Indigeneity, Hip Hop and Black Liberation Struggles: Decolonizing state violence on Black and Brown bodies.

(Scz)

“(*What did the Indian say?*)

A piece of land

That's what the Indian said, I needed demand

Telling me longevity is in the dirt, should buy some property first

Should profit a better dollar with generational perks

Equity at his best, really, you should invest

These tangible things expire, don't you expect

Income with so much outcome and yes

Look at my heritage, we blessed

(*Now what the black man say?*)

A piece of pussy

That's what the black man said, I needed to push me

To the limit to satisfy my hunger

We do it all for a woman from hair cut to a wool

We like to live in the jungle, like to play in the peach

What you saying to me?

He said "nigga, come back to reality for a week"

Pussy is power, fuck on a new bitch every night

I wouldn't be prouder, you should allow it

(*What the white man say?*)

A piece of mine's

That's what the white man wanted when I rhyme

Telling me that he selling me just for $10.99

If I go platinum from rapping, I do the company fine

What if I compromise? He said it don't even matter

You make a million or more, you living better than average

You losing your core following, gaining it all

He put a price on my talent, I hit the bank and withdraw

Hit the bank and withdraw, hit the bank and withdraw

Put myself in the rocket ship and I shot for the stars

Look at what you accomplished and what he said to the boy

I'mma make you some promises that you just can't ignore

Your profession anonymous as an artist

If I don't target your market

If you ain't signing your signature when I throw you my wallet

A lot of rappers are giving their demo all in the toilet

You work toward your master's mortgage, I need a piece

**Kendrick Lamar untitled number 3 (2016)**

Lamar’s verse from *untitled number 3* illustrates how Hip Hop as a medium for communication mobilizes concepts of Indigeneity and Black Liberation politics to decenter the colonial notions of colorblindness, neoliberal capitalism, white supremacy and other mechanisms of coloniality. Kendrick does this while positing, to my reading, a politic that centers Black femme power (*pussy)*, Indigenous land ethics, and still maintains an expression of self-reflective reasoning about his position as a Black man within systems of white supremacy and capitalism. This writing examines the relationship between Indigeneity, Hip Hop and Black Liberation by reflecting on the intersections of these spaces in the cultural production of emceeing and sonic manipulation, personal work as a cultural producer and educator, and readings of aesthetics as resistance.

**Why I’m Mad:  An introduction in necessary rage**

As I began to write this piece, I was reminded of lessons from the Black Radical Tradition, when scholar Kyle Mays (2016) penned an essay on Decolonization.org surrounding the #FlintWaterCrisis.He started his essay with an introduction entitled “Why I’m mad”, and this assertion prompted me to remember that as “woke” scholars we have a responsibility to continually be on our James Baldwin type ish. We must not look at the world and feel despair for our social conditions of existence. To be “woke” is to embrace our rage.  Our rage is not only productive, it is deeply necessary for our movements to continue. Castells (2012) outlines how our relationship to digital and social networks and mass-communications technology have facilitated people tapping into collective rage as a means of overcoming the administration of fear to create social change. Our rage holds us accountable to our actions and pushes us to take risks which confront state-sanctioned and transnational methods of control, most commonly bodily violence.In our current moment the emergence of this movement or politic is the manifestation of wokeness, it is decolonization as a praxis, the centering of unapologetically Indigenous, Black, and Queer discourse and narratives, and a necessity to disrupt the (il)logic of coloniality at every turn.

I realize as a lover, creator of and participant in Hip Hop culture, I am mad. Mad that we continue to have the same conversations. Mad that coloniality attempts to make Hip Hop feel stagnant, when at its essence it is movement, creative flow and action. Mad that *scholarship about Hip Hop* largely still focuses on politics of authenticity, respectability and female sexuality, homogenizing of history and arguments about industry rap verse “conscious” Hip Hop, while *Hip Hop scholarship* is given very little space to exist as a legitimate form of knowledge.  Hip Hop since its inception has been a culture participated in & created by femmes, poor folx, Black & Indigenous peoples, queer and trans kids; if you believe any different, remember hegemony is a lie and history is a weapon **(**Hill 2009**,** Hernandez, 2014, Lane, 2011, Shange, 2014**).**This work is autoethnographic, the cultural producers I interact with and interpret are based on my own social conditions of existence, my current understanding of the historical legacies of diasporic and Indigenous identities, and my social location within communities actively working to resist these traumas (Story 2015). In the study, I use some of the more easily recognizable “elements” of Hip Hop most commonly emceeing and deejaying/producing as sites/texts/spaces where knowledge is communicate, however it is through the lenses of what emcee and scholar Bocafloja and the collective Quilomboarte assert are their redefined version of Hip Hop’s four elements, “decolonize, self-manage, transgress, and emancipate” (Bocafloja, 2013).

If colonialism and white supremacy are the frames by which hegemony has structured the last five hundred years, then we must acknowledge that Indigeneity and Black liberation are both the political ideologies and forces of mobilization that seek to resist those narratives and contours. The concepts of Indigeneity and Black liberation cannot be viewed as mutually exclusive. Evidence of their integration exists in the formation of quilombos in Brazil, maroon communities of the Caribbean and the U.S., the emergence of Garifuna identity and culture within Central America, and larger decolonial struggles on the African continent. Hip Hop as a cultural expression and political movement could only have been birthed through the convergence of Indigenous and Black experiences of colonial conditions within a specific climate of white supremacist/capitalist hegemony in the United States. Since Hip Hop’s inception, it has been a medium to critique and question the state’s exploitation and violence towards people of color.

Cultural production as a decolonial form of resistance can be traced throughout the Black Atlantic (Gilroy 1993**),** from percussive “talking” drums to polyrhythmic call and response, to the emergence of Hip Hop. Conversely, stylistic elements, rhythms, and sounds in early Hip Hop can be traced to histories of Indigenous/Latinx expressions (Ball 2011, Flores 2000). In our ongoing practices of decolonization, we must recognize that colonialism, nationalism, and histories of erasure seek to rob individuals of their identity. When Hip Hop’s history is being discussed, we must acknowledge that Caribbean diasporas living in the Bronx like Puerto Ricans and Dominicans are part of an Indigenous lineage(Taino, Arawak, Carib), and therefore part of a legacy of Indigenous resistance (Ball 2011, Flores 2000). In our present moment, Hip Hop is a global medium for expression and communication which is utilized as a decolonial strategy from South Africa to Palestine to Central America to anywhere peripheral bodies exist/resist at the power**.**

Kidane and Martineau (2013) argue that, “in their shared dreams of freedom, in linked flight from coloniality, and in resistance against the state, Indigenous and Black struggles for decolonization are inextricably interconnected.” Black liberation and Indigenous movements have been mobilizing the cultural medium of Hip Hop to communication complex webs of knowing and being, which contextualize the varied expressions of Black and Brownness(Chang 2009, Ball 2011, Flores 2000).I will discuss the ways in which Indigenous and Black Liberation movements are mobilizing sonic signifying, acts of radical imagination, community organizing, cultural production and manipulation of technology as tools for reclaiming the past, reimagining the future, and resisting present social conditions. This work reads bodies as texts and grounds the production of knowledge in the experiential rather than the scientific (Freire 1970). My work is rooted in the tradition of scholars like Audre Lorde, who once said, “u*nless one lives and loves in the trenches, it is difficult to remember that the war against dehumanization is ceaseless*” (1984, pp 119). These are never processes and conditions I speculate about, these are my lived realities. Fanon (2004) discusses the role of the colonized intellectual is to be transformed by being with the people during liberation struggles, our involvement in these struggles provides us with a new vocabulary one that focuses on collectivity over individuality, the familial over the epistemic violence of “other.” He suggests the terms brother, sister and comerade are some of the first to denote this critical recognition, I would suggest from my experiences we add to the lexicon of understanding; fam, y’all, muxer, sis, homie, boo, my dude, bruja, witch, hunty and chile. It is through these vernaculars and more that we are developing our analysis of our social conditions of existence, coding our knowledge and communication, and actively working to destabilize the mechanisms of coloniality. Through this discussion, I will continue to center the concepts of decolonize, self-manage, transgress, and emancipate as core elements of Hip Hip’s radical potential.

This is not to say that Hip Hop has not been co-opted by spaces of ytness and capital.Hip Hop as medium of communications lives in a space that can be define by its ability “to operate within the matrix of power”, but “is not the same as to replicate uncritically relations of domination” (Butler 1990, 40). We must take this understanding further by recognizing what scholar Jared Ball (2011) highlights as the precarity and social locale of Hip Hop, “…what cannot be avoided in any case is that it (Hip Hop) emerged as a part of a pre-existing, and global, imperial process of colonization that had long been in full swing. The Hip Hop nation is a colonized extension of a predating and continuing colonialismo that engulfs its progenitors and governs still the process and necessity of the theft of soul or the grossest forms of distortion of communication.” Hip Hop like all forms of expression in the colonized world, exists on the parallels of mainstream and counter narrative, however we must recognize that disidentification is one of our most resistant strategies, the ability to exist *within* but *to identify as not of (Story 2015, Hill 2009*)  Muñoz (qtd in Story, 2015 pp 28) contends that although “disidentification is not always an adequate strategy of resistance or survival for all minority subjects,” it can, for some, function as a subjective identity formation tool that seeks to represent identities within the public sphere that “are formed in response to the cultural logics of heteronormativity, white supremacy, and misogyny,” This is why Hip Hop was able to move from the center of hegemony (the US) and even in its most commercialized, industrialized form of rap export, to the margins where it created resonance. Hip Hop in in its essence Queer and decolonial in its politics and movements, it refutes borders, transcends binaries and complicates narratives (Hill 2009, Story 2015, Hernandez 2014, Lane 2011). Hip Hop is radical movement, it is a cultural expression that bridges divides of anti-Blackness and internalized colonialism that are present in the embodied experiences of colonized peoples.

**Themes and variation: Echoes of the past, Reimagining the future and Resisting the present**

Hip Hop like any other movement, culture and art form must be viewed through a multivariate lenses. Hip Hop in its forty plus years of history has much like its predecessors of jazz, funk, soul, soca, merengue, and other Black Atlantic sound, been home to various themes, interpretations and variations in expression.

**Echoes of the past: decolonial histories, sonic archives of knowledge and connection to our ancestors.**

Fanon (2004, pp1) reminds us in the simplest of terms, “decolonization as we know it is a historical process.” The act of sonic signifying as a means of reclaiming the past occurs through emcees as they channel names, places and events from the past in order to inform current narratives. Emcees have inherited the legacy of griots and oral traditions that touch most precolonial societies and communities (Ball 2011, Galeano 2009, Kelley 2003).  Fanon (2004) reminds us as colonized peoples during liberation struggles we become preoccupied by crisis and we forget to tell our stories. This hypervigilance feels like a function of necessity as we exist in spaces where the threat of violence is omnipresent, however we cannot in our desire for wokeness forget to dream. The role of the emcee manifests Aimé Césaire's (1972) concept of poetic knowledge. Poetics become a device to communicate emancipatory pedagogies, as Sheffield (2011, 99) highlights “The *power of hip-hop* (indeed any music) as a form of political expression is the speed with which it travels across audiences and the sheer simplicity of the medium**.”**

Jennifer Stoever-Ackerman (2008) argues that Hip Hop has the ability to encapsulate a sonic archive in each track, which questions the politic of how knowledge is produced, remembered and mobilized. Artist and educator CambioWasHere in his 2015 release by the same name, lyrically signifies Bobby Hutten, Fred Hampton, Octavia Butler, James Brown, Frida Kahlo, Malcolm X, Bob Marley, Harriet Tubman, white Jesus, Biggie, Che Guevara, Hernando Cortes, his mother, Karl Marx, Willy Loman, Reaganomics, El Chapo, Emory Douglas, John Coltrane, 43 students, Monsanto, Favianna Rodriguez, his wife, Miles Davis, Will Smith, Mayas, ISIS, fracking, Coca-Cola, Chiapas, (Muhammad) Ali, Lewis and Clark, Paul Mooney, David Chappelle, by positioning these people, places and events within his narrative he provides the listener with a vast archive of emancipatory knowledge. This archive consists of cultural workers in various struggles of Black and Indigenous resistance (both historical figures and present), while providing heavy critique of agents of the colonial state like Hernando Cortes and Lewis and Clark. His work highlights Bobby Hutten and Fred Hampton, both of whom were involved in the Black Panther Party and who were murdered by the police in Oakland and Chicago respectively. Cambiowashere through his own body of work, maintains a long tradition of Hip Hop artists who use their lyrical prowess to deconstruct the social condition of state-sanctioned/police violence, he does this from the intersection of Black and Brownness underscoring the insidious violence of the border (Amerikkka/Mexico), commenting on the racialized hierarchies that exist within border imperialism (Walia 2013) and connecting struggles against settler colonialism globally.

Deejays/producers reclaim sonic pasts through the act of sampling. The mixing and production of tracks serve as a space where cultural producers use samples to transmit, comment on, and contextualize these archives of knowledge. Indigenous scholar and cultural producer Jarrett Martineau/Culturite, creates mixtapes that focus on Indigenous resistance in its many forms. In his, *Nationhood* mixtape (2013), he samples the voices of Malcolm X and Gil Scott Heron, recontextualizing them to create new meaning by connecting voices from past Black liberation struggles to Indigenous strategies in his cultural production. Tillet (2014) highlights the ways in which current Hip Hop (mostly in a US context) movements have embraced the legacy of Nina Simone. Tillet (2014, 120) underscores the importance of the resurgence of Nina and what she represents, “Simone emerges as both a compelling singer and a cultural signifier, a virtuoso and political visionary, whose sampled voice, pianism, and performative strategy enable a diverse range of hip-hop artists to access and perform a version what I am calling her sonic black radicalism.” Both Rebel Diaz in their album *Radical Dilemma* (2013) and Jasiri X on his Black Liberation Theology (2015) sample Simone speaking during a 1969 interview for the *Great American Dream Machine* (Tillet 2012). In this sample Simone states, “I’ll tell you what freedom means to me, no fear! ... If I could have that half my life, no fear,” it has been widely proliferated by people in current liberation struggles because of its emancipatory affect.  In my own work as a deejay it is not uncommon for me to sample the voices of individuals like James Baldwin and Audre Lorde to assert a queer Black/PoC politic into my sonic narrative,while attempting to transgress normative/hegemonic concepts of knowing and being. As we sample our sonic histories, we are able to act as time travelers, conjuring sounds, rhythms and vocals that connect our current works of cultural production to places of past meaning. Deejays/producers honor our ancestors (actual or imagined) through an act of sonic Sankofa.Deejay’s use strategies that are reflexive, recombinant and regenerative in order to transcommunicate knowledge and create movement in bodies and spaces.

**Reimagining the future: Decolonizing Imaginations, Indigenous and Afro Futurisms and Hip Hop emancipation**

Hip Hop as a movement is always in flux, as soon as coloniality begins to define what it is or is not, Hip Hop transgresses and transforms into something new. In terms of the idea of movement, we must begin to understand that it is never directionless and always gaining in momentum. So what then is Hip Hop moving away from and towards? Hip Hop as an emancipatory strategy and medium for communication exist within a continuum of Indigenous and Afro futurism and decolonial acts of imagination. Dreams of exodus, flight, marronage, and fugitive aesthetics are common themes in cultural production of Black and Indigenous peoples. Jarrett Martineau and Eric Ritskes’ (2014, Pg IV) definition of fugitive aesthetics is important framing when thinking about Hip Hip as movement, “the fugitive aesthetic is not an abdication of contention and struggle; it is a reorientation toward freedom in movement, against the limits of colonial knowing and sensing.” Robin G. Kelley (2003, pp 17) highlights why this concept holds such strong appeal in the Black collective consciousness, “Exodus represents dreams of black self-determination, of being on our own, under our own rules and beliefs, developing our own cultures, without interference.”

This need for self-determination/management can manifest in many ways, one is in our desire for destruction, whether real or imagined, hence want to burn down Babylon. Fanon (2004, pp 6) posits “to destroy the colonial world means nothing less than demolishing the colonialists sector, burying it deep within the earth or banishing it from the territory.” In spoken word piece *Speak to me of Justice*, by Waziyatawin which was featured in Culturite’s Indigenous Futurism mixtape (2014), she imagines the necessary conditions which need to take place before hegemony/the settler colonial state could ever step to her about justice. Her assertion begins with “Speak to me of justice when the beneficiaries of genocide feel the anguish of my ancestors and beg our forgiveness, when every one of the inheritors of stolen land engages in personal and collective acts of reparative justice…” She uses a decolonial lens to imagine a time *not if* but *when* justice will be brought to the Dakota peoples. It is necessary for the oppressed to have spaces where we can dream and imagine so that we might better inform our strategies in the present.

One of the most subversive assertions Hip Hop makes is at its core being committed to joy (Bambaataa 1984). As oppressed and colonized peoples, one of the ways we maintain our dignity and express our humanity are through our collective and individual acts of joy. Martineau and Ritskes (2014) express this active strategy to move away from the trauma inducing hyper-mediated images of Black suffering as spectacle. This strategy disrupts coloniality and forced hegemony by providing spaces where we are able to define ourselves for ourselves.

It is important in our decolonial praxis to have possibility models, spaces/places where these freedom dreams are actualized either in full or part, where we can experience joy, self-representation/determination, and healing. Sometimes this may take us into the past, like when we look to the Young Lords or the Black Panthers popular education models as we organize political consciousness in our communities. Sometimes those model meet us in the present, over the last two and a half years, I have helped to run an autonomous/self-managed (i.e. not part of the Non-profit industrial complex) community project which teaches deejaying, music production and emancipatory education to youth in my city. The work we engage in spends significant time unpacking focusing on the “new and good” in our youth’s lives, while giving them a safe space to process encounter of white supremacy and violence. However, this project could have easily remained an idea if it weren’t for being able to see and connect with similar project taking place in other cities, like 1Hood Media Academy (Pittsburgh), Breakdance Project Uganda, Lah Tere’s work with Hip Hop and healing and through Mama’s Hip Hop Kitchen, and many others.

**Resisting the present: digital diasporas coding resistance, media-organizing, cultural production and manipulation of technology**

Hip Hop's past and future exist in the current moment. We come from a lineage of technology manipulators, of ingenuity and innovation. Ingenuity is the code of Black and Brown creative genius, it is the nuanced ways that colonized bodies have found to communicate concepts of resistance toward colonial narratives. As cultural producers we have a responsibility to understand the connection of technology to a history of capitalist exploitation, global Black insurgence, Afrodiasporic creative energy, and Indigenous mobilization.In Hip Hop's early formation this ingenuity looked like the creation of the cross fader, when an electrician turned deejay named Grandmaster Flash learned how to keep the mix moving and started blending sounds (Chang 2007, KRS-One 2013). Today we still manipulate and appropriate technology created in the center for the purposes of expression in the margins. The interconnectivity of our digital diasporas breaks down the binary thinking of the colonial mentality, we are able to exist outside of and in between its narrow definitions. Using these platforms of self-representation we are able to exercise the resistant acts of liberation and transgression that connect us to our shared histories of struggle against oppression.

Hip Hop, like other counter hegemonic resistance forms, manipulates and appropriates sanctioned uses of technology in order to create culture that is easily produced and disseminated.  Our modern social conditions connect us to hypermediated spaces, and these spaces become places where we can see acts of resurgency in action.  Diasporas exist because of the extreme violence of coloniality, however. technology is allowing (dis)placed bodies to find connection to our diasporic identities and understandings as we share our stories in our own voices, and for many this voice comes in the form of Hip Hop. Digital diasporas are using Hip Hop to connect transnational collectives and digital safe-spaces where knowledge sharing, identity assertion/affirmation and the breaking down of isolation can occur.

Hashtags are one of the ways in which we are forging digital connections and communicating knowledge across large and small geographic distances. Hashtags *are* Hip Hop. They are digital call and response, the manipulation of technology for liberatory gains, they are the act of sampling and archiving, analogous to graffiti in their reclaiming of space. When the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter was introduced the by three queer Black women after George Zimmerman was acquitted for hunting down and murdering a Black youth named Trayvon Martin, it became a space for reclaiming and asserting Black humanity and dignity. After August 2014 and the murder of Mike Brown in Ferguson, Missouri the phrase and hashtag #BlackLivesMatter gave us a vocabulary to connect the experiences of state-sanctioned violence at a national and international level, because we exist in a global apartheid which positions the South and Black and Brown bodies, regardless of there geographic locale, at the bottom. This tag became an archive and discursive tool for global struggles against white supremacy (Richmond 1994).

We see this global resonance with similar hashtags like #FergusonIsEverywhere. Ferguson, Missouri became a microcosm of pressures that were/are building all over the colonized world. Hip Hop organizers, artists and activists were some of the first to respond to these events, using their skills in media production, popular education and journalism to counter the narrative being produced by corporate mass media. An exemplar the intersection of Hip Hop/Indigeneity/Black liberation politics can be seen in the Democracy Now (2014) interview with Rosa Clemente, a Hip Hop activist, educator and leading scholar on Afto-Latinx identity and Talib Kweli entitled “Black life is treated with short worth,” which versions a lyrical phrase created by the artist Yasiin Bey (Mos Def) who is one half of Black Star with Kweli. Rosa and Talib through their embodied social conditions and production of knowledge deploy decolonial strategies that seek to disrupt hegemonic norms of anti-Blackness, capitalism, imperialism, patriarchy, settler colonialism and other mechanisms of coloniality, while recentering on explicitly Black and Indigenous experiences. This interview took place in Greater St. Mark’s Church, which would later be raided by the police for providing a safe space and medical treatment to protesters.

During this interview Clemente and Kweli recount their experience and trauma from the previous night with the police, which highlights the (de)valuing of Black life in Amerikkka, no amount of album sales, accolades, degrees, or visibility will save you from guns being pointed at you and your life being considered disposable. They use this media platform to articulate a critique of white supremacy that addresses the post-9/11 militarization of the police which they connect to a larger policy of border imperialism which is weaponized against Black and Brown bodies. As educators, they work to explicate what it means to have movement on the ground, “Tweets not connected to action are false movement”, the need to connect each act of state-violence to a historical legacy, and a broadening of the narrative of violence past the male body. They use the strategy of signifying to discuss the importance of people such as Fannie Lou Hammer, Malcolm X and Stokely Charmichael, and give the current moment a historical context. Rosa maintains a perspective in the Black radical tradition of a leftist working-class anti-capitalist analysis of bourgeoisiepredominantly male “leadership” which tends to emerge from these moments of uprising and often serve a co-opting function within coloniality.

Two other hashtag that I would like to touch briefly on, are #RhodesMustFall (and subsequent #FeesMustFall and #EndOutSourcing) and #HipHop2Decolonize. The movement which uses the hashtag #RhodesMustFall began in Capetown, South Africa as a student lead strategy to challenge the historical legacy of settler colonialism, the corporatization of the university and the large system of insidious whiteness which permeates the country. The name centers on one of the early demands which was the removal of a statue of Cecil Rhodes from the university’s campus. This movement has connected student movements globally who are seeking to radically challenge the coloniality of knowledge by removing whiteness and Eurocentered discourse from the universities. British-based Hip Hop artist Little Simz (2015) used her video for Gratitude to spread a visual message and representation of this movement which typically goes unseen in hegemonic productions of knowledge and visibility through mass media.

#HipHip2Decolonize was a hashtag created by *Decolonization: Indigineity, Education & Society* as part of their blog series I had the privilege of participating in. They tweeted March 9th, 2015 “We'll be using the [#HipHop2Decolonize](https://twitter.com/hashtag/hiphop2decolonize?src=hash) tag to facilitate conversation, get music recommendations & keep things together.” Artists whose work was tweeted under this hashtag include: Jasiri X, Shining Souls, Ibeyi, Tall Paul, Darah, Rebel Diaz, Frank Waln, Akala, Joshua Virisami, Kendrick Lamar, Yuri Kochiyama, Shibastik, Gil Scott Heron, Bocafloja, A Tribe Called Red, Ana Tijoux, Shadia Mansour, Culturite, ¡Alas!, Dialectic, Angel Haze, Little Simz, Black/Other, Sharif and @Knockzarelli, Mark Campbell, dead prez, Olmeca, and Ancestress & Yilinhil. These artists exist at various intersections of embodied experiences and identities within oppression and use their performative politics to communicate critical understandings and oppositions to coloniality. The blog series covered topics of remixing, performance as resistance, critical pedagogies, Indigineity and Modernity from a Hip Hop frame.

In this current moment of resistance, emcees’ oral signifying becomes a way to assert their politics in space while using a creative platform of expression to challenge notions of police brutality, state sanctioned violence, mass incarceration, school-to-prison pipelines and other forms of overt violence. One of the ways this signifying takes place is in themes of memorializing the dead, especially those whose murders by the police/state permeated the national/broader collective consciousness. There are innumerable songs which reference Mike Brown, Trayvon Martin, Tamir Rice, Oscar Grant and others (cite tracks). St. Louis-based artist and activist Tef Poe’s (2015) *Say her name,* maintains the same theme of memorializing, while transgressing the narrative that state-sanctioned/police violence is only exercised against Black male/masculine presenting bodies. Tef Poe’s signifying locates state-sanctioned violence not only in the bodies of Black and Brown women, but he uses his cultural production to connect his local, the murder of Kim King in St. Louis, to a national/transnational discourse focusing on state violence against women by signifying the names of Sandra Bland, Rekia Boyd and Jessie Hernandez.

To underscore the potency of Hip Hop’s power to communicate resistance, we see even highly commercially successful artists taking on these themes. J. Cole’s (2013) *Crooked Smile*, music video dramatizes and memorializes AiyanaStanley-Jones, a seven year old who was murdered in a police raid of her residence. The video ends with a typed message from Cole, asking (the viewer/Amerikkka) to reconsider the war on drugs. Cole’s video shows us a snapshot into one of the unforeseen repercussions of this war, other effects of this war include a 700% increase in the prison population in the Amerikkka, Amerikkkan foreign policy and military interventions that have lead to the destabilization of Central American governments and the forced displacement of millions of people, and the continued dehumanization of Black and Brown life by white supremacy and capital. (Flatow 2014**,** Gonzalez 2011)

The ways in which producers and deejays mobilize sonic devices and sample-based music in current movement for Indigenous and Black liberation struggles is varied. It can come in the form of sonic redistribution like sampling protest chants in the club in order to communicate that both the streets and the dance floor are places for challenging the violence of coloniality. Mark Campbell (2015) in his piece *Sonic Intimacies: On Djing Better Futures*, highlights the ability of sonics (deejaying) as a means to break down some of the barriers that force us to think about Black and Indigenous life as mutually exclusive spheres in Western Society, sounds can destabilize social constructed boundaries between Indigenous and Black culture.

I am reminded of last summer when I was teaching *Deejaying as Decolonial Strategy: The Pedagogy of Hip Hop; Music, Media and Technology* to youth participants at a latinx leadership camp in Kentucky. There, I had the experience of my young people using sonic signifying through the form of a sample, to communicate a very specific politic in the mixtape they created as part of the class. They sampled the artist Cambiowashere’s track *#BlackandBrownHistory*, where there he asserts “white latinos ain’t representing me, just because you speaking Spanish doesn’t mean we’re family”. This choice in sample, which they put through stutter effects, chopped and mixed into and over other audio at least 10 times, positioned their understanding of latinx identity as unequivocally counter to whiteness. This act of sonic signifying was both a narrative to larger listening community, but also their space to express their feelings of marginalization within Latino/Hispanic spaces that center on whiteness. Their desire to disrupt and decenter whiteness was in part, a response to a few of the students in the program who maintained Anti-Black and white supremacist/colorist views towards students who were Afro-Latinx or Indigenous presenting.

**Conclusion:**

Hip Hop teaches us we must remain in constant movement, existing in between our dream states and wokeness in order to dismantle coloniality and rebuild our world in a different image. When all movement by Black and Brown bodies has the potential of being viewed as a threat to by neutralized by the force and violence of colonitality, then we must remember than that all movements are resistant in their very existence.  Our strategies must include creation. These acts must occur often and with intention, both in public to disrupt the very systems that seek to destroy us and in private/community where we have the ability to explore our vulnerability, address our humanity and heal our traumas.

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