exaggerated, the relation of this competitive attitude between women over a man reflects some of the problems of the heteronormative praxis Kulick is critiquing.

However, taking the lens of Butler (2004) and Kulick's discussion of the Homosexual

Panic Defense, Latifah's use of "no" in relationship to an embodied act in fact can also be read as a challenge to this narrative. Through considering the complicated relationship between bodily acts and speech acts, dancing "no" and saying "no" are two separate yet enmeshed processes, both of which can be read as underlining the process of performativity but with different results on the production of the subject. Kulick argued that saying "no" produces a particular dynamic "in which the sexual subjects so produced are differentially empowered and differentially gendered" (2003, p. 146). Physical acts of violence rather than the utterance of "no" enable men to maintain their position of power whilst also rejecting the sexual advances of another man. So how then might this map onto women thinking of dance movements, a physical rather than verbal response, as "pushing away" a man's advances? If the utterance of the speech act "no" is replaced by a bodily act, how might the structures of power and woman's perceptions of their bodies as an instrument of power shift?

While there are studies that look at how women use dance as a means of seduction, or how women's bodies become objects of male desire through dance, what is of interest in understanding the movements in this context is the potential of women learning to embody "no" in a non-violent way. I argue that this can lead to empowerment through increased control over their bodies as an interjection in the process of performativity. This happens not through performing the "everyday" unconsciously, but instead through embodying the everyday in conscious and choreographed movements. I argue that by learning to dance "no" the students are in fact being given access to a means of understanding "no" in a way that challenges the normative use of dance as a sexually provocative bodily act, and also undoes the process of interpellation through which the utterance of "no" constitutes the woman as sexual subject whilst violent action in face of the impossibility of "no" constitutes the man as masculine. Put simply in

the "heteronormative praxis" as Kulick describes: men act no and women say no. What the practice of dancing no does is put women in the position of saying no without speaking no, not through violence or self defense, but through dance practice.

Break it Down: Body Politics

In light of this relationship between dance performance and gender performativity, I turn to a discussion of Latifah, in light of Kimberlé Crenshaw's intersectionality and Butler's argument that "the body has its invariably public dimension; constituted as a social phenomenon in the public sphere my body is and is not mine." (2004, p. 21). The body then is both a public representation of the self, as well as a potential medium for communicating that resists the limitations of verbal utterances through dance. The question that I became interested in exploring is how street dance with its historic connection to hip-hop culture can expand to understanding performativity as constitutive of the self through the intersections of race and gender as an embodied identity. In order to lay the foundation for this process—which I argue must draw from intersectionality as a core theme—I would like to take some space here to discuss race as a critical dynamic in Latifah's experience at the school and how this relates to the importance of students learning to embody resistance.

In her work, *Beyond Racism and Misogyny: Black Feminism and 2 Live Crew,* Crenshaw described three different yet overlapping and inter-related dimensions of intersectionality: structural, political and representational. Though the political and structural dimensions are important, she focused, as I will, on the representational dimension in analyzing various examples of black femininity in media. Crenshaw described representational intersectionality as, "the way that race and gender images, readily available in our culture, converge to create unique

and specific narratives deemed appropriate for women of color" (1997, p. 250).[14]

Latifah's actions and words in the above ethnographic sketch highlight some connections between performativity and intersectionality. In her arts-based research approach to analyzing the creation of a performance piece on identifying as a woman in the twenty-first century, Etalia Thomas expanded her focus on gender to explore the ways in which race and ethnicity are viewed and performed by the students. In discussing students' explorations of race in particular, Thomas referred to the students "demonstrat[ing] awareness and confusion pertaining to stereotypes presented in the media" she stated that "the frustration heard in the verbal dialogue was echoed in the participant's bodies" (2015, p. 189). This frustration was evidenced by her description of how, for the students, "embodying race and ethnicity through dance and movement proved to be quite challenging" (Thomas 2015, p. 188). This frustration around stereotypes is something that came up in my post-unit interview with Latifah as we discussed the contrast between teaching street dance or teaching styles such as ballet. Latifah describes a discrepancy in student expectations where a "Russian lady or whatever" teaching ballet is expected to be strict and students respectful. This contrasts to her own experiences teaching: "when I get a little passionate, they cry… or they assume I'm being ghetto. And I get the whole 'angry black girl vibe' which I don't find is very fair... and I feel like ya, it's just not taken as serious." Latifah went on to personalize this further in relation to both race and gender. She explains the ways in which her "consciousness" of black history and self as a black woman affects her relationships with men whom she says at times see her as "too diva."

Latifah's description of being stereotyped as "angry black girl" or "diva" relates to

[14] By culture here I can only assume she refers to the United States, however I argue (as do many in Canadian critical race theory) that many of the same media representations exist and influence the Canadian context.

Tomas' description of how the students expressed frustration with stereotypes in media. I connect these two examples through Crenshaw's work (1997). Crenshaw focused particularly on how certain violent and sexualized representations of women of colour in American film, "not only represent the devaluation of women of color, they may also reproduce it by providing viewers with both conscious and unconscious cues for interpreting the experiences of 'others'" (1997, p. 253). The question then becomes—in connection to Thomas' work—how do we address representational intersectionality through the body?

Analyzing interview data from my multiple interviews with Latifah over the project through the lenses of performativity and intersectionality, I draw out a different connection with Kulick and dance through a story Latifah told about her early experiences of clubbing as a dancer. In the interview we conducted the same day as this evaluation, Latifah described the importance of her brothers to her understanding of herself and responses to men:

> I am who I am today because of how men treated me actually. Like I grew up with two brothers, I was the baby, and like I had two cool ass brothers on top of that, who were very popular. and whatever they did shed light on me…. from them growing up it was like dancing and teaching…. I would go to clubs, and like I would just be dancing regular, and guys would come up to me and start waving and like... And like I'd always be like 'I'm not here to do that' and I would just brush them off…. And he's [her brother] like 'no, never, when a guy calls you out, you shut him up. Because that's the reason they're coming up to you, is because they think, they want you to do that, or they want you to give in. No, you freaking

> battle them, and you shut them up once and for all'….and that's what ended up happening. Guys would come and [here Latifah impersonates a man dancing in her face] and I was just like [here Latifah dances just as hard but much more controlled and clean]. That's why I did popping and hip-hop. I did hip-hop but that's why popping was the style I learned right away, was because popping it was so strong. I wanted to be a hard popper, I wanted to pop harder than the guys.

She expanded from this story to go on to discuss the ways in which sexism continues to impact the street dance community, particularly within popping in Montreal.[15] This story touches on gender relations, and the importance of family support for Latifah's confidence. I argue it also shows dance as a vital form of communication in spaces such as clubs in a way that can be tied back to the notion of dancing no versus saying no. Latifah saying "I'm not interested" or simply brushing off men who wanted to challenge her as a dancer in the club was not sufficient in the views of her brothers who were large influences in shaping her own identity. Latifah learning to use her body to "shut up" men who were expecting her to "give in" or simply vocalize a rejection, mirrors a more extreme version of the students learning to push away a boy in the class. This single motion did not necessarily, at least consciously, translate into the girls feeling a new level of empowerment or ability to say no with their body. However, in post unit interviews all the students recognized the ways in which seeing Latifah's strength, and being able to learn the dance, inspired their own confidence and sense of empowerment.[16]

For Latifah, fashion and the way in which she presents herself are vital to her

[15] A whole other thesis could be devoted to analyzing the persistence of sexism in street dance communities, and a comparison of how the different forms within those communities handle gender differently.

experiences as a dance educator and artist. In one of our earlier interviews she describes wearing an afro to a meeting at an all-white establishment with three black artists working on a project "but it was like well-groomed, like super round. And I wore a turtle neck, high-waist bell-bottoms, dressed. But to them they're not seeing I'm dressed professional, and I came on time or whatever. They're just seeing: afro! black girl! Ahh!!" Latifah describes comments being made about her hair in this particular case, to which she responded, "you did ask for Latifah, and you never get less but you always get more," going on to describe how this kind of response was something she worked towards in contrast to a past version of herself. "The old me, I would break down and cry, any kind of race that came up to me… I got sad, and I felt attacked and I would cry. And I was like oh hell no I'm not showing these people my weakness, but I *will* throw their ignorance in their face."

Latifah's constant effort to resist negative stereotypes of both femininity and blackness through both her body and speech acts at Simone Elliot creates an opportunity for expanding the use of performativity into not only exploring arts education but also wider resistance to structural racism and sexism embedded in educational institutions. The conversation with one of the other research assistants about Latifah's constant feeling of resistance to tardiness was also a resistance to performing a negative stereotype of blackness. Latifah points to her own appearance versus work ethic as a contrast to the reputation of Simone Elliot. A few weeks after this first ethnographic sketch Latifah missed class due to sleeping in. While this was uncharacteristic and an isolated incident of Latifah "being human and making a mistake" (-as a co-worker described) I found myself reflecting back on the weight of this moment. A single act of lateness or of "being human" for Latifah, based on her own identity and need to resist a certain performance of

a negative stereotype carries a different weight then it would for a white dance teacher in the same position. She reflected in response to that incident on the ways in which a single mistake has in the past ruined long term working relationships. This reflects Crenshaw's point that the stereotypes upheld and reproduced around black women have lived and very real consequences for those women. I will share more about how Latifah negotiates her identity and how this impacts her teaching in the next chapter on dance with the boys.

"The resistance to the same things persist"

Women's participation
Gender and power
In the arts
Gendered division
As well as race
This is a pattern I see
The importance of spaces
Gender issues seem to be at play
Dance, confidence, race, gender, breaking, school success
I will try interacting more with the female students in the class myself
Reflecting on the gender and age dynamics of myself as researcher/teacher
I think about this in relationship to gender issues
Male-predominance of our artists and teachers
Causes for her often disruptive behaviour
A very low sense of esteem
Excited by his progress
Again thinking about
Race
Gender
Power

(Friedmann, Found Poetry drawn from reflective memos 2016)

Chapter 3: Questioning Difference

Dancing with the Boys

I wind my way down the staircase from the gym to the basement of Simone Elliot. I trail behind eight boys from the grade ten class on route to their second dance class of the unit. We cross the cafeteria to the dance room where Latifah awaits. I pause to take her outfit in, a departure from her usual bright colours. She wears a long black t-shirt with a tiger printed on it, flared black pants with black and white oxfords peeking out from below. The boys seep into the room, falling into the chairs that line one side, leaning against the back wall, lingering on the steps to the door. Latifah and I have a quick exchange in which she apologizes for having missed classes last week while I too had been out of town on an exchange with other students.

The students all stand along the walls and back of the room as Latifah begins her review of the three basic techniques of hip-hop. When she asks them if any of them remember the techniques, Arthur says "bouncing" softly, as Shawn begins to list "MC, DJ, Graffiti." Latifah cuts them off as other students begin to yell out answers, reminding them of the distinction between the elements of hip-hop culture and the foundations of the dance. She asks again; I jump-in pointing out that one student had in fact already said it. Arthur repeats "bouncing" again a bit louder and Latifah congratulates him before moving on the the next foundation. Bounce, rock, groove. The boys stay mostly motionless as Latifah and I dance through the movements. I notice the responses come much quicker in this group than they had with the grade elevens girls in their first few sessions. Latifah calls the boys off of the wall and out of their chairs in order to start warming up. The boys resist a bit as we start moving; Christopher stays in his chair while others group together and stand still as we begin practicing our technique. Latifah coaxes Christopher, the final resistor, out of his chair. Gradually as we continue bouncing, rocking and

grooving, all the students begin moving, albeit not necessarily with the same movement as Latifah. She starts to incorporate a travelling step as we "slide, then bounce." The "slide" involves stepping out widely with one leg and sliding the other in towards it. As we do this we pull our bodies towards our stepping leg with a swipe of the arm. Latifah describes the movement to the boys:

"Imagine you see a fine ahh... I shouldn't swear," she laughs and I crack a smile. "Imagine you see a really cute girl but your friend is in the way so you have to push them aside and be like yo, let me check out that girl!" She does the movement as she describes the scenario, embodying the intention with dance. She then moves on to a movement that she had used in the girls' class; she shows the boys to bounce from side to side, pressing their arms away. When teaching the girls' class Latifah had contextualized this movement as pushing away a girl. However, with the boys, Latifah described the movement as pushing away someone who has "nasty breath" and narrating the movement as "like your saying 'ew no, get that nasty breath outta my face.'"

We start the routine the group will be evaluated on next week. We are dancing to "Poison" by Bell Biv Devoe. Latifah puts on the song and marks through the opening move, which is several fast and rhythmic steps to the opening refrain of the song. She smiles and whispers to me "I want them to get this on the beat." She raises crossed fingers and I raise mine to match hers, a moment of shared hope for the students. Latifah practices the pattern to the music on her own a few times before she finalizes the pattern, five quick steps then a criss-cross– like a jumping jack but where the legs cross and uncross. She separates the boys into three groups from the right to the left of the room. Each group is assigned a different timing for the steps. The effect in the end is a wave as the movement starts on one end and carries across the line of students to the other. As we practice it a few times I am struck by the difference in the

way these students engage and disengage from the activity in comparison to the girls group. Some students embody a resistance to dancing through simply keeping their movements very small, not too unlike the girls. Certain students exaggerate the dance moves in a way that seems to almost be mocking them, while others refuse to fully commit to the movements, leaving their feet on the ground when they are supposed to lift them and hanging their arms by their sides when they are supposed to raise them. A few students take a more extreme approach by either not moving at all, trying to sit down, or leaning back against the wall. Christopher, for example, continuously tries to sit down on one of the chairs pushed against the wall as we continue the routine. Latifah is consistently draws him back into the dance, expressing a refusal to let this student quit. She does this through a fine balance of teasing and encouragement, at once joking with him about being an "old man" while also insisting in her belief in his ability to ace the unit. Having worked with Christopher in another class with other teaching artists, I note that Latifah is one of the most successful teachers at convincing him to engage.

That said, while some students seem disengaged, I cannot help but be struck by shyness being less explicitly an issue in this group. The boys in this group seem less concerned about using their bodies, even as an expression of resistance, than the girls in the grade eleven class. When they are asked to dance in small groups there is not the same outcry of anxiety around other students judging them or their own uncertainties around the movement. Some are even joking around and asking Latifah questions about "old school" moves that they impersonate in front of one another. There are exceptions to this lack of self-consciousness; I notice the boys that had initially hung back by the stairs still remain confined to their corner. Once we have worked through the tricky footwork and opening grooves of the song, Latifah decides to end the

routine with the "kid n' play", a classic hip-hop partner move she has used in almost every class so far.

The "kid n' play" involves partnering with another dancer. The two face one another and step towards each other with their left foot than lift their right foot up and tap their heels together like a "foot high five", as I describe it to one student, then they step back and repeat the movement. Christopher takes a seat again but Latifah calls him out in a new way, arguing "you're not on your period, and in fact when girls are on their period they are still being active in gym." The boys laugh and some make comments that the girls do not in fact do gym if they are on their period because of cramps. Latifah retorts that dancing and moving is in fact how you get rid of cramps, saying "trust me I know." The whole conversation catches me off guard in a class of all male students, though I note it seems to have worked in motivating the student to re-join the group. The "kid n' play" leads into a final pose with which Latifah chooses to end the routine. We run through it a few times before moving on to theory.

The students pull out the chairs and sit facing the chalkboard as Latifah begins her "theory" lesson, reminding the students they will be evaluated on this information as well as their dance. Theory includes the three foundations of the dance, and the elements of hip-hop and hip-hop culture as I described, drawing on Latifah's lessons, in the first chapter of this thesis. Christopher is notably the first to volunteer answers to the different elements. He jumps ahead of the class, listing as many as he can remember "MC, Knowledge, DJ-ing, fashion" before Latifah has finished prompting the students to guess the first element. Latifah is caught off guard by this class' extensive knowledge of hip-hop as they continue jumping ahead of her as she teaches, even as she moves on to new material. Latifah begins to re-tell her story of the birth of hip-hop. Latifah describes the birth of hip-hop as ultimately based in Cindy Campbell's desire for a

fashionable back to school outfit. This prompted Cindy to organize a party and take advantage of her brother's DJ skills and sound system in order to make them both some cash. The students know Kool Herc's name before Latifah even starts the story, as multiple students fill in the blank as she begins to write K O O on the board. The same happens as she moves on to describing the role of Afrika Bambaataa and the Zulu Nation. Latifah expresses her shock and pleasure at the students' knowledge of hip-hop history. Shawn starts murmuring the words to an old funk-era song that I recognize, "Bounce, Rock, Roll, Skate" by Vaugn Mason and Crew. I correct him on the lyrics as he is singing "bounce, rock, roll, groove". I remind him the word is in fact skate, though acknowledge that it's an easy tune to help memorize the foundations of the dance. The class culminates in a review of the movements that correspond to the ten elements of hip-hop culture. I note that this too is done differently than with the group of students from the grade eleven class who learnt the movements as a part of the final dance. This form of embodied learning is something I will explore further in my final chapter on Latifah's work at Simone Elliot but for now I want to focus on the differences I noted in Latifah's discourse around dance with this group in contrast to the girls.

Break it Down: *Never* say "No"

In this class Latifah also draws on the concept of pushing to describe a dance movement, though unlike the girls' class where the movement is often described as "pushing away a boy," pushing in this class is not described as "pushing away a girl" but rather someone with bad breath. The only direct reference to girls made in this class was in explaining the travel step with arm movement in the warm up, where she describes pushing a friend out of the way in order to better see an attractive woman. This reference upholds various heteronormative practices of male competition for female attention, and to a certain extent the objectification of an imaginary girl

who becomes the subject of the boys' competition but is not described as an active participant. Viewed from the lens of performativity, repeating this action could in fact support a process of performativity where men see the only obstacle to a woman's sexuality as being the other men in the way of this. This section of the lesson reflects some of the same issues of reaffirming gender norms I described in the last chapter, such as when Latifah and I danced an exchange, reifying competitiveness of girls for the attention of a boy.

This shift in teaching the boys is contrasted to the notion of saying "no" through dance discussed in the last chapter. In this scenario, Latifah is calling on the boys to relate their dance movement to a lived experience of pushing a friend out of the way to get to a girl. This shift in her way of describing a rather similar movement upholds the problem Kulick outlined in his work on the differentiation between the masculine and feminine subjects in the context of sexual harassment and rape trials. In discussing the "subject of the 'man'" who is "exhorted to *never* say 'no' when confronted with female desire" (2003, p. 141). Kulick also described how this is rooted in the normalization of heterosexuality as "for a male to say 'no' to female desire for sex would threaten to signify him as a homosexual" (2003, p. 141). Kulick went on to describe how this threat is ameliorated only under "extenuating circumstances" such as "extreme physical unattractiveness in the female" (2003, p. 141). This is reflected by Latifah describing the movement of pushing away a girl due to her having bad breath. With the girls Latifah rarely gave the girls a rationale for pushing the boys away. This underlines Kulick's argument that women are expected to say no by default, in contrast with men who must have cause for turning down a woman's advances.

Analyzing the warm-up portion of the class and the contrasts between how similar movements were described by Latifah in the two classes, it seems that certain gender norms were

upheld more than they were challenged. What is important to recognize however is the ways in which Latifah's reference to those norms through the element of dance re-contextualizes discourse around gender in a specifically embodied way. By bringing gender performativity into dance performance everyday bodily practices are brought to conscious spaces where analysis and rethinking of meaning is possible. While in the last chapter I explored how learning to dance "no" can in fact be a source of empowerment for the women in that class, in this chapter I propose that for the male students, simply learning to dance from a woman, and specifically a black woman, can be vital to unpacking the intersections between gender normativity and dance. This will be accomplished through exploring some of Latifah's own rationale for calling on these gendered norms in this class as well as with the girls.

When I asked Latifah about the experience of teaching in the two different classes she described a need to "switch it up" when faced with a class of boys. When I pressed Latifah further on what she felt was different between the two classes, she described a need to cater more to the interests of the boys, since "they [the girls] can do anything but men, boys, they're very particular like they don't wanna dance, especially if they have a girl teacher they tend to feel like 'oh what can I learn from her?'" Here Latifah calls attention to a problem that arose in interviews with other female staff at the school; the way in which teachers feel their gender impacts the amount of respect they are or are not afforded, in particular from the male students. One of the English teachers at the school described this experience to me in an end of year interview when I asked her about the gendered and racial dynamics of her class: "there are several cases in which I feel the boys react to me differently because I'm a woman. Um, they give me a run for my money I feel, and if I were a man I feel they'd give me an easier time." The contrast in Latifah's

teaching then can be understood as part of a wider effort to cater her teaching to the interests of the boys in the class.

This brings forth a few key problems in education that involves the body as explicitly as dance does. How can a woman, particularly a black woman, teaching dance challenge intersecting issues of privilege at play in student-teacher relations? On the other hand, how did Latifah's discourse around gender in this class in fact uphold certain gender relations? What this led me to think about were the student interviews when I asked girls and boys about their sense of gender relations in the classroom. Christy described boys in her class as "not really car[ing] about things" and that "girls are more efficient on things and more concentrated on things than the guys." Sandra shared this sense of the boys being less engaged in class. When describing why she felt an all-girls dance class was important she explained "I don't think the boys would take it seriously." All of the girls interviewed expressed a relief at not having the boys present. Sandra describes her rationale for this as feeling "overpowered" at times by the boys in her class describing: "They're very overpowering their energy…they're more like, I don't want to say tough, but more like loud and stuff like that." When I interviewed one of the boys from this dance class he recognized discrepancies in the views of boys and girls towards one another in the school: "I know a lot of the guys here… think that like, they that like 99% of the chicks here are like the kinda chicks that would like do something in the bathroom, you know what I'm talking about ya?...but the girls don't think that back." What these quotes highlight for me is a complex dynamic between the students where the girls at once feel like the boys in their class fail to take school—including arts in the school—seriously and the boys tend to see the young women in the school as sexual objects.

Another feeling highlight by my interview with a male student from this class was a shared sense of anxiety around dancing in front of the opposite gender. When I asked the boy from this class if he would have felt differently about the class if girls from his class had been present, he explained, “guys feel less confident and more, uh, nervous if there’s like a chick. Like if it’s your teacher its ok because she’s gonna do it anyway, like she’s gonna do it too so its ok.” When I asked him if he thought it would be the same for the girls he said “no I feel like with the girls, it’s more like, they feel more comfortable… because it’s like most people see dancing is for like girls and stuff, so if they see a guy doing it they’d be like ‘oh sure I’ll do it.’” When I pressed on him about his personal views on this perception that dance is for girls he responded, “no I thought it was fun, I was like, you know, there’s no problem with it. I don’t think dancing is for girls.”

What is interesting here is again a discrepancy between the male students’ assumptions about how girls would feel about dancing with the boys and the girls’ description of Mr. Matthew’s decision to split up their class. Cheryl theorizes why Mr. Matthews made this decision: “I guess because, like, if it was mixed, most of the girls wouldn’t want to do it because we’re shy.” Cheryl identifies the girls as being the ones who would not want to participate in the unit if it was mixed due to their insecurity around the boys, despite the perception that “dance is for girls.” Sandra explains a sense of the boys in her class “put[ting] a lot of pressure on the girls cuz you have to be like the other ones, the one who know how to dance, who are smart, they're beautiful and everything, you have to be like them, if you're not then why should we even talk to you." In contrast she describes the impact of the class on her sense of empowerment within this kind of dynamic: "In the dance class I felt more safe, and then I felt like after class I felt more positive as like 'no boys gonna knock me down, I'm not gonna listen to what they say or anything

like that' cuz in the dance room she's like 'no push away the guys and everything' with like the hand things I was like 'ya!'" What is interesting to consider in analyzing Mr. Matthew's decision is not only the contrasting views of the students but also his own comments on the potential of dance as a space for girls. When I asked Mr. Matthews why he gender-divided the grade eleven group, he reflects some of the views of the female students in particular, discussing how he felt the girls needed a break from the co-ed classroom. He also relates it more explicitly in relationship to the female student interests in "regular physical education classes" summarizing his conclusion:

> Ah, they are not into competitive sports. What happened is in that class it's very similar to a lot of coed high school classes and it goes into why a lot of phys ed teachers prefer separating classes. Boys tend to be very dominant in team sports. And they tend to really take over, and girls, females [are] sometimes intimidated by you know, very aggressive behaviour and you know, sometimes girls end up having to take a back seat and - I think there is an element of that. For the most part, this was a group of girls who as long as I've known them were never really into competitive sports.

When reflecting on a small unit with the grade seven students–which had been the only unit done with dance at the school where the full class was expected to participate–Mr. Matthews reflected on the gendered difference in resistance:

> It was more two or three boys who were refusing to participate. And I think that comes down to attitudes of some boys towards dancing in general. It's not "manly" I guess? I think that's just how they see it right? You know, obviously it's very silly, but it's been, you know, learned somewhere I guess.

Both Mr. Matthews and the male student's description of dance being read by boys at Elliot Simone as "not manly" is contrasted in the realm of hip-hop dance in particular. This lies at the core of my interest in researching gender, race and dance through the lens of hip-hop based education. One of the things that distinguishes hip-hop and other street dances from other forms of dance often used in education such as contemporary or ballet is the fact that hip-hop has historically been, and continues to be, a male-dominated dance form. So what I found interesting was how this fact did not seem to challenge the notion in the school that dance was somehow feminine. In the extra-curricular dance club I ran throughout this research, the space was almost always filled primarily with girls, though there was the occasional exception.[17] In analyzing student and teacher interviews in relationship to bringing hip-hop dance into the space of the school, it appears that normative assumptions about the relationship between gender and dance as feminine prevail in student and teachers' understanding and rationalization of why girls might be more interested in dance than boys. This exemplifies some of the difficulties of importing street dance culture into the school system.

When reading the boys' interactions in a male dominated space with a female teacher and a female researcher, I found myself reflecting on how their interactions with Latifah were shaped by her gender, race, and also her connection to hip-hop culture through both her profession and style. When we began discussing her teaching of hip-hop theory in this class Latifah points out another key contrast between the girls and the boys; that of hip-hop knowledge and confidence. As we continued our conversation about gendered differences between the boys and girls in relation to theory, Latifah pointed out "the boys worked more in the theory because some of

[17] These exceptions were particularly common during the period that we had a b-boy as an artist-in-residence at the school who would teach breaking tricks and flips during lunch break. The varying degrees to which different dances under the street dance umbrella are seen as masculine or feminine are something I aim to explore further in future work on dance in education.

them didn't want to do the dance" and "most of them got the ten elements a lot faster, even though we didn't even do the dance with them, we did it sitting down, but we didn't focus on it like we did with the girls." Latifah went on to describe how this knowledge was undermined to a certain extent by their behaviours in the class. Here Latifah returned to the issue of racial stereotypes and the responsibility of the students to work against them. In our post-unit interview, when we turned to the issue of race, Latifah describes calling out the black boys in the class for upholding stereotypes of "ghetto".

> I told the black boys, when they would sit down in class…yo, you guys want people to say that like, you know you're being ghetto or like, you're not… Like you guys are the ones that are actually talented and you are choosing not to use your talent. That's the sad part, because, you can blame it on white people, or any, any races that you want. But if you're not doing your part, to play, show your end of the stick, then you're not really helping the situation. I said 'look at me, like, you think the teachers coming here don't look at me a certain way?' I'm the hip-hop teacher who wears the brightest clothes and I'm not academic. But at the end of the day, my work ethic and the way I show up, shows them something different.

Here, Latifah seems to lay most of the responsibility for challenging racial stereotypes on the black students she is talking to in this context. She goes on to conclude this anecdote by arguing that "you guys have to prove them that, otherwise your behaviour right now, they have a right to feel what they feel because you're just proving it to them." I wondered why Latifah might not use the behaviour as a means to interrogating why those stereotypes exist and how hip-hop can work as a challenge to it, and pressed her on whether interest in hip-hop can be used as a positive

motivation rather than as a way to resist stereotypes. In response, she describes how her frustration was furthered precisely because of this.

> You like music, you listen to music all the time. You like to dance, you like to watch music videos... and now you have it in your own schools….and you guys are taking it for granted. Yo, if you having bad marks or you feel like you can't spell or you can't do other things, but there's one thing you can do, why the one thing that you're good at you chose to be lazy at, like all the stuff your bad at? You should see a difference.

For Laifah the boys' resistance to dance, particularly in the case of Christopher who consistently sat down throughout the class, is a missed opportunity to showcase some of their talents.

I must be wary here to be clear that I am not suggesting that all of the black students in the class have an interest in hip-hop, nor that all of the white and Asian students lack interest. This danger was highlighted by an interview done with Alicia, a black grade nine student who described the problem of these assumptions, "sometimes like kids and stuff, not really adults, but kids they expect me to know stuff, like certain things, like cuz race and everything." She added that though she hadn't had any experiences of explicit racism from her fellow students, there were instances when talking about slang and hip-hop in which a fellow student said "well you should know, your Black, you should know all the cool words." As well, she shared that despite her efforts not to let this get to her, "it kinda like sets me back a little bit." As well, one of the white students in the grade 10 class, Luke, and the Asian-Canadian student, Arthur, displayed a great deal of interest and knowledge of hip-hop dance and culture throughout the class. The complexity of the relationship between hip-hop dance and race is something I will now explore more through an analysis of the final class of the grade eleven dance unit with a focus on the embodied learning of the ten elements of hip-hop.

I don't wanna sound racist

Doesn't matter what colour you are, doesn't matter what race
The Black kids just hang out with the Black kids
You're going to hang out with the people you want to hang out with
Saying 'she can't dance' because I'm white
People don't expect girls to be good dancers
Stuff that only guys can do
Some guys just don't care
Dancing is for girls or whatever
Because of my sex, gender?
Both gender and race
I just wanted to get away from the guys
You have to be like the other ones, the ones who know how to dance
Getting me to do those movements
Women empowerment? I don't know…

(Friedmann, found poetry, drawn from student interview quotes 2017)

Chapter 4: Embodied Hip-Hop

Evaluation Day

The final day of the Grade eleven dance unit is here. Latifah and I meet before class to print off the evaluation sheets and written exam[18] that she has prepared for the group. The bell catches us both off guard as I hand Latifah my keys for the dance room and head up to gather the girls one last time. Only four students of our original six have consistently attended the unit and are present for today's evaluation. They share their anxiety about evaluation with me as we descend to the basement. I assure them they will be fine, reminding them they've been working steadily towards this evaluation for six weeks now, and that they have all shown huge development as dancers. I, however, feel my own anxiety building. I am fully conscious of the fact that the success of this unit will have a large impact on the potential continuation of dance within the school context. My own goals and emotions blend with theirs in a way that has begun to feel all too familiar.

One we arrive at the dance room, Latifah catches all of us off guard when she announces the lesson plan for today, which is not a review session as I had imagined, or as the girls had expected. Instead Latifah simply puts on music and clearly lays out the rules: No mirrors, no help, for the girls are on their own for this final class. They have thirty minutes to review, thirty minutes for the written exam, then Mr. Matthews and Latifah will evaluate them during the first fifteen minutes of their art class after lunch. The girls all immediately voice complaints about this plan. Thrown off by the loss of the mirrors, the girls insist that if they weren't allowed to use the mirror for their evaluation they should have been practicing without it earlier on. They are also frustrated that Latifah refuses to review the dance with them. This decision reflects one of

[18] These are included in Appendix A? B? Sounds like you might have a few.

the many points of difference between myself and Latifah, given that I would have personally taken the final class as an opportunity to review the material slowly with teacher assistance, but I've come to view these differences as vital to the success of the project. Different teachers and different methods of working with the youth are vital to the success of the students. Today I share the student's frustrations, yet am impressed at the ways in which the four girls band together to review the choreography without her help. They know the dance more than they realize: their bodies know.

Built into the choreography is a review of the ten elements of hip-hop culture. The routine starts with a simple rock from side to side with the body as the students use their upper body to depict the elements of graffiti, DJ-ing, and MCing through arm movements that mimic spraying paint, spinning records, and speaking into a microphone. They then jump and cross one leg in front of the other, spin around and cross their arms into a b-girl stance with their arms crossed tightly over their chest to represent breaking. After breaking, they walk forward, pushing their hands forward in a way that reflects rappers in a music video.[19] After this they rock side to side, covering their mouths and shaking their heads, impersonating a beatboxer. Walking backwards, they brush off their shoulders or pull on the corners of their shirts as they move, referencing street fashion. They return to their starting position rocking away from their hands as they motion street slang like puppeteers with their hands. Finally, for street money they create an arch with their hands above their heads, tossing imaginary money in the air as they bounce gently from side to side.

Latifah pipes in as the students hit a point in the choreography, after the embodied ten elements of hip-hop culture. After meeting with Mr. Matthews a few weeks ago to discuss

[19] A strong example of this movement is Jay Z who does it almost constantly, eg. at 58 sec. and throughout "Otis" 2011 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BoEKWtgJQAU

evaluation strategies, Latifah incorporated the use of various directions and levels into the second half of the routine. The goal is for the students to meet the requirements of space and body use based on rubrics Mr. Matthews had shared with Latifah from online resources on dance in Physical Education classes. The choreography involves students moving forward, backwards, and sideways, kicking their legs and touching the ground as they move across the space. The students struggle with remembering which direction to go in first, especially having to face the back of the room with no mirror to guide them. Latifah moves in front of the girls to review this section with them, going over it twice slowly then leaving the girls to try it to tempo without following her. Sandra, who attended classes the most regularly throughout the session, is notably well-prepared. She, however, is the most vocal about her trepidations around the evaluation, voicing her anxiety about the evaluation even as she consistently executes the choreography the most precisely amongst the group. Maya, whom Latifah has identified as one of the strongest dancers in the group, seems overwhelmed at the loss of the mirror, often anticipating the beat and skipping over a particular section of the choreography. I step in to remind Maya about the section after the girls have practiced the routine in tempo after Latifah's short review, taking Latifah's intervention as an opportunity to help the students. They run the routine a final time on Latifah's count: "five, six, seven, eight." All four girls do fairly well, though I note that Cheryl is still struggling with a section we learnt while she had been absent and Christy still struggles to remember the directionality of the travelling section.

The girls beg for an opportunity to try it once more with the mirror before they do the written section. Latifah hesitantly concedes and counts them in again as they turn around to face themselves in the mirror. I note they are much stronger with the mirror as a tool, not that this comes as a surprise based on my own experiences in the dance world. All of them do the routine

almost flawlessly, though Maya continues to be a bit ahead of the music and Cheryl still struggles with remembering the steps. Latifah congratulates them for doing the dance well, but then voices her frustration that they cannot perform as well with the mirror as without, arguing that it is a lack of confidence because the girls' bodies know the dance. This triggers a reflection for me about what it means for the girls' bodies to know, and why that knowledge is aided by the mirror. In my personal experience the shock of losing a mirror in a rehearsal forces one to trust the body in a new way, lacking the visual stimuli. When turning away from the mirror you lose both the image of yourself doing the movements, but also the visual image of your peers affirming your movement with their own. You become increasingly aware of that which your body has memorized because you can only "feel" and not "see" yourself.

Latifah stops the dancing here, asking the students to find a space in the room separate from one another to write their exams. We hand out the tests,[20] which starts with asking students to list the ten elements of hip-hop culture as well as questions about hip-hop history. The girls sit in opposite corners of the room facing one another. They raise their hands sporadically, primarily asking questions about spelling, though also digging for hints. The only hint Latifah and I consistently give is to "think of the dance" in order to help fill in the ten blanks for the elements of the dance. The girls all fill in the ten blanks and fill out most of the history section of the exam before the bell rings. I remind Maya to stay behind; she will be evaluated separately from the other students by only Latifah. This has been decided and approved by administration, Mr. Matthews and Latifah in response to the student's concerns about dancing in front of a man, in this case Mr. Matthews. Once the other girls have cleared the space Latifah sets up a chair at the

[20] A copy of the test can be found in Appendix A

back of the room facing the mirror. I set myself on the floor beside the speaker ready to play the song when Maya is ready.

Maya faces us, shaking off her nerves with a literal shake of her arms and legs. I ask her if she is good to go; as she responds with a nod I play the music. Maya is notably ahead of the music almost from the top of the routine, rushing through and skipping one section. Realizing she missed the section she stops and asks to start again, which Latifah allows. The second round her timing improves, although her movements are small and constrained. She almost seems like she is marking[21] the routine rather than performing for an evaluation. After she has done the routine a second time, we let her head to class. Latifah shares her disappointment with me, frustrated at what she describes as a lack of effort by Maya in the evaluation. We fill the time between evaluations with an interview about the process as Latifah marks the girls' written exams. We celebrate their success; all of the students get the ten elements perfect and all score almost perfectly on the wider history question. Next period Mr. Matthews will come down to the dance room and we repeat the process with the rest of the girls to repeat the dance evaluation.

Break it Down: Making it Stick

In most classes I observed over the course of my research, graffiti artists, rappers and dancers almost always discuss the concept of hip-hop as culture. As mentioned in the first chapter, my relationship with this particular group of students was in fact largely shaped by an extended unit I researched in their English class earlier in the year. That unit focused on addressing themes such as racism, economic inequality, and drug use through beat-making, rap, and visual arts. The English class began with a presentation created and delivered by two

[21]Marking is a method of outlining choreography with the body without fully executing the athleticism of the movement. Dancers often use it in long rehearsals or in constrained spaces to help review choreography without tiring themselves out.

resident rap artists at the school on the history of hip-hop. The presentation included the elements of the culture, as well as important figures like Kool Herc and Afrika Bambaata, and the socio-cultural dynamics of the culture born out of the black and latino Bronx neighbourhood. Though there was an informal mini-quiz at the end of the presentation, and these elements and figures were referred to throughout the unit, many students failed to remember or engage with this history throughout the unit. [22]

What I am interested in drawing out from my observations over the course of Latifah's dance class is how the embodied element of dance can have a particular impact on student feelings of belonging with or connections to hip-hop as culture in an urban arts school. I unpack this by drawing out connections between embodied knowledge, performativity, and intersectionality in relationship to hip-hop dance. What I aim to explore in the analysis of the evaluation day is how does embodied knowledge in a hip-hop class create a space for embodied cultural knowledge. Through the lens of performativity and intersectionality, I examine how the body not only comes to know certain movements in choreography, but also comes to know elements of hip-hop culture and the relationship of one's own body to that culture.

I remember a conversation with Sandra early on in the English unit when we were analyzing a music video where she expressed her disinterest in learning about hip-hop culture. She points to how having done rap in the past, she didn't feel like the unit taught her anything new about hip-hop culture. Sandra was not the only student to express these kinds of views. Cheryl, when asked about the incorporation of hip-hop into the school before the dance unit,

[22] This conclusion was based on observations of student work as well as post-unit interviews with six different students involved in the class. It is not a simple fact; it is arguable that certain students did engage with hip-hop in their project. However, no explicit references to hip-hop as a culture was present in the student's work, and no student used dance or dance videos in creating their project.

commented: “its just like… It doesn’t really bother me; it doesn’t effect me.” At one point Sandra even pointed to her whiteness as a perceived gap between herself and hip-hop. When I pressed her about why she felt so bored learning hip-hop she looked up at me exasperated and whispered, “miss, I’m white, and like it’s not that white people don’t like hip-hop but I don’t.”

These statements underline a few fundamental issues in hip-hop based education I have outlined in my introduction. First, that we must be cautious not to compartmentalize issues of race to history, whilst at the same time finding ways to engage all students, and not make assumptions about interest in hip-hop culture based on race. The assumption that hip-hop due to its history in Black and Latino neighbourhoods is going to relate to all Black students is dangerous, as is the assumption that white students will not be interested in hip-hop. It is also true that not all young people, including students in an “urban” setting, will be interested in hip-hop (that said, the music teacher has found it is the one music genre that appeals to the greatest number of students.) Both of these are issues that have been raised by teachers and artists throughout the course of my research. Beyond that, the ways in which students discuss hip-hop as synonymous to rap music underlines the continued hierarchizing of rap as the primary form of hip-hop being utilized in hip-hop pedagogy. So what happens when a Black woman teaches hip-hop culture and history through dance instead?

Deeper understanding of the culture behind the dance was something all of the students identified in post-unit interviews as vital to their enjoyment of the unit. All students interviewed identified an increased understanding of hip-hop history and culture after the dance unit. Sandra describes a change in her attitude towards the dance as she learnt more about the birth of hip-hop alongside the movement:

S: “In the beginning I didn’t really enjoy it that much, but then when I found out what the story was I started enjoying it more.”

D: “And why do you think that was?”

S: “I feel like because I had a reason to do it, kinda like history”

Similarly, Christy discussed her changing feelings over the course of the unit, acknowledging that “I knew it was going to be hip-hop which wasn’t really my thing but whatever.” Not really interested in dance, she saw it mostly as an opportunity to “get out of gym,” a place she strongly dislikes. Though Christy admits that the class did not draw her into doing more dance, she recognizes that the “theory” side of class was “really interesting,” particularly in getting to learn more about hip-hop beyond rap music: “that I don’t mind, I don’t mind looking up the history of how hip-hop became, how rap became.” Christy saw the class as an expansion on what her understanding of hip-hop was, because “the only thing I know is rap music, because I’m in that world, I’m in that genre.” Christy here reflects Schloss’ (2004) definition of hip-hop as generation, where simply by being in a generation where hip-hop and its subsidiaries are the most common form of music, Christy becomes a part of the “hip-hop generation” regardless of her race, class or interest levels in the music.

Cheryl, the only black student in the class, explicitly discussed how Latifah’s race and gender impacted her enjoyment of the unit. When asked how she felt about having a black woman teaching in her gym class which is usually taught by a white man she described the experience as “heartwarming.” When pressed as to why it was so, Cheryl went on to say “with everything that is going on around the world…. particularly with African-American people, to see African-American people, to see another African-American teaching, it’s nice to see.” Here

Christy exemplifies how hip-hop culture and its connections to race politics continue to create potential for thinking about race in the current political climate.

This notion of "seeing" also applied to Cheryl's way of explaining why the choreographed embodiment of the ten elements was helpful for her to do well on the written exam and remember the elements. When asked about learning the elements through dance Cheryl reflected: "that was helpful, cuz to be honest I'm more of a visual learner." She also felt having the combination of dance and the written exam was useful for not only being able to do well in the class but also connect more with the material noting that "now I have a better understanding of the culture and the background and where it came from" and that the combination of dance and written evaluation "made it stick even more." Christy also pointed out the ways in which learning the ten elements through choreography was helpful for her for the written part of the evaluation. Even a few weeks after the unit in our post-unit interview Christy still marks through the movements as she recalls the way in which they helped her with the test: "I was lying on the ground doing the paper and it said like for the ten, what are the ten things I was like [here she dances the first three elements with her arms as she talks]. You saw me, I was doing that."

I relate this increased sense of "knowing" or understanding to research on embodied knowledge and education (Barbour 2011; Bresler 2004; Stinson 2016). Breseler's 2004 collection of work on embodied knowledge and education opens with a chapter by Michael Peters who contextualized embodied learning within the philosophy of Cartesian Dualism:

> Perhaps the most culturally embedded dualism with which educational theory and practice must come to terms with is the mind/body separation. This dualism historically has

> developed as an instrument of 'othering': of separating boys from girls, reason from emotion, minorities from the dominant culture and classes from each other (2004 p. 15)

This dualism between mind and body is one that is useful for understanding not only dance in education but also the deconstruction of categories such as gender and race. Viewing the mind/body dualism as "an instrument of 'othering,'" the question of learning through the body also becomes connected to the categorization of those bodies. What it means to learn the elements of hip-hop culture through one's body, and how that relates to Judith Butler's notion of performativity, is what I aim to explore here.

In *Undoing Gender,* Butler unpacked the relationship between discourse and the body in the process of performativity. She argued, "performativity is not just about speech acts. It is also about bodily acts. The relation between the two is complicated." (2004, p. 198). The relationship between the discourse and the body as a complex and at times overlapping relationship is particularly useful for analyzing dance as a form of bodily discourse or as a site of learning. Butler's concept of bodily significations that can "exceed the intentions of the subject" (2004, p. 199) can be related to the concept of embodied knowledge in dance. The relationship between speech acts and bodily acts is highlighted in Latifah's class where her description of movement is combined with the movement itself. Through depicting the relationship between bodily acts and speech acts in performativity as "complicated," I argue Butler's work also complicates the mind/body dualism; both through recognizing the body's vital role in speech, and through suggesting the body's capacity to signify things beyond the capacity or consciousness of verbal speech. All students interviewed expressed benefits to learning about hip-hop culture through embodied practice, and were able to express that knowledge in a traditional mode of evaluation through a written exam. I find that this underlines an interesting link between embodied

knowledge, performativity, and hip-hop dance. In breaking down the assumption that knowledge resides purely in the mind, the question then becomes how does bodily performance in a dance routine feed into the "knowledge of self" that Latifah consistently referred to throughout the class as an element of hip-hop culture.

Chapter two focused on examining whether learning to embody "no" through hip-hop dance enabled a new form of empowerment for the girls. The ability to dance "no" in contexts where the verbal act of saying "no" upholds the problem of "no means yes" restructures questions of gender relations and power dynamics on the dance floor. In deconstructing the mind/body divide, bodily practices become as vital to the performative process as verbal utterances. In this chapter I analyzed students' rehearsal and performance of the ten elements of hip-hop as a "reiterative and citational practice" (Butler, 2004, p. 3) that is citing not only normative discourses around sex, but also hip-hop culture and history. I pressed this concept further using the lens of embodied knowledge to argue that what is learned by students through dance has the potential to impact on student identity and inter-relations precisely because of Butler's argument that "the significations of the body exceed the intentions of the subject" (2004, p. 199). It is here that race comes to the fore in analyzing the potential of embodied learning. In her work on B-boying cyphers, Imani Kai Johnson dissected the breaking cypher using the physics' concept of dark matter as "a metaphor for the invisible force in cyphers that helps hold them together" (2009, p. 11). She expanded this to "consider the influence of the cypher's dark matter in holding together the larger social circle of global b-boying culture, of hip-hop, and of global connections in general" (Johnson, 2009, p. 12). It is when she delves into the racial dynamics of hip-hop's diasporic influence that I find a fascinating opportunity for connecting Butler's views on bodily signification and the role of race in hip-hop culture. Johnson pointed to

a racial binary that "pit[s] white against black in a gross social hierarchy where the latter is subordinate to the former" (2009, p.118). She went on to look at the ways in which through the promotion of universality and the hierarchizing of meritocracy, race is not erased but "absented as a critical dimension of cultural knowledge" (Johnson, 2009 p. 126). Johnson's description of race in b-boying shares parallels with Goldberg's discussion of "disappearing raciality" where race is erased in favour of post-racism views. Disappearing raciality was something I saw reflected in the views of white students and teachers in particular. In our post-unit interview Mr. Matthews reflected, "in terms of race, to me I've never really, in all my years here, looked at kids in terms of their race." While some students recognize race as effecting social interactions, most didn't actually attribute these differences to race itself, instead citing past schools, sense of humor or interests as the main cause for racialized divisions in the student population. As one student described it, "it just so happens that the black kids chill with the black kids and the white kids chill with the white kids." In relation to b-boying, what Kai Johnson described is not an erasure of race but "absenting," and she went on to depict how this "absenting race from the discourse of universality forces those unavoidable aspects of race to the fore in the form of an unmarked yet impactful presence, reminiscent of dark matter" (2009, p. 127).

Through the lens of embodied knowledge, I posit that student's exposure to Latifah, and a prolonged practice of dancing with her, like her, and to her music creates a space for that which Crenshaw argues is not present in much of the discourse around rap music. As Johnson pointed out, despite being absented in verbal discourse around street dance, race is always there and at times emerges to the forefront. Latifah's focus on teaching students the history of hip-hop culture, as well as sharing her current experiences in the community, highlights Johnson's notion of race as a "critical dimension of cultural knowledge" (2009, p. 126). The use of the body, and

presence of Latifah's body in the class then also influences how race is being discussed in the dance class. The physical role of the Black female body allows space for significations beyond language. Latifah's body is able to convey through danced discourse with the students the potential of new means of discussing issues of race and gender in hip-hop as culture. Drawing on Omi and Winants (1994), Johnson stated that "race is both a process of meaning-making and the inscription of that process onto actual bodies" (2009, p. 119). I argue that in the views of many white students and teachers at Simone Elliot, race is often relegated to the realm of Johnson's dark matter, an unseen force that drives divisions and separations amongst the school population –something that is excluded from discourse, or is relegated to history in the same way that often happens in work on hip-hop culture. Here I want to avoid essentialism that all white students and teachers don't see race as an issue at the school; many identified issues of colourism and "self-segregation" as a problem that needs to be addressed in some way by the school. Likewise, white students and teachers were not the only ones who did not "see" race; racialized staff and students also absented race from their understanding of the school dynamics. Latifah's class challenges the disappearance of race, both through her physical presence in the class as a Black teacher, and through the content of the class itself as focused on hip-hop culture.

I view the lived experience of hip-hop culture as an active resistance to racist structures of power by presenting a positive and complex picture of blackness (Dyson 2010; Hill Collins 2006; Ogbar 2007; Rose 2008). Latifah sums up this issue in our post-unit interview as we discuss the criticism of "ganster rap" as a misogynistic or violent art form:

> Because they flip it too you know, like if you have like Straight Out of Compton like like umm you know, Eazy-E and Ice Cube and all that, it's like.. they talk about F the police and ya, yes they were disrespecting women and calling them

> bitches and all that.. but when you really listen to their lyrics they're talking about their life. Like how can you get mad about how they live? And they're living the way they live because of our history, but then they don't, no one wants to take account for the history and the bad that was brought on to black people….but in the music like it's like they're rapping what they know…that's their therapy, and that's why hip-hop became… hip-hop.

Latifah's comments here on the misogyny and the embedded race issues in current debates about hip-hop connect to Crenshaw's work. In her seminal work on intersectionality, *Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics and Violence Against Women of Color,* Crenshaw drew on the example of the prosecution of 2 Live Crew for obscenity in 1990. The lyrics of the rap group's song titled *As Nasty As They Wanna Be* had been ruled obscene in a Federal court and the group was arrested in Florida for performing the song. Though the members were eventually acquitted, the ruling of the lyrics as obscene remained. In this article and in later work (1997), Crenshaw described the public debate about the ruling and reflects on her own position as a black feminist scholar in relationship to the debate around rap music's content. She noted that this trial brought to the fore "the question of how to construct a black feminist approach to the virulent misogyny in some rap music" (1997, p. 253). Crenshaw argued that the case ultimately exemplifies racist selectivity. She argued that the prosecution of rap artists for sexualized lyrics that engage in similar acts and themes as white pop artists (she gives Madonna as an example), becomes a continuation of a "history of social repression of Black male sexuality" (1991, p. 1287). She concluded that in the case of 2 Live Crew "the appeal to community standards does not undercut a concern about racism; rather, it underscores that concern"

(Crenshaw 1991, p. 1288). Despite her acknowledgement that the obscenity charges are more based in racist structures of power than in the technicalities of the laws on obscenity, she is careful not to go as far as some of the legal scholars' she cites in defending the misogyny of the song. She concluded her 1997 chapter on the controversy by acknowledging that her work—though ultimately critiquing the court's ruling—does not aim to suggest "that Black feminists should stand in solidarity with the supporters of 2 Live Crew" (Crenshaw, 1997, p. 262). What is interesting in relationship to Latifah's own efforts to broaden student understanding of hip-hop in her class is Crenshaw's argument that ultimately "obscenity prosecutions of rap artists do nothing to protect the interests of those most directly implicated in rap—Black women" (199, p. 1290). I draw on this work as concerns about rap's obscenity are often a factor in teacher resistance to incorporating hip-hop in their teaching. This ties back to the initial problem outlined in my introduction around definitions of hip-hop and a conflation of hip-hop culture with rap music. Though I do not focus on rap and debates about obscenity within this thesis, these debates tie into my work as it shapes my interlocutors understanding of hip-hop as a whole.

In learning hip-hop dance, students reach a new level of understanding and "belonging" to hip-hop culture, precisely because of Butler's argument that the body conveys meaning beyond what we are able to consciously convey with speech. I also argue that through the consistent and repetitive practice of hip-hop dance, students' own identities can perhaps be shifted. For instance, though Sandra and Christy had both expressed a disinterest in rap music, and an association of that music as central to what hip-hop is. In our pre-unit interview Christy described her attitude towards hip-hop: "the whole hip hop thing….it's not my thing, it's not my style. It's interesting to learn about but it's not my typical taste in music." Though in our post-unit

interview Christy did not express and interest in continuing dance, unless as a means to get out of gym again, she recognized the way in which her understanding of hip-hop had shifted. This is clear in her depiction of working with Latifah as a teacher in contrast to Mr. Matthews:

> the style that she comes in with, you see the culture, you see from the old then from the new that she comes in with, that I found cool. And then how she dances and everything, and how she got us to like… made us more comfortable, I was starting to feel more comfortable with myself.

Here Christy demonstrates her increased perception that hip-hop includes dance and fashion as vital elements of the culture, reflecting Latifah's ten element definition. Christy's description of Latifah as representative of hip-hop culture is important again in considering racialized discourses that bodies are able to have that at times exist outside of verbal discourses. As I have shown through interview excerpts, race is often left out of verbal discourse similar to the issue of "dark matter" in Johnson (2009) and disappearing raciality in Goldberg (2013). I argue that through the relationship between dance and race in hip-hop culture, which is explicitly covered in Latifah's classes, race is brought into discourse through bodily practice of dance.

I do not mean that by practicing dance and seeing that dance as related to the process of performativity that the students are performing Blackness. There is an important distinction that must be made between performing hip-hop and performing blackness. However, performing hip-hop, as Johnson describes, carries with it a requirement of also not just learning the history of hip-hop, but bringing that history into the lived experience of bodily actions. Student positive responses to the learning of ten elements of hip-hop through embodied practice is something I believe exemplifies why dance is such a crucial element in hip-hop based education. If we view the body not only as a "repository of

knowledge" (Stinson 2016) but also fundamental in the process of performativity, hip-hop dance practice becomes a space in which discourse around race and gender can be produced in new ways. Based on my participation in the unit and interviews with students before and after, I posit that dance not only grants students an increased sense of self-confidence in their bodily ability to learn, but also an increased sense of belonging and desire to learn about hip-hop culture.

We're not like other high schools

I hate the school, the one thing I like about it is the arts here
I just don't like when people judge me, it hurts
It's just the way they look when they've read over my work
I stress myself out so badly that I don't want to eat at all
I would put my heart and time and work in it
Doing dance is something different
It's not my thing, but it was something to learn
When I'm sad, or not feeling myself, or I'm just not there, I usually dance and it helps
Make it as best I can
What I do like is everyone is trying
It means you get to know people
Now I have a better understanding of the culture
I'm becoming more outgoing, I have less of a low self-esteem
Dance brings us together in everything that we do
Teaching us the fun way basically
I still remember it mostly
I guess we all started connecting at the end
We're not like other high schools
Yeah I'd want to do it again

(Friedmann, found poetry, drawn from student interview quotes 2017)

Chapter Four: What Did Bodies Learn

Findings:

So how does the incorporation of street dance and hip-hop culture into a high-school curriculum affect the intersecting gendered and racialized elements of the school culture? Throughout this work I have drawn examples of the ways in which Latifah's classes have reproduced as well as shifted student discourses around gender and gender relations through embodied practice. Specifically, I have looked at heteronormative discourses and the iteration of "no." I explored how dancing "no" and saying "no" in an all-girls dance class could be a point of analysis for differentiating and exploring relationships between embodied practice and verbal discourses in challenging norms of gender relations. I also examined how the absence of "no" in a class of boys upholds norms wherein boys are taught to never say no to women's advances, but instead compete with one another for that attention.

I also discussed some ways in which hip-hop culture as taught through dance might have challenged racialized discourses and structures at the school by bringing aspects of the racialized history of hip-hop culture into current pedagogical practices. I argued that learning hip-hop history and culture through embodied practice opens up new opportunities for discourse around race that have been absented from verbal discourse, often abstracted to a historical dimension in much the same way that race is discussed in academic work on hip-hop culture. I also examined how race has often been marginalized in school discourses. Building connections between the work of Johnson (2009), Crenshaw (1995, 1997) and Goldberg (2013). I then looked at how this marginalization was both upheld and challenged within conversations with students and teachers at Elliot Simone. I see this work most importantly as a launching point for further exploration of

the nature of embodied knowledge through street dance and how it might shape student learning and engagement around intersectionality, identity and belonging.

Gender performativity (Butler 1990) was a central theoretical framework of this work as I aimed to further explicate the connections between the body and performativity. I describe the ways in which heteronormative views on gender were upheld, challenged, or both in Latifah's classes. Like Butler I am interested in examining both how norms and resistance to those norms co-exist and build upon one another. What I examined in Latifah's class was not always clear examples of resistance to gendered and racialized stereotypes. Yet even when those norms were upheld such as girls having to say "no" and boys never saying "no," the norms seemed to be reformulated through the process of embodied learning. I argue that saying "no" and dancing "no" are fundamentally different processes.

Ultimately, in addressing the question of how dance might affect student perception of gender and gender relations and respond to racialized discourses and structures, I did not discover a clear-cut discourse of resistance to nor of maintenance of these discourses and structures in student responses to Latifah's class – both seemed to be at work at different points. What I discovered was that embodied practices can enable new forms of discourse that can be read both as upholding norms and questioning them.

This new form of embodied discourse draws race and gender out of the shadows of "dark matter" yet does not necessarily resist normative discourses and racist or sexist structures of power through that process. Instead, by transforming bodily acts that exist within the day-to day processes of performativity into conscious dance performance, the embodied practice of hip-hop dance enables an increased awareness of those structures in relation to the body. I note that it is important to maintain a distinction between dance performance and performativity, recognizing

that dance practices may not map directly onto a process of performativity. Latifah's calling on "everyday" practices within the dance class does, however, draw attention to how performativity functions through highlighting gendered behaviours through dance. It is ultimately the intersections between embodiment, race, gender, and hip-hop culture that I am interested in. That said, much work remains to be done in further exploring how these dimensions of student identity are shaped through dance. I offer this work not as a definitive example of how hip-hop dance must be incorporated into hip-hop based education, but instead as a starting point for future work and for discourse (whether that discourse be through writing or dance.)

Finally, in addressing the effect of students' sense of belonging within hip-hop culture through dance practice I have discovered that the relationship between dance practice and hip-hop culture is an area that warrants further research. I consider this work a contribution to efforts to expand definitions of hip-hop beyond the four element (graffiti, breaking, MC-ing, and DJ-ing) definition often referenced in hip-hop based education (Lamont-Hill 2009; Petchauer 2009; Emdin 2010; Low 2011). I hope that this work will inspire additional work on hip-hop dance in education as well as on connections between hip-hop culture and dance forms outside of breaking. As a starting point for future work I hope to explore the concept of a "street dance community" within Canada. This community is composed of various smaller sub-communities that exist separately and yet interact in meaningful ways. I understand these various styles' overlap and exchange through the sharing of spaces and sense of belonging of its members to a wider community. This thesis provides an opening for conversations around defining or challenging the concept of a "street dance" community and its relationship to hip-hop, specifically hip-hop based education. An expansion of the definition of hip-hop culture also

relates to an expansion of who can experience a sense of belonging to this culture, in this case, youth who experience and build connections through movement.

What I Missed: Limitations:

Though this thesis provides a meaningful start to the much wider conversations I have outlined, I acknowledge several limitations in my research. First, the sample size discussed in these pages was very small. With under a hundred a fifty students in total attending Elliot Simone and only self-selected students from two classes involved in the majority of this analysis, I cannot claim that the findings presented here will be similar in other schools, or even within other classes at Elliot Simone. However, this was never the intention of my work as one founded in feminist anthropological methodology. Anthropology is less interested in quantitative data and definitive claims, and more on exploration of human behaviours in specific contexts. This work is not designed with the intention of creating a structure to be reproduced in other contexts, but instead as an analysis of a particular case.

I also recognize my position as an outsider of the St. Henri community as a limitation of my work. Despite two years of data collection and deep involvement at the school, I am unable to speak more to the effects of this work on student identity outside of the school. In a similar vein, I recognize that the lack of interviews with parents or guardians of the students causes a gap in my perspective on how the units impacted the students beyond the walls of Elliot Simone. Furthermore, my position as a research assistant for the wider Urban Arts Partnership shaped my work significantly, as certain goals were pre-determined and influenced by the wider project. Though this did influence my work and create certain limitations, it also expanded my role at the school and further enabled me to observe students, teachers and artists in various different spaces within the school, which had positive impacts on my data.

Though my wider experiences as a research assistant at Elliot Simone played a vital role in shaping my analysis of dance at the school, and the methods I chose to write about it, the need to focus more narrowly for a Master-level thesis caused me to leave out over twenty interviews conducted with teachers, students and artists over the course of my research. In particular, I recognize the lack of representation of male student and artist voices in this work. Due to the narrow focus of this work and my desire to draw primarily from interview and ethnographic data I also was unable to include more exhaustive analysis of how my findings relate to theoretical writing. I am particularly regretful of my inability to expand more on how this work can relate to feminist and educational anthropological work. As I discussed in my introduction, a final limitation of this work was my decision to look primarily at intersections of race and gender within my data. Class, sexuality, and linguistic identity were also vital elements of student identity politics at Elliot Simone but the scope of this thesis did not allow for deep analysis of how these dimensions impacted the incorporation of street dance into the school.

What's Next: Direction for Future Studies:

Having outlined some of the limitations of this thesis, as well as some of the ways in which I have attempted to open-up wider dialogue on hip-hop, I close with a few goals for future work with the data collected over my ethnographic research. I would first like to expand on my consideration of identity politics at the school, in particular intersections between class, race and linguistic identity through an analysis of units conducted in French classes at Elliot Simone throughout the course of the study. I would also like to further examine how embodied knowledge can be useful in learning subjects such as French and mathematics, which do not map as neatly on to the use of the body as an "instrument of knowing" as physical education (Stinson 2009). Further analysis of the politics of a partnership between university, high school and

community is also something I will be exploring further in future work as this presented a series of challenges and highlighted issues of identity politics and researcher positionality that I was unable to explore in this work. In particular, the value of artist-teacher partnerships is a reoccurring theme throughout my data that I was unable to fully explicate here, but hope to do in the future.

I have already began looking at other potential directions for this work through presentations and classwork throughout my masters. A fellow researcher and I have presented on the hierarchization of rap in hip-hop based education, examining how rap is prioritized over the other elements in hip-hop based education. We have already begun work on challenging the definitions of hip-hop in work on hip-hop based education and hope to continue doing so as a team. I hope to expand into considering potential overlaps between visual arts and dance through analysis of data collected during a visual arts unit facilitated in part by a b-boy. Likewise, connections between my work and the anthropological cannon was the focus of a presentation I did at the American Anthropological Association annual meeting in 2016. I considered how shifts in my positionality at the school throughout my work connects to shifts in educational anthropology towards a more activist approach to research and hope to continue working on the subject.

Throughout this thesis I have argued for the importance of the inclusion of street dance in hip-hop based education. I hope to continue expanding my work in this area, particularly through examining how different forms of street dance are incorporated into schools. The use of dance in pedagogical practice creates an opportunity for exploring the element of embodiment in educational institutions. This element of embodiment allows for a destabilization of the mind/body dualism, and, through this destabilization, creates unique opportunities for

discussions around the processes of teaching and learning about hip-hop as culture. I have argued that this use of the body creates unique means for students to have bodily discourses about race and gender in ways that are often challenging in verbal discourses.

Final Reflections: What Did My Body Learn

In our post-unit interview, Sandra (one of the students from the grade eleven dance class) described the importance of consistency in gaining respect at Elliot Simone: "you have to come often, and you have to talk to us and care about what's happening…it doesn't happen overnight." I feel that this is also true of creating honest qualitative research. It is not solely about the amount of time spent in the field, but the quality of that time. In my second year at the school—as I began working on writing my thesis—I was faced with the weight of immense caring for the school. The intense degree to which I became attached to students and teachers in my field site was both an unexpected and influential piece of my thesis writing process. At times this care was helpful, such as enabling the creation of genuine and deep bonds with interlocutors. Students trusted in me due to my extended and intense involvement in their lives. Other times, however, the care I developed for my interlocutors made my job as a researcher trying and overwhelming. The more I grew to care about my field site, the more difficult the process of writing became. I became wrapped up in the difficult task of managing various pieces of the project, as well as my involvement in the school and community beyond the realm of my research focus. Balancing ethnographic research, a master student's course load, committee meetings, running dance club, volunteering with our partner YMCA as a dance facilitator, applying for grants and continuing to train myself as a dancer was at times dizzying.

This process has also forced me to reflect on my own positionality and goals, and question how to better connect those goals with the interests and opinions of my interlocutors. In

an interview conducted after the b-boy artist in residence worked with her grade eight visual arts class, I asked Brandy, one of the most outspoken students, about gender, explaining it as one of the main focuses of my work. She voiced a critique of feminism stating that "feminism really only benefits white women." She described the problems of this feminism in relationship to her experience as a black woman: "When you're a Black female, people forget that you're female. The first thing they see on you is Black." During one of her visual arts classes I observed her and another student fighting in the bathroom about an issue with administration. Brandy lamented to me that being both Black and, "on top of that woman," she could not afford to get in trouble with the administration the same way her white female friend could.

Brandy's comments on feminism reflect Crenshaw (1995) and other Black feminist (Collins 2006; Hooks 1981; Lorde 2003; Rose 1994) critiques of feminism. Her comments in relation to her friend in particular also had a striking effect on my view of my positionality at the school, as someone with privilege on various levels, including race. I recognized the difficulty of grappling with the problems of "white feminism" as a white woman writing about feminism. I recognize that including the voices of women of colour, both in the interview data I chose to focus on, and academic work I draw from starts to create space for the inclusion of different voices and perspectives. I also acknowledge that ultimately much of the literature I draw from, particularly Butler whom lays the foundation for this work, is drawn from the cannon of white feminist theory. Also even when I draw from Black authors or from interviews with Black students I am ultimately frame the arguments based on my own experiences and findings which are influenced by my privilege.

I continue to struggle with negotiating my position as a white feminist working with Black feminist theory, acknowledging that I discuss race and gender from the perspective of

white privilege. I posit that despite this, it would be more flawed to embrace post-racialized discourse or simply state that due to my position I am unable to contribute in any way to discourse on race in hip-hop based education. Instead, I have made a consistent effort to forefront the voices of my interlocutors and Black feminist theorists in my work. I embraced the discomfort so vital to learning, engaging in discussions around race with Black students such as Brandy, but also pressing on students who evade the subject in interviews. This was something that took me almost two years to find ways of doing as a white woman myself. The poem that concludes chapter three, "I don't wanna sound racist" draws on student voices to draw a snapshot of how discourses around race are often shaped by a fear that any discussion around race is immediately racist. While I had to learn correct language and methods for discussing race, particularly with those who insisted on avoidance of the topic, by the end of my work I had learned how conversations around topics such as hair, neighbourhoods, and food could work as segues into deeper conversations about race and identity politics at the school. I argue that dialogue and challenging oneself to work in areas of uncertainty is vital to changing both how feminism functions, and how it is read by youth such as Brandy. I responded to Brandy's critique by acknowledging the flaws of feminism and opening a dialogue with her about intersectionality, asking her if she had ever heard the term and explaining it briefly.

The interview turned into more of a knowledge exchange in which Brandy taught me about her experiences as a Black woman in Elliot Simone, and I worked with Brandy to consider how her experiences could have some connection with certain branches of feminist theory. I shared some of the goals of my work to disrupt understandings of feminism as focused on only white women's liberation and asked Brandy for her views. This conversation strongly influenced the ways in which this thesis was structured. The decision to involve race as a major factor in all

three chapters of this work was not part of my initial planning. Though race was always going to be a vital factor of this work, it was not until I more thoroughly engaged with Crenshaw, and reflected on this interview through transcription that I realized race could not be relegated to a single chapter that focused purely on the racial dynamics of hip-hop as lived culture through dance. Instead, I have attempted in this work to apply the concept of intersectionality to my analysis, though I acknowledge again that my work on the subject comes from a position of white privilege. I turn to a final reflection about the impact of this work on myself as a researcher through a quote from the artist I worked the most with over the course of this research, Latifah.

In one of my interviews with Latifah, I asked her about what she had learned from extended unit with the grade eleven girls. One of the main takeaways she describes was an inspiration to push the theoretical side of her class further. "It's inspiring me to kinda like take it to the next step, like if they do surpass this…. the kind of material I can write. You know researching more about Mercedes Ladies and female artists." She went on to describe how she hoped that this expansion of the theoretical side of her teaching practices could function to help students realize that "knowledge is good…It's actually good to know, especially about hip-hop." When I asked her what form that expansion would take—whether it would be more chalkboard-based lessons or more choreographed means of learning about the wider culture of hip-hop—Latifah described a desire to continue developing lessons that use both the bodily practice of dance and a theoretical component of discussion and written assignments. Latifah's goal to build a more positive ethos around knowledge through a combination of embodied hip-hop practice and traditional methods of teaching exemplifies how the element of dance creates a new space for the teaching and learning of hip-hop. Her goal to expand more into female representation in

hip-hop music and history underlines the importance of including women, particularly women of colour, in initiatives such as the Urban Arts Partnership.

The issue of female representation in hip-hop culture is not one that can be easily solved through the incorporation of more women-centered and women-led pedagogies. However, the danger of academic work that focuses solely on the misogyny within hip-hop culture is that it overshadows the powerful role of women in the culture who have played vital roles throughout the history of hip-hop. Furthermore, as Crenshaw (1997) argued, these critiques against rap music are often shaped by systemic racism that targets rap as the symbol of misogyny whilst overlooking the interests of the Black women. I do not posit that bringing women into the school completely undoes the structures that marginalize women within hip-hop, but it might be a good starting point from which to do so. Furthermore, I think that bringing dance and other elements of hip-hop culture beyond rap music into hip-hop based education offers important opportunities to challenge assumptions of rap as the entirety of hip-hop. Through this challenging of popular understandings of hip-hop, I hope that dance can offer a new way of having meaningful discourses on race and hip-hop culture. In the future, I hope to continue building on the literature and the practices of street dance within educational settings, drawing on the knowledge of the many voices and perspectives within the street dance community and within the realm of education.

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Appendix A:

JAMES LYNG GYM/ DANCE EVALUATION

Name:_____ Date:_____ Secondary level:_____-

_____

GYM/ DANCE EVALUATION

CATEGORIES	DESCRIPTION	MARK /10	COMMENTS
BODY	-Usage of bosy part ***(arms, legs, head)*** -Extension of moves		
ACTION	-Hip Hop Technique ***(bounce, rock, groove)*** Spins -Floor /Footwork		
SPACE	-Traveling the room -taking space (***up, down, side to side)***		
TIME	-Tempo -dancing on beat Coordination		
ENERGY	-Enthusiasm -Attitude - Performance _Confidence		

OVERALL PERFORMANCE

TEAM WORK	/5	COMMENTS
PARTICIPATION	/5	
COMPREHESION (THEORY)	/5	

JAMES LYNG HIP HOP THEORY QUIZ

Name:_____ Date:_____

1. Please list the 5 Element of Hip Hop Culture. /10

1._____ 2._____
3._____ 4._____
5._____ 6._____
7._____ 8._____
9._____ 10._____

2. What's the name of the Founding Father of Hip Hop?

3.Where was he born?_____

3. Where was hip hop born?_____

4. What's the name of the pioneer of
Hip Hop?_____

5. What do you call the action when you gather around in a circle?

_____

6. What's the name of the Founding Father's sister's name?

_____

7. Please describe what she did to develop the roots of hip hop being born describing; what, where, how and the reason.

_____

/10

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