In a State of Becoming

Jazz Rap Meditations

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ARTISTIC RESEARCH: In a State of Becoming

Welcome into my Orange Garden

Acknowledgements

Abstract

The artistic research project *In a State of Becoming* explores musical identity in an ever-changing state of flow – changing both within itself and others' perception of it. It seeks to probe the matter of inherent flux by engaging another musical self in the present of the project, and the matter of extraneous flux by looking at surrounding components that build into the totality of the subjective perception.

Over a nine-month period (September 2019 till May 2020), I positioned myself within the genre of jazz rap – a disputed subgenre of hip-hop – working from a somewhat constructed sense of musical identity that, in its very premise of existing, challenged the idea of an innate musical identity. From this constructed position, several challenges arose regarding morality, which through the methodological approach of grounded theory, crystallized into two *contextual* pillars: one of authenticity and one of cultural appropriation. After processing these themes through the helix of my evolving grounded theory, a third, balancing pillar arose within the musical practice and the exploration of metaphors as an illustration of the moral challenges – all illustrated by a tripartite metaphor of an *orange garden* symbolizing *personal growth* reflected by a *universal aspect*.

The artistic outcome of the research is a jazz rap EP consisting of four tracks á 13 minutes, which embodies the processual reflections and the project's culminating awareness and understanding. Though it feels like a natural conclusion to the research, I want to argue that the importance of this project lies not in the conclusion but rather in the exploration – the road is the goal and so on.

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1. Introduction

We are constantly in a state of becoming; an endless state of flux
in which we are constantly changing, evolving, and becoming more (and less) at the same time.
– Heraclitus

1.1 The project

- What?
    - Welcome into my Orange Garden – EP á 4 tracks.
        - oranges
        - welcome into my orange garden
        - harvest moon
        - pick them hanging high

- When?
    - September 2019 – May 2020

- Who?

Birk Gjermundbo – keys/arrangement	– September – March 2019
Eivind Øygarden (Ivan Ave) – mentor	– October – March 2019
Malthe Jepsen – keys	– December 2019
Kristoffer Eikrem – beats	– January – March 2020
Kristin Dahl – backing vocals	– February – March 2020
Rasmus Gregersen – engineer: vocal recording	– March 2020
Eirik Riis Haraldsen (Deckdaddy Beats) – mixing engineer	– March – April 2020

- Why?
    - The project's catalyst was to face the authenticity paradox[1]: what musically got me to that point would not be sufficient to get me further; yet making the necessary changes in order to move forward felt like disregarding what I already had done musically.

1.2 Leading research questions

- What happens when I place myself within the sphere of a new genre?

- What are the moral issues of music-cultural appropriation in 2020?

- If we accept the premise that a cultural outsider can add anything to the culture she appropriates, what, then, have I added?

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[1] Ibarra, Herminia (2018) The Authenticity Paradox. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CIjI3TmEzrs&t=1s

2. Methodology

Freedom is that which conceals in a way that opens to light, in whose lighting shimmers that veil that hides the essential occurrence of all truth and lets the veil appear as what veils.
– Heidegger

2.1 Scientific methodology

2.1.1 Artistic Research

The range of what can be called artistic research is very broad and not at all homogeneous. It ranges from integration of philosophical or scientific knowledge to artistic research (from now on referred to as AR) as a form of institutionalized self–examination and scientification of artistic practice. As a research practice, AR became legitimized in Norway in 1995 through the university college reform *Act relating to Universities and University Colleges* (Malterud, 2012, p.3). This built upon the work of Christopher Frayling, amongst others, whom in 1993 introduced the distinctive categories research *into* art, research *through* art and research *for* art (Frayling, 1993, p.5). These were admittedly based on the work of Herbert Read, who published his study *Education Through Art* as early as 1943 (Keel, 1969, p.1). Following the work of Frayling, Henk Borgdorff introduced a new trichotomy in 2006: research *on* the arts, research *for* the arts and research *in* the arts (Borgdorff, 2006, p.6). Though it might seem bewildering, I merely want to illustrate the extent to which AR has been shaped by procedural circumstances. As the research practice is rather entangled with philosophical thoughts on the subjects of art and science, I have found the configurations of researcher Kathrin Busch (2009) valuable. The listed approaches below will, then, function as a beneficial contribution to, and nuancing of, the discussion that follows in chapter five.

I.   According to Busch (2009), one way of conducting AR is through more or less dissociated referencing of theory in art. In other words, this approach describes *art with research* – not to be understood as research, but rather by recourse to scientific research.

II. Another perspective is *art about research*. This might simply be art portraying research – for instance, a sculpture illustrating research instruments or actual situations. Just as there is science of art, there is also art of science.

III. A third approach to AR is *art that understands itself as research.* In this case, art will be the place and the object for producing knowledge. The theory will, through this approach, be interpreted as a constructive element of the artistic practice itself. And it is here that the borders begin to blur, and that the outcome can be classified as knowledge rather than an 'artwork' in the classical sense. It is not about researching in order to produce an artwork, but

rather the artwork *being* the research. It is partly within this approach that I locate my own project – something I will return to.

IV. A fourth perspective is that of *art as science in the sense of an academic scientific discipline.* Within this approach, the aim lies on establishing a theoretical, informed artistic practice that considers the claim of scientific methods through the transferring basic knowledge. As Busch states, "the art's capacity for self-reflection and auto-theorizing is referred to as the core aim of turning it into science".

V. A fifth approach is presented through Andrea Fraser's objection to the urge of forcing AR into other frames than it already inhabits itself – as if trying to force a square into a hexagon. With this, she raises the question: "Has not artistic research as research practice earned its right to be taken seriously enough without subjecting itself to the norms of scientific research?". In other words, this approach accentuates *art as a 'self-sufficient' source of knowledge* that should not require external 'framing'. This is also building on Foucault's idea of art as an independent form of knowledge. He exemplifies this with paintings which "emphasizes the irreducibility of the visible and the speakable" (Ibid.).

VI. A sixth approach, that follows in the tracks of the previous, is *art as knowledge that exceeds that of what strict science can offer.* Based on Foucault, this position depicts science as a possible excluding form of knowledge that lacks the appropriate tools for understanding metainformation. Art consists "not in showing the invisible", as some of the approaches mentioned above might indicate, but rather "showing the extent to which the invisibility of the visible is invisible" (Ibid.). Though layered, Foucault's statement explains how art shows that the invisible is part of the visible, and followingly how this dynamic function in different processes of life. This might be better understood if viewed alongside Heidegger's concern where he suggests that freedom is best understood as "that which conceals in such a way that opens to light, in whose lighting shimmers that veil that hides the essential occurrence of all truth and lets the veil appear as what veils" (Dumm, 1994, p.165). Through this approach, art is incommensurable to the frames of scientific research – a position that can be viewed as a counterweight to the critique of art as lacking affiliation to scientific research, implied in point IV.

With the research project being rooted in point III, the primary and initial goal of the project has been to filter, and eventually convey knowledge through the process of creating music. This underlying desire to contribute with new knowledge in an established academic world might bottom in a personal mission, but feels, despite its slightly flaky quality, essential to display also for the reader.

Followingly, this is why I deem it crucial to map out the different approaches to AR as a generator of knowledge, and to gain insight in the landscape of which the thesis lies.

2.1.2 Grounded Theory

With point number three (*art that understands itself as research)* laying the foundation for the *design* of the overall methodology, I initially resorted grounded theory (from now on referred to as GT) as the *method* of research. Though AR might have been sufficient as the sole framework, I wanted to apply a method to strengthen the scientific weight of the project. That being said, I am aware of a master project's limitations as to what scientific significance concerns.

When forming the research project, autoethnography and phenomenology were also considered as possible methods. However, GT stood out as the most enticing due to its way of forming categories. GT was initially established by Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss in 1967, but the two researchers gradually developed different branches of the method during the 90s. Additionally, Kathy Charmaz developed her *constructed grounded theory* as a response to the postmodern criticism towards the method, arguing that the truth could not be found solely in objective data, and that the subjective, relative data was a neglected value. This very theoretical branching is, however, one of the weaknesses in the method, as it is hard to identify the theory's core principles and heuristics devices (Charmaz, 2006, p.8). Based on the subjective nature of my project, I decided to base my research on Charmaz approach. In short, this is built up of the following steps: *gathering rich data, coding, memo-writing, theoretical sampling, saturation and sorting, reconstructing theory, writing the draft, and reflection* (Ibid., pp.13-177). Having a bottom-up approach to understanding, GT is inductive in its way of aspiring to collect and analyze data while simultaneously using the emerging findings to inform the data collection (Grossoehme, 2014. p.114). In other words, the researcher generates codes and develop themes based on what the researcher herself is seeing. In this way, the output feeds directly into the input – generating a feedback loop that spirals the occurring themes continuously until certain categories crystallizes. This iterative design is one of the main characteristics of GT and also one that distinguishes GT from other qualitative methods.

Through the GT approach, my initial focus was to achieve a greater sense of flow when creating the jazz rap EP. However, this angulation was too specific to capture the entirety of the process, and thus had to be widened through a broadening of the research questions in order to make sense of the theory that emerged. It was no longer a question of enhancing creative flow, but rather of the fluidity between different musical expressions and the moral challenges in appropriating a new genre. During the fall semester, I wrote daily monologues in which the content spanned from technical descriptions of the musical work to reflective thoughts regarding the process. The process of gathering rich data

ended in January with 60 daily monologues on 40 computer written pages. As GT suggests, these were coded shortly after they were written. This first process of coding is called *open coding* and is based on tracking and naming certain passages that excels (Pat's Psychology MSc, 2019). After further memo-writing, *axial coding* was executed – defining the core categories of the project. This eventually led to six categories: *authenticity*, *ego & intellect*, *music*, *lyrics*, *creative flow,* and the more general *interesting reflections.* Let me emphasize that there were no set restrictions regarding the frames of content, and no literature involved prior to the coding. It thus existed a freedom to write whatever came to mind, and followingly, a freedom in which categories emerged. Further on, I reached the stage of *selective coding*. This is the stage of the process where the narrative starts to evolve from the categories (Ibid.). It was also at this point that *authenticity* was identified as the main category at the time.

The next stage is *theoretical sampling.* In short, this is the stage where literature gets included in the work cycle and results either in refusing or confirming one's theory. Now, this and the following step are somewhat difficult to apply directly onto our single-cased artistic research – leading to a position of lacking a basis for comparison and validation. However, if we try to stick with the framework and terminology of theoretical sampling in its intended way, the literature that was included on the subject of authenticity can be said to have *refused* the emerging reality of the project. It showed that the previous reflections on authenticity were rather two-dimensional, neglecting the contextual placement of the concept, and thus lacking a touchpoint with reality. In order to restore the emerging theory, I thus defined an additional category of *cultural appropriation* that described the data better. This reestablished balance in the project, and eventually led to *data saturation,* which is the final stage of Charmaz's GT, before reconstructing and reflecting upon the actual theory. At this point, no new information was identified in the data, and thus led to the discontinuation of the data collection. As previously mentioned, this point was reached in January with 60 daily monologues. As the final stage in GT, we find the emerging theory. 'Theory' is not what we imagine when thinking of rigor science, but rather a conclusive point of "an explanatory scheme comprising a set of concepts related to each other through logical pattern of connectivity" (Birks & Mills, 2011, p.113). We are thus dealing with a storyline describing the studied phenomenon.

2.1.2.1 Reflexivity / Reflectivity

The key to constructed GT lies in its epistemology. As opposed to Glaser and Strauss' positivistic viewpoint of maintaining objectivity, the social constructionism of Charmaz argues that the researcher is not able to be fully disconnected from the study (Priya, 2016, p.57). In order to maintain a valid research, one thus has to expose the underlying bias through reflexivity. As my research is based on an

individual artistic practice, I have inhabited both the role as researcher and research subject – a challenge that is stressed by Grossoehme's (2014) description of GT's desired outcome:

> *"The extent to which the investigator notices subtle nuances in the data and responds to them with new questions (…), or revises an emerging theory, is the extent to which a grounded theory research truly presents a theory capturing the fullness of the data from which it was built. It is also the extent to which the theory is capable of being used to guide future research (…)" (p.114).*

According to the importance of the "extent to which the investigator notices subtle nuances in the data", the allocation of roles has led to challenges regarding the segregation of *reflexivity* and *reflectivity*[2]. Through the process of journaling there was constructed a database consisting of ideas and concerns, and tracing the presence of the researcher onto the research context (Knowles, 2008, p.471). As one, in the state of journaling, operates within the sphere of reflexivity, the mind's 'inner eye' is observing horizontally – which is also the main practice in philosophical approaches. In other words, the journaling takes place while in a state of self-examination, and thus bases its current thoughts on previous personal experience. When assuming the contextualizing role of the researcher, however, the minds 'inner eye' is observing vertically – looking towards other sources of knowledge, studying oneself with an outside look (Hannula, Suoranta, & Vadén, 2014, p.51).

Though I perceived this division of modes clearly, it felt near impossible to move in and out of the two states while noticing the subtle changes in thought patterns that occurred in me as a research subject, while in the role of a researcher. Within this study two voices have been used: that of the third person, adhering to the academic norms of a researcher, and that of the first person, reflecting my artistic practice as a research subject.

2.2 Musical Methodology

2.2.1 Jazz rap

The project is placed within the genre of jazz rap – a subgenre of hip-hop – that has provided the formula, or musical methodology for framing the musical research. Countering the free, varied and virtuoso characteristics of jazz, the instrumental building blocks of jazz rap were originally assembled by repeating jazz loops (often sampled) over 808[3] hip-hop beats. The development of the genre took place in the early 1980's at a time when the socially situated interpretation of music was largely

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[2] *Reflectivity* is pointing towards reflection *on* something. One takes a step back, and the rational reasoning happens in an inner consciousness making logical sense of an outside world. *Reflexivity* is pointing towards reflexivity *in* something. One lives in something – always as selves in relation to the others (Cunliffe, 2013).

[3] Roland TR-808, broadly known as 808, is a drum machine manufactured by Roland in 1980. One of the first drum machines to offer programming, and became a go-to among underground musicians – known for its idiosyncratic sound and booming bass drum.

colored by the mainstream jazz art ideology (I will return to an in-depth description in chapter three). This ideology appeared through certain *jazz codes[4],* which could be found in the lyrics, imagery, beats and instrumentation. In the latter, they were often achieved by implementing the timbre of different jazz instruments, such as the saxophone, as well as leaning on the approach of the performance, for example through a *walking bass*[5] approach. Regarding the beat, a way to capture an immediate jazz feel, could typically be to implement swung, rather than straight, eight notes (Williams, 2010, p.443-444). These codes have thus functioned as guidelines in the shaping of the musical material for the EP.

As the jazz codes became the ideal for my initial musical sketches (which took shape in early November), I sampled bass, saxophone and piano lines from musicians such as Pharoah Sanders, Alice Coltrane, Dave Grusin and Bill Evans, and placed them over traditional boom bap[6] beats. This style of beats is also typical for the genre – being present in the works of artists such as Nas, Gang Starr, Common and A Tribe Called Quest. However, when reaching the final stages of composition (February-March), the sampled elements of acoustic jazz were replaced by synthesizers. Though still maintaining jazz codes in the lyrics, imagery and beats, it was a quite drastic change of aesthetics. This choice was driven by personal aesthetics, as well as a targeting of the contemporary jazz rap community, such as the followers of Madvillain, Ivan Ave and Noname.

2.2.2 Lyric writing

One way of looking at our brain is by dividing it into two systems. *System 1* (S1) operates automatically and reacts instantly and emotionally, while *System 2* (S2) operates slowly, rationally, and logically (Kahneman, 2012, p.20). These systems have been a core idea for my musical methodology in how I am building my lyrics. Though S2 constructs thoughts in an orderly series of steps, S1 is the one to generate astonishing complex patterns of ideas. To explain the workings of S1, Kahneman draws an example with the words *bananas* and *vomit*. He proceeds to anticipate how you, over the last couple of seconds, experienced some unpleasant memories and images tied to the words, which resulted in a physical reaction. Your heart rate might have increased, the hair on your arms rose a little, and your sweat glands were activated. "In short", Kahneman says, "you responded to the disgusting word with an attenuated version of how you would react to the actual event" (Ibid., p.50). This insight led to a new approach on how the lyrics for this project was written, and it became an imminent goal to make the lyrics affect the listeners in a *visceral* way – hitting their S1.

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[4] According to Williams, a jazz code falls under a genre synecdoche – an instrument of musical structure that is shorthand for an entire style or genre (2010, p.443).
[5] A *walking* bass line walks through the scale of the respective chord being played – marking every beat of each measure.
[6] Prominent style in East Coast hip-hop between the 1980s and the 1990s.

Returning to the example of bananas and vomit, which is also related to the fruit theme of the EP, a change happened in your state of memory after reading the two words. In addition to experiencing a temporary aversion to bananas, you are also wakeful to recognize and respond to objects and concepts *associated* with the words (Ibid.). In practice, this means that the use of *banana*-related words such as *yellow, sweet* or *fruit* in the lyrics would have created a stronger response in you as a listener. Followingly, through such an attempt to reduce mental strain, it will be easier for the listener to detect, connect and remember the lyrics. Notice how the color yellow functions as a link in the lyric excerpt for *Oranges*:

Get all your ducks in a row, you reap what you sow.
It all hit me in the chakra – colored yellow
– originality – mango jam on bread.
Stirred up my morality – they wanted juice instead.

3. The Lineage of Jazz Rap

For doubters, perhaps rap + jazz will = acceptance.

Christopher John Farley in Time, July 12, 1993[7]

Jazz has been present in hip-hop artists work from the very start with the sampling of jazz as a way to pay homage to the musical roots. It has been referred to as the mother of hip-hop more than once, and both genres are known for going against the grain – born from oppression (Adaso, 2019). Though it always was present in hip-hop, it wasn't until the early 1980s that jazz became fused with the genre – blending into what some of us today knows as jazz rap. The name of the genre is somewhat disputed, ranging from jazz rap, jazz/bohemian[8], jazz hip-hop[9], and college-boy rap[10], to some arguing that it is a made-up genre[11]. From the starting point, excavated by A Tribe Called Quest (ATCQ) in 1985 and Gang Starr (MC Guru and DJ Premier) in 1986, jazz rap evolved through concepts such as Digable Planets (1987), The Roots (1987), De La Soul (1988), NAS (1991), Us3 (1993), J Dilla (1993), Guru's Jazzmatazz[12] (1993), Nujabes (1996), Camp Lo (1997), and Madvillain (2002), to the contemporary continuation of Ivan Ave and Fredfades' *Breathe* in 2014, Kendrick Lamar's *To Pimp a Butterfly* in 2015, Anderson .Paak's *Malibu* in 2016 and Noname's *Telefone* in 2016. An honorable mention is also 'the founding father of rap' Gil Scott-Heron, who started his musical career as a jazz poet already in 1969.

3.1 Contextual mapping

3.1.1 Subcultural identity

As we know, music has a unique power to evoke a rich range of emotions in human beings. As stated in chapter two, these emotional reactions are also accompanied by physical changes in our bodies: our heart rate increase, we breathe faster, our body temperature changes, and our sweat glands are activated. Additionally, we might also get 'the chills' when especially affected, which again, stimulates to an increased level of oxytocin in our brains (produced in the hypothalamus). This hormone is associated with feelings of affection and love, and functions as one of the explanations as to why music is such a powerful marker of cultural identity (Hansen, 2019, p.95). Although a hormone for

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[7] Farley's quote is derived from Williams (2010), p.435.
[8] Description derived from Krims (2000), p.65.
[9] Description derived from Williams (2010), p.435.
[10] Description derived from Krims (2000), p.65.
[11] Derived from dialogue with Ivan Ave, where he argues that hip-hop is as far as he goes labeling his own music – as he believed the term *jazz rap* flattens his work in the lines of algorithm generated playlists on Spotify.
[12] *Jazzmatazz* is a series of recordings from the artist Guru, where, instead of being sampled as previously, established jazz musicians came into the studios playing over hip-hop beats (Lewis, 2009).

cohesion and empathy, oxytocin has also been shown to induce aggressive feelings and hostility towards those who does not belong in a certain social setting. When the music stimulates to a stronger sense of belonging within the subculture of hip-hop, it therefore also leads to a distancing to the outsiders. This will notably occur as a stronger sensation in adolescence, as we, in that stage of life, are less open towards others due to the ongoing process of shaping our identity (Ibid., p.96).

3.1.2 High art / low art

Having a niche helped to crystallize the subcultural identity of jazz rap in the outskirts of its contextual landscape (Williams, 2010, p.458). As one of the architectures of the emerging genre, ATCQ's founder, Q-Tip, took steps in order to distance himself from pop rappers like MC Hammer and Bobby Brown. Whether this came from self-interest, or a genuine belief that there existed a gap that needed to be filled, is not for me to say. Nevertheless, the underlying commitment to a radical change in the hip-hop scene eventually contributed to the new genre.

Though ATCQ's, Gang Starr's and Digable Planet's fusion sounded brand new to the listeners, it induced recognizable associations due to the usage of pre-existing cultural information. In that way, the aforementioned jazz codes – already assimilated by the listener – also brought a mental connection to high art[13] ideologies that aligned jazz. Moreover, Q-Tip's lyrics became increasingly known for their philosophical, esoteric, and introspective themes. In addition to explicit jazz references such as "What's Duke Ellington without that swing" in *What*, they also implemented allusions to blaxploitation films[14] and other strong representations of African American identity – such as the physical afro hairstyle, and ideological Afrofuturism and Afrocentrism[15]. Other reoccurring lyrical themes were those of philosophy, referring to both Sartre and Camus, as well as political issues regarding blacks' and women's rights. This led to an understanding of jazz rap as more intellectual bent and reflective than its contemporaries – an implication of an elevation of the music to the status of a bourgeois high art (Ibid., pp.448-59). However, as well as it functioned as an aesthetic indicator, the rise of the subgenre was also very much about reclaiming jazz. In an interview with the magazine *Vibe,* Guru stated the following: "The so-called jazz hip-hop movement is about bringing jazz back to the streets. It got taken away, made into some elite, sophisticated music. It's bringing jazz back where

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[13] The concept of high and low art refers to a division in ones view of culture, largely between work created purely for the aesthetics and work created for the function. Regarding music, high art typically shows to classical music, avant-garde and, later on, also jazz (Fisher, 2013, p.480).
[14] Blaxploitation movies were made in the 1970s in an effort to appeal to black urban audiences, featuring black actors. The aimed at breaking film stereotypes by presenting black people in control of their own destinies (Sims, 2014).
[15] Afrocentrism is a cultural and political movement with a worldview that positively reflects traditional African values. Afrocentrism argues that European culture, following the white domination of Africans and other nonwhites, is at best irrelevant (Early, 2002).

it belongs" (Ibid., p.435). There thus exists a paradoxical duality in what we might call the subgenre's overall aim – is jazz a catalyst that establishes the output, or an ideal that establishes the input?

3.2 Vocal style

To illustrate the sound of jazz rap, I have completed a brief vocal analysis on some of the vocal traits found in the subgenre. *Brief,* because an all-encompassing analysis would neither have been achievable at the given time, nor reasonable to prioritize as a newfound research area. Nevertheless, I found it necessary to conduct an analysis, as I found my vocabulary inadequate when first attempting to communicate jazz rap's vocal traits. I also found this inadequacy mirrored in scholarly literature, as *jazz rap* is such a disputed genre term. The analysis is therefore based on ten songs that I, as a musician, find to embody the genre's vocal soundscape. I would at this point encourage the reader to listen to the mentioned songs in order to fully understand the further discussion. *1.Jazz (we've got)* – ATCQ, *2.Conspiracy* – Gang Starr, *3.Ill Street Blues* – Kool G Rap, *4.Jettin'* – Digable Planets, *5.The World Is Yours* – Nas, *6.I Can't Call It* – De La Soul, *7.Fancy Clown* – Madvillain, *8.The Backflip* – Akua Naru, *9.The Circle* – Ivan Ave and *10.Self* – Noname. The full analysis for each song can be found in the appendix.

My analysis has been shaped by the works of Adam Krims (2000) and Alyssa Woods (2009). As Woods' work is of the latest date, and the only one that directly theorizes the voice, I chose this as my main source of information when conducting the analysis. It is worth noticing that her work is strongly founded on that of Krims, as well as Kyle Adams[16], Allan Moore[17] and Felicia M. Miyakawa[18]. In her dissertation, Woods mentions a lacking theorization of the voice in Krims', Adams' and Miyakawa's work. This is also her main argument for including Moore's characteristics of vocal production in rock music in her analysis, instead of the other hip-hop angled approaches. Moore suggests four categories: 1. register and range, 2. degree of resonance, 3. the singer's heard attitude to pitch, and 4. the singer's heard attitude to rhythm (Woods, 2009, p.19). After adapting these to the nature of rap, she redefines them as 1. flow, 2. pitch and intonation, 3. vocal emphasis, 4. vocal quality and resonance, 5. register and range, 6. recording texture, space and arrangement (Ibid., p.26). Based on my target field of the thesis and the desired scope of analysis, these categories were yet again redefined as *1. Flow*, *2. Pitch, range & resonance, 3. Lyrics, 4. Form,* and *5. Vocal production.*

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[16] Adams, K. (2009) Aspects of the Music/Text Relationship in Rap. (*Music Theory Online,* 14/2, May, 2008*).*
[17] Moore, A. (2001) Rock: The Primary Text: Developing a Musicology of Rock, 2nd edition. Burlington: Ashgate
[18] Miyakawa, F.M. (2005) *Five Percenter Rap: God Hop's Music, Message, and Black Muslim Mission.* Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press

First, let us define two key terms used in the analysis: *MC* and *flow*. Within hip-hop there are two terms in circulation: *rapper* and *MC (emcee)*. According to the song, *MC's* by KRS-One (featuring Nas), "*rappers* spit rhymes that are mostly illegal" while "*emcees* spit rhymes to uplift their people"[19]. This phrase draws a clear line between the two, similar to that of high art and low art. MC's work is uplifted to a conscious act of moving one's crowd, while a rapper performs as a mere entertainer. As I do not feel entitled to make such a distinction between the artists chosen for the analysis, I will consequently use the term *MC* when referring to the noun and *rap* when referring to the verb. The second term in need of a clarification is *flow.* In short, flow is the MC's rhythmic delivery of his phrases, and is described in detail below.

3.2.1 Analysis

Flow

I. **Activity of vocal lines:** points towards the subdivision, regularity of phrasing and the nature of the rhythm in a vocal line. In the former, we most often find a subdivision that is based on eight, sixteenth and sometimes 32nd notes, but that leans towards triplets and a slightly bouncy shuffled feel. The regularity of phrasing varies between two phrases per fourth bar, one phrase per fourth bar and one phrase per eight bar. The nature of the rhythm is often straight, slightly towards swung. Here, as well as in hip-hop in general, we can see a difference between old-school and new-school flow, in that the subdivisions develop to be increasingly intricate towards the newer end (Adams, 2009).

II. **Style:** built on Krims' three stylistic types; *sung*, *percussion-effusive* and *speech-effusive*. The *sung* style is characterized by rhythmic repetition and predictability, as well as a higher level of energy in the delivery (Woods, 2009, p.7). This might resemble that of pop and rock singers' vocal delivery. The effusive styles, on the other hand, share a characteristic in *spilling the bars* – an expression used for phrasing that transgresses the bar's beats – creating a more fluid structure. What distinguishes a *percussion-effusive* style from a *speech-effusive* style is to what extent the MC leans towards a percussive versus a spoken delivery. This has proven to be a hard parameter to categorize for jazz rap, as the MC's has a tendency to vary between all three*.* As I found in Krims analysis of flow (or jazz/bohemian following his terminology), he describes jazz rap as eclectic, as it tends to "fall somewhat between sung and effusive" (Krims, 2000, p.67). In most of the chosen songs, the MC's goes in and out of unpredictability and predictability, from staggering syntax spilling the bars with caesuras that punctuated the

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[19] In the song *MC's* by KRS-One (featuring Nas and Talib Kwelia). Media derived from https://www.hiphopweb.tv/video=1699 (01.05.2020)

rhythmic flow, to a melodic approach similar to the melody of the spoken voice clearly leaning the eight-note beat. I do believe the reasons for this playful alteration between styles lies in other parameters, such as tempo and lyrics.

III. **Tempo:** a high tempo often indicates technical skills in hip-hop. A slower tempo can, however, function as a marker of confidence and assurance with the MC – which seems to be the case in jazz rap. As the tempo range in the chosen songs only varies between 87 and 92,5 bpm (with an average of 90 bpm) and given that most vocal lines are phrased within one bar, we find ourselves at walking pace in *andante*. This would also allow freedom in the MC's delivery of the vocal lines. Keep in mind here, that the songs are based what I find to embody the genre's soundscape, and that bpm most likely played a role when choosing songs.

IV. **Declamation:** indicating how the MC is phrasing both independent from the beat, as well as in consideration to the beat. This parameter also includes the elements of attack (release of syllables) and linguistic accent. On average the attack is precise but moderate. It is decidedly precise in its rhythmic placement and highlighting but does not strike one as crisp or hard. This is likely to come from the relatively low tempo, as one does not rely on *spitting* the consonants in order to maintain flow. Regarding the linguistic accent and geographical placement, most MC's on the list is born or raised on the East Coast in New York. This might also dictate what might be called an ideal accent in the lyrical delivery. The vowels are round, towards '*o*', and somewhat veiled.

Range and Resonance

I. **Melodic gestures:** smaller melodic motives within the rapped verses. These are found in most of the example songs and is often delivered in a spoken, relaxed manner – making them move slightly out of pitch.

II. **Interval:** the MC's interval range in verses – pointing towards a sense of melody in the rap. Within the given examples the interval range varies between a minor third (m3) to a diminished seven (d7), where the average lands on a diminished fifth (d5). Let me emphasize that this data is only collected from the rapped verses, and not the melodic hooks. It is, in other words, quite a large span.

III. **Resonance:** the quality or color of the voice, so to speak. In the individual song analyzes (appendix) the terms *neutral* and *curbing* appear as describing two modes used in Complete Vocal Technique[20] (CVT). Without further emphasizing this technique in particular, the neutral

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[20] CVT is one of several vocal techniques. Though a more extensive introduction to the technique would have been interesting, I have deliberately chosen to keep this as short as possible. https://completevocal.institute/complete-vocal-technique/

resonance is pointing towards an airy quality that is close to the natural speaking voice, while curbing is pointing towards a more restrained quality closer to a compressed singing voice. These are the two modes identified in most of the songs, whereas the remaining modes *overdrive* (unrestrained, shouty) and *edge* (compromised tone, bright and sharp) is nearly absent.

Lyrics

I. **Diction:** there are eight different types of diction in writing: formal, informal, pedantic, colloquial, abstract, concrete and poetic. Four of these recur in all of the songs: *1. informal diction,* being conversational in nature, *2. colloquial diction,* including expressions that "represent(s) a certain region or time", *3. slang diction* based on terms arising within certain subcultures, and *4. poetic diction,* which embraces metaphors, rhymes and lyrical words (MasterClass, 2019).

II. **Topic:** Regarding the topics of the songs, a collective term is consciousness. It all seems to come from a place of political awareness regarding racial injustice and black pride, which unfolds in both peaceful and more combative manners. Alongside with the topics of major labels versus independent artists, and high art versus low art, these are all themes that recurs in hip-hop in general. There is, nevertheless, a very clever way of expressing these thoughts and stances that I find to be unique for jazz rap. For instance Noname raising awareness of inequality of women in hip-hop, referring to patriarchal archetypes (while still sticking to the colloquial slang diction) by declaring: *"Fucked your rapper homie, now his ass is making better music, my pussy teachin' ninth-grade English, my pussy wrote a thesis on colonialism in conversation with a marginal system in love with Jesus"*. Though it might be hard to decipher straight away, Noname refers to men reducing her to being just '*good pussy'*. However, she hijacks the term and turns it to her favor, arguing that it is in fact so good that it might teach your "rapper homie" something about music. As previously mentioned, I do believe there exists a link between syntax and subdivision, as the value of acquiring knowledge might leads to a rich vocabulary with a higher number of syllables.

III. **References:** Regarding references in the lyrics, most of them points towards Afrocentric values – both through explicit references to activists or artists that has played important roles, or through implicit references to brown eyes and afros. There are also several references to other members of the hip-hop community.

Form

I. The form refers the buildup of verses, hooks, bridges, and so on. In jazz rap, this form is problematic to determine, as it largely varies from song to song. The one common feature identified in all of the examples (except Akua Naru's *The Backflip*) is the bypassing of the bridge. Besides that, it is challenging to draw other parallels between the songs – apart from that very feature in itself. One can say that there lies a sense of *freedom* in the way of building the tunes, that, to a larger degree, is controlled by the MC's amount of substantial lyrical content, rather than a preset form.

Vocal production

I. **Effects:** the amount of vocal effects in jazz rap is low. We can identify a consistently moderate to low usage of reverb and delay, resulting in the main vocal being perceived as rather dry. One effect that is used, especially in the examples from the 80's and 90's is scratching which, in return, is used quite extensively, and therefore becomes rather prominent. Another effect that recurs in several of the tracks is the usage of a short, percussive delay, echoing four 16th notes on one or two words.

II. **Placement in the mix:** refers to the perceived space that is created by the engineer(s) when mixing a song. When listening in stereo – both from a left and right (L & R) source – the engineer is quite free to shape this space. If we envision being in your living room, listening to a jazz rap concert, the main vocal is placed in the middle of the room, rather close to you. The instrumental parts of the song, the DJ, keys, and bass player is placed in a semicircle further back in the room. When arriving to the hook of the song, the engineer boosts the reverb and delay – creating an illusion of enlarging your living room. Furthermore, he includes some additional vocal elements in the room, such as backing vocals – often panned to the left or right, one notch behind the vocalist. The illustrated scenario also seems to function as a solid indicator for what you can expect when listening to the jazz rap vocal's placing in the mix. Lastly, I will mention Digable Planets' *Jettin'* as a tune that sticks out in the crowd, with a very active panning of the main vocals that alters between L and R in a triplet pattern in parts of the verses. Except from this, the vocal production in jazz rap is moderate.

4. Work Process

I subscribe to the opinion that metaphors are peculiarly crystallized works of art.

Ted Cohen[21]

4.1 In a State of Becoming

This has been a binary process, starting from a place of questions on figuring out how to move gracefully, yet utterly humble, in a musical landscape that I had only touched base with. The project's catalyst was me facing the authenticity paradox[22]: what musically got me to that point, did not feel sufficient to get me further; yet making the necessary changes felt like disregarding what I had already done musically. From that, questions developed through two months of ideation (September-October). I could feel a readiness for change – chasing personal and musical growth. Not surprisingly, I found these to be tethered – affecting each other by the mere conservation of momentum similar to that of Newton's cradle. In the midst of this, I was free to choose whichever vocal teacher I found to best fit my current musical mode. As the reader might recall, the choice fell on Eivind Øygarden (Ivan Ave), and the innate readiness for change thus manifested itself in a jazz rap project.

Our first lesson took place the 8th of November in Oslo, and our conversation spun towards musical identity and lyrics. I wondered how I could enable myself to move freely in a foreign landscape with a constant feeling of awe – a feeling that resembles so much to that of fear – which is quite the opposite of freedom. He argued that a part of hip-hop is very much about setting aside that respect, as to let the respect for oneself, and one's crew[23], bloom[24]. Though reasonable, I could not accept disregarding my moral concerns. At this point, the sense of appropriating hip-hop as culture – and even more jazz rap as a subculture – was present in every musical move I made. However, the term is never mentioned explicitly in my notes. The reason for this, is that cultural appropriation as concept has been treated as a non-issue within the conservatory environments that I have surrounded myself in. If raised as a question, it has been rejected as a naive perception of reality based on a concept that couldn't exist parallelly to the globalized reality of 2020. Back to the thesis, and although it is not the correct procedure of GT[25], I found it too important to be dismissed, and thus chose to include it as an independent research category.

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[21] Cohen (1978) p. 8.
[22] Ibarra, Herminia (2018) *The Authenticity Paradox.* Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CIjl3TmEzrs&t=1s
[23] Referring to the sense of community within collectives and crews in hip-hop, such as that of Ivan Ave and his collective Mutual Intentions.
[24] In retrospect, I have given this some though, and found that the key to balance this might lie in the approach to self-respect: do one object to respecting the frames in order to make room for self-respect, or do one inhabit such a high level of self-respect that one objects to respecting the frames?
[25] Recall that in GT, categories are advised to be named based on the research subject's applicated vocabulary in the data (cf. chapter two).

A term that is mentioned explicitly in my notes, however, is *authenticity* – first occurring the 5th of October, and followingly in 19 of 60 daily notes (appendix). Prior to this, my attitude towards the term *authenticity* could best be described as negative. As a term often seen used by music critics in the twilight of amateurism and professionalism, I perceived it as an easy way of adding weight to an otherwise shallow discussion. When performing literature searches on the topic, it turned out to be an *essentially contested concept*[26], and I thus witnessed yet another collision between my two positions as musician and scholar. What was an applicable term within my conservatory position, was not in scholarship. Finding the right way to treat this collision became all-consuming – leaving little room for other categories to form in my GT helix. Naturally, it also fed into my music – dominating the thematic sphere of the lyric production, which transpired between mid-November and mid-March. Creating music while simultaneously considering ways of working with my research categories eventually led to choosing musicians that already worked from the inside of the subculture. Respectively, this choice was made after three abolished collaborations due to undesirable soundscapes. Through Øygarden, I contacted Kristoffer Eikrem, whom is also a member of the *Mutual Intentions* family[27]. Furthermore, I contacted Eirik Riis Haraldsen, who has engineered many of Ivan Ave's mixes. To display the process as clear as possible, I have listed all of the involved parts below, where musicians marked in bold has participated in the end result.

- **Birk Gjermundbo** – *keys/arrangement*   – September – March 2019
- Eivind Øygarden (Ivan Ave) – *mentor*   – October – March 2019
- Paakow Tawiah – *suggested beats*   – October 2019
- Raphaël Besikian (DJ Parental) – *suggested beats*   – October – November 2019
- Jonas Cook – *keys*   – November 2019
- Zakaria Hameed – *engineer: vocal recording*   – December 2019
- **Malthe Jepsen** – *keys*   – December 2019
- Denisova – *suggested beats*   – January 2020
- **Kristoffer Eikrem** – *beats*   – January – March 2020
- **Kristin Dahl** – *backing vocals*   – February – March 2020
- Rasmus Gregersen – *engineer: vocal recording*   – March 2020
- **Eirik Riis Haraldsen** (Deckdaddy Beats) – *mixing engineer*   – March – April 2020

Besides their work being profoundly appealing to me, my main argument for involving these particular musicians was my conception of them as solid representatives of their given area; Eikrem and Haraldsen as 'insiders' of Mutual Intentions (the closest thing Norway comes to the US East coastal subculture of hip-hop), Gjermundbo representing a "new-school" approach through R'n'B influences,

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[26] A term coined by Walter Bryce Gallie (1956) to facilitate an understanding of the different applications or interpretations of certain terms or concepts with abstract, qualitative and evaluative notions.

[27] "Mutual Intentions is an Oslo based label and crew unified by their work in music and visual arts. Mutual Intentions members are musicians Ivan Ave, Fredfades, SRAW, Yogisoul, Mest Seff, Jawn Rice, Kristoffer Eikrem, Bendik HK, photographer Moe Chakiri, videographer Erik Treimann, designer Hans Jørgen Wærner and manager Stian Nicolaysen." Mutual Intentions (2020). Derived from: https://mutualintentions.bandcamp.com/merch

and Jepsen representing an "old-school" approach through jazz influences, and finally, Dahl appearing on the track *Oranges* as a representative of gospel. If we, for a short moment, accept the term 'authentic' as a marker for genuineness, the musical input of these representatives has thus added 'authentic' weight in terms of the moral aspects of cultural appropriation.

4.2 Authenticity

One might argue that there are at least two approaches on how to discuss *authenticity* that is relevant for this thesis. One is that of the *scholar* and one is that of the *general public*. The reader's positioning will here be crucial for her understanding of the concept. Before going into the scholarly positioning, I thus think it useful to highlight this existing duality. 'Authenticity' is colloquially used as a synonym for something that is perceived as genuine in its existence. In conversations, we might use it to describe an object's way of being or a subject's way of conveying. Which examples we choose are not of importance here; the point is merely that *authenticity* is accepted as an adjective in our vocabulary. It is only when we apply it in our scholarly discussion that it becomes somewhat of a minefield. In his article *Authenticity as Authentication,* Moore (2002) maps out several points of view on the concept of authenticity – manifesting themselves as variations in fragments of sentences to larger discussions and dissertations. At the same time, he is establishing three major categories of viewing and discussing the concept of authentication, based on the workings of several scholars from 1985 up to the point of publishing the article in 2002. Though the three categories overlap in practice, maintaining a separation may facilitate a more precise analysis if one were to apply the term in any case.

Within his categories, Moore offers an alternative subtext to the concept, discussing *who* rather than *what* is being authenticated by the certain performance. When discussing the attribution of authenticity, Moore presents the following two assumptions:

> (…) authenticity does not inhere in any combination of musical sounds. 'Authenticity' is a matter of interpretation which is made and fought for from within a cultural and, thus, historicised position. It is ascribed, not inscribed. (…) Whether a performance is authentic, then, depends on who 'we' are. It is my second assumption (…) that it is a construction made on the act of listening. (Moore, 2002, p.210).

In other words, we have to ask ourselves what contextual background we have when perceiving something as authentic or inauthentic. In which ways is your perception of my vocal performance colored by your privileges regarding ability, economic status, education, gender, gender identity, skin color, religion, sexuality, and family status? And moreover, in which ways is it colored by your previous

life experiences, such as your travel to Morocco last year? Based on a song you heard performed by a street musician while wandering the streets of Marrakesh, you deemed my vocal melisma in *Oranges* (0:32-0:34) inauthentic. You based this verdict on hearing a similar melisma sung by that very street musician. Your lover, on the other hand – sharing many of your privileges, experiences, and even your trip to Morocco – found my melisma original. In fact, it was not close to anything she had ever heard – so authentic – because she sat in your hotel room regarding a book by Paulo Coelho the night you walked the streets of Marrakesh. Thus, when Moore suggests a shift in the usage of the term *authenticity,* he argues that the perception of authenticity to a larger extent addresses the listener and not the musical originator (Ibid., p.221). There is nothing in a musical sound that is *essentially* authentic – and based on that insight the very discussion of authenticity in music becomes rather challenging. Nevertheless, after having established that the term falls upon its own unreasonableness, music is still being authenticated. It is nothing in this demolition of the term that removes the general public's *perception* of something as being original, genuine and real. Consequently, Moore has identified three categories of *authentication:* first-, second- and third-person authenticity.

First-person authenticity is authenticated when the performer manages to convey to the listener that his utterance is one of integrity – often through immediacy (Ibid.). This first category concerns the performer and her opinions, and that these are being understood as true and real by the listener. One could suggest that the easiest way of facilitating a feeling of the artist being her authentic self, would be within intimate frames where the expression of immediacy would come more natural for the performer. This could typically manifest itself though instantaneous laughter, comments regarding one's own behavior or performance, or other seemingly prompt sounds within the vocal delivery that is not normally included in the artist's regular performance. This might awake a primitive feeling of the artist being herself to the fullest, and the artist is then being authenticated by the listener.

Third-person authenticity happens when the performer manages to convey an impression of accurately representing the ideas of a non-present other – rooted in a certain lineage (Ibid., p.214). This sense of authenticity is awakened by the listener acknowledging that the performer respects the lineage and is maybe even taking on a position of reverence towards the heritage and predecessors. This form of authentication can, to some extent, be said to overlap the next approach, when talking about the communal sense that one often finds within sub-cultures. It is my belief that the pressure of respecting the legacy is even stronger when the sense of community is present – as it indeed is in hip-hop.

Second-person authenticity happens when the performance validates the listener's experience of reality. The authentication thus derives from a confirmation or verification of the listener's self (Ibid., p.218). It's not about the performer, but rather the performance evoking a feeling in the listener of

being seen. It might therefore also answer to relatability, and to the performance stimulating associations to ideas, perceptions and feelings that the listener inhabits. Furthermore, the diction could be viewed as a key feature here, as lingo differs between sub-cultures, and as it is essential for a feeling of mutual understanding (cf. *3.2.3 Lyrics*, chapter three). This form of authentication is about giving the listener a feeling of being validated, and thus also strikes me as a constructible sense of authenticity. It differs from the others in its way of existing – as an easily manipulable psychological sensation.

Conclusively, it is about uncovering the context in which the musical traits are being related to that which extends beyond its own being. This identification of intertextuality is critical for the discussion of cultural appropriation as well as the act of authenticating, as it indicates the framework for various perceptions of jazz rap as genre. As Gary Tomlinson has been quoted in Williams (2010) article:

> *All meanings, authentic or not, arise from the personal ways in which individuals, performers and audience, incorporate the work in their own signifying contexts. … The authentic meaning of a work arise from our relating it to an array of things outside itself (Williams, 2010, p. 457).*

4.3 Cultural Appropriation

In her article A Guide to Understanding and Avoiding Cultural Appropriation, Nadra Kareem Nittle (2019) quotes author of Who Owns Culture?, Susan Scafidi's definition of cultural appropriation:

> *"Taking intellectual property, traditional knowledge, cultural expressions, or artifacts from someone else's culture without permission. This can include unauthorized use of another culture's dance, dress, music (…) etc. It's most likely to be harmful when the source community is a minority group that has been oppressed or exploited in other ways or when the object of appropriation is particularly sensitive, e.g. sacred objects."*

Though I do believe this definition captures most of what people at large think of as cultural appropriation, it fails to identify what the actual harm of it is. To better understand what is at stake, I therefore wanted to include another perspective by producer and film director Loretta Todd: "For me, the definition of appropriation originates in its inversion, cultural autonomy. Cultural autonomy signifies a right to cultural specificity, a right to one's origins and histories as told from within the culture and not as mediated from without" (Matthes, 2016, p.347). Nor yet this interpretation provides a comprehensive explanation of what the actual harm is, however, it accomplishes to paint a (veiled) portrait of what is at stake.

An example of cultural appropriation can be when a major brand like Nike assigns the task of designing a clothing line that is based on traditional Egyptian clothing to their chief design officer, John Hoke.

The challenge here lies not in Nike appropriating Egyptian culture, but rather in them using their own American designer instead of a representative from the given culture (though 'traditional Egyptian clothing', as any example, could be problematic to delineate in itself due to uncertainty of when and where cultures influenced each other in the first place). Here, it is not only a matter of moral objections but also of cultural capital, where the borrowing of someone's capital without consent, by most laws, is defined as theft. In a video make my The Globe and Mail (2017), journalist Hannah Sung explains it this way: "If there are people on the margins, maybe we need to think about how to bring them towards the center, rather than taking the platform you already have and trying to imagine what it's like to be on the margins."

4.3.1 Epistemic Injustice

In his article *Cultural Appropriation Without Cultural Essentialism?* Matthes (2016) demonstrates two parallel discussions on cultural appropriation: one regarding cultural appropriation as potentially harmful – deducted with conceptual tools from the discipline of philosophy, and one regarding the conflict that lies in the center of criticism towards cultural appropriation. In order to discuss this in an orderly manner, let us for now accept that there exists a division between cultural insiders and outsiders (I will return to this in the discussion of cultural essentialism below). According to Young, a distinction necessary in order to analyze cases of cultural appropriation is that of insiders or members, and outsider or non-members (Young, 2005, p.136). This is based on the assertion that cultural appropriation only happens when conducted by an outsider. That is not to say that an insider cannot cause harm by *(mis)representation*; merely that we then do not deal with cultural appropriation (Matthes, 2016, p.349). In the case of my thesis, we have already identified that there is an outsider (me) appropriating the subculture of jazz rap. I will therefore not dwell on the aspect of cultural insiders for too long. However, I find it valuable to highlight both roles in order to lead as precise a discussion as possible, as well as being able to weave together the correlating threads that appear in regard to *authenticity*.

Amongst the identified conceptual tools retrieved by Matthes are *silencing speech* and *epistemic injustice*. According to recent works by philosophers Ishani Maitra, Kristie Dotson, and Miranda Fricker, these concepts can contribute to explaining "the mechanisms through which cultural appropriation interacts with underlying dimensions of social injustice" (Matthes, 2016, p.354). This is social structures that has internalized themselves as a natural part of our way of thinking and responding. It has become a part of our autonomous moral judgement and might therefore be hard to identify – and it is here that we can identify the actual extent of the potential *harm*. One relevant subcategory of epistemic injustice is that of testimonial injustice – a form of injustice taking place

whenever a representative form a given culture is facing a credibility deficit due to identity prejudice in the receiver. According to Fricker (2008), this happens "when a speaker receives a deflated degree of credibility from a hearer owing to prejudice on the hearer's part", that followingly "wrongs the subject in his capacity as a giver of knowledge" (p.69).

4.3.2 Cultural Essentialism

The second discussion in Matthes' (2016) paper is one on cultural essentialism. He argues that there lies a conflict in the core of the debate on cultural appropriation, as one, in order to discuss the topic, also need to accept the formerly mentioned premise of there being a division between cultural insiders and outsiders. Now, this might seem unproblematic if considering the clear borders between cultures – lined up by their names and main traits. However, the clarity stops once we start going in depth of the members of the given cultures. After all, "no groups of people share a language, a religion, (…) the same activities, cultural practices and core beliefs." (Young, 2005, p.136). Yet, with the application of the insider/outsider terms follows the application of certain unchanging characteristics inherent the insiders. In other words, the division of members and non-members forces us to engage in cultural essentialism, which again gives rise to the systematic marginalization of members. We are then facing a paradox: to identify, analyze and discuss the possible harms of cultural appropriation, we would carry out an equally harmful marginalization by engaging in *cultural essentialism*.

Matthes presents five responses for this paradox – the first being *family resemblance* (Matthes, 2016, p.358). Now, I want to clarify that I deliberately have kept this segment as short as possible for the benefit of the thesis' information capacity. Back to the first solution, it suggests that we apply the idea of family resemblance rather than the idea of a strict border between outsiders and insiders. If implementing this in our jazz rap context, it would suggest that we could authorize certain general traits that could identify resemblance, and then treat these traits as a cultural border drizzled with sand, instead of solid concrete. Matthes' objection to this, is that we then would end up with the exact same kind of marginalization as in cultural essentialism, by ascribing certain traits to certain people – no matter how few or splayed. The second response is that of *self-identification*, which points to a practice of members allocating the membership to themselves (Ibid., p.359). This would then translate to my own sense of belonging to the subculture being sufficient as the identifier. Though this position manages to avoid the challenge of essentialism, an objection to the response is that we then tear down the foundation of cultural appropriation as concept, by removing the general understanding of whom the group actually involves. A third response is to *reframe the question* regarding what interests lies in wanting a membership. Referring Suzy Killmister's work, it is argued that "insofar as

infringement of these interests is a harm to people who are not properly included as group members, we should allow the avoidance of these harms to suggest the proper method for determining membership in a given case" (Ibid., p.360). Somewhat similar to *self-identification,* I could then have been categorized as a group-member by one listener, based on the harm of a credibility deficit (Ibid.). The fourth response is *strategic essentialism,* which argues for a strategic application of the essentialism in policing the most harmful cases of cultural appropriation. Here, one "reject essentialist definitions of a group as *descriptively* false, while hanging onto a *political* notion of essential group identity in order to 'galvanize' social reform" (Ibid p.361). Based on this response alone, this research project would most likely dodge the radar. The objection here lies in the mere tension of rejecting a concept while still relying on it to advocate against cultural appropriation. The fifth response argues that *lineage* can replace the role of essential properties in order to determine membership. In other words, you would be an insider by sharing the origins and history of the cultural group. This sounds undeniably similar to the positioning of our current project. To this, Matthes argues that such a way of separating in- and outsiders would have been challenging, as we then would have had to exclude someone that otherwise would have been reckoned an insider. If we accept an Afro-American lineage as one of the premises for being identified as a jazz-rapper – which I am not at all certain is a valid premise – Ivan Ave would have been our primary example of an insider who did not meet the criteria.

As none of the five suggestions gave a sufficient response to the paradox of cultural essentialism, Matthes formulated one of his own that builds on philosopher Sally Haslanger's work. This response argues that focusing on identifying the answerable agent might be a less important position, as we already have identified the harm and its *ultimate cause*. When the harm manifests itself as credibility deficit, the ultimate cause is social marginalization (Ibid., pp.363-4). Followingly, Matthes argues, it is not necessary to identify the *immediate cause* (being the answerable agent) in order to understand and ameliorate the harms in general. We can rather direct our gaze towards the bigger picture and the ultimate cause – social marginalization – and thus escape our paradox of essentialism. An objection to Matthes response comes from Dr. John Danaher (2018), as he argues that it is a natural part of the human psyche to assign blame to individual agents. Moreover, he suggests that avoiding blaming an individual might not be possible at all, as most cases of cultural appropriation would lead to an action of consequence where someone would be affected in a personal manner. In our case, for instance, the possible *harm* lies in my music misrepresenting the genre or in me positioning myself in a profitable role that a cultural insider might have had instead. One solution sought to fight social marginalization would thus be to pass on my role to an insider of the jazz rap sub-culture. This would affect me personally, as I would have had to give up my role as a composer and performer of jazz rap

but would not at all rob me of my role as a musician. Admittedly, Danaher continues, these concerns are recognized by Matthes himself, and the solution thus ends up as rather ambiguous (Ibid.).

Danaher concludes by raising two points that has also existed in the back of my consciousness throughout this whole process. Firstly, he calls attention to the somewhat bitter aftertaste of the debate on cultural appropriation, in that there exists a presumption that outsiders are not capable to fully comprehend the cultural marker being discussed, and secondly that an outsider wouldn't have anything valuable to add, as the given marker is "beyond criticism and improvement" (Ibid.). I do find these points relevant to include in the discussion – still, I cannot help but get the feeling that focusing on them might be a step in the wrong direction. It is something about these arguments that seems to neglect the whole aspects of privileges. Furthermore, Danaher argues that there are ways of appropriating that can be "valuable (and) that fosters intercultural dialogue and enables cooperation, diversity and innovation" (Ibid.). However, as long as it can be referred to as "appropriation" it is not a case of equal dialogue and mutual agency. As previously mentioned, the concern should be directed on how to overcome or conquer *structural marginalization* in order to be able to eventually reach that point of exchange or collaboration between equals. This "intercultural dialogue" is not a dialogue as long as there exists a tilted power balance.

4.4 Lyrics

4.4.1 Cosmic / Mundane

The lyrics are the protagonists of my narrative. When writing, there has been an endeavor in balancing poetic philosophy and everyday banality – idealism and materialism – Plato's interrelation to my daily toasted bread. The scaffolding of the project has been exactly this; to draw lines from past to present, from the mundane to the cosmic, drawing the lines from history through my story – eventually representing the listener's story. It is about connecting the singular to the whole, and when my references cross path with totality, it generates a profound feeling of belonging in me. From that point of view, then, the very discussion of essentialism becomes nonsensical. However, one cannot get away from the musical parameters that ties the lyrics – no matter how free in their isolated being – to a specific area of music-cultural belonging.

According to the analysis in chapter three, lyric writing within jazz rap is very much about formulating deep thoughts in a way that is accessible, applicable and relatable. The lyrics' function is of an edifying quality – communicating thoughts and ideas that reaches beyond cultural borders – and the 'sweet spot' seems to lie in a symbiosis of *the* reality as a total and *their* reality as a partial. There have been

several sub-goals in my artistic research – one of these being to enhance the listener's focus on lyrics. Though lyrics has always been an artistic focal area for me, I have been aware of its limits as a musical means of communication in regard to the general listener. There is still a lot of work that remains in figuring out, firstly, what the best approach is for catching the listener's attention; and secondly, how to facilitate for associations to take shape. This was also the intention for investigating Kahneman's (2012) concept of *system 1* and *2,* introduced in the methodology chapter. In his book, he maps out some of the tools available to reduce cognitive strain in the receiver. One of these tools is to maximize credibility by not using overly complex language for the complexity's sake (2012, p.63). This does not mean that complex words and idioms should be avoided – it is after all one of the strongest tools we have to color the lyrics – merely that it is beneficial to stay close to the substantial core. In addition to favoring simplicity, Kahneman highlights how the use of rhymes and lyrical phrasing makes the message appear more insightful and "more likely to be taken as truth" (Ibid.)

One of the lyrical areas of exploration, as drawn up by Øygarden in our lessons, was that of the visceral. This concept also became a way of bringing the workings of system 1 into life. When trying to achieve immediate touchpoints with the listener, one way of doing this could then be through the verbal provocation of elemental emotions or instinctive physical reactions. My choice fell on the fruit metaphor as it seemed like a suitable tool for exploring the visceral in its mere way of being linked so closely to our physiology. Furthermore, I explored etymology as an additional way of easing cognitive strain through its very nature of being a connecting link. In the title track *welcome into my orange garden,* for instance, we can read the line "*apricots* and *alcohol,* he the king of *alchemy";* all of whom are derived from an Arabic noun combined with the Arabic article *al-* before it. In addition to being an alliteration, they also share a certain origin, in which might make it easier to notice and associate.

4.4.2 Metaphor

Following the natural course of the workings of *system 1*, 'metaphors' stood out as a forceful instrument of achieving a more or less immediate touchpoint with the listener. Tied together with the gained insight on subcultural diction (cf. vocal analysis, chapter three), the lyrics were shaped in a way that could match the colloquial yet poetic diction found in jazz rap. That is not to say that it was formulated at the expense of my writing style – in fact, claiming that there exists an essential style seems counterproductive in an immanent philosophical context where everything is in a state of flux[28]. One could, however, claim it immoral to alter the language if considered an act of manipulative construction. To that, my reply would be that my style of writing undeniably *is* staged, as there does

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[28] Reference to introductory quote of Heraclitus;

not exist a romanticized inner source from which my lyrical language flows – but that this construction of language does not change the *content,* merely the *subject matter*. It thus becomes crucial to stress that distinction. If evaluating the possible harmfulness of constructed language, I would argue, then, for examining the intention of the content rather than the subject matter.

An interesting aspect of metaphor is its ability to link our stories together. In this, it floods the borders of aesthetics in art and can condition our very interpretations of the world. As explained by James Geary (2011) "when we lend a thing a name that belongs to something else, we lend it a complex pattern of relations and associations, too". In that way, "metaphorical thinking half discovers and half invents the likenesses it describes" (p.9). In the lyrics of *welcome into my orange garden* (EP) there has been a tripartite use of metaphor; one of aesthetics, one of cognitivity, and one of community. If we were to analyze the over-all metaphor *'orange garden',* it firstly inhabits an aesthetical role in its single layered quality of being a sensuous associative representation; secondly, a cognitive role in its double-layered quality of being a symbolization of personal growth; and thirdly, a communal role – gathering certain people through a common understanding.

Working actively with diction and metaphors in this way might open up for inviting specific listeners into one's understanding of the universe. According to Cohen (1978) there are three aspects involved in such a cultivation of intimacy: "1) the speaker issues a kind of concealed invitation; 2) the hearer expends a special effort to accept the invitation; 3) this transaction constitutes the acknowledgement of a community" (p.8). Take for instance this line from *Oranges:* "Gathered mango seeds, tried to keep it homemade, grew'em into mango trees, my soul into free trade". Here, it exists a certain exclusivity in who I have invited all the way into the substantial core. Most will understand the first layered aesthetics of it, and some will understand the double-layered metaphor. However, there is a term in the last quarter that only some will know, and that thus limits their understanding to the metaphorical. One can, most likely, interpret "*my soul into free trade"* as a metaphor for giving away or negotiating something of importance. Fewer will, however, be able to decipher the metaphor "*my soul into free trade"* to its actual meaning: that my soul, as a symbol of the musical essential, is importable and exportable. In fact, this quarter has the possibility to sum up the entirety of the project's area of exploration: musical identity in an ever-changing flow – both changing within itself, and within other's perception of it. That is, the immanent flow of importing past and future into the present; and the extraneous flow of being perceived on a subjective level – dependent on surrounding components that builds into the totality of the perception. As art critic Jerry Saltz (2018) have called the "metaphysical quasar chambers" of art.

5. Considerations

5.1 Methodology

As the reader might recall, I listed six ways in which to approach AR in the methodology chapter. The reason for my interest in these was their intriguing invites into the understanding of artistic research, and their gentle reminder of the different ways subjects might read the text based on their mental outlook. They communicate an awareness, or even a reset, in how one perceives 'art as art' or also 'art as knowledge'. Allegedly, my methodology is based on point number III: *art that understands itself as research,* as the music created for the project has been an interwoven part of the evolving grounded theory. I do also claim that my lyrics play an important role in the conclusive stage of this project – reflecting my attitude towards the topics of 'authenticity' and 'cultural appropriation' more or less directly. Yet, there is an intention, or rather an ambition, in this work that also correlates to the philosophy of art as a tool to unveil the metainformation that lies hidden from strictly scientific approaches. In the midst of this, however, I do have to plea guilty to Fraser's accusation of the academization of artistic research contributing to the deprivation of its status – not being "taken seriously enough without subjecting itself to the norms of scientific research" (Busch, 2009).

Regarding the choice of GT as my methodic approach, we do face some challenges on the aspect of validity as this is a single-case study with the undersigned inhabiting both the role of researcher and research subject. However, self-awareness strikes me as a substantial virtue, and in its exposure of this bias, it might thus remove some of the harm.

Furthermore, one might question the application of GT rather than autoethnography, as the latter embraces subjectivity in its very design. Now, there are some central differences that should be highlighted here. Firstly, ethnographic studies seek to understand the behavior in correspondence to a specific, narrow culture, while GT seeks to explain the main categories and fuse them with the broader context. Secondly, ethnographic studies consider literature prior to the research, while GT bases its literature search on the findings in the data collection (Datt, 2014).

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[29] Quote from Ingmar Bergman. Derived 20.01.2020 from GoodReads.com: https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/534786-today-the-individual-has-become-the-highest-form-and-the

Another counterargument could conceivably be directed towards the processual development of the project being more similar to a *thematic analysis* than a grounded theory. This has also been a concern of mine, as their primary difference lies not in the practice per se, but in their extensiveness or magnitude (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.28). In short, an inductive thematic analysis would follow these steps: *familiarization with data*, *coding*, *generating initial codes*, *searching for themes*, *defining and naming themes*, and finally, *producing the report* (Ibid., pp.16-23). While a project can be found to follow both approaches to a certain point, it thus ultimately comes to a question of inquiry and structured meticulousness in order to advance from a thematic analysis to a grounded theory.

5.2 Jazz Rap

As I find myself in the crossline between the scholar and musician – and as that is the very premise of me writing this thesis – I find it necessary to air some considerations regarding jazz rap as a subgenre and the choice of performing a vocal analysis within this framework. As mentioned in chapter three, the name of the genre is somewhat disputed, ranging from jazz rap, jazz/bohemian, jazz hip-hop, and college-boy rap, to some arguing that it is a made-up genre. From this, then, one could and should question the validity of the genre as a concept – leading us to a credibility deficit affecting the total validity of the project. That being said, a literature search on the keyword 'jazz rap' in the digital library JSTOR[30], provided 4938 hits from journals and 2607 hits in book chapters when last checking May 11, 2020. Furthermore, these were most often found in the topics of African American studies, Anthropology, Education, and Art & Art History. Additionally, we could read the title "Perfekt jazz-rap", translated to 'perfect jazz rap' in the review of Ivan Ave's newest album, *Double Goodbyes* (Brevik, 2020). If not common, the term is at least traceable in the academic sphere. As far as musicians go, there is still uncertainty regarding jazz rap as a recognized subgenre – something that weakens the validity utterly. In my latest conversation with Ivan Ave, I was surprised to discover that he found the use of the term to flatten, reduce and simplify an otherwise nuanced fusion of genres which, in his eyes, is better earned with being titled hip-hop. This naturally leads to a challenge, as the action of claiming possible harm due to cultural appropriation seems legitimate only if the insiders of the defined (sub)culture identifies themselves as insiders. This I cannot deny – and I thus find myself in a paradoxical situation where the only remaining defense seems to lie in the frames of a research

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[30] Digital library for scholars and researchers that provides access to more than 12 million academic texts. Derived May 11, 2020 from www.jstor.org

project this size being dependent on delimiting categories (jazz rap as opposed of hip-hop) for at all to be able to have something to say – something to discover.

In the light of cultural appropriation, I also faced some difficulties in establishing a vocal analysis that did not compromise my stance as a musician. From a scholarly perspective, an analysis should be comprehensive and detailed to best reproduce reality. However, the on-going trade-off with my role as musician deemed such an analysis contra-productive. The very structure of this project is based on the pillars of cultural appropriation and authenticity that, ultimately, aims at hopefully *adding* something to the sub-culture of jazz rap in a way that is respectable and accepted – if that is at all possible. The least desirable outcome would in any case be to *remove* something by reduction through misrepresentation – which is actually what is at stake. Based on this, I chose a broad and open design for the categorization of jazz rap. One might, of course, argue that this approach compromises both positions in an undesirable way, rather than providing one that fully encompasses one of the positions.

5.3   Cultural Appropriation

The subculture of jazz rap has created a cultural capital or value through its historical development, and through acquiring a master's degree and selling the EP I am profiting on this cultural property. By completing this project, I am also automatically claiming that it is ok for a cultural outsider, with all of the privileges I inhabit, to appropriate a subculture such as jazz rap. Although one might argue that this choice initially was uninformed, I made no further choice to abandon the project after acquiring the information. As mentioned previously, another counterargument that has met me when sharing my worries on cultural appropriation in music is that of globalization and the growing interdependence of the world's cultures and populations. Many within my musical sphere have argued it futile to discuss such a concept in 2020 when equity for the first time is within reach, and when cultural lines is blurred to the unrecognizable. Though there lies truth in such a statement, I do find it problematic as it shuts down the hard conversation deeply rooted within the concept of cultural appropriation. Recall my first example on Nike's designer – some instances of cultural appropriation are easy to accept because they are easy to recognize. But when addressing that which extends beyond tangible and measurable objects (not to be confused with *object appropriation*[31]), the acceptance seems to reach its limit. At this point, the defense appears, and the topic of conversation seems to shift towards the dichotomy of freedom of speech and censorship, where cultural

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[31]As defined by Young (2005), "*Object Appropriation* occurs when the possession of a tangible object (...) is transferred from members of the culture that produced it to the possession of outsiders." (p.136).

appropriation is displayed as something threatening free speech (The Globe and Mail, 2017). This thus strikes me as a one-dimensional answer that neglects problematic societal structures and "the mechanisms through which cultural appropriation interacts with underlying dimensions of social injustice" (Matthes, 2016, p.354).

To draw as clear an image as possible, I want to emphasize Young's (2005) parameters for measuring the possible harmfulness of cultural appropriation. Let me, however, highlight that these does not take into consideration the argument of cultural essentialism, as that is a point raised first in 2016. The first Young mentions here is *social value*, a parameter that is easy to understand but might be hard to define. Shakespeare is mentioned as one example, as he engaged in several cases of subject appropriation[32], where he told the story of "Jews, Moors, and others" despite not being a Jew or Moor himself (Young, 2005, p.139). The social value of Shakespeare's works will, nevertheless, outweigh the harm of cultural appropriation. I find it hard to judge our case by this parameter. Despite it being a competent musical piece of work, it is not of immediate necessity in a world filled to the brim with music. However, I do find it to be a valuable contribution to a little exposed genre and to the visibility of female rap artists.

The second consideration is that of *freedom of expression,* which is highly valued by many. As long as this parameter is motivated by artistic inquiry and self-realization, Young claims that this parameter can way heavy indeed (Ibid., pp.139-40). The third consideration in that of *time and space.* Though somewhat self-explanatory, this considers the timing of execution – for instance holding a jazz rap concert in at the same period of time as there is a festival honoring the legends of the subgenre. Furthermore, there are certain physical spaces that should be avoided, as, for instance, symbolic buildings (Ibid., pp.141-2). The next parameter is the *extent of toleration.* In short, this translates to the extent of toleration of cultural appropriation within the given culture. Here, Young reminds us that it is crucial to know where the eventual acceptance within the culture comes from – is it based on freedom, or is it somehow forced or indoctrinated? (Ibid., p.143). Through informal conversations, I have gained the impression that jazz rap – as a subgenre of hip-hop – has a rather high toleration, due to the fundamental attitude of rebelliousness against systematic oppression, as well as a certain spirit fighting for equal freedom.

The final parameter raised is that of *reasonable and unreasonable offense.* Within this, Young identifies three further possible offenses that are at stake: *representation offense, consent offense and violation offense.* The first offence is created through misrepresentation (which has already been discussed), the second through the lack of sought permission, and the third through the misuse of a

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[32] As defined by Young (2005) "*Subject Appropriation* occurs when an outsider represents members or aspects of another culture." (p.136).

sacred, or in other ways meaningful, cultural marker. Regarding this final parameter, the project is only at risk of committing a consent offense, as it has been a project based in Norway and Denmark, with Norwegian and Danish contributors that may or may not be considered cultural insiders (Ibid., pp. 143-5). The challenge thus lies in how we define who the satisfactory representatives of the subculture are, and how many would be sufficient to 'grant' the cultural access.

At this point, it is critical to emphasize that it is an impossibility to integrate oneself as a cultural insider. This is not at all my intention. I am a white, heterosexual, temporarily able-bodied, neurotypical, monogamous, middle class, adult woman with a socially acceptable body size; natural born, raised in a safe environment by a stable family and as a native speaker of the main language in my country. Furthermore, I have had access to education – even music education – both in Norway and Denmark, where I am allowed freedom of expression. Maslow's hierarchy of needs is fulfilled, and this project thus becomes a result of self-actualization. I come from a highly privileged position, and what I do by creating this EP *is* cultural appropriation – there is no way around that. Yet, I do fear that the real harm of the project does not lie in the music – but rather in the very core of the thesis as it, in its nature of existing, reinforces marginalization through cultural essentialism. Though one might uphold Matthes' point of *lineage* in the discussion of essentialism (cf. p.27), it is a questionable response in its exclusion of non-Afro-American members such as Ivan Ave.

As T.M. (1991) suggested in a reader's letter, two possible solutions, or ways in which to remedy harm might be to include a written acknowledgment of the influential sources on all platforms it is being released or to let all or some of the profit derived from sale go to a welfare organization that is linked to the appropriated culture. This will be a consideration I bring with me in the stages of promoting and releasing the EP.

6. Findings & final thoughts

Treat my book as a pair of glasses directed to the outside; if they don't suit you, find another pair;
I leave it to you to find your own instrument, which is necessarily an instrument for combat.
A theory does not totalize; it is an instrument for multiplication and it also multiplies itself.
Marcel Proust[33]

I feel somewhat ambivalent summarizing the totality of this project into a few paragraphs. Nevertheless, I will do my best to formulate answers to the research questions, as they might have gotten veiled by big words and ideas along the way. Reviewing the research questions, one can notice how they build on each other, as they, too, have evolved through this process of artistic research and grounded theory. In that way, they are following the helix shape of grounded theory, partially overlapping each other.

- *What happens when I place myself within the sphere of a new genre?*

This constructed placement within a new musical sphere led to a steep learning curve when it came to musical matters such as rapping, lyric writing, and collaborations. It has been a quest to formulate deep and intricate thoughts in an understandable, accessible, and relatable way; and an exploration in how other forms of musical collaborations can look like – opening my eyes towards the scenius[34], as the intelligence of a whole cultural scene rather than of the singular performer (Sterling, 2008). With respect to the sociocultural context, it has also led to an epiphany regarding the conflicting views on the topics of authenticity and cultural appropriation that exists between scholars and the music environment as two separate entities. Here, I have had to readjust my mindset regarding authenticity as the magnitude of our intertextual connections became clear to me – uncovering the context in which the musical traits are being related to that which extends beyond its own being. Leading up to the second question, the project has also led me to dive deeper into the discussion of cultural appropriation – a concern that seems to have gotten lost in higher music education. Although I can think of several possible explanations to this (such as musical freedom and personal expression), I would argue that this is a neglected topic of conversation within conservatory environments.

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[33] Proust indirectly cited by Gilles Deleuze in Foucault & Deleuze (1977), p.208.
[34] Term coined by Brian Eno to counteract the romanticized image of innovation within arts and culture as being created by a sole genius.

- *What are the moral issues of music-cultural appropriation in 2020?*

Several moral issues of music-cultural appropriation have been identified throughout this thesis – although we do live in a highly globalized 2020. I would argue that the overarching one, the one we should focus on, is the neglection of Matthes' (2016) "mechanisms through which cultural appropriation interacts with underlying dimensions of social injustice" (p.354). However, in the light of cultural essentialism, we should question whether the sub-culture of jazz rap can be molded into a homogenous entity of its own, or whether the subgenre is better served by being defined as a multifarious entity in the process of becoming – existing temporally in an extended now while encompassing the future as expectation and the past as reference.

- *If we accept the premise that a cultural outsider can add anything to the culture she appropriates, what, then, have I added?*

I should mention that I feel ambiguous about accepting this premise, as I find it naive to claim that what one possibly adds is of such value that it overshadows the harm in appropriating a marginalized culture and thus maintain the mechanisms of social injustice. Namely, it eventually boils down to a question of moral rather than of musical quality. That is not to say that the quality of the music is irrelevant, only that it, in my opinion, cannot outweigh the moral aspects at stake.

However, if we do accept the premise, we can identify five parameters in which the work can be valuable. Firstly, I have had an increased focus on facilitating lyrical awareness in the listener by introducing an approach to lyric writing through targeting the listener's system 1[35] through active use of visual and visceral language in order to diminish mental strain. Secondly, I have focused my lyrics on edifying content – linking the cosmic and mundane in an accessible, applicable. Thirdly, a vocal analysis has been executed on jazz rap vocals to add a contribution within a scholarly discourse. This is, therefore, not adding to the culture of jazz rap directly but has the potential to function as fertile ground for an eventual extension of the analysis and validation within a scholarly discourse. Furthermore, it might also contribute to the culture by battling those "mechanisms through which cultural appropriation interacts with underlying dimensions of social injustice" (Ibid.). Fourth, this very thesis shares the potential of the previous point in regard to challenging structural injustice – in exposing the dangers of being a privileged outsider appropriating a subculture both in my own artistic practice and as a student. Finally, contributing to the field as a female rapper and producer supports

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[35] Kahneman (2012) p.20

the freedom which lies in the very core of jazz rap's battle. In this study, gender is acknowledged but not given extensive focus, as gender issues would demand a thesis of its own.

As in circular composition, I want to return to Heraclitus' philosophy on the endless state of flux – symbolized with the river in which one cannot step twice[36]. The subordinate meaning of this metaphorical river seems not to lie in the water's constant transformation resulting in the impossibility of encountering it twice, but rather in that "something stays the same only by changing" (Ivory, 2017, p.29). Although we would need additional months and pages in order to fully delve into Heraclitus philosophy, I do hope the reader finds value in this final metaphor regarding artistic identity and genre transboundary. Following the stream of the metaphorical river, it seems like its only way of realizing its own existence lies in its constant movement. Like the river, then, artistic identity and expression is too a way of becoming, at the same time as it is implying a state of being.

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[36] Kirk (1954) p.381

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APPENDIX 1

Lyrics

Oranges

Was feeling kinda green, now I am feeling somewhat orange.
Tried to keep my window clean, looking at my orchard.
Gathered mango seeds, tried to keep it 'homemade'
Grew'em into mango trees, my soul into free trade.
My fruit got swollen and ripe
Forgot about the shade exposed to too much light
Loosing the depth, and the richness of flavor
Dripping with zest, Freud digs the behaviour
Blossoming branches bent low from the weight, so
Granny brought waffles to celebrate - she say:
when a fruit goes ripe too fast,
it tastes sweet, but the taste might not last.
Get all your ducks in a row, you reap what you sow.
It all hit me in the chakra – colored yellow
– originality – mango jam on bread.
Stirred up my morality – they wanted juice instead.

II: The sun hits hard in the south, eh, I'm thirsty.
Harvest season came too fast, damn, have mercy :II

Try'd to, capture my truth with the stroke of a pen
felt like, measuring the growth of a Sequoia stem
Say, you going through it,
or you growing through it?
Set out to bake a mango pie
The blind leading the blind, an eye for an eye
Poured my flour through a sand box sift
like the, box of pandora it was one cursed gift
I am Massimo Bottura – a wizard of taste
Cleansing your aura with my selfmade toothpaste
You're twofaced, keep throwing shade
A lowering of centigrade will do good for my marmelade
My mission guides me like a Michelin Star –
Following Melchior, Caspar and Balthazar
Spinning earth – that's my constant
More in worth – than my consience

II: The sun hits hard in the south, eh, I'm thirsty.
Harvest season came too fast, damn, have mercy :II

welcome in to my orange garden

Flippin records like flatbread on the griddle
Norwegian farming food, caught in the middle, of the sublime
– orange branches reaching towards the sky
orange radiance from your eyes –

– like, you're some guru, might wanna dip into
your pool of wisdom, sun bathing in your world-view
Extravagance, young love, you got me to
Read your mantra one time felt the deja vu

The present – already seen, already lived through
boy, you were the one that introduced me to
The Sacral Chakra – seat of passion and food,
feed the lust forbidden fruit

Swaying trees in a warm summer breeze
Carrying the smell of Turkish Apple Tea,
apricots and alcohol, he the king of alchemy
blending our souls, creating gold right in front of me

II: *You – are flippin' records like*
– grandma is flippin flatbread on the griddle :II

Feels like: I'm climbing someone else's family tree
Pickin' all the oranges, feeding ego selfishly
tryna drop close to the stem – the forerunners
trying to assimilate my apple to their oranges

He made art with a marble colored hand
I painted his portrait, drew his lines in sand
He shaped the clay with his stream of thought
Embellished my garden with marble art

Garden's colored by the palette of my dreams
ran outta green, had to paint with memories
Memories of a green time gone by
Though my grass is orange, my nectar never dries

Welcome in to my orange garden
Mind your footprint, type: carbon
Dance barefoot – be real with me
Under a dreamy sky and an imported orange tree

II: *You – are flippin' records like*
– grandma is flippin flatbread on the griddle :II

II: *Welcome in to my orange garden*
Mind your footprint type: carbon :II

II: *You – are flippin' records like*
– grandma is flippin flatbread on the griddle :II

Harvest Moon

If you forget me If you forget me
If you forget me If you forget me

Darling boy, uphold your gentle soul
sun might hit you with beams of gold, so
When surfing those high tides and low
Bend knees to maintain flow

Might be blinded by the brilliance of the sky
So get a hold of some shades for your third eye
wise guy in the corner goes: now's the time to be alive
The tide is high child – don't be shy

History that led up to this moment overwhelms
From the first dawn to the first consciousness
universe opening her eyes, viewing herself
for the first time so keep your third eye
Open.

Look outwards - to look inwards
Hold up! You are running lunar cycles
Hiding in the shadow of Jung's archetypal self
Remember Harvest Time is Vital

Harvest Moon – remember
Harvest Moon – remember harvest time is vital, vital
Harvest Moon – remember
Harvest Moon – remember harvest time is vital, vital

Bedroom eyes, I dare you to desire me -
like I desire David's ageless ambiguity
Hellenistic kingdom of Parxiteles
Overlooking the moon rising in the East

Tint of orange like Italian terracotta tiles
When you look towards the sky – harvest moon in your eyes
In the hazy, milky air of the night
Through total silence a scattering of light

Universe, lesson, 101:
Time has just begun. We are yet undone.
Billions of years for Maya to arise
Yet again I'm blinded by the brilliance of the sky,

I cannot promise you the moon but I can take you to the ocean
Skinny dipping in Newtons third law of motion
To every wave there's a reaction
Equally directed in the opposite direction

Harvest Moon – remember
Harvest Moon – remember harvest time is vital, vital
Harvest Moon – remember
Harvest Moon – remember harvest time is vital, vital

If you forget me If you forget me
If you forget me If you forget me

Pick them hanging high

Fast loving, Easy loving, no commitments, only
warm hugging. Tuck me in at morn, pull me close to your
naked skin – and I'll – feel the color warm, taste the smell of you,
touch the sight of sound.
We getting up at noon. Surfing on the atmosphere, surfing
on the moon, yeah,
it has a dark side too, just like me and you,
but don't mind for now – he making breakfast soon,
 Avocado on dark, roasted rye.
Smoothie on the side like, Generation Y
            He say: Does she want some more coffee?
Then she'll get some more coffee.
Does she want some more coffee?
Then I'll grind you some coffee, baby

We are searching low,
looking for the sweetest fruit
forgetting what your mama told you:
harvest crown to root

Created a false escape – illusion of a safe space
Went back to the mermaid, though – cus we only hit second base
The mind rules the taste, yet his taste lacked a mind
Taste as sensibility, felt the depth occasionally
Plato illuminated the worlds of abstractions,
We're not being held responsible for our actions
Our concept is deeply metaphorical - the law of attraction
Baby needs affection and baby needs direction
Metaphors are the awareness of our condition:
Metaphors of space and movement, metaphors of vision
They say; when feeling bad, produce good art
They say: when feeling bad, produce good art
Hello, I'm searching for my nameless mission

We are searching low,
looking for the sweetest fruit
forgetting what your mama told you:
harvest crown to root

APPENDIX 2

Vocal Analysis

1. Jazz (we've got) – ATCQ

(92,5 bpm, 4:10, 1991)

- Produced by ATCQ, engineered by Bob Power
- Mastered by Tom Coyne
- Samples multiple elements from "Green Dolphin Street" by Jimmy McGriff and drums from "Don't Change Your Love" by Five Stairsteps – direct lyrical references to "Light My Fire" by The Doors, "Murder Dem" by Ninjaman, and "Segue 2: Funky Breeze/Ghetto Scene" by The Dells

Flow

- Activity of vocal lines
  - Subdivision: sixteenth note based, sometimes bouncy towards shuffled
  - Regularity of phrasing: one phrase per fourth bar (4x4)
  - Nature of rhythm: in between straight and swung in verses, swung in hooks and four first bars of Phife's verse with Trinidadian accent
- Style: speech effusive towards sung with percussion effusive
- Tempo: moderate flow
- Declamation: follows the nature of the instrumental by packing up most lines on the fourth beat, leaving ¾ of the last beat open. Rhythmical phrasing hints towards the classic jazz ride pattern on drums.
  - Attack: soft
  - Accent: Queens and Trinidadian

Range and Resonance

- Melodic gestures:
  - melodic gestures
- Interval:
  - 1st verse Q-tip: diminished fifth d7 (C-Gb) main tone F
  - 2nd Phife: diminished fifth d5 (F-D) main tone Bb
  - 3rd verse Q-tip: diminished seventh d7 (F-Eb) main between Ab-Bb
- Resonance:
  - neutral voice (chest), rich yet airy but with a compressed core, no vibrato

Lyrics

- Diction: informal, colloquial, slang, poetic
- Theme: high art/low art, musical success, lyrical consciousness "the prose is profound"
- References to systematic racism or Afrocentrism:
  - Phife Dawg cites dancehall artist Ninjaman's "Murder Them"– both are of Trinidadian descent
  - And refers to Jamaican dancehall artist Shabba Ranks
  - Refers to Pete Rock "for the beat ya don't stop" —> also producing Nas's example below

Form

- 4 bars hook – 32 bars verse (Q-tip) – 4 bars hook – 30 bars verse (Phife Dawg) – 32 bars verse (Q-tip)

Vocal production

- Effects
  - Moderate reverb (dry)
  - Scratching vocal samples

- Placement in mix
  - Main vocals: broad mid
  - Hook: panned L & R

2. Conspiracy – Gang Starr

(91 bpm, duration 2:48, 1992)

- ش Produced by Gang Starr
- ش Samples multiple elements from "High as Apple Pie – Slice II" by Charles Wright & the Watts 103rd Street Rhythm Band, and drums from "Sing a Simple Song" by Booket T. & the M.G.'s

Flow

- Activity of vocal lines
  - Subdivision: sixteenth note based
  - Regularity of phrasing: one phrase per fourth bar (4x4)
  - Nature of rhythm: straight/even but dragged
- Style: speech effusive
- Tempo: slow/moderate flow
- Declamation: follows the nature of the instrumental by packing up most lines on the fourth beat
  - Attack: soft
  - Accent: Boston: veiled consonants in the end of words

Range and Resonance

- Melodic gestures:
  - monotone
  - no melodical gestures
- Interval: major third M3, (D-Gb)
- Resonance:
  - warm, neutral voice (chest), rich yet airy but with a compressed core → developing compression , no vibrato

Lyrics

- Diction: informal, colloquial, slang, poetic
- Theme: racism, corruption, high art/low art → combat conspiracy
- References to systematic racism or Afrocentrism:
  - Guru refers to black-on-black-crime, and suggests the reason lies in systematic racism
  - "They use your subconscious to control your will II They've done it for a while and developed the skill
    to make you want to kill even your own brother man II Black against black you see it's part of their plan"

Form

- 4 bars intro – 4x4 bars verse – 2 bars hook/interlude –
  4x4 bars verse – 2 bars hook/interlude – (4x3) x2 bars verse – outro (fade out)

Vocal production

- Effects
  - Moderate reverb
  - Delay: echo (panned R)
- Placement in mix
  - Broad mid

3. ILL Street Blues – Kool G Rap

(89 bpm, 3:46, 1992)

- Produced by Trackmasters
- Sampled keys from Joe William's "Get Out My Life Women" and "Peter Rabbit by The Presidents, as well as dialogue from Scarface

Flow

- Activity of vocal lines
    · Subdivision: sixteenth and 32nd notes – blending in a large amount of triplets
    · Regularity of phrasing: varies between one line per fourth bar, two lines per fourth bar, and one line per eight bar. Intricate phrasing
    · Nature of rhythm: straight, slightly swung, triplets
- Style: sung with percussion effusive
- Tempo: moderate, though complex
- Declamation: Spilling the bars. Intricate phrasing
    · Attack: Hard. Focused points of staccato and pointed articulation, often caesuras
    · Accent: Queens

Range and Resonance

- Melodic gestures: monotone yet sung
- Interval: minor sixth m6 (A-F) main tone D
- Resonance:
    · compressed, pressured chest/throat (curbing – restrained), no vibrato

Lyrics

- Diction: Informal (highly narrative)
- Theme: Ghetto criminality. Reference to the police show Hill Street Blues. Fictional narrative – known for his fine ghetto story telling skills
- References to systematic racism or Afrocentrism: None

Form

- 4 bars intro – 26 bars verse – 4 bars hook – 26 bars verse –
  4 bars hook – 20 bars verse – 4 bars hook

Vocal production

- Effects
    · Dry main vocals
    · Scratching vocal samples
- Placement in mix
    · Main vocals: mid
    · Hook response: mid

4. Jettin' – Digable Planets

(92 bpm, duration 4:39, 1994)

- Produced by Sulaiman and Buttefly (Ishmael Butler)
- Mastered by Tom Coyne
- Contains sample from Bob James's "Blue Lick"

Flow

- Activity of vocal lines
  - Subdivision: eight and sixteenth note based, sometimes bouncy towards triplets
  - Regularity of phrasing: varies between one or two line per fourth bar.
  - Nature of rhythm: straight, slightly swung with triplets
- Style: speech effusive
- Tempo: moderate
- Declamation: Spilling the bars.
  - Attack:
    - Ladybug: precise diction and attack, yet relaxed. Uses consonants to bounce
    - C-Know: softer attack than Ladybug. Uses consonants to bounce.
    - Butterfly: moderate attack. Uses consonants to bounce. Slides up.
  - Accent: Brooklyn, round vocals (o-a)

Range and Resonance

- Melodic gestures: Melodic movements, sung hooks.
- Interval:
    - Ladybug: perfect fourth (Bb- Eb)
    - C-Know: minor sixth (Bb- Gb)
    - Butterfly: minor sixth (Bb- Gb)
- Resonance:
  - Ladybug: neutral voice, warm, airy but with a compressed core, chest, dark
  - C-Know: neutral voice, warm, airy but with a compressed core, chest, dark
  - Doodlebug: curbed voice, pointed/nasal, compressed core, chest/throat

Lyrics

- Diction: informal, colloquial, slang, poetic
- Theme: Black Power ("no blue eyes")
- References to systematic racism or Afrocentrism:
  - Black pride "we grow and take you back to like afros"
  - George Jackson (Black Panther) + Bobby Seale and Erika Huggins (co-funders of the Black Panther party)

Form

- 8 bars intro – 8 bars hook – 16 bars verse (Ladybug) – 8 bars hook – 12 bars verse (C-Know)
  8 bars hook – 22 bars verse (Butterfly) – 8 bars hook – 16 bars outro (slight fade out)

Vocal production

- Effects
  - Active panning shifts per beat L & R in first part of every verse
  - Long and big echo on hook
  - Reverb main vox verse

- Placement in mix
  - Active panning shifts per beat L & R in first part of every verse
  - Main vocals in mid
  - Responses often panned

5. The World is Yours – Nas

(87 bpm, duration 4:50, 1994)

- Produced by Pete Rock (boom bap beats)
- Samples from Ahmad Jamal Trio's "I Love Music", La Rock's "It's Yours", Jimmy Gordon & His Jazznpops Band's "Walter L" and The Rimshots' "Dance Girl"

Flow

- Activity of vocal lines
  - Subdivision: eight and sixteenth note based, swung towards shuffle. Longer words with several syllables changes up the flow to something unpredictable on some places. "Writin' in my book of rhymes, all the words past the margin" elegantly done with an extra syllable, making the metaphor come to life.
  - Regularity of phrasing: varies between one or two phrases per fourth bar.
  - Nature of rhythm: straight, slightly swung
- Style: sung with percussion effusive
- Tempo: moderate
- Declamation: Spilling the bars. Rarely starts phrases at one, but rather on four, four and, or one and
  - Attack: precise diction and attack, yet relaxed.
  - Accent: Brooklyn, East Cost (old school)

Range and Resonance

- Melodic gestures: melodic gestures, sung hooks.
- Interval: perfect fourth (Ab-Db)
- Resonance:
  - slightly nasal, (curbing – restrained) compressed core, upper chest/throat

Lyrics

- Diction: informal, colloquial, slang, poetic
- Theme: Injustice (racism)
- References to systematic racism or Afrocentrism:
  - Three references to Five-Percent Nation
    - "Devil" is part of their terminology, meaning white people.
    - "My strength, my som, the star will be my resurrection"
  - Scarface reference "The World is Yours"
  - References Fearless Four's "Problems of the World"

Form

- 8 bars intro – 16 bars verse – 8 hook – 16 bars verse – 8 hook –
- 9 bars interlude, 16 bars verse – 8 hook – 16 bars outro (fade out)

Vocal production

- Effects
  - Dry main vocals
  - Scratching vocal samples
  - Some echos with a length equivalent to a response
- Placement in mix
  - Main vocals: mid
  - Hook: panned L & R

6. I Can't Call It – De La Soul

(90 bpm, 3:28, 1996)

- Produced by De La Soul
- Mastered: Tom Coyne

Flow

- Activity of vocal lines
    ・ Subdivision: sixteenth and eight note based, sometimes bouncy towards triplets
    ・ Regularity of phrasing: varies between one line per fourth bar, two lines per fourth bar, and one line per eight bar.
    ・ Nature of rhythm: straight, slightly swung with triplets
- Style: Speech-effusive
- Tempo: moderate flow
- Phrasing: Spilling the bars. Rarely starts at the first beat, rather on the fourth beat or
    ・ Attack: semi hard attack, bounces on the initial letter in the words
    ・ Accent: Long Island, New York

Range and Resonance

- Melodic gestures: a lot of melodic gestures
- Interval:
    ・ 1st verse Pos: perfect fourth (F-Bb) main tone Bb
    ・ 2nd verse Maseo: perfect fifth (Bb-F) main tone Bb and Db
- Declamation:
    ・ neutral (chest), slightly more sung than the two previous examples
    ・ Pos: rich with a compressed core. No vibrato
    ・ Maseo: neutral airy, in and out of compressed core and speech voice. No vibrato

Lyrics

- Diction: informal, colloquial, slang, poetic
- Theme: musical industry, success, who's the shit and who's shit (I'll take the Markie up outta the Biz)
- References to systematic racism or Afrocentrism:
    ・ Refers to Rick and Vance Wright

Form

- 4 bars intro – 8 bars hook – 20 bars verse (Pos) – 4 bars hook –
  20 bars verse (Maseo) – 8 bars hook – 12 bars outro (scratching) fade out

Vocal production

- Effects
    ・ Moderate delay on main vocals
    ・ Scratching vocal samples
- Placement in mix
    ・ Main vocals: broad mid
    ・ Hook response: panned L & R

7. Fancy Clown – Madvillain

(90,5 bpm, duration 1:55, 2004)

- Produced by Madlib
- Sidenote: MF Doom performs this song as one of his other characters Viktor Vaughn
- Samples multiple elements from "That Ain't The Way You Make Love" by Z.Z. Hill, "Channel 85 Sign-On" by Philip Proctor and Peter Bergman, and vocal/lyrics from "Walkin' in the Rain With the One I Love" by Love Unlimited

Flow

- Activity of vocal lines
  - Subdivision: eight and sixteenth note based, slightly swung (reoccurring pattern: eight, sixteenth, eight, punctured eight)
  - Regularity of phrasing: one phrase per fourth or eight bar
  - Nature of rhythm: straight, slightly swung
- Style: Speech-effusive
- Tempo: moderate
- Declamation: Rarely spills the bars – in sync with beat – in the start and end: fourth beat enhanced by rhyme ("around" – "foundation" – "pound" – "inbound")
  - Attack: relaxed but presise – moderate attack
  - Accent: Geographical: Long Island

Range and Resonance

- Melodic gestures: few/none melodic gestures, sung hooks.
- Interval: perfect fourth 4 (Eb-Ab) main tone F
- Resonance: neutral – chest/gut, rich and full, element of rust

Lyrics

- Diction: informal, colloquial, slang, poetic
- Theme: This is a narrative-based lyric of Viktor Vaughn telling about his girlfriend that cheated on him with MF Doom ("his tin crown face" and "if you want a dude who wear a mask all day") – might be interpreted as a metaphor for the girl dating him for his status as MF Doom.
- References to systematic racism or Afrocentrism:
  - Not afro-based, but subculture: refers to the Shearling – a fur coat that was popular with b-boys and b-girls in the 80s.

Form

- 7 bars intro – 18 bars verse – 2 bars interlude – 12 bars verse (slight fade out)

Vocal production

- Effects
  - Dry/moderate reverb on main vocals
  - Interlude: slightly muted filter
- Placement in mix
  - Main vocals: broad mid
  - Radio vocal samples efx panned R
  - Gospel vocal samples efx panned L

8. The Backflip – Akua Naru

(89 bpm, duration 4:33, 2011)

- Produced by Christian Nink & Drumkidz
- Samples vocal/lyrics from "Ready or Not" by Fugees

Flow

- Activity of vocal lines
  - Subdivision: eight and sixteenth note based, slightly swung
  - Regularity of phrasing: varies between one line per fourth bar, two lines per fourth bar, and one line per eight bar.
  - Nature of rhythm: straight, slightly swung
- Style: Speech-effusive, but with caesuras that punctuates the rhythmic flow
- Tempo: moderate
- Declamation: Spilling the bars – rather busy compared to other song examples, still relaxed
  - Attack: precise but soft, consonants in back throat and oral cavity
  - Accent: round vocals – towards 'o'

Range and Resonance

- Melodic gestures: sung hooks, few/none melodic gestures in verses
- Interval: minor third m3 (F-Ab) main tone Ab
- Resonance: slight curbing, compressed core, full/rich

Lyrics

- Diction: informal, colloquial, slang, poetic
- Theme: women in hip-hop, assertively briefing us on her spot in hip-hop with lines such as "For those of y'all waiting for hip-hop – she's here" – "been at this since the days of John the Baptist"
- References to systematic racism or Afrocentrism:
  - No, but referring to strong women through history: activist and author Helen Keller, Anne Sullivan (instructor of Helen Keller), Mary Magdalene,
  - "Soul on the track, they flashback like Ol'. Gladys (…) transport you all to Paris" – might be referring to soul singer Gladys Knight OR swimmer Gladys Carson who won OL in Paris 1924

Form

- 11 bars intro – 16 bars verse – 8 bars hook –12 bars verse – 8 bars hook – 12 (+1) bars verse – 8 bars hook – 16 bars bridge – 8 bars outro

Vocal production

- Effects
  - Moderate delay on main vocals
  - Scratching vocal samples in hooks and bridge
  - Some responses with slight 'radio filter'
- Placement in mix
  - Main vocals: front, broad mid
  - Doubling of vocals behind main

9. The Circle – Ivan Ave

(87 bpm, duration 3:30, 2016)

- Produced by MNDSGN
- Engineered by Deckdaddy

Flow

- Activity of vocal lines
  - Subdivision: intricate – polyrhythmic enhancement of triplets as well as sixteenth notes
  - Regularity of phrasing: one phrase per fourth or eight bar
  - Nature of rhythm: straight, slightly swung
- Style: Speech-effusive, with caesuras that punctuates the rhythmic flow
- Tempo: moderate
- Declamation: Spilling the bars
  - Attack: precise but soft consonants in back throat and oral cavity
  - Accent: American – The Bronx – words shaped in oral cavity – round towards 'o' and 'æ'

Range and Resonance

- Melodic gestures: sung hooks, few/none melodic gestures in verses
- Interval: perfect fourth 4 (Gb-B) main tone Ab
- Resonance: curbing, compressed core, upper chest, slightly grainy

Lyrics

- Diction: informal, colloquial, slang, poetic
- Theme: relationships, musical career —> all in cycles – the circle, and my circle
- References to systematic racism or Afrocentrism:
  - none – but subcultural references to Mutual Intentions and Sade

Form

- 4 bars intro – 12 bars verse – 8 bars hook – 16 bars verse – 8 bars hook –
  12 bars verse – 8 bars hook – 8 bars outro (fade out)

Vocal production

- Effects
  - Continuous metallic delay on main vocals → sounds like a unison doubling
  - Enhanced metallic delay on hook
- Placement in mix
  - Main vocals: broad mid
  - Responses in low mix, panned R & L

10. Self – Noname (interlude)

(92,5 bpm, duration 1:35)

- Produced by Phoelix

Flow

- Activity of vocal lines
  - Subdivision: intricate, unpredictable patterns – triplets, sixteenth notes, touches of 32nd notes
  - Regularity of phrasing: 1st verse spontaneous and intuitive – spilling bars, 2nd verse one phrase per bar
  - Nature of rhythm: straight, slightly swung
- Style: Speech-effusive, with caesuras that punctuates the rhythmic flow
- Tempo: moderate, yet slightly more information than previous examples
- Declamation: Spilling the bars to a large extent
  - Attack: soft, precise
  - Accent: Chicago, not as round as other examples

Range and Resonance

- Melodic gestues: several melodic gestures, though delivered in a spoken manner
- Interval: perfect fifth 5 (G-D)
- Resonance: curbing, compressed core, upper chest

Lyrics

- Diction: informal, colloquial, slang, poetic
- Theme: women in hip-hop, referring to patriarchal archetypes
- References to systematic racism or Afrocentrism:
  - "a crack era – the Reagan administration that niggas are still scared of"
  - "fucked your rapper homie, now his ass is making better music" might refer to the Erykah Badu Effect. That might be continued in the lines "My pussy teachin' ninth-grade English, my pussy wrote a thesis on colonialism" – meaning her pussy (which at this point has become something of a character in its own, being mentioned a lot of times in her lyrics, according to Noname) isn't just good in a sexual manner, but in fact a good teacher, having the power to change "your rapper homie". Ending her tune with the following "And y'all still thought a bitch couldn't rap huh? Maybe this your answer for that; Good pussy, I know niggas only talk about money and good pussy. Noname hijacks the term pussy – and turns it around in her favor.

Form

- 8 bars intro – 16 bars verse – 12 bars verse

Vocal production

- Effects
  - Moderate delay on main vocals
  - Moderate reverb on backing vocals
- Placement in mix
  - Main vocals: front, mid
  - Backing vocals panned L & R, background