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# Rapping Back: Counter-narratives from Auckland, New Zealand

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# **Rapping Back: Counter-narratives from Auckland, New Zealand**

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS

in

INTERNATIONAL AND MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

by

Mariel Lopez Rogers

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UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Statement of the Problem**

Across the Pacific in Auckland, New Zealand two rap groups, Homebrew and @Peace, are contributing to a theoretically rich and socially conscious Hip Hop scene. Their music critically questions commercialism and conformity in a culture shaped by a history of colonialism. This makes their message starkly opposed to the normative values of New Zealand. The musicians of Homebrew and @Peace, a mix of Polynesian and Pakeha (people of European descent), employ methods of decolonization theory through the use of storytelling and focus on indigenous values. In a country that has adopted the neoliberal beliefs that competition drives human relations, and redefines citizens as consumers, Homebrew and @Peace use their music to resist these messages by valuing the individual over the almighty dollar. Straddling between worlds, one of urbanization and the other of indigeneity, Homebrew and @Peace show how this rift is a result of neoliberalism. Decolonization methodology calls for writing back or researching back, but these groups demonstrate that rapping back can be an equally significant form of counter-narrative.

The perceived benefits of urbanization and capitalism conflict with indigenous values. New Zealand is influenced by a colonial past, as they were part of the British Empire just over 100 years ago. Coupled with the neoliberal policies that influence everything from federal

welfare benefits to education, indigenous values have been historically marginalized. Currently, Polynesian, and specifically Maori, have disproportionately higher rates of disadvantage in almost every life outcome compared to Pakeha (Rankine et al, 2014; Newton et al, 2017). Issues of substance abuse and suicide are rampant among Polynesians in New Zealand, which these groups believe arrived from a disconnect from indigenous knowledges. Intense competition and the commodification of education and land are cited by Homebrew and @Peace as causes for feelings of alienation. They powerfully connect the political to the personal, which can inspire youth to become their own cultural theorists. In a country that blames the poor for their position in society and rewards conformity, it is a political act to encourage individualism. Because not all members of the music groups are Maori or Polynesian, they are able to speak to issues beyond racism or indigeneity. Using the salient characteristic of their socioeconomic class, they bridge the gap between communities and spread their message to a wider audience. Skillfully tackling colonialist influences and economic policy with poetic emotional depth, these groups are influential voices in their community.

Using their experience growing up in working class neighborhoods, the musicians powerfully dissect the words of politicians, making significant connections between identity, global capitalism, and decolonizing consciousness. Through a brutal honesty about hopelessness and failure, Homebrew and @Peace reveal the human elements of growing up in a marginalized community. I argue that these two groups are doing more than simply producing music -- they are cultural theorists who seek to decolonize consciousness through the use of Hip Hop.

## **Background and Need for the Study**

The legacy of colonialism and neoliberalism are causing indigenous communities in New Zealand to continue to be marginalized. One such example of this is the precarious state of the te reo Maori language. By removing “te reo Maori from the mouths of speakers, the colonial agenda was achieved more readily” by forcing cultural assimilation (Te Huia, 2015). In 2015, only 11% (50,000) of Maori adults indicated that they could speak te reo Maori well or very well (Te Huia, 2015). Older generations were most likely to be fluent speakers, but overall the Maori population is very young; in 2006 the median age was 22 years (Kawharu, 2014). Thus, the current numbers are not strong enough to sustain language regeneration (Kawharu, 2014). Today New Zealand is at a crossroads where they can pivot towards accepting multiculturalism or keep up with the status quo of cultural discrimination. For linguistic revitalization, te reo Maori needs to be learned by people of all racial backgrounds, not just Maori. For this to happen, value must first be placed on indigenous knowledges including language.

English is a global language that is rooted in a colonial history. Linguistic hegemony is connected to the global expansion of English and the subsequent lack of agency individuals, institutions, or states have as they are forced to conform in order to remain competitive economically (Ives, 2009). However the spread of English is actually tied to uneven power relations. The hegemonic and neocolonial nature of English creates an oppression that non-English speakers feel when forced to conform to English speakers and their culture, leaving a wave of damaged personal identities in its wake. Linguistic prejudice not only classifies and ranks people based on their proficiency in English, but requires others to conform to the English majority or remain silenced.



English acts a gatekeeper for social and economic process (Pennycook, 1994). Used in professional and political settings, it exacerbates power imbalances by rendering these places inaccessible to certain people (Pennycook, 1994). Access to international communication, privileged jobs, and exclusion all act to maintain the neoliberal structures that actively oppress non-English speakers. The spread of capitalism, development, global aid and North American media are all linked to the use of English (Pennycook, 1994). English, as language of globalization further operates to consolidate power by which capitalist countries, such as the United States, dominate the rest of the world (Tsuda, 2014, Pennycook 2007). The spread of English is a new form of linguistic colonialism that acts to silence the local.

Consequences of assimilationist policies are seen today in the racialized disparities between Pakeha and the indigenous Maori people. Maori are over represented in levels of unemployment, incarceration, special education programs for behavioral issues, illness and poverty (Curtis, 2016). The overall academic achievement rate is low, and they are more likely to be enrolled in vocational curriculum programs as opposed to being on a university track (Curtis, 2016). This effectively prevents this population from reaching higher education, and moving forward to become researchers and scholars who could represent their own community's needs. Drawing upon a decolonization methodology is a way to counter these effects, as it supports a grassroots theorizing that is occurring among youth.

Research has been done on postcolonial nations and Hip Hop (Alim, Pennycook, Ibrahim, 2009), however there is a gap in research regarding New Zealand. This is a unique example of the connections between global and local spheres, in terms of economics, colonialism, and culture. These two groups are influenced by a Global Hip Hop culture, yet reinvent style and language to fit their community. Homebrew and @Peace skillfully use literary

devices such as metaphor, satire, and allusion in their lyrics; making a discourse analysis a relevant way to have the music speak for itself. Similarly, the substance of their music speaks to local hardships which can ultimately be traced back to a globalization of capitalism. Coupled with the fact that many group members are indigenous in descent, this makes for an interesting case study in decolonization. Using a sociolinguistic and discourse analysis lens, I want to investigate how local MCs are leveraging their position in society to demonstrate to youth that they can be empowered by their individuality and resist the forces of global capitalism. Just as has historically been done with literature analysis, I want to employ these same methods for Hip Hop, building upon previous research while also filling in research gaps.

### **Purpose of the Study**

Drawing parallels between New Zealand and other formerly colonized countries can help shed light on the challenges that remain today. This is important for educators, policy makers, and the youth themselves to understand. I want to demonstrate that youth can be seen as cultural theorists who are driving the move towards social equality. Hip Hop can be used as a tool to uplift a community and should be spread in order to help youth meaningfully engage with social issues. Educators who work with youth need to develop an appreciation of multiple types of knowledge production. Having respect and understanding for the experiences, truths, and subsequent expressions of these is paramount to being a connected and understanding educator.

## **Research Questions/Hypotheses**

Homebrew and @Peace discuss intense feelings of alienation and isolation in their music while also challenging the neoliberal reforms of their government. I believe that there is a connection between these two. Further, given the post-colonial context of New Zealand, I argue that Homebrew and @Peace are actually working to decolonize the consciousness of youth by connecting the personal to the political. Their grassroots theorizing, among an interracial Hip Hop collective, can function to be more inclusive of youth who are not on a professional or university track, and reveal deeper and more authentic insights that would be lost from a top down approach.

My questions are 1) what themes are recurring in Homebrew and @Peace's music and how are they connected? 2) In what ways are Homebrew and @Peace using rap to resist neoliberalism?

By analyzing their lyrics, I hope to uncover the emotional effects of the clear disdain the government has demonstrated for the poor. Further, I hope to be able to show that an expression of emotion can in itself be a political act. I hypothesize that a critical youth movement is present in New Zealand and that this movement can be used in an effort toward decolonization.

## **Theoretical Rationale**

A focus on decolonization methodology, the hegemony of English and a globalization of Hip Hop will provide the backbone of the theoretical frameworks employed in this study. These three frameworks adequately address all major themes in my research and can demonstrate the political activism inherent in the use of a marginalized medium and local language practice.

Language practices have been subjugated by the hegemony of English. The global expansion of English has come at the cost of the “abandonment of the student’s native language and culture (Macedo et al, 2003, p. 9). Viewing bilingualism through a racialized lens, it is clear that the forced adoption of English through education is actually advancing a neocolonial agenda (Macedo et al, 2003). Colonial schools are political sites that function to reproduce the culture of the colonizer while simultaneously devaluing the language and culture of the colonized. The colonial worldview continues to be reproduced through globalization and neoliberalism in such a way that “so-called Third-World people can be acculturated into a predefined colonial model” (Macedo et al, 2003, p. 15). English is so associated with financial success that postcolonial nations are viewing English as a necessary means to compete in global economy.

In this social hierarchy, native English speakers can express their ideas on an international stage at any time, and the “muted” working class is enslaved to learn English in order to be heard or respected (Tsuda, 2014). Linguistic discrimination is even more harmful because language is how we understand and perceive the world and ourselves. English serves as a marker of prestige and in-group status, whereby non-English speakers are labeled as “incompetent, and thus insulted and perceived to be inferior” (Tsuda, 2014). Therefore, the ability to fluently speak English legitimizes and reproduces linguistic discrimination.

The colonization of the consciousness, as put forth by Tsuda (2014), refers to the mental control that occurs as a result of dominance of English. The globalistic nature of English forces speakers to “develop linguistic, cultural, and psychological dependency upon English.” (Tsuda, 2014). As English is privileged, there is a “deliberate undervaluing of a people’s culture, their art, dances, religions, history, geography, education, orature and literature” (Tsuda, 2014). The dominated are forced to identify with the dominator, and to devalue their own identities.

Because most political, educational, and commercial interactions take place in the language of the colonizer, the influence of English specifically has seeped into the consciousness of the colonized. Now the colonized even think and dream in a language that is tied to their own oppression. The effects of this are far reaching. Even more than the self-doubt caused, non-English speakers are less likely to resist if they feel their language and history are not equal.

Hip Hop can be utilized and adapted by youth to critique and analyze forms of oppression in their lives. Youth from New York to Japan to South Africa, are all connected through a Global Hip Hop Nation (GHHN) that masterfully juxtaposes a global style with a local experience (Alim, Pennycook, Ibrahim, 2009). In this nation, I see space for research involving New Zealand's musicians as te reo Maori are experiencing an emerging language revitalization.

Hip Hop lives at the intersection of the local and global. Youth can use this avenue to become cultural theorists as they lyrically dissect their identities and the hegemonic forces oppressing them. The GHHN is a “multilingual, multiethnic nation with an international reach, a fluid capacity to cross borders, and a reluctance to adhere to the geopolitical givens of the present,” (Alim et al, 2009). Global Hip Hop communities communicate with each other through cultural flows that facilitate a cultural movement. These flows connect the local and global, without a strict flow from the center to the periphery or vice versa.

As a framework to understand the multiple components of globalization, five landscapes of globalization are recognized: “*ethnoscapes*, the landscape of people, *technoscapes*, the technologies that link us, *financescapes*, the global landscape of capital transfer, *mediascapes*, the endless array of mediated images, sounds, and narratives, and *ideoscapes*, the uncertain landscape of dominant and nondominant ideologies” (Appadurai, 1996, cited in Alim, 2009). The GHHN is multilingual and multiethnic, relying heavily on technology and language. Youth

are using their voices to connect disparate communities across the globe. Instead of blanket “scapes” that overlap, I see Hip Hop connecting discrete points, or ‘hoods from all over the world. Hip Hop is an example of how a type of style can travel from point to point, bringing sets of local practices, ideologies, knowledges and aesthetics with it (Alim, 2009, p. 105). Alim (2009) refers to this phenomenon as “mobile matrices.” These matrices are not hegemonic, in the sense that they do not demand conformity as they move around the global market, but rather are remixed and reimagined as youth adopt or reject certain styles and aesthetics that work for their locality. Hip Hop is found in every corner of the world and can be used to provide a deeper understanding for transnationalism, cultural flows, syncretism, indigenization, hybridization, (im)migration, networks, and diaspora.

Localization of Hip Hop involves “complex relations of class, race, ethnicity, and language use,” (Pennycook, 2007, p. 102). Staying true to oneself is “dependent on local contexts, languages, cultures and understandings of the real” (Pennycook, 2007, p. 103). Being real or authentic demands that speakers move beyond the self, and can be in a dialectical engagement with the community. This localization effort means that aspects of Hip Hop from the United States are rejected for overtly local themes. Even though English and Hip Hop are now tied to capitalism, local artists are using a register that is local, generational, cultural, and distinctive while still having the ability to spread the message worldwide (Pennycook, 2007). According to Mitchell (2003), the globalization of rap is a political process where language is adopted and transformed through complex modes of indigenization. Localization exemplifies the realities, contexts and sociopolitical arrangements of the intersections between language, identity and power.

The way youth use language is a reflection of their identities. The language varieties of the GHHN demonstrate a limitless range of possibilities: positioning speakers of standard English as limited, and speakers of African American Vernacular English (AAVE) as limitless is a way of talking back to dominant narratives (Alim, 2009). Speakers of standard English are limited by its prescriptivism, whereas Hip Hop demands that styles continually evolve. Flipping the script in this way is an example of how Hip Hop can dissect forms of oppression. Rather than constructing different as deficient, youth can empower themselves through a global consciousness (Alim, Pennycook, 2007). Language use in the local context is an expression of identity. Identity is an outcome of language, and is, similarly, no longer static or prefigured (Alim, 2009). The GHHN is comprised of youth who are creating local identities based on the knowledge that they have “limited access to traditional avenues of social status attainment,” (Alim, 2009, p. 108). Hip Hop by its very nature demands diversity and is a source of resistance to oppression.

Decolonizing methodologies similarly take the place of marginalization and serve to empower through processes of writing and research. Smith (1999) argues that specifically indigenous knowledges have been subjugated by processes of colonization. Research has been used as tool of colonization as a means to claim superiority over indigenous people’s culture, knowledge, and resources. As Smith (1999) describes “research was talked about both in terms of its absolute worthlessness to us, the indigenous world, and its absolute usefulness to those who wielded it as an instrument” (p. 3). Research created a false worldview of the Other for the West, and then the West reflected this falsehood back to the Other to internalize (Smith, 1999). This created an internal colonization, where indigenous peoples came to think in the language of the colonizer, and even believe some of the falsehoods that were written about them.

With this underlying knowledge, Smith calls for a decolonizing method of research that deconstructs Western scholarship through the retelling or sharing of indigenous stories. By “taking apart the story, revealing underlying texts and giving voice to things that are often known intuitively,” it provides insights that explain certain experiences (Smith, 1999, p. 3). Through the use of counter-narratives, decolonization methodology can turn formerly marginalized spaces into “spaces of resistance and hope” (Smith, 1999, p. 4). Writing, talking, or researching back, involves a “knowingness of the colonizer and a recovery of ourselves, an analysis of colonialism and a struggle for self-determination” (Smith, 1999, p. 7). The authorship of one’s own world, implies the ability to use one’s own language. Storytelling is a powerful tool to do just that. Language functions as a window into a culture’s collective memory. The reclaiming of indigenous language, and therefore their stories is a political act that can decolonize entire communities.

These three theoretical perspectives provide a robust foundation for analysis of Homebrew and @Peace’s music. Together they can trace back root causes of marginalization in New Zealand society, give value and legitimacy to their voices, and connect their form of expression to a larger cultural network of resistance. Applying these theories, it can be demonstrated that a new form of oral tradition is being used to talk back or rap back.

### **Methodology**

I will be employing the techniques of Critical Race Theory to research these questions. A critical paradigm assumes that all thought is mediated by power relations that are situated both socially and historically (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997). Within these power relations it is given



that certain groups have privilege over other groups. This privilege remains unquestioned when subordinates accept their position as a natural state (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997). Oppression is expressed in many forms including structural policies, informal media representations and even mainstream research (Smith, 1999). Kincheloe & Steinberg (1997), state that critical research is a way to challenge and transform the social, political, economic, and gender structures that have been reproduced through mainstream research. Critical theory further states that epistemologically, it is impossible to separate the researcher and the researched. Ponterotto (2005) describes the researcher's values as central to the methodology. Qualitative methods are integral to creating this type of setting.

Critical Race Theory employs the use of counter narratives to challenge hegemonic power structures. Counter stories are narratives that are grounded in the real life experiences and knowledges that are contextualized within a specific social setting (Peters & Lankshear, 1996). They are from the perspectives of individuals and groups who have been historically marginalized or subjugated in the "official" telling of narratives (Peters & Lankshear, 1996). Given the tradition of oral history of Maori peoples, I believe that counter storytelling is a powerful and appropriate way to conduct my research on this topic.

My research will start with a discourse analysis of the lyrics of Homebrew and @Peace, focusing on recurring themes in their music. I will transcribe their discography, so that lyrics can be visually interpreted. In order to support the ground-up theorizing that is being done by these two groups, I endeavor to engage in data collection with no preconceived notions. To the best of my ability, I want to let the groups' music speak for itself.

Next, I plan on sorting the lyrics by line, verse or entire songs into themes. Special attention will be paid to social issues, such as suicide, substance abuse, activism, and references

to political economics. I will highlight uses of literary devices and local language practices in order to support the existing research around Hip Hop pedagogies.

Since Homebrew and @Peace have a large discography I will be narrowing my transcription to songs that are particularly salient or powerful. Because many songs discuss similar themes, I have chosen the best examples that speak to themes either because of their poetic or concise nature.

### **Limitations of the Study**

There is a history of research being used to oppress and control Maori in New Zealand. The West has used research to create a discourse about the Other by “describing it, teaching about it, settling it, ruling over it” (Smith 1999, p. 2). The collection of knowledge about indigenous people allowed the West to claim ownership over indigenous lands, creations, imagery and entire existences; while simultaneously denying the right to control those spaces and productions (Smith, 1999). The power of research and its subsequent knowledge production can be used in long lasting ways that can impact everything from sovereignty to consciousness.

Research done without this awareness, or based on an idyllic assumption that research is for the benefit of mankind, would not be sufficiently critical. Listening to the counter-narratives of those who have been the subject of research is a way to acknowledge their significance. What counts as “research” has been dictated by the West, and indigenous forms of knowledge do not make the same distinction between “scientific or proper research, from the forms of amateur collecting, journalistic approaches, filmmaking or other ways of 'taking' indigenous knowledge

that have occurred so casually over the centuries.” (Smith, 1999, p. 2). Counter-narratives are a form of resistance that can challenge the falsehoods that have been written about a community.

Discourse or content analysis relies on a high level of analysis. Without the ability to dialogue with the musicians, there will be a large element of interpretation. Even though I will only be using direct quotes from the MCs, there is still a possibility of misunderstanding or of having their words misconstrued. As an outsider in this community, I acknowledge the problematic nature of dissecting the meanings which are foreign to me.

The intention of my research is to support the use of counter narratives for the goal of decolonization. Given that I am an outsider to this community, I will be referring back to multiple tellings of New Zealand history and a wide array of perspectives on contemporary politics: at times allowing songs to be understood in their entirety, and always put into a specific context will also allow the musicians work to be interpreted on its own terms.

### **Significance of the Study**

I believe that these groups are not only leaders in their own community, but through the network of the GHHN, can become advocates of political activism worldwide. Hip Hop is a part of popular culture that reaches a massive audience. As the GHHN becomes more interconnected through processes of globalization, the messages of Homebrew and @Peace become more relevant. Because many countries still struggle with the aftermath of their colonial history, the themes of alienation and individualism in the face of neoliberalism are relevant to communities on every continent. This puts the musicians of Homebrew and @Peace on the frontlines of global advocacy for indigenous rights.

Awareness of socially consciousness Hip Hop elevates the entire genre. Stereotypes about the sexism and criminality of Hip Hop in general, and rap specifically, are rampant. Cultural stereotypes are carried down to the listeners of Hip Hop, further contributing to their marginalization. However, the examples of Homebrew and @Peace are testament to the intellectualism in this genre. Highlighting the powerful cultural theorizing of Hip Hop artists uplifts not only the entire genre, but is a source of empowerment for youth who participate in this culture.

## CHAPTER II REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

### **Introduction**

In this review of the literature I discuss the political nature of the telling of history and delve into a history of New Zealand from time of first conquest to contemporary day. I place special attention on the harmful effects of colonialism on the Maori, and the continuing consequences felt today. Background information on Homebrew and @Peace, and the specific context of South Auckland where these groups are from, will be described here as well. Finally, additional information on the GHHN and research among other indigenous Hip Hop groups will be included in order to support the global nature of my research questions.

### **History as Symbolic Reserve**

The history of a country is a symbolic reserve, including people, places and events in the formation of a national identity. Concreteness (like people and places) and narratives told about history, together build powerful tools in the construction and maintenance of a community. Narratives go beyond creating a national identity: they “define the timeless essence of a group, their shared experience and culture transmitted across generations and to newcomers such as immigrants through education and other media” (Liu, J. H., Hilton, D, 2005, p. 2). In New Zealand, the indigenous populations, British Crown, and Treaty of Waitangi are key players in the construction of national identity. These “concrete” elements of history are continually

reimagined reflecting the dynamicity of history. Throughout New Zealand's history, iconic elements are reimagined, demonstrating that history is a continual narrative that can be edited as groups fight for equal power. Today New Zealand portrays itself as a model of cultural fraternity and can boast about its harmonious race relations (Pawson, 1992). This national myth has opened the door for social activism, asserting that New Zealand needs to “walk the walk” if they are to present themselves as such. Under critical scrutiny, it becomes clear that there is not an ideal reciprocal relationship between Maori and Pakeha.

In this literature review, I summarize New Zealand history from first arrivals through contemporary social issues with focus on to how these aspects, Maori populations, British Crown and descendants, and the Treaty of Waitangi are continually reframed throughout history. I also provide background information about language suppression, indigenous hip hop, and the two rap groups Homebrew and @Peace.

### **First Arrivals**

The first peoples in New Zealand were Polynesians, who are referred to as Moriori. The early Polynesians were voyagers who were traveling across the globe at a time when Europeans had not even ventured out of the Mediterranean (King, 2003). Many of these voyages were bidirectional trips. Evidence of this is seen in the *kumara*, or sweet potato, becoming a staple of the Moriori diet. Potatoes originated from Peru, proving that Morioris traveled to South America and successfully returned when they began harvesting this new food (King, 2003). Exceptional skill, expertise of stars and cloud formations, plus intuitive ability were needed to complete these voyages.

In 1150 AD, the first Maori settlers arrive in New Zealand, which begins the myth of Aotearoa. Polynesian voyagers often relied upon cloud formations, bird sightings, and astrological formations in order to navigate and discover islands across the Pacific. The sightings of *aotea*, or white clouds, meant that an island was approaching (King, 2003). The myth of Aotearoa states that Kupe, arriving in New Zealand with his family and fleet of canoes, shouted *Aotea, Aotea*, when approaching the first sight of the island (King, 2003). Aotearoa, means Land of the Long White Cloud, and remains the Maori name of the North Island today. While this story, which has been taught in New Zealand schools for over 100 years, gives a name to the Polynesian discoverer and credit to the exceptional navigational skills of early Polynesians, it actually has no sound basis in Maori tradition (King, 2003).

The great fleet of canoes arrived in New Zealand in 1350 AD, marking the beginning of Maori colonization of the island (King, 2003). Moriori shared a common language family, Melanesian, with the Maori, thus these two groups would have been able to communicate with another (King, 2003). However, many Moriori died fighting with Maori, intermarried or resettled in the Chatham Isles (King, 2003). Early European anthropologists, Stephenson Percy Smith and Elsdon Best, used this information to justify their colonization of New Zealand (Hill & Bonisch-Brednich, 2007). Under their logic, the Moriori people were darker skinned, inferior to the Maori and unable to adapt to a new world (King, 2003). They believed that the Maori were more Aryan-looking and therefore more evolved than the Moriori (King, 2003). The very notion that the Maori had displaced a previous people was evidence of their superiority: however, this was used to justify colonization by Europeans. The argument was that just as Maoris were representatives of a higher order of civilization, so too were the Europeans coming to continue the cycle of colonization (King, 2003).

The first European to set sight on New Zealand was Abel Tasman, on December 13, 1642 (King, 2003). Working for the Dutch East India Company, Tasman spent days circumnavigating the Western coast, which would eventually be given his name, despite never docking on land. Before he could reach the coast, his ship was attacked by a canoe of Maoris with whom Tasman could not communicate. For over a hundred years, no European returned to New Zealand after tales of Tasman's fatal encounter with the Maoris. This built up the Maori reputation as ruthless warriors and increased the draw for European adventurers and anthropologists looking for a new setting and people to 'discover.'

James Cook, a British sailor, was the next European to return to New Zealand. He arrived in January 1770 (King, 2003). Learning from Tasman's mistakes, Cook armed himself with a Polynesian translator, Ariki Tupaia, and was able to successfully foster positive relationships with Maoris (King, 2003). He returned to map the island from 1773 through 1774, bringing with him goods to barter and introducing domesticated plants and animals (King, 2003). Cook operating under instructions not to occupy without consent, and began the process of documenting the language and culture of Maoris. He identified many resources, such as whales, flax, and timber that would be of interest to the British Crown.

### **Initial Impact of European Arrival**

European motivation for coming to New Zealand was based on quality of life issues in Britain, a thirst for capitalistic expansion and avoidance of penal consequences. In the nineteenth and proceeding century, Britain was the leader "in a rapidly developing European crucible of capitalism, a country seeking ever widening horizons of trade, capital export and emigration"



(Pawson, 1992, p. 16). For poor or lower class citizens, access to land was dwindling and they faced increased overcrowding (Pawson, 1992). The first Europeans to actually live in New Zealand were sailors who jumped ship coming from Sydney to avoid criminal conviction. They were the first to intermarry with Maori, learn te reo Maori, and eventually become translators for the newly arriving Europeans. As sealing and whaling began to provide lucrative returns for Europeans, ships and crews started pouring into New Zealand (King, 2003). In 1814, the first Christian missionary was sent to New Zealand with a “civilization first” policy, focusing on teaching agriculture and horticulture as a priority, then turning to European morals and religion (King, 2003). With it, came radical changes to Maori ways of life.

At the point of European contact, Maori had a higher life expectancy of 30 or more years, compared to the British whose life expectancy was less than 30 years (Reid, Taylor-Moore, Varona, 2013). Yet, this would reverse in a very short time. With changes to Maori social organization, and the entire landscape would ultimately end up depriving Maori of resources and land needed to maintain their health and culture. There was widespread deforestation of kauris, native hardwood trees, for ship production, and to make space for raising sheep, permanently changed the landscape of New Zealand (King, 2003). Entire seal and whale populations went into sharp decline from European over-hunting. These first encounters between Europeans and Maoris would lead to further assertion of control from the Crown as it was clear that New Zealand would be financially beneficial for the British. However, law and order would need to be established to control the ex-convict European population, and to persuade Maori to relinquish their land.

In the decades long after Cook had departed, “there came a vast array of military personnel, imperial administrators, priests, explorers, missionaries, colonial officials, artists,

entrepreneurs and settlers, who cut a devastating swathe, and left a permanent wound, on the societies and communities who occupied the lands named and claimed under imperialism” (Smith, 1999, p. 21). Smith (1999) makes the distinction between imperialism and colonialism: imperialism is related to the chronology of events related to “‘discovery’, conquest, exploitation, distribution and appropriation” whereas colonialism facilitated control by ensuring European power and subjugation of indigenous populations (p. 21). Imperialism and colonialism work together to serve the interests of the colonizing society.

During this time of New Zealand’s history Maori tribes lost the majority of their lands, and many thousands of lives as well. Imperialism and colonialism disconnected Maori from their histories, landscapes, languages and social relations (Smith, 1999). The underlying belief of colonialism was that Maori were primitive people who could not create anything of value, and did not know how to use the land and other resources to produce ‘civilization’ (Smith, 1999). Put most simply, Maori and Europeans measured wealth in different ways. Maori did not regard land as a tradeable commodity, and did not use it ways that Europeans saw as productive (Pawson, 1992). British condemned the Maori for ‘bestly communism’ which was actually a social organization based on kinship networks centered on *hapu*, family groups, and *iwi*, tribes (Pawson, 1992). By lacking these virtues of intellect, Maori were disqualified from “not just civilization but from humanity itself” (Smith, 1999, p. 25). The cultural supremacy of colonialism, brought with it increasingly racist attitudes throughout the nineteenth century (Pawson, 1992).

## Treaty of Waitangi

The signing of the Treaty of Waitangi is a defining moment in the history of New Zealand, aspect of which continues to be contested today (Smith, 1999; Liu, 2006). It marks the formal annexation by the British empire of the colonies known to Europeans as New Zealand (Pawson, 1992). The British had a long tradition of securing consent of indigenous people through treaties as a condition of their constitutionality, and would thereby peacefully and swiftly assume ownership over the land and resources (Pawson, 1992). James Busby, a representative sent by the British Crown, arranged a meeting with all major Maori chiefs to have them collectively sign a Treaty that would guarantee protection of their rights (King, 2003). Busby had a local missionary translate the document, with great haste, into te reo Maori (King, 2003). The speed with which the Treaty was written left many areas unclear and ultimately misleading. Many concepts such as sovereignty, and ownership did not have an equivalent term or concept in te reo Maori, were not parts of Maori culture, leading to claims the translation was prejudicial (King, 2003). Because the document was presented as a sign of the Queen's benevolence and love for the Maori people, the Maori felt duped when the true meaning and impact of the document was understood (King, 2003).

The Treaty of Waitangi had separate English and te reo Maori versions. Compared side by side, there were many translation errors that left Maori chiefs' unaware of what rights they were truly relinquishing. The first article required the chiefs to cede all aspects of their power and sovereignty to the Queen (Treaty of Waitangi, 1840). The second article guaranteed chiefs their tribes and families "full exclusive and undisturbed possession of the Lands and Estates Forests Fisheries and other properties" (Treaty of Waitangi, 1840, p. 1). The final clause stated

that “natives of New Zealand would be given all the rights and protections as British subjects” (Treaty of Waitangi, 1840, p. 1). The word chosen for sovereignty in the treaty, *kawanatanga*, technically means governorship, as there is no word for sovereignty in te reo Maori (King, 2003). In reality, the Treaty was purporting to require for chiefs to give away *mana*, or authority over, which has become a central aspect of legal debates over the treaty’s validity (King, 2003). By custom, *mana*, integrity and creative power, was embodied by the chief, and only with the consent of the group could the chief alienate land (Pawson, 1992).

This document has had multiple meanings from the time it was conceived. The missionaries believed it was to their benefit and in a paternalistic way, would benefit the Maori. They saw themselves as an instrument of protection believing the Maori would be brought from a state of barbarism to civilization and would thereby be protected from extinction (King, 2003; Derby, 2016). Maori chiefs were led to believe that the Treaty of Waitangi was an act of love and respect from a foreign Queen. The Crown believed that this would be a way to legally and peacefully acquiesced a new colony with minimal antagonism of the Maori (Pawson, 1992). These fundamental differences in perspectives would fuel legal debates for decades to come.

Through processes of colonization, Maori became conscious of themselves as Maori (Liu, 2005). Maori were given the name Maori through the formal processes of colonization, like the Treaty of Waitangi. Technically, this ascribed term means ordinary in te reo Maori. Polynesians were geographically isolated from other cultures, and, therefore, did not have words for race or culture (King, 2003). The British were focused on competition, whereas Maori culture was organized on more cooperative principles (Pawson, 1992). Identity and worth were found in tribal and familial connections, not in racial or individual qualities (King, 2003). Further, identity was linked to place and land. *Waiata*, or songs, and *patere*, or assertive chants, that were

associated with a tribe and their territory were also used to assert identity (King, 2003). Acceptance of an identity that is ascribed is a way that colonization sought to control consciousness as well as wealth.

Maori populations were decimated after the Treaty of Waitangi was signed. This was due to a combination of disease, land loss and subsequent poverty. Waves of migration brought measles and influenza for which Maori did not have an immune stock (King, 2003). By itself, this was devastating for Maori populations. In addition, not all tribes had protective treaties, and thus land was signed over by chiefs who did not rule over it (King, 2003).

Promises from the government to set aside resources for Maori were not kept (King, 2003). The 1867 Native Schools Act, built schools for Maori children with the requirement that instruction be in English (King, 2003). There were many instances of children being punished for speaking te reo Maori on school property (King, 2003). Nationally, the Maori population dropped from 56,000 in 1857 to 42,000 in 1896, while the European population tripled to 255,000 in 1874 (King, 2003). By 1900, the European population had reached 770,000, a number that was unimaginable at the time of signing (Pawson, 1992). With these rapidly declining numbers in population, Europeans believed that Maoris were on the path to extinction.

### **Two New Zealands**

Maori and Europeans clashed on fundamental beliefs about religion, land, and culture. Maori culture is “centered upon nature, which provided material and spiritual sustenance” (Pawson, 1992, p. 19). A sense of unity with the environment is a defining element of indigeneity, and this is present in Maori cosmogony and tradition (Reid et al, 2013). Maori identity is linked to a sense of “belonging to the land, being part of it and being bonded to it”

(Reid et al, 2013, p. 522). This is contrasted with Christianity, where spiritual significance is only between people and God. Under this belief, land is simply a resource and should be used for individual use and gain (Pawson, 1992). Lacking understanding for an indigenous spirituality, Europeans set forth in their attempts to gain as much land as possible and to use it to build personal wealth. The result was Crown policies enacted to suppress Maori autonomy and culture and subsequent wars ensued.

Wars erupted shortly after the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, from 1845 until 1872 (Newton, Sibley, Osborne, 2017). The strongest sites of resistance came from the North Island, where Maori populations were numerous (Pawson, 1992). While some Maori sided with the Crown in order to settle old land rivalries with neighboring iwi, there was widespread inter-tribal cooperation (Pawson, 1992). The British hired 12,000 professional soldiers, while 2,000 Maori came together to curb communal land loss (Pawson, 1992). The wars that ensued were “more akin to classic wars of conquest than we would like to believe” (Pawson, 1992, p. 22). Maori were able to stave off the British in the northern-North Island, through iwi organization, better strategies and tactics, and overall better knowledge of the landscape (Pawson, 1992).

After the wars, the British expeditiously confiscated large quantities of land which economically devastated Maori and set them up for an intergenerational disadvantage that continues to this day (Newton et al, 2017). The loss of land had deep spiritual and economic consequences for Maori. Land served as the basis for production and all resources derived from the land were continually redistributed between hapu (Reid et al, 2014). Land sales, confiscations, and the creation of the Native Land Court “led to the displacement of large numbers of Maori by the end of the nineteenth century” (Reid et al, 2014, p. 522). The Native

Land Courts were created to bureaucratically break up communal ownership by switching to individual ownership. Essentially a capitalistic culture was used to break a cooperative one.

Education was another powerful tactic used by the British to undermine Maori culture and self-esteem. The Native Schools Act of 1867 made attendance at British run schools compulsory and required English-only instruction (Reid et al, 2014). Schools undermined the values of a cooperative culture by teaching individualized ethics (Pawson, 1992). The use of English-only instruction turned schools into sites of assimilation (Reid, et al, 2014). Inoculating students with the language of the colonizer planted the seeds for a complete degradation of Maori culture and worldview. This was intensified by the Tohunga Suppression Act of 1907 that outlawed a form of Maori education and knowledge production by outlawing the curriculum of wise men, or experts within Maori culture (Reid et al, 2014). This act in particular, “was the greatest blow to the organization of Maori knowledge in the respect of healing, the environment, the arts and the links between the spiritual and the secular” (Reid et al, 2014, p. 524).

British efforts to weaken ties to Maori culture were effective. Maori were given only four seats in parliament, insufficient to ever hold a majority (Pawson, 1992). This symbolic gesture was done in the hopes of further weakening loyalty to hapu and iwi, and the democratic process ensured that they would remain a minority. By 1900, Maori were economically and emotionally defeated. The Maori population was destitute, depopulated and largely landless which led to a major decline in Maori life expectancy (Hill & Bonisch-Brednich, 2007). By 1891, life expectancy dropped to 25 years for men, 23 years for women, in comparison from pre-European contact (Reid et al, 2014). Chronic undernourishment from lack of land put many families close to starvation (Reid, et al, 2014). Not only did land loss remove the ability to self-govern, but also it undermined the mana of chiefs. Mana gave chiefs authority, but also status, charisma and

spiritual power. The process of “undermining mana involved deep humiliation as well as personal psychological and spiritual denigration” (Reid et al, 2014, p. 523). Displacement led to social and economic marginalization that left Maori in a vulnerable place in society.

### **Recovery After Loss**

After an era of European normalization and subsequent marginalization of indigenous lifeways, Maori needed to make focused recovery efforts. In 1926, the Maori population was 64,000 but by 1986, the population had rebounded to 295,000, demonstrating the effectiveness of the path of resistance Maori took (Pawson, 1992). Beginning the 1950’s, Maori families began emigrating to cities in search of employment and housing. New Zealand became increasingly class divided. By the 1970’s, three quarters of Maoris lived in close proximity to Pakeha (Pawson, 1992). Unemployment reached 200,000 in the second half of 1980’s, with Maoris disproportionately affected (Pawson, 1992). In this era, the Labour Party, allied with the Maori constituency since the 1930’s, had control over New Zealand’s parliament and was entering their third term (Pawson, 1992). During this era, the national myth of harmonious race relations was leveraged by Maori social activists. Known as the Renaissance of Maori rights, the 1970’s nourished a progressively growing bicultural society (Hill & Bonisch-Brednich, 2007). Equipped with an international decolonization rhetoric, the Maori activist group Nga Tamatoa (The Warriors), made up of young, university educated Maori fought racial discrimination and injustices perpetrated by the New Zealand government (Bennett & Liu, 2017). Nga Tamatoa formed coalitions with other civil rights movements, such as the one in opposition to the Vietnam War in the U.S., and with like-minded Pakeha (Bennett & Liu, 2017). Marches across



the length of the North Island in 1975 helped pressure the government to pass legislation reinvigorating the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi (Bennett & Liu, 2007; Pawson, 1992).

The Treaty of Waitangi Act of 1975 established the Waitangi Tribunal as a permanent commission to hear grievances arising from breaches of the treaty (Pawson, 1992). The Treaty of Waitangi had new life breathed into it, as it was shown to be an evolving social contract not simply a historical document. This tribunal only heard claims arising from the government's current policies, and did not have the power to enforce its findings (Pawson, 1992). Chief Justice Durie, himself Maori, was appointed chairman of the tribunal and used this as an opportunity to reinvigorate Maori culture. He brought the tribunal to the *marae*, a Maori meeting place, and started fierce debate among the Maori in te reo and English about what claims should be heard (Pawson, 1992). Beginning in the mid 1980's, the Maori community began to focus on claims of state appropriation of indigenous resources and suppression of Maori culture, which together had led to the marginalization of Maori people (Hill & Bonisch-Brednich, 2007).

Indigenous narratives and oral tradition were central to Maori arguments in court. Indigenous narratives established meaning for events and "gave mana and knowledge for the groups particular claims" (Hill & Bonisch-Brednich, 2007, p. 171). Counter-narratives had "been providing a basis for understanding as an indigenous world view of human experiences and social conditions" (Hill & Bonisch-Brednich, 2007, p. 171). These counter-narratives sat uncomfortably next to western research production and the Pakeha meta narrative (Hill & Bonisch-Brednich, 2007). Treaty historians actively fought against the use of tribal histories that could not be confirmed with written documentation. This not only deprived current claimants of due process, but suppressed the entirety of a collective remembered history. Once again, this is

an example of how Maori worldviews were marginalized, while the systems of the colonizer remained normalized.

Despite these challenges, Maori tribes successfully won reparations from the Crown, and earned respect of Pakeha and their own communities. The Manukau case focused on the negative consequences the Auckland harbour sewer system would have on local fisheries. Highlighting differences in spirituality, Maori argued that while bodies of water have often been used by Europeans as sewers, for the Maori “water is endowed with spiritual properties that must be fostered in order to sustain stocks of fish and shellfish. Hence, using water to dispose of industrial waste or sewage is offensive in Maori eyes, even if treatment to scientifically determined standards takes place” (Pawson, 1992, p. 26). The Tainui, the tribe bringing forth the claim, successfully won their case, forcing New Zealand to live up to their national myth. In 1984, the Labour Party won a fourth term in office and amended the Treaty of Waitangi Act enabling the tribunal to hear claims resulting from violations back to 1840 (Pawson, 1992). These treaty settlements brought considerable material, psychological and emotional gains for Maori communities. To date, more than a billion dollars in cash and property have been returned to Maori tribes in reparations (Bennett & Liu, 2017). All of this capital has pushed Maori tribal entities into the modern capitalist landscape of New Zealand.

### **Contemporary Social Issues**

In 1990, the National Party, considerably more conservative than the former Labour Party, won office and started immediately repealing policies enacted by the former office. This set the stage to create widespread societal disparities between Maori and Pakeha. While Maori were 14.9 % of the New Zealand population in the 2013 census, they are disproportionately

represented in measures of disadvantage (Rankine, Barnes, McCreanor, Nairn, McManus, Abel, Borell, 2014; Newton et al, 2017).

Today, in almost every measure in life outcome, Pakeha come out ahead. Maori have more negative outcomes in education, work, health, income, and experience less poverty, crime, discrimination and unemployment. (Rankine et al, 2014; Newton et al, 2017). Pakeha are twice as likely to be in the highest quintile of household incomes, and far less likely to live in poverty or in households which receive federal benefits (Rankine et al, 2014). In terms of mortality, Pakeha have a higher life expectancy: 79 years for non-Maori males versus 70 years for Maori males, with 83 years for non-Maori females versus 75 years for Maori females (Rankine et al, 2014; Reid et al, 2014). Maori have higher rates of hospitalization for preventable conditions, such as asthma and diabetes, an issue that is compounded by poverty. Amputations caused by complications for diabetes are four to five times more likely for Maori (Reid et al, 2014).

Mental illness and substance abuse are also prevalent among Maori. Over half of Maori become mentally ill in their lifetime, with slightly under a third diagnosed within the past 12 months, showing this is not a slowing trend (Reid et al, 2014). Suicide rates for Maori are 16.1 per 100,000, as compared to 9.9 per 100,000 for non-Maori (Reid, et al, 2014; Bennett & Liu, 2017). “Substance abuse was the third leading cause of hospitalization for mental health disorders among Maori males between the years of 2003 and 2005” (Reid et al, 2014, p. 515). Unfortunately most Maori are more likely to access mental health care through the criminal justice system rather than voluntarily (Bennett & Liu, 2017). Even in terms of incarceration, Maori are disproportionately represented; “Maori are almost 15% of population and yet they comprise 51% of the prison population” (Bennett & Liu, 2017, p 6). Substance abuse, mental illness, and suicide are all well documented responses to the stresses induced by traumatic events

(Reid, et al, 2014). Contemporary measures of life outcomes can be traced to a history of colonization that caused a great wound on the bodies, minds, and spirits of indigenous peoples.

Historical traumas, such as wars, environmental catastrophes, natural disasters, and violence, or for indigenous people -the colonization experience, cause severe distress that continues to be felt through subsequent generations today. The first generation experiences the mass trauma, and then second, third, fourth generations and so on, continue to embody the trauma (Reid, et al 2014). Storytelling and oral traditions allow subsequent generations to vicariously relive the experience of colonization. When the dominant group legitimizes the grief of the oppressed group the historical trauma remains unresolved (Reid et al, 2014). The effects of this can be loss of self-mastery, loss of autonomous personal dignity, loss of trust, loss of personal adequacy, loss of self-efficacy, negative self-opinion and fractured identity though loss of cultural memory and imposed memories from cultural assimilation (Reid et al, 2014, pg. 520). There remains a historical unresolved grief in New Zealand, as demonstrated by disturbing high rates of mental illness and substance abuse in the Maori population. Despite victories during the Maori civil rights era, there is still much work to be done to empower Maori identities.

### **Southside Auckland**

In the neighborhoods of South Auckland, there is a vibrant and diverse Polynesian community that yet despite richness in culture, this population is still defined by what is lacking. Deficit narratives and negative discourses told about a subjugated race are not only told about Maoris, but about entire South Auckland neighborhoods. The cities of South Auckland include Manukau City, Otara, Papatoetoe Mangere and Manurewa. Manukau City is one of the fastest growing cities in New Zealand, and is a multicultural city with higher proportions of Maori,

Pacific and Asian peoples and fewer Pakeha nationally (Borell, 2005). A southsider identity is based not only on race or geography but also by social psychological conditions as well.

South Auckland is presented in societal discourse as a place to avoid. It has become “synonymous with crime, poverty, danger, delinquency and negligence” and for some, *rangatahi*, or young people, are specifically to blame for this (Borell, 2005 p. 192). Being Maori is associated with real or perceived material deprivation (Borell, 2005). Living in financial scarcity as (seen by outsiders), is described as living efficiently or with no waste by southside youth (Borell, 2005). South Auckland Maori families are viewed as “rough” in contrast to “normal, nuclear” Pakeha families (Borell, 2005, p. 200). The normalization of a middle class, two parent family serves as point of comparison for Maori youth, making their experience perceived in a negative light. Finally, gangs are considered to be entrenched in South Auckland. The Mongrel Mob and Black Power gangs are locally and familial based, with many youth reporting that they have family members in a gang (Borell, 2005).

Yet, among research of youth in South Auckland, Borell (2005) found that despite negative views of South Auckland by outsiders, youth still felt a strong sense of belonging to the land and the people. Rather than acknowledge these stereotypes, residents contest and reject them with overtly positive and prideful alternatives. This is represented through shoutouts to “Rewa hard” or “Mangere Present” which boast a local identity. Self-reports from southside Maoris show that important aspects of their identity include: ancestry, self-identification, marae participation, connections with extended whanau and ancestral lands, contacts with Maori people and language (Borell, 2005). Aware of all these negative outside voices, southside Maori youth are competing with desires to be ‘normal’ in terms of family structures. They are aware that outsiders see them in terms of poverty and criminality. But by the same token, they are using

distinctly Maori traits, like ancestry and language, in conjunction with local authenticity to demonstrate a strength, pride and desire to affirm traditional Maori identities.

### **Global Hip Hop Nation**

Hip Hop is a living, breathing entity that can take different forms as it is (re)imagined in local neighborhoods across the globe. Part of what makes the GHHN such a powerful transnational force is its ability to empower marginalized identities, talk back to hegemonic forces, and bridge the gap between academic theory and daily realities of youth. The GHHN is a imagined, multilingual, multiethnic community that has a “fluid capacity to cross borders and a reluctance to adhere to the geopolitical givens of the present” (Alim, Ibrahim, Pennycook, 2009, p. 3). Hip Hop communities interact with each other through media, cultural flows, and migrations. Using Hip hop, youth can become cultural theorists as they lyrically dissect their identities and the hegemonic forces that work to oppress them. Hip Hop is a global phenomenon that can discretely connect local ‘hoods across the globe through shared beliefs, experiences, knowledges and styles. It is therefore important to understand how Hip Hop is spread globally and practiced locally. This dichotomy can be especially powerful for addressing decolonizing methodologies because it is an example of how indigenization can “talk back” to historical forces of colonization.

Indigenization of Hip Hop brings local philosophies into a global stage. Hip Hop within indigenous contexts is a “new site for the articulation and contestation of multiple identities” in a time where “neocolonial subjects and nations are exploring strategies of reinvention” (Alim, Ibrahim, Pennycook, 2009, p. 12). Indigenous Hip Hop artists, K’Naan (Somali-Canadian) and Wire MC (Aboriginal Australian), both identify ways in which they straddle two worlds:

indigeneity and a global Hip Hop community. Wire MC describes himself as Abo-digital; “I’m down with laptops and mobile phones...But digital also means your hands and your fingers, so I’m still putting my fingers in the dirt. I’m still using my hands to create things” (Alim et al, 2009, p. 26). K’Naan, uses the term ‘dusty foot philosopher’ to describe a child with “dusty feet is not a beggar, and he's not an undignified struggles, but he’s the dusty foot philosopher. He articulates more than the cameraman can imagine, but he has nothing,” (Alim et al, 2009, p. 25). Dusty foot philosophy poetically describes those who live in poverty yet live in a dignified fashion, able to talk about life in a way equal to those who are educated. K’Naan’s description is grounded in the local, and the real and is deeply connected to the earth. At the same time, it elevates the experiences and thoughts of indigenous youth as they connect their knowledge to global politics and critique particular forms of historical reasoning. Indigeneity in Hip Hop is a continuation of a traditional ways of doing things, and draws people into a renewed relationship with cultural practices.

Language use in the local context is an expression of identity. Identity is an outcome of language, and is similarly no longer static or prefigured (Alim, 2009). Pennycook (2010) argues that language is a local practice, encouraging us to look at language as an activity rather than a structure. Language is then seen as a social practice that is deeply embedded in a cultural space where people engage. The underlying assumption behind the GNNH is that youth are creating local identities based on the knowledge that they are marginalized from avenues of social status attainment (Alim, 2009). Therefore the lyrics, styles and activism that is coming out of the GHHN, embody a reflection of the types of oppression and identities that youth are experiencing. Hip Hop in its very nature demands diversity and is a source of resistance to oppression. Identity

formation is a critical aspect of youth development and it can be an empowering experience to have education recognize the experiences, knowledge and truths that are expressed lyrically.

Using te reo Maori within a postcolonial context is a political statement. Te reo Maori is a minority language, and is spoken by a small portion of New Zealanders, most of whom are indigenous. Rapping in te reo Maori, as shown by Upper Hutt Posse, a Maori rap group, is a political act that is as much a statement about British colonialism as Maori tradition. In the music video for “Tangata Whenua (People of the Land)” there is a marae, with carvings depicting ancestors (Alim et al, 2009). There is a constant reference to ancestors throughout the video, drawing from the Maori belief that ancestors are spiritually connected to the living (Alim et al, 2009). The track also uses traditional Maori musical instruments, such as the purerehua (bull roarer) to further assert the importance of Maori belief systems and sovereignty over the land (Alim et al, 2009). Using indigenous elements is a way to redefine a local environment and reconstitute the community.

### **Homebrew and @Peace**

Homebrew, or Homebrew Crew, is a New Zealand Hip Hop group hailing from Auckland. Tom Scott (MC), Lui Gumaka (MC) and Harry “Haz” Huavi, all grew up in Auckland, with Tom and Lui specifically growing up in Avondale. Homebrew released their first EP in 2007 titled “Homebrew Lite.” They released another three EPs and one full length self-titled album in 2012. In line with their message against neoliberalism, all of their EPs were released for free. Listeners could receive their album for free as well if they attended the album release party. Homebrew received critical acclaim for their album “Homebrew.” In 2012 Homebrew won the Best Urban/Hip Hop Album in the New Zealand Music Awards.



@Peace was formed after Homebrew members parted ways to pursue separate projects. Tom Scott continued to MC in @Peace with vocalist Lui Tuiasau. Christoph El Truento, Dandruff Dicky and B Haru were the producers and beatmakers of @Peace. They released three albums between 2012 and 2014, all of which are used in the data for this research.

Homebrew and @Peace share a connection through the group member Tom Scott and their record label Young Gifted and Broke (YGB). The label is more of an art collective rather than music label, exemplified by the collective effort to help each other produce albums, album art and events. The intention of the label is to allow artists to maintain artistic control, rather than “selling out” to make money. These values are clearly reflected in the lyrics of Homebrew and @Peace.

### **Summary**

The symbolic nature of history shows that events are continually reimagined depending on perspective. It is clear that a history of colonialism in New Zealand has left permanent wounds on the descents of Maori peoples. This is reflected in racialized disparities in life outcomes. Homebrew and @Peace are analyzing contemporary social issues based on an alternative interpretation of history. Their perspective, much like the perspective of Southside Auckland youth, is empowering in the face of pervasive deficit narratives being told about their race.

## CHAPTER III: THE PROJECT

### **Introduction**

The data set for this study included song lyrics from two rap groups Homebrew and @Peace. I transcribed 27 Homebrew and @Peace songs, and included excerpts from 26. In order to preserve the meaning of a song, attached the entirety of six songs in an appendix for reference. Using a discourse analysis and sociolinguistic lens, I highlighted lines or verses that exemplified a certain theme. I broadened some themes to conclude subthemes. My two main categories of themes were alienation, and sovereignty, each divided into subthemes. This allowed me to dive more deeply into nuances, thereby allowing the lyrics to ‘speak for themselves.’ The results of the study include lyrics, an explanation of their meaning, and why they fit into a particular theme.

### **Theme One:**

#### **Alienation**

##### **Subtheme: Audience**

Through song dedications, or shout outs, Homebrew sets the stage for their intended audience, which broadly includes those who are alienated or excluded from mainstream society.

It's dedicated to all the artists who struggling  
through all the hardship and punishment from the heart for the love of it

...

For the fellas that I sit up in the detention with and  
anyone who ever had the name on the attendants list

For every kid who ever thought of ending it  
and even piss poor bum living on the benefit

[chorus]

This is dedicated to

This one goes out to you

This is for the openers, the prisoners holding bars  
watching life rolling past faster than stolen cars  
The fiends trying to find a fix for their broken hearts

In this quotation, from the song “Dedicated to (Intro),” a clearly defined audience is established. It starts by giving a shout out to fellow artists who stick with their passion despite no financial gain. It includes fellow students who have been criminalized by the school system through being sent to detention, or who have been added to an attendant's list, a list of students to watched because of too many unexcused absences. It goes further into criminalization by directly addressing prisoners, who are running the clock waiting for their sentences to end. The line, “watching life rolling past faster than stolen cars” conjures a feeling of isolation and desperation, thereby humanizing criminals who are often portrayed as heartless. The quotation also includes “the piss poor bum living on the benefit” which is one type of federal welfare provided in New

Zealand. “Living on the benefit” is a colloquial phrase that further localizes their language use and solidifies an audience. Without having to say, we are People of Color living in South Auckland, this expression purposely identifies with those who are often left out of the discussion. Their audience also includes those who are living with depression, as demonstrated by their reference to suicide. This is a recurring theme in their music, which will be further discussed.

Interspersed within this song, are multiple types of references to the Global Hip Hop Nation. The chorus, is a sample of an American vocalist with scratching turntables, an homage to the center of the Global Hip Hop Nation. Lyrically, Homebrew references classic Hip Hop albums:

It’s for the boombox that Tupac played on  
The same one I chewed up my Snoop Dogg tape on

...

It’s for the rap fanatics, the Illmatic addicts

In a few lines, Homebrew references three U.S. rappers: Tupac, Snoop Dogg and Nas, who all influenced the group’s music. Referring to the Global Hip Hop Nation in connection with those who have been isolated, marginalized or living in hardship builds upon the argument that Hip Hop can be empowering for those lacking a place in the mainstream.

### **Subtheme: Desperation**

Desperation thematically includes a description of political issues that Homebrew and @Peace have identified as most salient to their community. In their descriptions of political issues, the emotional and physical consequences of marginalization are brought to the forefront of the discussion. Desperation broadly describes the hardship, marginalization, and limited

decision available to those who lack a political voice. First I discuss what causes the feeling of desperation, and then cover subsequent consequences: substance abuse and suicide.

“Listen to Us” uses samples of former New Zealand prime ministers to historically show how (im)migration, and economic policies, as well as entrenched racism has led to an overwhelming sense of desperation for working class Kiwis.

There was a time when New Zealand cities were quiet and clean  
 People said they were, nice places to bring up children  
 But the cities grew alarmingly  
 People poured in  
 Not just from the country  
 But from other countries as well  
 62,000 in just two years  
 Then one day there weren't enough jobs either  
 The people became angry, and violence broke out  
 Especially among those who had come from other places expecting great things

...

[David Lange, Prime Minister 1984-1989]

It's that some governments, such as New Zealand  
 Have forgotten for whom they have a responsibility  
 And they owe nothing to huge projects  
 They owe a lot to little people  
 And they have turned their face on striving people  
 Where prices are allowed to soar  
 While wages are screwed down

...

[John Key, Prime Minister 2008-2016]

Well I'm making enough to be comfortable

In the introduction to “Listen to Us,” the initial issues of (im)migration and economic policy are set up. Major waves of migration to New Zealand sparked a recession and ultimately forced many Kiwis to emigrate in order to find a livable wage. Currently 14.5% of Kiwis live outside of New Zealand, the second highest expatriate diaspora in the world

(<https://www.radionz.co.nz/news/national/294750/kiwis-are-scattered-far-and-wide>). Homebrew further builds upon this point in the second verse with the single line, “While half the population flies across the Tasman, the other half try to act like it's not happening.” This line refers to the significant number of New Zealanders who travel across the Tasman Sea to Australia to have access to higher wages.

The introduction continues with a quote from David Lange, a Labour Party prime minister who based his campaign out of South Auckland. His defense of the working class is then immediately juxtaposed with a quotation from John Key, New Zealand’s prime minister at the time this song was released. Key, a member of the National Party, was widely criticized for his lack of understanding for the working class because he inherited a significant wealth from his father who was a banker. His quote saying that he has enough money to be comfortable, demonstrates his disconnect from the working class constituency.

Lack of gainful employment opportunities and feelings of hopelessness are at the center of Homebrew’s political discussion.

All we got is luck and hope

Dreams going up in smoke

...

Fucking prime minister ain't even got the time to talk

Cutting off the dole

Trying to justify why we're poor

Acting like we're happy working underneath your iron claw

Where you don't even need to give the reason we're being fired for

Trying to fight the law is like trying to fight a fireball

...

Fuck working in the factory until you're 94

'Course we resort to crime

But all you get from crime is...caught

And that's a fucked up system

Where justice is just some

Juxtaposition between the police and the judge's decision

And even if we scream

Who the fuck is going to listen to us?

The center of the issue here is the “cutting the dole” or lack of state welfare opportunities, like retirement savings or job security, and a lack of agency in government. Blaming the poor for being poor, denies any historical or institutional causes of oppression that limit opportunity for People of Color. Further, a lack of being heard or understood is what drives the decision to live outside the mainstream. However, Homebrew acknowledges that making money from crime is self-defeating because it ultimately puts your fate back in the hands of a system that doesn't understand you. This cycle of poverty, crime and subsequent reinforcement of racism further perpetuates a feeling of desperation.

### **Subtheme: Racism**

Racism from politicians and mainstream society are causes for feelings of desperation. Also from “Listen to Us” is a quotation from John Key, where he makes a joke based on Maori stereotypes: “The good news is that I was having dinner with Ngati Porou as opposed to their neighbouring iwi which is Tuhoe, in which case I would’ve been dinner.” This joke perpetuates stereotypes that Maori are savage cannibals. Having a Prime Minister joke like this, opens the door for others on all levels of society to normalize racism and spread negative stereotypes. It is a clear signal that Polynesians are considered less than Pakeha.

@Peace addresses racist stereotypes about Polynesians in their song “Nobody.” The song allows MCs to describe themselves from the perspective of outsiders. The song opens with:

They say I’m nothing but a bus catchin’

Too much butt sassin’

Drunken car crashin’

Bad habit havin’

Procrastinating, trash talking, pants falling off his ass border life

...

Who knows where his mind is

Probably chilling on a palm tree on some island

...

Lining up at the dole lobby

In his ole swanny

He’s a nobody



In this song Pakeha perspectives of Polynesians are addressed. It plays into stereotypes regarding socioeconomic class, intelligence and criminality. The first stanza is an acknowledgement of what the MC believes Pakehas think of Polynesians. In these few lines it is clear that the MC has internalized stereotypes about attitudes, criminality and appearance of Polynesians. The last two stanzas are delivered in voices which impersonate the voices of Pakehas. Standing in line at the dole lobby, is another reference to receiving state benefits, while a swanny is a type of outdoors shirt typically worn by farmers. These two references are extremely localized and in a few words signal a close affinity to working class communities. Overall it implies a lack of intelligence and laziness. The title of the song, “Nobody,” most concisely describes how @Peace feels Polynesians are regarded in New Zealand society. Feeling like a “nobody” in society is a direct result of feelings of alienation and desperation.

### **Subtheme: Heartbreak**

The anguish and loneliness of heartbreak are sources of feelings of desperation. As a contribution to despair, heartbreak is an aspect that @Peace see as contributing to substance abuse and thoughts of suicide. In “Days Like This,” @Peace talks about the anguish of seeing others happy when struggling with heartbreak:

I’m happy I met her

I know if I love her I set her free

Whether together forever or never to ever be

Forever I’ll treasure the memory until the death of me

I’m devastated

Man I’m desolated

Definitely, desperately down  
 But now I know it's best if we leave it to necessity  
 But unquestionably  
 I miss you, most definitely  
 On days like this  
 Time never went so slowly  
 And I've never been so lonely

This is an honest account of the despair and loneliness caused by a breakup. While clearly conflicted by wishing to be with her, yet knowing she is better off without him, the MC must accept the grief that comes with letting her go and recognizing that he isn't able to be the best partner for her.

@Peace uses storytelling and other literary devices to convey a sense of despair and grief to the listener. In a single line, "Broken hearts everywhere, blood all over your hands," MCs are able to compare a broken heart to a car crash. Storytelling is another tool that instills a feeling of desperation without explicitly telling the listener how they feel. From the song "Flowers:"

I bought you blue and yellow tulips because of your smile  
 Lights up my day like the sun in the sky  
 See I know you the romantic poetical type  
 So I wanted to set the tone from the start of the night  
 ...  
 So I'm waiting outside fixing flowers in your doorway  
 With butterflies, haven't heard from you all day  
 But you're probably busy being beautiful and all that

Plus I know if you got my text you would call back  
 So I knock on the door, wait for a reply  
 No response so I step inside  
 Your mom's got heavy eyes and she's shook to the core  
 Then the flowers fell to the floor

This verse shows MC Lui Tuiasau going from showing devotion for this partner by buying flowers, to the final image of those flowers falling to the floor as he realizes she has died. Though it is not explicitly stated in the verse, the lack of communication from her and the appearance of her upset mother are evidence enough for the listener to infer the meaning. Allowing the story to speak for itself humanizes the MC by having the listener truly empathize with his loss.

### **Subtheme: Existentialism**

@Peace produced the album “Plutonian Noise Symphony” with the intention of creating a philosophical outlet for youth. The group sought to inspire more questions than answers in line with the Socratic method. They wanted to leave room lyrically for youth to find their own answers. At the root of their philosophical inquiry were tenets of existentialism. In an interview, Tom Scott said he wanted youth to ask, “Is existence fundamentally meaningless? If so, it is worth living despite this?” (<http://grindin.net/news/peace-interview/>)

The song “Hug Your Mum” questions the commercialism and the overall meaning of life:

Hug your mum, hold her hand  
 Let her go, be a man

Sell your soul, buy a house  
 Buy a car, drive around  
 Fall in love, watch TV  
 Have some kids, watch them eat  
 What's the point? I don't know  
 Hug your mum, die alone

Life is quickly summarized in a series of purchases and landmark life events. After selling out to buy a house and car, having a family is the next step mandated by society. Reducing life in this way, with the simple question “What’s the point,” starts a conversation about what is truly meaningful in life, questioning the materialism the song conveys. @Peace and Homebrew have publically chosen art over money, and can stand as role models for those choosing to live outside the mainstream.

“No Stars in the City” from @Peace is questioning the disconnect from nature and community in contemporary city life. The first line of questioning begins with “Does anybody want to look up anymore? Does anybody wonder where this all come from?” Stars have historically been fundamental to Maori knowledge of sea voyaging, a skill that has been almost entirely lost. Questioning why New Zealanders have forgotten to look up, is also questioning why they have forgotten their ancestral connection to the land. The second verse continues with:

All I want to do is lay against the ground  
 And stay awake all night  
 I wonder why my life was made  
 When I look at the life I prayed  
 To stars that will take me back  
 Cause I don't feel like I'm surviving  
 That place where they don't give a fuck about the skies

Ultimately realizing the absurdity of an urban society, feelings of alienation and desperation are expressed. This is an example of investigating a line of reasoning and then reflecting on what that means for your own life. It provides a model for youth to become their own cultural theorists or philosophers as they raise questions that are important to them.

### **Subtheme: Substance Abuse**

Substance abuse is a complex subject that is realistically depicted by Homebrew and @Peace. References include the mania and chaos of Saturday night, to the moments of clarity on Sunday morning. There are acknowledgements of using drugs and alcohol as coping mechanisms and employing satire to confront racial stereotypes about substance abuse.

“Friday” talks about the excitement for a weekend of partying with friends after a rat race of a work week.

So whether I'll be on the brew, white wine or rum  
 I'm gonna be fucked up when the night is done  
 I'm on a mission to find the fun  
 I got a liver made of steel and a iron lung  
 And I'm living for  
 Right now!

This song falls into a category of unquestioning youthful drug and alcohol use. In “Friday,” there are no consequences, just the unbridled exuberance of being out with your mates. Despite the fact that this one song could be seen as promoting drug use, many other examples on the same albums critically question the causes and outcomes of substance abuse.

Homebrew cites many reasons for substance abuse. In “Listen to Us,” they argue that drugs and alcohol are a form of escape from the desperation of poverty.

Act like we’re poor

Only know prison and drugs

Getting high is the only way we’re living it up

...

Where I come from minimum wage is what we run on

No wonder why we’re spending our pay getting drunk on some cheap shit

The anger expressed in “Listen to Us” is connected to a feeling of desperation and being trapped in the working class. Without a voice in government or a way out of poverty, substance abuse is a way to subdue feelings of resentment and hopelessness. It is an intentional choice to bring up substance abuse in a song that is highly political. Many politicians, such as John Key, argue that federal benefits given to Maoris ultimately end up going to alcohol purchases, and therefore, benefits should be reduced. These lyrics essentially say that we are what you make us.

Federal benefits and substance abuse are further depicted in the Homebrew song “Benefit.” This song is a satirical jab at those exact stereotypes.

I got two dozen in the fridge

plus I got another two dozen on the way

and I just got paid from WINZ

so it’s gonna be on today

...

I get my money for nothing for who I claim to be

scamming the government laughing it up on easy street

I got by DVD, my PS3, and TV free, plus I got my missus preggo, now we’ll get the DPB

I love being me, I'm just a groovy guy  
 I went from thinking suicide up to super size  
 ...  
 I lay around and make about 200 buck a week  
 I made the couch into my house, my life is fucking sweet  
 I never score I get a bottle full of drugs for free  
 chuck them all in a cup of tea and it's like popping a couple E

“Benefit” is highly localized and relies upon insider knowledge for understanding. The first stanza describes buying alcohol on dole days, or the day checks arrive from Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ). This is the hook for the song, and both MCs sing these lines together. These lines exactly play into stereotypes upheld by Key. The second stanza provides a caricature of what politicians and Pakeha believe being on the benefit is like. Again, local language use is seen with the acronym DPB, or Domestic Purposes Benefit. The last stanza sarcastically suggests that there isn't a need to score drugs, when the government hands them out to anyone for free.

Satire and sarcasm are heavily relied upon for meaning. Even further, the final line of “Benefit” is “Shot for the money John!” where “shot” colloquially means “thanks.” After an entire song of claiming that federal benefits are abused by those who receive them, this is a direct jab at John Key. This type of drug and alcohol use is glorified because it paints substance use as deliberate political activism. While looking at the overall picture, it is clear that “Benefit” is a satire; however, this doesn't show the true nature of substance abuse which is clearly acknowledged in other songs.

Moving away from the haze of idealism surrounding substance abuse is the song “Barstool Balancing Act 1.” This is a jazzy spoken word song that describes drinking alone at a bar until closing.

It’s one of those infinite Wednesdays  
 You stay until your mind turns off and the house lights come  
 Like a spotlight on your failure  
 It’s a massacre  
 Bodies and nobodies who’ve got no somebodies  
 Clubbed to death  
 Twenty five shots to the liver  
 In a puddle of whiskey  
 So you stumble out the door into the real world  
 Check in with your taxi driver psychologist  
 And drift back to your king size with no queen in it  
 Back to your dreams of monogamy  
 Sleep to the liquor store opens  
 Drink till it closes

There are no uplifting beats and catchy hooks, just a piano and voice of MC Tom Scott. The melancholy tone of the piano embodies the feelings of loneliness and failure expressed by Tom Scott. It is a clear example of using alcohol as escapism, yet ultimately fails to ease any pain.

The song “Alcoholic” again has no glamour around addiction. It begins with Tom Scott introducing himself at an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting and starting to tell the story of addiction in his family.



Cause my father's a fiend, so is mom, so it's part of my genes

It's hard to get clean, but as hard as it's been

At the end of it, I really can only answer to me

In the second verse, Tom Scott explains that he ended up in rehabilitation for attacking a police officer. When considering what his options are now he says, "I could even jump off a bridge, or go get on it, cause I'm an alcoholic." This is a honest and brutal account of his family life and struggle to remain sober. He is clearly conflicted by first taking responsibility, but then contemplating suicide or relapsing. An admission of vulnerability from a young man is a political act that can make others feel less alienated in their struggles.

The downward spiral of addiction is elaborated upon in "55 Stories" a song primarily about suicide. Homebrew discusses causes of depression in the first verse:

Deep down I'm feeling beat down

I haven't slept in a week now maybe I'm asleep now

The only thing I've eaten is that E I dropped

And that lemon from the tequila shot

Tell myself I need to stop drinking

As I take the lid of my hip flask

Take a sip and wipe the whiskey off my moustache

Here addiction is sited as a source of depression and desperation in their lives. Juxtaposed to "Friday," this song is a sobering call for help. It removes any idealism around substance use and shows the emotional and physical consequences of addiction.

### **Subtheme: Suicide**

Suicide is thematically tied to desperation, as it is the final progression of feelings of alienation. “55 Stories” uses storytelling to connect two stories of suicide. The first story is autobiographical shown through references to Tom Scott’s life.

As I look to Avondale

See my old lady's pad

And memories of my childhood that make me mad

My old crazy dad and his brown paper bag

Smacked up in the room next door playing jazz

Sitting on top of a building, 55 stories high, Tom Scott refers to himself as a “wishing broke musician,” as he reflects on the hardships of growing up in South Auckland with a junkie father. References to the Global Hip Hop Nation are made in the bridge, with a sample from MF Doom talking about the use of characters in storytelling. Then the second verse jumps into a fictional character's struggle with depression:

Don't even recognise my own reflection

Catch my eyes in the shop window

But there ain't no connection

I guess that I ain't even someone to trust

Maybe I should run in front of a bus

This is an honest account of what is like to lose faith in yourself because of severe depression. Homebrew demonstrates that alienation is a source of suicidal thoughts, yet speaking about suicide and depression ultimately shows that youth can talk about and ask for help.

“Everybody” functions as public service announcement about the dysfunction of New Zealand culture. Homebrew describes New Zealand as having “suicide rates as high as junkie.” This is a fair metaphor; New Zealand has the second highest rate of youth suicide in the OECD, with highest rates among Maori males (NZ Ministry of Health, 2015).

We livin in the macho, can't show, nobody got heart's broke

World where there are no

Humans, only machines

...

We mumble a bunch of bullshit

Sport score and weather talk, and if we say that's cold, that's a metaphor

Because as men we're never taught to express ourselves

Or better yet, accept ourselves

So we are stressing out trying to be anybody except ourselves

...

Follow everyone around town like a mouse

Trying to be like everybody else but myself

“Everybody” fits between Alienation and Sovereignty. The need to fit in with the crowd or suppress negative feelings alienates an individual from themselves and ultimately the whole community. This song highlights the effects of a toxic culture that demands conformity and the expense of mental health.

## Theme Two: Sovereignty

In the second half of the results, all lyrics are related to the general theme of sovereignty. Smith (1999) calls for a decolonization methodology that deconstructs Western scholarship through the retelling or sharing of indigenous stories. Smith refers to writing or researching back as being a “recovery of ourselves, an analysis of colonialism and a struggle for self-determination,” (1999, pg. 7). These lyrics are a way of rapping back. Unlike academics who are most likely to write or research back, Homebrew and @Peace are providing counter-narratives from the ground up. They are able to reach a wider audience by including those who may not be on a tenured university track.

Sovereignty has been a central issue to indigenous rights struggles in New Zealand, most prominently reflected in the Treaty of Waitangi debates. By critically questioning those in power, Homebrew and @Peace attempt to bring authority and self-determination back to youth and indigenous peoples. In “Listen to Us” Homebrew brings up issues of representation:

I been thinking about who’s doing the talking

In all I’ve been reading, about how we’re sinking

I’ve been thinking about how we’re doing

All that we’re missing

And how nobodies listening to us

This quote points to a lack of sovereignty. However this type of acknowledgement of a problem is actually empowering. By naming the issue, it provides an opportunity to correct it. Demanding to be recognized is a hallmark of indigenous rights issues, and Homebrew masterfully breaks this issue down so it can be understood by all. This is a lens through which the following lyrics should be analyzed.

### **Subtheme: Self Determination**

Self-determination or individualism is an aspect of sovereignty. It is empowering to be able to define who you are in a society that demands conformity. Smith (1999) writes that the colonized have experienced an internal colonization as well, as they have been taught to believe falsehoods about their people and history. Self-determination becomes a political act when considered in the context of a post-colonial society. Reclaiming individualism in this context resists hegemonic language practices, commercialism, and colonial cultural structures like religion and education.

“All I Need” specifically targets commercialism as a form of oppression.

They make you believe that you need more

Three foot tall TV to watch the League on

...

So they can sell a couple more

Add another floor

And build another mall

Full of nothing at all

This highlights the worthlessness of material items. In the end, “It’s as simple as Sesame bro, It’s capital greed,” states Homebrew. The “subtle telepathy” that attempts to sell “jeans as if they are amphetamines” only benefits big business. Homebrew wants to reveal how material items do not provide happiness or define a person. To combat the demand for goods, “All I Need” shows that relationships and simple pleasures are truly all that is needed in life. A beat to rhyme on and “my olds and my fam to rely on” are all they need.

“Simple Man” builds upon this message. Being called a simple man, may be interpreted in a derogatory fashion, however Homebrew opens their first verse by saying otherwise:

They say a man who wants nothing is invincible

Simple ain't it

I can't define it

So I try to explain it

I ain't simple minded at all

I am mentally challenged

Fighting a war with my thoughts and my dreams

This explains that simplicity doesn't relate to a lack of cognitive ability, but rather to a lack of desire for material items. To arrive at this conclusion requires critical questioning of the status quo and an inner strength to resist the norm. “Simple Man” continues by defining what is happiness to them:

Every sunny place I went

Cracking funnies with my friends

So just let my brothers instrumental jam

We don't need no Neptunes or Timberland

Don't need a brewery I'm cool with a simple can

Chilling on the porch with my brothers

I'm a simple man

...

You say, cash, we got something greater than that

It's call love bro

For Homebrew, the best things in life are free. Memories of good times with friends and beautiful places take the top of the list. Rejecting Neptunes or Timberlands, both clothing brands, is a way of not letting material items hold power over yourself. Finally, most simply put, it is love that triumphs over cash.

Individualism is discussed in “Everybody” as a tool for resisting conformity. Most concisely put, Homebrew MC Lui Tuiasau states, “freedom is a state of mind...fuck a silent society” when discussing what he personally believes and does to be an individual. Conformity in this context means more than just fitting in with popular culture. As a Maori male, his denial of conformity is a larger rejection of the colonizer’s culture. He believes that is his responsibility to be a voice or representative for his community in order to bring empowerment. Liu Tuiasau continues:

All I’m trying to do is be, so money’s no priority  
 I see no benefit spending my life trying to get paid  
 staying the same while everyday people dying from hate

This is a rejection of financial success as a marker of worthiness of a person. Instead of using money as a measure of worth, he instead shifts that towards authenticity. The final line is a reference to the racialized disparities in health and life outcomes between Maori and Pakeha. His connection between individualism and oppression is a demonstration of strength that can be harnessed by listeners. In the final verse, Homebrew promotes “set some principals before you set trends and set your sights on being comfortable in your own skin.” Again, this is a call of affirmation that diversity is a necessary and essential part of culture.

### **Subtheme: Decolonization**

Decolonization is used to refer to themes of political activism and storytelling. Storytelling and counter-narratives are fundamental to a decolonization methodology as they affirm indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing, as well as challenge hegemonic narratives. Activism in these songs is illustrated by a call to action through lyrics.

Returning to indigenous values, such as the sacredness of the planet, is shown in the song “No Stars in the City.” This is a song that talks about how alienation from the land and the stars is causing an internal isolation as well. To be able to undo an internal colonization, first @Peace shows that there is a disconnect between people and the land.

I don't see no stars in the city

All see is cars, it's a pity

...

Does anybody want to look up anymore?

Does anybody wonder where this all come from?

Living in the city where the stars are blocked out from the city lights is a metaphor for how a thirst for development has overtaken a love for the land. The following line of questioning brings up issues of isolation and questions the rationality of city life. Oral argument and discussion is fundamental to Maori culture and this song is a contemporary example of those values.

In the final verse @Peace reaffirms indigenous knowledge that states that land cannot be owned, and that we are all connected to the land spiritually.

You don't belong to the world



Nothing belongs to you  
 Still, we run around trying to figure out what we always knew  
 We belong to the darkness  
 And the stars too

The phrase “run around trying to figure out what we always knew” is a reference to the forgotten historicity of indigenous knowledge. The land and stars provide life for humanity, and in this way humanity cannot own the land. But rather we are responsible for caring for it. This song directly brings indigenous knowledge and philosophical inquiry to the public.

Retelling history is fundamental to a decolonization methodology. In the opening verse of an album @Peace begins with a dedication to all those who have contributed, good or bad, to their current home.

This song here this goes out to all walks  
 Living in this village that we call Aucx  
 Like from the streets to the boardwalks  
 We just wanna spread peace to you all  
 Rest in peace to the moreporks  
 And beef to the law force  
 And Ancestors and Missionaries who bore swords  
 To cut the native trees and plant more gorse  
 This a small apology to all the chiefs for the seabed and foreshore  
 And peace to the fourth cause, who fought wars  
 So we could have our seat on the porch horsed  
 We thank you all for  
 The right to let us stand on this war torn land that we all call

## HOME

In this introduction, there are many local language practices; appropriate for a dedication to their hometown of Auckland or Aux, their metropolitan village. Moreporks were indigenous owls that have since been almost entirely extirpated through the introduction of non-native species. One reference to such a species is gorse, a coastal plant used as a windbreak. These two species can be seen as a metaphor for the loss of indigenous life with the arrival of Europeans. Much like the loss of a native bird and plant, so too were indigenous ways of life extinguished. In their opening, they acknowledge the violent struggles between their ancestors and missionaries. Starting their album with a direct reference to colonialism shows that @Peace recognizes their own country as still reeling from the effects of colonialism. With this, it is fair to argue that @Peace has meaningfully curated their album to reflect a post-colonial struggle.

Throughout the rest of the song “Home,” there are linguistic references to indigenous culture. Use of the words “paua” (fish), “ia lavalava” (sarong), and “kowhai” (native tree) is a type of codeswitching. It reveals the connection to Maori culture and language, but still remains accessible to a wider audience. Codeswitching among youth is a way to support the indigenous identities of youth, who may not be fluent in te Reo Maori.

### **Subtheme: Activism**

Several songs, such as “Listen to Us,” “Everybody,” and “Benefit,” which have been previously discussed, specifically highlight political issues in New Zealand.

“Tell the Children the Truth” talks about education as a means of internal colonization. The song begins with a sample of an American voice talking about how education can be used for the subjugation of entire peoples:

There isn't any way to punish a large number of people  
 Unless you can colonize the mind of children growing up  
 So they become their own police

Using education for colonization of the consciousness was a tool used by the British in New Zealand. This sample powerfully sets the tone for what Homebrew is speaking out against. It gives listeners a perspective into the motivations behind educational policy. It continues by highlighting specific failures of the education system:

You call it a uniform  
 I call it a costume  
 How the hell the classroom is different from the staff room  
 Sayin that we should be in a group, not be original  
 But that's how people end up hating people that they're different to  
 Look miss I'm sick of being treated like a criminal  
 Why you always wanna keep track of me  
 Make the geeks rat on me

School uniforms and criminalization of students are two issues highlighted here. School uniforms are required in all public schools, and are representative of the culture of conformity in New Zealand. Comparing school to a staff room suggests that education is being used not to promote critical analysis or knowledge but rather for agreeableness and relatable job skills. This suggests a commercialization of education imbeds the belief that diversity and individualism is a problematic quality. This is an example of neoliberalism at its worst, making public rights, access to meaningful education, a commodity. Finally, the lyrics also point to issues of

criminalization. Students who are frequently in trouble at school are led to believe that they are not as worthy as other students and eventually believe that they are bad kids. This causes the school-to-prison pipeline.

The title of the song is a demand to “tell the children the truth.” In this context Homebrew believes that the truth is that public education is denying children’s humanity. They state that “the consequences that make highly talented, brilliant, creative people think that they are not, because what they think they were good at school wasn’t valued or was actually stigmatized and I think that we can’t afford to go on that way.” This points to their struggle as musicians, who have a passion or skill that has been stigmatized.

“Be Like” dissects economics from a socialist perspective using shout outs to famous politicians, observations about poverty in New Zealand, and storytelling from their own life. The entirety of song lyrics is attached in an appendix. The introduction of “Be Like” begins with a dedication to Karl Marx, David Lange, and Huey Long. These three men represent advocates of populism. Challenging the social order by redistributing wealth and empowering the working class are concepts advocated for by Homebrew and @Peace, making these leaders ideal symbols.

The first verse describes the brutal reality of living on the street:

Heard people say that home is where the heart is  
 Does that mean that homeless are heartless?  
 I guess that’s how it is when you live in hardship  
 With no mattress, pillow or even carpet  
 Concrete sleeps, yeah g, that's some hard shit  
 I wanna feed, so I eat from the park bins

Their question, “Does that mean the homeless are heartless?” is a way to humanize the homeless. The second verse continues with a personal narrative showing Tom Scott’s relationship to political activism:

My grandmother was a member of the Communist party  
 And her Auntie was a part of the resistance  
 So I know a little bit about activism  
 Division of class, equal distribution of wealth burnt by the industrial revolution  
 I know about the state  
 I read it as a student ironically while I was paying to their institution  
 But way before I had heard of Marx,  
 When equality was too big of a word to grasp  
 I was a kid wondering why I smelled burning grass  
 Not even knowing that my neighborhood was workin class  
 Sitting in my Mom’s lap she used to read the Lorax  
 Never knew that I was learning political economics

This form of storytelling pays tribute to the women in his life that influenced his thinking and values. His grandmother, aunt, and mother are all sources of knowledge and inspiration for his future commitment to social activism. More importantly, this narrative shows a form of informal learning in a community that is often plagued by deficit narratives. In a three-minute song, @Peace provides a passionate introduction to political economics in a medium that is capable of reaching a far wider audience than a university course.

### **Subtheme: Storytelling**

Storytelling is a key aspect of a decolonization methodology because it places value on indigenous experiences and knowledge, and shifts the power of representation from the colonizer to the colonized. Homebrew's album *Last Week*, recounts the daily experiences of group members. Each song is a day of the week, and covers everything from "running in the rat race" to zapping "up the road like a madman, cause there ain't nothing like my girl's mum's roast lamb."

Local language practices and code switching are present in every song. While this album does not explicitly speak about political issues or activism, it is powerful expression of self-determination and sovereignty. This includes references to New Zealand stores, brands, or bank cards. *Last Week* also uses dialogue among MCs and characters to mimic conversations. Homebrew is able to use ample slang like "hard" and "sweet as" through the use of dialogue. On "Sunday" the MC thanks his partner's parents for dinner. When speaking to woman he keeps his voice in its normal pitch, but when speaking to the father he drops his voice to a lower pitch. This is considered polite when speaking to an older Maori male, demonstrating an group membership.

This album ends with "that was just last week." While this might seem to downplay the significance of storytelling, it actually shows that there is meaning in the daily life experiences of their community. Instead of taking out excerpts, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday will be included in the appendix. The entirety of songs are helpful in understanding the full picture, but too lengthy to include here.

## Summary

Two opposing sets of themes emerged from Homebrew and @Peace's discography. On one end of the spectrum were themes surrounding alienation, such as desperation, heartbreak, substance abuse, suicide and racism. This is contrasted with themes of sovereignty and decolonization. Though alienation is a negative feeling, it is harnessed by these two groups to become sources of empowerment and activism. In the following chapter, I discuss in more detail how these themes are related and how they resist neoliberalism specifically.

Homebrew and @Peace employ classical literary devices in their lyrics. Uses of metaphor, dialogue, and satire all elevate their lyrics to a form of social commentary. Their work demonstrate how Hip Hop is a theoretically rich genre which authentically expresses youth resistance. Using a discourse analysis methodology for analysis is helpful and entirely appropriate, given their use of literary devices.

## CHAPTER IV

### Discussion

Alienation and sovereignty are opposite sides of the coin, yet both are needed to make up a complete picture. Without first describing the causes and consequences of alienation, expressions of sovereignty would not be as powerful. Homebrew and @Peace seamlessly juxtapose alienation and sovereignty in a fashion that allows listeners to connect the personal to the political.

Alienation encompasses the isolation and desperation caused by political injustices. The proper context of their songs cannot be understood without knowing about the audience of their music. The intended audience is shown through dedications and shoutouts, an appropriate expression for the Hip Hop genre. Their audience is focused on those who have been marginalized or disenfranchised. Uses of local language practices, references to street names or townships further narrows this to Polynesians in the working class neighborhoods of South Auckland. Hip Hop is historically a genre of the oppressed (Alim, 2007), and similarly is used here to attract youth who are marginalized and share a similar political disadvantage.

The subtheme of desperation encompasses root causes and subsequent expressions of this alienation. Racism, poverty, and political injustice are all cited as causes for desperation. Homebrew and @Peace show that politicians hold racist beliefs about Polynesians, and are effectively limiting upward mobility out of poverty. This is seen by their desire to cut federal benefits and impose restrictive educational policies.



Homebrew and @Peace masterfully humanize the effects of political injustice. These young men they honestly express the inner turmoil and anguish caused by desperation. This, in itself, is a political act. In a culture that doesn't encourage male sensitivity, these groups can be seen as role models for their community. They are capable of expressing feelings of heartbreak, loneliness and depression while still maintaining their masculinity. This authenticity is a necessary requirement for Hip Hop artists, but Homebrew and @Peace go well beyond the norm by being brutally honest.

Substance abuse and suicide are two physical expressions of the consequences of desperation. These two issues are rampant in New Zealand and disproportionately affect Polynesians, specifically Maori males. Homebrew presents the full spectrum of substance use and abuse. At times their music glamorizes drugs and alcohol in songs such as "Friday." It also shows how substance abuse is used to numb feelings of alienation when it feels like there is no way out. However issues of criminalization and addiction are also honestly portrayed. There is no glamour in going to prison for drug dealing or in the hopelessness of repeated failed attempts to get sober. Suicide is tied to substance abuse. In "55 Stories" Homebrew specifically references addiction as the final breaking point. Their songs function as public service announcements; with several of their music videos actually ending with information about a substance abuse prevention hotline.

Sovereignty is the opposite side where the personal can become political. Sovereignty encompasses the sub themes of self-determination and decolonization. Self-determination is an individual level of sovereignty whereas decolonization is a more community driven effort to remove vestiges of colonial power. Sovereignty can be expressed through storytelling, counter-narratives, or activism.

Demanding representation or recognition is the first step to claiming sovereignty. Within an indigenous context iwi must be recognized in order to claim benefits or protection from the government. Homebrew connects issues of representation, or lack thereof, to a lack of a voice in politics. Without a strong voice, there is no leadership for a marginalized group. I argue that Homebrew and @Peace have become thought leaders by using their music to speak up about lack of representation.

Self-determination is a political act since its proclamation of individuality defies attempts at colonization. Homebrew and @Peace reject any forms of internal colonization. This is seen through their rejection of commercialism and the idea that material items should define you. They suggest instead that worth comes from relationships with friends and family and the ability to do what you are passionate about. Self-determination is also reflected in their existentialist inspired songs. Critical questioning of what society values, the meaning of life and recognizing the absurd, all work to undermine the colonial values that have been pushed upon indigenous peoples. Demonstrating this process, while leaving unanswered questions is a valuable service for the empowerment of youth. Seeing this process occur, but having space for individual questioning, can inspire youth to grow their own individualism.

Decolonization is accomplished through activism and storytelling. These two activities bring the goals of decolonization theory to fruition. At times, storytelling and activism are deeply entwined. In the introduction of “Home” @Peace summarizes some of the effects of colonization, like losing native species, in their dedication. This introduction is effectively a story, or counter narrative that tells a different version of history. By prefacing an album with this counter narrative, the rest of the songs can be seen through a postcolonial lens, making their lyrics all the more political.

Another song from the same album as “Home” is “Be Like” which is an example of activism. “Be Like” exposes the hardships of poverty and again uses storytelling as method of decolonization. The song humanizes a political issue through artistic expression, bringing personal experience and compassion into a political discussion. Activism is explicitly discussed as a methodology modeled by women in Tom Scott’s life. This is especially important because it reflects a type of informal knowledge and ground up theory that juxtaposes academic or formal ways of knowing. It demonstrates that knowledge production and informed action can come from informal environments. This example supports a decolonization methodology and simultaneously connects it to a political injustice.

“Tell the Children the Truth” exposes the colonial intention to “colonize the mind” of young people through education. The song further emphasizes that schools do not value the minds of creative people. A revelation like this in a rap song is a powerful way to engage marginalized youth on a subject where their voices are generally not heard. Revealing the power of indoctrination that formal schooling has will ultimately inspire more self-determination in the pursuit of knowledge and support informal learning methods.

@Peace and Homebrew transform negative emotions caused by alienation, racism, desperation into motivation for modes of sovereignty. Considering their music as a methodology, they demonstrate the ability of marginalized youth to empower their minds. They show that everyone in their audience actually holds tremendous political power through the individual choices they can make in their daily life. Together this collective, inspired by a love for Hip Hop, are a powerful community that can theorize on their own struggle for decolonization. As a part of the Global Hip Hop Nation, artists and their audience can further each other’s struggle through continued commitment to this cultural group.

## Conclusion

My research questions sought to identify what themes were discussed in the music of Homebrew and @Peace and to further analyze how those themes are connected. The second research question specifically looked at how these groups are resisting neoliberalism.

Thematically, Homebrew and @Peace connect expressions of desperation, such as substance abuse and suicide, to the effects of neoliberalism. They clearly demonstrate that politicians lack compassion for the working class. Within their lyrics they show how expressions of desperation by marginalized people are political acts. They employ classic methods of decolonization theory to use their music as a form of counter-narrative and empowerment.

At the heart of the message from these groups is a resistance to neoliberalism. Without using the term explicitly in a rhyme, Homebrew and @Peace refer to the emptiness of materialism and the disdain that politicians have for the poor. Neoliberalism rewards ruthless competition on a global scale, and privatizes public services thereby turning citizens into consumers. Democracy is exercised by modes of buying and selling. This global market creates a universal set of qualifications required to be considered worthy. Examples of Homebrew rhymes that display their resistance to neoliberalism include, “so they can build another mall filled with nothing at all” and “buy one now and get one free, happiness not guaranteed.” They show that politicians have internalized the values of neoliberalism so completely that they have turned their back on the working class by cutting federal benefits.

The hegemony of English is tied to the oppressive nature of neoliberalism, as English fluency is needed for acceptance into privileged jobs and roles. Competition drives nations to

adopt English so that their citizens become more efficient workers. This comes at a high cost of cultural loss because indigenous languages, such as te reo Maori, are devalued. When efficiency and wealth are the only markers of success, indigenous knowledges are subjugated and even exterminated. For those straddling two worlds, this can cause feelings of deep alienation and isolation.

The resistance demonstrated by Homebrew and @Peace shines through lyrically. A decolonization methodology seeks to bring indigenous voices, knowledges and experiences to the forefront of a research discussion for the intention of community advancement. Homebrew and @Peace employ methods of storytelling and counter-narrative to achieve just that. While cultural norms are telling society that the poor are worthless, these groups show that there is deep meaning and personal satisfaction in being a “Simple Man.” Their album “Last Week” is a tribute to the working man, who balances employment, family and friends, and fulfills individual passions. This resists the larger societal discourse that portrays the poor, and specifically Polynesians, as deficient.

Homebrew and @Peace are advancing the movement of decolonization by showing that rap and Hip Hop can be used as a counter-narrative as well. Without access to privileged positions in academia or politics, these MCs use the tools and skills they have available. In this case, a microphone is more powerful than a published research paper because they are able to reach their audience directly. Their localized language practice shows that youth can use its own voice. With a rich cultural knowledge of their community, they thereby empower entire groups of young people as they resist the forces of global capitalism that would keep them marginalized.

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## APPENDIX

**Be Like**

Yeah we dedicate this track to mr. Karl Marx

What it could be like

To Mr. David Lange, Huey P

What it could be like

What it could be like

You know

Imagine if the world was equally divided up

But them homeless holding paper cups trying find a buck

While the rich sit in tubs twenty six stories up

See em on the steps but don't even give a fuck

Just another drunk bum sitting on the corner

Stealing from store for a little bit of water

With no support got no wife or daughter

So go and try to tell him how to get his life in order

Heard people say that home is where the heart is

Does that mean that homeless are heartless?

I guess that's how it is when you live in hardship

With no mattress, pillow or even carpet

Concrete sleeps, yeah g, that's some hard shit

I wanna feed, so I eat from the park bins

Guess society didn't have any options for me,

But it's sweet, I'll get lost in

What it could be like,

What

What it could be like

Just imagine that

See I was raised a hippie and a junky

Up in inner city Brixton

My grandmother was a member of the Communism party

And her Auntie was a part of the resistance

So I know a little bit about activism

Division of class, equal distribution of wealth burnt by the industrial revolution

I know about the state

I read it as a student ironically while I was paying to their institution

But way before I had heard of Marx,

When equality was too big of a word to grasp

I was a kid wondering why I smelled burning grass

Not even knowing that my neighborhood was workin class

Sitting in my Mom's lap she used to read the Lorax

Never knew that I was learning political economics

I just liked the pictures

Like I was reading comics

In a bubble where people would always keep their promise

Until I turned five

That's when I really saw the world for the first time

See it was Christmas and I just got this dirt bike

But my friend across the road didn't get shit,

And then I learned why

He told me that we was poor

I never even saw

We were all playing

He was just the same as me and poor

Shit I never even thought

That there were needy people

Needing more

But because the greedy people keep it all

That's not what my grandma told me

Nah ah

See that's not what my old man told me

Nah ah

See I gotta try make up my mind

Get this bullshit out of my life

So I think I might get up and fight

Either that or just lay down and die

But

What it could be like

What

What it could be like

What

What it could be like

What

It's going out to my Grandma

And all the thinkers

All the Marxists

All the Communists

All the lefties

Wish we had some fair shit

Imagine if we had a fair fucking world

Not this fucking prison

If we were all equal

What it could be like

What it could be like

Imagine that

[Sample]

Living in the world no different from myself

Living in the world no different from myself

Living in the world no different from myself

Living in the world no different from myself

It shouldn't be so rough

## Monday

When it all started I was lying in my bed  
 Counting all the sheep leap, flying through my head  
 Snoring in my deep sleep, jumping on the stage  
 Rhyming to this mean beat, then it stopped  
 And the crowd started yelling 'beep beep'  
 Then I woke up (huh?), colder than a snow cone  
 Late for my job, think I'll pull a no-show  
 Dude on my right shoulder's like "nah don't go"  
 Nerd on my left's like "you gotta get the dough bro"  
 Chur bro you're right, but I'd rather have a doze though  
 "yeah but, what about the bill for the home-phone?"  
 "yeah but, what about the boss he's a homo  
 He makes you work all day without a fucking smoko?"  
 Oh fuck, gotta get the dough though  
 Tryna put my album out and I ain't signed a stones throw  
 So I guess I gotta work until I get my own show  
 And watch the whole day go by, it just that

Every day (every day)

Same old shit (same old shit)

Its that every day (every day)

Same old boring, same old shit

Every day (every day)

Same old shit (same old shit)

Its that every day, shit that happens to me every day

"Hey if you could mate" (what?)

"put these rubbish bags out on the back dock and

Grab that mop mate, you missed this here black spot

Top chap Scott!"

"yeah, up your crack boss"

"now what was that?"

"sweet as boss!.. you fat cock"

"oh great mate, anybody wanna clean the-"

"bags not"

"lock the gate mate, here's the code for the padlock"

"pad-lock?!"

Flat screen plus laptop

Plus black hoodie equals ka-ching jackpot

All I gotta do is get a car and a ski mask

I already know where the cunt put the key-card

And there's more squid in his safe than at sea mart

So when I'm done I can probably build a theme park

Then get a jet-plane for me and my sweet heart

Plus some '0's for the bro's, that'll be mean hot  
Oh shit, I forgot the security guard  
I guess I gotta keep working for this retard (it's that)

The day finished and I raced home  
Quicker than a red-cross first-aid  
Clothes looking dirtier than girls at the birdcage  
Walked through the door looking like I seen a mermaid  
Dinner on the table for me like it was my birthday

"Hey how was work babe?"

"Haha fucking awesome!"

"Awesome"

"Oh no it was awful, I mean the sauces

Nah I was bored stiff, had no one to talk with

But I pulled a couple mean dougheys on the forklift, but

How was your day?"

"Oh, it was okay

Thanks for asking, hey

Do me up some O.J?"

"Oh shucks, that was dope babe"

"Oh I'll wash, you dry"

"Oh what a do-the-dishes-even-though-you-cook-the-food guy

Just sit down babe, chill let the time go."



"But what about the- (dishes).."

"Yeah yeah yeah, they can dry though"

Then we watched some T.V, had a cup of Milo

Then let the night go, without me shouting like a psycho

And there wasn't no one giving orders like a manager

No one looking through my texts like 'who's Pamela?'

I was on top of shit, Like Canada

Turn the lights off, cross Monday off the calendar

Night night

## **Tuesday**

Hey anyone seen the phone?

Oh yea sweet, oh nah sweet got it..

"0800 ASB ASB"

"Welcome to AS"- Yeeeah fuck that

continued beeping..

"I'm sorry, you have entered an invalid" Mtch, \*mouth sounds\*

continued beeps..

"The current balance of your 00 bursary cheque, is \$1999-" Yeeeah"

"overdrawn, and the available balance is \$0 and 5 cents"

(Fucking piece of shit!)

I'm rolling up the tube to get the last drop of toothpaste

Feel like an epileptic in an egg and spoon race  
 Tired as, tryna tie my jeans up with my shoelace  
 "Sorry sir, it's declined" FUCK I hate tuesdays!  
 All the food inside the fridge is way past the used-dates  
 'Bread's covered in green, the cheddars covered in blue veins  
 Out of washing powder, my hoodie's covered in food stains  
 Pulling all the pillows off the couch to find some loose change.

Oh fuck! 'Got a migraine

It feels like I just drunk a yard glass of nightshade  
 Try stay happy but it's hard when your lightweight  
 And ten dollar' gas don't get you down your driveway

"Hi hey, just a loaf of bread and this pie eh."

"it'll be 4.95 thanks, have a nice day!"

"What the fuck?"

"Whats wrong, you alright mate?"

"What the hell is in this pie bro? Whitebait?"

For fucks sake man that's rough, what are these?

It costs a couple G's now to buy a block of cheese  
 And 5 bucks for broccoli like these grow off of tree's  
 And 6 bucks for lettuce? Shit it's just a lot of leafs!

While rich cats are on overseas shopping sprees

I'm gonna come down for the week and let us spend popping E's

My flat-mate's like "who drunk my beer?" wasn't me

And on top of all of that bullshit, I've lost my keys!

Plus the warrants up

I'm late with the rego

I say a pray-er that the radiator doesn't explode

Rolling down town in a car that's on death-row (road)

That starts making weird noises when the water gets low

But I guess though, I'm blessed though

Don't need a mood-change

Ain't like I'm about to be, zapped by no doom-ray

And even though I feel like I'm bottom of the food chain

It ain't nothing new eh, it's just another Tuesday

### **Wednesday**

Yeah it's just another cold day sittin' in the shack

Make another beat and make another track then

Heat up the knives, kick back, spit out the rhymes and that's that

Yeah it's just another cold day runnin' like a rat

Warm up the dome and write another rap then

Burn up the pie, kick back, turn off the mind and that's that

I heard a bell from the cell grab my phone check the messages

It said "hey bro it's Daz I just left a mes, I got a go pick up some  
Shit from the ex's but I'll be over soon once I've snuck off  
To get some piss"

I said "sweet bro" jumped out the duvet  
Threw the same hoodie on that I was wearing Tuesday  
Then I text Lui like "hey Silk, you busy bro?"  
"yeah I'll be free at 10 once I'm finished at the physio"  
"Sweet then think you could pick up Lance from the crop shop?"

"Yeah I know the one across the road from the parking lot"  
Walked in to saw Lance jammin' on the scissors

Heard the clippers this time around zizz zizz a zizz zizz

"Sup bro to Haz" then Haz said

"Eeeey what up bro" then Lance said

"I'm done bro let's jet bro that's us! I just got paid and  
I'm down for a duz plus I got the goodie bag of the buds"

I text Haz like "bro where you at bruv"

"Hey the bus is running late bro, rats buzz!"

"Sweet as bud I'll see you in the shack cuz"

"Yeah I'll be there about 12 then that's us"

And then 12 came round and before long

We were yellin' out loud like morons

"man I'm horsed as bro put the swords on"

"Nah man the gas in the bottle bro it's all gone"

"Sweet then roll us up a bit of cardboard Tom

And yo Haz put that beat with the horns on!"

And then we got blazed cause Lance had the pure chron

So give him a text if you need somewhere to score from

Anyway, then we jumped back to the cypher (cypher)

We all chipped in with the fiver (fiver)

And then we got a little bit higher!

Hey yo Haz, can you pass the lighter?

"Hey Haz"

"Yeah what?"

"Bro I'm blazed as!"

"Same bro, fuck I'm mashed off my ass

"Oi there's someone knocking at the window!"

"Nah that's just the wind bro"

"Oh yeah shit let him in bro!"

"Na na stop bro, what if it's the cops though

Better hide the buckiee and the knives for the spots bro"

"Hey who's that?"

"It's just Lui man you're lost bro"

"What bro? You never told me Lui was a cop bro?"

"Let's get another box bro!"

"How much you got bro?"

"Ah I've got nothing but I'll try my EFTPOS though"

"Hey bros I gotta get back to my house

I got work tomorrow so bro I better bounce!"

"Shouldn't have missed the last bus back to the south"

Hey Lance is it sweet if I crash on your couch?"

"Hard Lui C bro we're gonna gap if we're out"

"Yeah sweet I'll just rap by myself!"

### **Friday**

[Hook: Tom Scott and Esther Stephens]

And I'm living for

Right now!

I just wanna blaze my

Mind now!

So if you got bud then

Light up!

Tonight we're gonna smoke till

Lights out!

Chea and I'm on my way to

High town!

So everybody pass the

Wine round!

It's just another Friday

Night out!

And all I'm thinking 'bout is

Right Now!

Yeah, it's three to six and I need a fix

So I take my bike down to Pack'N'Save, cause they got cheaper licks

Feeling sick like I been eating bricks

Cause all that I got inside the pantry is Weet-Bix and Eta chips

And all the bud I got is seeds and sticks

So I text my bro, cause he let's me do the cheeky ticks

Then get a feed at vick

Eat it quick

Leave a tip

Sweet that's it

Need to skip

Back to base, clean the kicks

I spend the whole week rapping alone

In a shack on my own

Now I'm back in the zone

So I pick up the phone

While I'm packing a cone

"What you doing bro?"

"Jack"

"Where you at?"

"I'm at home"

"Sweet bro, bring a box of heiny and a pipe 'round

Then we'll a cab get it to drop us by town

Heard there's something happening at this place, kinda high-brow"

"Alright pal, I'm down, when you gonna ride round?"

Right Now

"Chur bro"

Box under my arm

Kick my bike into turbo

Heard the substance is up Fu bar

Phony's playing down at Kuja

So I'm down if you are

Anywhere but Asta

That's a fag bar

That's where all the dogs go

Cause that is where the cats are

You know all the Cheetahs

Looking for Jaguar

Cats drinking tigers

Rap stars in dad's car



All I really wanna do is chill with my odd  
And drink drive through the cop stops  
In a hotbox  
I'm gonna rax with a cats  
With a couple scotch shots  
Shit I might just do some top rocks  
Anything could happen when I'm high off spots  
Doing foxtrots  
Poppin' pills like they're cough drops  
We in the chop block clubs  
Full of top dogs  
In odd socks  
And tops that I got from opshops  
  
And I'm living for  
Right now!  
I just wanna blaze my  
Mind now!  
So if you got bud then  
Light up!  
Tonight we're gonna smoke till  
Lights out!  
Chea and I'm on my way to

High town!

So everybody pass the

Wine round!

It's just another Friday

Night out!

And all I'm thinking 'bout is

Right Now!

I ain't out on the town yelling out cash bank

Chasing a flash skank

That's always on E, like my gas tank

Ain't in the club on a wife hunt

Where the bouncer's got a small dick so he acts like one

That's why I steer clear

Of anywhere near there

Cause the beer there's dearer than a flippin air fare

And I don't fit in with my weird gear

Need to go somewhere like Cheers

Where everybody's tripped there

I like the quiet clubs no one likes

Cheap shacks with broken lights

Sweet cats and open mikes

Relax and smoking pipes

Just moving to the next  
With nothing on my mind  
And chewing on the decks  
Or some other DJ B-Grade Junkie  
Some recluse or just something funky  
I'm into Stormin' Norman I love Manuel Bundy  
But I'm kinda g-g-g-g-goofy and gummy  
But  
Right Now!  
I'm pretty wasted  
Might go and watch the Unseen play at Basement  
I wish the Opensouls were on man they're my favourite  
Bjorn, he's the man and that dude on the bass chip  
I'm gonna paint the town like spray-can  
See the same band from last week, cause they were way bad  
And if they ain't, text my mate Sam  
Cause he's the kinda dude that knows the kinda dude with an escape plan  
I'm feeling like some kind of funk might be kinda fun  
Might see the Shades cause they're playing up at rising sun  
Then No Keys is in playing 90's thump  
Then Julian that guy can drum  
So whether I'll be on the brew, white wine or rum  
I'm gonna be fucked up when the night is done!

I'm on a mission to find the fun  
I got a liver made of steel and a iron lung

And I say

And I'm living for

Right now!

I just wanna blaze my

Mind now!

So if you got bud then

Light up!

Tonight we're gonna smoke till

Lights out!

Cheer and I'm on my way to

High town!

So everybody pass the

Wine round!

It's just another Friday

Night out!

And all I'm thinking 'bout is

Right Now!

Today, let's all get by day

So let's all get high day

Let's get fucked up sideways

Yknow? It's Friday

So don't kill my buzz like fly spray

Fuck those games that your mind plays

This ain't the ice age

It's Friday, yeah

And we're living for

[Bridge: Tom Scott and Esther Stephens] x2

Slow down

Everybody just slow down

If you got it then roll it up

If you want then slow down don't hold out

[Outro: Esther Stephens]

One of these things is good for us

The other is just enough

So make your mind up

Before your time's up

The message is right in front of us

Better not miss the bus

So don't you break down

Let's escape now baby

### **Sunday**

I threw away the bottles from the Wednesday

Emptied out the ashtray

And tidied up the shack it was looking like the bat-cave

Filled up the gas tank

Chucked out the hash cake

And payed back the brews that I rapped from my flat-mate

Took a couple aspirin so I could kill the back pain

I got from Monday running in the rat race

Told my girl I'm sorry

She like "sweet as babe

Remember that we're having dinner at my mum and dad's place!"

Cool! I'll be there at six

Grabbed the new pair of kicks

Took a beer out the fridge

Then I disappeared to Gibbs

Had some spots

Jammed on the Xbox

Gibb's making head shots

I'm covered in red dots

Then we took the vests off

Threw away the hand grenades  
And tried to beat the hacky record that we made on Saturday  
Munched a bit of carrot cake Gibby's girl's nana made  
And talked a bit about the Warriors Parramatta game  
Then we sat 'round  
Then light go to black  
Then "Hey bro, what's the time bro?"  
"It's five bro, why's that? Gotta leave bro?"  
"Yeah I gotta go get a feed bro, Gotta gap"  
"Oh yeah mean bro"  
"Yeah sweet bro"  
"Yeah peace bro, I'll be back"  
Then Zoooom!  
Zapped up the road like a madman  
Cause there ain't nothing like my girl's mum's roast lamb  
You see I love my missus' folks like my own fam  
Because they love me for my faults and my toe-jams  
Plus I'm hella tight with her little bro and  
I can even sit around and laugh with her old man  
And I don't know why  
But I feel so high  
Sitting watching telly with them like Roseanne  
Anyway, I was sippin' on a nice iced beer

Chilling with her pops on my right like 'cheers'

And that's when I sparked up my bright idea

I should write 'bout stuff like this night right here

Then 9 turn to 10, "Goodnight mum, I love you!"

"Cheers for the beer Puna,

Shot for the grub Sue!"

And then another day was gone in a heartbeat

And then this week turned to last week

And then I heard that voice in my head asked me

"Hey what's it all about Tom, what are we?"

I thought about it for a minute, then I outed

And the next thing I woke up, to my alarm

Beep, beep, beep...