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Chapter 0

Introduction & Acknowledgements

This thesis is the intersectional product not only of the past years of my studies in these respective disciplines, but also of the culmination of a lifetime's worth of more often than not very unacademic experiences and knowledge. As such, as I have previously suggested to my teachers and professors -not as an apology but rather as a reminder of sorts- I am not a scholar in the traditional sense intended, nor am I truly an intellectual. This is also not really a translation studies thesis or major properly speaking as I, like many or perhaps even most students in general shy to talk of, have little to no conscious recollection of the innumerable theories, articles and scholars my professors made me cram for throughout countless semesters since my undergraduate years.

Indeed, it seems to me the entire academic system is structured upon this well-hidden yet tacitly acknowledged premise that none of us have 10 to 100 000 pages of seemingly highly facetious, excessively complex deductions and theories from erudite people that each doctoral bibliography represents, not to mention this is technically barely even the tip so to speak of the academic iceberg we are meant to either masterfully avoid as navigators and tricksters or haphazardly crash into in the maddening hopes that we may perhaps survive or even continue after upon this perilous venture.

And so, as Dean McCormack has suggested to me before at an impromptu meeting in the midst of a poetry gathering I was speaking at, and as my supervisors Dr. Anne Malena, Dr. Sourayan Mookerjea & Dr. Michael Frishkopf as well as my dear friend & committee member Dr. Elena Siemens -to whom I am deeply indebted- have also agreed upon eventually after discussing the concept of poetic license and my exceptional status as both a decolonial activist and scholar studying much of my own letterings, my emphasis in this thesis is primarily and even almost solely intersectional and interdisciplinary, with a focus on decolonial sociology, Indigenous oralitures and literatures (as opposed to say, settler litter), diasporic ethnomusicology and activist translation, all of the previous also being from a queer perspective, quite literally. This is not to say that reading this won't also make it seem as though I am indeed a scholar of sorts (maybe even a decent one at that), but I am first and foremost an artist, an activist, a poet and a trickster, so don't let those big words fool you too quickly. I promise I'm not nearly as linguistically gifted and academically proficient as I make it seem in this.

Of course, in the context of this global revolution and mass extinction event which has likely changed the face of this society we live in forever, considering all we now have to put back into perspective and question as earthlings in the midst of the greatest mass extinction in 65 million years of planetary history (which we managed to actually trigger in approximately less than a century), I do believe this thesis will stand the test of time and possibly be of lucidly insightful benefit to many who may happen to read it or even merely dabble in its gleanings.

It has not been easy for me to finish this, let alone do anything at all other than eat, sleep very little, frantically sword train, shadow box, work out and talk to friends in a highly paranoid state about a dystopian near future society in a post-apocalyptic setting considering I have had to simultaneously battle against these same referenced neocolonial systemic forces described and somewhat joked about in this, as throughout the course of this pandemic I was hospitalized and forced on various meds against my will twice already and they've essentially attempted to bully me into submission to their manipulative pharmaceutical industry more times than I care to think of to 'slow down' my thinking and productivity; but I think I've described this enough as well in my poetry and I know to those foolish and abusive men with dubious credentials and tutors this to them was nothing personal really, just business as usual strictly. And yet here I am still when the original psychiatrists who told my family and mother to give up on me because I could never be anything else than a mentally disabled and sedated, zombified citizen with no other option than psychiatric meds and long-term asylums are likely almost dead by now, or also probably infected zombies by their own medical definitions and concepts.

Paradoxically, in this age of global pandemics we are currently living (from COVID to AIDS, cancer, degenerative diseases and hard drugs/pharmas to beyond) it seems as though writing a thesis generally speaking has little importance truly, especially considering that academic institutions worldwide are mostly shut down and operating solely online and at half capacity or less if that, and indeed survival and the human species' evolution seems like it is

much more of a concern in the present than academic and intellectual ventures. Yet I do still believe that in many cases this decolonially artistic and intersectional project is far from a waste of time, as we do need many new modes of thinking and forms of hitherto unheard information and analyses in order to more effectively make it past these perilous times. And so, at the risk of sounding somewhat dire and sombre, and considering the fact that my mother herself -who inspired me more than anyone to write this thesis on futurist spoken word poetry- is herself a dystopian feminist cli-fi scholar and professor who teaches her students daily about the mass extinction currently unfolding and the beauty of speculative fictional futures to solve and reconstruct this, as opposed to say, neocolonially binary and heteropatriarchal religious stories poorly plagiarized and inverted from previously existing Afro-Indigenous, Asiatic, Diasporic & Middle/Near-Eastern cultures, I do believe that the apple in my case has not fallen far from the proverbial tree.

Perhaps this will be read by naught more, as Margaret Atwood suggested it in her introduction to *the Testaments*, than a handful of worried yet also hopeful scholars, students and citizens wondering what the next chapter of this saga and global transition unfolding will be, or perhaps rather years later when this great shift has completed itself and Canada has become the actual world leader in alternative energies, environmentalism, sustainability and intersectionality it has always purported itself to be, this thesis will serve as some form of reminder of the power of imagination, myth, anticolonialism and art in deconstructing systemic inequities to dream up a better world through the Gnostic concept of *ennoia*, which is to say,

physical manifestation of matter through purely imaginative, psychic and spiritual creativity. Or perhaps it may simply be nothing more than a somewhat sarcastic form of humorous dismissal of the ivory tower hierarchy of self-professed 'higher' educational institutions in general, its pomposity and pretenses (yes, I can clearly see the irony in this statement myself considering my own oracular and intellectual pretensions proffered therein), and the exorbitant amounts of money, time, energy and stress which all of us seem to have mostly wasted in the process of playing this game of who can get the most academic credentials and authority.

Nonetheless, as I write this in a state of mental Hell whose precariousness has been punctuating my often sleepless and sweat ridden nights pondering my own fate and that of humanity and Nature's denizens, with knots in my stomach and constant headaches from this technologically disruptive form of education and communication which seems to be a requisite for any kind of success or functionality in this New World Order society, I still feel some sort of solace and a lot of hope for better tomorrows writing these sentences, because I somehow still believe that all of us hold the key in our minds and spirits to self-manifestation and the prophecy, or maybe rather the profession, of creatively diasporic quantum futures beyond this veil of illusion and lies we've been living in for far too long.

There have been countless scholars in the past who have professed to change the world or revolutionize academia with their syncretic and 'groundbreaking' theories and postulates, or new systems of analyses and methodologies in their respective disciplines. I certainly cannot

count myself among them, especially in light of the fact that I am not even worthy of the proper title of scholar myself. I am merely a trickster of sorts who has managed to weave my way in and out of this systemic labyrinth of precisely delineated and structured uni-versal knowledge at times with much seeming ease, and others in ways perhaps much more frustratingly and bafflingly reminiscent of Kafka's character K in *The Castle*. I do aspire to become much more of a multiversal polymath than I currently am to some, but this is of course as speculative as the fictions and odes of the diasporic futurist movements described and analyzed in this thesis.

Now this is the part of the introduction where I would usually neatly wrap up and summarize each chapter of the thesis in a tantalizing way so as to better entice you to somehow read on further, and perhaps even trick you into thinking this is worth your precious time and effort, not to mention the corneal and macular degeneration ocularly speaking which inevitably comes from spending time in front of a computer screen in this age (if you've printed this out congratulations on saving your eyesight and maybe also avoiding a brain tumour at the expense of chopped down and pillaged forests compressed into bleached, chemically processed sheets of paper with toxic ink upon them, although ironically I still do think it a better option).

Or rather, this should be the part where I do that, but I choose instead not to in the hopes that this will somehow oppositely trigger some sort of curiosity as to how such a dishevelled and haphazardous introduction would evolve into an interesting thesis, particularly if the state of the planet was such that reading this manuscript was perhaps one of the last freedoms allowed to whomsoever came across it in these days and times.

Chapter 1

(Prologue)

Neocolonialism & Neoresidential Miseducation:

An autobiographical survivor's account

originally a conference

at AAMIAQ Indigenous Masculinities Symposium, December 2015

Like many queer and feminist scholars and poet(esse)s have previously suggested, I find it impossible to ponder the topic of Indigenous Masculinities without also pondering Indigenous Femininity and all of the LGBTQIA2S spectrum as well, from alternate genders to genderlessness. However I do not wish to extensively address a topic which has already been so comprehensively detailed as I am no expert in this field, and so I will focus rather on neocolonial depictions of Indigeneity in present-day society with a brief poetic introduction, leading to the central issue of what I have coined as “neoresidential miseducation”:

Society is Lies

By kikwaakew, from the “L.I.F.E.” album

(Living Inner Freedom Eternally)

*Heteropatriarchy is ever the stated doctrine awkwardly indoctrined
by morbid corporate minions & politicians, lost scholars & artists
in a society with no regards for karmic biases authored in the process,
yet we are not forever fated for this oddity, we are slated for change
and there are ways we can face this strangeness and replace it
with matriarchally supportive constructs, the Creator is not simply God the Father,
it is not simply a masculine concept, there is a Creatrix, this is the Goddess,
let us acknowledge it & be freed from misogynistic dogma like Crees & Mohawks,
the goal is not to show force it is to grow taller but also softly
like the breeze wafting in trees we've often forgotten to speak to or believe in,
the Goddess is breathing in them, She is Gaia,
She is Nature & animism, but She is also the Cosmos,
who do you think birthed the Father the Caucasian Occident worships?
Have we forgotten that a Goddess birthed us all
like the Earth & the farthest stars in the perfect skies?
We search in lies & we're herded like the herds of the sky's offspring violently slaughtered
so far from the silent offerings we wrought for the sons & daughters
of those we carved in totems as all of our closest watchers,
why is there little to no regards for this anymore?
yet plenty of lore to describe it... & why am I stating this?
Because any kind of oppression stems from heteropatriarchy systemic
Whether women or sentient kindred we're made as godly creations
so equality should not just be acknowledged and stated
it should be solace engraved in all that we gave to make it progress & fated doctrine
we were all made to be Cosmic*

Before I properly begin, I would like to clarify the term “neoresidential” so that no misunderstanding arises from it: the horrors of residential schooling for First Peoples the world over is clearly one of the worst atrocities perpetrated against them by settler states and their religious and socio-political administrations, and far be it from me the intention to ever diminish in any sense the physically, linguistically, culturally and spiritually genocidal implications of this aberration which has finally begun to be acknowledged and minimally addressed with the *Truth & Reconciliation Commission*. My intention in coining this word is rather opposite to this, the intent being to recognize that the educational experience of Indigenous/Métis/Inuit children and high school students, as well as many other ethnic minorities we are kin to in more than one sense, both in Canada and in the US, as well as Oceania and beyond, although it is occasionally recognized as having unintentional neocolonial aspects, is widely perceived by the general public as being on the road to betterment and having shed most of the miseducational horrors of our colonial past, particularly in Canada as we have often prided ourselves into the delusion that we are one of the most open-minded, progressive and multicultural countries on Earth, which in comparison to other horrid atrocities such as is the case with our Southern neighbours and other dictatorships and false democracies across the planet, is not as far from truthful as we could imagine it in this present context.

Using my own elementary and high school education as a concrete example of what I am speaking of, I intend to argue that neoresidential miseducational aspects -at an elementary and high school level for First Peoples and multiethnic/diasporic children in most educational

institutions- are a very tangible reality across this continent and beyond it to an extent that would never be tolerated at a graduate or post-graduate level and would immediately raise vehement protests from the First Peoples/multiethnic community (and indeed they have, but obviously like many other problems in Occidental society they've too often been swept under the rug). What I mean, then, by neoresidential miseducation, is virtually identical to the difference between the horrors of colonialism in the days of Columbus and the invasion of Western European settler states as compared with neocolonialism in its subtler present-day forms, ranging from the stereotypical representations of Indigeneity in Hollywood and mainstream literature to biased and sensationalized media depictions of Nativeness, which so many Indigenous and Métis authors, scholars, artists and activists have actively addressed and criticized, yet which the general public still somewhat seems to be sorely lacking awareness of.

This commodification, romanticization & stereotyping of Indigeneity by said sources, many of which are not only tolerated but also tacitly or actively promoted & supported by the government, as previously mentioned, has already been recognized for decades by most First Peoples as being a critical issue in dire need of being remedied; yet this perpetuated ignorance has still been all-too-often echoed not only by thinly veiled racist conservative citizens & politicians such as Harper –as King details it in his satirical depiction of the past leader in his collection *A Short History of Indians in Canada*, something which King also addresses in his Massey Lectures, compiled into a book titled *The Truth About Stories*, which is the one of the main oral literature pieces I referenced in my Masters' thesis on *Idiolect, Irony and the*

Trickster as Instruments of Anticolonial Resistance in Indigenous Literature.

King suggests that there is a new form of racism now, which I would say is eerily parallel to the notions of neocolonialism and neoresidential miseducation: “Not the same brand of racism that created apartheid in South Africa or slavery and segregation in the United States. It’s a kinder racism that is cut with a genuine fondness for Natives and Native culture, a racism infused with a suffocating paternalism that can gently strangle the life out of a people” Part of what this is expressing to me is that we desperately need, as Sherene H. Razack puts it, “a politics of accountability rather than a politics of inclusion, because without accountability for our past and present actions and thoughts, inclusion becomes a mere illusion, even a form of racial oppression and iconization”. I’m sure many would argue that with the TRC we are now seeing the beginning of this accountability in Canada, but the most problematic aspect of this is that it is by and large an accountability of past colonial oppression which only indirectly acknowledges the current problems our children still face.

I would like to share with you the story of my education, from the early to the late 90's in Quebec City as a multiethnic Tzigane and non-status métis youth. My mother, who is a feminist/queer activist and PhD scholar who has always vehemently been opposed to past eurocentric, racist notions mainstream Christianity has imposed on so many nations, was still so concerned with giving me the best possible education, and so convinced that most of these abuses were a thing of the past, that she paid nearly a quarter of her measly yearly salary at the time, 3000\$ a year, to send me to what was then considered to be Quebec City's best private

school, the Pensionnat St-Louis de Gonzague, an all boy boarding school exclusively run by Catholic grey nuns.

Beyond the bullying, racism and oppression I experienced at the hands of the students there, most of which were White passing and thought my name, my facial features and my apparent poverty as well as my customs and the unusual snacks my mother gave me in an elitist private institution were more than fair game to pick on -to the point where I literally became the school reject, the boy everyone else picked on everyday from the classroom to the playground and beyond it- what also occurred is that the nuns who taught and ran this school in which I was literally the most proficient student with the highest average, took it upon themselves to repeatedly hit me when I used my left hand to write and wrote 'backwards' (from right to left) in the manner of Arabic or Asiatic cultures –which I had no idea at the time were even a part of my roots ethnically speaking– telling me that I was “the Devil's child” and good Christian boys only wrote with their right hand. Parallel to this was the fact that each day an hour or more of our class time was devoted to going to the chapel in the school, where we would read various racist, misogynistic and generally colonial and oppressive whitewashed Bible verses and were taught to memorize them and apply these principles to our lives to the extent of all they implied, verses which stood against practically everything my multiethnic and polyglot parents had taught me about the equity of all beings and respecting cultural and spiritual diversity, my father having raised me until his tragic disappearance at the age of 5 on fairy tales, myths and legends from the world over, from African to Asian, European and

Native ones, as he grew up hunting and fishing with Inuit and Gwi'chin peoples in the Arctic circle in NWT and had met my mother doing archeological digs and publishing research to ensure those cultures were allowed to preserve their own artifacts and actively determine their own 'socio-political' structures rather than being passively subdued by a system bent on describing them as 'primitive' and 'uncivilized'.

Being a young child quite unaware of the underlying reasons for my oppression at the hands of my peers and teachers, with the exception of one amazing woman I will always remember who jokingly called me her 'favourite little blond hair blue eyed boy ("mon p'tit blond aux yeux bleus favori"), I had very little means to express to my mother the extent of the psychological and physical abuse that was happening to me, much less the root causes of it. And so when I graduated from this boarding school in grade 6, my mother, once again highly concerned as an intellectual and academic about the quality of my education, decided to send me to the Jesuits College, founded in 1635 as the first college on the continent. This institution is still considered one of the best private high schools in Quebec City and has never to my knowledge been criticized for having any problematic content or practices, similarly to my elementary school, although they did shut down around the same time as the very last residential schools in Canada in the late nineties. As far as I know I am the first student to ever bring up any of these issues. The Jesuits College is no longer actively run by Jesuits, yet still has many ties with –and classes on– Christianity. Again, as I recollect there were very few First Peoples students there, but there were definitely many other multiethnic & diasporic peoples.

I cannot say that my experience there was nearly as traumatic as the one I had at that Catholic boarding school –I still have nightmares about that sometimes– yet when I look back and consider the fact that we were forced to do 3 years of mandatory Greek and Latin classes, many of which we had to translate and analyze New Testament verses in of a very similar nature to those of my elementary days, as well as how in my ‘history’ classes we were taught absolutely nothing about the multi-layered genocide which took place in the Americas, and like most other children in the country were simply told that Columbus “discovered” the Americas and all the other so-called “explorer” figures such as Jacques Cartier in Quebec ‘joyously’ interacted with First Nations and tried to ‘peacefully co-exist’, I am suddenly at a loss for words.

When I was at the end of my fourth year at the Jesuits College and my mother had just received notice that she had been accepted as a French professor at the University of Regina (Oskana, Saskatchewan), I was given an opportunity by a friend to participate in the end of the year school performance in front of all the other students in the giant auditorium. I was 14 or so at the time and had been doing socially conscious, activist hip-hop for two years already, so I had a drastically different awareness at the time from the one I had as a young boy at the nuns' boarding school. I thus prepared with my best friend a number of socially critical, activist raps for the performance. The school principal, being made aware of what we were planning to do, asked for copies of our poems to ensure they were “appropriate”. Naively, I cooperated, and of course we were immediately banned from the performance. My other friend who had originally

invited us, a Haitian-born student, was much smarter and simply gave them some bland poetry composed for their specific needs, so they accepted it. After he performed a completely different freestyle he invited us up on stage for a collaborative performance regardless of what had been said and the school authorities, not wanting to create a scene and perhaps not having enough time to properly react, did not attempt to stop us, so we performed our songs, and immediately after all three of us were taken to the principal's office and told that we were in serious trouble and would be expelled from school unless we all agreed to spend 12 hours locked up in a dark closet that could barely fit a small chair & desk attached to it to reflect on the inappropriateness of our actions. My friends eventually caved in and accepted, but I vehemently refused and told them they were the ones who were in fact being inappropriate and oppressive in using such a tactic, much like our songs had described. I was thus expelled one week before my final exams, and had to entirely redo my grade 10 when I came to Oskana the following year.

When I look back on such instances, as horrible as they may seem, it is painfully apparent to me that they have little in common with the residential school abuses and horrors which were perpetrated for hundreds of years across North America. However, there are enough parallels in my humble opinion to warrant and justify the use of the term *neoresidential miseducation*, much like the idea of neocolonialism, as previously stated. The main reason I am sharing this story is to express the sad reality that as much as things seem to have changed significantly since the days of these horrors, colonialism, as we all know, is far from having

disappeared, regardless of how much authorities would like to have us think it has. Its extensive and pervasive ramifications, particularly and most markedly in youth education, are quite clearly an issue which, although it has been amply acknowledged in the recent decades, remains yet to be proactively addressed in terms of replacing these educational curriculums with appropriately comprehensive First Peoples and multiethnic histories, herstories and theirs, particularly considering the fact that the Americas, Eurasia and Oceania, as unceded and illegally occupied First Peoples lands, should obviously encompass not only the oppressor's perspectives and stories but also those of the oppressed, and that that very dichotomy itself is a falsely subjugating binary that further reproduces and perpetuates the polarizing concept of lord and slave, or oppressor and victim, and situates the global multiethnic diaspora in a spatio-temporal construct which is almost exclusively based upon pre and postcolonial linear temporal history. Furthermore, what also needs to be addressed is the root cause, as mentioned in my poem, of most all these problems, which is to say, the hegemonic heteropatriarchy which created them, cloaked under the guise of a not-so-tacitly religious elite somehow dictating, like those nuns did to me and which so many others have similarly suffered from, that 'God' is angry at or ashamed of First Peoples, that the horrors of their current plight are brought about largely by their animistically ungodly beliefs and ways, and that they are in need of guidance, like a lost flock of beasts, or 'savages'.

One need look no further to witness this than Mormons and their neoBiblical idea of the Lamanites, an 'ungodly and wicked' tribe punished by 'God' in their scriptures, which they

believe are the First Peoples of the Americas in need of Christian salvation. As an avid student of various faiths and religious beliefs, and as a bit of a social experiment, I spent over a year going to Mormon Sunday school & temples in Oksana/Regina during my Bachelor years to learn more about Mormonism, this division of Christianity which has been deemed the most powerful on the planet next to Catholicism, and was told repeatedly by elders, teachers and priests alike about the significance of the Lamanites, and why it was of the utmost importance that I should convert to Mormonism as soon as possible and give my life entirely and solely to a White Jesus Christ, incarnated as their president Gordon B. Hinckley -who is long dead now mind you and still hasn't resurrected as the supreme Savior it seems- lest I lose my soul in the process of these 'wickedly animistic ways' from my cursed ancestors that I professed to honor.

This may seem to be a tangent from my main subject, yet it truly is not. The fact is that this is merely another one of the many aspects of heteropatriarchy in action as an oppressive force against First Peoples. This may be vehemently denied by many Christians, but I myself was born as one, so I believe this further gives me the right to challenge this oppression which many know is a commonly accepted reality in mainstream Christianity as it has been (and perhaps still is, depending on when you are reading this thesis) depicted by various patriarchal, hegemonic and queerphobic leaders and priestly representatives across the globe.

In this case, the plight of Indigenous men can be eerily paralleled to that of women in general in the Church as they have been traditionally depicted, which can be resumed in one

sentence: they are the bearers of Original Sin like Eve, as well as being reduced to silence within the religious sphere, not only as potential prophets or priestly representatives, but even as mere passive worshippers, as the so-called Saint-Paul suggested about women in Church in his 'gospel'. Even more deeply distressing is the fact that, if Native men are looked at in such ways, Native women's burden is doubly problematic: in a socio-politico-religious settler state hegemony where even heteronormative Native men who choose not to bow to a Eurocentric and colonial 'God the Father' (what the Gnostics refer to as the Demiurge) are seen as oddities in the best of cases, and lost souls or demons in the worst, where does this leave Indigenous GBTQIA2S+ 'men' in a similar predicament, and even further, Indigenous LGBTQIA2S+ 'women', and further still any non-binary or genderless/gender-fluid being that does not identify with any of the previous realities, all of which are also actively demonized by queerphobic Biblical scriptures and their proponents? This is now up to a quadruple exclusion and demonization which is enforced, one which is increased myriad fold in the case of the unemployed, the homeless, street workers, anti-capitalist, anti-religious activists, and those deemed mentally ill which many First Peoples' cultures have recognized as potential shamanic or *heyoka* spirits, or any previous combination thereof.

How can we even begin to address & redress this colossal injustice, which no combination of words, however erudite or poetic, could even begin to accurately express the abyssal depths of? My proposed answer to this is by no means novel, nor does it pretend to be an authoritative one. Certainly, it is but a small branch of the 'solutions' tree. I believe it begins with the

mainstream implementation of alternative and anti/decolonial education, not simply in universities, but rather from the earliest stages to the latest, which is the most important key to a greater Non-Indigenous awareness of, and respect for, First Peoples, their Diaspora and the breathtakingly rich and beautifully complex and intricate mosaic of socio-cultural, mythological and spiritual diversity which these ethnicities represent across the globe.

As previously mentioned, particularly in light of the recent *Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, which is a (somewhat) significant step forward in terms of decolonizing this society, bearing in mind the fact that many witnesses and victims of these atrocities were either silenced or murdered much like the case against the Queen of England's visits to Inuit schools in the 70s and the parallel disappearance of children from the schools she 'visited', many seem to forget that an acknowledgement of the horrors of the past does not automatically equate with an acknowledgement of lesser present ones, nor does it directly imply real change, as is blatantly obvious if we look at the number of climate change accords like that of Paris and other well-meaning resolutions worldwide that have yet to be comprehensively implemented.

How many public elementary and high schools across North America actively incorporate Indigenous authored myths and stories, as well as histories that are not grossly biased and in many cases even outright lies, in a continent where in numerous regions the First Peoples/multiethnic population is growing so fast that it has long since realistically equalled and surpassed that of the non-Indigenous once again, although of course official numbers and

statistics and their stringent patriarchal and neocolonial measures of blood quantum have somehow managed to make us believe that ‘Whites’ are a ‘majority’ and the term ethnic ‘minorities’ is even remotely accurate? How have all of us not recognized how insidiously and deceitfully obvious of a divide and conquer tactic this is?

And what of these so-called explorers who, as King and many others have stated, as in his “A Coyote Columbus Story”, are no more than glorified delusional and genocidal imperialistic psychopaths, yet are still taught to most children to this day to be the discoverers of a continent already populated for countless millennia by spiritually attuned, holistically symbiotic and supernaturally inclined human beings, in an era where higher educational institutions -which coincidentally happen to be quite expensive and unattainable in comparison- openly acknowledge, study and discuss this? How is it that this massive educational oxymoron is still tolerated? Could it be that those who control this society and regulate its institutions somehow deem that the truth is far too traumatic for children and teenagers and should be hidden from them for the crucially formative first half of their lives only to be revealed to a minute and elite fraction of financially and academically privileged students who specifically choose to study this very subject?

It does not seem so farfetched or conspiratorial to believe that political authorities know all-too-well that were they to openly reveal this from the first grade to all children and progressively address all the ramifications that this mass physical, mental, spiritual, cultural,

and linguistic genocide and further enslavement for the survivors we so tamely title “colonization” entails as their intellectual capacities expanded, they will (and have indeed, regardless of what they chose to do or say) suddenly be(en) faced with an overwhelming mass of militant anticolonial activists who will radically protest and shift, nay even collapse the entire current structure of Eurocentric Western society? This is the power we hold as activist Indigenous/multiethnic/Métis/diasporic academics and artists, and it is one we must wield as wisely as possible, yet also with little to no regard for the safety of our careers, or for the political correctness of our statements, writings, and actions. Only then will this colonial past cease to cyclically repeat itself, and will the change we so desperately need and speak of actually become a lasting reality.

Chapter 2

A Hidden History of Hip-Hop:

Redefining the Global Revolutionary Diaspora

Beginning to express the myriad roles of Hip-Hop within the diaspora of First Peoples' communities since its inception to the present day -and even far beyond it, to the Afrofuturistic realities it often depicts- is a colossal undertaking, and as much as it is a popular trend to generalize and/or compare different aspects of this multiversal culture, such statements cannot be essentialized as empirical truths, as the categorization and differentiation of these individually interconnected parts which form the greater whole are themselves by-products of Western eurocentric standards of academic analysis. Despite this, it is still of primordial importance to distinguish the vast semantic and socio-cultural as well as politico-economic gap between the concepts of 'rap' and 'Hip-Hop' as they have emerged historically, as KRS-ONE (Knowledge Reigns Supreme Over Nearly Everyone), one of the foremost founding fathers of Hip-Hop from the Bronx, aptly given the name 'The Teacha', expresses it: 'Rap is something you do, Hip-Hop is something you live':

“Hip-Hop is larger than the radio, larger than commercialized artists, larger than record industry branding. [...] Hip-Hop cannot be easily understood or defined. It is complex and full of narratives that would blow away even the strongest anthropologist. But as I always tell my students, we have to discuss the obvious to get to the obscure. I am suggesting we begin to deconstruct parts of Hip-Hop as a larger phenomenon in order to understand the whole” (The Soul of Hip-Hop, p. 20).

A contextual history of how this culture evolved into what it is today in its vastly diverse forms, along with the key events which shaped it, is essential to a proper understanding of how this has influenced and informed First Peoples communities' reflections of the original movement in a globally diasporic sense. The term 'rap' originated as an acronym for Rhythm And Poetry, yet unlike Hip-Hop, there seems to be no unanimously agreed upon definition of rap which entails the full presence of the 6/9 Elements¹, of which Knowledge is the basis, contrary to the common misperception that DJing, MCing, Breakdancing & Rapping are the only official 4 Elements to which an often elusive 5th, Beatboxing, is sometimes added. The greatest perceived problem in the mainstream rap movement these days seems to be the fact that most of the culture has been forcefully alienated and estranged from this Knowledge which inspired its birth and subsequent blossoming. We see in the early 90s at the inception of the mainstream gangster rap movement, with the creation of groups like N.W.A., a drastic split between commercial gangster rap and revolutionary/activist/conscious Hip-Hop, as exemplified in various shades by Public Enemy, Soulz of Mischief/Hieroglyphics, A Tribe Called Quest, Tupac, Nas and countless others. Another parallel to this dichotomy is the equally immeasurably vast gap between patriarchal, queerphobic and misogynistic rap and what I would coin as Rainbow warrior/anarchist activist Hip-Hop.

Many theories have been posited for this split and its subsequent schisms, but perhaps the most plausible still remains the “conspiracy theory” which some gangster rap artists have referred to which speaks of a secret meeting in the early 90s between the most influential

1 KRS-ONE Lecture at Harvard on the 9 Elements <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4tUaGFI2m5Y>

gangster rap artists at the time, many of which were still militant activists for Black rights and power (I am thinking here of artists such as Ice Cube with his album *the Predator*), and the CEOs of various record companies and industrial prison complexes, a meeting in which in which these artists, who were all forced to sign a contract of absolute secrecy and non-disclosure, were told that they would be offered very lucrative music distribution contracts and promotion as well as millions of dollars worth of private prison shares as substantial minority shareholders in the companies who planned to expand all over the US (as they clearly have) in exchange for them altering and streamlining the content of their rap music to focus more prominently on the promotion of excessively violent and ignorant, misogynistic, drug and alcohol-induced behaviour, promoting toxic commercial products which would also profit them greatly such as infamous cheap beer and hard liquor brands (OE, St-Ides, Colt 45, Tanqueray, Bacardi etc.) that would encourage disenfranchised street youth and rap listeners in general to commit more senseless crimes as a corporately sponsored 'rebellion' against the eurocentric system and its oppressive institutions, laws and order, thus justifying their imprisonment to fill up the numerous privatized prisons constantly being built².

We can clearly see to this day which artists refused to buy into this and which ones did. Artists like the original *N.W.A.* members (Dr. Dre, Ice Cube, MC Ren, & Easy-E) as well as many others like Too \$hort, Snoop Dogg and the labels that distributed their music (*Death Row Records* is perhaps the most infamous example with Suge Knight at its helm) became avid and ceaseless promoters of values which, paralleled with Black/Psy Ops *C.I.A.* projects such as

² <http://www.hiphopisread.com/2012/04/secret-meeting-that-changed-rap-music.html>

Operation Pegasus, the goal of which was to infiltrate and widely sell and distribute crack as a new, even more addictive and destructive form of cocaine in the inner city ghettos of Latino and African communities across the US, particularly in its major cities such as LA and New York, from coast to coast. Many L.A.P.D. and C.I.A. agents testified to having been a part of this operation, and detailed the work they were asked to do in facilitating the sale of this drug in industrial quantities to key drug dealing moguls in these cities (who were also recruited similarly to how gangster rappers were with this meeting), but of course the Supreme Court case seeking to indict the director of the C.I.A. at the time was dismissed for “lack of sufficient evidence” despite the numerous officers' testimonies.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DyM43Sw2OVc>

(LAPD officer/narcotics investigator Mike Ruppert in *American Drug War* documentary)

“The corporate appropriation of what began as a powerful expression of the Black and Latino experience of urban poverty has significantly compromised its transformative potential [...]. The recurrence of deeply embedded racist stereotypes coupled with the fixation on consumption characterizes corporate control of hip-hop and diminishes its position as a revolutionary art form and burgeoning mass social movement” (Hip-Hop & the Aesthetics of Criminalization, p. 2).

The combination of both of these operations/plots and their subsequent culturally and spiritually genocidal effects upon ethnic “minorities” across the US in the years following their deployment triggered a massive spike in ethnic populations being corrupted and incarcerated,

as Grant Morrison depicts it so vividly in his antivillain comic series *The Invisibles*³. Thinly veiled White Supremacist CEOs prospered, while large portions of the American youth's population, particularly ethnic ones, were relentlessly indoctrinated and brainwashed by this onslaught of toxic thoughts and substances, and the repercussions of this are still clearly felt to this day in both the commercial rap and underground Hip-Hop communities to varying extents.

This brings us back to the Great Divide which formed between these two genres at the time, often pitting conscious, revolutionary Hip-Hop artists such as the aforementioned *Public Enemy*, KRS-ONE, Jeru the Damaja and other more soul/funk inspired ones such as *A Tribe Called Quest* and Common, Mos Def & Talib Kweli against nefarious criminal figures of rap authority (who in many cases were not even true gangsters to begin with) that now dominated the scene such as N.W.A. and the rest of the *Death Row Records* lineup. In between these worlds, with one foot firmly planted on each side of these opposite movements, were prophetic figures of the revolutionary 'Black badman' like Tupac Amaru Shakur and MCs from labels like *Duck Down Records* and *Boot Camp Clik*, who pioneered the concept of RBG (Revolutionary But Gangsta), which activist Hip-Hop groups like *Dead Prez* would later popularize:

“In his book “from Trickster to Badman”, John W. Roberts makes a careful distinction between the Black badman and bad n***** in African American folkloric tradition and suggests that folk heroic traditions are typically enacted by members of subordinated groups as a counter-hegemonic act of subversion and resistance. The Black badman figure is truly heroic in the classic sense of the term because he seeks the good of those in his community and works towards that even if he is seen by

3 <http://www.revolt-motion.com/gnosticism-archons-aeons--sophia.html>

whites as a troublemaker. The bad n*****, on the other hand, exerts his power by resisting all social and moral control, and tends to be viewed as a threat by other Blacks since he acts in his own self-interest even if this hurts his community” (From Jim Crow to Jay-Z, p. 65).

Also somewhere in the middle of these realities as well was a new emerging genre which was dubbed by some as superconscious/spiritual Hip-Hop, with key figures like *Jedi Mind Tricks*, *Wu-Tang Clan*, and other affiliated artists such as Canibus, Killah Priest and Razz Kass, who later formed *The Four Horsemen* (of the Apocalypse) alongside *Dogg Pound* rapper Kurupt, which I further discuss in “the 2nd Coming of Hip-Hop” and “From Sumerians to Superheroes” chapters.

This is but a very brief overview of some of the key figures of the rap and Hip-Hop movements around the time where this divide became more readily apparent, yet it is quite crucial to properly grasp how the worldwide First Peoples communities where these forms of music were later seeded and disseminated further were thus influenced to create the art they did to this day and beyond it. Rap & Hip-Hop identities were formed from these in various ways and, as in the case of many foreign languages fused with local cultural and linguistic elements to create new dialects, worldwide communities from Mexico and South America to Africa, the Middle-East, Europe, Asia and Oceania thus evolved their own distinct forms of this American-born culture, which better reflected their individual and collective realities and the problems inherent within them which they sought to solve with this artform. Before delving into specific

continents, countries, regions and the Indigenous peoples' histories and communities upon which American hip-hop exerted its global influence, it is also necessary to understand that just as English and US culture have had a nefariously hegemonic control over nearly the entire planet and most of its urban centres, US rap, Hip-Hop culture/music and the founding fathers of its manifold genres, subsequently to their commercialization and exportation from the early 80s onwards, have had a similar control and influence over the entire planet's youth, street cultures and communities within which this originally Afro-American, yet soon-to-be eurocentralized artistic movement's corporate takeover would be heavily felt in a number of ways.

Both rap and Hip-Hop were originally born as anticolonial instruments of resistance, dual facets of a double-edged sword which on the one hand, promoted militant Black and Latino/a/Taino/a power activism and a human rights/street warrior mentality with rap (such as with the aforementioned *Public Enemy*, *BCC*, *Nas*, *Dead Prez*, etc), and on the other, a street-wise, intellectually aware and positively uplifting mindstate with Hip-Hop (such as with Lauryn Hill & the Fugees, Common, Mos Def & KRS-ONE). Of course there are overlapping elements of both of these within each artist and many others; far be from me the thought of essentializing a binary divide between oversimplified categorizations in the process of trying to deconstruct these very stereotypifications, I simply reference these general differentiation guidelines to express certain schisms that were created over time in the movement from slightly differing ideologies. Also, as previously mentioned numerous aspects of both of these cultures, particularly and most predominantly in gangster rap, were sizeably corrupted and repurposed

by white supremacist elites and US corporate moguls into neocolonial tools of oppression completely antithetical to their (Ab)original aims and purposes.

“Anyone who hasn't heard Nelly or, back in the day, MC Hammer or the Sugarhill Gang might assume that rap is by nature music of urban anger and protest. It isn't, of course. Still, politically-oriented rap -which speaks to Black life under conditions of adversity- has been a defining strain of the music. If you doubt there's room for political themes in this era dominated by pop-rap, listen to Dead Prez or the Coup” (Hip-Hop & Philosophy, p. 173).

To be clear, what I am expressing here is in no way meant to be a comprehensive history or detailed analysis of the endlessly expansive and complex web of interrelations which rap and Hip-Hop communities –as well as the music and art they produce– represent across these continents, but rather simply a reflection of both my experiences and interactions with specific artists, their collectives and art, which in many cases have been directly or indirectly tied to my own. As such, this dissertation, like any other, cannot help but to be biased in that sense as well as extremely limited in its scope and references.

Kanada & Turtle Island: a Personal Journey

Having lived most of my life across Canada, and even at that only in a few major cities therein, and having travelled little during my time as a hip-hop artist globally speaking due to criminal and budgetary restrictions as well as professional ones (although I did extensively travel within Canada and beyond as well for various reasons and non-profit ventures) I can but speak here of my experiences in this country; luckily as the multiethnic mosaic that Canada is (despite its subversively and overtly racist/neocolonial undertones), I have been lucky enough to meet and physically work with as well as interview, tour and perform with MCs from the world over, even within these geographical limits. Beyond this however, with the advent of the internet and global telecommunications, as well as numerous emerging social media outlets, I have had the rare privilege –as a veteran and pioneer of sorts in the Canadian and worldwide underground Hip-Hop community for over 25 years now– to come into contact and collaborate with a plethora of countless hip-hop artists, producers/DJs, B-Boys/B-Girls, beatboxers, graff artists and many more who are an integral part of this movement, and so rather than speaking second-hand about established mainstream and underground legends of the US scene, with which current hip-hop literature is already grossly oversaturated, I am rather glad to speak instead of what I like to deem a hidden history of Hip-Hop, one which has been mostly overlooked because it was purposefully censored by industry moguls, as countless other aspects of it have been as well.

Kébec and the Eastern Diaspora

I spent most of the first half of my life in Eastern Canada, more specifically in Quebec city and its surrounding areas, and so my first experiences with Hip-Hop and the genesis of my career began there, back in 1992, when I was introduced to the local scene and did my first show there at a local summer camp at the age of 10. My experience in Quebec was quite different from its evolution in the Prairies (Oskana, Saskatchewan, currently known as the Queen City, Regina), where I spent the later half of my life from the age of 16 onwards, and where I was introduced to certain aspects of the reality of First Peoples rap and Hip-Hop in a more specific sense (First Nations & Métis) than the more diasporic one in which I generally use the term in here.

In Quebec in the early 90s the Native rap and Hip-Hop scene at the time was practically non-existent, as Hip-Hop itself was taking its first steps, yet in a more multicultural and multiethnic sense First Peoples rap and Hip-Hop were flourishing quickly due to European/French Hip-Hop's influence, and African & Caribbean artists like Naz la Racaille, Techlet & Shoddy Abolik of *Les5dwadlamen* & *Black Beretta*, L'Narga and many others perhaps more consciously inclined like Webster became at times both mentor and brotherly figures to me at a young age. Many of us not having had any significant or worthy father figures to raise us, Hip-Hop became the main form of therapy and community we had to bind us together and express the realities of the thought prison society we were trapped in.

In Quebec's underground scene, as a culture which was originally born from a colonial settler relation with France, to then further being colonized by the English, these first and second generation immigrants now had to cope with additional aspects of colonization themselves as triply colonially subjugated subjects of England's colony, furthermore having to express this reality in a language which was not originally their own. This made for very unique and fiercely militant aspects of their personas as MCs fighting against this multi-layered oppression, coupled with the fact that each of these individuals was involved in one way or another, as I was also at the time, with street culture and its more notoriously illicit facets. However, due to the often complex and intellectually intricate manifestations of French Hip-Hop in comparison to its American kin, and the fact that at the time I began my career Quebec rap and Hip-Hop were merely beginning to blossom, the only points of pre-existing Francophone references were essentially Paris and Marseille (where artists such as *IAM* (Imperial Asiatic Men), MC Solaar, *Fonky Family* & a few others who had pierced through into the mainstream market and become the founders -in the late 80s and early 90s- of what would become the empire of French Hip-Hop), and so quite in contrast to the more recent brand of linguistically simplified and more slang and gangster-like, American influenced Quebec rap which became more prominent for a while on the Canadian scene, these artists back then were still very much militantly anticolonial AND intellectually and socially conscious all at once, and there was truly no such thing as "mainstream" gangster rap or watered-down commercial gimmicks which were to be seen there in any respect.

At the age of 15, nearly 5 years into my Hip-Hop career and having already acquired quite a reputation in Quebec as one of the only bilingual/trilingual artists in the area who could not only rap without an accent but also had significantly socio-politically provocative and witty content, I had nonetheless also gotten myself caught up in a similar predicament to that of many of my MC peers in terms of criminal ties and endeavours. After being approached by a Hells' Angels grower I quickly expanded my scope and reputation for selling quality ganja in my area, yet I soon found myself getting arrested & facing time in a longer-term juvenile detention centre for trafficking at my local high school, after which I was transferred under probationary restriction to Saskatchewan under my single mother's supervision until I reached the age of majority rather than serving extended time alone in Quebec.

The Indigenous Prairies & the Bible Belt

What is interesting to note here is that as I transferred to a Western, English-speaking province, and began to adapt more to the reality and lifestyle there, I found myself listening more and more exclusively to US-based gangster rap, and less and less to French, socially and street conscious Hip-Hop, and my assimilation to Anglophone hegemony began slowly but surely, giving me an insider's perspective on the vast contrast and even stark opposition at times between French, Eastern based Hip-Hop (or even US Eastern based Hip-Hop like Nas, *Mobb Deep & Capone N' Noreaga*) vs the West Coast's nefarious mainstream gangster rap era in the 'Golden Age' of Gangster Rap of the early to late 90s.

I experienced this first hand as I landed in Regina and saw the extent to which US gangster rap, in a city infested with colonial abuse and racism, had left its mark upon the consciousness of all the systemic rebels and misfits of the notorious 'Bible Belt' of Canada. I spent well over a decade living, recording and performing in Regina (1997-2011), and became even more deeply embedded within the 'criminal' underworld, spending a significant portion of my time with urban wildkin, gang members and drug dealers of various backgrounds -who were truly more soulful and balanced beings than most of the racist and class-based people discriminating against them which society considers to be 'normal' citizens in my humble opinion- expanding my own networks as I witnessed why this had become the crime capital of Canada at the time.

Seeing the ways in which First Peoples MCs dealt with the harsh realities of their segregation and criminalization, much like my preferred US rap mentors Nas and Tupac, I decided to stay close to street kin and the criminal underworld, while at the same time choosing to reflect on deeper aspects of the systemic inequities -and the biases they were a product of- rather than glorifying them. I thus soon began to associate with many of the pioneers of the Saskatchewan Hip-Hop scene in the mid 90s, such as legendary Latino/Taino MC Danny Fernandez (Def 3), Indigenous activist artists like Brad Bellegarde (Info Red) and their DJ Chris Merk (Merky Waters), who published the first Hip-Hop compilation CD in Saskatchewan at the time, and eventually formed a short lived crew with 3 of them alongside younger up-and-coming Caribbean-Canadian MC Kyriel Roberts (Pimpton): *Fellows of Perfect Penmanship*, out of which came the full length LP "Extraordinary Tales" with various other feats on it.

Still, witnessing these MCs escaping the vicious cycle of criminality and poverty even partially was a very rare exception in this city and province in general, like in the case of female activist Hip-Hop artists such as Lindsay Knight (Eekwol) and Alexandra-Marie Kiyawasew (Anon Amiss, from Prince George), as many of the other Native crews/MCs I was more distantly familiar with (such as *Blazing Natives*, the *Lazy Four*, *Dogz' Life*, *Joey Cappo*, *Cyrious* and various others) were very deeply entangled in these sordid realities and could not truly help but be negatively affected by the plethora of factors weighing in against them, coupled with the onslaught of American gangster rap as the main figure of reference for street culture in terms of that musical genre. Money, street reputation and fame were the greatest priorities to many in trying to escape the shackles of white systemic oppression, and the quickest way to get to it according to most of gangster rap's 'gospels' seemed to be hustling, pimping, and robbing, in stereotypical alpha male fashion.

I myself fell partially victim to this mentality for a while as a byproduct of unchannelled systemic rebellion, and had a harsh wake up call in 2002 as I got arrested and charged for armed robbery, wearing a mask, and a breach of my previous probation for 'trafficking' marijuana literally a month before it was about to expire. With 3 previous trafficking counts, I was now facing 3 to 9 years in federal penitentiary, and my future was looking grim. I swore to myself that if I made it out of this I would change my life, and become a more conscious-minded being, pursuing my studies and academic education to honor my mother and family which I felt like I had significantly disgraced with these sordid stories. And miraculously, I did.

The prosecutor for my case kept disappearing and being replaced each time my case was deferred, and none of the new ones knew anything about my history, so they had nothing relevant to say other than the ‘fact’ that I was a ‘dangerous’ criminal with a history of mental illness and ‘drug’ dealing. My lawyer gave the best 15 minute speech I ever heard about my potential as a human being, and how I had had a troubled life with no father figure and a mother who tried hard to raise me the best she could in the midst of abuse and rejection, how I was a gifted artist and a university student with many future possibilities to benefit society. The judge -who was one of the rare ones known to be lenient with exceptional cases and ethnic minorities- scolded the prosecutor for his incompetence and gave me 6 months of electronic monitoring and 18 months of probation with a weapons and bar restriction instead of 3 to 9 years in the pen, and my life was forever changed, as I soon started forging the blueprint to much of what I have become to this day.

Parallel to this shift of my own Life’s path, in recent years, particularly in my own personal experience in Edmonton, Toronto, Vancouver, Montreal & many of the major urban centres of this country, there seems to have been more and more of a resurgence of conscious, militant, RBG style Hip-Hop across Canada (and the US) with politically rebellious, anarchist/activist First Peoples & diaspora groups and artists such as *Test Their Logik*, *Babylon Warchild*, *A Tribe Called Red* & slam artists like Spin el Poeta -as well as countless others- while the phenomena of gangster rap dwindled and became watered down significantly enough to be replaced with what so many now refer to sarcastically as “mumble rap”, and which even

hardcore thugs and gangsters cannot help but ridicule and disassociate from. As well, the phenomena of activist spoken word poetry in First Peoples/multiethnic/diasporic communities across Canada, the US and even indeed the entire planet, has played no small part in this resurgence of real Hip-Hop and its rise back to prominence, expressing perhaps that the long-term therapeutic value of such politically revolutionary music far surpasses any of the so-called 'positive' or 'counter-cultural' aspects of a movement so commercially sponsored and corrupted by corporatism, religious fundamentalism and scarcely veiled White Supremacist values that far too few of these aspects can truly be found within it as redeeming or worthwhile features.

“Political rap demonstrates the value of rap music as a politico-educational tool, as rap music has educated many people about issues that they may never have been exposed to [otherwise] [...]. Basically, these people are indicating that [political] rap music played a significant [positive] role in their lives [...]. The same argument holds true for the negative impact that gangsta rap can have on influencing how one views life or one's interactions with others” (Therapeutic Uses of Rap & Hip-Hop, p. 32).

Turtle Island & Mesoamerica

Across the border into the US, Mexico and South America I cannot speak firsthand of my personal experiences in these communities and movements to the same extent, as I have not been there myself yet for various legal reasons as previously mentioned, and yet I have been gifted enough to work with so many now legendary artists and pioneers of the scene, like *Akashik Ancestorz* (Son of Saturn, Amun Morb/Naja Gemini, Yeddidyah Ben Sion & Life Scientist), *Jahnigga tha Baptist/Illuminati Congo*, *Atma & Apakalypse (Masta Buildas)*, *Bliss of Ascended Masters*, *Wormhole*, *Intikana Kekoeia*, *tha Truth*, *Mark Spears* & many others in the US, *Secret Swords* and a number of other UK based artists, *Onse of TSW Crew* (France),

along with York Siddhartha & Dash Shamash in Mexico, Erks Orion & Kali Sandoval (Argentina), Zaika Dos Santos (Brazil), Mighty Kalipssus & Nya Indigo (Colombia), Spin El Poeta (Guatemala) and far too many more to properly list here.

I have to apologize in advance for anyone reading this who do not see their name expressed, as I have been featured on songs in over 200 albums worldwide and have collaborated with thousands of Mcs and producers from so many diverse regions and ethnicities that the task alone of remembering and finding all of them would be one more colossal than this academic venture. Please forgive me in advance for this, and do not take it as a reflection of your worth to me, or of the seemingly greater worth of those whose names I mentioned.

The realities and wisdom these activists depict in their art -similarly to that of the pioneering artists I spoke of in Quebec & Oskana/Regina, yet amplified myriad fold, perhaps due to being not only so close to the 'cradle' of Hip-Hop's civilization, but beyond this also being so immersed in the sordid realities of what Rastas coined as [New] Babylon (the US)- have created an undeniably powerful form of supraconscious, revolutionary and militant Hip-Hop, one which seems to have transcended and fused all the best aspects of each branch and subcategory of the global diasporic culture and syncretically synthesized its essence, albeit with still many future evolutionary possibilities encrypted and inked into it.

Sadly, at the time I wrote this, quoting specific research other than the occasional online independent articles and blogspots on the subject of these artists previously named, in nearly all cases, was practically impossible as I am one of the first Hip-Hop scholars to mention most of them in an academic context for the unparalleled pioneering work they have put in and their powerful influence across the globe. The reasons for this are again quite simple, and have previously been hinted at with the colonial hegemony of commercial mainstream/mainstream underground rap and Hip-Hop culture being what it is, and I cannot but acknowledge that there are so many true pioneers in the movement in so many respects that as already stated, one cannot possibly list even a fraction of them comprehensively, especially not in a global context or in such a short project, hence why this is merely a brief personal introduction to the thesis I am writing, a hidden history of Hip-Hop of sorts if you will.

The Global Diaspora

My personal experience with Hip-Hop artists from the Middle-Near East and Africa to Oceania (somewhat in contrast to that of South-East Asia/Desi Hip-Hop) is quite a different one in retrospect: the gravity of the socio-political and economic instabilities in these regions, born from a form of colonial hegemony perhaps more nefarious than any previously mentioned, has made these areas and communities more militant and extreme in their anticolonial views than perhaps any previously explored, particularly so in the Middle-East, South Africa, Aotearoa & Mabo (the last two more commonly referenced as New Zealand and Australia). Having grown up as a teenager with some of the leading figures of the underground Persian Hip-Hop scene, the families of many of whom fled to Canada during the Gulf War in the early nineties, I witnessed the extent to which, in their music and daily experience of reality, these horrors -as well as the torture and slaughter of Persian Baha'is and Babis a century and a half earlier by mainstream Islamic authorities- had shaped their revolutionary, anti-establishment/anti-religious views and art.

The Persian/Middle-Eastern Diaspora

Artists and revolutionary comrades such as Ali Dahesh, Kasseb & Hitchkas, pioneers in the Persian and indeed the entire Middle-Eastern Hip-Hop scene, as well as others such as Samir Mohammad Ramadan (X-Flame, from Aleppo, Syria) and Shadia Mansour (Palestine) - the former having been put to death by the Syrian religious authorities at the age of 16 for his revolutionary Hip-Hop which was referred to as 'occult and demonic', and as such he had to be smuggled illegally out of the country after his family bribed a prison guard; the latter being

given the title of “first lady of Arabic Hip-Hop” for her relentless activism and powerful Islamic feminist views- became to me perhaps some of the greatest examples of revolutionary inspiration and resilience in the face of unfathomable adversity.

South Africa & Afrofuturism

As such, similarly to this, the apartheid horrors having been witnessed and experienced by Black South African artists such as those of Iapetus Records (Yugen Blakrok, Kanif, Robo the Technician, Hymphatic Thabs and many others) and other up-and-coming MCs such as Ophiuchus/Loki the MC, Alchemet the Shaman, Rev Sum1 Els, L7 Sativa, *Pillars of Enlightenment & Dark Chamberz* to name but a few, seem to have given rise to a very specific form of occult/anarchist & Afrofuturistic, revolutionary Hip-Hop, quite unlike the others I have listed in both its bleakness and militancy against not only the political powers that be but also spiritual/religious ones, and a fusing of ancient tribal/interfusal African elements and lore within these activist oracular tablets. I would personally deem that South African Hip-Hop is now at the forefront so to speak of the Afrofuturistic spoken word poetry/Hip-Hop movement, and it seems to me from my current understanding of the scene there that not unlike early multiethnic French Hip-Hop in Europe, there is practically no space whatsoever for any form of commercially inclined, materialistic Hip-Hop out there, and no money to be made in its promotion either.

The African Diaspora

Although I cannot speak as extensively about East and West Africa, and the North is very much akin to the Middle-East in previous respects, I have seen from what little I know that the Rastafarian reggae movement from Ethiopia & Eritrea has had a sizable influence on Eastern African Hip-Hop, and again, to parallel this with the East & West divide of both Canada & the US, this pattern here seems to repeat itself yet again if we look at the rise of commercially viable US influenced gangster rap and street culture in general in Western African countries (Sarkodie & Flowking from Ghana to name a few, as this is the main country I am familiar with personally). Yet of course as in any situation, as I originally stated, such generalizations cannot be held to be the norm, but rather simply as a partial reflection of socio-geographical and cultural patterns repeated across spaces with somewhat common threads, as even within Ghana the Hiplife movement itself is prominent as well on the opposite end of the spectrum, just as artists like Rasse Kass and Tupac bridged the West vs East gap to a certain extent, and dethroned stereotypes of those regions with their unorthodox and revolutionary flows and content. “Many Perry emphasizes in *Prophets in the Hood* (2005) that along with the multiculturalism and hybridity of Hip-Hop [Black essentialism] continues to “exist within Black American political and cultural frameworks” (*The Africanist Aesthetic in Global Hip-Hop*, p. 25).

Oceania, Mabo & Aotearoa

As for Oceanian rap and Hip-Hop, the parallels in terms of colonization and the decimation of Aboriginal cultures and traditions -as well as the peoples- are quite clear, yet the contrast between the extent of the damage done is quite a stark one, the main difference lying in the fact that while the US, and Canada particularly, claim to be postcolonial regimes where Indigenous oppression and assimilation are a thing of the past (this of course is quite a sarcastic and illusory fallacy to most), in Oceania in general the horrific extent of the documented abuse of Aboriginal peoples, particularly of youths in detention centres across Mabo and Aotearoa, is such that it could easily be compared to the sordid reality of residential school abuses, rapes and murders in “historically” colonial Canada. In light of this, I have found that both in the gangster rap aspects of Oceanian culture as well as in the more revolutionary conscious ones, a similar form of extreme militancy and awareness to that existing in the Middle-East & North and South Africa permeates most aspects of these communities and the music that emerges from them, and the urgency of a need for drastic, revolutionary change which mere official apologies and reconciliation statements could never fulfill:

“Australia has a profoundly racist history, and, notwithstanding the happy face of cosmomulticulturalism presented, for example, at the opening ceremony of the 2000 Summer Olympics in Sydney, it is still plagued, if not defined, by unresolved racial tensions. [...] By contrast, the closing ceremony [...] surface veneer was ripped, if not shattered, by two gestures on the part of popular music performers: the lead singer of Savage Garden wore a t-shirt emblazoned with the red, black and gold Aboriginal flag, while Midnight Oil's black trousers and shirts were stenciled with the word “sorry”, a none-too-subtle dig at Prime Minister John Howard's refusal to make an apology to the Indigenous peoples of Australia for government policies [which continue to this day]” (Phat Beats, Dope Rhymes, xi).

The Indian Diaspora & Desi Hip-Hop

Desi Hip-Hop, on the other hand, is somewhat of an enigma in comparison with its plethora of diverse genres, perhaps partly because of the very diversity of languages and cultures itself within South East Asia and the prominence and commercial appeal of Bollywood culture, which is exported worldwide in a similarly opposite fashion to Hollywood's in the US. However, as in the case of Hiplife in Ghana, there are still a handful of activist artists within the Desi Hip-Hop movement that refuse to be bought out or commercialized, one of the most notorious of whom I also have had the rare privilege of calling a close kindred and brother, namely Unknown Mizery of *Babylon Warchild*, who is also the founder of the worldwide Hip-Hop collective *Empty Handed Warriors*, a veteran of the Desi Hip-Hop scene for nearly 20 years now who has released over two dozen albums and collaborative projects and has toured the world and collaborated with countless legendary Hip-Hop figures of both the mainstream and lesser known underground revolutionary movements while still remaining humble and true to his roots as an activist, addictions counselor/social worker and agent of change in communities worldwide.

A Retrospective and Apology

Clearly there are countless examples of artists and countries which I could have spoken of and infinite ways in which many could twist and bend the logic and truth of each statement I have made to question their validity or lack of academic sources, countless hours of academic research I could have done in subjects which have often already been explored in depths by scholars and veterans of this movement who have lived and witnessed the experiences of these communities they described first hand; which is precisely why I have chosen not to do so, and instead merely sketched the outlines of largely uncharted territories in the hopes that these unspoken stories and hidden histories, and hers/theirs, can one day emerge at least as a worthwhile, if not even a keystone contribution to the greater stories of diasporic First Peoples rap and Hip-Hop worldwide, as in the current state of affairs we find ourselves in academically, commercially, socio-politically, religiously or otherwise, there seems to be far too many crucial aspects of worldwide Hip-Hop and rap culture being ignored, like the true roots of the falsifications therein as well as the corruption that the New Age slavemasters of the masses brought about within it for insidious psycho-social and politico-economic reasons.

Chapter 3

A Poetics of the Oppressed

If we re-examine more closely the supposed impact of 'postcolonial' studies on Indigenous peoples the world over, we can easily come to the same conclusion as King does when he suggests that “most of us don't live in university, and I can only imagine that the majority of Native people would be more amused by the gymnastics of theoretical language -hegemony and subalternity indeed- than impressed” (*The Truth About Stories*, 114-115). As such, I personally do not believe that the concept of a 'poetics of the oppressed' from an academic perspective is something which many people could freely coin or even refer to; yet the term 'poetics' is nonetheless quite radically different in its implications and etymological roots from 'pedagogy', whose historical referents -from ancient Greece to the current day Eurocentric neoresidential educational institutions it inspired- are now well-known to have been widely corrupted, elitist and hierarchical at their basis. And so it logically follows for me that if a concept such as that of a 'pedagogy of the oppressed' can be reclaimed from its etymologically and historically colonial, heteropatriarchal roots and cancerous evolutionary branches by an activist scholar of such a stature as Freire, a similar exception should be much more feasibly achievable with the concept of a 'poetics of the oppressed', as contradictory as it may be to attempt to express obvious truths in a facetiously complex fashion which seems to go against the very nature of what is being described. Despite this perceived limitation of intellectually hegemonic linguistics, my purpose in this venture is virtually identical to that of Taiaiake

Alfred's when he suggests that “my intended contribution, and my aspiration, is to present a view firmly rooted in a Native world and solidly grounded in the scholarly world. As one who is fortunate enough to walk in both, I take it as my responsibility to create bridges between the two worlds that others may use to heal the rifts that have developed between us” (*Heeding the Voices of Our Ancestors*, p. 1).

However, in my use of the term 'poetics', I would rather prefer to distance myself from the 'scholarly' (read: Greek) roots of this term and works such as Aristotle's *Poetics* which it is directly based upon, to rather do what KRS-ONE suggests with the concept of Hip-Hop culture reclaiming and inverting the semantic fields of words in colonial languages and use them as anticolonial tools of resistance. Therefore if I use the term 'poetics' here, let it be known that it has no affiliation whatsoever with any established Eurocentric theoretical frameworks of analysis in regards to poetry and its bodies of works, but rather stands apart from them as a testament to the peoples who have used poetry itself as an anti-theoretical tool of 'theorization' on the subjects of oppression, abuse, slavery, exploitation and genocide -as well as their myriad repercussions- which constituted their direct experiences, as it did those of Freire to a notably lesser extent, rather than a second hand observation and sympathetic association or 'allyship' with the oppressed beings it sought to describe.

To quote King again, as he was the basis of my study on anticolonial resistance within Native literature for my Masters thesis, I would like to clarify my position within this academic odyssey I find myself meandering in and out of: “I am not a theorist. It's not an apology, but it

is a fact. So I can not talk to the internal structure of the theory itself, how it works, or what it tells us about the art of language and the art of literature” (*Godzilla vs Postcolonial*, p. 10). Despite the fact that I am currently completing an interdisciplinary PhD with a specialization in activist translation studies, ethnomusicology, decolonial sociology and Indigenous comparative oralities & literatures, and as such am construed by many peers as a specialist of sorts in the various research fields I have delved in, I most certainly am no such thing. I am a poet first and foremost, as well as a global citizen acutely aware of the fact that, since the first days of my youth, I have been irreconcilably different and apart from this Western European society and its systems we are all entrapped in, albeit some of us perhaps being more willing participants than others.

A 'poetics of the oppressed' then, to me, should be both an anti and decolonial 'theory' -definitely not 'post' in this day and age- of the functioning and perpetuation, as well as the experience of oppression within past and current (neo)colonial systems from the very perspectives of those who have suffered from it first and foremost, and chosen to express this reality through various poetic and artistic means. Following this logic, I cannot pretend to belong to such a category to the same extent as a so-called 'Third World' youth, citizen or artist born in the midst of capitalist sponsored warfare and destruction in their homeland -which I, along with many others, unwillingly and even forcibly contribute to by mere virtue of existing in such a country as Canada.

And yet, having grown up with many such beings who have called me a close kindred and related to numerous experiences of mine as at least partially worthy of association in such a sense, I shall here still attempt to map out my understanding of this concept, while also trying to avoid the pitfalls of relating my own personal experiences as a basis for its partial definition, as well as those of an academically convoluted terminology which, as previously described, does little more in most cases than simply further perpetuate the illusion that all of this is now largely a ‘thing’ of the past we can freely revel in merely describing, assuming this will somehow magically avoid it from repeating itself yet again:

“If we are to use terms to describe the various stages or changes in Native literature as it has become written, while at the same time remaining oral, and as it has expanded from a specific language base to a multiple language base, we need to find descriptors which do not invoke the can’t of progress and which are not joined at the hip with nationalism. Post-colonial might be an excellent term to use to describe Canadian literature, but it will not do to describe Native literature [...] As a Native writer, I lean towards terms such as tribal, interfusional, polemical, and associational to describe the range of Native writing. I prefer these terms for a variety of reasons: they tend to be less centred and do not, within the terms themselves, privilege one culture over another; they avoid the sense of progress in which primitivism gives way to sophistication, suggesting as it does that such movement is both natural and desirable; they identify points on a cultural and literary continuum for Native literature which do not depend on anomalies such as the arrival of Europeans in North America or the advent of non-Native literature in this hemisphere, what Marie Baker likes to call "settler litter." At the same time, these terms are not "bags," into which we can collect and store the whole of Native literature. They are, more properly, vantage points from which we can see a particular literary landscape” (*Godzilla vs Postcolonial*, p. 12).

The term 'poetics' itself, in regards to the previous, has at times been used in a more general sense not necessarily directly relating to poetry in the context of its literary criticism/study, as well as its practice in various branches of psycho-socially and/or artistically analytical thought, to rather simply denote the concept of theory in a much broader sense, which to me is likely far more redemptive and generally accurate of a term to use than 'theory' itself, if we once again go back to the Greek etymology of these words, which is to say the concept of “looking at, viewing, beholding”, *theoria*, versus the idea of *poetikos*, literally “creative, productive [works]”. The previous, in a nutshell, exemplifies all that is wrong and backwards with academia in general, which is to say that the creative/artistic facets of expression and critical analysis are most often dismissed or trivialized as secondary -or even 'theoretically' irrelevant- in the face of so-called objective 'theorization' which in fact is nothing more than a mere static observation and mimetic repetition of what has been deemed to be the standard of acceptable analysis in a 'higher' educational context.

This brings us to the concept of the mimetic and lyric traditions in poetics, namely, the infamous 'East versus West' paradigm, which seems to endlessly reincarnate in various forms in this 'postmodern' age of multifaceted interpretations of existence, and the endless disciplines which its creative and critical observation and analysis have fostered. Once again, my previous statement in regards to eurocentric limitations is of crucial importance here in the sense that the mimetic interpretation of poetics -from its Greek origin with Aristotle- cannot possibly even begin to render the fullness, depth and complexity not only of poetry itself, but more so even of a 'poetics of the oppressed'.

There truly is no accurate way to begin to convey the originality of the emotions and feelings associated with oppression and its infinite experiences in this world and its past and current his/her/theirstories without the lyric tradition, which is perhaps best recently exemplified in the Hip-Hop, Spoken Word and Slam Poetry movements, which are living, creative and (Ab)original, multiethnic embodied representations of the oral traditions which mimetic Western poetics and societies merely copied or plagiarized from in an attempt to supplant these traditions with the supremacy of written colonial languages and oppressive systemic structures de-legitimizing Indigenous experiences and world views.

Of course, I am quite aware of the irony apparent here in using myriad facetious terms which I myself disavow the validity of in such a context, and in writing about an orally-based Indigenous artform within the boundaries of an academic realm I so openly revile and chastise - due in no small part to its hegemonically imposed restrictions, mind tricks and pitfalls. However, as many have previously expressed, this seemingly paradoxical -and perhaps even oxymoronic- situation is not unheard of, and certainly serves a clear purpose more often than not in such a context, namely that of simply showing thinly veiled (neo)colonial forces that despite their apparently endless hoops and hurdles we are made to jump through like circus animals -in order to gain a recognized and 'legitimate' approval of our anticolonial criticisms and perspectives- some of us are still willing to entertain this illusory masquerade of literary and academic professionalism long enough to prove an already obvious point within the very languages and perceived boundaries of the remaining few elites who would perhaps still wish to argue that things are not as they so blatantly 'appear' to be:

“Contemporary Native writers do indeed, to a certain extent, collaborate with and appropriate the colonizer’s idiom by writing in Western literary forms and by using the English language. Many Native writers are just as immersed in Western literary and cultural traditions as in their Native background, so that their texts are characterized by a transcultural integration of Western traditions and Native elements, be they terms from Indigenous languages, narrative structures originating from the oral tradition, or fragments from Indigenous texts such as creation myths. Transculturation, as established by Pratt, describes how, in situations characterized by hierarchical power relations, subordinate groups selectively incorporate elements from the dominant culture. “While subordinate peoples do not usually control what emanates from the dominant culture, they do determine to varying extents what gets absorbed into their own and what it gets used for” (*M.L. Pratt 1991*, 36)” (“Humor in Native Lit” p. 30.)

Looking back once again at the history of eurocentric and heteropatriarchal mimetic poetics, one can have a quick glimpse at literally all that has gone wrong with art in this current global context from a mainstream perspective, from the 'Conscious Hip-Hop vs Gangster Rap' paradigm, which I have previously detailed in “A Hidden History of Hip-Hop”, to most all corporately/commercially sponsored music and art in general: the very term 'mimetic poetics' seems like quite a laughable concept in light of the unbridled creativity which poetry naturally entails, coupled with the previous exploration of Greek history/culture and its misappropriation of Afro-Asiatic knowledge, art and wisdom in general.

However this in and of itself is not the most problematic issue, since many of course could argue that practically all cultures were essentially founded on the borrowing and re-appropriation of past knowledge and traditions from previous empires, cultures and nations. Nonetheless, the key difference here is that -as in all (neo)colonial cultures- there is a complete

dissociation from the previous cultural traditions pillaged, coupled with a vehement refusal to acknowledge the origins of these so-called 'original' concepts which the new culture has proprietorially claimed, rather than a humble acceptance that we can only create, produce, recreate and reproduce based on past foundations pre-existing. There is no science without prescience. There is no true knowledge without the acknowledgement of its prior origins. As such, if we examine the definitions of poetics, which have for the most part originated in a Western European context, there is a clear lack of acknowledgement of the First Peoples, Afro-Asiatic, Middle-Eastern and Proto-Dravidian origins of this and all it relates to. Definitions generally point back to Greeks as the founding fathers of this discipline, since of course in the context of a hegemonic overtaking of ancient civilizations now diasporic from aggressive assimilation attempts into Greco-Roman languages and cultures, a term which has its linguistic roots in those 'cult-ures' couldn't possibly have originated elsewhere, could it now?

And here we arrive at the heart of the matter, if we look at the current predicament artists and intellectuals alike, indeed all of humanity within a colonially systemic social context is trapped in: practically all of Western societies' by-products, artistically, commercially, religiously, politically, philosophically, economically and otherwise are based on a hopelessly flawed and grossly incompetent mimetic reproduction of previously existing, already ideally functional (Ab)original/Indigenous/multiethnic/diasporic concepts which, in the best of cases, are merely acknowledged in fleetingly passing statements which do little more than pay lip service to their transgressions/appropriations and coercively serve to reinforce romanticized stereotypes that further commodify these cultures, rather than properly paying homage to them

and giving them back what was so horrendously and forcefully extracted and stolen from them in the first place.

As Taiaiake Alfred suggests in his chapter “Reconceptualizing Nationalism”, there is an urgent need to redefine a healthy pride in the diversity of influences from which non-colonial, non-hegemonic cultures and nations -and all the art and creative contributions & expressions therein- are ideally born, as Eurocentric blueprints for social and institutional structures were systemically and systematically created to eradicate all Indigenous notions of interconnectedness and diversity:

“Most earlier formulations of nationalism were based on the imposition of a common culture and the gradual homogenization of values within a society. In equating shared cultural attributes with nationhood, there was an evident bias toward the particular experience of European societies and against non-Western values. There was as well an inherent rejection of the idea of cultural diversity within a society. On the whole, nationalism was narrowly seen as the development of institutions specific to the Western context or their imposition through European colonization in various parts of the world. In this view, nationalism is:

the general imposition of a high culture on society, where previously low cultures had taken up the lives of the majority, and in some cases the totality, of the population. It means the generalized diffusion of a school-mediated, academy-supervised idiom, codified for the requirements of reasonably precise bureaucratic and technological communication.
(Gellner 1983: 57)

The inherent bias toward the particularly Western form of the nation-building process is reflected again in the linkage of nationhood to exclusively Western forms of social relations, that is: “the establishment of an anonymous, impersonal society with mutually substitutable atomized individuals held together above all by a shared culture ... in place of a previous

complex structure of local groups, sustained by folk cultures reproduced locally and idiosyncratically by the micro-groups themselves (Gellner 1983: 57)” (Heeding the Voices of Our Ancestors, p. 8).

One of the positive manifestations of the latter concept of a healthy cultural nationalism and its expression, as well as perhaps the most poignant aspect which I believe illustrates the uncanny beauty and lyrical evocativeness of a poetics of the oppressed is that of humour, specifically irony/sarcasm, as an instrument of anticolonial resistance in Indigenous literature, which goes hand in hand with the concept of the Trickster in these traditions, as I also explored in my Masters thesis. Authors such as the aforementioned, in their larger-than-life depictions of such grossly exaggerated racist and systemically ignorant stereotypes of White Supremacist culture, manage to express neocolonial horrors in such a fashion as to make them bizarrely and often even hilariously cathartic for Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples alike, even those caught up in the midst of these stereotypes, who cannot help but laugh at the ridiculousness of their own ignorant existence and belief systems. This, to me, is perhaps one of the most overlooked -and yet also one of the most primordially important- aspects of resistance literature and poetics altogether: the power of laughter.

Knowing the risk of alienating non-Native people with reproachful comments, they instead use humor –more specifically satire– as an instrument of anticolonially discursive resistance, one with which they will, first, raise awareness of Natives’ physical and psychological plight to this very day, and second, create a sense of accountability in these same people, to transform

them by playfully making them aware of their unwitting complicity in this sordid affair. By juxtaposing both the non-Indigenous and Indigenous readers with various characters in a satirical context, these authors and artists implicate them without threatening them, thanks to their abundant use of humour.

As Davidson, Walton and Andrews state about King, “[he] carefully couples selected aspects of traditional comedies with a distinctively Native sensibility to create his own subversively comic vision” (p. 29), a vision within which irony is the central theme, without which the bleakness of the subjects he discusses could not possibly be brought to light without compromising his readers' interest and support for what he speaks of. Yet his storytelling strategy goes beyond the simple use of satire as an anticolonially educational instrument. King, along with other pioneering Indigenous male authors such as Tomson Highway, Sherman Alexie and Richard Wagamese, has reshaped the conventional notion of comedy by blending satire, myth, religion and history with important social concerns such as social equality, tolerance, justice, and many more crucial subjects. His use of satire has the potential to cleverly alter societal conventions and subtly shift the prevailing ideologies in the minds of his readers. This is the gift of humor: readers become so engrossed in his writings that they forget the educational aspects within them. Anticolonialism is presented in such a fashion by the author that there seems to be no viable contesting alternative to it. The readers may indeed feel they have little choice other than to yield and acknowledge it as the most logical perspective.

The transformative power of Indigenous myths and stories is quite clear -as is the power of satire with which many of them are imbued- and these new 'fictions' which diasporic Native authors have written are no more than a creative, lyrically poetic retelling of endless ancient myths which have morphed and reformed themselves into stories from authors that have found newly creative ways to reach an audience with little interest in the traditional tales of stereotypically mythologized Indigenous peoples they have overly commodified and romanticized -to the point of neocolonial peoples often scarcely relating to them at all. As King puts it, these stories are “all we have to fight off illness and death, you don’t have anything if you don’t have stories.” Speaking of himself and a close friend, he says, “[W]e wrote knowing that none of the stories we told would change the world. But we hoped they would. We both knew that stories were medicine. That a story told one way could cure, and told another way could injure.” (*The Truth About Stories*, p. 92)

Throughout many Indigenous literary and oral works of art, what is consistently made most apparent is the use of satire in order to soften the tragic nature of the messages they are conveying to their non-Native audience: something is very wrong with the continent we live in, with the relations non-Indigenous 'citizens' have with the peoples they took it from, and with the way history and spirituality are viewed. Relaying this message appropriately is no easy task, and many artists and authors are fully aware that listeners/readers are generally not willing to cope with another bleak reminder of Native history. And so, they often use irony -or more specifically, satire- to establish a relationship with their audience that will allow them to recontextualize their moral and ethical concerns in order to better question their validity. “No

theorist of irony would dispute the existence of a special relationship in ironic discourse between the ironist and the interpreter; but for most, it is irony itself that is said to create that relationship” (Hutcheon, p. 89). Without satire, it would likely be much more difficult for them to connect with a significant portion of their Non-Native potential audience: it becomes the tangible link that allows them to bond with them in order to facilitate the critical questioning of their beliefs.

By developing their own tragi-comic visions, which blend different aspects of the Western genre with various Native traditions, First Peoples art, poetry and literature become accessible and even 'palatable' to many different audiences. These intercultural aspects of tragi-comic works offer an invitation (rather than a threat) to non-Native audiences to participate in the art or text, and laugh with its various characters. At the same time, comedy can invert and contest the presumption of White dominance to offer a different perspective on the world. This then combines Native beliefs with an awareness of the contemporary complexities of First Peoples identity, especially for those who have been raised off the reserve (Davidson et al, p. 30-31).

In the title story of one of his more famous earlier works, *One Good Story, That One*, which I translated and analyzed as part of my Masters, King takes the Christian epic of Creation, a typical non-Native mythological construct -which many religiously inclined Westerners take at face value and consider to be the foundation of their metaphysical belief system- and deconstructs it in a highly satirical, postmodern fashion in order to expose both the colonizing aspects of such a myth and the dominantly patriarchal, angry and unforgiving nature

of the Judaeo-Christian 'God'. King creates this laughable image of the Western deity and his religion in order to both entertain people and raise awareness -which is the first step towards accountability- of the highly problematic, misogynistic and discriminatory nature of Christianity, as well as the governmental institutions associated with it, and its effects upon Natives to this day. As Gruber puts it:

“It is not only the historical decimation as such that Native people have come to terms with; the shockwaves caused by land theft and forced relocation, the social and cultural disruptions caused by practices such as forced conversion, sterilization, child adoption, and recruitment for boarding or residential schools are felt up to the present. [...] to expect Native people to forgivingly embrace a history of extermination, discrimination and forced assimilation at the hands of White institutions is asking a lot – especially when the physical and psychological consequences continue to determine their lives. [...] Native humor has inevitably been influenced by this legacy of decimation and cultural disruption: “Indians were forced to take their culture and spirituality underground, and they sharpened their humor to make the horrible things happening around them more bearable (Giago, 1990, 54)” (*Humour in Contemporary Native Literature*, p. 117).

King's use of the Trickster Coyote is also an important humorous element which serves as an instrument of anticolonial resistance and education, one whose mythological significance is crucial to the development of an alternate ideological structure, which he establishes as a healthy counterpart to the Western religious inspired one with its traditional Judaeo-Christian dichotomies: “King challenges the legitimacy of Eurocentric paradigms by installing a framework of Native beliefs and perspectives that reveal the absurdity of specific aspects of the former, from divergent viewpoints. Here, Barbara Babcock’s notion of ‘symbolic inversion’ helps to explain King’s brand of comedy. Babcock describes symbolic inversion as ‘any act of expressive behavior which inverts, contradicts, abrogates, or in some fashion presents an

alternative to commonly held cultural codes, values and norms, be they linguistic, literary or artistic, religious, or social and political” (Davidson et al. p. 35.)

In each of the previously stated literary devices -the use of poetic myths, satire and the Trickster- it can be argued that King, and indeed many other Indigenous, Inuit & Métis authors and poet(esse)s, have used them as discursive instruments of anticolonial resistance both educational and martial in nature. But rather than overburdening the readers with an excessive guilt which many of them have already been reminded of numerous times, these authors and artists use newly rewoven poetic myths, recreating and evolving traditional Native storytelling in order to facilitate the bonding between author and audience, thus making the act of reading/listening a personal and intimate one; and secondly, they intermesh humour and satire with the use of Trickster elements, which they themselves also embody as satirical storytellers and artists/poet(esse)s; through these, Western history and religion are presented from a more humorous angle which exposes their fallacies in a tragi-comical context, blurring the boundaries between reality and myth and thus alleviating the burden of colonialism upon Native & non-Native readers alike, while also encouraging accountability:

“North American Indian policy in the last half of the 19th century had many of the qualities of a bad movie. It was a low budget affair with a simplistic plot: politicians, soldiers, clerics, social scientists, and people of unexamined goodwill dash about North America, saving themselves from Indians by saving Indians from themselves. But, unlike *Plan 9 From Outerspace*, Plan B didn't include the option to get up and leave the theatre. For 250 years

Whites and Indians had fought as enemies, had fought as allies, had made peace, had broken the peace, and had fought each other again. But when Great Britain, France, and the newly formed United States sat down in 1783 to hammer out the details of the Treaty of Paris that would officially end the American Revolution, Native people, who had fought alongside both England and the colonies, were neither invited to the negotiations nor mentioned in the treaty itself. So long and thanks for all the fish” (*The Inconvenient Indian*, p. 100).

What is this 'poetics of the oppressed' then exactly? It is all of this, not only the male authors often quoted in this dissertation, much like this patriarchal society seems to privilege and facilitate access to their books and works at the expense of many others, but more so the million or more others beyond this that we couldn't possibly ever all honour appropriately, because they have seen and lived it firsthand and many times were forced to remain somewhat under the radar -although they may now also walk the shamanic Middle Path between both worlds- but also first and foremost every being who has never been acknowledged as a worthy representative of such a notion in a world where all the cards are stacked against them, in a dictatorial meritocracy where to be a worthy candidate for the utterance of such a statement or condition one must be a poet, an artist or a scholar, nay even a polymath of the highest calibre, wielding all of these with unprecedented expertise and bravado -'highest' of course being socio-economically, religiously and politically determined only by those same eurocentrically hierarchical standards.

Or perhaps more commonly, on the other end of the spectrum, one must belong to the Hollywood-worthy category of those 'lucky' cases of oppression, of sob stories of horror and bravery, or gloriously hopeless determination in the face of unfathomable abuse, worthy enough of attention by 'their' books as to warrant 30 seconds of documented fame on mainstream networks to add to the fleetingly endless list of First Peoples, immigrant and refugee 'success' stories, ones where when the child may have ended up one day as another statistic in the news for being "in the wrong place at the wrong time" despite the parents' triumphs against all odds, the neocolonial nation seemed to mourn their loss long enough to make it an acceptable one, enriching the soil of this 'American Dream', just as those who did not have this marketable luck have 'enriched' the system through the prison industrial complex that feeds it, as statistics of another kind altogether, ones which have never been deemed to be acceptable enough to warrant their mourning, as their demonization and perceived failure seemingly served to further justify warped notions of supremacist Judaeo-Christian justice. As Ta-Nehisi Coates puts it so grimly and poetically:

"I came to see the streets and the schools as arms of the same beast. One enjoyed the official power of the state while the other enjoyed its implicit sanction. But fear and violence were the weaponry of both. Fail in the streets and the crews would catch you slipping and take your body. Fail in the schools and you would be suspended and sent back to those same streets, where they would take your body. And I began to see these two arms in relation -those who failed in the schools justified their destruction in the streets. The society could say, "He should have stayed in school" and then wash its hands of him. It does not matter that the intentions of individual educators were noble. Forget about intentions. What any institution, or its agents, "intend" for you is secondary. Our world is physical. Learn to play defence -ignore the head and keep your eyes on the body. Very few Americans will directly proclaim that they are in favour of Black people being left to the streets. But a very large

number of Americans will do all they can to preserve the Dream. No one directly proclaimed that schools were designed to sanctify failure and destruction. But a great number of educators spoke of “personal responsibility” in a country authored and sustained by a criminal irresponsibility. The point of this language of “intention” and “personal responsibility” is broad exoneration. Mistakes were made. Bodies were broken. People were enslaved. We meant well. We tried our best. “Good intention” is a hall pass through history, a sleeping pill that ensures the Dream” (*Between the World and Me*, p. 33).

This quote to me expresses the quintessence of a poetics of oppression, in its most genuine and unacademic sense. For as beautiful and crucially instrumental as Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* is, it is still sufficiently theoretically inclined so as to fit within the boundaries of the spectrum of Western prodigy success stories. The fact that he was jailed by the Brazilian government for his revolutionary views and subsequently became no less than the special educational adviser to the *World Congress of Churches* only further adds to the charisma of his story from a eurocentric perspective, while also reinforcing his position within the context of a colonizing force of 'global unification', namely a unified Christian conglomerate, for whom such a revolutionary figure would obviously give some much-needed legitimacy and attention to further oil the cogs of the system's outdated colonially religious institutions.

Chapter 4

The Truth About Stories is That's All We Are:

Anticolonial Storytelling and Anti-imperial Translation in a Postcolonial Age

This chapter consists in an analysis of a translated story excerpt from Thomas King's *The Truth About Stories* compared and contrasted with one of my own poems, which is also a story of sorts, a reflection upon one of Bob Boyer's art pieces that expresses the horrors of colonization and Christianization. I will also explore the unwritten implications of the words being spoken/written, the satire, the bleakness, the activism at play, and all the different elements which reinforce the anticolonial, educational aspects of these oral literature pieces. I will contrast this syncretic form of storytelling with traditional storytelling from a non-traditional historical perspective, as well as exploring how modern storytelling incorporates elements from past oral traditions and recontextualizes them.

My main concern in activist translations as well as in those of my own poems is to stay as true as possible to the spirit of the original work and its gaps, repetitions, rhythm, cadence, syntax and phatic use of language. In doing so, my goal is to foster the reader's understanding of First Peoples/Diasporic Peoples and their plight, establishing an oral bond through the translation of the orality between them and the translated work, much like I have done in the translation of *What We All Long For*, by the Caribbean-Canadian author Dionne Brand.

As Benjamin suggests in “The Task of the Translator”, translation ideally bridges the gap between cultures while expanding their horizons, just as King's modern, syncretic Indigenous storytelling breathes new life into traditional spiritual practices and beliefs. However, as King warns us about stories, which can be not only healing but also harmful, translation can adversely widen that gap and harm intercultural relationships when improperly harnessed. When properly harnessed, however, translation re-enacts a narrative to launch it in a new language-culture, in the same manner that Indigenous storytelling (both traditional and modern) enacts a performative that not only preserves culture but recreates it anew. Hence my interest in discovering the links between the fashioning of a new world, full of promise, through narrative, and the refashioning of a narrated text through translation into a new language-culture. Translating the anti-imperialism at work in King's *The Truth About Stories*, my intent is to capture the ways in which King's modern Indigenous storytelling and the bleak, satirical humour with which much of it is tinged, continues to combat colonialism to this day, even in this so-called *postcolonial* society.

In the collection of lectures entitled *The Truth About Stories*, Thomas King explores the power of storytelling in both traditional and modern contexts, and satirizes Canada's conservative hegemony, one that is fraught with racist and colonial undertones. Similarly, in my own poem “Expression, Repression”, the roots of colonial oppression, which persist to this very day, are explored and recontextualized in a bleak, sharply satirical context. Both King's and my own work “function simultaneously as an elaborate set design for a theatre of mythos and as a melancholic ceremonial space for people to reflect on their own racist attitudes to

other cultures. And depending on the cultural baggage and racial background of the visitor, and on his or her particular relationship to the symbols... the work changes its meaning and even its looks” (Brydon, 54-55). This ambiguity is crucial, allowing “for the coexistence of multiple perspectives” (Brydon, 55). Indeed, multiple perspectives are key to these works, as well as their translations, replete with satirical humour to simultaneously raise awareness and help ease the burden of such an exploitative history upon the descendants of the colonizing forces who, willingly and unwillingly, perpetrated it. In the analysis of these works, I will also contrast the modern Indigenous storyteller's plight with that of traditional storytelling in pre-contact and contact oral traditions, expressing how syncretic storytelling has to contend with a whole new set of problems and ideologies.

Through the examples of various quotes from different authors, as well as an analysis of King's work and my own poem, I will show that a climate of racism and right-wing ideologies have prevailed across North America, even in this *postcolonial* age we supposedly live in. King clearly expresses the all-too-vast gap between the expectations and the limitations of postcolonial studies when he says, “I know that post-colonial studies is not a panacea for much of anything. I know that it never promised explicitly to make the colonized world a better place for colonized peoples. It did, however, carry with it the implicit expectation that, through exposure to new literatures and cultures and challenges to hegemonic assumptions and power structures, lives would be made better. At least the lives of the theorists. But perhaps that was it.” (*The Truth About Stories*, 58-59)

If we explore this problematic concept even further, Siemerling examines Krupat's response to King's (and Vizenor's) critique of postcolonialism, and the latter's proposition of “anti-imperial translation” as a viable alternative to the predicament of postcolonial studies :

“Anti-imperial translation, as Krupat suggests with reference to a passage by Rudolf Pannwitz (taken up also in Benjamin's (1969) “The Task of the Translator” and Talal Asad's (1986) “The Concept of Cultural Translation in British Social Anthropology”), creates perturbation in the target language and culture. [...] Krupat's category of “anti-imperial translation” means transformation and doubling of both “target” and “source” cultural practice. Although the “target language” of many written Native texts may be English – where anti-imperialist cultural translation produces a critical perturbation and ironic doubling – the translation can simultaneously be seen to proceed in the opposite direction, as an adaptation and integration of Western forms into Native practices. The process of “translation” and transformation is here a two-way street: what for one audience looks only like a transposition of Native culture into a non-Native, “Western” medium is also, in many ways, a curative integration of what King calls “the anomalies such as the arrival of Europeans in North America or the advent of non-Native literature in this hemisphere” (King 1990a:12) into a Native frame of reference or, as we have seen Portelli put it, an “extension and continuation” of Native verbal and social practice” (Siemerling, 63).

And this is precisely what I believe I have done with both of these translated pieces: in the process of the transposition of a Native reality into a foreign language and culture, I have imbued that foreign language with elements of the former reality and have thus extended “its verbal and social practice” rather than merely attempting to naturalize it or foreignize it.

It should be stated, however, that a colossal gap exists between translation and self-translation, as colossal a gap as there is between mere translation and anti-imperial or activist translation, though the latter one is of an altogether different nature. It must thus be said that in translating King's work, as much as I would fancy thinking that I have done justice to the text in a way that would be most pleasing to the author in that it reflects his own anti-imperial intentions -considering that I am myself of multiethnic origins, as well as an anticolonial poet and translator- I am well aware that such a thought is ultimately illusory and significantly removed from the reality of things. However, I believe that as a self-translator as well as an activist/anti-imperial translator I have a unique advantage and vantage point, both of which allow for seldom-reached heights of poetic expression in the course of the translated works in question, as Iyalla-Amadi so insightfully expresses in her article "The Self-Translating Poet: Implication for French-English Translation Studies":

“a **self**-translating poet, who in the first instance translates his/her thoughts into words, and only thereafter translates into another language, is the true poetic translator. This is as opposed to some other poet or translator, who, thanks to his/her knowledge of the poetic form and/or devices, translates the poems of another. Such a translator can at best be called a translator of poetry. A distinction is therefore made here between a poetic translator and a translator of poetry, with a preference for the former as the true conveyor of poetic thought. The implications of this for **translation** studies can be found in Seleskovitch and Lederer's (1984) observation that the art of **translation** is not just the rendering of words in one language into another, but rather the transfer of ideational concepts expressed in one language into a second one. This being so, the **translation** of poetic thought can best be achieved by original poet(esse)s who are adequately literate in other languages. They are in a much better position to present to the world a true original version of their primal original thought” (p. 1032).

Keeping my former statements in mind, I would now like to examine a short translated excerpt from *The Truth About Stories* to better illustrate King's use of satire, as well as the psycho-social implications of what he states:

“When I was much younger and more prone to be incensed by injustice than I am now, I was invited by a small college in Northern California to be on a panel as part of their "Indian Awareness Week." There was a "Black Awareness Week" and a "Chicano Awareness Week," which left, if I've done the math correctly, left forty-nine "White Awareness Weeks." Still, it was a chance to say something meaningful, and being politically naive and eager, I accepted.

There were four of us: a Mohawk artist, two guys from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and me. The Mohawk guy talked eloquently about traditional art, spirituality, and pride. The two guys from Washington made pragmatic speeches complete with charts and overheads to show the kinds of programs that were available to Native people who wished to better themselves, along with the kinds of economic opportunities that various government agencies were providing for the benefit of tribes, such as oil exploration, coal mining, dam construction, clear-cut logging ventures, and nuclear waste storage.

For my part, I told stories. Stories about broken treaties, residential schools, culturally offensive movies, the appropriation of Native names, symbols, and motifs. And Ishi.

It's a famous story and I imagine some of you know it. Or know a few of the details. And then again, maybe you don't.” (62-63)

Quand j'étais beaucoup plus jeune et plus enclin à être offensé par l'injustice que je ne le suis maintenant, j'ai été invité par une petite université du Nord de la Californie à faire partie d'une table ronde dans le cadre de leur « semaine de sensibilisation aux Indiens ». Il y avait une « semaine de sensibilisation aux Africains » et une « semaine de sensibilisation aux Latinos » ce qui laissait, si j'ai bien calculé,

quarante-neuf « semaines de sensibilisation aux Blancs ». Quand même, c'était une chance de dire quelque chose de significatif, et comme j'étais politiquement naïf et avide, j'ai accepté.

Nous étions quatre en tout : un artiste Mohawk, deux gars du bureau des Affaires Indiennes, et moi. Le gars Mohawk a parlé de façon éloquente à propos d'art traditionnel, de spiritualité et de fierté. Les deux gars de Washington ont donné des discours pragmatiques aidés de diagrammes et de graphes pour montrer le genre de programmes disponibles aux Amérindiens qui voulaient améliorer leurs conditions de vie, ainsi que le genre d'opportunités économiques que différentes agences gouvernementales offraient pour le bénéfice des tribus, telles que l'exploration pétrolière, l'exploitation du charbon, la construction de barrages, les coupes à blanc en exploitation forestière, et l'entreposage de déchets nucléaires.

Pour ma part, j'ai raconté des histoires. Des histoires à propos de traités non respectés, d'écoles résidentielles, de films culturellement offensifs, de l'appropriation de noms autochtones, de leurs symboles et leurs motifs. Et à propos d'Ishi.

C'est une histoire célèbre et j'imagine que quelques-un(e)s d'entre vous la connaissez. Ou vous en connaissez peut-être quelques détails. Quoique, peut-être que non. (My translation)

This is but a short excerpt, a minute fraction of this work, yet if we examine it closely it contains myriad portals to deeper sociopolitical and religious issues, and one could easily write an entire thesis on this single passage, with all its implications and ramifications, as well as clearly exemplifying the western paradigms that modern First Peoples storytellers have to contend with (and hopefully shatter) as opposed to their more mythologically inclined counterparts. This is why I chose this particular excerpt to translate and analyze. As well, the simpler, oral structure of this text is such that the meaning and intent, as Schleirmacher or even Kundera have oft fantasized about and longed for, can in my opinion be preserved without any

overly significant alteration being performed. The fact that English borrowed over half of its words from French – and many other languages of course, as yet another byproduct of colonialism- is also quite convenient in amplifying the correspondence of parallel meanings in both languages.

The author's purpose in writing this passage is quite apparent. Knowing of the risk of alienating non-Native people with reproachful comments, King instead uses humour –more specifically satire– as an instrument of anticolonial discursive resistance, one with which he will, first, raise awareness of Natives' physical and psychological plight to this very day, and second, create a sense of accountability in these same people, to transform them by playfully making them aware of their unwitting complicity in this sordid affair. This is what I have attempted to reproduce in my translation, rather than opting for a translation strategy such as d'Ablancourt with his « Belles Infidèles » that would embellish King's often more straightforward, orally based syntax.

In an interview with Hartmut Lutz, King suggests that “it doesn't help the fiction if all you do is talk about the kinds of oppressions White culture has had on Natives. There are all sorts of other ways to do it which are much more powerful” (*The Truth About Stories*, 112). By developing his own comic vision, which marries aspects of the western genre with various Native traditions, King's writing becomes accessible and even 'palatable' to many different audiences. These intercultural aspects of King's comic texts [...] offer an invitation (rather than a threat) to non-Native readers – to participate in the text, and laugh with its various characters.

At the same time, King uses comedy to invert and contest the presumption of White dominance and to offer a different perspective on the world. His texts combine Native beliefs with an awareness of the contemporary complexities of Indian identity, especially for those who have been raised off the reserve. (Davidson et al. 30-31)

Freedom of Expression/Oppression/Repression

I would now like to examine a self-translated poem of mine, titled “Expression, Repression”, and its multiple premises, both spoken and unspoken. This poem, as previously stated, was written as a reflection about Bob Boyer's installation “Trains-N-Boats-N-Plains: The Nina, the Santa Maria & A Pinto”, of which I have included a picture and description.

Bob Boyer, *Trains-N-Boats-N-Plains: The Nina, the Santa Maria & a Pinto*,

1991. Road maps, chain, wire, Styrofoam tray, crayon, mixed media and oil over acrylic

on blankets, 295 x 730 x 50 cm.



*Verdrängung. Turtle Island. **Repression. Colonization.***

Repressed thoughts of colon-ized Nations whose so-called pagan faiths
were demonized by socio-politically inflated eurocentric wisdom,
perpetuated through slaves of the system who claimed to assist them
by aiding and abetting an 'intrinsic' religious experience most Natives were wary
—and soon became weary— of; this was really meant to replace plains and lakes
by trains, boats and planes from flakes who came forth from strange places,
with land claims and plans to enslave races
soon-to-be estranged with their Native planes and ancestors' graves,
in the name of some Caucasian deity's decadent representatives,
who spoke of paganism without knowing what it meant linguistically
In its original Latin sense, Catholic Christians used it profusely back then
to belittle and banter those who professed pantheistic, holistic or animistic preferences...

If we go back in history, or 'His story',
repression is perhaps a large part of the thoughts of underpaid scribes,
forced by knavish tyrants that enforced slavish hierarchies,
to change the line between fact and fiction,
between lax and more accurate reconstructions of both Her & His stories

which we so desperately lack in our hopelessly conceited and misplaced glory...

We've already seen & heard THE story of how Christopher Colombus,

'Christ the Colon', paved the way for those who came amongst First Nations

with gifts like infected water, weapons and blankets, things we could easily relate to

except we ought to have known about the Trojan horse

before blindly molding more minds into 'soldiers of Christ',

without even knowing for whom we were truly prostrated...

Trains-N-Boats-N-Plains: the Nina, the Santa Maria & a Pinto,

three blanket statements full of lies and deceit pulled like wool over our sheepish eyes

to keep us peaceful, that were meant to be removed and exposed through this piece,

replete with symbols completed with geometric precision asymmetrical,

with the express intent -the expressed intention-

of uncovering unmentionable blunders still covered up because of *Verdrängung*

Repression in German, with a capital letter for added emphasis on the Word.

The same capital letter they tentatively lack to represent

when they use the words 'native', 'aboriginal' and 'first nations'... or African-American

No worries though, it's simply a subliminal, unintentional by-product of ethnocentric guilt and

hatred, transformed into a subversively coercive statement,

like taking the blue pill in the Matrix;

yet blue bloods still bleed the same red...

the same red as the blood painted dripping from the tainted crosses on those blankets:

perhaps this was meant to be a statement

of the horrors Yeshua suffered on the Cross for the “greatest of civilizations”

or perhaps it was rather meant sarcastically, to superpose this blasphemy

with the pain of colonized Nations, left with the impression that their sufferings

–while unintentional and regrettable– were nonetheless in vain compared to Jesus',

who saved the entire 'Free World' with his blood and belief system...

So Bob Boyer painted sickly, washed up colours on blankets

that became a canvas for his pain...

the primary colours are decimated like Nature in this painting and installation;

well-defined crosses bathe in eerily iridescent light whites and beiges,

surrounded by triangles that lead our eyes to see the main piece on this stage:

a messy cross, looking like blotting paper, a cross bleeding the lot of Natives

who obviously did not discover the Americas, let's face it,

since they were simply savage animals in Nature...

Pink, violet and grey-blue, Indian & Caucasian skin tones

stylized in colour-coded geometric shapes,

in opposite and complimentary arrangements to enhance the viewer's sense of a strange angst...

everything pales as he lets his eyes scale towards the centre,
as if most colours had slowly been bled to death,
like the Natives that wish they had at least been killed to be laid to rest
yet how could this be in a land left breathless,
plagued with infections from settlers who divided it into sections
with imaginary lines traced on cartographic projections,
based on Western conceptions of ownership and tenancy:
mulch and minerals commodified as private properties and residences...
This is what Boyer is representing with his use of European travel fetishes
wrapped up in maps, tied up with chains and wires,
or even with pink ribbons, to make them seem nicer;
a random Styrofoam tray as a bleak reminder of stray litter left behind
by colonizing Caucasians made bitter from the inexplicable resistance of First Nations,
and their reticence to recognize the validity of treaties' words
based on the 'supreme' authority of 'royal' patrons with absurd claims;
A crayon to first trace the outlines of the basis for the worst-case scenario in relatively recent
history -believe me, this is certainly not ancient: the charting and delineation of uncharted,
virgin spaces eventually leading to their grievous desecration,

along with the deportation and assimilation,
or perhaps in better cases, of the murder and martyrdom
of a larger part of the races that originally populated them,
the luckiest of which were left to express this inoculated hatred and angst
with mixed media and oil over acrylic on blankets,
standing wider and taller than all people on planet earth,
with almost three hundred centimeters in height, seven-thirty in girth,
and exactly a half-meter in depth.

Then perhaps Jesus wept.

Expression, Répression

Verdrängung. Turtle Island. Répression. Colonisation.

Pensées réprimées de Nations colonisées

Dont les soi-disant fois païennes ont été démonisées

Par une sagesse sociopolitisée, enflée et Eurocentralisée

Perpétuée par des esclaves de la société qui prétendaient les assister

En voulant aider et faciliter une expérience religieuse intrinsèque de douteuses sectes

Dont la plupart des Autochtones et corps métissés se sont d'abord méfiés

Et dont ils se sont plus tard lassés

Ceci était en vérité fait pour remplacer les lacs et plaines par des actes et thèmes de cinglés

Venus de contrées et d'endroits étrangers

Avec des concessions de terres et des planifications d'assimilation

Et d'asservissement d'ethnicités qui seraient bientôt séparées de leurs contrées natales

Et des pierres tombales de leurs ancêtres,

Au nom de représentants d'une déité javellisée décadente

Parlant de paganisme aborigène sans en savoir les origines étymologiques latines

Les Catholiques l'utilisaient profusément en ce temps pour ridiculiser et châtier

ceux qui professaient des préférences animistes, panthéistes ou holistes...

Si l'on retourne en arrière dans son Histoire

Car l'on ne peut pas dire «sa», quoique le mot soit féminin

La répression des destins est peut-être une grande portion des pensées de scribes sous-payés

Forcés par des tyrans porcins enforçant des castes blasphématoires

à travailler comme des forcenés pour changer l'Histoire

et tracer la ligne entre fiction et réalité,

Entre controverses et reconstructions de savoir d'à la fois

sa et son Histoire tellement désespérément dus

Dans notre gloire méconçue et éperdument décousue...

On a déjà vu et entendu la seule, l'unique histoire de Christophe Colomb

«Le Christ Colon» qui a pavé le sentier pour ceux qui sont venus coloniser Les Premières Nations avec des dons comme des boissons, des armes, des couvertes et des cadeaux infectés,

des découvertes auxquelles on pourrait facilement s'adapter...

sauf qu'on aurait dû savoir à propos du cheval de Troie

Avant d'aveuglement forger d'autres mentalités de soldats du Christ

Sans même s'imaginer devant qui on était prostrés en réalité...

Trains-n-boats-n-plains: the Niña, the Santa Maria & a Pinto

Trois couvertures d'un constat global rempli de menteries et de déceptions

pour aveugler nos yeux de moutons et nous pacifier

Qui étaient destinées à être enlevées et exposées par ces toiles

Remplies de symboles complétés avec une précision géométrique asymétrique

Avec l'intention formelle, intention exprimée, de mettre à jour de lourdes bourdes de gourdes

qui se sont gourés, fourrés, fourvoyés, à cause de Verdrängung...

«Répression» en Allemand, avec une majuscule, pour mettre l'emphase sur le Mot.

La même majuscule qu'ils tentent subtilement de ne pas représenter

Quand ils chantent les mots «autochtone», «aborigène» et «premières nations»

ou «africain américain» avec leurs airs enchantés... mais on va les faire déchanter...

Il ne faut surtout pas vous inquiéter, ce n'est qu'un simple sous-produit subliminal,

non-intentionnel de haine et de culpabilité ethnocentrée

transformé en une déclaration subversive coercitive, comme d'avalier la pilule bleue dans la

Matrice, mais les sang bleus saignent quand même le même sang, vieux...

Le même sang que celui dégoulinant des croix corrompues sur ces couvertes:

Peut-être est-ce voulu comme étant une déclaration des horreurs

que le Christ a souffert sur la Croix

Pour «la Civilisation Suprême»...

*Ou peut-être même est-ce sarcastique, pour superposer ce blasphème
avec la douleur des Nations colonisées, qu'on a laissées avec l'impression*

*Que leurs souffrances, quoique exécrables et regrettables
Étaient tout de même vaines en comparaison avec celles du Christ*

*qui a sauvé l'entière du «monde libre», le monde entier,
avec ses croyances et son sang... pitié*

*Alors Bob Boyer a peint des couleurs malades et délavées sur des couvertes
qui sont devenues des toiles pour sa douleur blafarde...*

*les couleurs primaires étaient décimées comme la Nature l'était dans cette installation,
des énormes croix baignant dans une constellation de beiges et de blancs pâles*

sinistrement iridescents, entourées par des triangles

qui mènent nos yeux vers la pièce principale de cette scène:

une croix bâclée, ressemblant à du papier buvard, une croix qui saignera la Foi des Indiens

qui bien sûr n'auraient jamais pu avoir découvert les Amériques, soyons réalistes,

puisque'ils étaient simplement des animaux sauvages dans une Nature bien triste...

Rose, violet et gris-bleu, couleurs de peaux indiennes et caucasiennes

stylisées en formes géométriques codées, arrangées de façon complémentaire et opposée

pour augmenter l'idée du spectateur d'une étrangeté angoissée et hantée...

Tout pâlit tandis qu'il laisse ses yeux dériver vers le centre,

Comme si la plupart des couleurs avaient été tranquillement saignées à blanc

Comme les Premières Nations qui auraient au moins aimé être tuées pour se reposer en paix...

Mais comment serait-ce même une possibilité dans une contrée laissée essoufflée,

Empestée et infectée par des colons qui l'ont divisée en sections

avec des lignes nées de leurs imaginations tracées sur des projections cartographiques

basées sur des conceptions eurocentristes de location et de possession:

Notre Terre Mère et ses minéraux marchandisé(e)s

En résidences et propriétés privées...

Est-ce que vous voyez ce que Boyer a essayé de représenter,

Avec son usage de fétiches européens de voyage

enveloppés dans des cartes, attachés avec des chaînes, ou même des rubans roses

Pour qu'on voit la vie en rose;

Un contenant de styromousse crade comme souvenir maussade

des ordures sales laissées en arrière par des colonisateurs aryens

Rendus âpres par l'inexplicable résistance des Indiens,

et leur réticence à reconnaître la validité des mots de traités

Basés sur l'autorité «suprême» de conquérants extrêmes aux exigences sans thème...

*Un crayon pour délimiter les contours de la base du scénario dans le pire des cas
de l'histoire relativement récente, croyez-moi, elle n'est certainement pas si ancienne que ça*

La cartographie et la délimitation d'espaces vierges inexplorés

menant éventuellement à leur bouleversante profanation

Ainsi qu'à la déportation et l'assimilation, ou peut-être,

Dans de meilleurs cas, à l'assassinat et au martyre

de la plus grande part des ethnies aborigènes qui y habitaient à l'origine

Les plus chanceux étant laissés là pour exprimer cette haine et cette angoisse inoculées

avec des médias mixtes et des peintures sur des toiles et des couvertures,

Plus grandes que tous les humains sur cette planète Terre,

Avec presque trois cents centimètres de hauteur, sept-cent trente de tour de hanche,

Et exactement un demi-mètre de profondeur.

À ce moment, peut-être que Jésus pleure.

In the translation of this poem, I have taken many liberties which I perhaps would not have allowed myself in the translation of a stranger's work. But self-translation, as previously stated, exists in a realm of its own, and like numerous self-translating authors such as Calvino, Borges and Nabokov, as well as critics like Bassnett, I am of the general opinion that an author who self-translates should have entire creative control and liberty with their work; indeed it may even become a stand alone work of art. Yet as a translation practice, it is almost uncharted space. As Popovic once wrote, self-translation is “another vast territory without history.” (19) Bassnett also discusses various issues with self-translation in her article “The Self-Translator as Rewriter”:

“The term 'self-translation' is problematic in several respects, but principally because it compels us to consider the problem of the existence of an original. The very definition of translation presupposes an original somewhere else, so when we talk about self-translation, the assumption is that there will be another previously composed text from which the second text can claim its origin. Yet many writers consider themselves as bilinguals and shift between languages, hence the binary notion of original-translation appears simplistic and unhelpful.”
(Bassnett, 15)

I would say that in the case of my own poem, I went in a quite different direction than that of my translation of King's passage, because I felt as though in this case I had the authority to do so. The result was thus more in line this time with the aforementioned d'Ablancourt, yet in this case it was « Belle mais fidèle », since I know as the author of my own poem that I preserved the spirit of the original quite accurately in my translation. Indeed, I enhanced it in some senses, I adapted it in the translated language so that it could literally and poetically flow in the same fashion as the word plays orchestrated in the original. I have included both an English & French audio version of the poem recorded on different instrumentals featuring

Princess Elysia Lightening; they may sound quite different in rhythm and cadence, in structure and perhaps even in their ambiance, but I believe they are still unified in spirit and meaning⁴.

I used a number of anglicisms in my French translation for rhyming and phonetic purposes where I deemed them to be poetically useful (*sociopolitisée, Eurocentralisée, enforçant, méconçue*); some may disagree with this approach but as the author, I believe I have the poetic licence to do so. The ultimate goal of this poem's translation was not absolute fidelity to each word and sentence, but rather the transposition, as Kundera has often expressed, of the meaning and context of the work so that the spirit could be preserved. Translating this poem faithfully in traditional semantic and syntactic terms would have been nothing short of disastrous. Had I chosen to disregard rhyme schemes, flow and phonetics, the oral nature of this poem would have been completely lost. Thanks to the phonemic, phonetic and rhythmic word alterations, the anticolonial message, which is being conveyed through the original piece, becomes entrancing and mnemonic retention in the listener is heightened.

Though I believe that all things considered I have offered an uncannily faithful self-translation -and even transliteration as well in many cases- of my poem, keeping in mind what I have previously stated about the rhythmic and phonetic restrictions of poetry translations, I would like to examine a few examples worth poring over where I have significantly altered the original verse or even added strophes. One such case is the following, where I added “de douteuses sectes” to the line “une expérience religieuse intrinsèque” (An intrinsic religious

⁴ <https://julesnyxkikwaakew.bandcamp.com/album/red-moon>, tracks 2 & 8

experience [of dubious sects]). In English there is no mention of “dubious sects”, yet those words are implicit in the overall tone and content of the poem, so that in adding them in French there was in fact ultimately no alteration of the poem's content or meaning. I did this primarily for rhyming purposes however, because I felt the need to rhyme “religieuse” with “douteuses” and “intrinsèque” with “sectes”, as in English the word “**ex**perience” was internally and assymmetrically rhymed with “weary” and “wary” respectively.

Another case which seems quite innocuous at a glance is the line “[Le Christ] qui a sauvé l'entièrete du “monde libre”, le monde entier, avec ses croyances et son sang... pitié” ([Christ] *who saved the entire “Free World” with His blood & belief system*). But if we look at it more closely, though once again rhyming restrictions seem to have authored this superficial repetition of “le monde entier” as well as the addition of “pitié” at the end of the strophe, we realize that this is in fact not quite such a simple case. The repetition of “le monde entier” in this case emphasizes with irony the Eurocentric concept previously exposed that the “Free World” is in fact considered to be the “entire world”, something which once again is clearly implicit in the English poem, yet is in this case made more flagrantly apparent in the French version, as in the previous case examined. As for the addition of the word “pitié” at the end, (literally, “pity”), this is a common French expression which again is quite sarcastic generally speaking and usually denotes the idea that the speaker is quite skeptical and indeed “weary” of their nemeses’ statements or ideological positions. Added to this is the homonym pun which is indirectly created with the combination of the words “sang” and “pitié”, referring to another common French expression, “sans-pitié” (literally, “without mercy”), once again alluding to the

mercilessness and lack of compassion of the colonizers who ironically religiously claimed to be quite the opposite of what they exemplified.

A final example worth considering in my opinion, though there are many others, is the line “une croix bâclée, ressemblant à du papier buvard, une croix qui saigne la Foi des Indiens bâtards” (“A messy cross, looking like blotting paper, a cross bleeding the lot of Natives”), where the word “lot” has been replaced with “Foi” (“Faith”), and the qualifier “bâtards” (“bastards”) has been added to the word “Natives”. Again, at a glance this seems to have been conceived solely for symmetrical phonetic purposes, but if we look at the entire poem's context once again we realize that replacing “lot” with “Faith” is not the semantic *faux-pas* it perhaps appears to be: in this case, the crosses directly represent Faith, although that of mainstream Christians, but considering Boyer's intentions in this piece and the fact that countless Indigenous peoples across the globe have been forcefully converted to this Faith, saying that this cross is “bleeding the Faith of Natives” is not at all incongruous in my opinion.

Furthermore, adding the adjective “bastards” as a qualifier to “Natives” is yet another satirical addition to the French version, since in fact First Nations were perhaps the farthest thing from “bastards” we could ever etymologically or biologically conceive of, yet that insult is still how they were implicitly considered by their oppressive, self-righteous conquerors, much like the derogatorily intended moniker of ‘savages’, which again ironically could be taken as a compliment considering the fact that it originates from the French word “sauvage”, which literally means ‘wild’, as in Nature’s wilderness, which is exactly what Natives

traditionally are and honor, hence why in Hip-Hop, as has been the case with the N word being reclaimed by the African diaspora and beyond, the word 'savage' in First Peoples Hip-Hop, art and literature/oraliture has also often been reclaimed as a symbol of the pride of being wild and untamed, unfettered by the chains of neocolonial woes and horrors.

In the case of this poem's translation, the article by Grutman, "Beckett & Beyond: Putting Self-Translation in Perspective" sheds some light on the particularly unique case in which I find myself in the act of self-translation. Grutman differentiates between the most famous and widespread cases of self-translation such as Beckett, Nabokov, Green, Huston, Semprun and Dorfman, which he considers to be in the category of "horizontal" transfers between symmetric pairs of widespread languages. In many other instances, however, "asymmetric" linguistic configurations saddle the act of self-translation" (p. 188).

What Grutman is positing with these concepts "refers exclusively to the nature of the interlinguistic transfer upon which translation hinges [...] We can therefore usefully contrast self-translators whose linguistic configuration rests on asymmetry, since it involves a language that is symbolically and/or socially dominating and one that is symbolically and/or socially dominated, with those who work in widely distributed languages that occupy comparable positions on the world stage" (p. 200). As I am personally averse to any dichotomous differentiations and seemingly non-compatible polar oppositions, I would like to argue that in my case I am somewhere in between these two categories, in the myriad-coloured spectrum which exists amidst illusions of a black and white reality. In his consideration of French-

English translations as being in a position of “horizontal” transfer due to both of these representing both linguistically and colonially dominant powers, the author seems to have overlooked or trivialized the extent to which English has become the ultimate hegemonic language in the modern world -as Cronin so unequivocally exemplifies it in his article “The Cracked Looking Glass of Servants: Translation and Minority Languages in a Global Age”- as well as the particular case of French-English relations in Canada, which few could ever argue are anything else than overwhelmingly asymmetrical in nature by the author's own definition of this concept. In my case however, I believe my previous assertions and explanations of my self-translated poem quite clearly exemplify both instances of a “horizontal transfer” and “asymmetrical linguistic configurations”, although the latter is perhaps noticeably more prevalent in light of the oppression and minoritization of French in English Canada.

Grutman goes on to state that “at least three categories of self-translators whose linguistic repertoire is characterized by such asymmetry can be distinguished: (1) “(post)colonial” writers who alternate between their native tongue(s) and the European language of the former colonial powers; (2) recent immigrant writers who expand on work begun in their home country while staking out new ground for themselves in the language of their adoptive country; (3) writers belonging to traditional linguistic minorities because of the multilingual make-up of the State of which they are citizens” (p. 188). I find these separate categories to be problematic in the sense that once again they seem to presuppose that there is no possibility of overlap. One must either be (1), (2), or (3), A, B, or C. In my case, although I can claim no part of the second category, since I am a third generation Canadian -although I spent the first three years of my

life in Paris and thus could perhaps almost claim somewhat of an immigrant status simply for my argument's sake- I can still quite clearly identify with both his first and third categories. I am quite clearly of the first category, although I disagree with the qualifier (post)colonial for various reasons which I have previously explored and prefer the terms “anti/decolonial” or “anti-imperial” to it, and also “polemical” and “interfusional” as previously suggested by King: my native tongue is French, and in the particular case of Canada English is the most blatant -or at least most dominant- colonial power. However I am also of the third category, because once again, in the case of Canada, as a Québécois I can easily “be conceived of as belonging to a traditional linguistic minority because of the multilingual make-up of the State” of which I am a citizen.

Both the former and latter expressions of my thoughts on the matter of Grutman's self-translation classifications are simply meant as a critical reflection on the all-too-often limited spectrum of possibilities which are explored and offered by perhaps more traditional translation theorists, something which I believe is quite relevant in relation to the anti-imperial and activist stance which I choose to take in the exercise of my profession as well as in my daily existence, yet I also acknowledge that words routinely fall short of expressing the fullness of our capacities when it comes to theorizing on academic matters, and one is bound to be corrected eventually once they try to encompass an entire discipline within restrictive categories.

In retrospect, if we examine both of these 'stories' being told, by King and myself, we can immediately see the common perspective in them : humour, or more specifically irony and satire, whether it be of the bleak or more poignant variety, becomes the bonding agent for the

reader or listener to assimilate the anti-imperial subversive content being conveyed. King is well aware as many of us are that we live in a sometimes virulently racist, patriarchal and oppressive society which a lot of the population has passively, tacitly or even actively supported and assisted historically. Nonetheless, if we look on the brighter side of things, one could hardly ever argue that significant progress has not been made over the last hundred years.

And I believe this is what King is capitalizing on when he chooses to write such stories; he does so, as he says, in the hope that they may change things. It is quite clear that syncretic Indigenous storytellers are faced with a task which is quite significantly different than that of their predecessors, as previously expressed: most, if not practically all of the aforementioned problems they must contend with and combat in their current forms were indeed non-existent in a pre-contact and contact era, and traditional storytelling focused much more on tacit instructions and examples about general well-being and harmony -or their opposites, as in the case of trickster stories- veiled in mythological constructs that aided their proper processing and transmutation both spiritually/emotionally and mentally/physically. Yet in examining King's stories, as in my own poem, one can easily notice that many mythological constructs are still present, yet in a much bleaker and more irony-tinged context, one which is largely the by-product of hundreds of years of colonization's after-effects, not to mention the current prevalent socio-politically and religiously hegemonic context we still exist in.

Some would once again perhaps still think that with the advent of the ‘postmodern’ age and ‘postcolonial’ studies things have changed, or that if they have not yet, at least society is on the brink of a new era where a global awareness of colonized nations’ plight will usher in the longed-for peace and harmony between peoples which most of us desire. But this may very well be nothing more than an elaborate mirage. If we re-examine more closely the supposed impact of postcolonial studies on Natives, we can easily come to the same conclusion as King when he suggests that “most of us don’t live in university, and I can only imagine that the majority of Native people would be more amused by the gymnastics of theoretical language - hegemony and subalternity indeed- than impressed” (*The Truth About Stories*, 114-115).

Indeed, what is the purpose of semantically abstract, highly theoretical articles and theses scarcely being read by even a minute fraction of the population, this minute fraction being, in this instance, often mainly composed of middle-aged/elderly, White passing male scholars? How could this better First Peoples in any way if a majority of the non-Native population continues to perpetuate and believe in racist or romantic notions of Indigeneity and ethnicity? Marie-Hélène Jeannotte speaks of the origins of these notions when she suggests that “les contacts entre indigènes et conquérants ont produit “une prolifération de textes [...] qui ont fictionalisé l’Indien, devenu alors objet mythique,” jusqu’à offrir une représentation erronée défigurée de l’autochtone” (Gatti, 207). Thomas King also addresses the root of this problem when he suggests that “Most Canadians have only seen Natives through the eyes of non-Native writers, and, while many of these portrayals have been sympathetic, they have also been limited in their variety of characters, themes, structures and images” (*All My Relations*, xi).

King then targets these skewed stereotypes in his introduction to *The Native in Literature*, and illustrates them with examples from Wayland Drew's *The Wabeno Feast*:

“These three visions of the Indian, these masks —the dissipated savage, the barbarous savage, and the heroic savage— should be familiar to any contemporary reader, for they represent the full but limited range of Indian characters in literature. [...] Like the majority of writers who attempt to make serious use of Indians either for themselves or as metaphors, Drew is content to approach and recognize this other world but to go little further in than the masks, the images, which mark the outer boundaries.” (*The Native in Literature*, 8-9)

And these stereotypes are re-explored in a different light with King's characterization of each of the four Aboriginals (himself included) in the panel he speaks of in the excerpt translated : he also himself expresses a few pages after that passage that he is scornfully addressed as an 'apple' (Red on the outside, White on the inside) by an Aboriginal member of the audience wearing traditional Native clothing and jewellery which King had earlier decided against wearing in an effort to break away from stereotypes of Indigeneity. If we go even further than this, and look at the entire spectrum of stereotypes generated by eurocentric societies, we realize, as Kateri Damm suggests, that

“Stereotypes such as the Drunken/Lazy/Promiscuous Indian, or the Noble Savage, or the 19th Century Plains Indian as Prototype, continue to pervade the consciousness of those, both Native and Non-Native, who have been 'educated' through Western institutions. Historically these institutions have acted as tools of the State, often in concert with the Church, to civilize and control Indigenous peoples while nurturing and preserving the righteousness of imperialist attitudes” (Armstrong, 13).

To combat this, there are a limited range of solutions. Perhaps the most effective is literature/oraliture itself, written/spoken and translated first and foremost by Natives, but also by Non-Natives as well, although in the case of the latter, by authors/storytellers and translators who are acutely aware of Native stereotypes and romantic notions and know how to transcend them instead of remaining hopelessly entangled in their midst. For First Peoples, literature thus becomes a tool of resistance against neocolonial, socio-political and religious oppression, as well as an educational one for all those who so desperately need a change of perspective.

In the case of this thesis and the translations within it, I believe my purpose has been at least somewhat fulfilled and has merged with the original intent and goal of this work. In an activist and intersectional sense, I feel as though I have gone significantly beyond the average translator's duty, and tread on a road that sadly enough, very few of my peers have historically walked. And as previously stated, as a Tzigane and multiethnic scholar/student myself, as well as an activist spoken word poet and (self-)translator, I also have a unique vantage point from which to translate King's work, one that makes me quite aware of the pitfalls and possible problems inherent in the translation of orally based Native literature. The latter point only reinforces my strength as a self-translator in the case of my own poem, as my mastery of both languages, my artistic abilities and my activist leanings are considerably useful attributes in the interlingual transposition, or perhaps rather the transmuted of artistically structured thought patterns made verbally and literally manifest.

Like Vizenor's notion of the “postindian”, my primary goal in the translation of First Peoples/diasporic literature/oraliture and poems is to transcend and overturn the restricting, stereotyped and imposed Western European notions of “indianness” by going beyond traditionally imposed translation boundaries, so that the roots of these artistic creations can be nourished into a new, equally beautiful literary/oral growth, rather than uprooting the original work in a futile attempt to plant and revive it in foreign soil.

“For Vizenor, resistance to imposed identification and mis-recognition has to overturn the romantic figure of the Indian created by white culture. What he calls “manifest manners of dominance” invent the “Indian” as tragic *other* and victim of American manifest destiny. [...] While the “*indian* is a simulation, the absence of natives” and has “no referent, memories or native stories”, the “*postindian* must waver over the aesthetic ruins of *indian* simulations. (1998:15) (Siemerling, 93)

Throughout this chapter, I believe what has been consistently made apparent, far past the obvious and vast differences between translation and self-translation, is the amazing resilience of Native culture in the face of overwhelmingly menacing odds, and how this continues to be exemplified when activist, anti-imperial translators and self-translating authors vie to express the inexpressible and translate the untranslatable. These stories/poems, these alternate his/her/theirstories and playful, even mythical reconstructions and contestations of dominant historical paradigms, are examples of how, despite the seemingly never-ending evils of colonization and Christianization, First Peoples, for the most part, remain strong, proud and steadfast, grounded in their spiritual and ancestral knowledge, and continue to evolve and adapt through the myriad problems and complications which they encounter in Western society.

Indeed, they have managed to “translate” various aspects of their culture and spirituality in countless different manners, be they literal or metaphorical, and their oral and literary works continue to blossom in unfathomable languages and ways. Aware of the atrocities and injustices of the past, Indigenous, Inuit, Métis, diasporic & multiethnic authors, poet(esse)s and scholars nonetheless generally remain humorous, optimistic, and tolerant of those around them, seeking overwhelmingly to educate the ignorant and raise awareness through stories of their plight, so that history might not repeat itself once again.

“The truth about stories is that’s all we are. “I will tell you something about stories,” the Laguna storyteller Leslie Silko reminds us, “They are just entertainment/Don’t be fooled/They are all we have, you see/All we have to fight off/Illness and death. You don’t have anything/If you don’t have the stories.” [...] Thomas King speaks of his friend, writer Louis Owens, and says, “we were both hopeful pessimists. That is, we wrote knowing that none of our stories would change the world. But we wrote in the hope that they would” (*The Truth About Stories*, 92).

Chapter 5

The Reality of Ethnic “Minorities” in the Eurocentric Occident, or

How to be a Successful Immigrant in the Western System

by Kikwaakew/Kikwaadju

I believe the analysis of this song/poem is of particular relevance to the topic of the toxic media ecologies which Western society and its global system's offshoots promote, as it intersects with a number of other pressing issues that need addressing/redressing, and also clearly reminds us why the quintessential concept of interconnectedness in First Peoples cultures, which is truly the Grandmother of intersectionality, is so primordially vital. This chapter -and the poem analyzed in it- specifically breaks down and discusses, from my own personal experiences and perspectives as well as scholarly ones, the variations between the levels of discrimination and racism as well as the multifacetedly nefarious mechanisms which support them in the 3 major eurocentric empires on the planet: namely, the United States of America (perhaps with the notable exception of some of California, Oregon and Washington), Canada (minus much of the islands, territories and coastal provinces) and most of Western Europe (of course with the notable exception of Gaelic territories).

The purpose of this work is to give an ironic, idiolectic perspective on death and damage narratives -as a doctoral evolution of my masters thesis- in order to then reflect on the fostering of Afro-Indigenous and diasporic futurist life and desire-based ones, progressing from death towards liminality, then to life, moving beyond current eurocentralized Western historical/academic/artistic narratives and revealing their limited effectiveness in dealing with the issues they claim to foster a better understanding of.

Following the structure of the poem, this chapter is structured in 3 main parts, representing the 3 aforementioned foremost imperial/colonial areas of the globe. Each area is compared and contrasted with the others, and an overall analysis of the global predicament we are in as human beings and hybrid evolutionary sentiences -as well as possible ways to solve it- is offered based on a synergistic synthesis of theories studied and quoted, as well as through artistic and historical experiences.

How to be a Successful Immigrant in the Western System

by Anton Oscar Côté Iorga aka Kikwaakew

People say the USA is a melting pot.

This is what I picture when I hear that hellish thought as a description:

a bunch of monstrously obese morbid European corporate leaders, politicians & coarse elitists

hegemonically chopping up all the diasporic ingredients

in a pot with a lot of genetically modified, salty & oily,

deep fried & boiled pieces of rotten meat

from all of the tortured peoples & slaughtered species bordering extinction...

they'll forcefully take your distinctive essences & herbs like sage, saffron, curry & basil,

& mix them with preservatives & chemicals...

it's ok though, once they're thrown away for THAT long in THIS mixture of soulless 'things',

their distinctiveness will so slowly fade that you won't notice or miss it

and nobody will taste it in the end, they'll eat most of it anyways...

I mean, they need to taste test it before you can all be sated, & you won't be truly,

but they'll say they're just keeping it for You to better preserve Your culture,

the way they see it, it spoils your teeth, it's been turned into a toxic substance...

*but maybe you'll eat what they left to rot & fester like your forgotten ancestors
in their dungeons & unmarked graves & plots that they plundered
while they blotted your Suns with their whitewashed messengers
& hunted your Daughters along with all genders of oracles & non-binary prophets
for their following festin to soulfully dismember them at the solstices like winter & spring...*

colonial seasons they imposed on the 6 pre-existing

(Nepin (S), Tukwakin (F), Mikiskaw (Freeze up),

Pipon (W), Sekwun (Sp), Mithoskumin (Break up)

like the Crees & peoples of Treaty 6 & beyond like the 6 Nations,

like you were some sort of sick patients in their asylums:

Be patient and silent! Be respectful!

If you're psychotic, take some noxious medications to calm you!

now wait for your turn and they WILL serve you... if you're fortunate

cause hey, after all, America IS the whole continent,

so you're all a part of it, stop complaining, ALL of you...

Meanwhile, a bit higher in North America...

Canadians say that this place is a multicultural mosaic of races,

but I say its a mosaic of racism,

and its an extensively selective process involved

in which races and parts of their population are accepted, and others are not,

especially if your thoughts or expressions aren't blessed by the God of Christians

& you don't believe in Jesus or you call him Yeshua, then you're not a part of it at all,

you're just one more discarded piece or shard that got lost in the darkness of your features...

see, Natives & Métis aren't seen as Canadians when they starve in the streets

or try to barter for the Peace or Change that nobody seems to offer

or bothers to keep in store for rainy days when its cold & dark...

yeah sure, they were the First Nations, but they signed a lot of treaties and papers

and they lost their Peaceful & Sacred places to War, disease and racism,

they were conquered & we should all get over it...

or so the story goes & its told so soberly

& they pretend to nobly grieve when they slowly speak it,

but its ok, Canada is postcolonial, yay!!!

And we're an almost perfectly clustered multicultural mosaic

where each culture can show their names and beliefs...

if they don't disobey our own and coincide with the paintings we own

that display who they are like Cigar Store Indians,

& if they explain them in a way that doesn't make Canadians feel grief or feel disrespected...

what a bizarre story of idioms/idiots...

this is our home on Native land, come share it, but we own it!

& we will ban you if you can't pay or invest in our lands & great Nation...

now please Smile for the picture we're taking to show every ethnicity how accepting we are,

& after that, you can stay in our closet... its decently sized

and there's a lot of space for your thoughts inside it. Now pray to God & be prosperous...

or maybe pray to God that you MAYbe prosperous,

it's kinda shady but it seems obvious what you ought to say if you want to make it:

be a carnivore, barter with Satan but not like a pagan,

just pretend that you talk to our God & relate to us...

*And now finally, across these borders to the part of the continent that solely created them
with colonial administrations that soullessly desecrated most of the globe for their greatness
and were so bold as to state that they were the noblest of Creation...*

Europe's Caucasian Occident, home of the 'Greatest' of all 'Civilized' Nations...

*If you're applying for immigration in these parts,
you need to try to relate a lot harder than previously applies,
and specifically, as always, and there are not a lot of exceptions,
if you're Islamic or Gypsy this is probably predictably impossible,
unless you're statistically a part of such a microcosm of these nations and tribes
that happens to be a postdoctoral scholar, an author and Nobel prize laureate
along with perhaps a polyglot, a translator, and a prof,
and maybe a few more aspects relatable and laudable...
but if you happen to be a hip-hopper, an artist and an activist on top of that,
and you talk of marijuana and psychoactives as ways to solve crazy problems,
psycho and hapless impostors & belligerent liars like big pharma
and their passively ignorant doctors with massively rigged and toxic prescriptions to harm you*

*synthetically & factually limit the processes of matchless & limitless thoughts,
& mad Christians from sections of the populace that existed in Caucasus in prehistory
will call you blasphemous and appalling, inadmissible like the ghastly limited,
narrow minded & harrowing scientists & scholars clearly trying to trap you
in infinitely terrible mirages they call empirical science or academics...
obviously they never heard of the concept of science-fiction as speculative,
time-travelling, quantum physics or progress that's logarithmic...
say sayonara to your 'happy' karma honestly, that's not just statistics,
that's a promise from the God of the West... it's not gonna happen for you, it's always a test,
they'll probably block you financially like embargoes with banks and corporate gangsters
with all the rest of Gaia that's conscious & knows democracy is all just a jest,
cops'll always arrest or harass you, colleagues will be morbid & sceptic when they razz you,
family will warn you of stats and problems they're fond of manifesting
when they constantly talk about them as facts till that's what they are as plans destined...
but at this point a sorely lacking and bizarre -yet also handsome- existence
will be what you actually always planned to expect,
people will ask you to answer questions about ethnicity, linguistics,
resistance, and the math of Destiny and many will actively discredit you as you answer them...*

& laugh your ass off at the idiocy of humanity's recessive genetics

grasping onto the strand that economic dominance and egocentric prominence

equals godly status, regal sentience & competence

and that non-conformity and non-compliance means you will fall to the bottom

and be a lost cause as they walk on fecal stretches of waters infected

made up of bleached and modest droplets forgotten...

Welcome to the Western Hegemonic System,

my blessed bredren & sistren & non-binary citizens,

this is your map to this section of the Occident,

do not hesitate to knock at random doors and rely on the kindness of all,

request any form of assistance you can ponder or think of, and rejoice in this kingdom...

More music/poetry, videos and various anticolonial resources all freely available at

www.revoltmotionrecords.bandcamp.com

www.Revolt-Motion.com

Across the planet for many decades now, there have been extensive discussions and heated debates on the various and far-reaching impacts of (neo)colonialism and its corporately hegemonic forces. This is quite meticulously and comprehensively outlined in Lowe's *Intimacies of the Four Continents* (2015), which examines the veil of the illusory liberalism masking imperial ambitions of global dictatorship that much of the Western European based system and its politico-religious institutions hide behind under the guise of proselytizing so-called democratic notions of Peace, equality and progress -which in reality have only been fuelled through War, heteronormativity, patriarchy, objectification and colonization born from racially eurocentric notions- as partially expressed and detailed by Lowe:

“My study could be considered an unlikely or unsettling genealogy of modern liberalism as a project that includes at once both the universal promises of rights, emancipation, wage labor, and free trade, as well as the global divisions and asymmetries on which the liberal tradition depends, and according to which such liberties are reserved for some and wholly denied to others. In this sense, the modern distinction between definitions of the human and those to whom such definitions do not extend is the condition of possibility for Western liberalism, and not its particular exception” (*Intimacy of the Four Continents*, p. 4).

Chakrabarty has suggested in “Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History” (2007) that Europe is the silent referent in historical knowledge, yet I would question the context that this word, 'silent', brings to mind, as it is in fact quite oppositely a very loud imperial/hegemonic referent, and not only in a historical sense but also in a religious, socio-cultural, political, economic, medical, and epistemological sense. In order for this to shift it is not only His-story which must be either entirely erased or at the very least rewritten and reconceptualized -or perhaps greatly expanded to include rather than negate all ethnic/gender 'minority' perspectives-

but also all of these overarching and interrelated parasitic realities. A possible solution to this which has been extrapolated by many different scholars and activists the world over is the drastic remodelling of our current social structure to include alternative forms of, and perspectives on, knowledge, education, spirituality, economic exchange, interpersonal relations and the abolishing of any form of ethnic/gender/social/cultural/intellectual/religious hierarchies born from the predatorial industrialization and commodification of the globe and its natural resources and citizens by colonial nations which countless socio-historical theoreticians and revolutionary thinkers warned us of:

“The classical theorists, while less interested in ethnicity than industrialization, were deeply concerned with the impact of industry on society. They thought it promoted mechanical materialism and undermined social solidarity. These foci are relevant in our discussion of ethnicity because stratification and secularization affect ethnic values such as culture, religion, consciousness of kind, a sense of being a People, and how we relate as racial groups. Marx was concerned with stratification, power and the potential for alienation; Durkheim probed the role secularization and what this does to social cohesion and sacred values. Stratification and secularization affect ethnic identity, which is the point of discussing industrialization here (*Ethnic Pluralism*, p. 9).

This poem encompasses all of the previous and much more, addressing issues underlying the so-called liberal policies of these Western nations, such as the racial dynamics of difference as social relation, and the commodification of the psyche, outlining how capitalism and human alienation dictate most educational institutions' standards for excellence. In McNally's seminal work on anti-capitalism, he reiterates Marx's crucial concept of alienated labor, stating that:

“conscious, creative activity that shapes the environment in which we live in is central to what makes us human. But under capitalism, this essential life activity -social labor- is transformed into work done according to the dictates of capital. What is produced, how it is produced, according to what techniques and under what circumstances is determined by the logic of capitalist accumulation” (*Another World is Possible*, p. 114).

This particular statement is a bleak reality which encompasses much of the daily existence of immigrants in the Occident, whether it be from a refugee's perspective, a worker's or even an academic's. It is indeed symptomatic of the entire Western hegemonic system and how it operates on every level of existence, from psycho-social to economic, political, religious and beyond as already expressed.

The power of poetics is undeniable, even in this modern day secular-industrial society which seeks to destroy or discredit its value, hence why I chose to express these sordid realities from a mythopoetic perspective. Many have argued that modern, overly rational Western society has attempted to subjugate in many ways the value and power of myths, as Joseph Campbell describes it, yet as other theorists have posited their power is still encrypted in sigils and both metaphorical and literal aspects of systemic existence which permeate our lives:

“Modern life has not eliminated the importance of [mythological] notions. While contemporary societies usually do not possess formally canonized myths, mythmaking proceeds apace, and rituals, both modest and bombastic and both old and new, continue to be threaded through social life. Both the humanities and the social sciences now recognize the irrational and a-rational dimensions of industrial society where symbolic expression plays a critical role whether within defined realms like “religion” or “the arts,” or interlaced within economic and political processes. Myth and ritual, as general analytic categories, are no longer

viewed as confined to societies once designated as “primitive,” “folk”, “traditional” or “pre-modern”. Taking on new configurations, they are linked to deeply held ideas, key symbols, and existential dilemmas within contemporary societies (Barthes 1972)”

(“Myth-Ritual-Symbol” in *A Companion to Folklore*, p. 120-121)

Breaking down the inner workings of this commodified reality and the sordid intricacies of its underbelly in a post-apocalyptically ironic, mythologized fashion, this poetic analysis is divided into 3 main sections relating to the 3 specific poems on each socio-geographical area, each of which is deconstructed and examined from an anticolonial, activist perspective, drawing upon the concepts of such notable figures in the resistance movement as King (*Godzilla vs Postcolonial*), Wright (*Stolen Continents*), DuVal (*The Native Ground*), Petras and Morley (*US Hegemony Under Siege*), Elshtain (*Democracy on Trial*), and many more.

1- The United States of America

The concept of the melting pot which the US is (in)famous for, invoking the illusory idea of post-raciality which Goldberg, Ogletree and Da Costa have explored; this idea that all cultures, beliefs and religions are seamlessly blended together -co-existing in harmony in this 'Eldorado', this 'land of milk and honey'- is deconstructed extensively here, the metaphor being rather literally depicted to better express the implications of each aspect. This portion in particular offers an in depth analysis in poetic language of the insidious effects of heteropatriarchy and the interrelation of Smith's three pillars of white supremacy.

People say the USA is a melting pot.

This is what I picture when I hear that hellish thought as a description:

a bunch of monstrously obese morbid European corporate leaders, politicians & coarse elitists

hegemonically chopping up all the diasporic ingredients

in a pot with a lot of genetically modified, salty & oily,

deep fried & boiled pieces of rotten meat

from all of the tortured peoples & slaughtered species bordering extinction...

they'll forcefully take your distinctive essences & herbs like sage, saffron, curry & basil,

& mix them with preservatives & chemicals...

The poem opens up with an extensively detailed culinary metaphor which in fact is simultaneously a very literal statement. The USA is well-known for being the birthplace of GMOs, fast-food, and the cultural appropriation/commodification of practically every ethnic food imaginable; they have also successfully exported these globally and further hegemonically imposed them upon the entire planet, much like the English language and their neocolonially bigoted rhetoric and politics. This is thus quite a relevant starting point, physically expressing that this metaphor of an unhealthy, even toxic melting pot which represents US culture is in fact the perfect analogy for the destruction, desecration and (co)modification of all the foreign cultures which comprise its seemingly harmonious diversity. One need look no further than the incredibly biased and nonsensical foundational statement of this diversity and purported equality in the American Constitution, which Elshtain ironically reminds us of:

“American society is, perhaps, unique among nations in building in from the first a strong presumption for equality as one of the touchstones of its national identity and political culture: all men are created equal. (Need I acknowledge that slaves and women were omitted from the formal definition here articulated and struggled mightily for inclusion?)” (*Democracy on Trial*, p. 68)

Again, here we can easily extend this obvious oversight and lack of inclusiveness not only to slaves and women, but to all immigrants and non-binary/queer citizens who cannot afford to economically contribute to an extent deemed significant and conformist enough for Western eurocentralized institutional standards, whether governmental, academic or otherwise.

it's ok though, once they're thrown away for THAT long in THIS mixture of soulless 'things',

their distinctiveness will so slowly fade that you wont notice or miss it

and nobody will taste it in the end, they'll eat most of it anyways...

I mean, they need to taste test it before you can all be sated, & you won't be truly,

but they'll say they're just keeping it for You to better preserve Your culture,

the way they see it, it spoils your teeth, it's been turned into a toxic substance...

but maybe you'll eat what they left to rot & fester like your forgotten ancestors

in their dungeons & unmarked graves & plots that they plundered

while they blotted your Suns with their whitewashed messengers

& hunted your Daughters along with all genders of oracles & non-binary prophets

for their following festin to soulfully dismember them at the solstices like winter & spring...

colonial seasons they imposed on the 6 pre-existing

(Nepin (S), Tukwakin (F), Mikiskaw (Freeze up),

Pipon (W), Sekwun (Sp), Mithoskumin (Break up)

like the Crees & peoples of Treaty 6 & beyond like the 6 Nations,

like you were some sort of sick patients in their asylums:

Here the culinary metaphor is further developed and expanded with the analogy of Indigenous and Afro-Asiatic ancestors slaughtered and enslaved for the “betterment” of their “great” nation, while simultaneously spiritually discrediting and demonizing their traditions to rather replace them with those of “White washed messengers”, messengers that were originally of various ethnic origins and genders but whose names and faces, like in the Bible, have been deviously modified to fit the model of Eurocentric heteropatriarchal dominance. Here a subtle reference is also made to 666, the “Mark of the Beast”, which is in fact a divine Kemetic proportion, by stating 6 seasons, Treaty 6 peoples, and the 6 Nations, to parallel the demonization of pagan/Indigenous & Afro-Asiatic traditions with the warped Judaeo-Christian notion of Evil, examined from a metagnostic & Sophianic perspective.

As Wright recounts in *Stolen Continents*, “The friars who came to New Spain soon realized that the only way to transform Mexican culture was to understand it. [...] The physician, [Bernardino de Sahagun] wrote, [we] cannot advisedly administer medicines to the patient without first knowing from which source the ailment derives. [...] He was learning about Aztec culture in order to kill it. [...] In 1550, Charles V ordered that all Indians learn Castilian and become Hispanicized. In the 1570s the Inquisition forbade further work in Native tongues. [...] Sahagun ignored the imperial decrees, but late in life he began to bowdlerize his informants' work, cutting, paraphrasing, and moralizing as he went. He intended to boil down the raw data into a sort of handbook for future missionaries” (p. 152-53).

With such a sordidly poetic analogy, one could hardly think of a more fitting quote to illustrate the reality of this culinary metaphor. Indeed, the concept Sahagun and friars are using here of “boiling down” the raw data into a 'fitting' mixture, one which would actively promote their own Christian agenda while still using the language and structure of Aztec peoples, is the perfect example of how such an alteration and whitewashing of original spiritual principles is operated in order to foster the most effective assimilation and eventual obliteration of this culture and those who originated it.

Be patient and silent! Be Respectful! If you're psychotic,

TAKE SOME NAUSEOUS MEDICATIONS TO CALM YOU!

now wait for your turn and they WILL serve you... if you're fortunate,

*cause hey, after all, America IS the whole continent,
so you're all a part of it, stop complaining, ALL of you!!!*

This part of the poem closes with yet another allusion to the Western medical system, where dissidents and rebellious multiethnic citizens who refuse to pledge allegiance to this imperial folly are likened to patients in an insane asylum who are discredited and ridiculed for their non-conformist beliefs and once again forced to ingest toxic substances which the government legally imposes upon them “for their mental betterment”, but truly mainly to force them into conformity and a passive acceptance of their nightmarish reality. These ethnicities are thus paralleled to docile and sedated psych ward patients calmly waiting in line for their nauseating food and toxic medications, which they should be grateful to even have, finally being reminded after that their histories and countries having been assimilated into the US as “America” is a positive thing they should be proud to be a part of.

On the other hand, Canada is also quite (in)famous for its contrasting concept of multiculturalism, this mosaic of cultural elements who are each allowed to 'peacefully' and 'equally' co-exist under the pretence that this is part of what makes Canada so welcoming and open-minded, in stark opposition to its more “ignorant” neighbour (or so the story goes). Again, here this metaphor is also deconstructed to reveal the sordid underbelly of this elusive 'multiculturalism' concept which truly ends up looking much more like a carefully constructed mosaic with some pieces -the most valued cultures, mostly Eurocentrically compliant ones- at

the centre of attention and importance, with others being displayed so selectively on their periphery and being altered so much in the process that they scarcely, if at all, resemble their original counterparts. In this particular portion of the song/poem, the biopolitics of settler colonialism offered by Morgensen is also represented through the exploitation and marginalization of First Nations peoples, which is aiming at their erasure/assimilation in the process of creating a 'better' society, 'free' from the so-called problematic aspects of these (Ab)original peoples who have been purposefully corrupted in order for the legitimacy of their claims and intentions to be questioned and replaced by a New World Order in which they are but a romanticized memory, one where the idea of urban homesteading and fantasizing adoption thus replaces their culture and heritage, as outlined in the article *Decolonization is Not a Metaphor* by Tuck and Yang.

2- Canada

Meanwhile, a bit higher in North America...

*Canadians say that this place is a multicultural mosaic of races,
but I say its a mosaic of racism, and its an extensively selective process involved
in which races and parts of their population are accepted, and others are not,
especially if your thoughts or expressions aren't blessed by the God of Christians
& you don't believe in Jesus or you call him Yeshua, then you're not a part of it at all,
you're just one more discarded piece or shard that got lost in the darkness of your features...*

In this second poem's introduction, the underpinnings of this liberal policy of multiculturalism are analyzed, and the subverted clauses which regulate the “acceptable” cultural elements which may compose it are revealed, expressing how cultures and religious traditions which are too far removed from thinly veiled conservative Christian-Canadian values, such as Islamic, African, Eastern or animistic ones, are both covertly and overtly undermined, even outright rejected or demonized. Furthermore, it has been a rarely argued reality that the welfare of any ethnic group or individual therein who openly questioned or criticized the colonial and Eurocentric nature of mainstream Christianity and its core values and beliefs has been greatly jeopardized through such dissension, particularly in the “Bible Belt”, which bears many a resemblance to the US in its religious and socio-political structure.

see, Natives & Métis aren't seen as Canadians when they starve in the streets

or try to barter for the Peace or Change that nobody seems to offer

or bothers to keep in store for rainy days when its cold & dark...

yeah sure, they were the First Nations, but they signed a lot of treaties and papers

and they lost their Peaceful & Sacred places to War, disease and racism,

they were conquered & we should all get over it...

or so the story goes & its told so soberly

& they pretend to nobly grieve when they slowly speak it,

but its ok, Canada is postcolonial, yay!!!

And we're an almost perfectly clustered multicultural mosaic

where each culture can show their names and beliefs...

if they don't disobey our own

and coincide with the paintings we own

that display who they are like Cigar Store Indians,

& if they explain them in a way that doesn't make Canadians feel grief or feel disrespected...

what a bizarre story of idioms/idiots...

Here we begin to delve into another problematic aspect of Canadian “multiculturalism”, which deals with the fact that in this claimed acceptance of the plurality of cultures there is barely even any space for Canada's (Ab)original cultures, that of the First Nations, Métis and Inuits. Disregarding the fact that they were historically decimated in so many ways that they cannot ever hope to be comprehensively listed and described, a lot of Canadians seem to think that both stereotyping Natives based on realities such as alcoholism and endemic violence that they do not even begin to comprehend the origins of -nor seek to understand in the least as a direct consequence of colonization- as well as discriminating against those who fall victim to these colonial repercussions, is perfectly acceptable and justified in light of the White privilege they do not even acknowledge the existence of. As is widely acknowledged now and as Daschuk reiterates in *Clearing the Plains* in reference to the Fur Trade expansion in Canada:

“Alcohol was increasingly perceived as a problem within First Nations communities. The Canadian advantage in the trade was a steady flow of alcohol from Montreal. The ceremonial consumption of spirits was a feature of trade protocol, but the volume of alcohol brought to the Northwest led to addiction and violence. Edward Umfreville, a trader along the North Saskatchewan in the 1780s, witnessed the growing pathology associated with alcohol: “intoxication, bordering on madness, for two or three days,” and “fifty to one but someone is killed before the morning”” (p. 45).

this is our home on Native land, come share it, but WE own it! & we WILL ban you

if you can't pay or invest in our lands & great Nation. Now please Smile for the picture

we're taking to show every ethnicity how accepting we are, & after that,

you can stay in our closet, its decently sized & there's a lot of space for your thoughts inside it.

In this portion the issue of economic prosperity is addressed, which is to say that for a culture to be accepted or celebrated within this 'cultural mosaic' an overwhelming majority of its constituents must be financially prosperous enough to actively and substantially contribute to Canada's corporate-sponsored economy, otherwise they will both figuratively and literally be rejected (the former in terms of discrimination and stereotyping and the latter in terms of immigration rights & citizenship). Finally, those who ARE accepted after this extensive selection process must blatantly show their appreciation for our acceptance of their diversity in such a way as to promote this illusion of cultural tolerance for the world to see as a promotional tactic to further advertise this country's 'liberal' values. If they do so, they will be allowed a small portion of recognition and living space within “our” Native lands, symbolized here by the metaphor of a closet, which also represents the concept of reserves on the periphery of cities where most citizens seldom, if ever set foot unless they attempt to ceremonially “dress up” to celebrate our “cultural diversity”.

Now pray to God & be prosperous...

or maybe pray to God that you MAY be prosperous,

it's kinda shady but it seems obvious what you ought to say if you want to make it:

be a carnivore, barter with Satan but not like a pagan,

just pretend that you talk to our God & relate to us...

Here again this idea of conforming with Christian traditions is reinforced, at least in appearance, when in reality what is required of such “ethnic minorities” is usually opposite to the values which said religion claims to promote, hence the analogy of being a carnivore and bartering with Satan, yet not like a pagan (once again invalidating non-Christian perspectives), and the semblance of relating to “our” God and culture.

3- Western Europe

Finally, Western Europe is also often lauded for its incredibly rich cultural diversity and history, as well as for its 'neoliberal' policies in regards to many topics such as education, secularism and corporate responsibility, and yet here once again as we dive deeper into the not-so-hidden aspects of Occidental European bigotry and ethnic intolerance, we quickly reveal that this is no more than a shoddily constructed facade in a part of the continent which is solely responsible for the most massive and horrific colonization enterprise of a not-so-modern history, an industrialized colonial factory which in a very real sense has passed on this legacy to the two previous colonies described, who have only gained their 'independence' from the former by enslaving and oppressing other cultures and countries to further expand and glorify their own in a mimetic fashion. Islamophobia and extreme hatred towards Roma peoples - which specifically relates to Smith's Orientalism/War pillar of white supremacy-, academic elitism to an unfathomable extent, and extremist right-wing governments with near-majority status -such as in France and the UK- reveal that Western Europe is indeed the cradle of colonial (un)civilization.

And now finally, across these borders to the part of the continent that solely created them with colonial administrations that soullessly desecrated most of the globe for their greatness and were so bold as to state that they were the noblest of Creation...

Europe's Caucasian Occident, home of the 'Greatest' of all 'Civilized' Nations...

In this introduction, Occidental European “history” and traditions' true origins are laid bare for what they are, namely a white supremacist, hegemonic system of values and beliefs which has been forcefully imposed upon the rest of the planet for the better part of this past millennium, resulting -as stated here- in the creation of the “Third World” & so-called developing countries, and much of the wars, diseases and destruction induced by the violent Christianization/colonization of said countries under the guise of “civilization”, although this ongoing religiously hierarchical assimilation is now often touted as being, if not mostly solved, at least partially mitigated with the advent of 'post-colonialism' as both a discipline and 'reality', as Slemon contends in his article “The Scramble For Post-Colonialism”:

“The obvious tendency is to understand 'post-colonialism' mostly as an object of desire for critical practice: as a shimmering talisman that in itself has the power to confer political legitimacy onto specific forms of institutionalized labour, especially on ones that are troubled by their mediated position within the apparatus of institutional power” (*The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, p. 51).

*If you're applying for immigration in these parts,
you need to try to relate a lot harder than previously applies,
and specifically, as always, and there are not a lot of exceptions,
if you're Islamic or Gypsy this is probably predictably impossible,
unless you're statistically a part of such a microcosm of these nations and tribes
that happens to be a postdoctoral scholar, an author and Nobel prize laureate
along with perhaps a polyglot, a translator, and a prof,
and maybe a few more aspects relatable and laudable...*

Here a partly hypothetical yet very specific example of Eurocentric academic elitism is examined partly based on my own personal experience, reminding us that Western Europe, perhaps best exemplified in the specific instances of Ivy League universities in England (but also in France, Germany and many other countries), is plagued with hyperaccentuated intellectual snobbery in “educational” institutions so rife with white privilege & supremacy and unrealistic academic standards that for an ethnic 'minority' to be successful in such a context is statistically not only highly improbable, but likely impossible --save for a select few akin to jackpot lottery winners whose “success” is solely dependent not only upon their rigorous conformity to the previously stated standards, but also upon such a ludicrously unreasonable amount of academic work, publications and recognition that they would need to be world-renowned polymaths and prodigies to achieve it, particularly if they happen to be of Middle-

Eastern or Roma origin, these two ethnicities being perhaps the most notoriously flagrant victims of bigotry and racial intolerance in Occidental Europe.

*but if you happen to be a hip-hopper, an artist and an activist on top of that,
and you talk of marijuana and psychoactives as ways to solve crazy problems,*

psycho and hapless impostors & belligerent liars like big pharma

and their passively ignorant doctors with massively rigged and toxic prescriptions to harm you

synthetically & factually limit the processes of matchless & limitless thoughts,

& mad Christians from sections of the populace that existed in Caucasus in prehistory

will call you blasphemous and appalling, inadmissible like the ghastly limited,

narrow minded & harrowing scientists & scholars clearly trying to trap you

in infinitely terrible mirages they call empirical science or academics...

obviously they never heard of the concept of science-fiction as speculative,

time-travelling, quantum physics or progress that's logarithmic...

Here the limitations of the previously stated, quite ridiculous requirements for success in academia in Western Europe are made explicit -again, from my own perspective and experience-, reminding those that might think they could somehow 'escape' these restrictions through excessively prolific intellectual proficiency that if they happen to be too openly

anticolonial, anti-conformist or even slightly on the fringes of what is considered to be acceptable and credible academic research, they should harbour no such 'delusions' if they wish to preserve any of their social and professional status and credibility. Furthermore, these potential suitors of European academia are also reminded that even valid scientific and academic research in their areas of predilection will likely not be recognized as such -even if it is tacitly tolerated to an extent-, the oxymoron seemingly apparent in this being that Eurocentric academic institutions will only accept activism and diversity work and research to the superficial extent that it can promote the illusion of their acceptance of such things without openly criticizing or compromising the Western hegemonic foundations of their structures and hierarchies, as Ahmed's interviewees clearly describe in her groundbreaking work "On Being Included: *Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life*".

*say sayonara to your 'happy' karma honestly, that's not just statistics,
that's a promise from the God of the West... it's not gonna happen for you, it's always a test,
they'll probably block you financially like embargoes with banks and corporate gangsters
with all the rest of Gaia that's conscious & knows democracy is all just a jest,
cops'll always arrest or harass you, colleagues will be morbid & skeptic when they razz you,
family will warn you of stats and problems they're fond of manifesting
when they constantly talk about them as facts till that's what they are as plans destined...
but at this point a sorely lacking and bizarre -yet also handsome- existence*

will be what you actually always planned to expect,

people will ask you to answer questions about ethnicity, linguistics, resistance, and the math of

Destiny and many will actively discredit you as you answer them...

& laugh your ass off at the idiocy of humanity's recessive genetics

grasping onto the strand that economic dominance and egocentric prominence

equals godly status, regal sentience & competence

and that non-conformity and non-compliance means

you will fall to the bottom and be a lost cause

as they walk on fecal stretches of waters infected

made up of bleached and modest droplets forgotten...

In these concluding strophes, many alternate limitations and restrictions for activist ethnic 'minority' academics are listed, reiterating the reality that there has often been no “happy karma” inherent in these endeavours, and one had to generally accept to be discredited and ridiculed on a daily basis for virtually all that they did and believed in, not only from family members who feared for the safety and future of their sibling/child, but far more so from skeptic and hostile/threatened colleagues, administrators and supervisors whose credibility and economic viability was threatened when they supported the conclusions of these activist scholars challenging the validity of this oppressively hegemonic system of education, indeed the very nature and fabric of society itself. In the end, these misfit academics were reminded

that a healthy appreciation of the starkly revolting irony of this society and of Life itself in such rigidly structured institutions was perhaps the only way to survive such an ordeal without folding or collapsing under the formidable pressure of the oxymoronic realities they had to bear in their quest for the validation of their work and art and their ideally viable applications.

*Welcome to the Western Hegemonic System,
my blessed bredren & sistren & non-binary citizens,
this is your map to this section of the Occident,
do not hesitate to knock at random doors and rely on the kindness of all,
request any form of assistance you can ponder or think of, and rejoice in this kingdom...*

Finally, this last portion of the ultimate poem closes with a very sarcastic statement telling immigrants of all walks of Life coming to these parts of the world, particularly non-binary/queer ones, that they should not hesitate to seek friendly assistance from any and every person they encounter along their path to success, and that they will inevitably be helped and find happiness in this “land of opportunity”.

Beyond this, a large portion of this poem/song also relates specifically to articles such as “Suspending Damage: *A Letter to Communities*” by Tuck on the pathologizing affect of this damage narrative on First Peoples, which applies to the US as well but is much more

widespread and apparent there in terms of other ethnicities, its effects being somewhat mitigated in comparison in Canada relative to non-Indigenous peoples.

This poem itself seems very damage-based in its rhetoric, which some may argue is perhaps not so different from being oppositely culturally or romantically nationalist in a reverse-ethnocentric sense, but this may simply be more in terms of its criticism of falsely democratic imperialism, the desire implicit in this criticism being that this drastic shift of awareness fostered can function as a shock therapy of sorts, where the individual who gains awareness of this suddenly finds themselves in a situation where it is literally impossible to negate the reality being expressed, which is accentuated by the mnemonic and hypnotic, neurolinguistically deprogramming/hacking effect of the phonemes, words, rhythms and rhyme structures being used. As well, articles such as *the Study of Racism* truly frame the context of this poem in the sense of addressing a plethora of interwoven and interconnected factors which trigger and foster the growth of racist events within society rather than simply targeting specific instances, politico-religious doctrines or structures.

Romantic and cultural nationalism have greatly influenced the past centuries in terms of stereotypes and characterizations of nations and the individuals within them, such as the romanticization of the “dying Indian” as in the *Last of the Mohicans*, *Pocahontas* and countless others. Oppositely racist stereotypes which are explored here have been apparent more recently as well with the resurgence of white nationalism such as the concept of “lazy Mexicans” or “drunken Indians”, or “immigrants stealing our jobs” (I've always pondered the irony of how

'lazy' immigrants could also simultaneously be 'stealing' all the jobs from 'hard-working' European-Americans/Canadians in a white supremacist system), etc. As Nahachewsky suggests in his overview of romantic nationalism:

“Cultural nationalism continues to influence many people's thinking profoundly today (Motyl "Cultural nationalism" 2001). (It's a part of popular culture that is spread by newspapers, movies, government agencies and in many other media.) Ideas about culture and about nationalism have changed since the 19th century however, and certain specific views of romantic nationalism are no longer generally accepted by most serious thinkers in these fields. In particular, the idea that nations are distinct, natural, primordial groups with definite set cultures, has lost most of its support in Western academia. Nations and ethnic groups are more commonly seen as "imagined communities" resulting from a convergence of historical factors and ideas since the mid 18th century (Anderson 1991 [1983]: 4). They exist because people believe they exist. When they stop being powerful symbols for a community, they disappear.

This change in the perception of nations and ethnic groups influences our understanding of the other tenets of romantic nationalism. The whole idea of "purity" versus "contamination" loses its salience if the "national character" is a set of continuously re-negotiated symbols rather than a primordial predisposition” (*Romantic Nationalism*, p. 2-3).

Ultimately, many solutions to this seemingly inextricable anti/colonial conundrum we are trapped in have been offered, academically and otherwise, and so extensively researched, funded, promoted and studied that the only logical and sensible conclusion one can come to in regards to why this has not been globally eradicated -and rather has historically proliferated in myriad fashions, both subversively and overtly- is that this is, as many of the previous scholars quoted have expressed, a widespread deception that the leaders of socio-economic, religious and political forces at play have orchestrated in order to stall the evolution and symbiosis of humankind as long as they possibly could, so that they could once more find a way to psycho-

socially, economically, physically, emotionally & spiritually exploit this illusion of progress while simultaneously subversively fostering a polarly opposite reality for the quasi-entirety of the globe's citizens. In reaction to this bleak and sordid reality, many worldwide activist/revolutionary groups and organizations (Anonymous and Wikileaks perhaps being two of the most globally recognized ones technologically speaking; Amnesty International, Extinction Rebellion, Greenpeace & Sea Shepherds being other pillars of more grassroots and socio-ecological non-profits) as well as dissident academics and anti-conformists of all walks of life have continued to organize and structure various parts of de/reconstructive blueprints to a harmoniously and ideally functional world where these nefarious forces no longer have any form of control over the planet. I firmly believe that, as many have expressed before, no one solution is ultimately the most effective on its own; rather what is needed is a unification of the best and most effective of them, reminiscent perhaps of the concept of Unified Field Theory and quantum physics/mechanics, so that all of the pieces to the ever-evolving puzzle of this new multi/transethnic reality we wish to create can come together syncretically in a sustainably revolutionary fashion in the wake of a global shift of consciousness.

Chapter 6

Self-translation as/and Activist Translation

As the advent of the 'postmodern' and theoretically appointed 'postcolonial' ages have brought to the forefront of academic attention, the global history of First Peoples has been mired and desecrated by countless aspects of Judaeo-Christian colonialism and imperialism which have persisted far longer than they ever should have. And of course, as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis posits that languages not only influence but may even entirely construct our realities and the perspectives they are formed from -something which colonial forces were obviously acutely aware of when they imposed linguistic hegemonies to overtake, erase, assimilate and replace First Peoples' languages and beliefs with languages such as English, French and Spanish and the socio-political and religious realities embedded within them- it follows logically that the creative and activist translation of these colonial histories and the poetry, writings, myths and stories which were oftentimes partially born as an anticolonial reaction to them, as well as the cultural revival of ancient traditional practices and belief systems to counter these sordid realities, are necessarily a quintessential part of properly honouring these First Peoples and cultures of the Rainbow Tribes and Medicine Wheel, indeed to all of existence.

As such, self-translation is even more so primordial to the emancipation from neocolonial realities Native, Métis, Inuit and multiethnic/diasporic peoples in general find themselves embedded within -much against their own will- since it allows for a direct expression of their realities and experiences within eurocentrically linguistic constructs which, without their own anticolonial and activist backgrounds and the ability to self-determine the semantic fields and parameters of what is originally being expressed in their poetry, writings, stories and myths, has otherwise often been lost -or at the very least significantly distorted and/or corrupted/repurposed- by translators who, even with the best of intentions, could not possibly have fully rendered the depth, intensity, complexity and soulful nature of an experience which they had not personally lived, and had likely been quite detached from in terms of their understanding of it.

If we look at the most famous examples of self-translation -many of which, predictably enough, fall within the canon of Western European literature- we clearly find that a number of these authors express the same previously worded concerns as the main reason for wanting to have creative and editorial control over their works: from Nabokov, Brodsky, Kundera, Kafka & Ionesco in Eastern Europe, Calvino, Conrad, Joyce & Beckett in the West, as well as Borges, Green and Huston in the Americas; to Xiao Qian, Lin Yutang, Eileen Chang (Zhang Ying) & Bai Xianyong in China, & myriad others such as Brink & Krog in South Africa, wa Thiong'o in Kenya & Tagore, Kamala Das, Karnad & Hyder in India, or Bouudjedra, Djebbar & Sari in Algeria, to name but a few.

“The phenomenon of self-translation (ST) has been neglected in literary history and translation theory since it was regarded as idiosyncratic anomaly. It was called “another vast territory without history” (Bastin & Bandia, 2006: 22). The issue has become an object of theoretical studies only recently. Nowadays it is obvious that self-translation deserves close attention. In this case the source and the target texts are produced by the same person, that is the degree of their equivalence is extremely high. In general, self-translation implies that the author recreates his or her work in another language. Besides, self-translation often generates linguistic forms that can enrich the target language. Therefore, the subject is relevant and very important for translation theory.” (*An Investigation into Self-Translation*, p. 1261)

As previously expressed in the prior chapter *A Poetics of the Oppressed*, the eurocentric/Judaean-Christian view of history, and furthermore even the very etymological roots of all the languages with which it has been projected, have been fraught with embedded meanings of psycho-socially and politico-religiously deceptive 'realities' meant to subvert and overtake those of the cultures they claimed only to seek to 'describe' and 'analyze'. This comes as no surprise to most postmodern & anticolonial scholars, and indeed has been the very foundation of their academic analysis within their respective disciplines, hence why an activist stance in the matter of translation -indeed in all disciplines- is most crucial in remaining as unbiased as possible within the constraints of human consciousness. Yet more often than not this claim to objectivity has been confused with that of neutrality. To the discerning reader of history however, neutrality in the face of such horrors and abominations -masked under the Foucauldian panoptical gaze of 'progress and prosperity'- is never a 'neutral' option.

“In Eurocentric cultures people think of the Bible and Greek and Roman literature as part of “their” literary system, even though very few people read Hebrew, Greek, or Latin at present. Similarly Buddhists around the world claim the sutras for their own, as Islamic cultures do the Qur’an, whatever the vernacular language of the culture. Within

social systems as a whole, translations ground cultures, establish affiliation, construct identities, and enable appropriation. Descriptive studies have also established that the role of translation across systems is far from uniform: it is correlated with dominance and power, as well as local norms. Thus, in cultures such as the United States, translations play a smaller part in and constitute a smaller percentage of the total field of publication than is the case in Italian or Norwegian culture, for example. Awareness of the function of translation in constructing the asymmetries of cultural systems and inequities in cultural power becomes ever more urgent as media translation inserts quantities of material from dominant societies into the social space of peoples around the globe” (*Translation, Resistance, Activism*, p. 6-7).

Tymoczko speaks in her above quoted seminal work of the advent of this awareness in translation studies post-WWII, once Toury's observations on the subject began to be deconstructed and expounded upon to find the inherent exceptions within them (5). And yet as other scholars in this book have expressed on the subject of the colonization and decimation of the Americas, we need to be aware of the fact that far before translation studies were even a concrete field of research, complex psycho-social mechanisms were already consciously at play in the minds of the friars, priests, scientists and *conquistadores* who came here with the intention to 'document' and 'translate' various aspects of First Peoples' beliefs, languages and practices for posterity's sake, or rather more perhaps for their own glory and prosperity at the expense of the latter's.

“On the one hand historical discourses tend to reflect ideological positions that portray the views of a specific social group, Eurocentric positions for the most part in this particular field. On the other hand the first documents produced to report the happenings of the time were registered by people who were in most cases simultaneously actors in and reporters of the historical events. Translators, like other actors in history, do not function in a vacuum; rather they are social beings and as such espouse ideologies and identities that are particular to their social contexts. Román Álvarez and M. Carmen-África Vidal note: Translators are constrained in many ways: their own ideology, their feelings of

superiority or inferiority towards the language in which they are writing, the text being translated, the prevailing poetical rules at that time, the very language in which the texts they are translating is written, what the dominant institutions and ideology expect of them, the public for whom the translation is intended. The translation itself will depend upon all of these factors. (1996:6).” (*Translation, Resistance, Activism*, 42-43)

Translation has been such an insidious Trojan horse of sorts for hegemonic/colonial cultures: who could have truly suspected, as these new beings and cultures came across seas to 'expand' their world views, 'trade' and 'exchange' items, cultural baggage and stories, that they would be using this oral and literary device for anything other than simply seeking to better understand and grasp the new beliefs of civilizations and linguistic realities they were faced with, as well as simply to better express themselves? Who could have possibly surmised that such beings would in fact use these languages to overtake and rescript the very traditions and languages of near-mythological beings they were purportedly only seeking to 'document and preserve', like Darwin with rare tropical species of fauna brutally slaughtered, only to be bathed and preserved in tiny jars of formaldehyde, with quaint labels on them bearing their newly adopted scientific Roman names?

“For centuries Western Europe has imaged translation as a type of transfer, whether that transfer took the form of passing on the methods of rhetoric or oratory from the Greeks to the Romans or whether it involved moving lexis and semantic meaning to a target culture. The metaphorical conceptualization of translation as primarily a process of cross-linguistic transference— a communicative process in which content is transmitted from one language to another— is reified in the English word translation, which comes from Latin roots meaning 'to carry across', as well as words in other dominant Western European languages, including Spanish *traducción*, French *traduction*, and German *Übersetzung*, which are based on similar conceptualizations. Western writing about and theorizing of translation have also commonly been rooted in similar assumptions about the primacy of semantic meaning and communication

in translation, often resulting in normative and prescriptive statements about the process and products of translating. These expansions in translation studies traced a trajectory away from technical questions about how to translate per se toward larger ethical and political perspectives on the activity of translating, on the functions of translation products in relation to power, and on the agency of translators. Implicit in many of these discourses are ideological questions, including the constructivist aspect of translation, the nature of representation in translation, and the transculturation of cultural forms and values” (*Translation, Resistance, Activism*, 3-4).

In light of all the previous observations, it becomes readily apparent why self-translation is itself not only the next but indeed the ultimate evolutionary stage in the process of activist translation for a plethora of reasons, the primary one -encompassing and surpassing all others- being that it represents the pinnacle of the author's emancipation from outside (read: (neo)colonial) influences and any potential distortions/repurposing of their intended meanings and works in general. If we look specifically at self-translation in the context of the Indigenous Americas, the dominant colonial languages undoubtedly being English, French and Spanish (and to a lesser extent Portuguese), a linguistically hegemonic legacy which has subdued and even at times permeated my consciousness significantly, both from an oral/literary and cultural as well as bio and mythogenetic standpoint to a lesser extent thanks in no small part to rape, religious hierarchies and slavery, it is not hard to see how the translation of (Ab)original anticolonial realities into these (neo)colonial languages -indeed even more so from a diasporically Indigenous perspective- without a self-determined and autodidactic, vigilant and militant activist awareness imbued into every syntactic and semantic aspect being self-translated could easily become at once extremely subversively and overtly problematic, not to mention masochistic even, as it was for countless First Peoples the world over when they were

unwittingly & unwillingly colonized, Christianized and Anglicized/Hispanicized/Franchised (pardon the latter pun, but it is quite etymologically and historically accurate).

“For many Russian émigrés, for many Scandinavian writers, for many Indians or writers from the Maghreb, the decision to self-translate may be motivated by a myriad of practical, political or commercial factors. Without excluding such writers from the possibility that their practice might also be masochistic, those who write between major languages are clearer cases for the critic as analyst. At the very least, we must make a rather schematic distinction here between major and minor languages. For instance, the Scottish poet and novelist Christopher Whyte is a native Anglophone who writes in Scots Gaelic and has produced bilingual editions of his work. Yet, Whyte has written: ‘self-translation has in my case always been done under duress. It has never been done with either pleasure or satisfaction’ (67). Authors like Whyte who write in minority languages but who are proficient in major languages – especially English, French or Spanish – are subject to pressures from both publishers and readers to produce a supposedly definitive translation of their work, not to mention a more marketable bilingual edition. Such obligations, and the very different financial reality of publishing in a minor language, immediately set these authors apart from cosmopolitan self-translators.” (Self-Translation: Brokering Originality in Hybrid Culture, p. 86)

If we peer into a hypothetically alternate past timeline where self-translation had been the norm and First Peoples worldwide had been educated in the intricacies of anticolonial and activist writing and discourse in the process of learning the languages of subversively invasive nations, one can only imagine the colossal difference this would have made, for example, in the translation of the Bible into their Native languages -and its inherently genocidal principles- giving us perhaps a story much akin to the previously mentioned “One Good Story, That One”, or “A Coyote Columbus Story” from King, where Native peoples would have seen these bloodthirsty religious figures, anthropologists and conquistadores coming a mile away and said “No thank you, we know exactly what you're trying to do here, and none of us are even

remotely interested. No free slaves, gold, resources or anything else for you. Pack up your bags and go back where you came from. Have a nice trip.”

“Old Coyote still thinks that Christopher Columbus is playing a trick. She thinks it is a joke. That is a good joke, she says, trying to make me think that you are going to sell my friends. And she starts to laugh again. Grab some more Indians, says Christopher Columbus. When Old Coyote sees Christopher Columbus grab some more Indians, she laughs even harder. What a good joke, she says. And she laughs some more. She does this four times and when she is done laughing, all the Indians are gone. And Christopher Columbus is gone and Christopher Columbus's friends are gone, too. Wait a minute, says old Coyote. What happened to my friends? Where are my Indians? You got to bring them back. Who's going to play ball with me? But Christopher Columbus didn't bring the Indians back and Old Coyote was real sorry she thought him up. She tried to take him back. But, you know, once you think things like that, you can't take them back. So you have to be careful what you think. So. That's the end of the story. Boy, says Coyote. That is one sad story. Yes, I says. It's sad alright. And things don't get any better, I can tell you that” (*One Good Story, That One*, p. 125-26).

The analysis of this story in itself is a good metaphor for the intrinsic power which lies in the anticolonial repurposing of English and French from an Indigenous perspective, as in this case I personally translated this story into French, and King himself, employing his own idiolect infused with various Native mythological and orally linguistic elements similar to Pidgin and Mitchif, could be said to have performed a self-translation of sorts on a metalinguistic level.

However, since much has already been said -particularly in the past decade- on the subject of self-translation, and most of it is from the perspective of mainstream, world-renowned authors/self-translators who once again have often sadly mainly been of European/Western backgrounds, not to mention that a lot of what has been written on the subject as such has

emanated from writers and academics who were more-often-than-not *not* self-translators themselves, let alone even translators in many cases -strangely ironic, yes-, I have rather chosen in this case to speak from my own perspective as a multiethnic self-translator, to analyze and relate my own experiences and opinions on this emerging subject, reinforced and validated of course by those of the numerous other authors, artists and intersectional academic activists which I have been inspired and guided by.

Perhaps the most obvious reason which comes to mind for my own self-translation -in my experience as a published translator of two bestselling novels (and more in the works)- is the acute awareness of the limitations which conventional, commercially-guided translation entails and the hierarchy inherent within its structures, from the culturally estranged editors and the corporate publishing houses who hire them -seemingly only to subtract a more substantial dividend from the final translation's paycheck and further complicate and mire the translator's work in the process- to the harrowing lack of any recognition or credit for the creative authorship of said translation, not to mention the fact that translators are always the first ones to be blamed for any perceived shortcoming, as well as any typographical, contextual, semantic, syntactic or grammatical error therein. In comparison, self-translation seems like a beautiful day at a secluded beach on an uncharted island, far from the nightmarish realities and expectations of plutocratically industrial urban society and its endlessly pervasive ramifications, though of course I am well aware that the reality of the matter is quite different.

“Research to date has shown that self-translators bestow upon themselves liberties of which regular translators would never dream; self-translation typically produces another ‘version’ or a new ‘original’

of a text. What is being negotiated is therefore not only an 'original' text, and perhaps the self which wrote it, but the vexatious notion of 'originality' itself. Most scholars of translation are aware of Lawrence Venuti's persuasive demonstration that historically valuing and requiring the translator's invisibility from the text sustained pressure upon the translator to suppress his or her originality. Indeed, this fetishizing of the 'original' maintained the myth of the translator's invisibility, or lack of originality. It follows, thus, that the special status accorded to, and assumed by, the translator who is also the author of the original means that the self-translator is unique in not being sanctioned for overtly exercising creativity in translation" (*Self-Translation: Brokering Originality in Hybrid Culture*, p. 3).

The concept of a self-translator as such is a strange one, one in which the author often cannot or does not wish to trust anyone else with their works for variously obvious reasons, including the ones previously stated. Living in what could easily be described at times as a paranoid-delusional literary world view by the more conventional/rational-minded critics, or perhaps more descriptively, in an odd form of anticolonially multiethnocentric solipsism for activists such as myself, the self-translator chooses to place themselves above any other authority for the very clear reason that they accept none other than their own in the matter of their works and interpretations/transpositions into other cultures/languages; they live in a consciously chosen, self-imposed form of exile from the literary world and its socio-economically imperial apparatus which dictates the capitalist desire for the propagation of seminal works in all hegemonic languages as quickly and efficiently as possible, with little regard for the artistic and creative requisites of the (Ab)original author, the emphasis instead being placed on their legibility and accessibility to the wider public in most cases:

“The problem of geographical and linguistic exile is fundamental in understanding how language loss, the work of memory and trauma as the violent deformation of a constituted knowledge (Harel 154; Bohórques 89–90) play a fundamental role in the endless process of narration, whose main goal is the reconfiguring and repositioning of the self in a new language and in a different time and space.^[1] The motif of the non-linear and anachronistic character of memory and the experience of exile is central to the literature of exile. The narrator of the Nabokov novel [The Gift](#) expresses it in terms of ‘the material metamorphoses which are taking place in us’ (428), while Józef Wittlin, an exiled [Polish](#) writer, states that:

In Spanish, there exists for describing an exile the word “desterro”, a man deprived of his land. I take the liberty to forge another term, “destiempo”, a man deprived of his time. The time of the exile is different. Or rather the exile lives in two different times simultaneously, in the present and in the past. This life in the past is sometimes more intense than his life in the present and tyrannises his entire psychology. (88) Even still, being an exile does not always mean being stuck in the past; it can also mean a full investment in the present, the here and now. In this sense, self-translation appears to be a powerful means of inscribing the self in a new language and environment” (Self-Translation: Brokering Originality in Hybrid Culture, p. 193-194).

This self-imposed psycho-social exile from the mainstream literary world at large -and its ramifications- is also largely a by-product of a linguistic event as Brodsky expresses it, one in which the self-translator consciously chooses the foreign languages to either adopt or further hone into professional tools/weapons with which the optimal or desired dissemination of their literary works will occur. In my own case, my father's Native language, Inuktitut, was never taught to me, as he disappeared when I turned five and I was then taught by Catholic nuns in a private elementary all boy boarding school, one where Native languages and any related beliefs in general -which my father had fostered daily in me as a child with countless legends, myths, and Nature excursions- were demonized in a neoresidential fashion, as I previously detailed in the prologue and *AMIAAQ Indigenous Masculinities* conference in 2015.

As such, I was left with English instead as my paternal tongue, and French as my maternal one, since my non-status Iberian/Hebraic métis mother's Indigenous languages and heritage (Plains Cree, Mik'maq & Mohawk, to the best of my limited knowledge, as matriarchal lineages have often historically been lost/disregarded/socio-politically invalidated) were also erased and assimilated at least 2 generations prior in the course of the continuation of the French Catholic colonization of Quebec. Spanish, which was my mother's 3rd language, and also part of my cultural heritage (along with Portuguese) as I much later found out, thus became my (anti)colonial language of preference as a late teenager, since it symbolized the bridge to me between those two colonial cultures and linguistic realities, despite being a colonial language itself.

There is something to be said about Spanish's South American variants as sharply contrasted with Spain's, much like the difference between UK English and African-American urban dialects, or Latino Spanglish, or even France French as compared to Eastern Canadian Québécois or Acadian dialects, the latter from which much of Louisiana's Créole was partially derived. To me this is also quite reminiscent of other variants of Pidgin, Patois & Créole across the globe in previously colonized nations who still chose to adapt and evolve, as well as symbolically -rather than iconically- hybridize socio-linguistic and religious aspects of both cultures as they saw fit to better (re)create their own.

This is in many senses exactly what I did with my use of bi/tri/multilingual poetry, which in some cases such as the *Ghosts in the Machine* album even became a polyglot mosaic of sorts, as I decided to include elements of Sanskrit -in honor of my Tzigane roots, tracing back to India over a millenia ago-, Sumerian, Arabic & Kemetic -in memory of my father's Middle/Near Eastern & more distant North African origins from which my birthname was derived, as well as the mythological and etymological origins of the Torah and Bible's Genesis which I was forced as a child and teenager in the Western religious educational system-, Mandarin & Japanese -going back to my East Asiatic roots, which I was not even aware of until a recent DNA test-, and various fragments of Indigenous languages such as Mayan, Cree, Blackfoot & Lakota Sioux, which I mostly gained in the process of reconnecting with my Native roots and the local and global communities that represented them.

“Iconic hybridity singles out its speaker. By foregrounding the speaker’s linguistic idiosyncrasy it portrays him or her as departing from the norms of what is considered standard in the narrative. Symbolic hybridity, on the other hand, signifies not a language variety, but a language, or more precisely, it represents what is considered to be the standard variety of this language. Unlike iconic hybridity, it does not allow conclusions to be drawn about a speaker’s level of education or his or her social class, but solely about his or her ethnic origin and therefore about his or her cultural values and beliefs. Hence, symbolic hybridity reflects the ideational point of view of a particular ethnic group, insofar as it represents a whole culture, and therefore does not tell us anything about the cognitive characteristics of its speakers as individuals, while iconic hybridity reflects either the mind style of a group of people or the mind style of a single person” (*Self-Translation: Brokering Originality in Hybrid Culture*, p. 118).

Still, I seemed to have innately understood that not only grasping but also mastering the most powerful and pervasive colonial languages on this planet was perhaps the only viable way to counter and eventually invert the insidious hegemony they represented; for as much as I would like to have been born speaking only the (Ab)original and diasporic tongues of my varied ancestries and thus perhaps have felt less like a permanent exile and alien in the midst of a strange land whose customs and beliefs I could not properly fathom, I also realize that being raised with and within three of the most dominant colonial languages and cultures on the planet -in the midst of a country prided for its multicultural acceptance- was in many senses an ideal way for me to develop into the scholar I am today, despite the cultural detachment, isolation and hollowness this assimilation has fostered within me: language is clearly one of the biggest problems an (im)migrant or exiled author encounters.

In "The Condition We Call Exile," Joseph Brodsky claimed that

"For one in our profession, the condition we call exile is, first of all, a linguistic event ... What started as a private intimate affair with the language, in exile becomes fate — even before it becomes an obsession or a duty" (108). Exile leads to isolation, one is on one's own, alone with oneself, and with one's language, and no one and nothing between them: language is one of the most dramatic experiences in exile. According to Amin Maalouf in his 2000 *In the Name of Identity*, language is usually one of the elements that betrays the (im)migrant: the accent, the syntax, grammatical gender, etc. Out of all allegiances, Maalouf considers language to be the most decisive because within our identity it usually comes even before religion (131). But Maalouf also insists on the importance of admitting that different linguistic allegiances may live in peaceful coexistence within our identity. The only answer for Maalouf is a voluntary policy aimed at strengthening linguistic diversity and based on a simple idea that "nowadays everybody obviously needs three languages. The first is his language of identity; the third is English. Between the two we have to promote a third language, freely chosen, which will often but not always be another European language" (*Translation and self-translation in today's (im)migration literature*, p. 3)

The latter is exactly why I am still grateful for the knowledge and mastery of the colonial languages which I presently have: some purists and hardline activists could perhaps say that Maalouf, by expressing that 2 out of 3 potential languages known should likely be European, of which one should assuredly be English, is in fact an advocate of assimilation and the erasure of multiethnic identities and a diaspora of minority languages which so desperately need reviving; and yet I cannot but sympathize with his point of view here, as I overstand the implicit awareness within it that we would likely never have an even remotely similar global impact as self-translators should we have chosen to write and speak only in minority languages within a neocolonially hegemonic and eurocentric world system.

To come back full circle to where we begun, I would like to re-emphasize why ST is so crucial in the discipline of translation studies, especially at the historically critical point we have reached in terms of corporately sponsored globalization and its extensive impact upon all of academia and the literary world at large: as both anti and decolonial activist scholars, translators and authors, we can no longer afford to be at the mercy and whim of non-kindred editors and corporate publishing houses who have no desire to support our works' core beliefs and artistic essence other than when it involves the promise -or at least the strong hint- of an economically prosperous contract for them, nor can we let random translators we know little to nothing about -and with whom we have little or no time to engage with- decide of the shape and structure, indeed the fate of our poetry, works and creations. This would be tantamount, as many have previously expressed in different ways, to giving up our creative and artistic control, our imaginations and the products of their creativeness, to the whims and wills of corporations

hiding behind the veil of the corrupted individuals indirectly speaking and working on behalf of them, as unwittingly as they often may be.

Granted, the privilege of self-translation is still a rare one as I write this, and this cannot yet become the norm in this discipline, as there is a long road to walk to get to the point where all of us have regained our polyglot, multicultural/multilinguistic heritages to such an extent as to be able to always represent ourselves; I and I can acknowledge how utopian such a statement may seem in the present. However this is in no way a cry for the death of what some may call traditional translation, but rather a reminder, nay even an encouragement to more intimately connect on a personal level with existing translators, authors and artists, to ensure that whatever may happen in the future in this discipline remains a collective effort in a grassroots sense rather than a corporately sponsored one, one in which an intersectionally activist awareness of the previous history of this discipline and its nefarious multifaceted uses as a weapon of covert linguistic warfare for colonial and economic benefit is always present in our minds.

“A substantial number of self-translating authors turn to self-translation for only one reason: to prevent, or otherwise discourage, a translation by commissioned translators. This motive can be realized in a variety of ways, and can stem from both empirical evidence (such as reading a translation of a text prepared by a commissioned translator) or on purely theoretical grounds [...]. This theme is often detectable in authors' complaints about unsatisfactory translations, in authors' assertions that their texts will be unsatisfactory rendered by translators and in authorial interventions into the translation process. Self-translators certainly change their texts, and commissioned translators do too. But in self-translation many authors do it because they are dissatisfied with the transformation as evidenced in commissioned translations. Accepting that regularities of behaviour are evidence of norms, it is possible to tentatively conclude that such behaviour of authors is certainly of a normative nature. In addition to the case of Lilliana Lungina, this

tendency is evident in the case of Joseph Brodsky, a Russian émigré and a Nobel-prize winning poet. Christopher Whyte noted that Brodsky must be one of the most notorious examples of self-translators, —who, after intervening massively in the translations of his Russian originals by other hands, began to do his own, even, where he saw fit, adding further stanzas to a poem in its new English format (Whyte 64)” (*On Literary (ab)normality & Self-Translation*, p. 43-44)

Chapter 7

From Sumerians to Superheroes,

From Ancient Oracles to their (Re)incarnated Offspring:

How Modern Comics & Music are Changing the Face of Faith

As Willi Braun suggests in *Introducing Religion*,

“A common frustration for scholars of religion concerns the restrictions, often self-restrictions explicitly invoked or tacitly obeyed by students at all career stages, that are placed on curiosity: the “better not ask” or “better not go there” affective stances that are put down as obstacles to the pursuit of a disciplined drive toward a cogent intelligibility of human practices we have come to call, in virtue of some stipulated markers, “religion” or “religious”. The Pandora of myth is still censured in the academy, it seems, as the arch- or original sinner, the anti-model of intellection, that evil woman (it *would* be a woman, of course) whose curiosity released a can of toxic worms that kills cats, rather than as the mythic hero of curiosity as the giver of everything - which is what *Pandora* means.”⁵

These restrictions as to the limits of where 'Religious Studies' *should* end and popular/fringe culture in the derogatory sense many scholars view it should begin, are exactly what this essay intends to explore. If I have learned one thing above any other in this society, it is that far too many academics, scientists, historians and specialists of all sorts try to precisely date, delineate and categorize practically everything in order to make more sense of it, when in fact there are often no such distinctions to be made in reality, as many wiser scholars -as well as various mystics and sages- have taught us. I intend thus to truly push the limits of what has

5 Willi Braun, “Introducing Religion”, in *Introducing Religion: Essays in Honor of Jonathan Z. Smith* (ed. W. Braun & R.T. McCutcheon; London: Equinox, 2008).

too long been construed as an elitist and restrictive categorization: that of the concept of “religion”, as well as who is allowed to define both its boundaries, morals, doctrines, and prophet(esse)s. I believe Braun's previous statement is the perfect way to introduce this topic, as the demonization of women (as well as non-binary genders) is a huge part of the problem I will be addressing. Before I go any further, let me simply address the ‘root’ of this problem so-to-speak, which is to say the etymology of ‘religion’, from the Latin ‘religare’ (to bind, to submit), and ‘religioso’, (to submit to God). We can thus clearly see where heteronormativity and patriarchal oppression stems from.

Let us then begin by exploring altogether fundamentally different aspects of this quandary and attempting to expand the limited boundaries of what we have come to know as “religion”, though this has been done quite often already, albeit in different contexts. Because of the interest for superhero/mutant culture and comics, science-fiction, myths and popular lore as well as religious ones, mainstream and underground musicians/artists/actors have for a significant amount of time now begun taking on both prophetic and fictional characters and bringing them to life to the point where their fans have to varying extents accepted them as an almost messianic fulfilment of what I have chosen here to dub 'the age of superheroes'... One need look no further than the relatively recent phenomenon of the slew of Marvel, DC Comics & X-Men movie franchises in Hollywood and those who play the role of these characters such as Tobey Maguire, Scarlett Johansson, Robert Downey Jr. & Christian Bale, among others, and their larger-than-life status in both social and corporate media to see a glimpse of what I am positing here.

However what I am suggesting goes quite a bit beyond this mere statement and reality: disillusion with religious conservatives and their outdated patriarchal, homophobic prophets⁶ as well as their “Revelations”, “Apocalypse” or “Second Coming” that just never seem to come - because each time the prophets come they are slaughtered or hailed as false figures such as Bahai's or Babis in 19th century Persia⁷ - has heralded a new age where both spiritual musicians/artists and more fantastic/sci-fi ones have joined forces and decided to take on the roles of these elusive fictional and mythological figures and, because of the amount of mainstream and underground support they have, as well as because of the present popularity of these figures and superheroes, they have gained a historically unprecedented amount of recognition and acceptance as well as credibility, due to the complexity and beauty of their art, which other so-called gurus and messianic 'quacks' seem to lack.

What I speak of may sound quite unsound and questionable to many. However I have myriad concrete examples to offer in support of the previous claim⁸. If we look at the dawn of civilizations and early religions & spiritual traditions, from animistic and pagan ones to poly and monotheism, there are many examples of poet(esse)s and musicians being closely linked with religious or spiritual prophecy, and in fact most all spiritual texts have been known to be poetic in many aspects, from Sumerian myth makers to Zoroastrian, Sufi and Hindu mystics,

6 <http://www.atheistrepublish.com/blog/abbassyed/homophobic-islam>

<http://skepticsannotatedbible.com/gay/long.htm>

7 http://bahai-library.com/winters_chronology_babi_persecutions

8 <http://www.ivpress.com/cgi-ivpress/book.pl/code=3234>

(Jesus & the Hip-Hop Prophets: Spiritual Insights from Lauryn Hill & Tupac)

ancient Egyptian poet(esse)s, Greeks, African griots, and Middle Age and Renaissance prophets like Da Vinci and Nostradamus, to Sephirothic & Kabbalic authors, Christian Gnostics and Biblical authors, to Babi and Baha'i prophets of the 19th century such as Baha U Allah -who were known to be so poetically prolific that their poems were practically limitless- all so-called sacred scriptures across the planet are rife with metaphors and various figures of speeches and poetic devices that enhance the sense of their supernatural subjects of discussion.

Recently, in this (post-)modern, (post-)apocalyptic age where all traditions and influences of past and present syncretically and eclectically seem to blend together thanks to the 'positive' aspects of globalization and multiculturalism, there has also been the rise of what I would argue could be construed as a unifying force in worldwide wisdom literature and oraliture: music, which had often been argued to be a universal language, has become more and more of a cross-cultural global phenomenon thanks to the internet and other worldwide media, and the poet(esse)s and artists creating it in many cases have arguably become polarly opposed authority figures in terms of morality, ethics, belief systems and lifestyles. Music has long been a vehicle for poetic, transcendentalist ideologies -whether of an anti-conformist and rebelliously subversive or socially reinforcing religious nature- since the dawn of the first civilizations as previously mentioned, and perhaps even before this if we consider entrancing shamanic, animistic utterances that likely served some form of spiritual or esoteric, metaphysical purpose. Very little has changed several millenia later in that respect, other than the fact that now there is an ever-growing overabundance & diversification of musical genres and subcategories constantly enriching the pre-existing spectrum.

Granted, now a large portion of that music has a very basic, even simplistic and repetitive message that serves various mainstream corporate and social interests, and has very little in common with the previously stated ideologies. However this paper is not overly concerned with these commercially oriented and generated manifestations, but rather more with those on the periphery of cultural and social norms which have grown into their own subculture, in some cases even infiltrating and influencing mainstream musical movements.

I will concern myself with two different aspects of religious/spiritual ideologies within music: mainly, those dealing with what are considered to be historical/mythological figures within religious/spiritual movements, as well as those dealing with characters in recent (science-)fiction, most often of the superhero/mutant type. My contention is that in both cases musicians and poet(esse)s who have taken on the aliases of these characters have come to embody their principles and characteristics either in a traditional -or most often- in a revolutionary sense to such an extent that many of those who listen to their art and support them literally see them as incarnations of these beings rather than mere fictional personas.

If we look at conscious/spiritual hip-hop as an example, there are many depictions of these historical/mythological beings to consider, and perhaps the most prominent would be Nasir Jones, or *Nas*, as well as Tupac Amaru Shakur, aka *2Pac*, as Black Christ figures. Both of them have depicted themselves as such on various occasions, Nasir Jones having released an album titled "God's Son", -which he also tattooed on his chest- in which, in one of the songs'

videoclip, "Hate Me Now"⁹, he is represented with a crown of thorns carrying a heavy cross on which he is finally crucified, making such statements in the song as "I was destined to come, second to none". His epic lyrical confrontations with Sean Carter, aka Jay Z or Jay Hova, who is portrayed by both Nas and Tupac as an evil and fraudulent impersonator of righteousness and promotes materialism, misogyny and various questionable morals in his songs, have only added to the hype: in the battle song "Ether", Nas says to Jay Z in the hook "Fuck with your soul like Ether/Teach you the King who knows you/God's Son across the belly/I prove you lost already".

Tupac, for his part, on his final album released a week before his murder, "Don Killuminati: the 7 Day Theory", is also depicted nailed to a cross with a crown of thorns and a sullen face. Another interesting non-Christian religious parallel in the case of *Tupac* is the fact that his birthname, Tupac Amaru Shakur, in honour of the South American revolutionary movement¹⁰, his mother being a Black Panther, literally means "Shining Serpent who Gives Praise to God"¹¹, and is considered to be one of the epithets of the Aztec flying serpent divinity Quetzalcoatl. And yet again, in the case of Tupac, he was famously pitted against his antithesis and lyrical nemesis, Christopher Wallace aka *Biggie Smalls*, the *Notorious B.I.G.* -also murdered 6 months after *Tupac*- who was infamous for his at times extremely misogynistic and violent, materialistic lyrics¹²; whereas *Tupac*, as much as he was a conflicted gangster, was also very much a revolutionary in many aspects like his militant activist mother. More interesting

9 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dKSJN3WWR3E> (Nas – Hate Me Now Feat. Puff Daddy)

10 [http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Tupac_Amaru_Revolutionary_Movement_\(Peru\).aspx](http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Tupac_Amaru_Revolutionary_Movement_(Peru).aspx)

11 <http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Tupac+Amaru+Shakur>

12 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oiPV4yXgL08> (Biggie & Eminem, "Dead Wrong")

even is the fact that *Jay-Z* was *Biggie Smalls'* protégé until *Biggie* was murdered, and *Nas* has often paralleled himself with *Tupac* as well and shown *Jay-Z* as *Biggie* in music videos like “Got Yourself a Gun”¹³ (“Me and *Tupac* were soldiers of the same struggle”), and neither gained any significant amount of recognition until their mentor figures were murdered, continuing their feud post-mortem in many senses, although they have since made peace.

These are undoubtedly the most famous mainstream examples of such a phenomenon, however there are a plethora of others as well, such as the underground legend, *Wu-Tang Clan* producer, and *Lost Children Of Babylon* member *Amos the Ancient Prophet* aka the Polish Buddha, *Wu-Tang Clan* member *Ol' Dirty Bastard* as Osiris, *Jon the Baptist* and *King David* of *Vendetta Kingz*, *Jahnigga tha Baptist* of *Illuminati Congo* and *Masta Buildas*, who also oppositely portrays himself as Baphomet in *Island of Patmos*, *Son of Saturn* of *Akashik Ancestorz*¹⁴, and legendary old school French hip-hop pioneers *IAM* (Imperial Asiatic Men)¹⁵ that have names such as *Akhenaton*, *Kheops* and *Khephren*. Other underground celebrities who took on certain alter egos include *Killah Priest* of *Wu Tang* as Constantine, *Prince Ea* as himself, *Canibus* as St. Germaine, *Ali Dahesh* as Imam Ali, and the list goes on.

Parallel to this, we have other famous -and less famous- hip-hop artists also taking on various personas, however in this case they also take on completely fictional avatars such as

13 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6YiJH3-Nkb0> (Nas – Got Yourself a Gun)

14 www.Revolt-Motion.com / www.revoltmotionrecords.bandcamp.com

(All these artists and more being spoken of can be found on this label)

15 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/IAM_\(band\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/IAM_(band))

video game or comic book characters. Notable examples of this include *RZA* of *Wu-Tang Clan* as Bobby Digital & Iron Fist (of the blockbuster movie), *MF Doom* as Viktor Von Doom (the archnemesis of *The Fantastic Four*), *Jean Grae* as herself, *Vast Aire* of *Cannibal Ox* as Captain Nemo & *SA-Roc* as Mina Harker of *the League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*, *Canibus* also taking on the guise of Cthulu, H.P. Lovecraft's fictional cthonic deity, and countless lesser known mutants from the Marvel & DC world of superheroes that various rappers have personified throughout the ages. These artists' alter egos have become so seriously intertwined with reality that they have arguably become as significant or even more than ancient prophet(esse)s or their religious representatives.

This is in many ways the dawning of a new age which some have dubbed the age of superheroes, where fiction seems to merge with reality in an unprecedented fashion. However, even with all this being said, we have not yet properly expressed what may or may not constitute a valid analysis of such a phenomenon as religiously viable. Granted, the fundamental principle here is that there should be no limiting what one chooses or does not choose to categorize as a religious phenomenon in this post-modern world where most all perspectives are accepted as simply being that, perspectives; and the fact that these artistic figures are considered by large amounts of fans or followers to be the very personifications of the myths or fictions they depict themselves as should, at the very least, express the hardly deniable reality that some sort of religious/spiritual experience is being documented here, regardless of whether or not there is a consensus as to whether it is a 'legitimate' one or of a more sectarian or cultish nature.

Then again, who are we to judge this truly, and what right do we have, whether as atheists, agnostics/Gnostics or whatever the case may be, to place a label upon this global artistic occurrence or attempt to compare it and thus limit it within our own preconceptions of what religion and/or spirituality is? Beyond this, if we truly sought to compare the concept of music with the idea of God(dess), then indeed the parallel seems obvious, and quite ironic too: with music, the prophet(ess)/poet(ess) can literally be omnipresent and summoned at will whenever the listeners chooses to call upon them, something which no God(dess) in the history of humankind has ever successfully achieved thus far.

Still, would any religious scholar seeking to discredit any of what I speak of -as mere senseless and fruitless babble or cult-related blasphemy, as an old cis White man once commented at a lecture of mine on the Second Coming in Hip-Hop a few decades ago- by comparing various aspects to other more 'legitimate' manifestations of religion be any different than founding fathers like Weber or Fraser talking of the classification by comparison of human beings and their supernatural beliefs based on their own categorizations of what is meant to be legitimate or not, inferior or superior in reasoning or complexity or validity? As Smith argues in his work *Drudgery Divine*,

“In the case of the study of religion, as in any disciplined inquiry, comparison, in its strongest form, brings differences together within the space of the scholar's mind for the scholar's own intellectual reasons. It is the scholar who makes their cohabitation – their 'sameness' – possible, not 'natural' affinities or processes of history Comparison does not necessarily tell us how things 'are' comparison tells us how things might be conceived, how they might be 'redescribed.'”¹⁶

16 J.Z. Smith, *Drudgery Divine*: 51-52.

Indeed, in most of these cases it is not even a debate anymore that these artists are recognized by their religiously and spiritually inclined fans and followers as the manifestations of these aforementioned prophecies which never seemed to manifest; until now, that is. The concept behind these artists and their motivation, such as *Nas* or *Tupac* portraying themselves as Black Christ figures, is that they stand 'righteously' opposed to the rest of the mainstream music industry, media and politics, which are represented by the elusive and conspiratorial-sounding *Novus Ordo Seclorum* on the American dollar bills -the “New World Order” as many call it- but literally this means “New Secular Order”, following the conspiracy theory where spirituality would be replaced with money and corrupted rulers would have ultimate authority over all under the guise of a false unified religion. We see this clearly exemplified once again in Tupac's final album released before his death, “Don Killuminati: the 7 Day Theory”¹⁷, which is based on the principle that Tupac is the Christ-like figure that rises up against the controlling clutches of the Illuminati who stand at the head of this NWO, and eventually kills them, hence, “Killuminati”. There are extensive amounts of interviews by many artists speaking both about their own experiences with this in the music industry as well as those like Tupac and Nas speaking out against it¹⁸.

Another religious principle which is echoed as well as opposed in different facets of the music industry, particularly in hip-hop, which I will focus on here, is the concept of Ahimsa, non-violence, which is the basic principle in Buddhism, Jainism, and some forms of Hinduism

17 <http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Killuminati> (Humor is nice sometimes)

18 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RtzYin300ZA> (Famous artists against the Illuminati)

and Shintoism¹⁹. On the one hand, we have mainstream conscious artists like *Mos Def*, *KRS-ONE* (whose name was inspired by Krishna), *Common* and many others who actively embody the principle of consciousness as Peace and positivity, or as *RZA* of *Wu-Tang Clan/Gravediggaz* says it, “P.E.A.C.E.” (Positive Energy Activates Constant Elevation); and on the other hand, we have artists such as *Lil Wayne*, *Rick Ross*, *Gucci Mane* & many other “gangster” rappers who have often historically personified unconsciousness as War and ignorance, as well as greed and materialism, which are all subjects which religious followers are warned about extensively in universal scriptures. Hence we can suggest that in this case, the battle between conscious hip-hop and mainstream gangster hip-hop, particularly between these avatars of false drug dealers (like *Rick Ross* & *Gucci Mane*, the latter who was actually a prison guard rather than a drug dealer) or deceitful etymological personifications (the Truth, Future, *Jay Hova/Jehovah* etc.) and the avatars of 'righteous' prophets or divinities (such as *Nas/Tupac* as the Black Yeshua, *Jon the Baptist*, *King David*, *Killah Priest* as Constantine, *Heaven Razah* as the Black Moses, etc) are in fact direct spiritual parallels and representations of decaying, sterile religious prophecies coming back to life in a polymorphic and Afrofuturistic sense.

If we look at the average aforementioned stereotypical gangster rappers who have often spewed nonsense and sought by any means to mentally, spiritually and financially enslave their listeners to support them, they seem to have done so in a very similar fashion that many atheists and non-believers perceive Yahweh to be doing in the Old Testament, or Allah in the Qu'ran, or

19 <http://www.britannica.com/topic/ahimsa>

indeed any divinity which seeks to ascertain sole worship by demonizing all others who do not support their cause. Ironically, many of these gangster rappers have professed to be Christians (or Muslims/Jews to a lesser extent) when in fact in this sense they can be paralleled, as previously mentioned, with many ancient war-like, ignorant deities demanding sacrifices and offerings to keep their cult alive. In fact, the name "thug" itself comes from the word "thuggee", which was a devotee of Kali that slaughtered and robbed passerbys as an act of sacrifice to the Goddess.²⁰

In both cases as well, whether in organized religions or mainstream commercial music, I believe the common thread is that there is a drought of individual thoughts within the collective sentience, which is to say that nobody truly thinks for themselves and they accept practically everything they are unwittingly force-fed as gospel, or even worse, don't even pay attention to the words being sung and simply hum on and dance to the melody while being brainwashed and hypnotized: "Biggie, Biggie Biggie, can't you see, sometimes your words just hypnotize me"²¹. Some may perhaps think that this parallel I am making is in itself a voice in support of Western religious principles of Good & Evil, where I am taking the side of the 'legitimate' prophets against these 'false idols' mocking God(dess), but in fact this is not a reference to the so-called false gods that many Judaeo-Christian sects speak of, but rather one to the Buddhist & Jain concept that many beings can be godly without being benevolent like Asuras, Rudras²², Devas, etc.

20 <http://www.thugexposed.com/tme-chapter-2/>

21 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=glEiPXAYE-U> (Biggie – Hypnotize Feat. Puff Daddy)

22 <http://www.lionsroar.com/the-dark-side-of-tibetan-buddhism/> (The Buddhist rebirth of a Rudra)

A further exploration of another neglected aspect of these self-made new age prophet(esse)s is the Reggae movement in music, which for the most part is directly based upon Rastafarianism and the historic Emperor & Empress of Ethiopia, the divinities of Rastafarians, Haile Sellassie and Menen Asfaw²³. Biblical references in Reggae abound in regards to Yahweh (commonly called Jah and equated with Haile Sellasie) as well as the concept of America and its empire as the New Babylon, which is in the process of burning according to all of them, and this fits quite well within the picture I am painting of the decadence of the current mainstream music in the United States and its peripheries, as previously exemplified.

Undoubtedly the most famous of all Rastafarian prophets is Bob Marley, with a book of his prophecies having even been recently published, and of course all of his offspring who also happen to be reggae artists, as well as many of his relatives. Perhaps one of the most prominent examples that comes to mind when thinking of his son Damian is the song “It Was Written”, and also his collaboration album with Nas, “Distant Relatives”, in which one of the most prophetic songs next to “Road to Zion”: “Patience”²⁴, depicts Nas once again as a king with a crown and a lavish robe, while Damian chooses the humble and dark hooded robe of a wandering mystic/monk, his verse opening with these words:

*“Some of the smartest dummies
can't read the language of Egyptian mummies*

Plant a flag on the moon

23 <http://www.tozion.org/Rastafari%20Empress%20Menen%20Asfaw.html>

24 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c9VQye6P8k0> (Nas & Damian Marley - Patience)

*and can't find food for the starving tummies
Pay no mind to the youths
'cause it's not like the future depends on it
But save the animals in the zoo
'cause the chimpanzees them a make big money”*

Most of these lines speak for themselves, but the final one is perhaps a bit more cryptic: what it is meant to exemplify is how commercial artists such as those aforementioned gangster rappers are in fact “chimpanzees in a zoo making their captors big money” unbeknownst to themselves.

Much of this -as well as all these other conscious/spiritual artists' creations- is a prophecy or prediction of sorts in the vein of futurist poet(esse)s and Afrofuturistic authors creating their own tomorrows and authoring their own destinies²⁵ speaking of what will assuredly happen once intersectional activists have more influence upon this Western system we live in, whether as anticolonial scholars, activists, poet(esse)s, visual artists, or all of the above and beyond. Any of these poems could easily be seen as the illusory thoughts of a psychotic or schizophrenic person with delusions of grandeur, and part of the paradox previously expressed is this very reality, which many poet(esse)s and activists have lived and spoken of in the past. As they say, there is a very fine line between genius and madness, and walking it, especially deprived of mental sobriety in an overstimulating materialistic world, can be a harrowing task. With creations of such Afrofuturistic artists such as Nas & Damian, we flash forward into a speculative fictional future akin to Margaret Atwood's *MaddAdam Trilogy*, Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* or Kurt Vonnegut's *Cat's Cradle* where this system eventually destroys itself and is toppled by the Sands of Time like the Babylonian or Roman empire Rastas speak of.

25 <https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/text/brief-guide-futurism>

While most religions on this planet have been endlessly waiting for Revelations, and Apocalyse or a Second Coming as previously expressed, and continuously slaughtered, imprisoned or discredited the prophet(esse)s who came along to manifest these changes, it seems that musicians/artists have found a socially legitimated way to finally bring these predictions from the realm of myth and fictional lore into reality. The sequel to this bleak, post-apocalyptic landscape painted is worded with the idea of Afro-Indigenous futurism and self-manifesting matriarchal prophecies and oracles, combined with activism and engagement in communities -both locally and globally- rather than passively waiting for and praying for a supernatural rapture which has no functional link to -or basis in- reality. Part of the reason why perhaps so many religions have failed to bring about the messianic change they sought could be seen, at least minimally, as residing within the problem of origins, as McCutcheon expands upon in his article *Origins Today*: "How far can one stretch the presumed originality, and thus the value, of an item before something snaps, and it all crumbles in on itself? How much can we modify a claim of uniqueness before something is judged a useless, worthless, derivative copy?"²⁶

This to me is likely one of the key features which drastically distinguishes the rebirth of religious prophecy within modern poetry from traditional ancient religions and their own original prophets: these religions and their representatives to this day for the most part abhor the concept of having to recognize the prior 'origins', or rather the previous influences of past cultures and their own religious beliefs and thoughts, upon their own -as in this example by

26 Russell McCutcheon, *Fabricating Origins*, 124.

McCutcheon- insisting instead on their complete novelty and originality, when in stark contrast to these futuristic poet(esse)s not only recognize the contribution of past cultures -such as the Sumerian origins of Genesis- but in fact offer a plethora of references to them in their poems and gladly acknowledge that cultural acceptance of diversity and its embracing is the only way the future will peacefully manifest as "It Was Written", if you can forgive me the pun.

The end goal of all of these oracular artists/musicians and the collectives they represent and alliances they have forged, truly then, seems to be to re-encompass past religious as well as fictional & science-fictional concepts such as Afro-Indigenous futurism, merging and fusing them in a syncretic sense to not simply reiterate and reconcile all seemingly contradicting earthly beliefs -as this would be an impossible task- but rather to paste them together in a mosaic in which each piece has been recarved to create a fitting ceramic tapestry metaphorically speaking, where concepts like heteropatriarchy, homophobia and misogyny become a thing of the past and all the errors and limitations of past prophets and their predictions are recognized rather than being ignored and them being idealized as flawless and incapable of mistakes -since 'God created all of their works and God is perfect'. Indeed, much of this 'new school' music is an ode to realization that God is NOT perfect, and that the previous statement is logically doomed from the very start with the concept of the Goddess & queerness missing from the equation. Ultimately, imagination, intersectionality art are perhaps the most sorely lacking trinity in this society and this messianic/prophetic musical movement clearly seeks to remedy this problem, at the very least in a makeshift sense at first perhaps, yet I

believe that the more such unconventional and artistically-focused projects are undertaken and accepted, the more society will continue to veer and shift towards new horizons full of much more hope and much less 'blind faith' than was previously encouraged as convention.

Chapter 8

Shamanism Revisited

Shamanism is a fascinating subject to me, especially in the context of Hip-Hop and self-translation, and particularly after having explored the idea of prophecy and supernatural incarnations of evolutionary, oracular humans as spiritual and religious figures reincarnated, as all of these are facets of realities being continually and originally, artistically and spiritually re-expressed, reinvented and rekindled to bridge the gap between seemingly impossibly disparate cultures, realities and paradigms: it is a form of prescience (read 'pre-science') meant to reconcile the irreconcilable nature of the rational and irrational aspects of existence and their great divisions that systemically iniquitous venoms have often used to conquer or numb us into submission, from Native to non-Native, man and women to non-binary & in between, night and day to destruction and creation and far beyond, it is endless truly and honestly speaking.

However, of course academically this has to come to some sort of an ending. I have to string together words eloquently enough to express the inexpressible, just as the shaman(ess) has to equally bridge the realities of the seen and the unseen, the physical realm and that of the spirit, the known and unknown; and what is more unknown to a being we consider normal or monolingual and rationally inclined than self-translation into seemingly foreign cultures, tongues and ethnicity, many of which are often incidentally much more shamanically and esoterically inclined than this hegemonic empire we've purported to share information and

living suggestions from to forcefully impose upon all the rest of the globe along with its neocolonial woes of overly rational and empirical sciences, education and languages really meant to be little more than new forms of psycho-social, politico-religious, cultural and linguistic restrictions and genocidal oppressions?

The quest of the true shaman(ess), much like that of Gnostics for Christians, or like that of a gifted Hip-Hopper or translator alike, is essentially to express and find a form of non-binary predictive probability within limiting binary depictions of the physical constraints and prisons of this existence, which is as vast as Assia Djebar or Buddhists & Hindus suggest it in their scriptures. All that religion seems to have failed to do -or has done very shoddily at best- as plagiarists of foreign oracles and kingdoms for tens of centuries or perhaps arguably has done quite oppressively to so many across these continents (see previous chapters for reference) has been quietly and often literally silently done since the dawn of human empires, and if we are to believe mythological/religious scriptures being previously examined, perhaps far before the dawn of any such concepts or the civilizations themselves that authored them as we ponder and think of them even existed.

As previously expressed, the link to Hip-Hop and poetry is also quite obvious to anyone attentive to the foundational notions of that discipline as KRS-One defined them, considering the fact that shamanism emerged solely from oral traditions, guttural utterings much like beatboxing and supernatural phonetic incantations that, like those of powerful masters of ceremonies (ie Emcees/Mcs), expressed the inexpressible to a riveted audience entranced by

the mathematically interwoven syllables meant to create a momentary portal along with other shaman(esse)s or Emcees (ie a *cipher* or *wormhole*) into the realm of the metaphysical and paranormal, the domain of spirits and of the Divine Feminine, which to the Gnostics worshipping Sophia, is where the term Philosophy emerged as *philo sophia*, Lovers of (the Aeon/Goddess of) Wisdom.

Of course, depending on the potency and intention of the shaman(ess) this portal could potentially lead to great harm or destruction as many have often criticized with modern rappers, and likewise with shaman(esse)s, as if their own energies and intentions are not properly aligned with those of sentience and Gaia this can have devastating consequences for the audience or initiates. One could easily argue as such that much of Hip-Hop, or rather mainstream rap historically has perhaps not clearly served an ideal function for a lot of us; and I would likewise argue as expressed in the previous that not all shaman(esse)s have been true adepts of their crafts, as Carlos Castaneda's mentor Don Juan suggests to him in "The Power of Silence".

I could speak at length on this subject and go into myriad tangents on all the implications and ramifications of both the ideal and problematic aspects of this form of pre-science, and this could potentially end up becoming another thesis unto itself, perhaps comparing the metaphorical and literal implications of Lil Wayne's "Lollipop" song or 50 Cent's "Candy Shop" as an exemplification of all that is wrong with the heteronormative, misogynistic and objectifying leanings of mainstream rap or what has been deemed to be 'trap rap', and maybe

also go on a 200 page semi-academic rant about the symbolism of this subcategory of music trapping and ensnaring listeners as unsuspecting prey with hypnotic, narcotic or oppositely narcoleptic forms of audio-visual and psycho-phonetic/linguistic manipulations of the unsuspecting masses with it, but again, these are the inherent pitfalls of pseudo-intellectual ventures in a highly hierarchized realm of overspecialized and overexplained domains which in the end do little more for the general public than pay lip service or a fleeting homage to the intersectional scholars of our times who would likely be able to deconstruct this reality much more effectively in a few sentences at a conference than dedicate an entire life's worth of work to a song.

Back to shamanism then. It has been suggested by some that much like royalty, shamanism can only be passed down through the bloodlines of sorcerors/sorceresses (to use Castaneda and Don Juan's terminology) and is not a thing to be learned, no matter how hard one might try or how dedicated one might be to this craft for an entire lifetime. I believe this to be quite ridiculous of course, as much as aristocracy being a birthright, but regardless I suppose to those with such an inclination I could say I was born to be shamanic as my Tzigane father grew up in the Arctic with Inuit peoples, spoke Inuktitut fluently and spent most of his earlier existence living as mythologically as anyone could ever be expected to in this age, hunting and fishing with traditional weapons made of wood and bone, surviving for months in frozen woods alone or in the cold and heat of the Arctic wilderness in makeshift shelters with little more than a few gifts and survival tools and tips from kindred, praying and communing with spirits, totems and tricksters on vision quests, building and living in igloos in Arctic communities with them.

So I can actually laugh and say ‘yes’ when people jokingly ask without thinking if my dad lived in an Igloo and walked with polar bears as a Canadian citizen, much like Tomson Highway’s reference to literally being born in a snowbank in the middle of winter in Northern Manitoba in *a Tale of Monstrous Extravagance*. And of course, Tziganes, from the Greek root *Atziganoi*, meaning Black Magicians, were often feared and respected (and much more often despised and reviled) for being occult oracles, poverty stricken quantum scientists of sorts predicting probably futures for those who would bother to lend an ear to their stories, and as artists and musicians, and perhaps some of the first dumpster divers, recyclers, and repurposers of this Earth who wandered it in search of better tomorrows; so one could say I was born in the heart of a shamanically elemental storm.

My mother herself is still considered by many of her kin as a bit of a witch, albeit a kind and respectful one most often, and spends her spare time as a herbalist and writer deconstructing and predicting new forms of post-apocalypse from a matriarchal perspective when she’s not teaching dystopian science and speculative fiction feminist/queer literature and activist translation, or educating her students on the 6th greatest mass extinction event we’re currently living (the first one in the past 65 million years as such since the dinosaurs were killed, literally, and the greatest genocide in history). Both of them left me with a hybrid legacy of supernatural phenomena and mythogenetics I have spent much of this existence unravelling, perhaps best and most notoriously expressed in my phonetic art tapestries, some of which (or so I’ve been told) have made many a person reconsider the fundamental tenets of society’s definitions of reality, along with their own (ir)rational ideas on it all in the process.

This to me again is what the purpose of a true artist or shaman(ess) should be, and what their art and utterances or rituals and potions/notions should foster for the listeners or initiates, as conscious or spiritual forms of Hip-Hop and oral traditions in general in a mythopoetic sense are meant to be forms of rhythmically mnemonic, supraphonically entheogenic medicines whose neural encryptions/decryptions & (em)phatic repetitions as well as their polymorphic semantic fields, syllabic and phonemic structures are meant to facilitate the retention of this socio-religiously occulted information and its further dissemination and growth, parallel to that of the synaptic and neural connections and pathways blossoming and evolving within the listeners' minds, much like a potent mixture of superfoods, vitamins, minerals and nutrients meant for optimal/ideal brain growth and the constant evolution of human/mutant kind.

In order to better express the links between shamanism, or even why I chose this as the 8th and final chapter of this thesis and what this represents symbolically as the ending journey into the infinity that this represents numerically and numerologically, when the beginning itself expresses all the limitations, restrictions and oppressions I -and many others- lived as a kid in a neoresidential and neocolonial, heteronormative religious context, and the problematics embedded within this imposed 'education' instead of the shamanic initiations which were stolen from me by the system legally restricting my father from seeing me as he was also considered like I am to be mentally ill -something which my mother herself somehow reinforced and acquiesced to, paradoxically- I would like to delve a bit more into a more esoteric description of shamanism from what I gathered along this path I've chosen to tread.

Please forgive me in advance if I re-express bits and pieces of the previous in a different sense,

and to those of you who would perhaps morosely think all of this is very tedious and nonsensical-seeming gibberish which is quite unacademic in essence. This is how I also feel when I read most of the theses and readings I've been given to peevishly peep into as an intellectual elite initiate, of course, in an opposite sense to the previous description.

Shamanism then, revisited again.

Shamanism/animism is arguably the most primordial form of spirituality in existence. It represents the transcending of duality and binary consciousness of Good/Evil to a cosmic comprehension of how everything is interconnected. As Mayans say, In Lak'ech Ala Kin, I am another you, you are another me. Northern Indigenous peoples use terms such as Omitakuye Oyasin (Lakota Sioux) or Ok'nixikwa (Blackfoot) to denote the interconnectedness of all beings/energies. To those of you from those ethnicities and traditions, please do forgive me for the very approximate and shoddy translation into hegemonic semi-equivalents of such poetically evocative languages and tongues as could never properly be expressed in written words. I am simply writing these as they were expressed to me on my adoptive reserve by fire keepers and kindred.

This is the major difference between Judaeo-Christian and religious concepts of oneness as opposed to interconnectedness, which is someone reminiscent to me of the concept of a university versus a plurality or multiplicity of verses and perspectives, such as in the term omni or multiversal. Oneness from a hierarchical religious perspective usually implies absolute

conformity and compliance to whatever rules, dogmas, morals and ethics are being passed on, and having no individuality whatsoever. This, in my humble opinion, is a form of enslavement and brainwashing which strips away ego from the individual without actually giving them any substantial awareness of the power intrinsic in their differences. Interconnectedness, on the other hand, celebrates diversity and difference as having enough common threads to be relatable in many ways without needing to all be forced into a box of universal rules and regulations.

In animism, the primary concept is that there is a spiritual essence in all things/beings, a sentient energy which both imbues and connects them. In Eastern Philosophies they call it Tao or Chi, or Prana, whereas in Western theology this Holy Spirit has more often than not been turned into a binary hierarchical subjugation process which separates humans as beings with souls from things/objects/animals/plants/insects, which are often considered soulless, in the same sense that the Holy Ghost or Spirit cannot seemingly be accessed by anyone other than those who bow down to it as grievous sinners in complete submission and awe.

This brings us to how shamanism and animism are key to grasping what I consider to be the fundamental functioning of our 8th sense, ie shape-shifting, which in good old western empirical or scientific terms would simply be referred to as quantum reality, ie the well-known fact that when you wake up after a hangover on a slow hot morning and look in the mirror you are clearly not the same being momentarily until you brush your teeth, have a glass of water,

orange juice or a cheap beer (or a Starbucks coffee or frappuccino depending on your inclination for post-hangover breakfasts, and suddenly have the epiphany that Buddhists would call the realization of no self, or anatta).

7 is the holiest number in Western Theology because it represents the archangelic dominion and awareness of great predatory birds which have a birds eye view over land and sea creatures and can easily survey and oversee these parts as such. Judaeo-Christian traditions do not want anyone to grasp what the numerological and spiritual awareness of 8 represents, because this would allow them to spiritually and metaphysically transcend the 7 Heavens and dogmatic realms to enter the Gates of Infinity & Indigenous awareness of Nature & Her denizens beyond these.

8 symbolically and mathematically represents infinity because of the concept of cell mitosis, the birth of duality from oneness, which leads to non-binary reality beyond this. Once you grasp this interconnectedness of all things/beings and the essence which imbues them, you grasp that there is no separation from any, therefore you are in essence both everything and nothing. You are no thing, because things do not exist, every "thing" is in actuality a form of being or consciousness. 8 also represents 2 times 4, or the bipolar nature of the shaman(ess) in both Light and Darkness/Man and Womb-man, which is to say two humans, or 4th density consciousnesses, the 3 main dimensions representing space and the 4th being Time, as many philosophers and physicists such as Derrida and Einstein have pondered. These are both

contained within one shamanic being meant to bridge both worlds, like two-spirit peoples in Indigenous traditions.

Basically speaking, 8th density humanity as I previously mentioned represents that there are two polarly/physically/psychically/spiritually opposite/complimentary 4th density humans contained within the shaman(ess) self, such as a two spirit shaman(ess) with both a male and female spirit (two-spirits) -or various non-binary/genderless ones, or perhaps even an animal totem persona and an angelic one- who co-exist within this like the Yin & Yang; this can also more simply be two male or two female spirits, whether cis or queer, although for a healthy and veritable shaman(ess) normativity is impossible to exist in. For the chemically imbalanced/"psychotic" humans, this is literally simply that those 2 different spirits cannot get along, like an angel and demon always fighting, which triggers the psychosis. Most 4th density humans either choose to keep one or the other, and kill or silence or enslave/torture the one they don't agree with symbolically and metaphysically speaking, hence why they cannot spiritually evolve...

Humans are shape-shifters by nature, and indeed all beings are truly, but this is much more readily apparent in humans: everyday we dress differently, we put on suits, clothes, masks, we shift our expressions and demeanors and are often lost in the translation of complex emotional states; we literally change density levels and states of being by how we react to or interact with the energies around us (see the previous hangover description as well for the less amusing parts of this).

The best way to scientifically express how we literally shape-shift every moment we exist is perhaps to analyze a series of potential emotional states and occurrences in the daily life of a human being: when we yell at each other, argue or channel certain forms of exhausting and unmastered negative energies, we essentially temporarily become demons from a Western binary perspective, or 6th density fiery/cold beings with short tempers prone to anger, cruelty or apathy, and when an event or turning point occurs to shift this, or the argument is concluded, suddenly the energy shifts too and we can perhaps be ourselves again, regular 4th density human beings perhaps, with little awareness of ESPs such as what we call the 6th sense, which many beings are acutely aware of when they manipulate emotions/bodies/minds through patho/psycho and telekinesis.

Yet once one comprehends the concept of animism as fundamental to Gaia's harmony and detaches from religious dogma and spiritual subjugation to higher density dominant species and spirits, the true awareness of infinity comes and the veil is lifted, allowing beings like shaman(esse)s/nahual(a/e)s/aj'kijis/bruja(o/e)s/witches/sorcerers/sorceresses to traditionally take on the physical appearance of other density forms such as various animals or fantastic mythological creatures at will through spells and incantations which facilitate the opening of density gates altering the physical perception of matter, as Aldous Huxley explains it in his treatise on psychedelic experiences and how they affect the brain, "The Doors of Perception" & "Heaven & Hell". Even Buddha himself recognized the primordial importance of the number 8 in his teachings of the eightfold path which leads to bodhisattvic awareness.

Perhaps at this point I've rambled about shamanism from a non-academic perspective for long enough and without quoting any certified doctoral shaman(esse)s from the Canadian association of shamanic healers that many of you may be wondering where I'm going exactly with all of this and perhaps already forgot what this even has to do with translation or Hip-Hop to begin with. I'd insert a hip-hop song on shamanism and academia here called Totemik Akademiks to further express the point I'm trying to get to but I do believe this thesis is getting somewhat lengthy already and I could likely keep quoting and self-referencing songs of mine as an ego-gratification process quite endlessly considering the number of albums I've made on that subject alone, so I'll rather just leave some audio links with thick translation annotations in the hopes that this can likely inspire a new generation of anti-intellectual and anti-conformist scholars in the future to do something similarly artistic and deconstructivist with their own bodies of literature²⁷.

So then, to recap how this past numerologically concrete yet highly esoteric description of shamanism fits into the realm of academic theory, I would have to submit the concept of the numerology of consciousness as a religious studies based discipline of sorts, which thankfully has already been partially pioneered in *The Encyclopedia of Absolute and Relative Knowledge* (L'Encyclopédie du Savoir Relatif et Absolu) by a diasporic theological literature adept and famous French science-fiction author that has greatly inspired me over the past decades with his works, namely, Bernard Werber. This notion seems farfetched of course, that consciousness or even shamanism could be numerologically described, and yet no one would argue that the

27 <https://revoltmotionrecords.bandcamp.com/> (This is a global repository of world music and Hip-Hop albums, as well as instrumental, soul, reggae, ambient, R&B, lullabies and a lot more)

pictographic significance of hieroglyphics is real and that each depiction has an equivalent semantic field directly correlated to the picture. Thankfully, I've conveniently compressed all of that into a quaint song that was inspired by an incarnation of one of the most famous herstorical oracles, and as such I can avoid you the somewhat boring task of having to read more pseudo-spiritual new age gibberish to instead perhaps enjoy some of this poetry I've been so extensively describing as Life-altering and prophetic. This, then, is "The Numerology of Consciousness" in 432Hz crown chakra resonance frequency (or so Mike Myers as Guru Pitka told me), from a triple LP of mine under the guise of Antony of Egypt as Captain Nemo, "The 33 Oracles of Cassandra". <https://revoltmotionrecords.bandcamp.com/track/the-numerology-of-consciousness-prod-by-yz1-in-432hz>

The problem with our more modern pictographically abstract languages such as French, English and Spanish is that, much like the mythological significance of our names given at birth by parents who might have simply watched one too many episodes of *Days of Our Lives*, many of us in this society of blissful ignorance and Lethe-like forgetfulness -think here of heavy metals, fluoride and chlorine in the water and technological frequencies proven to cause memory lapses and cancerous tumours as well as macular and ocular degradation- haven't had the educational privilege to remember why numbers and letters in all alphabets and languages were (Ab)originally derived from directly equivalent pictographic descriptions, hence my explanation of the biological and mathematical significance of 8 and its correlation to infinity as the same symbol with a different angle and spin to it, as opposed to 7 being the ultimate spiritual hierarchical limit of the number of Heavens in Western theology, when in reality there

are many more in Eastern Philosophies, and many other realms beyond this. One can quickly grasp of this however that it is quite obvious which parts of these continents and which ethnicities have achieved a form of symbiosis with shamanic knowledge and wisdom and which ones have not yet. They say ignorance is bliss, but I would say ignorance being bliss is like suggesting that sucrose or aspartame in Coca-Cola zero and wildcrafted local honey from a matriarchal or queer African berry farmer are the same thing.

Conclusion (*Epilogue*)

Post-Apocalypse, The (re)birth of Diasporic Futurism and the Age of Mutants

Again, this would logically be the part of the thesis where I neatly and eloquently wrap up and recap all that I've previously expressed in some quaint overview that reminds you of what you possibly skimmed through because a lot of it was somewhat repetitive and dishevelled, especially for such an academic venture. I would rather instead leave you with some sort of oracular epilogue that may pay better homage to the previous chapters' descriptions of futurism and the power of language, as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis suggests, shaping and constructing our entire reality. This seems like a stretch of the imagination perhaps to beings that may be quite rationally and empirically inclined, and indeed it is, literally speaking. If we ponder the concept of matter as being mostly made up of empty space (ie antimatter and dark matter) scientifically speaking, we can then easily realize why the illusion of matter being tangible is somewhat comparable to the idea of a song, poem, movie/visual art piece or comforting words, or even a dream realm experience feeling real and tangibly physically, mentally and emotionally, even spiritually restructuring or modifying our core consciousness and states in a positive or negative (or neutral) fashion: technically speaking these forms of expression which are orally or visually based have very little to seemingly no materially palpable substance, yet they can still appear, influence and act upon physical and metaphysical matter to shift its fundamental and peripheral constitution.

In this current age we live in as I write this at the eve of the new Gregorian year in 2021, pandemics, technocracy, mass media manipulation, disinformation and propaganda, as previously expressed in the introduction -just like GMO foods, cancerous animal by-products, cheap slave and child labor material goods, chemical drugs and synthetic ones- seem to be the norm, although of course this surface veneer merely reflects what the elites and political parties in power want us to believe and perceive as the only possibly viable version of reality.

Even academia itself, as this thesis I hope has at least partially shown, has been significantly historically corrupted and mired by corporate interests, toxic medical, economic and oligarchic research projects, and much more than I could spend the next 20 pages easily describing and criticizing. However the latter is perhaps exactly what the problem seems to be; we have more and more books, articles, research, conferences, lectures, classes and workshops, as well as art and community-based projects, on how to be more environmentally conscious, how to better our nutrition, how to 'save the world', but not nearly enough of it has concretely translated into the lasting change we so desperately need in this 6th greatest mass extinction and greatest genocide in Earth's entire 3.5 billion year history (or Herstory, rather).

Can I then pat myself on the back once I finish writing this conclusion and think, "crisis averted, I'm quite sure now that the planet is safe since I've finished writing my intersectional activist PhD thesis, now all I have to do is find a worldwide publishing house, take out all the academic jargon and turn it into a mainstream bestselling novel read by tens of millions of people or more, and voilà! The world will be saved." Of course not. Yet and still the simple fact remains that the more we talk about these subjects and the more this information is made

readily accessible to the wider public the easier and quicker this lasting change can come.

Which again, is exactly the problem. This thesis, unless I am very lucky, may be read by little more than a handful of people who are likely mostly already academically inclined, and historically speaking, most theses have scarcely been read by more than the academic advisors themselves, usually not with the greatest of enthusiasm.

Enter diasporic & multiethnic futurism and speculative fiction, as well as intersectional arts in all the wonder and awe of their colossal spectrum. As I once suggested in a song many years back, ironically one that was created in the context of a government-sponsored initiative for inner city change and poverty abolition in Amicwacii Waskahikan, titled a *Piece 4 Peace*, “We do not need more concrete solutions, we need more dreamers and seers to complete the blueprint”. Far be it from me the idea to think that herein resides the answer to all of our problems, but far be it also from me the idea to believe that it would reside in academia.

Intersectionality, imagination, creativity and artistic expression in the most metagnostic or sofianic of senses, which is to say, as I suggested with the concept of ennoia, the physical manifestation of new matter through the purely creative and supernatural mingling of aetheric/spiritual/psychic energies at play in daily occurrences ranging from fascinating interdisciplinary conversations between two sapiosexual/romantic beings to artists in a jam session all co-creating Afro-Indigenous futurist tomorrows in a range of mediums and artistic forms of expression, to children and teenagers, perhaps jaded & disenfranchized, or oppositely

in marvel at the beauty of Nature and creation in the midst of this war zone & veiled horror we call democratic progress, simply choosing to observe their surroundings and reflect on the fractal patterns of a fading leaf in Tukwakin (autumn) falling to the ground, or the iridescently mesmerizing patterns of an oil spill in a water hole on the scorched asphalt of a barren street, all of this to me holds significantly if not infinitely more potential for change and (R)evolution than this idea that somehow one superstar or a handful of them with ‘all the right answers’ could potentially be our only hope to change the world, or that all of us have to rush to the forefront of attention with our findings, our poetry or our theories to make sure that everyone hears us loud and clear.

Again, since this is far from a traditional thesis, I would like to push the boundaries of what is conventionally expected of me in a conclusion and instead leave you with some futuristic tablets to glean from in the hopes that this interaction between your eyes, ears and pituitary and pineal glands can perhaps foster some ennoia as well in the process of reading this and listening to the following as a sort of testament after the death these words on paper or worse, on a static screen of liquid crystalline depictions hypnotizing us into short term memory impairment at disruptive frequency levels which were (un)originally made to aid our collectively unconscious amnesia and subsequent systemic compliance.

And so, as I have written at length about the power of oral traditions, poetry and creative, unacademic ventures as infinitely superior and preferable to these ramblings and pseudo-intellectual babbles I was somewhat forced to humor and entertain as an educational hurdle to

achieve some form of societal and professional success, rather than pore minutely and extensively over each word and strophe of these poems, deconstructing them in some well thought out and structured chapter explaining as I previously did with my other poems what the significance and sequence of each phoneme and semantic field refers to, as a creatively concluding exercise I would rather this time leave you entirely free to interpret any and all of this as you wish, with no guidelines of interpretation whatsoever, not even an obligation or requisite to listen in fact, although I would like to encourage you, if you've gotten this far and are still reading, to lend your ear(s) to at least one poem before you decide whether or not this is a worthwhile venture.

Since this is meant to be not only an interdisciplinary but also mainly a translation studies thesis, to those of you so inclined in these particular specialization fields related to it I would suggest my self-translated glossolalia-like albums, since they are likely the most relevant to this current thesis. Regardless, to anyone who would wish to rather listen to whatever art piece, poem, title or album cover is most enticing or intriguing to them, I would assuredly suggest to you to follow your heart and do that. Here then, for the translation enthusiasts and specialists, is one of my latest romantic-futurist-dystopian/utopian projects, Ghosts in the Machine, which was made in 7 main languages, namely English, French, Spanish, Sanskrit, Arabic, Japanese & Medu Neter (Kemetic), with passing references to 15 others in worldwide First Peoples tongues, and another album, much more romantically & mythologically inclined, "the Island of Immortals", which is mainly an autotranslation in English, French & Spanish. Both of these were dedicated to past soulmates in this Earthly realm, but also beyond this to the divine

feminine & non-binary oracles and divinities they represented to me, which is to say, Akhilandeshvari, the Goddess who is Never Not Broken, and Kuan Yin, the Aeon of Compassion & Mercy and supreme Bodhisattva of matriarchal Buddhist mythology. The lyrics, translations and annotated comments will be added shortly underneath the song links on the bandcamp page, as I seem to have had some issues originally with this and they have since been deleted.

In the likely event that you are reading this in the midst of a nuclear fallout or some global disaster (which we are, interestingly enough, currently living), feel free to call my landline at the faunic reserve and offgrid sanctuary I will be managing, as even if the internet and cell towers were completely non-functional and electricity was disconnected temporarily this line would still be active. If this isn't an option, I would say that you will likely, if you believe in it enough, be able to somehow manifest a synchronicity of finding these poems and being able to listen to them one day in this existence, if not in future ones nonetheless. Please do accept my apologies if they are not currently accessible.

<https://revoltmotionrecords.bandcamp.com/music> (Some of my spoken word albums & others)

<https://revoltmotionrecords.bandcamp.com/> (A world music & poetry archive & repository)

<https://revoltmotionrecords.bandcamp.com/album/ghosts-in-the-machine-prod-by-zens>

<https://revoltmotionrecords.bandcamp.com/album/the-island-of-immortals-prod-by-aquarius-minded>

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